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# *The Arthur Miller Society Newsletter*

*In Association with The Arthur Miller Centre, University of East Anglia*  
Volume 1  
June 1999

## **Founding President's Welcome**

On behalf of everyone who has worked hard to bring this long-awaited project to fruition, I want to welcome you to the inaugural issue of the publication of the Arthur Miller Society.

As most of you already know, the Arthur Miller Society was founded on April 7, 1995, at the Second International Arthur Miller Conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. An international group of scholars and students interested in Miller studies decided to meet at this conference to found a society that would promote the study and production of Miller's plays as well as provide an outlet for the exchange of information on Miller's life and career through the publication of a Miller Society newsletter.

This newsletter will regularly publish book, film, and production reviews, notices about conferences and special sessions on the playwright, and occasional feature articles on such notable events as the gala celebration of Miller's eightieth birthday both in London and New York.

We are delighted to have you join, and invite your ideas and contributions as we commence our publication in honor of Arthur Miller and his lifetime of distinguished achievement in the theater. Indeed, welcome!

---Steve Centola

## **Society Meetings**

The first meeting of the Arthur Miller Society was held during the evening of April 7, 1995, at the Second International Arthur Miller Conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. Conference participants and guests met to discuss the purpose of the society and agreed that the organization would promote the production and study of the playwright's works. It was decided that this goal could best be realized if the exchange of information on Miller's life and career were assisted through the publication of a society newsletter. It was also decided that attempts would be made to regularly schedule society meetings at conferences and special sessions devoted to Miller studies.

Preliminary by-laws were also reviewed and approved at this meeting, and the following were elected as *pro-tem* officers: Steve Centola, President; Paula Langteau, Vice President; Eric Sterling, Secretary/Treasurer, and Jane Dominik, Newsletter Editor.

The second meeting of the society was held on September 18, 1996, at Utica College of Syracuse University during the Third International Arthur Miller Conference. Society members gathered to

review and approve completed by-laws and to elect officers. Those elected were Steve Centola, President; Paula Langteau, Vice President; Eric Sterling, Treasurer; Steve Marino, Secretary; and Jane Dominik, Newsletter Editor. Nominations were also made for members of the Board of Directors and Honorary Society members.

The remainder of the meeting was devoted to a discussion of the newsletter and upcoming conferences. Suggestions were made about the range of topics and selection of the features for the newsletter. Plans also began for a special session on Miller at the American Literature Association Conference in May 1997 in Baltimore and the next Arthur Miller Conference in March 1998 at Millersville University.

The third meeting of the Arthur Miller Society was held during the evening of March 13, 1998, at the Fourth International Arthur Miller Conference at Millersville University in Pennsylvania. Members in attendance reviewed and amended the by-laws. Discussion regarding

(cont. on page two)



## Arthur Miller Society

### Officers

- Founding President, 1995-98: Steve Centola,  
Millersville University, PA
- Current President, 1998-2000: Paula Langteau,  
Georgia Perimeter College, GA
- Vice President, 1998-2000: Sue C.W. Abbotson
- Secretary/Treasurer: Steven Marino,  
St. Francis College, NY
- Founding Treasurer: Eric Sterling,  
Auburn University at  
Montgomery, AL
- Newsletter Editor: Jane K. Dominik,  
San Joaquin Delta College,  
CA

### Board of Directors

- Christopher Bigsby, Steve Centola,  
Brenda Murphy, Matthew C. Roudané

### Honorary Board Members

- Gerald Freeman, Hal Holbrook,  
James Houghton, Robert A. Martin,  
Kevin McCarthy, Mashiro Oikawa,  
June Schlueter

### Contributing Information Instructions

Information and requests to submit articles are encouraged, including those regarding book, film, and production reviews, and announcements of upcoming productions, events, and conferences. MLA style sheet preferred; disks in Word are appreciated. Submission address: The Arthur Miller Society Newsletter, c/o Jane K. Dominik, San Joaquin Delta College; 5151 Pacific Avenue; Stockton, CA 95207.

### Subscription Information

Membership and Subscription are available for \$20 per year for individuals in the U.S. and Canada; \$10/year for students; \$25/year for joint memberships; \$25/year for overseas members; \$30/year for libraries, and \$45/year for institutions. Membership and subscription address:

The Arthur Miller Society  
c/o Stephen Marino  
100-14 160 Avenue  
Howard Beach, NY 11414

terms of office ensued and procedures for incorporation of the society were determined. Finally, plans for three upcoming conferences were made: ALA in San Diego May 22-24; "Miller and the Holocaust" at Kean University, New Jersey, February, 1999; and The Fifth International Arthur Miller Conference at St. Francis College, New York, April 16-17, 1999.

The most recent Society meeting was held on April 17, following the Fifth Conference. Announcements and discussions included upcoming conferences, outreach opportunities for conferences, the new website, and future publications.

### Arthur Miller Web Site

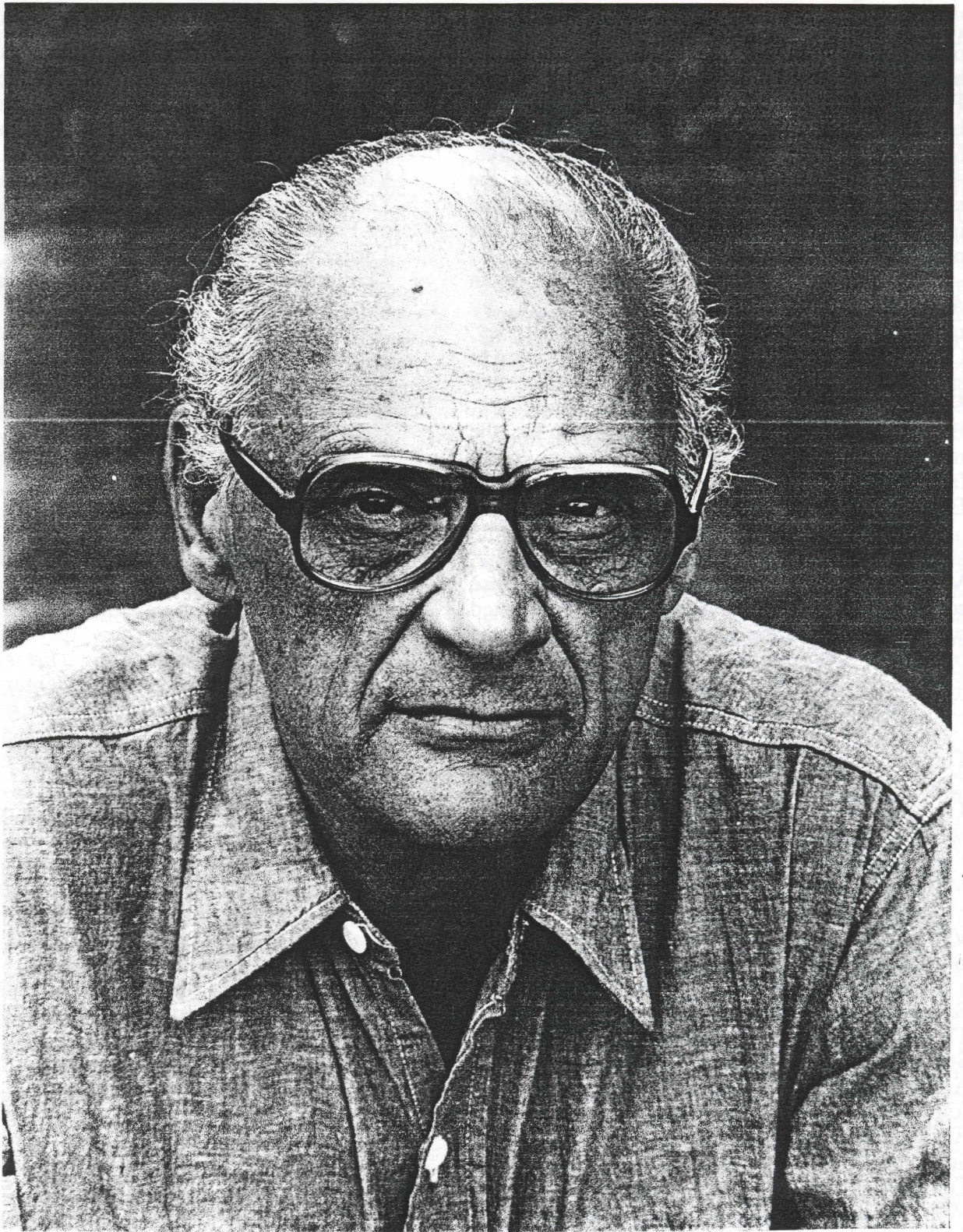
The Arthur Miller web site is up and running at:

[www.metalab.unc.edu/miller/](http://www.metalab.unc.edu/miller/)

### In This Volume:

Welcome.....	1
Society Meetings.....	1
Society Conferences.....	4
ALA Conferences.....	.6
Holocaust Conference.....	.7
Birthday Celebration.....	.7
Manuscript Pages.....	.9
Afternoon with Miller.....	15
Ride Down Mount Morgan.....	16
Miller at Queens College.....	17
Miller Season in New York.....	18
Book Reviews.....	20
Film Review.....	24
Contributors and Members.....	.25





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## The International Arthur Miller Conferences

"The Many Faces of Arthur Miller" was the title of the first International Arthur Miller Conference, held at Millersville University in Millersville, Pennsylvania. Conceived, designed, and planned by Steve Centola, an English professor at Millersville, the conference ran for two days, April 10-11, 1992. This conference was the culmination of a year-long slate of activities that included a visit to Millersville's campus by the playwright in November 1991.

The keynote address, "A British View of an American Playwright," was delivered by renowned scholar and author Christopher Bigsby. Commenting on Miller's controversial decision to stage the premiere production of *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* in London rather than New York, Bigsby presented a cogent explanation for the reasons that Miller's works are much more favorably received in Europe, particularly England, than in the States.

