Al-Adab Journal **Issue. No (155) (December) 2025**

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 **P-ISSN: 1994-473X**

Psychological Depth and Moral Collapse: A Dual Reading of *All My Sons*

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.31973/s7xymq77

Abstract:

Arthur Asher Miller (1915-2005) was an American playwright, novelist, and short story writer. His works examine a wide range of social, moral, and psychological themes, often focusing on the human condition, ethical dilemmas, and the consequences of individual actions within a broader societal framework. He was concerned with not only the American man but also the contemporary man in general. By shedding light on the conflicts and turmoils lived by common people in their domestic lives, Miller reflects on how man's attitude is shaped by society that cares about the outer image of the individual. *All My Sons* (1949), his first notable work, tackles those themes and reflects the individual's struggle between oneself and society. This research aims to analyses the psychological aspects of the individual and how societal forces influence one's life. By applying Carl Gustav Jung's (1874-1961) concepts of the Archetypes, the individuation process and Jacques Lacan's (1901-1981) concept of the big Other, the research presents an understanding of the individual and the effect of society upon him. The research presents a comprehensive understanding of the character's behavior and inner selves. It draws attention to the importance of addressing societal pressures, and how they influence the individual.

Key words: the Shadow, the Ruler archetype, individual, individuation process, the big Other

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

I. An Introduction

Arthur Miller is a moral guide for American society and contemporary society. He addresses not only the moral, social, political, economic, and psychological issues faced by individuals but also the deeper metaphysical aspects of current problems. He seeks to connect the tragedy depicted in his plays with the tragedy of contemporary society. The events of his plays usually occur in a society characterised by a lack of moral values and a metaphysical emptiness, illustrating the despair of modern social existence. The tragic situations in his plays arise from personal failure, unhappy family conditions, socio-economic forces, guilt consciousness, conflicts, and loneliness. His protagonists' lives are characterized by frustration, insecurity, self-delusion, a quest for identity, and self-absorption. The protagonist's hidden and deepest feelings are revealed. The characters that come to life are portrayed as victims of misguided values and a corrupt social system. A person understands that their identity extends beyond themselves and their family to encompass the broader world. In his plays, tragedy arises not only from the conflicts between man and woman, father and son, and individual and society, but also from the protagonist's internal and external experiences (Ray, 1992).

Plot of *All My Sons*

All of this can be seen in his first major play *All My Sons,* that concerns a manufacturer of aircraft engines, Joe Keller, who, under pressure of wartime production, allows a batch of faulty cylinder heads to be supplied to the Army Air Force in the knowledge that they may cause catastrophic failure and thus endanger life. He does so rather than risk losing his contract and thus possibly his business, the business he wishes to pass on to his sons. In the subsequent court case, he denies responsibility, insisting that he had not visited the plant on the day in question and allowing his business partner and neighbor, Steve Deever, to take the blame. At the time, Deever’s daughter, Ann, had been engaged to the Kellers’ son, Larry, himself serving in the Air Force.

In order to provide for his own family, Keller makes the sacrifice of a n-other. When Larry, a pilot, goes missing, Kate Keller refuses to acknowledge his death, not least because to do so would be to accept a symbolic connection between her husband’s action and her own loss. The play opens as their other son, Chris Keller, invites Ann to stay, intending to propose a marriage that will, effectively, signify public acknowledgement of Larry’s death and thus precipitate a crisis for all of them as past and present are brought into immediate confrontation.

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

Subsequently, Chris has some concerns regarding his father and addresses him regarding those concerns. This leads to a confrontation that results in a physical altercation between the two, while Keller asserts that he would take his own life if there were anything more significant than family. Ann presents a letter from Larry, which serves as evidence that she has been withholding information from the family. She desires for Kate to release Chris from the falsehood regarding Larry; however, due to Kate's refusal, she is compelled to reveal the truth. Chris is unable to continue in Keller's business and will seek a new life. He and his father have another fight, and Keller advises him to dispose of the family money if he views it as unclean. Chris acknowledges that he idolized Keller without question and now perceives reality more clearly.
Ann decides to share Larry's letter, revealing the information that ulti m-ately divides the family. In the letter, Larry admits to taking his own life as a reaction to Keller's crime, and Keller reacts to this news by silently stating that he now understands, and then he goes inside to take his own life. The play concludes with Kate embracing Chris, attempting to console him, and urging him to continue living.

General insight

All My Sons, which won the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for best play of 1947, is the work that began Miller's long and notable career in the theatre. Although it may not be considered his best or most significant play, it undeniably holds a special position in his canon of work. It marks his first major theatrical success, showcases his remarkable ability to manage dramatic structure, and hints at even greater accomplishments from one of America's foremost playwrights (Centola, 2006).

Additionally, Miller started writing the play during the Great Depression of the 1930s, that significantly diminished the status of many fathers by removing their role as providers. Following the Depression, World War II highlighted these family challenges. Fathers, sons, and husbands were removed from their homes due to the draft, with some not returning. Regarding the war, Miller's mother-in-law, Julia Slattery, informed him about a young girl in Ohio who reported her father to the FBI for producing defective aircraft parts during the war. The concept for a play centred on a war profiteer emerged from that piece of gossip, yet the characters and intricate relationships presented are distinctly Miller's creation (Abboston, 2007). Such a play about war profiteering that opened shortly after the end of the World War II would likely have been significantly painful for the audience, given the many who had suffered similar losses of a

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son, a brother, or a fiancé. Even for individuals whose situations differ from those in *All My Sons*, the play indicates that grief and responsibility are shared among all (Ackerman, 2013).

Moreover, the play is frequently seen as a work significantly shaped by the social plays of Henrik Ibsen, particularly in its traditional structure, the manner in which the past impacts the present, and its commitment to realism. At the time of writing the play, Miller was resolved to write a realistic play that would be broadly accepted in a theatre environment largely focused on realism (Abboston, 2007). He observed in Ibsen's social dramas methods that were both ethical and pragmatic. The play is influenced by the dramatic structure and strong moral perspective present in Ibsen's writings. Additionally, *All My Sons* has been acknowledged as Miller's most Ibsenesque play, both by Miller himself and by various critics. He has also recognized his technical debt to Ibsen for demonstrating how to illustrate the principle of causality in events. This principle indicates that all real events necessarily have a cause. It assures the existence of a logical relationship between two events, the cause and the effect, and an order between the two. However, the most Ibsenesque element of the play is its theme, which focuses on the individual's responsibility to society, even at the cost of family obligations (Murphy, 2011).

