
PSYCHOANALYTICAL SENSE OF TRAGIC DREAM: BEHIND THE FALL AND THE PRICE

Madhulika Singh, Dr. Tushthi Sharma

¹Research Scholar, ²Supervisor

^{1,2}Malwanchal University

Indore, Madhya Pradesh

ABSTRACT

Miller successfully synthesized diverse dramatic styles and movements in the belief that a play should embody a delicate balance between the individual and society, between the singular personality and the polity, and between the separate and collective elements of life. Miller is a writer of social plays whose concern with the moral problems in American society led him to probe the psychological causes of behavior. He builds on the realist tradition of Henrik Ibsen in his exploration of the individual's conflict with society but also borrows Symbolist and expressionist techniques from Bertolt Brecht and others. He bases his plays on the assumption of an objective reality that is comprehensible as well as a subjective reality that makes life problematic and ambiguous. Therefore, all attempts to interpret his work from either an exclusively political or an exclusively psychological standpoint fail, for Miller regards his plays as indissoluble amalgamations of inner and outer realities.

Key words : American society, amalgamations

INTRODUCTION:

In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss, describe, and analyze how Arthur Miller presents his different angle of tragic vision in the plays *After the Fall* (1964) and *The Price* (1968). These plays do not have core essence of tragedy as other plays of Miller, but conversely these plays have materialistic approach of modern relationship which makes the atmosphere gloomy and tragic. The play *After the Fall* in the form of dramatic monologue is a journey of a central protagonist towards self-revelation through different tragic experiences. The next section of this paper analyses the modern sense of tragic vision blending with materialistic and utilitarian approach as reflected in *The Price*.

The Psychoanalytical Sense of Tragic Vision in After the Fall:

Arthur Miller's journey as a modern American dramatist with his unique portrayal of tragic vision of life blossomed to fruition with the publication of *After the Fall* (1964). Miller wrote his peculiar social tragedy *A View from the Bridge* in 1956, and went off the stage writing for long period of eight years. During this period, Miller passed through various tragic experiences of inquiry by HUAC, accusation of treason under McCarthyism and frustration in personal life. The decade of sixties to seventy witnessed noteworthy change in Miller's tragic vision of life from general concerns of daily existence to a vital problem of human predicament of failure of human relationships and collapse of family affiliation.

Arthur Miller has written the tragedies like *All my Sons* and *A View from the Bridge* from heard sources. The tragedy of *The Crucible* is written from historical sources, but Miller wrote *After the Fall* from the source of his mind. The play *After the Fall* was performed on American stage in 1964 at 'Washington square theatre' in Newyork and showed the most successful debating hits of the stage. The play received various interpretations by critics as 'autobiographical', 'commercial' but finally concluded as "impressive work of art". It is the most introspective play of Miller. It is an interior monologue with fine blending of stream of consciousness and flashback of events. The play origins in the mind of the protagonist, develops in the mind of the protagonist and ends in the mind with hope of survival. In the words of Miller it is "a trial of man by his own conscience, by his own values and own deeds".

After the Fall: A Trial of Human Consciousness

Arthur Miller does not believe in arts for art's sake. Miller's plays emerge from real images with the portrayal of such modern characters which face the problems, predicaments and situations which appeal and charm to the modern man. Miller in his collected essays says:

I am not calling for more ideology as Ustinov implies. I am simply asking for a theatre in which an adult who wants to live can find plays that will heighten the awareness of what living in our time involves. I am tired of a theatre of sensation, that's all.

Miller in *After the fall* has made new experiment of exploring the depth of human psychology which is quite different from his earlier tragedies. The play is a new form of 'psychological thriller' where neither the beginning, nor the middle and where no end is certain and logical. The plot structure of this tragedy is an amalgamation of different fragments of human psyche and some bitter memories of his past which has disturbed his present. The play is a trial of the human past, human present and its future. Miller has advocated different sense of tragic vision where audience perceive different shades of tragedy in protagonist's life.

