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Full Length Research Paper

A study of the portrayal of virginity in Ugandan novels

Mary Naula^{1*}, Joseph Jakisa Owor¹ and Cornelius Wambi Gulere¹

Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Education and Arts, Uganda Christian University, Uganda.

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This paper examines the portrayal of virginity in Akiki K. Nyabongo's, *Africa Answers Back* (1936), Mary Okurut's *Invisible Weevil* (1998) and Jane Bakaluba's *Honeymoon for Three* (1975). The study analyzes the place of virginity in African traditional marriage. The girls are trained by the elder mothers and aunts to remain a virgin until their wedding night. In Africa, virginity is highly valued that even if one is not a virgin, one is better off to pretend in order to avoid embarrassment. This study has used a qualitative content analysis of three Ugandan novels to unfold subjective interpretation of the text data preceded by identification of the themes and the main characters. Qualitative content analysis has guided us to investigate how important virginity is in African traditional marriage. This study found out that in African traditional marriage, virginity is one of the core values that are cherished because it brings stability and harmony into marriage. Africans believe that if a girl has been faithful before her wedding she will remain faithful even in her marriage. Premarital sex is horrible because it steals the woman's virginity and destroys the foundation of upcoming marriage.

Key words: Virginity, premarital sex, African traditional marriage, Nyabongo, Okurut, Bakaluba, Nkwanzu, Genesis, Naiga, Chief Ati.

INTRODUCTION

This paper analyses the portrayal of virginity in Akiki Nyabongo's *Africa Answers Back*, Mary K. Okurut's *Invisible Weevil* and Jane Bakaluba's *Honeymoon for Three*.

A study in Sweden by Cooper and Nylander (2010) observed that generally a woman who has not experienced vaginal-penile heterosexual penetrative sex is a virgin. A study by Olson and Garcia-Moreno (2017) noted that virginity was valued by almost all religious sectors and cultures of the world. With time the trend has changed. However, some communities still uphold

virginity as a value that should not be destroyed and some perform virginity examination before marriage. To Olson and Garcia-Moreno (2017) communities within these countries still hold on to the values of virginity: Egypt, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Afghanistan, Palestine, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Turkey, Uganda, and Iran.

The coming of Colonialism to Africa destroyed the African traditional values of faithfulness, honesty, virginity and fidelity (Igboin, 2011). Before it was distorted by Western influence, Africans attached so much value to

*Corresponding author. E-mail: owornaula@gmail.com.

faithfulness in marriage that prostitution, rape, homosexuality, lesbianism, divorce and single parenthood were unheard of. For a woman to be found a virgin at marriage carries a high value and a dignity that attract respect and honour to her parents and the family.

Statement of the problem

Although the western world has tried to underrate virginity in the majority world, it has stood the test of time in many countries of the south. Virginity is still taken to be an important value that is treasured in a bride. In some places, marriage is disbanded as soon as the bride is found to have lost her virginity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A Study in Ethiopia by Molla Mitike, Yemane Berhane and Bernt Lindtjørn (2008) found out that maintaining virginity is still a way of securing marriage for girls, particularly in rural areas. Molla et al., (2008) observe that the reason for keeping the virginity of boys and girls was for marital purposes.

A study by Olson and García-Moreno (2017) noted in their literature search that the existing social rationale for testing virginity is that an unmarried female's virginity is indicative of her moral character. Virginity is social value and it is important in the context of marriage eligibility, sexual assault assessment, employment application and the like. Cooper and Nylander (2010) also cite sources that believe virginity is prestige and social honor or value resulting from positions that are established through social assessments.

A study by Cooper and Nylander (2010) revealed that in Islamic culture, remaining a virgin until the wedding day is very important. They note that girls are encouraged to save their hymen for their husband and around the wedding night, rituals take place to prove the bride's virginity. Some girls are taken to medical doctors to get a certificate of their virginity. In some cases, cloth with the woman's blood has to be demonstrated to the relatives, friends and neighbours at the first consummation of marriage. If they prove that bride is not a virgin, the marriage can be dissolved.

A study by Carpenter (2002, 2005) noted that women's virginity holds a greater social value than men's because it is perceived and portrayed as a gift given to bridegroom on the wedding day. But sometimes women are disappointed by the experience they go through as compared to its importance and significance. A study in Vietnam by Manh La (2005) found out that virginity is the most valuable asset of a young woman and virginity is not only men's concern, but also the concern of young women and their parents and virginity of a woman was observed through the bloodshed on a handkerchief after

the first sexual intercourse of the couple on the wedding day. Manh La (2005) continued to observe that to be virgin by the Vietnamese is to be a morally "good" woman. This belief influences Vietnamese culture.

The study by Manh La (2005) in Vietnam revealed that her cousin Van returned to her family with serious bruises all over her body. Van was bitten and tortured by her husband on the wedding night because she was found not a virgin. The biting was severe until Van confessed that she had engaged in sexual relationship with her former boyfriend. Nam who is Van husband condemned her for not being a virgin and bringing shame to his family. This is an indication that virginity is still treasured by some countries. And therefore, it must be guarded jealously.

A feminist perspective as portrayed by Cooper and Nylander (2010) study who argue that men who are speaking on behalf of women's sexual health are problematic and illustrate patriarchal connotations as men are seen determining the value of women's sexuality.

This paper analyses the depiction of virginity in Akiki K. Nyabongo's, *Africa Answers Back* (1936), Okurut's *Invisible Weevil* (1998) and Bakaluba's *Honeymoon for Three* (1975).

METHODOLOGY

The design is a qualitative descriptive study of three Ugandan novels. The method used is a qualitative descriptive content analysis. In this case the researchers read the texts several times, coded them, generated concepts from which themes were derived.

Theoretical framework

In this study, post-colonial theory was used, which is not a single theory but combination of different theories. Post-colonial studies are based on the main aspects of colonialism and its pervasive effects which have persisted even after the end of the colonial rule. This theory has helped to explain the themes as portrayed in the three Ugandan novels.

