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Self-Construction, Alienation and Myth in Arthur Miller's and Eugene O'Neill's Drama

(*The Crucible* (1953), *Death of a Salesman* (1949) and Long Day's Journey into Night (1956))

Thesis Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctorate in English (Literature/Civilization)

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Declaration

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I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgment is made, whenever necessary, to the work of the other researchers.

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Abstract

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This thesis proposes to study self-construction as an alienating process in Arthur Miller's ***The Crucible*** (1953) and ***Death of a Salesman*** (1949) and Eugene O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** (1956). It essentially tries to bring to the fore the imaginary character of the founding ideals which are at the core of American identity. An analysis of Miller's and O'Neill characters in the three selected plays will thus bring evidence that American identity formation causes alienation and loss rather than bring self-gratification and fulfillment. Therefore, this research work aims to challenge the image of America as an exceptional land in which all people, regardless of their origins can attain success, personal welfare and happiness.

Self-construction and alienation in Miller's and O'Neill's selected plays will be studied in the light of Jacques Lacan's and Roland Barthes's theories. Lacan's theory of self-construction suits the subject of my research as it stresses alienation. Lacan's concept of the mirror stage describes the formation of identity through a process of misidentification with reflected external images taken from the discourse of the Other. Lacan states that the Other frames the desire of the individual, which implies that people's desire for identification is the desire of the Other. Hence, identity construction is an alienating process.

Barthes's theory is selected because it highlights the deceitful and manipulative power of myth. As the American identity is essentially founded on myths, Barthes's theory will further stress alienation. Barthes's perspective serves to question the main American founding myths, such as the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the self-Made-Man; and reveal their alienating effects on American identity. Moreover, Barthes's theory emphasizes the adaptability of myths, a fact which throws light on how American identity is replicated over centuries. More importantly, Barthes considers that the main function of myth is to secure the values of the dominant groups, which may suggest Lacan's concept of the Other. That is, it shows how religious, political and economic institutions shape American identity through manipulation.

The Crucible highlights self-construction and alienation in intolerant seventeenth century Salem. It essentially shows how the myth of the Promised Land shapes Americ-

an identity through manipulation. Miller depicts tormented and self-alienated characters

who cannot experience self-fulfillment, a fact which calls into question the image of America as an exceptional country in which happiness and welfare are guaranteed. The play echoes a similar struggle for self-construction in twentieth century anti-communist America. A deep scrutiny of the play reveals similarities between Salem Witch hunts and McCarthy hearings in the Cold War period. Comparing the two periods serves to shed light on the adaptability of the myth of the Promised Land to the different American historical periods and stress its continues manipulative force and alienating effects on American identify.

Death of a Salesman and ***Long Day's journey into Night*** further emphasize alienation in America. The two plays bring forth the alienating effects of the myths of the American Dream and, to a lesser extent, the Self-Made-Man on American identity in postwar consumerist America. The characters' alienating struggle for self-formation in both plays exposes America as a waste land in which intolerance, conformism and materialism triumphed over freedom, equal opportunity and self-individualism. The study of the plays will therefore reveal the reality behind the mythical exceptional America.

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Key words: Alienation, American exceptionalism, Arthur Miller, authoritarianism, conformism, consumerism, desire, Eugene O'Neill, imagination, Jacques Lacan, , manipulation, myth, Puritanism, recognition, Roland Barthes, self-construction, the American Dream, the Other, the Promised Land, utopia.

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Introduction

The ideals that America is founded on were designed to ensure a democratic society in which all individuals, regardless of their social backgrounds, have equal rights and opportunities. Every American believes that America is the Promised Land and a true paradise. The concept of the Promised Land can be traced back to the early seventeenth century when the Pilgrim Fathers came to New England and sought to establish an earthly "Heaven" where dreams and hopes must come true. After the American independence, the history of America's Pilgrim Fathers became a foundational story that was transformed from a regional narrative of New England into a national myth. America became a "paradise" where every individual is a pursuer of the American Dream. Consequently, myths such as the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man which made up the national narrative contributed to idealize accounts of American history.

The Pilgrim Fathers' utopian vision survived across the centuries and would later develop into American exceptionalism. Under this definition, America is pictured as having a unique history, an exceptional identity and an extraordinary mission which is to save the world. The idea that America is inherently different from the other nations gave birth to Americanism, a unique American ideology stressing freedom, individualism, equality and laissez faire. All these values served as a setting for identity formation. Answers to "what makes an American?" and "what affirms the individual's identification with the United States?" became tightly linked to the degree of the individual's attachment to the American "exceptional" ideals.

However, despite America's democratic ideology and all the promises of self-fulfillment and happiness, gender issues and increasing ethnic and racial diversity within the United States have led to questions regarding how far women and ethnic groups can be considered as Americans and how strongly they can integrate in the American society. Another key concern related to these questions is whether such categories are offered equal opportunities to reach mobility and

enjoy economic prosperity. Indeed, the Civil Rights and Women's Right Movements in the 1960s can be viewed as strong indicators of disappointment, disillusionment and above all discrimination. Earlier, the periods following the wars were marked by utter disenchantment and confusion, affecting all American people regardless of gender and origin. Whether postwar disillusionment was a pure effect of the war remains to be seen, yet the Americans' feeling of loss might also arise from having their ideals and dreams challenged. What if the promises of happiness and self-gratification were only mere fantasies? All these concerns bring us to question the image of America as a Promised Land, particularly the notion of American exceptionalism. It could be that America is not such a Promised Land as it might appear. In an attempt to explore the depths behind the "paradise" land, this research work proposes to study American identity construction as an alienating process in Miller's and O'Neill's plays, namely ***Death of a Salesman (1949), The Crucible (1953)*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night (1956)***.

A survey of the critical evaluation of ***Death of a Salesman*** reveals that the play has mostly been regarded as an attack against the American Dream, condemning the callous materialism and engulfing capitalism of the postwar period. Most critics who discussed how the concepts of American identity and the American Dream evolved through time presented the American Dream as harmful, unethical and self-alienating as long as it is based on financial creed. Kenneth S. Lynn argues that America became a "wide-open race" **(Lynn 7)** in which financial success is equated with happiness. Similarly, Jim Cullen states that the American Dream "is defined in terms of money, in the contemporary United States [that] one can almost believe this is the only definition" **(Cullen 7).** Miller's literary critics have tended to follow these definitions of the American Dream. The best example is probably Harold Clurman. In his critical analysis of ***Death of a Salesman***, he shows how materialism has resulted in materialistic success oriented ethics. Hard work and perseverance were substituted for salesmanship which is "implied on some element of fraud" **(Clurman 213).**

The bottom line of all these analyses is that in postwar capitalistic America the old American Dream has been distorted, reshaping American identity. In the light of these analyses, American identity can be studied in terms of a conflict between the old democratic values of the American Dream and the materialistic ethics of the postwar period. In this sense, Gerald Weales argues that Willy is "enmeshed in a struggle that results from his acceptance or rejection of an image that is the product of his society's values and prejudices" **(Weales qtd. in Marino 18).** Hence, alienation is rather a result of these conflicting values.

However, Miller's critical analyses seem to suggest that the American Dream is attainable if founded on values which are broader than just material gains. None of the critics openly question the American Dream as a concept, but they rather focus on its corruption and distortion in a changing American society. Therefore, alienation in ***Death of a Salesman*** is rather presented as a phenomenon which is essentially linked to a specific period and provoked by specific changes. The focus is only on the effects of the materialistic ethics on American identity in postwar America, a fact which does not really let the reader question American exceptionalism.

In my study, I will try to highlight a less utopian vision of American exceptionalism. I will essentially try to prove that Willy's failure to attain the American Dream should be seen as evidence of the fragility of the utopian values on which American identity was founded. If Willy does not attain the American Dream, it could be because the dream is unattainable in the first place. The American nation is not as unique as it might seem, and the excessive materialism and high consumerism of postwar consumerist America only came to accentuate and bring into the fore the utopian early vision of the American Dream and thereby stress the fragility of the American identity. Therefore, my study mainly aims at shedding light on the imaginary character of American identity, showing how it is reproduced through imagination over centuries.

Long Day's Journey into Night for its part is regarded by most critics as an autobiographical play. Certainly, much of what O'Neill describes in his play is true to his life, including the playwright's battle with tuberculosis, his mother, Ella's addiction to morphine and his brother, Jamie's debilitating alcoholism. The Swiss philosopher Carl Gustav Jung summarizes perfectly the main theme that literary critics tend to relate to the play: "Every form of addiction is bad, no matter whether the narcotic be alcohol or morphine or idealism" **(Jung qtd. in Mattoon 267).**

However, addiction to idealism which could be strongly linked to the idealistic myth of the American Dream is regarded by most critics as a family experience, highlighting the autobiographical elements in the play. In this regard, Sinclair Lewis argues that O'Neill "has seen life as not to be arranged in the study of a scholar but as a terrifying, magnificent and often horrible thing akin to the tornado, the earthquake, the devastating fire" **(Lewis qtd. Draugsvold 33).** Lewis equates the "earthquake" with the disaster that threatens the Tyrones, just beneath their seemingly peaceful summer holiday. Similarly, Travis Bogard states that "the suffering of the playwright is more real, if that is possible, than of his characters" **(Bogard 432).** Also, Robert Brustien writes that "there is a fifth Tyrone involved in [the play]-the older Eugene O'Neill**"(Brustien qtd. in Bloom*, Long Day's Journey into Night* 7).** The critics' analyses go in the same direction and tend to stress the biographical aspect of the play. The metaphor of the journey is regarded as a family's journey towards frustration and disillusionment.

In my study, the Tyrones' journey into darkness is regarded as a journey of every American who tries to construct his identity in the twentieth century consumerist America. The focus will be on the American Dream, showing how pursuing an unattainable dream will necessarily result in alienation, causing loss, disenchantment and resentment rather than bring happiness and self-fulfillment. It is worth noting that my study does consider the autobiographical aspect of the play. Yet, the autobiographical elements selected for my analysis are chosen only

to accentuate the object of my study that it stressing the alienating character of American identity.

Lastly, many critics have interpreted ***The Crucible*** as a class struggle of Marxist proportions. Karen Bovard argues that "Miller takes pains to document property disputes behind some of the accusations in Salem" **(Bovard qtd. in Bloom, *Arthur Miller's The Crucible* 71).** Bovard sheds light on how people in seventeenth century intolerant Puritan Salem gain and use property, be it land or money, to gain power and influence. Marxism is demonstrated through the characters' desire to maintain their property by refusing to confess to witchcraft and the accusers' attempts to force them to lose it. Likewise, Terry Otten considers that ***The Crucible*** is "a response to the growing anti-communist sentiment…in the United States [especially since] Miller's first unpublished dramas (No Villain or They Too Arise, Honors at Dawn and The Great Disobedience) were strongly Marxian in character" **(Otten qtd. in Bloom, *Arthur Miller's The Crucible* 114).**

Other critics have attempted to offer a religious interpretation of the play, stressing Puritan intolerance in seventeenth century Salem. However, most of them do so to expose the allegory between the Salem witch trials and the McCarthy hearings in the postwar period. In this sense, Francis J. Bremer argues that "it is no surprise that when the playwright Arthur Miller wanted to portray a repressive and persecuting society as a way of commenting on the McCarthyism of the 1950S, he chose to place his play ***The Crucible***, in 1692 Salem" **(Bremer 107).** In the same sense, George Mckenna states that ***The Crucible*** is "intended as an allegory on McCarthyism" **(McKenna 273).** Building on these parallels, John Mason Brow argues that "witches never existed…but today there are traitors who have warmed their ways into positions where they can do great harm" **(Brow qtd. in McConachie 268).**

For Brooks Atkinson, though ***The Crucible*** hints at some specific connections between the Salem Witch trials and McCarthyism, it should not be taken as a

pure political allegory. He believes that ***The Crucible*** "is a self-contained play about a terrible period in American history" **(Atkinson qtd. in McConachie 268).** He tries to highlight the contrast between morality and corruption. Along the same lines, Christopher Bigsby remarks that Miller's play "expresses a "desire to reach back [to a past] before corruption" **(Bigsby 136).**

Although my study of ***The Crucible*** hints at political, historical and moral issues, its main purpose is to illuminate how these issues contribute into understanding self-construction and alienation in America. Puritan intolerance, anti-communism and corruption are regarded as evidence of the betrayal of the myth of the Promised Land which is a core constituent of the American identity. The collapse of the American values stressing the myth of the Promised Land, namely self-individualism, freedom and equality, stresses the imaginary character of the American identity, emphasizing its fragility and most of all its utopian dimension.

In an attempt to provide adequate answers to the questions that proceeded from the problematic of my research that is trying to bring evidence that American identity is reproduced through imagination in Miller's and O'Neill's three selected plays, I will study the plays in the light of Jacques Lacan's theory of the self and Roland Barthes's theory of myth. No critics, as far as I know, have presented a deep analysis of the three plays focusing on identity formation in America in such a way as to show that over centuries American identity is reproduced through imagination thanks to the adaptability and deceitful power of the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and to a lesser extent the Self-Made-Man. Also, no deep interpretations of the plays combined Lacan's theory of identity construction and Barthes's theory of myth to set a sociohistorical framework for the analysis of American identity in the three plays. Combining the two theories allows the reader to understand how history and culture, more particularly myths which have a historical and cultural foundation according to Barthes, af-

fect identity formation in the American society as portrayed by Miller and O'Neill, causing alienation.

The choice of Lacan's theory is due to the fact that it emphasizes alienation. Lacan's concept of the mirror stage shows how identity is constructed through identification with inflated reflected images. It essentially underscores the concept of the Other which exposes how the outside world shapes the mirrored images with which the individual misidentifies. Lacan also assumes that the individual's desire for identification is a desire for recognition. Lacan's approach, therefore, suits the subject of this study for four main reasons. First, it stresses alienation and thus puts forth the imaginary nature of the reflected images with which the American identifies when constructing his/her identity. Second, it brings us to question the core values that define Americanness. If American identity is constructed through misidentification with inflated images, a fundamental re-examination of what it means to be American would be required. Third, if the Other plays a crucial role in framing American identity, that is, if it prevents the individual from constructing his/her identity according to his/her own desire, all the notions about freedom, self- individualism and democracy that are at the core of American exceptionalism will come under question. Forth, if the process of identification is a manifestation of the individual's desire for integration and acceptance by others, this implies that some subgroups might not be recognized as true Americans if they do not conform to particular social norms. In other words, some categories of people would be socially alienated, a fact which would raise further questions about American democratic ideals which are at the core of American exceptionalism.

In order to understand the influence of the Other on identity formation and stress its alienating impact, I have selected Barthes's theory of myth for three main reasons. First, Barthes's approach to myth as a second order signification underlines its falsity. It shows how history and culture are given a natural justification through deception. As American identity is essentially founded on myths,

Barthes's approach will thus further stress its alienating character. Second, according to Barthes, the main function of myth is preserving and perpetuating the values of the dominant groups through manipulation. Therefore, Barthes's perspective will serve to highlight the deep division and repression in the American society, and will thereby challenge the ideals of self-individualism, freedom and equality which constitute the basis for American exceptionalism. Third, Barthes's view that myths are regenerated through signs emphasizes their longevity and adaptability. This will explain how American identity is reproduced over centuries with signs which suit each American time period.

The selection of ***The Crucible, Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** for illustrating alienation in the American society is justified by the fact that the three plays are considered to be among the most accomplished and influential American plays in the twentieth century, particularly in the period following the wars. Another purpose for choosing these plays in particular is the intense inner conflict experienced by the characters throughout the three plays. Miller and O'Neill depict tormented and disillusioned characters, a fact which may bring us to question whether self-gratification and happiness are possible at all in America during that period. Furthermore, my choice is related to the time and location where the events of the plays take place. Both playwrights portray the hidden aspect of the "earthly Heaven" in different historical periods.

The Crucible renders a negative image of American exceptionalism in seventeenth century Massachusetts, the place whose regional myths became national. In the Puritan community of Salem, intolerance and repression seem to be the law. Apparently, Salem is not the Promised Land for all people. The protagonist John Proctor, for example, is a good illustration of the American's struggle for integration and recognition in a presumably democratic and equal society. In the same play, Miller echoes a similar identity conflict in the twentieth century anti-communist America. In fact, there is a striking parallelism between Salem witch hunts and the McCarthy hearings in the Cold War period. In this context, the

study of ***The Crucible*** in particular will thus highlight how the myth of the Promised Land was readapted to suit the place and time period. More importantly, a deep scrutiny of the play will show how the same myth continues to shape American identity, causing the same alienation and disenchantment experienced centuries ago in intolerant Puritan Salem.

Death of a Salesman and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** further stress alienation in the American society. Both plays display the dark side of the myth of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man in postwar consumerist America. Willy Loman and James Tyrone in ***Death of a Salesmen*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** respectively undergo a deep identity crisis when trying to belong in a world which is becoming more and more materialistic. My study will open a chasm between fact and fancy in the urban area of the New York City. If the American Dream is of equality, opportunity and justice for all, one may wonder why for Willy and James America is not a capitalist paradise where happiness and personal welfare are inevitable and where every American can reinvent his/her identity as a self-made-man who can reach the American Dream. My analysis of the two plays will thus expose how the exceptional American dream of a glorious and idealistic past was distorted and reframed to offer a fanciful image of a peaceful collective enlightened self-improvement in a time of resentment and uncertainty. Hence, exploring the two plays will shed more light on the impact of the foundational American myths, mainly the American Dream on identity construction, underscoring its alienating effects in particular.

To study self-fashioning in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, I have preferred to look at the two plays which hold much in common. One area of similarity between the two plays has to do with the time period when the plays were produced. Basically, the two plays were written in a period when the American nation was reviving up for the economic boom of the 1950s. During that period, consumerism was playing a major role in the American Dream. Opportunity, competition and an increasing consumption of goods be-

came the backbone of the dream. This new context has certainly affected the two playwrights in regard to the choice of characters, plot, theme and even aesthetics.

Another similarity concerns the characters. Both plays are essentially four character plays. Both plays dramatize the story of a family composed of male and female parents and two sons. Also, most events in both plays take place largely, though not exclusively, in the family household. In both plays, the life condition of one or more characters affects the other major characters. Immediately apparent are also the motives of the male parents. Both are pursuers of the myth of the American dream, and both are disillusioned.

The central research questions raised above, namely the extent to which identity construction in America is an alienating process and how the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man affect identify formation, cause alienation and stress the utopian dimension of America's exceptionalist identity have determined its method of organization. My thesis will be divided into four main chapters. Chapter one provides the theoretical framework and historical background underlying the research and describes the most important concepts. It is divided into three main sections. The first presents Lacan's theory of self-construction, pointing up its alienating effects. It explores the basic concepts on which Lacan's psychoanalysis is founded. Six notions in particular will be highlighted: the mirror stage, identification, the Other, desire, lack of being and fantasy. Lacan's key concepts will better be understood when we explore Lacan's three registers: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. The second section is a study of Barthes's theory of myth. It essentially underlines Barthes's semiological approach to myth, emphasizing its deceitful character. In order to show how myth is produced and put forth its fanciful nature, it is imperative to explain the difference between form, meaning and signification. Then I shift my focus to the function of myth, stressing its manipulative power. In order to do so, I will explore the secondary message of myth. The third section aims at underlining alienation in the American society. Its main concern is showing how the

American foundational myths have evolved through time and how they affect American identity, causing estrangement.

Chapter two is an analysis of the Promised Land in ***The Crucible*** in the light of Lacan's theory. It is divided into three main parts. The first explores the characters John Proctor and his wife Elizabeth, shedding light on their intense identity conflict throughout the play. It brings into the fore alienation in seventeenth century intolerant Salem, calling into question American exceptionalism. It points up the deceitful nature of the myth of the Promised Land, showing how the two characters go from a state of self-alienation to a state of social estrangement, and how they lose their "Americanness" when they challenge the social norms fixed by the Puritan Other. The second part illuminates Lacan's concept of the Other in ***The Crucible***. It principally exposes the power of the Puritan Other in shaping the characters' identities. This part will thus further accentuate alienation in the American society by underlining the repression exerted on the Salem Puritan community, a fact which goes against the American ideals of self-individualism and freedom. This will raise further questions about American uniqueness. The last part displays similarities between seventeenth century Massachusetts and postwar anti-communist America. Two main parallels will be pointed out. The first similarity is between Abigail Williams, a fictional character and Josef McCarthy, a historical figure. Both can be regarded as figures of hysteria, highlighting the power of the Puritan and capitalist Other. The second correspondence is between Miller and his fictional character Proctor that stands for an imaginary projection of his personal-experience. The two similar points will further stress the adaptability, longevity and above all the manipulative power of the myth of the Promised Land, highlighting its continuous alienating impact on the American identify over centuries.

The third chapter is a study of the American Dream and to a lesser extent the Self-Made-Man in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** along the lines of Lacan's theory of self-construction. It essentially displays al-

ienation in postwar consumerist America, emphasizing the alienating effects of the two myths. It is divided into four main parts. Part one aims at showing how the pursuit of the American dream, which has become purely materialistic in postwar consumerist America, causes the Lomans' and the Tyrones' alienation. Basically, this part exposes the power of the consumerist Other in framing the identities of the dream pursuers, leading to self-alienation. Therefore, this part will also bring into the fore the conformity of the American family in a highly consumerist society, an image which calls into question American self-individualism and freedom and thus challenges the notion of American exceptionalism. Part two analyzes two main characters: Biff and Edmund. Contrary to the other family members, the latter resist the capitalist and consumerist Other. The main aim of this part is thus to show how defying the Other would lead to social alienation. Hence, the study of the two characters will primarily serve to verify how democratic America is. Providing an answer to this question will serve to raise further questions about American exceptionalism. Part three explores Miller's and O'Neill's autobiographies. The purpose for doing so is to see how the characters' personal experiences of disillusionment have affected their writings. It mainly attempts to verify whether the playwright's disillusionment has turned into rebellion. Particularly, this section consists in showing how the playwrights can resist the capitalist and consumerist Other through art. Said differently, it displays to what extent Miller's and O'Neill's plays can be said to present a note of hope in a conformist and highly consumerist American society. Part four is a comparison between ***Death of a salesman*** and Robert Frost's "**The Death of the Hired Man**." The main object of the fourth part consists in exploring the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man, showing how they have been readapted to suit a more market oriented American society. This part thus endeavors to assert the continuity of the American foundational myths and their alienating effects on American identity.

The last chapter deals with Miller's and O'Neill's use of onstage techniques. I attempt to show how these techniques can render an imitation of life which paral-

lels the characters' imaginary state of being. More precisely, I endeavor to display how both playwrights use allusions to highlight alienation in seventeenth century Massachusetts and consumerist postwar urban New York. By setting clear boundaries between reality and illusion, my study will thus serve to reveal the deceitful and manipulative nature of the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. It will mainly challenge the idealizing accounts of America as an exceptional "earthly" Heaven. Therefore, this chapter is important as it sheds light on the importance of Miller's and O'Neill's plays as works intended for theatrical performance; and thereby exposes drama as a conceptualization of a cultural practice that complements life by expanding its possibilities. In addition to being drama texts, Miller's and O'Neill's plays are also stage texts. The main concern of this chapter is thus to show how both playwrights skillfully transform drama text into onstage dialogue and onstage directions in order to give a palatable dimension to alienation in the American society.

Chapter One

Theoretical Framework

and

Historical Background

The first chapter of my thesis looks at American identity in the light of Jacques Lacan's and Roland Barthes' theories. It will combine the two theories which will allow us to explore alienation in the American society. The chapter is divided into three main parts. The first part is a study of Jacques Lacan's theory of self-construction in order to expose its alienating character. Before attempting to explore Lacan's view, however, I will introduce some key notions of the self. I will examine how issues about identity construction are addressed by different schools of thought. Then, I will focus on Lacan's conception of self-construction. A full understanding of how the process of self-formation results in an alienated subject in the light of Lacan's theory makes it imperative to explore Lacan's three registers: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. Each register will highlight some of the Lacnian concepts, putting forth alienation.

Three main points will be highlighted. The first deals with the Imaginary order. Exploring the Imaginary will bring to the fore the concept of the mirror stage. It shows how identity is formed via a process of identification with a specular image. The Imaginary marks the beginning of alienation when the child recognizes himself as other, distinguishing himself from his parents. The focus of the second point will be on the Symbolic order. This part tries essentially to highlight the concept of the big Other, showing how mirrored images come from the outside world or the domain of the Other to shape the individual's identity when he/she develops into an adult. Moreover, it explains how identification with such images relies on the desire of the Other. The concern of the last point is examining the Real order. It attempts to distinguish between need, demand and desire, and explains what Lacan means by the realization of desire. Also, analyzing the Real order sheds light on Lacan's concept of lack or emptiness. It shows how the process of identification creates a sense of incompleteness or imperfection, which can be filled with the object *a* through fantasy or imagination. Therefore, by stressing the impossibility for the human subject to be identical with the mirrored images he identifies with, the three Lacanian registers stress the alienating character of identity construction.

In the second part of the present chapter I analyze myth, exposing both its subject matter and its function. Focus will be on Barthes' theory of myth. The choice of Barthes's theory among others is justified by the way in which my research work relies on Lacan's theory of identity formation. Indeed, it is imperative to explore the main notions on which his theory is founded and which relate to the main problematic of my thesis. In order to understand how myth is formed in the light of Barthes's theory, it is crucial to explain some basic concepts on which his theory is founded. First, we try to highlight Barthes's view of mythical speech as a semiological system. In order to do so, it is essential to show how Barthes applied Saussure's concepts of signifier, signified and sign to explain how myth is socially formed. It is also important to shed light on Barthes's contribution by bringing into the fore his concept of second order of signification, also called connotation which is at the core of myth formation. This is an important concept to examine as it emphasizes the falsity of myth and its manipulative power which powerfully evokes Lacan's notion of the deceitful nature of fantasy. The second order of signification will also reveal what Barthes calls the secondary message of myth as a tool used by dominant ideological groups to homogenize human behavior. This is another crucial point to consider as it suggests Lacan's concept of the Other. This part is thus important as it attempts to show how myth can relate to identity formation along the lines of Lacan's theory, illuminating the mechanisms of fantasy and further stressing alienation.

In the third part of my research I will study alienation in the American society. Stressing the alienating impact of myths on American identity will raise questions about the notion of American exceptionalism. Therefore, I will attempt to show how the experience of becoming an American results in an alienated and tormented rather than a self-satisfied individual. Based on Lacan's and Barthes's theories, the human subject constructs his/her identity through interaction with the Other. In the case of the American society, the "Other" can include different institutions such as dominant religious groups and capitalist leaders who promote

myths in order to preserve their ideologies. As myths are socially constructed and are not natural in origin, and given the fact that myths are "timeless," the old foundational American myths such the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man, may be adapted to suit each time period. In this respect, the cultural values of myths are essentialized; that is they become a natural condition of the world. In seventeenth century Massachusetts and postwar consumerist America, myths were advanced by the Puritan Other and consumerist Other as a natural order to unify the American society and alleviate the omnipresent feeling of alienation, promoting fanciful images of America as a safe Heaven or a Promised Land where every American can reach self-fulfillment and find happiness. Therefore, it could be argued that the Americans construct their identities in a fantasmatic or imaginary state.

To have a better understanding of how myth can be a constituent of the American identity along the lines of Lacan's theory, I try in the last part of the present chapter to study the three foundational American myths namely the myth of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. The choice of the three myths among others lies in the way they relate to Miller's and O'Neill's plays which essentially deal with the alienating impact of the three selected myths on American identity. The study of each myth will illuminate the notion of American exceptionalism, i.e. how each myth is promoted by the Puritan Other and the consumerist Other to stress the utopian notion of American uniqueness and advance it as part of a natural order. This is an important point to examine as it puts forth Barthes's secondary message of myth and its manipulative power, stressing its alienating effect on American indentify.

I- Jacques Lacan's Theory of Self-Construction and Alienation

Concerns with notions of the self and identity are quite old and have always been problematic. "Who we are" is a crucial question which has been approached from

different perspectives. In an attempt to examine how one can experience oneself, different schools of thoughts have addressed a number of essential issues: are identities given naturally or constructed? Do people experience themselves as individual persons or social groups? Is identity homogenous or heterogeneous ? Essentialists believe that "identity is given naturally…[and it] is based on some essence"**(Craig 13).** They regard human beings as having an essence to which they give the name "soul," "self" or "subject." The self is the subject of our mental and physical actions. Being the essence or the subject is also the idea of being unitary and undivided over time. Other philosophers and psychologists developed a category-based approach to identity. William Peter Robinson argues that Henri Tajfel conceptualized the distinction between interpersonal and intergroup behavior in regard to "acting in terms of self versus acting in terms of [one's] group" **(Tajfel qtd. in Robinson 3).** This leads to a distinction between social identity and personal identity. This distinction is based on the idea that "every individual is characterized by social features which show his or her membership of the group or a category, on the one hand, and by personal features or individual characteristics which are more specific…on the other"**(Worchel et al. 2).** The idea of personal identity is not very different from the concept of the "essence" as it refers to the fact that "the individual perceives himself as identical to himself…[and]he is the same in time and space"**(3).**

However, essentialists do not consider categorical similarities to be part of the subject. Along the same lines, the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud came up with a more challenging and longstanding approach to identity, showing the complexity of the individual and stressing the problematic of identity. Freud does not accept the existence of one single and undivided entity as that could be put forward as an answer to "who are we?" Reflecting on Freud's theory, Alex Watson argues that "even at one moment of time we are not one thing. Rather we are a multiplicity of interacting systems and process" **(Watson 2).** Therefore, Freud precisely questions out the conviction of being undivided and identifiable individuals. Freud's breaking up of the unity of the person is evidenced by, for instance,

dreaming. He argues that dreaming cannot be explained if we consider ourselves as a unity:

> No doubt a wish-fulfillment must bring pleasure; but the question then arises `To whom?'. To the person who has the wish of course. But, as we know, a dreamer's relation to his wishes is quite a peculiar one. He repudiates them and censors them –he has no liking for them, in short. So that their fulfillment will give him no pleasure, but just the opposite; and experience shows that this opposite appears in the form of anxiety, a fact which has still to be explained. Thus a dreamer in relation to his dream-wishes can only be compared to an amalgamation of two separate people who are linked by some important common element. **(Freud, *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* 580)**

According to Freud, the dreamer's anxiety can only be explained on the assumption of two agencies: one that wishes and another one that resists the whish. Based on this argument, Freud puts forth his first topographical model (conscious and unconscious) that he develops later on into his structural model. Freud remarks that, though we may appear as a unity, we can only be represented by the plurality of three agencies: the id, ego and Superego that operate at three different levels, each adding its own unique contribution to our identity. Freud describes the id as "the repository of instinctual impulses" **(Freud qtd. in Abel 60).** The function of the ego **"**is to discover the most favorable and the least perilous method of obtaining [instinctual] satisfaction**" (61).** The superego, on the other hand, "observes the ego, gives it orders, judges it and threatens it with punishment exactly like the parent its place has been taken" **(Freud qtd. in Spillious 16).** According to Freud, the three constituents lack sufficient compatibility, as they do not share common goals (pleasure Vs safety). Therefore, they cannot suggest unity but they rather depict a heterogeneous or divided "self."

Ontogenetically, the ego could be said to be "the product of successive identifications" **(Stijn and Verhaeghe 395).** Freud distinguishes between primary and secondary identifications. He defines the primary identification as the "earliest

and original form of emotional tie" **(Freud qtd. in Stijn and Verhaeghe 396).** This identification is indistinguishable from the object choice (the parents). Freud explains that the infant, in order to survive, is preoccupied with the satisfaction of his instinctual drives. Therefore, the infant needs the other, the parents, who become the first drive objects that allow him to satisfy his drives. The ego starts with a primary identification, which is "enlarged by successive indemnificatory layers, each one going back to a specific object relation" **(396).** At this point, we can conclude that Freud views the self or identity as an ongoing process rather than a fixed entity.

Moreover, Freud's view of the self cannot be complete without referring to his concept of narcissism[1]**.** In his paper "On Narcissism: An Introduction" (1914), Freud post-postulates that all individuals have some level of narcissism throughout their development. However, he draws a clear divide between primary and secondary narcissism. Primary narcissism is present from birth. At an early stage, the infant acts spontaneously and experiences himself as "the center and core of creation" **(Freud qtd. in Schore 93**). This state of being gives the infant a feeling of being powerful and loved. Since we once experienced this feeling in infancy, as an adult the individual projects the possibility of a return to narcissism by means of what Freud calls the ideal ego: "Man is not willing to forgo the narcissistic perfection of his childhood; and when he grows up he is disturbed by the domination of others…so that he can no longer retain that perfection, he seeks to recover it in the new form of an ideal ego" **(Freud qtd. in Sandler et al. XII**). Therefore, primary narcissism "is replaced by the installation of a division

[1] The concept of narcissism was "inspired by the Greek myth of Narcissus. It referred narrowly to a perverse form of self love, in which a person's own body was his love object" (Sandler et al. 56, 178). The meaning of the concept changed over time. In psychoanalysis, the term was first used by Sigmund Freud. Later on, Lacan makes narcissism a central aspect of human psyche, aligning it with what he terms the Imaginary Order.

between the actual ego and the ideal ego" **(Stijn and Verhaeghe 355).** The development of the ego thus can be seen as a never-ending attempt to the return to

the primary narcissism. However, due to censorship mechanisms, not all representation, or projections, will be accepted by the superego. The ego itself becomes split between ego and ideal ego, which points at the heterogeneous character of the self.

Jacques Lacan, like Freud, emphasized the heterogeneity of the subject. His contribution is mainly based on three main concepts: specular image, mirror stage and object *a*. Lacan's concepts can best be understood within the context of Freud's claim in "On Narcissism" that the ego comes into existence as a result of later development. Lacan develops a well-founded theory to explain how this development can be understood. Lacan stresses that what guides human development and provides what we usually call identity is images. Lacan's conception of identity can best be understood when considering the three major spheres of his theory, the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real. The theory of the three registers forms the skeletal framework for most Lacanian concepts. In his theory Lacan emphasizes how interdependent the three registers are. He "likens these orders or registers to the Borromean knot [which] is a group of three rings which are linked in such a way that if any one of them is severed all three become separated. All three threads are interconnected and interwoven" **(Costello 92).** To provide an insight into how identity is constructed within the theoretical frame work of Lacan's psychoanalysis and bring into the fore its alienating character I explain each one of the three Lacanian orders in detail.

1- The Imaginary Order

According to Lacan, the Imaginary is the register where the infant "imagines" himself to be. In particular, the Imaginary is central to Lacan's accounts of ego-formation in a phase which he names the "mirror stage." One of the crucial upshots of the mirror stage is that the ego supports a phantasmatic or imaginary sense of selfhood. To explain how the ego is formed, Lacan attempts to understand the experience of a child looking in the mirror. The infant sees a reflection

of his image in the mirror, and thus forms his first impression of himself. This reflected image, also called specular image, makes the child experience a sense of self unity: "It suffices to understand the mirror stage… as an identification, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image" **(Lacan, *Ecrit* 76).** Phillipe Julien remarks that "what Freud introduced in the relationship of the ideal ego (idealich) to the ego (ich) was imaginary identification, revealed in Lacan's mirror stage in all its purity" **(Julien 49).** Reading Freud, Lacan uses Freud's term ideal ego to refer to the narcissistic and idealized image of the self in the Imaginary. However, Lacan believes that the mirror lies to the infant because it guarantees an illusory sense of bodily unity and wholeness while he is still dependent on the others for his physical security. Identification deludes the human subject because the feeling of unity provided is only an illusion. Therefore, the mirror stage is a narcissistic process, in so far as the perfect image of the self, the ideal ego with which the child identifies, is only a future possibility and not a present reality which is imperfect:

> The important point is that this form [the Ideal-I] situates the agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will only forever remain irreducible for any single individual, or rather, that will asymptotically approach the subject's becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical syntheses by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality. **(Lacan, *Ecrit* 76)**

Considering Lacan's concept of the mirror stage, we can infer that identification with the reflected image entails alienation. Being based on an illusory image of wholeness, the primary function of the ego is thus one of misrecognition. In other words, the reflected image with which one identifies is an "other" misrecognised as one-self. Therefore, the ego becomes "other" to itself. This is the first type of otherness that Lacan refers to in his theory. The second type which is the "Other" with a capital letter relates to the Symbolic and Real registers which

themselves are linked to the Imaginary. The Other will be developed later on in our research as a symbolic and imaginary type.

The postwar period, in which Miller's and O'Neill's plays were produced, alienation came to denote a near universal and psychological malaise. Feeling estranged was a reason for profound dismay. Religiously, economically as well as socially and politically, it was difficult to feel whole or at one with oneself or the world. Alienation thus became central in the self-understanding of millions of Americans. In this context, Lacan's concept of the Imaginary seems most able to suit the topic of my research: it could be an adequate analytical tool for understanding Miller's and O'Neill's characters and highlighting their alienating traits.

However, though alienation was mainly a characteristic of modern life, this does not exclude the fact that loss of unity can also be related to the pre-modern period. As it will be discussed in the second chapter, alienating features could be observed as early as the early settlements in the New World, particularly during Salem witch trials of 1692. This does not go against Lacan's theory which considers alienation to be at the core of identity-formation regardless of the time period. It would be truer to say that alienation was not a product of modern life: it only became better known during this period because of the advance in the psychoanalytic field which provided a scientific frame to analyze and understand this feeling.

Despite the fact that Lacan's Imaginary order is presented as a stage in child development, it is worth pointing out that it is a life process especially since Lacan's three psychoanalytic orders are related. They form a trio of intrapsychic realms. This notion will be clarified when we consider the Symbolic order which is the second point of our discussion.

2- The Symbolic Order

The symbolic order is the realm of language. Therefore, it is the register of law, institutions, ideology, and traditions of societies, these things being intertwined in various ways with language. It is hence a pre-existing register which prepares places for individuals in advance as Lacan explains:

> Symbols in fact envelop the life of man with a network so total that they join together those who are going to engender him by bone and flesh before he comes into the world, so total that they bring to his birth,…the shape of his identity, so total that they provide the words that will make him faithful or renegade. **(Lacan, *Ecrit* 231)**

From what has been said, the Symbolic order is thus the domain of the Other, also called "the big Other" which is included in the second type of otherness. By mirroring elements from the outside world, the human subject can develop his identity. In his contact with the others, the individual tries to answer the question: what do the others want from me?" In an attempt to answer such question, the human subject develops an identity in relation to the Other. Therefore, in Lacan's mirror logic, the development of an identity goes beyond the creation of a self-image in relation to perceived other images. It continuously turns the ego into Ego Ideal mirrored from the outer world. According to Lacan, the second type of otherness refers to both the symbolic and the Real Other.

To explain how the individual situates him/her-self towards the second type of otherness, it is important to explore one main concept of Lacan's theory termed: Name-of-the-Father as Lacan observes: "It is the in name of the father that we must recognize the basis of the symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law" **(231).** Lacan's picture of the father is deeply rooted in the Freudian notions of the Oedipal complex. Lacan points out that "there is no question of an Oedipus complex if there is no father [and] to speak about the Oedipus complex is to introduce as essential the function of the father" **(Lacan, "The Paternal Metaphor I" 118).** In the Lacanian version of the Oedipus complex, the maternal figure stands for the Real

Other. According to Lacan, the mother is important for the infant as it makes him/her feel whole, full and eager to merge with her. Nonetheless, the child does not know what the mother desires[2] that will allow him/her to make one with her. In other words, the desire of the Real Other is uncontrollable and unpredictable. Lacan explains that in order to control what is otherwise uncontrollable; the desire of the mother is replaced by the paternal metaphor of the father which stands for the Symbolic Other. The individual constructs him/her-self according to whatever he/she thinks the father possesses that makes him the focus of the mother's desire. In other words, when developing his/her identity, the subject observes the way the Other reacts and has to make sure that the Other desires the image he identifies with: the individual attempts to merge his/her self with the social "I" which is sociatilly formed. Therefore, the concept of desire (desire of the Other) is also at the core of Lacan's theory of identity formation and alienation.

Miller and O'Neill wrote their plays in critical periods of time characterized by dominant religious, political and economic ideologies. Hence, in trying to understand the individual's alienation Miller and O'Neill certainly could not neglect the alienating effects of the dominant groups on the individual's behavior. Considering Lacan's theory, it could be argued that both playwrights brought into the fore the concept of the Other. The characters' process of self-construction and alienation in the three plays could best be understood if we consider how the characters relate to the Other and how they are affected by the Other's desire.

It was Ferdinand De Saussure's conception of language as a system of signs

[2] The concept of desire has its roots in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel argued that "it is essential as one needs the other for recognition, and at the same time the other is a threat and imposes limitation on one's own freedom" (Hegel, 800). Hegel's idea of recognition is at the core of Lacan's concept of desire: "Man's very desire is constituted, he [Hegel] tells us, under the sign of meditation: it is the desire to have one's desire recognized" (Lacan, *Ecrit* 182). Lacan's concept of desire will be developed in detail when we study the Real order.

that provided a model for Lacan's symbolic order. Noteworthy though, is the fact that the Lacanian conception of the relation between the signifier and the signified transcends De Saussure's modal and concurs with the post-structuralist critique of De Saussure. The post-structuralist Jacques Derrida has elaborated a theory of deconstruction that challenges the idea of a frozen structure and advances the notion that "there is no transcendental or privileged signified and that the domain or the interplay of signification has…no limit**" (Derrida 3).** Sean Homer similarly states that "Lacan accepted the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign [but questioned] the prioritization of the signified over the signifier" **(Homer 4-41).** Homer goes on explaining that for Lacan a signifier does not refer to a signified but rather to another signifier which in turn refers to another signifier and so on in an endless chain of signification. Therefore, "signification is always a process- a chain. None of its elements actually 'consists' of the meaning or the signified but rather each signifier 'insists' on a meaning, as it presses forward to the next signifier" **(44).** Or as Lacan puts it, there is an "insistent sliding of the signified under the signifier" **(Lacan, *Ecrit* 419).** In other words, meaning is not fixed because it does not connect a word or a name to a specific object but it rather connects an image to a concept in a given context. When the context changes, the meaning changes as well. Along the lines of Lacan's theory, the individual's search for meaning could be understood as a continuous process of identification with images that would allow him/her to be recognized by the Other.

Therefore, the process of identification in Lacan's theory is actually symbolically mediated. In this respect, Ego Ideals are regarded by Lacan as symbolic elements that the human subject takes from the discourse of the Other. The human subject identifies with images which, in the subject's interpretation, are more likely to affect the desire of the Other. In this process, the Ego Ideal thus allows the subject to have an idea about who he will be. Moreover, they function to obtain recognition (recognition by the Other). Therefore, the desire for recognition has an alienating impact on the human subject.

In this respect, Miller's and O'Neill's characters' process of self-construction

could also be studied in terms of search for recognition. My study will thus expose how these characters try to position themselves within the sliding chain of signifiers (or images reflected by the Other) in such a way as to be validated by the dominant religious, political and economic dominant institutions in America. It will equally highlight how the search for recognition results in the characters' estrangement.

Because the signifier is never equal to the signified, the subject can never position him/her-self within the chain of signification. As soon as the subject tries to position him/her-self, the signifier shifts to another signifier. In other words, the subject (or the ego) never really equals the symbolic elements (Ego Ideal) he identifies with. Therefore, the result is a barred and alienated subject. The void in the signifier's structure is occupied by what Lacan calls objet *a*, which is the cause of desire. Therefore, in their attempt to identify with their Ego Ideals, Miller's and O'Neill's characters should relate to the object *a*, which they equate with the values of the myths promoted by the Puritan and capitalist Other, in order to compensate for their imperfections and alleviate their feeling of alienation. The lacanian object *a* will be discussed in the following part of my research work.

3- The Real Order

The Real order, indeed is one of the most confusing of the three Lacanian orders. One of the major difficulties of discussing the Real is the fact that it cannot be known. For Lacan, it is "the impossible…which may be approached, but never grasped"**(Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XI* 280).** The very entrance into language marks the separation of the individual from the Real. Therefore, the Real cannot be symbolized, as Lacan puts it, the Real "is what resists symbolization absolutely" **(Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book I* 66).** However, it is the Real which makes symbolization possible. The signifiers in the Symbolic try constantly to signify the Real. Yet, this is not possible because the

Real resists symbolization and cannot be expressed in language. In an attempt to clarify the desire of the Real Other, Lacan makes a clear distinction between need, demand and desire.

Lacan considers that needs are vital requirements for the human beings. The child, who is helpless, articulates his/her needs and addresses them to others who are capable of fulfilling his/her needs. Before acquiring language, crying, screaming and gesticulating are primary expressions of these needs. As a response to these expressions of needs, the infant, for example, is fed, hugged or gets his diaper changed. Therefore, need is each time followed by satisfaction provided by the others. Assistance provided by the others to meet the child's preverbal expressions of needs reveals that it is the Other who interprets these expressions.

The Other sets up links between the infant's expressions of needs and their significance. Hence the child is helped to be aware of the socially mediated significance of his/her expressions of needs which become what Lacan calls demands. When the child acquires language and grows up, the Other continues to exert an influence on him/her. In order to get his/her needs satisfied the individual should address them in a satisfactory way. The human subject should articulate his/her demands in terms imposed by the Other. Subjected to socio-cultural factors, demands are needs which help the individual become socialized.

Lacan defines desire in relation to both need and demand. The psychoanalyst points out that "desire begins to take shape in the margin in which demand rips away from need" **(Lacan, *Ecrit* 689).** To put it differently, desire is what remains when we subtract need from demand. According to Lacan, when an individual articulates a demand which is satisfied, this indicates that he/she is accepted and loved by the Other. In addition to meeting the expressed needs, every demand becomes "a request for love" **(689).**

However, desire is for Lacan unattainable because it is situated in the Real. As soon as the individual projects it onto the signification (the Symbolic) it is no longer his/her desire. Paradoxically, Slavoj Zizek pointed out that the attainment of desire does not consist in being fulfilled: "[a] desire's raison d'être is not to realize its goal, to find full satisfaction, but to reproduce itself as desire" **(Zizek 39).** Hence, if desire is not meant to be fulfilled, there remains to know what Lacan means by the realization of desire. When the human subject tries to represent the Real in the Symbolic, the result is what Lacan calls a sense of loss or lack because the Real is "impossible". This lack is replaced by what Lacan calls object *a*. However, desire for Lacan is a relation to lack and not to an object:

> Desire, a function central to all human experience, is the desire for nothing namable. And at the same time, this desire lies at the origin of every variety of animation. If being were only what it is, there wouldn't even be room to talk about it. Being comes into existence as an exact function of this lack. **(Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book II* 213)**

Object *a* is a cause of desire rather than an object of desire, because there is no object that really is "IT." The object *a* is, as Jean-Michel Rabaté puts it, the "object that escapes from being caught in the chain of signifiers" **(Rabaté 112).** Because there is a void in the signifier's structure, object *a* in this context is the object which comes to "represent this very lack of the signifier" **(118).** Hence, the realization of desire is the representation of the lack or void which is involved in the endless metonymy of desire.

Within Lacan's logic, a human subject is thus "a lack of being." The subject's fundamental emptiness (lack) makes it impossible for him to express wholeness that would amount to being. Lacan argues that "desire is a relation of being to lack. This lack is the lack of being properly speaking. It is not the lack of this or that, but lack of being whereby the being exists" **(Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book II* 223).** No matter how many signifiers the human subject adds to the signifying chain, the chain will always be incomplete. It will always

lack THE signifier that could complete it. The human subject thus identifies with a lack of being. In other words, the individual's identity will never mach up to its own being.

Therefore, alienation is an inevitable result of the process by which identity is constructed. By clinging to an object *a*, the split and alienated human subject can somehow ignore his/her division and sustain an imaginary sense of wholeness. Lacan calls the relation between the barred subject and objet *a* fantasy or imagination. Although the different objects are necessary, there will always be a gap between the object *a* originating from the Real and the object incarnating "IT." Any person, thing or concept that causes desire is the object *a*. Therefore, fantasy allows the individual to think of him/her-self as being whole and to get a sense of self even though it is only fanciful. As Zizek puts it: "fantasy itself is a 'primordial lie' a screen masking the fundamental impossibility**"(Zizek 20).** While the human subject accepts that the Real is lost, in his/her fantasmatic or imaginary life he/she yet supposes that there are others who have more direct access to the Real. This fantasm consoles the individual by positing that the state of wholeness he/she once experienced in the Real can be regained. Since THE thing that made the subject feel complete in the Real was taken from him/her by the Other, the individual fancies that she/he will find it gain in the domain of the Other. Therefore, fantasy or imagination serves to hide from the subject that full satisfaction is never possible anyway. However though it never really allows the human subject to attain completeness, fantasy safeguards his/her desire. According to Lacan, desire should not be satisfied and cannot be satisfied, because its satisfaction would mean the end of the subject.

Lacanian fantasy can be connected to the mechanisms of myth. The latter offer images of a unified self which the human subject merges with his/her Ego Ideal. Because the desire of the Real is unattainable and the return to the Real is impossible, the fantasy and inflated images provided by myths allow the subject to perceive his/her society as an organic whole where he/she can experience

him/her-self as being unified again. The feelings of completeness and perfection are fanciful though, because they are the product of imagination. In this respect, self construction and alienation in Miller's and O'Neill's plays can also be studied in relation to the mechanisms of myths. For multiple reasons that will be developed later on, the religious, political and economic dominant institutions, or the Other, worked out erroneous images of unity, welfare and self-gratification from the foundational American myths in critical historical periods where they were most needed. The workings of myths, their relation to identity construction and their alienating impact on the characters will be the focus of the following sections of this chapter.