In *After the Fall*, Miller widened his visionary power of tragedy and its place, scope in human life. In this play Miller advocates new sense of tragic vision where tragedy happens in modern man's life in absence of Hamartia, where there is no physical violence or aberrational action by the protagonist or because of pressure of social evils on tragic hero. Tragedy in this play happens only in the mind of protagonist and guilt of the protagonist is judged by the mind. It is a tragedy of mind judged and observed by the mind as pointed in stage directions that "The action takes place in the mind, thought, and memory of Quentin".(ATF1) The listener in the tragedy is an imaginary character. It may be God, or may be some psychoanalyst or some regard it as Quentin himself. Miller has adopted complete new technique for expression of psychological turmoil of the protagonist. The horrible past events happened in the life of Quentin, his failure to establish cordial relations with his former two wives, the culture of betrayal he has witnessed in his childhood, tense conjugal life of his parents, his mother's infidelity against his father and all other events and memories boils and heats his mind; that he is sometime confused and sometimes he searches for the 'separate identity' of human being at present. It is the tragedy of association and disassociation of the past and present of the human being. Quietens failure to make relations with his mother, father, brother, friends, his clients and specially with three women in his life like Louise, Maggie and Holga opens the trial of his sub conscious mind and the tragedy takes place in his life. These characters peep out in the mind of the Quentin in the form of his past memories. B.N. Englewood says that:

...The play does not unfold in a linear arc but in a series of recollections and associations as Quentin's thought glide back and forth in time and space. Everything the audience sees is viewed through the reflector of his memory, and consequently the viewer never gets an objective picture of any of the people in Quentin's life. They are ghosts, phantoms flaring fitfully in the recesses of a mind questing over its own surfaces and into its depths.

Quentin's first wife Louise is romantic and open minded woman. She wanted free and well relations with her husband Quentin. She wanted love and affection from her husband but Quentin does not fulfil her common demands. He has materialistic and puppet doll attitude for a woman. Louise accuses him that he does not 'what woman is'. Quentin expects from his wife that she should not make any complains and no daily issues should put before him. This is not possible in life. Conjugal life is a fine mixture of quarrel, anger, insistence, sulk and morose. Quentin wanted an ideal wife where there is only praise of him. Faded with Quentin's such unkind, unrealistic and too much idealistic approach Louise separates from her husband and she wanted 'separate identity' with the approach of 'separate human being'. They married for seven long years under one shade, but live like unknown persons.

None of ideas, likes, dislikes etc. is matched between husband and wife. It is true that some absurdness has prevented Quentin to love with Louise. Even no attempt is made by Quentin to understand Louise's concern and feelings. And finally she divorced from Quentin. Although, Louise divorced physically from Quentin but she is not divorced from his mind. She still lurks in his mind. After divorce her sweet memories disturb Quentin with some memorable golden moments passed with her. Quentin narrates to unknown Listener his psyche and the turmoil going on in his mind.

After Louise, Quentin makes his second relations with pop singer Maggie. Maggie is very bold and open minded woman. Critics call the character of Maggie with Marlin Monroe. Marlin was most charming and highly paid Hollywood actress of America with whom Arthur Miller married in the year of 1956 and after five years of conjugal life divorced in 1961. Quentin meets Monroe in one pub and fell in love with her at first sight. Both married with pre condition that they will not dig their past. However this does not happen. The past memories of Louise still haunt Quentin, whereas the glamorous past of Maggie does not find any pleasure and happiness with Quentin. She wanted complete love and affection from Quentin, but unfortunately he does not give her what she wants. On the very first day of their wedding he says to Maggie that "you want more love" (ATF31). Finally Maggie is disturbed psychologically and turns to be drunkard. She drinks too much in a day that she lives in bed for whole day. She turns to smoking too. Later on for sleep she is habituated for sleeping pills. Finally, one day she commits suicide. Thus, Quentin's second life with Maggie comes to pathetic end with unfulfilled desire of Maggie's true love. It is to note that all these characters do not appear practically on the stage, but appears in the mind of Quentin.