In addition, the structure of a play is essential, as it shapes the plot, connects scenes, and leads to a significant climactic event. *All My Sons* is Miller's most traditional play in terms of structure, and it poses the provocative question of whether a modern tragedy can exist. Regarding the play, these comments raise the question of whether Kell er is a tragic hero. This question may be addressed considering Miller's own terms since his 1949 essay *Tragedy and the Common Man* (1949) goes on to argue that "[t]ragedy enlightens – and it must, in that it points the heroic finger at the enemy of man's freedom" (Miller, 1949, p. 2). The desire for freedom is the aspect of tragedy that elevates it. The questioning of the stable environment is what causes fear; this is seen throughout the play when Chris questions his father's seemingly stable environment (Ackerman, 2013).

Also, the structure of tragic drama typically starts in a state of order and gradually falls into chaos. The structure of the play rests on Miller's vision as he expresses in *Timebends* that when the hand of the distant past emerges, it is both surprising and strange, leading one to question its authenticity. It appears to uncover some unreadable hidden order behind the seemingly random events one observes in a rational manner. That emergence is, in fact, a central theme of *All My*

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Sons–that there are moments when things truly come together. Therefore, the hints and clues regarding who possesses certain knowledge must be accessible to audiences without disclosing too much prematurely; this is not merely about the audience's suspense but also about the suspense of the characters. Not only do connections exist between the present and the past, or between events and their moral consequences, but also between the visible and the hidden (Ackerman, 2013). In the play, Miller creates and unveils dramatic action that, through its progression –through the creation, suspension, and resolution of tension; its relentless advance towards tragic confrontation—demonstrates that the past is always present and cannot be overlooked, forgotten, or denied (Murphy, 1997). He skilfully elicits the audience's sympathy for Keller prior to disclosing his crime. This man spends time playing games with the neighbourhood children. He is friendly and uncomplicated, earning the admiration of his idealistic son and the respect of the neighbours who recognise his contributions. His human aspect is completely engaging. He is a tough businessman, one who may have indirectly caused the deaths of 21 pilots and manipulated another individual into accepting full responsibility, though there appear to be mitigating factors (Abboston, 2007).

Moreover, Miller's critique focuses on personal awareness and social change, emphasising the methods through which these goals can be attained. His ability to explore the individual and social psyche relies on the potential for effective communication, viewing theatrical language as a means for human connection and understanding. His unwavering determination to explore both his own psyche and that of humanity, along with his ability to formulate hypotheses about the human experience based on his findings, leads to broad and often critical conclusions, which contribute to the compelling and powerful nature of his plays (Barker, 2010). This play explores the individual's responsibility for his actions and the obligations he has to society. The crime at its core highlights the conflict between individual self-interest and collective human solidarity. However, it encompasses much more than this. There remain traces of Miller, who, in 1941, outlined a character he would ultimately not employ, yet who embodied a conflict that would emerge in *All My Sons*. This character was neither a worker nor a member of the bourgeoisie but was instead corrupted by the notion of opportunity. The play, especially in its early drafts, conveys a belief that idealism and justice are ultimately undermined by materialism and the corruptions that accompany a desire for success (Bigsby, 2010).

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Accordingly, Miller's works can be approached in various ways; understanding the psychological aspects of his heroes is among the most notable ones. Each of his heroes engages in a struggle that stems from their acceptance or rejection of an image shaped by the values and prejudices of their society. Despite his recognition as a good husband and father, Keller fails to live up to his son Chris's expectations of a good man and citizen. Chris emphasises that, for him, there is a greater concern than the family, but Keller does not believe so. More intriguing than the exposure and consequences of Keller's crime is Keller as a uniquely American figure. He is a self-made individual, an apparently successful entrepreneur who still carries the influence of his background as a machine-shop worker and manager. His ambitions are modest, focusing on providing a comfortable home for his family and establishing a successful business to pass down to his sons (Weales, 1962).

Jungian Reading of *All My Sons*

Keller's character can be perceived through Jung's idea of the Shadow, which represents the darker and hidden parts of the self that a person represses and denies. These parts can emerge and appear under pressure or stress, and they usually affect the other people surrounding the individual. While Keller is unable to accept the fact that he can be responsible for the death of his son alongside the 21 pilots, he denies his actions and moral failings, and he does not take responsibility for them. Through a Jungian lens, one can shed light on Keller's unconscious motivations driving his actions, which ultimately lead to his downfall. His unconscious parts of the psyche conflict with his perfect self-image that he creates for himself and believes it. Yet, these parts still shape his actions. His Shadow is evident in the way he selectively justifies his actions. He claims that he did it for the family and specifically for his son Chris. He says to him, "what the hell did I work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin' - match is for you" (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p. 102). This shows that he believes his actions can be justified if they stem from a sense of protection for the family's financial stability. Obaid says, "[a] guilty reduces his sense guilt by reducing responsibility or wrong self-forgiveness. He tries to reduce his emotional desirability for the crime by trying to change his feelings about the event" (Obaid, 2021, p. 7). This psychological mechanism and rationalisation reflect his Shadow since his self-interest and moral compromise are hidden behind an appearance of paternal dedication. Moreover, not only he justifies his behaviour by claiming it is all for the family's sake, he puts the blame on his business partner Steve Deever, so he projects his guilt to another

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person. In so doing, he allows himself to preserve an appearance of innocence and dedication in the eyes of his family, neighbours, and even himself. An indication of his nearly perfect outer image is the fact that the family's neighbour Sue describes his family as holy when she tells Ann, "I resent living next door to the Holy Family. It makes me look like a bum, you understand?" (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p. 131). Hence, Keller would certainly wish to maintain such a reputation. He tries to satisfy his self-image by deceiving himself and avoiding confronting the ethical darkness within him until the consequences are inescapable. By repressing these aspects of himself, he avoids an uncomfortable confrontation with his Shadow, where his selfishness, guilt, and moral weakness reside.

Keller's denial enables him to maintain a positive self-image as "a man among men" (Miller, 1955, Act 1, p. 90) who sacrifices for his family, even though, deep down, he may suspect this image is flawed. His inability to integrate these darker, hidden aspects into his conscious self-awareness is what Jung would consider a failure to reconcile with the Shadow. It is also a failure in the individuation process that involves recognising and accepting one's Shadow and becoming aware of the integration of the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche. Jung asserts that this process is necessary for the individuals in order to reach a more complete and balanced version of themselves. For him, the self represents the totality of the psyche, and it embodies unity and wholeness among the conscious ego and the unconscious parts of mind (Jung, 1959). The individuation leads the individual to achieve a harmonious and deep sense of being, which is something that Keller does not achieve as he is unable to live in harmony with his inner and outer worlds.