II- The Deceitful Nature of Myth: Barthes's Theory

Myth could be defined as a story. Any significant story (significant for adherents) in the present or future could actually be turned into a myth. Whether the story must in fact be true is left open-ended. However, myth could be taken more broadly as a belief or set of beliefs. Theories of myth may be as old as myths themselves. In this concern, Robert A. Segal argues :"Only in the modern era …have those theories purported to be scientific for only since then have there existed the professional disciplines that sought to supply truly scientific theories of myth, the social science of which anthropology, psychology and to a lesser extent sociology have contributed the most" **(Segal 20).** What seem to unite the study of myth across these different disciplines are the questions asked. The three basic questions are those concerning the origin of myth, its function and its referent (or subject matter). Each theory differs in its answers to these questions and also on their focus. Therefore, analyzing a myth is to analyze it from the viewpoint of some theory. The truth or falsity of myth may relate to the function of myth. Segal explains:

A theory which maintains that myth functions to explain

> natural processes is committed to the falsity of myth if the explanation given proves incompatible with a scientific one. A theory which maintains that myth functions to unify society y may circumvent the issue of truth by asserting that society is unified when its members believe that the laws they are expected to obey were established long ago by revered ancestors, whether or not those laws were really established back then. **(Segal 4)**

Falsity of myth can best be understood along the lines of Roland Barthes's theory. Reflecting upon Barthes's conception of myth, John M. Gomez explains that myths are "a series of collective beliefs that seem natural and universal but are, in fact, socially and historically determined" **(Gomez 12).** From this definition, a good number of important points are put forward. Barthes takes the broad meaning of myth which he equates with a set of beliefs. Also, falsity is according to Barthes at the core of myth. Moreover, myth is formed in relation to society. To understand how Barthes explains the natural and eternal aspects of myth it is imperative to examine some concepts such as form, meaning and signification.

1-Form, Meaning and Signification

To explain how myth is formed, Barthes resorts to Saussure's theory as he considers that mythology is part of semiology, the science of forms. Along the lines of semiology, Barthes defines myth as being "a system of communication, that is a message…It is a mode of signification, a form" **(Barthes, *Mythologies* 107).** In other words, what really characterizes a myth is its form rather than its content. So according to Barthes everything can have the status of myth even material objects.

When Barthes defines myth as a system of communication or a type of speech he points out that this speech is not oral speech or written discourse only. It can take many other forms such as: "photography, cinema, reporting, shows, publicity [which] can serve as a support to mythical speech" **(108).** Therefore, a photo-

graph in a magazine or an automobile can be a kind of speech in the same way as an article in a newspaper or a show on TV if they signify something.

Considering mythical speech as a semiological system, Barthes borrows Saussure's terminology when discussing the relationship between "sign," "signifier" and "signified". Barthes argues that "we are dealing, in any semiological system, not with two, but with three different terms. For what we grasp is not at all one term after the other, but the correlation that unites them: there are, therefore, the signifier, the signified and the sign, which is the associative total of the two terms" (**Barthes, *Mythologies* III).** For example, a bunch of roses is a sign which unites a sound image 'roses' (signifier) and the concept passion (signified).

To his semiology, Barthes adds denotation and connotation in his book ***Elements of Semiology***. After sign-signifier-signified has been formed, that sign will become the new sign. The new sign in the first level is called denotation, or the first order of signification, while sign in the second level is called connotation or the second order of signification. Barthes adds that the connotation of a sign is derived from different signs:

> Any system of signification comprises a plane of expression (E) and a plane of content (C) and that the signification coincides with the relation (R) of the two planes ERC. Let us now supposes that such a system ECR becomes in its turn a mere element of a second system, which thus is more extensive than the first…In the first case, the first system (ERC) becomes the plane of expression or signifier of the second system…the first system is thus the plane of denotation , and the second system (wider than the first) the plane of connotation….Society continually develops from the first system which human languages supplies to it, second order significant systems… Connotation being itself a system comprises signifiers, signifieds and the process which unites the former to the latter. **(Barthes, "Connotation and Denotation" 89-91)**

However, it is crucial to notice that for Barthes myth is a peculiar system; a

semiological system of a second order. Barthes explains: "That which is a sign (namely the associative total of a concept and an image or form) in the first system, becomes a mere signifier in the second" **(Barthes, *Mythologies* 113).** In other words, myth is created when an image is taken out of its context, emptied from its truth, history and actual culture and then is repackaged and invested a second layer meaning. To make it clearer, we take the famous example that Barthes gives, of a magazine photograph. A picture of a Black man on the cover of ***Paris Match*** magazine is a collection of lines and colors. Because in our culture we already know what a photograph is, the colors and lines represent for us an image of a man. Moreover, because we are already familiar with some conventional codes (for example the uniform of French soldiers) the photograph does not show the image of any man. It represents a picture of a Black soldier in a French uniform giving the French salute. Barthes calls the latter a sign.

In the mythical system, however, the sign becomes a form to be ready to receive a new signified. Barthes argues that "when it becomes form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, history evaporates" (**116).** In the case of the magazine photograph, Barthes states that "one must put the biography of the negro in parentheses if one wants to free the picture and prepare it to receive the signified" **(116).** That is, we should abstract the picture from its historical context: the Black man might have joined the French army as a result of some circumstances. But Barthes adds that "the form doesn't suppress the meaning, it only impoverishes it, it puts it at distance, it holds it at one's disposal" **(117).** When history is drained the meaning of the photograph, the myth becomes timeless and universal.

It is when form receives a signified, also called concept that myth comes into being. Defining the concept, Barthes states that "it is determined, it is at once historical and intentional; it is the motivation which causes the myth to be uttered…through the concept, it is a whole new history which is implanted in the myth**" (Barthes qtd. in Storey 78).** The concept of the Black man giving the

salute is French impartiality. The picture is intended to convey the mythical message that in the French empire all people, black and white, are equal. This is suggested by the Black man who looks exactly like a French soldier when he salutes. In signification (a term that Barthes uses in the mythical system just as the Saussurean sign used in the linguistic system), the relation between form and concept should seem natural. In other words, a social or historical idea or concept is made to become an empirical fact. French imperiality then is imposed as a timeless natural fact while it is a political and historical situation only.

By "myths Barthes also means ideology understood as a body of ideas and practices which defend the status quo and actively promote the values and interests of the dominant groups in society" **(Moriarty 21).** This definition exposes the referent of myth in Barthes's theory. According to Barthes, the subject matter of myth is the set of beliefs and values of the dominant group. In this respect, the dominant group evokes to Lacan's concept of the Other. In the same concern, Barthes adds that myth is "what conforms to a particular ideological world view, serving particular social interests"**(Barthes qtd. in Moriarty 60).** Therefore, the principal function of myth in the light of Barthes's theory is unifying society, homogenizing human interactions by presenting an unquestionable way of ordering the world; and making people participate in this collective belief. To explain the ideological dimension of myth and its manipulative power, Barthes distinguishes between the primary and secondary messages of myth.

2-Primary VS Secondary Message

To explain the concept that a mythical message is an ideological narrative, Barthes states that there are two types of messages. One is primary and is presented as being natural or common sense. The other is secondary. The former functions so as to conceal the latter which serves particular ideological interests. Barthes gives the example of wine in France to show the double function of the mythical message. The primary message, which is taken for granted and seems natural, is

that wine is a good and fine substance. Being good, wine becomes part of the French people's life. Barthes points out:

> Wine is part of society…it is an ornament in the slightest ceremonials of French daily life, from the snack (plonk and camembert) to the feast from the conversation at the local café to the speech at formal dinner. It exalts all climates, of whatever kind: in cold weather, it is associated with all myths of becoming warm and at the height of summer, with all the images of shade, with all things cool and sparkling …Combined as a basic substance with other alimentary figures, it can cover all the aspects of space and time for the Frenchman**. (Barthes, M*ythologies* 60)**

In other words, wine has become a sign of Frenchness. It is felt by the French society to be "a possession which is its very own, just like its three hundred and sixty types of cheese and its culture. It is a totem-drink, corresponding to the milk of the Dutch or the tea ceremonially taken by the British royal family" **(58).** Thus for Barthes wine has been adopted as a French national drink and has consequently become part of the French identity. This means that the belief in the myth of wine allows an apparent sense of self and integration for the Frenchman. Equally, "a Frenchman who kept this myth at arm's length would expose himself to minor but definite problems of integration" **(59).** This recalls Lacan's concepts of identification and recognition. The desire of the French to homogenize is also a desire for recognition. However, this taken-for- granted and "natural" mythical message should be questioned because it is concealing a secondary message which should be revealed. In other words, Barthes invites people to be more critical.

Barthes argues that the secondary message of the myth of wine should be denounced because it is concealing the interests of the capitalist regime. In the colonial period, for example, the myth of wine alienated and excluded the Muslim populations in North Africa from their own culture. He points out that the production of wine: "is deeply involved in French capitalism, whether it is that of the private distillers or that of the big settlers in Algeria who impose on the Mus-

lims, on the very land of which they have been dispossessed, a crop of which they have no need while they lack even bread**" (Barthes,** ***Mythologies*** **61).** Therefore, myths according to Barthes serve to include or exclude categories of people from society.

The ideological aspect of myth as explained by Barthes is a crucial point to consider when studying identity formation and alienation in Lacan's theory as it lays stress on the individual's desire for recognition and validation. Also, the presence of dominant ideological groups who design myths highlights Lacan's idea of the individuals' interaction with the Other when constructing their identities. More precisely, it enhances the power of the Other in shaping the individual's identity, a fact which emphasizes alienation. Moreover, falsity which is at the core of Barthes's theory puts forth Lacan's concept of fantasy. In this respect, ideologies may work as myths in deluding people and offering them a fantasmatic or imaginary state of being. How identity formation in America may relate to both Lacan's and Barthes's theories will be discussed in the last section of the present chapter.

III- Alienation and Myth in the American Society

Claims for exceptionality have been made for many countries. Each nation considers itself as a distinct cultural entity with a unique history and identity. For instance, the conviction of Russia's uniqueness both in the past as well as the present is widespread among Russian Slavophile intellectuals. That sentiment is essentially built upon centuries of defeating invaders such as its victory in the Napoleonic wars in the nineteenth century and its triumph over Germany in WWII. After their victory in the Napoleonic wars, Denis Davidov, one of the flamboyant Russian partisans, declared: "with head proudly lifted, one can say 'I am a Russian'" **(Davidov 56).** Germany made the same claim. The notion of a German difference from the rest of the world has been around for centuries, es-

pecially during the Nazi period when a volcano of nationalism erupted across the German society. German exceptionalism may stem from the thesis of German Sonderweg[3] which stresses the unique path of Germany when emerging from an aristocratic to a democratic country. Russia and Germany are not alone in projecting themselves as exceptional powers. Indeed, all the beliefs constructed around the history of the glorious British Empire and Britain's triumph in WWII reinforce British exceptionlism. Other nations such as France and Japan were also imbued with the same notion of exceptionalism.

For its part, America is claimed to be a more nearly exceptional nation than are others. The American sociologist Seymour Martin Lipset explains that American exceptionalism "basically means that America is unique, different, in crucial ways from most other countries" **(Lipset 25).** This concept is reinforced by the political scientist Byron E. Shafer who states that American exceptionalism is "the notion that the United States was created differently, developed differently, and thus has to be understood differently- essentially on its own terms and within its own context**" (Shafer qtd. in Glaser and Wellenreuther 267).**

Therefore, each nation believes in its own personal exceptionalism, which is visible in a wide range of fields. American exceptionalism is clearly noticed in American identity. Given the fact that America has no history prior to its independence, the new American nation needs a "repertoire of foundational Mythology" **(Paul 12)** that requires the creation of traditions and a useable past.[4] Hence, it is through an "imagined communal mythology" **(Campbell and Kean 22)** that

[3]The concept of the German Sonderweg refers to "a supposedly unique historical route …which had marked German development and set it off the putatively "normal" modal of liberal political evolution" (Liulevicius 5).

[4] The concept of a "useable past" for the U.S was first used by Van Wyck Brooks in 1918. Then the historian Henry Steel Commager made of the "useable past" expression something of a common place. He stated that: "Americans provided themselves with a usable past: history, legends, symbols, paintings, sculpture, monuments, shrines, holly days, ballads, patriotic songs, heroes and- with some difficulty- villains" (Commager 13).

American identity can be articulated. Each myth helps create a sense of identity, defining what it means to be American. Taken together, these myths will reinforce the basic tenets of American exceptionalism.

One of the first and most outstanding approaches to American myth in the 1930s and the late1950s that sought to affirm the claim of America's exceptionalist identity is the Myth and Symbol School. Important figures working in or around this approach include Henry Nash Smith, R.W.B Lewis and John William Ward. In the ***Virgin Land***, Smith explains:

> [Myth and symbol refer to] Larger or smaller units of the same kind of thing, namely an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image. The myths and symbols with which I deal have the further characteristic of being collective representations rather than a work of a single min. I do not mean to raise the question whether such products of the imagination accurately reflect empirical facts. They exist on a different plane. But as I have tried to show, they sometimes exert a decided influence on practical affairs. **(Smith VII)**

Smith considers the "virgin land" as an influential symbol or myth generated by the European encounter with the American West. The "virgin land" symbol is imbedded in mythic narratives such as the myth of the frontier and the Self-Made-Man describing America as a land of unlimited opportunities for any American who wants to reach success. Although myths contain some degree of fiction, they remain part of the American heritage as they help emphasize the uniqueness of the New World.

However, in the mid 1960s, in the wake of the civil rights and the women' movements, the approach of the Myth and Symbol School was challenged by critics who began to question America's exceptionalist identity. A good number of critics contested the foundational myths of American identity. For example, Richard Slotkin argues that "murderous violence [is] linked to…the frontier psychology…of…our long heritage" **(Slotkin 5)** rather than innocence. This critical

reevaluation of the American foundational myths presents "a negative view of American exceptionalism as it brings into light other aspects of the American nation such as violence, racism and sexism. It aims at a more inclusive… representation of America and at recognition of its multicultural legacy" **(Paul 22).**

Despite the fact that the notion of American exceptionalism was challenged by many scholars, it is still a core element of American identity; and the Americans continue to defend the myths and beliefs sustaining American uniqueness. In his account of the US after the end of the Cold War, Donald E. Pease talks about a "new American exceptionalism" by which he means an adaptation of the old foundational myths to the new situation. Pease explains that: "when one version of American exceptionalism no longer suited extant geopolitical demands, policymakers reconfigured its elements to address the change in geopolitical circumstances" **(Pease 9).** For instance, the myth that American is a nation with a Manifest Destiny gives the U.S the divine right to enlarge its territory. This old myth was reshaped during the Cold War and played an important role in American foreign policy by giving the right to America to expand its capitalist ideology overseas. Here appears the first power of myth that involves longevity, continuity and flexibility.

In the light of Lacan's theory, American myths could be said to generate the Lacanian object *a* which constitutes the different values and beliefs around which myths are constructed. That is, myths allow the reproduction of the Americans' desire for a unified self. Being flexible long-lived and continuous, myths can adapt the lacanian object *a* to new situations in the American society. Here appears the second power of myth that derives from the state of fantasy that myths provide. By generating the object *a*, myths allow the Americans to momentarily fill the vacum in them and feel as if their selves were equal to the fanciful unified image they identify with in the domain of the Other. Like fantasy, myth thus veils truth and "builds up an entirely fantastic world" **(Ernst 45**) where everything seems to work perfectly. In other words, myths serve to temporarily conce-

al alienation which is at the core of identity construction.

What makes the American people absorb myths without questioning them is the fact that myths appear as natural facts. The Americans are given a willing suspension of disbelief.[5] This reveals the third power of myth that resides in its ability to make any social, political or economic fact appear as common sense. For Barthes, myths "alter the past by endowing the shifting, complex processes of history with the appearance of something natural and eternal" **(N. Campbell and Kean 9).** To better understand how myth can be related to identity formation and alienation in America, each of the selected myths, namely America as a promised land and America as a capitalist paradise, should be studied in detail.

1-America as a Promised Land

A look at how the myth of the Promised Land impacted America for centuries indicates that it has been one of the core constituents of American identity. In the age of discovery, the European explorers believed that they could create the utoPia[6] never realizable within the sterile traditions of their own countries. The earliest and most prominent of the groups who considered America as their Promised Land were the Pilgrims[7] and the Puritans. Their history "became a foundational story that was transformed from a regional narrative of New England into

[5] The term of suspension of disbelief was first coined by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Dickey explains that if a writer is able to imbue the work with "human interest and a semblance of truth" (Coleridge qtd. in Dickey 48). When infusing fantasy in fiction, "the reader would willingly suspend disbelief and judgment to embrace the work" (Dickey 48).

[6] Thomas More, an English Renaissance humanist, used the term "utopia, literally meaning no place, in his famous tract" *Utopia* in 1516. The tract is "an ironic and satiric humanist critique of Europe's own political and moral failures" (Green 26).

[7] The Pilgrims "were religious separatists who reached America in 1620 on board of Mayflower with William Bradford and founded Plymouth…The Puritans…arrived in 1630 on board of the Arbela…under the guidance of John Winthrop…and founded the city of Boston" (Paul 138).

… [the] national myth" **(Pau140)** of the Promised Land.

One of the key foundational texts of the United States that depict America as a Promised Land is Bradford's ***Of Plymouth Plantation***. In his chronicle, Bradford describes the Pilgrims as God's chosen people who managed to survive the hostile environment and establish their colony with God's help. In one of the passages, Bradford shows how God guided the Pilgrims on their journey to the Promised Land and took revenge on those who wanted to harm them. By illustrating God's providence in his text Bradford reinforces the uniqueness and exceptionalism of the New World:

> There was an insolent and very profane young man…who was always harassing the poor people…and cursing them daily…But it pleased God…to smite the young man with a grievous disease of which he died… Thus his curses fell upon his own head, which astonished all his mates for they saw it was the just hand of God upon him. **(Bradford 41)**

The vision of America as a Promised Land is also to be found in the chronicles, sermons and autobiographical narratives of the Puritans. In his famous sermon ***A Model of Christian Charity***, John Winthrop declares: "We shall be a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us, so that if we shall deal falsely with our God with this work we have undertaken…we shall be made a story and by-word through the world" **(Winthrop 216).** Like Bradford, Winthrop describes the Puritans as God's elect and evokes the exceptionality of the Americans as a model for others.

Considering the internal and external conflicts during the colonial period which witnessed Indian wars, slavery and religious dissenters culminating in Salem witch Trials[8], we can clearly notice that the image of America as a land of

[8] The Salem Witch Trials were a series of prosecutions of people accused of witchcraft in Massachusetts in the 17thc century. "Witches were considered to be anti-Christian- against al good really- rather than simply non-Christian" (Roach, XX).

hope and deliverance is more imagination than fact. Here appears the concealed message of the myth of the Promised Land. The latter was used by people in power, the Puritan Other, as an instrument of social control to keep some categories of people at the bottom of society. To make the myth appear as a natural fact, every detail was interpreted as a sign of God's will. Regarding the extinction of the Indigenous people, it was considered as the work of God. It was argued that "sweeping away great multitude of the natives by the smallpox, a little before we went thither"… [made] room for us there" **(Sabin 37).** This gave right to the settlers to fight the natives to the death. African slavery for its part "was based on claims of … [the Africans'] unworthiness in the eyes of God" **(Paul 168).** Moreover, the Puritans discriminated against women and less privileged men basing their argument on the concepts of the original sin and predestination. The Puritans consider that all people are born sinners because we all are in Adam and in Adam's fall, we sinned all:

> After his sin, he [Adam] was driven into exile, and by his sin the whole race of which he was the root was corrupted in him, and thereby was subjected to the penalty of ath. And so it happens that all descended from him, and from the woman who had led him into sin, and was condemned at the same time with him-being of the offspring of carnal lust on which the same punishment of disobedience was visited- were tainted with the original sin, and were drawn through diver errors and suffering into that last and endless punishment which they suffer in common with the fallen angels, their corrupters and masters, and the partakers of their doom**. (Augustin 32)**

However, Anette I. Hagan argues that according to the Puritans "all were in Adam, only the elect were in Christ and they were chosen out of the mass" **(Hagan 71**). Therefore, the myth of the Promised Land secured the interests of the elect who became the saviors: they carried out the work of God on earth by "purifying" the American earthly Heaven from all people who, according to them, work against the will of God.

The inherent contradictions in the American society discussed above question

the image of America as a Promised Land and hereby the notion of American exceptionalism. Indeed, the secondary message of the myth of the Promised Land underlines the falsity of myth as well as highlights the fantasmatic nature of the images of unity and prosperity promoted by the Puritan Other, a fact which points out the alienating character of American identity.

In ***The Crucible***, despite the horrors experienced in seventeenth century Massachusetts, namely the Salem witch trials, the Puritan Other promotes a false image of a safe Heaven full of hope and promises to secure their interests and maintain their power. In order to be recognized and find acceptance in Salem, Miller's characters should conform to the image of a "good Puritan" as promoted by the Puritan court and church. Identification can only be possible if the characters, male and female, cling to the object *a* which they mistake for the values of the myth of the Promised Land. Our study of the play will thus highlight the characters' identity construction in ***The Crucible*** as an alienating process, stressing the alienating impact of the myth of the Promised Land. However, it is worth noticing that the myth of the Promised Land is not limited to seventieth century Massachusetts, but it goes beyond time and space to become a core constituent of American identity for over centuries.

2-<u>The American Capitalist "Paradise" as the Promised Land</u>

By the end of the eighteenth century, the myth of the Promised Land developed by the Pilgrim Fathers achieved a national dimension. Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the Declaration of independence in 1776, considered that the "Exodus event in and through which God had formed his chosen people prefigured the formation of the American nation" **(Buckley 46).** The Pilgrims and the Puritans were regarded as "the founders of American democracy" **(Hall 1),** and American republic. America "evolved from the Puritan's Mayflower Compact to the political maturity of Republicanism" **(Paul 198).**

Therefore, for nation building purpose, the myth of the Promised Land became secularized to personalize "the origins of American nationhood, republicanism and democracy**" (Paul 198).** The value of freedom figures in the opening lines of the Declaration of Independence; "all men are created equal" **(DOI).** Equally, the first phase of the American Constitution (1787) "we the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility…promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves" **(U.S Const)** emphasizes religious and cultural freedom. This phrase stands among the most revered phrases of the American civil religion[9]. The democratic ideals echoed in both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution emphasize the exceptionality of the American nation as a model for national freedom and democracy which are central to American identity.

The triumph of the North over the Agrarian South during the American Civil War (1861-65) was a sign of the supremacy of the capitalists of New England. During the period following the war, they launched a bold reconstruction [10] of the Agrarian South. In 1865 an editorial for the ***Independent*** asserted that the "North must remain the absolute Dictator of the Republic until the spirit of the North shall become the spirit of the whole country**" (Blum 87-8).**

Even the West became part of the Capitalist Promised Land. A similar policy of containment was carried on in the West "to spread Puritanism and Protestantism" **(Paul 165)** and therefore capitalism. Once again, the image of the United

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[9] Civil religion is a concept that originated in the work of French Jean Jacques Rousseau. Hammond claimed that "the United States has a civil religion of the sort Rousseau urged- that is, a transcendental ideology independent of both church and state. All the necessary conditions for the emergence of an independent and civic faith were present from the very genesis of the American nation" (Cristi1 38).

[10] The Reconstruction "refers to the period from the end of the Civil War in 1865 to the withdrawal of the last Union troops from the South in 1877" (Stroud and Schomp VI). The main goal of the Reconstruction was to rebuilt the South after the war and spread the ideals of the North.

States as a land of freedom and tolerance proved to be an illusion. The White Protestant culture, now a capitalist culture, was still at the core of American identity, making it difficult for other groups to assimilate into the American society. For example, after the Reconstruction, the African freed slaves in the South faced discrimination and could not assimilate. Despite the 14th and 15th Amendments guaranteeing the civil right of black Americans, "a hundred years passed after the Civil War before… [African Americans] could vote with impunity or attend the same universities that the white Southerners attended" **(Parish 117).**

As the communist ideology gained power under the Soviet Union during the post war period, America felt the need to purify the American Heaven from communist "traitors." Being flexible and long-lived, the myth of the Promised Land was thus adapted to the context of the Cold War. As "a city upon a hill" and a model for all mankind, America had the duty to expand and promote the values of capitalism throughout the continent. Capitalism was presented as a "natural condition of humanity…that…conforms to the laws of nature and basic human inclinations" **(Meiksins 1)** and America became the embodiment of the capitalist paradise.

The psychological conditions of the post war period were in place for the Capitalists to promote capitalism. As a matter of fact, the beginning of the 1950s provided a chance for a better life with the atrocities of the Second World War now past. Nevertheless, some still "looked to the future filled both with promise and danger" **(H. Young and K. Young XII)** and others even labeled the era "the Age of Anxiety." Uneasiness crept in a result of discrimination on grounds of race and gender. Although most people were enjoying a great quality of life as they began to buy on credit, "many black Americans still toiled in underpaid, low-status jobs and lived in substandard housing"**(6).** Furthermore, "single women, already laboring in low-paying positions, continued to lag behind their male counterparts" **(6).** However, the main anxiety of the decade was a fear of nuclear annihilation: "the nation had lost its nuclear weapons monopoly. Soon thereafter,

both the United States and Russia claimed possessions of hydrogen bombs, the most fearsome invention of the postwar era" **(H. Young and K. Young XII).** International fear of communism was soon transformed into a domestic fear culminating in McCarthyism.

Fear of domestic communism resulted in a mass hysteria similar to the Salem witch hunts in the seventeenth century. Although short-lived, the McCarthy witch hunts had a great impact on American identity. People who were accused of being communist supporters were expected to confess and denounce others as being communist subversives. To assert the exceptionality of the U.S and promote the image of America as a Promised Land and capitalist paradise, the Americans should show their loyalty to the capitalist ideology and hold a belief in America's missionary role in bringing social harmony back into the world by fighting domestic communism. Therefore, to be a true American one should first be an anti-communist. The Americans should conform to the image of a "true" American. The atrocities experienced during the McCarthy era, however, highlight the deceitful nature of the myth of the Promised Land, raising questions about American exceptionalism. The falsity of the myth brings into the fore the fanciful nature of the images with which the Americans misidentified during that period, shedding light on alienation in anti-communist America.

It is worth noting, however, that the myth of the Promised Land was not the only myth that modeled American identity in the postwar period. Economic promises in the 1950s became a crucial dimension of other foundational American myths, namely the American Dream and the self-made-Man. The last part of the present section will thus show how both myths have been adapted to the postwar period to reshape American identity.

3-The American Dream, the Self-Made-Man and Personal Welfare

To stress America's exceptionalist identity, the U.S claims to be a paradise in which every American can achieve the American Dream. Defining the American Dream of success, James Truslow Adams described America as "a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability and achievement" **(Adams XVI),** regardless of his social class circumstances of birth. Consequently, participation in the dream is what qualifies a person as officially American. The American Dream became the national ethos of the United States and was elevated to the level of myth. One of the most influential figures who have typified the American Dream in the American culture is Benjamin Franklin, dubbed "a model representative of the American Dream" **(Huang and Mulford 147).** In his ***Autobiography*** which is a narrative of his own rise to success, Franklin asserts the idea that every individual is the author of his own life that he can control and change: "I should have no objection to a repletion of the same life from its beginning, only asking the advantages authors have in a second edition, to correct some faults of the first"**(Franklin 68).** Franklin has become a model to every American who wants to reach personal welfare.

The American Dream is closely associated to the concept of the Self-Made-Man. That is, to achieve the American dream every American should be a self-made-man. The term self-made-man is credited to Henry Clay (1777-1852). In his speech (1832), he argued that "almost every manufactory known to me is in hands of enterprising self-made-men who have whatever wealth they possess by patient and diligent labor" (**Clay).** The belief in the concept of the self-made-man or social mobility is so significant in the American life that it became another foundational myth. The myth of the Self-Made-Man was described as an "American invention," and a "unique national product **(Cawelti 1).** Therefore, social mobility has become a core constituent of American identity in that it promoted welfare and happiness.

Max Weber argues that the modern concept of happiness finds its origin in the

ethic of Calvinism. He explains that the Protestants, like Martin Luther, considered that "for everyone without exception God's Providence has prepared a calling" **(Weber 160),** and "the individual should remain once and for all in the station and the calling in which God had placed him, and should restrain his worldly activity within the limits imposed" **(85).** Therefore**,** besides economic development, the spirit of capitalism in Northern colonies "is brought forth by Puritanism" **(Paul 372).** The Protestants gave a moral justification to worldly activity which was regarded as a means to salvation and God's blessing. They "provided legitimation for worldly success" which was seen as a "reward" from God. Over time, the notion of salvation was secularized and the concept of happiness was "transfer[ed]…from the afterlife to one's earthly existence, i.e. to the present moment or at least to the near future" **(369),** a fact stressing the longevity and flexibility of myth.

4-The American Dream in Twentieth Century Capitalist America

The period following the First and Second World Wars was in favor of the capitalist Other to reassert the myth of the American Dream. Bombarding people with advertisements, some reference consumption groups were promoting the beliefs that "the possession and use of an increasing number and variety of goods and services is …the surest perceived route to personal happiness" **(Goodwin at al. XXX),** and "cultural consumption will make… [American people] whole again." **(Sandlin and Mclaren 4).** This led to a dramatic change in American spending habits. Consumers would go deeply in debts to acquire possessions not for their own sake, but for the imagined personal welfare that those possessions would bring them.

In addition to psychological conditions, economic prosperity was an important factor that helped promote the myth of the American Dream. After the First and Second World Wars, the U.S emerged as a hyper consumer society. The majority

of the Americans "directed increasing amounts of their money to whatever they wished enjoying a level of goods and services never dreamed of earlier**" (H. Young and K. Young 5)** especially since their incomes almost doubled. In addition to high wages, payment facilities changed American buying habits in favor of consumption. With the credit card revolution, "a new extravagance replaced the frugality of the past, one that touted 'buy now, pay later'" **(6).**

The Suburbanization of American cities, which was facilitated by the rise of car ownership and the building of wider roads, is another important factor to consider. With the massive growth in suburban populations, commercial shopping malls were built near suburbs to satisfy people's needs; and demand for automobiles grew to join the city for work, resulting in an important increase in consumption. Most importantly, suburbanization reinforced social conformity. The Americans of the suburbs "were white and Christian, heads of nuclear families, and proudly middle class. Their clothing, their architecture, their jobs and their leisure all supported this kind of sameness" **(21).** Therefore, in addition to the common experience provided by consumerism, American people were also eager to imitate the conservative way of life of the suburban family.

Social conformity was mainly fostered by media imagery especially after TV was present in all homes. No doubt, advertising which had become an important business during that period played an important role in enhancing the consumer experience. Advertisements promoted not simply specific goods and services, but also a vision of how a "true" American should be:

> The mass media proved it could point people into certain sartorial and class codes…Americans were expected to dress a certain way and the avalanche of commercial imagery that accompanied the postwar boom-magazines…advertisements…television… supplied constant reminders. **(Coombs and Batchelor 139)**

The myth of the American Dream linking financial wealth and personal wel-

fare was powerful enough to become firmly entrenched in American culture in the postwar period. Every American constructs his/her identity by conforming to the image of a happy and prosperous individual. That is, every individual should submit to the desire of the consumerist Other to be recognized as American. Therefore, in a similar way to the myth of the Promised Land, the American Dream is another myth that has an alienating impact on American identity.

In literature, negative representations of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man were very prominent during the postwar period. A market-oriented figure of the Self-Made-Man is used in F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel ***The Great Gatsby*** **(1925)** According to Lionel Trilling, Fitzgerald's protagonist Gatsby is a character that "comes inevitably to stand for America itself" **(Trilling 69).** Gatsby overcomes his poor past to gain an incredible amount of money. However, it is noteworthy to point out that Fitzgerald is also casting doubts on the illusory nature of the American Dream. Indeed, most critics focus on "the withering of the American Dream" **(Tyson 69)** when studying Fitzgerald's novel to show that the fantastic wealth and personal welfare people enjoyed in the 1920s were as ephemeral as Gatsby's parties.

The American Dream in the context of a hyper consumer society was also embodied in Arthur Miller's play ***Death of a Salesman*** and Eugene O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. Like Fitzgerald, Miller and O'Neill present a different critical view of the American Dream and American exceptionalism. In my study of the plays, I try to show how the new values of the American Dream which link wealth to personal welfare are mistaken for the Lacanian object *a*. In other words, I attempt to bring evidence that Miller's and O'Neill's characters in the two plays misidentify with the image of a self-satisfied and happy American as promoted by the consumerist Other. Therefore, my study will underscore the flexibility of the myth by showing how it was reinvented to serve the needs of the consumerist postwar American society. Moreover, examining Miller's and O'Neill's characters in the light of Lacan's and Barthes's theories will bring to

the fore the falsity of the myth and its manipulative power in homogenizing the Americans' consumer habits, a fact which will further stress alienation in twentieth century consumerist America.

A central concern of the first chapter has been to show how far identity construction in the American society leads to alienation. I have opted for Lacan's theory of self-construction and alienation. Three main points have emerged from my study of Lacan's theory. First, the child constructs his/her identity in the Imaginary through a process he calls the mirror stage. In the Imaginary, the human subject "imagines" himself to be and he/she becomes other to himself/herself. This phase is called the first type of otherness which marks the beginning of alienation. Second, when the individual grows up he develops his/her identity in relation to the Other by submitting to the desire of the Other and identifying with images from the outside world (the Symbolic) This is called the second type of otherness. Because the desire of the individual is the desire of the Other. Hence, identification entails alienation. Third, the image the individual identifies with, also called the specular image or Ego Ideal, is never equal to his/her "ego," which results in a sense of Lack or imperfection. To make identification possible, the lack is filled with what Lacan calls object *a*. Because return to the state of perfection and wholeness experienced in the Real is impossible, the object *a* only provides a fanciful or imaginary sense of self-satisfaction and unity in a state of fantasy or imagination. All in all, Lacan's theory stresses alienation by highlighting the alienating impact of the Other on identity construction.

In the present chapter I have also tried to show how myth can relate to identity construction and alienation. The focus has been on Barthes's theory of myth. Barthes defines myth as a semiological system of a second order. Basing his theory on Saussure's concepts of signified-signifier-sign, Barthes explains that myth comes into being when a sign (image) is emptied from its historical context and culture and is invested with a new meaning (signified or concept). Moreover, myth is formed by dominant groups (ideologies). Hence, the subject matter of

myth is the beliefs and values of the dominant group. Furthermore, myth is created to unify society and homogenize people's behavior in order to protect the interests of the dominant group. The function of myth is, thus, manipulating people in order to preserve the interests of the dominant ideologies. The latter is revealed through the secondary message of myth. Lastly, it is found that falsity and deceit are at the core of myth. According to Barthes, myth does not reflect the truth but it is made to appear as a natural order to be accepted by people.

A survey of the foundational American myths, mainly the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man has revealed that the latter are at the core of American identity. Because they are flexible and long-lived, they are adapted to different time periods and continue to affect identity construction in America throughout time. When combining Lacan's and Barthes's theories, several key points have been highlighted. The Lacanian object *a* can be equated with the values of the American myths. Also, the Puritan elect and the capitalist leaders may stand for both the Lacanian concept of the Other and Barthes's dominant ideological groups. Moreover, the manipulative and deceitful forces of myth are comparable to the Lacanian concept of fantasy. As a result, when constructing his/her identity, the American should submit to the Puritan and consumerist Other by identifying with images promoted by the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. Because falsity is at the core of myth, the images with which the American identifies provide an imaginary state of being, a fact which stresses alienation in the American society.

The coming study of the three selected plays, namely **The *Crucible, Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** highlights the heterogeneous character of American identity by putting forth the connection between self construction, alienation and myths. ***The Crucible*** will display the characters' self-construction and alienation in both seventeenth century intolerant Salem and twentieth century anti-communist America. ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long***

Day's Journey into Night will present identity formation and estrangement in postwar consumerist America. The three plays will, thus, bring into light alienation in the American society and show how the three selected myths, namely the myth of the Promised Land, the Self-Made-Man and the American Dream, have been reshaped to provide a false sense of self and alleviate the feeling of loss that characterized both periods.

Chapter Two

The Crucible: Self-Construction, Alienation and Myth in Seventeenth Century Intolerant Salem and Twentieth Century Anti-Communist America

The second chapter of my thesis aims to expose American identity construction as an alienating process in Arthur Miller's play ***The Crucible*** in the light of Lacan's and Barthes's theories. It particularly deals with the seventeenth century Puritan community of Salem, and the twentieth century anti-communist American society. It is divided into three main parts. The first part attempts to examine how far it could be argued that Miller's characters, John Proctor and his wife Elizabeth in particular, can be regarded as alienated individuals. It explores the myth of the Promised Land in the period of the early settlements, particularly during the Salem witch trials, and elaborates on how the myth affects the process of identity construction and leads to alienation by promoting fanciful images of unity and self-gratification. Shedding light on the imaginary sense of American identity would challenge the notion of American exceptionalism as it raises questions about how true is America a Promised Land.

This part sheds further light on the mechanisms of the myth of the Promised Land and fantasy. That is, it brings forth Barthes's secondary message and its relation to American identity as it inspects the persuasive and deceitful power of the myth. This part thus invites the reader to go a step further and verify whether the myth is manipulative enough to grant Proctor and Elizabeth unequal social status and yet persuade them that social imbalance is part of a natural order and above all an articulation of the characters' degree of national patriotic sentiment. Therefore, this is an important point to consider as the falsity of myth and its manipulative power in hiding social imbalance would cast further doubts on American exceptionalism.

The second part of this chapter is a detailed analysis of the Puritan Other. First, I attempt to examine which characters in the play could be said to stand for the Puritan Other. I focus on Reverend Parris, Reverend Hale and Abigail for their social position in Salem, their motives, their reactions to the witch trials and above all the power they gain over the course of events. Second, I try to demonstrate throughout my analysis how the three characters, as the Other, contribute

into defining and/or preserving the Puritan established order and principally upholding this order as the only single reality. They exemplify how the Puritan Other, through manipulation and lies, mislead Salem's inhabitants into believing that social disparities are an expression of their closeness to God.

In the third part of this chapter I have thought it worth displaying similarities between McCarthyism and Salem witch hunts in Miller's ***The* Crucible** which was completed in the 1950s. In other words, I will study the extent to which the witch trials can be regarded as a metaphor for McCarthyism. In order to do so, it is important to draw parallels between characters, concepts and events during the two periods. Therefore, this part serves to further stress the alienating character of American identity and expose the longevity and the adaptability of the myth of the Promised Land to the different American historical periods.

I-John and Elizabeth Proctor: From Self Construction to Alienation

1-John Proctor: Self-Construction, Good and Evil in Puritan Salem

To fully understand how the playwright dramatizes Proctor's search for self as an alienating process, it is worth looking at the cultural and historical environment. The protagonist is a member of the Puritan society which is a tight knit community centered around a specific ethos upholding hard work and piousness**.** As Puritan New England, Salem in particular, is advanced as a "City Upon a Hill," and a model for all mankind; any action outside Puritan cultural norms attracts great disapprobation and even scandal. In a Heaven-like Salem, Proctor is supposed to show moral and religious earnestness, because leading a moral life is an encouraging sign of the effect of being chosen by God to enjoy eternal bliss in Heaven.

In the light of Lacan's theory, all the Puritan ideals and beliefs could be regarded as the Lacanian object *a* as they allow Proctor to identify with the image of a "good" Puritan as reflected by the Puritan Other.

As it is impossible to be entirely confident in one's eternal fate because of the doctrine of predestination, Proctor should redouble his efforts to follow God's plan in the "earthly Heaven" in order to reassure and comfort his troubled soul. In the same sense, it could be argued that adopting the Puritan principles would allow Proctor to experience a sense of perfection, completeness and personal welfare. These feelings would eventually allow Proctor to find recognition in Salem and would give a meaning to his life. In an attempt to bring supportive evidence for this argument, we can refer to the beginning of the play. Proctor seems to be deeply respected by the Salem community and this could be interpreted as a sign of integration and social approval: "[Proctor is] a good and righteous man"… [who] is never drunk as some are, nor wasti' his time at the shovelboard, but always at his work*"* **(Miller, *The Crucible* 100).** Proctor's clinging to the Puritan basic tenets could be an indication that he has submitted to the desire of the Puritan Other. Considering himself as a man with high morality may suggest that Proctor has misidentified with his Ego Ideal, That is, he has projected an idealized image of himself as a remarkable man. Therefore, it could be safely inferred that Proctor's desire to build his identity according to the desire of the Puritan Other comes out of his desire to be accepted and loved by his community.

However, Proctor's inflated image as a "good" Puritan and the sate of serenity that he experienced in the beginning will soon be challenged, bringing into light the illusory nature of the images of wholeness and personal welfare promoted by the myth of the Promised Land. Proctor's adulterous relationship with Abigail generates feelings of unworthiness and makes Proctor feel socially inadequate. As sin in the Puritan doctrine is a sign of triumph of evil over good, adultery exposes Proctor as a damned man and underlines his predestined role as a meaning-

less agent on earth. In what is believed to be the name of God, people in the Puritan community of Salem can move from "good" Puritans to "evil" creatures without due consideration for their good reputation. This could be evidence that Proctor's feelings of self-satisfaction and perfection are short-lived and unreal and that Proctor has constructed his identity in an imaginary state.

The destructive impact of sin in the Puritan community of Salem in the seventeenth century was explored one century earlier by the famous American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne whose ancestors were Puritans and amongst the judges who witnessed the Salem witch trials. In his masterpiece ***The Scarlet Letter***, the writer tried to show the connection of sin with the social order in the Puritan society; and he dramatized the necessity to make a private sin public. In ***The Scarlet Letter***, Hester Prynne, a young woman, is compelled to confess the sin of adultery in public, though she does not reveal her lover's identity. Hester, holding her infant, emerged from the prison door and "stepped into the open air" **(Hawthorne 44-5)** where she "stood fully revealed before the crowd" **(44-5)** to be publically condemned. It is this kind of humiliating public confrontation that Proctor wants to avoid at the beginning of the play to maintain a sense of dignity.

This is not really surprising because after all the significance of an individual in the Puritan community of Salem depends on his capacity to conform to the standards fixed by the Puritan Other. Therefore, confession would ruin Proctor's reputation, destroy his glorified image as a "good" Puritan and make him lose his social status and recognition. This explains well why Proctor hesitates to go to the court in Salem to denounce Abigail as a liar. Freeing his innocent wife who was falsely accused of witchcraft by Abigail would mean to confess adultery in public and ruin his name as a "good" Puritan. In this regard, Palmer argues:

> If [his adulterous relationship] is exposed, his act no longer would be merely a transgression against his wife that might be repaired; it would require a fundamental change in the story he is able to present to the world about

> who he is. He would in fact confront shame and the collapse of his sense of self. (**Palmer 33-4)**

Indeed, after confession, Proctor publically appears as a "corrupt" man who does not act in accord with what is supposed to be God's plan on earth. His identity as a "good" Puritan is put into question. However, it is worth pointing out that Proctor's confession is not preceded by real self-questioning. When Proctor cries out "Whore! Whore!" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 97)** the audience notices that his confession is rather an instinctive response of a man who is determined to save his beloved wife. In fact, no deliberate decision preceded Proctor's confession to adultery. Therefore, at this point of the play, we cannot really talk about Proctor's revolt against the Puritan Other, which may explain Proctor's feelings of unworthiness after confession. Proctor feels unworthy both because of committing a sinful act and also because of being forced to confess it publicly.

Proctor's forced confession hereby reveals that the Puritan fundamentals that temporarily provide Proctor a spiritual consolation for his constant anxiety caused by the fear of being denied God's salvation are the same that ruin his reputation. This casts doubts on the concept of American exceptionalism in seventeenth century Massachusetts. Salem's inhabitants are destroyed by the ideals and beliefs which are supposed to protect them and provide them with self-gratification.

Similarly, Hester's image as a "good" Puritan is shattered when she confesses to adultery. She is no longer a woman of virtue, and all the townspeople see her as someone whose transgressions outweigh and obliterate their own errors. Her idealized image as a "good" Puritan woman is substituted for a new image symbolized by an embroidered badge on her chest- a letter "A" which stands for adulteress. The letter is "so artistically done, and with so much fertility and gorgeous luxurious of fancy" **(Hawthorne 45).** The necessity to have the letter "A" on the breast of her gown is expressive of the power of the Puritan rule as it

shows how much the private sphere is invaded by the public. That is, the individual's identity is shaped by the Puritan Other. Each time people will look at the letter "A," Hester is reminded of the sin of adultery she committed. One of the women of the crowd who were making disparaging comments about Hester said: "They should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead" **(Hawthorne 44)** because the letter "A" may be covered and Hester can "walk on the streets as brave as ever!" **(44)** The woman's comment reinforces the underlying element of hypocrisy of the Puritan doctrine which aims less at helping people redeem from their sins than denouncing them publicly and designating them as damned individuals. The audience witnesses the same situation in the court when Proctor utters the word "whore." Judge Danforth is quick to denounce Proctor: "You- you are a lecher?" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 97)** yet he purposefully pays no attention to the fact that Proctor confessed to his sin.

2-Self-Alienation and the Puritan Other

When his glorious image as a "good" Puritan is shattered, Proctor can no longer experience a sense of self-gratification in public as he did before confession. Although his wife Elizabeth reconciles with him and takes shared responsibility for his affair with Abigail, Proctor keeps feeling publically unworthy, a fact which demonstrates the extent to which the individual's identity is shaped by the Puritan Other. Proctor cannot value himself outside the Puritan belief system. From the beginning of the play, Proctor has not shown any desire of his own. He has rather submitted to the desire of the Puritan Other to the point of becoming other to himself. His restless desire to prove his "purity" by conforming to the Puritan social norms is suggestive of his obstinacy to consider adultery as an indication of his corrupt nature rather than as a regrettable mistake that he can repent from. All his actions, reactions and opinions are determined and shaped by the Puritan Other, causing him self-estrangement. This brings to the fore the alienating character of American identity in the Puritan community of Salem.

Proctor's self-estrangement is also noticed in his desire to confess to witchcraft. After Abigail's wrong accusations, Proctor is charged with conspiring with the Devil, a fact which further damages his reputation as a "good" Puritan and threatens his life. If Proctor's confessing to witchcraft is a an act of self-preservation it is at the same time an indication of seeking public approval and recognition as admitting witchcraft publically would fit the expectations of the Puritan Other. Because now he is "no good man" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 118)**, Proctor wants to confess to witchcraft, as if to redeem himself from the sin of adultery. If he failed to behave in accordance with the Puritan rule by committing adultery, Proctor can at least show his obedience to God's will by confessing to witchcraft even if that means lying. In so doing, Proctor believes he can recover his status and be reintegrated into the Puritan community. This indicates that Proctor still identifies with the image of a "good" Puritan mirrored by the external world, or the domain of the Puritan Other, and regards this erroneous image as his own self. He molds his identity by trying to be identical with an image that would be approved by the Puritan Other.

In Lacanian terms, Proctor misidentifies with his Ego-Ideal that is, the Puritan rules, beliefs and regulations that constitute an image which Proctor considers to imply an answer to what the Puritan Other desires. Proctor perceives the desire of the Puritan Other as a set of characteristics that he should adopt in order to be accepted and recognized. Proctor mistakes these characteristics for the Lacanian object *a*, i.e. a set of principles or values that would allow him to experience a sense of self-gratification and wholeness. However, according to Lacan object *a* is only an object of desire that is it causes Proctor's desire, but it is never identical with what would bring him the desired self-satisfaction. Because return to the Real is impossible, only a transient sense of self-gratification and unity can be attained. This stresses the falsity of the images of personal welfare and wholeness advanced by the myth of the Promised Land. Because Proctor misidentifies with a fanciful image, self-alienation is inevitable.

What further stresses Proctor's self-alienation is his inability to take any decision without involving his wife: "I have been thinking I would confess to them, Elizabeth…what say you?" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 118)** He also feels the need to know whether Giles's wife has confessed as if to be more reassured: "Giles' wife? Have she confessed?" **(118)** Considering Elizabeth's judgment and Giles's wife's decision are further evidence that Proctor still cannot behave without involving the Other: it clearly shows that Proctor's desire is the desire to be accepted and recognized by the Other. It seems that his wife's answer is not helpful enough, which urges him to reiterate his previous argument when he finally decides he still could preserve his status even if he confessed because after all he "is no saint" (**120).** Proctor still considers the concepts of "good" and "evil" in the light of the Puritan doctrine. This scene exposes Proctor as a character who avoids critical thinking for fear that reflection would lead to confrontation with the Puritan Other resulting undoubtedly in losing both his social status and his life.

Both Proctor's desire to keep his adulterous affair with Abigail secret and his desire to confess could be regarded as expressions of Lacan's "desire of being." In the beginning, Proctor tries to conceal the sin of adultery for fear of being rejected by his community. Now he wants to confess to witchcraft to be reintegrated. Therefore, each desire expresses an attempt to conform to his idealized image of a "good" Puritan as promoted by the Puritan Other. However, clinging to the Puritan basic tenets (mistaken for the object *a*) never really fill the vacuum in him and never offer him self-satisfaction. Proctor's feeling of imperfection, or "lack of being" to use Lacan's terms, is expressed in his inability to experience peace and serenity. The Puritan ideals thus do not offer Proctor any real spiritual comfort. This is exemplified by Proctor's constant anxiety and fear which culminate in his final questioning: "what is John Proctor?" **(120)** Each step forward to self-assertion is a step backward to self-alienation. Proctor becomes lost in an endless cycle, knowing no longer who he really is. Proctor's feelings of loss and uneasiness clearly reveal that living a heavenly life in the Puritan community of

Salem seems as impossible as the return to the Real, a fact which questions the image of America as an exceptional land in which happiness, self-gratification and personal welfare are everyone's rights.

The notion of American exceptionalism is further challenged when Judge Danforth pressures Proctor to sign his confession and demands it as proof of his witchcraft to the village: "You will sign your name or it is no confession. Mister!" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 123)** He adds: "Your soul alone is the issue here, Mister, and you will prove its whiteness or you cannot live in a Christian country"**(122).** These two quotes reflect on how America has strayed from its democratic ideals which are at the core of American exceptionalism. In intolerant Puritan Salem, even personal decisions should be approved by the Other. Proctor can be reintegrated into the Puritan community only by fully conforming to the rules and regulations governing behavior, action and thoughts. This is emphasized by Proctor's questioning the judge's decisions which can be viewed as a cross-examination of the rigid Puritan thinking: "I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public?" **(123-4)**

3-From Self-alienation to Social Alienation: Death as a Final Outcome

The previous scene clearly announces the beginning of Proctor's resistance to the Puritan Other. Though the protagonist has started experiencing an internal conflict earlier in the play, his torment and disillusionment are only voiced in this scene. Proctor's intense struggle is symbolized by the title of the play. The word "crucible" is contextually defined as a pot in which metal or other melting substances are heated into high temperatures. In the play "each character is metaphorically subjected to the heat of the surrounding situation and the characters that could morally stand out in the face of this conflict, symbolically refuse to melt" **(Dey and Das 3).**

Proctor's refusal to "melt" is obvious in the final scene of the play when he firmly refuses to accuse innocent people and cause their destruction, even if that means losing his life. We notice that this time Proctor is more determined than ever. He no longer seeks others' advice or approval. He decides not to submit to the authority of the Puritan Other and chooses to die rather than destroy the reputation of his innocent friends when he finally cries out:

> PROCTOR. [With a cry of his soul]: Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and Sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the Feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given my soul; leave me my name! **(Miller, *The Cruci ble* 124)**

By refusing to submit to the desire of the Puritan Other and by disregarding the Puritan principles, Proctor is finally giving up his inflated image as "good" Puritan with which he misidentified at the beginning of the play. For the first time, Proctor tries to construct a self outside the domain of the Puritan Other. However, when Proctor admits the collapse of his image as a "good" Puritan in the final scene, his death becomes inevitable. That is, to choose between submission and resistance to the Puritan Other would be like choosing between life and death.