Other featured presenters included Gerald Weales, Brenda Murphy, June Schlueter, Matthew Roudané, and Janet Balakian. These scholars' works, as well as several other selected papers from the conference were collected in the book *The Achievement of Arthur Miller: New Essays*, edited by Steve Centola and published by Contemporary Research Press in 1995.

Papers presented were Qun Wang, "The Tragedy of Ethical Bewilderment"; George Jacob, "The Nature of Enlightenment in Miller's Tragedies"; Jeanne Johnsey, "Meeting Dr. Mengele: Naming, Self (Re)presentation and the Tragic Moment in Miller"; Terry Otten, "Arthur Miller and the Temptation of Innocence"; Brenda Murphy, "The Reformation of Biff Loman: A View from the Pre-Production Scripts"; Janet Balakian, "*Salesman*: Private Tensions Raised to a Poetic-Social Level"; Paula Langteau, "Miller's *Salesman*: An Early Version of Absurdist Theater"; Matthew Roudané, "From Page to Stage: Subtextual Dimension in the Theater of Arthur Miller"; Don Lawson, "Brecht and Miller"; Jon Tuttle, "The Families as Corporate Entity in Arthur Miller"; James A. Robinson, "Fathers and Sons in *They Too Arise*"; Mashiro Oikawa, "A Transformed Hero: Dr. Stockman in Arthur Miller's Adaptation of *An Enemy of the People*"; Andrea England Braun, "Eddie Wrecks: Probing the Author's Unconscious in *A View from the Bridge*"; Peter Chetta, "Arthur Miller: Theory and Practice"; Robert A. Martin, "Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*: The Critical Context"; Gerald Weales, "Watching the *Clock*"; June Schlueter,

"*The Ride Down Mount Morgan*"; Robert Lee Feldman, "The Horror of the Holocaust: Miller's *Playing for Time*"; Steve Centola, "Temporality, Consciousness, and Transcendence in *Danger, Memory!*"; Timothy Miller, "John Proctor: Christian Revolutionary"; Rocio Davis, "Make Your Peace with It': The Conscience on Trial in *The Crucible*"; Gregory Thomas, "The Dynamics of Escalating Crisis: *The Crucible* and Victor Turner's Social Drama"; and Robert J. Willis, "Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*: Relevant for All Time."

On Friday evening, conference participants and guests were treated to a rare performance of *The American Clock* by the Actors Company of Pennsylvania.

The Second International Arthur Miller Conference was held on April 7-8, 1995, at Millersville University as well. Once again, Christopher Bigsby delivered the keynote address. His paper, entitled "Arthur Miller and His Contemporaries," discussed the playwright's relation to both American and European writers, his impact on the modern theater, and his exploration of global issues and themes that define our troubled life in the twentieth century. Putting the achievements of this great writer in historical perspective, Bigsby eloquently concluded that "Arthur Miller is a playwright for all seasons and all nations."

In an effort to expand the length of time for discussion at each session, only fifteen other papers were read at this year's conference. From this group, seven were selected for publication in the fall 1996 special Arthur Miller issue of *American Drama*. The authors and titles that appear in this volume are as follows: Matthew Roudané, "Arthur Miller and His Influence on Contemporary American Drama"; Steven R. Centola, "How to Contain the Impulse of Betrayal': A Sartrean Reading of *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*"; Brenda Murphy, "*The Man Who Had All the Luck*: Miller's Answer to *The Master Builder*"; Terry Otten, "Historical Drama and the Dimensions of Tragedy: *A Man for All Seasons* and *The Crucible*"; Jon Tuttle, "The Efficacy of Work: Arthur Miller and Albert Camus' 'The Myth of Sisyphus'"; Robert A. Martin, "Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*: 'A Play about a Theme'"; Thomas E. Porter, "Strong Gods and Sexuality: Guilt and Responsibility in the Later Plays of Arthur Miller."



Other papers delivered were Gerald Weales, "Arthur Miller Takes the Air"; Jane Dominik, "Arthur Miller and Neil Simon: Tragic and Comic Viewpoints of the American Family"; Janet Balakian, "Beyond the Male Locker-Room: *Death of a Salesman* from a Feminist Perspective"; Stan Kozikowski, "The Death and Life of Willy Loman: A Re-examination of Miller's Theory of Tragedy, the Play, and Their Significance"; Jeanne Johnsey, "General Subversion and the Magistrate of the Heart: De-Politicizing Evil and the Witch Hunt in Arthur Miller, Caryl Churchill, and Robert Coover"; Qun Wang, "The Dialogic Richness of the Timeless World of Tennessee Williams' and Arthur Miller's Drama"; Norma Jenckes, "Making Connections between Arthur Miller and Edward Albee"; Eric Sterling, "Broken Glass, Shattered Ideals: Sylvia's Unconscious Fear of Helping in Miller's *Broken Glass*"; and Todd Pettigrew, "*Timebending* Elia Kazan: Arthur Miller's Tragic Autobiography."

On Friday evening, conference participants and guests met to found the Arthur Miller Society. Officers *pro tem* were elected.

Utica College of Syracuse University, in upstate New York, was the site of the Third International Arthur Miller Conference, held on September 18 and 19, 1996. Hosted by Frank Bergmann, Associate Dean for Humanities, the conference was entitled "Arthur Miller: Celebrating a Lifetime of Achievement."

On September 17, conference panelists and guests were invited to attend a pre-conference screening of "Hollywood on Trial," a film that depicts the devastating effects of the McCarthy era investigations, hearings, and blacklists on the artistic, film, and literary communities in American in the 1950s. In concert with this film's theme, keynote speaker Gerald Weales addressed Miller's personal and professional experience contending with the forces of fear and paranoia in Hollywood, the government, and society. A printed version of this speech appeared in a later issue of *The Michigan Quarterly Review*.

Once again, to encourage extended discussion of the panelists' papers at each session, the number of presentations was limited to fifteen: Charles A. Carpenter, "Carping about *Death of a Salesman*: Willy's Incongruous Suicide and Some Lesser Disparities"; Jeffrey A. Barber, "Nobody Dast Blame This Man: Willy Loman's Struggle for Male Identity"; Stan Kozikowski, "Miller Deconstructing Aristotle"; Brenda Murphy, "*You're Next*: Miller's Anti-HUAC Poster Play"; Stephen Marino, "Poetry and Politics in *The Crucible*"; Herb Goldstein, "The

Proctors' Drive to Heal Themselves: Counterpoint and a Major Strength Against Destructiveness in *The Crucible*"; Jesse Kavadlo, "Marriage and Montage: A Defense of *After the Fall*"; Robert Feldman, "The Problem of Evil in *After the Fall*"; Qun Wang, "Arthur Miller and the Poetics of Tragedy"; Steve Centola, "*All My Sons* and the Paradox of Denial"; Paula Langteau, "Deadly Self-Deception: The Bigotry of Albert Kroll in *Clara*"; Jane Dominik, "A Specific 'Common' Man: Arthur Miller's Tragedy of the American Working Class"; Sue Abbotson, "Issues of Identity in *Broken Glass*: A Humanist's Response to a Postmodern World"; Jeanne Johnsey, "Marilyn through *Broken Glass*: Sylvia Gellburg as a Vindication of Miller's Chaotic Female Protagonists"; and Kim Cook, "Self-Preservation in Arthur Miller's Holocaust Dramas."

On September 18, panelists and guests attended the second meeting of the Arthur Miller Society.

The Fourth International Arthur Miller Conference was held on March 13 and 14, 1998 at Millersville University. The conference, entitled "Arthur Miller's Dramatic Theory and Strategy," included fifteen papers: Fred Ribkoff, "Shame, Guilt, Empathy, and the Search for Identity in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*"; Gerald Lee Ratliff, "The 'Tragic Fallacy' of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*"; Lucia Cherciu, "The Failure of Simulation and the Economics of Gender in *Death of a Salesman*"; Janet Balakian, "Are You Now, Or Have You Ever Been Guilty?": Dramatic Form and the Problem of Power, Guilt, and Vengeance in *The Crucible*"; Kim Cook, "Raising up a Whore: The Dramatic Construction of Abigail Williams"; George Castellitto, "Demirep or Pre-Modern Woman: Abigail Williams in 1953 and 1996"; Robert Shulman, "Left Politics in *Death of a Salesman*: From *Waiting for Lefty* to *Death of a Salesman*"; Stephen Marino, "The Destruction of Myth in *A View from the Bridge*"; Jane Dominik, "Dramatic and Symbolic Uses of Settings and Properties in Arthur Miller's Drama"; Thomas Porter, "The Outside in *The Archbishop's Ceiling*"; Susan Abbotson, "A Whimsical Dramatic Exercise or Serious Social Drama: Responsibility and Connection in *Elegy for a Lady*"; Steve Centola, "Reflections of the Mind: Arthur Miller's Dramatic Strategy in *Two-Way Mirror*"; Katherine Egerton, "The Lunatic's Ball: Redemption and the Aesthetics of Mental Illness in *The Last Yankee*"; Terry Otten, "Coming to Roost Again: Tragic Rhythm in Arthur Miller's



*Broken Glass*"; and Michelle Sampson, "Ethics, Anti-Semitism, and Tragedy in Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*."

On Friday evening, after a President's reception and dinner, the Arthur Miller Society held its third meeting.

The Fifth International Arthur Miller Conference was held at St. Francis College, Brooklyn, New York--Arthur Miller's old neighborhood--on April 16-17, 1999. The conference title, "The *Salesman* Has a Birthday" recalls not only Miller's essay of that title but also celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of Miller's masterpiece, and the one upon which the playwright expects his reputation will largely rest.

