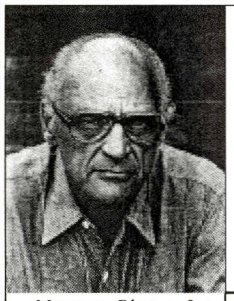

—Magnum Photos, Inc.

The Arthur Miller Society Newsletter

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

Volume 6 December 2002

Words from the Society's New President

It is a pleasure for me to address you as the new president of the Arthur Miller Society. The previous presidents have guided the society through its initial years, and I hope I can lead the membership with the same vision. In particular, I would like to thank Susan Abbotson for the fine job she did during her tenure. She secured the society's incorporation and began our application for 5021(c)3 status. Sue also has worked on securing Miller sessions at the annual ALA convention. I am pleased that she will continue as the society's webmaster; please continue to send Sue information about productions of Miller plays, publications, or related links for her to post. I would like to thank her for her support and encouragement as she turned over the reins of the society to me. I am also pleased to announce that Carlos Campo has been elected the society's vice-president.

At this year's ALA in Boston, the society will sponsor two panels: a traditional session with 3 or 4 papers and a second session that will focus on teaching Miller plays. This second session will feature a keynote by our first society president, Steven Centola, and a follow-up roundtable moderated by Carlos and me. Proposals for papers are still welcome until January. If you can possibly make it to Boston on the Memorial Day weekend, it would be worth the trip. The ALA is a pleasant conference, and it would be nice to see society members support our panels at the ungodly hours at which our sessions are usually scheduled. Check out their website at www.americanliterature.org. Former society president Paula Langteau is planning the next society conference, our eighth, at Nicolet College in Rhinelander, Wisconsin, on October 3-4, 2003. The conference topic is "Miller and Middle America." (See details inside.) Paula will be sending a call for papers after the new year. Peter Hays is planning an American Drama conference at UC Davis for February, 2004. Arthur Miller has committed to attend.

This edition of the newsletter once again offers reviews of recent publications in Miller scholarship and productions of Miller plays. Carlos Campos analyzes Brenda Murphy and Sue Abbotson's *Understanding Death of a Salesman: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents*. Robert Combs provides perspectives on *American Drama Since 1960: A Critical History* by Matthew Roudané and *Readings on All My Sons* by Christopher J. Smith. Brenda Murphy evaluates my new book, *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays: The Poetic in the Colloquial*, and I have reviewed Terry Otten's major new work, *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller*. Paula Langteau provides insight into the opening of Miller's new play, *Resurrection Blues*, at the Guthrie in Minneapolis in August. I have contributed a review of a November college production of *A View from the Bridge.*

Sadly, this is the last newsletter that will be edited by Jane Dominik. Jane has been the newsletter editor since the inception of the Arthur Miller Society, and it is largely because of her Herculean efforts that the society consistently has produced a high quality publication. For this, the members of the society are forever grateful. Jane wants to devote more time to her professional and personal interests, and we wish her well. Jane will be difficult to replace, but the society needs someone to carry on the great work that Jane began. If you are interested, please contact me at smarino819@aol.com or (718 848-3875).

Enjoy.

—Stephen Marino

Farewell from the Editor

Jane Dominik

It has been more than seven years since we began the Arthur Miller Society and I accepted the position as the first Newsletter Editor. It has been an honor to begin such a venture, to be on the forefront of news of publications by and about Miller and his works, productions, and other events. For personal, professional, and collegial reasons, it is time for me to relinquish the editorial reins, as it were. I look forward to the new editor's vision and contribution as we continue to celebrate and honor this great writer and human being, Arthur Miller. It has been my pleasure to work with so many of you as writers, colleagues, and friends. Finally, I look forward to seeing you at conferences, reading your reviews in future issues of this newsletter, and staying in touch. Thank you!

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Contributing Information Instructions

Information and requests to submit articles are encouraged, including those regarding book, film, and production reviews, and announcements of upcoming productions, events, and conferences. MLA style sheet preferred; disks in Word are appreciated. Submission address:

The Arthur Miller Society Newsletter
c/o Jane K. Dominik
San Joaquin Delta College
5151 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95207

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The Arthur Miller Society
c/o George Castellitto
28 Elizabeth Street
Dover, NJ 07810-4475

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In This Volume:

Editor Vacancy

We are still seeking nominations for the position of Newsletter Editor. Those interested should contact Stephen Marino at smarino819@aol.com.

Notes from New York

—On September 3, 2002, Arthur Miller received the 2001 *Praemium Imperiale* Award for lifetime achievement in the arts at the Japan Society in Manhattan. Miller was unable to attend the official award ceremony that was held in October 2001 in Tokyo. The award was created in 1989 by the Japan Arts Association to honor lifetime achievements in areas not covered by the Nobel Prizes. Previous recipients of the $125,000 prize are the filmmaker Ingmar Berman, the musician Leonard Bernstein, the artist Jasper Johns, the architect Frank Gehry, and the sculptor Richard Serra.

—Arthur Miller will once again be featured as part of the "Food for Thought—Lunch Hour Theater," a reading series devoted to rarely produced one-act plays, which is held on Mondays, Wednesday, and Thursdays from 1 to 2 PM at the National Arts Club. Other works by Athol Fugard, Eugene Ionesco, David Mamet, and Joyce Carol Oates also will be presented.

—Until a few months ago, it appeared that the incredible run of revivals of Miller plays that have appeared on New York stage in the last five years would finally end. However, the streak continues as the Metropolitan Opera is presenting the New York debut of the operatic version of *A View from the Bridge*. The opera, which premiered at the Lyric Opera of Chicago in 1999, is composed by William Bolcom with a libretto by Arnold Weinstein and Arthur Miller. Bolcom has made some changes for the New York version, most notably adding two new arias, one each for the characters of Eddie and Beatrice.

