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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ARTHUR MILLER AND BEOMSUK CHA

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YONGHEE LEE

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ABSTRACT

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ARTHUR MILLER AND BEOMSUK CHA

BY

YONGHEE LEE

This study discusses the similarities between the playwrights, Arthur Miller and Beomsuk Cha, and pays particular attention to the inseparable relationship between humans and their society. The plays, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge by Arthur Miller are compared with the socio-familial plays of Beomsuk Cha, The Barren, and Castle of Roses. This study explores the relationship between society and the individual, or the family and the individual. This same relationship is also evident in each playwright's biographical life as much as in their plays. This study examines how the environment effects the protagonist's tragedy.

The study uses obsession, alienation and differing generational values to examine the relationship between the social environment and the protagonist. This study also includes a telephone interview with Beomsuk Cha as an appendix.

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INTRODUCTION

This study explores the similarities between two different cultures could be found by analyzing two playwrights: an American, Arthur Miller(1915-) and, a Korean, Beomsuk Cha(1924-). These men are prominent contemporary playwrights who established themselves after World War II. According to a phone interview with Cha, Cha personally admitted that there are some similarities between Miller's and his own work when he was asked to share the likeliness to Miller. Cha mentioned that "I really like Miller's plays. Despite some severe criticisms about his plays, I like All My Sons, Death of a Salesman and A View from the Bridge. It's because he describes persons under certain social systems and circumstances, not persons who belong nowhere." In addition to Cha's acknowledgement, these two playwrights are recognized as social dramatists, and they live in the similar historical period. These similarities suggest that both men might dramatize similar social situations, and they might also use similar approaches to enlighten their societies. Among many major historical incidents, World War II, a war that both playwrights experienced, created a great deal of confusion and led to a shift of value systems in the two

cultures. By looking at the shifts in value systems that both dramatists witnessed, it is hypothesized that both Miller and Cha share a similar perspective toward their societies. Both playwrights understand that the environment of society and social values greatly influence human life.

In order to explore similar social perspectives seen in both Miller and Cha, Miller's major socio-familial plays, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge and Cha's major socio-familial plays, The Barren and Castle of Roses have been selected for their emphasis on social values and social environment. In these five socio-familial plays, the theme of an inseparable interrelationship between humans and their society is well indicated by each protagonist's struggle with members of their family and their interactions with society. These plays exhibit specific social conditions that affect each protagonist in the same way those social conditions influence the people in that society. These five plays also show the different generational value systems between parents and children that have changed over time. By using conflicts between parents and children, both playwrights, depict humans affected by and resisting changes in their society.

The main concern in the study is the playwrights' perspectives toward the relationship between society and individuals rather than specific cultural or social circumstances. Thus, Confucianism will not be compared with Christianity, even though Confucianism is a factor in the socio-environmental background of Korean society. The study, rather, focuses on the similarities in the plays. Despite cultural differences, society greatly impacts both the playwrights and the characters in their plays. This study is justified in that the similarities of both playwrights not only provide an opportunity to bridge two different cultures, but they also help us understand another culture.

Chapter One is divided into two parts, dealing with the careers of Miller and Cha. Because their social perspectives were formed by the influences of their own societies, we can see the environmental forces to human life through Miller and Cha's biographical and educational backgrounds.

Chapter Two analyzes Miller's three socio-familial plays, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge, and examines them in terms of three elements, obsession, generational value systems, and alienation which are found in all of these plays.

Chapter Three deals with Cha's two plays, The Barren, and Castle of Roses. This chapter analyzes the plays using the same three elements explored in Miller's plays and begins to compare Cha's work with Miller's three plays. It explains specific aspects of Korean society in both 1950s and 1960s in order to examine a social background in Cha's work. This chapter also compares the two plays with each other in order to highlight the socio-environmental characteristics in Cha's plays and Korean society.

Chapter Four concludes by focusing on the two dramatists' similarities in respect with both their careers and writing. In their plays, Miller and Cha, share the perspective that social environments seriously determine human life. In addition, this chapter suggests the need for further comparative studies of Korean and American literature.

CHAPTER I

This chapter will discuss the careers of two playwrights, Arthur Miller and Beomsuk Cha, focusing on the impact their youth had on their writings.

Arthur Asher Miller (1915-), one of the greatest American modern playwrights, was born on October 17, 1915 in Manhattan, New York City, as the second son of Isidore (a Jewish immigrant and owner of the Miltex Coat and Suit Company) and Augusta Miller. Young Miller grew up observing Jewish customs and was inculcated in Judaism. His house was located near Harlem, so he attended public school in Harlem until 1928.

According to Miller's autobiography, Timebends: A Life, before he entered elementary school, he watched a movie that "deepened [his] misunderstanding of the real" (1987: 57). As young Miller viewed the movie, the projector light suddenly went out and he became curious about where the actors and actresses were. His curiosity remained unanswered until he had the opportunity to watch a theatre performance. At about the age of eight, Miller went to the Shubert Theatre with his mother. There he learned "two kinds of reality,"(1987: 58), true reality and

representative reality in theatres and movies, recalling his unsatisfied curiosity about what happened to the people he saw on the movie screen. However, compared to the movie, theatre provided Miller with a much more real and exciting view. Watching the performance full of tension, he was entrapped by the magic of stage.

In 1929, because of the crash of Wall Street and the Great Depression, Isidore's business suffered great financial losses, and finally the family had to move to Brooklyn. To Miller, the crash of 1929 and the Depression helped develop his view of real life. The Depression destroyed his father's business and

> put serious strains on the young Miller's relationships with other members of his family. The relative poverty to which they had been reduced meant that sacrifices were called for and every desire to place self-realisation above family solidarity implied a fundamental betrayal. (Carson 4)

In addition to troubles within his own family, he saw many jobless or homeless people roaming the street. He gradually realized that there was no way anyone was immune to these disasters, and later he recalled his memories of irresistible forces of circumstance during the Depression.

In Brooklyn, Arthur Miller attended Abraham Lincoln High School where he distinguished himself in everything except football. In high school, he injured a knee during

football practice, which made him ineligible for military service during World War II. After graduation from high school, Miller worked at various jobs "ranging from a singer on a local radio station to a truck driver to a clerk in an automobile-parts warehouse on Tenth Avenue in Manhattan"(Martin 1978:xi). Finding a job was not easy, and even more difficult for Jews, which Miller personally confronted as a harsh reality. Nelson explains that "[a]nti-Semitism, which was [an] abstract and distant concept in his comfortably clannish neighborhood, now emerged as a personal and particular fact of life"(19).

While working for the warehouse, Miller read The Brothers Karamazov, by the Russian novelist Dostoievsky, which had a great impact on him, and steered him toward becoming a writer. He was struck at the conflict between the father and his sons and between brothers in the novel. This conflict later became his main subject in his works. Miller read more in the year following his discovery of The Brothers Karamazov than at any previous time. "[W]ith his reading," according to Nelson, "came the first sense that writing could be a way of communicating, of defining experience, shaping chaos, making some kind of sense out of apparent senselessness"(19). His experience at the

warehouse later produced a one-act play, A Memory of Two Mondays.

Despite his low test scores, the University of Michigan granted Miller conditional admission, and he enrolled as a journalism student in 1934. To earn tuition fees and other living costs, Miller decided to work for the student newspaper, *The Michigan Daily*, as a reporter and night editor. This experience enabled him to widen his political perspective because the 1930s were full of political and social issues such as the New Deal, President Roosevelt's confrontation with TVA, and many strikes and protests. He was interested in the Spanish Civil War and gradually found himself immersed in the socialist ideals of the time which supported the need for change and progress in society. In 1936, his political and social interests yielded the play No Villain. This play is about a Jewish family living in the outskirts of New York. This family is threatened by a strike. The play portrays Millers' family as a frame of the story. In this play, the father runs a garment business, like Miller's father, and his sons, Ben and Arnie are like Miller and his brother, Kermit. Neil Carson commented that No Villain is

> [a] realistic treatment of a domestic crisis which is precipitated by external, political events. The conflicts provoked arise from what might be called

> ideological differences but these are by no means confined to political ideologies. (7)

In No Villain, Miller is also concerned with the question of how an individual may live with others in his family and in society. Because the characters in the play are affected by their social circumstances, these circumstances cause conflicts among the family, as the form of generational conflicts; and conflicts between an individual and society as the form of alienation. Miller depicts an individual under particular social surroundings and how deeply he/she is influenced by the surroundings. This concern has produced Miller's later major plays such as All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View form the Bridge.

Miller started his playwriting career with No Villain, and received a Hopwood Award in Drama from the Avery Hopwood Writing Contest for this play. Even though he began to write No Villain in order to earn $250, in his autobiography, Timebends, he confessed that he couldn't help writing plays as the tool for expressing his artistic spirit and freedom. Miler explains that,

> [f]rom the beginning, the idea of writing a play was entwined with my very conception of myself. Playwriting was an act of self-discovery from the start and would always be; it was a kind of license to say the unspeakable… writing meant freedom, a spreading of wings. (1987: 212)

Before submitting No Villain, he let his friend, Jim Doll, read the play and Doll praised it fully. At that time, Miller expressed his discovery by saying that "the magical force of making marks on a piece of paper and reaching into another human being, making him see what I had seen and feel my feelings—I had made a new shadow on the earth"(1987:213). Miller realized the thrill of great power of writing when his friend, Doll, sympathized with him. In September of 1936, he changed his major from journalism to English, and he revised No Villain for the Theatre Guild's Bureau of New Plays Contest and renamed it They Too Arise.

The next year, he enrolled in the playwriting class of Professor Kenneth Rowe because, until that time, Miller had not had any real playwriting lessons. In Rowe's classes, Miller learned how to establish a well-constructed plot by studying the dramatic forms of the past, especially the realistic works of Henrik Ibsen. Rowe taught "Ibsen's emphasis on social problems and the way in which the playwright focused on the questions of moral values, integrity and will underlying those problems"(Carson 7-8). Through this perspective, Rowe influenced Miller's development in the process of his playwriting, stressing the importance of a good plot:

> [l]et [the author] present the story, translate it, if necessary, in terms of a background and kind of people he knows and understands. Then let [the author] develop the play earnestly and sincerely in truth to the characters and to life as he sees it. (Rowe 1939, 52)

While he studied at the University of Michigan, Miller kept writing plays such as Honors at Dawn, which received another Avery Hopwood Award, and The Great Disobedience. He had a chance to put his play They Too Arise, on stage at the university. In June of 1938, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in English. As soon as graduated, he began to work with the Federal Theatre Project in New York, sponsored by the United States government in order to provide work for actors, writers, and theatre technicians (Carson 9).

Between 1938 and 1943, he wrote many radio plays and scripts for the government in support of the war effort. Since there were so many restrictions and taboos from the government, Miller expressed his dislike for radio scripts in a 1947 New York Times interview: "I despise radio. Every emotion in a radio script has to have a tag. It's like playing a scene in a dark closet"(Hogan 1964:7). In spite of his dislike, the experiences of writing radio plays and scripts helped him financially and later in literary aspects. One of his radio plays, The Pussycat and the

Expert Plumber Who Was a Man, foreshadowed his later major plays. Tom, the cat in the radio play, was reminiscent of two characters of Miller's major plays—Eddie Carbone in A View from a Bridge and John Proctor in The Crucible. Tom, the cat, says,

> the one thing a man fears most, next to death, is the loss of his good name. Man is evil in his own eyes, my friends, worthless, and the only way he can find respect for himself is by getting other people to say he's a nice fellow. (Hogan 8)

The idea of the significance of keeping a good name, was explored in this script.

In 1943, because World War II was still going, Miller was asked to write a screen play based on Ernie Pyle's war report in newspaper columns. Miller did not have military service experience, so he toured army camps to gather material for the film script The Story of G. I. Joe. In 1944, he also published a book about this tour under the title Situation Normal. In the same year, he produced his first Broadway play, The Man Who Had All the Luck; although the play closed 4 days after it opened, it received the Theatre Guild National Award. More importantly, this play showed Miller's major concerns about the father-son relationship, a son's search for his identity, and individual responsibility in a family tragedy. Miller explains in his Collected Plays that, "[t]he crux of All My

Sons, which would not be written until nearly three years later, was formed; and the roots of Death of a Salesman were sprouted"(1957: 126).

During World War II, as the world knew that the Germans were hunting down the Jews *en masse*, American bigotry and hostility became worse toward Jews as well as foreigners in general. In 1945, Miller published the novel Focus as a remembrance of his job hunting experience. In it he attacked anti-Semitism in American society and further concentrated on the irrational hatred toward any racial minority. In future works, Miller returned to Jewish settings and characterizations in Incident at Vichy and The Price.

After World War II, "the growth of America's responsibility toward the world's oppressed people" (Scharine 1991: xxi-xxiii) was a dominant political idea. Miller put this concept into his play, All My Sons, which deals with social idealism and universal relatedness. Two years after World War II, All My Sons was produced in New York and ran for 328 performances. This play received both the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Donaldson Award and gave Miller professional recognition as a playwright.

After publishing All My Sons, Miller admitted Ibsen's influences on his playwriting. Miller thought contemporary playwrights could do more with Ibsen's intention to "cling always to the marvelous spectacles of life forcing one event out of the jaws of the preceding one and to reveal its elemental consistencies with surprise"(1978: 545). Namely, Ibsen dealt with the process, change, and development of life; therefore there are relationships between past and present. Miller stressed the causation between the past and present; "[an] enormous past was always heavily documented to the end that the present be comprehended with wholeness, as a moment in a flow of time, and not as a situation without roots"(1978: 544). Miller took Ibsen's insistence on the valid causation of events in writing plays.

In addition to the irrevocable relation between past and present, Miller found the spirit of Greek tragedy in Ibsen's realistic plays to be a force which he wanted to capture in his own writing. "To me," Miller said,

> [Ibsen] was a reincarnation of the Greek dramatic spirit, especially its obsessive fascination with past transgressions as the seeds of current catastrophe. Past and present were drawn into a single continuity, and thus a secret moral order was being limned. (1978: 547)

The ideas of "obsessive fascination with past transgressions" and the impact of public life on the private guided Miller. Using stories he had heard from his relatives or friends, Miller produced Greek tragedy-like plays such as All My Sons (1947) and A View from the Bridge (1955, 56).

Exactly two years after releasing All My Sons, Miller introduced his most influential play, Death of a Salesman, to audiences all over the world in 1949. This play earned many awards, from the Pulitzer Prize to the Theatre Club award. Many critics questioned the theme of Death of a Salesman; however, personally I will focus on how Miller depicts society through an individual's mind as well as an individual through the materialistic society. This matter will be discussed in great detail as the main point of the later chapters of this thesis.

After Death of a Salesman was published, Miller wrote "Tragedy and the Common Man" in the New York Times on Feb. 27, 1949 to explain his definition of tragedy. In addition to this article, he published other articles, such as "The Family in Modern Drama" (1956) and "The Shadows of the Gods" (1958), to explain the ideas in his plays which caused misunderstandings and confusion among critics, readers and politicians of the period.

During the period that Miller wrote Death of a Salesman, the early 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy brought the issue of anti-communism to the public. He warned Americans that communists in government positions, the military, and the arts threatened the American way of life. The House Committee on Un-American Activities, a special committee put in place "to investigate the extent of Communist infiltration into American life"(Carson 15), accused Miller of being a communist. Starting with writing Death of a Salesman, and followed by An Enemy of the People (1950), and The Crucible (1953), Miller attracted the attention of politicians because of the anti-capitalism aspect of his plays, which caused suspicion that he was a Communist.

In particular, The Crucible drew more attention because it reflected the McCarthy hunt for communists. By chance, Miller noticed a copy of Marion Starkey's book on the Salem witch trials, The Devil in Massachusetts. Miller was impressed by the "terrible marvel of people who could have such a belief in themselves and in the rightness of their consciousness [that they would] give up their lives rather than say what they thought was false"(Carson 16). People who read this play and watched the performance definitely thought this play criticized the current

political climate where people were afraid to speak out about what they really thought.

Despite his denial, in 1954 when he tried to renew his passport to attend the Brussels opening of The Crucible, the State Department refused his application. In 1956, Miller sent a letter to the chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities which said,

> I was looking for the world that would be perfect. I think it necessary that I do that if I were to develop myself, as a writer…. I am not ashamed of this. I accept my life…. What I sought to find from without I subsequently learned must be created within. (Carson 32)

This statement is indicative of him as a social dramatist and his continuous search for a better society. His role as a social dramatist, which is greatly significant to this thesis, will be dealt with in the next chapter.

