

**Ann, Claire, and Helen- From Mammies to Killer: Three
Successive Rounds in Females' Struggle against Fettering
Patterns**

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Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the crises of Ann in Rachel Crothers's *He and She* (1911), Claire in Susan Glaspell's *The Verge* (1921), and Helen in Sophie Treadwell's *Mechinal* (1982) in their confrontation with the society's dogmatic paradigms. Such paradigms hinder the females' independence and creativity. The three female figures, in their attempt to protect their identities, arouse in us Arthur Miller's concept of tragic emotions. This paper presents the three-targeted females as having a tough conflict with close people with whom they have personal or emotional relations. In their ferocious challenge against the fettering patterns and institutions, the three heroines offer three successive, complicated rounds in one battle. Ann's timid struggle passes through Claire's affirmative self-creation and closes with Helen's realistic fight for economic independence. This paper will rely on the feminist approach as the theoretical framework for the three plays in discussion. The focus will be the societal assigned roles for the female figures and their attempts to break through all fettering factors; including society rules, marriage, family, and economic dependency. Despite all the conspiracies on the three heroines, the three plays carry a glimpse of hope and optimism for all females.

Keywords: Ideologies- feminist approach -oppression- fettering patterns-tragic feeling-Arthur Miller.

The present paper intends to discuss three women's struggle, in three different plays, against the suppressive ideologies of their society –the fixed patterns that reserve independence only for the male. The three women are Ann in Rachel Crothers's *He and She* (1911), Claire in Susan Glaspell's *The Verge* (1921), and Helen in Sophie Treadwell's *Mechinal* (1982). Each of the three women is, in some degree, a tragic figure and in Arthur Miller's words, "evokes

in us the tragic feeling” because their struggles have one major goal, that is, “to secure personal dignity [and] to gain rightful position in society” (Miller 894). Ann, Claire, and Helen retain an “inherent unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what [they] conceive to be a challenge to [their] dignity...and image of rightful status” (894-95). Ann’s retreat to the motherly duties at the expense of her artistic creation does not mean that her “unwillingness to remain passive” is over. Some might claim that Ann’s situation is more “pathetic” than “tragic” because the end of the play is not “unhappy ending.” But Miller himself refutes this opinion when he says that “in truth tragedy implies more optimism” even than comedy. Based on Miller’s notion, Crothers’s play is tragic due to its “optimism”: Ann’s decline could be temporary, and Ruth never declined.

According to Miller’s concept of tragedy, the three women are in the social “condition which suppresses [and] perverts the flowing out of [their] love and creative instinct” (895). The “perversion” of “love” can best be seen in Claire’s and Helen’s respectively, whereas that of “creative instinct” is exemplified in both Ann’s and Claire’s situations. Claire’s success in producing her “Breath of Life” never guarantees that the ideologies of society are no longer opposing, nor does it mean that every woman can now act freely without hindrances. Claire, after all, has paid a precious price.

Again, in accordance with Miller’s own belief, the three plays in question retain “the thrust for freedom,” the credential that Miller asks for to be “in tragedy that exalts” (895). Moreover, the three plays raise “revolutionary questioning of the stable environment,” the so-called unchangeable positions of the superior male and the inferior female (895), or what Remington in *He and She* calls “the laws of creation” (Crothers 939). The three plays are like three successive rounds in one big battle, fought by women against all fettering patterns and stagnant institutions. The fight starts with Ann’s somewhat mild struggle and retreat, passes through Claire’s assertive self-creation and transcendence, and ends with Helen’s actual life struggle for economic independence and love pleasure.

