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ARTHUR MILLER'S *RESURRECTION BLUES*: THE LEAST MILLERESQUE PLAY?

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Abstract. Starting from the observation that Arthur Miller's *Resurrection Blues* is in many ways unique in comparison to the playwright's previous oeuvre, we offer evidence that the drama testifies to the evolution of Miller's style, rather than a change in his focus. The conclusion that Miller's penultimate play is the least Milleresque is a consequence of its contemporaneity, unusual setting, and adaptation of the topic to contemporary intellectual currents. Although the context of *Resurrection Blues* is undeniably postmodern, the themes that permeate Miller's entire oeuvre—social criticism, innocence, and guilt—are also crucial to this drama. This paper argues that *Resurrection Blues*, despite being often interpreted as cynical, suggests that the possibility of resistance to the system and redemption exists. However, the play does not imply that a profound change is possible through a political revolution, but only through a change within the individual, i.e. a revolution of consciousness.

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Resurrection Blues—*Postmodern, but still Milleresque*

Prima facie, Arthur Miller's *Resurrection Blues* (2002) is in many ways unique compared to the famous American playwright's previous work. Critics like Leinster have even characterised *Resurrection Blues* as "probably the least Miller-esque play" (2018, p. 123). In contrast to the playwright's earlier work, which, according to Šoškić, was characterised by a serious, almost solemn style, this drama is marked by a tone that is amusing, ironic, and caustic (Шошкић, 2022б, p. 150). *Resurrection Blues* is not a tragedy, but a tragic farce or a dark comedy. Instead of ending with the protagonist's death, the play concludes in an open and ambiguous manner. Unlike Miller's earlier oeuvre, which mainly focuses on events from America's past, the context of Miller's penultimate play is undeniably contemporary. Hence, its absence of history is distinctively postmodern. Moreover, *Resurrection Blues* delves into one of the crucial preoccupations of postmodern literature—it does not deny that reality exists but rather "questions what reality can mean, and how we can come to know it" (Hutcheon, 2002, p. 32). According to this critic, post-modernism entails constant examination, i.e. criticism, to "de-naturalize some of the dominant features of our way of life" (2002, p. 12). As reflected in the play, contemporary society exhibits a discrepancy between reality and our perception of it, as the politicians and the media (television in particular) go to great lengths to shape our understanding of reality. Using the mechanisms of propaganda and packaging reality to suit their interests, these two power structures misinform the public to anaesthetise it and reduce its critical abilities, so that the average person can hardly distinguish illusion from fact.

In addition to its absence of history and questioning reality, *Resurrection Blues*'s form also testifies to its postmodernistic elements. The play blurs the boundaries between the characters and the reader/audience. For example, in the prologue, Jeanine directly addresses the audience and introduces the characters, thereby breaking the fourth wall. The drama also incorporates parody and irony, distinctive literary devices of postmodernism. The purpose of using these narrative techniques in Miller's penultimate drama is not merely to express dark humour

as a cynical response to "a situation that has already moved past our control" (Mason, 2003, p. 665). In an attempt to scratch beneath the surface and uncover what lies behind the scenes, Miller's play may not aim for immediate political change. However, it does aim to raise awareness, which is key to changing individual attitudes and ultimately leading to desired changes on a broader level in the long run. Hence, this paper argues that despite its postmodern framework and style, *Resurrection Blues* is indisputably a work of social criticism. In this play, Miller also delves into his most salient themes—challenging key American myths (including materialism, self-sufficiency, and selfishness (Churchwell, 2019, p. 49)), innocence and culpability, the possibility of choice, and passivity as a tragic flaw. The play's criticism may be subtle and hidden behind parody, but its pointing out what is wrong with both society and its individuals is the first step towards raising the level of consciousness, which is the basic prerequisite for a profound change.

That the implications of this play are not overt and clear but are lurking beneath its ironic veneer is again in line with the postulates of postmodernism, one of the most important of which is, according to David Lodge (1977), uncertainty (p. 10). The fictional world of Miller's penultimate play is extremely uncertain—it is a world in which the line between reality and illusion is blurred, where even the existence of the character after whom the work is named is questionable, given that he never appears on stage.