Proctor's struggle with the issue of naming names of people who are doing what are considered "unlawful" acts is present in Miller's ***A View From the Bridge***. While Proctor chooses to be loyal to his innocent friends, Eddie Carbone turns against his community. However, both are faced with the problem of choosing to abide by the values of the American system of justice. Carbone knows the drastic consequences of his decision, but he remains powerless: "You can get back a million dollars that was stole than a word that you gave a way" **(Miller, *A View rom the Bridge* 16)**. By choosing to be American and by submitting to the Other (the American law), Carbone loses his old self as a Sicilian

and becomes self-alienated. On the other hand, Proctor chooses to die rather than lose his old self.

Despite his seemingly heroic death, Proctor's social image is ruined. When Proctor confesses to adultery he loses the respect of his community. On the other hand, when he refuses to denounce his innocent friends he loses his life. Each time Proctor commits a "sin" in the Puritan sense, his reputation is dragged down until he loses his social significance as his death may suggest. Similarly, in ***The Scarlet Letter*** despite Hester's solitary triumph in the woods where she feels free from her burden of having to carry her sin, her social image is destroyed too. Both characters lose social status when their images as "good Puritans" as promoted by the Puritan Other prove fragile. Therefore, resistance to the Puritan Other causes both Proctor and Hester social alienation as they are both rejected by the Puritan community, a fact which indicates that there is no other way to construct an identity in intolerant Puritan Salem than to succumb to the desire of the Puritan Other.

More interestingly, Proctor's and Hester's tragedies exemplify the contradictions inherent in the Puritan community and bring to the fore the secondary message of the myth of the Promised Land that is how the myth normalizes intolerance and injustice through religious manipulation. A deep insight into the Puritan doctrine can help us understand some of these contradictions and unfold the workings of the hidden message. The Puritans, who put heavy emphasis on the idea of the original sin and predestination in general, embraced the Augustine notion that all people are born sinners because we all are in Adam and in Adam's fall, except the elect who are in Christ. This is a crucial point to consider as it sheds light on how the Puritan basic tenets can be misused to determine the characters' Americanness. In fact, exposing Proctor's and Hester's sins of adultery does more than merely protect the community, especially since God had already decided who would be saved or damned before the beginning of human history. Confession thus would not earn them real salvation if they were not already cho-

sen by God. Therefore, if we go beyond the apparent reality we can notice that the public nature of Proctor's and Hester's punishments along with the beliefs of the original sin and predestination reinforce the belief that such people are sinners by nature. Above all, they are damned by God and thus do not deserve salvation. Their sins are considered to be strong indications of their unwillingness to contribute into shaping their society and themselves to accord with what they call the will of God.

4-To Be or not to Be a Good American: Religion as Check on Loyalty and Disloyalty to America

If we equate sin with disloyalty, we can infer that Proctor and Hester can never become "good" Americans because of their evil inclinations. Indeed, Proctor's hanging in the end of the play not only signals the Puritan single conception of reality but also reveals how the Puritan Other uses religion as check on anti-social behavior. Anyone who attempts to construct his/her identity outside the discourse of the myth of the Promised Land and defy the Puritan interpretation of reality will be treated as a social outcast and a traitor. Categorized as an "un-American", Proctor, therefore, deserves the lowest social ranking and even punishment. On the other hand, Parris, Danforth and Hale who deem themselves as models of morality and men of God can establish order in their community without being questioned. We can argue thus that beneath the apparent "Puritan paradise" lies a hidden force which stands as a means to divide Salem into Americans and un-Americans, the oppressive and the oppressed, leaders and self-controlled people.

Social inequalities and injustices which are exposed as natural facts in Salem community emphasize Barthes's secondary message. Moreover, the rigidity of the Puritans, particularly predestination, underlines the undemocratic rule in Puritan Salem. A category of people who are not chosen by God, such as Proctor, and who are labeled as Devil's allies can never rise up to a higher position and enjoy

self-gratification. Seventeenth century Puritan Salem is not a land of opportunity for such people. This stresses the false promises of the myth of the Promised Land, particularly the promise of equal opportunity, and hereby calls into question the notion of American exceptionalism. Damnation extends to reach other characters in the play like Proctor's wife who, according to the Puritan doctrine, seems to show evil inclinations preventing her from attaining self-gratification.

5-Elizabeth Proctor: Self-Construction and Puritan Feminine Ideals

A close scrutiny of the character Proctor has shown that his wife Elizabeth has played a significant role in Proctor's self-construction. Throughout our analysis we have noticed that each time Proctor experiences a moral dilemma, he feels the need to seek his wife's advice. However, it would be awkward to limit the role of Elizabeth in the play to a sole influence on her husband's decisions. It is crucial to draw attention to the fact that Elizabeth herself experiences an identity crisis, though seemingly not as complex as her husband's; she also takes a stand towards the witch trials in Salem and the Puritan established order as a whole. To explore Elizabeth's identity construction and alienation and examine the role she plays as a wife but also as a member of the Puritan community, it is essential to observe and analyze her reactions when the plot unfolds, especially when, like her husband, she faces different accusations.

Elizabeth appears as decent and pious. Upon Hale's questioning about her faith in Act II, Elizabeth answers without hesitation: "I am a covenanted Christian woman" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 64).** Although, like Proctor, Elizabeth doesn't seem to adhere to all the external rituals of religion, she knows her Commandments well, keeps an upright way and she is true and faithful to her husband and family. It could be said that Elizabeth falls in the category of "The

Angel in the House."[1] In her essay, Virginia Woolf coins the word "Angel" to describe the role of women during the Victorian Age. She describes her as "intensely sympathetic [and] utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily…She was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own [and] she was pure" **(Woolf 141)**. This image tallies with patriarchal ideologies which regard females as weak, submissive and in need of protection from men. In this sense, Elizabeth could be said to be the "angel" in Proctor's house and in the Puritan community of Salem which is essentially patriarchal.

Along the lines of Lacan's theory, Elizabeth's desire to adopt the characteristics defining a "good Puritan woman" is an indication that her desire is shaped by the Puritan Other. Comparable to Proctor, Elizabeth projects an image of herself which she captures from the external world. Her projection of the self can be equated with the image of a dedicated and faithful Puritan wife. In a similar way to Proctor, Elizabeth identifies with her Ego-Ideal by adopting an image which, in her interpretation, would grant her the love and approval of the Puritan Other. Like her husband, the wife mistakes the features of a "good Puritan woman" that is, being dedicated to her husband and giving her children a good upbringing, for the Lacanian object *a*, believing that the latter would bring her a sense of self-gratification and approval.

If we observe Elizabeth's attitude at the beginning of the play, we can notice a good number of signs suggesting her sense of self-worth and social integration. What may first pinpoint Elizabeth's sense of self-satisfaction, which is only apparent as will be seen later, is her opinion about herself. In Act II, Elizabeth states clearly: "I am a good woman, I know it" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 64).** Also,

[1] "The Angel of the House" is a narrative poem written by Coventry Patmore (1823-1896) during the Victorian era. Most critics focus on the poem's "contribution to the nineteenth century Woman Question: the nature of woman's intellect, character and role within society in relation (inevitably) to that of man" (Moore 41).

Proctor's high regard for his wife testifies to the respect and love she has gained among her family: "In her life, sir, she have never lied. There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep-my wife cannot lie" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 98).** Like her husband, Elizabeth's good reputation extends beyond the confines of her small family to reach the whole community. This is observed towards the end of the play when Parris is afraid there would be a rebellion against the court if respectable people like the Proctors were arrested. Despite his hatred for the Proctors, Parris cannot deny the fact that the couple is admired in the Puritan society of Salem: "I would to God it were not so, Excellency, but these people have great weight yet in the town" **(111-2).** However, it is worth pinpointing that Parris's words are to be taken both as a sign of respect for the Proctors and also as a manifestation of fear that this well-known and highly respected family would gain more influence than allowed in the Puritan community. Considering all these facts, we can deduce that Elizabeth's desire to hold onto the image of a "good Puritan woman" emanates from her desire to be loved and recognized by the Puritan Other.

Nevertheless, soon before long the audience notices that despite Elizabeth's faithfulness and purity, her husband is not loyal to her. It is probably her husband's adulterous relationship with Abigail that shatters her apparent feelings of self-gratification and awakens her to the fact that their matrimonial life is restless. Ironically Enough, Proctor claims that it is Elizabeth's coldness that attributes to his infidelity: "You will not judge me more; Elizabeth…Let you look to your improvement before you go to judge your own husband any more**" (55).** Even worse, towards the end of the play Elizabeth admits she is a cold wife: "John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me!...I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept" **(55).** Instead of condemning her husband, she ends up blaming herself. Though Elizabeth must have been cold at times, her cold behavior toward her husband is the result of years lived in neglect. Elizabeth is relegated both emotionally and socially. Her coldness and intolerance towards her husband when she discovers his

act of adultery is a reaction to coldness and intolerance experienced in the Puritan patriarchal community of Salem.

Coldness and indifference are so common in the Puritan community that Elizabeth could not realize how distant she was from Proctor until he had an affair with Abigail. This highlights how conformity to the Puritan Other may blur the reality and affect people's perception. It also exposes alienation in the Puritan community of Salem. Elizabeth becomes alienated from her husband and also a stranger to herself knowing not who she really is. At this stage of the play, the audience can sense Elizabeth's regrets and also her disillusionment about her marriage. As if for the first time Elizabeth reconciles with herself and confronts the truth about her life. If Elizabeth's disenchantment proves anything, it is probably the false promises of unity and self-satisfaction promoted by the myth of the Promised Land. In point of fact, constructing an identity within the frames of the Puritan society by appropriating the Puritan basics (mistaken for the object *a*) does not seem to offer Elizabeth a real sense of fulfillment, serenity and welfare long awaited. Therefore, it becomes clear that the social representation of a "good Puritan woman" which Elizabeth adopts as her own self only offers her a fanciful sense of satisfaction and worthiness, a fact which stresses Elizabeth's self-estrangement. It could be said thus that Proctor's relationship with Abigail has risen Elizabeth's self-questioning about her life and above all about the Puritan belief system as a whole.

6-Defying the Puritan Other as a Woman: Heading towards Social Alienation

Elizabeth's first attempt to defy the Puritan rule is exemplified in Act II when she voices her doubts about witches and defies Hale: "If you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it"**(Miller, *The Crucible* 66).** This statement is problematic and presents a concept of "good" and "evil" completely opposed to the

Puritan philosophy. The fact that she believes she is not a witch casts doubts on the existence of witches and puts into question the Puritans' conception of absolute truth. Consequently, by shattering the belief that there is only one truth, Elizabeth can bring into light another mode of existence outside the imposed order in Salem. Her opposition becomes more aggressive at the end of the play when she refuses to attest to witchcraft, though she knew perfectly that confession would save her from jail. Elizabeth's unwillingness to confess is indicative of her refusal to perpetuate lies that would guarantee the maintenance of the Puritan imposed order.

Most importantly, Elizabeth's attitude in regard to her husband especially towards the end of the play signals both her own rebellion against the Puritan Other and her support to her husband's rebellious attitude. When discussing Proctor's self-construction we have noticed that Elizabeth is urging her husband to go to the court and denounce Abigail. However, the most intense moment experienced by Elizabeth is still to come. When the play reaches its end, the audience may notice an apparent change in attitude. The woman is no longer showing her husband what is right to do. For example, when Proctor hesitates to confess and seeks his wife's advice, her reply is simply: "Do what you will. But let none be your judge" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 119).** Elizabeth's attitude could be interpreted in two possible ways. Her reaction may stem from her love to her husband, knowing that confession would definitely cause his death. Elizabeth may also want Proctor to take decisions alone in order to reach the highest level of self-awareness. Regardless of her position, the audience can well sense Elizabeth's inclination for Proctor's opposition to the Puritan authority even since the very beginning. This is quickly confirmed by Elizabeth's last words: "He have his goodness now. God forbid, I take it from him" **(126).** Her words echo her approval of her husband's attitude in the end when he decides to hang rather than confess.

Elizabeth's multiple efforts to defy the Puritan Other can be viewed as an en-

deavor to get closer to her nature as a human being. Therefore, her resistance could be viewed as a blow to both the Puritan rule and male dominance. Moreover, compared to her husband, the audience notices that Elizabeth can reach to a considerable realization of truth before the husband. This exposes Elizabeth as a source of consciousness and symbol of wisdom. Though Elizabeth's struggle is less aggressive than her husband's, it shows more wisdom. This could be noticed in the final scene when she lets her husband take his own decision, because she believes that real resistance cannot be forced. Therefore, we can deduce that Elizabeth's resistance against the Puritan Other brings to the fore true female essence beneath the dominant male system in seventeenth century intolerant Puritan Salem.

Nevertheless, Elizabeth's various actions lead to her own imprisonment and even worse hasten her husband's death. In a similar way to Proctor, Elizabeth's detention metaphorically marks the loss of her social status as a "good" Puritan woman. Said differently, Elizabeth's resistance to the desire of the Puritan Other at the end of the play causes her rejection and social alienation in the Puritan village of Salem as her imprisonment may suggest. Miller once again accentuates the difficulty of having a different mode of being as the one imposed by the Puritan sovereignty. This could be taken as further evidence highlighting the manipulative power of the myth of the Promised Land in shaping people's identities. Being a nonconformist, Elizabeth fails to construct an identity as a "good" American woman.

7-Elizabeth Proctor: The American Innocent Turned an Un-American Witch in the Promised Land

Elizabeth reveals the hypocrisy, intolerance and injustices laying behind the "earthly Heaven" in Salem. When the play opens, the audience is introduced to a character that seemingly enjoys a peaceful life in her community. This may give us a tainted image of women in the Puritan society in general and Elizabeth in

particular. Soon after, the mask of fantasy falls off and the atrocious reality is uncovered. Despite being moral and upright, Elizabeth could not have the respect and love of her community for a long time. She is an overall good woman, but apparently not good enough to gain the approval of the elect. As a "man of God," Parris could save his reputation despite his lies and his niece's involvement in witchcraft, while the innocent Elizabeth, in a short period of time and without any supporting evidence, turns into a witch in the eyes of her community and is arrested.

It is doubly important to note that Elizabeth's downfall also puts forth the secondary message of the myth of the Promised Land that is to normalize the low status of women through manipulation. As a seventeenth century Puritan woman, Elizabeth must completely subsume under her husband's identity. She has been taught to submit to her husband's rule to maintain the godly social order. Male dominance is thus assumed as the natural state of the Puritan society by virtue of religion. As the plot unfolds, the audience gets nearer to the full picture of women in Salem. Women, regardless of their social status, are consigned to rigid roles –an obedient mother wife and caretaker. If any woman steps out of these rigid boundaries she is considered as a rebel against male authority and hereby a disobedient to God. Such is the situation for Elizabeth who is called a witch without clear evidence. Elizabeth is accused because she is a woman, and women are viewed by the Puritans as vulnerable to temptation. Then, the innocent woman is arrested because she challenges the standard practice at the time of confession to witchcraft. Because she does not behave according to the standards expected of a "proper" Puritan woman, Elizabeth should receive punishment. Compared to Proctor, Elizabeth could be characterized as a double sinner: a sinner because of the original sin and her "vulnerability" as a woman. Therefore, we can deduce that women in the Puritan society of Salem, being doubly subversive, are less likely than ordinary men to be become "good" Americans. The puritan principles, the original sin and women "satanic" nature in particular serve to justify and perpetuate the institutionalized Puritan order. This pure injustice falsely support-

ed by no logical facts is presented as a natural outcome and a fair act of God's justice. Therefore, the image of the Puritan woman that the myth founders are promoting is that of an obedient, oppressed and passive. Only identification with such a picture will grant her a social significance and instant gratification. The hidden message of myth thus is to support an image of a conformist American family in which all the members should bow to what is believed to be the word of God. Women have no free will and they are persuaded that their existence is meaningful as long as they live disciplined lives and participate in producing a future of perfect peace. On the other hand, the elect, or also called the "loving" parents, are chosen by God to assist women in accomplishing their godly roles in society.

Both Proctor's and Elizabeth's tragedies serve to exemplify the undemocratic ideals of the Puritan doctrine. Being social outcasts by virtue of their sinful nature and gender none can live a decent life let alone reach social mobility. This brings to the fore the false promises of the myth of the Promised Land. American individualism is also called into question. Women and ordinary men, such as Elizabeth and Proctor, are given preordained roles which are advanced as part of God's plan on earth. This renders a picture of America as a land in which the individual cannot experience free will. The "God" of the Puritans who has privileged the elect has excluded people like Proctor and Elizabeth from the "Promised Land" Therefore, Salem is not a Promised Land for all people, and the image of the Puritan community as an earthly Heaven in which all people without exception can reach social mobility is only fanciful. This brings us to reconsider the notion of American exceptionalism in seventeenth century Puritan Salem .However, despite its illusory nature, the myth of the Promised Land is maintained because of its manipulative force exerted through the Other. The concept of the Other will be discussed in details in the following part.

II- Salem's Church as the Puritan Other: Sustaining

the Puritan Established Order through Control and Manipulation

1- Reverend Parris :The Other as Control of Puritan Reality

Reverend Parris is one of the main figures in ***The Crucible*** who stand for the Puritan Other. As a minister of Salem's Puritan Church, Parris becomes "an extension of the weighted authority of the word of God" **(Caputo 7).** The Bible, containing the law of God is to be accepted as an authority and strict obedience was necessary. Each member of the community of Salem was constantly exposed to the scrutiny and criticism of the Puritan Church. Parris, whose authority comes from the church, makes the inhabitants of Salem conform as closely as possible to the Puritan ideals and therefore produces the Puritan reality. As such, Parris could be regarded as the embodiment of the Puritan Other.

Parris's position as an authoritarian and God-like figure makes him single minded and arrogant: "Mr Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard College" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 34).** As soon as the play opens, Parris appears as a determined character, feeling no remorse for accusing innocent people. The minister strongly holds to the Puritan vision of the world which is not open to revision and to which he clings till the end. One of the Puritan beliefs sustaining Parris's vision is that the world is divided into the elect chosen by God to receive grace and the others, labeled as Devil's allies who are destined for Hell. Hence, Parris being divinely commissioned and his authority being part of the plan of Providence, resisting him would mean attacking the authority of God: "You people seem not to comprehend that a minister is the lord's man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted**" (35).** In this way, Salem's inhabitants are not allowed to have a desire other than that of the Puritan Other. Parris's privileged status in the Puritan Church gives him the right to distinguish between good and evil. As a reverend,

Parris's primary mission is to promote the image of Salem as a promised land in which the members of the Puritan community can live together peacefully and happily as if in a peaceful heaven. For this to happen, Parris should "purify" Salem from "evil."

2-The Puritan Other and the Challenge of Sin: Manipulation of Truth is the Answer

The audience soon realizes that, with the seeming presence of witchcraft in Salem, Parris hypocritically sees evil everywhere but denies its presence in his household when his daughter Betty falls sick and her illness fuels the first rumors of witchcraft: "No-no. There be no unnatural cause here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mr Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be None" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 18).** This quote speaks out Parris's worry at people learning that witchcraft originated from his household. Therefore, we can infer that Parris is more concerned about how witchcraft threatens his position as a minister and man of the church than his daughter's illness. He seems terrified at the thought of losing the respect of his community and, above all, their obedience if witchcraft was discovered in his house. This is further emphasized by another scene in the play when the minister is pressing Abigail to spare his reputation:

> PARRIS. [studies her, then nods, half convinced]: Ab igail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you compromise my very character. I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back- now give me upright answer. Your name in the town- it is entirely white, is it not? **(20)**

When Parris realizes that he cannot hide his involvement with the scandal even with the arrival of Hale, he immediately turns the situation into his advan-

tage to save his reputation and position once again. Parris tries to turn people's attention away by suggesting that the Devil is to be found outside his household. He calls Abigail and gets her to confess that it was Tituba, his slave, who conjured with the spirits and manipulated his daughter and the other girls. Apparently, this time the minister brilliantly succeeds in his manipulation which will be an open door to other crimes to come. Abigail ends up screaming:

> ABIGAIL. She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!
>
> PARRIS. She have often laughed at prayer!
>
> ABIGAIL. She comes to me every night to go and drink blood! **(Miller, *The Crucible* 46)**

By arising and spreading witch hysteria in Salem, Parris can sustain the Puritan rule and shape the other characters' identities in such a way as to conform to the Puritan Other. For these reasons, he urges Abigail and the other girls to name their neighbors as witches, because such creatures are "considered to be anti-Christian-against all good really-rather than simply non-Christian" (**Roach XX**). So, they should either confess or be hanged as they constitute a serious threat to the Puritan way of life. Stigmatized as anti-Christian, their "confession would leave them ostracized from their community and most likely [means] they would leave the colony to escape the shame" **(R. Brooks 29).** This shows how important it is to conform to the Puritan Other in Puritan Salem. More precisely, it brings support to the fact that Parris who stands for the Other really frames the other characters' process of identity construction by maintaining the Puritan order unchanged. Also, extending the witch trials would allow Parris to appear as a "saint" religious leader who is dedicated to his work by guiding everyone in the Puritan life and belief. His "noble" status makes him view himself and the community he lives in as a whole and coherent entity where the Puritan elect saints ensure that all people are treated with fairness and love.

In Act III, other events bring more evidence about Parris's role as the Puritan

Other. When Proctor and Mary Warren come to the court, and when the latter testifies that she and the other girls were only pretending to be afflicted by witchcraft, Parris immediately declares that they want to overthrow the court: "This is a clear attack upon the court!" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 85)** He attempts to persuade Danforth that Mary Warren is lying: "Surely your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie" **(96).** Every statement, fact or belief which is not approved by the Puritan legacy is considered as a lie. This obviously suggests that the only acceptable choice is through submitting to the desire of the Puritan Other by pretending that the way of life in Salem is a workable system.

By contrast, the will to construct an identity in a different reality is interpreted as evidence of fraud. In Salem, truth is defined and seen, and thus constructed by the Puritan Other. In the play, "versions of the word 'see', in fact, recur frequently…keeping before the audience this question of seeing the unseen, of reading or misreading the evidence" **(Bloom, *Arthur Miller's The Crucible* 76).** Parris is thus given the absolute authority to define reality, one fixed single reality. Parris states: "We are here, Your Honour, precisely to discover what no one has ever seen" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 93).** As a man of God, Parris is granted the exclusive power to define truth and falsehood and decide on what can be seen and unseen. This explains well why Parris is urging Tituba to confess the lie about seeing the unseen Devil and bewitching Betty and Abigail. It also reveals why the minister is putting pressure on Proctor to sign the document in Act IV. By perpetuating lies and making them public, Parris can prove his innocence and exonerate his daughter and niece. Only in so doing can Parris preserve his powerful position and continue to exert power and influence on people in the Puritan village of Salem.

3-Manipulating the Myth of the Promised Land

It is no coincidence that many of Salem's residents, including the Proctor family, have stopped attending church on a regular basis, a fact which points at Parris's

unpopularity. At the opening of the play, Miller describes him as a man who "believed he was being persecuted whenever he went" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 13),** which indicates Parris's failure to spread trust and love in his community. Worse of all, the reverend's hatred continues to show all through the play especially during the court trials. The minister is determined to execute anyone who challenges the Puritan Other. He purposefully asserts all Abigail's lies without seeking out evidence, and ruins the Proctors and many others. It could be stated that Parris's mask of holiness parallels the delusory quality and manipulative power of the myth of the Promised Land. Behind the brilliant facade of the Paradise land lies a bleak and dark reality. Like fantasy, the myth only obfuscates the reality in Salem and makes it falsely appear as a coherent entity kept together by forces of love and justice. Indeed, the witch trials expose Salem as a land of intolerance and injustice rather than a promised land in which people can find peace and enjoy self-gratification.

Parris uses his image as a God-like figure and his high social status as a minister of the church as an excuse to obtain that of which he considers as a requirement for such a prestigious man as he believes to be. This is displayed in an argument he has with Giles Cory and John Proctor: "Mr Cory, you will look far of a man of my kind at sixty pound a year!" **(34)** He adds: "Man! Don't a minister deserve a house to live in?"**(34)** By using this argument, Miller articulates the fact that the myth helps people like Parris to accumulate wealth at the expense of the others, highlighting Barthes's secondary message. Because the Puritan community of Salem has a strong belief in the power and authority of God, it is natural that the God's earthly representatives are granted a high status as a fair reward. This apparent reality would mislead Salem's inhabitants into believing that social disparities are an expression of people's closeness to God, and their devotion to bring God's will on earth as in Heaven. Therefore, it becomes obvious that all the privileged members of the Puritan community are tempted to keep the established order unchanged to secure their interests. In this concern, it is worth studying the character Reverend John Hale, another privileged member of Salem

community as he seems to show at times remorse and hesitation, a fact which arouses our curiosity to investigate whether he will finally defy the Puritan order despite being part of the Puritan Other.

4-Reverend John Hale: The Other between Duty and Failed Rebellion

At the beginning of the play, Reverend John Hale comes "bearing heavy texts" [that he feels are] weighted with authority" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 40),** which may be a first indication of Hale's powerful position as a reverend but also of the deep respect for the sacred religious texts which he considers as the supreme source of knowledge and authority. Hence, Hale can be regarded as another character that stands for the Puritan Other. His position in the play therefore calls for a study of how Hale's identity construction is affected by the hysteria in Salem, and also of how his authoritarian position as the embodiment of the Puritan Other may affect other characters' identities. In this context, it is imperative to scrutinize the different events in the play and see how the character reacts to them.

Hale displays a remarkable faith in the teaching of the church when he claims: "We cannot look in superstition in this. The Devil is precise" **(41).** He holds a strong belief in his work, underlining that it is his duty to drive the Devil out of Salem: "Have no fear now- We shall find him out if has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face" **(42).** Hale's devotion to the church and his work as a "spiritual doctor" make an elect of him. He has the duty to fulfill God's will on earth and purify Salem from the Devil and its allies. Both the intellectual, spiritual doctor and witchcraft expert in him are summoned to Salem to diagnose witchcraft and provide a necessary cure. He is a most knowledgeable man who can tell the truth from the lie, see the unseen and help people confess their supposed sins in order to reach salvation. Hale's pride in his God-

like position is evidenced by statements like “The Devil can never overcome a minister. You know that, do you not?”**(Miller, *The Crucible* 48)**

From the simple observation of Hale’s superior attitude, we can now deduce the considerable power of the Puritan elect to establish one single reality in Salem by virtue of their “absolute” knowledge. Like Parris, Hale embodies the Puritan Other and contributes to nurturing the myth of the Promised Land by promoting an image of Salem as a Heaven in which people can live in peace and harmony only through complete submission to the Puritan legacy. Therefore, in a similar way to Parris, Hale shapes people’s identities by making them submit to the desire of the Puritan Other.

Hale’s position as a God-like figure has granted him respect, and approval in Salem. The longer the Puritan order persists, the more it assures Hale’s worthy position and integration in Salem. This could be one reason why the highly respected man, consciously or unconsciously, does by no means question the rule established by the Puritan church, and he cannot even conceive of a different mode of existence. However, unlike Parris, Hale’s faith in the Puritan religious principles cannot be dissociated from his belief in law and his duty as a man of the Puritan church. This can be noticed as early as the play opens when Hale, more than any other character, is totally immersed in the myth of the Promised Land. Contrary to Parris who pretends to hold onto the Puritan beliefs in order to keep people under control, Hale is convinced that everything is under control and nothing can go wrong if the Puritan basic tenets are carefully preserved. For instance, he easily believes the girls’ confessions of witchcraft and their accusations without investigating them, though he was summoned to inspect the claims of witchcraft in the first place. He would urge the members of his community “to call a phantom real and to deny their touch with reality” **(Miller, “Brewed in The Crucible” 173),** as long as it would keep the Puritan order unchanged.

Despite his “absolute” knowledge, the intellectual man can but perceive one

single reality. In this regard, it is argued that Hale "is left with little space to self reflect and to see the things from an angle different from that of the church and the authority" **(Dey and Das 5).** At this point of the play, it is not safe to assert that Hale is completely aware of the manipulative process through which the Puritan Other exerts its power and authority. Hale's strong belief in the Puritan doctrine and his duty as a man of the Puritan church might have prevented him from considering another mode of belief.

In spite of Hale's strong religious beliefs, his actions in Act II announce a beginning of change in his attitude and expose his doubts about an apparently unified and Heaven-like Puritan community. As a matter of fact, when Elizabeth's name is mentioned in the court, the minister quickly shows up at the Proctors' house of his own accord, trying to investigate on who the Proctors are. This demonstrates well that Hale has started questioning the established order and he might have also expressed remorse about the possibility of accusing innocent people "I am a stranger here, as you know. And in my own ignorance I find it hard to draw a clear opinion of them that come accused before the court. And so this afternoon, and now tonight, I go from house to house" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 62).** This could be regarded as a first attempt to recover his real position as an investigator and a thinker as he shows a will to carefully consider both the accusers and the accused before pronouncing a final judgment.

Another sign of the minister's skepticism in Act II is his questioning of Abigail's confessions and accusations against Elizabeth. When Hale learns about Abigail's affair with Proctor and her eventual revenge against his wife, he is determined to give his testimony to the court about Abigail in favor of Elizabeth: "What I have heard in her favor, I will not fear to testify in court" **(73).** Casting doubts upon Abigail's words means presenting another truth as opposed to the Puritan absolute truth. Hale is becoming increasingly more involved in the trials. He tries to rely on forensic evidence rather than on biased testimony.

Miller takes his character a step further in Act III. The audience notices Hale's total disillusionment when Proctor and Giles, though presenting counter-evidence of witchcraft, are disregarded and even arrested. This is clearly noticeable in the climactic scene in the court in Act III when the minister's plea is quelled; and Mary Warren ends up accusing Proctor who is then arrested for collecting names in the Devil's book. At this point, when Hale "suddenly realizes that he has been deluded by vicious and stupid beliefs" **(Taylor 107),** he decides to leave the court. This time "the subject of his concern is no longer the books he carried into Salem, but what is happening to Salem as the result of the reification fallacy initiated by him and the corrosive texts he has since denounced" **(Caputo 16).** His strong belief in the Puritan doctrine being shattered, the minister pleads with Danforth to stop the proceedings: "I beg you, stop now before another is condemned! I may shut my conscience to it no more- private vengeance is working through this testimony!" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 100)**

It is the first time Hale denounces the unjust proceedings of the court in public and is striving for justice. This is an important point to consider as it highlights the connection between Hale's faith in the Puritan doctrine and his perception of truth. Hale opens up to other truths when his trust in the Puritan rule is shaken. Therefore, Hale's self-realization is crucial in the play as it opens our eyes to a different reality in the Puritan community where injustice is law, even if it means sending innocent people to their deaths.

Hale's quitting the court at the end of Act III can be viewed as a sign of disenchantment and an attempt to rebel against the Puritan order. However, the next time he is seen in the play in Act IV, Hale devotes himself to persuading the prisoners to confess so that they may avoid execution. Though convinced of Proctor's innocence, Hale is imploring him to confess in order to preserve his life: "Man you will hang! You cannot" **(125).** By urging the prisoners to tell lies, Hale is reinforcing the slanders of the court, and perpetuating the Puritan rule. This indicates that Hale is again acting as a spiritual doctor who has the mission

to help the presumed sinners confess their sins: he is still playing the role of the Puritan Other in shaping people's desires. At this point of the play, it is safe to say that Hale is completely aware of the importance of his position as a man of God and the manipulative power of the heavy texts he is bearing, yet he consciously continues to assert the Puritan rule. He once again presents himself as a man who has the duty to teach Proctor and the other prisoners how to behave.

5-Preserving the Myth of the Promised Land: Towards a Most Conformist Community

We cannot say that Hale is better than Parris especially since Hale's self-realization does not result in any effective confrontation. In any case, both contribute intentionally or unintentionally to keep the Puritan order unchanged: the former perpetuates the present reality by his conformity and the latter holds steadily to this reality and maintains it through lies and manipulation. Here we come to understand the real role of Hale in the Puritan community. Hale is no more than an instrument of religious influence used to perpetuate the Puritan order. As a knowledgeable man of the church, people are more likely to trust him and identify with the reality he portrays. Therefore, in terms of influence, Hale's conformity is no less important than Parris's deliberate and strong manipulation. Both characters, thus, sustain the image of Salem as a Heaven on earth in which obedience to the Puritan Other would mean servitude to God and loyalty to the nation. This would obviously account for all the crimes and injustices committed during the witch trials, and would eventually allow the Puritan rule to last even longer. The strict code of laws perpetuated by both Parris and Hale would impose conformity on all Salem's inhabitants, leaving no room for individuality.

Though at first sight Salem may appear as a land of justice where evil should be punished to secure some future good, all notions about good and evil, fairness and injustice, truth and falsity are called into question over the course of the play. A deep scrutiny of Hale's main vocation reveals inconsistency between the Puri-

tan religious texts and the need to preserve the rights of Salem's inhabitants. Ironically enough, though Hale is the most religious and knowledgeable man in Salem, he fails to save Proctor and Elizabeth. Hale is summoned to Salem to ascertain witchcraft and beat the Devil-two invisible forces that only the "experts" can see. This not only highlights the single perception of reality imposed by the Puritan Other, but it also shows how fragile the Puritan religious texts are. Innocent people like Proctor and Elizabeth are wrongly accused of witchcraft and executed by mere accusations based on no evidence.

All these contradictions and horrors behind the Heaven-like Salem community bring to the fore Barthes's secondary message of myth, i.e. it makes intolerance and power abuse appear as natural facts through deceit. People like Hale and Parris are meant to be regarded as loyal and faithful Americans, while Proctor and Elizabeth who have challenged the Puritan rule are designated as traitors and thus un-American. In the name of God, such injustices are advanced as an absolute truth that cannot be disputed or altered. The study of the characters Parris and Hale thus reveals that Salem is not the Promised Land for all people as it emphasizes its image as a land of intolerance and crime, a fact which raises further questions about American exceptionalism. It is not surprising that many less privileged people blindly submitted to the desire of the Puritan Other and never questioned this instituted single reality when they were left with little space for self-reflection. Others, however, such as Abigail Williams may well be tempted to take advantage of all the contradictions sustaining the Puritan order in order to gain power.

6-Abigail Williams: The Puritan Other as a Woman of Power: Puritan Values at the Service of Feminine Deception

Abigail Williams, Parris's niece and a servant in Proctor's household is no less important than Parris in terms of manipulation and yet she lives in a misogynist community. Though she does not reach to Parris's and Hale's high positions in

the Puritan church, Abigail seems to have a great impact on people's perception of reality to the point of starting the whole witch hysteria in Salem. Therefore, we deem it necessary to provide a deep insight into Abigail, elaborating on her main motives and most importantly bringing to the fore her role as the Puritan Other and highlighting her significant influence even on the most prominent people the likes of Hale, Parris and the judges.

When the play opens, the audience learns that Abigail had an affair with Proctor when she was working in his home despite the fact that adultery constitutes a sin according to the Puritan religion. What is more striking is that she does not suppress her desires and she is still pursuing him even after getting fired: "John - I am waiting' for you every night" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 28).** It could be said that she is the exact opposite of Proctor who refuses to acknowledge his attraction to Abigail and denies his love affair. Abigail's defying attitude is indicative of her willingness to discard the Puritan social values, something that Proctor cannot do at this point of the play because he does not want to ruin his reputation as a "good" Puritan. This is probably the reason why Abigail is convinced that Proctor is in love with her but cannot express his love. She believes she has only to eliminate Elizabeth so that she can become his new spouse: "It's she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now" **(29).** Abigail's attitude seems to reflect her age. As an awkward seventeen year-old girl, she only wants her desires to be fulfilled with little regard for the consequences of her actions. Abigail's youth could be taken as a symbol of human instinct. At her young age, Abigail's impulse sometimes is shown to be greater than her desire to conform to social representations designed by the Puritan Other.

Nevertheless, shortly after the audience notices that Abigail is becoming increasingly more aware of how to use the Puritan strict social code in order to gain power. Fear of the Devil's presence in Parris's house seems to be the initiating event that changes Abigail's motives and affects her behavior. This is exempli-

fied in the first scene of the play. In the beginning, Abigail implores Parris to go down town and deny the rumor of witchcraft. Though she confesses to dancing in the woods with the other girls, she denies having conjured the spirits and cast a spell on Elizabeth, a more serious sin in the Puritan doctrine: "Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it-and I'll be whipped if I must be. But they're speakin' of witchcraft. Betty's not witched" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 19).** Abigail thus lied certainly to prevent charges of witchcraft and adultery, when the only alternative was to be hanged.

If Abigail's obstinacy to confess to witchcraft and adultery is an act of survival instinct, her capacity for strategy, particularly her prudent plan to eliminate Elizabeth reveals a skillful plotter and manipulator. Abigail understands the Puritan code very well. She knows that anyone in Salem discrediting witchcraft and the Devil is liable to severe punishment. While in the beginning she denies witchcraft to preserve her life, now she declares witchcraft to gain power. Abigail "finds that, through claiming she had a direct connection to the divine, she is able to posses more power than men, ministers or even the Deputy Governor himself" **(Hsu).** The young girl, thus, takes advantage of the intolerance and narrow-mindedness that characterize the Puritan community to gain importance and carry out her plan. She becomes more aware of her role as the Puritan Other. Like Parris, Abigail shapes people's desire and makes them identify with a reality she creates through lies. She names innocent people as accomplices of the Devil and makes the others view them as such. The first person Abigail accuses of witchcraft is Tituba: "She makes me drink blood." **(Miller, *The Crucible* 46)** Then she starts naming innocent women:

> ABIGAIL. I want to open myself! I want the light of God; I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss his hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil! **(49)**

Declaring witchcraft establishes Abigail's "credibility" with the court and preserves her reputation. It is worth noting that Abigail carefully selects her victims. The first three women she names are considered social outcasts. Tituba being Parris's slave, Sarah Good a poor woman and Goody Osburn with legal issues with the Putman family and a low church attendance. In addition to being social outcasts, they are women. The Puritans believe that "it was women, by and large, whom the Devil tortured hoping to recruit them in his service as witches" **(Reis 2).** Therefore, knowing that the Puritan society is already predisposed to convict such women, Abigail can increase her credibility and eventually gain more power. Abigail thus decides until the court sees her as credible before she accuses Elizabeth.

7-Abigail Williams: The Puritan Feminine Other as Betrayal of the Promised Land

In Act III, we clearly notice how much importance Abigail has gained when the witch trials extend over the town. In fact, her status is no less important than that of the minister Parris and judge Danforth. In a similar way, Abigail can see the unseen and define what truth is. For instance, when Mary Warren comes to the court to testify against Abigail and declare that she falsely accused Elizabeth, Abigail casts her as a liar: "it is a lie, sir" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 92).** Danforth immediately believes her words when she claims that Mary Warren is sending her spirits against her: "Oh Heavenly Father, take away this shadow!"**(97)** Ironically enough, while distrustful of Proctor, Mary Warren and even Hale, the witchcraft expert Danforth blindly believes Abigail without seeking out concrete evidence. Guilt and innocence need not be proven by hard evidence, and any accusation attesting to the "evil" character of the accused is enough to put him under the suspicion of guilt. By considering truth and falsehood as defined by the Puritan Other, the young empowered girl can assert the image of the Puritan community as a "Heaven" which should be preserved and purified from evil, and thereby affect people's conception of "reality."

The new authority figure becomes Other to the people of her community and by virtue of her power she can cause their desire to adopt the Puritan beliefs. This highlights the role of Abigail in framing peoples' identities, causing their alienation, by perpetuating the Puritan rule and maintaining the illusion of one single reality. Abigail's powerful influence is evidenced by the final scene in Act III when Mary and the other girls become infected with the hysteria started by Abigail. They all start repeating Abigail's words, accusing Proctor of consorting with the Devil. The mere fact of repeating the exact words uttered by Abigail is a sign of submission to Abigail's desire.

8-Rebellious Elizabeth Vs Manipulative Abigail

Compared to Elizabeth, Abigail could be taken to portray a different type of female characters. On the one hand, Abigail does not defy the Puritan Other the way Elizabeth does, though she shows a will to discard Puritan social norms. On the other hand, Abigail does not identify with the image of the submissive woman put forward by the Puritan rule. Yet Abigail succeeds in saving her life, gaining power and achieving a high status. By pure and simple false charges the girl can ruin the reputation of many innocent people and cause the death of others including the man she loves. We can consider that Abigail has achieved equal position with a male character- not any male character but one of influence like Reverend Parris and Judge Danforth. Instead of submitting to the Other or defying the Other, Abigail becomes the Other.

The position achieved by Abigail requires careful consideration as it raises many crucial points. It further stresses the power of mythic fantasy that blurs the boundaries between reality and appearance. In a repressive and misogynist Puritan community in which people, particularly women, are caught in a web of lies and deception, Abigail appears as though she were one of God's servants who have the noble mission to purify Salem from evil. With little room for self-

individualism, good is mistaken for evil, lies for truth and appearance for essence.

Abigail's destructive behavior and thirst for power may be the result of her desire to take revenge on Elizabeth, but they could also be traced back to her low social position. Not only is she a woman, but she is an orphan and spinster. In the Puritan community of Salem, a woman of such a social status can never rise to power. Therefore, her attitude could be regarded as an act of revenge against the whole society. Whatever her real motives, Abigail took advantage of the delusion that characterized the Puritan community to gain authority. Abigail's challenging behavior could be compared to Elizabeth's. However, Abigail acts out of self-interest, while Elizabeth acts out of conscience. The power gained by the Proctors' former servant also reveals the contradictions inherent in the Puritan system. It seems unthinkable at first sight that such a lowly person who has no knowledge of judiciary law would gain an enormous amount of authority, divert blame from herself and manipulate the judges, causing death and destruction in Salem. The main argument that could be made for why Abigail gains so much power is on the one hand her capacity to lie and manipulate the others into believing in her lies, and on the other hand people's predisposition to believe such lies. Such an argument serves to reveal the atrocious reality in Salem where a mere lie can define the fate of an individual, causing his death.

Abigail's attitude, thus, calls into question the whole basis of the myth of the Promised Land. In the Heaven-like community of Salem, the same Puritan code which was supposed to preserve people's human rights now constitutes a threat to people's lives. Abigail's power and destructive influence expose Salem as a land in which fear and anxiety rather than peace and serenity are the prevailing sentiments. This casts more doubts on America's exceptionalist identity as it challenges people's right to live which is at the core of American exceptionalism. In Seventeenth century Puritan Salem, lies rather than hard work and perseverance become the new key to success, a fact which exposes America as a dishon-

est land. The same reasoning unveils the secondary message of the myth of the Promised Land as it reveals how social disparities and crimes in Salem are made to appear as a reflection of God's justice in the "earthly Heaven". In the Puritan community, there is one truth, one God and one Devil all of which are defined and fixed by the Puritan Other. Your loyalty to the American nation, which cannot be dissociated from you faithfulness to God, lies in your capacity to approve and validate this single reality. This is the reason why it becomes unquestionable that the accomplished liar and manipulative Abigail gains authority by pretending to perform God's will on earth while Elizabeth ends up in jail, though the latter shows more moral traits.

Although centuries have passed, authority still seems to be the rule in America. McCarthy hearings in the postwar period are very similar to Salem witch trials as they both expose authoritarian figures which shape public opinion through manipulation, causing crime and disaster. The myth of the Promised Land continues to define American identity through power and deceit, substituting religion for capitalism.

III- History, Self and Imagination: Salem Witch Trials as Reflection of McCarthy Hearings

1-Abigail Williams and Joseph McCarthy as Figures of Exceptional Authoritarian America

In ***The Crucible***, Miller presents Abigail as a character living in a time when Puritanism was pervading and controlling every aspect of life be it public or private. Running parallel to these early events of American history are those that took place during the McCarthy era when Miller produced his play, written at a time when anti-communism dominated the United States. This could be seen as the

first major parallel in the play. In this respect, Miller reflects in ***The Crucible*** an extended description of American history: an explicit portrayal of Puritanism through the Salem witch hunts started by Abigail, and an implicit representation of anti-communism suggested by the striking correspondence between McCarthy's hearings and their predecessors.

In ***The Crucible***, Miller depicts a Puritan society where witchcraft is not solely a sin; it is a significant threat against religion, law and the Puritan philosophy as a whole. Whoever is suspected of practicing black magic would deserve death and the fate of eternal hellfire hereafter, owing to their corrupt "nature". People could thus die of fear if their sinful "nature" was revealed to the public. Following Betty's unexplained illness, the inhabitants of Salem start relating it to witchcraft. Soon after, the whole town is caught up in a witchcraft paranoia. Just like the witch hunts before, communism, also called Red Scare, constituted a source of distress and concern about the American nation.

The amounting fears of communism lead the country to plunge in a wave of mass hysteria, causing significant and long lasting effects on different aspects of the American society, particularly on American identity. It is worth noting that McCarthy came from a rural background, strangely enough, an origin which he shares with Abigail. He "was born…on a small farm…His childhood was unexceptional- the rudiments of an elementary education in a small, one-room country school, hard work on his father's farm, Sunday Mass at St. Mary's in nearby Appleton"(**Griffith 2).** As studied in the previous part, the orphaned young girl has no privileged status. Not only is she a servant, but she also has the misfortune of being born a woman. Taking account of this correspondence, we can argue that McCarthy's modest milieu might have engendered in him a feeling of resentfulness about himself.

Moreover, like most Irish people in the United States, McCarthy must have sensed a feeling of rejection and marginalization. These feelings may also be at

the origin of McCarthy's desire for revenge and desperate need to gain power. Arthur Herman argues that "the Irish wanted above all to be part of the mainstream of American life and enjoy its most dazzling promise, that of personal success. Success was the best revenge on one's supposed social betters. That …was part of the McCarthy reality" **(Herman 11).** A similar desire for vengeance is manifested by the character Abigail who unscrupulously sends to death Elizabeth and even her lover Proctor when she feels rejected and humiliated.

Considering the antagonist values between the United States representing capitalism and the Soviet Union representing communism, the shortest cut to show patriotism during the Cold War is undoubtedly through adherence to the capitalist ideology. Therefore, showing anticommunist sentiments indicated McCarthy's loyalty to the American nation and hereby earned McCarthy respect and eventually allowed him to integrate quickly and efficiently. In a short period of time, McCarthy emerged as Senator Joseph McCarthy. He definitely became the most powerful and influential historical figure of the time. He was a demagogue who knew how to win the support of people by exciting their emotions. Even the era was called after his name: the McCarthy era. His extraordinary influence during the post war era even brought some critics, like Richard H. Rovere, to compare him to Hitler: "Like Hitler, McCarthy was…a master of the mob" **(Rovere 19).** His strong manipulation and control over people's lives would culminate in the McCarthy hearings.

Success and rise to power through manipulation are best portrayed in Robert Penn's Warren's ***All the King's Men***. In the Deep South in the 1930s, Willie Stark rises from poverty to become governor of his state and its most powerful political figure. Out of Willie's experiences, there grows a conclusion that life is not just a clash between good and evil but rather all evil, because "man is conceived in sin and born in corruption" **(Warren 235).** This conviction influences Willie's concept of progress profoundly and changes his political philosophy. There is degeneration in Willie, which is exemplified by the change in his oral

speeches. His earlier speeches were filled with facts and explanation, while his later speeches were delivered emotionally and with intensity. Willie's "cry for justice is dissipated into demagoguery" **(Sillars 349).** Willie becomes a demagogue because he believes that the public could not respond rationally to his earlier rational speeches. He discovers that he can rather appeal to their emotions and manipulate them very effectively. Willie's philosophy is worthwhile considering as it further stresses the image of American as an authoritarian land in which demagogy rather than hard work is the key to success. This explains how through manipulation the historical figure Joseph McCarthy could rise to success and even cause disaster.

The sort of chaos generated by the fictional character Abigail in ***The Crucible*** is similar to the disaster brought about by McCarthy in the Cold War period. Just as Abigail spread rumors about evil witches in Salem, McCarthy caused paranoia by proclaiming that hundreds of communist traitors had infiltrated the United States government. Both associated themselves with images of "saints" with the mission to "purify" the American society from "evil" people. Therefore, both figures can stand for the demagogical Other by shaping people's desire and making them submit to their authority. Abigail makes people identify with the image of a "true" American as an "anti-witch", and McCarthy makes them associate with the image of an "anti-communist," by accusing the Devil worshippers and the supporters of communism of being un-American.

Similar to Abigail, McCarthy, without proper regard for evidence, accused a huge number of government employees, writers and entertainers of being communist sympathizers and ruined their careers. Accusing prominent figures in particular might not be mere coincidence. One possible reason is to draw more attention, which would gain McCarthy more fame. Another probable motive is to be more credible because it is more likely that government employees and intellectuals have a significant role in the political sphere. Similarly, Abigail starts accusing women and less prominent persons because these categories are believed

to be damned by God, and people would thus easily believe Abigail's accusations. After sowing the seeds of doubts, she starts accusing more important people like Elizabeth.

Therefore, both McCarthy and Abigail are sharply aware of the contradictions and weaknesses within the American society and smartly use them to manipulate people and gain power. In Act I, Abigail calling names of important and well reputed people she "saw" with the Devil recalls McCarthy's black list supposedly naming communist subversives. In 1950 McCarthy gave a speech at a Women's Republican Club during which he announced:

> In my opinion the State Department, which is one of the most important government departments, is thoroughly infested with Communists… I have here in my hand a list of 205- a list of names that were made known to the secretary of States as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless less are still working and shaping the policy in State Department. **(McCarthy qtd. in Schwartz 428)**

McCarthy's pretence of being able to identify suspected communists and his capacity to corrupt the truth without being questioned testify to the God-like power that the senator had gained by starting the trials. This conjures up the courtroom scene in ***The Crucible*** dominated by Abigail showing an endless power for manipulating and misleading the judges. Both the senator and the empowered girl pretend to see the unseen "Devil" and name those who work for it. For McCarthy, the Devil is the communist threat. Miller shows that, three centuries after, the persuasive power of the myth of the Promised Land together with its capacity to impose one single vision of the world still dominate American imagination. The image of the New World as a paradise that should be protected and purified form "evil" has not lost luster.

