

世界经典文学作品赏析(英汉对照)

Arthur Miller's
DEATH OF A SALESMAN
and ALL MY SONS

Joan Thellusson Nourse

阿瑟·密勒的

推销员之死
和
全是我的儿子

外语教学与研究出版社

Simon & Schuster 国际出版公司



(京)新登字 155 号

京权图字: 01-1996-0574

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

阿瑟·密勒的《推销员之死》
和《全是我的儿子》:英汉对照/
(美)诺斯(Nourse, J. T.)著;
任小玫译. —北京:外语教学与
研究出版社, 1997. 1

(世界经典文学作品赏析)

ISBN 7-5600-1210-8

I. 阿… II. ①诺…②任…
III. 英语-语言读物、文学评
论-英、汉 IV. H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据
核字(97)第 06381 号

阿瑟·密勒的
推销员之死
和**全是我的儿子**

著: Joan Thellusson Nourse

译: 任小玫

外语教学与研究出版社出版发行

(北京西三环北路 19 号)

北京外国语大学印刷厂印刷

新华书店总店北京发行所经销

开本 850 × 1168 1/32 9.75 印张
208 千字

1997 年 5 月第 1 版 1997 年 5 月第 1
次印刷

印数: 1—31000 册

ISBN 7-5600-1210-8/H·676

定价: 11.80 元

Joan Thellusson Nourse:
Arthur Miller's DEATH OF A
SALEMAN and ALL MY SONS
Authorized translation from
the English language edition
published by Simon &
Schuster.

Copyright © 1965 by Simon &
Schuster

All rights reserved. For sale in
Mainland China only.

本书中文简体字版由外语教学
与研究出版社和美国 Simon &
Schuster 国际出版公司合作出
版, 未经出版者书面许可, 本书
的任何部分不得以任何方式复
制或抄袭。本书封面贴有
Simon & Schuster 防伪标签,
无标签者为盗版, 不得销售。

版权所有 侵权必究

只限中华人民共和国境内销售

CONTENTS

目 录

英文部分

Introduction	1
<i>Death of a Salesman</i> (1949)	16
Detailed Summary and Analysis	24
Analyses of Major Characters	115
Commentary on <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	124
Review Questions and Answers	132
<i>All My Sons</i>	142
Analyses of Major Characters	149
Commentary on <i>All My Sons</i>	158
Review Questions and Answers	163
Bibliography	167

中文部分

简介	173
《推销员之死》(1949)	185
详细概述及分析	192
主要人物分析	274
关于《推销员之死》的评论	282
《全是我的儿子》	289
主要人物分析	295
关于《全是我的儿子》的评论	303

INTRODUCTION

PULITZER PRIZE PLAYWRIGHT. For the 1948-1949 theatrical season Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* was granted the coveted Pulitzer Prize. It also received the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award, the Antoinette Perry Award, the Theatre Club Award, and the Front Page Award, as well as general critical acclaim. The dramatist so honored was then only thirty-five years old, yet this was his third play produced on Broadway. The first, *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944), closed after four performances. The second, *All My Sons* (1947), was widely hailed, enjoyed a good run, and garnered some awards, such as that of the Critics' Circle. Such unusual recognition was accorded the young playwright because of his superior stage craftsmanship, his efforts to develop a new, modern type of tragedy, and his strong, serious concern with social issues affecting his fellow-countrymen.

TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY. Revealing early a talent for creative writing, Arthur Miller wrote several prize-winning plays at the University of Michigan and afterwards sold radio scripts, all the while perfecting himself in his craft. He especially admired Henrik Ibsen, the great Norwegian master of the "well-made," tightly constructed play. And both *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* have carefully planned plots, wherein skilled use is made of such typical Ibsen devices as foreshadowing, irony, and symbols. Also observed are the traditional "unities," inasmuch as each has one main story line (unity of action) that develops in and about one small area, such as the hero's house (unity of place), within a brief two- or three-day period

(unity of time).