The ending of *Resurrection Blues* also testifies to its uncertainty. Miller's refusal to sacrifice his alleged Messiah has often been interpreted as an unsatisfactory ending which stands in stark contrast to his earlier oeuvre. It is common knowledge that Arthur Miller has become famous for his tragic dramas ending with the death of the protagonist (Leinster, 2018, p. 56). An illustrative example is the ending of *The Crucible* (1953), where the protagonist consciously sacrifices himself for the sake of others, thus growing into a tragic hero. On the other hand, Miller's play from the beginning of the third millennium resists classification as a typical tragedy. *Resurrection Blues*, although it hints at the possibility of catharsis, which is crucial to the tragic variant of the drama, does not actualise that possibility. Critics like Mason (2003) have analysed such an ending as a possible departure from the writer's earlier firm conviction that a change is possible. However, this paper argues that Miller's reluctance to bring the plot of *Resurrection Blues* towards closure is rather indicative of its postmodernist context. As Hutcheon aptly observes, postmodernist irony rejects the resolving urge of modernism (2002, p. 99). In withholding from resolving the crisis and leaving an open ending, Miller strives to intrigue his audience and critics, to make them think, and to bring them, just like his characters, into a state of uncertainty and questioning. In doing so, the play exemplifies Miller's conception of a theatre of "heightened consciousness" (Driver, 1987, p. 19).

The Condition of the Western World (The Factual Reality)

The plot of *Resurrection Blues* is not set in the United States but in an unnamed Latin American country. Jeffrey Mason interprets this manoeuvre as Miller's allusion to "the inverse of the United States, or rather of the self-conceived image of the United States" (2003, p. 663). As Bigsby aptly observes, the prevailing ideology (that of capitalism) and values (or lack of them) of the unnamed state are precisely the same as in America (2005, pp. 425–426).

As Leinster correctly notices, the condition of the Western world, as reflected in *Resurrection Blues*, may be succinctly depicted as "an early 21st century moral wasteland" (2018, p. 263). As the reader is informed, the faraway country has just emerged from a thirty-eight-year civil war. The brutal nature of the fratricidal conflict is amply demonstrated by the fact that the ruling regime is responsible for the deaths of more than a hundred thousand citizens. The effects of war are felt in all spheres of life. For example, General Felix Barriaux, the state chief, is not allowed to go anywhere without a group of armed soldiers. There is a jarring gap between the rich and the poor; crime, drugs, and violence are rampant. The water is contaminated with a parasite that destroys children's livers. Apathy, despair, and hopelessness prevail in society, and people turn a blind eye even to dead babies on the sidewalk.

One event, however, threatens to disrupt the monotony of this everyday life. A man named Ralph appears and presents himself as a saviour, the Messiah. In a community where materialism, selfishness, and self-interest are at their peak, Ralph preaches love and compassion. In addition, this man supposedly has healing powers. He even occasionally emits some unusual light that is incomprehensible to the average person. As such, Ralph symbolises hope: "People are desperate for someone this side of the stars who feels their suffering himself and gives a damn" (Miller, 2006, p. 31). With his appearance and actions, this man not only stands out but also encourages others to change. In a society dominated by self-interest, materialism, and greed, Ralph represents hope with his gospel of love and spirituality. The respect he enjoys among ordinary citizens is great, and his influence is noticeable in the changes that are taking place:

> "They've taken out the ancient instruments that nobody had played for years, and they dance the old dances again. […] A much less garbage in the street and whitewashing their houses and brushing their teeth—and the number screwing their daughters is like way down." (Miller, 2006, pp. 96, 100)

However, government officials who, after years of civil conflict, have turned paranoid and trust no one, see Ralph only as a rebel who can inspire resistance. As such, he represents a threat to the junta's leader, an intruder that needs to be removed and eliminated quickly, which means by execution. His death by crucifixion is an example of how far power is willing to go to subjugate an individual.

