

**THE IMPACT OF THE FAILURE OF THE MAIN CHARACTER'S
MARRIAGE IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *AFTER THE FALL***



A Thesis presented to the English Department,
Faculty of Letters, Jember University,
as one of the requirements to get
the Award of Sarjana Sastra Degree
in English Studies

By :

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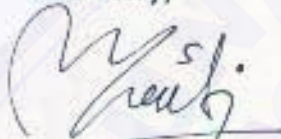
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APPROVAL SHEET

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Jember, April 1, 2002

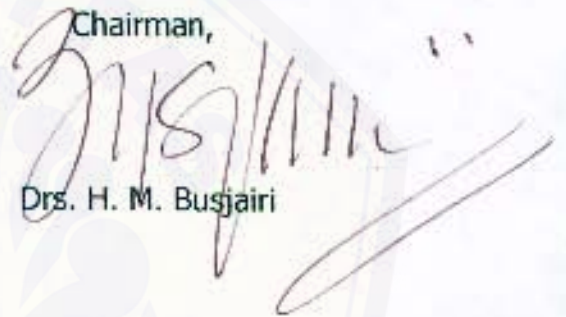
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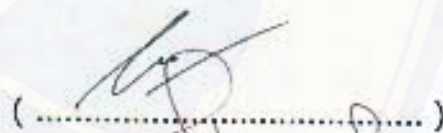
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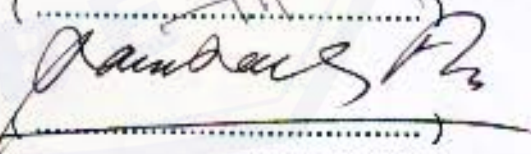
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MOTTO :

Do your best, do what is right,

and

God will do the rest

(TRACY TRINITA)

Dedicated to :

☪ *My beloved parents:*

Muhammad Syafei and Martinis Munir

*Thank you for guiding and encouraging me
Both of you've taught me how to walk without your hands*

