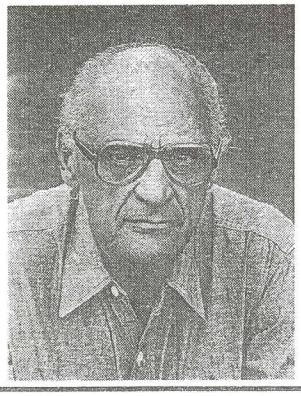


The Arthur Miller Society Newsletter

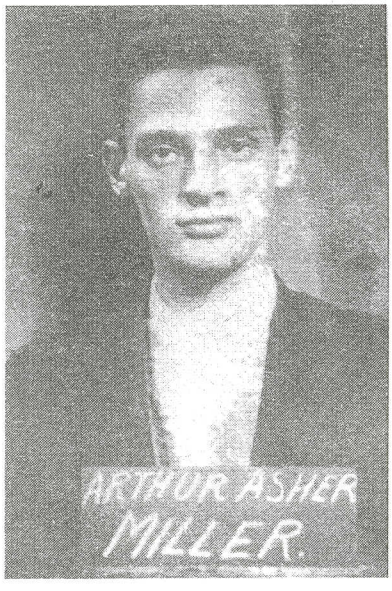
In Association with The Arthur Miller Centre, University of East Anglia

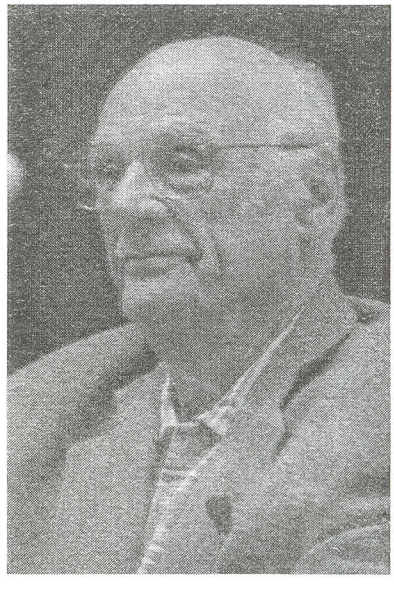
Magnum Photo Inc. Volume 11 June 2005

Arthur Miller 1915-2005

Arthur Miller died with the same dignity by which he had always lived, at his home in Connecticut on February 10th, at the age of 89, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him or his work. A great writer, a staunch humanitarian, and vital human being, his biggest legacy is his writing, and he has thankfully left us with a great wealth. It will be the society's privilege to continue to promote and study this national treasure. The following obituary was printed in the *New York Times* on 2/14/05:

The Arthur Miller Society
recognizes the artistry, moral authority,
and human solidarity of our mentor.
We thank Arthur Miller because
you leave us our name and social mission.





Miller s 1936 Student ID from University of Michigan and appearing at St. Francis College in 2004, courtesy of Jeffrey Mason

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In This Volume

Arthur Miller: In Memoriam.....1
Lists of current officers and members 2
Editor's Note 2
Miller's Legacy 3
Reports on the Memorial Service 4-5
Notes and Queries..... 6-7
Miller's Brooklyn 8-12
Arthur Miller Journal 13
Arthur Miller: A Critical Study..... 14-15
Arthur Miller Day 15
ALA 2005 Abstracts 16-18
Call for Papers 18
Contributors' Biographies 19
List of Current Members 19

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or
sabbotson@ric.edu

Note from the Editor

Through the erstwhile endeavors of Steve Marino and generosity of St. Francis College, we will soon be getting our very own journal, so this will be the penultimate issue of the newsletter, as it seems redundant to run two separate publications. As members, you will continue to get mailings regarding conferences and calls for papers. We hope to have more information in the next issue as to how we plan to combine membership dues with a journal subscription, starting next year. We do intend to continue several of the newsletter features within the new journal. I shall be in charge of production reviews--so please let me know if you have seen (or will be seeing) any interesting Miller productions, on stage or screen.

This issue contains an amazing piece by Steve Marino detailing Miller's old stomping grounds, as well as reports on Miller's Memorial Service and Arthur Miller Day, some interesting letters in the notes and queries section, the abstracts from last month's ALA presentations, several exciting notices, and a thoughtful review from June Schleuter of Chris Bigsby's latest Miller book. Thanks again to all of my contributors. Please send in pieces for the final issue to reach me by the end of November 2005, and we will close out the year with another useful edition.

--Sue Abbotson

Contributing Information Instructions

Information and requests to submit articles are encouraged, including those regarding book, film, and production reviews, as well as announcements of upcoming productions, events, and conferences, and brief notes and queries regarding Mr. Miller's work. MLA style with files in WORD.doc please to:
abbotson@hotmail.com

Subscription Information

Membership and Subscription are available for $20 per year for individuals in the U.S. and Canada; $10 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,
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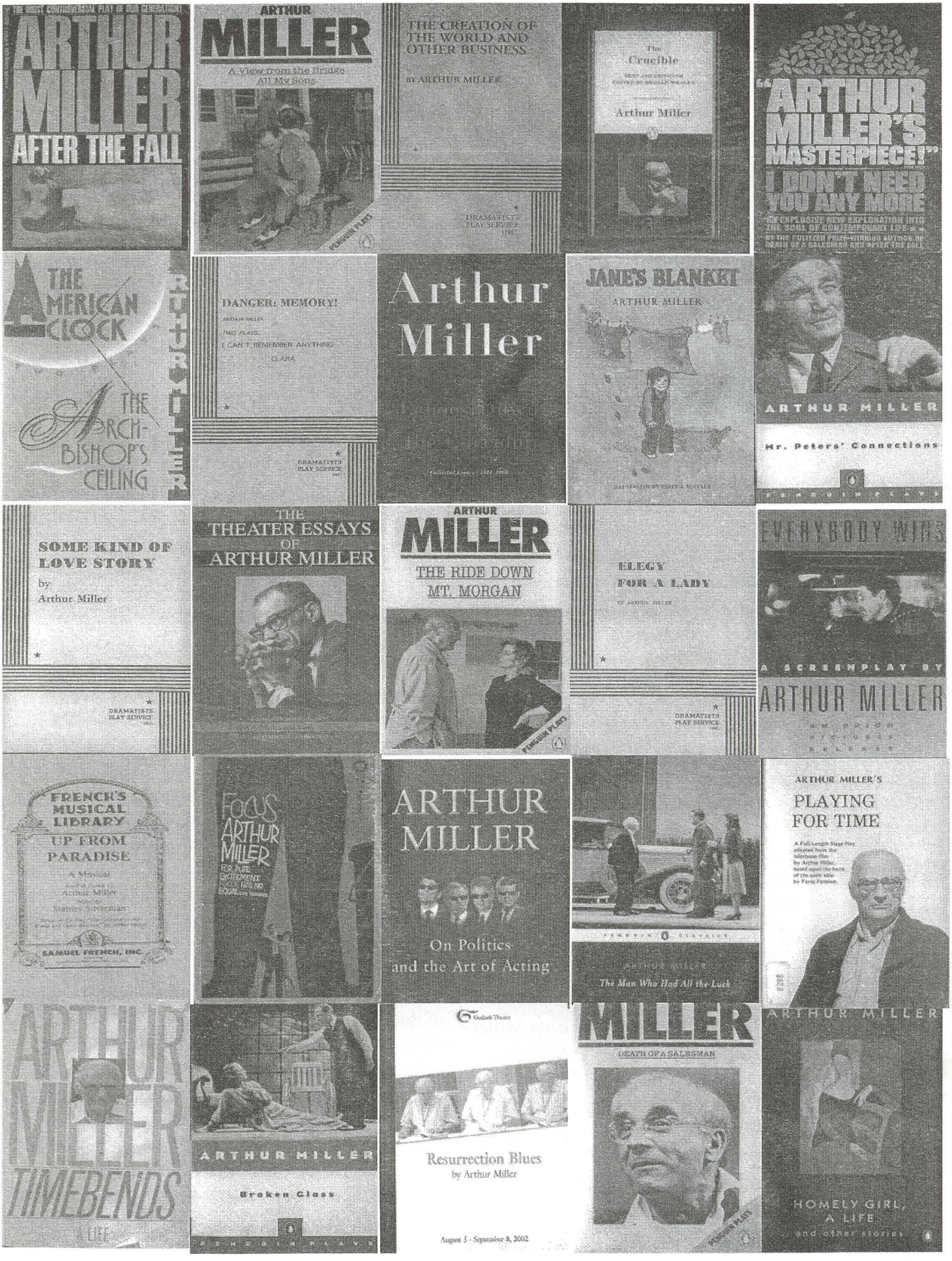
ARTHUR MILLER
AFTER THE FALL
ARTHUR MILLER
A View from the Bridge
All My Sons
PENGUIN PLAYS
THE CREATION OF THE WORLD AND OTHER BUSINESS
by ARTHUR MILLER
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE INC.
The Crucible
Arthur Miller
"ARTHUR MILLER'S MASTERPIECE!"
I DON'T NEED YOU ANY MORE
THE AMERICAN CLOCK
THE ARCH-BISHOP'S CEILING
DANGER: MEMORY!
TWO PLAYS
I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING
CLARA
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE
Arthur Miller
JANE'S BLANKET
ARTHUR MILLER
ARTHUR MILLER
Mr. Peters' Connections
PENGUIN PLAYS
SOME KIND OF LOVE STORY
by
Arthur Miller
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE
THE THEATER ESSAYS OF ARTHUR MILLER
ARTHUR
MILLER
THE RIDE DOWN MT. MORGAN
PENGUIN PLAYS
ELEGY FOR A LADY
DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE
EVERYBODY WINS
A SCREENPLAY BY
ARTHUR MILLER
FRENCH'S MUSICAL LIBRARY
UP FROM PARADISE
A Musical
Arthur Miller
Stanley Silverman
SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.
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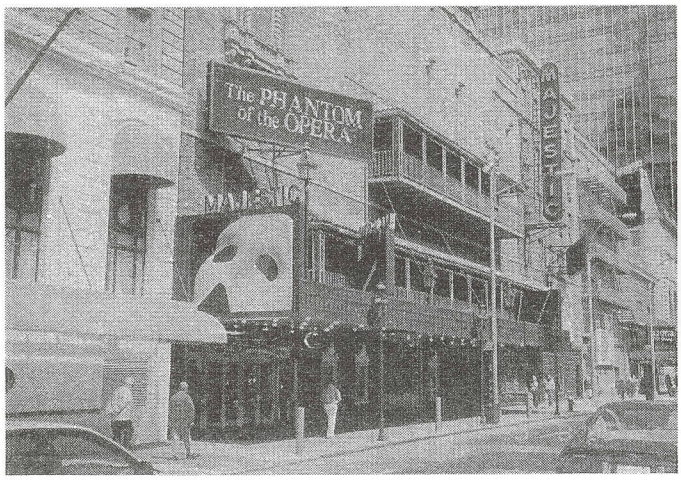
ARTHUR MILLER
ARTHUR MILLER
On Politics and the Art of Acting
ARTHUR MILLER'S
PLAYING FOR TIME
ARTHUR MILLER
The Man Who Had All the Luck
ARTHUR MILLER
TIMEBENDS
A LIFE
ARTHUR MILLER
Broken Glass
PENGUIN PLAYS
Resurrection Blues
by Arthur Miller
August 3 - September 8, 2002
MILLER
DEATH OF A SALESMAN
PENGUIN PLAYS
ARTHUR MILLER
HOMELY GIRL, A LIFE
and other stories