The production premiered on December 5 and received strong reviews. Howard Kissel of the *New York Daily News* judges that "it is one of those rare times when opera is great theater." Anthony Tommasini of the *New York Times* called it an "involving and significant work." Eight performances are scheduled through December 28.

—Stephen Marino

On *Resurrection Blues*

Talk about being in the right place at the right time! I arrived in Minnesota to visit relatives on August 9th, the opening night of Arthur Miller's satire, *Resurrection Blues*.

The Guthrie and Miller were made for each other. The staging was incredibly stark but effective for this new play. Miller's satire is reminiscent of Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal." The playwright is aware that he is treading in dangerous waters as he plunges his biting wit against the modern phenomena of modern commercialism as especially wielded by the very unethical media.

Only time will tell how audiences and readers will receive this new Miller play, which deserves future productions. They must ask themselves the question: Is Miller suggesting that the almighty dollar and all it signifies is America's "modest proposal"?

—Sister Louise Sheehan, R.S.M.
Saint Francis College

A View from the Bridge Enlivens Queens Stage

Most theatergoers think of the New York theater scene as constituting the many Broadway, off-Broadway, and off off-Broadway productions in Manhattan. However, the so-called "outer" boroughs of the city contain an active theatre life that is sustained by high quality productions by colleges, church groups, and community theaters. During three weekends in November 2002, the Department of Speech Communication and Theatre Arts of Queensborough Community College of the City University of New York presented a compelling production of Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge*. Staged in the intimate confines of the Shadowbox Theatre, this production exhibited the best of local theatre.

Director Robert D. Simons assembled a fine cast composed of veteran actors, Queensborough faculty and students, and local citizens from whom he elicited strong performances. Lydia Jasmin Carrasillo, in her theatrical debut, and QCC veteran Jimmy O'Neill effectively conveyed the youthful passion in the relationship between Catherine and Rodolpho upon which the play's conflicts converge. Vincent Pepe convincingly portrayed Eddie Carbone's struggle with himself, his wife, and his Sicilian community. Joey Giannone exhibited Marco's range of emotion, especially his growing awareness of the threat Eddie poses to him and Rodolpho.

The standout performances of the Saturday evening production I attended were by Arthur Pellman as the lawyer Alfieri and Dale Soules as Beatrice. Pellman was particularly effective in balancing the somewhat detached emotion that is necessary to the role of Alfieri as the outside narrator with the intensity he must muster when he is part of the play's action. Soules's experience as a Broadway and off-Broadway veteran was evident in her realistic portrayal of Beatrice as the conflicted Brooklyn housewife. Soules vivified Beatrice's turmoil as she is torn by her love for Eddie and her devotion to her niece.

On a personal note, I brought my fifteen-year-old daughter and twelve-year-old son to see the production. They have been raised on a steady diet of the kind of Broadway musicals that Arthur Miller frequently rails against, so I decided that their first real drama should be a Miller play. They were riveted, which is a testament to the endurance of Miller's play and the quality of the Queensborough production.

—Stephen Marino

Resurrection Blues Review

Arthur Miller's newest play, *Resurrection Blues,* premiered August 9, 2002, at the Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis. It is Miller's first satire written as a full-length play. Since this is an unusual form for a Miller play, audiences may be taken by surprise. In fact, in a September 13, 2001, *USA Today* article, "Arthur Miller, Always in Style," by Elysa Gardner, the playwright prepares the audience for *Resurrection Blues*, saying, "It's a satiric comedy—you're supposed to laugh. I have to explain that to people because when it's one of my plays, they forbid themselves to laugh."

It is the story of a revolutionary—who goes by many names, including Ralph, early in the play, and Charlie, later—who is captured and is to be put to death by televised crucifixion in an unnamed Latin American country. Felix, the military dictator, plans to sell the exclusive rights to broadcast the crucifixion worldwide for $25 million. Henri, a businessman/philosopher and Felix's cousin, whose daughter, Jeanine, claims she was brought back to life by Ralph after a suicide attempt, tries to persuade the TV crew, including director, Emily and producer, Skip, to abandon the project. After Ralph escapes, Jeanine and Stanley, Ralph's chief disciple, articulate Ralph's message ("just don't do bad things") and his intentions ("to change the world"). Henri continues to campaign for Ralph's pardon, and in the end, everyone presents Ralph (by then called Charlie) with arguments for what each of them thinks he should do, lobbying for an end that would best serve their own individual causes.

Despite the main characters' focus on Ralph/Charlie, however, the play proves to be *not* about the revolutionary himself, who never actually appears onstage. In fact, his very physical existence comes to be questioned, as the meaning of his life and death is explored. Instead, the play becomes an examination of what is real, what is imaginary, and what the difference—and the significance of any difference—between the two may be in our lives. In the course of that examination, it satirizes religion and television, two social realities that often walk—and cross—a fine line between the real and the imaginary.

The day after *Resurrection*'s opening, in a public conversation with the artistic director, Joe Dowling, Miller explained one impulse behind the play's genesis: "The more I observed the United States and parts of Europe as well, the crazier it all seemed and the more absurd it all seemed—and the more tragic. I wanted to depict this contradictoriness on stage." Miller very deliberately chose to portray television as the exploiter of this contradictoriness because, he explained, "I've come to believe that television is the great trivializer of our lives. I watch with horror and with laughter, since it is so pretentious. It is the ultimate consuming machine." And he chose satire as the form for his play's focus on television's role because "the only way to approach it [television] is to ridicule it, which is more than it deserves."