☪ *My dearest sister and brothers:*

Ir. Lasmi Apriaty, Dedy Hendri, Febriwan and Hendra Hanafi

*Thank you so much for your supports, love
and togetherness that we've shared*

☪ *My best friends Mubin, Diana, Evi, and Rize*

*You're all the best I've ever had and I will never forget
our true friendship*

☪ *My beloved Alma Mater*

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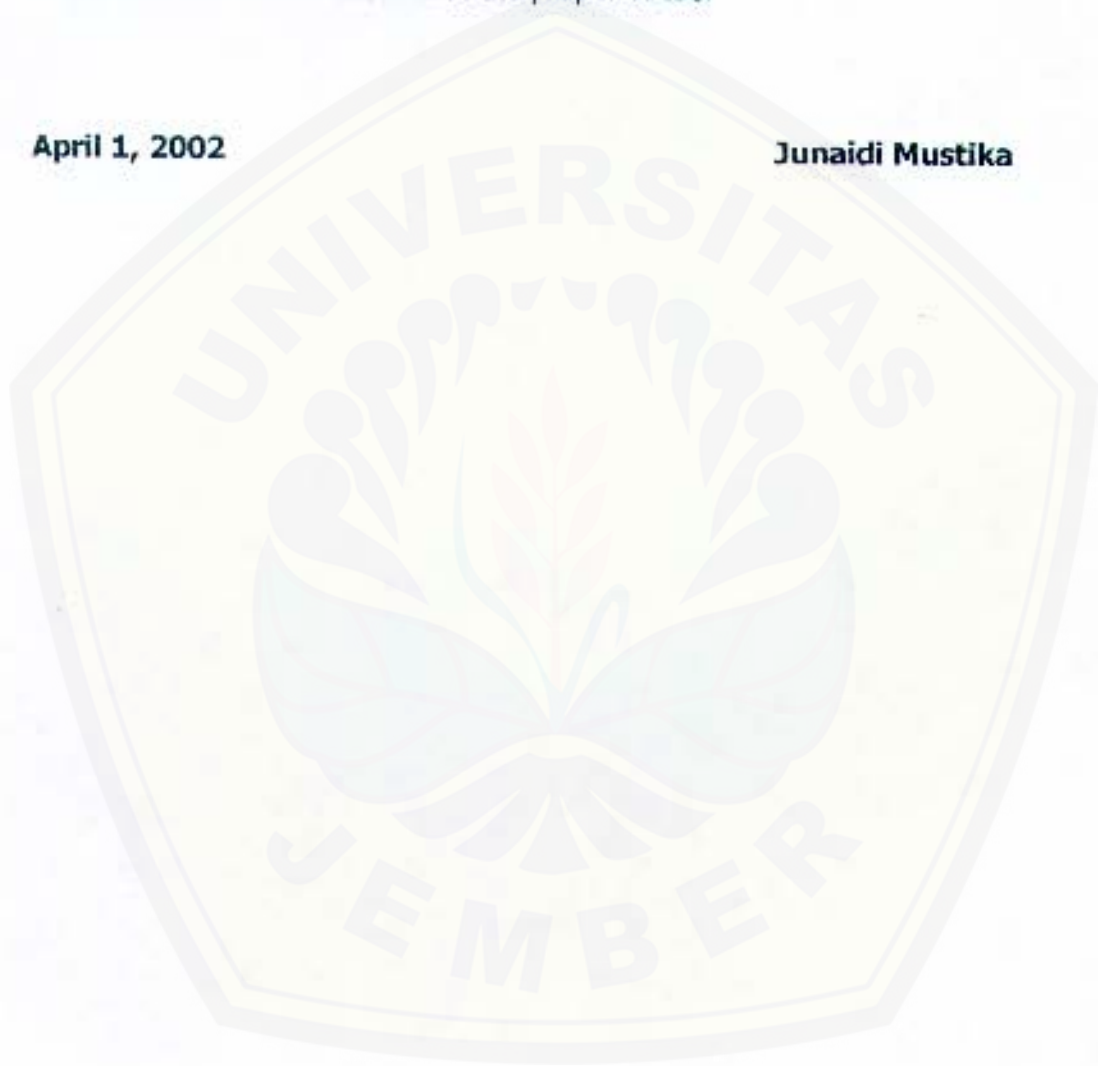
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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Rationale

Literature is surely the reflection of human life. It gives the readers not only pleasure but also moral teaching. It can be the portrayal of human joy or human misery. Moreover, it is the creation of a person who uses imagination to interpret life. It is in accordance with Jones's definition that literature is "simply another way we can experience the world around us through our imagination" (1968:1)

It is common that literary works use individual or society as the object of its interpretation. The author gets inspiration from many events in social life. It may be his own experience or other's. Principally, literature depicts the social life as stated by Wellek in *Theory of Literature* that

Literature 'represents' 'life'; and 'life' is in large measure, a social reality, even though the natural world and the inner or subjective world of the individual have also been the objects of literary 'imitation' ... (1956:94)

According to the quotation above, literature cannot be separated from society. The social phenomena depicted in literary works may occur from the events or facts in society, interaction between individuals, conflict that usually happens, etc.

Drama or play, one of literary forms, is "written to be performed on the stage" (Reaske, 1981:5). The performance of drama requires some elements of literature to interpret it obviously. When it is performed on the stage, the dialogues become the most important aspect because they will lead the actors or actresses to create their roles. In addition, Reaske defines that drama is a work of literature or composition, which

delineates life, and human activity by means of presenting various actions of-and dialogues between-a group of character (1981:5).

Arthur Miller is one of the greatest American dramatists who uses the social phenomena as the central theme. This theme is truly a big interest for Miller to compose his works from psychological side. As the playwright who writes the social reality in his works, he gets a good reputation in American literature.

After the Fall was produced in 1964 after his broken marriage with a beautiful and famous actress, Marilyn Monroe. This play tells about the marriages and the failures that happen in Quentin's marriages. The failures of his marriages give some impacts to Quentin, the protagonist. According to Marowski and Roger Matuz, *After the Fall* explores questions of social responsibility and personal guilt independent of family environment (1988:248). Miller writes this play after he experiences the failures of his own married life. Here, Quentin - the main character - is a portrait of a wealthy man's son and an intellectual man. His parents live in disharmony so that finally they get divorced. From the point of view of Leonard, Quentin is an individual who has seen the wreckages of two marriages. He has seen the failure of love both in his family and among his friends (1974:163).