Authors biographies

Mary Karoro Okurut

Mary Karoro Okurut was born in Bushenyi district of Uganda on December 8, 1954. She graduated from Makerere University in 1977 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in Literature. In 1981, she graduated with the degree of Master of Arts in Literature from Makerere University and began lecturing in the Department of Literature. She continued lecturing until 1993 when she took up employment as the press secretary to the Vice-President of Uganda. Between 1996 and 1999, she served as Commissioner, Education Service Commission in the Ugandan Ministry of Education. From 1999 until 2004, she served as the press secretary of the President of Uganda. In 2004, she entered elective Ugandan politics. Prior to her political career, Okurut was perhaps best known for her contributions to Ugandan literature both as a writer and as the founder of the Uganda Women Writers Association (FEMRITE), an organization which has since received international

attention and has to date produced one winner of the Caine Prize, Arach Monica de Nyeko, whose story *Jambula Tree* won in 2007.

Karoro Okurut's literary publications include these books: *The Curse of the Sacred Cow* (1993), *The Adventurous Sisters* (1993), *The Invisible Weevil* (1998), *The Official Wife* (1997), *The Blood Brothers* (2003), *Potiphar's Grand Daughter* (2013), and *The Switch* (2016). She also edited *A Woman's Voice* (1998), a collection of short stories by Ugandan women writers.

Akiki Nyabongo

According to Kahyana (2016), Akiki Nyabongo was born in 1904 to Omukama Kasagama, King of Toro Kingdom, which had come under Britain's influence in 1891 when Captain Fredrick Lugard of the Imperial British East Africa Company signed a treaty with the Omukama, in which he promised to 'protect' him against Omukama Kabarega, the powerful king of the Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom whose forces had fled. Nyabongo studied at Harvard University for an MA and Oxford University for a PhD in Philosophy and worked at Tuskegee University and North Carolina A&T University in the 1940 and 1950s. He returned to Uganda after the country became independent in 1962. His main literary work is *Africa Answers Back* (1936) which was initially published as 'story of an African chief' (1935).

Jane Jagers Bakaluba

Jane Jagers Bakaluba's date of birth, education and other literary works could not be accessed. Her main literary work is *Honeymoon for Three* (1975).

Okurut's synopsis on 'The Invisible Weevil'

In *The Invisible Weevil*, Okurut makes the contemporary Ugandan socio-political situation the setting for her work. She deals with closely entangled social contradictions that are a common feature of the Ugandan society. Nkwanzu and Genesis love each other and have done so for a long time. But Nkwanzu will not give into pre-marital sex because she wants to remain a virgin up to her wedding night, to "redden" the traditional white sheet and honour her parents, according to custom.

As fate would have it, Senga, who was preparing Nkwanzu for her wedding, leaves her alone briefly to collect something and Rex finds her naked on her bed and succeeds in raping her (Okurut 1998). This puts an end to Nkwanzu's "white-red-sheet dream" and introduces a new crisis in her vision of herself as a woman and in her relationship with Genesis.

Her aunt, Senga, insists that she should not report the rape to the police. She should just get married and forget the rape as simply an unfortunate incident (Okurut 1998). Despite the pressure from the Senga and the mother not to report the rape case to police, Nkwanzu goes ahead to report. Rex was arrested and the wedding goes ahead. This rape case punched a hole in the long awaited and anticipated happy marriage between Nkwanzu and Genesis.

Bakaluba's synopsis on 'Honeymoon for Three'

In *Honeymoon for Three*, Jane Jagers Bakaluba tells the story of a young courageous girl, Naiga, who after attending boarding school finds herself unable to accept the values and attitudes of the older generations without questioning them. Naiga turns down the proposal of her father's candidate in favour of a suitor of her own choice; Nuwa, 'the poor Christian'. Her relationship with her family becomes sour and she has to flee in order to marry the man of her

choice. The story takes interesting turns towards the final reconciliation: one of Mukasa's last actions on his deathbed is to forgive his daughter, even if she receives this good news a bit too late.

Virginity is one of the customs which this society values so highly (Bakaluba, 1975). Aunt Sulu has to go with Naiga up to the bedroom with a white bed sheet to be put on the marital bed to get evidence to prove her virginity as she is expected to have sex for the first time. Naiga is supposed to bleed during the first sex with her husband. If the girl's virginity is broken on the wedding night, she will bleed and the white bed sheet will be 'reddened' as Okurut calls it. The aunt will show the 'reddened' sheet to the people as proof that this girl is virgin. The parents are then given gift of a goat by the husband to thank the parents for raising their daughter well and keeping herself until the marriage day. This is what aunt Sulu says:

"I believe Naiga is virgin. I have no doubt about that, but it must be proved for everybody to know. Nuwa will have to present Mukasa with a live goat as a token of appreciation for a virgin bride" (Bakaluba, 1975).

If a girl is found not to be virgin, the parents are blamed for bringing up their daughter badly and the parents will miss the honourable gift. The parents especially the mother and the Aunts are ashamed of having such a girl as their daughter. However, in this custom, the boy's virginity is not questioned.

Nyabongo's synopsis on "Africa Answers Back"

Africa Answers Back contains four parts. Part I is an account of Europe's incursion into Buganda, starting with the arrival of Henry Morton Stanley at Kabaka Mutesa's court in 1875 and of the missionaries, specifically the Reverend Alexander Mackay of the Church Missionary Society in 1877 and Father Lourdel Mourpel of the White Fathers in 1879. Here, how the Buganda Kingdom is soon plunged into chaos as different religious groups strive to control the Kabaka's court, leading to the 1892 religious wars between Christians and Muslims, and later, between Anglicans and Catholics, in which a powerful chief, Ati, fights on the side of the Anglicans was seen.

Part II depicts Ati's return from the war and the birth of his son, Abala, whom he also names Stanley (after Henry Morton Stanley) and Mujungu (after the missionaries who, to him, 'roam' throughout the land). Part III centres on missionary education in Buganda and details how ten-year old Mujungu receives education at the Reverend Jeremiah Hubert's school. Whilst there, the young Mujungu constantly challenges the missionary about what he believes to be incorrect subject matter (e.g. the missionary's unwillingness to listen to his students' views). Reverend Hubert eventually dismisses him from the missionary school and his father takes him to a private school where he completes his secondary education. The last part of the novel depicts chiefdom in crisis: there is a smallpox epidemic that Chief Ati does not survive. With the help of European medical personnel, Mujungu manages to contain the epidemic, and after being installed as his father's successor, he tries to introduce far-ranging reforms in the kingdom, which his wife and other subjects resent (Kahyana, 2016).