If, however, both plays evidenced command of time-tested older stage methods, *Death of a Salesman* also strikingly employed certain techniques associated with later experimental writers. For instance, during the 1920s, those known as Expressionists had attempted to create special effects by freely shifting action from place to place and altering the customary time sequence. In *Death of a Salesman*, Miller actually does keep to standard chronological order and conventional home and office locales in depicting Willy Loman's last hours from his return to his house Monday night until his suicide late Tuesday. But the famous interposed flashback scenes, representing past experiences now preying upon Willy's distracted mind, cut across more rigid plot lines to achieve greater fluidity. Moreover, having the set itself designed for unhampered movement and the same actors playing characters in both current scenes and flashbacks further breaks down ordinary barriers, with clever lighting and background music making transitions easy and natural.

In addition, other modern dramatists, such as Eugene O'Neill, had engaged in noteworthy efforts to deal on stage with the curious inner workings of the human mind. In *The Great God Brown*, for example, O'Neill had used masks to convey the difference between the characters' surface behavior and their tormented inner selves, wracked by fear and anxiety. And in his *Strange Interlude*, he used spoken "asides," theoretically unheard by other characters in the same scene, again to deal with hidden worries and frustrations. Another well-known playwright, August Strindberg, of Sweden, had shown in his dramas how doubts and tensions could bring about madness or lead to suicide.

In *Death of a Salesman*, Miller lets us know not only what Willy says to his wife, Linda, and his son, Biff, but also what memories are causing him to become mentally disturbed. He uses flashbacks, however, rather than masks or asides to reveal how inner tensions can impel a man toward self-destruction. Hence, in handling his subject, he continues the comparatively recent trend of concentrating upon psychological aspects of character.

To sum up, those evaluating Miller's work, and particularly *Death of a Salesman*, were much impressed with his mastery of technical skills, noting that he combined to advantage the tight structure of the "well-made" Ibsen play with the free-flowing movement of the Expressionists and the psychological analysis favored by other experimental dramatists.

TRAGEDY FOR TODAY. When the ancient Greeks or Elizabethan playwrights, such as Shakespeare, wrote tragedies, they usually selected as hero an exceptional individual occupying a high, influential position. A basically good man, with some weakness in his character or "tragic flaw," the hero eventually falls from his great height of fame, wealth, power, and respect, to the depths of misery and often to his death. As Aristotle, the ancient Greek philosopher, indicates, audiences seeing this happen experience a "catharsis," or the purifying of the spirit, as they feel "pity" for the terrible woes of this admirable figure and "fear" because of an increased awareness of the forces in the world powerful enough to topple even the mightiest. Caught up in events of great magnitude, or so the theory goes, spectators are imaginatively liberated from all that is dull, petty, and mean in the life around them. Instead, they are stirred by the spectacle of human greatness, of Man daring to reach out beyond reasonable limits in quest of some glorious ideal. And even when he fails, as

fail he must, there is still, for them, the satisfaction of having viewed nobility in action.

In sharp contrast, Miller's *Death of a Salesman* tells of no illustrious prince or general, but of an ordinary Brooklyn "drummer" (salesman), who has never been at any time rich or famous or in any way influential beyond the circle of his own family. In a sense he cannot "fall," in the way Greek or Shakespearean heroes could, because he has never occupied a high enough position. Moreover, his objectives are ostensibly not the most exalted. He wants to be well-liked, make some money, and have his two sons also be popular and prosperous. He is largely the "common man," with rather mundane aspirations, as opposed to the traditional extraordinary or unique hero, whose dreams were breathtakingly bold.