After the Fall is characterized as an autobiographical drama, which illustrates some psychological problems. It shows the condition of the failures of Quentin's marriages. He becomes a man who loses his confidence after facing his two broken marriages. However, he has suffered from his marriages that make him fall. His struggle to survive from many problems is sustained by his strength, both physically and mentally, which enables him to solve his problems. Then, how deep is the impact of the failures of Quentin's marriages is interesting to make a topic

entitled **"The Impact of the Failure of The Main Character's Marriage in Arthur Miller's *After The Fall*".**

1.2 The Problems to Discuss

The married couple sometimes face some problems that make their marriage in disharmony. They may happen because of the financial, sexual relationship, career problem, or another problem. They also happen to Quentin that leads this play into the portrait of his married life. A husband or a wife has the equal position in marriage. One has similar rights and obligation in marriage. People who can sustain their marriage will find happiness. On the other hand, those who cannot resist their marriage will find many conflicts. If they cannot solve their problems, they may divorce then.

In *After the Fall*, Quentin fails to build a happy marriage. He has suffered from his two broken marriages and finally found his prospective marriage in his third marriage with Holga. Then, the discussion of this thesis is focused on these problems. Firstly, it is necessary to analyze the factors causing the failures in Quentin's marriages. Secondly, it is aimed at finding the impacts of the failures toward him. Lastly, the most important problem is to analyze how far the impacts of the failures of his marriages may influence his life.

1.3 The Scope of the Study

To avoid a complicated discussion, the analysis is focused on the failures of the main character's marriages and the impacts that happen to Quentin. It means that it discusses only Quentin's married life and some events, which relate with his actions. Therefore, it is expected that better understanding about the topic will be gained.

1.4 The Goals of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to understand human life and his society, especially on Miller's works. By appreciating his works, it is hoped that other people will be interested in reading his works. Secondly, the other aims are to apply the theory of literature by interpreting the literary work. The last is to understand the main character's attempts to face the failures of his marriages. In short, it is also hoped that the study will be a meaningful contribution to everyone who studies literature as his or her field.

1.5 The Approach to Use

To analyze a literary work, a suitable approach is demanded to get a clear description and detailed explanation. In *After the Fall*, the psychological approach is used to analyze the play.

Psychological approach is applied to depict the impact of the failure of the main character's marriage in the play entirely. Wilbur S. Scott says that there are three applications of the psychological knowledge to art:

First, it provides a more precise language with which to discuss the creative process. ... Second, it can study the lives of authors as a means of understanding their art. ...Third, psychology can be used to explain fictitious character. ...(1962:71-72)

Among the three applications, the relevant applications that relate to the topic is the second and third, so that both are used for the analysis. They help to analyze the discussion about the psychological problems and the impact of the failures that happen on the main character's marriages. Quentin faces many conflicts on his marriages. It can be seen on the dialogues between Quentin with Louise, Maggie, Holga, and also his friends.

1.6 The Method of Analysis

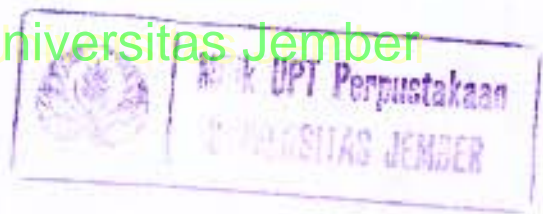
Firstly, the library research is applied in writing this thesis. It concerns with collecting data and information derived from several books and dictionaries. Secondly, inductive method, which is a way of drawing a conclusion of certain knowledge of particular, cases the general one (Hadi,2000:42) is also applied on this analysis.

1.7 The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of four chapters. Chapter One presents the introduction. The biography of Arthur Miller and the synopsis of *After the Fall* are described in Chapter Two. Then, Chapter Three is the main discussion of this thesis, which presents the impact of the failure of the main character's marriage. This chapter consists of the meanings of the terms, the failures of Quentin's marriages and the impact of the failures of the marriages towards him. The last chapter, Chapter Four, is the conclusion of the entire discussion.