Chief prepares to marry 375th virgin girl

Chief Ati who is a major in *Africa Answers Back* is informed by the messenger that his 375th bride has grown and become beautiful. She is now ready for marriage. Her twelve months of seclusion has come to an end. The bride has to go through intensive training by the elderly women. The teachings are on the dos and don'ts of

marriage. The mysteries of marriage are best taught by mature women who have been there. Within these twelve months, the bride gets special treatment, she does not leave the house, no man sees her, her body is rubbed with cow-ghee twice a day until her body becomes as smooth as jelly fish (Nyabongo, 1936).

After a series of rituals, the bride is veiled in backcloth and is carried by two men to her new home. But before being taken to the man's home, the bride is required to go through the last ritual of sitting on her mother's lap, and then on her father's knees. It is an indication that the parents have released their daughter into marriage. The father now presents his daughter to the family of the bridegroom with the following words: *my daughter is a virgin, healthy, good looking, pure, perfect, and she must be treated well.* The elder from the groom's side then kneels and kisses the hand of the bride's father as a sign that the groom has accepted the bride (Nyabongo, 1936).

After handing the girl to the man, the elderly mother has to witness and approve the virginity of their daughter by being around during the first consummation of bride and groom's love. And if the girl is found to be a virgin, the relatives are given a bull to continue with the celebration of their daughter's successful marriage. The elder mother, who has been taking care of this girl, remains with the bride in her new home for four days in seclusion. The bark-cloth where the marriage has been consummated is taken home by the elder mother to show it to her people that their daughter was a virgin. The bridegroom has to give her a bull as a reward (Nyabongo, 1936). This is the pride of the family and the clan, because they believe that children belong to the entire clan.

Fake virginity

In African tradition, virginity is of such importance that if a girl is not a virgin, she will fake it in order to avoid an embarrassment. Both Nakintu and Mwambu entered into marriage pretending to be virgins. Nakintu, knowing that she is not a virgin, pretends to be one. She decides to keep quiet about it as a grave. One day after Nakintu bursting into tears as a sign of repentance she announces it to Mwambu, her husband, that Nantogo is not her cousin or niece as she has been lying but her daughter. These are their words:

"Won't you say something?" Mwambu plainly asked Nakintu. "Ye-ye-yes, I will". "Are you too disappointed in me, Sarah?" "No, it's not that," she sighed. "It's that I have something as grave to tell, but can't yet bring myself to do so." Whatever it is, my heart will take it, embrace it, and bear it for the love of you. And, I must add for God's sake. Get it off your mind, forever; and you'll become new, and feel new!" Nakintu buried her face into the blanket on Mwambu's bed and burst into tears. "Sarah my darling one," Mwambu whispered in a tone of ultra tenderness, get it off your mind! "Nantogo isn't my cousin or niece," she announced with a deep groan. What do you mean by that? Mwambu cut in, visibly puzzled. She's my daughter, "Nakintu let out. Mwambu's mouth fell open, while Nakintu resumed her flow of tears. ... How on earth does a mothering woman successfully trick a man into believing she is a virgin" (Wangusa, 2015).

Nakintu could not keep quiet forever because she is aware that she is not a virgin. To speak out is to be set free from lies and to receive salvation in marriage as Mwambu announces. Mwambu too, after being raped by Mayuba, and the outcome of that rape is Buwayilila, he pretended to be a virgin because the society values virginity so much that it is shameful to break ones' virginity before the wedding night. And so the secret which he had kept for long, he decides to confess it to his wife, Nakintu.

"Sarah, he called, as a strange feeling of relief swept through him, what mother has been saying encourages me to say what I am

going to say. It has seemed like a sensitive secret up till now, and it certainly does not deserve to be kept as such. "Then, out with it!" Nakintu prompted him. "Buwayilila is not my nephew. He's my son." Nakintu's face went blank. Just the one thing that never occurred to me... never ... and Mwambu has kept it this long ... as long as I've kept mine ... it's like a vengeance...this incredible coincidence ..." (Wangusa 2015).

Both Nakintu and Mwambu decided to keep their secret as long as time allowed. But as the saying goes that lies cannot endure forever, so they had to let it go. Nakintu laments that Mwambu has kept it this long as long as she kept hers. She continues to say that it is like 'a vengeance'.

Even though Nakintu had a girl child before her relationship with Mwambu, she pretended to be a virgin but this could not last forever. Mwambu is very surprised and this raced into his mind:

And he thought, Like that virgin spot of blood on the white linen of our wedding night. How on earth a mothering woman does successfully trick a man into believing she is a virgin (Wangusa, 2015).

The reddening of the white sheet is a big issue. Mwambu is well informed that Nakintu is not a virgin because on their wedding night the spot of blood on the white linen was not visible. However, he decides to keep it cool since even himself is not one. This is why Okurut in *The Invisible Weevil* reports that after the rape of Nkwanzu by Rex, Senga, insists that this unspeakable act should be buried in their stomach. It should not be disclosed to anybody. She should just get married and never to mention this to Genesis (Okurut, 1998).

When Rex rapes Nkwanzu, Ssenga suggests that this unspeakable thing should be stomached and never to be mentioned (Okurut, 1998). She fears for the consequences. She knows it has the potential to damage the marriage:

"I have just been raped," she stated in a voice devoid of any emotion. What? The two exclaimed incredulously, both holding Nkwanzu from either side.

"Yes, I've been raped"

"It can't be..."

"But who..."

"Rex."

"Rex?"

"Yes." answered the embittered bride.

"Oh, oh! We're cursed! How can this be? What crime have we committed? Oh my poor child! Oh oh" wailed Ssenga" (Okurut, 1998).

The virginity that was to be broken by Genesis has now been broken by a rapist but it is still better to keep it secret. Rape is one of the taboos in African traditional societies. The girls are encouraged by the elderly women to keep their virginity because this is the glory of the entire family. And the boys are encouraged by the elderly men to keep their virginity until the wedding day. And to lose it is a big loss.

Ssenga is lamenting on rape as a taboo in African society. She says in their days, rape was not common as they are these days (Okurut 1998). Rape was unheard of in African traditional society. It is a foreign thing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In African traditional marriage, virginity is one of the values which are cherished because it brings harmony

into the marriage (Moler, 1982). Africans believe that if a girl remains faithful before her wedding, she will do the same even after it. Premarital sex is nasty because it steals the woman's virginity and destroys the foundation of future marriage (Kyalo, 2012). Bhana and Anderson (2013) observed that virginity brings respect and recognition among the youth. Bhana (2016) says that Africans defend virginity because it is grounded and inspired by deep cultural connections. Bhana continues to say that virginity is an important resource for respect, status and an identity. Nyakato (2010) writing for New Vision gives a detail understanding of virginity in the Ugandan cultural context. She says "virginity was something to be proud of" in the African traditional society. She says that in certain communities, the price for losing virginity was death and it is believed that many girls were drowned in Lake Bunyonyi and Kisizi Falls.