2-The Adaptability of the Myth of the Promised Land and American Identity: An Endless Quest for Self-gratification and

Recognition in Capitalist America

As was the case in seventeenth century Puritan Salem, there seemed to be only one way of being in the United States during the Cold War period. Whoever adhered to the communist ideology was categorized as un-American. Therefore, in the light of Lacan's theory we can reflect that the old object *a*- the Puritan religious beliefs in the seventeenth century- was substituted for a new object *a* which comprised economic liberalism during twentieth century Cold War, a fact which highlights Lacan's concepts of lack and unattainable desire. The American has an endless desire for unity and self-gratification which urges him to move desperately from one object *a* to another. Moreover, the correspondence between McCarthy and Abigail stresses the longevity and adaptability of myths. Indeed, the myth of the Promised Land continues to shape the desire of the Americans by offering them new images of unity and self-fulfillment that would suit the context of the time. Furthermore, the correlation between the two figures calls into question American democratic ideals which are at the core of the American identity which moves to be a falsity. The rigidity of the Puritan doctrine did not leave room for individual choice. The power of anti-communism in restricting freedom was not less significant either, a fact which challenges American exceptionalism.

In the play, the concept of the Other is embodied in the Puritan elect and it is mainly symbolized by Salem's court which parallels the House Un-American Activities Committee during the McCarthy era. The committee shed light on the American public policy which set an atmosphere in which ideas of national belonging and citizenship were tightly linked to ideological commitment. By holding an aggressive policy through different public institutions, the American authority could impose capitalism as the only possible economic system in the United States. In this respect, the Other could be the HUAC or any public institution set during the Cold War to support and perpetuate the values of a free enterprise economy.

If the Other may take different forms, and the constituents of the object *a* may change from one period of the American history to another, the myth of the Promised Land continues to adapt to the time period and affect American identity by fixing the defining features of Americanness. At each period of time, people in the United States are compelled to identify with new images revealing American characteristics. Despite the promises made, namely having equal opportunity, recovering a feeling of unity and wholeness, and integrating into the American society, the myth of the Promised Land in both Abigail's and McCarthy's times proved to be pure fantasy. Not unlike Salem's trials, the McCarthy hearings bring forth the illusory nature of the myth. If one considers the ruin and damage caused by the anti-communist mass hysteria, one will quickly sense a feeling of disillusionment about the hideous reality in the American society where safety, love and equal opportunity emerge as only false promises.

On the contrary, the myth of the Promised Land in postwar anti-communist America works for the interests of the powerful groups and does not seem to preserve the unity of the American society. It is rather used to exclude some categories of people from assimilation in the American society by stigmatizing them as communist traitors. Neither the Puritan beliefs nor the policy of the free market could bring real gratification and alleviate the anxiety and restlessness prevailing in seventeenth century Salem and postwar America. The emergence of some communist sympathizers in the postwar period signals people's disillusionment about capitalism. During the economic depression of the 1930s, some American people already started having doubts about the efficiency of capitalism and felt drawn to communism. Looking for an alternative system is not necessarily a sign of disloyalty to the American nation. It may just pinpoint the failure of a free enterprise economy to fulfill the promises of freedom, equal opportunity, and social mobility.

This brings us to consider Barthes's secondary message of myth in McCarthy's time; that is how crimes, intolerance and injustice are presented as natural

facts that should not be questioned. Just as social injustices in the seventieth century were made to appear as an articulation of people's degree of devotion to God's will, social disparities in the postwar period were advanced as an expression of the Americans' degree of loyalty to the American nation. The American people are made to believe that they are not often their best selves, which creates a system of barriers to social mobility and personal welfare. Weighing these arguments, social inequalities in the United States become a natural fact and are presented as the only social order guarantying "justice." The desire to "purify" the American land from whatever is designated as "un-American" and preserve the "earthly Heaven" thus results in the division of the American society into "God's elect saints" and "Devil's allies," the "loyal" and "disloyal." The denominations may differ, yet they all expose the American society as class-based system, calling into question the promise of equal opportunity which is at the basis of the myth of the Promised Land, and hereby raising further questions about American exceptionalism.

While a comparison between Abigail and McCarthy reveals a striking correspondence between seventeenth century Salem trials and the McCarthy hearings in the Cold War period, an autobiographical study of Miller shows similarities between the playwright and the character Proctor. If Abigail and McCarthy perpetuate the illusion of reality in the American society, Miller, through his fictional character Proctor resists this reality.

3- John Proctor as an Imaginary Reflection of Arthur Miller: The Liberal Mind against Authoritarianism

In order to study the effect of McCarthyism on Miller's personal life it is crucial to explore the playwright's biography especially his political background. A close scrutiny of Miller's political life reveals his strong liberal views as emphasized by Enoch Brater: "Miller's comments mark him as an original Liberal

thinker, a decidedly dramatic Liberal thinker. Thus I call Miller a "Liberal playwright" **(Brater 24).** However, the word "liberal" can lead to confusion especially in the context of the Cold War period. In this context, Brater explains that Miller "has generally refused to toe the line of any specific variant of Liberalism, [but] he has generally …sought the rights due to the citizen"' **(24).** In the same sense, many philosophers "see Liberalism as primarily about liberty, other liberal thinkers have claimed that the core value of Liberalism is not liberty but rather equality" **(Kelly 7).** Yet, the concept of equality remains problematic, because equality may mean sameness and denial of difference which could be antithetical to liberalism. It remains to see if by seeking the rights due to the citizen Miller is claiming the right to be equal or the right to be different.

Equally important to consider is Miller's position in relation to capitalism. According to Miller, "the inherent danger in capitalism…is that it can cause freedom to become a mere illusion as people become trapped in a cycle of false need and hope" (**Miller qtd. in Abboston, *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller* 374).** This is the reason why Miller became involved in socialist politics during the depression, thinking that the economic problems of the time caused by the Free enterprise could be resolved by socialist solutions. However, Abboston remarks that "Miller is a socialist, but one who strongly believes in the American democracy over communist dogma" **(Abboston, *Student Companion to Arthur Miller* 91).** In view of all these arguments, we can infer that Miller is not an advocate of Liberalism as an ideology, let alone economic Liberalism, which in his view imprisons and enslaves man. Yet, he cannot be termed pure communist. Hence, Miller's liberal ideals rather mean people's right to live regardless of their supposed political, ideological or economic leanings.

In ***The Crucible***, Miller's liberal thoughts are noticeable through the character Proctor who powerfully evokes the playwright. For example, though Proctor is a hard worker and he somehow shows moral earnestness, he goes to the Puritan church only occasionally and not all his children are baptized. At the end of the

play, Proctor appears even more critical of the rigid thinking of the Puritan community, when he finally stands against the Puritan Other. Therefore, Proctor is not opposed to Puritanism as a doctrine but he is rather reluctant to be part of one single reality fixed by the Puritans. This leads us to conclude that creating a character like Proctor is a way of speaking out and protesting capitalism which was imposed as the only possible order.

Miller's resistance to the anti-communist Other made him a target for McCarthy's accusations. Not unlike the other intellectual figures of his time, the playwright was considered suspicious by the senator and his supporters and was "blacklisted from films, radio and television" **(Pells 324).** In a similar way, Proctor is accused of witchcraft during the witch trials in Salem and later on sentenced to death. The audience notices that Proctor is subject to suspicion as soon as the play opens. Indeed, Hale's investigation to the Proctors' can but be an indication of the Puritans' rigidity which parallels anti-communism during the Cold War period.

Both Proctor and Miller are charged without any supporting evidence. Because of his disbelief in witches, his poor church attendance and his inability to recite all of the Ten Commandments, Proctor was designated as the Devil's ally. He would soon become a threat to the community of Salem, and would thus deserve severe punishment. Similarly, Miller was identified as a communist traitor because of his rebellious attitude. Like his fictional character, the playwright stands against the court and claims the right to be different without being stigmatized as disloyal to the American nation. Moreover, if we consider the two men's past history and social backgrounds, we find no criminal record. On the contrary, both men are highly respected and accorded considerable social recognition. This further emphasizes the intolerance and single vision of the American authorities during both periods.

At the end of the play, the connection between Miller and Proctor becomes

even more apparent. When Proctor was called to the court to testify, he refused to sign his confession and implicate innocent people. Miller also defied the House Committee on Un-American Activities and didn't give the names of suspected communists. The audience can easily sense the playwright speaking through the protagonist of his play. When asked to identify participants at the Communist Party, Miller's answer to the committee obviously echoes Proctor last words: "I am not protecting the communists or the Communist Party. I am trying to…protect my sense of self. I could not use the name of another person and bring trouble on him" **(Miller qtd. in Pells 324).** This is obviously a sign of high resistance and defiance in the years of the post war period marked by violence, oppression and an almost complete absence of freedom.

Miller's opposition to the Committee is an indication of his desire to resist the anti-communist Other and question the values of capitalism as a dominant ideology. However, we notice that Miller's position as a prominent and talented writer was almost ruined when he refused to adopt the values of capitalism during the McCarthy trials, and in particular the duty to denounce supposedly communist subversives to preserve the unity of the American nation. This dramatizes the difficulty to construct an identity outside the discourse of the myth of the Promised Land even for an artist supposedly creative and therefore different.

My analysis in the present chapter has revealed that John Proctor and his wife Elizabeth experience a deep identity conflict throughout the play. In the beginning, both characters show moral and religious earnestness which may attest to their desire to follow God's plan on earth and hereby behave in accordance with social dictates imposed by the Puritan elect. In the light of Lacan's theory, it could be inferred that Proctor and Elizabeth have submitted to the desire of the Puritan Other by clinging to the Puritan values. They both adopt social images mirrored by the Puritan Other whom they regard as their own selves. Proctor associates himself with the image of an upright and hard working man, and Elizabeth identifies with the image of a faithful and submissive wife. In their interpre-

tations, adopting the Puritan principles, which they mistake for the unattainable Lacanian object *a*, will bring them self-gratification and approval.

However, it has been observed that embracing the Puritan basic tenets do not offer the couple a real spiritual consolation, because in the light of Lacan's theory the characteristics defining a "good" Puritan only cause Proctor's and Elizabeth's desires, but it is never really identical with the unattainable object *a* which would have offered them real self-gratification. The couple's failure to find the desired self-satisfaction is noticed in Proctor's constant anxiety, Elizabeth's coldness, the couple's inability to confront the truth about their unsuccessful marriage and above all the Proctors' inability to feel safe in the Puritan community.

The couple's restlessness has brought to the fore many important points. Proctor's and Elizabeth's desire to assert themselves is an expression of Lacan's "lack of being." The couple's constant anxiety is a manifestation of the couple's feelings of imperfection and dissatisfaction, or to use Lacan's terms, an expression of "lack." The Puritan values, mistaken for the Lacanian object *a*, only cause their desire for self-assertion but never really compensate for their imperfections. Also, living a heavenly life in Salem is impossible because the images of welfare and self-gratification promoted by the myth of the Promised Land only offer an imaginary sense of completeness and perfection. This highlights Lacan's concept of the Real as it stresses the impossibility to find real-satisfaction in the domain of the Other. Above all, my study has shown that self-construction is an alienating-process, because submitting to the desire of the Puritan Other implies projecting a fanciful image of the self which is not the real self. The three points stress the alienating character of the American identity in seventeenth century intolerant Salem, proving that it can only be constructed in an imaginary state.

More interestingly, it has also been found that both characters display a shift in attitude in terms of submission to the Puritan Other which is exemplified in their multiple efforts to stand against the Puritan court. Compared to Proctor's,

Elizabeth's resistance is less aggressive, yet it shows more wisdom. This sheds light on the female essence beneath a Puritan patriarchal society which neglects women's potential by reducing them to the status of submissive wives incapable of critical thinking. However, it has been noted that Proctor's and Elizabeth's resistance to the desire of the Puritan Other causes them social estrangement as Proctor's death and Elizabeth's imprisonment in the end may suggest.

The characters' tragedies reveal the intolerance and injustice behind the "earthly Heaven" in Salem, stressing the false promises of the myth of the Promised Land. Moreover, they highlight the manipulative power of myth and bring forth its secondary message, that is they show how social disparities are made to appear as part of a natural order. Being nonconformist, both Proctor and Elizabeth are stigmatized as "sinners" and are socially rejected. Proctor is a "sinner" because of the original sin, and Elizabeth is a double "sinner" because of her vulnerability as a woman. Therefore, I can conclude that the hidden message of myth is observed in the following arguments. Ordinary men, let alone women, are not likely to become "true" Americans and integrate into Salem community. Another argument is that Salem community is a big family in which all members should carry out what is believed to be God's plan. Also, the elect, or the "loving parents," are selected by God to assist Salem's inhabitants in accomplishing their godly roles in society. The three arguments put together call into question equal opportunity and democracy which are at the basis of America's exceptionalist identity.

On the other hand, it is left to people like Revered Parris and Reverend Hale, who embody the Puritan Other, to define "reality" by establishing a single way of being in Salem. The two characters assume that the Puritan society is divided into saints and sinners. Proclaiming themselves God's chosen people, Reverend Parris and Reverend Hale have the mission to maintain the present order in Salem which they portray as "a City Upon a Hill." Therefore, it is made to appear as an act of duty to submit to the desire of the Puritan Other which is also God's

desire. In this way, the Puritan elect can oppress innocent people by ruining their reputation or send them to jail in the name of God. In this respect, they turn from oppressors to saviors that will "help" the sinners redeem and "purify" the "earthly Heaven" from evil. Though at times Hale's awareness is awakening, it does not result in any effective confrontation with the Puritan court. Hale's conformity is no less effective than Parris's deliberate manipulation as they both maintain the Puritan order unchanged. This further stresses the single-mindedness of the Puritan elect and their unwillingness to open up to a new reality.

Abigail Williams, though not one of God's elect, seems to perfectly understand how the whole order is created and maintained. In the beginning, it has been noticed that Abigail's denial of witchcraft practices is rather an act of survival. Then, the young girl's capacity for strategy and planning reveals maturity and awareness of the shortcomings of the Puritan community that she has turned to her advantage. In a short period of time, Abigail gains credibility and power. By pure false charges, Abigail can send many innocent people into death. Therefore, our analysis of Abigail has brought into light a different type of female characters. Both Elizabeth and Abigail revolt against the image of a passive and submissive Puritan woman of the time. However, their challenging behavior leads to different results. While Elizabeth's moral values cause her imprisonment, Abigail's manipulation of facts brings her to power. The power gained by Abigail has brought me to draw the following conclusions. Abigail's new position further highlights the manipulative power of myth which prevents people from distinguishing between truth and lie. This shows that demagogy, instead of hard work, becomes the safest way to reach social mobility in authoritarian Puritan Salem. The position reached by Abigail stresses once again the contradictions and injustices inherent in the Puritan community in which liars are made to appear as "saints" and innocent people like Elizabeth as "witches." It also exposes the false promises of the myth of the Promised Land which, instead of bringing love and peace into people's lives, it is rather teaching hatred and revenge.

A deep scrutiny of Miller's political autobiography and the period in which ***The Crucible*** was produced has disclosed a parallel between the Salem witch trials and the McCarthy hearings. This is evidenced by a notable similitude between Abigail and Joseph McCarthy who can both be regarded as the embodiment of the Other. Therefore, the analogy between the fictional character Abigail and the historical figure McCarthy stresses the longevity and adaptability of the myth of the Promised Land over time. The same image of unity advanced in the seventeenth century by the Puritan Other has been extended to the post Cold-War era, substituting the Puritan religious principles for the capitalist values: the defining characteristics of Americanness have been reconsidered and redefined to suit the time period. The longevity and adaptability of the myth highlight its powerful and lingering impact on the American identity. However, they equally expose the intolerance and rigidity of the American nation that go against the ideals of justice and freedom at the core of the American framing ideals. Ironically enough, a dominant group, be it religious, economic or political is entitled to dominate in a country founded on the premise that all are created equal. The Promised Land has become an authoritarian Land of lost promises.

My analysis has also pointed out that the character Proctor can be viewed as Miller's projection of his personal experience as a liberal man. Despite some differences, Proctor is presented as a character who goes through a similar experience, particularly at the end of the play. Both Proctor and Miller have tried to resist the dominant ideology (the Other) and maintain a sense of self outside the Puritan and the anti-communist communities respectively. Proctor's death at the end of the play can be viewed as a metaphorical death for Miller's position during the McCarthy hearings. Both fail to find social recognition and acceptance. The fact that Miller's and Proctor's nonconformist attitudes have caused them social rejection stresses the alienating character of the American identity. Moreover, it further highlights the single reality that is continuously advanced by the different American myths over time, stressing their adaptability and longevity. More importantly, Miller's and Proctor's rejection from society raises doubts in

regard to American exceptionalism. Last but not least, Miller's projection of his personal experience on his characters can be seen as a sort of resistance. In twentieth century anti-communist America, art seems to provide a free space for Miller to break the rules and resist social norms. It is, somehow, a way to present a new mode of being out of the confines of the intolerant anti-communist society.

The Lacanian struggle of the characters to construct an identity is no less important in Miller's second play ***Death of a Salesman*** and Eugene O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. In both plays, the characters seem to experience the same type of conflict. The conditions of the post Cold-War period were in place for the capitalists to adapt the myth of the Promised Land as studied in ***The Crucible***, and other foundational American myths, the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man, to the new context of the time. Whether the capitalists succeed into reshaping the characters' desire in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** so as to make them embrace the new versions of the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man will be the main concern of the following chapter. This is an interesting point to investigate as it would provide a more complete picture about the American identity by exposing the long lasting and alienating effects of the Myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and Self-Made-Man on identity construction.

Chapter Three

Death of a Salesman and *Long Day's Journey into Night*: Self-Construction, Alienation and Myth in Postwar Consumerist America

The third chapter of my thesis looks at self-formation and alienation in Arthur Miller's ***Death of a Salesman*** and Eugene O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** with the help of Lacan's and Barthes's theories. It aims at investigating to what extent self-construction in consumerist postwar America is an alienating process which results either in self-alienation or social-estrangement. It is subdivided into four main sections. The first explores the myths of the American Dream and the self-Made-Man in the forties and beginning of the fifties as myths affect identity-construction and cause alienation. Moreover, this section looks at the working of fantasy and Barthes's secondary message of myth. In other words, it attempts to highlight the manipulative power of myth and show how it naturalizes social injustices and inequalities through deceit.

The choice of the characters who are the focus of this section lies in how they relate to Lacan's and Barthes's theories. This section consists of three essential parts. The first attempts to explore the extent to which it could be said that Willy Loman and James Tyrone as patriarchal figures can be viewed as alienated characters who have submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other. It elaborates on how the myth of the American Dream in consumerist postwar America shapes their identities and leads to self-alienation by promoting false images of happiness and self-satisfaction. The second examines the sons' attitudes, Happy in particular. It explores the extent to which Happy plays as a masculine passive Other: he sustains his father's illusions, causing him further alienation. Whereas the first and second parts look at male characters, the third exposes the role of the American woman as passive feminine Other. It attempts to determine how far Linda and Mary can be regarded as further sources of alienation for their husbands. Showing how each member of the American family can affect the process of identity formation of the other members and cause alienation would further stress the imaginary sense of American identity and raise further questions about the notion of American exceptionalism.

The second section examines whether it is possible to construct an identity in

consumerist postwar America without submitting to the desire of the consumerist Other. Therefore, in this part I try to show the impact of the myth of the American Dream on the characters who try to resist the desire of the consumerist Other. Focus will be on Biff and Edmund in particular. This section aims to highlight three main points. The first attempts to show how far Biff and Edmund can be regarded as forces of self-awareness. In other words, it tries to study how the two characters can resist the desire of the consumerist Other. This would help expose the part Biff and Edmund play as active Other: how they shatter the illusions of the other family members and try to bring them back to reality. The second point investigates whether Biff and Edmund can find new possibilities of self-realization in highly consumerist America. This point is worth considering as it brings to the fore a note of hope which would be a powerful force, especially in times when materialism has enslaved people's lives. The third point explores Barthes's hidden message of myth. It sheds light on how Biff and Edmund, who have tried to resist the consumerist Other, are misrepresented and are socially alienated. This would be further evidence of the alienating effects of the myth of the American Dream and its deceitful force.

The third section attempts to determine the extent to which Miller's and O'Neill's characters can be regarded as creations of the playwrights' personal experiences. It attempts to show how the playwrights' interests in studying the drastic impact of the myth of the American Dream on the American identity reflect their personal experiences of alienation. First, I explore Miller's and O'Neill's autobiographies and see whether Miller's and O'Neill's families were part of the big American family who submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other by embracing the values of the American Dream. Then, I try to bring evidence that both dramatists experienced disenchantment. Lastly and more importantly, my analysis sheds light on how Miller and O'Neill can be considered as rebels against the consumerist Other like Biff and Edmund and examines whether the playwrights' resistance caused them any kind of social-alienation.

The fourth and last section of this chapter is a comparison between Miller's ***Death of a Salesman*** and Robert Frost's "**The Death of the Hired Man**." The aim for adding this section is exploring the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man and show how they shape Silas's and Willy's identities in a changing rural New England as compared to postwar urban New York. Therefore, this section adds the part Frost plays as an interpreter of rural life. Three key points will be the focus of the present section. The first point aims at showing how the myth of the American Dream can be reshaped to suit a more market-oriented society. That is, it attempts to explore how far Silas can be regarded as a self-made-man who can attain the American Dream in a changing New England. Therefore, it investigates whether the myths can resist rural-urban disparities. This point is important as it puts additional emphasis on the longevity and continuity of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man and thereby stresses their manipulative power. The second point explores whether Silas's pride in a mechanized rural New England is a sign of security and self-realization or shame and uncertainty. This would show how far Silas can find acceptance and recognition in a more mechanized rural New England. The third point is a comparison between the main reasons behind Silas's and Willy's alienation and downfall. The second and third points are crucial to my analysis as they underline how the impact of technology and complex mechanization on identity formation in rural areas could be comparable to the drastic effects of unrestrained consumerism in postwar urban New York. If the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man can be redefined to suit different areas and time periods, it remains to see whether their longevity and continuity result in more alienated individuals, stressing the alienating character of the American identity. This would give us more reason to question American exceptionalism in different American historical periods.

I- The Lomans and the Tyrones: Pursuing Financial Success and Self-alienation

1-Willy Loman and James Tyrone: From Strong Believers in the American Dream to Self-alienated Failures

Willy Loman and James Tyrone are the main characters in Miller's ***Death of a Salesman*** and O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, respectively. A good understanding of the playwrights' exploration of Willy's and James's self-construction and alienation in the light of Lacan's and Barthes's theories requires a consideration of the postwar consumerist environment in which the two characters live. In a milieu where the notions of personal welfare and happiness become fundamentally dependent on consumer goods and material possession, we expect Willy and James to participate in the American Dream of success that is to make it in the sales business and Broadway theatre respectively. They should identify with the image of a happy financially successful American man promoted by the consumerist Other.

When the play opens, Willy, proud of himself as a traveling salesman, assumes he is regarded with respect and importance by his clients. Despite the fact that he has returned home from a failed business trip, Willy still believes he is "the New England man" and that he is "vital in New England"**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 5).** Willy's unrealistic pride is an indication of his distorted perception of reality. His image as an important salesman man is only fanciful. Also, Willy's strong interest for business exposes his steady belief that business success is the only route to personal welfare. This idea is emphasized by the conversation he has with his wife about their son Biff. When Linda tells her husband that Biff and him will "both be happier and not fight any more" **(5)** only if their son reaches success, Willy's answer is: "How can he find himself on a farm? Is that a life? A farmhand?...It's more than ten years now and he has yet to make thirty-five dollars a weak!" **(5)** Willy's philosophy about success is an important point to consider as it highlights how "the American Dream… [became] distorted to the dream of business success" **(Clurman 132),** especially during the postwar

period. The old ideals of hard work and perseverance were substituted for easy and quick accumulation of profit and increasing consumption. Thomas E. Porter argues that Willy "has been shaped by a society that believed steadily…in the myth of…[business] success, and he has become the agent and the representative of that society"**(Porter 29).**

From a Lacanian perspective, Willy constructs an identity according to the desire of the consumerist Other rather than his own desire. Willy's desire to adopt the new values of the America Dream that is to accumulate wealth and increase consumption is an indication that his desire is shaped by the consumerist Other. In other words, Willy embraces the values that define a "good" American in postwar consumerist America. The salesman is persuaded that these values will compensate for his imperfections and allow him to reach self-gratification. Therefore, it could be argued that Willy has mistaken the new values of the American Dream for the unattainable Lacanian object *a* that would have brought him real satisfaction. Willy misidentifies with his Ego Ideal which is only a representation he constructs of himself and not a faithful reflection of the self. As Willy's inflated image of himself as a happy and self-satisfied successful salesman with which he identifies is taken from the discourse of the consumerist Other, Willy's process of self-construction is self-alienating. Lori Freshwater explains:

> Loman lost the ability to see his identity through his own eyes. He was imprisoned by this, and could only see himself through the gaze of the Other. He had no inner compass. He had no way to gain self-worth other than his pathetic attempts to be what he thought society deemed worthy. **(Freshwater 32)**

The salesman's philosophy about material success could be seen as a good illustration of the Lacanian concept of recognition. Willy tells his son Happy that "the man who makes appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and you will never

want”**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).** As Thomas E. Porter asserts: “Willy’s adherence to the cult of personality, of being well liked is a reflection of his identity” **(Porter 29).** According to Willy, social success and business success are two concepts that cannot be dissociated. Comparing himself to his brother Charley, Willy strongly believes that one day he will become “bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not liked” **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 11);** This quote stresses Willy’s conception that man’s greatness and success are fully accomplished only if he is recognized and accepted by his society. Therefore, it could be argued that Willy’s desire to construct an identity by submitting to the desire of the consumerist Other stems from his desire to be accepted and recognized by the Other. In other words, Willy’s quest for material success is also a search for recognition and social assimilation. The desire for recognition by the consumerist Other further stresses Willy’s self-alienation.

Willy’s self-alienation is further due to his having awkwardly conformed to the discourse of the consumerist Other: he adopted the American Dream without ever being fully aware of its corruption. Willy fantasizes about a new car and a new home filled with a happy family, but fails to see how fanciful these images of happiness, personal welfare and prosperity can be. Lew Livesay points out: “Willy lives in his mind, rather than the world” **(Livesay31),** and he develops “a character… whose American Dream exists only in his imagined world” **(30-1).** Willy internalized all the beliefs about prosperity, happiness and personal welfare promoted by the consumerist Other, but his partial and distorted view of reality prevents him from understanding how capitalism works as a whole system and discerning the limits of the American Dream. He seems to be unaware that “the capitalist system involves an economy of production, competition, exchange, speculation, and profit or loss” **(30-1)**. Miller uses Howard as a symbol of innovation and competition in contrast with Willy’s outdated business values.

Howard focuses on how Willy performs in the moment. He considers that Willy is not able to “pull his own weight” **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 27),** and

can no longer compete in the modern world of business. Howard mainly views his relationship with Willy as diplomatic and business like, and all he has to say is that: "business is business**" (27).**

Howard's business ethics is also to be found in Miller's ***All my Sons***, another play which illustrates the corruption of the American Dream in a consumerist world. Joe Keller becomes part of a world which recognizes and honors material success with complete disregard for human values. He believes a man's worth is measured by his success in business: "I'm in business, a man is in business" **(Miller, *All my Sons* 68).** Keller believes that business is a practical pragmatic method for creating happiness and he assumes that the power of money makes people forget his indulgence in crime: "Try to see it human …That's the business. A fine Hairline crack" **(28).**

However, Willy thinks it is all about gratitude and loyalty because he worked for Howard's father for thirty four years. This is a good example of Willy's misunderstanding of the nature of capitalism. He is unable to understand that feelings and emotions cannot interfere with business. Willy also fails to see that the American Dream has been adapted to the context of the postwar period, and that new notions such as competition and quick profit are introduced in a society characterized by increasing consumption. In a conversation with Arthur Miller, the playwright explains:

> [Willy] has values [old values]…the fact that they cannot be realized is what is driving him mad….The truly valueless man, a man without ideals, is always perfectly at home anywhere…because there cannot be a conflict between nothing and something? Whatever negative qualities there are in the society or in the environment don't bother him, because they are not in conflict with what positive sense one may have. **(Miller qtd. in Roudané, *Conversations with Arthur Miller* 30)**

Willy's predicament can be compared to the Monarchs in Henry James's ***The Real Thing,*** another story about the inability to adapt to change**.** The artist in

James's story can only paint appearances and illusions that the Monarchs cannot fully represent. He has "an innate preference for the represented subject over the real one: the defect of the real one was so apt to be a lack of representation" **(James 86).** Therefore, the Monarchs cannot be good models, because they cannot fully embrace their roles. Though now poor and desperate for work, they still capture the essence of English aristocracy just as Willy cannot completely detach himself from his older values of popularity and loyalty. The Monarchs were "photographed, immensely" **(84)** and taken in pictures, which may suggest that they perceived reality as something fixed. In a similar way to Willy, the Monarchs fail to see that reality is changing and it is redefined over time.

Not unlike Willy, James In ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** is a pursuer of the American Dream of material success. James conforms to the image of a happy financially successful American man prompted by the consumerist Other. As soon as the play opens, the audience learns that James moved from Ireland to America looking for financial success as suggested by Mary's words to their son Edmund: "I never wanted to live here in the first place, but your father liked it and insisted on building this house"**(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 38).** In this respect, Lois Tyson argues: "Every family wants to own its own home on its own land is a capitalist ideology" **(Tyson 53).** Therefore, James's determination to own his own property in America is indicative of how close to the discourse of the consumerist Other James is. The latter was so desirous of material prosperity that "he [sold] his talents" **(Babaee 13)** as an artist in order to take a profitable but artistically unrewarding part in a popular melodrama.

Throughout the play, James recalls his past promising career as a Shakespearean actor. When they are alone in the last act, James confides in Edmund: "I was considered one of the three or four young actors with the greatest artistic promise in America…I studied Shakespeare as you'd study the Bible…I could have been a great Shakespearean actor, if I'd kept on**"(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 131).** He has relinquished his own desire to join the desire of the consum-

erist Other. James's obsession with material success further impacts his relationship with his sons. He "measures all human relations based on the notion of productiveness or use value" **(Babaee 13).** In James's eyes, Edmund is "an invalid**"** **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 29),** because "his health is broken down" **(29)** and he is unproductive. Therefore, James is a product of postwar consumerist America and his desire for material goods is none other than that of the consumerist Other. While arguing with his son Jamie at the beginning of the play, James boastfully claims: "If you weren't my son, there isn't a manager in the business who would give you a part…I have to humble my pride and beg for you, saying you've turned a new leaf" **(27).** James's words are highly suggestive of his excessive pride.

Along the lines of Lacan's theory, James like Willy has a false sense of reality. By joining the desire of the consumerist Other, James misidentifies with his inflated image of himself as a highly important and self-satisfied man. That is, James equates himself with his Ego Ideal. James is made to believe that acquiring wealth and material goods will relieve his feelings of imperfection and make him feel whole again by making identification temporarily possible, a fact which leads us to deduce that James has mistaken the new values of the American Dream for the unreachable Lacanian object *a*. However, because the Ego Ideal is only an imaginary projection of the self mirrored by the outside world, James's process of self-construction results in self-alienation.

A close scrutiny of James's past shows that he is tormented by "his own childhood, as an immigrant from Ireland whose family fled the potato famine of the 1840s"**(Dugan 382).** James's tormented past can be noticed in his excessive stinginess, or as he calls it "money prudence" that is shown through several examples along the play. Since the beginning when the character is introduced, the audience learns that "he believes in wearing his clothes to the limit of usefulness" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 11).** Also, at the beginning of Act IV, James has an argument with Edmund about turning off the lights: "Turn out the

light! We're not giving a ball. There's no reason to have the house ablaze with electricity at this time of night, burning up money!" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 109)** Even worse, the whole family will accuse him of getting the cheapest doctor for Mary and also for Edmund to treat his consumption. Although now apparently rich, James cannot escape his destitute past. He still fears that his life should end in poverty. Equally important is the Tyrones' Irish-Catholic background which makes it difficult for James to belong to a predominately Anglo-Saxon Protestant society. Therefore, it could be argued that James's desire to achieve the American Dream is a desire to reinvent himself as a self-made-man regardless of his Irish origins and poor background and eventually integrate in consumerist America. James could be seen as a character who is "in the process of assimilation" **(Raleigh 128),** and his desire for material success, thus, arises from his desire to be recognized and validated by the consumerist Other. By equating himself with the new version of the self-made-man that is a man who can reinvent himself and attain the American Dream through material success, James thinks he will be recognized as a "good" American by the Other.

2-Willy and James as the Other: The Fathers' Failed Attempt to Maintain a Sense of Self by Shaping their Sons' Desire

Willy's and James's glorified images as self-satisfied and successful businessmen will soon prove fragile. From the opening scene in ***Death of a Salesman***, the audience can already sense some sadness and lack of self-confidence in Willy's behavior and words. The fact that Willy can no longer drive his automobile without veering off the road suggests that he is "ill equipped to deal with the modern world of the machine"**(Koprince 320).** He is, thus, metaphorically moving away from the American Dream. Also at the beginning of the conversation with his wife Linda and their son Biff, the salesman desperately admits that he "couldn't make it" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4)** and that "some people accomplish something"**(5);** These two quotes expose Willy's false sense of pride and foreshadow his failure to achieve the American Dream.

Similarly, the first scene in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** marks the beginning of James's unsuccessful quest for prosperity and progress. The audience can perceive a fragile and powerless character behind a mask of greatness. From Mary's words, we learn that James suffers from many losses in business due to McGuire's advice: "I hope he [McGuire] didn't put you on any new piece of property at the same time. His real- estate bargains don't work out so well" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Nigh* 13).** However, James chooses to remember buying Chestnut Street, on which he made a "quick turnover...for a fine profit" **(13)**. At this point, James still cannot admit the collapse of his inflated self-image as a great business man. His wife fails to convince him that he is "not a cunning real-estate speculator" **(13)** and bring him back to reality.

We cannot discuss James's identity crisis without referring to his dependence on alcohol which seems to be James's favorite method to escape the inevitable downfall of his glorified self. O'Neill presents a character who drinks all day long. Though stingy, alcohol is one of the few things on which James hardly spares. In a moment of confession, Mary tells Edmund that all her husband "likes is to hobnob with men at the Club or in a bar-room" **(38).** At the beginning of Act IV, the audience can see a character who is dead drunk: "The whisky bottle on the tray in there quarters empty. There is a fresh bottle full bottle on the table, which he has brought from the cellar so there will an ample reserve at hand."**(108)** However, "despite all the whisky in him, he has not escaped" **(108),** a fact which shows that the inflated sense of the self that alcohol offers him is illusory and temporary just as the transient happiness and self-gratification provided by the myth of the American Dream.

Despite all signs of weakness, Willy and James attempt desperately to maintain a sense of self by asserting their success as businessmen as well as model fathers who can lead their sons to success. They still cannot face the bitter truth about themselves as failures. Although the audience knows that Willy has just returned home from an unsuccessful business trip, the old salesman still portends

that he can "get…[his son Biff] a job in selling"**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 6),** because upstanding people "know… [him]…up and down New England**" (11).**

More importantly, Willy tries to assert his image as a model father who has successfully taught his sons how to attain the American Dream. This shows that Willy tries to play as Other for his sons by shaping their desires. Memory, and therefore the past, plays a key role in asserting Willy's glorified image as a successful father and helps him establish temporary order in his tormented life. For example, Willy proudly recalls his father as "a very great…man **[**who] made more in a week than …a man could make in a lifetime" **(16)** so that his sons "know the kind of stock they spring from" **(16).** Memory allows Willy to deny the truth about his own failure and feeds the belief that he has inherited the fundamentals of the American Dream from his successful father that in turn he will instill in his sons. This is noticed when Willy carefully selects memories of Biff's last football game and his peak successes:

> WILLY. Like a young god. Hercules something like that. And the sun, the sun all around him. Remember how he waved to me? Right up from the field, with the rep preventatives of three colleges standing by? And the buyers brought, and the cheerers when he came out-Loman, Lo-man, Loman! God Almighty, he'll be great yet. A star like that, magnificent, can never really fade away! **(24)**

Willy prefers remembering the past when Biff was proud of him than to facing the present when he is at odds with his son. All these past memories of happiness, hope and prosperity are prior to Willy's failed business trip. By reviving past memories, Willy can somehow maintain his inflated self-image as a happy successful salesman and perfect father.

In addition to past memory, we notice that all along the play Willy eagerly instills in his sons, and especially Biff, the belief that only success in business

equals achievement: “The man who makes an appearance in the business world…is the man who gets ahead” **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).** The father optimistically believes that nothing can prevent Happy and Biff from making it in business. He keeps telling his sons that if they are determined to succeed “the world is an oyster” **(14).** By planting the basics of the American Dream in his sons, Willy “desires his sons to be like him, or more accurately, like the image of himself he projects to them”**(Wattley 6).** As pointed out earlier, Willy’s father was a successful businessman. Even more successful is his brother Ben who “was seventeen [when he]… walked into the jungle, and when [he]…was twenty one [he]…Walked out. And [he]…was rich” **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 17).** If Willy fails to follow successfully in his father’s and brother’s footsteps, he can at least live through the success of his sons. Instead of trying to understand the reason causing his own failure in achieving success, Willy is blindly striving to maintain a sense of self by asserting his glorified image as a good and successful father who has taught his sons how to reach success.

In a similar way, James in ***Long Day’s Journey into Night*** has high aspirations for his sons though his derisions hide his concern for them. For instance, we learn that James wants Jamie to follow his example and become a successful actor when he tells his son: “You had the talent to become a fine actor! You have it still. You’re my son!”**(O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* 28)** This exposes James as Other who wants to shape his son’s desire. Yet an argument with Jamie lets out that James is very critical of him. He tries to persuade his son that the reason he forced him to become an actor was his laziness and reluctance “to find anything else to do”**(27).**

James has more sympathy for Edmund. We feel his regret and guilt when he learns about Edmund’s inability to be successful because “his health has broken down and he may be an invalid for a long time”**(29).** But he disapproves of his taste in literature and denounces his favorite authors as “atheists, fools, and madmen”**(117).** In so doing, James tries to prove that his sons are the only ones

to blame for their failure. James's scorn for both Jamie and Edmund may stem from his own feelings of unworthiness. By despising his sons, James can somehow preserve some dignity and preserve his glorified image as a model father.

Despite Willy's and James's multiple efforts to maintain their disproportionate images as prominent businessmen, their masks of greatness will soon drop. Willy's meeting with his boss Howard in Act II anticipates his downfall. Willy has to undergo the shameful task of begging Howard for a job, each time asking for less money. What is even more shameful is that Howard is the son of his old boss. In an attempt to convince Howard, Willy resorts to old memories at a time when he was working for Howard's father. He tries to explain that Howard owes him a job because he "can't eat the orange and throw the peel away" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 28),** herein questioning Howard at the same time as voicing his disillusionment with the American Dream. Man is disposed of like the material goods he wants to possess. When he becomes obsolete, like Willy, he is marginalized and forgotten. After having "put thirty years in [Howard's]…firm"**(28),** Willy is fired and "can't pay [his]…insurance"**(28).** Despite Willy's arguments, Howard remains impassive and insists that job is not available: "I don't want you to represent us" **(28).** The picture of Willy at this moment is that of a desperate and diminished character who has lost his status.

Willy's pride gets hurt for a second time when Howard advises him to appeal to his "two great boys" **(29),** Biff and Happy, for financial assistance: "Why don't your sons give you hand?"**(29)** Ironically enough, the audience knows that Willy's sons are unsuccessful and that they can by no means help their father. To preserve a sense of pride, Willy desperately lies to his boss and pretends his sons are "working on a very big deal" **(29).** What makes the situation all the more ironic is when Howard replies: "This is no time for false pride" **(29).** Howard refers to Willy's pride while the audience knows that at this point of the play Willy has lost all dignity. This is indicative of Willy's failure to lead his sons success. His shining image as a model father is shattered as he is confronted with

bitter reality.

Another scene in the play which is worthy of consideration is when Willy is appealed to face the bitter truth about his son Biff. When Biff later went to see his former boss, Bill Oliver, he was forced to wait for "six hours" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 35)** before he could see him just "for one minute" **(36).** Then Oliver "went out…and [Biff]…was all alone in the waiting room"**(35).** Biff's meeting with Oliver is very much like Willy's interview with Howard. Like his father, the son is humiliated by his old boss who does not even recognize him. When Biff tries to explain what happened at Oliver's office, Willy keeps interrupting him. Willy cannot allow Biff to fail because that will only contribute to his own breakdown. As a father, much of Willy's personal pride is based on the success of his own child. This scene is, thus, significant as it further stresses Willy's double failure as a salesman and as a father who could not pass on his values and beliefs to his sons. Biff's failure shows how far Willy is from being like the perfect father he pretends to be, a fact which sheds more light on his imaginary sense of self.

Similarly, James's false sense of self will be revealed through the gradual downfall of his sons. Despite his apparent wealth, James fails to take care of his sons and show them the road to success. In Act II, James learns from Doc. Hardy that his son Edmund has consumption, which may imply failure. The news makes James feel shame as it brings up past memories when he insisted on having a cheap doctor for his son. To preserve his image as a model father, James tries desperately to persuade his family that he is not to blame for Edmund's illness. First, James gives irrational arguments when he explains to Jamie that "there wasn't one of [his family]…that didn't have lungs as strong as an ox" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 68).** Then, he decides to commit his son to a state sanatorium because he is "no millionaire who can throw his money away" **(68).** Instead of helping him regain some respect, James's arguments put forth his stinginess in terms of both money and compassion. This is voiced by

Jamie who describes him as a cold father: “With your Irish bog-rotten idea that consumption is fatal, you’ll figure it would be a waste of money to spend anymore than you can help” **(O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* 68).** This scene is important to consider as it reveals how far James’s self is from corresponding to his glorified image as a perfect father, binging to the fore James’s self-alienation.

3-Death and Alcohol Paralysis as Extreme Forms of Self-alienation and Defeat

Willy’s death at the end of the play is inevitable. The old salesman suffers the humiliation of being fired from his job of thirty four years which is evidence that he is not fit for “the new world of machines, automobiles, business growth, and crowded cities”**(Koprince 320).** In his moments of clarity, Willy admits that “[he] is not noticed”**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).** Even his son Biff, who used to consider him as a model of success and a model father, now views him as a fake: “You fake! You phony little fake! You fake!”**(41)** Willy’s death may stand for the collapse of his idealized image and the burial of all his great expectations. Willy becomes a stranger to himself. For the first time in the play, Willy is confronted with reality and he becomes aware of his self-estrangement. His fear of not being able to conform to the consumerist Other anymore is the main reason behind his suicide. Therefore, Willy’s suicide can be regarded as an extreme form of self-alienation. Willy’s downfall is the fate of every American who has blindly believed in the American Dream without really understanding what it meant. Brenda Murphy points out: “Being Americans, we are all salesmen in one way or another, **[**and] “to be like Willy is to be a failure” **(Murphy, “Willy Loman: Icon of Business Culture”).**

Willy’s suicidal act can also be regarded as a last desperate attempt to achieve the American Dream. When Biff cries at the end of the play, Willy thinks that his son still appreciates him, and he believes that the life insurance money

will secure Biff's respect and pave the way for him to become successful. Willy cries out: "That boy is going to be magnify cent! **[**and] he'll worship me for it" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 46).** Willy pictures his upcoming death in heroic terms: "That funeral will be massive! They'll come from Main, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire!...that boy will be thunder-struck…because he never realized –I am known!" **(43)** Willy feels compelled to prove to Biff and the others that he was successful as both a salesman and a father. This scene dramatizes how important it is for Willy to be recognized by the Other. It reveals how deep his self is embedded in the discourse of the consumerist Other to the degree of accepting self-destruction if appreciated by the Other, a fact which accentuates Willy's self-estrangement.

It is worth stressing the similarity between Willy's and Gatsby's fate in Scott Fitzgerald's ***The Great Gatsby*** written at a highly consumerist time too. Like Willy who wants to become financially successful to win his family's respect and love, Gatsby is "in the quest to lure Daisy to him…[and]…attract her interest" (**Bloom, *Bloom's Guide: The Great Gatsby* 20).** The castle he purchases near her home and the enormous parties he organizes are solely meant to win her admiration and respect. Through Daisy, Gatsby seeks recognition from the consumerist Other by breaking the barrier of money and social standing that once separated them. Therefore, both characters crave for material success just in the hope of being recognized and validated by the Other.

The end of the novel reveals that the people who came to Gatsby's parties simply wanted to have free time, free food and free drink. When dead, Gatsby is nothing more than a poor man whom nobody wants to remember. Nick cannot get people to come to Gatsby's funeral: "I began to look involuntary out the widows for other cars….But it wasn't any use. Nobody came" **(Fitzgerald 181).** Even Daisy did not attend. Nick's words recall Linda's words at Willy's inhumation: "Why didn't anybody come?" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 47)** Like Gatsby, Willy dies unnoticed. The end of both stories dramatizes self-alienation in

consumerist America. The fact that neither of them can be noticed suggests that their "selves" are just illusions. This is stressed by Nick when he says that Gatsby "sprang from his Platonic conception of himself" (**Fitzgerald 105).**

Similarly, James's metaphorical paralysis at the end of the play can be regarded as an extreme form of self-estrangement. In the first three acts, James has been struggling to preserve a sense of self. Like Willy, James interrupts anyone who tries to tell him the truth. "That's a lie, "Lies," and "It's not true" are James's answers to end any conversation which does not feed his platonic conception of himself. However, in Act IV James is compelled to face the truth and his journey into the self finally comes to an end. When the act opens, O'Neill describes James as a "defeated old man, possessed by hopeless resignation" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 108).** O'Neill's description already announces the protagonist's failure. Also, though James argues about Edmund having left the hall light on, he immediately apologizes and he even lights the three bulbs in the chandelier: "We'll have them on! Let the burn! To hell with them! The poor house is the end of the road, and it might as well be sooner as later!" **(111)** The word "end" may suggest the end of James's journey into the self, and the lights foreshadow James's self-revelations in the final confrontation with his son Edmund in which he ends up admitting the collapse of his idealized self:

> TYRONE. Yes, maybe life overdid the lesson for me, and made a Dollar worth too much, and the time came when that mistake ruined my career as a fine actor. (sadly) I've never admitted this to anyone before, lad, but tonight I'm so heartsick I feel at the end of everything, and what's the use of fake pride and pretence. That God –damned play I bought for a song and made such a great success in a great money success- it ruined me with its promise of an easy fortune. **(130-1)**

Contrary to Willy, James does not commit suicide. His death in the play is rather symbolic: James dies as an anonymous husband, father and man. This is

implied by James's alcohol paralysis in the end of Act IV. Like Willy, James finally admits his collapse: "[I'm] old and finished" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey in Night* 149).** All the images of perfection and greatness with which he has identified become unfamiliar to him. In a similar way to Willy, James reaches an extreme point of self-alienation when he cannot pretend glory and perfection anymore, as his reply "[I'm] finished" **(149)** may suggest.

Willy's death and James's alcohol paralysis stress the extent to which the two characters become strangers to themselves, as if the consumer goods they crave for stand as a barrier between the two men and their real selves. Therefore, both "worshipers" of the American Dream fail to identify with the image of a happy self-satisfied American promoted by the consumerist Other and are turned into split and self-estranged failures. Willy's and James's feelings of incompleteness and imperfection could be equated with Lacan's concept of lack that we may relate to the role played by myth.

4-The Alienating Impact of Myth: The American Dream as Source of Emptiness

Though the American Dream seems to offer a short-lived gratification, it never really filled the vacuum in Willy and James. The images of wholeness and personal welfare promoted by the consumerist Other through advertising could be equated with the representation of the Real. However, the attempt to represent the Real will necessarily result in a sense of lack and loss, because according to Lacan, returning to the Real is impossible. In this respect, the characters' pursuit of happiness and search for completeness can be regarded as expressions of the void in Willy and James that they try to fill with what they think is the Lacanian object *a* which is to possess material goods.

Yet, along the lines of Lacan's theory, the American Dream could only be seen as an incarnation of what the characters desire in the Real, but can never be

what they really desire. This explains why Willy and James constantly feel that something is missing in their lives without really knowing what it is. For instance, in the late-night confrontation, James implicitly refers to what is missing in him when he says to Edmund: "What the hell was it I wanted to buy, I wonder" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 32).** It could be argued that, with money, James has desperately tried to "buy" these feelings of love, wholeness and self-satisfaction. This brings to the fore Lacan's concept of "lack of being." In other words, the characters' desire to acquire more material goods is an expression of their "desire of being." In Lacan's theory, each attempt to construct a sense of self could be regarded as an articulation of the characters' desire of being, yet a desire which cannot be fulfilled as the lack may suggest. Indeed, with all their material commodities, Willy and James still experience a sense of incompleteness and imperfection which is indicative of their lack of being. This leads us to deduce that financial prosperity will not allow their desire of being to be satisfied. They can only fulfill their desire in a state of illusion. This explains why Willy and James can never identify with their inflated self-images as prominent and great men. Each object *a* that is, any material possession, only allows temporary identification with the image of a happy and self-gratified American and provides Willy and James transient feelings of happiness and completeness. The feeling of imperfection which is at the core of the process of Willy's and James's identification accentuates the characters' self- alienation.

