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The Feminine Rebel: Treacherous Housewife-mothers and Aggressive Wives Fighting for Personal Identity in Arthur Miller's *After the Fall*

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Abstract

This article attempts to explore Arthur Miller's representation of wife and mother characters in his play *After the Fall*. In the play, Miller puts more emphasis on his wife and mother characters' awakening and rebellion. Miller portrays Rose as a treacherous housewife-mother who rebels against the idealized woman image of loving wife and sacrificial mother by becoming a separate person, asserting her own ambition and meeting her own demands. And through Louise's victory in her fighting for personal identify, Miller shows women's strong voices in their family. Besides, via Maggie's tragedy in her self-pursuit, Miller proves that women can be as significant and tragic as men. In his effort to depict wife and mother's rebellious spirits, Miller creates some complicated and diverse wife and mother images. So, that his representations of autonomous women achieve victories and suffer defeats disproves the viewpoint that Miller's women are mere objects of male desire without self-defined identity.

Key words: Arthur Miller; *After the Fall*; Housewife-mothers; Wives; Personal identity

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INTRODUCTION

When Arthur Miller returned to the theatre in 1964, after an absence of eight years, he brought to the audience new subjects and new forms with his most autobiographical play *After the Fall*, which launched the beginning of his later creative career. His later plays also include *Incident at Vichy* (1964) and *The Price* (1968) in the 1960s, *The Creation of the World and Other Business* (1972) and *The Archbishop's Ceiling* (1977) in the 1970s, *Playing for Time* (1980) and *The American Clock* (1980) in the 1980s, and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan* (1991), *The Last Yankee* (1993) and *Broken Glass* (1994) at his senile age.

These later plays vary differently in forms and in subject matters. In regards to his wife and mother presentations, some critics still maintain that Miller in this period still prefers to cast them in traditional roles, as bearers of children, protectresses of the male ego, and symbols of passive domesticity. For instance, Christopher Bigsby (1992) points out, "for his women, character is a product of role. Identity is not problematic…the values they represent lack conviction and to some degree dramatic force because their symbolic role blunts the edge of their dramatic force" (p.146-147), which is not fair to value all Miller's female creations in his later period, especially his wife and mother representations. As a matter of fact, Miller gives equal space and power to his females in his later plays. Men dominate the stage nearly in all his early plays while women far surpass men in quantity in *After the Fall* and *The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*. All his early plays center on the heroes' story, while in his later plays Miller also gives equal roles to females. Maggie in *After the Fall* is as important as Quentin to the thematic development of the whole play. Eve in *The Creation of the World and Other Business* is even more indispensable to the play than the males. Maya, in *The Archbishop's ceiling*, has been a mistress to all three male characters and is an equal member of the quartet. *The American Clock*, a slice of depression life, lacks a hero, but has Rose a heroine at its centre. Both Robert W. Corrigan (1969) and Ann Massa (1990) identify Miller's

shifting role of women in his later plays.

And, in fact, in the later period, Miller's characterization of wives and mothers becomes much more complex than that has been recognized. After the sympathetic depiction of housewife-mothers caged in domestic sphere and confined in traditional familial roles imposed by the patriarchal society in his early plays, Miller moves to represent wife and mother characters who attempt to rebel against male-defined social norms, assert their own values and rights, violate male expectations, and thus achieve autonomy in some degree. Underestimating the female presentations in Miller's other plays, Harold Clurman (1995) thinks highly of Miller's portrayal of women in *After the Fall*, and puts it, "Miller's women are usually shadowy characters, rarely as fully realized as even some of the secondary men. The exceptions are the woman in *After the Fall*: the mother, Elsie, Holga. Here too we find the helpless Maggie…" (p.xxii). Indeed, as the heart of second half of Miller's oeuvre, *After the Fall* portrays several aggressive wives and rebellious mothers challenging male-defined norms. By presenting different versions of rebellious women in *After the Fall*, Miller foregrounds women-centered issues in his works. Here, the author intends to show Miller's capability to create believable women fighters by elaborating the major wife and mother figures in *After the Fall* in the context of historical and cultural background.