In *He and She* (1911), Crothers, a social playwright, has taken one American family, the Herfords, as a sample to put minutely under analysis and investigation: the playwright exposes the family members’ disparate viewpoints regarding the beams of the forthcoming independence of woman, as represented in their situation by Ann Herford and Ruth Creel, her friend. The quest for women’s rights has been one of the crucial issues in the American society since approximately the 1850s. it remained a heavy mission transmitted, with the turn

of the century. To a new generation of women who wanted to redefine and re-map their position in that male –dominated society, and to bring to light “an autonomous, independent, self-sufficient woman, with or without male definition if that is her desire” (Olauson 1). Committed to these objectives as a woman playwright, Crothers once said that “women are in themselves more dramatic than men, more changing, and a more significant note of the hour in which they live because of their own evolution ... the most important thing in modern life” (quoted in Lois C. Gottlieb 51). Here, Crothers seems to have faith in the females’ capacities to take actions that may lead to crucial changes in their life.

The predicament of woman in *He and She* is approached by Crothers via three different facets. The first is Ann’s; the second is Ruth’s, whereas the third is Daisy’s. Ann’s is the most difficult situation because she is entangled in the middle of a big web of relationships: husband, daughter, and father-all add up to her struggle. After becoming rival to “the biggest men in the field” of sculpture, Ann is imposed to accept only one option, home. As Tom sets it blindly, “I didn’t see what it would lead to. It’s taking you away from everything else...and there’ll be no end to it. Your ambition will carry you away till the home and Millicent and I are nothing to you” (Crothers 954). Tom allows himself not only to intercede with Ann’s progress as an individual, but also assigns himself as the only “seer.” of all the consequences. Moreover, he assumes to have the role of ceasing Ann’s progress, a blessing which he earlier has endowed, no matter that Ann would be devalued or humiliated. Ann’s ambition, to his male logic, is “selfishness” and Tom considers himself a “fool” when he first allowed her to vie in an all-male field. Ann’s success “raises [in Tom] the type of hostility and fear regarding woman’s progress” which, as Henry F. May notes, “was a characteristic of prewar society” (341).

Ann finds herself in a bitter conflict with the people to whom she has strong personal and emotional ties, people who were supposed to be more of help than of condemnation or denial to her progress as a free and independent woman. Ann should have “no needs of her own”. She should be ready to sacrifice any personal wish and be “satisfied by serving her family”. (Tyson 89) Tom, in bitter selfishness, says: “Ann. Can’t you see? You’re a woman and I’m a man. You’re not free in the same way. If you won’t stop because I ask it-I say you must” (955). Tom allows himself, in an aggressive manner, not only to have the upper hand on Ann but also to take her own decisions without any

consideration of her desires or ambitions. He follows the "Norms of masculinity [that] stress male power to protect and decide on behalf of women and children" (Sweetman 4). Tom is hypocrite because he formerly pretended that he is more liberal and that he accepts Ann's joining the field and the contest. Now, he is fearful and tries to hide his hypocrisy under the false claims of home duties and family responsibilities. If we look at Tom from Kierkegaard's concept of "shifted responsibilities" he will look like an absurd figure because he asks Ann to do something, he himself evades, that is, giving more care to Millicent (Kierkegaard 552). In addition, he believes that Ann needs to prove her love for him and for Millicent by quitting her art and independence.

Having Tom's hypocrisy unraveled, Ann, less aggressive than Glaspell's Claire and Treadwell's Helen (symptomatic of the prewar woman) replies cautiously, "I want to believe you're what I thought you were. Don't make me think you're just like every other man" (Crothers 955). Unlike Claire, who divorced her first husband, neglected the second, took a lover, Tom, and had an affair with Dick, and unlike Helen who had an extra-marital affair with her lover Roe, Ann behaves more conservatively: "I want to keep on loving you" (955). Though Tom has, by now, undermined the basis on which Ann has loved him, liberality and non-prejudice, Ann never thought of taking another man nor looked for an outlet. In a more sacrificing fashion, though without submission, Ann has innocently suggested that Tom can take her own drawings: "I want you to look at them –and if –if you like it–if you think the idea is better than yours, I want you to take it—use it, instead of yours.... it's there—something vital and alive—with a strange charm in it. And I offer it to you my dear—if you want it" (942).