Moreover, Jung argues that denying and repressing the Shadow does not eliminate it but rather strengthens its unconscious influence over one's actions (Jung, 1959). In Keller's case, his denial becomes increasingly destructive, poisoning his relationships with those around him and, ultimately, leading to his downfall. He denies, starts to explain, seeks understanding, and continues to the shadowy space where the other man's responsibility becomes his absolution. His denial prevents him from neither understanding nor accepting the full impact of his actions, allowing him to continue living as though nothing were wrong. His actions and decisions show an underlying motivation to safeguard his self-image and the reputation of his family. As Jung sees it, if unconscious processes exist, they must be part of the whole individual, even if they are not elements of the conscious self. If they were associated with the ego, they would have

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to be conscious, as all aspects directly linked to the ego are conscious. Consciousness can be understood as the relationship between the ego and the psychic contents. However, unconscious phenomena are often so disconnected from the ego that many individuals readily deny their existence altogether. And this is the case with Keller; though he consciously denies his actions, there is an unconscious motive behind it that leads him to do so. This is why he is unable to achieve full integration between the conscious and unconscious parts of the mind. The psychological divide between his ideal self-image and the suppressed Shadow fosters an illusion in which he perceives he can evade accountability. As the play unfolds and the truth emerges, the carefully built world he created starts to fall apart.

Simultaneously, Miller employs a Greek tragic structure in the play that revolves around themes of fate. Keller is destined to die, influenced both by his identity and the environment surrounding him. The Greeks held the view that a world governed by fates was influenced by the gods, whereas Miller argues that individuals' characters play a more significant role in shaping their destinies. He believes that failure should not be attributed to an unclear hostile fate but rather to individuals who do not accept their responsibilities and their connection to others. Keller's character flaws are what led to his defeat, rather than any divine authority. He knowingly shipped defective aircraft parts, which could have led to multiple fatalities. In an effort to preserve his business, he has endangered others. His refusal to accept responsibility for his actions leads to guilt that ultimately destroys his relationships with the sons he wished to have followed in his footsteps, as well as his own sense of self. After he committed the crime, his fate was determined, and it was only a matter of time before the consequences would return (Abboston, 2007).

In addition, working with and understanding the Shadow is essential for reaching a sense of psychological wholeness. A wholeness that involves recognising and accepting the parts of oneself that one might usually hide, rather than ignoring them or blaming others for them. Keller, however, does not integrate his Shadow; instead, he keeps denying it until the final act. What complicates his situation more is the fact that he calls his business partner with traits that suit him more. He talks to George about his father and tells him, “[a]s long as I know him, twenty-five years, the man never learned how to take the blame. You know that, George” (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p. 151). This is ironical because, in reality, Keller unknowingly is describing himself with those words. He makes it very clear that he is the one who is unable to take the blame for his actions and not Steve,

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who is in prison because of Keller's inability to take responsibility. In most of the play, Keller neither faces the truth about what he has done nor accepts his guilt, allowing his Shadow to unknowingly control how he acts. He finally realises the shame that comes with his responsibility when he has to face the outcomes of his choices. Since he is unable to integrate his Shadow, the only way to fix what he has done is by taking his own life since he realises the seriousness of his actions and he feels that there is no turning point in front of him.

Furthermore, the archetypes appear in literature as repeated plot patterns, images, or character types. They can evoke deep emotions in all audiences because they tap into images held in the collective unconscious, leading to feelings or emotions that are familiar to the audience (Bressler, 2004). One of Jung's later identified archetypes is the Ruler archetype. It seeks to establish order through the use of control. Carol Pearson says that the motto of the Ruler archetype shows that power is not merely significant; it is the primary focus, and its essential desire is to maintain control. The goal is to create a prosperous and effective family or community by utilising power (Pearson, 1991). This is what Keller does since his main concern is to establish a stable condition, and he wishes for Chris to follow his steps in the world of business and to continue with the same path he made. Chris is anticipated to not only generate income from the business but also to assume control after his father's retirement.

Keller envisions a future for his son and feels shocked and angry when this vision does not align with his son's true desires (Abboston, 2007). As William B. Dillingham describes it, "Keller's extreme allegiance to a lesser good, the family, destroys his social consciousness; he becomes merely a shell, a man without conscience" (Dillingham, 1977, p. 342). This indicates that the Ruler archetype and Keller are two sides of the same coin. They are driven by the need for power and concerned with creating wealth and prosperity. To achieve this goal, the Ruler needs to acquire complete power. He occupies the highest position in the food chain and is typically fully in control for the environment of the world he lives in. It is a recognized concept and is frequently associated with the potential for corruption within Jungian archetypes. This involves assuming leadership and responsibility for not just one's own life, but also for the lives of those in one's vicinity. In this situation, people frequently see themselves as role models for others, with the goal of helping others attain success and safety.

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Also, Keller embodies the Ruler in that the Ruler consumer is focused on image, status, or prestige. He possesses a genuine fear of being overthrown. This archetype is among the most dangerous to descend into shadow. When the archetypes fall, they do so with significant power, making it challenging to defeat them without incurring substantial costs to the opposing side. While a Ruler's strength lies in their leadership, which can inspire others, their weaknesses may emerge when they develop narcissistic traits, leading them to believe that their authority is unquestionable and immune to critique. Besides, there is tension between Keller's paternal obligation to protect the family and the societal expectation of moral unification. His notion of family loyalty acts as a facade for his deeper self, enabling him to conceal his true motivations behind the appearance of paternal responsibility instead of confronting the self-serving impulses that genuinely propel him. Jung recognises such denial as a mechanism through which the ego protects itself from the distressing realities contained within the Shadow. Keller's denial of his involvement in the creation and distribution of defective airplane components serves as a self-defensive mechanism and illustrates a significant instance of the underlying dynamics at play in human conduct. When Chris pressures him and tries to confront him with what he has done, he responds by saying, "[h]ow could I kill anybody? I didn't kill anybody!" (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p. 157). He persistently refuses to acknowledge his responsibilities, not just to his family and community, but importantly, to himself as well. He realises that he was merely surrendering to the demands of business, unwilling to comprehend and acknowledge that his choices had fatal consequences. He holds onto these justifications because acknowledging the truth would compel him to face the more troubling facets of his character—his readiness to place profit above ethics and his shortcomings as both a father and a businessman. Eventually this would lead to his overthrow, which is something a Ruler cannot tolerate.