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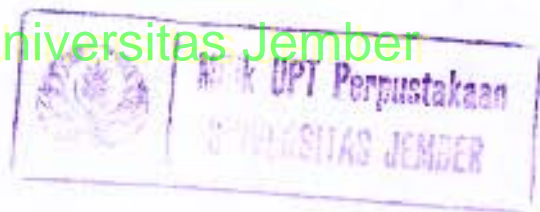
CHAPTER II

THE BIOGRAPHY OF ARTHUR MILLER AND THE SYNOPSIS OF *AFTER THE FALL*

2.1 The Biography of Arthur Miller

Arthur Miller was regarded as one of the important American playwrights after World War II (*Encyclopedia Americana*, 1998:123). Miller was born on October 17, 1915 in Manhattan, New York. He was a son of Augusta Barnett Miller and Isadora. His father was a lady coat manufacturer, while his mother was a schoolteacher. He came from the middle class of Jewish family. His brother was a businessman and his sister was an actress. Therefore, he was not only famous as an American dramatist but also an essayist, script writer, short story writer, novelist, and autobiographer (Marowski, 1988:247).

The Depression surely gave the impact to all of American citizens. Young Miller, who studied at Harlem firstly, then moved to Brooklyn because of its force. In the Depression years, he lived in the midwood section of Brooklyn. His father suffered from the economic depression in 1932 that made his business failed. Though it was a hard life, when he was seventeen years old, he graduated his high school from the Abraham Lincoln. He, who had good enough grades, could not enter the college because his parents could not afford to send him in. He attempted to face the social reality by working in various jobs around New York. He worked in the auto supply warehouse, which then became the setting for his one-act play, *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955). After that, he worked in a small Brooklyn radio station as a crooner. He was a kind of person who never gave up to face a hard life. Although he has worked for two and a half years, he still had a strong desire to study in a college. It was proved



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by his successful application to the University of Michigan in 1934. Bigsby in *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama* said that he chose the journalism major and then switched to English at the age of nineteen (1984:137).

Miller was an active person. At Michigan, he found some works to add his income. He worked as a night editor on the *Michigan Daily*. While he was in university, he began to write his first play *Honors at Dawn* (1936) that it successfully won the Avery Hopwood Award. He received the same award for his' *No Villain* (1937) (Helterman, 1981:87).

Arthur Miller got his degree, Bachelor of Art (B.A), from the university in 1938. When he was 23 years old, he wrote *They Too Arise* (1938), which won the Theatre Guild Award. He received the cash prize amount to \$ 1250. This prize encouraged him to do engagement with his Michigan schoolmate, Mary Grace Slattery. After graduating his study, he returned to New York and joined the Federal Theatre Project. Then, he joined the radio workshop as a radio scriptwriter (Moss, 1966:249).

The success as a radio scriptwriter made Miller live in a medium he had never considered seriously. After he was established, he married Mary Grace Slattery in 1940. They lived in Patchogue, Long Island. It was an interesting place for Miller where he could get some inspiration for his works (Moss, 1966:249).

Then, in 1944 he visited the army camps in World War II to provide some materials for the making of Ernie Pyle's film. It was such a new experience for him when he should observe their life completely. The observation was used to complete the material for the filming of *Story of GI Joe* (1945) and journal, which published in 1944 called *Situation Normal*. In 1944 Miller produced his next play, which is entitled *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. This was the play that initially performed on

Broadway. Then in 1945 he wrote his first novel *Focus* and sold out until 90,000 copies (Helterman, 1981:87-88).

At the development of his career, Miller suffered from his marriage besides his success. He received many awards for his works but failed on his first marriage because of its disharmony. In 1947, *All My Sons* won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award (Leonard, 1974:151). The performance of this play earned him to build a studio. Bryan Ryan stated in *Major 20th Century American Writers* "with the box-office proceeds of *All My Sons*, Miller bought a farm in rural Connecticut. There he built himself a studio and began to work on another drama" (1991:2053). The success was followed by the *Death of a Salesman* (1949) that received two awards: the New York Drama Critics Circle and the Pulitzer Prize award. This play depicted the main character, Willy Loman, who was being a tragic hero for his family and also his society. To many people, this play was still generally regarded as Miller's masterpiece. It was amazingly produced on February 10, 1949, on Broadway and performed for 742 performances. Then, at December 28, 1950, he produced the adaptation of Ibsen's *Enemy of the People* (Leonard, 1974:153-154).