Between 1956 and 1961, when Miller was married to Marilyn Monroe, he did not write plays, but instead devoted three years to writing a movie script, The Misfits, which was later published as a novel. After divorcing Monroe, Miller returned to Broadway with After the Fall (1964) and Incident at Vichy (1964), ending a seven-year absence. People were interested in seeing these plays because they presumed both plays would be based on his marriage to Marilyn Monroe. Instead, both plays returned to his earlier

familial concern –"how to make of the outside world a home, a world after the fall from innocence, a world invaded by evil most manifest in the Holocaust but evident as well in personal betrayals"(Griffin 114).

In 1962, he married Ingeborg Morath, an Austrian-born professional photographer, and the couple worked together on the three books In Russia (1969), In Country (1977), and Chinese Encounters (1979); Miller wrote the stories and Ingeborg took photographs for each book. From 1965 to 1969, he was president of International P.E.N., an organization that advocated freedom of expression. Since 1968 when he wrote The Price, which treats hostility between competitive brothers, Miller has, almost annually, produced plays and books.

Miller himself mentioned after 1972 his plays became more mythological, particularly, The Creation of the World and Other Business (1972) and Up from Paradise (1974). When speaking about these plays, Miller explained that, "the characters are actually mythological…. And perhaps it isn't as obvious to others as it is to me that the characters in all my other plays are also mythological"(Griffin 9).

In 1980, Miller's adaptation of Fania Fenelon's memoirs, Playing for Time, was shown on TV and became one of television's all-time best dramas. In 1983, Miller

directed Death of a Salesman at the People's Art Theatre in Beijing, The People's Republic of China, proving his universal recognition as a leading modern playwright. This experience gave birth to Salesman in Beijing the next year. In addition to these two plays, after 1984, Miller produced many plays, such as Danger: Memory! (1987), The Last Yankee (1991), and Broken Glass (1994).

In 1987, Miller wrote his autobiography, Timebends: A Life at the age of 72, recalling his life in relationship to various historical events of the 20th Century such as the Great Depression, World War I and II, the collapse of the Cold War, and the Vietnam War. Having experienced these political and social issues in person, Miller knew firsthand the power of these invisible and irresistible forces over human life. This knowledge influenced his thought about how we may live, and continued his career as a social dramatist.

Nine years after Arthur Miller was born in America, Beomsuk Cha (1924-) was born in the southwestern Port City of Mokpo, Korea. Cha is an outstanding and representative Korean playwright whose voice parallels that of Miller's. When he was born, Korea was under the rule of Japanese Imperialism and most Koreans were treated as slaves of the

Japanese. However, because his father, Namjin Cha, was a large landowner in those days, Beomsuk Cha did not, as a boy, experience many difficulties surviving and was free to continue his schooling, hardly noticing that Korea had a subordinate relationship with Japan.

In 1932, he entered Jaeil Elementary School, and he read all sorts of books, magazines, and novels in Japanese without any trouble. His Japanese was good enough to write compositions and translate into Korean so that, in the future, the college student Cha could translate the Japanese version of Oedipus the King into Korean for himself, and he used that script for performing the plays. When Cha recalled his youth, he was appalled with how intensively Japan forced Koreans to learn and use Japanese instead Korean.

Like Miller, Cha also experienced the miracle of the performing art as a young boy. In 1936, he watched a dance concert by Seunghee Choi which affected him greatly. Choi was a famous Korean international dancer at that time, therefore many Koreans looked forward to seeing her dance with the expectation of seeing something other than traditional dance. Attending Choi's dance concert left a strong impression on Cha about what real and true art was. Choi made him feel full of mirth. "This mirth originally

came from the dance, and the dancer spread her enthusiasm to the audience unconsciously. At the end the dancer and audience connected into one assimilated unit, and this for me was the highest point of art"(Cha 1993: 64). Choi's dance concert aroused in him the dream of becoming an artist, and in fact, he later knocked on the door of the dancing world.

As a middle school student, Cha dimly realized the social circumstances in which he lived. Because of the severe militarism of Japan, Koreans could no longer learn the Korean language in school. They had to change their names to Japanese, and young Korean students were forced to take military service in school with the volunteer system for World War II. Cha, however, was only 14 years old, and he had something else on his mind--love and romance. One day he was called to see a teacher and was pressed hard about a violation of school rules. His error was that he had exchanged letters with a girl, so he was suspended from middle school and forced to return home for a long period of time. During his stay at home, he became curious and questioned what he had done wrong. Eventually he became angry at the older generation for prohibiting his naïve and natural feeling toward a girl and which, moreover, punished him as a violator of rules. Cha explained,

> I indulged myself in several novels that claimed free love in those days. As a boy opening my eyes to love, these novels might have sprouted my revolt against the older generation's moral and educational values which condemned my behavior of sending a letter as being sinful. (1993: 75)

His revolts against the older generation influence the pictures of the younger generation in his plays. Cha depicts a younger generation that has conflicts with the older generation and is furthermore forced by the older generation to do things it does not want to do.

After graduation in 1942, he failed twice to enter the university and lived in Japan for two years. This stay allowed Cha to widen his artistic perspective, and in the end, he made up his mind to be a playwright. In Japan, he attended many cinema and theatre performances because he felt the need to know various aspects of life, and movie and theatre performances were the best method for this. Due to World War II, he could not view American or British plays or movies; instead he had chances to watch French, German, Italian and Swedish movies because these nations were friendly with Japan during wartime.

In 1943, two years after Japan had declared war against the United States, the United States bombed Tokyo, so Cha hurried back to Korea. As the war deepened, Japan enforced the conscription system and, to exempt himself

from military service, Cha entered Kwangju Educational College. The war created a need for more teachers in order to substitute for conscripted teachers. During this time, Cha wrote some novels in Japanese to release his restrained desire, and these novels symbolized for him the struggle for real freedom. Despite his attempt to avoid the army and become a puppet of Japanese Imperialism, he was drafted in June of 1945 into the Japanese army and stayed on Jaeju Island, which is located in the southern most part of Korea. Cha comments about the terrible humiliation and oppression in Life of the Artist. He explained that

> everything was forced unconditionally and one-sidedly; we had to receive this with silence and submission…. I didn't have enough courage to tear off the Japanese national flag sewn on my shoulder. I didn't have the power to resist and claim for whom I ought to die. (1993:95-6)

Luckily, two months later the war was over, and Korea was liberated from Japan.

Cha started to work for Bukkyo Elementary School in 1945 when he saw the national flag for the first time. He had already decided to become a playwright, so one year later, in 1946, he entered Yeonhee University (today, Yeonsei University), majoring in literature. Since 1947, the same year he was married, Cha's theatrical career has blossomed.

At first he established the Yeonhee Theatre Art Yeon Gu Whoi Club, and in this club he began his theatre activities. Original Korean plays, however, were so scarce that the demand for Japanese plays rose. In addition to this club, Cha joined Sae Ma Eul literary club whose members had interests in poetry, fiction, and drama. The club's view of literature was social realism, which is defined as: "Literature must be based on realism and it doesn't have significance if a work ignores historical and national reality"(1993:116). This view of literature slowly attracted Cha to the works of revolutionary Korean writers. In 1949, the Yeonhee Theatre Art Yeon Gu Whoi, a theatre group, received the second prize at the first Korean University Theatre Contest. The club performed the Greek tragedy, Oedipus the King, translated and directed by Cha, which was the first time a Greek tragedy was presented on stage in Korea. As he wondered about the proper play for this contest, Cha spoke with Chijin Yoo (1905-74), an early 20th Century Korean realistic dramatist, who influenced Cha's writing. Yoo recommended using a Greek tragedy, saying, "Try a Greek tragedy. I think, when student theatres have an academic and experimental spirit, they finally get vividness. Besides, if you want to be a

playwright, you need to study plays methodically"(Cha 1993: 149).

In addition to the advice from Yoo, Cha was affected by Yoo's literary tendencies, especially his realistic view of society. While he took Yoo's class, "Theory of Drama," in 1947, Cha learned that "a play is conflict," and that "[t]heatre is an art which lets the audience see, not listen." Yoo told his students that, "[p]lays must be established as one genre of literature in Korea. Theatre cannot become theatre for the people without educating the public"(Cha 1993: 147). Yoo's life greatly impressed Cha because Yoo devoted himself to establishing drama as a higher art in Korea. Cha received another stimulus from Yoo's beliefs regarding the need for a Korean theatre movement. Yoo believed that this need resulted from the oppression and humiliation the Korean people received during 35 years of Japanese Imperialism. "The only method to break down people's sorrow under tyranny and furthermore awaken their suppressed consciousness," according to Yoo, "is theatre"(Cha 1993:148). This painful and strong comment urged Cha to follow Yoo and taught him how to perceive reality as a writer.

Yoo personally confessed that he was influenced by Romain Rolland's Theory of People's Theatre (1903) and the

plays of Sean O'Casey, an Irish playwright. Yoo especially shared O'Casey's agonies over despotism, because Ireland also had been ruled by a foreign force, the British Empire. Thus, when Yoo read O'Casey's plays, he felt the empathy with O'Casey's distress as a person of a colony. Romain Rolland helped Yoo to "choose the most direct and practical drama among literature and the most active and realistic theatre among art"(Yoo 1975: 101-2). Beginning in 1920, Yoo exploited the dark age of Korean drama under Japanese rule.

While Cha's aspiration was growing under the influence of Chijin Yoo and other theatre activities, the Korean War broke out in 1950. Cha had to leave Seoul, giving up his studies. On the way back to his hometown, Mokpo, with his wife, Cha underwent unforgettable experiences and life or death choices. Fortunately, Cha and his wife arrived at Mokpo 17 days after they left Seoul, and Cha found a job at Mokpo Middle School, where he taught for the next six years. As a humanistic teacher he told his students to respect humanity. Influenced by Chijin Yoo, Cha, as a literature teacher, taught his students the function of the literature of the time. "[T]he function of literature," Cha taught, "is to frankly speak and express, not neglect or disregard, about everything surrounding us today"(1993: 143). During this period, he wrote approximately 10 plays

and directed them in Mokpo Middle School in order to prepare to make a future debut in letters.

In 1955, Cha's efforts to become a playwright yielded recognition when he won second place for his play Home-brew at the New Plays Contest, sponsored by Chosun Il Bo, the daily newspaper. The next year, he wrote Homecoming, and this play received first prize in the same contest. He was still working for Mokpo Middle School at that time, but he gradually made up his mind to leave the school and devote himself to writing plays. While he worked at Mokpo Middle School, he saw the evil side of human nature in the educational organization. Some of his co-workers, doing supercilious things, betrayed other teachers to promote and succeed in their jobs. At last in 1956, he left Mokpo Middle School and moved to Seoul again and worked for Duksung Girls High School for five years.

In Seoul, the capital of Korea, Cha was quickly conscious of the change in theatre. After the Korean War, many playwrights attempted to illustrate pictures of the social impact of the war on the family and old value systems. Sunghee Kim, in her Masters thesis, mentioned the general characteristics of the postwar plays in Korea:

> the family image described in the plays of the 1950s can be thought of as a microcosm of the postwar society begetting such a variety of problems as the

> conflict between old and new values…the hard struggle for survival and the changes of societal customs and morality. (1986: 82)

Cha agreed with these tendencies of the postwar plays and became engaged as one of the influential playwrights of the period.

Among many contributions to Korean theatre, first of all, he felt the urgent need for different theatre troupes. In those days the theatre company, Shin Hyep, monopolized theatre performances. Cha thought Shin Hyep used hyperbole too much in its plays and chose too commercially limited a repertoire. Although he respected realistic viewpoints in art, Cha disliked Shin Hyep's style. Finally Cha revolted against Shin Hyep and formed Jae Jak Geuk Whoi with his old college friends. Jae Jak Geuk Whoi aimed at producing plays which made people aware of the sorrow and happiness of the time. It also looked for plays to fit more modern and subjective tastes. It was the beginning of a community theatre movement in Korea; however, with Jae Jak Geuk Whoi, Cha pursed his literary ideal to do something for the people.

In 1963, Cha left Jae Jak Geuk Whoi because he thought Korea needed a specialized theatre company. He organized a theatre company, Sanha, whose goal was to popularize and specialize theatre as an art form. Therefore, Sanha staged

many local performances of original Korean plays, including Cha's plays, rather than translated foreign plays. Sanha appealed to the Korean public until 1983, and made a great foundation for theatre popularity in Korea. Cha became appreciated as a key figure in Korean theatre.

In addition to his experience establishing a theatre company, he worked for television, radio, dance companies, many other theatre companies, and as a university professor. As a representative of Korean writers, he traveled to America for the first time to attend the 1966 International P.E.N. conference in New York City when Arthur Miller was the president of P.E.N..

While working in theatre administration, Cha has written 32 long-act plays, 28 one-act plays, 7 *Chang geuk* (similar to opera) and dance plays, and 9 adapted plays. Also, in 1993, he published his autobiography, Life of the Artist at the age of 70.

Cha's plays are roughly categorized into three groups according to the themes of localism, social criticism, and biography. The plays in the first group, localism, include Home-brew (1955), Homecoming (1956), I must survive (1959), The Mountain Fire (1962), and The Forest of Murder (1976). They describe the poverty, sorrow and joy of the common

people during the wartime. Those in the second group, social criticism, The Barren (1957), Angry Machine (1958), The Blue-roofed House (1963), Castle of Roses (1968), The Substitute (1969), and The Occupation of Professor Wang (1970) reflect the pictures of a society full of confusion, alienation, collapse and emergence, and loss after the Korean War. The third group, biography, was mostly written after the 1970s, when Cha started to feel the need for a new recognition of Korean history due to the recent political and social stability. Death of Chadon Lee(1973), Bird, Bird, Blue Bird (1974), Sontak Hotel (1977) and Dream Sky (1987) belong to this group. I will focus on the second group because those plays show the most similarity to Arthur Miller's plays, and in Korea they continue to be performed successfully on stage today.

I will compare The Barren and Castle of Roses by Cha with Arthur Miller's *socio-familial* plays - All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge. As I have described in this chapter, both playwrights have lived during almost the same historical period, but in different regions--Miller in Western culture and Cha in the Eastern culture. They both went through serious historical events in their lifetimes and the hardships during those periods

contributed to their similar thoughts about the invisible and irresistible power of circumstance on human life. In their plays, both emphasize the relatedness between individuals and society to convey their messages.

In the next two chapters, I will study in depth Miller's and Cha's similar perspectives toward the relationship between society and the individual.

CHAPTER II

This chapter will examine Miller's three *socio-familial* plays that are based on Miller's experiences of the interrelation between society and the individual. Miller often uses the fish-water analogy to illustrate that "a serious treatment of a human being must encompass the society that surrounds him or her as the force that has conditioned thoughts, culture, attitudes and values"(Griffin 1996: 15-6). A fish is directly affected by the conditions of the water where it lives. Water nurtures the fish and determines the external and internal conditions of fish. Although the fish does not want to be influenced by its water, it cannot survive out of the water. Miller thinks this relationship is identical with that of the individual and society. Therefore, in order to understand an individual, it is necessary to understand his or her society.

In three of his plays, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge, the protagonists undergo tragic experiences caused by societal influences. Despite many arguments among literary critics about the

existence of real tragedy in modern times, Miller declares that there is the possibility of modern tragedy:

> There are among us today…those who act against the scheme of things that degrades them, and in the process of action everything we have accepted out of fear or insensitivity or ignorance is shaken before us and examined. . . .[F]rom this total examination of the unchangeable environment--comes the terror and the fear that is classically associated with tragedy. (1978:4)

Miller thinks contemporary playwrights can find sources of tragedy from conflicts between humans and their social surroundings. Since the modern man cannot get out of his surroundings like a fish cannot leave the water, the surroundings function as either a "promise" or a "threat"(Miller 1978: 43) in his life. Thus, when an individual feels threatened by his social surroundings, conflicts between him and society are formed.

To show the conflicts between humans and their social surroundings, and draw pictures of individuals under certain social conditions, Miller uses the basic social unit, the family. Hogan states that "the larger society is reflected by the little society of the family. That little society, that microcosm, Miller knew intimately and revealingly documented"(1964: 15). According to Welland, Miller "relates the frictions of family life to those of the macrocosm outside: his families live in a recognisably

real world"(1985:12-3). By projecting a family into a society, Miller closely studies the individual's strife with society.

Before looking at three *socio-familial* plays, I will deal with the significance of family because Miller focuses intensively on family; especially the father's role in a family by depicting the father as a tragic protagonist in each play. Family is the most fundamental institution that "human beings require; it is the key social unit within where we learn to love, come to terms with our aggressions, develop a conscience and acquire values"(Salk 1992: 20). Thus, if a family does not function well enough to nurture an individual, the person can not survive in society, the larger unit. For an individual, a family or a society is like water for the fish, it produces the elements necessary to live. Among family members, the father for Miller plays an important role for sustaining the family's welfare against the waves of adversity in life.