Miller's Memorial Service June 9th 2005, Majestic Theatre, New York



We have a personal report to follow from Will Smith, who was able to attend the Memorial Service with several other members of the Arthur Miller Society. We asked him to share his impressions of the event, which he has done with great candor and aplomb. But first we offer this outline of what took place, pieced together from various news reports, noting who spoke and the gist of what they said.

The service was opened by the Rev. William Sloane Coffin Jr. Bill Coffin was a friend of Miller's for 35 years, and he described the playwright as "brilliant, so funny and on occasion, strangely tender." He also quoted the late Inge Morath who admitted falling in love with her husband because of "the integrity of his mind."

Joan Copeland, Miller's sister, read an excerpt from *The American Clock*, in which she had starred on Broadway in 1980. She chose Rose Baum's speech in which she declares her intention to read more books. This was followed by Estelle Parsons reading Linda Loman's "Requiem" speech from *Death of a Salesman*.

A brief letter from Bill Clinton, praising Miller, was read by Miller's nephew, Ross Miller. Miller's son, Robert brought cheers when he read his father's 1956 letter to HUAC explaining why he would not name names. Miller's daughter, Rebecca , read one of her father's poems, and her husband Daniel Day-Lewis read "A Boy Grew in Brooklyn," one of the essays reprinted in Miller's collection *Echoes Down the Corridor*, about his days as a bakery delivery boy: "Give a bagel man an onion roll by mistake, and you've ruined his entire day."

Tony Kushner explained how he decided to be a playwright at 6 after watching his mother play Linda Loman in a production of *Death of a Salesman*. In between observations of Miller's political mindset, he recalled his first encounter with his idol sitting behind him at the 1994 Tony Awards: "I spent the evening looking at the back of his head, which was more interesting than anything that transpired on stage that night." He confessed, "I wanted to touch the head, but thought the owner might object." He described Miller as having had the "curse of empathy" and thanked him for writing plays that ask, "What is your relevancy to the survival of the race?"

Edward Albee, opened by lashing out at the neoconservative *New Criterion* magazine because of what he called a "vile and sniggering unsigned editorial" written about Miller after his death. He explained that Miller, like the best dramatists, held a mirror up to his audience saying, "Here is how you behave, if you don't like it, it's your responsibility to change." He concluded by stating, "Some writers matter and some do not. Some of our most clever writers don't matter. They teach us nothing and they do not render ourselves coherent. Arthur Miller was a writer who mattered. A lot."

Honor Moore, a poet who was Mr. Miller's longtime friend and neighbor in Roxbury, Connecticut, recalled their last conversation. "I remember him saying only two or three weeks before he died: 'When life disappointed me, I always had my writing.'" She also recalled a story Miller had told her about his childhood (which clearly has its echo in *After the Fall*). She explained how one day she asked Miller why he became a writer, and he told her, "I was a terrible kid. I drove my mother crazy. So one day my parents took off for a vacation at the shore, taking my brother, who was the good one, and leaving me behind. They had made believe it was only for a day. But they left me alone with the Polish maid. Because of that, I had to start learning to use my imagination."

Democrat, George McGovern praised Mr. Miller's optimism and thanked him for supporting his 1972 presidential run. McGovern explained how he had seen *Death of a Salesman* in Chicago as a young man and it had such a lasting effect on him that he titled a campaign speech in Milwaukee "Attention Must Be Paid," and won the Wisconsin primary. He recalled joining Miller on a series of campaign events through Miller's native Connecticut.

Coffin reappeared to close the memorial. He told of speaking to Miller in the hospital a few days before he died. "I told him, `I know you think you're on your way to nowhere, but I've got better information than you do. They've got a special seat up there for you. As one of God's favorite atheists, your sole duty is to keep the Christians honest. What you do with the Jews you have to figure out on your own time.'"

The event closed with clips from various television interviews featuring Arthur Miller. In one he said, "Imagine if you didn't die. What a horror that would be! You'd have nothing to measure your life against." Fortunately, Miller left us with plenty against which to measure his life.

The Rest is Silence

Report from Will Smith, Drew University

As two long lines of actors, writers, politicos, scholars and fans streamed into New York City s Majestic Theater, Daniel Day-Lewis lanky frame huddled modestly in an arched doorway, stage-right, his long, full beard hearkening Walt Whitman, whose championing of the singularity of mankind perhaps foreshadowed the themes hammered at nearly a century later by Arthur Miller. A single piano occupied the theater s dimly lit stage, its unamplified soloist accompanying the standing-room-only crowd with music that echoed the jazz age and would have been a suitable soundtrack for Miller s childhood days in Brooklyn, time that profoundly shaped his dramatic pallet. A familiar picture of Mr. Miller was projected onto a screen at the back of the stage, and his face looking as if caught between a grin and a wry remark seemed to shun the melancholy and anticipate the joyful memories that flowed forth for the next seventy minutes from the podium on the stage.

The celebration of Miller s life was duly bookended by words from Reverend William Sloane Coffin, a noted New York spiritual leader who first recalled an encounter with Mr. Miller at Miller s home in Roxbury, Connecticut during the Vietnam War and later made light of Miller s Judaism. One by one, various speakers, most notably playwrights Tony Kushner and Edward Albee, Miller s son, Robert, and sister, Joan Copeland, and his daughter and son-in-law, Rebecca Miller and Daniel Day-Lewis, combined to reflect, read from Miller s works, and recount days spent with the author.

Miller s importance in the shaping of contemporary American drama and his passion for political expression thematically unified the speakers. Tony Kushner shared the impact of Miller s stature on him, recalling a night at the Tony Awards when he sat behind Miller in awe that Willy Loman was conceived inside the impressive head just feet in front of him. His anecdote climaxed with massive audience approval when he somewhat un-hyperbolically noted that, for an American playwright, the dome before him that night compared in sacra sanctity to the Arc of the Covenant or the manger in Bethlehem. Similarly aware of their audience, both Albee and Senator George McGovern accurately gauged the political leanings of many in the crowd and earned applause for their contemporary political commentary raised while alluding to Miller s outspoken public criticism of American governmental practices.

While Kushner s remarks were wonderfully funny and unabashedly full of praise, and Day-Lewis readings from Timebends unintentionally elegiac, perhaps Albee s lines more solemnly captured the dominant sentiment of the afternoon. His gruffly stated conclusion that Some writers matter. Arthur mattered a lot! was enhanced by a series of rare family photos that had been projected onto the screen throughout the hour and which both reminded us of Mr. Miller s importance to his family and exposed a softer and rarely seen side of the author.

The memorial concluded with some video footage culled from three or four interviews Miller offered throughout his career. Prompted by Charlie Rose to consider what he would want his obituary to say, Miller simply responded, W riter , at which point his image was frozen on the screen, applause grew from the audience and the slow jazz piano began anew. At that moment, a pun on Kushner s earlier Shakespearean conclusion, The rest is silence, emerged in this writer s mind. Now, as Miller rests, he is bodily silent; his pen, too, is silent; his throaty growl against the conservative majority is also silent; but with that same silence, Miller has put to rest his quarrel with the win-at-all-costs, too polished, overly-manufactured way of American living that ironically provided the impetus and fodder for his prolific and important artistic expression during his eighty-nine active years.