The Crucible (1953) might be his most controversial play that portrayed the Salem witch trials. This play focused on the dignity of man and received the Antoinette Perry (Tony) Award. In September 25, 1955, he produced *A Memory of Two Mondays* and *A View from the Bridge*, which won his third Drama Critics Circle award (Helterman, 1981:100). They were one-act plays that were also performed on Broadway. Miller, who is 86 years old now, had ever been involved with American politics. His name was ever blackened in 1955 and suspected by the State Department as a person who became a member or sympathizer for Communist party. Though many problems happened in him, he surely attempted to be a strong person. In 1955, his first marriage with Mary

Grace Slattery was disharmonious anymore. They decided to divorce at that year (Leonard, 1974:161).

Being failed in his first marriage, Miller did not feel despair on his own life. He married Marilyn Monroe in 1956 after his unsuccessful marriage previously. His marriage with Miss Monroe, a beautiful actress, arose many comments. Such as the headline of the *'Pinko Playwright Weds Sex Goddess'* became big news. Monroe married Miller for some purposes of her own career. She was tired of casting on her movies as only 'dumb blonde' roles. She thought that her marriage with him, the skillful and intellectual playwright, could increase her popularity rapidly. Moreover, she wanted him to create a new role that was very different than before. Miller soon felt into Monroe's career rather than vice versa and influenced in her financial arrangements and script choices too. The marriage of this celebrity couple began to founder when Monroe felt that she was unable to bear Miller's child. During this time, he produced no new plays. He only wrote the screenplay of *Misfits* (1961) and dedicated to her. Perhaps it was the proof of Miller's love but satire to her. It seemed that Monroe hated her role as Roslyn 'the unfortunate misfits' on this movie. They started to quarrel about whose picture it was. She thought that she was just the 'dumb blonde'. Finally, realizing that their marriage intolerable, they left Hollywood separately and divorced in 1961. In 4 August 1962, Miss Monroe was found dead because of the overdose of sleeping pills.

In the following year, Miller married a Swedish photographer for *Reuters*, Ingeborg Morath. She really supported him so that he could finish *After the Fall*. Having been absent for several years, he came back to the stage with his first play that was finished in nine years, *After the Fall* (1964). Many critics argued that it was an autobiography drama and Miller's testimony of life.

Nowadays, Miller stays in the country squire of 400 acres of Connecticut countryside where he spends his old time and writes four to six hours every morning in an isolated studio (Helterman, 1981:87). Besides his successful works previously mentioned, he had also written *Incident at Vichy* (1965), *I Don't Need You Anymore*, which was the short stories collection, produced in 1967. The other works are *The Price* (1968), *The Archbishop's Ceiling* (1977), *The American Clock* (1980), *Playing for Time* (1981), *The Last Yankee* (1993), and *Broken Glass* (1994).

Arthur Miller uses drama brilliantly as a medium to express his thought and feeling about what happens to his surroundings. He is a playwright who illustrates the social problems in his most works. Although Miller is only a playwright but he is able to portray and deliver the message to the audience nicely. Moreover, he is also a productive author because until now he has produced over 55 works including plays, novels, essays, and some scripts for radio and television (<http://www.ArthurMiller.com>).

2.2 The Synopsis of *After the Fall*

Quentin is a famous lawyer at his forties. He is the son of the rich family. His father works as a successful businessman who becomes a weak man by the involvement of his wife. His mother is a typical of selfish and materialistic woman. She demands a lot of things and money from Quentin's father. Meanwhile, his parents have two sons, the first named Dan and Quentin is the second.

Then, his father's company begins to go bankrupt when Quentin was still child. His father feels depressed like other depressed men, so that at that time he needs more attention from his wife. Unfortunately, Quentin's mother is unable to give him affection that he needs. She

cannot give him any attention even insults that he is a foolish husband who undergoes the bankruptcy. Since then, there is no happiness on their marriage. She often quarrels about money. Young Quentin often cried when he heard his mother's arguing. He has ever seen her mother's treatment to her father. If he cannot give her any dollars anymore, she will leave him. It is very difficult for him to save their marriage. His wife becomes a materialistic woman who does not support him at the failure of his business.