Willy's and James's strong beliefs in a delusive dream and their unquenchable thirst for material possessions are encouraged by the culture of advertisement. Like any American of the postwar period, Willy and James dream of living an ideal life like the one portrayed in TV shows. Obviously, the American marketplace fills up with consumer products to encourage more consumption. The televised life which is becoming more expensive and extravagant has shaped people's desire and transformed them into consumers after the most expensive, and often unneeded and unfamiliar commodities. Willy cannot handle the tape recorder, a fact which shows his inability to adapt to the materialistic life he wants

to live. Advertisements have transformed all the Americans into dreamers of the same lifestyle. Willy's and James's desire to pass on their beliefs and values to their sons are good examples illustrating the notion of conformity in postwar consumerist America. Instead of consciously making personal choices, Willy and James blindly conform to the images of wholeness, prosperity, and welfare promoted by the consumerist Other and advertized on television. They have both identified with their "advertised" Ego Ideals. In this concern, Livesay argues that the danger of sameness consists in the following: "On the one hand, submission to [the consumer Other] would mask an anomie that obliterates individual choice; on the other hand, resistance to this impulse of sameness can lead to separation from the mass that entails a degree of psychosis foreclosing interpersonal connection" **(Livesay 26).** In other words, choosing between submission and resistance constitutes a choice between two nightmares as it leads either to further self-estrangement or social rejection. This underlines the alienating impact of the materialistic American Dream on identity. The more people try to conform to the consumerist Other the more they become Other to themselves. The Americans become trapped in a world of appearances and illusions in which they try in vain to imitate an advertised lifestyle. Therefore, Willy and James are turned into split and completely alienated individuals who can experience their identities only in an imaginary state of being.

5-The American Dream as Naturalization of Social Inequalities

The ending of both stories invites the reader to go one step further and study Barthes's secondary message, by exploring the power of the myth of the American Dream to present a distorted reality as a natural order. The fact that Willy literally kills himself for money sheds light on the hidden horrors of the consumerist American society. Willy is turned into a product whose sole value is his financial worth. Barbara Ehrenreich argues that in pursuit of the American Dream, the Americans "neglect their own children so that the children of others will be cared for; they live in substandard housing so that other homes will be shiny and

perfect, they endure privation so that inflation will be low and stock prices high" **(Ehrenreich 211).** Considering Ehrenreich's words, we infer that the dream "sellers" (the consumerist Other) are making significant profits while the dreamers are trying to attain the unattainable. Therefore, it becomes clear that the American Dream, which has become purely materialistic, elevates the dream "sellers" to a socially high position, whereas the dream "worshipers" remain at the bottom of society. In consumerist America where the seats of power are limited because of high competition, people like Willy and James are kept in a low position as the name "Loman" may suggest. For its dreamers, the American Dream is thus more destructive than constructive as Ruzbeh Babaee explains: "[the dream] is destructive in itself…spoils every effort to achieve happiness [and] puts a value on misery and pain" **(Babaee 13).** This obviously sheds light on the contradictions and injustices in postwar consumerist America hidden beneath the fanciful images of happy and prosperous families advertized in TV shows.

The dream "advertisers" advance social disparities as the only possible and unquestionable reality. People like Willy and James are regarded as defeated individuals who have not worked hard enough to achieve the American Dream. They are made to believe that their inferior status is a natural outcome of being incompetent. In so doing, the dreamers will turn into blind servants to a myth which is crushing them down. Instead of questioning the capitalist system and the consumer culture, they would rather blame themselves for their failures. Here appears the power of mythic fantasy which blurs the boundaries between reality and illusion. Willy and James prefer living the illusion of happiness and prosperity to facing the unbearable hidden reality.

Naturalized injustices and inequalities in postwar consumerist America call American exceptionalism into question. People like Willy and James who can never achieve the American Dream expose the falsity of the myth, showing that social mobility is not possible for every American. Moreover, the high degree of

conformity characterizing the period challenges American democratic ideals which are at the core of American identity. America turns from a capitalist paradise in which every Americans can achieve the American Dream and reinvent himself as self-made-man into a land of lost promises.

Willy's and James's alienation and demise could be regarded as a symbol of a declining Western world in the period following the wars. This idea is best expressed as early as post WWI in T.S Eliot' most renowned poem "The Waste Land" which is a metaphorical depiction of the modern world as a barren and lifeless waste land. The poem repeatedly refers to the decay of western civilization after World War I, communicating a sense of confusion and spiritual disillusionment. In the first section, the speaker observes the "Unreal city" of London after the war "under the brown fog of a winter dawn/ a crowd [flowing] over London Bridge" (**Eliot, "The Waste Land").** The poet uses the fog as a metaphor to depict postwar London as a city characterized by incomprehension and bewilderment. The same sense of loss, the same empty relationships and the same isolation are to be found in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** in which postwar consumerist America is described a world of broken images. Willy's and James's obsession with materialism and instant self-satisfaction have transformed them into failures without spirituality and love. They become fragmented just like the world they live in. They have succumbed to a superficial world that condemns them to become strangers to their wives, sons, and even to themselves. The other members of the Loman and Tyrone families seem to be caught in the same endless cycle of emptiness and sterility. Though to different degrees, Linda and Mary are touched by the same sense of delusion as prevails in their families. How Linda's and Mary's identities are affected by the consumerist Other and how they affect Willy and James that is to be Other for their husbands will be the focus of the following point.

6-The Passive Feminine Other: Linda and Mary as Further Source of Self-alienation for their Husbands

Linda and Mary play considerable roles ***in Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. In postwar consumerist America where materialism emerges as the most dominant view affecting all aspects of life, Linda and Mary experience an identity crisis. If they knew who the "old self" was, they might not fully understand the new values and ideals shaping the "new self" anymore. A deep analysis of the two female characters reveals that their identity crisis can best be understood when considering their relationships with their husbands. We notice that both are affected by the consumerist Other through their husbands. Moreover, both wives can be regarded as passive Other for their husbands.

Linda supports Willy "in his confused pursuit of unrealistic and unwise goals" **(Bernstein 39).** To the end, Linda goes along with Willy's fantasies. Loyally and faithfully, Linda asserts her husband's idealized self-image as a model husband and an important salesman. She refers to Willy as the "handsomest man in the world [and] idolized father" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 13)**. Added to this, Linda regards Willy as a successful salesman. She knows that her husband is secretly borrowing money from Charley to pay for the life insurance and other bills. Yet she keeps praising him: "you are doing wonderful, dear. You are making seventy to a hundred dollars a week" **(13).** The mother-to-sons outlooks are equally important to consider in this regard. Knowing that much of Willy's personal pride rests on Biff's and Happy's success, Linda supports her husband's false projection of his sons. In Act II, when Biff goes to ask Oliver for a loan to start a business, Linda seems optimistic and holds onto Willy's belief that Biff is "heading for a change" **(24).** She proudly tells her husband that their son can be "a-anything" **(24)** in his blue suit. Despite the fact that Linda shows substantially more concern than her husband with Biff's talent and basic ethics, his poor math performance and stealing habit in particular, she irrationally supports Biff as long as this helps sustain Willy's fantasies. In the last act, when the two sons return home and Biff finally decides to tell his father that he is "not smart enough" **(13)** to fulfill the American Dream, Linda becomes over protective. In a last attempt to protect her husband, Linda shouts at her sons and violently asks them to leave

the house: “Get out of here, both of you, and don’t come back! I don’t want you tormenting him anymore” **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 42).** Linda’s words indicate her unwillingness that her husband should face the truth and at the same time reveal her inability to confront reality herself.

Linda’s encouragements and excessive support fuel Willy’s doomed pursuit of material success and personal welfare. By completely submitting to her husband’s desire, Linda is perpetuating the precepts of the materialistic American Dream. She becomes passive Other for Willy as she does not help him open up to a new mode of existence. Therefore, Linda can be regarded as a destructive force and a source of self-estrangement in Willy’s life as she enables him to remain in his imaginary world, anticipating his demise and accentuating his self-alienation.

It is worth observing that Linda’s loyalty to Willy goes far beyond support for his delusive dreams. Her desire to hold onto Willy’s dream may also stem from her desire to be acknowledged by her husband and her sons. This could be observed throughout the play when Linda is desperately striving to persuade herself and her family that she is a happy wife and a loving mother who can hold her “successful” family together. In so doing, Linda could win the respect of her husband and sons. This explains why Linda will never admit to herself or to anyone else the failure of her husband and sons, because their inaptitude would mean the collapse of her glorified image as a model wife and mother.

We can deduce from this that Linda, like her husband, constructs her identity in an imaginary state. She has forged her identity through similarity by conforming to the values and ideals of the consumerist Other. Linda has shown no desire of her own, but she has formed her identity according to the desire of the consumerist Other- her husband and her society. Linda misidentifies with her idealized image of herself as a wealthy and self-satisfied American woman that the consumerist Other has created for her (Ego Ideal). This exposes Linda as both a self-alienated character and an alienating force in her husband’s process of iden-

tity construction, stressing the alienating character of the American identity in postwar consumerist America.

The end of the play is worth considering as it sheds more light on the concept of self-alienation in postwar consumerist America. With all her loyalty to her husband, Linda could not prevent him from committing suicide. When she is left alone the day of Willy's funeral, Linda expresses her deep torment and disillusionment: "Why did you do it? I search and search and I search and I can't understand it, Willy" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 48).** Linda's failure to understand and protect her husband reveals how fragile her relationship with her husband was. Although they lived together for years, they could not be close to each other. Willy's and Linda's strong sense of self-alienation turned them into strangers under the same roof. This is emphasized by the last scene when Linda, after having made the last payment on the house, says: "there will be nobody home" **(48).** Her words may mean that Linda "consider[s] herself, as Willy had, to be nobody**" (Stanton 190).** Like Willy, she will probably live the rest of her life "unnoticed."

We cannot study the play's last scene without referring again to Fitzgerald's ***The Great Gatsby***. Gatsby does manage to achieve his desired wealth. Yet, his money does not allow him to be recognized by his society. He is a "well-liked" man only in his fantasy world. In Chapter 7, Tom Buchanan attempts to expose Gatsby as "Mr. Nobody from Nowhere" **(Fitzgerald 136).** The implication of the phrase is that Gatsby's blind pursuit of wealth has reduced him to an empty and ghost-like being, accentuating his self-estrangement. He can neither recover his "old self" nor can he construct a "new one." This exposes the disparity between the past and the wasted reality of the present. A good illustration of this is Gatsby's inability to recover Daisy's love, a fact which shows the absence of love and spirituality in consumerist America. One can hardly expect a man who is unnoticed to be loved and respected. This may explain the fact that Linda and Willy cannot feel each other despite being husband and wife.

When ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** opens, Mary seems to have the same attitude as Linda. Act I starts off with a bright ray of hope. O'Neill presents a woman who wants to make it appear as if she is a happy wife and a model mother. Like Linda, Mary has identified with her Ego Ideal, an image of a "good" American wife that she captures from the discourse of the consumerist Other. Indeed, like most American women in postwar consumerist America, Mary has been dreaming of a financially prosperous and happy family as advertised on television. In a similar way to Linda, Mary submits to the desire of her husband. She has conformed to the beliefs and values of the consumerist Other which she equates with the Lacanian object *a* and imprisons herself in her husband's world of fantasy, which would soon accentuate her self-alienation.

When she married James, Mary tried to substitute religion for material possessions in order to somehow recover the happiness she once experienced in the past. In fact, as the plot unfolds, we learn that the only happiness that Mary has apparently known was in the convent. Mary believes that acquiring material commodities will compensate for her imperfection and help her feel whole again. In this respect, it could be argued that material wealth becomes the new religion in post war consumerist America. Money worship can well be equated with religious devotion. This stresses the absence of spirituality and moral values that were replaced by materialism in postwar America. However, as Lawrence Dugan remarks, Mary "has lost that part of her early religious life and will acknowledge no other, substituting drugs for prayer and adulthood" **(Dugan 389).** Consumer goods fail to bring Mary real happiness, which causes her to recourse to morphine as a source of escape.

O'Neill uses drinking and drugs to achieve the same purpose. While James abuses alcohol, Mary is addicted to morphine to escape from her present reality. Under the influence of morphine, Mary can move into her idolized past when she was in the convent. Tyson explains that Mary's flashbacks to the past are a defense mechanism which "keeps the repressed repressed in order to avoid know-

ing what we feel can't handle knowing" **(Tyson 18).** Her flashbacks can be regarded as a temporary "return to a former psychological state, which is not just imagined but relived" **(18).** In her imagined world, Mary tries to relive the state of happiness she experienced in the convent, and morphine makes the return to the past easier as it blurs the lines between reality and illusion. In so doing, Mary moves away from reality, a fact which causes her further self-alienation. This idea is voiced by Mary when she says:

> MARY. None of us can. None of us can help the thing life has done to us. They're done before you realize it, and once they're done they make you do other things until at last everything comes between you and what you'd like to be, and you've lost your self forever. **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 53)**

Despite her obvious addiction to morphine, Mary tries to persuade her family that she has recovered from morphine when she remarks to Edmund "how fat [she's] grown" **(37).** Admitting that she is trapped in morphine's vicious cycle would bring up past memories when she was lonely and unhappy, particularly when she spent years in cheap hotel rooms and lost her little child Eugene. Even worse, recalling Eugene's death would eventually make her appear as an irresponsible mother who could not take care of her child.

Added to Mary's morphine denial is her inability to accept Edmund's illness. Though deep inside she is worried, Mary refuses to admit that Edmund might be truly sick. She keeps saying that "it is just a cold" **(23),** and that Edmund will soon recover. Mary cannot allow herself to admit Edmund's serious sickness because she fears that her son has inherited her lung fragility. Therefore, we can infer that Mary's denial of truth emanates from her desire to be loved and recognized by the consumerist Other embodied in her family and society. Obviously, preserving her inflated image as a perfect wife and caring mother would earn her the respect of her family and society, as is the case with Linda.

Mary's irritability and her critical attitude towards her husband are other means of escape from reality. The audience notices that Mary trembles and gets nervous as soon as she feels the weight of her husband's or sons' gazes on her. When Mary catches her husband's eyes fixing at her, and she is afraid that he knows about her returning to morphine, she says: "Why do you look at me like that? (her hands flutter up to pat her hair) Is it my hair coming down" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 59).** The mother has the same reaction when she learns that her son Edmund saw her walking around at night: "So you pretended to be asleep to spy on me!" **(41)** By getting nervous, Mary tries to start a quarrel and eventually shift attention away from her.

Also criticism is another kind of defense through which Mary deceives herself about the unpleasant reality of life. Unlike Linda, Mary is continually laying the blame upon her husband to justify her own downfall. Mary tries to persuade herself and the other members of the family that her misery started when she decided to marry James. Apparently, the only happy moment she shared with her husband was her wedding day: "I want to remember only the happy part of the past….Do you remember our wedding, dear?...I was so excited and happy" **(98).** From then on, Mary could never find happiness. She blames her husband for being the cause of her giving up on her dream. She confessed to her servant, Cathleen, that when she met James she "forgot all about becoming a nun… [and] all [she] wanted was to become his wife" **(91).** In so doing, Mary avoids admitting the collapse of her idealized image of herself as model mother and wife:

> MARY. No, no. Whatever you mean, it isn't true, dear. It was never a home. You've always preferred the Club or a bar-room. And for it's always been as lonely as a dirty room in a one-night stand hotel. In a real home one is never lonely. You forget I know from experience what a home is like. I gave up one to marry you- my father's home. **(62)**

Mary is critical of James because he confronts her to the unbearable reality that she does not want to face. This may well explain why Mary's accusation, wi-

thout any good reason, quickly changes to regret. Right after criticizing James, Mary apologizes to him: "I'm sorry, dear. I don't mean to be bitter. It's not your fault" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 65).** This is an important point to consider as it reveals that Mary's critical attitude towards her husband is not really intended to bring him back to reality, especially since each reproach is followed by tender words. Therefore, though Mary seems more critical than Linda, her attitude leads almost to the same result. If Mary does not glorify her husband's illusory image as a successful man, she does not truly help him confront reality either. Like Linda, Mary is passive Other for her husband. This becomes even more obvious when we consider the last scene of the play. Mary's withdrawal into the past is indicative of how distant from her husband she becomes. If Mary was critical in the beginning, now we can barely expect any criticism from a ghost-like woman.

In this respect, Monica Gupta argues that **"**isolation in the plays of Eugene O'Neill is shown through the love-hate relationship among the characters**" (Gupta 155).** Mary is isolated from her husband owing to this type of relationship. Her isolation makes of her a passive Other as she does not show any significant influence on her husband. The more self-alienated Mary becomes the more hatred she develops towards James, because his mere presence makes her conscious of the unhappy and carless woman she is in reality.

We find the same love-hate relationship in the case of Hicky and Evelyn in O'Neill's ***The Iceman Cometh***. Hicky's love for Evelyn is a facade behind which he hides his hatred of her and the ideal love she represents. His soul is divided between loving her forgiveness and devotion on the one hand and hating her as a reminder of his unfaithfulness on the other. Hicky explains: "I couldn't forgive her for forgiving me. I even caught myself hating her for making me hate myself" **(O'Neill, *The Iceman Cometh* 239).** Hicky's and Mary's inability to feel and communicate real love also exemplifies alienation and unhealthy relationships that became quite common in postwar consumerist America.

Equally important to consider is the retroactive chain of events that shows the degree to which the past is central to this play. Tom F. Driver argues that "the past is so overwhelming…that the present cannot show any action leading to the future" **(Driver qtd. in Raleigh 113).** This is voiced by Mary when she says: "The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 75).** Driver's words put forth the chaos and sterility prevailing in consumerist America. The Americans become stuck in empty circular movements, moving aimlessly from past to present and from present to past as suggested by Mary's bewilderment. They can neither renew with the past, nor move forwards. This is exemplified by the last scene when Mary, like a ghost, enters the room while she speaks aloud to herself and carries her wedding dress with herself, as if she sees and hears nobody.

7-Mary's Morphine Dependence as Addiction to Consumerism: The Legacy of the American Dream

The end of the play suggests Mary's spiritual death. Unable to rise up to the standards of the American consumerist society, Mary ends up in a state of delirium with ominous threats that she might commit suicide. With the spread of consumerism, the fundamental values of democracy and autonomy that are at the core of the American identity have been called into question. Conformism and determinism seem to win over America's democratic ideals. Mary's morphine addiction is only a minor form of addiction. Initially, the figure of the addict was "constructed as the outcome of an interaction between the properties of specific substances regarded as dangerous and powerful and the consumption patterns of certain disruptive social groups" **(Reiht 284).**

However, over time the potential field of addiction has extended to include an increasingly large range of commodities, threatening the freedom and autonomy of consumers. The notion of consumption turns "the sovereign consumer on its head, transforming freedom into determinism**" (286).** In this concern, it could be

argued that Mary as a morphine addict is a symbol of the American consumer who is turned into an "addict." People do no longer choose to consume, but they are rather forced to do so. In pursuit of the American Dream, most of the time, the Americans consume unnecessary products. This proves that the act of consuming does not stem from their own desires, but it is rather shaped by the desire of the consumerist Other. Postwar consumerism has, thus, created addict identities. An addict identity in its extreme forms could be observed in Mary who becomes consumed by consumption as the final scene of the play suggests. The American family of the postwar period clearly became a big addict consumer. All the family members are made to conform to the same social norms and standards.

8-Myth as Homogenization of the Image of a Submissive American Wife

Mary's and Linda's adherence to the culture of sameness through their direct or indirect support of their husbands' delusive dreams brings to the fore Barthes's secondary message of myth. Linda and Mary passively accept as real the television representations that are somewhat significantly skewed. Despite the fact that women had other aspirations in life in the period following the wars, and employment rates rose for women, media purposefully tended to focus on women's role in the home. In this concern, Susan Levine explains that "American women, housewives in particular, may have accepted the logic of rebuilding family life after years of depression and war" **(Levine 85).** Therefore, to prove their Americanness, especially in the postwar period that saw a great rise of nationalism, the American woman was compelled to identify with the image of a loyal and "perfect" housewife. This is clearly observed in both Linda and Mary to whom marriage seems to be more important than any other goal.

Linda is presented as a devoted wife who never questions her husband. At no point in the play does Linda talk about her own dreams. We can hardly dissociate Linda from Willy, as if she can exist only thorough her husband. For her part,

Mary abandoned her dream of becoming a num when she married James, a fact which shows that her role in the home is more important than any other field. In the American conformist society, Linda and Mary are very unlikely to reject these representations of women as unreal. This highlights the manipulative power of myth. At that time, it was made to appear as though the role of a "true" American woman consists in supporting her husband's goals, submitting to his desire and eventually help him achieve the American Dream. By advancing the image of the loyal "housewife" as part of a natural order, the promoters of consumerism can keep the American family under control. While the American men keep dreaming of financial success and their wives fuel their dreams, the myth promoters continue to accumulate profits. As might be expected, most of the American children will inherit the same consumer habits from their parents and join the American Dream. This would maintain the fixed social order for longer, making it easier for the Americans to accept the "shaped reality" as the way the world really is. In ***Death of a Salesman***, Happy can be regarded as the best example of how the American children can be a source of support for their parents' unrealistic dreams.

9- Sons as Passive Other: Happy as a Self-alienating Force for the Father

In ***Death of a Salesman***, Happy seems to share his father's inflated pride and strong belief in the American Dream. Compared to his brother Biff, Happy lacks the tiniest spark of knowledge or capacity for self-analysis. As such, Happy is static throughout the play and remains faithful to his father's dream to the bitter end. Trying to persuade his brother Biff to borrow money from Oliver in order to start a business, Happy advances the same argument as his father: "I bet he'd back you. Cause he thought highly of you, Biff, I mean they all do. You are well liked, Biff" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 9).** Happy believes that being liked by people will be enough for his brother to make a fortune. Like his father, the son is pursuing the American Dream without really understanding what it means.

Therefore, Like his parents, Happy has no goals of his own. He has been taken the freedom to construct his identity according to his own desire. He becomes a blind obedient servant to the consumerist Other.

Both father and son need to prove themselves to other people: "I gotta show some of those pompous, self-important executives over there that Hap Loman can make the grade" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 9).** However, the one Happy wants to please the most is his father. As the plot unfolds, we quickly learn that Happy has always lived in the shadow of his brother Biff. Because he is not loved and appreciated as much as his brother, Happy always desires to please his father in any way he can. Therefore, we can infer that Happy's desire to construct an identity by submitting to the desire of the consumerist Other stems from his desire to be loved and recognized by the Other. In an attempt to attract his father's attention, Happy claims superiority over his brother by using women again. If Biff fails to please his father by succeeding in business, Happy thinks he can win his father's admiration for being successful with women. In this concern, Abraham Taisha explains:

> Happy sought the self-confidence of the older brother Biff and found sexual confidence and it is now where he has superiority over his brother. Although both hope to have fraternal life together…they have competing versions. Biff more attracted to the green world, wants to buy a ranch…and Happy plans for them to go into business together…Later in the restaurant, when Biff tries to tell Happy about his attempted meeting with Bill Oliver, to put forth Happy's own plan for going into business together, Happy turns Biff's attention to the "strudel" he has been attempting to pick up, insisting that Biff demonstrate his old confidence before he speaks of the Oliver meeting. Happy wishes to establish a safety net of sexual confidence to protect them against news of failure that he may anticipate and fear, and he perhaps wants unconsciously to show off his success to contrast Biff's probable failure. **(Taisha 163)**

Equally important is the scene when Happy addresses the girl in the restaurant: "You don't happen to sell, do you?" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 34)**

Happy's words could be an allusion to prostitution. Happy shows utter contempt for women whom he continually regards as whores that sell their bodies. That is why he cannot marry because "there's not a good woman in a thousand" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 34).** To explain Happy's attitude, Abraham pinpoints that Happy "is not only more sexually promiscuous than any of the women, but he also takes unsavory circumstance. Thus he projects his own whorishness onto women in the play's clearest depiction of male-female Business World dealings" **(Taisha 164).** Happy's whorishness is suggestive of his remarkable ability to sell that Willy has instilled in him. Unfortunately, Happy's selling potential is misdirected.

Happy's attitude towards women also exposes the negative impact the consumer culture can have on how Happy views himself and forms his identity. In his initial conversation with Biff, Happy claims to have everything he has always wanted: "[his] own apartment, a car and plenty of women" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 8).** This quote clearly sheds light on Happy's hidden materialistic philosophy. For Happy, women are not much different from the other material possessions that are supposed to bring him happiness. In a consumption-oriented society, people are turned into bodies without souls. Their value is defined in terms of their capacity to sell, which can be viewed as a waste land. America is transformed into a barren land devoid of spirituality and moral values.

Seeking love confirmation from different women could be seen as a desperate attempt to compensate for the absence of satisfactory paternal love and attention. Happy tries to recover the state of wholeness he experienced in the Real. Every woman is a representation of the Lacanian concept of the mother. Each conquest is an attempt to relive the state of fusion with the mother he experienced in the Real. Therefore, Happy's pursuit of women is an expression of his desire to be loved and appreciated by the Other. However, no woman can bring him real self-satisfaction. Each attempt to get recognition and love from the Other causes him further self-alienation, a fact which stresses the impossibility to return to the Re-

al. Women, like the consumer goods, cannot compensate for his imperfection, or to use Lacanian words fill the void in him. Like his father, Happy becomes a stranger to himself unable to develop healthy relationship with others.

The end of the play clearly shows how deeply Willy's beliefs are instilled in his son Happy who preserves his father's dream intact. In his last conversation with Biff, Happy rejects any sort of argument that would shatter his father's dream and would eventually bring him back to reality. In this concern, we can notice that Willy and his son share a similar attitude. As Willy cannot allow his sons to fail, Happy cannot admit his father's misplaced idealism and spoiled vision of the American Dream because that will forcibly cause his own downfall. The father needs to believe that Biff and Happy are successful businessmen because his sons' success in business would assert his image as a successful father and salesman. Similarly, Happy has to convince himself and the others that his father's dream is right because any argument that questions his father's dream would inevitably result in Happy's self-destruction and the collapse of his inflated image as an important assistant buyer. Therefore, the glorified images of both father and son as perfect and successful men are interdependent. From this, we can conclude that Happy, like Mary, is a passive Other. He is another source of self-estrangement for Willy as he nurtures his father's illusions, causing him further self-alienation. In a defying attitude, Happy boastfully remarks to his brother Biff:

> HAPPY. All right, boy. I'm gonna show you and every body else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have to come out number one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him. **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 48)**

10-Myth as Reification of America as a Big Consumer Family

We can note that Happy has adhered to the culture of sameness. Willy is to Hap-

py, what Ben is to Willy. Ben represents for Willy a force of self-delusion and personifies his dream of easy wealth. Willy is impressed by his brother's financial success, but never really understands what success is all about. For his part, Happy blindly follows in the steps of his father. Both hold other figures as examples of easy financial success. Therefore, both join the consumer culture by trying to identify with images of success that have already been prepared for them by the consumerist Other. Happy conforming to the dictates of the American consumerist society unveils the hidden message of myth. America has become a big consumer family in which each member is playing a "consumer" role. A "true" American son is expected to adhere to the desire of the consumerist Other by inheriting his parents' capacity for self-delusion. Alexis de Tocqueville argues that all Americans should "feel for their homeland a feeling analogous to what a man feels for his family" **(Tocqueville 107).** Therefore, being faithful to the consumer culture would mean being loyal to the American nation. When Happy remarks at the end of the play: "I'm staying right in this city, and I'm gonna beat this racket…The Loman Brothers" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 48),** he might have used the concept of brotherhood to implicitly refer to American people as a community linked by a common interest which is to succeed in the business world.

However, behind this advertized image of loyalty lies the secondary message of myth. By defining Americanness in terms of commitment to the American Dream, the consumerist Other shapes the identity of the future generation in such a way as to secure the established social order for long. Said differently, they want to be reassured that every dreamer, who will forcibly collapse like Willy, will be replaced by a future dreamer. In order for be a faithful and a patriotic son, Happy should keep dreaming no matter how unrealistic his dreams are. In this way, all the members of the American family become slaves to the same system. This accentuates the restrictive effects of consumerism on people's freedom of choice and thereby calls into question America's democratic ideals which are at the heart of America's exceptionalist identity.

11-Myth as Delusion: Happy's Unfulfilled Desire as an Expression of Unreachable Happiness

Despite Happy's efforts to live up to his father's expectations and keep his father's dream alive, the dream fails him. Neither the father nor the son can reach the desired self-satisfaction, a fact which stresses the inability to reach the American Dream. Happy possesses all the material adornments of success, yet he admits to feeling unfulfilled: "I don't know what the hell I'm workin' for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment-all alone. And think of the rent I'm paying. And it's crazy. But then, it's what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 8).** This quote stresses Lacan's concept of unfulfilled desire. Like his father, there is still something missing in Happy's life. The fact that Happy cannot identify what is missing implies that Happy's desire is not related to the lack of consumer products or any other objects, but what is really desired is "being" itself. Happy's lack of being highlights the delusive and alienating character of the myth of the American Dream. Material goods are only representations of the desired object in Happy's imaginary world, and they are not the Lacanian object *a* that is "THE" desired object. This is the reason why Happy can only experience an apparent sense of wholeness and self-satisfaction, but never enjoy real happiness and personal welfare. Happy will soon have to find another object *a* to fill his new sense of lack. Like all the dreamers in postwar consumerist America, Happy will engage in a lifestyle of excessive materialism, each time trying to purchase new and ever more costly consumer goods. Moving from one consumer product to another will only cause Happy further self-alienation, because the transient sense of completeness and happiness that the material acquisitions bring to his life can only be experienced in an imaginary state of being.

Though Biff and Edmund belong to the same milieu as Happy, consumerism has affected them differently. If Happy has completely succumbed to the desire of the consumerist Other, Biff and Edmund are rather skeptical. Therefore, we

deem it necessary to devote the following section to examining how the characters' different attitudes may have caused them to construct their identities in a different way from Happy. If possible at all, it remains to see whether being different would not generate further alienation. The following part will thus expose a new type of the American son.

II-Biff and Edmund as Rebellious Sons: Resisting the Desire of the Consumerist Other

1- Biff and Edmund as Awakening Forces for the Fathers

Of all the other characters, Biff and Edmund are the only ones who somehow reach some kind of truth about their fathers' delusive dreams and admit the harmful effects of resigning oneself to a bleak reality. In Act I of ***Death of a Salesman***, the audience quickly discovers that Biff's idealization of his father ended a long time ago, precisely when he discovered his adultery. The discovery of Willy's affair might have triggered Biff's awareness and made him question his father's ideals and beliefs. The son now views his father as a fraud, as he remarks to his mother: "I know he is a fake" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 20).** As James's idealized image as a perfect father and husband is now shattered, Biff can no longer consider him as a model to follow.

Similarly, ***Long Day's Journey into Night****'s* opening scene reveals that Edmund's disillusionment with his father's dream can be traced back to the past. In a conversation with his mother, Edmund is critical of his father whom he names "the Old Man" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 39).** By "old," Edmund may be referring to his father's aging but he may also be alluding to the fading of James's inflated self-image. Moreover, Edmund bitterly recalls past memories when he experienced loneliness in cheap hotel rooms despite his father's consid-

erable wealth: “Well, it’s better than spending the summer in a New York hotel, isn’t it? And this town’s not so bad. I like it well enough. I suppose because it’s the only home we’ve had” **(O’Neill, *Long Day’s Journey into Night* 38).** Edmund’s embarrassing memories are indicative of the son’s scorn for his father.

The collapse of the fathers’ disproportionate image in the eyes of Biff and Edmund anticipates the sons’ withdrawal from their fathers’ imaginary worlds. As early as the play opens, Biff openly confesses to his mother that he is neither able nor does he desire to achieve the American Dream: “Mom, I don’t fit in business”**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 21).** However, as the plot unfolds, it is revealed that Biff’s attitude goes from a simple grumble to a real confrontation.

Biff’s refusal to go to summer school and retake the math course he failed is the first act marking Biff’s resistance to his father’s view. Despite his father’s insistence, Biff’s sharp answer is “I’m not going there” **(41).** Biff has probably decided not to attend summer school and graduate as a way of defying and at the same time humiliating Willy. Knowing that much of his father’s false pride is based on his own success, Biff deliberately refuses to take any action that fuels the inflated self-image that the father has created for his son. As Bloom points out, Biff tries to release himself from “his father’s self-serving adoration” (**Bloom, *Bloom’s Guide: Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman* 67)** in which he has been imprisoned. Another point which is equally important to consider when studying Biff’s opposition to his father’s misconceptions is his eventual meeting with his former boss Bill Oliver.

Ironically enough, the father’s encouragement for his son to get a loan from Oliver has not resulted in asserting Biff’s idealized image as a successful son, but it has rather led to Biff’s release from Willy’s imagined world. Oliver not only does not grant him a loan, but also does not recognize him. In this concern, Bloom argues that “the moment when Oliver does not recognize Biff is the occasion for Biff to recognize himself” **(59).** Even before meeting Oliver, the audi-

ence may have noticed that Biff was not as optimistic as his father, as if he had anticipated Oliver's scornful attitude. Therefore, it could be argued that in addition to confronting the truth, Biff has decided to meet his former boss to show his father a more authentic version of himself. The scene at Oliver's office thus serves the double purpose of challenging the father's self-delusion and trying to bring the father back to reality. Hence, Biff can be regarded as active Other for his father as he attempts to change Willy's misperception about the American Dream and awaken his consciousness.

Added to Oliver's contemptuous attitude is the pen stealing issue which is equally worth considering. Biff stealing Oliver's pen may allude to the fact that Biff, throughout his life, has been trying to take something which is not his. Biff has apparently inherited this habit from his father who could never really teach his son right from wrong. The pen stealing links back to the father's indifference to his son stealing a new ball from his coach. Therefore, the pen may stand for the American Dream, and stealing the pen may mean that the father has tried to dispossess Biff from his identity by making him live a dream which is not his. This scene recalls Happy's act of stealing his executives' fiances, stressing the stealing habit that Willy has instilled in his sons. However, the sons' attitudes are widely different. While Happy is unaware of his stealing habits, Biff is quite conscious and he even questions his act of grabbing a pen. In the final confrontation between Biff and his father that occurs later in the evening, Biff reflects:

> BIFF. I ran don eleven fights with a pen in my hand to day. And suddenly I stopped, you hear me? An in the middle of that office building, do you hear this? I topped in the middle of that building and I saw-the sky. I saw the things that I love in this world. The work and the food and time to sit and smoke. An I looked at the pen and said to myself, what the hell am I grabbing this for? Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 45)**

The scene takes place in the late evening, which may suggest the end of lies in a house where the Lomans "never told the truth for ten minutes" **(59).** Biff's rai-

sing awareness leads him to try to understand the reasons for stealing and stand against his father. The fact that he finds no answer underscores the uselessness of trying to live a dream which is not his. Biff's question is rather followed by another interrogation about his identity. This is further evidence that the act of stealing may be related to the American Dream in postwar consumerist America where people have their identities stolen. Unlike Happy, Biff thus does not inherit his father's capacity for self-delusion. He finally breaks through the lies surrounding his family and comes to realistic terms with his own life. He gives up on his idealized image with which the father has wrongly misidentified him. Rather than seeking business success in the New York City, Biff decides to leave home and return to the West. In this concern, Ama Wattley explains that Biff's will to leave home stems from his "desire to move as far away from his father's dreams for him" **(Wattley 13).** Biff's refusal to submit to the desire of the consumerist Other underlines his will to recreate a new identity, which brings to the fore his disillusionment with the American Dream.

In ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, Edmund, at first sight, could be comparable to his father who seeks refuge in alcohol to attain relief as he says: "let's drink up and forget it" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 114).** However, the audience soon realizes that he does not really believe in drunken release even if he says so. Of all the Tyrones, Edmund appears to be the most sober. Bloom points out that Edmund is a character who "watches, listens, perhaps records it all, and tries to understand" **(Bloom, *Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night* 101).** In addition to analyzing facts, Edmund also takes action. At several times, Edmund, in a similar way to Biff, confronts the members of his family in an attempt to bring them back to reality. While James and Jamie decide to keep the truth about Edmund's serious sickness from Mary, Edmund tells the truth to his mother: "What I've got is serious, Mama. Doc Hardy knows for sure now" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 102).** The fact that Edmund admits his illness is suggestive of Edmund's will to face reality.

However, Edmund's attitude towards Mary requires more attention. It seems that the son's intention goes beyond merely saying the truth to breaking through to his mother emotionally by arising feelings of guilt. Like all the characters in the play, the combination of love and hatred is a characteristic of Edmund's relationship to his mother. Edmund feels some sympathy towards his mother, yet he cannot forgive her because he is persuaded that she "betrayed [him] just by bearing him [and] by bringing him into his painful existence" **(Raleigh 132).** Hence, telling Mary the truth about his deadly illness implies that the only thing the mother could offer her son was death. Edmund's fatal sickness may also allude to the death-like life that Edmund experienced as a result of neglect and rejection. Through Edmund's insinuations, Mary would appear as an emotionally absent mother especially since she started taking drugs right after his birth.

By making Edmund confront his mother, O'Neill achieves a dual purpose: on the one hand he gets Mary divorced from her imagined world in which she has mistaken herself for a protective and responsible mother. On the other hand, he allows Edmund to withdraw from his father's imaginary world by making him indirectly question the American Dream. If Mary became a morphine addict after Edmund's birth it was mainly because of James's avarice. Both Mary's addiction and Edmund's illness underscore James's extreme focus on materialism at the expense of humanitarian values and family ties, giving more reason to Edmund to rebel against his father's beliefs and ideals.

Edmund's criticism of his father's delusive dream culminates in a face-to-face confrontation. In their last exchange in Act IV, the son's attitude becomes more aggressive when he confronts his father directly and blames him for his obsession with money that caused Mary's morphine addiction:

> EDMUND. You've never given her anything that would help her stay off [morphine]! No home except this summer dump in a place she hates and you've refused even to spend money to make this look decent, while you keep buying property, and playing sucker for every

> con man with a gold mine, or a silver mine,, or any kind of get-rich-quick swindle! **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 122)**

When Edmund learns about James's plan to send him to a cheap sanatorium to save money, his anger and bitterness increase and he finally bursts with rage against his father: "Don't think I'll let you get away with it! I won't go to any damned state farm just to save a few lousy dollars to buy more bum property with!" **(126)** Each time O'Neill makes Edmund defy his father and rebel against his false beliefs, he takes him one step further away from the American Dream. Therefore, like Biff, Edmund is also an active Other for his father as he tries to make him open up to a new reality.

However, if all the Tyrones mourn the death of their idealized selves, Edmund, as Bloom remarks, is the only one "who wants nothing as much as to lose himself" **(Bloom*, Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night* 100).** By losing himself, Edmund may be willing to reinvent his identity in a completely new environment. This marks a new similarity with Biff who goes West. The two sons do not just oppose their fathers' blind beliefs in the American Dream, but they also attempt to construct an identity outside the established order, in a pursuit of a better existence. Therefore, both Biff and Edmund could be regarded, at least to some extent, as symbols of hope in a sterile and waste land.

2-Self-Constrcution in Nature and the West: Renewing with the Exceptional American Dream

The West, which has long been important in shaping the American identity, is associated with notions of freedom and equal opportunity for all individuals. It is thus connected to the old version of the American Dream before it becomes tainted and stripped of its original purity. Therefore, a return to the West could be

regarded as a symbol of resistance to self-alienation and renewal with one's origins. One of the greatest literary works that exemplifies the notions of freedom and regeneration in the West is undoubtedly Mark Twain's ***The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn***. Twain tries to depict the fundamental changes in America after the Civil War, referring mainly to the violation of the American democratic ideals. The novel looks at different aspects of freedom. Twain's opposition to conformism is obvious and it starts with his reference to civilization. At the beginning of the story, we learn that their attempts to "civilize" Huck have been only partially successful. Though he learns to read, write and conform to some social norms, Huck soon fakes his death and escapes to the West. There, he meets Jim, a slave, with whom he embarks on a journey down the Mississippi River where he lives a life of freedom.

Huck opposes institutionalized religion, and considers that true religion is rather based on love. In nature, Huck also rebels against order in the way he eats, dresses and sleeps in a barrel. On his trip, Huck can experience freedom of thought. He confronts the dictates of his society that have taught him that Jim is only a property and not a human being. He even decides to help him escape rather than leave him in slavery: "All right, then, I'll go to hell" **(Twain 208).** This quote is very significant as it reveals that Huck has finally decided to do what he deems right and moral. Therefore, Huck's physical escape to the West is a form of freedom from authority and social control. It could be argued thus that Huck's faked death may stand for the symbolical death of the alienated "self" he has constructed by submitting to the desire of the Other. Now that he is in the West, Huck is born again and can freely construct a new identity according to his own desire. Both Huck and Jim can finally feel free and happy in nature. They can get food from the river, sleep in nature and look at the stars:

> This second night we run between seven and eight hours, with a current that was making over four mile an hour. We catched fish, and talked and we took a swim now an then to keep off sleepiness. It was kind of solemn, drifting down the big still river, laying on our backs looking up

> at the stars, and we didn't ever feel like talking loud, and it warn't often that we laughed, only a little kind of a low chuckle. We had mighty good weather, as a general thing and nothing ever happened to us at all, that night, nor the next, nor the next. **(Twain 70)**

The fluidity of the river reinforces the freedom experienced in nature. Twain thus paints a natural beauty without any stereotypes provided by society as opposed to the material and superficial beauty. Huck and Jim are aware of their existence as human beings. They fuse in nature and seem to be out of time of society. This Edenic state of being recalls Lacan's register of the Real, a state of nature in which the individual experiences a complete state of wholeness before his entrance into language and submission to the desire of the Other.

Miller and O'Neill suggest that the myth of the West has never stopped fascinating the Americans. With the rise of unrestrained consumerism in the postwar period, the American ideals of freedom and democracy come under threat again. In ***Death of a Salesman***, Miller alludes to the West as a possible source of regeneration. Though years passed, the American frontier still supports the last pieces of the exceptional American Dream. In a natural environment, where modern man has not yet devastated life's primary essence, Biff attempts to reconnect with his origins. By heading West, Biff, like Huck, can re-invent his identity which has long been obscured by his father's greed for material success. At the end of the play, Biff shouts: "What am I doing in office, making a contemptuous begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there waiting for me the minute I say who I am!" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 45)** "Out there," Biff will break free out of the confines of the cramped offices and buildings of Eastern New York and go onto a limitless and natural space. The consumer culture has affected every aspect of Biff's life and shaped his perception of reality. Only in nature can Biff know who he really is. By setting himself free from the world of illusion, Biff can renew with truth and reality about himself and his world. In a similar way to Huck, Biff attempts to return to the Real where he can experience a real and not an apparent sense of being. In nature, there will be no authority (no

Other) to shape his desire. Biff's words: "the minute I say who I am" may be suggestive of Lacan's concept of desire of being. Once in nature, Biff can finally know what he really desires.

Looking for freedom out of the confines of the town is also found in Tennessee Williams's ***The Glass Menagerie***, another story of alienation in capitalist America. Williams describes the Winfield's apartment as "one of those vast hove-like conglomerations of cellular living units that flower as warty growths…and are symptomatic of the impulse of the largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society"**(Williams 3**). Williams's depiction of the house sets a claustrophobic atmosphere which parallels the Winfield's dull existence in the city. While Amanda and Laura retreat in their imagined worlds, Tom wants physical escape. Tom is more like his father. He desperately seeks the life he always desired, the life of adventure: "If self is what I thought of, Mother, I'd be where [father] is-GONE!" **(23)** Like his father, Tom wants to reinvent his identity by escaping his cramped life at home and the landlocked Midwest. Even though he cannot bring himself to actually leave, Tom finds a temporary safe heaven by going out on the fire escape and spending almost every night at the movie theatre. However, Tom makes it clear that what he really desires is physical escape. He wants a new experience in a new place that can bring him real freedom and joy: "People go to the movies instead of moving! Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them" **(47).**

Fitzgerald shares the same attachment to the West in ***The Great Gatsby***. Nick who travels from the West Coast and arrives in New York is fascinated with the sophisticated lifestyle of Daisy and her acquaintances. But he soon discovers that their lives are spoiled by consumerism. Completely disillusioned with his experience in the East Coast and his associations with superficial people like Daisy and Tom, Nick returns to the West with the desire for "the world to be in uniform and at sort of moral attention for ever" **(Fitzgerald 8).** Hence, it could be argued that

Fitzgerald makes Nick undertake a trip to the West as a way to purify his inner self and go back to his origins.

Reference to the sea as a symbol of rebirth and freedom is found in ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. As opposed to the rest of the family who find themselves trapped in the fog, Edmund embraces the world against all the odds. Edmund speaks of the sea as the embodiment of the great expectations that the Tyrones can never reach, but also as a liberator, or "a desirable substitute for his previous life" **(Baker 189)** that will set him free. Reflecting upon his personal experience, Edmund says:

> EDMUND. I was set free! I dissolved in the sea, became white sails and flying spray, became beauty and rhythm, became moonlight and the ship and the high dim-starred sky! I belonged, without past or future, within peace and unity and a wild joy, within some thing greater than my own life, or the life of Man, to life itself!.It was a great mistake, my being born a man, I would have been much more successful as a sea- gull or fish. As it is, I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death! **(*O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night* 135)**

From Edmund's words we can notice that the sea is described as a source of freedom with a vision of death. This brings to the fore the perfect union between life and death. By melting in nature, Edmund will die as a "product" of the consumerist American society and be reborn as a human being in a natural and simpler environment. Edmund can get close to nature where he can find solace and feel part of the world and not its outcast.

In ***Beyond the Horizon***, O'Neill draws a similar picture of nature which he describes as a source of regeneration and freedom. Rob wants to go beyond the horizon in search of his dream and discover the mystery of life: "It is just beauty

that's calling me-the beauty of the far off and unknown…the need of freedom of great wide spaces…in quest of the secret which is hidden over there, beyond the horizon" (**O'Neill, *Beyond the Horizon* 9).** Like Edmund, Rob believes he can experience freedom and reconnect with his real self only in nature.

This reunion with nature could be equated with the state of completeness that the individual once experienced in the Real. Therefore, both Miller and O'Neill consider that nature is the unique place where man can reconnect with his origins, reinvent his identity away from social dictates and eventually reach real self-satisfaction. However, O'Neill goes a step further, underscoring the importance of death as a necessary step to merge with nature.

O'Neill's vision of death as a necessary step to regeneration is equally present in Fitzgerald's ***The Great Gatsby***. In this respect, Gatsby's death becomes quite significant. In the end of the novel, Gatsby is found floating in his pool. Reflecting upon the last scene, we can argue that Gatsby and his dream disappear in the purifying water. Gatsby's extraordinary capacity to dream is still alive, but Gatsby must die because his dream is sullied. Therefore, water could be viewed as a source of purification. Gatsby must free himself from the material world that consumed his "self" and refine his dream in order to transcend and regenerate. Fitzgerald's and O'Neill's concept of death is thus a desperate call to modern man to awaken to the atrocity of the situation and make a sacrifice to reach redemption.

3-Rebirth in Postwar America: Images of the West after the End of the Material West

When considering the idea of rebirth in Miller's and O'Neill's plays, it is equally important to investigate its place in American history, especially after the closing of the American Frontier in the nineteenth century. The wide continent no longer seems limitless and the possibility of starting a new life away from social control

becomes less likely. In the postwar period, the West became purely mythical and the frontier individualism which promoted democracy and unlimited opportunity was rather idealized in art and literature to restore hope in the barren and sterile modern world. Therefore, Biff's heading to the West should rather be taken symbolically. It is more of a reference to the ideals associated with the West than to the place itself. In the postwar conformist American society, Miller is hinting to the necessity of pursuing self-individualism and freedom which are key defining characteristics of American identity. Yet, this remains problematic given the unrestrained consumerism and excessive materialism of the time which have turned the American people into objects devoid of critical thinking. In addition, it is difficult to imagine how the Americans can escape from the control of society, let alone in the crowded city of Eastern New York. The view about the harmonious fusion of the individual with nature seems more utopian than ever. Just as the individual cannot return to the Real and experience a state of completeness, the probability that the American man lives alone in nature is very low. Probably, this is the reason why O'Neill relates nature to death, when he discusses the possibility of regeneration through the character Edmund. A fundamental and radical change should happen before the American people can somehow restore their individualism.

O'Neill's idea of relating regeneration to sacrifice is closely related to the tradition of the American Adam. R. W.B Lewis identifies the American Adam with Adam before the Fall: "In his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The word and history lay all before him. He was the type of creator, the poet par excellence, creating language itself by naming the elements of the scene about him" **(Lewis 5).** The American man as the American Adam is thus believed to be a man with immense potential to build a new word, a new history and a new identity. The tragedy of Adam lies in the view that Adam had to fall and suffer to attain maturity and manhood to survive. Though tragic, Adam's Fall is also a fortunate fall, because the American Adam, "in the hopeful creed, had no past, but only a present and future" **(7).** In other words, no matter how harsh the condi-

tions he has to endure, the American man can always reinvent himself and build a better future.

Therefore, despite the fact that the myth of the West is fading and the vision of death as a necessary sacrifice to regeneration seems to be fatalistic, both Miller and O'Neill somehow conclude their plays with a hopeful note. In this regard, life in nature and in the West could be seen as alternative modes of existence. It somehow offers to Biff and Edmund a possibility to regenerate, enjoy more freedom and construct a new identity away from the constraints of the consumerist Other. However, it has to be verified whether these alternatives are possible at all, and if so whether they have no harmful consequences.

4-Biff and Edmund: From Resistance to Social Alienation

In both ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, Miller and O'Neill depict a highly materialistic American society in which the Lomans and the Tyrones seem to be compelled to conform to the consumerist Other in the hope of being valued and accepted. And yet, this does not prevent Biff and Edmund from rebelling against the established order and even try to find other modes of existence. However, the end of the two plays show that breaking the rules might not be without consequences. The fact that Biff is not recognized by his former boss Oliver could be a good example. It is true that Biff went to meet Oliver with the intention to force his father to review his inflated image, knowing in advance that he would not be granted a loan. Yet this does not exclude the fact that Biff was rejected by his former boss. Hence, being rejected by a successful business man could be seen as a form of social-alienation and a failure to belong to the postwar American society. This is best expressed in the last scene when Biff, at the peak of his fury shouts: ""I'm nothing!" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 65)** Because Biff does not adapt to the laws of social representation, he will forcibly fall into nothingness. In other words, because he represents "nothing" to

his society, Biff cannot be recognized as an American. Biff symbolically dies as a member of the American consumerist society and can only be reborn in a new world, the West, defined by new values and beliefs.

Similarly, showing resistance to the consumerist Other does not allow Edmund to find consideration and recognition, not even in the short term. In this respect, Edmund's disease could be a sign of weakness, suggesting that his death (and also his metaphorical collapse) is very near. Just as the disease has weakened his forces, opposition to the desire of the consumerist Other will gradually reduce his significance in society until he finally falls into social-alienation. This being said, it becomes clear that resisting social representations cannot be done without losing one's status. As Edmund remarks in the final act, he is doomed to live as a man who "is not really wanted [and who] can never belong" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 135)** to his society. Edmund's words further stress Lacan's concept of recognition. The desire to be validated by the consumerist Other is at the core of American identity construction in postwar consumerist America. This is certainly the reason why Edmund who has not conformed to the dictates of the consumerist Other can never be recognized as a true American.