Okurut in *The Invisible Weevil* portrays the conflict between the Western and African traditional perception of sex before marriage. Genesis is tired of waiting for sex from his girlfriend Nkwanzu, and has this to say:

"Yes. I'm fed up with your holy attitude. Simply because some old-fashioned aunt of yours told you about some damned sheet, you then torment me" (Okurut, 1998).

Nkwanzu responds that it is not just the sheet and continues, I believe we should keep our bodies intact until marriage. Virginity should be treasured, not despised (Okurut, 1998).

Bhana (2016) supports Nkwanzu by arguing that the belief of virginity is valued in many contexts beyond KwaZulu-Natal and it is shaped by patriarchal control and the regulation of female sexuality.

Nkwanzu is such a typical African girl who cannot be moved just by a man's emotions. She is an image of African societal values because of the training that she has received from her aunt, the custodian of her culture.

Bakaluba in *Honeymoon for Three* presents Mrs Horne and Aunt Sulu in dialogue on how Naiga's virginity will be proved on the wedding night:

"I believe that Naiga is a virgin. I have no doubt about that, but it must be proved for everybody to know. Nuwa will have to present Mukasa with a live goat as a token of appreciation for a virgin bride. This is our custom, it is our tradition" (Bakaluba, 1975).

Aunt Sulu believes that the bride, Naiga, is a virgin, but it must be proved for everyone to know. She is expected to be present to prove whether the white sheet is stained with blood on the wedding night or not. The aunt will carry this white sheet outside and show it to the people as proof that she guarded her culture. In return, the groom will have to present the father of the bride (Mukasa) with a live goat as a token of appreciation.

Bhana (2016) agrees with Aunt Sulu when she suggests that virginity has dual function of bringing bride wealth, cattle or cash fulfilling the patriarchal bargain and the greater pride and dignity. Mrs Horne is extremely surprised at the strange custom (Bakaluba, 1975).

Kyalo (2012) argues that the traditional marriage system of going into marriage when one is a virgin gives the proper ingredient for a healthy marriage. Africans understood marriage in its right, and had a way of upholding its richness and value. Therefore, a virgin bride is an honour to her parents and a prize to her husband. Bhana and Pattman (2011) assert that boys want to have sex with a girl who is a virgin because they say a virgin is very cool.

In *Africa Answers Back*, Nyabongo (1936) depicts the theme of virginity in Chief Ati's marriage to his 375th wife. He portrays an elaborate marriage process with several rituals which ends with the bride's party handing the bride to the bridegroom. The elder mother of the bride stays behind with her for four days in seclusion. The bark cloth where the marriage has been consummated is taken home by the elder mother to show it to her people as a proof that their daughter was a virgin. The bridegroom then gives the elder mother some gifts to take home. Virginity is the pride of the bride's family (Nyabongo, 1936).

Africans take virginity as social value because it has a historical and material basis and derives from culturally embedded notions of respect (Harrison, 2008). Hunter (2010) argues around male power that regulates female sexuality and emphasizes the importance of virginity. Even if modernity shuns virginity as backward and a violation of human rights, it keeps African marriages stable and free from promiscuity. It is an African value to be cherished.

The paper examined portrayal of virginity in Akiki K. Nyabongo's, *Africa Answers Back*, Mary Okurut's *Invisible Weevil* and Bakaluba's *Honeymoon for Three*.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that the three Ugandan novels portray virginity as the age-old virtue of African traditional society which is highly valued; it should not be allowed to die because of other influences that come with modernity. This is why Ugandan novelists give it special attention in their works. The African elders should continue to encourage the youth to keep their virginity because it keeps the marriage and family stable.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Capitalism versus narcissism: Death of a salesman's psychoanalytic critique

Nurul Anwar

Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Social Science, BGMEA University of Fashion and Technology, Bangladesh.

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Arthur Miller's, Death of a Salesman seems to have lost some ground to its once established position as many critics of late downplayed the demise of its protagonist Willy Loman by inscribing the causes of his death on 'narcissism' and excessive self-importance other than delving into the deeper causes behind his tormented and isolated private life. However, the author argues that Willy's life gets systematically shattered and crippled by his careless and cruel society fuelled by 'capitalist ideology' underlying the so called American dream. His death is extremely significant and current as present day self-harm and suicide rates unfailingly reverberate with the tragic demise of Willy. Though Willy's obsession with success, in disguise, puzzles the critics as conceited hubris his refusal of Charley's job offer strongly testifies to the unceasing resentment he holds towards capitalist workers. This paper rejects 'narcissism' as to be the major cause of his self-committed suicide and rightly points the self-termination, caused by the life-circumstances, to 'capitalist American dream'. Finally, it validates the transformation of his vengeance into his self-destruction that still reverberates with self-harm and self-destruction committed by men and women today.

Key words: Narcissism, capitalism, American dream, self-committed suicides, psychopathy.

INTRODUCTION

In his seminal work, *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller portrays wretched conditions inflicting the lives of lower class people amid class-struggle in 1940s America. Miller sets the story during great financial depression in the US, in between times after the World War I and around World War II, though his characters hardly speak about the trauma of the war. Miller earns an enormous success by putting an ordinary salesman as the protagonist in his

play instead of putting a man of social nobility. In the play, Miller depicts his central character, Willy Loman as a destitute salesman struggling to rise up the social ladder in a capitalist society, who remains deluded by a 'dream of success' and takes on a relentless pursuit of happiness that eventually brings his tragic demise. Though some critics speak in favor of the popular account of the cause of his death being his excessive

E-mail: anwarengnsu@gmail.com.

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obsession with so called American dream¹ and the 'capitalist oppression', many still refuse to ascribe the cause of his death to capitalist oppression, which will be used synonymously with American dream here. About the cause of Willy's death Critic like Bert Cardullo, in his article subtitled The Swollen Legacy of Arthur Miller, argues that:

...The salesman figure that comes through is not of a typical grunt brought down by financial failure but of an exceptional invalid, in whom the stress of business only increased existing psychological imbalances (Bert, 2006; Helene, 1983).