The importance of family for the individual is present in three of Miller's major plays, All My Sons, Death of a Salesman, and A View from the Bridge. In these plays, the protagonists, Joe Keller, Willy Loman, and Eddie Carbone, all fathers or father figures, respectively, share common tragic elements. Their lives in society manifest the power

of their social circumstances. All of them are alienated from the community or society to which they either belong or wish to belong. Their obsession with something, such as family, success, name, or passion, reflects the influential social surroundings of their lives. These obsessions generate conflicts with their children because of disparate generational value systems. Finally the three fathers bring a tragic ending upon themselves and tragedy to their families via alienation from the family and society.

To explain the interrelationship between an individual and society, I will focus on three common elements which effect these three families: first, obsession; second, the different generational value systems held by fathers and children; and third, alienation of family members and of family from society. These three elements clarify how society influences an individual and how the individual deals with social circumstances. To examine the roles of these three elements, obsession, generational value systems, and alienation, I will discuss the three plays separately, focusing on the particular social conditions and their influences on the characters in each play.

All My Sons

Joe Keller is a father of two young men and is a successful businessman who made a fortune during and after World War II selling airplane cylinder heads. Joe let Steve Deever, his partner, ship out defective engine parts to the Army Air Force and these products caused the deaths of 21 pilots. When the law asked who was responsible, Joe lied that he was sick that day and with the false testimony of his wife, Kate, even accused Steve of shipping the parts without asking Joe. Joe was exonerated, but Steve was sent to prison. Steve's family moved out of the town in shame. However, this incident was remembered by the neighbors who believed that Joe was guilty as well.

During the war, the elder son of Joe and Kate, Larry, a pilot, became missing in action. Joe and his younger son, Chris, believed that Larry must be dead, but Kate fervently believes, and even forces others to believe, that Larry is not dead. Later, when Kate hears that Chris and Ann, Larry's girlfriend and Steve's daughter, are going to marry, Kate refuses to accept Larry's death and spills the beans about Joe's responsibility for the pilots' deaths. This revelation of long deception causes the relationship between Chris and Joe to be broken and finally leads to Joe's suicide. The causes of Joe's tragedy can be found in

the three elements, obsession, generational value systems, and alienation.

Joe Keller is described as a nice, funny, but somewhat ignorant father. He simply does what he believes without any other thought. While Joe strongly believes what he believes is right all his life such as the justification for his crime, he ignores what he has to ignore such as his responsibility for deaths of the pilots. His characteristic is exemplified by the stage direction:

> *When he reads, when he speaks, when he listens, it is with the terrible concentration of the uneducated man for whom there is still wonder in many commonly known things, a man whose judgments must be dredged out of experience and a peasant-like common sense.* (5-6)

Joe's "wonder in many common known things"(5) creates the conflicts with Chris who tries to read current state in the world from the newspaper by being interested in recently published books. These differences become the sources of generation gap later. Joe's "peasant like common sense"(6) also separates him from the successful community. Even though Joe is self-imposed, he is also alienated from his society like a fish out of the water. Joe who many common things are still wondrous cannot help to sticking to his

existing value system which he has believed for a long time in spite of changes of social surroundings.

Joe is obsessed with his business and his family, especially his son. Joe takes it for granted that his only remaining son, Chris, will take over his successful business. Although Chris is not interested in taking over the business, Joe does not try to learn what Chris truly wants to do, but thinks only about Chris' succession to the top of Joe's business. This selfishness results in his obsession with his son. Because of the loss of his oldest son in World War II, Chris is the only son left to Joe and his business is only thing he has been able to retain. However, when Chris tries to move out of the family home and live in New York with Ann for their marriage, Joe desperately pleads with Chris to stay, saying, " Because what the hell did I work for? That's only for you, Chris, the whole shootin'-match is for you"(15). For Joe, Chris's departure means the end of his business, and Joe's life becomes futile.

In the past, Joe's obsession with his family and business caused the deaths of pilots. Because of the urgent need for these parts, Joe believed he could not re-manufacture the engine heads because it would take time as well as money. He also did not stop shipping out these

defective products because the business meant security for his family. If he had reported the truth about the defects, his business would have been ruined and his family's security endangered. According to Nelson, Joe does not view his business, "as an end in itself, but as the means by which he can give his family the security they presently enjoy, and enable his son to make the best possible life for himself"(83). These values and attitudes result from the prevailing materialism and success syndrome that is a by-product of the American Dream. Like a fish that absorbs everything in the water where it lives, Joe, as a businessman, adopted these values which influenced him when he decided to send the faulty products.

Joe's decision to ship out the defective products to the Air Force was not based on his individual greed and villainous selfishness, but rather on his obsessive caring for his family's welfare. Yet, from a larger social view, it is also considered selfish on the part of the individual to think only of one's family. Joe does not seem to be concerned about his crime for killing the pilots and for ascribing the fault entirely to Steve. His lack of feelings of guilty or concern shows his selfishness toward others except for his family.

Joe's obsession with his family is based on the importance of the family bond. While excusing Steve as "a little man" who was "always scared of loud voices"(28), Joe tries to convince Chris that a father is always a father in spite of his crime or in any situation. Thus, condemning one's father is not right. Later, when Joe's hidden crime is disclosed, Joe still believes that he did the right thing for his family, so he does not need to be forgiven by his son. Joe decisively says, "There nothin' [Chris] could do that I wouldn't forgive: Because he's my son. Because I'm his father and he's my son"(63). This reinforces the idea of his obsession with family and shows how strongly Joe believes in the importance of the father-son relationship in society. Furthermore, Joe vows if there is anything bigger than the family, he will kill himself. As for him, society is only his family. Joe denies the existence of bigger society beyond his family. His vow is like a fish's vow that it can survive without water.

Joe's conception of family is different from that of his son's. Joe thinks the family is only a "forty-foot front and [that] it ends at the building line"(63). Joe's conception of the family is represented by the scope of his activity, the backyard of his house. Joe has placed his family as the highest value in his life, especially

concerning the blood bonds between a father and a son. This value is based on "the conviction that nothing is bigger than the relationship between a father and a son"(Carson 43).

Joe's obsession with his own conception of family collides with his son's conception of family after Joe's crime was revealed. Chris Keller is an honorably discharged solider from World War II; his experience in the war greatly effected his value system. Just as Joe was influenced by a conception of the American Dream, so Chris was affected by his particular experience in World War II.

Through his experiences as a commander of a company in the war, Chris learned how people are responsible for the lives of others and ultimately connected with the larger society. According to Scharine, after World War II, the idea of "the growth of America's responsibility toward the world's oppressed people"(xxii-xxiii) blossomed as the United States became one of two leading world powers. This responsibility makes Chris, a commanding officer, feel guilty about his survival when almost all his soldiers had been killed. When he talks to Ann about his shame of surviving, Chris explains that

> [t]hey didn't die; they killed themselves for each other. I mean that exactly; a little more selfish and they'd've been here today. . . . A

> kind of. . .responsibility. Man for man. And then I came home and it was incredible. [T]here was no meaning in it here. (31)

As a survivor, Chris feels ashamed of living happily after the bloody war in his unchanged hometown. Chris's ideal society, where "they killed themselves for each other and sacrificed themselves for others, is described by his lines above. The reality, however, is not like what he dreamed, because no one in the U.S. recognizes these responsibilities. Instead, everyone was caught in the American Dream and pursued for the materialistic success by sacrificing others for their own desires. Moss examines this sense of relatedness that soldiers felt in battle and the sense of futility that these men felt when readjusting to civilian life:

> No man has ever felt identity with a group more deeply and intimately than a soldier in battle. But . . . the usual veteran returning to his city or town on the usual day finds no common goal at all. (21)

The war experiences make individuals contemplate and feel the interrelationship and loyalty between human beings.

Since the war has extended Chris' values and perceptions of the family to a larger view of the world, Joe's circumscribed values do not make an excuse for his crime. In contrast to Joe, who makes a great account for the blood ties, Chris thinks the family extends beyond the

narrow limits of immediate blood ties. The different generational value systems between the father and the son in this play are remarkably shown in the following scene the moment after Kate uncovers the secret:

> Joe: He never flew a P-40—
> Chris: But the others.
> Joe: She's out of her mind.
> Chris: Dad. . . you did it?
> Joe: He never flew a P-40, what's the matter with you?
> Chris: Then you did it. To others. (58)

Joe focuses on the fact that he did not kill his son, Larry, because Larry "never flew a P-40." Thus, Joe believes he did no wrong because he sees no responsibility to the larger community. On the contrary, Chris focuses on the fact that his father killed other pilots, soldiers like himself, about whom Chris felt guilt at having survived when others did not. Chris bursts out in anger:

> What kind of a man are you? Where have you come from? . . . What the hell do you think I was thinking of, the Goddamn business? . . . Don't you have a country? Don't you live in the world? (59)

Chris thinks Joe does not see how society affects him, only thinking about money. As for Chris, Joe seems not to belong to society like a fish out of the water. According to Chris' extended conception of family, Joe has killed his family members for the sake of his selfish success. Thus, Chris criticizes Joe and society calling society, "the land

of the great big dog"(66) where people do not love each other and even sacrifice others for their desire for success. To this Joe responds that no businessman, "worked for nothin' in that war?"(67) This indicates that every businessman during the war pursed his own success, therefore Joe Keller, as a businessman, followed what the others did. Namely, Joe was influenced by his particular social circumstance. Chris, however, cannot understand Joe's excuse because Chris also has been affected by his own very different experiences. Like a fish that depends on and is influenced by its water, each particular social surrounding affects differently the father and the son in this play.

In addition to Joe's obsession and the generational value systems between Joe and Chris, alienation illustrates the fish-water analogy in respect to one's interrelationship with others in society and even in family. The Kellers' alienation from their community is symbolized by the atmosphere of their house. The backyard, where every action happens in this play, is "*hedged on right and left by tall, closely planted poplars which lend the yard a secluded atmosphere*"(5). This secluded

atmosphere hints at the hidden secret of the Kellers and reflects their attempts to hide the crime.

The relationship with their neighbors also shows alienation. Even though their neighbors seem ignorant of what Joe actually did during the war and pretend to believe Joe's innocence, the neighbors still remember the case of Joe and Steve and believe that Joe also is guilty for the pilots' deaths. These things illustrate how the Kellers' false relationship with their neighbors causes the alienation of the Kellers from the community.

The alienation of the family members from each other is due to the long deception and the lack of true conversation in the household. For instance, from the beginning, Joe and Kate have told lies to Chris and their neighbors about what really happened the day the defective products were shipped out. Chris suspected his father, but he has never raised the issue because of his own cowardice. Chris says, "I was made yellow in this house because I suspected my father, and I did nothing about it"(66). He is afraid to confront the truth, which is never openly discussed.

These daily deceptions disable Joe and prevent him from helping himself out of the uncertainty about his values. When Joe asks Kate what to do, after fighting with

Chris who incisively condemns his father's crime, she only says not to ask her. This scene is described by Welland as, "the bewilderment of a naturally garrulous man who has suddenly realised the impossibility of communication on the matters of deepest consequences" (28). Joe is so perplexed by the fact that not even Kate can help him that he says, "What am I, a stranger? I thought I had a family here. What happened to my family?"(62) At last, Joe perceives that his family, on which he places the highest value in his life, cannot prevent him from standing on the edge of uncertainty about his beliefs and he glimpses his eventual total alienation from the family.

Joe realizes that his value for the family is blamed for a selfish attitude by his beloved sons. In the end, this feeling of alienation from his family leads Joe to commit suicide. Miller comments about Joe's tragic end when he explains that

> Joe Keller's trouble… is not that he cannot tell right from wrong but that his cast of mind cannot admit that he, personally, has any viable connection with his world, his universe, or his society. . . . The fortress which All My Sons lays siege to is the fortress of unrelatedness. (1987:130-1)

In terms of the fish-water analogy, Joe is a fish in a materialistic ocean (society), who had to endure World War II with his family. As a businessman, he cannot manufacture

products without receiving money; as a father, he cares for his family's welfare during the war. Joe's tragic flaw, however, is his ineptitude at comprehending his relatedness to others in society. For him, his family is society, so his limited perspective cannot survive after World War II, which brought to the United States the idea of interconnectedness and responsibility for and to others in the world. Joe is a selfish man who does not care for association with others in society. Finally, Joe admits his responsibility to and connection with others after the accusations of his two precious sons, lamenting, "I think to [Larry the dead pilots] were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were"(68).

Death of a Salesman

Willy Loman lives with his wife and their two sons. Willy is an aging salesman, proud of himself for being a "well-liked" salesman. His favorite son, Biff, is a famous and promising football player in his high school years, and thus Willy takes pride in his son, dreaming that Biff would be successful. But when Biff finds out about his father's adultery, Biff gives up his hopes and dreams. He becomes a jobless "bum" and still wonders what he should do with his

life. In addition, Biff's habitual pilfering adds to his failure. Willy and Linda's second son, Happy, is working aimlessly for a company and leads a life of dissipation. Linda is a faithful wife and mother, and really cares for her husband.

Willy, however, is failing as a salesman. His sales are declining, and his employer, Howard, eventually takes Willy off salary and puts him back on straight commission. For some time, Willy has had to borrow money from Charley, his best friend and neighbor.

When the play opens, we find that Biff has returned home again. Thus the conflicts between father and son are the focus of the action. Willy's expectations for Biff have been continuously disappointed, and finally, Willy cannot stand his own failure and the failure of his favorite son.

Meanwhile, Biff does not understand why Willy constantly criticizes him. In spite of their love for each other, they cannot reach a mutual understanding. When Biff reaches an understanding of his own identity, Willy still refuses to accept him, and believes that Biff is only trying to spite him. Finally, when Biff is able to show his father how much he loves him, Willy decides to kill himself (something he had been planning for quite a while) in order to provide Biff with the insurance money. Willy believes

this is his only worth to his family, and his only option after he has been fired.

Much like Joe Keller in All My Sons, who is influenced by the given circumstances, Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman presents a tragic picture with the same three elements: obsession, different value systems held by father and son, and alienation. In both plays, "each father has been egocentrically seeking a kind of personal immortality through his sons"(Nelson 107); however, both characters' obsessions with their sons also becomes a means of justifying the fathers' "fake"(58) lives.

Willy Loman is obsessed with success and his favorite son, Biff. While his obsession with success grows out of the American Dream and relates to his strong belief in past values in society(the water), the obsession with Biff originally comes from Willy's memories of his own childhood.

When he observed the success of an elderly salesman, David Singleman, Willy was so impressed that he decided to become a salesman. For Willy, Singleman's life demonstrated "the co-operative and benevolent nature of capitalism" (Carson 51). Thus, Willy tenaciously hangs on to values such as respect, comradeship, and gratitude in the world of

the salesman in a world that rapidly discounts these traits.

Willy thought that being a salesman, a middle-class white-collar salesman, looked much better than being a carpenter, despite the fact that Willy was gifted as a carpenter. He is captivated with the American success syndrome, and furthermore, has tried to imbue this ideal to his beloved son, Biff. The American success syndrome makes people perceive "the need to amass money as proof of character, to be well-liked at the expense of moral virtue, to prove love for family by bestowing on them material goods"(Adler 104). Willy's life is immersed in precisely this prevalent ideal of the time, similar to a fish in water.

Willy demonstrates his strong belief and obsession with success in a materialistic society. This characteristic is exemplified by his perception of his own name, Loman (low-man). Willy refuses "to think of himself, or [to] allow others to consider him, as 'little.' The dream of being Number One propels him, and the tenacity with which he pursues the dream in itself makes him nonordinary"(Adler 101). When Willy hears that in society he and his son are not as great and "well-liked" as he has believed, Willy firmly refuses it, stating, "I am not a

dime! I am Willy Loman and you are Biff Loman"(132). In his life, Willy clings to the fame and honor that comes from being a salesman in society and a father to his family.

Willy's infatuation with the fame and honor is driven by his obsession with success. Particularly, Willy thinks the best key to success is to be "well-liked"(36). When he has an affair with "The Woman", his well-likedness proves to be the way to succeed. His well-likedness makes her pick him up among the other salesmen and she "put [him] right through to the buyers"(38). In addition to The Woman's case, Willy uses, as a key to success, being "well-liked" by his children as a father. When Willy feels stressed out because of the travel associated with his job, Linda consoles him with, "[f]ew men are idolized by their children the way you are"(37). Through the love of his sons and The Woman, Willy positively prided himself on his being "well-liked," and this value has proved a useful means to success. This is the reason Willy is so strongly obsessed with being likeable.