To carry that satiric depiction to the stage boards and to focus the audience on an examination of the layers of reality between the real and the imaginary, director David Esbjornson skillfully employs layering in the depiction of multiple levels of onstage performance: the physical presence of the main cast members, the background presence of other essential cast members, serving as extras and in non-speaking roles, and the reflections of human presence—i.e. shadows, silhouettes, and photographs, as well as the light that serves to depict the revolutionary himself—appearing in almost every scene.

In fact, Esbjornson chooses to center the play's action by opening with the depiction of an added layer of reality *not* written into Miller's script: the slow motion, impressionistic dramatization of Jeanine, played by Wendy Vanden Heuvel—as well as her shadow behind her—falling several stories to the pavement below in her suicide attempt. This image adds a physical as well as surrealistic dimension to an event only referred to later in the play, helping to focus the audience not only on Janine's recovery and on the response of her father, Henri, played by Jeff Weiss, to Janine's radical behaviors and attitudes with respect to the revolution and to its leader, but also on the very voyeuristic notion of watching someone die, an idea played out with the introduction of the planned televised crucifixion of Ralph.

Esbjornson uses multiple, simultaneous physical images onstage not only to carry Miller's satiric message but also to depict multiple layers of representation in Miller's characters and in the performance of those parts by the show's cast. For example, when the audience meets John Bedford Lloyd's Felix, we are simultaneously overwhelmed by the tremendously larger-than-life-size portrait of him that Esbjornson places center stage in Felix's office. Paradoxically, this monumental portrait, meant to celebrate the man it depicts, actually serves to dwarfs him as he stands beneath it, foreshadowing not only the conflicting dimensions of Felix that Lloyd skillfully weaves into his performance but also which of these dimensions will ultimately prevail: the over-inflated caricature of Felix as dictator as well as shallow and—ironically—impotent ladies' man over the realistic Felix who becomes personally, and humanly invested in the conversation and action only after the subject turns to Ralph in the first scene. Just as the stage is dominated by the towering portrait, Felix is overtaken by his façade.

In fact, Esbjornson uses Felix's secretary, a silhouetted form who never appears on stage except as a shadow, to signal the shift in Felix from caricature to real person and back again. Lloyd stays in caricature mode while the silhouetted office assistant files her nails and answers the telephone, shifting only to a down-to-earth conversation with Henri during the secretary's brief absence from the stage. This con-

flict between the real person and the façade becomes more complex when Felix deals directly with Ralph. On a personal level, Felix wants to learn from Ralph about how Ralph brings women to orgasm by lighting up, while on a political level, he is driven to use a televised crucifixion of Ralph as a means to gain funding, and, consequently, more power. Although the personal desire comes as close as Felix gets to exposing something real about himself, it underscores, as much as his political desire does, his insecure and exaggerated self-image. Though Felix briefly offers Ralph a pardon and a position in the government, after a quick calculation of advantage, he reverses himself. Ultimately, in the struggle for his soul, Felix is deterred by moral impulses only temporarily, and only in response to his desire for Emily and his gratitude to her for reawakening his sexual ability. Money, sex and power overcome any potential for true spiritual engagement.

Unlike Felix, Henri, the play's main character, is driven by idealistic values. Unfortunately, Henri's adherence to those values is equally flawed. Roughly based on Miller's host during a visit he took to Columbia, Henri is a rich, atheist, Marxist. As Miller tells it, the "real" Henri, who hoped to overthrow a dictatorship, "ended up at the bottom of his own well to escape the guerillas he was supporting." Men like this, Miller says, "sometimes start a new university, and then forget about it, or they raise fighting bulls, and then forget about them. It's all a kind of magical realism." Rather than starting a university or raising bulls, Henri, like Miller's Albert Kroll in the 1986 play *Clara*, promotes and then abandons, in practice, anyway, an idealism that he passed on to his daughter—whose faith in it jeopardizes her very life. Achieving awareness of the role his values played in her near demise, and recognizing that "there is nothing but one's family, if one can call that a faith," Henri is truly repentant. He tells Janine, "If I misled you, I apologize to the depths of my heart." But his insight about the damage his values caused in his relationship with his daughter and his continued campaign for Ralph's pardon only compound a further internal conflict: as a pharmaceuticals company owner, he is profiting from the economic stability that the suppression of the revolution affords. Jeff Weiss, who compellingly portrays the very real struggle of Henri, aptly described, in the August 11, 2002, post-play discussion, how Henri is "embarrassed by how much money he makes on depilatories [and] nostrums, but it affords him the leisure to be an intellectual." While he is upset that "this insane worship of money is killing us!" Henri is dependent upon it for the lifestyle he enjoys as a dilettante philosopher. By the play's end, however, Henri laments one crucial lost opportunity: "I could have loved in my life."

Like her father, Jeanine is focused on love. She is drawn to Ralph the revolutionary because she believes "all he is is love," somebody who will go the distance out of love for others. On stage, however, Jeanine comes across as quite loveless herself, exuding strength in a very harsh, overbearing and humorless fashion. Her strength is reflected not only in her resolve to defend her beliefs and the man she loves (a potential Mary Magdalene figure?) but also in her incredible physical agility with a wheelchair even when her character is presumably severely injured from the suicide attempt. Janine says she was dead, that Ralph brought her back, making her a kind of Lazarus figure as well. Yet, despite the opportunity for developing the complexities of character the Magdalene and Lazarus images offer, in performance, Vanden Heuvel keeps Jeanine one-dimensional. She never varies from an angry, bitter, strong portrayal.