Young Quentin starts to understand the condition of his parents' marriage obviously. From those quarrels, he realizes that it is a broken marriage. Since then, he has a bad perception about marriage. Knowing this problem, marriage is just like a bad thing for him. In his opinion, he thinks that he does not want to marry anyone.

In the college, Quentin meets a girl from the same subject named Louise. He is interested in her for his first love. He slowly can throw away his past trauma by this relationship. Their relationship seems serious when finally they decide to marry after getting their Master degree. It is the first marriage for Quentin. Their marriage seems happy because they love each other.

When Quentin was thirty years old, he has already become a famous lawyer in the city where he lives. He successfully builds the firm of law with his partners. He has reached this position by his own attempt. Being regarded as a famous lawyer, he gets a good reputation in the development of his work. Nowadays, after his career is in top, he is busier than before in facing the consequence of his profession.

Meanwhile, Quentin has two close friends, Lou and Mickey. Lou is a Professor of Law, while Mickey is a lawyer. Mickey is a member of the Party of Communist, but both of Quentin and Lou are not either. He is hoped by his organization to recruit a new member. Because of Lou's

status, he becomes the target of this recruitment. Mickey tries in many ways to persuade Lou to join this party. On the other hand, Lou has his own belief that he will not be a member or supporter of the Communist party. Of course, he hates this action and even refuses Mickey's proposal. He thinks that his name is only sold by his own friendship with Mickey for some political intrigues. Hearing his refusal, Mickey is very angry with him and he says that their friendship should end. After this happening, Quentin never sees Lou in his office. He thinks that it must be the influence of Mickey's recruitment. Lou thinks that Mickey feels disappointed with him so that he does not come to their office again.

One day, after finishing his work in the office, Quentin goes to a park city to take a rest. Actually, he sits there just to relax and reminds him of Lou's problem facing the terror from Mickey. He asks himself why it can happen on their friendship. It shows that he wants to destroy their relationship without thinking the effect that will occur. Then, when he feels that he cannot help Lou except his advice only, Quentin intends to go home. Suddenly, there is a beautiful woman who recognizes him as the famous lawyer. The girl is Maggie, a famous singer in the city. They introduce each other and share their problems.

After that meeting, Maggie tells her own life to Quentin. She says that until this time she cannot find her father. She tries to find her father because she never gets any love and affection from the figure of a father. Her father had left her and her mother when she was a child. She has tried to find her father, but the man whom she thinks her father refuses and denies on her. The man says that Maggie is not his daughter. However, she feels so sad and disappointed. Although she succeeds being a famous singer, she never feels such happiness in her life. Maggie then talks frankly to him and he can see her sadness in her eyes. So, he sympathizes on her and knows that Maggie needs someone to help her.

For Quentin, it means that she really needs a friendship and he can do what she wants.

After the conversation with Maggie, Quentin goes home late at night. Louise is very confused with this situation. She waits for him until he comes. When he arrives at home, Louise is very angry with him because of his late. Louise worries him because she has received two phone calls for him. The first call comes from his friend who calls him for the meeting. Besides, the second call shocks him very much. His friend informs him a bad news that Lou has died by committing suicide. Hearing this news, he is very sad because he has lost one of his best friends. He says to Louise that he goes to the park city to take a rest for a while in the afternoon. It may be his mistake by going home late. She does not believe at all, even she suspects him that he makes a date with another woman. Therefore, it makes Quentin deny her suspicion and he also admits that he meets a woman in that place.

After hearing her husband's admission, Louise becomes jealous and angry. She does not want to sleep at the same room with him at that night. She says angrily that Quentin must sleep in the living room. This condition initially leads their marriage in trouble. Finally, they decide to divorce after realizing that they have no the same perception and cannot be united into one anymore.

Then, Quentin has a close relationship with another woman. In his desperation, he meets Maggie, a famous pop singer. She is a beautiful and sensual girl. In short, he decides to marry Maggie. In this second marriage, it seems happy first until there are some problems that occur in their marriage. Maggie begins to show her pride as a famous and different person. She feels that she is a famous singer and she wants Quentin to appreciate her more than a wife. Even, she thinks that she is

higher than her husband in the social status. It shows that Maggie is a selfish woman who does not have any respect to her husband.