Willy's obsession with success and his son produces the vision of Ben in order for Willy to justify to himself that his teaching this value to his sons is right. Ben is Willy's success dream and confirms Willy's belief in the values of success. Whenever Willy sees Ben in his head,

Willy is eager to hear about how Ben became rich and whether Willy's teaching is right or not. Ben only talks about how he became rich, and it turns out that Willy's beliefs in "rugged, well-liked, all-around"(49) values are right. However, it turns out that his values are not practical for a successful life. Concerning Willy's obsession with values for success in spite of social changes, Carson states that

> [h]e fails because he never understands the inconsistency in his beliefs and that his desire for the emotional security of popularity is at odds with the realities of the profession he has entered. (81)

Willy, who has been influenced by the American Dream, cannot be satisfied with his unsuccessful life and this puts him at odds with society and family.

In addition to his obsession with values for success, Willy is preoccupied with his desire to see his son as a successful man who would replace him in society. This obsession results from Willy's empty feeling in himself because of his father's abandonment. Willy's father was a traveling flute-inventor who deserted the family when Willy was very young. Therefore, Willy keeps asking Ben, Willy's older brother, to talk about their Dad. Since he did not receive his father's love, Willy tries to compensate by showing his sons excessive love. Willy expresses this

incomplete feeling in himself when he explains that, "I never had a chance to talk to [my father] and I still feel--kind of temporary about myself"(51). Carson points out that Willy's "temporary" feeling prevents him from guiding his sons to success: "[t]he quintessential boy-man, Willy is the eternal adolescent arrested at an early stage of development and because of it unable to help his own son to a healthy maturity"(49). Willy's surfeit of love for his sons proves not to be the key to success in society, rather it is the source of his sons' failure.

Just as Willy chose a salesman's job, so Willy chooses Biff's job as a salesman, in spite of his preference to work in the open-air, enjoying freedom. Since Willy does not become a successful businessman with his self-assertive "well-liked" value, he selfishly wants his son to accomplish his dream.

Unlike Joe Keller's tragic ending mainly due to the generational value systems, Willy's end is caused by his obsession with his dream of success and love for his son. Thus, Willy's suicide reflects the great influence of social surroundings on him.

Since Willy realizes that Biff still loves him, he decides to sell himself to bestow some money on his beloved son. As a failed salesman, Willy has the only one thing

(his life) left in order to earn money. When Willy makes up his mind to kill himself, he never gives up his Number One dream, saying, "Imagine? When the mail comes [Biff]'ll be ahead of Bernard again!"(135). Willy thinks that the money he can give to Biff will make his son become 'Number One' again like Biff's youth as a famous and promising football player. As for Willy, success in society means to earn much money and to enjoy materialistic wealth. Therefore, Willy believes that the insurance money can restore hope to Biff's future. This idea shows how deeply Willy is influenced by the American Dream. In addition to his Number One dream, Willy's sense of competition toward everything and everyone is also one of by-product of the American Dream.

Nelson comments about Willy's decision to kill himself in terms of the inescapable impact of social circumstance: "Unable to break the shackles of commercialism that have both defined and limited his life, Willy apparently seeks death as the most feasible resolution to an increasingly desperate dilemma"(127). In other words, Willy thinks that killing himself and making some money for his family are better than "standing here the rest of [his] life ringing up a zero"(126). If his death can provide some money for his family, especially his oldest son, taking his life is

worth it to Willy who has been fired and can no longer expect to provide for his family at all. Willy sacrifices himself to get some money for his family's welfare and in particular to ground Biff's success in society. Willy's obsession with the success syndrome works as the agent of his death.

Willy's obsession with Biff and his success generates the conflicts with Biff. Like Chris Keller in All My Sons, Biff loved his father very much before seeing through his father's mask. Willy's adultery was shocking to young Biff and Biff gave up every hope for the future, and "sever[ed] the bond of mutual respect [for his father]"(Moss 45). While Chris's war experience formed his new value system which was in contrast with that of his father, Biff is not influenced by other particular value systems except Willy's teaching before the discovery of his self-identity.

Since Biff was young, he has been affected by Willy's values, with an emphasis on well-likedness. However, in reality Biff "never got anywhere because [Willy] blew [him] so full of hot air"(131), and he realizes his father's value system is impractical for achieving success in society. After discovering the truth about himself, Biff knows what he wants to do and who he is. But these discoveries are the opposite of what Willy has believed

concerning himself and his son. While Biff admits his petty position in society as a "dime a dozen"(132), Willy strongly rejects it, saying, "I am Willy Loman and you are Biff Loman"(132). Willy's obsession with his values for success prevents him from accepting Biff's true realization about both of them.

Willy's obsession with past values alienates him and his family from the success in society. If he had been satisfied with his carpentry ability or with living in Alaska, Willy would probably not kill himself for materialistic success. However, Willy's fixation on success as salesman in a city causes the alienation of himself and his family from their community. This alienation of the Lomans is visible through the stage direction of their house. The Loman house is surrounded by "*a solid vault of apartment houses*"(11). Their house is the small, fragile-seeming home which looks like a dwarf among normal people. It represents the Lomans' ineptness in the successful community surrounded by them.

In addition to alienation from their community, the Lomans are alienated among themselves. In particular, this alienation is caused by the lack of true conversation. According to the stage direction, Biff and Happy are

described as distracted characters: "*Biff. . .bears a worn air and seems less self-assured. . . . [H]is dreams are stronger and less acceptable than Happy's. Happy. . .like his brother, is lost, but in a different way*"(19).

Because Willy and Linda have been preoccupied with Biff, their first son, Happy has grown up with the sense of being less valued in his home. In the play, whenever Happy attempts to attract his parents' attentions, he fails. For instance, young Happy said to Willy, "I'm losing weight, you notice, Pop?"(29) and grown-up Happy says to Linda, "I'm gonna get married, Mom. I wanted to tell you"(68). Every effort is ignored because of his parents' indifference and their preference for Biff. Thus, when Happy confesses about his life to Biff, Happy expresses his emptiness, and makes excuses why he hunts for women: "I don't know what the hell I'm working for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment—all alone. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, I'm lonely"(23). His family and society cannot replace his desolation, and mostly his parents' obsession with their elder son causes Happy's alienation in his family.

Biff's alienation comes from Willy's obsession with him and success. When he works in an office, Biff feels he is "making a contemptuous [and] begging fool of

[himself]"(132), so he feels isolated in the business world, but he keeps trying to get a job as an office worker. This is because Willy's selfish desire is to make Biff a successful white-collar man. Biff accuses his family of not confronting the truth, that the Lomans have lived a false dream: "We've been talking in a dream for fifteen years"(104), and "We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house"(131). Although Biff sees the truth, the other members do not want to and Happy and Linda even interrupt Biff to prevent him from facing Willy with the truth. Thus, Biff's efforts to make his family see their reality fails and he feels alienated from his family.

Linda demonstrates her lack of understanding in requiem. She keeps saying that she could not understand why Willy killed himself, even though they finally have their own house. Linda's lamentation shows the capitalistic view that if a materialistic problem is solved, then there is nothing to be suffered in life. According to Nelson, her comments over Willy's grave illustrate "how much she has emphasized this materialism and how little, for all her insight, she really knew the man to whom she was married"(113). Even though Linda is a faithful and devoted wife and mother, she is not able to truly communicate with her husband.

Willy's alienation from his family is clearly seen when he is deserted by his beloved sons. Willy feels the futility of what he has really cared for throughout his life. Thus, in compensation, Willy desperately tries to plant seeds which will yield something tangible. When Willy says "Nothing's planted. I don't have a thing in the ground"(122), he realizes that in his life there is no reward for his devotion. Willy's sense of futility increases when Biff claims that he is nothing, and so is Willy. Willy thinks Biff's spite for him results from the fact that Willy has nothing to give his sons. Here, Willy does not truly understand what Biff really wants from him and this lack of understanding causes alienation between Willy and Biff. Willy's fixated thought on materialistic success inhibits him from giving what his son really needs from him. Willy's materialistic view toward Biff's accusation manifests the power of his social surroundings. Thus, when Willy decides to kill himself, he is pleased with the expectation that his son will worship him for what he has provided through the insurance money.

Willy's serious alienation starts with his dismissal. To a salesman in a capitalistic society, dismissal means death. Willy expresses his distress about bad days during his travel:

> 'Cause I get so lonely—especially when business is bad and there's nobody to talk to. I get the feeling that I'll never sell anything again, that I won't making a living for [Linda], or a business, a business for the boys. (38)

He is afraid of becoming a useless salesman kicked out of successful salesmen's society and, furthermore, being isolated from where he wishes to belong. In a capitalistic society, the worth of an individual is measured by materialistic wealth, thus work alienation is a serious problem for an individual in society. "Miller notes," according to Griffin that "Willy has broken the law which says that a failure in society and in business has no right to live. . . . to fail is no longer to belong to society"(36). Willy fails to become a successful salesman, and to make up his alienation from work and to cover his inability as a bread-giver of family, Willy sells himself, through death, to earn money for his family.

Through Willy's last choice to commit suicide, Miller indicts both Willy's materialistic society and his obsession with the success syndrome. About Willy's tragic ending, Hayman says that

> [Willy] has committed himself so completely to the counterfeits of dignity and the false coinage embodies in his idea of success that he can prove his existence only by bestowing power on his posterity, a power deriving from the sale of his last asset, himself, for the price of his insurance policy. (35)

Willy is influenced by the American success syndrome which highlights the significance of materialistic wealth. Like Joe Keller, Willy is a fish in a materialistic society. While Joe succeeds his business, Willy has wished to become a successful salesman, and Willy's dream lets down him in reality. However, Willy's obsession with the values of the salesmen's world of the past prevents him from accepting his ineptness in successful society. Conversely, his social surroundings that provided him with dreams of success and values drive Willy to commit suicide in order to earn material worth. So to speak, Willy's 'water' serves as a misdirecting and ultimately self-defeating source in his life.

A View from the Bridge

Eddie Carbone lives with his wife, Beatrice, and their niece, Catherine, in Red Hook, a part of Brooklyn. He is an Italian longshoreman who gets along with other longshoremen in Red Hook. Eddie has an inappropriate passion for Catherine who is 19 years old. Every time Eddie feels that Catherine is about to get out of his control, he prohibits her from doing what she wants, making an excuse that he has

responsibility for her. In the meantime, Catherine considers Eddie as a father, and feels that she has to be obedient as a daughter figure. Thus, she follows his instructions when conflicts arise.

As Rodolpho and Marco, Beatrice's relatives from Italy who have come to America illegally, start to live with Eddie's family, Eddie's passion becomes less disguised. This is because Rodolpho and Catherine fall in love with each other. By using the American law system, Eddie attempts to break up their relationship in order to regain Catherine. But there is no legal sanction against love between Rodolpho and Catherine. When Rodolpho and Catherine decide to get married, Eddie feels desperate and, at last, reports Rodolpho and Marco to the Immigration Bureau. In Red Hook, informing against illegal immigrants is equivalent to betraying the community. Therefore, Eddie is isolated from his community. Catherine, who has followed and respected Eddie, condemns him for his betrayal after she realizes his crime. In the end, while fighting with Marco in order to regain his name (which has been ruined by Marco), Eddie dies by his own knife.

Compared to the two previous plays, this play presents much more intensely the power of social surroundings. This

is because Eddie Carbone, the protagonist in this play, lives in tightly knit Italian American community. This surrounding provides Eddie with his particular value system, while Willy Loman and Joe Keller struggle with their prevalent surroundings, such as the American Dream, World War II and capitalism. Miller uses the conception of the Greek polis when he explains Eddie's specific social surroundings:

> The polis were small units, apparently deriving from an earlier tribal social organization, whose members probably knew one another personally because they were relatively few in number and occupied a small territory. (1987: 52)

Miller emphasizes the fact that people in the polis were "engaged, [so] they couldn't imagine the good life excepting as it brought each person into close contact with civic matters"(1987: 52). Therefore, if someone broke the rules of the polis, he or she would be isolated from the rest of the people in the polis, which was a kind of social "death."

Compared to Death of a Salesman and All My Sons, which deal intensively with the struggle between fathers and sons, this play mainly focuses on how Eddie violates the social codes and how he confronts the facts of social circumstance. Miller and other critics refer to this play as having the tendency of a Greek tragedy, because Eddie

has fatal obsessions which cause him to end his life. Like the previous plays, A View from the Bridge demonstrates the three elements (obsession, value difference, and alienation), which lead the protagonist to tragedy. In fact, Catherine, Eddie's niece, shows less conflict with Eddie in terms of value difference than did Chris and Biff with their fathers in the two previous plays. However, similar to Chris and Biff, who are disappointed with and revolt against their fathers' realities, Catherine stands on her own feet and revolts against him.

Eddie Carbone lives in Red Hook where the Italian immigrant longshoremen constitute a polis in New York. As in ancient Greece, people in Red Hook are engaged with each other. Eddie is one of those who has observed their rules and social codes. Even though the people in Red Hook live in America, they observe the strict Sicilian social codes. In the introduction of A View from the Bridge, Miller remarks about Eddie's values, which are formed by his social conditions:

> The mind of Eddie Carbone is not comprehensible apart from its relation to his neighborhood, his fellow workers, his social situation. His self-esteem depends upon their estimate of him, and his value is created by his fidelity to the code of his culture. (1960:viii-ix)

Thus, influenced by his social condition, Eddie is obsessed with keeping his good name in his community, which is the most important value in his life.

Eddie has two strong obsessions: his secret passion for Catherine and his good name in his community. In fact, passion is the biggest tragic flaw in Greek tragedy, and it leads to the downfall of many Greek heroes. In a community like Red Hook, a man with an inappropriate passion, bordering on incest, is liable to destroy himself. Like a fish that must remain within the limit of the water, Eddie cannot step outside of the community's prohibition against incestuous relations without facing punishment.

From the beginning of the play, Eddie shows his obsession with Catherine, who has become a beautiful woman and is about to fly out of Eddie's nest. He uses the slightest pretext to try to criticize her behavior, such as her short skirts, her high heels, and her waving to other men. Whenever Eddie says these things, he justifies his obsession with her by claiming responsibility for her. Eddie had "promised [her] mother on her death bed. [He is] responsible for [her]"(8). Eddie also uses this excuse when he tries to separate Catherine and Rodolpho, saying that he

has acted out of family loyalty and especially on his promise to Catherine's late mother to care for Catherine. His inadmissible and irresistible passion is characterized by Miller in the introduction of his Collected Plays as

> the awesomeness of a passion which, despite its contradicting the self-interest of the individual it inhabits despite every kind of warning, despite even its destruction of the moral beliefs of the individual, proceeds to magnify its power over him until it destroys him. (1967: 48)

In the play, however, Eddie constantly denies his immoral passion for Catherine and he justifies his excessive concern for her on the grounds of his responsibility as a father figure.

Eddie's obsessive love for Catherine is visible when Catherine asks him to allow her to take a job offered through her school. Hearing this, Eddie at first prohibits her from getting a job because there is a Navy Yard near the office where she will work. Eddie is afraid that Catherine may meet some sailors and leave his house. His inappropriate passion for Catherine is dimly condemned by his wife, Beatrice, berating, "I don't understand you; She's seventeen years old, you gonna keep her in the house all her life?"(13). Eddie is pierced by her accusation, and finally, he lets Catherine go to work.

Eddie's obsession with Catherine is exposed clearly when Beatrice's Italian relatives enter America illegally and stay with the Carbones. At first, Eddie is very thoughtful and considerate when he hears Beatrice's concerns about her relatives staying in their house. He comforts Beatrice, saying that "as long as they know where they're gonna sleep"(10), which foreshadows the conflict that will soon erupt in his house. This thoughtful man, who respects honor, suffers his downfall because of the obsession with his niece.

Eddie becomes disturbed as one of Beatrice's relatives, Rodolpho, attracts Catherine's interest. Rodolpho is a young Italian man who can sing, cook, and even make clothes. Eddie warns Catherine not to hang around with Rodolpho on the pretense of his responsibility for Catherine and for Rodolpho, because if Rodolpho is seen often in public, he is likely to be recognized by the Immigration Bureau. Eddie cautions Catherine against speaking of the two "submarines"(illegal immigrants) in their house to others, and in doing so tries to rationalize his obsession with Catherine to himself. In his mind, he is only looking out for Rodolpho's best interests. Moreover, to cover up his obsession, Eddie warns Catherine that Rodolpho is a "hit-and-run guy"(30) who will do anything to

be an American. Eddie keeps saying that Rodolpho only pretends to love Catherine and after accomplishing his dream, he will desert her. But, in spite of Eddie's efforts, Catherine does not end the relationship with Rodolpho.