NOTES AND QUERIES

(A column through which we hope to share ideas, opinions, and ask questions--please send in anything you feel might be of interest to include in future editions and please send in responses to either of the letters printed here)

Dear Arthur Miller Society:

Hello, I'm an English teacher, and another English teacher and I were discussing today whether or not the flashback scenes in Death of a Salesman can be entirely trusted as accurate. I remember reading a couple of analyses years ago that said that the flashback scenes cannot be trusted as 100% accurate representations of the past, because it is not an entirely objective, third-person view of 1928, but is (sometimes) filtered through Willy's warped perceptions, so that (for example) some of the incidents may be exaggerated or toned-down or characters or their dialogue idealized, so that everything takes on an aura of nostalgia, a glow. The analyses held that it's sometimes a candy-coated or idealized vision of the past and not a completely accurate representation. The other teacher said she couldn't find anything in the play itself to support that interpretation, and that for her, the flashback scenes HAD to be completely accurate. I couldn't come up with any specific examples from the play of where I thought there might be an inaccuracy, but I remember that at the time I read the analyses, I was convinced, and I have since accepted that interpretation as true, an interpretation I passed along to my students.

So, my question is (since Mr. Miller passed away a few weeks ago and I cannot ask him directly), did Arthur Miller ever state definitively in an article or an interview whether the flashback scenes in Death of a Salesman are completely accurate and we can, as an audience, view everything that happens in them as reliable, unfiltered, unvarnished and objective reality?

I tend to believe that Willy's 'filter' on the past turns the colors up to brighter hues, cranks the volume on the highs and perhaps even somewhat diminishes the lows (though in the flashbacks we still catch him in lies and see his flaws) and so on, so that while the scenes basically convey to us what, essentially, happened, the flashbacks may not be 100% accurate down to the last detail (his psyche, of course, is fracturing and he is confusing past with present, after all, and a title Miller was considering earlier was something like "Inside His Head").

So, how about it—can you help me resolve this question? Did Miller ever say anything about this topic, one way or the other, in any article or interview you know of? If you don't know, perhaps you could post this to a message board and have other people try to help find the answer. A community of people working on the problem might be able to come up with articles or interviews that only a few may not be aware of ... Anyway, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Thank you. I greatly appreciate your time and assistance.

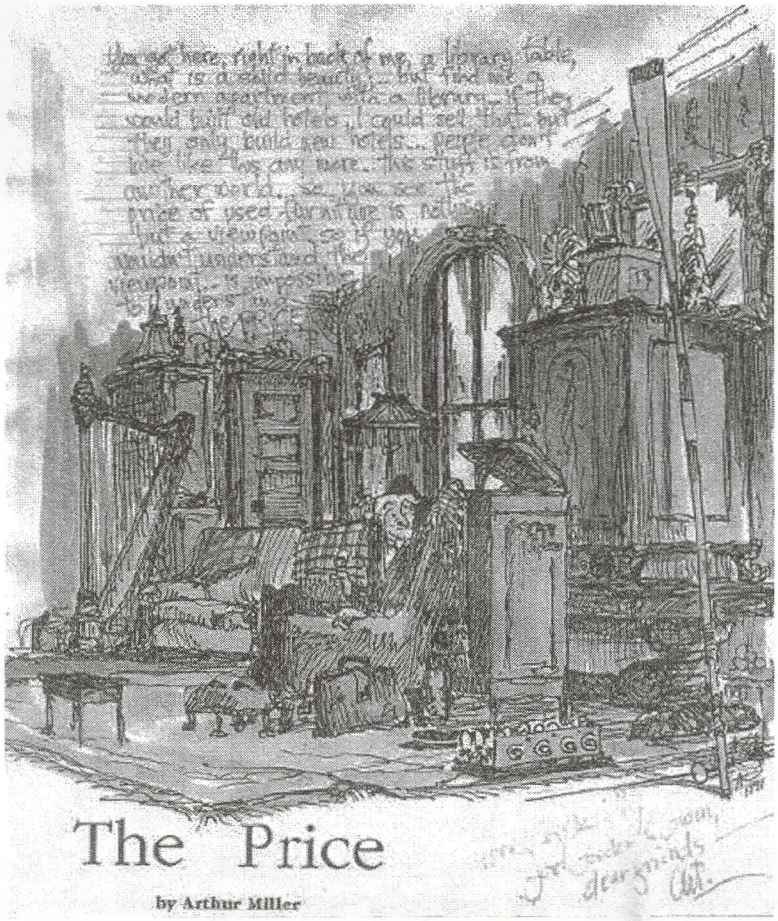
Brandon Juhl

Dear Arthur Miller Society:

I came across this document (see top of opposite page with apologies for picture quality) at a small shop in Grandy, North Carolina (just north of the Wright Memorial Bridge/Outer Banks area). I initially thought it might be a program cover but the weight of the paper seems too light as well as too large (it is standard letter size). It was in a frame and when I took it out it had no further information with it and also no indication that it was cut or torn from anything. The art work itself has an "A" for the signature and is dated 1991. There is a faded inscription in the lower right hand corner that reads "Colored especially for Gordon & Gwen, dear friends————Art." The coloring is just in shades of red. The text appears to be hand written on lines done with pencil. It is very interesting and also a mystery to me. Anyone have any idea as to what I have here?

I showed it to a local man who is involved with a theatre company. He noted that the speech that is written on the upper left section appears to have been added to the paper (based on the fact that the ink can be seen clearly through the back side of page as if a felt tip pen had been used). He suggested that I contact the two major script publishers to see if the drawing is something that they recognize, but I would welcome any other ideas, as I haven't seen an edition of the play with this particular graphic.

Ellie M. Guthrie



New Book on Miller

Juan I. Guijarro and Ramón Espejo, eds. *Arthur Miller: Visiones Desde El Nuevo Milenio* (València: Biblioteca Javier Coy d'estudis nord-americans, 2004). 151 pp.

Two Spanish scholars from the Universidad de Seville, Spain, Professors Juan Guijarro and Ramòn Espejo, hosted an Arthur Miller Conference in November 2001 entitled "Cincuenta Ãnos de Arthur Miller en España." It was an enjoyable conference, made all the more so because all the faculty and students went on strike during the two-day conference, closing the university to all but some devoted Miller scholars. Still, out of this conference comes a new collection of critical essays, *Arthur Miller: Visiones Desde El Nuevo Milenio,* published in late 2004. The paperback volume contains an introduction, a brief telephone interview with the editors and Miller (conducted October 14, 2003), and ten critical essays. While there are essays written in English from Enoch Brater, Gregory Black, Michael Grownow, and myself, there are some fascinating essays written in Spanish by the volume's editors and Antonio Celada, Rafael Portillo, David Rio, and Isabel Porcel.

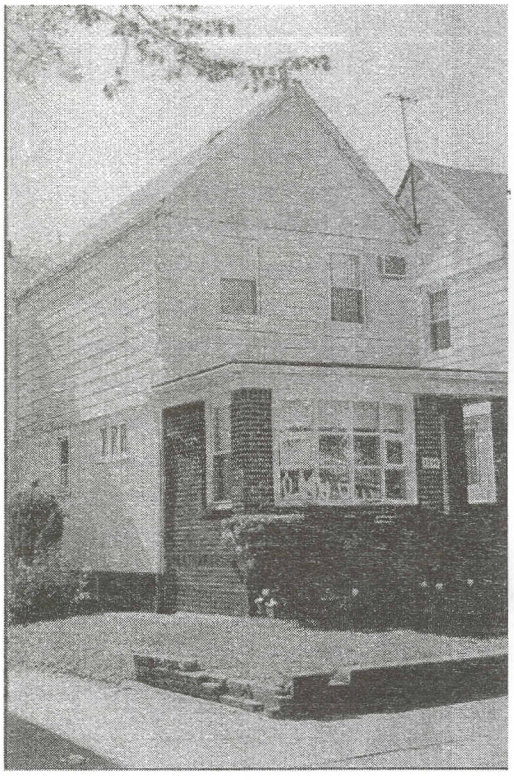
After reading this volume, I came to better understand why Arthur Miller was, to a degree at least, more appreciated in Spain than in his own country. Both Spanish scholars and the general theatergoing public in Spain hold Miller in the highest of regard. As a Fulbright Scholar at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2004-05, I learned just how interested both the undergraduate and graduate students are in Miller's theater. In fact, the Universidad Complutense recently awarded Miller an *Doctoris Honoris Causa*, the equivalent of an Honorary Doctorate, and we were making plans to present this award to Miller when, of course, he suddenly passed away. (I'm not sure what the officials of the Universidad plan to do at this point.)

In any event, since I imagine this volume isn't widely publicized, I wanted to bring it to the attention of members of the Arthur Miller Society. And if your Spanish is better than mine, you'll really enjoy it.