1. REBELLIOUS WIFE AND MOTHER FIGURES IN *AFTER THE FALL*

1.1 The Treacherous Housewife-mothers Rebelling against Being the Idealized Woman Image

Since Miller the playwright is deeply influenced by both his mothers and the mother figures around him, he frequently refers to them as the prototypes of the mother figures in his plays. Rose, Quentin's mother, is one of the strongest characters in *After the Fall*, similar in several important respects to Arthur Miller's own mother, Augusta Miller. In the play, the fictional Rose repeats her life in the early twentieth-century America through Quentin's memory. In Quentin's intermittent memory, Miller portrays Rose as a treacherous housewife-mother who rebels against the idealized woman image of loving wife and sacrificial mother by becoming a separate person, asserting her own ambition and meeting her own demands.

Though the women's movement has existed for a long time, it was still in its early stage in the early twentieth-century America. When Rose was young, the image of woman acting as docile daughter, loving wife and sacrificial mother was still the dominant and desirable cultural value in the early twentieth century. Women who presumably came in assorted psychological and intellectual shapes and sizes were excluded in this idealized women image of loving wife and mother, and they had to find adjustment in the prescribed role for them. The image demanded ceaseless dedication of women and continual self-abnegation of women. Therefore, for most women of the 1920s' America, to be the loving wife and sacrificial mother was still the ideal image of women. Rose is also a woman who has suffered greatly in order to accord with this idealized image. When she was a young girl, she felt in love with a penniless medical student, but her father strongly opposed the young man, "my father wouldn't let him in the house" (Miller, 1995, p.274). In order to be an obedient daughter, she was submitted to her father's wish and refused the young man—her true love. Furthermore, Rose was very intelligent, and obtained a scholarship to Hunter College, but going to college for a woman at that time was not socially respectable enough, so the patriarchs in her family soon arranged a marriage for her, "And as I came home, and Grandpa says, 'you're getting married'" (ibid.). Again, in deference to her parents' wishes, she had to give up her plans to go to college in order to marry—to accept the prescribed role for a woman. But the most painful thing for the girl is the moment she discovered that her husband could neither read nor write two weeks after their marriage, "Couldn't *read*! I got so frightened I nearly ran away!" (ibid.). Therefore, in some sense, Rose scarifies her own love and happiness, denies her own ambition in order to fit herself into the male-idealized women image, and is a victim of the image of obedient daughter.

The painful experiences of trying to be a good daughter do teach her a lot. And as a housewife-mother, Rose becomes aggressive and self-assertive with the times. Consequently she comes to rebel against the prescribed role of loving wife and mother. Another important theme of *After the Fall* is betrayal, and Leonard Moss (1980) observes, "Quentin's disorientation had its roots in his youth: two memories, both of which show his mother to be 'treacherous'" (p.58). In fact, in the play, Miller depicts Quentin's three memories about his mother, and each episode shows Rose's rebellion against being the idealized housewife-mother through her betrayal of her husband and her son.

In the first episode, Miller portrays Rose's resistance to be the loving wife by betraying her husband and becoming a separate person. Completely different from the loving housewife images in Miller's early plays who center themselves on their husbands' benefits and needs and offer the quickest and best support when they are in need, Rose is an aggressive wife who is concerned more about her own benefits, and a treacherous wife who turns her back against her frustrated husband. Instead of offering consolation to Ike her husband when he has lost all of their money in the stock market crash, Rose is

concerned more about her own money lost in the crash, "well, you get them back, I've got ninety-one thousand dollars in bonds you gave me. Those are my bonds. I've got bonds…" (Miller, 1995, p.276). Instead of acting like Linda Loman to encourage his husband by the honeyed words that tomorrow will be another day, she then takes the chance to take revenge on her husband who ruins her by criticizing Ike's incapability in business, "…*now a growing contempt*. You mean you saw everything going down and you throw good money after bad? Are you some kind of a moron?" (ibid.), and then she betrays her husband by regretting for marrying him and calling him an idiot,

> Mother: I should have run the day I met you…. I should have done what my sisters did, tell my parents to go to hell and thought of myself for once! I should have run for my life!... I ought to get a divorce!… But your last dollar! *Bending over, into his face:* you are an idiot! (ibid.)

Here, Rose releases her anger at being the victim of the male-defined image of obedient daughter and expresses her determination to resist being the idealized image of loving wife.

In Rose's second collision with her husband, she continues to defy the male idealized image of self-abnegated housewife by opposing her husband's decision and asserting her own ambition. According to the men-defined idealized housewife image, housewives should not air their opinion but follow their husbands' will. And the sacrificial housewives should forsake their own ambition in order to please their husbands. After marriage, Rose doesn't completely lose her ambition. And trying to recover the lost promise of her own youth, she has managed to place her own ambition onto her second son and has earlier urged the young Quentin to become excellent in reading and penmanship. And she will not allow anyone to destroy the realization of her ambition, including her husband. Therefore, when the father insists that he needs Quentin to regain his lost fortune, the mother demands that he be able to go to college rather than Dan—Quentin's brother, "I don't want his young years going by. He wants a life!...Because he's different!"(ibid., p.317). Here, she demonstrates that she will resist sacrificing her own ambition in order to be an idealized wife.