Politics and the Media—Power Structures That Shape Reality and Prevent Change

To General Felix, Ralph is a worthless rebel threatening to disrupt his plans. His life is worth nothing to Felix. He should be done away with summarily, but death alone is not enough. In Felix's opinion, the ubiquity of violence, both in reality and on television, has numbed people. That is why a new, more extreme approach is needed in the form of a crucifixion:

> "Shooting doesn't work. People are shot on television every ten minutes; bang-bang, and they go down like dolls, it's meaningless. But nail up a couple of these bastards and believe me this will be the quietest country on the continent and ready for development!" (Miller, 2006, p. 28)

According to Felix, Ralph's crucifixion may have a beneficial effect on the dissatisfied citizens, who will think twice when they see what fate awaits them if they follow the path of rebellion. Still, the situation is complicated by the emergence of an American agency offering $75 million for the exclusive rights to broadcast the crucifixion of the alleged Messiah. When money gets involved in the story, Ralph becomes a source of profit, a means that can improve the country's state, and undoubtedly the general's financial situation. Felix's cousin, Henry Schultz, interprets turning the crucifixion into a mega-spectacle in a diametrically opposite way. Henry warns Felix that by crucifying the Messiah, even the supposed one, he will join two of the most infamous historical figures, Pontius Pilate and Judas. Moreover, given the great respect of the citizens, who light candles to Ralph, Felix risks awakening the ordinary people from apathy and rebellion. Felix lightly dismisses Henry's warnings by claiming that "in politics there is only one sacred rule—nobody clearly remembers anything" (Miller, 2006, p. 33), supporting this statement with an example from American history.

The vision of society that *Resurrection Blues* offers is bleak. People in powerful positions are depicted as capable of committing any misdeed to remain where they are, from murder to commodifying everything and profiting from personal tragedy. Principles and scruples are virtually non-existent, and there seems to be no limits to using any experience, even someone's agony in death, for personal and commercial purposes. Power structures, primarily politics and the media, otherwise abstract and incomprehensible to the common man, are exposed and presented as ruthless, oriented towards survival and profit. The main motto of politicians, besides the fact that voters have short-term memories, is the willingness to do literally anything to stay in power.

Life in the moral wasteland ruled by the junta is barely tolerable: "Some guy sending out eight-year-old daughters to work the streets, or those little kids a couple of weeks ago killing that old man for his shoes" (Miller, 2006, p. 72).

However, Felix lives in denial and obstinately refuses to acknowledge that the society he governs has hit rock bottom. He has clearly accepted Darwinian logic of the survival of the fittest, according to which rising to the top and remaining there is all that matters. He refrains from confronting the painful reality and draws attention to the state's alleged endeavours to move forward. For example, Felix emphasises the country's efforts to elevate itself by investing in building shopping malls, "put[ting] the police into decent shoes, and sending all our prostitutes to the dentist" (Miller, 2006, p. 32), while he considers the existence of a dangerous parasite in drinking water to be a trifle that does not deserve his observation. Felix's statement that the blood fluke can be destroyed by simply boiling water is both a testament to his manipulative nature (by shifting the blame onto ordinary people) and "a declaration of the government's intentionally misplaced values" (Brucher, 2013, p. 73).

Mason correctly notices that the state of the nation, as reflected in the drama, "has already moved past our control" (2003, p. 665). The revolution is impossible in the circumstances presented, not only because the general has access to all state resources but also because of his connections with crime and the support of America. In addition, the question is whether a change of government would lead to the desired changes, as evidenced by Felix's own remark that there is a fear among his associates that his overthrow might bring someone much worse to power. Therefore, the argument of this paper does not go in line with Mason's claim that "Felix is too firmly placed" (2003, p. 665), but rather aligns with Brucher's assertion that the general's power is arbitrary (2013, p. 71). The political revolution is beyond the present condition of the global world as reflected in *Resurrection Blues*, but not because of Felix, who is in himself irrelevant, but because of the entrenchment of the system that brought Felix to power.

Politics and the media are the best evidence of the collapse of the system of values in the fictional world of *Resurrection Blues*. The world of television is embodied in the character of the account executive Skip Cheeseboro, a man willing to do anything that will serve the interests of the agency which hires him, including the live broadcast of the crucifixion. While Felix is brutally honest and does not deny the numerous crimes attributed to him, Skip is more sleazy due to his conviction of his innocence. While Henry convinces him to abandon turning the crucifixion into a television spectacle, Skip denies responsibility and complicity: "We are recording a pre-existent fact, Mr. Schultz, not creating it—I create nothing!" (Miller, 2006, pp. 81–82). So Skip, like Felix, lives in a state of denial, convincing himself of his own innocence despite the obvious fact that he is an accomplice in the heinous act that is being prepared.