Arthur Miller has argued, however, that if tragedy has ever had any meaning for men in general, most of whom are not kings, it must have dealt essentially with thoughts and feelings that have some universality. And the common man of today, he maintains, can be just as much the good human being with a "tragic flaw" attempting against formidable odds to transform some vision into a reality. Even if he does not want to secure a throne like Macbeth or conquer the world like Marlowe's Tamburlaine, he can at any level give himself so completely to his own personal struggle that the very intensity of his passion tends to prove Man still indomitable. Willy Loman's craving to be a well-liked, successful salesman and family man may be as ordinary as that of Joe Keller in *All My Sons* to leave a thriving business to young Chris. But both men, although in somewhat blundering fashion, go after their goals with fearsome, uncompromising determination. And both in a general sense go to their deaths rather than live on as acknowledged failures. Doubtless, to some extent they are psy-

chologically warped, but they are not merely maladjusted. To some extent they are victims of a social environment instilling faulty values, but this is not the complete explanation either. For good or ill, they are men who take a stand and hold to it regardless of dire consequences. And this total commitment, heroically maintained in the face of great personal tribulation, entitles such heroes as stolid Joe Keller or distracted Willy Loman, in Miller's view, to tragic status. And since their problems are today more genuinely meaningful anyway than those of the fast disappearing aristocracy, they may point a way, he maintains, perhaps the one possible way, in which tragic drama can elevate the spirit of the present generation.

In advancing such opinions, and carrying them out in his plays, Arthur Miller was advocating nothing completely new or revolutionary. Ibsen and O'Neill had dealt with tragic situations involving middle-class individuals; and from 1750 on through the whole Romantic period there had been much talk of the "common man." But Miller's plays were powerful, and Miller's statements strong and challenging. So his efforts on behalf of the "new" tragedy were regarded with respect and hailed as significant.

SOCIAL CRITICISM. Arthur Miller was, of course, not the first American playwright to view critically certain values held by our people. Eugene O'Neill's works had some comments upon the American social scene, and such writers as John Steinbeck and Clifford Odets, Robert Sherwood and Maxwell Anderson had all contributed dramas with perceptive observations about life in this country. But many of the plays produced over the years on Broadway have been superficial and trivial. Indeed, the various groups giving awards for theatrical excellence have sometimes had to skip whole seasons for want of productions worth commending. Hence, the emergence of

Arthur Miller as a serious social dramatist, as well as a superior craftsman and creator of tragedies, was regarded with enthusiasm.

Essentially, Miller criticizes first of all the sort of family-oriented morality that causes Americans to lose sight of their responsibilities to the larger social groups of which they are also members. Joe Keller, of *All My Sons*, behaves admirably to his immediate family as a good, hard-working husband and father. But to save the family business, he will ship out defective plane parts that may bring woe to other American families. Willy Loman would not presumably steal from his sons, Biff and Happy. But he is tolerantly amused when they appropriate footballs or building materials that belong to others. And Willy's boss, Howard, another apparently devoted family man, is callously indifferent to the fate of an aging long-term employee. Miller shows such social irresponsibility as leading to wartime profiteering on the home front and to ruthless competition in the business world generally.

Several other dubious aspects of life here also receive critical notice in his plays. He eyes skeptically, for instance, the over-emphasis upon a sort of facile surface charm, the big smile and glad hand, at the expense of more solid virtues. He notes the fantastic acclaim lavished on the muscular victors of the football field, and the contrasting rejection of equally muscular trades in favor of more "respectable" white-collar jobs, however spiritually unrewarding. He speaks out against the insistence upon getting ahead and surpassing others that works against good neighborly relations. Note how readily Joe Keller sacrifices the interests of his next-door friend and partner, and how insultingly Willy speaks to Charley. In later plays, Miller especially decries the smugness and narrow-mindedness that lead to deplorable acts of intolerance.

Again, Arthur Miller was not the only writer voicing such views. Ibsen and other dramatists abroad had long before this developed a type of theatre adaptable for criticizing the values and attitudes of modern society. But in combination with his other manifest achievements, Miller's serious endeavors as an American social critic won him, from the first, encouraging recognition on the part of all who felt that the contemporary stage should show concern for the problems of contemporary life.