Matthew Roudané

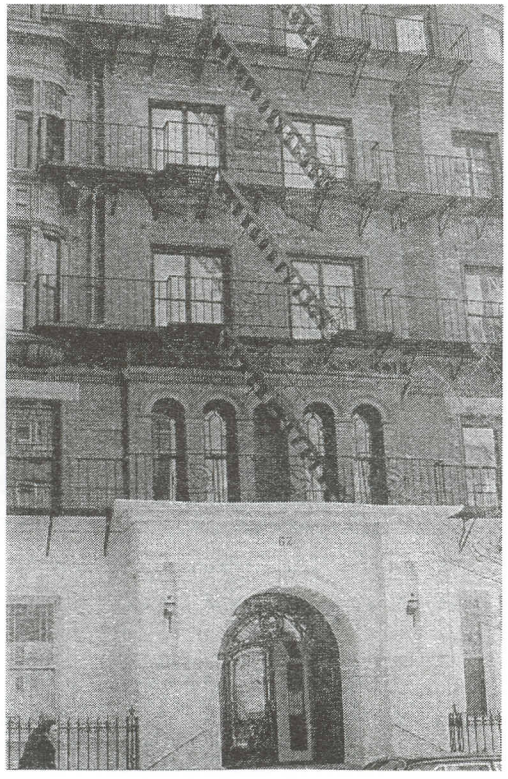
Touring Arthur Miller's Brooklyn

By Stephen Marino St. Francis College



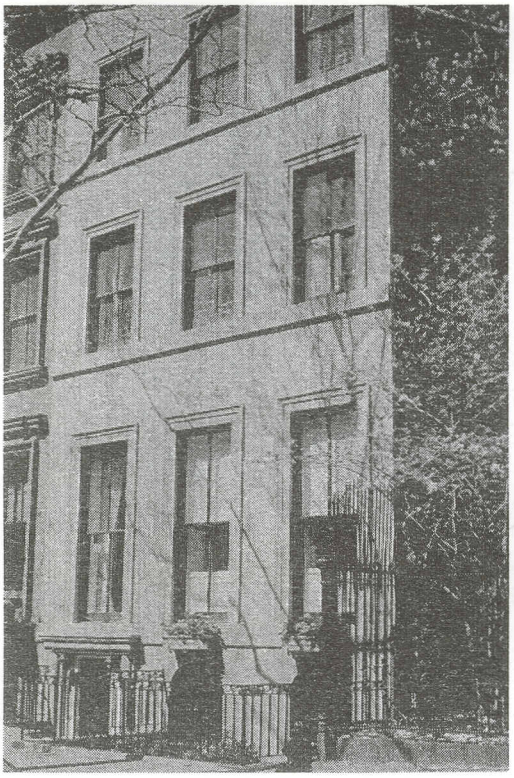
During Arthur Miller's interview at the society's spring 2004 conference, Chris Bigsby asked him how he felt returning home to Brooklyn. Miller quipped, "I don't recognize it. It looks like Philadelphia." Despite Miller's reaction to the many physical changes in his Brooklyn Heights neighborhood, all of the residences where he lived in the 1940's and 1950's survive. As a native Brooklynite, I was pleased to conclude the conference by leading the participants in a tour of Miller's Brooklyn Heights apartments and homes, all within walking distance of St. Francis College, the site of our proceedings. I ended the day by taking Chris Bigsby and Jane Dominik on a driving tour to the heart of Brooklyn to see the house at **1350 East Third Street** (fig. 1) to where Miller's family moved from Manhattan in 1928.

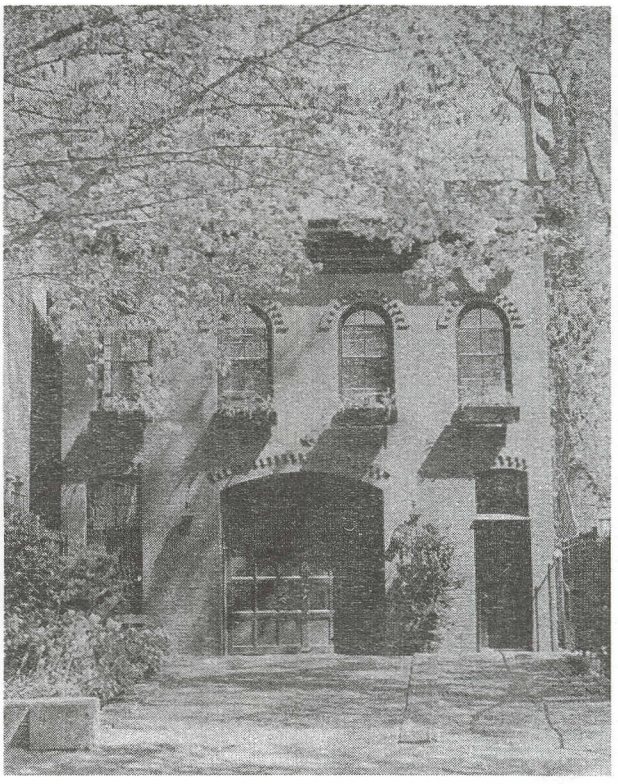
In many interviews, articles, and his autobiography, Timebends, Arthur Miller details the importance of his defining experiences in Brooklyn as a boy growing up in the 1920's and 1930's and as a young playwright, husband, and father in the 1940's and early 1950's. Because of the collapse of his coat and suit factory, Miller's father, Isidore, moved his family in 1928, when Arthur was 13, from Manhattan, where they had lived in middle class splendor in an apartment at 45 West 110th Street. The hard times had come for them early, even before the Stock Market crash of 1929. The move to Brooklyn was clearly a step down, and the family relocated to the Midwood section of the borough to a little six-room house on East Third Street where Miller shared a bedroom with his maternal grandfather. After Miller graduated from the University of Michigan and he married Mary Slattery, the couple lived in various apartments and homes in Brooklyn Heights which Miller describes in Timebends as a "leafy village."



Brooklyn Heights is a national historic district which had the reputation in the early 19th century as New York's first suburb. Many of the pre-Civil War homes are lovingly preserved as result of their designation as protected structures. After lunch we began our walking tour at Miller's first Brooklyn Heights residence at **62 Montague St**. (fig. 2). In 1940, Arthur Miller lived in an apartment which he shared with his new wife's roommates. The style of this building is Queen Anne and it was constructed in 1885 as a luxury multi-family residence, that is, an apartment building which the owners preferred to call "French Flats." Proceeding geographically rather than chronologically, the group then walked the few blocks to **31 Grace Court** (fig. 3). Miller had bought this house in 1948 and was living here during the period he was planning *Death of a Salesman*, although the play was actually written in the studio he built near his country house in Roxbury, Connecticut. Miller later sold this home to W.E.B. DuBois. As a vocal member of the Communist Party, Dubois was hounded so much by the FBI that he could not find a home to rent; Miller offered him 31 Grace Court, which DuBois was glad to purchase.

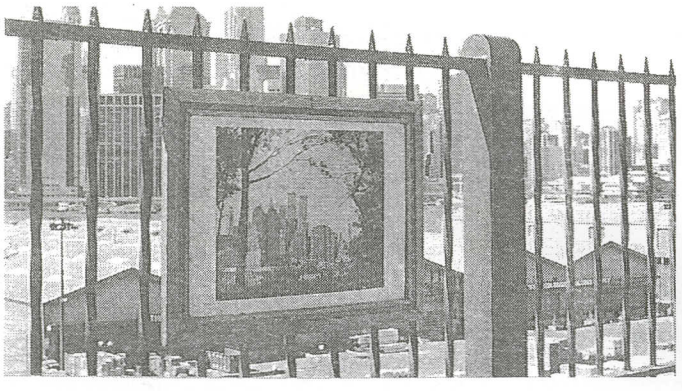
We then strolled to the Promenade. Anyone visiting Brooklyn



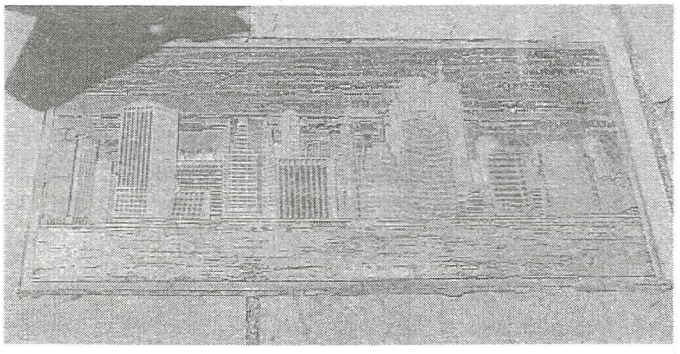


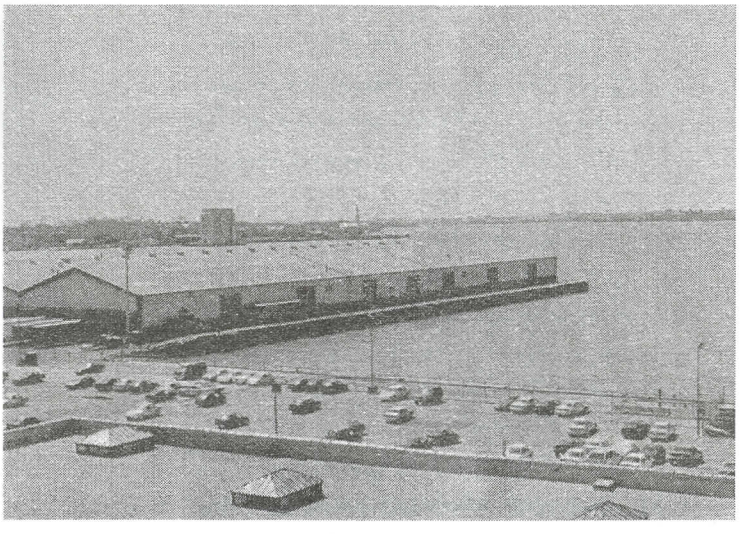
Heights should not miss the view of lower Manhattan from the famous Brooklyn Promenade, which sits atop the hill on which two levels of the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway are built. From here is a breath-taking view of lower Manhattan across the East River . From this vantage, you can see the Brooklyn Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, and the docks and piers of Red Hook which Miller used in *A View From the Bridge*. The view of Manhattan is especially moving with the absence of the Twin Towers, which are depicted in memorial plaques set on the walkway and fences (figs. 5& 6).