Thereafter Quentin meets Holga as his third love as a refugee at German concentration camp. Holga wanders and escapes from life in search of 'innocence'. She believes that after inhuman massacre of Jews no one is 'innocent' in the world. Although Quentin likes Holga but he does not dare to express his love to her. The past failure of relations with Louise and Maggie still haunts Quentin. He has so many doubts and dilemma in the mind, yet he accepts Holga as his third life partner. He fairly says to Holga that, "I tell you frankly. I am little afraid" (ATF 13). He hopes something strange from Holga which could help him to find the true meaning of the existence of human being. He has learnt a lot from his past two divorces. He is perplexed. He is oscillated between the tragic choice of whether to marry with Holga or not. He wants to introspect hardly for the failure of his early relations with two women. Quentin wants to know the root cause of his failures. He blames for him self. He realizes that his cold attitude for his two wives Louise and Maggie has ended in tragic end of their relations. Louise once asks him, "What do you need a wife for? (ATF37). Louise's ardent urge for love has harmed his personality and mind, whereas Maggie has jerked him out of his self-satisfaction. Then at the end Quentin believes that human existence is useless and worthless. The failures in relations makes him sceptical for life and love for others. The failure to maintain relations with others make Quentin conscious and he trials his own mind for the selfishness, guilt, prejudice and hatred for others and inferiority complex. He attempts to find the essence of life. He is forced to examine the errors. He makes fair mind trial of his childhood, his youth, his relations with parents and brothers, relations with friends and clients and finally relations with his three life partners. His failure to maintain relations with others left him nowhere and he passes through various mental tragic sufferings. At the end he finds himself frustrated, alienated and heartbroken. Miller has skilfully touched the issue of psychological dilemma of modern man. In *After the Fall* Miller makes trial of human psyche, evil inherent in man, hatred of man, inferiority complex and malevolence. The play is considered as fine psycho drama. It is the tragedy of conflict of human consciousness with all those internal forces which affects the lives of human being. The trial of self-consciousness of the protagonist is made by the protagonist with some imaginary ghostly characters. It is apt to call the play as 'trial of consciousness of the protagonist, by the protagonist and for the protagonist'. It is also 'a trial of the mind, by the mind

and for the mind'. Even after two failures to maintain relations with woman, Quentin expects love and life from Holga. The trial ends with notes of optimism.

After the fall: Tragedy of Quentin's fall

From the opening of his literary career, Arthur Miller has tried to give the convincing stylishness with 'an assessment of life'. He has attempted to keep the balance between subjective and objective truth of life. Instead of piling the issues and concerns of modern man, Miller has more interest in providing the way for the solution of the human concerns. The tragedy *After the Fall* is not only the fall of one individual, but the fall of Quentin is the fall of human psyche. John Milton in *Paradise Lost* has referred the prime cause of the fall of our grandparents. Man's first disobedience to god has caused the first fall of mankind. The archetypal characters of Adam and Eve brought sorrow, sense of defilement, agony, tragic sufferings, betrayal and breakage in the human relations. It was not only physical fall of Adam and Eve but it marked the fall of human consciousness.

Quentin's failure to maintain relations with all persons in his life is marked as the fall of human consciousness. He marries with Louise, but completely failed to establish relations of romance, love and affection with her. He has maintained very formal relations with Louise where he feels that by reading a 'brief' he has done his duty to the wife. He sees his mother in his wife. Once, his mother has locked him in the house and went for a trip. It has made such strong impact on the mind of Quentin that he also behaves same with his wife Louise. It is just an 'Oedipus Complex' in Quentin's life. His over attachment with his mother and expecting the same love, attachment and affection from his wife Louise is the first moral fall of Quentin. He fails to break the chains of psychological bondage with his mother and wife and hence he could not maintain good relations with either. Quentin's inferiority complex stands as big obstacle in inter personal relationship between mother and son and between husband and wife. In *Paradise Lost* 'fall' was ensured because of Eve's failure to keep the trust of Adam. In *After the Fall* 'fall' is ensured because of Quentin's failure to maintain relations with woman. Quentin does not run up smooth relations with his first wife Louise. He fails to understand wife's feelings, emotions and expectations. Louise blames him for his 'cold love' that, "I know you don't. You have no conception what a woman is. You think I am some sort of ... I don't know what I am to you"(ATF28). Quentin replies her that he takes every care of her. He says that last night he has read her brief. Louise responses, "Quentin you think reading a brief to woman is talking to her"(ATF 29). Both live seven long years together but they do not have cordial relations of wife and husband. Louise alleges that:

I don't intend to be ashamed of myself any more. I used to think it was normal; or even that you don't see me because I am not worth seeing. But I think now that you don't really see any woman. Except in some ways your mother. You do sense her feelings; you do know when she is unhappy or anxious, but not me or any other woman.

Miller specifically intensifies and exposes the hollowness of the relationship between modern wife and husband. It is not more that 'waste land' of conjugal relationship. Woman is an integral part of human relationship. Woman could enter in human life as a mother, sister, daughter, friend, beloved and wife. It is a duty of a man to handle all such relations with in the framework of social codes. It is a duty of a man in male dominated society to provide maximum cooperation, love, affection, and care to 'woman'; whoever she is in the life of man.

Quentin does not understand the depth of his wife's world, does not love her, does not care her, does not communicate with her and finally worst to say does not make sexual relations with her. Therefore tired and troubled by Quentin's cold attitude for her, she decides to live separately and finally divorces. Quentin's fiasco of relationship with Louise may be regarded as 'fall' of husband. Louise expresses to

her husband that, “We don’t seem married”(ATF25). Quentin regards Louise as an element of pleasure and praise for husband. He considers that merely praise of wife could satisfy her. Quentin praises his wife with sweet words but there is no any emotional bond between these two souls. Louise blames her husband that, “You want to provide an atmosphere, in which there are never any issues, and you’ll swim around in a constant bath of praise”(ATF 46). About failure of understanding Louise’s feelings and expectations Quentin blames himself. He openly confesses his moral fall. He even admits that he has not kept relations with others too. He misses the line of relationship in his social, familial and conjugal relationship. He says that, “I hate the world, hate woman, hate men, hate all”. In Milton’s ‘Paradise Lost’ tragedy and suffering in Adam and Eve’s life were brought after their fall from paradise; and their happy life comes to an end. Similarly after the moral and psychological fall of Quentin and Louise both quit their relations and divorced. The tasting of forbidden fruit marks an end to the happiness and innocence of the human being. In biblical mythology Adam and Eve’s sin was for innocence, but in Miller’s modern bible of human survival; Quentin and his three wives sinned for guilt and losing the innocence. All the characters in *After the Fall* have been ‘fallen’ from somewhere. It is not sure whether these characters ‘fall’ from heaven or ‘fall’ from earth to somewhere, but it is sure that all characters ‘fall’. Miller points out that Quentin is responsible for the both physical and psychological death of his two wives Louise and Maggie. Louise has fallen psychologically and Maggie has fallen both physically and psychologically. Miller himself believes that ‘evil’ exists in every human being. It is ‘evil’ which forced Eve for her ‘fall’ from the paradise and it is pre-existed ‘evil’ which caused the fall of Quentin.

The Psychoanalytical Sense of Tragic Vision in *The Price*:

The Price another notable typical modern tragedy of Arthur Miller appeared on the stage in 1968 and lasted for 425 stage performances. Miller wrote *Death of a Salesman* and *All my Sons* with special focus on family tragedy; whereas the plays *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge* handled the theme of social and community vision. After *Incident at Vichy* staged in 1964, Miller keep aloof from the writing. Then after four years of long gap, Miller returns back to family concerns and loss of familial values with *The Price*. Along with the hollowness of American dream, failure and disintegration of family appealed to Miller in Seventy and Eighties; and he turned to domestic tragic vision. The play is “new face of Miller” (Kerr1). The play is good potential of tragedy although it does not contain any violence, murder, crime, bloodshed and suicide.