The keynote address entitled "Arthur Miller: Time Traveller" was delivered by Christopher Bigsby. Papers included Matthew Roudané, "Celebrating *Salesman*"; Peter Levine, "Attention Must be Paid: Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and the American Century"; Steven Centola, "The Condition of Tension: Unity of Opposites as Dramatic Form and Vision in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*"; Janet Balakian, "Beyond the Male Locker-Room: Teaching *Salesman* from a Feminist Perspective"; Heather

Callow, "Masculine and Feminine in *Death of a Salesman*"; George P. Castellitto, "Willy Loman: The Tension between Marxism and Capitalism"; Lewis Lindsay, "Willy's Mystified Failure to Attain Identity in *Death of a Salesman*"; Stephen Marino, "'It's Brooklyn, I know, but we hunt, too': The Image of the Borough in *Death of a Salesman*"; Susan Abbotson, "From Loman to Lyman: The *Salesman* Forty Years On"; Brenda Murphy, "*Salesman* at 50: The 1999 Broadway Production"; Jane Dominik, "Absent Characters in Miller's Drama"; Kate Egerton, "'Getting Sorry': Truth and Alcohol in *The Archbishop's Ceiling*"; and Herb Goldstein, "Hap Loman's Evolution into Lyman Felt." In addition, a panel consisting of Brenda Murphy, Christopher Bigsby, Matthew Roudané, and Steve Centola led conference members in a discussion about the Broadway revival of *Salesman*.

On Friday evening, conference members attended the 50th Anniversary Production of *Death of a Salesman* at the Eugene O'Neill Theatre.

--Steve Centola/Jane K. Dominik

## Arthur Miller Sessions at American Literature Association Conferences

On May 30, 1996 at the American Literature Association Conference in San Diego, three members of the Arthur Miller Society presented papers: "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller" by Matthew Roudané of Georgia State University, "Who's the Enemy Now?: The Relevance of *An Enemy of the People* a Century, and a Half, Later" by Jane K. Dominik of San Joaquin Delta College, and "The Holocaust, the Depression, and McCarthyism Haunt Miller in the Sixties" by Jan Balakian from Kean College of New Jersey. Brenda Murphy from the University of Connecticut at Storrs chaired the session.

The ALA conference ran for three days and included 130 sessions, many on two restored riverboats on the water, receptions and a party, cruise, poetry reading, society meetings, and exhibits and sales of new and used books.

In Baltimore, on May 23-25, 1997, members of the Society presented papers at the ALA conference under the title of "Arthur Miller's Artistry in Drama: A Half Century and Beyond." Brenda Murphy of the University of Connecticut at Storrs presented a paper entitled "The Hook, the Bridge, and the Waterfront": Miller, Kazan,

and Informers," Steve Centola of Millersville University presented a paper, "Miller's Women and the Roles They Play," and Jane K. Dominik of San Joaquin Delta College presented a paper on "The Price: The Continuing Fraternal Tragedy." Stan Kozikowski of Bryant College Rhode Island, chaired the session, and Jan Balakian of Kean College of New Jersey was the respondent. In addition to the panel of papers, the film *Broken Glass* ran during a break at the conference.

In May 1998, Miller scholars presented papers at ALA in San Diego, on a panel entitled "Arthur Miller and the Art of Disconcertion." Chaired by Sue Abbotson, papers presented were Jan Balakian, "The Holocaust, the Depression, and McCarthyism Haunt Miller in the Sixties"; Kim Cook, "'Raising Up a Whore': The Dramatic and Cultural Construction of Abigail Williams"; and Katherine Egerton, "'Of course it isn't, but that's where it comes from': Creation of Hysteria and Other Business in Arthur Miller's *Broken Glass*."

Most recently, this past May, Jan Balakian chaired a panel at ALA entitled "Moral Drama or Political Allegory: Ways of Seeing the Plays of Arthur Miller." Papers included Robert



Shulman's "The Cold War on the Waterfront" Miller's *A View from the Bridge* and Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront*," Stephen Marino's "Death of a

*Salesman: The Poetic of the Colloquial*," and Jon Tuttle's "Living the Wrong Life: Arthur Miller's *Danger: Memory!*"

## Miller and the Holocaust Conference

A special conference entitled "Miller and the Holocaust" was held at Kean University in Union, New Jersey, at the end of February. Organized by Jan Balakian, the conference consisted of a keynote address by Christopher Bigsby entitled "The Shearing Point: Arthur Miller and the Holocaust," and papers by Steve Centola, "Arthur Miller's *Playing for Time*: The Soul's Self-Portrait"; Brenda Murphy, "Possession, Responsibility, and the Holocaust in Arthur Miller's Plays"; Stephen Marino, "Metaphors of Survival in *Incident at Vichy*"; and Sue Abbotson, "The Contemporary Relevance of Arthur Miller's *Playing for Time*." In addition, the conference included a production of Miller's *Playing for Time*.

## The Playwright Has a Birthday

On October 17, 1995, Arthur Miller celebrated his 80th birthday in Norwich, England, in the company of a host of distinguished actors and guests through a series of events culminating in an elaborate dinner party complete with a grand fireworks display. The Arthur Miller Centre at the University of East Anglia, directed by Christopher Bigsby, sponsored two days of activities including two on-stage interviews, one at the National Theatre in London on Sunday, October 15, 1995, and the other at Norwich's Theatre Royale on Tuesday the 17th, followed by a reception and dinner at the Sainsbury Centre to honor Mr. Miller. Bigsby's efforts coordinating the events and conducting the two public interviews resulted in a remarkable and noteworthy celebration gala, not only in the homage it offered to Mr. Miller, recognizing his continuing achievements as one of the most significant playwrights of the century, but also in the opportunity it offered the guests and celebrants to hear from Miller and see some of the most notable scenes of his plays performed by some of the finest actors in Britain.

At the National Theatre Sunday evening, Bigsby led Mr. Miller through a chronological reminiscence of his life and art. Bigsby questioned Miller about the development of his playwrighting over a period of fifty years, beginning with his commercially unsuccessful first Broadway play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944), and concluding with his most recent play of the time, the Laurence Olivier Award-winning *Broken Glass* (1994), and novella *Plain Girl*, (entitled *Homely Girl* in the States), which was released by Methuen the following evening. The interview segments were interspersed with performances of scenes from such famous Miller plays as *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible*, *A View from the Bridge*, *After the Fall*, *The Price*, and *Broken Glass*, as well as a scene from his recently released 1941 *Golden Years* and a dramatic reading from his novella *Plain Girl*.

In the interview, Miller described his writing technique, returning repeatedly to the theme of interrelatedness of time and the connectedness of all life. He explained how, for him, time does not represent a linear progression, but that all time, and the events it comprises, interrelate within the human psyche. He incorporated this view of time within *Death of a Salesman*, which contains not flashbacks but a depiction of past and present interacting, a feature, he told the Norwich audience Tuesday night, of which he is "particularly proud" and which distinguishes that play as the one he'd most like to be remembered for because it represents "a real invention of form." Miller's unique vision of time as well as his belief in the connectedness of all life translates from his life to his art, which reflects the mystery of both, as revealed in the final paragraphs of his autobiography, *Timebends*, from which Miller read at the close of the interview. While the playwright has spent forty years at his "temporary residence" in Connecticut, "all the time expecting to get some play or book finished so [he] could spend more time in the city, where everything is happening" (599), the appearance of coyotes in the woods behind his home stirred his sense of the connectedness of all living things when he recognized that he is "doing what they are doing, making [him]self possible and those who come after." (599) Thus he concluded both the autobiography and the interview: "[T]he truth, the first truth, probably, is that we are all connected, watching one another. Even the trees."

At the Norwich interview two days later, Bigsby questioned Miller about the importance of community theatre, since a new community theatre was soon to open there. Bigsby asked Miller if communities need community theatre; Miller said he didn't know if they needed it, but "it is good for them." The discussion



then expanded to international performances of his plays. Miller likened playwrighting to composing a musical piece, admitting that the artist must turn interpretation over to the audience. Thus, Miller quipped, "It's not the business for anyone with any self-respect." Miller explained in different countries, the same play "can't be the same thing." For example, in China, Miller described, relationships of sons to parents is different than in the United States; a "certain deference," Miller related, would not allow a son to refer to his mother as "Pal" as Biff does in *Death of a Salesman*. And audiences may be touched in different ways. For example, following the production of *Salesman* in China, Miller recalls one Chinese woman remarked to his wife Inge, "That Willy Loman is just like my mother."

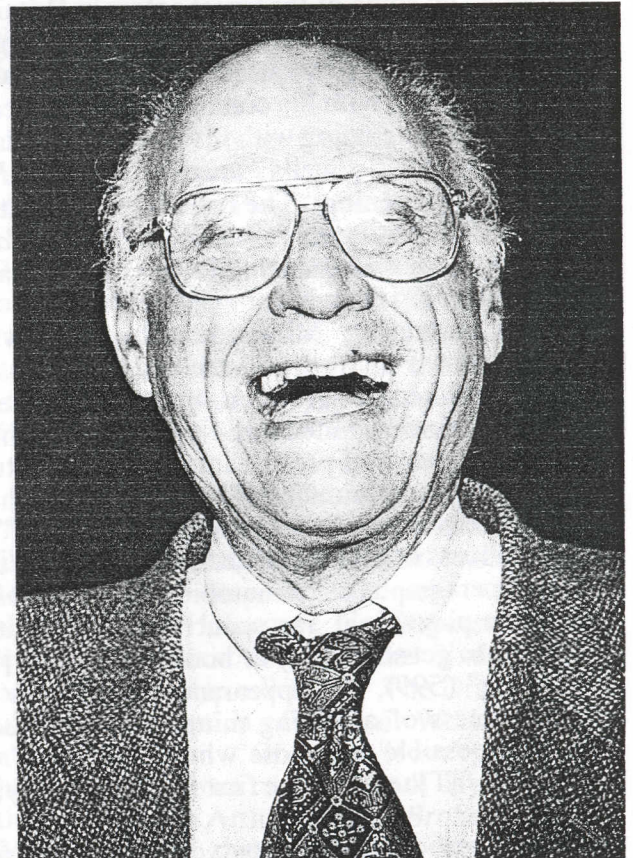
Interpretation, Miller explained, affects comedy as well as tragedy. Because of the cultural difference, he commented that he wouldn't want to do comedy in China. Further, he added, tongue-in-cheek, the production of *Salesman* in Sweden differed from productions elsewhere because "Swedes aren't big laughers. In scenes that should have been humorous, there was [merely] a certain rise in the level of despair."