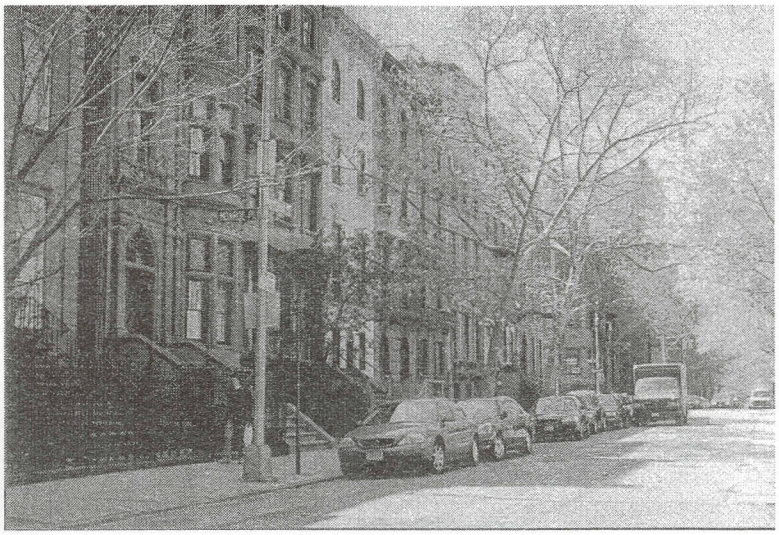
From the Promenade, we walked to **151 Willow St.**, a beautiful former carriage house (fig.4). Miller had purchased this home after selling the Grace Court house to DuBois. Our final stop was the house at **102 Pierrepont St.** (figs.7& 8 overpage). In 1944, Miller lived in a duplex here and he wrote, "The rooms were very dark-wood paneled. It had been a very elaborate home. We never could see anything. Norman Mailer lived upstairs, but much of the time he was away at war." Miller wrote *All My Sons* here; Mailer also wrote *The Naked and the Dead* in his apartment.. (See *Timebends* 139 for Miller's unflattering account of Mailer.)



After saying goodbye to our society friends, Chris Bigsby, Jane Dominick, and I began our drive into the heart of Brooklyn. To get to Midwood from Brooklyn Heights, we drove through **Red Hook** (fig. 9), the







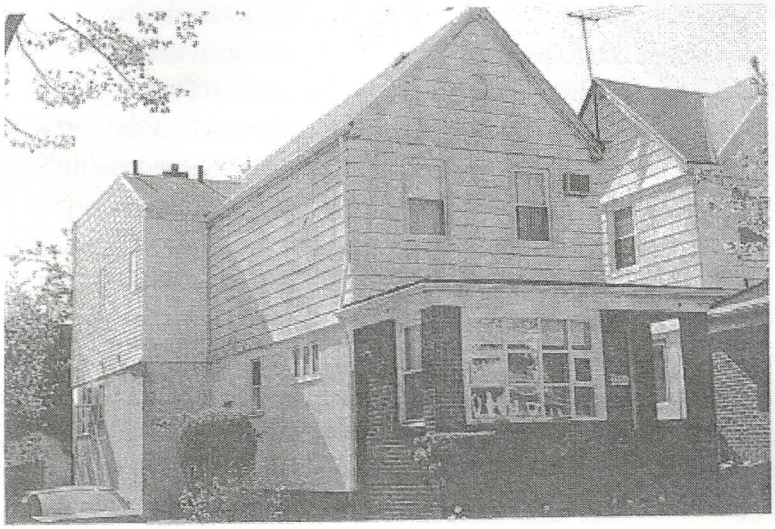
neighborhood of Eddie Carbone in *A View From the Bridge*: the piers and docks spread along New York harbor. The Prospect Expressway took us to the beginning of the wide boulevard known as Ocean Parkway. This famous Brooklyn street traverses directly through the borough with its terminus, as the name indicates, at the Atlantic Ocean, our eventual destination. In *Timebends* you may recall Miller recollecting how as a young boy he worked for a bakery and one cold winter morning his bicycle toppled over on the icy road spilling bagels, rolls, and breads over this six-lane parkway. You may also recall how in *Broken Glass* Dr. Harry Hyman rode his horse on the bridle paths—now pedestrian walkways—which formerly lined this boulevard (fig. 10).

Miller often describes the Brooklyn of his youth as if it were a rural, frontier outpost. In *The American Clock*, a play which partly chronicles his family's downfall during the Depression, the sisters Rose and Fanny, (characters based on Miller's own mother and aunt), argue over their father's objections to moving to Brooklyn. Fanny says: "And what is he going to do with himself in Brooklyn? He never liked the country." This description of Brooklyn as "the country" typifies an attitude towards the borough in the 1920's and 1930's—a point of view which impressed Miller so much he would later use it in *Death of a Salesman*. For despite the borough's size and population (when Brooklyn joined New York in 1898, it had been the fourth largest city in the country with a population of 1.1 million), surprisingly many areas remained relatively rural even though the infrastructure of the city: streets, trolley, bus, subway and elevated train lines, were being built. And life in an "outer" borough like Brooklyn greatly contrasted with life in Manhattan, what people then (and now) called "the city." In a piece he wrote in 1955 for *Holiday* magazine, *A Boy Grew in Brooklyn*, Miller described the Midwood section thirty years before:

> As a flat forest of great elms through which ran the elevated Culver Line to Coney Island, two and a half miles distant...Children going to school in those days could be watched from the back porch and kept in view for nearly a mile. There were streets, of course, but the few houses had well-trodden trails running out their

back doors which connected with each other and must have looked from the air like a cross section of a mole run; these trails were much more used than streets, which were as unpaved as any in the Wild West and just as muddy (54).

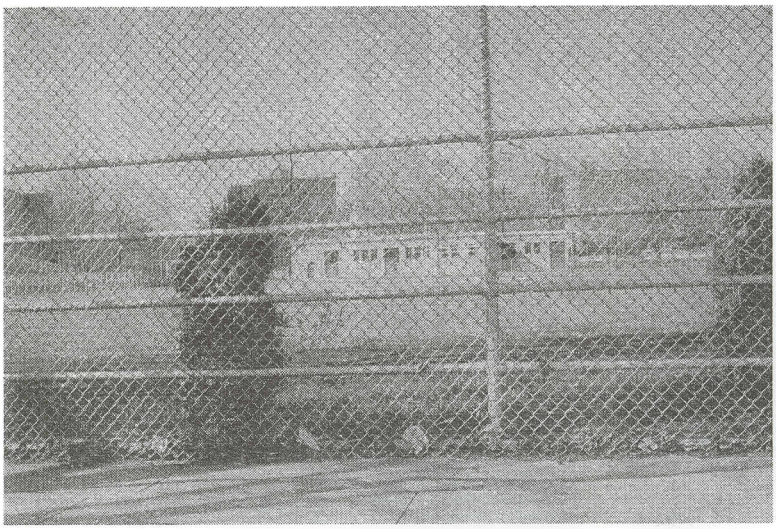
Driving down Ocean Parkway through the Midwood section in 2004 clearly gives a real sense of how much Miller uses Brooklyn in his work. The elevated line still runs parallel to the wide parkway where many grand brick houses of the wealthier Brooklyn residents stand. Many of these single family homes are shadowed by the larger apartment buildings which were constructed during the rapid growth of Brooklyn in the era between the world wars, when Miller witnessed the borough's quick and dramatic change to the wholly urban environment of today. The side streets off Ocean Parkway are occupied by many of the same small wood frame houses which dominated the neighborhood when Miller lived here, interspersed with the more recently-built brick apartment buildings

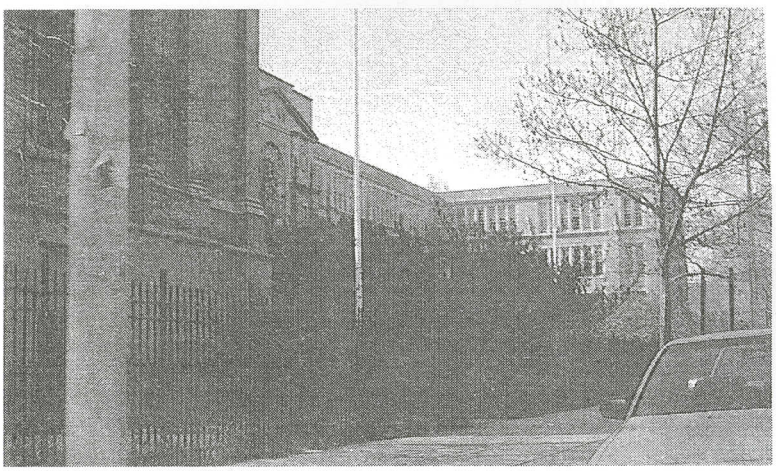


The block of **East Third Street** where the Miller family lived was, and still is, a dead end street in what is technically the "Gravesend" section of the borough, an appropriate name for both the street and the cemetery which lies beyond the baseball field at its north end. You can still see and hear, like the young Arthur, the "el" train as it head south towards Coney Island and north towards Manhattan. Miller's house, **number 1350**, sits 2/3 down the dead end on the left side. What is particularly striking about Miller's block is how powerfully it evokes *Death of a Salesman*. The houses resemble Willy's house and Charley's house with the "bricks and windows, windows and bricks" of apartment buildings lurking over them. Equally compelling are the houses across from Miller's: there still standing is the homes of Manny Newman and Lee Balsam, Miller's salesmen uncles, who had moved their families to Brooklyn after World War I, almost ten years earlier than his own family. The Newsam-Balsam connected houses are still flanked by only four other pairs, a line of little wooden homes with flat roofs and three-step stoops. Beyond their backyards, on the next block loom larger apartment houses.