At last, Eddie thinks that he needs to take legal action against Rodolpho, who is trying to snatch Catherine from him. Therefore, he sees Alfieri, who is an Italian-American lawyer in Red Hook. Alfieri represents the bridge between American law and Sicilian social codes. Eddie accuses Rodolpho of not being "right"(34), referring to Rodolpho's girlish traits, like cooking and sewing. According to Murray, Eddie is "shifting the guilt he feels for his neuroticism concerning his niece onto Rodolpho's alleged abnormality"(107).

Desperately, Eddie asks Alfieri to punish Rodolpho in the name of American law. Alfieri warns the distressed Eddie not to be obsessed with Catherine, which is likely to flow in a different direction. Alfieri says, "We all love somebody, the wife, the kids . . . every man's got somebody that he loves, heh? But sometimes . . . there's too much. You know? There's too much, and it goes where it mustn't"(36). Despite Alfieri's warning against Eddie's obsession with Catherine, Eddie does not recognize his own

passion, but rather berates Alfieri, who cautions that Eddie cannot marry her.

Eddie's obsession with Catherine reaches the climax as he sees Catherine and Rodolpho coming out of the bedroom. This represents Rodolpho's violation and Catherine's betrayal of what Eddie has offered them. Catherine betrays her long loyalty for Eddie by choosing her love, and Rodolpho refuses to sleep where Eddie thinks he should (anywhere but with Catherine). Eddie's jealousy of and anger toward Rodolpho makes Eddie kiss Catherine on the mouth and kiss Rodolpho in order to show her that Rodolpho is not a "right" guy.

Eddie's obsession with Catherine propels his betrayal of the social codes. Eddie places great value on keeping a good name in his community. To him, one's name is the indication of a good reputation and morals. For Eddie his name has a dual significance: first, it is "the symbol of personal integrity and supreme selfhood," and second, it is "the symbol of a connection, a communion with one's fellowmen, without which the self becomes a vacuum"(Nelson 217). Therefore, when Louis, another longshoreman, praises Eddie for taking care of the illegal immigrants, Marco and Rodolpho, in his house, saying, "Believe me, Eddie, you got

a lotta credit comin' to you"(27), Eddie is pleased to hear it. It means that he is appreciated as a man with loyalty. According to Welland, "Eddie's loyalty to Marco and Rodolpho as 'submarine' is more than a loyalty to his wife's relatives: it is an ethnic loyalty to a self-contained group with common antecedents"(81).

Eddie's loyalty and obsession with his name are betrayed by the obsession with Catherine. The moment Eddie hears Catherine's decision to marry Rodolpho and leave the house, he blinds his respect for the social codes that he has observed for a long time. To prevent Catherine from marrying Rodolpho, Eddie reports Marco and Rodolpho to the Immigration Bureau without considering what this betrayal will cost him. Eddie's violation of the social code destroys his honorable name, and he is isolated from his community.

In order to regain his status in his community, Eddie tenaciously denies what he did and finally fights with Marco in public. Eddie demands Marco apologize to him and give him back his name. When Eddie says "Wipin' the neighborhood with my name like a dirty rag! I want my name, Marco . . .now gimme my name and we go together to the wedding"(64), he puts his good name on a higher plane than

his illicit passion. Eddie's attempt to regain his name fails, as Marco calls him an animal in front of everyone, "Animal! You go on knees to me"(64-5). Eddie's obsession with his name results in his death at his own knife during the ensuing fight.

As mentioned above, this play shows less conflict between a father and a child figure compared to the two previous plays. However, after Catherine, who is obedient and loyal to Eddie, discovers her uncle's crime, she strongly revolts against Eddie and develops her independence.

Eddie's constant denunciation of Rodolpho confuses Catherine because she has been loyal to Eddie since she started to live in his home. Catherine says, "I don't know, Bea. It just seems wrong if he's against it so much"(31). Because she has obeyed Eddie for so long, Catherine is scared and worried whenever he is against what she really desires. In spite of being seventeen, she still acts like a child and is not independent. Unlike Biff Loman and Chris Keller, who develop their own independence, Catherine needs to learn from Beatrice and from Rodolpho how to be independent and how to find her identity.

When, due to Eddie's strong opposition, Catherine is confronted with what she has to do with Rodolpho, Beatrice advises her to stand on her own feet, getting out of Eddie's shadow: "Was there ever any fella," Beatrice asks, "[that] he liked for you? There wasn't, was there? . . . It means you gotta be your own self more"(31). Beatrice helps Catherine to realize she is a grown-up woman to whom Eddie cannot give orders any more. Like Beatrice, Rodolpho also encourages her to be independent from Eddie. Catherine is still conflicted by her loyalty to Eddie and her love for Rodolpho. She explains to Rodolpho how hard it is for her to betray Eddie: "I've been here all my life." Catherine explains, "You think it's so easy to turn around and say to a man he's nothin' to you no more?"(47) Later, Catherine begs Rodolpho to help her to leave Eddie without feeling any guilt.

As Catherine becomes more independent through Beatrice and Rodolpho, Eddie desperately tries to cut off the love between Catherine and Rodolpho. Eddie justifies it to himself that Rodolpho is not "right," thus he as a father figure must stop their relationship for Catherine. By kissing Rodolpho on the mouth, Eddie attempts to prove Rodolpho's supposed homosexuality. However, this results in hostility from Catherine, and she decides to leave the

house by marrying Rodolpho. In spite of Eddie's pleas not to marry so quickly, she makes her own firm decisions: "No, I made up my mind . . . 'cause I did. I don't want nobody else"(55). Her obedience to Eddie is gone, and she finds herself as an independent individual who can speak out about what she wants.

Catherine's revolt against Eddie grows stronger after Eddie reports Marco and Rodolpho. When Eddie prevents Beatrice from attending Catherine's wedding, Catherine condemns him, saying, "Who the hell do you think you are! . . . You got no more right to tell nobody nothin'!"(62) Catherine, who used to obey Eddie, is sharply changed here and accuses him of "biting people when they sleep"(62). Furthermore, she denounces his betrayal of the "submarines' and the community: "He comes when nobody's lookin' and poisons decent people--in the garbage he belongs"(62). Like Chris and Biff, Catherine also realizes the truth about the father figure of whom she has been so proud. While she is so disappointed with who he really is, Catherine finds her identity through removing her father figure's mask. She cannot believe the fact that he betrays the people who are considered to be family, and the fact that he violates the social codes which he has observed so proudly and which he

has tried to make her observe as well. Catherine, however, never knows what truly makes Eddie act the way he does.

Basically, Eddie's obsession with Catherine causes his tragic death, but his efforts to retain the name and not to be alienated from the community also work as sources of his death. In this play, the alienation relates to Eddie's obsession with his name. Just as Willy Loman feels desperate after being alienated from work, Eddie does after being alienated from the community.

Alfieri warns of Eddie's isolated future before Eddie loses his name. When Alfieri notices Eddie's intention to report the "submarines" because of his niece, he remonstrates Eddie that if he reports them, he will lose everything in his community: "You won't have a friend in the world, Eddie! Even those who understand will turn against you, even the ones who feel the same will despise you"(51). Despite Alfieri's warning about Eddie's alienation, the obsession with Catherine drives Eddie to betray a social code. Later, Eddie has to confront this situation as a punishment for his violation of the social codes.

Everyone in Red Hook lives between "the Sicilian code of honor, *omerta* and revenge, and the American legal

system"(Martine 89). However, as an Italian immigrant neighborhood, Eddie's community respects the loyalty to each other more than the law of America. Thus, Eddie threatens the security of his community. Welland explains that Eddie's "betrayal of submarines is a threat to the right way to live together, which Miller regards as the great feature of the polis; in cutting himself off from his polis he destroys himself"(81). When Marco accuses Eddie of informing on him to the Immigration Bureau, gradually the people turn away from Eddie and leave him, even though he denies his guilt. In order to remedy his dishonorable, isolated situation, Eddie confronts Marco in the end.

Eddie's downfall proves that human beings are social beings, subjected to their surroundings. In the introduction of A View from the Bridge, Miller concludes that "it is more possible now to relate his actions to our own and thus to understand ourselves a little better not only as isolated psychological entities, but as we connect to our fellows and our long past together"(ix-x). Compared to the two previous plays, Eddie very clearly presents an individual's destruction under social circumstances and the relatedness to society. Like a fish that cannot get out of water to survive, Eddie cannot survive in isolated

surroundings from his community. Eddie is fully influenced by his social surroundings, which respect loyalty to each other. All of sudden, this observance to loyalty is violated by his inappropriate obsession with Catherine. However, Eddie returns to what he has strongly believed. Eddie's community places a high value on a person's name and thus so does Eddie. Therefore, he fights for his name/honor to the death.

I have studied Miller's three *socio-familial* plays, in terms of obsession, generational value systems, and alienation. Although each play illustrates a different downfall for each family, there are several similarities in terms of the fish-water analogy.

First, the three protagonists, Joe Keller, Willy Loman, and Eddie Carbone, have obsessions with success, fame/name, or family, which cause their tragic endings. The values that the three protagonists obsess over reflect particular social circumstances. Eddie's society reinforces for him that retaining a good name is the prime virtue in life, so he desperately tries to retrieve his name. Willy's obsession with success comes from the American Dream, which makes people think that everyone can be successful. As for Joe, the family equals society, so he only makes efforts to

maintain his position as father. In addition, all three characters keep trying to justify their acts as being for the good of their families.

The second similar aspect in these three plays is that each father's obsession collides with his child's will. Joe and Willy immerse themselves in materialistic values shaped by the American Dream, so they want their sons to follow these values. However, as society changes, each son realizes the inadequacy of his father's values in contemporary society. The sons are also impacted by their own social circumstances. Through the conflicts between fathers and sons in terms of each generational value system, Miller shows that human beings are subject to their social circumstances. While the conflicts of different generational value systems are remarkable in the first two plays, in A View from the Bridge, the conflict of the generational value systems is not so conspicuous. Like Eddie, Catherine has also been affected by the social codes of Red Hook. Thus, when Catherine discovers that Eddie has broken the social codes, she defies him. She protests Eddie's violation of the social codes, but does not support any new generational value systems.

The third similarity is the main characters' alienation from society. Each father attempts to secure his

status in a particular surrounding. However, after failing in their attempts to secure their societal positions, they feel isolated from where they belong. In the case of the Kellers and the Lomans, each family's isolation from society is represented by the stage direction about their house. The backyard where Joe Keller always stays is a secluded place hedged by tall poplars. The Keller's alienation results from their attempts to hide Joe's past crime. Meanwhile, the house of the Lomans is dwarfed by tall and solid apartment houses, and implies that the Lomans do not belong to their successful community despite Willy's attempts. In Eddie's case, even though he is a respectable man at the beginning of the play, his betrayal of social codes is directly punished by alienation from his entire society. Thus, the power of his social circumstance is stronger than that of the two previous protagonists because Eddie's alienation is what ultimately leads him to death.

Overall, Miller displays three different individuals who were greatly influenced by their social surroundings. Specifically, I have focused on three elements--obsession, generational value systems, and alienation--which are determined by their social circumstances. Through the main

characters' gradual (self-) destruction under certain social conditions in each play, Miller stresses how directly society and individual connect with each other and how deeply society impacts a human life.

In the next chapter, I will explore Cha's two plays which show similar aspects in terms of the *socio-familial* plays. Miller's idea about the relationship between an individual and society appears similarly in the works of the Korean playwright, Beomsuk Cha.

CHAPTER III

Like the previous chapter of Miller's *socio-familial* plays, this chapter will study Beomsuk Cha's two *socio-familial* plays. Cha noticed the impacts of circumstances on individuals and expressed these impacts in his plays. Taking specific circumstances in Korean society, he commented about the interrelationship between individuals and society:

> we are influenced by the change of surroundings such as political or cultural or social elements. Especially, in the mid 1900s, [Korean] society was under strong political control. . . . Besides, the process from an agricultural society, to an individual society which is the change of circumstance, causes many conflicts among human beings (Phone interview with Cha, Feb 13, 1999).

Like Miller, Cha was aware of the interrelationship between society and individuals.

Cha started his literary career after the Korean War. "[In general] post-Korean war plays in the 1950s," according to Sunghee Kim, "expressed very clearly such pictures of social impact as the destruction of families and the collapse of the traditional view of values caused by the terrible war"(81). The Korean War (1950-51) caused Korean society to change greatly in various ways.

The 1950s was a period that saw the collapse of traditional order and the rise of existentialism. The partition of the Korean peninsula was fixed politically, economically, and ideologically; the same period brought Western values to Korea. The Korean plays in the 1950s reflected the conflicts between the traditional and new ideals that were the result of these social changes. Cha's family dramas deal with the struggle between the traditional Korean view of family and the Western view of family, especially the American idea of individualism within the family.

Traditional views of the family, in Korea, are based on Confucianism, and stress the importance of the family in human life. The family is the root or center of the societal unit to which the individual first and foremost belongs from cradle to grave, and it is through this concept of family that the whole society can be seen. Confucianism considers society as a big family, so a king in a nation parallels a father in a family, and the relationship between a king and his people is like the relationship between a father and his sons. Everyone in the nation has responsibility to each other because of their bonds as one family. Just as Miller sees the family as a microcosm of society, so does Cha.

Korea has been influenced by Confucianism for 600 years; however, after the Korean War, Western culture and its value systems were introduced and mingled with the dominant traditional value systems. To the Koreans, distressed by Japanese Imperialism and the Korean War, American individualism and the American Dream were attractive. Koreans uncritically accepted them. This caused many problems in Korea, such as "loss of humanity resulting from alienation and solitude of modern men, troubles of love and lust produced by change of age, and collapse of tradition"(Jung 1988:1) and an emergence of new ideas. These problems, arising in the 1950s, became popular subjects for Korean writers.

Cha in response to what he sees happening in Korea, examines how the individual has been influenced by the modern age both socially and morally. He stresses the interrelationship between human beings and society, especially how human beings survive the influence of the gigantic mechanism known as society. After the Korean War, Cha saw that, due to the absurdities and corruption in society, the relationship between individuals and society was in conflict rather than compromise and adjustment(Lee 19). In his plays, Cha shows this relation, emphasizing

alienation, frustration and the failure of an individual in the family which symbolizes the failure of an individual in society. Cha has a perspective similar to Miller's toward the affect of society on human beings and explains that

> [Koreans] are greatly influenced by the change of surroundings such as political or cultural or social elements. Especially in the mid 1900s, [Korea] was under strong political control that did not allow artists to express their desires. Besides, the process of moving from an agricultural society to an industrialized society, which is the change of circumstance, causes many conflicts among human beings. (Phone Interview with Cha, Feb 13, 1999)

Cha illustrates these various changes of surroundings and the reactions of individuals through the protagonists in his plays. Most of his major plays deal with social changes after the Korean War, adjustment to Western culture, and alienation resulting from those changes. These changes caused conflicts between the old and the new generations and finally led to the collapse of the traditional value system.

Cha's two *socio-familial* plays, The Barren and Castle of Roses, show that the particular social condition causes each family's tragedy. As in Miller's plays, in Cha's two plays, "society is a power and a mystery of custom and inside the man and surrounding him, as the fish is in the water and the sea inside the fish, [is] his birthplace and

burial ground, promise and threat"(Miller 1978:143). Cha depicts the process of the collapse of a family, a private space, from the encroachment of society, an outer space which encompasses the family(Kim 72)and eventually becomes part of the family. While The Barren chiefly deals with the conflict between the old generation and the new generation, like Death of a Salesman and All My Sons, the main concern in Castle of Roses is alienation, like A View from the Bridge. With these similarities in mind, I will use the three elements of obsession, the differing value systems between generations, and alienation to discuss these similarities and examine these two Cha plays.

The Barren

This play shows Korean society at the end of the 1950s confronting confused value systems and a generation gap resulting from economic depression, increasing unemployment, and capitalism. According to Cha, the inspiration for The Barren came to him when he was walking through downtown Seoul. "After the Korean War," Cha confesses that

> Chongro street of Seoul was built up by tall and sturdy buildings. . . . Among high buildings, I saw an old house. On the roof there were darkish mosses and weeds. . . . I started to imagine the world between a father and a son, who each

> struggle for their lives and goals, under a roof where the sun did not shine. (Lee 41)

This comment becomes the exact background of The Barren. In this play, Cha focuses on the different generational value systems caused by the changes of social surroundings.