His statement best reflects the hypocrisy of the world of the media. Ralph's crucifixion, indeed, is a fact. However, this reality is only a raw material for television, an experience that has to be shaped to serve the aims of the media. The agency's goal is to transform the execution into a crucifixion of Jesus Christ. To

become a faithful simulation of the crucifixion of the son of God, the execution of Ralph must emulate the known representations of this heinous act. The agency, therefore, is not interested in conveying the truth about the events in the Latin American dictatorship, but in placing the execution in a context and framework that will ensure the highest share. What matters is not the facts, the reality, but the packaging of reality in a simulation. The preparations for the television broadcast of Ralph's crucifixion best illustrate that, just as Baudrillard claims (1981), the simulacrum, marked by "the utopia of the principle of equivalence between the sign and signifier" and embodied in television, "masks and denatures a profound reality" (p. 6). In his efforts to meet the expectations of a diverse future audience, Skip's intention is not to faithfully record reality, but to create reality by packaging raw facts to fit not the real event, i.e. the crucifixion of Jesus, but the known images of that event. In doing so, the media simulacrum transforms into hyperreality, which becomes more important than reality (Baudrillard, 1981). By aestheticising Ralph's death, the media transforms it into a commodity, a product to be consumed by the audience, reducing them of their ability to sympathise with the sufferer. Moreover, to increase the share of viewership, the media deliberately simplify the content they broadcast, and by moulding it into patterns, they reduce the critical ability of viewers. Viewers, numbed by exposure to violent content, cannot tell the difference between truth and illusion, that is, between factual reality and simulacrum.

Felix and Skip, as representatives of politics and the media, testify to how far these structures are willing to go for the sake of survival or profit. While the media, unlike the government, do not use violence directly, they commodify it, paving the way for further anaesthetising ordinary people. Hence, the role of the media is in a way even more detrimental than that of a totalitarian regime. In a similar vein, Felix, with his unusual combination of brutality and puerility, is more likeable and human than the bureaucratic Skip. Despite being responsible for so many murders, Felix is a more appealing character because it seems like he actually has feelings and a guilty conscience, which he suppresses, and which ultimately manifests as erectile dysfunction.

On the other hand, Skip testifies to a dehumanised individual unable to feel and sympathise, a perfect product of the capitalist order incapable of questioning rules and orders. This is best exemplified by his stubborn refusal to provide a doctor or any painkillers for the man he was about to crucify, on the pretext that it would spoil the simulation of Christ's crucifixion. This shows that for him, "human beings do not exist as objects of compassion and empathy" (Шошкић, 2022a, p. 588), but only as "raw material for the media" (Bigsby, 2005, p. 423) that will transform one's death into a spectacle that will have a large audience. As such, Skip represents a loyal subject of the system who blindly carries out imposed obligations under the pretext of just doing his job. To get the job done, Skip will do literally anything, showing no regard for the man who will be sacrificed, caring

only for the reactions of the diverse audience. His complete indifference to Ralph stands in stark contrast to the compassionate response of Emily, who is forced to direct such a bizarre event because she cannot afford to lose her job at the moment she buys an apartment on credit. When asked by Emily if he was not disgusted by this kind of "project", Skip's answer speaks for itself: "In a way, I suppose, but realistically, who am I to be disgusted?" (Miller, 2006, p. 46). Hence, his absence of reactions speaks more about the destructive and dehumanising nature of the system than the character of the junta's leader.

Is There a Possibility for a Change?

In a community under the clutches of politics, corporations, and the media, which serve only their own interests, the hope for social progress is, as Miller's play suggests, slim. For these power structures, the individual is irrelevant, everything has a price, and value is attributed only to that which can bring profit. Exposing the essence of media and politics is an unequivocal act of social criticism for which Miller is recognisable and remarkable. This bleak vision of the Western world offered by *Resurrection Blues* has led some critics to argue that this play reflects Miller's abandonment of the liberal activism that was a hallmark of his early plays (Brucher, 2013, pp. 80–81; Mason, 2003, p. 676). Indeed, the drama implies that the prospects for a profound change by a political action, i.e. overthrowing a system that serves only itself, are negligible.