Our visit to East Third Street took place on a Saturday, which is the Sabbath for the largely Hassidic population which now resides in the neighborhood. As we drove down the block, we had to carefully steer through the young children playing ball on that warm spring day. Many male adults, all clothed in their distinctive white shirts and black pants, lingered on the sidewalks and their stoops enjoying the afternoon weather. Since I had to double park on the crowded street, we immediately caught the attention of the kids and their parents for we were obviously strangers. The three of us stopped, admittedly awe-struck at standing in front of the house which had served a pivotal role in the formation of Miller's artistic life. Jane, ever the camera buff, started snapping pictures from every angle. Chris went to the front door to speak to the current residents. I fended off the inquiries of some neighbors who wanted to know if the residents "had won something." I laughed at how Chris, Jane, and I must have looked to them—like the employees of "Publisher's Clearing House" bestowing some grand prize. When I explained that Arthur Miller had lived in the house, many of them recalled *Salesman* and a few, of course, knew about his marriage to Marilyn Monroe.

Meanwhile, Chris was conversing with the younger residents of the house who were initially reluctant to speak to us. However, an older woman, the grandmother, explained that they could not invite us into the house on their Sabbath, but we were welcome to walk around the outside. The house looks much like it did when Miller lived in it with some modern alterations of brick-face on the front porch, stucco on the first floor and aluminum siding on the second floor where the bedrooms are located (Fig. 11). The grandmother explained that the only major renovation

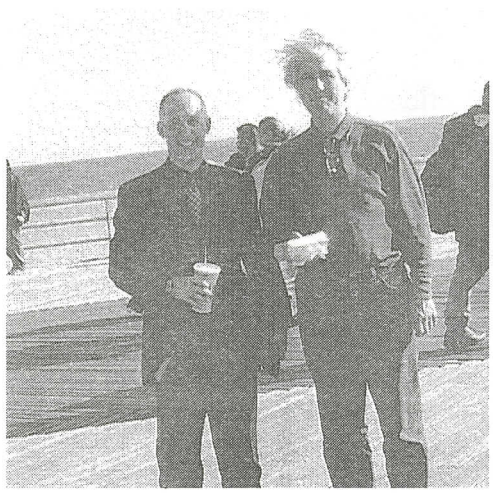




to the house occurred in 2003,, when the family added a two story addition to the back which created a larger kitchen and an additional bedroom. Chris was especially anxious to see the backyard because Miller had planted a pear tree there in 1928, the first year the family had moved to the house. And lo and behold, the tree was there just coming into bloom! The grandmother explained that their religion forbid them to destroy any living thing, thus the extension to the home ended right at the tree. Oh, how the three of us recalled Willy's lament in *Salesman* at the builder having cut down the elm trees. The grandmother also mentioned that someone had visited a year earlier to take photos, and we concluded that this must have been during the publishing of Martin Gottfried's biography. The family truly realizes the importance of their home and would be willing to have a plaque installed in front indicating Miller's residence there.

We then drove the two miles (which Miller walked everyday) down Ocean Parkway to see Abraham Lincoln High School where Miller had an admittedly undistinguished academic career, but enjoyed playing second string football. (figs. 12 & 13)) From there a short drive through Brighton Beach (I told Jane we can do the Neil Simon tour on her next visit) took us to Coney Island. The boardwalk was packed, for the weather was glorious. As a native New Yorker, I made sure that Chris and Jane both saw and tasted the famous landmarks—the Cyclone, the parachute jump, the aquarium—and Nathan's hot dogs (figs. 14& 15).

On the way back to Brooklyn Heights, we concluded our special tour with a quick visit past the Brooklyn Navy Yard and to the foot of the Brooklyn tower of the Brooklyn Bridge, where that famous photo of Miller was taken and from where the view of Manhattan is spectacular—and definitely does not look like Philadelphia!



Arthur Miller Journal

Dear Miller Society Members:

The months since Arthur Miller's death have given us time to mourn the passing of our titular leader and consider his place as a literary giant. I am pleased to announce a project that will provide a lasting legacy to Miller's significant contributions to American drama. St. Francis College has agreed to fund the ***Arthur Miller Journal*** which will be published under the auspices of the English department in cooperation with the Arthur Miller Society. St. Francis College expects members of the society to be an integral part of the journal. We know we cannot produce a superior publication without the expertise of Miller scholars.

At this point the college is projecting to publish twice a year, with the inaugural issue scheduled for early spring 2006. I will be spending much of the summer getting organized. This month, I will be mailing an official journal announcement to the English and Theater departments of colleges and universities throughout the country. The Miller Society distributed a flyer at last month's ALA. Steve Centola's brother, Tom, has granted us permission to use his wonderful sketch of Miller, which has become the unofficial logo of the society, as part of the design of the front cover.

Establishing the ***Arthur Miller Journal*** has been an eventual goal of the society, and our first class newsletter, nurtured by Jane Dominik and Sue Abbotson, certainly is the foundation upon which the new publication will be built. Therefore, in addition to peer-reviewed essays, the ***Arthur Miller Journal*** will incorporate the book, production, and performance reviews that have been the strength of the newsletter. We also will include the popular notes section, as well as abstracts from the annual Miller conferences.

I invite you to help me with this exciting new project. Of course, I welcome essay contributions from society members. I also need you to review essays. As experts, you will help assure that the ***AMJ*** includes material that will represent the best in Miller scholarship. In short, I need any assistance you can give. Sue Abbotson has already created a page for the journal on the ***AMS*** website, where you can find additional information. Please contact me at:

Stephen Marino
English Department
St. Francis College
180 Remsen Street
Brooklyn, New York 11202
smarino@stfranciscollege.edu

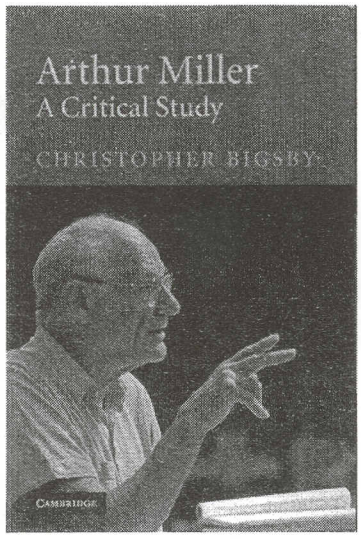
For your information, my home telephone number is (718)848-3875. Thanks for your support.

Sincerely,

Steve Marino

Arthur Miller: A Critical Study
by Christopher Bigsby.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
x; 514pp.

Reviewed by June Schlueter, Lafayette College.



Arthur Miller: A Critical Study may not be a *Festschrift* for the playwright, but the coincidence of its publication and Miller's death is fortuitous. Indeed, Miller might not have appreciated essays by diverse hands so much as this volume, which pulls together the many strands of Miller's life and career to present what will surely be the definitive tribute to America's foremost playwright.

Nor is anyone better positioned to have written this critical study than Christopher Bigsby, who teaches at the University of East Anglia, home of the Arthur Miller Centre; who was responsible for the BBC radio broadcast of *The Golden Years* in 1987; who brokered the love affair that Britain had with Miller in his later years, including a part of the gala eightieth birthday celebration in 1995; who knew Miller personally and interviewed him frequently; and who publishes widely and perceptively on American and British theater.

Bigsby has published on Miller before—most notably *File on Miller* (Methuen, 1988), (ed.) *Arthur Miller and Company* (Methuen, 1990), (ed.) *The Portable Arthur Miller* (Penguin, 1995), and (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller* (Cambridge University Press, 1977). But none of his projects, nor those of any other scholar, has been this extensive. *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study* is a compendium of information, drawn from a range of resources, and a seasoned sequence of judgments on the plays and the man. It follows the work chronologically, from the Michigan plays of the 1930s through *Finishing the Picture* (2004), documenting and assessing a 68-year career that was still in motion when Miller died in 2005. In interspersed chapters, Bigsby engages larger issues—"Arthur Miller: Time-Traveller," "Tragedy," "The Shearing Point," "Fiction," and "Arthur Miller as a Jewish Writer"—and in brief narratives that serve as postscripts to his discussions, he provides information on production.

Even Bigsby's brief introduction reveals his depth of understanding of Miller both as a person and a playwright. Indeed, his examination of materials in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Michigan, and the Billy Rose Theatre Collection at the Library of the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center; of typescripts provided by Miller; and of rehearsal materials have yielded discoveries and insights. In his discussion of the Michigan plays, for example, Bigsby takes us through three versions of Miller's variously titled first effort, which won him the University's Hopwood Award, and he identifies another wartime play, *Boro Hall Nocturne* (1942), previously unknown. Bigsby is as conversant with the never produced *Half-Bridge* (written 1940-43 and "over-stuffed with plots" [34]) as he is with the widely known *Death of a Salesman* (1949); he offers a fine chapter on the radio plays and insightful analyses of the late 20th- and early 21st-century writings, including *Finishing the Picture*, which Miller had begun in 1977-78 and returned to in 2003-04. Even in chapters on the much analyzed plays—*All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible*, and *A View from the Bridge*—he offers perceptive close readings, refreshed by notes on early drafts, some discarded, and revelations secured in conversations and interviews.