5-Myth as Rationalization of Social Alienation

Biff's and Edmund's social-alienation and inability to find recognition highlight the difficulty to construct an identity outside the confines of the postwar consumerist society. Moreover, Biff and Edmund falling into nothingness brings to the fore Barthes's secondary message of myth. When James observes that his son Edmund "may be an invalid for a long time" **(28),** he in fact voices what society thinks of people like Edmund. After all, James being a pursuer of the American Dream can no longer think for himself. He becomes part of the reality defined by the consumerist Other. The father does not question the contradictory values of his society, but he rather points a finger at his "unfit" son. This shows how much

James has internalized social norms. He can no longer distinguish reality from illusion.

On the other hand, Oliver is presented as a figure of success. In this regard, Biff's unsuccessful meeting with Oliver parallels Biff's failure to equal to Oliver's social position. The myth of the American Dream in Eastern New York thus makes people like Biff and Edmund appear as losers rather than rebels willing to construct their identities in a new environment. Consumerist America is pictured as a land of opportunities where "strong" people like Oliver are rewarded by success while "weak" people like Biff and Edmund are doomed to failure. Instead of denouncing the harmful effects of savage capitalism, American people would rather stigmatize Biff and Edmund as losers. Said differently, social disparities are made to seem like a logical outcome of hard work and perseverance so that they would not be questioned. In this way, the social order in postwar consumerist America is kept unchanged and leadership positions unthreatened.

Biff's and Edmund's difficulties to belong shed light on the inherent contradictions of the American society which are normalized by the myth of the American Dream. If America is inherently exceptional, one may wonder why Biff and Edmund should experience rejection and social-alienation just as it would have been the case in "less exceptional" countries. Why, by virtue of free will, would Biff and Edmund lose social recognition in a country where freedom is one of the main defining features of the American identity? The questions raised regarding Biff and Edmund bring us to re-examine the notion of American exceptionalism. Moreover, this leads us to investigate whether Miller's and O'Neill's glorification of rebellious characters such as Biff and Edmund reflects the playwrights' personal experiences as rebels.

III-Miller's and O'Neill's Characters as Projections of the Playwrights' Social Alienation

1-Self-alienating Fathers as Capitalist Other

Like many other Jewish immigrants, Miller's family took part in the big exodus from Poland to the New World in pursuit of the American Dream. As ethnic minorities, Miller's family members were in search of integration and acceptance. In a seemingly exceptional land of unlimited opportunities, they tried to reinvent their identities by submitting to the desire of the capitalist Other, which will soon lead to self-alienation. The impact of Miller's family has much to do with ***Death of a Salesman*.** In this regard, Matthew Roudané argues that "Miller regarded Uncle Manny and Uncle Lee, like Ben's and Willy's father, as pioneers" **(Roudané, "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller" 71)**. Ben refers to their father as a "Great inventor" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 17),** which may relate to his pioneering role in business world. Hence, it could be argued that Miller's successful uncles have somehow shaped the playwright's conception of Willy's father who is in Willy's eyes the embodiment of success.

Roudané's words also echo the conversation between Willy and his elder brother Ben in Act I about the old days, including Ben's experience and memory of their father. Ben is a father-like-figure who represents an ideal for Willy and serves as a guiding star in Willy's destiny and that of his sons Biff and Happy. Willy's words: "Listen to this. This is your Uncle Ben, a great man" **(17)** expose Ben as a "pioneering father." Yet, one should not lose sight of the fact that Ben is a man who became rich by finding diamonds in the African jungle rather than by working hard. Therefore, Ben's figure hints at the distorted vision of the Self-Made-Man and the values of the corrupted American Dream, namely easy money and rapid success. Moreover, throughout the play Willy presents his father as a successful "businessman" with no real concern for what would have led him to success. We can deduce that Miller's choice of Willy's father and Ben as father figures suggests the alienating power of the American Dream in capitalist America. Both father figures, in the eyes of Willy, stand for the capitalist Other as they cause Willy's self-alienation.

The closeness of ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** to the known facts about O'Neill's life has led critics to assume that the story is almost pure autobiography. Although the story is not the whole truth, there is a striking correspondence between biographical facts and artistic fiction. John Patrick Diggins notes that Eugene's father, James O'Neill, came to the United States "at the age of five" **(Diggins 10).** Here we can note that O'Neill and Miller shared a common immigrant experience that might have affected them in a similar way. That is, both playwrights would undergo an identity conflict when seeking integration and recognition in America. In this context, Diggins adds that the father, like the other Irish immigrants, "looked upon America as the country in which they could reach levels of achievement but only at the cost of betraying their original identity" **(10).** Like Miller's family, O'Neill's father was more likely to embrace the American Dream in the hope of building a new identity and be assimilated in the US.

In ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, the father's immigrant experience is portrayed by the character James Tyrone who was forced to work as a boy to reach financial success. Also, the monetary discourse and the consumer culture that characterized the postwar period are rendered through the same character. Frederic Ives Carpenter argues that, James Tyrone, "exactly as James O'Neill…gave up serious acting and spent the rest of his professional career making money" **(Carpenter 20).** Both James the father and his alter ego are motivated by the advertizing images of financial success and happiness. The two men gave up their own desires and submitted to the desire of the capitalist Other, which would deepen their self-alienation. As an alienated father, James O'Neill is an alienating force in Eugene's life.

In both fiction and real life, there is a family desire to pursue the American Dream. However, in both plays the playwrights draw negative pictures of the American Dream pursuers embodied in the playwright's alienated fathers. Willy ends up selling his own life for money, and James blindly conforms to the mone-

tary discourse at the detriment of his career and family. Hence, we can hypothesize that Miller's and O'Neill's choices for alienated and disillusioned figures may well stem from personal disappointment that they have tried to voice through their fictional characters.

2-The American Dreams as a Family Experience of Disillusionment

The illusory nature of the American Dream, the lies that it promotes and the dark side of capitalism portrayed in ***Death of a Salesman*** can be regarded as a product of Miller's teenage experience. We already notice that the Lomans' home parallels the playwright's recollections of his uncles' household. Miller still remembers that "There was a shadowy darkness in their house [his uncles'], a scent of sex and dream, of lies and inventions, and above all of contradictions and surprise" **(Miller, *Timebends: A life* 122).** The same dim and dream-like atmosphere surrounds the Lomans': "The surrounding area shows an angry glow of orange…an air of the dream clings to the place, a dream rising out of reality" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** In addition to Miller's memories of his uncles' domain, the dramatist's representation of Willy's disillusionment with the American Dream may stem from his father's experience. Throughout the play, Willy and his family are constantly arguing about money and lack of success, which recalls the stress, fear and uncertainty placed upon Miller's family after the Great Depression of the 1930s. In his autobiography, Miller says that the Depression was "a moral catastrophe, a violent revelation of the hypocrisies behind the facade of the American society" **(Miller, *Timebends: A life* 115).** ***Death of a Salesman*** begins at the Loman family home where Willy and his wife Linda are voicing their worries about Willy's recent unsuccessful business trip. The audience can already sense a change in Willy's business life as he keeps saying to his wife that he "couldn't make it" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** Here Miller may be alluding to his family's lifestyle that took a drastic change after the stock

market crash of 1929. The latter "forced his father out of the coat business and the family out of their home to a small frame house in Brooklyn" **(Bloom, *Bloom's Major Dramatists: Arthur Miller* 11).** Therefore, Miller's characters and their real-world counterparts have both experienced disillusionment like many American people who idealized the American Dream.

Long Day's Journey into Night is equally full of images which suggest fallen hopes and expectations. James Tyrone has acquired an impressive wealth. Yet, he can never reach self-fulfillment and personal welfare. He is always feeling a vacuum which is emphasized by his excessive avarice. Some critics such as Frederic Carpenter consider that "James Tyrone's miserliness is exaggerated far beyond the actual facts of James O'Neill's actual life" **(Carpenter 20).** However, he does not deny that "James O'Neill was often miserly by habit" **(20).** On the other hand, other critics overemphasize the father's thrift. For example, Diggins reports that "James O'Neill behaved badly when he seemed reluctant to find the best medical care for his wife, and he also preferred to send his son to a state sanatorium to be treated rather for tuberculosis than to private hospital" **(Diggins 6).** The truth might be more complex than fiction, and biographical facts might not correspond exactly to the dramatic fiction. But what seems obvious is that O'Neill's play describes the truth as the dramatist perceives it. Diggins argues that O'Neill was "skeptical that there would be any place he truly belonged [and] he bore the burden of the Irish immigrant experience" **(11)** for the rest of his life. It becomes clear that no matter how wealthy James O'Neill was, his money has seldom brought ease and happiness to his family. Throughout the play, the audience may sense certain helplessness and feel pity for the characters that have to live with their tormented and restless souls. Mary never feels at "a real home" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 70),** and Edmund finds it more peaceful to "be nothing more than a ghost within a ghost" **(113).** Like O'Neill's family, the fictional characters' disillusionment with the broken promises of the American Dream is obvious in the play.

Our analysis of the male figures in fiction and real life reveals a good number of similarities. Like many profound believers in the American Dream, none of the playwrights' fathers and uncles could reach self-satisfaction through financial success. Moreover, their disenchantment has impacted the playwrights who experienced agitation, anxiety and restlessness as it is exemplified in the two plays. It remains to be seen whether there are any female figures in the dramatists' families, like Linda and Mary that might have supported their husband's pursuit of the American Dream, making the drastic effects on the family even worse.

3-Women as Sources of the Playwrights' Self-alienation: Mother Figures as Passive Other

Miller's aunt Annie Newman is a female figure on which the playwright has drawn upon to show how the American wife sustains her husband's illusions. Annie Newman resembles Linda "as a most moving woman who bore the cross of reality for them all" **(Miller, *Timebends: A Life* 123).** Miller recalls how his aunt would support her husband with a "mild enthusiastic smile lest he feel he was not being appreciated" **(123).** Similarly**,** In ***Death of a Salesman***, Linda "very carefully and delicately" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4)** welcomes Willy each time he comes back home, particularly from an unsuccessful business trip. By recollecting memories from the past, Miller remembers how Annie would reassure Manny "when with no audience to confirm his existence, his agonizing uncertainty of identification flooded him with despair" **(Miller, *Timebends: A Life* 125).** The wife is afraid that her husband's awakening to the truth will destroy him. This is the reason why she protects him even when he is "so competently isolated from the ordinary laws of gravity, so elaborate in his fantastic inventions, …[and] so lyrically in love with fame and fortune" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 123).** Annie's support for her husband causes him further self-estrangement as it keeps him imprisoned in his world of illusions. Hence, like the fictional character, Annie can be regarded as a passive Other for her husband.

The audience can recognize the same perpetual fear and dread in Linda's life. From the beginning of the play, Linda knows that Willy is trying to kill himself. Yet, from fear of losing her husband, she is continuously sustaining his illusions because she knows that it is the only way to keep him going. In this respect, Miller's aunt could be regarded as a mother figure to Miller and a source of inspiration for picturing the character Linda as an alienating force in Willy's life.

The facts of O'Neill's life and the fictions of ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** further account for the relationship of the playwright and his mother. Like the fictional mother Mary Tyrone, the playwright's mother Ella Quinlan O'Neill was a "convent-reared girl **[**of] a genteel Victorian" **(Carpenter 22)** birth who gave up her dream of becoming a nun to marry James O'Neill. As in fiction, Ella Quinlan showed an "extreme idealization …of her future husband" **(22).** This is echoed by Mary who regards Tyrone as a "great matinee idol" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 90).** Therefore, Ella Quinlan is a further source of alienation in her husband's life as she sustains James O'Neill's inflated image. Like Annie, Ella Quinlan is a passive Other for James's O'Neill.

James O'Neill did his best to live up to his wife's expectations, in so far as his exaggerated consciousness of the importance of money would allow. Ella Quinlan "would never get the home she longed for" **(Berlin 27).** Similarly, Mary can never feel she is in "a real home" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 70).** The inability of both the real and fictional mothers to find a real home can only partly be traced back to their husbands' avarice and their own affluent backgrounds that did not prepare them to live as poor actors' wives. All through the play, the audience can easily sense that Mary's disillusionment has less to do with financial comfort. Mary experiences a feeling of vacum that neither Tyrone's financial success nor the birth of Edmund (who could have replaced the dead Eugene) would ever fill in: "What is it I'm looking for? I know it's something I lost" **(152).** Like Mary, the playwright's mother found refuge in drugs to alleviate her pain. At age fifteen, O'Neill was told that his birth (Edmund's birth

in the play) started her on drug addiction. Normand Berlin argues that knowledge of Ella Quinlan morphine addiction "was a fact that brooded over [O'Neill's] entire life" **(Berlin 27),** accentuating his anxiety and agitation. Therefore, both Ella Quinlan and Mary become self-alienated and retreat into their imaginary worlds. Being themselves self-alienated, both wives fail to bring their husbands to face reality, a fact which causes the two men further self-estrangement.

We can see that the mother figure is of enormous thematic importance to both plays. O'Neill has drawn upon his ambivalent relationship to his mother to convey the feelings of fear, disillusionment and self-alienation that Mary embodies in fiction. Miller for his part draws upon his aunt to depict a supportive mother figure who has completely submitted to her husband's desire, causing him further self-alienation. Though in different ways, none of the mother figures could alleviate the playwrights' pain and restlessness. This could be noticed in the characters Biff and Edmund who attempt to find a new life away from the help of their parents.

4-The Dramatist Defying the Consumerist Other through Literature

Biff is closely modeled on Miller's cousin Buddy. Like Biff, Buddy is a renowned high school athlete who "played baseball and basketball and football and got mentioned in the Brooklyn Eagle two or three times" **(Miller, *Timebends: A Life* 122).** Miller's reflection on Manny Newman's relationship to his sons, Buddy in particular, offers an insight into his inspiration for Biff. In this concern, Susan Abbotson notes: "Miller had always felt that Newman saw him as being in competition with his sons and determined that Buddy and Abby would be the bigger success" **(Abboston, *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller.: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work* 441).** In ***Death of a Salesman***, the audience can sense a high spirit of competition between Biff and Bernard, his cousin. Though

Willy admits that Biff is doing poorly in school, he is persuaded that he is better than Bernard when it comes to business: "Bernard can get the best marks in school, y'understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y'understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him"**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).** Also, when Biff is about to meet his former boss Oliver, Willy appears very excited about the meeting. He is utterly convinced that Biff will impress Oliver because he is already a great success: "I see great things for you kids. I think your troubles are over. But remember, start big and you will end big" **(22).** In this scene, we feel as if Biff would play a decisive baseball game that he should absolutely win. Ironically enough, Willy is trying to internalize in his sons the notions of competitiveness that he himself fails to fully understand. When we first meet Biff in the play, he is thirty four and has not been able to hold a steady job. He fails to live up to his father's expectations.

However, it is worth pointing out that Miller takes his fictional character a step further than his real counterparts. Abbotson reports that "Buddy and Abby would sadly die in their forties, having achieved very little" **(Abboston, *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller.: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work* 441).** If Miller's cousins die, Biff is still alive and strongly holds on to the possibility of regeneration in the West. Therefore, Biff's desire to reinvent a new self may stem from a desire other than that of Miller's cousins. In this sense, we can say that Biff is modeled on Buddy and Abby and another person which could be the playwright himself. Therefore, literature serves as a tool of resistance to the consumerist Other.

Through the fictional character Biff, O'Neill somehow expresses a possibility of creating a new life and a new identity out of the confines of the consumerist Other. Literature could be seen as a free world parallel to conformist and consumerist America. Through writing, Miller can freely express his desire and break social rules. Creating a rebellious fictional character allows Miller to assert

self-individualism and freedom. Therefore, Biff stands for a new mode of existence made possible thanks to literature.

Most interestingly, Edmund in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** parallels O'Neill himself. The relationship between O'Neill and his family is ambivalent in reality as well as in fiction. O'Neill made no secret of the impact of his personal experience on his work. Upon the completion of his landmark piece the playwright presented the following letter of dedication to his wife, on his twelfth anniversary wedding:

> Dearest: I give you the original scrip of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift it would seem, for a day celebrating happiness. But you will understand. I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play-write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones. **(O'Neill qtd. in Bloom, *Harold Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretations: Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night*)**

In the letter, O'Neill displays an intense emotional experience. His commitment to his family was troubled yet deep and ongoing. The same complicated feelings are embodied by the fictional character Edmund who is highly critical of his father but who still has empathy for him. In Act IV, Edmund accuses his father of destroying the Tyrone family, but he suddenly shows affectionate again: "I didn't mean it, papa…I can't help liking you in spite of everything" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 124).** Like Edmund, O'Neill's ambivalent feelings towards his family may have originated from childhood experience. Not different from the fictional character, O'Neill's birth was "a very difficult one for Ella" **(Berlin 27),** because O'Neill (Edmund in the play) was born four years after his dead brother James (the dead Eugene in the play). This might have caused him to feel guilty and unliked by his mother, especially since the latter stared taking drugs right after his birth. Feelings of rejection and estrangement were intensified when "a tubercular infection necessitated a stay in a sanatorium" **(Bigsby**

36). This led him to grow rebellious against his stingy father but also his careless mother who abandoned him. Intense feelings of loss, loneliness and despair "helped to turn O'Neill away from his religion- surely his mother's Catholicism" **(Berlin 27-8).** The playwright became very skeptical towards religion and life in general as expressed by Edmund, quoting Nietzsche: "God is dead: of His pity for man hath God died" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 66).** Therefore, we can note that Edmund's disillusionment with the false ideas of happiness and personal welfare promoted by the American Dream can be traced back to the playwright's personal experience. In his autobiographical play, the playwright tries to fictionalize his deep frustration and torment that have long haunted his imagination. Despite his father's success in business, O'Neill could never experience happiness in postwar consumerist America.

At the end of the play when truth about the sterile and barren life of the Tyrones is revealed, Edmund tries to re-invent his identity by getting closer to nature. Interestingly, it was at the most desperate moment of his life, when he was in the sanatorium, that O'Neill "decid [ed] that playwriting was to be his life's work" **(Wilson 218).** Hence, we can argue that literature offers a possibility to O'Neill to overcome his disillusionment, defy the consumerist Other and reinvent his identity. This is emphasized in the play by Edmund's high interest in art. Through literature, and especially by including autobiographical elements in his drama, O'Neill can confront the truth about his past and be born again.

The same could be said about Miller whose fictional characters show considerable similarities with their real-life counterparts. Therefore, for the playwrights as for their characters Biff and Edmund, confronting the truth and defying the consumerist Other are necessary steps towards regeneration. As Biff and Edmund can experience freedom in nature, through art Miller and O'Neill are freed from all social constraints and can thus express their own desires without limits. Literature, thus, somehow allows the two dramatists to reach self-fulfillment and reaffirm their identities away from social representations. In this regard, we can infer

that art is another allusion to Lacan's concept of the Real. Though return to the Real is impossible, there is a desire to reconnect with one's origins. Be it called nature, the West or art, there is obviously a note of hope and a will for regeneration and renewal in the drama of Miller and O'Neill.

A similar will for regeneration is noticed in Robert Frost's "**The Death of the Hired Man**." In his poem, Frost shows how the market's spirit of the big cities has started reaching rural New England, causing further self-alienation. Through the character Silas, a conservative rural New Englander, Frost brings to the fore the spirit of hard work and self-reliance that characterize the first Puritan farmers. This could be seen as a call to return to agrarianism as a source of renewal with the exceptional American Dream and construct an identity out of the confines of the capitalist Other.

IV-Facing the Triumph of the Market-Oriented Version of the American Dream: Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man" Vs Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

1-Silas as a Typical New Englander: Trying to Resist Self-alienation by Reviving the Exceptional American Dream in a Changing New England

Even when critics do take Silas as the main character in **"The Death of the Hired Man,"** most critical commentary on the poem focuses on the relationship between Warren, the farm husband, and Mary, his wife. Warren is generally taken to represent justice, and Mary to represent mercy and kindness. Sidney Cox says that Frost spoke of the poem as "a little drama, in which the gradual change in Warren is shown" **(Cox qtd. in Bloom, *Bloom's Modern Critical View: Rob-***

***ert Frost* 274),** revealing how Warren's view is slowly changing towards Mary's. In the same respect, Katherine Kearns explores gender relations in the poem. She notes that Warren's tone softens as Mary continues to talk and hereby credits "Mary's great power to move Warren towards empathy" **(Kearns qtd. in Hoffman 106).** Karen Kilcup also considers that the dialogue between Warren and Mary "teaches us to value relationships over autonomy, compassion over economics, and feeling over thinking"**(Kilcup 86).** The critic, thus, reads the poem as a triumph of Mary's vision over Warren's. The three critics' perspectives converge, shedding light mainly, if not exclusively, on the conflicting attitudes of Warren and Mary as well as demonstrating the superiority of Mary's view. While the debate remains alive, most readers of Frost's poem took the conflict between Warren and his wife Marry as their central thematic concern, giving less attention to the character Silas and his motives.

A detailed consideration of Silas's identity construction requires an analysis of the environment to which the character belongs. For this purpose, it is important to study some of the main agrarian ideals of rural New England. In this rugged environment, hard work is not only a virtue but an economic necessity to achieve self-sufficiency which characterizes the life of the New England farmer. Describing the self-sufficient New Englander, Percy H. Boynton says: "Hard pride and grim endurance have lined their faces, their labor has bowed their backs and in breeding has done the rest" **(Boynton 461).** Being a man of the "milieu" and an admirer of self-sufficiency, Frost himself "went to farming, not to writing, advertising or selling books" (**Whitaker 66)** when he was forced to earn a living. The self-sufficient spirit of the inhabitants of New England is much emphasized in the poet's works and echoed in the characters that he portrays as "tireless folk(s)" **(Frost, "Ghost House"),** such as Silas in "**The Death of the Hired Man."**

Silas adheres to the spirit of self-reliance and hard work, two core ideals of the old version of the American Dream. The hired man recognizes himself as a self-

made-man who can achieve the American Dream through self-improvement based mainly on hard work. Hence, it could be said that Silas has inherited the old ideals of the exceptional American Dream from the first Puritan pioneers in New England who were basically farmers. As contrasted to Willy in ***Death of a Salesman***, Silas seems to still believe in the exceptional American Dream which is essentially associated with hard work and perseverance. Mary tells her husband: "He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me//He meant to clear the upper pasture, too" **(Frost, "The Death of the Hired Man"**). This quote stresses the value of hard work.

Unlike Willy who is obsessed with the accumulation of wealth and his philosophy of "being well liked," Silas appears to value hard work over money. It could be argued that the characters' differences in perception lie in America's urban-rural disparities. The advent of technology and savage capitalism in the postwar period in the cities like New York have distorted the American Dream to a business dream, leading people to focus more on success than on the means to success. In other words, the Americans in urban settlements perceive all the value to be in the result, not the in process.

Frost's portrayal of Silas as an agrarian self-made-man who believes in self-improvement through hard work reveals the poet's interest in the conservative nature of the rural New Englander. Ruth Whitaker considers that these conservative traits are for Frost "as native to New England as the chill fogs and the frozen suns of its climate" **(Whitaker 70).** By being true to his landscape and putting the ideals of the New England mind in his verses, Frost is questioning the advent of modern conveniences. Mark Richardson points out that Frost believes that "a return to rural life might save one from the corrupting influences of the city"**(Richardson 115).**

In addition to perseverance and hard work, Silas's remarkable pride is another trait which is indicative of Frost's nostalgia to his rural background. The

hired man proves to be a typical character of rural New England, a man who possesses inward pride. Frost allows his character to reveal his pride through the conversation he had with Mary. We learn that Silas does not come back to ask for charity, but he rather returns to the farm to live- or die- honorably. The hired man seems determined to fulfill his broken contract and wants to "ditch the meadow" **(Frost** "**The Death of the Hired Man"**) for Mary. Another sign which shows Silas's self-dignity is his obstinacy to ask help from his brother, a wealthy "director in the bank" though.

Silas's behavior sends us back to the opening scene in ***Death of a Salesman*** when Willy is proud of being an important salesman who is "vital in New England" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 5).** However, an analysis of the character Willy has shown that the salesman's pride stems from his inflated image of the self, which stresses self-alienation. On the other hand, Silas's pride derives from his sense of dignity as a self-made-man, which may imply that Silas is resisting self-alienation. Frost's depiction of Silas as a conservative and proud rural New Englander could be regarded as an appeal to reconnect with the exceptional American Dream and have a more basic lifestyle in order to resist the capitalist Other which has imprisoned the Americans in a materialistic and imaginary world deepening their self-alienation.

Frost goes a step further and stresses the importance of passing on the values of the typical rural New Englander to other people to survive the changes brought about by savage capitalism. The discussion between Silas and Mary shows the farmer's obsessive need to teach Harold how to bundle the hay: "He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be/Some good perhaps to someone in the world" **(Frost "The Death of the Hired Man").** To explain Silas's concern for Harold, Fritz Oehlschlaeger points out that Silas feels "the need to vindicate his own life as a hired man by turning Harold into one**"(Oehlschlaeger qtd. in Boudreaux 152).** Oehlschlaeger's argument underlines the vital necessity for the rural New Englander to preserve his rural way of life which is simple and yet more mean-

ingful and genuine than the materialistic lifestyle of the big cities. Similarly, Willy in ***Death of a Salesman*** shows the same obsession and determination to teach his sons, Biff in particular, how to become a "successful" business man like his father: "The man who makes an appearance in the business world …is the man who gets ahead" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).**

However, the nature of Silas's and Willy's desires differs. In the farm, Silas is closer to nature and can somehow express his own desire away from the dictates of society and asserts his identity through hard work and farming. In the big city of New York, Willy constructs his identity by submitting to the desire of the capitalist Other as he unconsciously identifies with the image of success taken from the discourse of the capitalist Other. It is worth pointing though that Silas's attempt to assert his desire and resist change is not without consequences. It turns out that Silas's high pride and dignity hide a sense of insecurity and unease, which could be regarded as signs of social alienation. In an attempt to bring more evidence to my assumption, it is necessary to observe how Silas's pride is celebrated throughout the poem and how it relates to the other characters.

2-Silas's Unease and Embarrassment as Signs of Social Alienation

In Frost's depiction of Silas, the reader can clearly sense the poet's worries regarding the effects of technology on New England's ideals. Like many other conservative New Englanders, Frost saw in technology and capitalism a spread effort to uproot households and communities from their provincial identities and align them with national judgments of self and success and personal worth. Silas's defensive pride is an illustration of Frost's concern as it proves that the worth and success of the rural New Englander are no longer measured by hard work and self-reliance. New determiners of worth are obviously brought about by the advance of capitalism.

Although Silas exhibits high inward pride and self-confidence, beneath his image of a proud farmer lie some feelings of doubt and uncertainty. Mordecai Marcus points out that Silas's "pride …is mostly defensive, and not really very self-assertive" **(Marcus 66).** Silas's pride is unstable because it is also directed outward. Silas's worries and uncertainty are shown particularly in his relation to his unnamed brother and Warren.

Silas's obstinacy to ask help from his brother is as much an expression of pride as of uncertainty. In the conversation with her husband, Mary records both her critical view of Silas and his own deep estimate of himself as worthless:

> Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him— But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide. He never did a thing so very bad. He don't know why he isn't quite as good. As anyone worthless though he is, He won't be made ashamed to please his brother.**(Frost "The Death of the Hired Man")**

In an attempt to make understandable Silas's attitude towards his brother, Marcus notes that the hired man "avoids his brother because the familial situation would increase his self-criticism and because …he can't decrease his burden of guilt in the case of the brother …he tr[ies] to lessen his guilt by promising restitution by means of skilled labor"**(Marcus 66).** Therefore, it could be said that when Silas compares himself with his brother, he somehow feels embarrassed and rejected because other people would identify him with the successful banker brother. Such identification would certainly result in a lowering of society's esteem for Silas but also in a lowering of his own self-worth. The hired man never told Warren and Mary about his successful banker brother for fear of being compared to him. In a changing New England, Silas's embarrassment is a result of his rejection by the capitalist Other. We can observe in Silas's proposals for renewed help to Warren an effort to compensate for the feelings of social alienation that it generates.

To fully understand Silas's unbalanced pride, one should not neglect the man's relation to Warren. When we discussed Silas's attitude towards his brother, we hinted at the possibility that the farmer's return to the farm might well be urged by his need to minimize an internalized discomfort caused, among others, by people comparing him to the successful banker brother. Silas does not want "to beg and be beholden" **(Frost "The Death of the Hired Man"),** but rather comes back with high promises to help and work on the farm. Silas's need to exhibit pride in the face of his employer by stressing his supposed practical abilities could well express his fear that Warren would think he came to ask for charity. Warren's words: "He thinks he ought to earn a little pay/ Enough at least to buy tobacco with" are full of mockery and scorn. They reveal how the capitalist Other regards people like Silas. The latter cannot find acceptance and recognition in a changing New England. In this regard, Marcus points out that Silas's self-justifications are "appeals to social norms" **(Marcus 64).** Silas's repeated claims that he is a worthy self-sufficient farmer are clear indications of social alienation.

Because Silas still holds onto the values of the old American Dream, hard work in particular, he fails to belong in a society which is not valuing them any-more. Therefore, the comparison with both the banker brother and Warren makes the hired man feel he is not socially approved. This is the reason why he needs to continuously assert his image as a self-sufficient farmer to conceal the feeling of being socially rejected.

At the end of the poem, Warren merely declares Silas "Dead" **(Frost "The Death of the Hired Man").** The way Warren announces Silas's death carries no sign of emotion or esteem. Warren's reply expresses Silas's bleak isolation and social rejection. In the light of Lacan's theory, Silas has failed to construct an identity that would be valued and accepted by the capitalist Other. Silas's death and the way it is reported by Warren symbolize Silas's inability to get a value in a more mechanized and materialistic New England.

The indifference with which the news of Silas's death is reported equates with the small and depressing funeral of Willy to which only few people come. Both Silas and Willy die unnoticed, which stresses the alienating effects of savage capitalism on identity construction. Willy's blind pursuit of the distorted American Dream without fully understanding the mechanisms of the capitalist system causes him deep self-estrangement. On the other hand, Silas's resistance to the capitalist Other by holding onto the values of old the American Dream and preserving a simple lifestyle leads to his social alienation. To better understand how the capitalist Other shapes people's desire in a changing New England and causes them further alienation, a detailed analysis of the character Warren is needed.

3-Warren as the Capitalist Other

In the verses of the poem we find many descriptions of Warren that put forth the spirit of capitalism. All through the conversation with his wife Mary, Warren does not act "with anything other than the material and practical concern in mind." **(Boudreaux 153)** Warren, having warned Silas not to leave him at haying time, does not want to have him back. Warren will stand by his word because he told the hired man what the consequences of his desertion would be**: "**'I told him so last haying, didn't I?/ If he left then, I said, that ended it." **(Frost, "The Death of the Hired Man.")** According to Warren, feelings have no room in the business world, and kindness consists in dealing in fairly with the hired man.

Another trait which defines Warren as a capitalist Other is his belief that a person's value is determined purely and only by his productivity and profit. When he returns home, Silas is old and almost dying. This explains well Warren's refusal to take Silas back: "What good is he? Who else will harbor him?/At his age for the little he can do?" Warren regards Silas as an obsolete product which cannot sell anymore. This is an important scene to consider as it exposes Silas, who is trying to resist the capitalist Other, as a socially alienated character. The fact that Silas is rejected by Warren, who represents the capitalist Other, sig-

nals the triumph of the market-oriented version of the American Dream in a changing New England.

Warren's philosophy of life reminds us of Howard's in ***Death of a Salesman***. Howard is another figure that embodies the capitalist Other. Howard is not willing to give Willy a job in his firm, because he is aware that his sales have not been adequate for some time. Despite Willy's attempts to persuade his boss by reminding him of the past when he was working for his father, Howard acts upon his business decision and refuses to accept his request. Both Warren and Howard share interest in purely material concerns and are determined not to give a second chance to their employees because they are old and no longer productive.

Towards the end of the poem, Frost grows more skeptical about the practical approach to life in the modern cities that has started to reach rural New England. We notice that Warren's attitude goes beyond practicality to cruelty. Warren tells Mary that if the old and dying hired man has already walked thirteen miles, he might as well walk thirteen more, though he well knows that more physical effort might end his life. Armond Bourdeaux argues that Warren's "insistence upon justice has led him beyond mere principle: he also wants to punish Silas" **(Bourdeaux 155):**

> Silas has better claim on us you think. Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles. As the road winds would bring him to his door. Silas has walked that far no doubt today. Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich, A somebody—director in the bank. **(Frost, "The Death of the Hired Man")**

Therefore, Warren stands for the capitalist Other which challenges Silas's conservatism in a changing New England. While Silas embodies hard work, perseverance and a simple lifestyle, Warren represents practicality, profit, and a materialistic life. Thus, both characters can be regarded as two opposing versions of the American Dream. Frost makes it clear that the spirit of capitalism has gained

New England, a fact which has distorted the original American Dream and affected the identity of the rural New Englander.

Mary on the other hand is a source of support for Silas. She embodies the old ideals of rural New England. Throughout the poem, Mary kindly attempts to change her husband's pure practical vision of the world and bring him to sympathize with Silas. Hence, through the character Mary, Frost shows the role a woman can play in preserving the simple agrarian lifestyle in New England as opposed to the practical and merciless way of life suggested by Warren.

4-Women as Active Other: Mary's kindness as Source of Resistance to Self-alienation

Frost's sensitiveness to rural New England's most pronounced ideals is also brought into light through the contrast between Warren and Mary. While Warren stands as a representative of business ethics, Mary is a symbol of the spirit of New England neighborliness. The divergence between the two philosophies is already apparent in the first verses of the poem. Mary bids Warren to "be kind," [and then takes] the market things from Warren's hands." **(Frost "The Death of the Hired Man")** Frost is implicitly setting one set of ethics (kindness) against another (the market's spirit). Mary exhibits the philosophy that kindness should be blended with labor. In a gradual, smartly managed, yet entirely delicate process, Mary attempts to move Warren from his adherence to principle into mercy. Therefore, Mary can be regarded as active Other for her husband as she tries to change his highly practical vision that the capitalist Other has internalized in him. Moreover, Mary attempts to resist self-alienation by refusing to submit to the desire of the capitalist Other embodied in her husband. Throughout the course of the poem, Mary does not deny the legitimacy of her husband's charges, but tries to insist on Silas's now helpless condition and asks for kindness:

> No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay. And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back. He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge. You must go in and see what you can do. I made the bed up for him there tonight. You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken. His working days are done; I'm sure of it. **(Frost, "The Death of the Hired Man)**

We can clearly notice that Frost favors Mary's way of thinking to Warren's. Towards the end of the poem, Warren's reply to Mary: "I can't think Si ever hurt anyone," implies that Warren has apparently started feeling sympathy towards the hired man. Using a friendly form of Silas's name may assert a change in Warren's attitude. By favoring Mary's perception about how the relations between the farmer and the hired man should be, Frost stresses the importance of comradeship and sympathy amongst the members of the rural communities. He warns that neighborliness is put at test as rural New England is gradually being affected by "inhuman" impulses brought about by advanced capitalism. Therefore, Frost sheds light on the necessity to renew with one's origins in order to resist self-alienation.

In ***Death of a Salesman***, Linda is the opposite of Mary. Though Linda is incredibly sympathetic and kind to Willy, she is constantly defending his actions, deepening his self-alienation. However, Mary, though kind, attempts to change her husband's beliefs and principles. As the poem opens, we learn that Silas has returned to Warren's farm after leaving him during the harvest season. Yet, Mary tries to spare the hired man from the humiliation of having to ask for Warren's pity. Because she anticipates Warren's anger, Mary urges her husband to be kind and merciful: "He has come home to die." By contrast, Linda does not blame her husband when he returns to his home from a failed sales trip. She rather bids her son Biff not to hurt his father's pride as she knows that Willy is exhausted and probably dying: "He is dying, Biff."**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 20)** Therefore, we can say that Linda's kindness stands for passivity, which is a form of self-alienation, while Mary's mercy symbolizes humanity which is a form of re-

sistance against the capitalist Other in a world which is growing more and more inhuman.

Time of change in the poem is symbolically marked by Silas's desertion. Though no time reference is given in the poem, we can guess that the hired man has left his employers for a long time. Similarly, Willy in ***Death of a Salesman*** returns home from a long trip to find that many changes have occurred in the world of business. Both characters return to a world which has been redefined, or at least has started to be, by new values and principles. Apparently change is unavoidable and The New world is moving towards a more materialistic and consumerist society, accentuating people's alienation.

Frost's wariness about the spirit of capitalism and its alienating effects is not to be regarded as a complete rejection of technology and progress. In the poem, Warren's excessive practicality that reaches at times the level of cruelty does not reveal Frost's worries about technology, but about the corrupting influences of modern city that leads to people's estrangement from the members of their community and even from themselves. Richardson remarks that the poet expresses his disappointment "at how actual human beings have failed to live up to the humanist ideals with which early modernity began." **(Richardson 89)** In other words, modernity is not a danger, but it could be so if it affects human impulses such as the desire for comradeship and neighborliness, and most importantly the desire to be oneself, away from social dictates.

5- Rural Life as a Symbol of Hope and Regeneration

Frost keeps a bright vision of rural life which he considers as the domain of simplicity and humanist values. The poet's cynicism about the complex mechanization of agriculture and his concern that it would lead to the mechanization of existence are obvious in the poem. We can sense Frost's appeal for a return to a simpler agrarian lifestyle particularly towards the end of the poem. Frost empha-

sizes that empathy and kindness are of central importance when the conflict between the couple ends with Mary's mercy overwhelming Warren's judgment. The humanist ideals of rural New England are also symbolically represented by the moonlight that "poured softly in [Mary's] lap" **(Frost, "The Death of the Hired Man"),** suggesting that people should allow their individuality to be subsumed by kindness especially in a world which is becoming more and more materialistic.

Silas's attempt to die in the companionship of Mary and Warren, the people he views as his family, stresses the importance of family over money. The hired man, who has left Warren's farm for higher wages, now has returned; sick and old, seeking home. While Mary would take Silas back to give him a "home" in which to die, Warren believes the hired man does not deserve such a chance because he has deserted them during haying time. At the core of their conflict are variant conceptions of what constitutes "home." For Warren, "home is the place where, when you have to go there/thy have to take you in." This definition is countered by Mary's view that home is "something you somehow haven't to deserve." Their conflicting views imply that the "notions of 'home' have already undergone change and redefinition" **(Monteiro 3).** And Warren's conception of "home" highlights the market ethics that the farmer has adopted. Therefore, we can argue that Silas's need to spend his last hours with his "family" by his side and the triumph of Mary's view over Warren's at the end of the poem underline the vital necessity of keeping the humanist values of the rural world safe.

Return to Warren's house is also return to the farm. Silas is back to the Warrens' in search of a family but also to fulfill his contract to ditch the meadow. In his attempts to complete his duty, we can observe Silas's determination to achieve self-satisfaction through farming, which is an indication that Silas is attached to a simple way of life. In the farm, man is closer to nature and his origins. In nature, Silas can sense himself as a human being rather than a product of society. Once again, Frost stresses the inevitability to recover the exceptional old

values of rural New England in order to face the changing challenges brought about by advanced capitalism. As a rural New Englander, Silas should construct his identity as a self-sufficient man (or a self-made-man) whose pride and worth are determined by hard work and self-sufficiency.

Like Miller, Frost depicts nature as a symbol of regeneration and renewal with one's origins. In this sense, Silas could be compared to Biff. Both characters attempt to reinvent their identities in nature out of the confines of the capitalist Other. Silas's death and Biff's departure to the West symbolize the beginning of a new life away from social conformism. In nature, both characters are born again as free individuals who can reach self-gratification.

Lastly, the process through which Silas and Willy construct their self-identities calls into question American exceptionalism and sheds light on the fragility of American identity and its alienating character. Our analysis shows that the myths of the American Dream and Self-Made-Man, being flexible and long lived, are reshaped and redefined to suit urban and rural areas as well. The enterprise of hard work and individualism will be substituted for the ethics of the free market and social conformism, a fact which stresses the power of the American foundational myths. However, the economic changes in the New World reveal the illusory nature of the American Dream and raise doubts about its core beliefs of freedom, happiness and equal opportunity. Silas's and Willy's alienation and downfall in the end underscore the alienating character of the American identity. Pursuing the American Dream will result either in social alienation or self-estrangement.

It has been the primary concern of this chapter to determine the extent to which American identity formation can be regarded as a self-alienating process in twentieth century consumerist America, putting emphasis on the alienating impact of the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. In this regard, it has been found that Miller's and O'Neill's characters in ***Death of a***

Salesman and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** can be divided into three main categories. Willy and James can be considered as self-alienated pursuers of the American Dream. It has been noted that both Willy and James indentify with the image of a financially prosperous and self-fulfilled American promoted by the American Dream. My study has also shown that the characters' identification with the promoted image is an articulation of their desire to submit to the consumerist Other. Moreover, it has been unfolded that search for recognition and self-gratification is at the core of their desire. However, my analysis has revealed that Willy's and James's desire cannot be fulfilled. Willy fails to make it in sales business and ends up committing suicide. On the other hand, James, despite all his material possessions, still experiences feelings of imperfection, and he is unable to find the desired self-satisfaction.

The analysis of the dream pursuers has brought to the fore the following key points. Both Willy and James are compelled to submit to the desire of the consumerist Other and move away from their own desires in order to construct their identities, a fact which causes them further self-alienation. Also, the desire for recognition and self-fulfillment which cannot be fulfilled is evidence that the American Dream can only satisfy Willy's and James's desire in a state of illusion. The first and second points, thus, stress the alienating character of American identity in twentieth century postwar consumerist America. Moreover, the inability to get a real sense of self-fulfillment and personal welfare calls into question the belief that every American is a Self-Made-Man who can reach the American Dream, a fact which highlights the corruption of the dream and hereby raises questions about American exceptionalism. Furthermore, it sheds light on the decline of the Western world in the period following the wars, revealing people's disillusionment. The Americans are consumed by the consumer goods they crave for and are turned into split and disillusioned individuals devoid of feelings and humanity, knowing not who they really are.

My analysis has also revealed that female characters play a crucial role in

accentuating Willy's and James's self-alienating processes. It has been pointed out that both Linda and Mary can be regarded as passive Others for their husbands. My study of the female characters has shown that Linda doesn't have a dream of her own, and she rather submits to Willy's desire. All through the play, Linda fuels her husband's fantasies and false projections of himself and his sons. Similarly, Mary, by marrying James, renounces her dream of becoming a nun and lives in her husband's world of illusions. Despite Mary's critical attitude towards James at times, the wife's accusations are soon followed by regret and apologies. Therefore, I can conclude that both female characters play the role of fueling their husbands in their pursuit of the American Dream, anticipating their own self-alienation and deepening their husbands' self-estrangement.

Happy can be included into the same category. My exploration of the character has revealed that Happy, like his mother, is a passive Other. He has submitted to his father's desire and has inherited his capacity for self-delusion. The son misidentifies with his inflated image as an important assistant buyer to sustain his father's false projection for him. Hence, in addition to Linda, Happy can be considered as the second destructive force in Willy's life as he nurtures his father's fantasies and thereby amplifies his sense of self-alienation.

The study of Linda, Mary and Happy is crucial as it puts forth social conformity in twentieth century postwar consumerist America and brings into light the inevitability for the American family to submit as a whole unit to the consumerist Other and conform to social norms in order to assimilate and reach self-gratification, though transient. This raises further questions about American exceptionalism as it calls into question American individualism and democratic ideals which are essential defining characteristics of the American identify.

Biff and Edmund represent the last category and can be viewed as the opposing pole to the other characters. It has been observed that among all the Lomans and Tyrones, Biff and Edmund are the only ones who show a capacity for self-

awareness and resistance. Therefore, they can be regarded as active Others for their parents. Right from the beginning, the two sons refuse to submit to the desire of their fathers and support their fantasies. Biff turns down Willy's request to seek business in New York, and Edmund blames James for his obsession for money. Their opposition to their fathers is a sign of resistance to the consumerist Other. Rather, the two sons find refuge in nature and in the West, which are symbolically used to imply the old ideals of the exceptional American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. Out of the confines of the capitalistic and materialistic North, Biff and Edmund attempt to reinvent themselves as self-made-men who can reach the American Dream through self-reliance rather than wealth accumulation and consumerism. Nature and the West also express an attempt to return to Lacan's the Real and reconnect with one's origins.

However, Biff's and Edmund's obstinacy to submit to the desire of the consumerist Other can only result in social alienation. After all, return to the Real is impossible just as the frontier life is utopian. Therefore, an examination of the last category is important as it further emphasizes the difficulty to recover the exceptional American Dream and construct an identity outside the conventional order especially since the material West is fading and the American society is becoming more and more conformist and materialistic. It equally brings further evidence that American identity construction in the period following the wars is an alienating process and a complex struggle that results either in further self-estrangement or social alienation.

My study has also discussed the manipulative force of the myth of the American Dream, bringing to the fore Barthes's secondary message that is, how social inequalities are naturalized by the myth. This is embodied in three categories of characters. Willy and James who fail to attain the unattainable dream are misrepresented as unsuccessful people who have not made enough efforts to reach the American Dream. Linda and Mary, for their part, are made to believe that a "true" American woman is a passive and submissive wife who sustains her hus-

band's dream. As for the sons, Happy who nurtures his father's dream is presented as a loyal American son, while Biff and Edmund who resist the consumerist Other are stigmatized as losers and unfit sons. Therefore, the positions of the three categories of characters in society unveil the reality beneath the American Promised Land. Social inequalities expose America as a betrayed Promised Land in which social mobility and equal opportunity are not every one's rights, a fact which further challenges the notion of American exceptionalism.

Furthermore, a biographical study of the two plays has disclosed that Miller's and O'Neill's interests in exploring the American Dream along with its alienating impact on the American identity may well derive from their personal experiences of social alienation. My study has showed that both playwrights share a common immigrant experience which might have led them to explore the issue of assimilation in the U.S in their drama. Also, my analysis has underlined a striking correspondence between Miller's and O'Neill's family members and the fictional characters in their plays. In a similar way to Willy and James, Miller's uncles and O'Neill's father can be regarded as self-alienated father figures who caused both playwrights to experience self-disillusionment. It has been equally noted that both Miller's aunt and O'Neill's mother are supportive mother figures who nurtured their husbands' dreams, deepening their self-alienation. This recalls Mary and Linda in fiction. In addition, it has been observed that Biff and Edmund are modeled on Miller's cousins and the playwrights themselves. Like Biff and Edmund, both playwrights have shown resistance which might have caused them social alienation. As the fictional sons seek refuge in nature and in the West, Miller and O'Neill attempt to reinvent their identities away from social representations through drama. Therefore, my study exposes art as a possibility of regeneration and a means to overcome disillusionment.

Finally, a comparison between Miller's ***Death of a Salesman*** **and** Frost's **"The Death of the Hired Man"** has revealed that America's rural-urban disparities play a crucial role in the characters' process of identity construction as they

have a considerable impact on the main constituents of the American Dream. It has been noted that the advent of capitalism and unrestrained consumerism have redefined the American Dream and distorted its old values. An analysis of the character Willy in ***Death of a Salesman*** has shown that savage capitalism and uncontrolled consumerism in capitalist postwar urban New York have turned the Americans into blind consumers, accentuating their self-alienation. In "**The Death of the Hired Man,"** the alienating impact of complex mechanization and materialism is emphasized through the character Warren who embodies the capitalist Other and Silas, the typical New Englander. Silas, is rejected by his former employer Warren and he cannot regain his position in the farm, because now old and tired, he can be of no use at work. This is indicative of Silas's social alienation in a more mechanized New England. Therefore, Silas's alienation further stresses the practical spirit of the free market which has started reaching rural New England.

My analysis of the poem has also revealed that Frosts stresses the necessity to reconnect with nature and return to the farm which he considers as the domain of simplicity and humanist values. This has been noticed in Frost's depiction of Silas as a farmer who wants to reach the American Dream through self-improvement based mainly on hard work. As such, Silas is presented as the old self-made-man. Though rejected by Warren, at the end of the poem Silas dies in the farm in companionship of Mary and Warren, which may suggest Silas's attempt to reconnect with his origins. This scene stresses both the possibility and the necessity of regeneration through nature. Therefore, return to rural life is presented as a possibility to recover the ideals of the exceptional American Dream.

Moreover, it has been noted that Frost further stresses the importance that the whole American family participates in preserving the culture of rural New England and reviving the exceptional American Dream. For this purpose, Frosts hints at the necessity that Silas instill his values, particularly the enterprise of hard work, in Harold when he teaches him how to ditch the meadow. Frost goes a

step further and creates another character, Mary, who stands for the spirit of New England neighborliness, to show the role women can play in preserving New England's values and resist alienation. My study has shown that, unlike Linda, Mary is an active Other as she tries to change Warren's highly practical vision. Mary's kindness wining over Warren's market ethics at the end of the poem is indeed another note of hope and call for renewal with the old American Dream.

The alienating impact of the foundational American myths, namely the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man has been obviously brought forth by the characters' development in the three selected plays and further stressed by Frost's poem. More interestingly, alienation in the American society finds expression in Miller's and O'Neill's styles of writing. A good number of specific onstage techniques might well have been selected by the dramatists to bring forth the hidden reality beneath the characters' apparent sense of self-fulfillment and wholeness. Therefore, it would be interesting to conclude my thesis by considering the possible link between identity construction, alienation and aesthetics. In an attempt to prove this hypothesis, I will devote the last chapter of my thesis to elaborate on the main onstage directions used in the plays and see how they can relate to the characters' identity construction and alienation.