Emily, Felix's sexual interest, played by Laila Robins, also comes across as a one-dimensional character, a sharp contrast to the play's main characters. Some of that may be a function of her role: she is television director, whose job it is to create seemingly real images from staged performances and events. In fact, when introduced to the idea of directing the televised crucifixion of Ralph, she objects: "I've never in my life shot anything real." Emily's focus on the artificial, the petty, comes through in her personal interactions as well as her work, reflected in her greater concern for baby seals and her cat getting fed than for the fate of a human being to be executed on camera. But Laila Robins translates Emily's shallowness into a single-dimensioned performance: she plays Emily as verging on hysterical at all times, starting with her discovery, by telephone call to her doctor's office, that she is pregnant and continuing throughout the play. Her extreme emotionalism sharply contrasts to Felix's hollowness. And, her fertility makes for an amusing juxtaposition to Felix's impotence, beautifully setting up the irony, in the dinner scene between Emily and Felix, when, after Felix regains his sexual ability with her, he tells Emily, "You have raised me from the dead." Who, indeed, is the Lazarus figure after all?

As Emily offsets Felix, Skip Cheeseboro, the television producer, played by David Chandler, serves as a foil to Henri. While Henri has the leisure to pursue intellectual and philosophical concerns, Skip can't afford depth: he has to put two kids through college. He is refreshingly honest and unapologetic about his shallowness. He wants Ralph crucified, and he wants the exclusive rights to film it. Furthermore, he wants to ensure Ralph won't ruin the whole thing by screaming! Chandler brings great humor to the part, especially when portraying Skip's obliviousness to the contradictions in the politically correct stances he attempts to take. When Emily asks if there is a doctor on the set or a hat available for the executionee, Skip suddenly takes the moral high ground, responding that to provide those on a Latin American televi-

Continued to page 7

Resurrection Blues Review *(Continued from page 6)*

sion shoot would be foisting a colonial mentality on another country, something he won't do. Televising the crucifixion of their revolutionary leader, however, is obviously exempt from that categorization! Most telling, however, is Skip's response to Emily's objection to shooting something "real": "When you make real things look fake," he tells her, "that makes it emotionally real." Indeed, therein lies Miller's satirization of television; it is the artificial, the "fake," that moves us.

Of all Miller's characters in *Resurrection Blues*, however, the revolutionary's disciple, Stanley, played by Bruce Bohne, is the most endearing because of his guileless and naive malleability to the latest movement or fad. We learn in Felix's interrogation of him that he has taken up with Ralph—now called Charlie—only after participating in numerous other movements. This information makes the delivery of his last line ironic, when he swears his unending devotion with, "Always love you, baby. Thanks." One could say there is no "always" in Stanley! True, Stanley is the fruitless searcher who can't seem to decide on, or commit to, a cause. But Stanley also serves as the only selfless character in the play, making no demands of his leader. This point is punctuated so beautifully in the performance when, in the final scene, all the extras come out behind the main characters, carrying the sick and the wounded to seek healing from the Christ-like revolutionary. While the main characters are determining, and lobbying for, what Charlie (Ralph) can do for them to further their individual causes and the extras are waiting for even a glimpse or a touch to make them whole, Stanley serves only as a constant companion and disciple. Perhaps that is why, after numerous revisions to the script's ending in the two weeks before the show's opening, Miller decided the final acknowledgement should come from Stanley.

Ultimately, *Resurrection Blues* depicts the human search for meaning and the shallowness of money, sex, and power in the achievement of that meaning. It depicts the selfishness and artificiality growing ever stronger in our modern culture. People want something to believe in, but they don't want it to be real because then it would affect their lives! As Skip points out, they want it to be fake but emotionally real. They want the experience without the consequences. Miller offers us these insights along with the satirist's mirror, giving us the opportunity to examine the fine line between the real and the imaginary—in television, politics, religion—and where we have crossed it in our own values and practices. When we laugh, it is a dark laugh, but it is, nevertheless, an enlightened one.

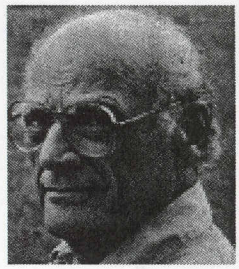
—Paula Langteau

Stephen A. Marino. *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays: The Poetic in the Colloquial.* Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002.

This book should put to rest for good the critical truisms that Arthur Miller is, as John Simon puts it, "tone deaf" and that his dialogue is colloquial, and therefore prosaic and not poetic. As Marino notes, these truisms have gone essentially unexamined for the more than fifty years of Miller's career, even while plays such as the partly verse *A View from the Bridge* and *The Crucible*, with its highly suggestive poetic language, have both succeeded on stage and entered the literary canon. Marino's thesis is at the same time modest and groundbreaking. He contends that, though "Miller seems to work mostly in a form of colloquial prose, there are many moments in his plays when the dialogue clearly elevates to poetry" and that Miller often takes what appear to be "the colloquialisms, clichés, and idioms of the common man's language and reveals them as poetic language, especially in shifting from their denotative to connotative meanings" (2-3). These insights form the basis of the imaginative, original, and revealing close readings of major plays from the several stages of Miller's career that make up the major part of this study.

It is through the accrual of evidence in these fine close readings, each of which is in itself a significant contribution to the understanding of one of Miller's plays, that Marino demonstrates his theory about how Miller's poetic language works: as he "employs the figurative devices of metaphor, symbol, and imagery to give poetic significance to the common man's dialect. . . . in many texts Miller embeds a series of metaphors–many are extended–which possess particular connotations in the societies of the individual plays. Most important, these figurative devices significantly support the tragic conflicts and social themes which are the focus of every Miller play" (3). In demonstrating this process, Marino makes it clear that two impulses which most critics, and often Miller himself, have often seen in conflict in his work–the aesthetic and the socially useful–are intricately entwined in his drama, and it is their particular configuration that makes his dramatic voice unique. Miller's dialogic techniques are a direct extension of this. As Marino puts it, "by subtly mixing these figurative devices of symbolism, imagery, and metaphor with colloquial prose dialogue, Arthur Miller has created a unique dramatic idiom which establishes him as an important language stylist within twentieth century American drama" (3).