Rose betrays not only her husband by resisting being a loving wife, but also the young Quentin by refusing to be a unselfish mother and meeting her own needs. According to the image imposed upon mothers, a mother should be utterly unselfish and sacrifice herself in taking care of her children. In literary works, there are a lot of such mother images, such as Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf and Mrs. Morel in *Sons and Lovers* by D.H. Lawrence. However, determining to forsake the unfair image of sacrificial wife and mother imposed upon her altogether and achieve her own autonomy, Rose becomes selfish in her attitudes towards Quentin. She makes him an accomplice to her betrayal of her evidently illiterate husband, projects her own ambition onto him, idolizes him as a child, and encourages him in deserting his father in order to recover her old resplendence. And in the third episode, Quentin recalls how his mother betrays him by tricking and deserting him for her own purpose. Rose went off on a vacation without telling him, "they sent me for a walk with the maid. When I came back the house was empty" (ibid. p.325), which made him feel abandoned. And the reason for her mother's deception is that "I wanted a rest" (ibid.), which strengthens her own desire and need rather than a desire to please others including her son. Through Rose's victory in her struggle against being the flawless women image of wife and mother, Miller demonstrates his ability to create feasible positive housewife-mothers rather than doormats as critics asserted.

1.2 The Aggressive Wives Fighting for Personal Identity

The 1960s witnessed the rapid political and social changes, which altered the patterns and meaning of family life. American began to rethink ideas about families and came to emphasize personal identities in addition to traditional family roles. Women also redefined themselves as individuals and workers as well as wives and mothers.

Being a writer who has a remarkable social consciousness, Miller also senses women's strong desire and is quick to actualize them in his plays of the sixties, especially *After the Fall*. In *After the Fall,* he adjusts his habitual treatment of the women as housewife-mothers in his early play and bestows them new images and roles rather than housewife-mothers. Females, in the play, are no longer housewife-mothers confined in their domestic space and bound by their children, especially their sons. They are wives but not necessarily mothers. For example, Lousie, Quentin's first wife, is actually a mother of a daughter, but her daughter never appears on the stage. Wives are no longer dependant on their husbands for a living and their occupations are no more housewives, instead, they act as the breadwinners of the family and own their own occupations. During Quentin's marriage to Maggie, he is just Maggie's lawyer and Maggie gets the power to dismiss him. Most importantly, in the play, Miller imbues them with new thoughts and rebellious spirits. So in the play, they are eager to ask for their own rights, redefine themselves as separate persons rather than docile wives and search life's meaning for themselves rather than being subjugated to their husbands' life searching.

Though *After the Fall* the whole play is about Quentin's search for a meaning to his life, it also stages the struggle of women who are anxious to understand their values and lives and to insist on their significance. The two acts which divide the play actually focus on the same search in his two wives.

1.2.1 Louise's Struggle to Be a Whole Person

The hero Quentin has experienced two shattered marriages. Act I shows his marriage to his first wife Louise and Louise's struggle to be a whole person. Louise is an intellectual, righteous and aggressive woman who might well be thought as an early feminist who tries to rediscover her own values, assert her own right and demand to be a person. From the play, we know that she was a docile and submissive wife who never lived a life for herself and was even ashamed of herself before. But, in the whole play, she has confronted with her husbands for three times, and each time enlightens her with new findings about herself and makes her more aware of her own importance.

Her first confrontation with her husband can be thought as her self-awareness of her own values. In the beginning of the first encounter, she expresses her desire to take up her whole life, and then she demands "a meeting" with her husband about their marriage and her values against her husband's will. In the meeting, she puts forward the most direct and tough problems existing in their marriage, "we don't seem…married…. You don't pay any attention to me…" (ibid. p.282), and then she denounces her husband's misunderstanding of women and wife, including misconception about herself, "You have no conception of what a woman is…. You thinking reading a brief to a woman is talking to her?... What do you need a wife for?… What am I to you?" (ibid. p.283). Actually, all the problems she puts are the hard nuts which the wives of the 1960s faced in their marriage. Here Louise stands for the early feminists who ask for the equal treatment of wives in marriage—treats them as persons rather than as objects. And when Quentin answers, "I know you" (ibid.), Louise silences him by the symbolic "No", which subverts the "yes" decade when wives must obey their husbands, and delivers the epochal emancipation for all wives "with dangerous dignity" (ibid.),

> Louise: No.…You don't know me. I don't intend to be ashamed of myself any more. I used to think it was normal, or even that you don't see me because I'm not worth seeing. But I think now that you don't really see any woman. Except in some ways your mother. You do sense her feelings; you do know she's unhappy or anxious but not me, or any other woman. (ibid.)