At the same time, Kate Keller plays an important role in concealing her husband's involvement in war profiteering. Rather than urging him to confront his responsibilities truthfully, she shields him from legal consequences by inaccurately affirming his falsehood. Her loyalty to her husband ironically deepens the divide between them, as their awareness of the deception creates discomfort in their interactions. Each feels shame under the other's accusing eye. By denying the facts and conspiring to withhold the truth from their community, Keller and Kate Keller create a lonely and unhappy

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marriage for themselves (Centola, 2006). Therefore, she plays a complex role in his Shadow dynamic by reinforcing his denial and enabling his refusal to accept responsibility. She actively suppresses her knowledge to maintain the illusion of family unity. In a sense, Kate becomes a co-conspirator in Keller's denial, indirectly supporting his negation to confront his Shadow by allowing him to continue believing that his actions were justifiable. Her role reflects the Jungian assertion that the Shadow can be socially reinforced and enabled by others who have a stake in maintaining the status quo. By participating in Keller's denial, she becomes a barrier to his self-awareness and individuation, creating an environment in which he can continue to avoid acknowledging his moral failings. This familial dynamic represents a collective repression of the Shadow, as both Keller and Kate refuse to confront the truth, allowing the darker aspects of Keller's character to remain hidden but powerful. Their shared denial ultimately isolates them from Chris, who becomes disillusioned as he realises that both of his parents are willing to sacrifice their integrity to preserve their sense of family unity.

Additionally, as Chris starts to doubt his father's decisions, the conflict intensifies. He comes to see that Keller's claims of family loyalty are merely a cover for choices that lack moral justification. Keller's denial comes into question as Chris ultimately uncovers the truth. For Chris, integrity and honour are crucial, and his father's denial breaks that image, resulting in deep conflict. "Family is a continuous dynamic process based in its essence in two main aspects, which are internal security and external security" (Jasim, 2022, p. 1). Thus, Chris feels angry and disillusioned, which act as a moral judgment that Keller's Shadow cannot handle, pushing him to a psychological breaking point. Keller's choice to end his life reflects a distressing effort to address this inner turmoil, as he struggles to bring together his darker self with the moral values embodied by his son. This resolution highlights the harmful impact of a hidden Shadow, which can push individuals toward drastic and tragic actions if not addressed. The autonomy of the unconscious starts at the point where emotions are triggered. They are automatic responses that disrupt the logical flow of thought through their intense eruption, and Keller's emotions are evoked by his son's confrontation.

Moreover, Miller skilfully uses symbolism throughout the play that explores Keller's Shadow. One of the first symbols that appear in the play is the tree that was planted in the backyard of the house to honour Larry. However, a strong wind blew it down in a storm previously in the play. The tree's destruction foreshadows the

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

destruction of Keller's illusion and yet the exposure of his repressed actions (Abboston, 2007). It also foreshadows the shattering of his carefully maintained image since the fragility of the tree is akin to the fragility of Keller's denial. Nonetheless, the tree's destruction represents the close breakdown of this denial and the unavoidable encounter with his Shadow. The fallen tree represents the breakdown of his meticulously constructed self-image and the revelation of his buried guilt, which he can no longer avoid. The destruction indicates that the concealed truths and guilt, much like the tree, will no longer stay hidden or restrained.

Furthermore, the tree is not the mere symbol that reflects Keller's Shadow. The backyard also represents his psychological state. The backyard appears to be a place of intimacy, isolation, and familial harmony, but it contains a sense of duality within it. Throughout the play, it appears to be a secluded backyard that distances the Keller's from the other households. However, not only does it isolates the-family from other neighbours but it also isolates them from the truths they need to face. It reflects Keller's mindset and how he desperately tries to isolate his thoughts from confronting his actions and what resulted from his moral collapse. The intimate setting of the backyard is apparently perfect and reflects the outside status of Keller's financial stability alongside his apparent stable state of mind. However, just like the backyard is filled with secrets, so is Keller. In Jungian manners, the backyard acts as a space for Keller's Shadow, as it is where his family comes together to partake in the facade of normalcy. However, the broken tree and the lingering presence of Larry's memory in the backyard create a sense of unease within this space, suggesting that the backyard, like Keller's self-image, is haunted by unresolved guilt and repressed truths. The backyard becomes a microcosm of Keller's psychological state, with its cracks and imperfections symbolising the fragility of his denial. As the play progresses, the backyard becomes the setting for confrontations and revelations, symbolising the eventual emergence of truths he has long buried as he is forced to confront his Shadow.

The letter from Larry, which is revealed near the end of the play, serves as a climactic symbol of Keller's Shadow and his final reckoning with his repressed guilt. Larry's letter reveals that he took his own life upon learning of his father's actions, directly implicating Keller in his son's death and forcing him to confront the true consequences of his actions. It symbolises the undeniable truth that Keller has avoided throughout the play—the reality that his actions have not only harmed strangers but have also destroyed his own

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

family. Larry's letter acts as the final, unavoidable emergence of Keller's Shadow. He has maintained a precarious balance between his denial and his self-image as a loving father and provider. The letter, however, shatters this balance, exposing all of his moral failings and forcing him to confront the consequences of his repressed Shadow. This moment of confrontation makes him recognise that his actions have permanently severed his connection to his ideal self and have left him unable to escape the darkness within him. Also, it represents the inevitable collapse of his denial and his ultimate inability to reconcile his actions with the fatherly image he has projected. In fact, Larry's absence embodies the void created by Keller's Shadow. By denying his role in Larry's disappearance, Keller also denies a fundamental part of his identity, distancing himself from the guilt, grief, and shame associated with his actions. Larry's absence therefore symbolises the internal disintegration caused by Keller's inability to integrate his Shadow, leaving him fragmented and disconnected from his authentic self, unable to achieve a full individuation process.

Moreover, Larry's continued presence in the family's memory acts as a haunting reminder of Keller's suppressed guilt. Kate's refusal to accept Larry's death mirrors Keller's own denial, as both parents cling to the belief that their son will return, symbolising their inability to confront the truth about Keller's actions. Larry's absence, then, becomes a symbol of the psychological distance between Keller's idealised self-image and the Shadow he is unable to acknowledge. Ultimately, this unacknowledged part of his psyche festers, leading to increasing tension within the family and eventually culminating in his tragic realisation of the truth.