Continued to page 8



Conference Announcement

The 8th International Arthur Miller Conference

will be held at

Nicolet College
Rhinelander, Wisconsin

October 3-4, 2003

Conference Topic: Miller & Middle America

Looking back on eight decades of dramatic form and art, the conference will celebrate Arthur Miller's embrace of middle America (the ordinary man, unique aspects of life and culture, how the works of Arthur Miller speak to all versions of the American identity, etc.) as well as other aspects of Miller's life and works. Papers may address, but are not limited to, the following topics: comparative studies of his works, significant biographical events that influenced his art, characters and characterization, his dramatic stagecraft, his significance in modern American drama, and his association with other playwrights. Papers may also consider social, linguistic, cultural, political, and aesthetic issues addressed in the plays. A call for papers will be forthcoming.

For further conference information, or to be included on the conference mailing list, please contact the conference chair:

Paula Langteau
Dean of Teaching & Learning
Nicolet Area Technical College
County Hwy. G., P.O. Box 518
Rhinelander, WI 54501-0518
langteau@nicoletcollege.edu

Stephen A. Marino. *(Continued from page 7)*

Marino's method of close reading follows directly on two fundamental characteristics that he has discovered in Miller's use of language. The first is that Miller's "figurative language relies heavily on the tension between the literal and the metaphorical, between the abstract and the concrete, between the denotative and connotative meaning of words" (9); the second is that "Miller often uses images, symbols, and metaphors as central or unifying devices by employing repetition and recurrence" (9). The first perception is central to Marino's dazzling close reading of *The Crucible*, which demonstrates that Miller's poetic language is distinguished by the use of opposites, reflecting in turn his perception of the extreme polarization of the societies of both Salem in 1692 and the U. S. in the 1950s about which he was writing, and of the heavily theological world view of the second-generation American Puritanism of 1692. Marino shows that Miller's use of the opposites of heat and cold, light and dark, soft and hard in his figurative language reflects the unambiguous Puritan view of good and evil: "for the Salemites, the wilderness and darkness of a physical universe which surrounded them in the new world of Massachusetts could only be tamed by its opposite: the light of their religious, political, and personal beliefs" (80).

Miller's creation of unity through recurrent figures and images, Marino notes, is well attuned to the technique of "cluster criticism," which he uses effectively in his readings of the richly image-laden "*Death of a Salesman* and *A View from the Bridge*, as well as later plays like *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* and *Broken Glass*, where Miller has taken a more minimalist approach to the use of imagery and symbolism. Marino's analysis of *Salesman*, like that of *The Crucible,* is a tour de force that reflects the complexity with which Miller's play intertwines the metaphors of sports (particularly boxing) and trees with the themes of competition, success, and the American Dream. Marino notes that Miller's juxtaposition of the abstract and the concrete is particularly evident in this play, as it is fundamental to Willy Loman's view of the world, where possession of a concrete object embodies his false dreams of success, and, therefore, happiness. In his analysis of *A View from the Bridge*, Marino shows that Miller's poetic expression both permeates the language of the verse sections and is'"rooted in the language of the Sicilian-American society in Brooklyn" that Miller creates. As in *Crucible* and *Salesman*, the figurative language in *View* comes directly from the experience of the people Miller presents on stage. Thus the opposition of the ocean with the beach, the Madonna with Geta Garbo as Hollywood icon, and the juxtaposition of the seemingly disparate imagery of shoes, bowling, and tunnels with angels and Madonnas.

In the later plays, Marino shows, Miller uses a clear controlling metaphor that is often reflected in the title, the ride in *The Ride Down Mount Morgan* and the glass in *Broken Glass*. And, the image patterns and metaphoric implications are more clearly delineated, as with the angels on the ceiling and the use of alcohol and "pills" in *Archbishop's Ceiling*, and the paralysis, the horseback riding, the sea, and the glass in *Broken Glass*. Marino demonstrates that Miller uses imagery and figurative language with great economy in these plays, creating unifying structures through the skillful manipulation of these image clusters, which Marino, in turn, explicates with deftness and clarity.

While the "poetic" qualities of a playwright like Tennessee Williams have long been taken for granted, those of Miller, which, Marino shows us, are of a different order, requiring a different sort of critical analysis, have yet to be acknowledged and explored. Marino's work is a groundbreaking contribution to this effort, and it promises to be an influential study. It is also a significant contribution to the recent revival of critical close reading that has been noted by critics such as Christopher Clausen, and it sets a high standard for the future analysis of dramatic texts that it will no doubt inspire. It is must reading for serious scholars, students, and readers of Arthur Miller.

–Brenda Murphy

Brenda Murphy and Susan C.W Abbotson. *Understanding Death of a Salesman: A Study Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999.

I began reading *Understanding Death of a Salesman* the way I imagined my students would: flipping from one essay to the next, reading the sections that seemed interesting at the time, following my curiosity rather than the page numbers. After several hours of reading this way, the value of this text became immediately apparent. To my knowledge, no other book brings together such diverse and wide-ranging topics in a scholastic format dedicated to Miller's most celebrated play.