Prima facie, *Resurrection Blues*'s vision is a grim one. The play delineates a chaotic and uncertain world in which religion does not exist, in which power structures not only fail to resolve the current debilitating state of affairs but also further disabuse the public and push it into anaesthesia. While Henry fears that Ralph's crucifixion could spark bloodshed, Messiah himself suspects that the media would make a spectacle of his death, which would quickly sink into oblivion. Even Stanley, Ralph's self-proclaimed disciple, testifies to the general moral lapse that arouses Ralph's suspicions about the expediency of his eventual sacrifice. Stanley mentions that even the peasants who draw a halo around Ralph's face are calculating how much the price of land will rise after the news of his crucifixion travels around the world. The implication is that his sacrifice would not redeem humanity in the present circumstances. That is precisely the reason Ralph withdraws from his original decision to "offer himself for the people" since "he knows selfless love will merely be commodified" (Culberston, 2005, p. 358). Ralph is aware that his crucifixion would not bring about the desired change, but that the media machine would turn him into a celebrity who would very quickly fade from the memory of the audience, always hungry for new sensations.

In *Resurrection Blues*, God is dead, and power structures are hostile to the common man. However, this does not mean that the play's implication is cynical

and pessimistic. In fact, the character's realisation that the world around him/her is hostile is a prerequisite for moving away from invisible forces that shape our perception of reality and developing critical individual thought, which is the first step of an individual on the path of moral rebirth. Moreover, the death of God does not mean the impossibility of redemption but rather moves it from the metaphysical to the ethical domain. In other words, the negligible influence of religion "has shifted the motivation of dramatic action from the cosmos to a self measured not against some essentially transcendent code of morality but rather personal and socially constructed values" (Otten, 2002, p. xii).

Miller's penultimate play implies that despite the seemingly hopeless state of affairs, we may and should be true to ourselves and remember that we still have each other. Hence, this paper argues that beneath the hopeless surface of the tragic farce of *Resurrection Blues*, there is a glimmer of hope that the individual is still capable of knowing himself and his fellow man. Therefore, this drama testifies to the evolution of the playwright's style, i.e. to its contemporaneity but not to a change in focus. As Terry Otten persuasively argues, "Miller has not so much abandoned as transformed his tragic vision" (2002, p. xi) "to the prevailing intellectual currents of the last few decades" (2002, p. x). This article argues that the key themes of *Resurrection Blues* may be obscured by their adaptation to the postmodern condition, but that they are distinctly Milleresque and similar to his earlier work. Here, too, the playwright deals with the most salient topic of his rich literary oeuvre—innocence and culpability.

As Bigsby convincingly argues, *Resurrection Blues* is "a play which is in part about our ability to abstract ourselves from responsibility for our own actions or for the actions of those we elect to express our will" (2005, p. 422). The characters of Miller's penultimate drama possess what Miller defines as a tragic flaw in his essay "Tragedy and the common man" (1949): the individual's passivity and denial of responsibility, the lack of will to look the truth in the eye and face disturbing facts of life. As it turns out, Milleresque vision of tragic characters is as applicable to the characters in *Resurrection Blues* as it is to the protagonists of *Death of the Salesman* (1949). Miller's characters, as Iannone aptly observes, are tragic not because of their "encounter with solemn powers greater than themselves" (2003, p. 52), but because of their cowardice in confronting the unjust and corrupt world that surrounds them. They pursue the wrong goals, crave material things, and seek escape from harsh reality in pleasures and entertainment. These are people who insist that they are agents, not principals (Bigsby, 2005, p. 428).