Miller’s Psychoanalytical Sense of Tragic Vision:

Arthur Miller’s unique tragedy *After the Fall* showed different psychoanalytical sense of tragic vision, as the play appears in the mind of the protagonist, characters appears in the mind of Quentin and develops in the mind of the tragic hero. Miller’s journey with innovative narrative of probing into the psychology of human continued with creation of *The Price*. The two brothers Walter and Victor Franz confront with each other on the remembrance of their past. Both brothers show different approaches to their past events. Mr.Franz is no more, but his character appears on the stage through his past memories. He exists on the stage in arm chair. Both brothers remind their past and interlink it for current failure in their life. Arthur Miller’s all tragic heroes suffer from psychological sufferings. Miller’s heroes are torn between psychological oscillations. Their past hovers in their mind. Willy Loman, Joe Keller, Quentin and Franz brothers are victims of their psychological guilt. Through psychological interpretations both brothers try to defend themselves as right fellows. The conflict in the play has no linking with the present situation and events, but it has direct connection with the past memories of Franz brothers. The stark realities of past and the present reality collide in the meet of two brothers. First act of the play runs in present time, but the climax of the play comes in second Act when two brothers meet and dig their past. They don’t know what they are talking and how they are behaving.

The Price: Miller's Existential Sense of Tragic Vision:

The term Existentialism emerged in 19th and 20th century with vast interpretations and doctrines. The father of Existentialism Sorren Kiergard believed that despite of many despair, anguish, absurdity, alienation, and world- weariness human being live a life in search of some meaning, identity and existential view to his life. Although Kiergard has propounded theory of Existentialism with vast doctrines, the Millarian view of existentialism out of which his tragic vision is associated is limited. In an existential world monarch, queens, dukes and duchess or other persons of aristocratic linkage has less value. It believes that common modern man struggles hard for self-identity and survival in commercial driven world. The Existential world also believes that human being gets more glory when he fights for his own existence against the individual nature. In *The Price*, Franz brothers are victims of their own individual nature of over ambition. Franz brothers struggle is only for the sake of seeking some meaning and value to their life where they failed miserably. Walter left home for the sake of seeking meaning to his life. Both brothers ended their relations for no reason. However Walter's harsh decision to be a part from father and brother did not find any meaning to his life. He realized that life is not only hostile but futile too.

Existential view also believes that "Society is strange and its customary and secular rules are capricious and against the ease for human living". *The Price* is a fitting example to this doctrine. The tragedy of Walter and Victor Franz is more societal than individual. Miller catches his own sense of tragic vision in such existential philosophy. He himself is a victim of such arbitrary societal rules and laws. Therefore Franz brothers' tragedy is more social than domestic or family tragedy. Here Miller has propounded complete new sense of tragic vision through the portrayal of Walter and Victor Franz. Human life is a vast gallery of problems, issues, uncertainties in our day to day life. Modern man every day makes honest attempt to find out some meaning to it facing all these odds. The main concern of Existentialists is the state of mind of a man which includes emotions, agony, fault, guilt, betrayal, atonement, remorse etc. For Miller tragedy is the highest form of literary art which aims search of human existence which may be either meaningless or optimistic.

CONCLUSION:

The subsequent section of this paper brings out Miller's psychoanalytical sense of tragic vision, his ideas, and his thoughts as reflected in the play *The Price*. *The price* is the play where no major or minor character is either dead or commits suicide. The play presents confrontation between two brothers on the issue of distribution of patrimony share. The play has only four characters and there resides one more internal character within the mind of the main character. Miller has analyzed the psychology, reasons behind absurd behavior, human tendency behind human vices and virtues. Miller has deeply probed into the psychology of common modern man where he makes mad pursuit of 'name and fame'. The two brothers Walter and Victor separated for nothing, they remain departed for nothing and fail to reunite for nothing. The play has portrayed typical tragic vision of Arthur Miller where none of Aristotelian principle of tragedy is followed, yet the play has good potential of modern tragedy. Miller through the characters of Victor and Walter Franz has commented, discussed the futility if money making and the need of love and affection in life. The play suggests that despite of money Walter Franz ends as a tragic hero of the play as he lefts "no more, nowhere and no care".

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