Authors Brenda Murphy and Susan C.W. Abbotson add this edition to the Greenwood Press's "Literature in Context" student casebook series (a series edited by Claudia Durst Johnson), which also features a text on *The Crucible,* among twenty or so other classic titles. *Understanding Death of a Salesman* begins with a brief introduction and discussion of the "Significance of *Death of a Salesman,*" and is then divided into six sections: "Cultural Myths and Values," "Eco-

Continued on page 9

Brenda Murphy and Susan C.W Abbotson. *(Continued from page 8)*

nomic Interests and Forces," "American Business Forces," "Family and Gender Expectations," "Sports and American Life," and "*Death of a Salesman*'s Impact on American Culture."

In "Cultural Myths and Values," perhaps the book's finest section, we hear from voices as varied as Benjamin Franklin, Horatio Alger, Dale Carnegie, Teddy Roosevelt, Lewis Mumford, and Sinclair Lewis, among others. This chapter embodies the authors' ambitious intent: to provide material from a variety of disciplines and perspectives that reflect *Death of a Salesman*'s richness. Murphy and Abbotson clarify that many of the play's central characters spent their formative years in the nineteenth century, while others "formed their ideas about life" in the 1920s. The play takes place in 1948, "but has continued to have an impact up to the present day." To give the reader a sense of the "thoughts, moods, and ideas covering the span" of those years, we have excerpts that begin with Franklin's *Poor Richard Improved* in 1758, and end with Jerry Rubin's obituary in 1994. Along the way, we have excerpts from a salesman's diary in 1919, a blurb from Thoreau's "Life Without Principle," de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*. These selections join more than sixty other pieces, from song lyrics to advertisements.

As might be expected, not all of the choices are especially relevant, but many are directly applicable to Miller's play, and quite a few more are fascinating for their intrinsic value. George Hopkins' comments from *American Magazine* in 1922, "We had a period when we thought that a first-class salesman was a man who could burst in anywhere, fill up the place with a freshet of language, and get out again with an order" could have been written by Willy Loman himself. Jerry Rubin's obit is a far less successful entry. Other than the title and prominence of the deceased, little recommends its inclusion here. An ad for Congoleum rugs has font so tiny that it would make an osprey squint, but a subsequent cover illustration from *St. Nicholas Magazine* perfectly recreates Biff's glory days at Ebbet's field. Claudia Durst Johnson's editing, while not flawless, is solid overall. Murphy and Abbotson's best work is reflected in the scope and format of this text. They have done extensive study and research that brings together information that would take weeks, perhaps months, to compile effectively. While such a broad range of materials might be lost in lesser hands, the authors here deftly manage to piece the works together in a clear, readable fashion.

Understanding Death of a Salesman: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources, and Historical Documents is a fine resource for students, teachers, and scholars, as it provides readers with a plethora of ideas and sources that indeed help us better understand Miller's play. If my students enjoy scanning its pages nearly as much as I did—and my guess is they will—it will be an asset in and out of the classroom for years to come.

—Carlos Campo

Terry Otten. *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller.* Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002

Every few years a work of criticism is published that is immediately recognized as a major new study. Terry Otten's recently released, *The Temptation of Innocence in the Dramas of Arthur Miller* is such a text. Otten, the Kenneth E. Wray Professor in the Humanities at Wittenberg University, has produced a study that has been sorely needed in Miller scholarship since the revival of productions of his plays in the 1990s. Otten's book is the logical result of the consequent critical reassessment of Miller's canon since it incorporates the last twelve years of play productions and criticism within the substantial body of work of Miller's sixty-five year career.

Otten traces the theme of innocence—and its relation to guilt and responsibility in Miller's characters—as an integral part of Miller's canon from his earliest plays to the recent *Mr. Peter's Connections*. Otten's central thesis challenges the critical misconception of many critics that Miller's repetition of this theme is stasis. Rather, Otten examines the changing nature of the theme of guilt and responsibility throughout Miller's dramatic canon. He contends that Miller has adapted and extended the use of innocence through his exploration of the meaning of tragedy and the development of his stagecraft. Otten shows the evolution of Miller's characters—from the first plays of his canon written in the 1930s to those produced in a post-modernist world—as they confront the temptation and destruction of innocence.

Otten's book is thoroughly researched and incorporates much of the major criticism about Miller. However, the strength of the text is that it takes no theoretical stance, so common in much literary criticism. Rather Otten considers all theoretical approaches in highlighting his focus on innocence. He thoroughly uses the criticism but never lets it overwhelm his argument. The book is particularly strong on including much of the recent criticism about Miller and balancing it against past perspectives.

The text organizes the discussion of the plays chronologically, with thorough, comprehensive readings of the plays. Otten's discussion of Miller's apprentice plays, written as an

Continued on page 10

Terry Otten. *(Continued from page 9)*

undergraduate at the University of Michigan and for the Federal Theater Project, shows how these works foreshadow the conflicts and themes of Miller's later major dramas. The analysis of *All My Sons* examines Joe Keller's moral responsibility for his action. Otten's judgment about Chris Keller focuses on him as the first of Miller's idealistic characters who are "prone to lapse into self-absorbing innocence."

Otten's discussion of *Death of a Salesman* thoroughly considers the moral responsibility of the characters. The strength of this chapter is its exhaustive consideration of the play's status as tragedy. Otten reviews the many arguments throughout the play's fifty-year history and concludes that in *Salesman,* Miller actually reverses the Aristotelian notion of tragedy in confronting Willy Loman's responsibility to himself and his son Biff. Otten's reconsideration of recent feminist criticism of the play is strong in its view on Linda Loman.

Otten's chapter on *The Crucible* considers it as a tragedy whose characters confront innocence and guilt in an historical context. Otten juxtaposes *The Crucible* with Robert Bolt's *A Man for All Seasons*, written about the same time. He compares Sir Thomas More and John Proctor as modern tragic figures.