The second marriage of Quentin begins disharmonious when Maggie once finds a letter in Quentin's suit. She feels very angry after reading the letter clearly. In that letter Quentin writes that the only one he loves is his daughter. Maggie feels upset with this letter. She feels jealous when she knows that her husband loves his daughter more than her. The situation of this family becomes complicated when Maggie cannot accept the reality. She becomes an alcoholic and takes overdose of sleeping pills for several times. Then, Maggie died because of the overdose of those things.

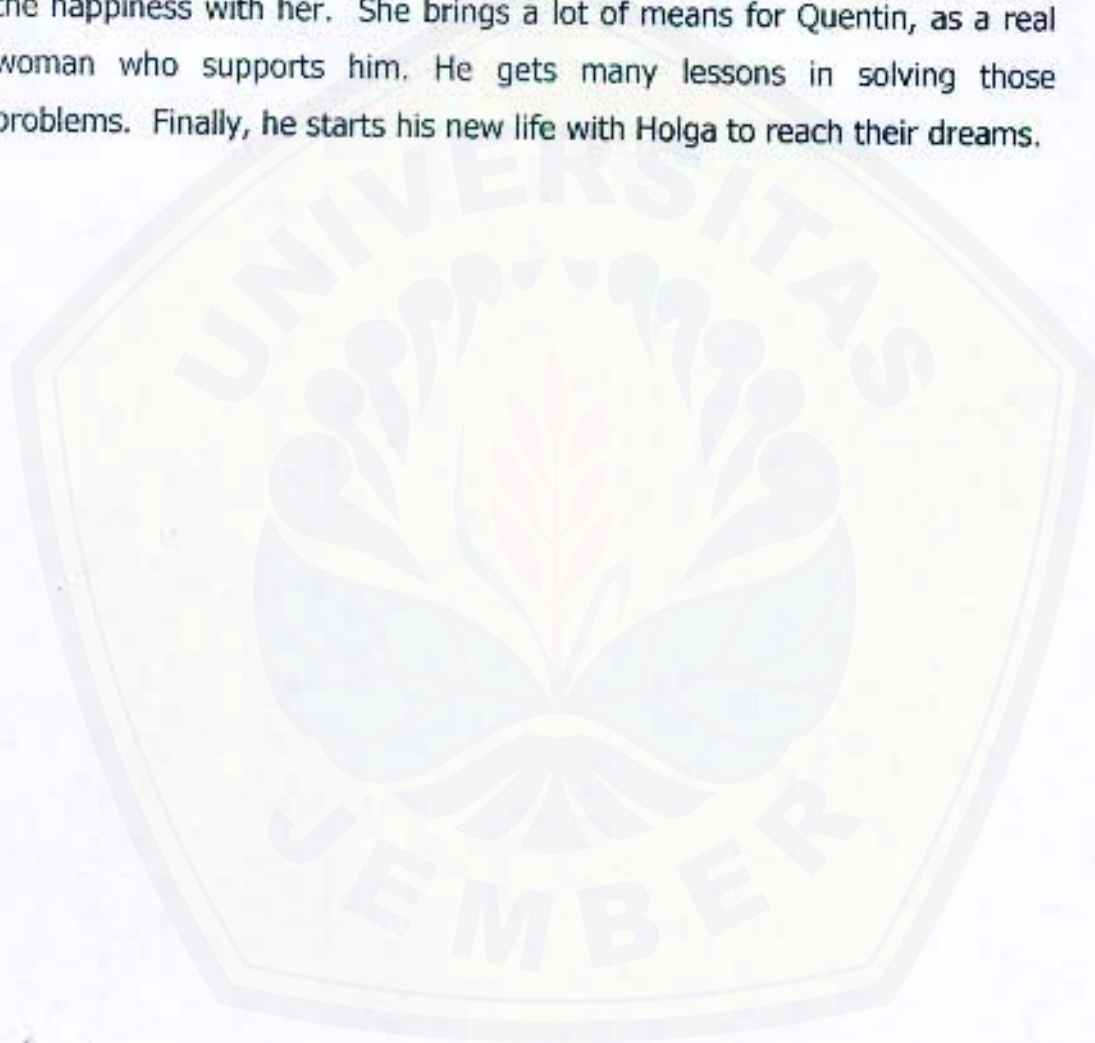
Facing his two unsuccessful marriages, Quentin becomes a weak person. He then becomes afraid to imagine what marriage really is. Even, he feels so lonely after the two unsuccessful marriages. As a result, he thinks that love is something strange for him. The two events make him frustrated and he promises himself not to marry again. He then hates his both former wife, Louise and Holga.