Regardless of the adjustments his plays must make to various audiences worldwide, however, his purpose in playwrighting has always been "to change the world." He realized he had done that, he said, when, following the premiere of *Death of a Salesman* (1949) in Philadelphia, he overheard Bernard Gimble, head of Gimble's Department Store, order his assistant to be sure no Gimble's employees were ever fired for being over age. Further, he noted that productions of *The Crucible* tend to come before or after revolutions because "*The Crucible* is dealing with social hysteria," which dictatorships attempt to generate to disband social relations as they exist. What enables the play to speak to people again and again over time, Miller explained, is that when "you're living in unknown territory, you're prey to unknown fears." But his plays continue to thrive because "very little changes." As Miller summarized, "I don't believe people go to the theatre for antiquarian reasons."

The interviews/performances met with overwhelming audience appreciation. At the close of the National Theatre interview Sunday evening, Miller received a standing ovation from the packed theatre house as the audience and actors on-stage joined in a spontaneous chorus of "Happy Birthday." Miller was further honored at two receptions, one following each interview, and a dinner at the Sainsbury Centre on the 17th. There Alan Plater offered Miller an honorary membership in the British Writer's Guild, and Robin Barrington, the cultural attaché of the U.S. Embassy, delivered a birthday message from President and Mrs. Clinton. Additionally, messages were sent by playwright Vaclav Havel, the President of the Czech Republic, and Ronald Howard, President of International PEN. Finally, Salmon Rushdie and British director David Thacker each spoke fondly of their work and friendship with Mr. Miller.

Miller, accompanied by his wife Inge Morath and a number of family members including his daughter Jane and her husband Tom Doyle, was visibly moved by the celebration, which concluded with a spectacular fireworks display that dinner guests viewed through the glass wall of the Sainsbury Centre. Following the dinner, the playwright tarried to graciously greet guests and to autograph their complimentary copies of *Plain Girl* and *The Portable Arthur Miller*, provided by Methuen and Viking publishers respectively. Thus concluded the two-day commemoration of the life and works of the octogenarian playwright, honoring him with a birthday celebration he's not like to soon forget!

---Paula Langteau



Arthur Miller at Gala celebration



Mr. Miller generously has provided the following manuscript pages from *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*.

*the other place  
They intended to be made of plaster  
and had them come &*

ACT III

(The plaster cast. Nurse Regan enters, goes to cast, removes a thermometer, reads it...)

Nurse R. *its*  
My mother's Canadian; *my father's from Buffalo. There used to*  
be eight or ten trains a day out of Buffalo. *Its the same with*  
the fireplaces; people bricked up all the fireplaces to cut down  
drafts, ~~so they said~~. *Now they can't even find the fireplaces*

Lyman  
Can't?

Nurse R. *People their walls, they they die and don't hear any instructions*  
That's right. ~~Walls got~~ plastered over and all; You know!

*Now you see, I'd never have dreamed people could love a fireplace. I should have gotten to*  
Lyman *people*  
I've never really gotten to know a woman like you. You must  
have quite a ~~complicated~~ interior.

Nurse (Embarrassed but curious laugh)  
A what!

Lyman *your*  
~~I mean the...furnishings of your mind. I never~~  
was inside a room like that. A woman is a kind of room, you know.

Nurse  
Don't say.

Lyman  
Oh yes...with a door; windows that go up and down; drapes that  
you can draw apart to let in daylight; and all different kinds  
of things you can touch and of course a wonderful place to lie  
down and bring on the darkness. I bet your chairs are covered with  
chintz.

~~Nurse  
Nurse  
(Takes a step to go)  
Its ten minutes to five, since you're always asking the time.~~

Lyman  
I wish to God I had an encyclopedia.

Nurse  
Why.

Lyman  
I have a tremendous yearning to look something up.

Nurse  
I'll do it for you, what do you want to look up?

Lyman  
No...that's something you have to do yourself. Thanks, though.



1-A #

Some have windows so you never  
feel you're alone, some have dark

It's rather a written *line*  
Lyman

*halleways inside cramped*

With a door, yes.. Some are fussy and soft, some are ~~hard~~ like  
the toilet on a train, some tremendous with wind blowing through *and*  
and windows, ~~the~~ go up and down ~~the~~ drapes to keep out the morning  
sun, ~~with~~ lots of different things to touch, and some a wonderful  
place to lie down. I bet ~~you~~ *the* chairs ~~are~~ covered with chintz.

*Will I hope you're out of your mind because if you're* *10 years are on the farm side and*  
Nurse

(Starting to leave) *hiding it's not funny.*  
Its ten minutes to five, since you're always asking the time. You  
want anything?

Lyman

I have a terrific yearning to look something up in an encyclopedia.

Nurse

What is it?--maybe I can do it *for you.*

Lyman

No--that's something you can only do for yourself, *unless of course you know in advance what you want to look up*  
Russell,

Nurse

Regan's my name.

Lyman

*in your own quiet way, had her friends and turns*  
Regan, I mean. You know a person like you, *is more mysterious*  
than the Five Books of Moses or the archeries of Zen...

(She goes out writing on her board.)

A pause.

*But I will never know what they are.*

SOUND SCENE begins--all the following  
is on PA system.)

District Attorney

(Slowly fading in)

...incidentally, Mr. Pelt...I'd like you to tell us how Hadley  
Roper came to know about these views of yours relating to the  
destruction of the city?

Lyman

Well ah...we'd know each other since *college...*

District Attorney

But how frequently would you see each other let's say in the last  
five or ten years?

Lyman

Not very frequently, but you know, you come to know somebody in  
school and your friendship may thin out over the years but you  
still keep a certain characterization of him in your mind. *We*  
both played clarinet and we were close.



1-A #

Some have windows so you never feel you're alone, some have dark

It's rather a wretched house  
Lyman

hallways <sup>inside</sup> cramped

With a door, yes. Some are fussy and soft, some are ~~now~~ like the toilet on a train, some tremendous with wind blowing through and windows ~~that~~ go up and down ~~the~~ drapes to keep out the morning sun ~~with~~ lots of different things to touch, and some a wonderful place to lie down. I bet your chairs ~~are~~ covered with chintz.

Well I hope you're out of your mind because if you're <sup>in</sup> fingers are on the firm side and  
Nurse  
(Starting to leave) <sup>thinking it's not funny.</sup>

Its ten minutes to five, since you're always asking the time. You want anything?

Lyman

I have a terrific yearning to look something up in an encyclopedia.

Nurse

What is it?--maybe I can do it for you.

Lyman

No--that's something you can only do for yourself, <sup>unless of course you know in advance what you want to look up</sup> Russell,

Nurse

Regan's my name.

Lyman

Regan, I mean. You know a person like you, <sup>in your own field way, has seen twists and turns</sup> ~~is~~ more mysterious than the Five Books of Moses or the archeries of Zen...

(She goes out writing on her board.)

A pause.

But I will never know what they are.

SOUND SCENE begins--all the following is on PA system.)

District Attorney

(Slowly fading in)  
...incidentally, Mr. Felt...I'd like you to tell us how Hadley Roper came to know about these views of yours relating to the destruction of the city?

Lyman

Well ah...we'd know each other since college...

District Attorney

But how frequently would you see each other let's say in the last five or ten years?

Lyman

Not very frequently, but you know, you come to know somebody in school and your friendship may thin out over the years but you still keep a certain characterization of him in your mind. <sup>we</sup> both played clarinet and we were close.



(Leah returns; Bessie watches her fascinated as she sits; then Bessie starts out.)

Leah: They're giving her something--she'll be all right. <sup>Would you</sup> ~~stay~~ with me a moment?

(Bessie seems hesitant); Leah pats a chair seat invitingly)

Come; sit here, Bessie.

(Bessie crosses, sits beside her facing her at an angle, her loyalties pulled in three directions.)

How old are you now?

Bessie: Twenty-eight.

Leah: We're almost the same age, I'm thirty-one--but you're still a young girl in my mind. And the photograph in his wallet of you is like ten or twelve...

Bessie: (Blushing) I know the one, I think.

Leah: I really hadn't expected you to be so grown. --In fact, though, it seems to me I've only known your father like six months. ...Which is a good thing to say, I guess, about a relationship. Maybe this is why, though--I mean that he hadn't told me everything; so it helped make it still seem new between us.

~~Leah~~ --I can't take it in.

Bessie: (Pause.) I don't know what to say.

Leah: I'm afraid it's going to be terrible. I'm afraid we're all unfortunate people. (Shakes her head) Unbelievable. Who exactly called your mother?

Bessie: The hospital; I guess they traced his license plates. Who called you?

Leah: State Police--they all know him; we let them use the back of our land for their annual turkey shoots. --Isn't that incredible?--the fact that your husband in Hard Lamb... You see, Lyman only recently showed me a brochure of his painting...

Bessie: (Nodding) From his last exhibition...

Leah: He was so relieved that he was finally being recognized. (Inhales quickly) My heart is still banging; I hope your mother's all right, she doesn't have heart trouble or something, does she?

Bessie: I don't think so...

Leah: ...you don't see her much?

Bessie: A few times a year.

Leah: (Nods without pressing this further, then touches Bessie's

hand.) Your father loves you a lot, you know.

Bessie: (Tensely, happy, but...) Does he?

Leah: Oh yes. --I guess he loves all of us! (Shakes her head) What a mess!

(I take it your mother's pretty much of a toughie, isn't she.)

(Bessie: (Struggles) Not.....maybe, yes./

(Leah: I'm just the opposite, I never know how to hold a grudge. ~~with them~~)

Leah: ...Then I suppose you never received my Christmas presents?

Bessie: ..Really?

Bessie:

Leah: Every year the last nine years./ What'd, you give them to ~~Bessie~~ Daddy to send?

Leah: (Nods) He'd send them from the New York office.



Lyman  
Simply--that we make a commitment for a lifetime to a person  
we wouldn't even have met if we'd ~~have to~~ <sup>have to</sup> tie a shoelace.