From another perspective, the physical boundaries of the house give feelings of being both safe and trapped, helping characters to hold onto their illusions. "The stage is hedged on right and left by tall, closely planted poplars, which lend the yard a secluded atmosphere" (Miller, 1955, Act 1, p. 89). The house looks tight as it exudes an aura of restriction and privacy. For Keller, home is a symbol of safety and success, yet it also turns into a prison he has created for himself. This prison is seen with the young boy Bert, who plays with Keller, almost as if there is a real jail in his home (Abboston, 2007). Though it is metaphorical, mentioning the prison indicates the psychological cage within Keller's mind. It reflects his intense need for control. In his mind, he is the patriarch who must protect the family and keep its stability at all costs. The house, therefore, becomes a space where he uses his authority and control. The walls that symbolise his success also serve as barriers to the outer world and moral accountability. His

E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

psychological imprisonment is reflected in the way he confines his life within the limits of his family and business, blinding him to the consequences his actions have on society. His view is limited by the metaphorical and literal walls of the house. This makes him unable to see beyond his personal responsibility to his family to a broader social responsibility. This creates an inner conflict within him; he views himself as a dedicated provider, but he is also tormented by the reality that his ambition led to the deaths of young men. The house thus reflects Keller's psychological entrapment in a web of denial and rationalisation.

The play is also a long day's journey into night, a play that begins with the sunny optimism of morning and ends in grim darkness (Ackerman, 2013). Another working title was Morning, Noon, and Night, which reflects the play's close adherence to the Greek idea of the three unities, emphasising that a drama should occur in a single location within a 24-hour period (Abboston, 2007). It is punctuated by references to nature, such as the seasons and change. It takes place in the summer, a season typically associated with growth and vitality. However, this setting amplifies the tension between the characters' desires for renewal and the reality of their situations. Summer heat can symbolise the pressure and intensity of their emotions, pushing them toward confrontation. As the characters grapple with their Shadows, the setting becomes increasingly oppressive, paralleling their internal struggles. Summer's warmth and light ironically contrast with the darkness of Keller's repressed guilt and moral failings. While summer is typically associated with openness and exposure, Keller's Shadow remains hidden beneath his cheerful, all-American family image.

Accordingly, this contrast between summer's brightness and Keller's internal darkness symbolises his divided self. He enjoys the easy, light-hearted aspects of his life while he refuses to acknowledge the weight of his actions. The summer setting thus highlights the facade he has constructed and foreshadows the inevitability of his moral reckoning. The irony of a warm, pleasant, and delightful season underlies how Keller's outward behaviour covers the moral decay and guilt lurking within his subconscious. Additionally, summer in the play also acts as a catalyst that brings Keller's Shadow closer to the surface. With the intense emotions and tensions that come with the heat and intensity of summer, Keller's denial becomes harder to maintain. This seasonal intensity aligns with the pressures building on Keller as his son Chris and his neighbour George begin to question and challenge the truths he has concealed.

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The intense heat of summer parallels the psychological heat Keller feels as his guilt starts to unravel. In the play, events such as the destruction of the memorial tree and George's arrival begin to expose Keller's actions, creating a sense of inevitable confrontation. The season, in this way, symbolises the mounting tension and the boiling point Keller is reaching as the Shadow he has buried deep within himself is forced into the light. Summer's temporary nature also reflects the unsustainable nature of Keller's denial and self-deception. Just as summer will inevitably give way to autumn, with its implications of decay and transformation, Keller's carefully maintained facade is bound to fall apart under the weight of his repressed Shadow. This seasonal transition represents the inevitability of truth, as the bright, temporary season of summer is set against the dark, long-lasting consequences of Keller's actions. It also subtly suggests that Keller's denial cannot last indefinitely. Much like the season itself, his constructed reality is fleeting and will be overtaken by the consequences of his moral failings. Jung's concept of the Shadow implies that suppressed guilt and shame cannot be ignored indefinitely—they will ultimately surface, demanding acknowledgement (Jung, 1959). Miller uses summer's transitory quality to underscore the play's central message that denial and repression are temporary solutions, and the truth, like the changing seasons, will always come to light.

The inability to achieve the individuation process and the inability to recognise and assimilate the Shadow may result in detrimental outcomes, manifesting both within the individual and in external circumstances. Keller's unfortunate condition exemplifies this principle in a cautionary manner. By neglecting to address his own ethical shortcomings and placing his asserted achievements above moral accountability, he generates a detrimental influence that ultimately leads to his own downfall. His tragic flaw lies in his inability to integrate the darker parts of himself into his conscious awareness. Instead, he represses and externalises them, which ultimately leads to his own degeneration. His demise is not merely the result of his actions but is rooted in his psychological denial and repression. This repression and denial prevent him from facing the ethical consequences of his choices until it is too late. Similarly, engaging with and assimilating the Shadow is crucial for achieving psychological completeness. This process entails acknowledging and embracing one's suppressed attributes instead of denying or projecting them onto others. This is something that he does not succeed to do, and he does not integrate his Shadow; rather, he persists in his denial

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until the concluding act, resulting in the occurrence of the Ruler's biggest fear, which is to be overthrown.

Lacanian Dimensions in Keller Keller's World

Miller believes that there are underlying influences driving the actions of individuals, and they need to be identified and categorized. He suggests that these hidden forces are widespread in human culture; they are fundamental causes of the loss of innocence, transgression, and the blindness with which his characters and all individuals behave. Also, his exploration of Jewish history, his understanding of victimisation and the victim's connection to a broader societal context, along with his perception of the unity between the individual and society, all add complexity to the overall narrative (Bigsby, 2010).

It is seen that Keller prioritises family over society and appears to put nothing above it. This belief, along with the effectiveness of deception, has been shaped by societal approval; however, this does not necessarily validate his views. He persistently declines to acknowledge the broader context until the conclusion, when he is faced with proof of his son's suicide. He only acknowledges this when he confesses to Chris that all the pilots who died due to his defective parts were, in a way, his sons, and that he ought to have treated them with equal respect (Abboston, 2007). Dillingham notes that a central theme in Miller's plays is the individual's struggle to find a secure place in society where they are loved and, in return, feel a sense of responsibility for others. Dillingham contends that tragedy arises when a character either does not acknowledge his position or relinquishes it for misguided values. The individual, feeling disconnected from society, struggles to uphold a sense of integrity and conscience (Dillingham, 1960). That is to say, humans are social animals and are inherently concerned with the stability and well-being of their communities. They are likely to be interested in issues related to social behaviour and government that necessitate their active involvement, leading them to take a stance in a controversial conflict (Siebold, 1997).