Chapter Four

Onstage Techniques as Physical Construction of American Mythology: An Alienated American Society behind an Imaginary State of Wholeness

To end my thesis, I suggest a fourth chapter that attempts to explore Miller's and O'Neill's use of literary techniques. In addition to discussing the manipulative power of myths and their alienating impact on the American identity in factual terms, Miller and O'Neill also use the allusive to paint a picture of a disjointed world and depict a sense of spiritual disillusionment. Therefore, this chapter will particularly attempt to investigate whether on-stage techniques can be used as physical construction of American mythology to stress the alienating character of the American identity. Deciphering the cultural meaning of the on-stage techniques would work for a better understanding of the plays. These techniques are part of the playwrights' handling of drama as an imitation or illusion of life which reflects the imaginary world in which the characters construct their identities. In other words, the study of such techniques would invite the audience to look for the truth behind the world of appearances. Therefore, they would further stress the manipulative power of the foundational American myths, particularly the myth of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man and emphasize the role of the Other in shaping the American identity. The main onstage techniques that will be examined in this chapter are: allusive language, titles of the plays, lighting and sounding effects, characters, claustrophobic setting, house furniture and commodities, and natural elements.

I-Representing Illusion and Alienation: The Power of Allusive Language

In the three plays, we notice that most words are used both explicitly and implicitly. According to Barthes's sign theory that involves a first order signification and a second order signification, the implicit meaning designates the ideological and cultural message conveyed by a word. Therefore, we can infer that the second reading of words in the studied plays hints at the imaginary world in which Miller's and O'Neill's characters construct their identities. The second order sig-

nification will thus invite the audience to be actively engaged in decoding the messages implied. It is necessary to recall that for Barthes a message is a complex association of signs. This means that, in addition to cultural background, understanding the message conveyed by the word requires sometimes the decoding of all the signs of the chain which could be gestures, musical sounds, colors, characters…etc. One of the techniques used by the playwrights in this concern is repetition. Sometimes the same word is recurrent throughout the play to immerse the audience into the characters' deceitful world. The repetition of ambiguous words can draw the reader's attention to seemingly minor details and make them consider other interpretations of specific events or concepts, particularly the illusions and lies surrounding the characters' worlds. As words can have different readings, so does the reality they construct. Another writing tool is making the characters on stage utter a soliloquy full of allusions implicitly addressed to the audience. This technique can be very powerful and effective as it creates a connection between the dramatist and the audience.

In ***The Crucible***, language is highly evocative. One of the most suggestive words used by Miller is "Devil" which is recurrent throughout the play. In the beginning, when rumors about the presence of witchcraft in the village of Salem are being discussed in Parris's house, the word is repeated several times. Parris says: "A wide opinion's running in the parish that the Devil may be among us" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 32).** In the same act Hale uses the word when he asks Tituba: "when did you compact with the Devil?" **(46)** Abigail also utters the word: "I danced for the Devil…I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!"**(49)** The three characters literally use the word to refer to evil spirits. First, by virtue of repeating the word, an atmosphere of deception and treachery is set into which the audience is drawn deeper and deeper. Second, when the characters utter the word "Devil" the audience is already aware that the whole witch hysteria in Salem is but a lie as there is no formal evidence of any witchcraft in the community. Therefore, the word "Devil" means more than witchcraft. It has a second order signification which

suggests the deceitful nature of the myth of the Promised Land in contrast to God's truth.

To have a deeper reading of the word "Devil", another sign should be taken into consideration: the characters. Indeed, in the play fraud and power are particularly embodied in Parris, Abigail and to a lesser extent Hale, all of whom are deceitful characters who can stand for the Puritan Other. As discussed in the second chapter, the characters' saintly models of goodness are but an illusion. In this respect, the word "Devil" reveals how the Puritan Other deceives the villagers of Salem and shapes their identities. They make them believe that the world is divided into "saints" and "damned" and that submission to the desire of the Puritan Other is the only way for the damned to comfort their troubled souls. This would lead Salem's inhabitants to sell themselves to the "Puritan Devil," a fact which would cause them further self-alienation.

Another word which is used to reinforce deceit and alienation is the word "Lie." In ***The Crucible,*** Miller integrates this word into the characters' speech to create an atmosphere of confusion and reverse our assumptions about truth and illusion. In Act III in the court scene, Abigail uses the word "lie" to deny the truth about having put the puppet in Elizabeth's house in order to accuse her of witchcraft: "It's a lie, sir" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 97),** while Proctor uses the same word to refute Abigail's lies about seeing the spirits that everybody in the court take as true: "lies, lies" **(101).**

Whenever truth is said in ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, which rarely happens in the Tyrone family, the word "lie" is uttered to generate doubt and hereby avoid confronting reality. In Act I, When Jamie accuses his father of getting an unqualified doctor who charges very little money for his services, the father retorts that Jamie lies and always thinks the worst of everyone: "That's a lie! And your sneers against Doctor Hardy are lies!" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 27)** While Jamie highlights the truth by presenting James to the audience

as a penny pincher, the word "lie" quickly draws James back into his world of illusions where he misappears as a responsible and caring father. In the following scene, roles are reversed: James blames Jamie for being the worst influence for Edmund. Immediately, Jamie cries out the word "lie" to shatter the truth and sustain the illusion that he is innocent: "That's a lie! I won't stand that, papa!" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 29)** It appears that the last act is where the word "lie" is most repeated. In the last confrontation between James and Edmund which culminates into harsh accusations, once again truth and illusion become confusingly interchangeable. "That's a lie! Your are crazy!" "Lies!" "It's a lie!"**(124-5)** are James's answers whenever Edmund attempts to unfold the curtain and denounce James as an alcoholic and careless father whose only purpose in life is accumulating wealth.

We can note that lies are suggestive of the deceitful nature of myth in both plays. In ***The Crucible***, lies help sustain the "reality" institutionalized and normalized by the Puritan Other which is embodied in the court scene by Abigail and the judges. By telling lies and making others believe them, the latter can preserve their interests and hold control over Salem's inhabitant. On the other hand, rebels such as Proctor who stand against the Puritan Other will be rejected and become socially alienated, as Proctor's hanging in the last scene may suggest.

From the standpoint of the post war period, lies in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** can be equated with the deceptive nature of the "fading" American Dream. Material possessions can only give the Tyrones an apparent short-lived satisfaction, but they never bring real happiness and personal welfare. Indeed, omnipresent irritability in the Tyrone family can be related to Lacan's concept of lack. The image of the self-satisfied and happy American promoted by the consumerist Other turns out to be a pure illusion as the material acquisitions fail to compensate for the Tyrones' imperfections, a fact which might be at the origin of the family's anguish and deep sense of self-alienation. Lies would maintain people in their imaginary worlds, and prevent them from considering other possible modes

of being, which would forcibly deepen self-alienation. The latter is further stressed by Miller and O'Neill through the titles selected for their plays which are also very suggestive.

II-Titles as Signs of Self-alienation: The Lomans' and Tyrones' Pursuit of the American Dream as a Self-destructive Struggle

Along with language, titles are also allusive in Miller's and O'Neill's plays. The full significance of the word "salesman" in ***Death of a Salesman*** is not always as obvious as it might appear. A first order signification of the word is non-coded. It literally refers to a man whose job involves selling products. If we consider the time period when the play was produced, we can assume that the title forcefully points to the consumer culture of postwar America. However, Miller never tells the audience what Willy exactly sells. Instead of drawing the audience's attention on what Willy sells, Miller chooses to focus on the fact that Willy is a salesman. As a result, the playwright creates two levels of understanding: Willy's perception of reality and the audience's perception. Willy views himself as a wealthy salesman who can make it in the business world by the mere fact of being well liked .For its part, the audience perceives a poor man who cannot make any sales, except perhaps that of "his very existence" (**Roudané, "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller" 81).** Ironically enough, Willy is so affected by the consumerist Other that he ends up selling his own "self." Each time Willy craves material possessions to reach happiness and find recognition, he is further drawn into his imaginary world. As a result, Willy becomes extremely self-alienated as his death at the end of the play may suggest.

Moreover, playing upon the word "salesman" and "death" enables Miller to dramatize the corruption and distortion of the original American Dream. In a highly consumerist and competitive society, hard work and perseverance have

been substituted for rapid success and accumulation of wealth. At this stage of analysis, the second order signification of the title becomes clearer. The "death of a salesman" is an allusion to the "death" of the old version of the American Dream as well as Willy's self –alienation. American people have sold their old values for the sake of a dream they will never reach.

The title "Long Day's Journey into Night" is also worth considering when examining the second level meaning of signs in O'Neill's play. The title stands for a very long day that fades out into night. In the morning, when the story starts, there is little turmoil within the Tyrone family. In the opening scene, O'Neill presents an image of a happy family. The Tyrones gather in the living room after breakfast. James and Mary appear as a perfect couple, and Edmund and Jamie seem to be laughing and having a good time with their parents. The Tyrones could be said to represent a model of a self-fulfilled and happy American family who has successfully reached the American Dream just as the one advertised in TV shows.

However, as darkness is taking over, the bitterness of the characters towards each other becomes obvious. The personal and interpersonal conflicts that shape the play begin to reveal themselves and the initial blissful situation will soon turn out to be only an illusion. Towards the end of Act I, we learn that Edmund might have consumption, and that Mary's morphine addiction is back. Also, the bitter arguing between James and Jamie puts forth the father's avarice and the son's immoral conduct. In the three acts that follow, the Tyrones will be gradually encompassed into darkness. As the night approaches, James and Edmund succumb to alcohol and Mary delves into past memories in an attempt to escape their present reality. Nonetheless, drinking and retreat into the past will only bring more confusion into the Tyrones' lives.

From this we can infer that "day" and "night" are two sides of the same coin.

Daylight hints at the seemingly bright promises of the distorted American Dream which offer an ephemeral state of happiness and self-satisfaction. The persuasive power of the consumerist Other lies in presenting a limited view about self-fulfillment. In a society dominated by excessive materialism and unrestrained consumerism, the gleaming image of a financially successful American family is advertized as the only "product" that would make you feel happy. On the other hand, the dense darkness of the night implies the spiritual chaos and self-alienation beneath the veneer of an apparent unified and complacent American society. The Tyrones' pursuit of financial success sinks them further and further into their worlds of illusions to the point of becoming unable to recognize themselves as darkness may suggest. The darkness of the night thus alludes to the Tyrones' self-estrangement and withdrawal from reality. Miller and O'Neill also play upon light and darkness to convey a blurred vision of reality and further emphasize self-alienation and deceit.

III-A Blurred Vision of Reality to Suggest Deceit and Self-alienation: Torment, Injustice and Self-delusion behind Transient Happiness and Self-satisfaction

References to light and darkness are recurrent in the three plays. Both Miller and O'Neill play on light and darkness to set confusion and suggest a blurred vision of reality. While light implies truth and awareness, darkness suggests deceit and illusion. In the context of the three plays, light is meant to convey reality as opposed to the lies and false hopes of myth promoted by the Other. Therefore, darkness also refers to the characters' self-alienation, as they become imprisoned in a world of self-delusion. Two main elements are used by the playwrights to convey a blurred vision of reality: darkness and fog. To reach the same purpose, Miller and O'Neill use "glasses," which also suggest a poor visibility.

1-Darkness and Fog as the Other: Miller's and O'Neill's Characters Immersed in an Alienated World of Self-delusion

In ***The Crucible***, the play opens in Parris's room, in which there is a "candle…burn[ing] near the bed" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 13).** It is morning, yet the candle is still lit. This may insinuate that there is still need for light. It could be inferred that Parris, who is viewed as a source of enlightenment by the Puritan community, is rather plunging them into hopeless darkness. Therefore, we can say that the candle is an allusion to the manipulative power of the Puritan Other embodied in Parris. The latter keeps Salem's inhabitants in ignorance and manipulates them into believing that Salem is an "earthly Heaven" in which all people can reach self-satisfaction if they fulfill God's will on earth.

However, behind the brilliant image of the earthly paradise lies a tormented and self-alienated community. Insufficient light suggests that Salem's inhabitants need real enlightenment in order to perceive the truth and eventually reinvent themselves. Kept in ignorance, people cannot construct their identities according to their own desires. They are made to believe that submission to the desire of the Puritan Other is an expression of the fulfillment of God's will on earth, a fact which will accentuate their self-alienation. Parris prevents the people of his community from perceiving the truth to hide the injustices and contradictions behind the "Heaven."

In Act III, the curtain rises on the anteroom of the General Court which is supposed to be a place of truth and justice. The most important feature of the room is the location of the windows which are "in the back wall" **(77).** When the Deputy Governor Danforth enters the room, he does not face the light pouring through the windows. Therefore, Danforth's position in relation to light reveals his unwillingness to see clearly and perceive truth. Being a representative of the Puritan Other, Danforth perpetuates the lies about the presence of witches in Salem to preserve his status as a deputy governor. The irony of the situation is that

Danforth is a court man. However, instead of shedding light on truth the man is sustaining lies. This exposes the Puritan court as a source of deceit and manipulation rather than justice. More importantly, it depicts Salem as a land of oppression rather than an "earthly Heaven." Because the Puritan Other, embodied in Danforth, never considers another mode of existence apart from the one institutionalized as the position of the light may suggest, people can but submit to the desire of the Puritan Other and become self-estranged or stand against the Puritan Other and will be socially rejected.

In ***Death of a Salesman***, a first reference to darkness is made when Miller describes the Lomans' house: "the surrounding area shows an angry glow of orange" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** The glow of orange covering stage provides a low visibility. The glow of orange which provides insufficient light could be compared to the consumerist Other that deceives people by offering them false promises of happiness and personal welfare. The consumerist Other puts forth the bright side of the American Dream and hide the horrors and social disparities in postwar consumerist America. Willy who has succumbed to the desire of the consumerist Other in the hope of reaching happiness and self-satisfaction becomes entrapped in a world of illusions and he cannot see beyond it.

Death of a Salesman begins in the evening when Willy returns home from his failed business trip. In this scene, the audience already knows that Willy is not a great and successful salesman as he pretends to be. Hence, the dramatic contrast presented by day and night can be equated with the disparity between clear visibility and blurred vision. While day suggests awareness, night implies self-delusion. Evening, with its enveloping darkness, heightens our sense of Willy's obscure perception of reality. Therefore, the darkness of the evening parallels Willy's extreme self-alienation. Willy's identity is so immersed in the discourse of the consumerist Other that he cannot recognize himself. Despite his failure in business and inability to reach self-gratification, Willy still misidentifies with his inflated image as a successful salesman.

The blurred vision conveyed by the evening also stands for the deceitful power of the consumerist Other which offers erroneous images of success and happiness to maintain the dream pursuers, like Willy, in an endless circle of consumption. The Consumerist Other presents only the brilliant side of the American Dream and keeps its destructive side hidden. In the same sense, the darkness of the opening scene foreshadows Willy's suicide which could be regarded as the destructive impact of the materialistic American Dream.

Miller also plays on light and darkness by using the windows in the room. At the beginning of Act I, in a conversation with Linda, Willy criticizes Biff and calls him "a lazy bum" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 5).** He then contradicts himself and praises Biff's popularity and attractiveness. In the same time, Willy interrupts the conversation to ask his wife to open a window while the audience can see that all the windows are open: "Why don't you open a window in here, for God's sake?"**(5)** The open windows should normally serve to light up the darkness in the room. However, with all the windows open, Willy still cannot see clearly and cannot even notice that the windows are already open. Hence, the blurred vision could be an allusion to the deceitful power of the consumerist Other which manipulates people into believing that financial success is the only route to happiness and individual welfare and keeps all other possibilities unseen.

In this context, Willy's inability to see the open windows also duplicates his failure to see the truth about his son Biff and also about himself, an idea reinforced by Willy's complaining that "they [are] boxed …in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks" **(6).** Miller presents Willy as a prisoner of the false hopes and promises promoted by the American Dream in postwar consumerist America. Willy's submission to the consumerist Other makes of him a completely self-alienated character who fails to see who he really is, a fact which implies the necessity to open up to the real world as the need to open the windows may suggest.

In the final scene, at Willy's funeral, "the darkening stage" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 48)** comes to further stress Willy's self-delusion and self-alienation. Willy was not able to see beyond the shadows and lies of the consumerist Other. The salesman was blinded by financial success, a fact which makes it impossible for him to develop a desire of his own. As a result, Willy lived his whole life in the shadow of his successful father and brother, a fact which caused him self-estrangement. Willy's suicide would not bring more light into his family's life. Indeed, the poor salesman died as he lived. Willy's poorly-attended burial emphasizes the Lomans' gloomy future and obviously foreshadows Biff's and Happy's failure to fulfill their father's dream. Hence, the darkness that covers the area after Willy's entombment parallels the burial of his "self" which is drifted deeper and deeper in his obscure imaginary world.

In O'Neill's drama, the fog plays an important role in conveying a blurred vision of reality. From the start of his carrier, O'Neill had used the fog as an important element in his plays. In the initial stage directions of his one act play ***Bound East for Cardiff***, the playwright specifies that the actions of the play take place on "a foggy night midway on the voyage between New York and Cardiff" **(Dubost 199).** In ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, the fog functions in the same way as in nature. Though its effects on the characters are slightly different, the fog envelops all the Tyrones in a world of illusions and deceit. As the play moves forwards towards its end, the increase in fogginess is parallel to the Tyrones' withdrawal and retreat. In the beginning of Act I, Mary insinuates that she is troubled by the thick fog that enwraps the Tyrones' summer home each night when in the morning she tells her husband: "thanks heavens, the fog is gone" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 14).** The fog clearly adds darkness to the scene and creates an atmosphere of impenetrable confusion and poor visibility. This may partly explain why Mary is distressed by the presence of the fog.

Thierry Dubost, for his part, points out that the fog "does not lie in its physical presence, but what matters is that it should be part of, or represent, a mental envi-

ronment" **(Dubost 31).** Therefore, the presence of the fog on stage invites the audience to have a second reading, taking into account the historical and cultural contexts of the play. In this context, it could be argued that the fog is an allusion to the consumerist Other that manipulates the Tyrones by making them temporarily identify with a deceitful image of a happy and self-satisfied American family. Yet, behind apparent happiness and self-gratifications lie torment and distress as the frequent quarrels in the play may suggest.

Mary's relationship to fog is by no means simple. She claims in Act III that she is not disturbed by the fog: "It wasn't the fog I minded, Cathleen, I really love fog" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 94).** What Mary really dislikes could rather be the sound of the foghorn and not the fog itself. The fog appeals to Mary, because it "hides [her] from the world and the world from [her]" **(14).** As the fog creeps between people and moves them to isolation, it pulls Mary gradually into her illusory world, enabling her to indulge in morphine without being criticized by her family. It hides all the imperfections that surround her life and remind her incessantly of the unhappy wife and careless mother she really is. In other words, it enshrouds Mary's painful present reality. Therefore, the fog is also an allusion to Mary's utter self-alienation. It serves to blur Mary's vision of the real world, making the boundaries between reality and illusion vague and unclear.

As for James, the fog stands for his blindness to confront the truth about himself and his family. James becomes an extremely self-alienated character who lives in a world of his own. He has lost sight of his failure to achieve happiness and also his sons' inability to come up to his expectations. Therefore, the fog is of great importance for James as it keeps the dark side of his life unseen, plunging him into a world of false promises and unreached dreams. James is so ushered in his imagined world that he becomes detached from both himself and the members of his family. This is implied by the broken down communication be-

tween the Tyrones who become unable to confront each other and make progress toward betterment.

The same could be said about Edmund, despite being the only member of the Tyrones who admits the destructive effects of not standing against the consumerist Other. Indeed, Edmund confronts the bitter truth about his sickness and his mother's addiction, and he even attempts to bring the other Tyrones back to reality. This may explain why at the beginning of the play Edmund is not much concerned with the presence of the fog.

However, when Edmund reaches his limits in the last act and gets closer to the bleak reality, the fog becomes even denser and more appealing. He finally confesses: "The fog was where I wanted to be" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 113),** which may be seen as another form of retreat. As discussed in the previous parts, Edmund defies the consumerist Other and attempts to construct his identity by renewing with nature. Yet, constructing an identity out of the confines of the consumerist Other can but lead to social rejection. Therefore, the fog in this scene suggests both Edmund's renewal with nature and his social-alienation. Being rejected, Edmund cannot be recognized by the consumerist Other as a "true" American as the growing density of the fog may convey. The blurred vision of reality conveyed by the fog is further stressed by Mary's glasses. In ***Death of a Salesman***, the same item is used by Miller to suggest Willy's distorted vision of reality and self-estrangement.

2-Glasses as Sign of Screened Reality: The Other as Source of Deceit and Self-alienation

"Glasses" which suggest inability to see clearly are mentioned several times in the plays. In ***Death of a Salesman,*** they may stand for the screen of mythic fantasy that prevents Willy from distinguishing between truth and lies, which causes his withdrawal from reality and accentuates his self-estrangement. The consum-

erist Other manipulates Willy into viewing himself as a successful business man and postwar consumerist America as an organic whole where every American can easily reach social mobility and personal welfare. Because Willy has submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other, he can see the world only through their eyes as the glasses may suggest.

Act I begins with Willy returning from an extended Florida sales trip to his home where he tells his wife about his wandering mind and his near accident. In an attempt to persuade Willy to rest, Linda literally refers to his poor eyesight: "May be it's your glasses. You never went for your new glasses" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** However, if we go much deeper into the meaning of Linda's statement, we notice that the word "glasses" is probably intended to be understood both literally and figuratively. Eric. J Sterling explains:

> Willy's faulty eyesight and glasses represent the most notable personal symbol of his effort to compensate for his failings. Willy cannot see properly; this represents not only his physical eyesight but his perspective on life as well. He admits that he is not content with his current mode of life, but he does not change his illusion that, one day he will attain the prestige and honor inherent to a successful salesman and alpha male. However, the glasses never really rectify his erroneous vision; they merely act as a temporary and superficial aid. Instead of changing his impaired vision of the intangible (at least to him) American dream, while placing health and happiness ahead of financial prowess; he simply conform to the capitalistic society by procuring glasses that will aid him in his flawed ideology. **(Sterling 166)**

Hence, Linda's allusion to the need to change glasses implies the necessity of getting in touch with reality. Willy is isolated in a world of lies and cannot see beneath the screened reality, suggested by the glasses, which prevents the poor salesman from realizing the false promises of the distorted American Dream. Therefore, Linda's remark could be taken as a call to open to a new reality.

"Glasses" are equally used by O'Neill in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** to enhance deceit and Mary's deep sense of self-alienation. Mary often fails to find her glasses. At the beginning of Act I, when the mother catches Jamie's eyes regarding her with an uneasy look, she immediately remarks: "My eyes are getting so bad and I never can find my glasses" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 18).** On other occasions, Mary claims she needs new glasses. Later in the same act, when Mary and her husband are arguing over Edmund's state of health, the wife nervously observes: "I really should have new glasses. My eyes are so bad now" **(24).** Mary's weak eyesight may imply her inability to consider truth on her own. She is completely withdrawn in her world of illusions to the point of losing touch with herself. This idea is emphasized by her need to wear glasses, which may suggest her submission to the desire of the consumerist Other. Being completely self-alienated, Mary can but view the world from the perspective of the consumerist Other. She still misidentifies with the image of a happy and self-fulfilled American woman to be recognized and validated by the consumerist Other. Therefore, Mary's need for "new glasses" brings out the necessity to awaken to consciousness, detach her desire from the desire of the Other and reconnect with herself.

Therefore, the deceitful nature of myth and its alienating impact suggested by the glasses sink both Willy and Mary further in a world of self-delusion, without providing real release. Neither of them can really see how unrestrained consumerism has distorted the American Dream and turned people into tormented and confused individuals, searching in vain for happiness and release. The consumerist Other thus screens all the contradictions in postwar consumerist America and puts forth an image of a happy American family who have successfully attained the American Dream. Alienation and self-delusion prevailing in the period following the wars are also conveyed through other characters in the plays that are typical of their time period. The characters' names, their way of acting, and their state of health can all have a second order meaning which further stresses their self-alienation and sheds more light on the deceitful nature of myth.

IV-Characterization as Onstage Reflection of the Self-alienating Power of Myth

In the drama of Miller and O'Neill, the audience can notice that characters are more than mere figures in the story whose roles are limited to create the action of the plot. In Barthes's terms, characters can be regarded as signs which vehicle a cultural meaning. Therefore, every detail in relation to the characters is worth considering in order to decipher the second order meaning. In our analysis, the focus will be on three main aspects: the characters' names, their body language and their clothes. A close scrutiny of the three aspects would bring to the fore the deceitful power of myth, showing how it deepens the characters' self alienation through manipulation.

1-Allegorical Names to Suggest Self-alienation and Self-delusion

Symbolic names in ***Death of a Salesman*** are no less suggestive than in Miller's other plays. Most of them have a second order signification. A passive reading may make it seem as though the last name "Loman" is void of any second level meaning. However, a deep analysis of Willy Loman invites the audience to have a second reading of the character's last name. Abbotson argues that "Loman is often read as indicating Willy to be a low-man, common and insignificant" **(Abboston, *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller: A Literary Reference to his Life and Work* 144).** Abboston's argument proves valid especially if we consider the end of the play when Willy appears broken and defeated. Indeed, when Willy boasts in the last act "I am not a dime a dozen! I am Willy Loman" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 45),** the audience can quickly notice the irony of the situation created by the disparity between the truth and illusion. In the imaginary world, Willy is a successful salesman. In reality, Willy is but a poor man who

cannot even pay his debts back. Therefore, Willy's name is an allusion to his extreme self-estrangement.

By extension, the name "Loman" also alludes to the deceitful power of the myth of the American Dream. The consumerist Other depicts postwar America as a society in which people like Willy are more likely to be part of the lower class because of wrong decisions they have made or lack of enthusiasm. In so doing, the consumerist Other normalizes social inequalities and maintains the dream pursuers in an endless pursuit of the unattainable. Willy is always in search of a better tomorrow that will never come.

Happy can be regarded as a young version of Willy. Much like Willy, Happy denies reality about himself as an assistant to an assistant buyer, and exaggerates details in his life to support his inflated image as a prominent assistant buyer. Hence, both father and son share a capacity for self-delusion and are unable to tell lies from the truth, a fact which keeps them imprisoned in their imaginary worlds and causes them further self-alienation.

Another point which is worth recalling is Happy's emotional abandonment. As already discussed in the third chapter, Happy's blind pursuit of women is indicative of his extreme loneliness. Therefore, Happy can be affluent and happy in his illusory world only. The boundary between reality and imagination calls for a second reading of the name "Happy," which makes the audience see the truth behind the screen of illusion. The name "Happy" which should evoke content is used by Miller in a negative way to suggest lack of happiness. If we consider that Willy is the one who named his son, we can say that the name "Happy" is an insinuation of the false promises of happiness and personal welfare promoted by the American Dream that the father has inculcated in his son.

O'Neill's characters' names are equally suggestive. The audience can easily notice that the name of the character "Mary" has been carefully selected by the

playwright to allude to the Virgin. Harold Bloom explains that "Mary identifies herself with the Virgin Mary whose single son died prematurely and whose virginal state corresponds to the virginity Mary has lost and longs to recapture" **(Bloom, *Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night* 193).** This becomes apparent in Mary's soliloquy toward the end of Act III in which she addresses both herself and her namesake the Virgin Mary: "I must go upstairs. I haven't taken enough…I hope, sometimes, without meaning it, I will take an overdose. I never could do it deliberately... The Blessed Virgin would never forgive me, then" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 105).** At this point of the play, the audience may sense that Mary is seeking redemption through Mary the Virgin for having lost faith in her; at the same time she is asking forgiveness from her own self for having abandoned her past dream of becoming a nun: her own choice. Therefore, we can assume that Mary's loss of innocence stands for the loss of her desire. Having submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other, Mary cannot construct an identity according to her own desire, which has caused her complete self-estrangement.

Given that the past and present are interchangeable in the play, we can infer that Mary's loss of innocence also refers to the tainted version of the American Dream to which Mary adhered when she married James. Therefore, a second order signification of the name "Mary" serves to discredit the supposed purity of the American Dream in the postwar period. America is no longer a virgin land where every individual can reach social mobility and be recognized by the others for what he is regardless of the fortuitous circumstance of birth or position. By encouraging rampant consumption in the name of the consumer culture, the dream has become purely materialistic, failing to provide Mary with a real sense of wholeness and self-worth. Like her husband, Mary has become lost in a world of illusions and suicide seems to be the only option that would eventually make her feel relieved.

To further stress alienation and self-deception, Miller and O'Neill use body

language, pauses, and same like acting techniques to increase tensions between characters, extend emotional moments and add an overall air of authenticity to the work. Such gestures, postures and temporary inaction are not used only in theatre but they are also found in daily life. In the light of Barthes's theory, these techniques form a chain of signs, most of which contain meanings by themselves. However, a close scrutiny of the characters' style of acting in the drama of Miller and O'Neill displays the dramatists' tendency to combine these signs to create a second-level meaning. More precisely, our study sheds light on how these acting techniques are used by the playwrights to suggest alienation and disenchantment.

2-The Characters' Body Language as Sign of Alienation and Disenchantment

Belief in the supernatural in seventeenth century Puritan Salem allows deceitful people like Abigail to manipulate Salem's inhabitants, deepening their self-alienation. Through deceit, Abigail can create an imaginary world which is mis-taken for reality. This is best exemplified by Abigail's hysterical acting in the scene court. Abigail claims to be possessed by the Devil when, "with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 101),** pre-tending to see a bird: "Why do you come, yellow bird?" **(101)** Abigail's hysteri-cal scream is immediately assisted by the other girls and so many of the older people seeming to believe in the spirits too. Knowing that a trick is being played against her, Mary warren joins the hysteria and enacts on the stage as if she were possessed by the spirits. She screams in horror and points at Proctor: "You're the Devil's man!" **(102)**

The fact that the girls join in hysteria, mimicking Abigail's hysterical screams indicates the extent to which Puritan Salem is a conformist community. Abigail's hysterical acting imitated by the girls highlights the manipulative pow-er of the myth of the Promised Land and dramatizes the Puritans' limited percep-tion of reality which is advanced as the only possibility of being. People in Salem

submit to the desire of the Puritan Other, behaving in accordance with the Puritan beliefs about the supernatural for fear of being rejected. This turns Salem's inhabitant into completely self-alienated beings living in a world of illusions shaped by the Puritan Other.

In ***Long Day's Journey into Night,*** the style of acting of the three male characters in the final scene also brings to the fore the characters' utter alienation and self-deception. When Mary sinks further into her world of illusions, "Tyrone stirs in his chair [and] Edmund and Jamie remain motionless" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 156).** Then, a long pause follows. The men's body language along with the dramatic heavy pause create an image of death which stands for the characters' extreme sense of alienation. .

The male characters remain immobilized, making no attempt to bring Mary back to reality. The men's paralysis can be equated with the spiritual paralysis that characterized postwar America. This paralysis grew out of the knowledge that the past was dead and that the present had probably no future. The false promises of the fading American Dream could only reinforce and intensify the feelings of confusion, despair and disenchantment. The audience watches the four Tyrones trapped in a death-like world in which alienation and disillusionment almost amounts to a state of madness.

In addition, Edmund's state of health is a powerful sign of the Tyrones' disillusionment. When the play opens, we learn that Edmund suffers from consumption. A reflection on the conditions of Edmund's birth along with the consumer values that characterized the postwar American society invite us to consider a second order signification of Edmund's sickness. In this concern, tuberculosis can be a reflection of postwar America. Both Edmund and the American society are suffering from consumption but in two different ways. Edmund is physically sick and he is becoming progressively weaker, and will probably pass away. In the period following the war, capitalist America was spiritually wasting away

when all old values seemed to falter. The harmful effects of tuberculoses on Edmund are comparable to the destructive impact of consumerism on the American society. Therefore, Edmund's state of health can also be related to the American Dream. We can infer that the alienating results of the fading American Dream are manifested in Edmund's illness. Striving for material success is a vicious and never-ending cycle that will never bring lasting happiness and self-fulfillment. The more material possession the Americans owned, the more their belongings owned them. The Tyrones become trapped and enslaved to money which weighed them down both physically and mentally.

Self-estrangement and disenchantment culminate in ghostly representations of characters which offer a space for thinking through the relations between the real and the visionary. Miller introduces ghostly figures from the past, making his characters fall into delirium. O'Neill for his part presents the Tyrones as fragile and inconsistent to the point of seeming like flickering shadows. In this concern, Harold Bloom once said that "*Long Day's Journey into Night* could be retiled The Ghost of Sonata[1]**" (Bloom,** ***Bloom's Modern Critical Views: Eugene O'Neill*** **3),** a play in which characters are presented as ghosts walking in daylight. It could be said that both dramatists portray ghostly characters haunted by the false promises of the myth of the American Dream. Deciphering the apparitions at the secondary level would thus expose the persuasive power of myth which blurs the boundaries between reality and appearance. It would equally shed light on the characters' self-alienation suggested by their utter delirium.

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[1] **The Ghost of Sonata is a play in three acts by the Swedish playwright August Strindberg, written in 1907. "In the course of the play, we journey to another reality. Along with the Student, [one of main characters], we gradually discover that the house which on the outside looks so attractive (Act I), has a less much appealing interior (Act II). Life might not be what we had accepted…The stable, attractive house proves to be a mirage. The true reality-this is what Strindberg wants us to experience-is to be found in the afterlife…Life on earth is painful and illusory….the living are actually ghosts" (Tornqvist 25).**

Ghosts of dead figures are central to ***Death of a Salesman***. Prominent among these apparitions is the spirit of Willy's older brother Ben who appears at crucial moments in the play could be regarded as the embodiment of the consumerist Other. The phantom of Ben appears for the first time in Act I, While Willy and his neighbor Charley are playing cards and arguing about business. When Charley tries to offer Willy a job, which might allude to Willy's failure to make it in the business world, Ben makes his entrance and starts talking about his past successful experiences. The second scene of Ben takes place in Howard's office when Willy has just been fired. At this critical moment, Ben attempts to persuade his brother to start a new career. The last and most important appearance is right before Willy's suicide when Ben is pushing Willy "to fetch a diamond out" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 58).** We notice that Ben's apparitions parallel Willy's different attempts to make it in business. Therefore, Ben's ghost reveals that Willy's desire to become a successful businessman is the desire of the consumerist Other. Hence, each apparition further stresses Willy's self-alienation.

However, every time the ghost of Ben appears, whom Willy considers as a figure of success, Willy is moving a step backward. Therefore, the different apparitions of Ben set clear boundaries between Willy's inflated image as a successful salesman and Willy's image as a failure. His comments such as: "The greatest can happen" **(17)** or "It's not what you do Ben, it's who you know and the smile on your face" **(30)** recur throughout the conversations with Ben's ghost, stressing Willy's unrealistic expectations in terms of success. In each encounter, Willy seems to be concerned only with financial success, showing no real interest in the means to achieve it. Therefore, it could be said that Ben's ghost stands for the distorted versions of the Self-Made-Man and the American Dream that Willy fails to fully understand. Under the influence of money worship, Willy like many American people can only catch an erroneous perception of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man without giving importance to the core principles and standards of success. Therefore, Ben's ghostly apparition puts forth Willy's self-

deception, stressing his failure to achieve the false promises of happiness and self-fulfillment in postwar consumerist America.

Whereas there are no apparitions similar to those haunting figures, In ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, Mary's irruption at the end of the play produces a ghost illusion. After a full day injecting morphine, Mary appears on stage like a phantom, regarding James and Edmund "from somewhere far away within herself, without recognition, without either affection or animosity" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 152).** Mary moves above and beyond her husband and son like "a ghost haunting the past" **(133).** Despite her husband's apparent financial success, Mary is unpleased with her present life and cannot help feeling as if she is living under constant pressure. Unwilling to confront her bleak present, Mary ushers herself in a world of illusions, falling into utter delirium. At this point of the play, Mary appears so fragile that the audience can barely assume there will be another chance to see her conscious again. Therefore, the ghost-like appearance of Mary could be seen as an extreme form of self-alienation and self-deception.

A similar ghostly figure is to be found in Eliot's **"The Hollow Men,"** another twentieth century literary work which stresses alienation and despair. The first verses of the poem "We are the hollow men/ We are the stuffed men" **(Eliot "The Hollow Men"**) offer a portrayal of individual's alienation in the modern world. The word "stuffed" implies that modern man has become a stranger to himself. Along the lines of Lacan's theory, it can be stated that modern man has been emptied of his old self which is substituted for his Ego Ideal. This image of self-estrangement is reinforced by Eliot when he describes modern man as "shape without form, shade without color/paralyzed force, gesture without motion," which stresses modern man's retreat into meaninglessness and nothingness. Modern men have been turned into empty shadows and dragged down into utter despair. Loss and despair are further emphasized by images of death which are recurrent throughout the poem. "This is the dead land/ This is cactus land"

(Eliot, *The Hollow Men*) depict the modern world as a dead and sterile land in which people fail to obtain real self-satisfaction and self-fulfillment.

In the same concern, Mary's ghost exposes postwar consumerist America as a world of appearances in which people lead a ghostlike life, breathing elusive dreams like air. Mary becomes another unreal part of the society. In this sense, it is worth pinpointing that in the final scene Mary is described by means of her outward appearance and no insight is offered into the interior world of the character. In so doing, O'Neill marks the contrast between material possessions and spiritual poverty that characterizes the sterile modern world. Moreover, focus on Mary's visible aspect makes the audience perceive Mary as a character whose existence is reduced to a mere physiological level. Behind the veneer of a capitalist paradise lies an empty world where people are transformed into the living dead of a fallen western civilization. The image of postwar America as a waste land is further emphasized by the characters' clothes which, like body language, have a second order signification.

3- Clothes as Signs of Self-alienation and Disillusionment

According to Barthes, clothes can also have a cultural meaning. For instance, the white wedding dress is more than a simple gown that the bride wears in her wedding ceremony. It "is popularly supposed to indicate the bride's virginal purity" **(Blank 99).** In ***Long Day's Journey into Nigh*t'**s final scene, Mary appears holding her white wedding dress dragging along the flour as she advances into room. At this particular moment, Mary fondly remembers the life she had as a young girl in the convent. Therefore, we can consider that the gown stands for the past that Mary perceives as being pure and untainted. In this concern, it is worth recalling that the white color of the wedding gown is "an inheritance from none other than England's Queen Victoria. At her 1840 wedding, she made the unprecedented sartorial choice…of wearing a splendid white satin gown" **(99).** Hence, the white wedding gown could be an allusion to the Victorian values that

dominated the Western society during the pre-war period. By extension, it refers to the American past, particularly the exceptional American Dream before it became exclusively materialistic.

However, finding the gown brings no real relief to Mary who goes back even further in her imaginary world. In this scene in particular, Mary appears completely self-alienated. Mary's restless attitude and desperate search for unity and security express utter disillusionment. Mary can find rest neither in the past nor in the present. O'Neill might be alluding to the fact that romanticizing the past is not enough for regeneration and renewal with the self. O'Neill subtly offers restoring the old values, among others the untainted American Dream, as a remedy for the crisis and cure to the Americans' self-deception and frustration in the contemporary world.

Although Miller gives no explicit stage directions for the costumes, any producer of ***The Crucible***, researching the background of the Puritan community during Salem witch trials, would discover that people at that time wore the most somber clothing. For example, "magistrates and ministers were likely to have clothing dyed black… [and] this was a sign of their distinction since black was the most expensive fabric to make a sign of high status, not sobriety" **(Bermer 51).** However, modest people need to be dressed in regular Puritan clothes made of dark cheap fabric. Therefore, we can infer that Reverend Parries, Reverend Hale and the judges in the play are all dressed in black. In this sense, the black fabric could be meant to imply the Puritan Other.

Being reserved for ruling elders, the black suit may refer to the evil forces that govern the Puritan community. The Puritan Other prevents people from seeing the truth beneath appearances as the black color may suggest. On the surface, judge Danforth is a highly respectful magistrate who is entrusted with guaranteeing security and administering justice in Salem. However, over the course of events, the audience learns that while the lives of many innocent people are ru-

ined, Danforth still cannot agree that the trials are but pretence. He refuses to accept the truth, because to do so would hamper his position. Like the other magistrates and ministers in the play, Danforth should perpetuate lies to preserve the order established by the Puritan Other. Therefore, the black outfit could be seen as an allusion to the deceptive power of the myth of the Promised Land that presents Salem as an "earthly paradise" to hide injustices and social inequalities. People who submit to the desire of the Puritan Other can only perceive truth from the eyes of the Puritan Other, which causes them further self-alienation.

In ***Death of a Salesman***, "stockings" is a recurring allusion in the play. Stockings appear in the hands of two female characters, Linda and The Woman with whom Willy had an affair. Throughout the play, the audience learns that Willy offered new stockings to The Woman as a gift, while he reprimands his wife for mending her torn stockings and implicitly suggests that he will buy her new ones: "I won't have you mending stockings in my house! Now throw them out!" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 14)** Sterling argues: "The darning of the stockings…[points to] Willy's failure in business because Linda cannot afford to buy new pairs and because the salesman sleeps with [The Woman] partly in order to go 'right through to the buyers'" **(Sterling 10).** On both occasions, the word "stockings" serves to confront Willy's image as a plain man with his inflated images as a wealthy business man, which reminds the audience of how self-alienated Willy is.

Therefore, the second level meaning of the "torn stockings" serves to bring to the fore the deceptive force of the American Dream along with the fading promises of happiness and personal welfare in a time of inherent consumerism. Willy's unwillingness to see his wife amend the stockings is indicative of his inability to see the truth about his life. Instead, Willy offers new stockings, but still the same product, to The Woman in order to help him in business, a fact which reveals Willy's blind obsession with financial success. In this respect, it could be stated that "stockings" alludes to the veneer of the myth over reality. Just as the

silk stockings may make a woman's legs more attractive, the distorted American Dream may also hide the contradictions in postwar consumerist America and make it appear as an appealing paradise.

The deceptive power of myth conveyed by the characters' clothes is reinforced by Miller's and O'Neill's use of a good number of consumer products that carry a second order signification. Furniture and consumer goods are used in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** as recurrent signs of the manipulative power of the American Dream in postwar consumerist America which offered the Americans false promises of happiness and self-satisfaction.

V-The Mythical Dimension of the Quotidian: House Furniture and Commodities to Stress the Deceptive Power of the Consumerist Other

In the drama of Miller and O'Neill, commodities and furniture which belong to the quotidian can be regarded as socio-cultural signs whose meanings are not inherent in the physical objects. The meanings of these objects are generated in the characters' interaction with the mythical discourse. Systems of such meanings have a second order signification. The playwrights make use of a good number of material goods and objects to highlight alienation and stress the deceptive power of the myth of the American Dream carried out through the consumerist Other.

1-Consumer Products to Suggest Self-alienation and Disillusionment: Buying False Promises of Happiness and Personal Welfare

a-Food as Transient Happiness and Escape

"Cheese" is a consumer item that Miller employs to convey disenchantment. Miller uses cheese in particular, because it is ephemeral and short-lived. This could be an allusion to the transient happiness and self-satisfaction that the American Dream provides for its pursuers. In the course of a conversation about Biff's alleged success, Linda tells her husband that she bought a new kind of American "cheese." The fact that the cheese is new could be taken to mean that Linda is alluding to the necessity to consider a new reality apart from that institutionalized by the consumerist Other. Willy's reaction is irritable and dismissive: "I don't want change! I want Swiss cheese. Why I am always contradicted?" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 6)** From this quote, we can infer that Willy fears making change in his life, although he ironically at the same time needs nothing but change. The old salesman cannot realize how false and distorted the American Dream has become especially with the country's growing obsession with the consumer culture. Willy's ideals and illusions about material success are riddled as the holes of the Swiss cheese may suggest.

The holes in the cheese may remind the audience of the holes in Linda's stockings. Both stress the growing corruption of the American Dream through excessive materialism in a society being torn apart day after day. The holes allude to the shortcomings of the American Dream which falls short of its promises of happiness and self-realization. Moreover, Cheese cannot be stored for long just as Willy cannot experience a long lasting happiness. Willy's apparent sate of self-satisfaction will soon turn into disenchantment as his suicide at the end of the play may suggest.

b-Wine as Sign of Disillusionment about Family Union and Personal Welfare

Self-deception in O'Neill's play is best conveyed by wine which only allows temporary escape and offers a transient state of self-satisfaction. To better understand the cultural meaning of alcohol, attention should be paid to many factors such as the activities that accompany drinking, the time when you drink and the types of drink. In the light of Barthes's theory, these elements can be regarded as signs that relate to each other and that can affect the secondary meaning of alcohol tasting. For example, when discussing drinking in the Western culture, Dwight B. Heath notes that "although many Northern Americans and Northern Europeans hold strongly to the view that drinking in the morning is morally wrong [because it is]…a signal that the drinker is a drunkard… such drinking is acceptable… in cultures where drink is viewed …as an important part of the diet" **(Heath 14).** In the same respect, Heath adds that in the US, "some bars advertize 'happy hour' or 'attitude adjustment hour' …for a couple of hour in the late afternoon or early evening" **(15).** Drink, thus, may serve as a marker of shift from work to leisure life.

More importantly, the Mass, ceremonial meals, and Thanksgiving are also celebrated with wine, which may imply that wine is a source of unity which holds the family and society together. Indeed, wine is central to the Catholic faith. In the first Mass at the Last Supper, the Christ offered bread and wine to his disciples which "became the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ." **(Baker 160)** The Mass became "a physical and literal continuation [of] Christ's once-for-all sacrifice" **(161).** From this, we can infer that wine is a sign of union and spiritual faith.

In the time when O'Neill produced his play, drinking consumption was meant to construct an ideal world in which financially prosperous American people were supposedly enjoying happiness, family union and personal welfare. Ironically enough, the Tyrones drink in order to escape or transcend the present reality rather than enjoy this reality. Therefore, wine is meant to suggest escape and alienation rather than family union and love, especially since the Tyrones drink in

times of tension. The more the Tyrones drink the more they become self-alienated. Every tense conversation that brings up the family's troubles results in one of the men drinking. This serves to show the audience that the Tyrones always drink to avoid telling or facing the truth. The father might very well have wished his son drunk to escape blame. In Act II, when James realizes that his wife is back on the drug, he immediately starts drinking: "I understand that I've been a God-damned fool to believe in you (he walks away from her to pour himself a big drink)" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 59-60).** Obviously, Mary's addiction brings James to confront his image as a cheap and neglecting husband, a truth that he does not want to admit. In the final act, Edmund explicitly states that the family can find refuge only in communal drunkenness: "Be always drunken...If you would not feel the horrible burden of time weighing on your shoulders and crushing you to the truth, be drunken continually" **(114).** The Tyrones' attitudes clearly expose their restlessness and disenchantment rather than happiness and serenity.

We can conclude that despite all material possessions, the Tyrones still experience imperfection, a feeling of vacuum to use Lacan's words that they desperately try to compensate with alcohol. Spiritual faith and love are substituted for greed and consumption. The blurry vision brought on by drinking can be equated with the deceptive force of the American Dream that sinks the Tyrones further and further into their world of illusions, accentuating their self-alienation. The dream-like state caused by drinking is emphasized by house furniture which further stresses self-alienation and self-deception.

c- The Broken Refrigerator and "Deadly" Water Heater as Deceit and Manipulation: The American Dream as a Broken Promise in a World of Gadgets

In ***Death of a Salesman***, the tainted American Dream to which Willy still clings is reinforced by the broken refrigerator of the Loman family especially if we re-

late it to Swiss cheese already discussed. The audience can infer that the cheese will probably become unsafe to consume in a shorter period of time. This alludes to the transient happiness that the American Dream may bring to the Americans. Willy has equipped his home with a broken refrigerator, which insinuates his holding to a broken promise of reaching happiness and self-gratification through material success. Later on, Willy tells his wife that they "should have brought a well-advertised machine"**(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 25).** Willy's words are highly suggestive. The salesman is more concerned with advertizing than the quality of the refrigerator. This is further evidence of Willy's self-deception. He can only see the bright side of the American Dream but fails to notice that it has been distorted from its original version as the broken refrigerator may insinuate.

This idea is reinforced by "The water heater," one of the basic elements with which Willy must equip his home for his family's health and comfort. However, the audience will soon realize that this item will do them more harm than good. By the end of Act I, Linda is petrified to find a rubber hose behind the water heater, a fact which implies that Willy apparently intends on inhaling gas from the water heater as a means of suicide. Yet, Linda cannot bring herself to confront her husband about the hose: "I'm ashamed to. How can I mention it to him? Every day I go down and take away that little rubber pipe. But when he comes home, I put it back where it was" **(21).** Therefore, we can consider that the water heater suggests all the deceptions and broken promises about happiness and self-satisfaction, and Linda's inability to confront Willy and accept that he would ever kill himself indicates how far the Lomans are trapped in their imaginary world. When the play reaches its end, Biff brings the hose out onto the kitchen table in an attempt to bring the truth to light: "Look what I found in the cellar, for Christ's sake. How can you bear to let it go on?"**(39)** Unfortunately, none of the Lomans seem to pay attention to him, showing their inability to face reality for fear of falling short of their high expectations. Through the second level signification of the "gas heater" Miller thus demonstrates the deceitful nature of myth which manipulates people into buying products that would ironically end up

causing their death. The manipulative force of the American Dream is further emphasized by the car which plays an important role in both ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***.

d-The Car as an Allusion to Disillusionment about Getting Rich Quick

In the postwar years, the car was promoted as a sign of personal welfare, prosperity and mobility. Willy usually evokes his Chevrolet, an American car brand, which he often associates with his old good days when everything seemed to be perfect, or at least this is what he tried to convince himself over and over again: "I was thinking of the Chevyy. (Slight pause) Ninety twenty eight…When I had that red Chevvy- (Breaks off) That's funny? I could sworn I was driving that Chevvy today" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 06).** Willy's remembrance of the car is synonymous of mythicizing it. The Chevrolet is not a mere product to achieve financial success; it is meant to support the American Dream as the only route to integrity and social mobility.

Nonetheless, the car is used to commit suicide. This is confirmed by the final scene when Willy is heard racing off with his car to kill himself. This scene shows that Willy wants to die the death of a salesman. That is why he has opted to commit suicide by wrecking his car instead of inhaling gas. Had he died of self-suffocation with the rubber pipe, the salesman would not have got the insurance money. Thus, it could be argued that in his car, Willy is driving himself to death in order to offer his family a life of success and harmony. At this level of analysis, the second order signification of the sign "car" becomes more obvious. The commodities that Willy works so hard to own under their surface are killing him. Therefore, Willy's car supports the American Dream as an illusion and false promise, a way to hope for future happiness and personal welfare with no real attachment to reality.