Leah  
But you didn't have to commit yourself ~~anytime~~ just because  
you happened to meet.

Lyman  
You don't think accident is important.

Leah  
Yes, but its still up to me what I commit to.

Lyman  
Can you see yourself ever committing yourself to a man?

Leah  
I would, if he seemed worth it--and if he'd commit himself to me  
--But that isn't what you're talking about, is it.

Lyman  
But that's not likely?

Leah  
Frankly, I'm not sure I think its worth all the time and  
trouble anymore. --I'm glad we're friends; its like stolen  
moments we have.

~~(Amendments)~~  
Lyman  
What do you think I'm talking about?

Leah  
...I can't keep it, dear.

*How do we take responsibility when*  
Lyman  
...~~We~~ commit our lives to people we wouldn't have even  
met if we'd happened to ~~come~~ <sup>have to</sup> tie a shoelace.

Leah  
But how else can it be?

Lyman  
We should be able to read our fates!--(Grinning)--that's  
what I would say if I said what I meant. I am not  
comfortable in myself, I don't belong in this man...I'd  
say that too if I dared. I could be turning Hindu;

Leah  
I have a feeling you're talking about...

Lyman  
I am--about this potential baby. We are its fate.

Leah  
Oh my God.



## An Afternoon with Arthur Miller

In honor of the long awaited American premiere of *The Ride Down Mount Morgan*, Williamstown Theatre Festival presented "Arthur Miller: An Afternoon—A Monday Special Event," on July 15, 1996, at the Clark Art Institute in Williamstown, Massachusetts. The event was directed by Robert Davenport and was attended by Miller himself.

The afternoon began with Amy Ryan (Bessie in *Ride*) recounting some biographical information about Miller, interspersed with a number of well-chosen excerpts from *Timebends* read, with humor, by Richard Libertini. This was an effective strategy for informing the audience about Miller's life and work, though a little too heavily weighted towards the earlier plays and events, ignoring the latter part of his career, as so often seems to happen.

Next we were treated to a performance of Mr. Miller's 1995 one-act, "The Ryan Interview." The scenario of this entertaining piece is that Ryan (Ben Hammer, Father in *Ride*), on his 100th birthday is being interviewed by a young reporter (Amy Ryan), and asked to recount what he sees as the changes he has witnessed during his long life. Declaring that nothing much has changed in the last fifty years, Ryan takes us back to the 1920s and 1930s to find a real contrast. Back then, he declares, people seemed more connected by their tolerance and humor, and this has now been sadly lost. We see Ryan in the 1990s as a lonely man, in a world where everyone keeps him/herself apart, sealed into protective cars—even the reporter we learn is a divorcée. And yet, Miller's innate optimism seeps through, largely via the character of Ryan himself. He may be lonely and at a loose end, but he is still full of life. Staunchly anti-government, Ryan possesses no social security number and prefers to stay out of cities—he went to Hartford once but "couldn't find anywhere to sit down." Played with roguish relish by Hammer, Ryan is an intriguing figure, and one wonders how far Miller is looking forward to 2015!

For the final section of the afternoon, Miller took the stage himself with director Gregory Mosher as facilitator. Opening himself to questions from the audience, Miller graciously answered every one, from the searching to the

banal. Given the sonorous quality of so many of his plays, it was surprising to find Miller so unassuming and softly spoken. His answers conveyed both his thoughtfulness and humor, covering a wide range of topics.

Regarding the forthcoming production of *Ride*, Miller admitted that the play was a strange one for him, and suggested that it should be played "like a lyric rather than a drama," because of its numerous scenes and need for a non-distracting brevity of movement. Having made a number of cuts and added new scenes, he described his own sense of it as being a new play. He was looking forward to its opening and had enjoyed working with the Williamstown Theatre Festival on the production.

Still writing, he informed us that he has a number of scripts as yet unproduced which he is not yet prepared to "abandon." On the subject of writing plays, he insisted that there is no single formula for success, but pointed out that "a play is its ending." At this, I felt it expedient to ask about the multiplying endings to *Broken Glass*. Miller declared that he now knows how he wants that particular play to end, and has shown this ending in the BBC production, aired in the States on PBS in October 1996.

Regarding his own frequently ambivalent reception in America, Miller suggested that it could be down to his having consistently, throughout his career, tried to say "things that everyone knows but no one wants to say out loud." Once more he pointed out the sad decline of Broadway and sees it largely due to the increase of movies and trivia in everyone's lives; no one, including most American actors, has time for the theater. Gregory Mosher pointed out how he and Miller had tried to put on a Broadway production of *The Archbishop's Ceiling* in 1990, but could not get enough support to mount the production.

With several participants needing to get off to rehearsals, the discussion was, unfortunately, cut short, but the audience seemed fully satisfied at having been able to meet and hear in person such an unpretentious and affable "showbiz" personality.

---Susan C.W. Abbotson



## *The Ride Down Mount Morgan:* Arthur Miller's Transcendent Masterpiece

*The Ride Down Mount Morgan*, Arthur Miller's 1991 play, had its American premiere on July 17, 1996 at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts. With this work, Miller made the plausibly improbable an actuality. Miller has written another masterpiece in his late seventies, his talent vibrant as ever, and transcended his earlier work.

Miller brings us a powerful, resolute, and clear-eyed depiction of not one or two characters, but a group of people who search the destructiveness of their own exploitive living, and suffer the impact of sudden and forceful recognition. The play begins in the final moments of the characters' existential blindness. Lyman Felt drives in the night down Mt. Morgan's iced roads into a smash-up. Now in a hospital, he is sedated, his body broken.

In the waiting room, Theo, his wife of thirty years, and Leah, his wife for the past nine, discover Lyman has married them both. They prepare for more shockwaves. Though sedated, Lyman, too, fears the splintering consequences. Miller spotlights a master manipulator with a streak of exploitive megalomania. Admired for building his own insurance corporation employing four thousand people, Lyman is known for his seemingly wonderful ways and courage. Miller shows Lyman's courage is a shield against memories of his father that drive Lyman's panic attacks over his youthful sexual exploits.

In flashback, Lyman bravely faces an oncoming, roaring lion during a family safari. He roars back, "We love our lives," meaning the lion's harem and his own bigamy. Moments later, he overwhelms Theo with assurances that she is his love and future, and then talks of "the Elmira office," his home with Leah.

When they confront Lyman, Theo and Leah thrust their memories of Lyman's duplicitous actions at him. Some are told directly. Some are enactments which drive home Lyman's machinations and fakery, and the women's seeing and unseeing participation in it. The revelation and disarray of a world she based on Lyman's seeming love and strength leave Theo dislocated in her anguish.

Lyman fights to hold on to them and, in turn, exposes their hidden motives in staying with him. He uses all his charm, humor, and anger to

virtually justify himself by his largesse and "love" for them. But Lyman cannot offer any sensitivity or change.

Struggling through this, and her wish to stay with Lyman, Theo sees she must leave. Leah, no less pained and jolted, realizes she allowed herself to become dependent on Lyman, and seeks to assert her independence emotionally and take back her insurance business which Lyman had taken. Leah's and Theo's lurch toward awareness means confronting themselves existentially; they bypassed Lyman's signals and lied to themselves lest they disrupt their lives with him. Lyman looks only at them. He cannot search as they do.

Leah and Theo have yet to recognize their parts in their children's disasters. Leah, however, worries about Bennie surviving Lyman's lies after worshipping him as a god.

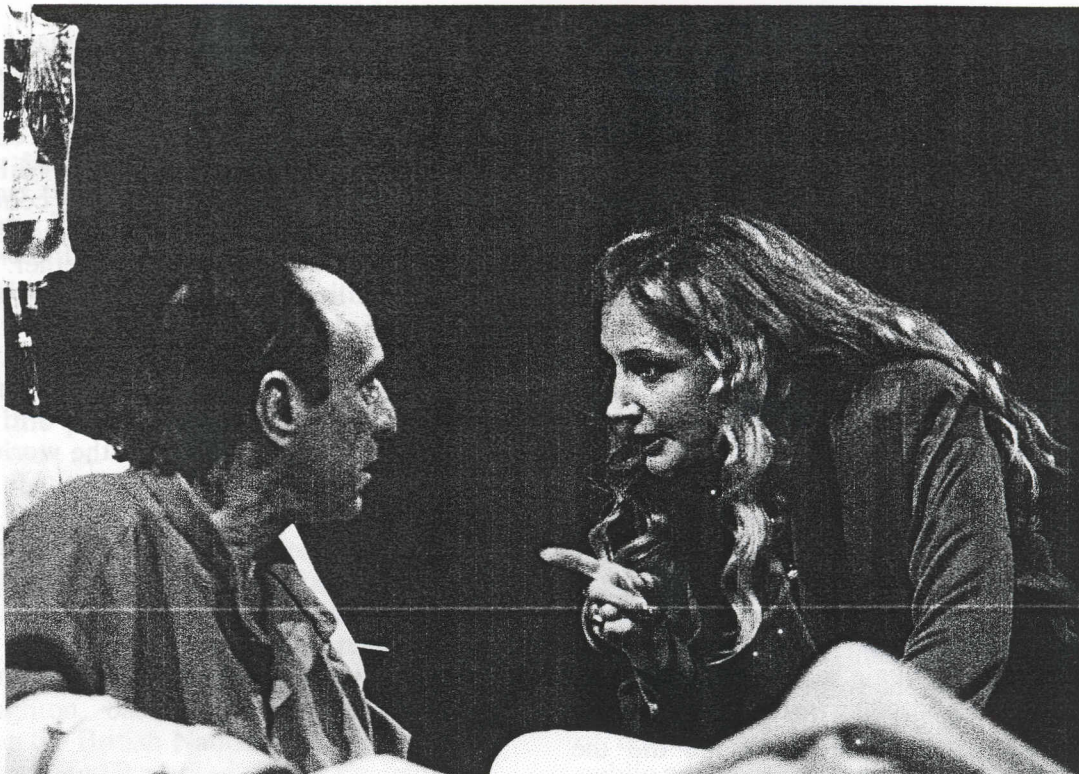
Bessie, having idolized Lyman, collapses over his betrayal of her trust and love, and her mother's. She condemns her own father as a monster who "should be killed!" These human tragedies are Miller's ultimate point.