Keller's actions, starting from prioritising the family until the effectiveness of deception, can be seen as a try to please Lacan's big Other. Dylan Evans speaks of the Other as "perhaps the most complex term in Lacan's work" (Evan's, 1996, p. 132). Despite its complexity, to demonstrate its value in understanding the relationship between individuals and society, the big Other helps explain how individuals connect to the social world, as well as the spontaneous emergence of power and social identification (Evans, 1996). Keller is put under

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societal pressure to preserve his image as a successful businessman and a successful father. By committing such an antisocial crime, he fails to uphold his responsibility to society. At that time, the Depression caused individuals to hold tightly to economic stability, and Keller's attitude is influenced by the materialistic society. He tries to please the big Other resembled by the sets of societal norms and expectations that gradually govern his behaviour. These norms provide a sense of reality and judgement outside him, influencing his sense of right and wrong, social identity, and personal guilt. His desire for social and economic success and his fear of public disgrace shape his character, driving him to prioritise reputation and economic success over moral integrity.

In the context of post-World War II America, financial success and social respectability are heavily valued .The play's shocking revelations and Miller's insistence that one must take responsibility for his actions provide a lesson about the destructive self-interest and the greed that drives capitalism, sacrificing human values to material values. This moral force is relevant in any social context, particularly for those who have recently experienced the Great Depression and the World War II (Ackerman, 2013). In *Echoes Down the Corridor* (2001), Miller notes that he wrote *All My Sons* during the war, anticipating significant challenges. However, the war ended just as he was finishing the play, allowing space for the unspoken truth that many were aware of—that the war had enabled certain individuals to illegal profiteering and at times enabled criminals to fortunes (Miller, 2001).

The idea of the drama of the complete man, encompassing both psyche and citizen, as well as individual subject and social actor, has influenced Miller's playwriting since the beginning of his career (Murphy, 2011). He represents Keller as an object of attachment after locating readymade society images to connect himself to, resulting in shortcomings. The link between a man's individuality and the image society expects of him is a major theme that appears in Miller's plays, and it is certain that a large theme is limited by itself, but Miller is capable of inventing it with emotion (Weales, 1962). He presents Keller's feelings of pressure to fulfil the cultural ideals, embodying the role of a successful provider, which is essential to his sense of self-worth and identity. This societal pressure is not only about making money but about keeping an image of success and prosperity in a community that values those traits. His ambition is shaped by the desire to be seen as a successful, reliable man in his community. This is noticeable in his actions since his desire to avoid a scandal

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ultimately overcomes his ethical obligations, reflecting how the pursuit of social acceptance can take over moral commitment. The stage directions describe him as "[a] heavy man of stolid mind and build, a business man these many years, but with the imprint of the machine-shop worker and boss still upon him" (Miller, 1955, Act 1, p. 89). He wants to keep this image of the self-made businessman because, in a post-war community, reputation is paramount. He cannot handle nor afford to be seen as a person who caused the deaths of young pilots or as someone who failed his family and society. He is unable to bear the rejection he would face if his actions became public knowledge, so he chooses personal preservations over principles. This leads him to have a specific aim that is to be respected in the eyes of the big Other.

In Lacanian terms, Keller's choices reflect a psychological need to be validated by society's ideals, which he internalise as the authority to whom he must answer. In his community, success and moral uprightness are closely linked; any scandal or disgrace irreparably damage his standing. Lacan's big Other often embodies the idea of an observing authority, or a gaze, that judges an individual's worth according to social standards. For Keller, the gaze of the community and the fear of social judgement weigh heavily on him, compelling him to maintain his image. His self-justification reveals his aim to avoid the condemnation of the big Other. In fact, admitting his role would expose him to the public gaze of the big Other, ruining the image of success and integrity he has worked hard to grow.

Essentially, the individual is part of society and one is unable to function without considering the environment that he lives in. Miller expresses his basic attitude toward the role of social forces in his essay *The Shadows of the Gods* (1996), in which he says:

I hope I have made one thing clear . . . and it is that society is inside of man and man is inside society, and you cannot even create a truthfully drawn psychological entity on the stage until you understand his social relations and their power to make him what he is. The fish is in the water and the water is in the fish (Miller, 1996, p. 185).

As a result, Miller sees that Keller's issue, in essence, is not that he is unable to distinguish right from wrong, but rather that his mindset cannot accept that he has any meaningful relationship with his world, his universe, or his society. The Other, therefore, is an alienating system, an always already existing totality to which the subject, i.e, Keller, needs to accommodate themselves and this system

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is described it as the "treasury of signifiers" (Žižek, 2006, p. 332) with which there can be no automatic or harmonious fit. Žižek explains Lacan's theory by saying that "[t]he big Other is the name for social substance; it is that on account of which the subject never fully dominates the effects of their acts, on account of which the final outcome of his or her activity is always something other than what was intended or anticipated" (2006, p. 332). Thus, Keller unconsciously lets his society control his mentality and his whole life with no borders to save him from the consequences. He embodies Lacan's belief that shows how an individual's desire is always the other's desire. He lives for the society more than he does for himself. One could believe that his own personality, wills, desires, and judgement determine what he wants from life. But the desires he has are the ones he is trained to have. He would have different desires and goals if he had grown up in a different culture or in a different Symbolic Order. He satisfies his society more than he thinks about satisfying himself.

Moreover, Keller's self-consciousness operates in a way that is related to Lacan's concept of the Mirror stage and the formation of the self. Lacan sees that though the Mirror Stage occurs in the early stages of a child, it shapes and affects social relationships, self-image, and emotional responses in the long term, laying the groundwork for a lifelong quest for identity and affirmation. For him, self-consciousness arises from the individual's recognition of their own reflection in the external world, where identity is shaped not just by one's inner sense of self but through the influence of outside perceptions and expectations. Keller's self-consciousness—his understanding of himself as a moral, respectable man—is fragile, almost barely visible, and heavily dependent on how he imagines others viewing him. His sense of self is not rooted deeply in inner values but is, instead, closely connected to the consciousness of others in his society. He defines himself by the standards and expectations of his society, putting his reputation above the reality of his actions. This leads him to take his life since he is unable to feel such abandonment, and he is also unable to live with his inescapable guilt. This dependency on external validation becomes a dominant force in Keller's psychology. In his mind, societal approval and his constructed self-image are more important than his self-awareness and accountability. This superficial form of self-consciousness distances him from his own ethical judgment, as he becomes increasingly focused on preserving a public persona that aligns with the big Other's values rather than confronting his own inner moral conflicts. His decision to let society dictate his

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identity and moral choices demonstrates a profound disconnect between his internal sense of self and the external image he projects. His self-consciousness is largely performative, shaped by the fear of being socially rejected rather than an authentic recognition of his actions. His identity, then, shifts from being about his true self to being about the persona he feels he must present to society. So, Keller's self-consciousness, like Lacan suggests, is influenced and limited by how society views him, which shapes his self-image and ultimately traps him in a false identity.