The Barren is set in down town Seoul where Mr. Choi lives with his wife and four children. He runs a traditional wedding equipment store, but recently, his business is declining because of the advent of new Western style wedding equipment. Mr. Choi's eldest son, Kyoungsoo, is a discharged soldier from the Korean War who has a university degree. Kyoungsoo has a difficult time finding a job after the war, so he roams the city and drinks everyday. The second child, Kyoungae, dreams of becoming an actress in spite of lacking acting lessons. She is proud and sure of becoming a famous actress in the near future. The third child, Kyoungwoon, is the only one who earns money for this family as a typesetter. The youngest, Kyoungjae, is a high school student who will enter university next year. As the play begins, Kyoungjae complains about the inconvenience of living in such an old house. Except for Mr. Choi, the family members want to move to another place, but Mr. Choi does not listen to them. The

old house was presented to him by his father a long time ago for his wedding gift. Everybody is afraid to tell him to sell the old house because they know Mr. Choi's stubbornness. Meanwhile, Mr. Choi cannot fathom why Kyoungsoo does not get a job with his good educational background, and why Kyoungae does not cease her vain dream to be an actress.

At last, when he becomes angry with the drunken Kyoungsoo, who interferes with his business with the realtor, Mr. Choi's severe belittlement to Kyoungsoo drives Kyoungsoo to leave the house with a hidden gun. Kyoungsoo plans to commit suicide for the sake of his family, but instead, he robs the jewelry shop in daytime and is arrested just before a notification of job employment arrives from a pharmaceutical company. Kyoungae, in the meantime, realizes that she follows a false dream. She is swindled by a fake Movie Company. Since Kyoungae loses her money and her virginity to become an actress, she kills herself in order to escape from the shame and misery she will experience for violating traditional value systems. Suddenly, when Mr. Choi loses two children, he finally cries out and condemns his miserable fate.

The first sign of obsession, generational value systems, and alienation is seen in the family business, a wedding store. Mr. Choi, the protagonist, owns a traditional wedding equipment store in the 1950s when people begin to prefer Western style weddings. This traditional wedding store becomes a relic of the past, and represents Mr. Choi's obsession of sticking with tradition. His complaints that "everyone is crazy about new and Westernized things"(6) highlight the change in social value systems. Like Willy Loman in Death of a Salesman, Mr. Choi refuses to accept the changes in society and is obsessed with his past ideals, such as compassion and intimacy among others, based on Confucian morality. These past ideals do not fit the social circumstances of the 1950s, so his values are destined to disappear with the advent of the new generation.

Mr. Choi's obsession with his traditional value systems is also seen his obsession with the old house. The house symbolizes the disappearing tradition or the old generation and even Mr. Choi himself. Surrounded by changed and developed tall buildings, this house is "like a dwarf among normal people"(16). Because a Korean traditional house used to be built as a one-story building, compared with Western style high rise buildings, Mr. Choi's house

looks inferior. In spite of changes in the neighborhood, Mr. Choi insists on keeping this house. Amidst the waves of social changes, the old house is the only thing he has. His dead father had bought it for him as a wedding present, so Mr. Choi firmly believes in the great value of the house like he believes in the great value of tradition. For 47 years, the Chois have lived in the old house, since Mr. Choi, who is over 60, "grew up, got married, and [had] children"(3) there. The old house represents his whole life, and he is obsessive about the house in spite of other family members' suggestions to sell it.

His fixation with the old house produces conflicts with the rest of his family who want to move to a different house for their own convenience. According to the Choi's children, despite its good location, the family house is too antiquated to have a water supply at home. They have to go to the Civil Water (public water) to procure the water they need. When Kyoungjae complains about drawing water every day and asks his father to move out, Mr. Choi obstinately refuses and emphasizes the relationship between him and the old house which share their lives: "I was born here, therefore I will die in this house"(5). Mr. Choi's strong obsession with keeping the house ignores Kyoungjae's

suggestion. Because of a patriarchal tradition, the family must follow the father's decision.

The fact that Mr. Choi is "strongly obsessed with disappearing traditional value systems," according to Sunghee Kim, "closing himself off from the advent of new value systems"(72) is shown when he complains about his neighbors who "only think for themselves and don't care for others"(7-8), dumping dirty water. Mr. Choi thinks "these days people become shameless"(7-8). Compared with the past when people cared for each other like a big family, the current society had become selfish and indifferent in Mr. Choi's eyes. He believes that modern development represented by the buildings surroundings his house is a cause of dehumanization in society. These buildings block his house from the sun, so "the flowers and vegetables don't grow"(4). The flowers and vegetables symbolize a life or birth and his children, especially, Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae who are choked off by modernized society. This life or birth does not exist in this house because of "ghostly buildings"(4) that surround it and represent modernization. Mr. Choi curses that "the world will become barren"(4) at this rate. The older generation, as represented by Mr. Choi, sees the development of technology and industrialization negatively, and believes this

modernization will destroy human life rather than improve it. This negative attitude toward changed society provokes the conflicts with his children in the play.

Compared with Mr. Choi's traditional view of society, his children's attitudes toward social circumstances are different and various. The oldest son, Kyoungsoo, thinks of himself as a victim of society and takes a pessimistic view of new society. Kyoungae, the oldest daughter and the second child pursues her dream of success which a changed society provides; she takes an optimistic view of life. Kyoungwoon and Kyoungjae, the youngest daughter and son, see society very realistically. They understand wrongs and rights in the modern society. For instance, when Mr. Choi complains about the changed neighborhood and praises the past, Kyoungjae explains that the past is of no use, "Today is today. . . . Someone who realizes this fact clearly can seek his future"(4). Kyoungjae faces up to the modern reality; he knows the advantages and disadvantages to human life resulting from the development of technology. Kyoungjae neither praises the social changes nor blames them. He just accepts the reality which Mr. Choi continues to fight.

This realistic attitude is also shown by Kyoungwoon, the youngest daughter. When Mr. Choi complains about

Kyoungsoo's joblessness and laziness in spite of his position in the family, as the eldest child, Kyoungwoon tries to make Mr. Choi understand the current unemployment situation. Kyoungsoo's joblessness is because "the society doesn't offer him one. [Thus] it's not his fault"(6). Kyoungwoon realistically perceives the changes in social circumstances, and in her family she functions as a buffer in the generational conflict. For example, when Kyoungsoo comes back home looking drunk and wretched, and starts to complain about the cruel society and inhumane people of the day, Kyoungwoon "understand[s] [his] situation better than anyone does"(14) in their family. She realizes that "such compassion and excuses"(14) of a discharged soldier are not useful to live in society, but are like the behavior of a coward. She thinks that doing nothing and only complaining about others and social wrongs is not the right way to live under their social circumstances. In front of Mr. Choi, Kyoungwoon makes her father understand and sympathize with Kyoungsoo's inevitable situation in society, but to the listless Kyoungsoo, she sharply expresses her realistic opinion about how to survive in this society. Moreover, she thinks, "it is irresponsible and weak behavior"(15) to complain and that he "ought to survive by any means"(15). Kyoungwoon realizes that it will take each person carrying

out his/her role faithfully and tirelessly for them to survive in their modern society.

Cha shows a positive image of the new generation through the perspectives of Kyoungwoon and Kyoungjae toward their surroundings. At the same time, and in the same family, Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae represent a negative image of the new generation that is confused and wandering as a result of Westernization. The society that Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae belong to is neither traditional nor Westernized, and they are trapped in a no man's land like a DMZ without any support.

After the Korean War, Kyoungsoo attempts to get a job, but because of the increase in unemployment and the economic crisis, he fails. As for Kyoungsoo, his social circumstance is like a war and thus he needs a gun to win over others. Kyoungsoo's experience with the war taught him the spirit of survival in the battlefield. The battle in the war symbolizes Kyoungsoo's struggle in the modern world where he sees others as his enemy. He thinks of his struggle to find work like a war, "where, unless we killed the enemy, we would die"(25). For the dejected Kyoungsoo, the possession of a gun gives him a reason to live and the energy to try again after many failures. The gun is necessary for him to deal with his tortured reality.

According to Kyoungjae, "whenever [Kyoungsoo] saw the gun, it reminded him of the battle"(25).

As the eldest son, Kyoungsoo recognizes his responsibility for the family and his father's expectations of him. Reality, however, turns out to be crueler to him. While Kyoungsoo makes efforts to get a job, he loses his self-confidence, his hope for the future and his faith in others, and eventually he becomes wretched. His wretchedness is similar to Biff Loman in Death of a Salesman. Both are elder sons in their families and each father depends on his son's success. However, Biff and Kyoungsoo cannot survive in modern society. Biff is imbued with Willy's misguided values that do not work in changed society. Likewise, Kyoungsoo is directly influenced by his social circumstances that do not offer him a job and are full of wrongs. Kyoungsoo's burden as the eldest son and his pessimism about himself and society cause him to commit a crime and ruin his hopeful life in the end. In the meantime, Mr. Choi cannot understand Kyoungsoo's pessimistic attitude toward society. Mr. Choi criticizes Kyoungsoo's inability to survive in society after the war. Comparing Kyoungsoo, who thinks the war ruins his life, with other discharged soldiers who made money by any means, Mr. Choi believes Kyoungsoo's joblessness results from his

laziness and his blaming of the war is "just a foolish excuse"(21). This is similar to Willy Loman's complaint about Biff. The fathers expect their eldest sons to succeed and take charge of their families. In particular, Mr. Choi depends on his eldest son's responsibility to support his family after himself, which is the traditionally expected role of the eldest son in a Korean family. However, Biff and Kyoungsoo disappoint their fathers despite their efforts. Because neither father can understand his son's true situations in society, the conflicts between father and son arise in each play. Like Miller's two plays, All My Sons and Death of a Salesman, Cha focuses on the struggles between a father and a son. In The Barren, Mr. Choi expects Kyoungsoo to play a traditional role of an eldest son, but Kyoungsoo's weakness in a changed society after the war cannot satisfy his father's wishes. Even though they care for each other, they cannot help failing to understand each other and this serves to make Kyoungsoo out of sinc with both his family and society.

Kyoungae, the second child and the oldest daughter of Mr. Choi, indulges herself in the American Dream. She strongly believes that she will become rich after being cast as a new starlet. She dreams of getting rich quick, and brags that if she should, "succeed to be selected as a

new face today, everything is gonna be okay"(10). She will "afford a better house and car"(10) and give Kyoungsoo a job, too. Kyoungae is obsessed with materialistic success, and is wrongly influenced by the American Dream like Willy and Happy Loman. She cannot see reality clearly and pursues wrong values. American individualism gives Kyoungae to a materialistic value that conflicts with the traditional world her father offers and in which she lives. Mr. Choi cannot understand Kyoungae's vain optimistic attitude toward society. When Kyoungae rattles on about her promise to buy new Western-style wedding veils for Mr. Choi's store, he rebuffs her and says that he could "grow a tail in the time it would take me to wait for you to become a star"(6). Mr. Choi does not believe his daughter's empty dreams for success.

While Kyoungsoo fights the fraud in society, Kyoungae uses money and her body as a bribe to get a role in the movies. When Kyoungwoon asks if buying off a judge is working in the movie business, Kyoungae proudly explains what the most important things are in order to succeed: she explains that "if ability is a four out of ten and a bribe is a six, then it will be okay." She believes that "most importantly, to be an actress, a woman must have a beautiful face and a nice body"(8) rather than acting

ability. Through Kyoungae, Cha censures the younger generation that follows false dreams or ideals without evaluating them. In a transitional period, the younger generation that does not have a firm identity is liable to waver aimlessly. Western value systems affect this generation, and make it confused and in conflict with the traditional one before it establishes its self-identity. Therefore, the younger generation is easily swept with the new waves in society. Kyoungbok Lee comments that Kyoungae is "the character that represents a woman of the new generation who chooses the easiest and the most secular way to make a fortune at one stroke"(Lee 43). In the end, Kyoungae is deceived by fake movie businessmen and kills herself because of the disgrace of her losses, especially that of her virginity. On the one hand, Kyoungae is unlike a traditional woman whose goal in life centers on marriage. On the other hand, her suicide shows that she still holds traditional values. Cha depicts Kyoungae as a woman of the new generation who pursues her own dream more than her traditional duty as a daughter in the family. According to Sunghee Kim, Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae cannot help "failing because they do not play the [traditional] roles as a son and a daughter in a strict patriarchal society"(Kim 71).

Mr. Choi is described as a powerful father who usually ignores what other family members say. His stubbornness and ignorance cause alienation from his family. When he talks with the realtor about the house, the other family members do not know what Mr. Choi is really trying to do because he does not share his intention to lease the house. As a powerful father, Mr. Choi makes a big decision for all of his family members, yet he does not ask others' opinions or share his intention with others. His dogmatic decision stems from extreme patriarchy, and it causes him to be alienated from his family.

Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae are described as isolated victims in changed society. Kyoungsoo drinks to escape from reality and alienates himself from the society and his family. He blames society and others for his joblessness. No work means that, as a fully matured man, he is useless in a materialistic society. This is like Willy Loman's work alienation. Kyoungsoo and Willy cannot adjust themselves in low-class jobs, and both also cannot bear their disabilities in society as jobless men. Instead, Kyoungsoo criticizes those who get jobs, cling to their jobs desperately, and fear being fired (13). These social circumstances cause many wrongs, such as mammonism, dehumanization, injustice, and immorality. For example, if

someone desired a job during that time, he needed money for bribes. After getting a job, that person tried to recoup the money he spent for bribes by taking bribes himself(13). This resulted in a vicious circle of fraud. Thus, Kyoungsoo becomes a victim of this fraud as a poor applicant of the time. He bitterly criticizes the current society where "everyone becomes selfish"(13). He explains that "if a guy is in need, he treats us nicely, but after grabbing what he wants from us, he treats us like dogs"(13). Through Kyoungsoo's bitterness, Cha presents Korean society in the 1950s, which had been adversely influenced by American individualism which was in conflict with the traditional Confucianism. Cha depicts Kyoungsoo as a victim in a confusing transition stage. Kyoungsoo is a fish that does not get along with living in his transformed water.

Kyoungae is a victim between the traditional and the Western value systems. Being deceived by the society that she trusts explicitly, she feels alienated and betrayed. After realizing her failure, Kyoungae regards herself as a worthless and indecent woman in view of the traditional value systems. Thus, she has to commit suicide.

In addition to each individual's alienation, the Chois' alienation from their community is symbolized by their house, much like the houses of the Loman and the

Kellers. The old house in The Barren at both sides is surrounded by "*three- or four-story buildings*"(1). These skyscrapers look like that "*they are superior to the old house*"(1). This indicates that the Chois do not belong to their community, and it also represents gradual disappearance of the tradition with the creation of the new.

Cha concludes the play with three tragedies which are influenced by their social surroundings; Mr. Choi's, Kyoungsoo's, and Kyoungae's. All of these characters finally conceive the power of their society in life. Kyoungae realizes that everything she has pursued at any cost is a false dream. The transition stage in society confuses her value systems and causes her to lose the most important element of a traditional woman for the sake of materialistic values. Kyoungsoo realizes that he is unable to compromise and adjust himself to an absurd society. As an educated man, he has had only to complain about society instead of confronting with the wrongs or finding other ways to live within it. Mr. Choi realizes that the old house he has loved for so long is worthless in modern society. When Kyoungae kills herself and Kyoungsoo is arrested, Mr. Choi laments that a person's life is not like

trash(35). He feels miserable and futile because everything and everyone he has cared for over his life does not yield any fruit. Mr. Choi curses his fate that is represented by the old house, saying, "I thought it makes only the plants wither, but even my daughter"(35). Like Willy Loman, Mr. Choi fails to gain reward for his lifelong efforts to rear his children and care for his house. Namely, his belief in the value systems does not prove to work in his changed society. While his society is changing, he is unwilling to keep up with the changes and holds fast to his traditional value systems. Mr. Choi condemns society for withering his two children in the same way he blames the buildings around him for the lack of sunshine that kills his plants. Through Mr. Choi's tragic grievance, Cha presents the irresistible force of social forces on individuals' lives. Bongseung Shin comments about the environmental force on human life, saying that

> the old house represents the cultural climate of Korean traditional society; the buildings which block the growth of flowers from the sun, and the neighboring café which makes the house poles rotten by dumping dirty water are the representatives of the gigantic mechanism and political authority which interfere with and control human beings. (Shin 482)

The characters in The Barren are influenced by society, and the social conditions drive them to their tragic ends.

Castle of Roses

This play explores one of Cha's major subjects: conflicts caused by love and lust in a family torn by social changes. According to Minyoung Yoo, Cha confesses that

> up to the present, in most cases, I could remember the experiences which I started writing from hatred, revolt, and impulse. However, over time I realize that life is not like that. . . . Suddenly 'love' came to me [as a subject for plays]. Even though I am neither a Christian nor a Buddist, I am a nonbeliever, I realized everything comes from love and this recognition is the one change in my works over the last six years. (Yoo 1987: 235)

Although Cha deals with issues of love, he illustrates these issues under specific social circumstances.