EARLY YEARS. Born in New York City on October 17, 1915, Arthur Miller was the son of an Austrian-born clothing manufacturer. He grew up in Brooklyn, which he would use as setting for *Death of a Salesman* and *A View from the Bridge*. In both plays he notes changes occurring during the years of his youth. Willy Loman, for instance, saw the almost rural area of small houses with flower and vegetable gardens yield to tall apartment buildings. And Alfieri, the lawyer in the latter play, saw its waterfront become more "civilized." Although Miller says little directly about his home life, there are some autobiographical hints in his plays. The genial side of Joe Keller may well have been suggested by his father's good-natured joking, and *After the Fall* indicates that his mother gave early encouragement to his literary promise.

DEPRESSION YEARS. Graduating from Brooklyn's Abraham Lincoln High School in 1932, Miller hoped to go to college, but the Depression had limited family finances. Several of his works reflect how hard men had to work to make a living during those years. Eddie, in *A View from the Bridge*, tells of his struggle to support his family, and it is clear that both Joe Keller and Willy Loman never found it very easy to forge ahead. In any event, to earn money toward a higher education, young Miller worked for two years in a

warehouse supplying automobile parts. Certain of the more pleasant aspects of this experience he recalls in his short play *A Memory of Two Mondays*. Subsequently he was able to go on to the University of Michigan. There he won the Avery Hopwood Award for his first play, *The Grass Still Grows*. He then continued to write dramas, completing his college course by means of a part-time newspaper job and help from the National Youth Administration.

RECOGNITION IN NEW YORK. Returning East after his 1938 graduation, Miller continued to create plays, while holding various jobs to make a living. He is said to have worked in a box factory and the Navy Yard, to have driven a truck, waited on tables, and served as crewman on a tanker. He also was connected with the Federal Theatre Project, wrote scripts, and did research for a film. In 1944 he brought out a war commentary, *Situation Normal*, and in the following year he published a novel against anti-Semitism, called *Focus*. His first play to receive a Broadway hearing, as indicated previously, was *The Man Who Had All the Luck* (1944). But full-scale success was attained actually with *All My Sons* (1947) and *Death of a Salesman* (1949).

AMERICAN FAMILY TRAGEDIES. Both *All My Sons* and *Death of a Salesman* deal with the business and domestic problems of middle-class American families. Both concern a father in conflict with two sons whose love and respect he ardently desires. Joe Keller wants, above all, to leave his boys a thriving business. But one, Larry, dies in the war. The other, Chris, is appalled to learn that while he was fighting overseas, his father shipped out defective plane parts. Rejected and condemned by his surviving son, Keller commits suicide. Never so prosperous as Joe Keller, Willy Loman too has great hopes for his sons, especially the elder, Biff. Willy brags to both of

his boys about his being well-liked and assures them of a great future awaiting them. Biff, disillusioned upon discovering his father's deceptions, drifts from job to job, while Happy resentfully makes up for his insignificant position by sensual self-indulgence. Unable to accept their failure and his own, Willy kills himself so that he can at least leave some impressive insurance money.

Of the two, *All My Sons* is the more conventional in form, with *Death of a Salesman* achieving fluidity by the skilled use of flashbacks. In both the heroes are not highly intelligent and not given to much genuinely perceptive self-criticism. They mean well, in general, but having uncritically accepted certain values find it hard to see where they went wrong. In both instances their sons come to reject their standards and angrily point out why. This means heart-break for the older men, with Keller eventually seeing more of the light than Willy ever does. Dramatically there is good lively conflict in these father-and-son scenes, and through the opposed points of view Miller is able to make some telling comments upon twentieth-century American life.

THE SALEM CHALLENGE. In 1950, Miller paid tribute to Ibsen, whose work he admired, by adapting the latter's fiery play about a repudiated idealist, *An Enemy of the People*. This, however, closed after a short run, although several years later it enjoyed some success off-Broadway. In 1953 Miller offered a new original work, *The Crucible*, based upon the trials for witchcraft that occurred in Massachusetts in the 1690s. In the 1950s the term "witch hunt" was being widely used to describe contemptuously various investigations launched by Congressional and other groups to expose un-American activities. Since it was understood that Miller himself had little sympathy for such official inquiries, many sought to reduce his play to a

simple allegory. Actually it is no mere propaganda piece, although there certainly is, by implication, criticism of the attitudes and methods of later interrogators. Subsequently Miller himself was to be called before a Congressional Committee headed by Senator Joseph McCarthy and even be convicted for failing to cite the names of those who formerly had engaged in radical activities. And his 1963 drama *After the Fall* would have more to say regarding such probes.

