

Life and works of arthur miller



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The paper aims to select a person and discuss his or her life and works. The chosen individual for the article is Arthur Miller. He was born in 1915, in New York City (“ Arthur Miller Biography”). Arthur’s parents were both Jewish, but his father was from Poland, and the mother was a native of New York. He was the second child in a family of three children. Before the Great Depression that was marked by the Wall Street Crash, Arthur’s family was well off. However, after the recession, Miller’s parents lost almost everything they owned (“ Arthur Miller Biography”). They had to move to Brooklyn where Arthur was employed at a local bakery, with the task of delivering bread every morning before going to school. After graduation, Miller was hired as a copywriter before accepting job offers from various universities such as New York University. While working in the faculty post, he joined the League of American Writers (“ Arthur Miller Biography”). The exposure provided him with an opportunity to interact with other writers and gain more information in the field.

Later on, Miller moved to Michigan and joined the city’s university. He studied journalism and participated in a variety of school projects, which allowed him to be exposed as a writer. Additionally, Arthur won an award for one of the works that earned him recognition and decided to focus on playwright as a career. He enrolled in a playwriting seminar, which was taught by Kenneth Rowe, an influential person in the field (“ Arthur Miller Biography”). By having a guide and instructor, Miller was able to win more awards such as Avery Hopwood Award for his work titled “ Honors at Dawn.” After the completion of the course, Arthur joined the theater and worked for

the Federal Theater Project. Nevertheless, the project he was working on was abolished, and he moved to Brooklyn Navy Yard. While he was there, he managed to write scripts for plays that were to be showcased on radio broadcasts such as CBS. After courting Mary Grace Slattery, Miller married her, and they had two children, Jane and Robert.

During World War II, the government made an order for men to join the military so that they can serve and protect the nation. Nevertheless, Arthur was exempted from entering the service since he had a kneecap injury that he had suffered while playing football in high school. Miller utilized the opportunity to produce a play titled “ The Man Who Had All the Luck.” It is based on a young man who has the ability of good fortune, which allows him to overcome any challenge that he faces, while others are defeated. Through the course of his encounters, he wonders whether the luck will disappear or remain. He later realizes the success is contributed by his hard work and good association with others and he has to maintain it. The play won the National award but got canceled after the audience was displeased with the performances. However, Miller did not lose hope and developed another play titled “ All My Sons,” which won the Tony Award for both best author and director (Abbotson 39). It was adapted from a true story and consisted of three acts. The performance was tremendous and earned Arthur recognition among other playwrights.

Through the success of the play, Miller established a studio where he would utilize to produce his works. After completion of the facility, he began writing the play titled “ Death of a Salesman.” He won a variety of awards including Tony Award, Pulitzer Awards for Drama, and New York Drama Honor (“

Arthur Miller Biography”). The rewards marked his first play to receive several prizes. Additionally, it was numerously showcased with the audience approving the plot. It depicts a businessman that is continuously frustrated at his workplace and other matters that his family faces. He meets disappointment and his son; Biff prefers not to follow his footsteps. On the other hand, Happy desires to be like his father. Unfortunately, Willy dies in a car explosion. The family laments the death of a father and husband, with each member having remorseful feelings. The central theme of the play was reality and illusion, whereby Will envisioned himself and his children successful. The more he dreams of being prosperous, the more he is dragged into the fantasy. It becomes for him to face reality. Moreover, Biff is the only family member that realizes that his family is living a lie and he chooses not to follow the same path. He does everything he can to try and conquer the challenges he faces and remain true to himself. The work was adequately received in other countries such as India, China, and Germany.