Here, Louise demonstrates her own will that she will not be ashamed of herself any more and proves her own worth that she is interesting and worth seeing actually as a woman. And then in front of the silent Quentin, she shouts, "silence is not going to solve it any more, Quentin" (ibid. p.284), which seems to suggest that from this moment, wives will no longer keep silent as usual. At last, she tells Quentin, "I can't live this way" (ibid.) to express her wish to end her predicament.

In her second encounter with her husband, she becomes more aggressive and fierce in order to fight for her own rights. Louise is an intelligent wife, who has the equal intellect with her husband. In this episode, she comes to assert herself after discovering her own values. First, she aggressively rebukes her husband that he gets no right to be angry with her just because she breaks into the male-dominated conversation in a public party and "cut in to explain what [her husband] was about to say"(ibid. p.292). She then pricks her husband's jealousy of her intelligence, "Quentin, I saw you getting angry when I was talking about the new anti-virus vaccine. What is it?"(ibid.). And then, she asserts that she has rights to be happy and that even Quentin her husband gets no privilege to hamper her in achieving her happiness. And most fiercely, she comes to affirm that wives have rights to refuse their husbands' sexual demand. In light of the patriarchal norms, it is a wife's duty to meet their husband's sexual desire. But, Louise actually refuses her husband's demands on sex. And facing her husband's accusation, "you [Louise] have turned you back on me in bed, Louise, I am not insane!" (ibid. p.294). She asserts that she gets rights to push Quentin's hands away, "Well, what do you expect? Silent, cold, you lay your hand on me?" (ibid.). And she then points out the essence of being Quentin's wife, "look, Quentin, you want a woman to provide an-atmosphere, in which there are never any issues, and you'll fly around in a constant bath of praise"(ibid.). Being Quentin's wife means to live her life for him. But she clearly declares that she has rights to live for herself for she is a person but not a machine, "Quentin, I am not a praise machine! I am not a blur and I am not your mother! I am a separate person!" (ibid.). Here Louise refuses to be taken as a praise machine and play the adoring mother role any longer, and she wants to be loved and appreciated as a separate person. And her words echo with Jane Eyre's declaration of her equality with Mr. Rochester in *Jane Eyre*, and Dora's declaration of her being a person but not a doll in *The Doll's House*.

Louise's third collision with her husband is the fiercest. In this episode, Louise still sticks to her own independence, refuses to compromise with Quentin and achieves her autonomy. In the patriarchal system, regarding sex, there is a double standard that expects chastity of women but tolerates promiscuity among men. And if husbands commit adultery, wives should take some responsibility. The theme of adultery appears frequently in most of Miller's early plays, such as *Death of a Salesman*, *The Crucible* and *A View from the Bridge*. In these plays, the housewife-mothers whose husbands commit adultery in mind or act usually pretend not knowing the cruel fact, or gently remind their husband, or even take the blame. Though Linda Loman must have guessed her husband's infidelity, she just puts it out of her mind and never troubles her husband for it. In face of her husband's incestuous desire for her niece, Beatrice Carbone just gently reminds her husband, "I just wish once in a while you'd responsible for me, you know that?" (Miller, 1957, p.55). Elizabeth Proctor even admits it is her coldness

which prompts her husband's lechery. However, Louise, this rebellious wife, will not submit to Quentin's excuses for adultery. In this episode, she first definitely refuses to be treated as the keeper of his phone number. Then she rebukes Quentin's romantic ideas by the similar assumption, "Suppose I came home and told you I'd met a man on the street I wanted to go to bed with—because he made the city seem full of lovers" (Miller, 1995, p.308) . And then she daringly refuses sex with him, "I don't want to sleep with you" (ibid. p.309) for "you are disgusting" (ibid.). When Quentin is going to resort to violence, she declares like a woman warrior, "I've waiting for the struggle to begin" (ibid. p.311). Finally, Louise achieves her goal—being a separate person, which is also the feminists' goal. Through Louise's victory in her fighting for personal identify, Miller shows women's strong voices in their family.