Quite the contrary—all the characters but Jeanine and Henry are accomplices in the planned crime because, for one reason or another, they agreed to participate in it. The circle of blame starts with Felix, through Skip and Emily, and even includes the poor villagers who hope for a tourism boom and infrastructure construction after the crucifixion. Self-knowledge and redemption for the characters in *Resurrection Blues* are possible and are reflected, as in Miller's

other plays, in the characters' willingness to admit their guilt and take on their share of responsibility. The characters' different reactions to the planned execution by crucifixion and its transformation into a mega-spectacle indicate varying degrees of awareness of their own culpability. The lowest level of consciousness is among the representatives of the power structures, General Felix and Skip, who live in denial. Emily, Skip's employee, is at a slightly higher level of awareness. She shows compassion for Ralph and expresses contempt for the act. However, media representatives have their own ways of forcing their staff into submission. After a failed attempt to win her over with flattery, Skip reminds Emily that her refusal to obey will inevitably jeopardise her career. Yet, even after seemingly agreeing to participate in the heinous act, Emily acts subversively—at Henry's prompting, she attempts to convince Felix to abandon the crucifixion.

Admittedly, the characters' decisions in Miller's play are largely shaped by the oppressive, hostile system that attempts in every way to crush individual free will. These people are "trapped by circumstances and the crush of overwhelming forces in society" (Centola, 2007, p. 201). However, that does not absolve them of guilt. As the drama suggests, freedom hurts and costs. *Resurrection Blues* implies that freedom of choice always exists, but the majority follow the line of least resistance and opt for the less painful, but morally wrong path. To redeem themselves, people first need to stop denying reality and take responsibility for their lives and their actions.

In other words, Miller's characters cry out for awakening from anaesthesia towards both "self-understanding and mutual comprehension" (Iannone, 2003, p. 62). This drama, symbolically called the blues, is a lament, not over suffering, as Bigsby claims (2005, p. 434), but over people's inability to feel and sympathise, over people's unwillingness to rise above beings capable of satisfying their desires only. Of all the characters, only Henry dares to admit that the activities that man engages in ("sports, opera, TV, movies" (Miller, 2006, p. 80)) are a form of escapism from the sorrow that is inherent in all of us. Individuals, anesthetised by an abundance of information, entertainment, and consumption, can only be awakened by some tragic event, which can bring them out of their slumber and force them into a different way of thinking. This kind of individual is embodied in Henry Schultz, who, after his daughter's suicide attempt, changes his perspective, regrets the wrong choices he made, and most of all, the fact that he missed the opportunity to love. Thus awakened from his state of mental dullness, Henry realises that Ralph presents a threat not because he may be a Messiah but because he actually feels everything.

The case of Henry points to the proposed course of action in the fictional world of *Resurrection Blues*. As suggested by the play, the only possible revolution in the contemporary world is a revolution of consciousness. Awareness raising, usually triggered by a tragic event, leads to self-questioning. After almost losing his daughter, Henry thinks about his daughter and realises that he has not lived

up to her expectations, nor his own. Emerging from the cocoon of anaesthesia and denial, Henry redeems himself by taking responsibility and claiming that life could and can be different. In doing so, he turns out to be the sole character in *Resurrection Blues* who stops living in denial, admits guilt, and struggles with it, a condition necessary to solving the denouement of Miller's play. A former rebel who made a deal with the regime, in exchange for comfort, he realises that his life was mostly a waste. In a conversation with Felix, Henry evokes memories of the days when they were young idealists who believed they could make a difference. Henry comes to the painful realisation that "they betrayed not just each other, they betrayed themselves and their own ideals" (Churchwell, 2019, p. 49). He sincerely regrets two things: that he did not try harder to set a better example for his daughter, and that he did not allow himself to love:

> Henry: "… I hadn't actually been seeing anything for most of my life. That I have lived half blind … to Jeanine, even to my former wife … it's all left me with one idea that I can't shake off—it haunts me. […] That I could have loved. Slight pause. In my life." (Miller, 2006, p. 34)

Henry correctly concludes that the pleasures offered by consumerism are merely an escape from a boring (Miller, 2006, p. 80) or, rather, painful reality. Without bothering to understand that pain is necessary and even beneficial for the development of the personality, an individual "surrounds oneself with images and words and music" (Miller, 2006, p. 80) that are a distraction on the path to actualising humanity.