During the anti-communist suspicion in the United States, Miller developed two plays which criticized McCarthyism. Besides, the works were based on a variety of themes such as mass hysteria, political persecution, and fear that the administration enforced on individuals at the time. The plays were titled “An Enemy of the People” and “The Crucible.” One of the playwrights was adapted from an original work by Henrik Ibsen and follows the original plot developed by the writer. For “The Crucible,” it highlights a story of the Salem trials which involved witches (Carson 49). The play was written by Arthur to portray the ways that the United States government victimized individuals under the claim of being involved in communists’ plans and

deeds (Bigsby 81). During its first performance, Miller acknowledges that the reception would be harsh, but he was determined to portray the truth explicitly. Nonetheless, the work won another Tony Award and was regarded as a classic (Bigsby and Bigsby 47). Other playwrights considered it the standard of drama in the United States. “The Crucible” led to the persecution of Miller, and he was forced to be a witness before the HUAC (“Arthur Miller Biography”). He refused to provide names for individuals who were regarded as communist, and he was convicted of contempt. Arthur’s lawyer fought for his case and appealed against the verdict. Fortunately, he won the case and was freed from the legal charges he faced.

Arthur’s works became more recognized beyond the United States and were highly appreciated. One of the play was titled “A View from the Bridge,” and the other was “A Memory of Two Mondays.” The work was unsuccessful and did not receive many audiences as people were not familiar with the version he had produced. Later, he decided to review the play and make an adjustment that would fit his viewers and make them understand the message he was trying to portray. Upon revising the play “A View from the Bridge” to entail two acts, it was directed in Europe, and a co-production was produced based on Miller’s play (Abbotson 51). It relays a story of a man, Eddie living with his wife Beatrice and her orphaned niece Catherine. The play explores how Eddie manages his obsession with Catherine. It also relays the extent that Eddie is determined to protecting her and revealing his affection for her. Arthur later admitted that the plot is based on a true story relayed to him by a lawyer he once encountered. While working on different projects, Miller met Marilyn Monroe, with whom they had a relationship.

Arthur decided to leave his wife Mary Slattery and marry Marilyn Monroe. With the pressure from the work and her surrounding, Monroe left Hollywood and ventured to begin a new life apart from the one she was used to before. Furthermore, she converted to Judaism as a way to reveal to Miller and her parent; she was loyal and was ready for a family with Arthur. Soon after her conversion, Egypt prohibited Monroe's movies in the country.

Away from the limelight, Miller and Monroe lived a normal life in the country. Marilyn was readily accepted to Arthur's family due to her character that enabled her to interact with people from different age levels. During their marriage, Marilyn Monroe regularly accompanied Miller, especially when HUAC summoned him. She highly supported Arthur during the trial and through their career. She wrote periodically of their encounters and experiences during the marriage, expressing her deep love for Miller. Besides, she considered him a wise and artistic husband and did not mind the age difference between them. Nevertheless, Arthur and Monroe began quarreling as he was developing "The Misfits" (Bigsby and Bigsby 63). It starred Marilyn Monroe and was directed by John Houston. It was a drama motion picture that depicts a recently divorced woman and her interactions with new people she encounters as she tries to find a new life on her own. During the production of the film, Miller's and Marilyn's marriage faced challenges, Monroe began taking drugs to enable her rest and sleep. She would consistently show up late for work and most of the times did not remember the lines. Immediately after the film premiered, Arthur and Marilyn divorced due to the constant arguments they had and their marriage

had fallen apart. Later, Marilyn Monroe was found dead in her house due to a drug overdose.

Arthur moved on and married Inge Morath. She was the photographer that filmed the creation of Miller's "The Misfits." The family had two toddlers. However, their son, Daniel was diagnosed with Down syndrome and Miller took him to a care facility where he was admitted (Carson 89). Arthur decided without consulting Morath. Besides, He never visited his son and refrained from divulging any information about Daniel. On the other hand, Morath regularly visited their son and developed a close relationship. Miller did not stop working on projects; he produced "After the Fall." The subject of the film was to portray the relationship that he had with Monroe and provide deeper insights into Miller. The motion picture received criticism for displaying a look like of Monroe. Moreover, during the same year, Arthur wrote the play "Incident at Vichy" which was later adapted and developed into a film (Abbotson 73). The project displays a group of people held at a camp waiting for inspection during World War II. Various themes were elaborated by the work such as fear and human nature. Later, Miller was appointed the president of PEN International ("Arthur Miller Biography"). While working there, he produced other works such as "The Price" which became more successful, almost attaining the record that the play "Death of a Salesman" had set.