In connection to the social changes resulting from modern developments in the 1950s, the 1960s was the period that had been influenced by feminism in Western society, especially women's liberation. The feminist movement generated great changes in the traditional views of women in Korea. A traditional patriarchal system existed in Korea, and men were placed in a higher position in society where women were required to obey their men under Confucianism. The relationship between a husband and a wife was similar to the relationship between a king and his

people. In spite of the subordinate relationship, a husband respects his wife because Confucianism is based on love and care of each other. This relationship was not formed for the exploitation of the weaker, but for maintaining orderly society. According to Kyoungbok Lee, a traditional woman was portrayed as a woman who tolerated her given situation, obeyed her husband, and thought her best duty was keeping her family together(68). However, after the influx of Western ideas in the 1950s, Korean women gradually grew conscious of their equal rights. This knowledge caused conflicts with the traditional role of women.

Cha's first trip to America in 1966 gave him a fresh shock because he only knew about America and its culture indirectly through books or movies. To him, "the art and culture of America had variety and freedom, so there were no constraints or fetters to express"(phone interview with Cha). Cha was impressed with the artistic freedom in American theatre after watching Broadway shows which dealt with aberrant sexual issues that were taboo in the 1960s' Korean theatre. In particular, he was surprised at the multiplied expressions of sexuality that were presented during this American period. When Cha returned to Korea

realizing the need for dealing with the subject of human nature, he finally produced Castle of Roses.

In Castle of Roses, Cha describes a transitional woman's turmoil, shaped by alienation and resulting from her husband's homosexuality. Even though homosexuality had existed in Korean society, it had never been brought to the surface, so Cha covers new territory in this play. Castle of Roses is similar to All My Sons and A View from the Bridge in that the main topic is alienation from the community. In this play, Cha depicts a woman who struggles with hiding sexual shameful acts from her community and even her family, and therefore, like The Barren, this play also displays social issues surrounding a family unit. In Castle of Roses the female character tries to self-impose a separation which goes against what she desires.

Mrs. Yoon, the protagonist, is a famous sculptor who lives in a remote place near Seoul. She lives with her mother-in-law, Mrs. Lee, her daughter, Sangae, and the maid, Ilsoon. Yoon has avoided the media because of her hidden disgraceful memories since Youngdo Bae, her husband and promising painter, left their house. His homosexual acts with an U.S. soldier betrayed Yoon and hurt her pride as both an artist and a woman. Yoon could not stand or understand her husband's betrayal with a man, so she forced

him to leave their house. After that, she confined herself and her family in a place isolated from the public. In the meantime, Yoon never tells anybody about her husband's homosexuality; instead she has lied to her daughter and others saying that Youngdo is dead.

However, Hanki Kim, an art critic, brings the news that Youngdo has returned to Korea from the U.S. as a wretched failure and Hanki Kim wants Yoon to forgive her husband for whatever he did wrong to her in the past. While Yoon tells Hanki that she adamantly refuses to forgive Youngdo, Mrs. Lee who has believed all along that Youngdo is alive, overhears the conversation and finally accuses Yoon of kicking Youngdo out of their house 17 years ago. During this argument, Mrs. Lee criticizes Yoon's hidden passion for men. Mrs. Lee points out that choosing Youngtaek who looks like Youngdo as a tutor for her daughter, displays her passion. Yoon positively denies this passion. Sangae gradually realizes her mother's hypocrisy and her concealed past when she overhears Mrs. Lee's accusation of Yoon. After recognizing her mother's selfishness and the reason her mother does not like her close relationship with Youngtaek, Sangae shoots the two male dogs that Yoon loves. Sangae, at this point, claims that she has become independent, and is now out of her

mother's shadow. In the end, Yoon hears of Youngdo's suicide and destroys her famous masterpiece, named, 'insult.'

Mrs. Yoon's obsession started with her memories of her shameful husband. After she found out the truth of her husband's homosexuality, she felt humiliated because she lost her husband not to another woman, but to a man, which devastated her pride as a woman. Mrs. Yoon was used "as a female animal, not as a woman"(87) by her husband and feels disgraced. She becomes "cold, arrogant, and haughty"(127) in order to avoid a loss of her pride in public. Therefore, she hid herself from society, living in the 'castle of roses.'

Due to her tenacious attempts with keeping her fame and pride, Yoon herself shows cynical wariness to the reporter in order not to disclose her hidden past. She criticizes the cruelty of the media, which is "like a vacuum cleaner because it sucks up everything"(10). Yoon is afraid of being deprived of her mask as a proud and famous sculptor, thus she takes defensive actions toward the media. She answers the reporter, who grumbles about her avoidance in answering the questions,

> I think life is cruel anyway. Can you find things which are not cruel around us? I look at the world today as a place filled with cruelty where people don't consider the ways and means to fulfill their needs in politics, thoughts, and even love. (21)

Her husband's treason makes her cynical about everything, even love. Her experience of betrayal by her husband causes her to shun and criticize society. If she did not defend herself, the cruelty of life and traditional thinking about homosexuality would encroach and destroy her.

While she tries to hide her ignominious past by accusing the media of violence, she tells Hanki Kim, an art critic, about her disguised life and how she suffered to live in the world of fame and unable to tell anyone how badly she was hurt(126). Because of her obsession with sustaining her good name in society, Yoon has cloaked her life; and in order to remove all the traces of her dishonorable past, she tells her family a lie that Youngdo is dead. Like Miller's protagonists, Yoon justifies to herself that her lies about Youngdo's death are for her family. She hides the truth about her husband because the truth is "ugly"(128) and only hurts her family's life. In fact, Yoon is scared of losing her traditional honor as an artist by the scandal of Youngdo's homosexuality. Yoon's fear to lose her honor as an artist cloaks her basic fear

to lose her pride as a woman. Ultimately, Yoon's selfishness and obsession with fame create the alienation of her family and herself from the community and block true conversation in her family.

Yoon's shunning attitude results in the obsession with Sangae. In order to erase shameful memories, Yoon moved to the 'castle of roses' far from their community and cleaned the new house obsessively(iii), thus eradicating any traces of Youngdo. The hatred against Youngdo and all males causes Yoon to become obsessed with her daughter. Yoon also feels an urgency to cleanse their daughter who "was born between a human being and an animal"(88), because she thinks Sangae is contaminated by her animal-like father's homosexual blood. Therefore, Yoon tries to cleanse Sangae from the dirty blood of her father by warning Sangae about men and by controlling her life completely. Her feelings of betrayal create Yoon's obsession with Sangae and, as a result, her alienation from the community because Yoon is afraid of being hurt by people(8). Like Joe Keller with Chris in All My Sons, for Yoon, Sangae is all she has and is very precious to her(53).

Sustaining the lie about her father's death, Yoon dominates Sangae's love. Yoon strongly posits that her excessive love for her daughter makes Sangae not need a

father figure. When her tutor, Youngtaek, brings up the question about Sangae's father, Yoon explains that she "didn't know why there had to be a father. It's natural that [Sangae] thought that way, because I did her father's share, too"(56). Here, Yoon shows that, in the concept of modern family, a perfect family does not necessarily consist of both father and mother. Her concept is compared with that of Korean traditional family that emphasizes the need of both parents for a healthy family. Yoon is vexed at Youngtaek when he advises her about her daughter. Yoon believes she knows best and what her daughter needs. Like Willy Loman, Yoon does not truly know her child. Even though Sangae is really hungry for a father figure, Yoon has never realized Sangae's true need because of her selfishness and because she is trying to avoid the social stigma that revelation would create.

Yoon's obsessive care for her daughter clashes with Sangae's close relationship with Youngtaek. Sangae has been following Yoon's instructions all her life, but Yoon's protectiveness becomes extreme. Sangae cannot understand why her mother is afraid of her dependence on Youngtaek. She turns on her mother and thinks her mother's excessive care is not love, but is "meddle"(54). Basically, Sangae, a representative of the new generation, thinks that she is an

independent person, and that no one can take care of her life except herself. Thus, she considers her mother an outsider in her life and that her mother's concern interferes with her affairs.

In the meantime, Yoon thinks her concern for her daughter is reasonable as a mother. Her daughter's problem becomes Yoon's own problem. On the one hand, Yoon is a modernized and liberal woman, because she is a single parent who earns wages like a traditional father. On the other hand, she still has aspects of a traditional mother who believes that a mother helps her daughter to find happiness, and that the mother is responsible for the daughter's happiness. Thus, Yoon thinks Sangae's business is hers as well. Yoon confesses her life has been lived only for her daughter: "I've been doing my best for your well-being until today, and I've endured agonies until this day only for you"(66). This is similar to the pleadings of Joe Keller, who thinks his business and his life have been only for the sake of his remaining son, Chris.

Cha shows the generational value systems through the differences between Sangae's and her mother and between Mrs. Lee and Yoon. Sangae is influenced by individualism, so she does not value the blood bond and explains to Yoon that "water sometimes can be thicker than blood"(43).

Traditionally, Koreans have made a great account for the blood ties, but Sangae respects the modern tendency to Westernized individualism and thus each person's rights. She also admits the fact that, for whatever reasons her parents broke up, it is not her problem. She is sure that she will "have [her] happiness even though [she] was born from such parents," because "there is happiness each to his own"(89). Sangae represents the positive image of new generation, according to Cha(Phone interview with Cha). Sangae values her own efforts for her life because nobody can live her life for her.

Sangae's individualistic value systems cannot fathom why Yoon has lived as a single mother. When Sangae's father left the house she was only one year old. Because Yoon has completely erased all traces of her husband, Sangae does not know what he looks like and the truth of why he deserted his family. Without knowing the truth, Sangae sees her mother as a traditional faithful woman. Traditionally, after her husband's death, a Korean woman used to live a solitary life for her dead husband until she died. This loyalty for her husband is treated as the greatest virtue of a woman. Therefore, Sangae thinks her mother has observed this traditional virtue, which Sangae considers as a disappearing virtue of the time;

> Fighting loneliness for 17 years can't be considered a virtue any longer. You should know, mother, that there are more people who laugh at you than admire you, because you live far out in a deserted area surrounded only by roses. (67)

Sangae recognizes the changes in the values of her time and that her mother's solitude looks like hypocrisy. Sangae confesses that because of her mother's hypocritical attitude, she cannot understand Yoon at all.

Yoon's hypocritical attitudes result from her self-contradiction. By saying that she never feels lonesome or afraid living out in a remote place without a man in her family, Yoon tries to deny her passion and need of a man, but her hypocritical attitudes are revealed in her obsession with her dogs and Youngtaek.

Yoon's obsession with her daughter in forbidding Sangae to get close to Youngtaek, a tutor who looks like Sangae's father, comes from her selfish desire. Yoon chose him as her daughter's tutor among other applicants in order to compensate for her deprived husband. After losing her husband to a man, Yoon disguised her desire for a man as a hatred against and superiority to men for 17 years. Therefore, in her family, there is no man, and Yoon firmly denies the need of a man in her life. Yoon's hidden desire, however, is shown in two stage directions. When she sees Youngtaek entering, "*her startled reaction is a self-*

conscious behavior, which she pretends to be official, hiding gladness from him"(41). Here she not only finds him attractive, but also happy to have a male presence again. In addition, when she hears that Sangae and Youngtaek often go to the garden of roses, "*Yoon looks very uncomfortable. . .[and] tries to read the newspaper to calm herself*"(48). Even though Yoon pretends to loathe her husband and all males, she cannot refuse the need of a man in her life. Another example of Yoon's self contradiction is Yoon's special care for two big male dogs that they rear. Yoon does not let the others bathe them. The two big dogs are male dogs, not female and this shows her need of and desire for male companionship. As she bathes them, Yoon can control and fondle the two male dogs that can passively receive her love. These behaviors imply bestiality which is related to her husband's homosexuality. Also, when touching her sculpture, titled, 'Insult,' she looks like she is stroking the back of a living animal gently and warmly: "Her attitude seems to suppress her passion"(67). These attitudes reveal that, like Eddie Carbone in A View from the Bridge, concealing his passion for Catherine in the disguise of the duty as a father figure, Yoon hides her passion for men. Her self-denial of this passion is hidden in her belief that everything is for her daughter. Thus,

her passion is disguised as the obsessive care that Sangae does not get close to a man, and eventually is represented by her art piece, 'Insult'.

While Sangae realizes that her mother's obsession with her is, in fact, her mother's disguised passion, at the same time she discovers her self-identity that produces the conflict with her mother. Like Chris Keller, Biff Loman and Catherine who realize their fathers' realities and launch their own lives from the fathers' shadows, Sangae firmly stands on her own two feet. After shooting the two male dogs--this violent act symbolizes her revolt against her mother--Sangae cries out, "You're not my mother! I neither have a father nor a mother. Only me."(141). As the distraught Sangae aims the gun at her mother, Yoon begs her to calm down, emphasizing their blood bond relationship. Here, Yoon displays a contradictory behavior because she mentions earlier that "a blood relationship doesn't mean a thing. To the modern men, blood has lost its meaning and power"(120). But now, in front of Sangae, she appeals to the relationship between mother and daughter. Yoon's self-contradictory attitude represents the picture of the transitional stage woman in the 1960s of Korea. Yoon stands between concepts of the traditional and the modern woman.

Sangae, however, responds to her mother's begging, "there's no use of relationship. Everybody is busy finding one's own need. We all became animals"(142). Sangae becomes like 'practical' Chris and 'tearless' Kyoungsoo, as she discovers how to survive in such a bestial society by being independent.

In addition to the conflict between mother and daughter, there is another conspicuous conflict shown between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. Cha uses Yoon to illustrate a transitional image of a woman from the traditional to the modern woman in the same way he uses Kyoungsoo and Kyoungae in The Barren. Compared to Sangae, Yoon still has aspects of a traditional woman; but compared to Mrs. Lee, she is modernized. Yoon shows aspects of a very active and revolutionary woman. For example, she asked Youngdo to marry her during their college years. This attitude is uncommon in the ordinary and traditional image of women of the period. Women were supposed to be passive. Yoon does not feel the need of a father figure for raising her daughter, so she has been a single parent. Unlike traditional mothers, Yoon enters the society of works like fathers and earns money for her family. Rather, she feels superior to men as a career woman. Thus Yoon's liberal thoughts and conduct with regard to love and works reflect

the new ideas influenced by the American feminist movement, which supported equal rights of women. In the meantime, through Mrs. Lee, Cha embodies the image of a traditional Korean woman who only endures whatever fate is determined for her by her father, husband, and later her eldest son. Mrs. Lee has lived with Yoon and Sangae for 17 years since her son left their house, not uttering a word about how she felt(72). Without knowing the truth about why Youngdo left their house, but condemning Yoon Youngdo's departure, Mrs. Lee expresses her opinion about a wife's role. Mrs. Lee explains that a traditional wife would "have sold the house to support him for a husband if her husband wanted to study abroad"(84). She thinks Yoon's selfishness to keep her husband with her prevented Youngdo from studying abroad. Mrs. Lee believes when he decided to follow the U.s. soldier for studying, Yoon forced him to leave and not to come back. Driving a man out of the house is not a proper way for a wife to treat her husband whether he does something wrong or not(80-84). A traditional Korean woman has to be patient with her husband, whatever he does. Yoon is not either a traditional woman or a completely modern woman, and in this conflict, like the conflict with her daughter she conflicts with her mother-in-law because of different value systems.

Yoon's obsession with getting rid of her memories and not being hurt by people makes her "[drift] to an island from the city civilization"(18) and thus she becomes alienated from society. Yoon does not even maintain contact with her relatives. Four people live in this confined situation Mrs. Yoon has constructed since the miserable end of her marriage. When the reporter from the magazine visits Yoon's house, according to the stage direction, "the maid shows awkwardness serving the guest. This indicates that she is not used to serving many guests here"(1). The maid's awkwardness to visitors reveals how much Yoon's family has lived separately from the community.

Yoon's house represents her alienation from the community as well. Like Joe Keller's secluded house, Yoon's house is surrounded by a virtual fence of roses and is located in a place isolated from people. These living conditions reflect Yoon's obsession with ridding herself of a painful past and defending herself from betrayal by human beings again.