METHODOLOGY

The paper relies on eclectic approach through discussions on psychoanalytic theory in the first place. It also collects statistical data from current sources on the effects of capitalism and its fatal effect on the lives of middle class people in the present time. It also contextualizes theories of Marx's alongside Freud's psychoanalysis to bolster its argument in the line of capitalism's oppression to Willy's family, and how it leads to the eventually tragic end of the protagonist tragic hero.

DISCUSSION

Practically, the critic appears to have failed to mention who or what is responsible for Willy's delirious state. In order to get a valid answer to this complex phenomenon we ought to conduct a careful inquiry into the matter by asking a question; do we see Willy psychologically imbalanced from the start of the play, or do we see a systematic and gradual decline of his mental health caused by financial failure? Does Willy make conscious choice to take his own life for twenty thousand dollars? Does his death have to with delivering a deeper message that what we see on the surface level of the play? In order to make a legitimate claim about any potential answers to these bewildering questions it is mandatory to rediscover how human psychology works under complex circumstance, and how it evolves and deteriorates through progression. Of course, we can resort to Karl Marx's theory on the role of base and superstructure² to find quite a plausible answer to personality and behavioral change; nonetheless, the author would like to first consult a well-known specialist in the field of mind game, Mr. Freud Sigmund. Indeed, there are

disagreements among critics about every issue including this on the basis of whether or not we can psychoanalyze fictional characters who do not possess a real human psyche. Despite controversies Tyson responds to the criticism by pointing out: 'psychoanalyzing the behavior of literary characters is probably the best way to use the theory' (Tyson 35). But, we cannot psychoanalyze Willy's personality traits and behavioral degeneration unless we put him on two sets of rule prescribed by Tyson:

When psychoanalyzing literary characters, the characters are not so called real people but are representations of psychological experience of humans in general. Secondly, she states that it is just as appropriate to psychoanalyze the character's behavior as it is to analyze their behavior from a Feminist, Marxist, or African American perspective, or from any critical theory that analyzes literary representations as illustrations of real-life issues (11-12, 34-35).

According to the set rules, Willy rightly qualifies to be treated from psychoanalytic perspective since it happens to be one the four popular ways of theorizing any subjects of a literary genre. Another allusion, quite analogous to the first, the critics make about the cause of Willy's death is to his Narcissism. Bert Cardullo, for example, forthwith dismisses Willy as:

A man who dies believing in money, he kills himself for money. Because he confuses materialistic success with worthiness for love, he commits suicide to give his son Biff the insurance benefit as a stake for more business (Bert, 2006).

He goes on with another attack:

...An exceptional invalid, in whom the stress of business only increased existing psychological imbalances. Willy is shown to be at least as much a victim of psychopathy as of the bitch-goddess Success (Bert, 2006).

Cardullo's first comment indirectly calls Willy a narcissist though it does not contain the exact word in it. His first claim turns out to be paradoxical with the second since he uses the word *confuse* and *psychopathy* synonymously. Here emerges a logical question, how can a person be psychopath and be obsessed with money at the same time? It is argued that psychopathy is a result of someone's mental trauma due to financial breakdown which is not a result of a self-inflicted or conscious act, but narcissism is, as mentioned clearly in the following definition, being obsessed with one's personal image. It is easily discernable that one cannot possibly be obsessed with something without being conscious about it. The following remark makes it clear that he was not self-obsessed; therefore not a narcissist:

¹ A belief system popularized in 40s and 50s America by the capitalists and government alike, among the lower and middle class people that hard work brings success irrespective of class and privileges, which still exists among the American.

² Marx and Engels provided a method of analyzing society which has been of enormous fecundity. This has been shown in every generation since the method was first outlined in The German Ideology in 1846.

Although Willy is aware, maybe dimly and imperfectly, that he is not cut out for success in the world of trade and commerce, he nevertheless nurses the dream of getting the better of everybody else. And this leads him into an alienation from himself, obscuring his real identity (Sharma, 370). For a better logic, we can consult the following statement by Freud and others, the two French psychoanalysts Jean, Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, 1988, says, "narcissism as the state of being captivated by and obsessed with one's personal image and ego in their book *The Language of Psycho-analysis*" (255-257). To illuminate the difference between these two situations, the author would like to use the following quote by Becker, 2008.

The psychopath is less obsessed than the narcissist with validation. Indeed, his inner world seems to lack much of anything to validate: it is barren, with nothing in it that would even be responsive to validation. An emotional cipher, the psychopath's exploitation of others is more predatory than the narcissist's. For the psychopath, who may be paranoid, the world is something like a gigantic hunt, populated by personified objects to be mined to his advantage (2).

Yes, many of Willy's conversations with others also testify to his mental disorder. He yells at Biff: "Not finding yourself at the age of thirty-four is a disgrace!" But later adds: "Greatest thing in the world for him was to bum around." And again: "Biff is a lazy bum!" says Willy. Then almost immediately thereafter: "And such a hard worker. There's one thing about Biff—he's not lazy." (1.5) The logic evidently does not allow Willy to be called a narcissist or a psychopath rather he is caught up in a blurry margin in between two which alludes to a different state of mind.. Here I begin to inquire about the monster in him which haunts him constantly and fails his patience at the end. It is obvious that some critics try to ignore the success of Miller's mission of creating a true tragic hero as they view Willy just as an insane personality derailed from psychic balance-but what causes it?

However, the critics conceive of one side of the problem in his character other than missing the most crucial aspects of his mind that constantly vacillate between his past and the present, clearly in Freudian terms *the unconscious* and *the conscious*. According to Freud (1963), "the unconscious mind is the primary source of human behavior. Like an iceberg, the most important part of the mind is the part you cannot see" ("The Unconscious", cp. VI).

The analysis of Willy's complex mind demands serious attention to the juxtaposition of two minds his unconscious mind and the conscious mind which are at times in constant contention resulting in the creation of perplexing fluidity as represented in the play in the form of the flashbacks and time travelling- which fails him from

holding a grip on his present and future. His appears to be a derelict who cannot stick his aim at future as he is long past his glory as a respected salesman. Again Willy's condition worsens after being fired by, Howard Wagner, whom Willy presumed to be of big help in the time of his distress, brusquely refuses him. Howard's blatant response goes, "Willy, but there just is no spot here for you." Eisinger clarifies,

Willy's dream rests on the cult of personality. It is necessary, he holds, "to make a good appearance and to be well liked, appearance is a key concept in his notion of success (98).