Henry vividly exemplifies the evolution of Miller's concept of the main character. As Henry himself remarks: "The world will never again be changed by heroes, […] One must learn to live in a garden of one's self" (Miller, 2006, pp. 93–94). In a world where power structures are invisible and deeply rooted, there will be no progress in changing the government, which is only an outgrowth of the hidden powerful. Unlike his idealistic and inexperienced daughter Jeanine, Henry correctly concludes that revolution by action is impossible in the present circumstances. As Mason correctly notices, "Jeanine is just as absorbed with the material potential of her country" (2003, p. 672) to see the bigger picture. As Henry suggests, the current state of affairs will not be changed by any hero or political act—the system is too entrenched. Therefore, *Resurrection Blues* implies that the only possible and effective form of resistance in the current state of affairs is the development of critical awareness and taking responsibility for one's choices and actions. By admitting complicity and taking on his share of culpability, Henry is emblematic of Miller's vision of change for the better. To bring about profound change, the play suggests, individuals must first become the change they wish to see in their environment. Henry truly undergoes a change of perception, which is necessary for his return to true values, which manifests itself through his naming what he deems wrong with the society he lives in and his turning to his family.

In a kind of recapitulation of his life up to that point, Henry regrets his failure as a father, a husband, and most of all, feels contrite about the missed opportunity to love. However, he attempts to at least partially redeem himself by being with Jeanine in her most difficult moments. Moreover, Henry openly reprimands Felix and tries in every way to dissuade him from an act from which there is no return.

Conclusion

Prima facie, *Resurrection Blues* appears to be the least Milleresque play. It stands out in Arthur Miller's rich literary oeuvre for its contemporaneity, its postmodern context, its unusual setting, its combination of tragic and comic elements, and its allegedly cynical implications. The article offers evidence that *Resurrection Blues* contains a number of postmodernistic features. First, it deals with an essential preoccupation of postmodernism—the questioning of reality. Second, it incorporates irony and parody, distinctive devices of postmodernism. Third, the play's fictional world is undeniably ambiguous. Its uncertainty is also reflected in the end of the play, which has no form of resolution, but rather leaves the audience in doubt and questioning.

However, this paper argues that despite Miller's penultimate play's singularity, which testifies to the evolution of the playwright's style, the themes *Resurrection Blues* delves into are distinctly Milleresque. In its essence, the play deals with innocence and culpability. Moreover, the author leads the reader behind the public veneer of politics and the media to expose these structures as hostile to society. Laying bare the media and politics is an unequivocal act of Miller's social criticism, a hallmark of his entire oeuvre. By demonstrating that our perception of reality is constructed and exposing the hidden mechanisms that shape our consciousness and prevent change, this seemingly cynical drama seeks to generate new ideas and move people to change their perceptions.

Admittedly, *Resurrection Blues* offers a bleak vision of the system and suggests that it is too deeply entrenched to be overthrown by a political revolution. This, still, does not mean that *Resurrection Blues* is a pessimistic play that does not hint at the possibility of redemption and transcendence. The drama suggests that the contemporary era is not the age of heroes in the classical sense and that change cannot happen overnight. The proposed course of action is to take individual responsibility for one's own life, actions, and choices. The first step, as Henry's example shows, is to admit guilt and reconsider one's own decisions. Only a revolution of consciousness and a change of perception will lead to the desired long-term changes for the better, both on a personal and communal level.

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Блуз за Месију Артура Милера: најмање милеровска драма?

Резиме

Полазећи од запажања да је драма *Блуз за Месију* Артура Милера по много чему особена у односу на прећашњи опус драматурга, нудимо доказ да ова драма сведочи о еволуцији пишчевог стила, али не и фокуса. Закључак да је ова драма најмање милеровска, последица је њене савремености и прилагођавања теме постмодерним интелектуалним струјама. Иако је контекст Милерове претпоследње драме непобитно постмодеран, теме које прожимају читав његов опус, теме друштвене критике, као и кривице и невиности, кључне су и за ову драму. Аутор у овом раду тврди да драма *Блуз за Месију*, иако често тумачена као цинична, сугерише да могућност пружања отпора систему и препорода постоји. Међутим, драма не имплицира да је дубинска промена могућа политичком револуцијом, већ једино променом унутар појединца, тј. револуцијом свести.

Кључне речи: Артур Милер; *Блуз за Месију*; друштвена критика; кривица; невиност.