In addition to the external alienation of the surroundings, Mrs. Yoon's internal life is wrapped with lies and agonies that cause her family to be alienated from each other and society. She has never revealed the truth

about why she has lived such a lonely life without her husband. She has never told the truth about the past happenings between her and her husband, Youngdo. Instead, she lies to her daughter that her father was dead after leaving their house. Even though Sangae believes what her mother told her about her father, she still does not understand Yoon's obsessive hatred of and warnings about men. Sangae expresses her wish to "feel one tenth of the praise which other people say for [her mother] being a famous sculptor"(104). In fact, Sangae really needs a father figure, but she has never spoken of her need because she knows her mother's delicate characteristics. Yoon's obsession with the certainty that Sangae does not need a father figure hinders Sangae's true desire. Yoon's obsession with demolishing her disgraceful past and her lies prevent the relationship between the mother and the daughter to be shared fully and finally causes alienation between them.

Yoon's eventual alienation comes from her family that she has cared for much. When Sangae accuses Yoon of being an animal, exactly what Yoon has accused her husband of being, Yoon loses her conviction that she is different from her animal-like husband. Yoon denounces Youngdo's immoral passion, but later her hidden passion for men is revealed,

and she is accused of such by her precious daughter. Similarly, in A View from the Bridge, Eddie warns Catherine about not speaking about the 'submarines,' but later his passion for Catherine results in betrayal to his society. Just as Eddie's passion and betrayal bring out alienation from his community, Yoon's betrayed feelings and concealed passion cause her to be alienated from her community. At last, when labeled an animal, Yoon feels total alienation from what she is obsessed with in her life. Yoon breaks her sculpture, 'Insult' into pieces. According to Kyoungbok Lee, this represents "the frustration of her pure eroticism"(70). In addition to Lee's comment, destroying her masterpiece means that Yoon finally admits her disguised life. 'Insult' symbolizes her belief in a woman's superiority over a man. Lee comments about Castle of Roses, saying, "[This play] is a work stressing both an artist's completeness and a woman's happiness which are accomplished by her husband's existence"(70). Yoon's extreme alienation cannot sublimate itself in art. Cha highlights the fact that human beings are social beings that cannot be alienated from society. Cha shows both Yoon's hypocrisy as an artist in order to sustain her fame in public and her incompleteness as a human who denies the psychological and

physical need of the opposite gender for accomplishing one's life fully.

In Castle of Roses, Cha presents a woman who is in a transitional stage between a traditional and a modern woman. This unstable stage reflects the 1960s' Korean society that had been influenced by Western ideas of feminism and individualism. These Western ideas collide with Korean tradition and customs, mainly based on Confucianism and this collision engenders much confusion in society that is represented by the conflicts between Sangae and Mrs. Yoon. This play focuses on the interrelationship between society and individuals.

Overall, in the two plays, The Barren and Castle of Roses, Cha explores the forces of circumstances on individuals. These circumstances develop after the 1950s when Korean society was sharply changed socially, politically and ideologically. Cha, however, emphasizes the different generational value systems, which are greatly affected by the social changes taking place in Korea, more intensively than Miller does. These social transformations, which Cha depicts in detail in his two plays, caused many confused situations and conflicts in family as well as in society.

First, each character has an obsession with something. Mr. Choi sticks to the traditional values whereas his children are influenced by social changes, such as the American Dream, materialistic success, and individualism. Mrs. Yoon is obsessed with her fame and her daughter. Her obsession results from her homosexual husband's betrayal that shows the changes of sexual concept in society.

Second, in the two plays, there are conflicts between parents and their children because of the impacts of different social circumstances. Mr. Choi, a strong patriarchal father, cannot understand his children's value systems. For Mr. Choi, Kyoungsoo is too pessimistic while Kyoungae is too vainly optimistic toward society. Since Mr. Choi makes a great account for living together with others beyond his own family, for him the realistic viewpoint of Kyoungwoon and Kyoungjae sound too modern. In case of Mrs. Yoon, she stands between the traditional and the modern stage, so Yoon herself shows self-contradictory acts. Since she is affected by the American Feminist Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Mrs. Yoon is not concerned that single parenting might be her weakness; rather she prides herself in being a career woman. In the meantime, Mrs. Yoon holds fast to the traditional roles of a mother and blood bonds. Thus, she wants to control Sangae's business like her own

business. Sangae, however, who is deeply influenced by individualism, sees Yoon's concern as an interference with her life.

Third, Mr. Choi's alienation is largely caused by social changes whereas Mrs. Yoon's alienation is self-imposed in order to protect her honor as a woman and an artist in her society. Mr. Choi's obsession with tradition prevents his family from keeping up with changes. This alienation is physically presented in the tall Westernized buildings that make their house look like a dwarf among normal people surround their house. Alienation is seen in Castle of Roses, when Mrs. Yoon tries to conceal her shame caused by her husband's homosexuality. She alienates herself and her family purposely by establishing castle of roses in a remote place far from any community. The society in which she lives is so cruel and inhumane that gossip is likely to destroy a person different from the social norm. Mrs. Yoon knows the destructive power of society, and thus, she takes defensive acts toward society.

With the three elements, I demonstrated the interrelationship between society and individuals in Cha's two plays. As shown in the Miller chapter, Cha gives various pictures of individuals who struggle with their given social circumstances. In the next chapter, I will

conclude the previous three chapters, emphasizing the similarities between both playwrights.

CONCLUSION

Miller and Cha have taken similar career paths in their lives. Even though Miller started his career as a playwright earlier than Cha, they both worked as writers for radio and TV, as directors of their own plays, and as teachers of theatre and literature. Before their professional work, their various youthful experiences helped to create such vivid plays as Miller's Death of a Salesman and Cha's The Barren.

Both have lived in a similar historical period, so they share similar perspectives in their plays, in spite of cultural, ethnical, and geographical distances. Miller's background is Jewish whereas Cha has a Confucian background. Their backgrounds, imbued in their youth, later influence creation of such plays as Miller's Incident at Vichy and No Villain and Cha's The Barren and The Blue-Roofed House.

Miller, born during the World War I, experienced the Depression as a young sensitive boy. He realized the Depression deeply affected people's lives. In Cha's case, he grew up under Japanese Imperialism. As part of a subordinated people, Cha also noticed the power of circumstances. Both playwrights lived through World War II

and the Korean War. These wars and personal experiences under the dark social condition greatly influenced them and solidified their thoughts about the environmental impact on humans.

In addition to the impact of social circumstances, Miller and Cha were influenced by different theatre figures. Ibsen affected Miller, with his spirit of Greek tragedy. The question about harmony between the public and the private life hooked Miller and in his plays, Miller deals with conflicts between the public(society) and the private life(family), or with tragedies of a family caused by society. Just as Ibsen inspired Miller's work, so Chijin Yoo did Cha's work. Yoo encouraged Cha to perceive the right role of theatre under specific circumstances like Imperialism. Due to Yoo's impact, Cha has tried to establish Korean theatre as the effective method to enlighten an oppressed Korean people, reflect the social changes of the period, and to suggest a better future. Cha thoroughly felt the environmental force in his own life as he longed for freedom as an independent writer under the suppressed social and political situations. Thus, both playwrights, through their personal lives and education, learned the power of social circumstances on human life and

followed the trend of social drama like their influential preceptors.

In their socio-familial plays, both Miller and Cha express an individual's or a family's frustration, conflict, pleasure, and hope provided by the social circumstances. In this thesis, I emphasized three particular elements shown in these five plays and related to each social influence on characters and family. Each main character in the plays of both Cha and Miller has an obsession, and this obsession conflicts with his/her children in the form of the generation gap. The obsession alienates the protagonist from both the family and society. Through the characters(Joe, Willy, Eddie, Mr. Choi and Mrs. Yoon), Miller and Cha depict individuals who are directly affected by their social circumstances. They take ideas and values from their social world and thrive or fail.

Ultimately, personal experiences of these two playwrights about economic, social, or political changes help Miller and Cha to generate plays that deal with the inevitable relationship between humans and their social environment.

This study suggests that further study about other approaches to these two playwrights such as how cultural

difference works for adapting their plays to each culture. An examination of Miller's and Cha's dramatic structures and devices is still needed. In addition, it would be worthwhile to compare Cha with other American playwrights and to compare Miller with other Korean playwrights. In the process of exploring this thesis, it became evident that more Korean plays in English translation could be an important contribution to world theatre and cross-culturalization.

Telephone Interview with Beomsuk Cha, Dated Feb. 13. 1999

Me: What are the major influences on your writings?

Cha: Russian novels by authors such as Tolstoy and Dostoevski influenced me. I also read lots of Irish plays, especially John M. Synge's works.

Me: Was there a Philosophy or School of Thought that influenced you?

Cha: I can't pick a specific school of thought but I used to be impressed by Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, when I was a middle school student.

Me: You have heard of Arthur Miller, right?

Cha: Yes. After I entered upon a literary career, I started to pay attention to some American playwrights such as Arthur Miller, William Inge and Tennessee Williams. Moreover, I really liked Death of a Salesman and Glass Menagerie, so I directed those plays in my theatre troupe.

Me: I heard you mention that you had traveled in U. S. A. in 1966 for the first time. Did that travel influence your writings in some ways?

Cha: I used to know about America and its culture indirectly by reading books and watching the movies. However, through this travel, I could feel American culture directly which gave me a fresh shock. The art culture of America had variety and freedom so there was no constraints or fetter on expression. That greatly surprised me.

Me: So did you see many American plays at that time?

Cha: For one month, I haunted on Broadway and Off-Broadway and I watched "The Fantasticks," "Wait until the Dark," " People in Ravanche," and so on.

Me: After your travels in 1966, you wrote Castle of Roses in 1968. Are there any relations between that trip to America and writing Castle of Roses, because that play seemed to have been very shocking in Korea in those days?

Cha: On Broadway, I watched many plays which dealt with sexual problems. It was taboo in Korea in those days to present those problems on stage. I was inspired by America's artistic freedom and I wanted to deal with sexual problems in my plays.

Me: How often do you travel to foreign countries?

Cha: Well...up until now I have been to America four times. However, I have been to Europe more than America.

Me: Who has been the most influential theatre artist for you? Have there been any special or specific foreign artists who have had an impact on you?

Cha: Well...no. Frankly, I began to realize what a play was by Chijin Yoo lecture, "Theory of drama." I learned my basic knowledge about plays from him. His theory became the basis on which I write my plays and the criterion for reading foreign plays. Yoo said, "A play is a conflict." There are conflicts between others and me or between me and myself, between me and current societal structures and so on. I want to say the essence of a play is a conflict. Especially, without conflict, a play loses its meaning.

Me: What's your concept of Family?

Cha: According to our oriental and traditional concept of the family, father, the head of a family, is the center of the unit like a maypole and the other members are bound to him as a whole unit. Recently, however, the western concept of the individualistic nuclear family has spread over our country so our traditional and original thought or concept of family doesn't work any more. For the older generations, the concept of family is in danger of breaking down. I like the old and original idea, but today's reality proves that the old idea is gradually disappearing. Therefore, I conclude that in a family we need to respect each other. In the old days in the relationship between parents and children, parents had absolute authority over their children. In the relationship between husbands and wives, a wife had to obey whatever her husband told her to do. But today, these kinds of relationships are not seen any place. So I think we have to respect each other in order to manage today's family. Without understanding and respect among family members, that family cannot be called a true Family.

Me: Some people said your plays depict a modern person who discards some morals between parents and children or between husband and wife. Then what is ethics for you here?

Cha: In the past, from the viewpoint of the expected relationships, based on Confucianism, absolute obedience or subordiance was allowed but, on the contrary, today's ethics is based on individual freedom or acquisition and approval of freedom or longing for freedom, I think.

Me: Have you heard American playwright Sam Shepard?

Cha: No, I haven't. Could you name his plays' titles? I think if I have heard of it, I may possibly know who he is.

Me: Buried Child, Curse of the Starving Class...

Cha: Oh, yes! I know those plays. In Korea, some theatre troupes presented those plays before.

Me: Among Shepard's plays, Lie of the mind deals with family violence which causesthe destruction of the family unit. Buried Child talks about incest, which represents the condition of the collapse of morality in the family. I think both plays show collapses of family values.

What do you think about Korean family values which you have tried to show in your plays? Do they follow Confucianism?

Cha: I don't think so. There are some differences between the younger and the older generations. I think America focuses on the relationship between individuals. You just said family violence. But in our case, we are influenced by the change of surroundings such as political or cultural or social elements. Especially in the mid 1900s, our country was under strong political control which didn't allow artists to express their desires. Besides, the process of changing from an agricultural society, to an industrialized society is the change of circumstance and causes many conflicts among human beings.

Me: So do these conflicts cause the change of value systems and furthermore the collapse of a family?

Cha: Yes. In the 70s and 80s, most remarkable Korean literature dealt with the questions of how to survive and how the individual endures the process of the change of surroundings which lead to the collapse of the old orders. I guess today because of the industrial development, dependence on foreign countries is necessary, such as the current IMF situation. Thus living under these dominions of circumstances where the individual doesn't know what to do, but just wanders, is the key problem these days.

Me: Could I dare say that your plays, The Barren and Castle of Roses, criticized the reality of society after the Korean War?

Cha: Yes, you may. In The Barren, symbolically, I described the old and humble traditionally built house surrounded by tall and modern buildings. This contrast shows the picture of the old generation who struggle in the waves of the changes or the advent of a new age. The Korean War brought these scenes, so human beings are at the mercy of circumstances directly or indirectly. Under these circumstances, a writer tries to establish his own world in his plays and I think this is the spirit of a writer.

Me: I'm not sure about my knowledge, but do your plays belong to the naturalistic trend?

Cha: No...I don't think so. In European culture, naturalism began with the human recognition of the spirit of science. Also naturalism had an effect on many genres of Korean literature, but my plays are not in the naturalistic trend. I can say "realism" or "objectivism."

Me: What made you mainly write family drama such as The Barren and Castle of Roses?

Cha: Well...I think I need to define the meaning of family drama. In Korea, we call "Home Drama" which doesn't deal with society but the relationships between individuals of a family. So in light of this definition, I'm wondering whether The Barren belongs to the category of Home Drama.

Me: So you mean The Barren deals with circumstances and social systems rather than conflicts between family members?

Cha: In The Barren, I show the conflict between father and son, but this conflict comes from different ideas about current society or the waves of social changes. Roughly, I can say this conflict was brought about by social changes, not by family members. In this sense, The Barren is a social play.

Me: How about Castle of Roses?

Cha: This play is a bit different from The Barren. When the promising sculptor, Mrs. Yoon buries herself into solitude, where does this solitude come from? It resulted from the relationship with her husband. Her husband left her to follow his male-lover. This play deals with human's instinct and sexual issues.

Me: Sangae in Castle of Roses shows the pictures of the new generation. Did you personally depict Sangae in a positive or negative way?

Cha: I thought in the near future, our society would follow Sangae's thoughts and attitudes. In effect, she is an ideal character. However, Sangae thinks of her parents are thought negatively. Her rebellion against her mother is not due to the generation gap but

comes from value system conflict. Even though Mrs. Yoon is highly intelligent and educated, Mrs. Yoon doesn't try to solve her basic problem, but keeps herself isolated. This attitude does not satisfy Sangae. So, Sangae decides not to live like her mom.

Me: So there is not a big conflict between family members in The Barren and Castle of Roses, right?

Cha: Right. It's like Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. This play talks about one American family so we may say it's a Home Drama. But contradictions of a highly developed capitalistic society are projected into this family; therefore, this play is called a social play.

Me: What are your characters' characteristics?

Cha: Since I have written plays, I seldom write a character who ignores his surroundings or the changes of society. No matter when conflicts in a play may be produced, I aim at realistically depicting a human being under certain circumstances. Thus I do not write a work which ignores a specific social settings or surrounding, and I do not like works like that. Like absurd drama, I don't usually enjoy them because in absurd plays there is a character who has a vague social circumstance.

Me: Do you think I dare say your plays and Arthur Miller's plays are very similar?

Cha: You may. I really like his plays. Despite some severe criticisms about his plays, I like All My Sons, Death of a Salesman and A View from the Bridge. It's because he

describes persons under certain social systems and circumstances, not persons who belong nowhere.

Me: According to your chronological record, you translated and directed many foreign plays and later published some books. In the Modern One Act Plays, which plays are included? And why did you pick such plays among many others?

Cha: John M. Synge's works, Bernard Shaw and well...oh, yes Eugene O'Neill's plays. In 1950, when I tried to work with an amateur theatre company, because of the lack of original Korean plays, I had to use foreign plays to perform. Among many choices of plays, the reason I chose Synge, Shaw and O'Neill was these playwrights were well-known to the public so it would be easier to understand the performances.

Me: Thank you very much, Mr. Cha. I really appreciate taking time to speak with me.

Cha: You're welcome. I hope your study will contribute to the development of our Korean theatre. Personally I hope you wisely apply your knowledge which you learn in America to our current situation.

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