In his analysis of *The Misfits*, Otten rejects the over-emphasis of the autobiographical elements in the screenplay that Miller wrote for Marilyn Monroe. Rather, Otten judges that the work reflects Miller's growing existential vision. Otten points out that this is clearly evident a few years later in *After the Fall*, which marks a crucial shift in the evolution of Miller's concept of guilt, innocence, and responsibility. This shift is evident in 1960s plays like *Incident at Vichy* and *The Price*, where Victor, like Quentin, is true to an existential ethic.

Otten's analyses of the full-length plays of the 1970s and one-act plays of the 1980s trace the loss of innocence in characters who are searching for a moral position in their worlds. Otten's final chapter examines the plays of the 1990s where the characters' moral certainty is blurred in a post-modernist world less sure of its center.

Otten's study is surely to be valued by undergraduates searching for an in-depth reading of individual plays in the context of Miller's dramatic canon and scholars desiring to keep abreast of the continuing re-evaluation of Miller's art.

—Stephen Marino

Christopher J. Smith, ed. *Readings on All My Sons*. San Diego: Greenhaven Press, 2001.

This anthology of critical resources on Miller's breakthrough play of 1947, which beat out Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh* for the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, is one volume of the *Literary Companion Series*, published by The Greenhaven Press. The series editor is Bonnie Szumski. Surely this must be the Cadillac of study guides. Each volume contains a biographical essay on the author, numerous critical essays on the work in question grouped under appropriate divisions like *Themes*, *Characters*, *Staging and Structure*, a chronology of the author's life and career, and a brief bibliography of primary and secondary sources. The essays have been "expertly edited to accommodate the reading and comprehension levels of [young adults]" (10). The content of each essay is briefly identified in the *Table of Contents* by a one-sentence summary, while a more substantial *précis* introduces the piece as it appears in the body of the text. There are also occasional sidebars and subtitles within each essay to keep the reader clearly oriented. This is a user-friendly book.

The essays are brief but substantial, taken mostly from books and articles from the '60s through the '80s. There is one excerpt from *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller* (1997), an essay by Steven R. Centola. The pieces are detailed enough so that even seasoned Miller scholars will be able to find new nuggets. We are reminded that the idea for *All My Sons* came from a conversation overheard in Miller's living room: "A pious lady from the Middle West told of a family in her neighborhood which had been destroyed when the daughter turned the father into the authorities on discovering that he had been selling faulty machinery to the Army. By the time she had finished the tale [Miller] had transformed the daughter into a son and the climax of the second act [of *All My Sons*] was full and clear in [his] mind" (5). Did you know that the play's original title was *The Sign of the Archer* (51)? There are two fascinating essays by Miller on the play, one from 1957, in which he discusses the dramatic importance of "relatedness," by which he means the psychological necessity of relating oneself to the consequences of one's own actions (47), and one from *Timebends: A Life* (1987), in which Miller remembers responses to the play by an Israeli audience in 1977. Yitzhak Rabin saw parallels with his country at that time. And Miller saw in the performance of Hanna Marron, who lost a leg in a terrorist bombing in 1972, an image of disfigurement resulting from war. This undercurrent in her presence on stage, though she barely limped, added authenticity and universality, for Miller, to Kate Keller's suffering. Such poignant reflections crossing cultural borders and expanses of time are intriguing reminders of the power of drama to communicate and connect people through psychic channels we very inadequately understand.

This valuable resource would be a welcome addition to every high school and undergraduate library, and I am glad to own a copy myself. I will turn to it every fall as I happily gear up for Miller once again.

—Robert Combs

Matthew C. Roudané. *American Drama since 1960: A Critical History.* New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996.

Like most things in modern life, American drama seems to have speeded up a great deal in recent years. Looking back at the theatre of the United States from its beginnings during the Revolutionary period to the early twentieth century, Matthew C. Roudané invokes Groucho Marx, who quips in *Monkey Business* that he has "worked [him]self up from nothing to a state of extreme poverty" (ix). But when Eugene O'Neill arrives in the 1920s, things begin to move. And by the '40s and '50s, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller are, like O'Neill in his late works, creating momentous drama for the American stage, drama with real momentum. Roudané takes up his narrative of American drama in the 1960s with Edward Albee, who, building upon O'Neill, Miller, and Williams, and simultaneously reaching out to Beckett, Ionesco, Genet, and Pinter, rejuvenates the American stage with experimental techniques equal to the social/political complexities of the time. Just as O'Neill moved beyond his father's melodrama when he discovered Ibsen and Strindberg, Albee moved beyond realism and paved the way for Adrienne Kennedy, Amiri Baraka, Sam Shepard and many others.

Roudané's book is part of Twayne's five-volume critical history of American drama, Jordan Y. Miller, general editor, and shares some of its territory with two other books in the series: Thomas P. Adler's *American Drama, 1940-1960: A Critical History* (1994) and Sally F. Burke's *American Feminist Playwrights* (1996). The former should be consulted for William Inge and Tennessee Williams, and the latter for a more detailed treatment of female playwrights of the contemporary period. Roudané does not attempt to comment upon every successful dramatist of the second half of the twentieth century. John Guare, Tina Howe, Wallace Shawn, and Paula Vogel are nowhere to be found. Neither are Neil Simon, Anna Deavere Smith, Israel Horovitz, and Tony Kushner. In this regard, Roudané avoids competing with Gerald M. Berkowitz, who, in *American Drama of the Twentieth Century* (1992), does an excellent job of touching all the bases, commenting on numerous authors, and working succinctly and insightfully.