He faces a dilemma when he meets a German woman named Holga, whether he wants to marry again or not. On the other hand, Holga can attract his attention. In his loneliness, she is accepted by Quentin to become his partner and continue his next life better. Holga is the character of a woman who brings many hopes. Besides that, she is a woman who can stand on her own feet and a figure of a mature woman.

Then, Quentin falls in love with Holga. He really feels that she is so special for him. Apparently, she also gives a good response for him. Although she knows everything about his past experiences, she loves him and understands his trauma very much. That is the positive side of Holga's personality. She can comprehend his experiences wisely. For Quentin, Holga is a woman who has an ability in helping him to find his

lost confidence. He believes that his past experiences teach him a good lesson and he should face the reality of life with courage and confidence.

Shortly, Quentin feels sure that Holga is the right woman to be his partner of life to create a happy family. He believes in his principle that she will not ever disappoint him and even he promises himself to reach the happiness with her. She brings a lot of means for Quentin, as a real woman who supports him. He gets many lessons in solving those problems. Finally, he starts his new life with Holga to reach their dreams.



CHAPTER IV
CONCLUSION



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Most of Arthur Miller's works depict the human life and his society. This enables him to get a reputation as a brilliant playwright who can frame the social phenomena naturally. Miller composes *After the Fall* after getting the inspiration from his unsuccessful marriage with Marilyn Monroe. Different from his other works, this play depicts the psychological problems that are faced by the main character, Quentin.

After the Fall portrays the failures of Quentin's marriages. He has married twice with two women who have different personalities too. Firstly, he marries Louise. She is an educated and patient woman. It is true that they live disharmoniously because they fail to build a happy family. Louise demands much attention from him whereas he cannot behave as she hopes. It happens because he is a famous lawyer who seldom stays at home. Secondly, Quentin feels unsatisfied on sexual relationship to Louise. Thirdly, Louise feels jealous of his affair with other women. While in the second marriage, he marries an uneducated, a childish and easy-going woman. Maggie feels that she has high social status than Quentin. It proves that since then he dislikes Maggie's attitude of being famous person. Then, Quentin hates his bad attitude, such as taking sleeping pills and drinking alcohol. It really becomes a trouble because Quentin has reminded her to stop her habits but she only ignores him. Moreover, Maggie also hates to be compared with his former wife or his mother. She wants him to understand her completely. His second marriage ends tragically after Maggie has died because of an overdose of sleeping pills.

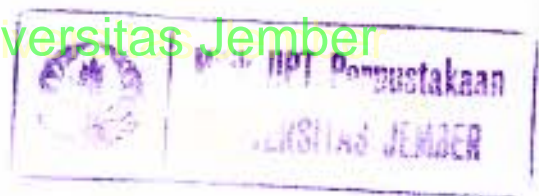
During his loneliness after Maggie's death, Quentin faces many problems. The failure of his marriages gives some negative and positive

impacts upon him. Firstly, he loses his self-confidence after he gets failure. It proves that he has no capability to work on his firm because he cannot concentrate on a case anymore. He then realizes that it is difficult for him to love someone totally. Secondly, he faces a dilemma after his divorces. He is so confused whether he wants to marry again or not. From the analysis of the discussion, it is true that the failures of Quentin's marriages also give a positive impact. He finds his true love on Holga because she supports him so much. Her patient, understanding and courage have proved that Quentin can awake from his past experiences. In fact, he gets his self-confidence after he meets Holga. It means that the impact of the failure does not always give a bad impact but also might give a positive impact. Since then, he is able to love someone totally.

Failure is inseparable from human life. One must have self-confidence and believe in his own ability to solve his problems. In *After the Fall*, it is provable that the impacts of the failure of Quentin's marriages give moral lesson for the readers. It concludes that how hard and difficult is the problem; it can be solved with patience and strong will. Everyone may face those problems even the famous lawyer like Quentin. From the discussion, it is better to understand one's personality deeply and completely before deciding to get married.

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