It is clear from his nearly 500 pages of commentary that Bigsby recognizes the coherence of the Miller canon, seeing in it the relentless reflection of a mind aware of unfolding events in the world and deeply concerned. Hence the imperative of individual action, the interplay of responsibility and guilt, and the constraints of contingency and destiny appear and reappear, mapping an individual quest for correspondence between his own moral positions and the world's. Marxism, Communism, Judaism all figure in what Bigsby styles "the corridors of Miller's work," which he aligns with care.

Bigsby explores Miller's preoccupations, with

family, for example, particularly father/son, and with America. With *Death of a Salesman*, he sifts through the many interpretations Miller himself offered and settles on the Beijing notebook statement that "*Death of a Salesman*, really, is a love story between a man and his son, and in a crazy way between both of them and America" (102). Indeed, even at an advanced age, Miller did not stop exploring that relationship: in *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* (1991), a play that Bigsby calls "a response to Reagan's America" (366), Lyman Felt undergoes (or undertakes) a crisis when he reaches the age at which his father died. Nor did Miller ever abandon the motif of the American dream. As Bigsby puts it in his discussion of *Mount Morgan*, "Loman, the loser salesman of *Death of a Salesman*, has become Lyman, the salesman who believes he has found a way to win" (368-69). In numerous plays, right up through *Resurrection Blues* and *Finishing the Picture*, Miller's wish for an unconflicted, reconstructed, fair-minded America is plain. As he moves through each successive chapter, Bigsby braids the instant work with the ones before it, creating a critical frame within which the synchronicity of Miller's work becomes both visible and clear.

I have two quibbles with Bigsby's book, neither of them serious. One is that Bigsby only infrequently acknowledges the critical work of other scholars. Though in the privileged position of a retrospective on Miller's entire career, and though abundantly equipped with primary material, Bigsby seldom touches base with the considerable body of secondary literature on Miller, which could well have enhanced his own analyses. The second is that Bigsby might have included more of his own experience with Miller's plays in performance. Although the interstices of chapters collectively form a production record and he does speak of performance within the chapters, one wishes that a scholar who has been so engaged with theater had more frequently dipped into his own recollections of how individual productions responded to the text and how audiences, himself included, responded to the plays. Indeed, the newly established production archive at the Museum of Television and Radio in New York and Los Angeles about which Susan C. W. Abbotson writes in the June 2004 *Newsletter* promises a bright future for performance scholarship on Miller. Whatever its records yield, however, will only embellish Bigsby's study, which is, in its own right, a substantial piece of scholarship and an immense achievement.

Arthur Miller Day

Roxbury, CT announced May 7, 2005 to be the town's first official Arthur Miller Day. A gathering at the Town Hall was attended by around 100 people, including Miller's son, Robert, daughter Rebecca and her two sons, and his daughter Jane, and her husband, Tom Doyle. Jane spoke of plans to bury Miller on his estate in Roxbury. First Selectman Barbara Henry referred to Miller as a "giant in our midst," adding, "We all knew it, but he was just a regular guy." She recalled discussions with Miller over the years about town water that was overflowing onto one of his fields, and other workaday matters.

A bust of Arthur Miller by Washington sculptor Philip Grausman stood on a pedestal at the front of the large Town Hall meeting room where everyone gathered. Tom Cole, Miller's neighbor on Tophet Road and one of his best friends during the last decade of his life, described Miller as "just the greatest friend you could have." Cole showed a series of black and white slide portraits of Miller, mostly taken by Inge Morath, with John Houston, Elia Kazan, sculptor Alexander Calder, Jerzy Kozinski, Saul Bellow and John Steinbeck, Pablo Naruda, William Styron and Ralph Ellison, with Roxbury Assessor Jackie Dooley, dancing in a Bicentennial celebration, with Broadway director Robert Whitehead, fishing rod in hand, baiting Mr. Whitehead's hook for a little recreation in the Miller pond, and with his children at home.

Rebecca spoke of her mother, and described her father as having led several lives -- as a resident of Roxbury, the one she knew best, but also as a celebrated playwright, and as a political activist -- and that he moved from one to another "without sentimentality." She recalled wanting a stereo for her birthday and getting one - handmade by her Dad, in wood, with enormous knobs and one speaker. Robert fondly remembered playing baseball in Roxbury, swimming in the creeks and walking the roads. Joe Godfrey, an actor and writer who lives in Roxbury, read Miller's poem "Lola" and other Roxbury residents recounted memories of the man they had known, from his tennis partner, Barbara Ungeheuer, to the people from the local drug store and farm stand. All spoke of a gracious and friendly individual who was involved in the daily life of the town. Henry closed by summing up Miller as "a resident, a great tipper at the Roxbury Market, a taxpayer and a regular guy."

ALA 2005 ABSTRACTS

Teaching Miller in Multiple Contexts

Music, Miller and Making the Classroom Sing

In this lecture/recital, I hoped to reveal the complex thematic unity reflected in the choices Miller makes for music in his plays. For the purpose of illustration, I focused on two examples, one well-known, and the other new to most instructors and scholars. The role of Paper Doll in *A View From The Bridge* has been commented on by several critics, who have pointed to the robber motif reflected in the song. I covered other aspects of the song, including the gender conflict and the inherent perversity of the lyrical content. Shenandoah, a river shanty from the 1820s is featured in *Clara*, yet has not yet received critical attention. Miller uses the folk song to jog the memory of Jack Kroll, the play s protagonist. Kroll cannot remember the name of his daughter Clara s murderer, until he hears himself sing Shenandoah on an old record that Clara had. Like Paper Doll, Shenandoah sets the tone for several important themes in the play, including racism and idealism.

By performing both songs, I hoped to illustrate that music is an effective tool for teaching Miller. I wrote that because a musical piece reflects its cultural milieu, it provides educators with a gateway to a myriad of discussions, including class, gender, historical and social elements, and many others. Performance aspects of both songs are further revealed when an instructor plays a recording or performs the music with the class collaboratively. Exposing students to the intricate connection between music and Miller s drama may give them a new appreciation for the works, while the music itself can help transform the predictability of many classrooms.

Carlos Campo, Community College of Southern Nevada

Towards a Humanistic Democracy: The Balancing Acts of Arthur Miller and August Wilson

Though a number of critics have pointed to a surface similarity between August Wilson's eighties play *Fences* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, the comparisons have mostly been disengenuous for they fail to show the more pervasive thematic similarities and authorial intents which exist between the works of these two major American playwrights. The 35 year time difference between the productions partly accounts for this, as any comparison between these playwrights works better by paying attention to the plays they were writing concurrently during the1980s and 1990s. Setting these two writers side by side helps draw out their surprisingly similar philosophic goals, and artistic means of achieving these, and to teach them together could only benefit a student's understanding of each. Given time constraints, I cannot possibly do any comparison full justice here, but I can at least make a case for a subject worthy of further study, and offer suggestions as to why it would be a valuable classroom pursuit

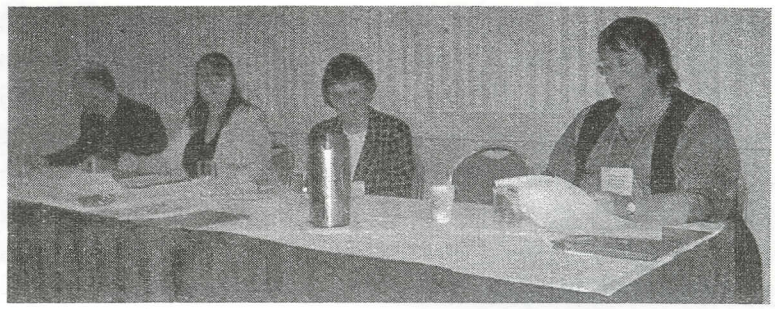
Susan C. W. Abbotson, Rhode Island College

Arthur Miller's New York

Literary critics have long focused on how certain novelists create geographical locations which function as central settings throughout many of the works in their canons. Of note are Thomas Hardy's Wessex, James Joyce's Dublin, Saul Bellow's Chicago, and William Faulkner's American South. For these novelists, the cultural, political, social, and religious histories of the geographical regions in which they were born and/ or lived became the subject of their work: the raw material of real places transformed into fictional landscapes.

In the same way, the playwright Arthur Miller used his native New York City and its surrounding environs as the central focus of many of his major dramas and fiction. Throughout his career, Miller transformed the defining experiences of his youth and early adulthood formed primarily on the streets and neighborhoods of the New York boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn and created a dramatic landscape where his characters encounter the cultures, ethnic, religious, and economic issues indigenous in twentieth century New York City.