What Roudané does is select about two dozen playwrights which illustrate the range of concerns and shifts in dramatic presentation that have characterized this period. He goes into the works of these authors in some depth and detail, bringing in relevant scholarship, biographical, and historical background, and discussing theatrical history as well as dramatic texts. His table of contents hammers home his thesis, that American drama since 1960 has been engaged in a project of demythologizing American life. In *Myths of Rebellion and Recovery*, he discusses the works of ten African-American dramatists, from Alice Childress and Lorraine Hansberry to Ntozake Shange and August Wilson. Roudané updates the concept of double-consciousness, showing black dramatists embracing a sort of postmodern condition as they "create in effect a play within a play, a piece of metatheater in which their scripts could parody and satirize, protest and resist a white world while simultaneously creating on the stage a black cosmos" (50). In *Myths of Identity*, he discusses the ways selected women dramatists—Megan Terry, Maria Irene Fornes, Marsha Norman, Beth Henley, and Wendy Wasserstein—have come to terms with modernity, how they "validate a set of behaviors and responses that celebrate the female as subject rather than object; the female as a central agent in her own life" (113). In *Myths of Confrontation and Expiation*, he analyzes the dramatic/ceremonial rites of Arthur Kopit, Lanford Wilson, David Rabe, and David Mamet as they confront what Julia Kristeva calls "symbolic denominators," collective memories that are interweavings of history and geography. Finally, in *Myths of the American Dream*, Roudané discusses two playwrights who are central to his reading of American drama, Arthur Miller and Sam Shepard. Both tell stories, in the words of Arthur Miller, which highlight "an aspiration to an innocence that when defeated or frustrated can turn quite murderous" (177). In this way Miller emerges as one of the two heroes of Roudané's narrative of American drama because Miller exposed the American Dream, which is really the myth of man's perfectibility, as the master-myth of American culture. It is this myth that forms the background of irony for so many American playwrights as they examine experiences of failure and victimization in our culture. The other hero is Albee, who forced American audiences to participate in, not merely to observe, the anxieties that lurk below the surface of "normal" life. Albee made it possible for white American audiences to see, if they cared to, that they are no different from "others" on the margin. All are caught in the same mythic net of history. What Roudané says of Shepard's characters could be said of so many characters in contemporary American drama: they "are victims of their own identities" (232).

Roudané's opening chapter, *Uncertainty and Affirmation: The Contours of Contemporary American Drama*, emphasizes Cold War anxieties and the period's increasing awareness of conflicting social narratives with their underlying revolutionary currents. The "carnivalesque" '60s moved into a new chapter of American drama beyond such end-of-the-world plays, as great as they were, as *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Albee would continuously challenge and inspire new playwrights to embrace the central ideological debates of their time. No arena is better suited for these debates in a free world than modern drama. As C. W. E. Bigsby puts it, "the theatre is an arena in which societies debate with themselves. It is where that delicate negotiation between the individual and the group finds its natural contexts" (9). From its beginnings into and through the twentieth century, American drama has moved from a provincial beginning toward some of the most scalding self-examinations produced by the contemporary literary imagination. Roudané tells the engrossing story of this coming of age with great passion and intelligence. His book will be immensely useful to all students of American history, literature, and culture. It contains a bibliography that is selective and up–to-date, as well as a year-by-year chronology, 1960 to 1995, juxtaposing drama, literature, and art with historical events, an entertaining exercise in dramatic irony in its own right.

—Robert Combs

Contributors

Robert Combs is an associate professor of English at George Washington University in Washington, DC, where he teaches courses in American Drama and short fiction. Author of *Vision of the Voyage: Hart Crane and the Psychology of Romanticism*, he has also written articles on Eugene O'Neill, Israel Horovitz, David Mamet, Harold Pinter, and others. He lives in Baltimore.

Carlos Campo began teaching at UNLV in 1989, upon entering the doctoral program. Campo has degrees in Theatre and English (MA) from UNLV, and has an extensive background in theater and voice as a teacher and actor. In 1993, his dissertation, *Friendship in Arthur Miller*, was honored as the "Dissertation of the Year" by the UNLV Foundation. Campo taught at UNLV until 1997, when he transferred to CCSN, where he teaches English, specializing in drama and Shakespeare. Campo has published many articles on drama and film, and has specialized in the work of Arthur Miller for many years.

Paula Langteau is the Dean of Teaching and Learning at Nicolet College in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. She served as a founding member of the Arthur Miller Society, as its first Vice President (1995-1998) and second President (1998-2000). She continues to serve on the Executive Board. Her professional accomplishments include presenting at nine national or international— as well as numerous state and local— conferences. She has five publications, including the chapter, "Miller's *Salesman*: An Early Vision of Absurdist Theater," in *The Achievement of Arthur Miller: New Essays*, edited by Steven Centola, 1995. She has been recognized with two national teaching excellence awards.

Stephen Marino teaches at Saint Francis College in Brooklyn and at Saint Francis Preparatory School in Fresh Meadows in New York, where is he chairperson of the English department. His work has appeared in *Modern Drama* and *The Journal of Imagism*. He edited a book titled *"The Salesman Has a Birthday": Essays Celebrating the Fiftieth Anniversary of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*, published by University Press of America. His book, *A Language Study of Arthur Miller's Plays: The Poetic in the Colloquial*, has just been published by Mellen Press. He is currently the president of The Arthur Miller Society.

Brenda Murphy is Professor of English at the University of Connecticut. Her recent books include *O'Neill: Long Day's Journey Into Night* (2001), *Congressional Theatre: Dramatizing McCarthyism on Stage, Film, and Television* (1999), *Miller: Death of a Salesman* (1995), *Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan: A Collaboration in the Theatre* (1992), and *American Realism and American Drama, 1880-1940* (1987). She has also edited three volumes of essays on American drama and theatre.

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5151 Pacific Avenue
Stockton, CA 95207