Eisinger, 2010 does not contextualize at what point Willy conveys such an asinine view. It is indeed not until after he gets refused by the man whom he confided in the most as to be the biggest savior during his distress that he is forced to lose faith in consciousness and his own identity (Murphy, 2010). Sickels, 2010 argues that "Miller 1998 critically examines the myth of the American Dream" (79). She also says, "the American dream is not openly expressed, defined or mentioned in the play, it is well-known that Arthur Miller took inspiration from the American society" (102-103). Perhaps Willy misunderstood the paradox of American Dream; however, does he not deserve to aspire higher? James Truslow Adams in his book *Epic of America* puts forward a succinct definition of American Dream:

But there has been also the American dream that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability or achievement. It is a difficult dream for the European upper classes to interpret adequately, and too many of us ourselves have grown weary and mistrustful of it. It is not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of birth or position (404).

James' definition clearly states the paradox of American dream which evades the definition of the word itself and ends in itself; thereby, makes no promise of success to people. But, Willy's was not just a dreamer; he struggled but failed and his failure is responsible for his subsequent degeneration. This experience of rejection of a man living on the fringes of society generates a strong evocation of the hideous discrimination, which can be traceable to Marxist interpretation of the circumstances surrounding the poor in a capitalist society. Marx believed that the change in the overall psychic orientation of an individual is determined by a superstructure of American capitalism underlying the society, and even more in Willy's case by Dream. Here the author endorsed, whose psychological aplomb degenerates under the force of

social superstructure though, on the surface, his erratic behavior loosely reveals his outward personality.

Now, the author's shifts his concentration from the fantastic world of Miller to the realistic one. To many talking about 'capitalism' and 'death', holding the one responsible for the other, may sound unreal, though many still see the horrific consequences, in this case Death, due to financial crisis, in societies foster under the influence of capitalism, as portrayed by Miller in the play *Death of A Salesman*. Willy's death reflects palpably on the similar circumstances facing the Lower class in today's America and across the globe. Katherine A. Fowler led a study along with five researchers who analyzed suicide findings from 16 states that participate in the National Violent Death Reporting System. The report confirms, this study was the first to our knowledge to systematically examine suicides linked with eviction and foreclosure," the report reads. The researchers identified 929 suicides between 2005 and 2010 related to evictions or foreclosures. The total numbers were fairly split—51 percent were eviction-related and 49 percent foreclosure (Capps, 2015).

Needless to say, the fraudulent promise propagated by capitalism succeeds to be the most potential qualifier behind these deaths. Another study shows, "...recent study examining the impact of austerity measures taken in England during the European financial crisis on unemployment and subsequent suicides attributed more than 1,000 excess suicides to these economic conditions between 2008 and 2010" (Capps, 2015).

These deaths such as the one committed by Willy in *Death of a Salesman* resuscitates similar picture. The play is worth rediscovering and putting out there as a meaningful source to creating a photographic manifestation of the wicked effects of capitalism in societies experiencing violence, self-harms, and other forms of dehumanizing actions.

Also, it is worth noting that functioning as a social being amid technologically rapt lifestyles, cultural entanglement, and media outpouring a large number of social critics and reformers may be now are moonstruck, and their inquiry into the loss of personal identity and self-harm and suicide as means of escaping the impact of Capitalism, if not entirely impossible to trace, remains a chimera. For disease and health problem being the generally believed cause of death, the argument as to blame Capitalism as the prime cause of deaths seems a little fragile unless we borrow from an expert in the field. M. Harvey Brenner's finding, visiting professor at Yale School of Medicine and an expert in health and medicine, allows the author to overtly publicize capitalism as the most potential cause behind the deaths today which are identical with the death of the salesman in the play:

Employment is the essential element of social status and it establishes a person as a contributing member of society and also has very important implications for self-

esteem," said Brenner. When that is taken away, people become susceptible to depression, cardiovascular disease, AIDS and many other illnesses that increase mortality (YaleNews, 2002).

These days we hardly investigate such facts as invisible power domination of capitalism and the effects underlying social system and ideology while dealing with answers to the root cause of life threatening and near death experiences like self-harms inflicted by financially and emotionally distressed people rather we tend to blame these incidents on difficult relationships, love affairs, excessive drinking, divorce and other external phenomena. Robert D. Putnam, a professor of public policy at Harvard, in his book *Our Kids*, an investigation of new class divisions in America, gives a better picture of Capitalism in today's world and its effect on the increase of the suicide rate in present day US- which allows us to draw a connection with the demise of Willy Loman. In response to the recent findings on suicide rates in the US, he responds, "This is part of the larger emerging pattern of evidence of the links between poverty, hopelessness and health." (The New York Times, 2016).

To begin with references to make connection with my discussion till now, it is preferred to borrow a quote from the play that holds the intensity of an extreme feeling in the moment when Willy is pushed to the brink of his rational thinking and forced to redefine the value of his own self and existence- (a philosophical dilemma which could be identical with the one with Hamlet in Shakespeare 'To be or not to be, that is the question'. Though delivering different evocation at a different context the affinity between these two pressing situations makes them seemly identical).

Why am I trying to become what I don't want to be? What am I doing in an office, making a contemptuous, begging fool of myself, when all I want is out there, waiting for me the minute I say I know who I am! (2.105).

Karl Marx's theory on human belief can be a good reminder in connection with Willy's current situation. Marx believed that, " various positions and beliefs held by people, be it religious, moral and so on, are created and conditioned by their material circumstances" ("Capital"). This is true, as Marx points elsewhere, to both historical circumstances and class, social and economical circumstances. We see Willy feels trapped and forced to questions his own existence by his material circumstances and his social status. He is just a counterpart to Charley whose condition was more stable and secure. Charley's remarks manifests futility of American Dream that promised everyman in the 40s America with a message that hard work brings success.

Nobody dast blame this man. You do not understand: Willy was a salesman. And for a salesman, there's no

rock bottom to the life. He don't put a bolt to a nut, he don't tell you the law or give you medicine. He's a man way out there in the blue riding on a smile and a shoeshine. And when they start not smiling back—that's an earthquake. And then you get yourself a couple spots on your hat and you're finished. Nobody dast blame this man. A salesman is got to dream boy, it comes with the territory ("Requiem" 111).