The Other serves as an important source of authority and unity in society, representing common standards, values, and beliefs. However, eventhough it serves as a guiding presence in social interactions, the Other is fundamentally lacking, incomplete, and uncertain. Lacan's concept of the Other indicates that it does not exist as a stable source of truth or authority. Instead, it serves as a hypothetical or assumed framework that remains somewhat indefinite. This lack does not diminish its role in preserving social unity—individuals still behave as though the Other is real, even if they cognitively grasp its lack of substance. The belief in the Other can continue to exist even without conscious support, as individuals behave according to ideals that they perceive as authoritative, even when these ideals are recognised as hypothetical. Therefore, the power of the Other exists in this paradox: it is a hypothetical construct that society depends on as though it were substantial, merging emptiness with the ability to hold profound meaning and importance (Žižek, 2006). If Keller reflects on his core values and persistently questions 'why?' regarding his most important beliefs—be they emotional or social—he will ultimately reach a state of emptiness, answering with 'because I do' or 'because it is' just as he tells Chris, "what could I do! I'm in business, a man is in business" (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p.157). He sees that he did what he needed to do because he has to do so and things need to be done. Lacan examines the point at which a lack, particularly the inability to offer a conclusive justification or ultimate substance, transforms into something else. This transformation prompts an investigation into the underlying meaning of everything, offering a basis for individuals to define a clear social role and importance in their lives.

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Interestingly, one of the symbols Miller uses to represent the societal pressure to achieve social status is the factory. Keller tells Chris

they close you up, they tear up your contracts, what the hell's it to them? You lay forty years into a business and they knock you out in five minutes, what could I do, let them take forty years, let them take my life away? (Miller, 1955, Act 2, p. 157)

He built the factory from the ground up, and it embodies his life's work and is essential to his identity as a thriving businessman. It is also a form of the big Other since it serves as a constant reminder of the cultural emphasis on economic prosperity, which society equates with worthiness and respectability. His eagerness to protect the factory's success at all costs reflects how the big Other can distort moral values. The factory's role in the play represents his life work that he is not ready to lose. It also critiques a society that priorities financial success over ethical responsibility, since the only thing society cherishes is financial success.

Furthermore, money and material wealth are other symbols that are relevant to the big Other. Throughout the play, Keller equates financial prosperity with personal worth, a belief shaped by society's valuation of the self-made man. His underlying obsession with money and material security drives his decision to risk the lives of soldiers for profit, justifying it as a necessary sacrifice for his family's future. Though he is the one obsessed with money, he puts the blame on his family, claiming that they are the reason behind his actions. To him, his family is both a personal and social institution, which makes it also a big Other. It creates societal pressure since society expects that a man will provide for his family regardless of anything else. He feels a profound duty to secure his family's future, which he interprets as justifying his morally questionable decisions. He believes that securing financial stability for his family is the ultimate good, even if it is at the cost of their inner stability and even if that means taking actions that are ethically unacceptable. He tells Kate, "I don't know what you mean! You wanted money, so I made money. What must I be forgiven? You wanted money, didn't you?" (Miller, 1955, Act 3, p. 162). In fact, he transfers his desire for money to his family, but the societal pressure is focused mainly on him rather than his family since he is the family's provider and his social role requires him to support his family.

For the most part, Keller's fixation on money and outer appearance demonstrates how the urgent need to please the big Other distorts his personal ethics and leads him to commit a crime. Society

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appreciates one who has material success regardless of the way he obtained it. Miller believes that "the crime is seen as having roots in a certain relationship of the individual to society and to a certain indoctrination he embodies, which, if dominant, can mean a jungle existence for all of us no matter how high our buildings soar" (Miller, 1996, p. 19). The emphasis of wealth as a measure of worth critiques the materialistic culture of post-war America, which influences the individual and overlooks the ethical cost of success. This moves Keller's desire to maintain his place among his neighbors. He brags about the fact that they respect him and appreciate his success, despite the fact that they might suspect him guilty. He tells Ann and Chris about the day of the trial when he came home. He says:

The day I come home, I got out of my car;—but not in front of the house ... on the corner. You should've been here, Annie, and you too, Chris; you'd-a seen something. Everybody knew I was getting out that day; the porches were loaded. Picture it now; none of them believed I was innocent. The story was, I pulled a fast one getting myself exonerated. So I get out of my car, and I walk down the street. But very slow. And with a smile. The beast! I was the beast, walkin' down the street that day I was guilty as hell. Except I wasn't, and there was a court paper in my pocket to prove I wasn't, and I walked ... past ... the porches. Result? Fourteen months later I had one of the best shops in the state again, a respected man again; bigger than ever (Miller, 1955, Act 1, p. 116).

His speech reveals his sense of pride for being the successful man his society demands. On that day, he surrendered to the big Other as soon as he projected his guilt to Deever and came back home proud of his impunity. Paradoxically, by suggesting that only his possession of a court paper proves his innocence, he unconsciously incriminates himself, for the audience knows that his innocence should derive solely from his awareness of the inaccuracy of the accusation against him. His denial, therefore, has the opposite effect on his audience that it is designed to achieve. Also, he does it because he wants to be well liked, and he is skilled in getting people to like him and using them to his advantage. Perhaps he realises that the neighbours suspect his innocence, but he knows that giving parties and inviting people to his home ingratiates him with them. His skill is also seen later in the play, when George arrives with word from his father about the faulty parts. Keller dismisses Steve's argument and tries to win over him by offering to get him a job and new life in the neighbourhood and to give his father a new start as well. Keller thinks that if George believes Keller has their best interests at heart, perhaps George will

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not try to reopen the case; perhaps he will believe Keller always had his and his father's best interests at heart and so never would have claimed that Steve was guilty if it had not been true (Abboston, 2007).

From a psychological perspective, money puts pressure on Keller as it creates in him the need to be viewed by the others. As Lacan's ideas imply, Keller is constantly monitored by the gaze that is powerful over him. This is an unavoidable thing, and it shows in Dr. Jim's words when he tells Kate: "Half of my patients are quite mad. Nobody realises how many people are walking around loose, and they're cracked as coconuts. Money. Money-money-money-money. You say it long enough it doesn't mean anything" (Miller, 1955, Act 3, p. 159). These lines reflect the obsession with money that drives Keller, as well as the psychological compromises he makes in the pursuit of financial success. They also reveal how his superficially rational appearance hides deeper splits in his psychological status, aligning with the thought that an individual can appear stable but, in reality, be deeply flawed. This happens because the external pressure exacerbates the internal conflicts faced by him.