The amount of work in which Miller used New York locations is staggering. Miller placed nine of his major plays in New York. *Death of a Salesman, A Memory of Two Mondays, A View From the Bridge, After the Fall, The Price, The American Clock, The Ride Down Mt. Morgan, Broken Glass, Mr. Peter's Connections* all have settings in which the characters' interactions with the cityscape significantly determine the events of the plays. Much of the action of Miller's only novel, *Focus,* occurs in the borough of Queens, and boldly confronts for the first time in American literature the issue of anti-Semitism. In addition, most of Miller's short fiction, especially the recent pieces in the *New Yorker, Esquire, The Atlantic Monthly,* and *Harper's* depict New York settings which are catalysts in the main characters' conflicts. In particular, his novella, *Homely*



From LtoR: Carlos Campo (Chair), Elizabeth Osbourne, Susan Koprince, Ruth Samuel Tenenholtz

Girl, A Life creates a sweeping landscape of time and emotion in Manhattan.

Stephen Marino, St Francis College

Identity in Miller; Communities, Character and Connections

Arthur Miller and Jewish Identity

The foundation for this article is twofold. First of all it is motivated by the belief that the Shoah was a "centering" experience which left its mark on Jews everywhere, and based on this premise I trace the connection between Arthur Miller's 1940s drama *All My Sons* and the Nuremberg Trials.

Secondly, the writings of American Jews, emotionally burdened with the knowledge of the wholesale murder of European Jewry during World War Two are too often interpreted as wholly reflecting the mainstream cultural experience, unless their material is overtly Jewish and/or Shoah oriented. Such a monolithic attitude may be seen as a kind of exclusion, resulting in the marginalization of part of the writer's ethnicity, and solutions for this predicament are also suggested here.

Ruth Samuel Tenenholtz, Haifa University, Israel

The Secret Life of Willy Loman: A Thurber-Miller Connection

When Arthur Miller's name is linked with that of humorist James Thurber, it is usually because of the two writers' outspoken opposition to McCarthyism. This paper, however, suggests that there is also an intertextual connection between the two authors; namely, that Miller's character Willy Loman, in Death of a Salesman (1949), is indebted in part to the daydreaming little man in Thurber's famous short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" (1939). Both Thurber and Miller, I argue, create an anti-hero who escapes from the stress and disillusionment of modern life through compulsive fantasizing and who seeks, above all, a sense of self-dignity. Moreover, both authors employ a blend of realism and expressionism, focusing (to paraphrase Miller's original title for his drama) on the inside of that character's head.

After highlighting some of the striking parallels between Walter Mitty and Willy Loman (e.g., they both daydream intensely while driving; they both picture themselves as dying heroically), my paper discusses some crucial differences between the two protagonists. Walter Mitty's fantasies, unlike Willy Loman's, are comical, exaggerated, and replete with Hollywood clichés; they do not include memories from Walter's past but simply present images of the intrepid, dashing man Walter would really like to be. In other words, Thurber does not attempt to create the "mobile concurrency of past and present" that Miller strives for in the dream sequences of his play. Furthermore, Walter appears to have greater control over his "secret life" than does Willy, whose dark thoughts repeatedly infect his reveries, transforming him into a more complex and troubled character. Willy Loman, in fact, can ultimately be viewed as a Walter Mitty manqué; for even in his private world of fantasy, Willy remains frustrated and trapped—never rising above his status as "little man," never securing a sense of self-dignity, and never displaying the heroic panache of "Walter Mitty the Undefeated."

Susan Koprince, University of North Dakota-Grand Forks

Pray for him: Communities, Characters, and Chaos in *A View from the Bridge*

In the "Introduction to *A View from the Bridge* (Two-Act Version)," Arthur Miller discusses his motivations for revising the play and the effect he perceives in those revisions. He describes the one-act version as "a hard, telegraphic, unadorned drama. Nothing was permitted which did not advance the progress of Eddie's catastrophe in a most direct way" (*Theatre Essays* 219). Miller defends this as an experiment both reminiscent of Greek tragedy and a product of the theatre's atmosphere

at the time (219). Unfortunately, his experiment did not succeed as he hoped; the original production was referred to as "cold" and closed quickly with little fanfare. A year after the play's dismal NY debut, Peter Brook directed the London premiere of the two-act version, dubbed a great success by audience members and critics alike.

How did Brook's version differ from the original one-act? What revisions did Miller complete prior to this second opening, and more importantly, what effect do these revisions have on the play itself? In my paper I compare portions of the two texts – the original one-act and the revised two-act – with an eye toward analyzing the cumulative effect of the rewrites. Miller credits two seemingly minor changes that he claims made all the difference – the inability of the English actors to produce an even remotely recognizable Brooklyn accent and the London pay scale that allowed the production to hire a crowd. Miller writes, "The mind of Eddie Carbone is not comprehensible apart from its relation to his neighborhood, his fellow workers, his social situation. His self-esteem depends upon their estimate of him, and his value is created largely by his fidelity to the code of his culture" (221). With these words, Miller points to the vital role of the community in *View from a Bridge*. Without the people of Red Hook – Eddie Carbone's community – his story is unable to rise to the tragic heights Miller intends. How does this community function in *View from a Bridge*? I would suggest that Miller's use of community is vital to the unfolding action of the play, the inevitability of the tragic story, and identification with the characters and theme of the play; once the various communities are involved, the repercussions of Eddie's actions extend beyond his own family, reverberating throughout Red Hook, Brooklyn, and even his ancestral home of Sicily.

Elizabeth Osborne, University of Maryland.

Call for Papers

Saint Peter's College

announces the rescheduled dates for

The Tenth International Arthur Miller Conference

Miller and the Voice of Moral Authority

Columbus Day Weekend:

Saturday October 8th and Sunday October 9th, 2005

at Saint Peter's College, Jersey City, NJ

Conference Chair: Lew Livesay

English Department, Saint Peter's College, 2641 John F. Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ 07306

Phone: 201 915 9325

Check the Society website for details about lodging and travel: http://www.ibiblio.org/miller

The college is located approx. one mile inland, heading west, from the Statue of Liberty. It is 45 minutes by public transportation to the Theatre District in Manhattan.

Papers should be submitted for consideration in a WORD.doc attached to an e-mail.

Send to LLivesay@spc.edu

Length: 20 minute presentationPlease send by August 1st, 2005

(Acceptances will be sent out on August 15th)

The theme of "Moral Authority" allows our typical wide latitude in looking at Mr. Miller's extensive career and artistry. The society has always considered a wide range of papers, with the one essential being that a paper must illuminate some aspect of Miller's writing. With Miller's recent death, we are open to papers that assess his position in Twentieth Century literature and social thought. Teaching panels and student involvement also continue to be highly encouraged.

Notes on Contributors

Sue Abbotson is the editor of this newsletter and her latest book *Masterpieces of Twentieth Century American Drama* , will be published by Greenwood this Fall. She is currently working on a lengthy study of Miller for Facts on File, *The Critical Companion to Arthur Miller.* She adjuncts at Rhode Island College, and is a past president of the Arthur Miller Society.

Carlos Campo Carlos Campo is the Interim Dean of Arts and Letters at the Community College of Southern Nevada, where he teaches drama. A former Vice President of the Miller Society, he has presented on many aspects of Miller's work, including friendship and marriage.

Susan Koprince Susan Koprince is a professor of English at the University of North Dakota,where she teaches courses in American fiction and drama. She is the author of *Understanding Neil Simon* (University of South Carolina Press, 2002) and of articles on Tennessee Williams, William Inge, Neil Simon, Edith Wharton,and others.

Stephen Marino teaches at Saint Francis College in Brooklyn and at Saint Francis Preparatory School in Fresh Meadows in New York, where he is chairperson of the English Department. His work has appeared in *Modern Drama* and *The Journal of Imagism.* He *edited"The Salesman Has a Birthday": Essays Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of Arthur Miller's* "Death of a Salesman (UP America 2000), and recently published *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays: The Poetic in the Colloquial* (Mellen 2002).

Elizabeth Osbourne is a doctoral candidate in Theatre & Performance Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her work focuses on 20th century American Theatre, particularly the Federal Theatre Project. She has presented papers at the annual meetings of Theatre Symposium, the F. Scott Fitzgerald Society, the American Comparative Literature Association, and the American Literature Association, and her article entitled Yankee Consternation in the Deep South: Worshipping at the *Altars of Steel* will be published in *Theatre Symposium* (2005).

June Schlueter is provost and Charles A. Dana Professor of English at Lafayette College, Easton, Pennsylvania. Among her books are *Metafictional Characters in Modern Drama* (1977), *The Plays and Novels of Peter Handke* (1981), *Arthur Miller* (1987), *Feminist Rereadings of Modern American Drama* (1989), *Modern American Drama: The Female Canon* (1990), and *Approaches to Teaching Beckett's "Waiting for Godot"* (1991).

Will Smith isWilliam Smith teaches English and is the department supervisor at Red Bank Regional High School in New Jersey. While studying English Literature at Drew University, Will wrote his Master's thesis about Arthur Miller's wood figurations. He presented two papers culled from this at the 2003 Arthur Miller conference that will be contained in Paul Langteau's forthcoming book, *Miller and Middle America.* Will is a member of the Arthur Miller Society and recently reviewed Martin Gottfried's biography of Miller for its newsletter. A singer-songwriter, Will also has released two CDs of original music and performs regularly.

Ruth Samuel Tenenholtz studied for her doctorate, which has been pending since September 2004, at Haifa University. Her focus for research is the influence of Shoah on contemporary Jewish writers, and she has also written about Danny Abse. She currently teaches English at Shaanan College, a teacher training college in Haifa, and has published a book of poetry, *Building Blocks* (1992).

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