Charley's speech sounds sweet and promising for a man of Willy's social status, but here he speaks ironically about the impossibility of success under Capitalist Society. Willy does not fail to represent many a failed dreamer living in the 20th century America as well as in the other parts of world that are riddled with capitalists' propaganda. The realization of his total insignificance as a social being coerces him to take on committing suicide with twenty thousand dollars which he finds to be the only means, as intended to prove it right here, to escape the oppression of capitalism. Recent psychological research also reveals that the failure to achieve social status makes one undermine his or her self-value, and it is the most likely reason that induces harmful thoughts like committing suicide or self-harm. Baumeister claims,

When individuals realize that they fail to attain important standards or expectations, they may be motivated to escape the self, which could lead thoughts of suicide to become more accessible. Six studies examined this hypothesis, mainly derived from escape theory (90-113). The above statement allows the author to negate the claims that view Willy as a 'narcissist'. But it can be said that he just lived a false dream of success that his capitalist society presumably denied him. The 'dream' of course has several connotations in terms of the intention of its creator. According to Oxford Advanced learners' Dictionary of Current English, "dream is, in my own words, an abnormal, irrational, obsession with anything that one aspires to possess". It no longer matters whether Willy subscribed himself to American Dream or not; as a human, he was just like any other man of his rank who went through the same conditions. Miller's success is in creating a unanimous picture of all men across nations, who are of equal rank of Willy's, where capitalism determines who to live and who to die. It looks glaringly obvious that Willy has no other choice when Willy had nothing left to himself. He was entangled in a situation where he was not allowed to think but one solution, suicide. The following quote is used to bolster the argument that it was not his narcissistic, self-important ideology that contributed to his death it was rather the feeling of entrapment by life circumstances worsened by capitalist system. Integrated Motivational Volitional (IMV) model of suicidal behavior, postulates that,

...Suicidal behavior emerges as a result of feelings of entrapment; individuals who feel trapped by life

circumstances and who perceive no other alternatives for escape employ suicidal behavior as a means of seeking resolution". "This idea is consistent with Shneidman's assertion that the common purpose of suicide is to seek a solution, and with Williams and Pollock's arrested flight model of suicidal behavior which asserts that suicidal behavior results from the perception of being trapped with no possibility of rescue... (4).

Again, to reiterate, it would be a careless hypothesis if we simply consider his idiosyncratic behavior ignoring the socio-economic system in which his personality evolves. Another insightful statement by a critic delineates the real condition of the lower class under Capitalism. Brian Parker anticipates the capitalists' praxis and capitalistic society with an accurate mention of traits as to the principles of the system, which are conditioned for standardized living, such as advertising, time payment, faulty refrigerator, life insurance, mortgages etc. (42).

Willy thus becomes an inevitable victim of these flashy objects marketed by the dehumanizing insurance companies, another branch of capitalist syndicate. Mr. Miller later wrote in his autobiography, *Timebends*, that "he had hoped the play would expose "this pseudo life that thought to touch the clouds by standing on top of a refrigerator, waving a paid-up mortgage at the moon, victorious at last" (Siegel, 2012).

In the very opening Act, there is a vivid description as to how rapidly apartment buildings were rising around Willy's home territory. I argue that this invasion of territory also and the high raised apartments bear a subtle 'metaphor' to an explanation of the unfair upper-class domination where Willy's life is trapped.

Towards the end, the life of his father plays crucial part with his increasingly alienating soul. Miller makes frequent mentions to his father and to the melody of flute with Willy trying to reconstruct his past. This demonstrates Willy's psychological battle in between his conscious and unconscious drawing him away from his real existence. For a brief moment, Willy lives the life his father led. Kennedy, 1982 also sees in him lies his father;

It is not true that the Death of a Salesman gives a true picture', spoke one businessman at a Chamber of Commerce Executives meeting in St. Louis. 'The professional salesman has ...a life built upon the foundation stone of attitude, knowledge, integrity and industry (3).

Not unrighteous to say though that the businessman remains pretty biased towards his businesslike attitude. For we see him making desperate attempts to impress his friend. Willy is certainly different from other businessman dominating New York City, affluent and powerful. Willy is not suspected as a lackluster performer since he confesses the discrimination he has to face because of his aging. He says, "because he thinks I'm

nothing, see, and so he spites me. I am known! Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey- I am known, Ben, he'll see it with his eyes once and for all" (2.100). Here we get powerful evidence on Willy's past reputation. Willy could not accept the job because that would make him a complicit with those who did not stand against capitalist system. Here we have a clear prophesy of Willy representing democratic sentiment and individual freedom as opposed to capitalists' ideology. It can also be seen in Biff's character who displays strong rejection of social confinements. Another conversation with Linda, Willy expresses a sheer paradox of capitalism: "Figure it out. Work a lifetime to pay off a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it." (1.15). Biff's monologue reveals reminiscence of his past and an intense resentment to his personal location where he finds himself useless:

This farm I work on, its spring there now see? And whenever spring comes to where I am, I suddenly get the feeling, My God, I am not getting anywhere. And then he continues, 'I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life (1.2).

He has bought a car, a refrigerator and made life insurance; but at the end of the cycle he finds all of these belongings useless. These stuffs are very representation of American dream that left many Americans in debt... A recent day study also clarifies the true deception of American Dream, that the hard work is unable to turn American Dream into reality. The author quotes,

Americans in the lower class are more negative about their current financial standing and more pessimistic about their economic future than adults who place themselves in the middle or upper classes. Those in the lower classes also are significantly more likely than other Americans to doubt that hard work brings success (Morin et al., 2012).

Now broken, collapsed and exhausted, he fantasizes about his success in his Biff's life, and struggles to earn him a job. Now, we have to review the definition of Capitalism- is the system in business, run by private authority, that only aims at profit rather than anything else (Hornby et al., 2007). This definition reflects in action in this quote when Willy intends to join his previous company, but he is repelled by the young new director. Willy replies to Biff, "You know why he remembered you, don't you? Because you impressed him in those days". At this stage, Willy's finds himself totally stifled, and this is the moment he gives up and he no longer acts consciously or rationally. Karl Marx and Freud rightly publicized it to be-

...a false consciousness rooted in the whole social organization of man which directs his consciousness in

certain directions, and blocks him from being aware of certain facts and experiences (1.19).

We get a strong sense that Willy's death has very little to do with his dream, though we cannot detach him completely from the dream as he is as human as anybody else, but the key determination for an escape, from the agonizing world he lived, was the realization of his unconscious existence³ and real existence and value in the society, which he saw no different than mere death. Miller's success lies in this very discovery of Willy of the verisimilitude between his living death situation under capitalism and the real death. Willy's transition from 'false Consciousness' to 'true consciousness' makes him a true rebel against the existing social structure.