The Crucible, of which a more detailed analysis is provided in another of this series of review books, tells of the havoc wrought in early Salem when some restless young girls claim that witches are abroad in their village. Their leader, the beautiful and vindictive Abigail Williams, hopes for revenge against Elizabeth Proctor, from whose service she was dismissed after having had an affair with Elizabeth's husband, John. As more accusations are made, and many, including Elizabeth, are arrested, John Proctor joins with other sensible townsmen to try to stop the outrages. Charged himself and imprisoned, he must decide whether to live and make provision for his children even if this means swearing to a lie, or going to his death rather than deny the truth. He makes the second choice. Like Joe Keller and Willy Loman he thus makes a full commitment, but sees issues more clearly than they do. So his sacrifice is thus perhaps more meaningful. A noteworthy feature of this drama is the language used to suggest the blunt but forceful idiom of the early colonists. Miller adapts the speech of the times admirably to give his play a period flavor without making the quaint touches unnecessarily intrusive. As compared with *Death of a Salesman*, the form or structure is more conventional. But it is a powerful play, with exciting action and eloquent lines. It also suggests an admirable idealism, for such characters as the two Proctors and Rebecca Nurse make truly heroic decisions.

TWO SHORT PLAYS. Two and a half years later, in September, 1955, Miller offered a double bill of two short works, neither of which was particularly well received. The first, *A Memory of Two Mondays*, was a brief mood piece remembering his youthful experiences in the auto-parts warehouse. The young office boy, Bert, who is working, as did Miller, to earn money for college, takes a friendly interest in the joys and sorrows of his fellow employees, while wondering how they go on seemingly content with routine work over the years. When he leaves, however, he is saddened to realize how readily they will forget him. Snatches of poetry and certain softening effects in set and lighting cast an almost romantic glow over the mundane happenings in the drab, dingy old factory.

As for *A View from the Bridge*, here Miller chose to deal with Brooklyn residents quite different culturally from those in *Death of a Salesman*. Again, however, the tone was tragic and conflict was developed between family members of two generations. Again the father figure would seek blindly to safeguard the future for the young, and again be rejected and go to his death violently. Eddie Carbone, a hard-working longshoreman, is overly fond of his wife's niece, Catherine. When the girl falls in love with Rodolpho, an illegal immigrant sheltered by the Carbone family, Eddie convinces himself that the marriage would not be a good one for Catherine. Unable to dissuade her, he eventually turns informer and dies in a knife duel with Rodolpho's irate brother. Like Willy Loman, Eddie is not overly intelligent and cannot perceive his bias even when enlightened by the wise lawyer, Alfieri. But once certain that his course is right, Eddie, too, gives full commitment. So he is another unyielding Miller hero, willing to give up everything for his tenaciously held belief. An interesting departure in this work is the use of the cultivated Alfieri as a sort of chorus, adding interpretations that could not be formulated by

Eddie's uneducated group. And some critics have indicated other echoes in this play of older tragic themes. Yet again, this is a drama about a "common man," passionately determined and uncompromising. Dissatisfied with the work's original form, Miller later expanded the piece to a full-length play. Revived off-Broadway during the 1964-65 season, this longer form was hailed with enthusiasm as a strong, effective tragic drama.