Lyman is left alone. Nurse Logan, pointedly black, keeps centered on Lyman's human qualities. She is his guide to a view of wholesome simplicity of life in a family--her own.

In his brilliant array of manipulations, deceptions, and self-deceptions, Miller has brought us the living details and texture of the wrenching implosion of Lyman's faithless sham. Ultimately it is Miller's point that the children are innocently tormented by their parents' destructively "hollow lives," from generation to generation.

Through his artistry, Miller's simple dialogue conveys complex feelings and ideas moving in, and expressed by his characters. They all face that existential, live-changing moment when they must look in each other's eyes, into themselves, and see how they affected each other if they are to take their painful leave from Lyman. Miller's characters have struggled with these traits and confrontations before. Now, Miller's characters come to personal judgments about their own actions as they seek freedom from their manipulative confines. *Morgan* is a transcendent work of art.





F. MURRAY ABRAHAM (Lyman) and PATRICIA CLARKSON (Leah) (left to right).

---Photo by Richard Feldman

The American premiere of *Morgan* occurred in a festive atmosphere. In view of the occasion, Christopher Reeve attended to "show support." Television interviewers at the crowded entrance talked with Miller, Reeve, Festival, and other notables.

Directed by Scott Elliot, *Morgan* was handsomely mounted. However, a well-meaning

over-emphasis on comedy attenuated the tragedy overall. F. Murray Abraham as Lyman, Michael Learned as Theo, Patricia Clarkson as Leah, Amy Ryan as Bessie, Larry Bruggman as Lyman's lawyer, Adina Porter as the Nurse, and Ben Hammer, as Lyman's father, were well cast and did well within the production concept.

---Herbert Goldstein

### **Arthur Miller at Queens College:** *"I have no wisdom beyond my plays."*

On October 29, 1996, Arthur Miller spoke at The Evening Reading Series of Queens College of the City University of New York. Standing in front of a magnificent pipe organ on the stage of the College's Lefrak Concert Hall, Miller appeared before an overflow, turn-away crowd.

During the first part of the program, Miller read from his one-act play, *I Can't Remember Anything*. He introduced the play as being "about a woman who says that she can't remember

anything, but I think she remembers everything." Miller's strong voice and fine ear for dialogue conveyed the tension between Leo and Leonora.

In the second part of the program, Miller answered questions from the audience, a session where he gave insight into his career and work. Responding to a question about how he started writing, Miller talked about the beginning of his writing career in college. Although one reason he attended the University of Michigan was the \$65



tuition during the Depression, Miller explained that the school was the only college serious about creative writing and gave cash prizes for the annual Hopwood Award, which he won. He said, "They cared about writing."

Many of the audience's questions centered on *The Crucible* and *Death of a Salesman*. When asked if he saw any connections between *The Crucible*, the Salem Witch Trials, and the current political climate, Miller asserted that the situation today is not the same. He said, "'They' have tried to get the country to work together. . . There is no foreign enemy to menace us. . . Although parts of the country are rabid, there is no national fever." When questioned about Willy Loman and the different versions of *Death of a Salesman*, Miller responded that he is amazed at the "elasticity of Loman." He explained that each new version illuminates the text and said, "I can't account for it." He maintains that each production "evokes a color different from the other--to the same effect." When pressed by one questioner, Miller admitted that for him Lee Cobb did the

most with the role of Willy Loman. Responding to another question about the relationship between Hamlet and Willy, Miller proclaimed that there is "not a doubt in my mind" about the connection.

In questions about other plays, Miller explained that *I Can't Remember Anything* contains a sense of hopelessness, but that Leo and Leonora love each other; they are "locked together." In *Broken Glass*, Miller sees Phillip Gellburg's death as a result of the stress he lived under all his life. Moreover, he sees *Kristallnacht* as having a direct relationship to the paralysis in the play. Sylvia's paralysis is connected to the world's paralysis: "She is a metaphor for what the world was going through."

Perhaps the most revealing part of the question and answer session occurred when a high school teacher stood and asked what he should tell his class about what Arthur Miller would want them to know. Miller said, "Work hard, and you will arrive at yourself. I have no wisdom beyond my plays."

---Stephen Marino

## New York Audiences Enjoy a Season of Arthur Miller

Theatergoers in New York enjoyed an amazing Arthur Miller revival last year!

The Roundabout Theatre, which in May 1997 staged a well-received production of *All My Sons*, then presented *A View from the Bridge*, which last appeared on Broadway in 1983. The production opened to rave notices in December and sold out performance after performance. Consequently, it moved to a larger venue at the Neil Simon Theatre on April 3, 1998.

The Signature Theatre Company devoted its entire 1997-98 season to Miller's plays. A revival of 1980s *The American Clock* ran in October and November. Two one-act plays, *I Can't Remember Anything* and *The Last Yankee* opened in December and ran through early February 1998. On March 16, Signature sponsored a gala entitled "Arthur Miller on the Air," a one-time

performance of Miller's 1941 radio play, *The Pussycat and the Expert Plumber Who Was a Man*. The performance was held at the New Victory Theatre, featuring Matthew Broderick, Austin Pendelton, and Rebecca Schull, and included a conversation with Miller. On April 28, Signature opened the world premiere of Miller's new play, *Mr. Peters' Connections*, starring Peter Falk.

There have been more Miller productions in the New York metropolitan area. The Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey presented *Death of a Salesman* from February 24 until April 5, 1998. The Joseph Papp Public Theatre produced *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* in Fall 1998. And the 50th Anniversary production of *Death of a Salesman* opened at the Eugene O'Neill Theater February 10, 1999.

---Stephen Marino



## Reflections on a Season of Arthur Miller

As a New Yorker and Arthur Miller devotee, I have been reveling in the many productions of Miller's plays the past two seasons. The following are not reviews (I dare not walk upon the ground of the hallowed New York critics!), but rather my impressions of the productions and performance and their interpretation of the texts.

### *The American Clock*

For me, this play about the Depression has always proved an odd read because Miller intersperses the experiences of Americans in the aftermath of the 1929 Stock Market Crash (based on Studs Terkel's *Hard Times*) with his own personal experiences, in the guise of the Baum family. The play is complicated by the inclusion of a band with period songs punctuating the beginning and ending of many scenes. Director James Houghton based this new Signature production on the British National Theatre's 1986 London staging, and it worked well in the intimate spacing of the company's new theatre on West

42nd Street. The large cast remained on stage most of the play, singing and dancing with the band, but, most importantly, witnessing, too, the personal and public tragedies unfolding before the audience. The songs of the 1920s and 1930s powerfully augment the downfalls of the characters. In fact, this production revealed to me a power in the play which is not wholly apparent in reading the text. This is a tightly-wrought play where Miller shows how the personal experiences of citizens during the Depression challenged the public perception of our identity as Americans.

### *I Can't Remember Anything and The Last Yankee*

These two one-act plays seem like an odd combination to stage on the same bill. However, Joseph Chaikin's direction highlighted how both plays dramatize similar struggles and themes: the emotional breakdowns of women; men forced to understand their places in the world; past regrets; uncertain futures.

*I Can't Remember Anything*, the first play on the bill, featured the superb Joseph Wiseman as the gruff Leo, who must endure the daily visits of Leonora, the despondent, forgetful widow of his beloved best friend. Rebecca Schull, best known for her role on TV's *Wings*, revealed the pathetic waywardness of Leonora, who has cut herself off from everyone except Leo. The repartee between Wiseman and Schull captured the delicate balance

between humor and sadness that characterizes Leo and Leonora's relationship.

*The Last Yankee*, the second play on the bill, is a longer, more structured play. Set in a state mental hospital, the first scene of this production strongly emphasized how two men cope with the institutionalizing of their wives. Kevin Conroy as Leroy Hamilton, a descendent of Alexander Hamilton, captured his stoic acceptance of his wife's frequent breakdowns. Peter Maloney, as John Frick, perfectly depicted his confusion at his wife's first hospitalization. The second scene dramatizes how their wives view an unstable world outside the hospital. Kate Myer as Patricia Hamilton and Shami Chaikin as Karen Frick vividly portrayed how their anxieties forge an understanding between the two women.

### *A View from the Bridge*

*A View from the Bridge* last played on Broadway in 1983, a production which I saw. I did not think any actor could surpass Tony Lo Bianco's characterization of Eddie Carbone, but in this version, Anthony La Paglia brought a new edge and physicality to the role. His Carbone was gruff, yet tender. But what really distinguished La Paglia's performance was how he paced Eddie's inevitable march toward his destiny. La

Paglia gradually revealed how Eddie becomes consumed with the passion for his niece Catherine, a passion which destroys him. Allison Janey was perfectly cast as Beatrice, but the real surprise performance was given by Brittany Murphy in her Broadway debut as Catherine. Murphy captured the essence of Catherine with her mixture of innocence and sexuality. Stephen



Spinella gave an uneven performance as Alfieri; he seemed miscast.

This production also used a large cast of extras playing neighbors in the Red Hook section of Brooklyn where the play is set. They were a powerful reminder of the Sicilian-American community who share Eddie's tragedy. The production employed a semi-round stage surrounded by steps meant to suggest the stoops

of the Brooklyn apartment buildings; a large photo of the docks where Eddie plies his trade as a longshoreman loomed on the back wall.

---Stephen Marino

## The Pussycat and The Plumber Who Was a Man

As part of its season of Miller plays, Signature Theatre Company presented a special benefit evening entitled "Arthur Miller On the Air" March 16, 1998. Founding Artistic Director James Houghton welcomed the audience to the refurbished New Victory Theatre. The evening's program began with an interview of Arthur Miller by Charlie Rose, giving a brief overview of his career to date, including Miller's comments on his new play *Mr. Peter's Connections* and discussing the relationship between his earlier plays and current events.