In relation to Lacan's belief that the Symbolic Order is necessary to define selfhood and an isolated individual cannot exist as a subject or self (Tyson, 2014), Miller has repeatedly expressed a similar view that it is pointless for a playwright to try to examine the psychological aspects of a person in isolation without considering their social environment. Thus, he has written: "I can no longer take with ultimate seriousness a drama of individual psychology written for its own sake, however full it may be of insight and precise observation" (Miller, 1996, p.57). Miller illustrates how Keller's choices reveal the struggle individuals face when trying to meet the expectations of external influences, societal pressures, and their own moral beliefs, highlighting the intricate and often harmful nature of these dynamics. In trying to satisfy society's demands for financial success and family security, he ultimately sacrifices the very values society also holds dear: integrity, responsibility, and accountability. This tragic contradiction is what makes Keller a powerful example of how societal demands can shape, and ultimately destroy, individuals in their pursuit of social ideals.

Similar to many young men of that period, Chris realises that he wants a strong father figure to help him understand the evolving world—a figure who would remain constant and unyielding, providing him with a sense of stability. Keller, similar to many fathers of his era, is unable to meet such an ideal because the same social pressures impacting Chris are also influencing him. Keller attempts to

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provide Chris with the only stability he understands through his business; however, Chris seeks moral stability instead of this material one. Keller, despite his shortcomings, makes an effort to be the best father possible, considering the limitations of his era and his personal characteristics and convictions. Having successfully engaged with the pervasive materialism and competitiveness of the 1940s, he faces youths who have developed value systems that are entirely foreign to him (Abboston, 2007). The play's climax shows that Keller cannot escape his guilt, which comes from failing to meet not only societal expectations but also the moral law that society upholds. In his case, societal pressure initially drives him to deny his guilt, but as the play progresses, it also demands that he confront it. His confrontation with his son Chris brings this conflict to a head. Chris represents a new set of societal values, emphasising collective responsibility and ethical integrity. As Keller faces Chris's moral outrage, he can no longer avoid the social and ethical expectations he has been denying. The weight of societal values embodied by Chris ultimately forces Keller to acknowledge his guilt, illustrating how the big Other can serve both as a force for denial and as a force for moral reckoning. Keller's inability to align his actions with these values leads him to a breaking point, where he realises that he can no longer hide from the larger social expectations that condemn his actions.

As a result, Keller's crime is seen as more significant by his son because he has effectively created the impression that he is an infallible father. In trying to meet the unrealistic expectations set by this almost divine figure, he unknowingly prepares himself for a fall (Bigsby, 2010). He comes to the tragic realisation and takes his own life. He pays a significant price, experiencing mental anguish and suffering through the forces of retribution, which reach tragic proportions (Ray, 1992). This tragic realisation reflects how materialism is destructive to society as well as to the individual. Surrendering to the judgement and gaze of the big Other leads Keller to destroy both himself and his family, trying to satisfy society's standards.

Similar to Greek drama, Miller presents a scenario where no efficient path to the right choices and actions is available. Instead, it involves selecting the correct incorrect path toward an idea, which consistently reflects the failure and betrayal of the purity and perfection that his characters seek. This failure serves as a significant lesson that Miller consistently imparts, forming the basis of his critical analysis. It is a certain reality that individuals experience alienation, that they wish to overcome it, that they seek a means to do so, that this

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quest is unavoidable, and that it will ultimately not succeed (Siebold, 1997).

Conclusion

Reflecting on the ideas of Jung and Lacan reveals that Keller is a complex character who serves as both a victim and a victimiser, illustrating the contradictions of a man caught between personal loyalty and social responsibility. He victimises his sons by refusing to acknowledge responsibility and being unable to face his Shadow. At the same time, he is a victim of societal pressures and expectations. The constant demand for success leads him to compromise his values, rationalising unethical actions as sacrifices for his family's well-being. In protecting his family, he inadvertently becomes a perpetrator, causing harm to himself, his family, and innocent soldiers. His decisions expose his inability to see beyond his immediate social circle, implicating him as both a destroyer and a protector. This duality shows the main tension of the play, revealing the constraints of personal loyalty when it conflicts with broader ethical responsibilities and presenting Keller as a tragic character caught in a situation of his own creation, influenced by societal pressures and personal shortcomings.

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E-ISSN: 2706-9931 P-ISSN: 1994-473X

العمق النفسي وتفكك المبادئ: قراءة مزدوجة لمسرحية كلهم أبنائي لآرثر ملر

المستخلص

آرثر آشر ميلر (1915–2005)كان كاتباً مسرحياً وروائياً وكاتب قصص قصيرة أمريكياً. تناولت أعماله مجموعة واسعة من المواضيع الاجتماعية والأخلاقية والنفسية، وركزت أعماله بشكل خاص على الحالة الإنسانية، والتحديات الأخلاقية، وعواقب أفعال الأفراد في سياق اجتماعي واسع. لم يقتصر اهتمامه على الإنسان الأمريكي فحسب، بل امتد ليشمل الإنسان المعاصر بشكل عام. ومن خلال تسليط الضوء على الصراعات والاضطرابات التي يعيشها الناس العاديون في حياتهم اليومية، يعكس ميلر كيف يتشكل سلوك الإنسان تحت تأثير مجتمع يهتم بالصورة الخارجية للفرد. (كلهم أبنائي) (1949) هي أول عمل رئيسي لميلر، إذ تعالج المسرحية المواضيع أعلاه وتعكس الصراع الذي يعيشه الفرد بين ذاته والمجتمع . يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل الجوانب النفسية للفرد وكيف تؤثر القوى المجتمعية على حياته. من خلال تطبيق مفاهيم كارل غوستاف يونغ (1874–1961) حول النماذج الأولية وعملية التفرد، ومفهوم جاك لاكان (1901–1981) عن "الآخر الكبير"، يقدم البحث فهماً عميقاً للفرد وتأثير المجتمع عليه. يسلط البحث الضوء على فهم شامل لسلوك الشخصيات وأعماقها الداخلية، ويركز على أهمية معالجة الضغوط الاجتماعية وكيفية تأثيرها على الفرد

الكلمات المفتاحية :الاخر الكبير، الفرد، النمط الأولي للحاكم، الظل.