AFTER THE FALL. No new plays by Miller appeared during the next nine years until *After the Fall* opened at the new American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) theatre in New York in 1964. During that time, however, significant events occurred in Miller's life. In 1956 and 1957, for instance, he was summoned before the McCarthy committee and found guilty of contempt of Congress. This conviction was later reversed. Also during this period he had marital difficulties. After a divorce from his first wife, Mary Slattery, by whom he had two children, he married in 1956 the well-known motion-picture star, Marilyn Monroe. With her in mind, he wrote a poignant story, *The Misfits*, and adapted it for the screen. She starred in the film with Clark Gable. But this union, too, ended in divorce, followed by her suicide, and he subsequently wed a young European woman, Ingeborg Morath.

Like *Death of a Salesman*, *After the Fall* uses flashbacks to show what memories affect a man's thinking, but here all action takes place in the head of its hero, the lawyer, Quentin. There are no "outside" scenes, such as those between Linda and the boys, which are hardly in Willy Loman's thoughts. The setting is colorless and almost abstract. And characters appear and vanish readily as Quentin thinks about them. In general, Quentin, twice divorced and considering a third marriage to a German girl, reviews his life to date. He re-

calls unhappy scenes with his first wife, Louise. He painfully relives episodes occurring at the time old friends were summoned before Congressional committees. And above all, he keeps referring to his turbulent second marriage to an unstable blonde entertainer, Maggie, who later died a suicide. Agonizing over the problem of guilt, his own and that of others typified in Nazi atrocities, he finally takes heart from the counsels of Holga, the German girl, to accept his limitations and go on with courage and hope. The alleged autobiographical element in this work attracted considerable attention. In particular the rather sensational scenes with Maggie, the self-deceiving singer lost through drink and drugs, gave rise to comment. Some thought the apparent revelations in poor taste; others merely found the episodes intensely dramatic. The over-all format too was the subject of controversy, some finding it too diffuse for any satisfactory development of plot or characters. Incidentally, Maggie's false image of herself recalls the instances of self-deception in *All My Sons*, *Death of a Salesman*, and *A View from the Bridge*. And the scenes of family conflict from Quentin's boyhood echo the bitter domestic quarrels in earlier works.

INCIDENT AT VICHY. Also produced in 1964, this somewhat shorter work deals more fully with the question of Nazi crimes raised in *After the Fall*. In 1942, ten men suspected of being Jewish are brought in for questioning in Vichy, France. As the play proceeds, the ten prisoners speculate fearfully as to their fate, hopefully exploring every suggestion that all may yet be well. The final debate involves an intense Jewish psychiatrist who tries to convince an Austrian Catholic prince, arrested in error, that all who do not actively oppose the persecution of others are partially responsible for the resultant horrors. Appalled at this accusation, the prince gives his own pass to freedom to the doctor, thus accepting responsibility. Audi-

ences in general seem to find this work a moving experience. The stakes are high, the suspense is continual, and the discussions are lively and revealing. Also interesting is the fact that with no intermission the action could realistically take place in the time allotted for the play. Adverse critics, however, have found little new said about the World War II atrocities and the ten "typical" characters little more than personifications of certain points of view.

SUMMATION. During the twenty years following his first Broadway production in 1944, Arthur Miller has remained in the forefront of important American playwrights. Most anthologies and histories of the drama in the country give space to his works, and productions of his plays have been given overseas. He has, of course, not escaped adverse criticism. His language has been called banal and lacking in emotional power. He has been attacked as too negative in his view of American society and especially unfair to American business. Again there have been those who have rejected his concept of tragedy as meanly bourgeois, regarding his "common man" heroes as "little" and "common" in the worst sense, and not genuinely human enough to qualify as tragic figures at all. Nor have his technical approaches been universally approved. *All My Sons* was found to be too rigidly constructed, *After the Fall* too diffusely. The Act One "Overture" to *The Crucible* has annoyed some commentators, and the terminal "Requiem" to *Death of a Salesman* others.

Yet the very prevalence of so much controversy over this dramatist testifies to his influential position in the American theatre. Regardless of objections posed to this or that individual aspect of his work, his reputation has remained unchallenged until recently (1964), when the critic Robert Brustein, among others, questioned Miller's worth as a dramatist. But even those who take issue with him have