After "The Jingle Singers" sang "Sittin' Around," "that hit song from *The American Clock*," music and lyrics by Miller, the main event began--a presentation of Miller's 1941 radio play, *The Pussycat and The Expert Plumber Who Was a Man*. This is one of Miller's numerous radio scripts, this one written originally for Columbia Broadcasting System. The stage was set up for a radio show with actors sitting up center, those reading down center at the mics, the "other Arthur Miller" creating the sound effects stage right, The

Jingle Singers and small orchestra offering commercial breaks from stage left, and announcer Bill St. James cueing the audience to cheer, etc.

Matthew Broderick as the Pussycat headed the cast, which included Austin Pendelton as the Mayor, John Seitz, Paul Niebanck, Dakin Matthews, Michael Hadge, Isiah Whitlock, Jr., Rebecca Schull, Joyce O'Connor, Polly Holliday, and Scott Sowers.

The silly but poignant play concerns a populace who unknowingly elects a cat as mayor. Bits of philosophy range from the seemingly mundane--"One thing cat and man will do for free is snoop"--to more serious ideas which found their ways into other Miller plays, e.g., "Every man has something in his past for which he'll sell his soul" and "The one thing man fears most next to death is the loss of his own name."

The delightful evening offered a nostalgic view in world of radio shows and a "lighter" side of Miller's *oeuvre*.

--Jane K. Dominik

**Matthew C. Roudané, ed. *Approaches to Teaching Miller's Death of a Salesman*. Approaches to Teaching Literature Series. New York: MLA, 1995.**

For those unfamiliar with the Approaches to Teaching Literature Series, its more than fifty edited works aim to provide unique perspectives on celebrated authors/titles to a broad scope of groups: specialists, non-specialists, inexperienced, as well as experienced teachers, and graduate students interested in teaching. Now the series appends *Approaches to Teaching Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* to its ranks. And what better addition for Series Editor Joseph Gibaldi to make? After all, *Death of a Salesman*

remains one of the most beloved, commonly taught American plays--in composition, literature, and drama courses. The book, edited by Matthew C. Roudané, offers diverse, illuminating approaches to *Salesman* as well as a list of materials available on the masterpiece. The combination makes this 174-page paperback a thorough, valuable sourcebook.

Roudané sets up *Approaches to Teaching Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* with thought and care. Part One, "Materials," begins by



referencing the multitude of *Salesman* editions, individually or anthologized, and readings for teacher and students categorized in the section as "bibliographies and checklists" and "biographical dimensions." Additionally, "Materials" provides an instructor's library including "critical studies," "collections of critical essays," "text and performance," and "further selected reading." Finally, Roudané mentions courses in which instructors frequently teach *Salesman*. Roudané guides the reader along, succinctly summarizing most of the materials. Moreover, he indicates the benefits of certain essays/texts over others, commonly preferred editions, *et cetera*. This commentary could be of particular importance to those relatively new to the repertoire of Arthur Miller, despite the fact that they may feel slightly overwhelmed; these first nineteen pages are packed with data. Nonetheless, Part One serves as a meticulous reference guide.

Part Two, "Approaches," proves equally sweeping. This section opens with "Prologue: Arthur Miller and the Modern Stage," a provocative essay by Susan Harris Smith. Following are four essays discussing "Text and Performance," which seek to explore the relationship between text and performance. Next come five essays addressing "Critical Concerns," essays exploring recurring, critical issues within the play, in addition to some newer feminist perspectives. And, finally, three essays on "American Myths" are presented, essays which bring to light some of the most frequently debated topics prevalent during classroom discussions of the play. The section's Coda, Ruby Cohn's "Oh, God I Hate This Job," takes a look at the salesman in American drama by comparing Willy Loman to Eugene O'Neill's Hickey and David Mamet's salesmen in *Glengarry, Glenn Ross*.

Collectively, the essays address a myriad of viewpoints, from Martin J. Jacobi's rhetorical analysis to Jan Balakian's feminist perspective, from Thomas P. Adler's analysis of theater setting to Susan C. Haedicke's look at stylistic contradictions, also from a theatrical perspective.

While it seems safe to say that the Arthur Miller enthusiast would grasp illuminating concepts from each of the well-written essays in Part Two, one could also argue that some non-specialists, teachers or students, might grapple with some of the more specialized theories, consequentially missing some of the "good stuff." And while many of the essays offer practitioner-based teaching tools and techniques, some concepts and teaching tools, may, nevertheless, be at too high a level for some college courses,

freshman composition, for example, where many students get to study literature only for just a brief period during the semester. Roudané's selection of essays does, though, reflect a continuum of styles, from informal and formal, from fundamental discussions of theoretical concepts to scholarly ones.

Barbara Lounsberry's "The Woods Are Burning": Expressionism in *Death of a Salesman*," for instance, examines the play in such a way to enlighten specialists and non-specialists. After a brief introduction, she details an engaging history of expressionism. Then she outlines the expressionistic devices in *Salesman* including musical motifs, sets, lighting, and characters and costumes (52-60). Her use of sub-headings and end notes gives the newcomer the basic organizational structure s/he needs to "hang on." And yet, her detailed analysis of the movement as it pertains to the staging of *Salesman* would illuminate, as well, long-time Miller scholars.

For specialists, or those who aren't but seek a little challenge, Stephen Barker's "The Crisis of Authenticity: *Death of a Salesman* and the Tragic Muse" will not leave them wanting. Barker utilizes present critical theory in his discussion, (as does Linda Kintz in her essay "The Sociosymbolic Work of Family in *Death of a Salesman*"). According to Roudané, Barker, in his essay, "considers ancient dialogues concerning versions of the tragic and combines them with recent poststructuralists and psychoanalytic theories" (24).

While Barker's and Lounsberry's work immediately comes to mind as examples in Part Two's appeal to diverse audiences, all of the essays Roudané presents truly illustrate the array of pedagogical concerns surrounding this play. As the editor affirms in the preface to the volume, "*Death of a Salesman* is classically traditional and at the same time subverts classicism with its surprisingly post-modernist textures" (xi). *Approaches* does, indeed, capture arguments sure to illuminate vast camps: rhetorical critics, structuralists or semioticians, feminists, universalists, social constructionists, Marxists, Jungians, and mythopoetic critics.

With its logical organization, completeness, and collection of illuminating essays, *Approaches to Teaching Miller's "Death of a Salesman"* accomplishes what it sets out to do: it's a valuable sourcebook for those certain they know everything about *Death of a Salesman* as well as those certain they know little.

---Lisa Turnbull



**Brenda Murphy. Miller: *Death of a Salesman*. Plays in Production Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.**

As one of a new series of books edited by Michael Robinson, Professor at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England, Brenda Murphy's production history of *Death of a Salesman* is thorough, fascinating, and invaluable, examining from a relatively uncommon perspective a play which has commanded much critical attention since its Broadway premiere fifty years ago. Murphy has collected stories from behind the scenes from numerous points of view of the play's collaborators--Arthur Miller, director Elia Kazan, and designer Jo Mielziner--tracing the creation of a production which gave the American theatre both a new dramaturgy and new attitudes toward set and lighting design. Gathered from numerous primary sources, Murphy's treatment of the premiere "takes up about a third of the volume, an emphasis commensurate with its importance to the creation of the play" (xv). She covers the writing of the play, the search for producer, director, and designer, the design process, music, direction, actors, revisions during the rehearsal period, and the critical response. What distinguishes this book and makes it a fascinating read is the numerous details in the theatrical process which Murphy has culled. Simultaneously, it is a treasure, enlightening those not present to understand how a masterpiece in American theatre was created.

Murphy points out that "since its premiere, there has never been a time when *Death of a Salesman* was not being performed somewhere in the world" (70). Having established its creation, Murphy next traces major productions in English, including London in 1949 (which saw Kazan, Mielziner and Julia Sze as director and designers respectively again), Dublin in 1951 (Murphy points to the differing audience reactions), and South Africa in 1951 (technical challenges threatened the structure of the play). Murphy goes on to reveal other productions in English, commenting on how they came to be and the conflicts and collaborations, emphasizing the 1984 Broadway production starring Dustin Hoffman.

In her next chapter, Murphy writes of elements which distinguish various productions in other languages, notably German, French, Hispanic and Italian, and Eastern European and Asian, pointing out the variations in design, presentation, and politics as affected by culture. The next chapter concerns media productions, including the 1959 film version by Columbia Pictures, 1954 radio production, television versions in the 50s and 60s, and the CBS television version in 1985 based on the Broadway revival starring Hoffman. Adaptation by its very nature dictates changes and challenges. This is particularly true for *Salesman* because of what many critics have referred to as its cinematic structure and because of the political aims which some producers have attempted to imbue it with although in conflict with Miller's inherent intentions in the play.

Following these chapters, Murphy offers a Production Chronology which lists director, designers, and casts for approximately fifty productions. This is followed by detailed notes to primary sources and an extensive bibliography, both of which reveal Murphy's far-reaching research and offers those wishing to view the materials themselves, or glean more of what they include, a place to begin. Also included are a discography and videography.

Within these treatments of other productions are numerous interpretations of specific moments in *Salesman*, adding to the critical commentary on this masterpiece of Miller's. For a play which has received so much critical attention, there is new "stuff" here which is interesting in and of itself and offers more understanding of the play and its productions as a whole. It is of particular interest this year as the 50th anniversary production has been mounted on Broadway. Murphy writes that she "hope[s] that this volume will serve as a starting point for future research into the stage life of *Death of a Salesman*" (xvi). What a starting point! Perhaps it might also serve as a starting point for similar, thorough treatments of the productions of other Miller plays.

--Jane K. Dominik



**James J. Martine. *The Crucible: Politics, Property and Pretense*. Twayne's Masterwork Series. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993.**

In their brochure, the publishers of the Twayne series describe their volumes as "readable and accurate guides" to works and writers. James Martine's treatment of *The Crucible* not only fills that description, but delivers more than this advertisement promises. One of the most careful bibliographers of Miller's works and the critical literature on them, he begins with a chronology of the playwright's life and works through 1993 which is complete, succinct, and accurate. He then provides a detailed history of the literary and historical context of the play with information on the Salem trials, the communist scare, the activities of Joe McCarthy, and the HUAC investigations with attention to Miller's part in them.