1.2.2 Maggie's Struggle for Personal Identity

Act II dwells mainly on Quentin's second marriage, especially his second wife Maggie. Maggie is the most arguable person in *After the Fall*. Just after the production of *After the Fall*, the character Maggie arouses the critics' strong antagonism for most of the critics associate Maggie with Miller's second wife Marilyn Monroe and accuse Miller of his self-justification for his relationship with Marilyn. David Savaran (as cited in Otten, 2002) condemns the play as "a self-serving construction designed by Miller to quell the gossip surrounding one of the most public marriages of the 1950s and to clear his name of responsibility for Monroe's suicide." (p.105). So, American drama critics pay too much attention to identify Maggie with Marilyn or trace the autobiographical elements in the play, but neglect the artistic value of the character Maggie and the play at large. Nonetheless, some American theater personalities and critics have also recognized the character's stature. David Rabe (as cited in Miller, 1990) especially zeroes in on critics who accuse Miller of maltreating Marilyn Monroe in the character of Maggie: "he treats her with more dignity than anybody else has ever treated her in her career or life. Maggie is a character of great power and dignity—not the ditz Monroe was made into by the media, her directors, other writers and critics" (p.145). Many critics begin to see Maggie the character and Maggie the woman as central to the play. Robert Hogan (1964) calls Maggie "the best character that Miller has drawn or attempted to draw since Willy Loman" (p.40). Harold Clurman (1995) regards her as,

> One of the most perceptively delineated women in all of American drama…. Miller values her far more than he does his mouthpiece, Quentin. Maggie is woman, redemptively sensual, intuitive, captivating, tormenting and tormented. (p. xxii)

And for Clinton W. Trowbridge (as cited in Massa 1990), Maggie is "Miller's most fully realized and completely human figure of pathos" (p.129). Christopher Bigsby (1995) also gives high acclaim to Maggie, "…in the part of Maggie surely one of the most powerful women's roles in any of Miller's plays" (p. xxxiii). No other characters under Miller's pen have created such a lighting rod for criticism. Personally, Maggie assuredly embodies the image of Marilyn Monroe. As a character in a play, however, she of course carries larger significance as well, and the real question is not so much whether Maggie really is Monroe as whether she acquires the stature and integrity as a character.

As Louise in Act I, Maggie also experiences the life-death struggle for personal identity. Maggie's strife to be a person is much harder than Louise's. In Act I, Maggie's short appearance shows us that Maggie is a simple, unselfish, trusting and beautiful creature unencumbered by moral or intellectual preconceptions. In this Act, she, a phone operator in the office, is always ready to be helpful and trustful to others and isn't "defending anything, upholding anything or accusing [anything]" (Miller, 1995, p.307). In most people's eyes, she is more a beautiful piece rather than an authentic person. For Quentin, "she is just there, like a tree or a cat" (ibid.). And for most men who wants to take advantage of her, she admits that she is "a joke to them" (ibid. p.299). Therefore, Maggie's first show-up demonstrates that she has never truly been recognized by others as a genuine person but serves man's aesthetic and sexual needs.

However, Maggie never remains only as a beautiful piece in *After the Fall*. Maggie's overall motive to become a person is shown developing throughout the second act. In Act II, Miller delineates Maggie's pathetic struggle for recognition and respect and her demand for identity and love. In Act II, Maggie has already become a singer, in the top three, and won wide popularity. Though being a woman denied by her own father, unlike those traditional women who will accept this as definite, Maggie, after being a professional woman, does try to trace her origin and ask for recognition from her moral father who abandoned her when she was only eighteen months. Though she doesn't succeed in her attempt, she really gains new insight about herself, "I know who I am!" (ibid. p.322). Meantime, though being a starlet, she is still treated by people more than a joke. When she gets more involved in the public, she becomes more conscious of the unfair treatment and harsh judgment made constantly by men, and has begun to define her own values in society. She asks for respects from the people who takes her as a joke, and tries to show her power, declaring that she is not ashamed of what she is and is going to be proud of herself. In the course of seeking for recognition and respect, Maggie comes to gain self-awareness.