Abandoned and helpless against the rich and powerful, his dream started turning into vengeance which led him to plan a dangerous escape at the end. Another character in the play Ben who is not portrayed as a full-fledged character rather a less real figure and casts as other voice of Willy's heart that seeks 'escape' and 'success' (Parker 45).

He sees triumph, capitalistic force, in death and isolation. To Willy these life ends up worth more dead than alive, how very little light that sheds on the right way of living, says Charley (116). Kennedy well clarifies Willy Loman's broken mind that sees no prospect ahead. More than that, his statement anticipates a rebirth of another contradictory soul in every human being whose life is trapped in inextricable situations. Gordon, 1983 in his paper titled, 'Death of a salesman: An Appreciation, has pointed out that:

Willy is a victim of this inexorable social system which drives its men to frantic, all consuming dreams of success, is doomed not only by grandiosity but also by their inherent contradictoriness (322).

Unlike Willy Loman, Charley, who, ironically by a kind of 'indifference' or by complicity with American dream, succeeds within the capitalist system. Willy never transforms into a mimic man⁴ in the system as he is not complicit with it. Charley is in this sense can be termed as a other man who shows conformity towards the corrupt, unlawful capitalistic charges. Miller uses Charley as a counter part to Willy who is not a conformist. He intends to live a life on his own accord; free from capitalism where he finds himself ignored.

Willy's relentless struggle and failure to build relationship with those financially superior around him makes him a plausible candidate for Marxist interpretation of the nature of mutual relationship in a capitalist society-

³ Unconscious existence refers to the condition of living under superstructure and participating in it without being conscious about its impact on one's lifestyle or framework of thought.

⁴ *Mimic manis* used to identify the person, in a general sense, who lives under a colonized condition.

as Marx defines it, a Cash Nexus. It sounds meaningful to say Willy's failure to get an employment with Oliver resulted from his inability to impress Oliver with perhaps some kind of financial bond. Significantly, Willy's promise of twenty thousand dollars to Biff is built upon the reverse side but draws from the Marxist interpretation of 'base' and 'superstructure'. His final decision to plot an escape with twenty thousand dollars is manufactured by his present economic conditions. Marx Karl, 1981 believes, "it is not consciousness of men that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness" (Marx K et al., 1976). Just like O'Neill's, 2008, Bob Smith / Yank who found himself as counter-revolutionary creature, an ape. In today's world of technology and endless businesses we may not have time to think about people like Willy Loman, but thousands die every year due to unemployment problems. Behind most suicide unemployment is the near direct connection. Research shows:

The relative risk of suicide associated with unemployment was elevated by about 20–30% during the study period. Overall, 41 148 (95% CI 39 552–42 744) suicides were associated with unemployment in 2007 and 46 131 (44 292–47 970) in 2009, indicating 4983 excess suicides since the economic crisis in 2008 (1).

In the play, Willy grows frantic, and he becomes a faithful subscriber to Franz Fanon's theory of violence, in Willy's case violence against which I like to call the domestic colonizers⁵. Fanon 1963 writes, in fact, that "...the colonized man finds his freedom in and through violence" (86). Here such violent sentiment towards capitalism takes on different forms, a self-harm and self-destructive force, since it cannot stand against the organized powers. The following statement will further unveil that the capitalism is, mostly direct and sometimes indirect cause, behind such inequality and unemployment and deaths today, According to a new report published in Lancet Psychiatry:

...Unemployment caused approximately 45,000 suicides each year between 2000 and 2011. Through a longitudinal assessment of the World Health Organization's mortality database and the International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook database.... It has been proven that the only thing that "inspires" bosses to treat workers adequately is organized fight back by workers. It has also been proven that the only path to a real system that guarantees employment, education, health care and basic resources for all are by overthrowing capitalism (Staff, 2015).

Here it does not end. More reports show the indicators related to suicide rates in the economically advanced and

capitalist countries since 2008 crisis, they show an unsettling similarity to that of the increase in the instances of self-harm. More results related to suicide tells us that, "similar reports by a group of experts published in The British Medical Journal in 2013 directly reflect the increase in the suicide rate in many advanced capitalist countries with the instability caused by the crisis in 2008 and its ongoing effects" (Chang et al., 2013; Bantjes et al., 2016; Nordt et al., 2015). He also anticipates that "the native discovers reality and transforms it into the pattern of his customs, into the practice of violence and into his plan for freedom" (58). Willy's death proves firm and purposeful after all, other than a result of his Narcissism, when we take a last look at what Happy has to say:

All right, boy. I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain (Zheng, 2007). He had a good dream. It's the only dream you can have to come out number one man. He fought it out here, and this is where I'm gonna win it for him (Act 2).

Conclusion

Justifiably, Miller's death "Salesman" echoes with the death and violence of the oppressed under the force of capitalism at present time. His chilling legacy will visit our minds through each victim of oppression as long as inequality between the poor and the rich remain prevalent. He will speak as everyman as long as the proletariat loses their battle against the sustained power of the capitalists. A professor of MIT, Lester C. Thurow 1996, maintains that "the instability of modern capitalism will not make it implode, as communism did. Stagnation, not collapse, is the danger, given that capitalism faces no serious rival on the world's stage of ideas" (5).

Critics and playwrights do not forget to acknowledge the contemporariness of Death of a Salesman since Willy speaks for us all. " Critics feel, "Arthur Miller's classic play feels more relevant than ever. This intimation of life's precariousness makes Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" even more timely now than at its first staging in 1949" (The Economist, 2012). Mitra, 2016, Founder of One Million by One Million, org, when asked to predict the end of capitalism put:

Perhaps, Bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, Raj Yoga take a more central place in our way of life. But it will require a drastic reorientation in how society is organized when Capitalism is dead. And by all indication, I think, it is safe to say that in 50 years, Capitalism will be dead (Ruona WE, 1998).

So, the stealthy attack of Capitalism will ever elude our eyes, but we cannot fail to see its dreadful consequences which continue to cost many a distressed man his life just like the one of Willy Loman's. Thus, it seems we need to wait much longer before we can actually downplay the

⁵ An idea expressed by MARXIAN EXPLOITATION AND DOMESTIC COLONIALISM that connects to the black Americans under the oppression of the white.

relevance of Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and the 'death of a salesman' today since one way or the other "We are all salesmen now".

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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