In his chapter on the critical reception of the play, he reports on audience- and reviewers-response to the initial New York performance, including Miller's recollections about it. He replies to those reviewers, e.g., Eric Bentley, who found particular fault with concept or content. Because of the abiding interest of academic critics and scholars who continue to teach the play, successive generations of college students have encountered "the keeper of the American historical conscience of this century" (20).

The centerpiece of the book is "a reading" of *The Crucible*. After a short treatment on "how to read a play": the communal nature of drama and its performance-oriented text, he divides the play into manageable parts or aspects: *mise-en-scène*, structure, theme, character. The observations on the setting and props emphasize their function in creating a mood and commenting on the culture. In presenting the structure, Martine draws on a conventional description of the "well-made play": rising action, climax, falling action, denouement/catastrophe. With, for example, Proctor's confession and Abby's vision of the "yellow bird" as climax, this structure serves well enough to illumine the movement of the dramatic action.

In enumerating the themes treated in the play, there is a wide range offered: honor/betrayal, integrity/compromise, state/church, home/prison. All these represent conflict which, Martine notes, may be reduced to Proctor's sense of justice versus a corrupt society and Proctor's integrity versus his own sense of guilt. Society cannot deal with the hysteria of the children because its members will not admit their own failings, fear,

and ignorance.

Martine's treatment of character centers his reading of the play on the relationship between Proctor and Abby. The Proctor *persona* is "dynamic," struggling with culpability and a sense of responsibility; Abby is "static," determined to have her way without scruple. Proctor's secret sin triggers the girl's desire for him and sets the witch hunt in motion. The other *personae*, categorized using the dynamic-static distinction, are related to either the Proctor or Abby axis. Martine points out that Miller's personal experience might explain the centrality of this adulterous relationship. He departed from the historical record in developing their liaison--the historical record shows Proctor about sixty and Abigail a child of eleven. This suggests that Miller may have been moved to alter their ages by his own marital troubles. During the composition of *The Crucible* his own marriage to Mary Slattery was failing and his romance with Marilyn Monroe had just begun.

Martine does not neglect the feminist implications of the play's action. His comment on the love-triangle of Proctor-Abby-Elizabeth notes Elizabeth's awareness of Proctor's problem and her own contribution to it as well as her complicity in his silence and ultimate forgiveness. Her problem with Proctor and Abby is compared and contrasted with other such triangles in Miller--Linda-Willy-the Woman in Salesman and Beatrice-Catherine-Eddie in *View from the Bridge*.

Discussions of Miller's major works (and Miller's own comments on them) raise the issue of tragedy in the twentieth century; in what way does *Crucible* qualify for inclusion in this honorific category? Martine reviews the arguments, offering Miller's reflections in his essays. A willingness to lay down one's life for "one thing," to embrace a sense of personal dignity--often tied to a concern about one's "name"--is, for Miller, the root and ground of the tragic. This view of the tragic suffers from the assumption that *any* ideal or set of values is worth such a sacrifice (David Koresh, among others, comes to mind), and Martine does not fully endorse it.

This study makes a novel contribution in a chapter on analogues. Martine annotates less well-known works that treat the trials and their



personae: Longfellow's *Giles Corey of Salem Farm* (1868), *Giles Corey, Yeoman* (1893) by Mary Wilkins [Freeman], Sartre's *Les Sorcières de Salem* (1957), and the operatic version by Robert Ward and Bernard Stambler (1961). Martine contrasts the cultural emphases and character traits in these works with those of Miller's play.

Within the scope of this small and very readable volume, Martine provides all the information and approaches to interpretation that a student (or instructor) would wish. For those teaching the text who might disagree with the emphases of his

reading, he includes ample material for discussion. For instance, when he asserts that, in modern drama, "character creates plot" (*pace* Aristotle) and focuses on the Abigail-Proctor relationship, he offers sufficient background to allow for disagreement. As an introduction to the play and an illustration of ways in which the text can be illuminated, this book makes a notable contribution to the critical literature on *The Crucible*.

---Thomas E. Porter

## **Film Review of *The Crucible*: 1996** **Screenplay by Arthur Miller; Directed by Nicholas Hytner**

In the doom that overtakes John Proctor in Arthur Miller's 1996 screenplay of *The Crucible*, the tenets of McCarthyism and Calvinism are as evident as in the 1953 version that gained such critical acclaim both by theater critics and literary scholars. However, this latest version adds new dimension to the character of Abigail Williams as portrayed by Winona Ryder; is she, indeed, a calculating woman whose only intention is to destroy "Goody" Proctor as she attempts to keep John Proctor in her bed, or is she an example of a pre-modern woman who despises the principles of the patriarchal theocracy that control her and who carefully orchestrates a drama to nullify that patriarchy as she seemingly adheres to its dicta?

The moral ambiguities of this version are evident, in the final moral stance of John and Elizabeth as he refuses to sacrifice his name, in Proctor's refusal to implicate his friends, and in the irrevocability of the court as played convincingly by Bruce Davison as Parris and Paul Scofield as Danforth. Yet, it is against this array of moral values and Calvinistic fundamentalism that Abby positions herself. The viewer of the film feels both anger and surprise as Abby's face contorts with glee as each victim of her perjury hangs. Ms. Ryder's Abby persists as the young woman educated by the cynical and pragmatic Proctor, as the young girl who has seen "reddish work" done to her parents, as the defiant woman who fools the men of the court, gives them what they want to procure what she wants, and then disappears because she refuses to embrace the "goodness" that Elizabeth asserts that John now has at the film's end. The reader of the screenplay and the viewer of the film are compelled by Ms. Ryder's performance to question the nature of that "goodness." Hale's entreaties concerning the preciousness of life do not move Elizabeth to convince John to relent so that they may savor their unborn child. Joan Allen plays Goody Proctor as consistently cold, and, even in her final self-confession to John about her coldness, she still allows him to go to the gallows to grasp a goodness that is never adequately defined. Proctor dies experiencing no sense of transcendence, forsaking the utilitarianism that he has exhibited so far in the film, and, although his death creates marvelous drama, that death presents moral inconsistencies and ambiguities that cannot be ignored. Abigail alone remains as the character to defy through dissimulation and manipulation the males that depend so staunchly on her testimony, and her final stance, despite her disappearance before the film's end, is of a woman who knows what she wants and will do what she needs to procure it.

Mr. Miller and Mr. Hytner have created a film version that is in every way as compelling as the original play. One may ignore some of the obvious triteness that Mr. Hytner injects in his direction of the screenplay (Proctor declaring that God is dead while holding his arms outward is too trite a Christ symbol) to realize a film that is both thematically and dramatically imposing.

---George Castellitto



## Contributors

**Sue Abbotson** received her Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut in 1997 with a dissertation on August Wilson and Arthur Miller. She has essays on Miller in *South Atlantic Review* and *Journal of American Drama and Theater*, and Greenwood Press has just published *Understanding "Death of a Salesman"* for their Literature in Context series, co-authored with Brenda Murphy. She is currently under contract with Greenwood for *The Student Companion to Arthur Miller*, and is Vice President of the Arthur Miller Society.

**George Castellitto** is Associate Professor of English and Chair of the English Department at Felician College where he teaches courses in modern American literature. He earned his Ph.D. from Fordham University in 1984 where he studied Wallace Stevens. His published articles include ones on Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* in *Literature/Film Quarterly*, William Carlos Williams in *Papers on Language and Literature*, and Wallace Stevens in *College Language Association Journal*.

**Steve Centola** is founding president of the Arthur Miller Society, Professor of English at Millersville University, and author of several articles on Miller, three interviews with the playwright, and three books, including the revised and expanded *Theater Essays of Arthur Miller*. He is currently working on collecting non-theater essays with Mr. Miller and under contract with Greenwood Press for a book entitled *The Critical Response to Arthur Miller*.

**Jane K. Dominik** has presented papers on Arthur Miller's drama at various conferences and is completing a leave of absence from San Joaquin Delta College in Stockton, California, during which she studied at the University of East Anglia in Norwich, England. She is newsletter editor of the Arthur Miller Society.

**Herbert Goldstein** is currently an adjunct Assistant Professor for Family Relations at Queens College of the City University of New York, where he has taught periodically since 1969. He utilizes Miller's plays in his courses and workshops in the New York metropolitan area (forty-six workshops to date) to explore relationship issues. He also practices individual psychotherapy in Forest Hills, New York, is a clinical social worker, and has more than fourteen years experience as a family therapist. He holds an M.S.S. degree, and his achievements have been recognized as equivalent to a Ph.D. for the purposes of teaching at Queens College.

**Paula Langteau** is Assistant Professor of English at Georgie Perimeter College in Atlanta, Georgia, and is pursuing a Ph.D. at Ball State University in Indiana. She has presented papers on Arthur Miller at conferences since 1988, one of which is published in *The Achievement of Arthur Miller: New Essays*. She is currently president of the Arthur Miller Society.

**Stephen Marino** teaches at Saint Francis College in Brooklyn and at Saint Francis Preparatory School in Fresh Meadows, New York, where he is chairperson of the English Department. In March of 1997, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation on Arthur Miller at Fordham University. His work on Miller has appeared in *Modern Drama* and *The Journal of Imagism*. He is secretary/treasurer of the Arthur Miller Society.

**Thomas E. Porter** is Professor of English at the University of Texas at Arlington. He regularly teaches, among other courses, American Drama and Shakespeare. A Japanese translation of his book on myth and modern American drama was published fall 1997. Currently he is working on a book-length study of the later plays of Arthur Miller.

**Lisa Turnbull** received her M.A. in English Composition from California State University at San Bernardino and has taught all levels of composition during the past six years. Her experience includes copywriting, marketing, and writing theater reviews. She has published work in the *Pacific Review*.

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