Maggie's pursuit for identity is strongly reflected in her deteriorating relationship with Quentin. Out of love and respect, Maggie, in the first place, shows her idolatry for Quentin and regards him as God. Because of lacking parental love, she clings to Quentin as an image of manly

security. And, Quentin, out of his own ambition, wants to shape Maggie's innocent, trusting, tormented soul and transform it to splendor, "she…gave me something! The power to change her" (ibid. p.315). Therefore, before marriage, their relationship has been based on the unequal pattern: Maggie the submissive girl while Quentin the authoritative man. While after marriage, she sees him as he actually is, a man who has been ashamed of her, needs her to transform and needs her physically. Then she gradually changes from an innocent and submissive girl to an aggressive and demanding wife. In the continuous scenes, she seeks for limitless love from his husband who cannot love while demanding for her own rights. During their first dissension about Maggie's will, Maggie is no longer the timid girl who will only arrange his hair in her first show-up, but becomes the bold woman who is quick to rebuke the unfair impugnation from Quentin, "No! I'm not involved with Andy. I…don't really sleep around with everybody, Quentin! " (ibid. p.329). During their second argument, Maggie has already become an aggressive wife who stops her husband's words and condemns his unfaithful action, "you want me to be like I used to be—like it's all a fog?...You told me yourself that I have to look for the meaning of things, didn't you? Why don't you let her do that?" (ibid. p.336), and goes even to command her husband, "just tell her to knock it off!" (ibid.). In the successive divarication about the band, Maggie has gained more self-awareness. She refuses to be a joke and looks for respect, "I make millions for them and I'm still some kind of a joke…. I'm a joke that brings in money" (ibid. p.338-339). And she comes to realize that her present success is not brought about by her husband or others, but "only because I fought for it"(ibid. p.339). And most importantly, she becomes more conscious of her own rights and comes to assert her rights, "you don't have to be ashamed of me, Quentin. I had a right to tell him to stop those faggy jokes at my rehearsal. Just because he's cultured? I'm the one the public pays for, not Donaldson!" (ibid. p.340). In the following episode, Maggie and Quentin have the severest confrontation, and Maggie becomes more self-assertive by refusing to finish the tape and declaring, "I'm entitled to my condition. Quentin—and I shouldn't have to plead with my husband for my rights" (ibid. p.342), and finally commands Quentin, "I want her out" (ibid.). And subsequently, she becomes more commanding and critical of her husband, and even calls him a fag. When Quentin criticizes her, Maggie definitely says, "I am allowed to say what I see" and calls him "idiot!" (ibid. p.346). In their final conflict, instead of being the submissive, Maggie turns into the authoritative and tells her husband, "Love me, and do what I tell you. And stop arguing…if you don't argue with me, I'll let you be my lawyer again" (ibid. p.354-355). She remains deeply romantic; she can't emancipate herself from the idealistic notion that she and Quentin can devote themselves exclusively to each other. Maggie can't accept the inevitable egocentricity of love that Quentin sorrowfully articulates. So Maggie chooses death eventually, making her own self-determined action. Maggie's death is a big blow to Jeffrey D. Mason's (1989) charge that Miller can only create women who endure and survive and men who fail and fall and his assumption that If Miller writes tragedy, he makes it a male preserve. Maggie's death leads Miller to a degree to acknowledge indirectly that a Maggie, a woman, can be as significant and tragic a figure in his oeuvre as Willy Loman and some others. The acknowledgement came in an interview in which Miller (as cited in Mason, 1989) said of *After the Fall*:

> There is nothing like death…there's no substitute for the impact on the mind of the spectacle of death. And there is no possibility, it seems to me, of speaking of tragedy without it. Because if the total demise of the person we watch for two hours doesn't occur, if he walks away no matter how damaged, no matter how he suffered…. (p.134)

Ann Mason (1990) also gives high credit to the creation of Maggie, "In theory as well as in practice then, Miller for once indicates that he has decided to deal equally with men and women, and not to subsume women under the heading man" (p.134). Therefore, via Maggie's tragedy in her self-pursuit, Miller proves that women can be as significant and tragic as men.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in representing rebellious and autonomous women, Miller overturns the notion of women as the objects of desire by becoming desiring subjects. Women in the play become authentically human, self-governed and self-possessed. They do not exist just for men and are not only conscious of themselves but also capable of self-determined actions. Instead of being male-defined, these women reject the patriarchal enslavement of their independent self. And Miller, unlike many other male writers who are limited in the sense that their women characters seem to be bound to fail in their struggle and rebellion, his representations of autonomous women achieve victories and suffer defeats, which disproves that Miller's women are mere objects of male desire without self-defined identity.

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