As Miller advanced in his career, he continued producing more motion films. However, his projects such as "In Russia" were banned in the Soviet Union (Bigsby and Bigsby 75). The books condemned the country and made impressions of society. He began creating works that comprised of once

acting such as “ Fame” and “ The Reason Why.” Arthur introduced his wife to productions, and they worked together on projects such as “ In the Country” and “ Chinese Encounter.” He faced failures in other productions that were not adequately received by the viewers. “ The Creation of the World and Other Business” and “ Up from Paradise” were significantly criticized due to the notions they contained. Later, Miller wrote a collection of articles titled “ Theatre Essays,” which he provided insights into his work and the ideas his projects tried to relay (Bigby 69). Arthur began traveling to different regions to develop plays for an audience that acknowledged his work. He visited China to oversee the production of “ Death of a Salesman.” From the success of the project, he published a book titled “ Salesman in Beijing” where he deliberated his experiences and encounters in the city (Bigby 95). “ Death of a Salesman” was adapted and developed into a series which was broadcasted on CBS. Furthermore, Miller decided to air the issues he had not addressed to the public concerning Monroe through a published autobiographical book titled “ Timebends.” In the project, he offered insights to the audience to make them understand his marriage to Marilyn Monroe.

Miller further produced new plays including “ The Ride down Mt. Morgan”, “ The Last Yankee,” and “ Broken Glass.” The works received recognition but were not widely acknowledged as other Arthur’s projects. Moreover, his play “ The Crucible” was developed into a film and Miller was assigned to produce the screenplay of the motion picture. Other productions such as “ Death of a Salesman” enabled Arthur Miller to win awards in the category of the best-revived screenplays. Additionally, he wrote the play titled “ Mr. Peter’s Connections” which depicts a tale of a pilot recalling his glory days when he

worked for a renowned airline and interacting with different women through the course of his travels. Besides, Miller was considered by the humanities board in the country to present a lecture purposed in drawing different perspectives of the ongoing issues in the nation such as the presidential elections. Also, there are a variety of rewards that he was awarded including The Dorothy and Lilian Gish Prizes, which is given to individuals that have outstanding contributions that enable comprehension of life and the world. For his excellent writing skills, he received the National Books Foundation's honor for his influences in American letters. Miller was not only recognized in the United States but also around the world where he received a Spanish award for his literary works. In 2002, Morath, Arthur's wife succumbed to an ailment she had long been battling throughout her life. During the same year, he produced " Resurrection Blues," which tells a story of a captured prisoner in a third world country. The protagonist can perform miracles which lead to people wondering whether he is Christ. Nevertheless, because of his wonders, he is sentenced by a ruthless dictator.

Later on, Miller announced he had an affair with Agnes Barney, and they had been living together at his farm. His final play was titled " Finishing the Picture," it was showcased a few months before his death. The project relays the story of a young woman who is successful in her acting career. However, she is diagnosed with a mental illness during the production of a motion picture she features. As the play progresses, the director has to decide whether kitty can continue acting or cancel the show. The work adapted characters that can be closely associated with Miller such as Monroe, John Houston and himself. Additionally, there were claims that the play featured

events that transpired while Miller was creating and filming “ The Misfits.” However, Arthur came out and disapproved the claims by affirming that the work was fiction and it was based on no event or individual in real life. On February 10, 2005, the world received unfortunate news of Miller’s death. He had bladder cancer, and heart failure initiated his death. On the same day, he died marked the anniversary of one of his famous works “ Death of a Salesman.” After his death, his daughter Rebecca chased away Agnes Barley from their home since she did not support the relationship. In the playwright industry, Arthur Miller is regarded as one of the iconic individuals that significantly contributed to the advancement of the industry through his work that highlighted issues affecting society.

There have been various establishments that have been created to honor Arthur Miller and recognize his works. One of them is the Arthur Miller Foundation which was founded to honor his legacy. It supports pilot programs in theater and film a variety of public schools. Moreover, the objective is creating an adequate learning environment for theater students to enable them to emulate and progress the works of Arthur Miller further. There is also a public school in New York City that is focused on nurturing and promoting talent among young students. The education facility exposes the students to art and theater works which are taught by competent instructors in the field. Furthermore, Millers’ work was donated to the University of Texas to be reviewed and made available for researchers.

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