O'Neill makes use of the same item to reinforce the false beliefs about self-

fulfillment and happiness through rapid financial success. James buys the car as proof of financial prosperity and also of how much he cares for the comfort of his family, Mary in particular. Hence, the car is meant to testify to his success in achieving the American Dream. However, as the plot unfolds, we learn that James has bought his wife a second-hand car, a fact which alludes to James's avarice and brings back the Tyrones' old sorrows and traumatic past. Apparently, the family's misfortune and misery are not a story of the past, but they still persist and even worsen. Owning a car does not seem to bring Mary any sort of relief or comfort. In any case, Mary has no friends or relatives to visit in the car. This implicitly hints at James's marital unfaithfulness at the beginning of their marriage which caused many of the Tyrones' acquaintances to abandon them.

Therefore, O'Neill's second level meaning of the car serves to bring to the fore the void in the Tyrones who, despite all their material acquisitions, cannot attain self-gratification. Instead of bringing the hoped-for unity and integration, the car has further accentuated the Tyrones's sense of self-alienation, hastening the collapse of the whole family. The consumerist Other manipulates the Tyrones into believing that acquiring a car would compensate for their imperfections and bring them comfort and self-satisfaction. However, the car can but bring them short-lived happiness. Soon, the Tyrones will crave other material goods in the hope of reaching the promised happiness and integration. Yet, each material good brings more disillusionment to their lives, leading them to more consumption. Their identities being completely immersed in the consumer culture, the Tyrones become strangers to themselves.

The consumer goods in both plays are given a secondary order signification to imply self-deception and self-alienation in a society which is becoming more and more materialistic. Therefore, by stressing Willy's and James's holding to such products, Miller and O'Neill shed light on the deceptive power of the American Dream and its self-alienating effects on its pursuers. To shed more light on Willy's and James's self-alienation and bring into the fore the alienating force of the

Other, Miller and O'Neill make use of house furniture which is carefully selected.

2-House Furniture as Self-alienating Other

a-The Chair and the Mirror as Signs of Authority and Deceit: The Power of the Consumerist Other in Shaping Willy's Identity

We can obviously note that Miller's choice of furniture is not insignificant. Kuldeep Walia remarks that "the furnishing indicated is only those of importance to Willy" **(Walia 5).** The substitution of chairs for characters underlines the importance of furniture. In Act II, the salesman addresses a "chair, standing across the desk" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 28)** when he recalls his diseased former boss Frank Wagner: "Frank, Frank, don't you remember what you told that time? How you put your hand on my shoulder" **(28).** By talking to the chair, Wily tries to reconstruct an image of success in his imagined world. More importantly, Willy is seeking validation from Frank Wanger who stands for success. This shows how much Willy's perception of himself depends on the Other, as implied by the chair which could be seen as a seat of authority.

The same idea is reinforced by the mirror, which may stand for the consumerist Other. Mirrors have often been used as suggestions of clarity and truth, but they can just as easily imply self-delusion. The Mirror as an allusion to self-deception can be encapsulated in the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus[2]. Lieve Spaas argues:

> Over the years, the myth has been much discussed and reinterpreted: for philosophers, water acts as a mirror open

[2] **In Greek Mythology "the beautiful Narcissus glimpsed his own reflection in the water of a spring and fell in love with it. This scene constitutes the core of the ancient Narcissus myth, which has been retold in different versions" (Spaas1).**

> ing on the depths of oneself, a self which tends to become idealized; for psychoanalysts, the concept has led to hypo theses concerning the investment of psychic energy in the the self; for sociologists, it becomes a metaphor for the situation of mankind in modern society. **(Spaas 2)**

The Narcissus myth re-emerges in Miller's modern drama through the allusion of the mirror. While Willy's accomplishments are praised, "the Woman has come from behind the scrim and is standing, putting on her hat, looking into a mirror and laughing" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 12).** The audience can sense that "The Woman" is not looking at her reflected image in the mirror, but rather at the salesman's inflated image. Interestingly, the more Willy's achievements are praised the louder "The Woman's" laughter is, showing that Willy's idealized image as a successful man is but an illusion. In this regard, we can argue that the Narcissus myth parallels Lacan's concepts of the mirror stage and misidentification which emphasize Willy's self-alienation. The image of a successful salesman that Willy identifies with is in fact an "other" misrecognized as oneself.

Therefore, the mirror and the consumerist Other have a similar function as they both nurture the inflated images of wholeness and prosperity as a present reality. This scene reveals how the outside world (the consumerist Other) shapes the erroneous image of success and personal welfare with which Willy misidentifies. In pursuit of the American Dream, Willy has submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other and can only construct his identity through misidentification as his reflected image may convey.

b-<u>The Athletic Trophy and the Bookcase as Active Other: Biff and Edmund as Sources of Change for their Fathers</u>

Equally important is Willy's bedroom which is "furnished only with a brass bedstead… a straight chair… [and] a silver athletic trophy" **(14).** Strikingly enough, Linda has no object of her own in her bedroom. This exposes Linda as a passive Other who only fuels Willy's illusions about success. Linda exists only in her

husband's imaginary world. On the other hand, Willy is holding Biff's trophy in his bedroom, a fact which puts forth Biff as active Other. Among all the Lomans, Biff is the only member who tries to bring his father to face reality.

Like Miller, O'Neill's choice of furniture is not inconsiderable. However, we find in O'Neill's selected furniture an intellectual note (reference to Shakespeare in particular) which is missing in Miller's. This could be explained by the fact that O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** is autobiographical. As already discussed, O'Neill's father was a theatre actor who interpreted a variety of Shakespearean roles, a fact which may partly justify Eugene's interest in Shakespeare.

In the opening scene of O'Neill's play, two bookcases figure prominently. Edmund's bookcase contains novels by Balzac, Zola and Stendhal, philosophical works by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, plays by Ibsen and poetry by Rossetti, Wilde and Kipling. On the other hand, James's bookcase is filled with older sets including the romantic fiction of Victor Hugo and Alexander Dumas, three sets of Shakespeare, fifty imposing volumes of the world's greatest literature, several major works of history, old plays and poetry collections.

Hence, it becomes clear that their difference in literary tastes exposes James's sentimental view as opposed to a more realistic and fatalist perception of the world. In this sense, James's bookcase stands for the father's self-alienation and capacity for self-delusion, while Edmund's bookcase suggests the son's ability to confront the truth. Like Biff, Edmund is the only member of the Tyrones who tries to face reality and force his father to do the same. Therefore, Edmund could be regarded as an active Other for his father. In this sense, Edmund's bookcase is an allusion to Edmund's resistance and exposes him as an active force in the play. This is further emphasized by the fact that there is no reference to objects belonging to the other Tyrones.

The power of the Other in shaping people's identities and causing them further self-alienation is over highlighted by the claustrophobic effect conveyed by the setting. In the three plays, Miller and O'Neill select details about the house, rooms and windows which display a cramped atmosphere. In this respect, it could said that the setting serves to expose how the Puritan and the consumerist Others impose one reality, shape people's desires and manipulate them into constructing their identities within the institutionalized reality causing them self-alienation.

VI-Claustrophobic Setting to Imply the Authority and Self-alienating Force of the Other

In ***The Crucible***, the play opens in Parris's home in "a small upper bedroom … [with] a narrow window" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 13).** The small size of the room and the narrow window provide a claustrophobic effect. At a secondary level, the narrowness of the room conveys the limited vision of the Puritan Other imposed on Salem's inhabitants. As a member of the Puritan authority, Parris manipulates people into submitting to the desire of the Puritan Other, keeping them confined in one imposed reality, a fact which causes them further self-alienation.

The second act takes place in the common room of Proctor's house which is described as the "low…living room of the time" **(51).** The lowness of the room may imply confinement. At this level of the play, Proctor is still confined in a world of lies and illusions to preserve his status in the Puritan community. He still misidentifies with his inflated image as a model husband and refuses to confess his act of adultery and denounce Abigail. In other terms, Proctor's identity is immersed in the discourse of the Puritan Other. Therefore, we can consider that the lowness of the room serves the purpose of stressing a claustrophobic effect which stands for the authority of the Puritan Other in shaping Proctor's desire accentuating his self-alienation.

Proctor's limited vision is emphasized by the "stairway leading upstairs" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 51).** When Proctor enters the low room, his wife Elizabeth is upstairs. If we take into consideration the position of the two characters, we can assume that at this point Proctor has not achieved Elizabeth's perspective. He does not realize yet that not denouncing Abigail would mean perpetuating the Puritan rule. He fails to understand that in the Puritan community of Salem there are no half measures: you either fully submit to the desire of the Puritan Other and become completely self-alienated, or defy it and be socially rejected. Therefore, the stairway leading to Elizabeth may point to the steps towards self-realization, especially since Elizabeth plays a crucial role in bringing Proctor into self-awareness. In this sense, the staircase could be regarded as an active Other and Proctor's source for change.

The last act takes place in "a cell in Salem jail" **(107).** It is worth noting that the setting in the last act parallels the setting in the opening scene. The audience can sense the same claustrophobic effect. In this sense, we can argue that the jail stands for a virtual reality prison, implying that all the inhabitants of Salem are imprisoned in one fixed reality imposed by the Puritan Other. Even Hale who was questioning the Puritan values in the previous act is now urging the prisoners to confess. In so doing, Hale is releasing the prisoners from jail and confining them to Salem's big virtual prison. Equally, Proctor's imprisonment and execution reinforce the inability to construct an identity outside the way of being promoted by the Puritan Other. Having attempted to challenge the Puritan law, Proctor is executed, moving from the prison cell to the coffin prison, which may imply Proctor's moving from self-alienation to social alienation.

The same claustrophobic atmosphere is to be found in ***Death of a Salesman***. One of the motifs which are worth considering is the location of Willy's house. Given the importance of location in the play, much of its action takes place in Willy's property: "Before us is the Salesman house. We are aware of towering, angular shapes behind it, surrounding it in all sides…As more light appears; we

see a solid vault of apartment houses around the small, fragile seeming home." **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** Willy's house is literally walled in by apartment buildings that encroach from every direction. Roudané argues that the vault allusion may refer to "entombment, entrapment, a place of no exit**" (Roudané, "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller" 69).** In this respect, we can infer that the Lomans, like many other Americans, are trapped in their narrow vision of the world as defined and fixed by the consumerist Other. Having submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other, Willy cannot have a desire of his own any longer. He becomes completely self-estranged and imprisoned in his imaginary world.

The setting in O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** is equally significant. From the opening stage direction, James's house appears as the most important part of the setting as the play rarely focuses on elsewhere. The back parlor is "windowless…and never used except as a passage" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 9).** The back parlor being windowless provides the same claustrophobic effect sensed in both ***The Crucible*** and ***Death of a Salesman***. Like Miller's characters, the Tyrones are confined in their imaginary world and throughout the entire play they will be deluding themselves into not facing the truth. The second order signification of the windowless back parlor thus may imply the Tyrones' limited vision. James's family is unable to open up to other perceptions of success as may suggest the lack of windows. Having succumbed to the desire of the consumerist Other, the Tyrones are doomed to empty lives in a cramped world of appearances, which results in a extreme form of self-alienation.

Miller's and O'Neill's characters become trapped in a sterile world. The myths of the Promised Land and the American Dream fail to provide the Americans real happiness and self-gratifications. Seventeenth century Puritan Salem and twentieth century consumerist America turn out to be a waste land rather than a promised land and a capitalist paradise. Miller and O'Neill move beyond

the house to the environment, integrating elements from nature to stress the image of America as a waste land. They basically contrast natural elements with artificial ones to render an image of desolation and sterility.

VII-The Waste Land as Betrayal of the Promised Land and the American Dream

In the three plays, a good number of elements from nature are used by Miller and O'Neill to show how America, which has been considered for many decades as a land of opportunity in which every American can achieve the American Dream, has turned to a waste and sterile land. The main elements used by the playwrights are nature, lighting and sounds. The three elements are given a secondary meaning to imply images of chaos and desolation as opposed to the Promised Land.

1-Willy's Barren Garden as an Allusion to Postwar Consumerist America

Early in Act I, Willy condemns his garden as barren: "The street is lined with cars. There's not a fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don't grow any more, you can't raise a carrot in the back yard" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 6).** Interestingly, when Willy dresses for his interview with Howard, he looks back at the backyard, which may foreshadow his fruitless efforts to get the job hoped for. Later on, towards the end of Act II after the disastrous dinner at which Biff desperately attempts to confront his father with the truth, Willy immediately asks for the nearest seed store: "I've got to get some seeds, right away. Nothing's planted" **(42).** Willy's enthusiasm for planting contrasted with an early deep resentment makes his non-success in planting seeds inevitable. From the very beginning, Miller paints an image of utter desolation, implying the futility of Willy's attempts to achieve the American Dream.

In this regard, we can infer that Willy's barren garden alludes heavily to the American Promised Land which has turned into a waste and sterile land, lacking the cultural abundance of the past. This stresses the effects of unrestrained consumerism on the American Dream in postwar America. Willy's hopeless attempt to grow "seeds" actually implies the inability for the American modern man to reinvent himself as a self-made-man and reach the American Dream which has been distorted from the original one. Willy fails to blossom into a successful salesman and experience real happiness and self-gratification. When planting the "seeds," Willy is implicitly burying his hopes and dreams especially since the scene showing Willy growing vegetables is immediately followed by his death.

In the same context, Lain Sinclair considers that "the idea of gardening is a … parallel for the idea of raising a family" **(Sinclair 4).** Hence, we can say that Willy's desperate nocturnal efforts to grow the seeds are also an allusion to the father's failure to show his sons the road to success and happiness. When planting the seeds in a barren garden, Willy is burying his sons' dreams. This exposes America as a conformist society which leads the Americans to engage in building a sterile society. The same images of sterility and chaos are emphasized by contrasting natural light with artificial light.

2-Artificial Light Overtaking Natural Light: The Promised Land as a Glittering Consumerist Land

In the opening scene of ***Death of a Salesman***, Miller refers to "the blue light of the sky" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4)** which barely reaches Willy's house. This may mark the Lomans' departure from the natural world as Roudané explains: "[lightening in this scene] creates a trope of decline of the natural world**" (Roudané, "Death of a Salesman and the Poetics of Arthur Miller" 69).** The fact that the light of the sky hardly gains Willy's house because of the surround-

ing buildings could be an allusion to materialism and uncontrolled consumerism that damaged life's primary essence during the period following the wars. The natural light of the blue sky is evaded by the artificial light of the heater's blaze and the light of Biff's cigarette. It is no coincidence that the steady light at this point provides from tow consumer products. Miller seems to be alluding to excessive materialism and consumerism that would reduce the Lomans to ashes. Therefore, by contrasting natural light with artificial light, Miller articulates the dichotomy between two opposing worlds. Postwar America turned from a Promised Land which offered people freedom, equal opportunity and social mobility to a big consumer, sterile and alienated family engaging in unrestrained consumption and searching in vain for happiness and self-satisfaction.

At the same point of the play, Biff "comes downstage into the golden pool of light" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 24)** as Willy recalls his idyllic past: "like a young god [with] the sun all around him" **(24).** Then he adds "A star like that, magnificent, can never really fade away" **(24).** In describing his son, the father makes reference to sun and star which are both natural sources of light as opposed to the golden pool of light. However, the audience knows that Biff is a football star only in Willy's imaginary world and his fame has faded. Because Biff stands against the consumerist Other, he becomes socially rejected and he fails to make it in postwar America. Therefore, Biff's fading fame which pararells the fading light of the sun and star suggests the decline of America as a Promised Land as a result of uncontrolled consumerism. This is emphasized by the artificial golden pool of light that falls on Biff.

Like nature and lighting, sounds in Miller's and O'Neill's plays are not "incidental noises but significant dramatic overtones that are an integral part [of] the whole play" **(Baker-White 123).** Like lighting, sounds can also be divided into natural and artificial sounds. While artificial sounds stand for a material and artificial world, natural sounds could be regarded as intrusions of nature, reminding the audience of how America used to be in the past or how it was meant to be.

Therefore, contrasting natural sounds with artificial sounds serve to show how excessive materialism and uncontrolled materialism turned the American Promised Land into a devastated and waste land.

3-Natural Sounds as Reminder of the Exceptional Promised Land

a-The Drumroll and Violin Intense Sounds as Signs of a Fading Promised Land

In ***The Crucible***, the main sound effect is the drumroll which strikes when Proctor is escorted to be executed. At this crucial point of the play, the sound intensifies the death atmosphere and leaves the audience reflect on the court decision to hang Proctor. In the "earthly paradise" of Salem in which people are supposed to enjoy freedom and have equal rights and opportunities, the audience may wonder why Proctor would be sent to death for a sin he has not committed- except may be the fact of having opposed the Puritan Other. Therefore, the drumroll heard when Proctor is hanged echoes the fear, anguish and injustices experienced by Salem's inhabitants in the seventeenth century, showing that the myth of the Promised Land is only an illusion. At the end of the play, just before the curtain falls, the drumroll "heightens violently" **(Miller, *The Crucible* 126)** to signal Proctor's death and overemphasize Proctor's social alienation. In this way, the drumroll serves to expose the hidden horrors behind a paradise-like seventeenth century Puritan Salem and hereby stress the symbolic death of the Promised Land.

In the final scene of ***Death of a Salesman,*** "the music has developed into a death march [3]" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 47)** when Willy "rushes off around

[3] One of the largest death marches during WW II was Bataan Death March. "When the actual march began, no transportation was provided, nor was medical care furnished for

sick or wounded among the Americans and Filipinos …Those who died were not buried. Their bodies were left to decompose in hot sun" (Anderson 934-6).

the house" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 47)** to commit suicide. The term "death march" refers to forced marches of concentration camp prisoners over long distances in extremely harsh conditions during WWII. Commenting on the effects of those death marches on the prisoners, it is argued that "the captives were strongly determined to keep walking to avoid suffering the brutality inflicted on those fallen out of the march previously. Hope that food, water or transportation was waiting them at the next stop" **(Anderson 936).** If we consider Willy's suicidal act, we can infer that the music played by the violin which develops into a death march is indicative of Willy's unrelenting determination to achieve the American Dream. Like captives, the illusion of reaching the promises of happiness and self-gratification promoted by the consumerist Other keeps Willy walking up, though each step is leading him closer to death, which suggests Willy's extreme sense of self-alienation. Hence, the intense music stresses the self-alienating effects of unrestrained consumerism on the pursuers of the American Dream which turned the Americans into self-deluded individuals. This exposes postwar America as a Land of broken promises rather than a Promised Land in which every American can enjoy self-gratification.

b- Flute Notes Interfering with Tape Recorder Sound as a Warning to the Betrayal of the Promised Land

When ***Death of a Salesman*** opens, "[a] melody is heard, played upon a flute. It is small and fine, telling of grass and trees and the horizon" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** The flute notes may allude to a simple and natural world as opposed to a more mechanized and materialistic environment suggested by the high rise apparent buildings that crowd and trap the Lomans' house. Murphy argues that the flute is "an aural evocation of Willy's father, the wild and free adventurer who went where the road took him, making and selling flutes along the way" **(Murphy, *Miller: Death of a Salesman* 28).** In this sense, the flute marks the

distinction between the old American self–made-man and the modern American man trapped in the confines of excessive materialism. Therefore, the flute notes can be regarded as an allusion to the exceptional American Dream, a "dream of Idyllic America of open vistas and endless possibilities where a man with wits and a sense of adventure can still create his own future" **(Sterling 115).** The flute notes thus remind the audience of the American Promised Land before it turned into a waste land under money worship.

The flute plays on as Willy makes his first appearance. Yet, "[h] e hears but is not aware of it" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman* 4).** Willy's unawareness of the flute melody is indicative of his inability to be in touch with the original American Dream. Willy's identity is so immersed in the discourse of the consumerist Other that he fails to grasp his father's vision of success. This stresses Willy's self-alienation and further emphasizes the effects of hyper-consumerism on the pursuers of the American Dream in postwar America. It is no coincidence that the first flute notes are played when Willy returns home from his unsuccessful business trip. Miller is insinuating that Willy's failure to achieve success came as a consequence of his departing from the old values of the American dream. The flute thus stresses Willy's extreme self-estrangement as he succumbed to the desire of the consumerist Other.

The audience can hear the melody playing again in the end of the play when the salesman dies: "Only the music of the flute is left on the darkening stage as over the house the hard towers of the apartment buildings rise into sharp focus" **(48).** At this point of the play, the flute notes show how much impact consumerism could have on the American Promised Land which turned into a waste and desolate land. The play begins and ends with the flute melody, a fact which may infer that Miller is diagnosing the cause of Willy's failure to reach self-gratification. Miller might be insinuating that betrayal of the Promised Land is the main cause for extreme alienation and ill-being in postwar consumerist America.

Willy's self-alienation is further emphasized by the sounds played by the modern tape recorder. In Act II, Willy claims to want to buy a recorder for himself without considering his economic conditions. Added to this, when he accidently switches on the recorder, he "leap[s] away with fright, shouting" **(Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, 28)** for Howard to shut it off. He can neither afford the machine nor handle it. Yet, he is strikingly fascinated by the recorder and insists on having one, a fact which points to Willy's willingness to hold onto the consumer culture without fully understanding the rules that govern it. Willy's confusion is highlighted by the blending of the sounds played by the machine and the real voices of the characters. "That's lifelike, isn't it" **(26)** is Willy's comment on the mechanical sounds providing from the modern tape recorder. His remark can be regarded as an allusion to the artificiality of Willy's imaginary world, a fact which stresses Willy's self-alienation. The mechanical sounds are as lifelike as the mechanized modern world which is only a copy of reality. In this sense, we can say that the sounds played by the machine expose the deceitful nature of the materialistic American Dream which is an unfaithful version of the original.

Interestingly, when the modern tape recorder is played, a whistle, which recalls the flute notes, is heard and then breaks off continuously to be intercepted by the characters' voices. At this particular point of the play, the whistle may stand as a warning to Willy's extreme self-alienation which would eventually cause his death. Therefore, both the flute notes and the whistle, being natural sounds, can be regarded as warnings to the betrayal of the Promised Land in postwar consumerist America suggested by the artificial sounds played by the modern tape recorder.

c-<u>The Foghorn as Reminder of the Spiritual Decline in Consumerist America</u>

Like the whistle, the foghorn is used as a constant reminder of the fading American Promised Land. As early as ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** opens, the audience notices that most of the Tyrones are disturbed by the sound of the foghorn which is a call to reality. In Act IV, when the audience is made aware of Mary's opium addiction, the significance of the foghorn becomes obvious. When Mary tells Cathleen that the foghorn "keeps reminding [her], and warning [her], and calling [her] back" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 85),** the audience quickly understands that Mary's sleep problems do not derive from the foghorn' blasts but rather from her bitter reality. Hence, the foghorn reminds Mary of how self-alienated she has become. If the fog serves as an escape to Mary's imaginary world in which she can experience instant gratification, the foghorn "calls [Mary] back to undrugged reality" (**Bloom, *Bloom's Modern Critical Interpretation: Eugene O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night* 194).** Therefore, the foghorn serves to remind Mary of the fading promises of happiness and personal welfare betrayed by excessive materialism and uncontrolled consumerism. Postwar America is obviously not a Promised Land for Mary who has become an empty shadow of the woman she used to be.

While James is trying to find refuge in solitude, "the foghorn is heard" **(O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night* 108),** foreshadowing the last father son confrontation. Just as the foghorn interrupts the silence of the foggy night, Edmund intrudes into James's imaginary world in an attempt to bring him back to reality and help him reconnect with himself. Edmund's accusations will force James to confront the truth about himself and admit his failure to bring happiness to his family despite his accumulated wealth. Therefore, the foghorn exposes the failure of the American Dream, which has become purely materialistic in the period following the wars, to make of America a Promised Land.

Throughout the play, each foghorn blow heard by the audience acts as a periodic intrusion of the frightful reality of postwar consumerist America into each character's fantasy life. The foghorn is literally used to signal ships where land is

and warn them of dangers in foggy weather. Anne Fleche notes that "the sound of the foghorn in the play is almost always accompanied by the sound of ships' bells, and so each reminder is also a warning, in a kid of endless movement between the past and future, anticipation outside of time" **(Fleche 37).** In this regard, the endless movement of ships may remind the audience of the Tyrones' ceaseless striving to reach satisfaction, moving from past to present and from present to past towards an unknown and uncertain future. The fact that the sounds of the ships' bells and the foghorn are heard simultaneously can be viewed as a warning that the Tyrones' incessant wandering might lead to complete loss in the fog, which suggests extreme self-alienation. The mechanized and highly materialistic modern world turned the Americans into defeated and spiritually lost beings who are condemned to live an aimless and deceitful life in search of a dream they will never reach.

In this chapter I have aimed at showing how Miller and O'Neill make use of onstage techniques to stress extreme alienation in seventeenth century intolerant Salem and twentieth century postwar consumerist America. Seven onstage devices have been the focus of this chapter: allusive language, allegorical titles of the plays, lighting effects, characters, house furniture and commodities, a claustrophobic setting, and sound effects. All these devices have contributed to render an image of America as a waste land characterized by spiritual emptiness, highlighting the deceptive power of the Puritan and consumerist Others and stressing the alienating effects of the myths of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man on identity construction.

In this concern, it has been noticed that language in ***The Crucible***, ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***long Day's Journey into Night*** is highly evocative of deceit and alienation. A good number of words in the three plays have ambiguous meanings. Words such as "Devil" and "lie" carry cultural meanings as they serve the purpose of alluding to the imagined world in which the characters construct their identities, stressing their inability to perceive the truth about the false promises of

happiness and self-gratification promoted by the Puritan and consumerist Other. Therefore, allusive language emphasizes the deceitful force of the myths of the Promised Land and the American Dream as well as the characters' alienation and spiritual chaos beneath the veil of an apparent unified and exceptional American society.

Alienation is further stressed by the allegorical titles of the plays. The title "Death of a Salesman" exposes Willy as an extremely self-alienated character who has sold himself for the sake of financial success. As Willy fails to reinvent himself as a successful man, the title also suggests the death of the Self-Made-Man. Moreover, the title stresses the death of the exceptional American Dream which has become purely materialistic, turning people into empty shadows struggling in vain to achieve happiness and personal welfare through wealth. The same meaning is conveyed by the title "Long Day's Journey into Night" which exposes the American Dream as a pure illusion. The dense darkness of the night stresses the Tyrones' extreme self-estrangement and puts forth the deceitful power of the myth of the American Dream which hides the disastrous reality beneath the glittering image of a prosperous happy American family advertized by the consumerist Other.

A survey of Miller and O'Neill's use of light and darkness, for its part, has conveyed confusion and a blurred vision. Darkness suggests deceit and illusion as opposed to light which is meant to imply truth. In the context of the plays, darkness implies self-alienation and the deceitful power of the Other, while light suggests reality behind illusion. In ***The Crucible***, the candle lit in Parris's room in broad daylight stands for the manipulative power of the Puritan Other which keeps Salem's inhabitant in ignorance instead of bringing them enlightenment. The blurred vision in ***Death of a Salesman*** conveyed by the evening and darkening stage and the fog in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** also stress the false promise of achieving happiness through financial success as promoted by the consumerist Other.

My study has equally revealed that characters in Miller's and O'Neill's plays are used as onstage recreations of self-alienation and deceit. Names have a second order signification. For example, Willy's last name "Loman" suggests Willy's extreme sense of self-alienation as it alludes at how far Willy is from being a successful salesman. Accordingly, the name also emphasizes the deceitful power of the consumerist Other which manipulates the dream pursuers like Willy by selling them false promises and maintaining them in an endless pursuit of happiness and self-gratification through financial success. Moreover, the characters' body language allows recreating an appearance of reality on stage. Abigail's hysterical acting in ***The Crucible*** is a good illustration of the manipulative power of the Puritan Other that blurs the boundaries between reality and illusion and urges Salem's inhabitants to succumb to the world of appearance and deceit, accentuating their self-alienation. Ghost illusions further stress self-alienation and disenchantment in the plays. Mary's ghost like appearance at the end of the play is a form of extreme self-estrangement and self-deception. Unpleased with the present reality and incapable of reaching happiness and self-fulfillment, Mary becomes an empty and fragile individual under the influence of money worship, ushered in a world of illusion and false promises. The playwrights play on clothing to imply the same sense of self-alienation and disenchantment. In ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, Mary's white wedding gown may stand for the old American Dream, and the fact that it brings Mary no real relief communicates a sense of self-deception and self-estrangement, showing that Mary can neither find the promised happiness in the present nor reconnect with her old self.

In my study of onstage techniques, it has been noted that commodities and house furniture which belong to the quotidian are used by Miller and O'Neill as socio-cultural signs to stress self-alienation and disenchantment. Consumer goods, such as the car in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, serve to shed light on disillusionment about the American Dream in post-war consumerist America. The car which is promoted by the consumerist Other

to support the belief that financial success is the only route to happiness proves a pure illusion. Willy uses the car to commit suicide, and James fails to bring his family the hoped-for comfort and happiness despite his car. Disillusionment will lead to more consumption, turning Willy and James into consumer addicts whose identities are completely immersed in the discourse of the consumerist Other. House furniture in both plays is also significant as it exposes the deceitful power of the Other and hereby emphasizes self-alienation. The mirror in ***Death of a Salesman*** may stand for the deceitful power of the consumerist Other which nurtures Willy's inflated image as a successful salesman and deepens his sense of self-alienation. More interestingly, the bookcase and the athletic trophy in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** and ***Death of a Salesman*** respectively are allusions to Edmund's and Biff's resistance, exposing them as active Others who try to change their fathers' visions.

The use of claustrophobic settings accentuates the characters' self-alienation and entrapment in the world of illusion. The narrowness of Parris's room in ***The Crucible*** is an allusion to the limited vision imposed by the Puritan Other on Salem's inhabitants. The latter are confined in one single reality which deepens their sense of self-estrangement. The same meaning is emphasized by the cell in which the last scene takes place. A similar claustrophobic effect is conveyed by the windowless back parlor in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** and Willy's house in ***Death of a Salesman*** which is walled by apartments. Both show how the Tyrones and the Lomans are entrapped in the narrow vision of the consumerist Other which has resulted in the characters' complete withdrawal from reality.

In the three plays, Miller and O'Neill have made use of nature, lighting and sounds to render an image of America as a waste Land. Willy's barren Garden alludes to the American Promised Land betrayed by the myth of the American Dream which has become purely materialistic in postwar consumerist America. America has turned from a Promised Land offering people freedom, equal opportunity and social mobility into a sterile land consumed by consumerism. The

same image is emphasized by contrasting the natural light of the sky which stands for life's primary essence with the artificial light providing from the cigarettes and the heater's blaze which suggest consumerism. Natural sounds are equally used as reminders of the fading Promised Land. In ***The Crucible***, the drumroll which signals Proctor's death reveals that Salem is a land of injustice and crime rather than an "earthly paradise." The flute notes in ***Death of a Salesman*** and foghorn in ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** can also be regarded as warnings to the betrayal of the Promised Land and fading promises of the American Dream. Willy is unaware of the melody played by the flute, a fact which reveals his extreme sense of self-alienation and inability to achieve the American Dream. The Tyrones, for their part, are upset by the foghorn, which shows the failure of the American Dream to provide them the promised spiritual comfort and happiness.

It is true that the myths of the Promised Land and the American Dream help create a sense of national identity and grantee instant gratification. However, each myth brings into light the alienating character of the American identity. Miller's and O'Neill's use of onstage techniques in the three plays creates an illusion of life, stressing the fragility of the American identity which can only be experienced in a state of imagination. Indeed, each of the onstage devices highlights the characters' withdrawal into their fantasy worlds, a fact which reinforces the alienating aspect of the American identity. Finally, the seven basic techniques analyzed so far shed light on the deceitful power of the Puritan and consumerist Others, stressing the degradation of human values in seventeenth century intolerant Salem and postwar consumerist America and accentuating even much the fragile nature of the American identity. The seven onstage devices show how the American foundational myths have been distorted over time, turning people into empty and inconsistent beings. Therefore, my study of onstage techniques equally serves the purpose of raising further questions about American exceptionalism.

Conclusion

The central concern of my thesis has been to re-examine America's exceptionalist identity and the myths supporting it in Miller's ***The Crucible***, ***Death of a Salesman*** and O'Neill's ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. More precisely, I have attempted to highlight the illusion of America's exceptionalist identity in the three selected plays. The main hypothesis generating from the chief interest of my research is that Miller's and O'Neill's characters construct their identities in a state of imagination, emphasizing the alienating nature of identity construction. In order to prove this hypothesis, it is imperative to reconsider the foundational American myths, namely the myth of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man, highlighting their deceitful nature and alienating effects on identity construction, keeping in mind that the American identity is essentially built upon myths. Bringing to the fore the alienating and imaginary character of the American identity would call into question American exceptionalism, stressing its utopian dimension.

Psychoanalytic criticism has appeared necessary to analyzing the process of identity formation in the three plays. Jacques Lacan's theory of an alienated-self in particular has helped show how Miller's and O'Neill's characters construct their identities through misidentification with inflated images reflected by the outside world, or the Other. My examination of the three plays has highlighted the power of specific dominant groups in structuring the characters' desire by shaping their conception of what it means to be American. The Puritan rule in seventeenth century Puritan Salem, anti-communist leaders in the Cold War era and the capitalist leaders in twentieth century consumerist America can indeed be equated with Lacan's the Other. It has been found that all have significantly contributed to promoting the image of America as an exceptional country in which all American people can enjoy freedom, equality, social mobility and self-gratification.

In this respect, my analysis of the three plays has shown that myths have a crucial role in rendering such an image. Indeed, in ***The Crucible***, the myth of the

Promised Land is used to advance seventeenth century Puritan Salem as an "earthly Heaven" in which all the Americans without exception have equal opportunity. Moreover, a parallel study between the Salem witch trials and the McCarthy hearings has disclosed that the image of America as an "earthly Heaven" has been extended to the Cold War era, herein exposing its continuity in American history. Furthermore, when comparing ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***, the image of America as a "capitalist paradise" has again been brought to the fore thanks to the myths of the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man. The American Dream, which has become purely materialistic in the postwar era, has helped institutionalize the belief that every American is a self-made-man who can reach self-mobility and happiness through financial success, regardless of gender, race or social background. All these promoted images are meant to provide the Americans a sense self-gratification and most of all exceptionalism.

As the desire of the Other is vehicled through myths, the characters' submission to the desire of the Other would also mean a strong belief in the myths that sustain the image of America as an exceptional land. In this regard, my research has revealed that Miller's and O'Neill's characters can essentially be divided into two main categories: those who have submitted to the desire of the Other by clinging to the values of the myths, and those who haven't. My study of the characters has equally shown that gender issues may affect the characters' desire. In regard to gender, the characters in the three selected plays can be divided into two subgroups: male characters versus female characters.

Willy in ***Death of a Salesman*** and James ***in Long Day's Journey into Night*** have proven to be strong believers in the American Dream from the beginning to the end. Both fathers have blindly adhered to the authoritarian discourse of the Other, craving material possessions in the hope of reaching self-gratification and happiness. Therefore, Willy and James have given up their own desire and submitted to the desire of the consumerist Other by identifying with the image of a

happy and self-fulfilled American. The study of such category of male characters is important as it puts forth social conformity in consumerist America. Conforming to the dictates of the consumerist Other is shown as a sign of loyalty to the American nation. Willy and James would be recognized as "true" American only if they identified with the images promoted by the consumerist Other. This point is worth highlighting as it calls into question American democratic ideals which are at the core of America's exceptionalist identity. Moreover, the analysis of Willy and James sheds light on the role of the father in postwar America. Every American should be a model father for his sons by teaching them how to submit to the desire of the consumerist Other, a fact which would secure the continuity of the American Dream in American history. This is exemplified in the two plays by Willy's and James's several attempts to internalize the values of the American Dream in their sons.

The best example of a submissive son in the plays is Happy. Throughout the play, it has been noted that the son supports his father's dream and never questions the consumerist Other. Therefore, Happy is a passive Other for Willy as he fuels his illusions. Like the father, the American son should submit to the desire of the consumerist Other and embrace the values of the American Dream. Only through submission and social conformity can Happy be acknowledged as a loyal American son. Hence, the study of the character Happy further stresses conformity in consumerist America and thereby raises further questions about the notion of American exceptionalism.

My examination of the female characters has revealed that Linda and Mary could be included in the same category. Linda has no desire of her own, and Mary renounces her dream of becoming a nun. The two wives have submitted to their husbands' desire and encouraged their pursuit of the American Dream. Both are passive Others as neither of them challenges her husband's vision. Therefore, the submissive female characters shed more light on conformity in postwar America in which the status of a woman is reduced to a submissive wife. More

importantly, it stresses the inevitability for the American family to submit as a whole unit to the authority of the consumerist Other in order to be recognized, a fact which further challenges American exceptionalism.

On the other hand, my study of ***The Crucible*** has revealed that Proctor rather belongs to the second category of characters. Though in the beginning of the play Proctor has somehow attempted to identify with the image of a "good Puritan" by conforming to the dictates of the Puritan rule, a significant shift in attitude is noticed soon after. The upcoming events have exposed the character's multiple efforts to stand against Salem's Puritan church and court, a fact which well exemplifies his obstinacy to submit to the desire of the Puritan Other.

My analysis of ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night*** has also disclosed that among all the Lomans and the Tyrones, Biff and Edmund are the only characters who show resistance by defying the consumerist Other and trying to change their fathers' conception of reality. Therefore, contrary to Happy, Biff and Edmund can be considered as active Others for their fathers. Instead of conforming to social dictates, the sons find refuge in nature and in the West which are meant to symbolize the old ideals of the exceptional American Dream and Self-Made-Man. Away from conformist and capitalist America, both sons can reinvent their identities as self-made-men and somehow reach the American Dream through self-reliance and hard work rather than through acquisition of material goods. In the light of Freud's and Lacan's theories, Biff and Edmund can be regarded as revolted sons defying the authority of the Father (the consumerist Other). More interestingly, Edmund as an artist who shows interest in literature can equally stand for the dramatist.

My analysis of the three rebellious male characters has brought me to draw the following conclusions. Biff and Edmund expose literature as a form of rebellion against the consumerist Other, a possibility of regeneration and a significant means to achieve self-fulfillment in a land where consumerism has become a new

myth. The same could be said of Proctor. Through the fictional character Proctor, Miller can defy both the Puritan Other and the anti-communist Other, alluding to the necessity of expressing one's own desire in a country where the myth of the Promised land continues to shape people's identities, substituting religion for economic liberalism. Therefore, Proctor also stands for the dramatist's voice. This is evidenced by the biographical study of the plays which has revealed that the playwrights' interest in creating revolted characters may well derive from their personal experiences of rebellion. From this, it could be said that Miller and O'Neill construct modern mythology accounting both for modern history and modern consumerism. Art has been exposed as a substitute for the old American exceptional myths, especially since the material West is fading.

It has also been found that resistance against the Other is not limited to male characters. In ***The Crucible***, both Elizabeth and Abigail revolt against the image of a submissive woman of the time. However, it is necessary to underline that while Elizabeth acts out of moral conscience, Abigail acts out of self-interest. Also, it has been noted that Abigail, though an orphan and spinster, reinvents her identity and gains power and authority through deceit and manipulation, but Elizabeth ends up in jail despite the fact that she shows rational intelligence and more moral traits. More importantly, Abigail does not only resort to manipulation, but she also adopts traditional masculine features which can be noticed in her self-centeredness and ambition. Contrasting the two rebellious female characters has highlighted authority in seventeenth century Puritan Salem. Demagogy rather than hard work becomes the new key to success in authoritarian and conformist America. At this level of analysis, it is worth pointing out that my study has also revealed that Abigail in ***The Crucible*** can be regarded as Miller's projection of the historical figure Joseph McCarthy in anti-communist postwar America. The witch hysteria caused by Abigail in fiction parallels the McCarthy hearings in the Cold War Period. Both fictional Abigail and its real counterpart Joseph McCarthy immerge as demagogical figures who reach success through manipulation, a fact which stresses the image of America as an exceptional au-

thoritarian land. Furthermore, the fact that Abigail adopts male character traits to gain power exposes America as a patriarchal society. Finally, my analysis of Elizabeth's revolt has shed light on true female essence beneath male dominance, especially when contrasting Elizabeth with Proctor who can only reach self-realization well after his wife. This over highlights authority and male dominance in the seemingly free "Earthly Paradise."

In addition to highlighting conformity and authority in America and exposing art as a means of regeneration which reaches a level of myth, the analysis of the two opposing categories of characters has brought to the fore the alienating character of the American identity. The study of the first category of characters has brought evidence that the images with which Miller's and O'Neill's characters identify are inflated images, or specular to use Lacan's terms. In other words, they are fanciful reflections of what the characters should be according to the desire of the Other, and not what they really are. This is best illustrated in ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. Willy and James fail short of becoming model husbands and fathers who can bring their families happiness and self-gratification. This is exemplified by Biff's and Edmund's reproaches throughout the plays. Similarly, Linda's and Mary's images as model wives and mothers prove erroneous. Linda's inability to protect her husband and Mary's morphine addiction attest to their failure to build healthy relationships with their families and bring them spiritual comfort. Even Willy's son Happy fails to reach success as his unsuccessful attempts to attract his father's attention and to please women may suggest. Based on these findings it has been concluded that the experience of becoming American is an extremely alienating process. As they submit to the desire of the consumerist Other rather than their own desire, and identify with inflated images of self-fulfillment and personal welfare promoted by the American Dream, the Lomans and Tyrones become strangers to themselves. Willy's suicide, Mary's delirium, and James's excessive avarice are all extreme forms of self-estrangement. Father, mother and son construct their identities in their imaginary worlds, completely withdrawing from reality. Therefore, con-

structing an identity in America by submitting to the desire of the Other results in an extreme sense of self-alienation.

However, exploring the second category of characters has proven that defying the Other causes social alienation. Biff's and Edmund's obstinacy to resist the desire of the consumerist Other only results in rejection. Biff is not recognized by his former boss Oliver, which may suggest his non-recognition by society. And Edmund's death-like existence suggested by his serious illness is indicative of his withdrawal from society. Similarly, Proctor's and Elizabeth's rebellion against the Puritan Other has caused Proctor's death and Elizabeth's imprisonment.

From the analysis of the two categories of characters I can infer that conforming to social norms by submitting to the desire of the Other and embracing the values of the Promised Land and the American Dream will cause an extreme sense of self-alienation and resistance and will result in social rejection, which is also a form of estrangement. Therefore, to the main question introduced by the problematic of my research, which is whether Miller's and O'Neill's characters build their identities in an imaginary state, the answer is positive.

My findings have equally put forth the manipulative power of myth and disclosed its secondary message that is to normalize social inequalities and injustices and present them as part of reality. This point is worth emphasizing as it exposes America as a betrayed Promised Land and thereby challenges the notion of American exceptionalism. It has been noted that The Puritan and consumerist Other play an important role in framing people's vision of Americanness on the basis of God's justice, loyalty to the nation and the laws of the free market. In ***The Crucible***, Proctor's and Elizabeth's social rejection after being wrongly accused of witchcraft is made to appear as fair punishment and expression of God's will on earth. On the other hand, Parris preserving his social status and Abigail raising to power through lies are presented as a reward for performing God's will

by denouncing the presumed witches. The two demagogical and manipulative characters gain power in a land which is supposed to be free. Fear and intolerance in Salem may well explain people's sensitiveness to demagogical speech.

The same could be said of ***Death of a Salesman*** and ***Long Day's Journey into Night***. Willy and James who fail to bring happiness and comfort to their families despite all their efforts are designated by the consumerist Other as failures who have not tried hard enough to achieve the American Dream. Instead of blaming the consumerist Other, the dream pursuers would rather blame themselves. Willy's and James's inability to achieve the American Dream has revealed that social mobility is not possible for every American, showing that postwar consumerist America is not the Promised Land for all the Americans. Moreover, Biff and Edmund who have defied the consumerist Other are stigmatized as disloyal American sons who have not participated in the national American Dream. Biff's and Edmund's rejection, thus, expose the high degree of conformity in the period following the wars, a fact which challenges freedom and individualism. Social inequalities and intolerance in America continue to be naturalized on economic grounds.

Based on the findings above, it becomes clear that both Lacan's and Barthes's theories are relevant to my research as they stress the deceitful nature of the myths of the American Dream and the Promised Land and highlight the alienating character of the American identity. These are significant findings as they call into question American exceptionalist identity. Indeed, the study of identity construction in the three plays sheds light on the dark sides of the "Puritan Heaven" and "capitalist American paradise," exposing America as a land of lost promises, namely the promise of reaching happiness, self-gratification and above all reinventing oneself as an "American" regardless of where or into what circumstances one was born.

The image of America as a waste land has been emphasized by Miller's and O'Neill's use of onstage devices. A good number of techniques I selected for my

analysis further stress the illusion of life in seventeenth century Puritan Salem and twentieth postwar consumerist America. The claustrophobic setting conveyed by Proctor's prison cell and Willy's entombed house, the thick fog that enshrouds the Tyrones' home, James's alcohol addiction, Mary's ghostly appearance, and Willy's barren garden shed more light on the characters' extreme sense of alienation and withdrawal into their imaginary worlds. Therefore, each of the onstage devices accentuates even much the fragile nature of American identity which can only be constructed in an imaginary state. The foundational American myths, namely the myth of the Promised Land, the American Dream and the Self-Made-Man, have proven more utopian than ever, though long-lived and adaptable to the different American historical periods. The image of America as a land of desolation, emptiness and alienation depicted in the three selected plays is far from being the Promised Land projected by the Founding Fathers which is considered to be the origin of American exceptionalism.

The importance of renewing with one's origins through nature has been reinforced by Frost's poem "**The Death of the Hired Man**." Like Miller and O'Neill, Frost presents nature as a symbol of renewal allowing man to somehow assert one's desire and assert his identity. When comparing ***Death of a Salesman*** with "**The Death of the Hired Man,"** the spirit of hard work, self reliance and neighborliness that once characterized the Puritan farmers in rural New England has been brought into light. In his poem, Frost depicts nature, which may stand for rural New England, as a domain of humanist values and simplicity as opposed to the ethics of the free market in New York City that have distorted the original American Dream and Self-Made-Man, and turned people into completely alienated and inconsistent beings like Willy and Warren. As the spirit of advanced capitalism has started gaining New England, Frost makes an appeal to assert one's identity by living up to humanist ideals upon which rural New England was founded. Silas's return to the farm in the end of the poem displays a beginning of a new life in nature away from the corrupting forces of capitalism.

It is worth pointing though that the New England described in Frost's "**The Death of the Hired Man"** is different from that depicted in Miller's ***The Crucible***. When analyzing the poem, a high idealism in Frost's depiction of New England has been noted. Frost's poem implies that New England is originally a land of innocence, freedom and humanist values, and he puts forth the clash between the old agrarian ideals and capitalistic enterprise. On the other hand, Miller depicts an intolerant, conformist and authoritarian New England which, through myths, maintains the illusion of personal welfare and freedom. By contrasting the two visions, we can argue that the corrupting forces of capitalism only make more apparent the contradictions and injustices beneath the Promised Land which have characterized the American society as early as the time of settlements, a fact which leads us to wonder if America was really an exceptional Land when it was first founded. This point should be highlighted as it stresses the utopian dimension of America's exceptionalist identity, exposing its imaginary and alienating characters.

It would be interesting to study the extent to which asserting one's identity out of the confines of the alienating Other are possible in a world which is becoming more and more conformist and authoritarian. It is now almost seventy years since Miller's and O'Neill's plays were produced. Conformity and authority nowadays can be influenced by a wider range of factors, social networks in particular. Online forums, blogs, instant messengers such as Facebook and Youtube are now major tools for the authoritarian Other. Because information is shared in virtual communities all over the world with no time limits, the Other devotes efforts in virtual community marketing in order to enhance the credibility of information. The Other expects a behavioral response of compliance with social norms and acceptance of the information from the source as evidence of "reality." In so doing, the Other can easily shape people's desire, deepening their sense of alienation. The big virtual world in which people continuously interact is a good illustration of the actual modern world in which man constructs his identity in a state of imagination.

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Abstract in Arabic

ملخص

تقترح هذه الأطروحة دراسة البناء الذاتي كعملية اغتراب في المسرحيتين البوثقة و موت البائع للكاتب المسرحي آرثر ميلر ومسرحية رحلة يوم طويلة إلى الليل ليوجين أونيل . في هذه الأطروحة أحاول بشكل أساسي إبراز الطابع الخيالي للهوية الأمريكية وبالتالي فإن .تحليل دقيق للشخصيات في المسرحيات الثلاث سيثبت بأن بناء الهوية الأمريكية يسبب الاغتراب الذاتي أو العزلة الاجتماعية بدلا من تحقيق الإشباع الذاتي . لذلك ، يهدف هذا العمل البحثي إلى تحدي صورة أمريكا كأرض استثنائية أين يمكن لجميع الناس بغض النظر عن أصولهم تحقيق النجاح والرفاهية الشخصية.

ستتم دراسة البناء الذاتي والاغتراب في مسرحيات ميلر وأونيل في ضوء نظريتي جاك لاكان ورولان بارت .نظرية لاكان للبناء الذاتي تناسب موضوع البحث لأنها تبرز الاغتراب و العزلة الناتجين عن تكوين الذات .يصف مفهوم لاكان لمرحلة المرآة تشكيل الهوية من خلال عملية انسجام مع صورة غير حقيقية للذات مأخوذة من خطاب الآخر .ينص لاكان على أن الآخر يؤطر رغبة الفرد ، مما يعني أن رغبة الفرد في تحديد الهوية هي رغبة الآخر .ومن ثم ، فإن بناء الذات هو عملية اغتراب و عزلة . تم اختيار نظرية بارت لأنها تسلط الضوء على القوة الخادعة والمتلاعبة للأسطورة .نظرًا لأن الهوية الأمريكية تقوم أساسًا على الأساطير ، فإن نظرية بارت ستزيد من التشديد على الاغتراب و العزلة.

مسرحية البوثقة تسلط الضوء على البناء الذاتي ,الاغتراب و العزلة في القرن السابع عشر .أما مسرحيتي موت البائع و رحلة يوم طويلة إلى الليل فهي تؤكد على الطابع الخيالي للهوية الأمريكية في مرحلة ما بعد الحرب العالمية الثانية.

الكلمات الدالة : الاستثنائية الأمريكية, الاستهلاكية , الأسطورة ,الاغتراب الذاتي, الإمتثال , البناء الذاتي, البوثقة, السلطوية, آرثر ميلر, أرض الميعاد ,الحلم الأمريكي, الخيال, جاك لاكان, خطاب الآخر ,رحلة يوم طويلة إلى الليل ,رغبة الفرد, رولان بارت,. موت البائع , يوجين أونيل.