In order to show how the patriarchal beliefs spread, confirm, and regenerate themselves, Crothers presents three anti-feminists, Dr. Remington, Ann's father, and Keith, Tom's assistant, and Daisy, Tom's sister. Remington adds to Ann's dilemma by his belief that "The development of women hasn't changed the laws of creation" (939). As a big patriarch, he warns Ann against the dangers of her ambitions, "Oh, my daughter—don't let the new restlessness and strife of the world about you blind you to the old things—the real things" (958). In the same vain, Keith, a funny copy of Remington and also of Tom, appears as very contradicting and even ridiculous. All he expects in a woman is to be a wife. "I want a wife...I want my girl by my fireside to live for me alone" (937). This line reflects both the stereotypical image of the doll beside the fire and the selfishness of Keith. Though he admits that Ann has larger imagination than

Tom, he credits Tom alone for superiority based on that Ann is a woman: “when it comes to the real thing, she isn’t in it with him. How could she be? She is a woman” (936). Women, to Keith and his likes, are not supposed to be situated above men in the “real thing,” the concrete world. By such portrayals of men, Crothers is directing harsh criticism against her society’s complex web of prejudices, which in the last instance, rests on attributing man’s superior position to the “laws of creation.”

Ann, however, remained unyielding and together with Ruth, kept denying the male doctrines of superiority. But the sudden appearance of her daughter’s impasse impelled her to reconsider her standing and accept her motherly role, at least for now. Formerly, Remington has predicted the occurrence of “a hell of a mess on hand” if Ann keeps to her position, and ironically it has now become a reality—Millicent needs her mother’s help. Ann’s recess into domesticity might not continue for long because the “artist in her will yell to be let out” (962). That Tom admits his injustice to her: “I haven’t been fair –but you’re going to have this and all that’s coming to you,” indicates that Ann’s move will continue and that the male objections have started to recede. This kind of “optimism” implied in Ann’s tragedy relates the play to Miller’s concept of tragedy. Miller objects limiting the concept of tragedy to the works of unhappy ending. He further sees that “in truth tragedy implies more optimism in its author than does comedy” (896).

Ann’s retreat into motherhood is counterbalanced by Ruth’s utter refusal to fall into the domestic trap like Ann. Featuring the kind of women who will later make the “leap,” Ruth, unlike Ann, and unlike the manly-programmed Daisy, states that “being a mother is the most gigantic, difficult, important and thankless thing in the world” (945). Giving a deaf ear to the hindering dictations of her society, Ruth is not ready to quit her job for the sake of the house duties, nor for an idiot like Keith. With a high sense of individuality, predictive of the coming Claire, Ruth had been the only supporter to Ann: “Make your models and send them in yourself. ...it belongs to you—and if you don’t take care of it and give it chance, you kill something which is more important than you are. ...you’re not just the talented woman, you’ve got downright genius, and you ought to make everything give way to that” (942). What Ruth prescribes for Ann to do and to follow is almost exactly what Claire later does.

In the eyes of her society, Ruth, due to her unbroken perseverance, is seen as manly, and so invalid for love emotions and motherhood. This,

however, never shakes her will; “she’ll go further” (950). If Ann mammies herself or is mammed by her society and asks Tom to “put out the light” indicating the resumption of the motherly role, Ruth conversely refuses to be confined, and opens the door wide for women, like Claire and Helen, whose kids never subdued them.

He and She ends with the light “put out” but *The Verge* opens with a “shaft of light” as the stage directions tell us. In *The Verge*, we have a sort of role reversal: Claire is fully commanding, cold, and detached, whereas Harry, her husband, complains lack of attention, “I too need little attention...I am not a flower” (4). As a new type, Claire, contrary to Ann, refuses to subject herself under any circumstances and remains free and unshackled.

Susan Glaspell portrays her protagonist as more godly than human; she is the center of everything around her. She, moreover, has the intellectual potential to create, accompanied with a recognized instinct for “Otherness” (52). Knowing herself as a different breed, she mightily regenerates her own free and different self into a new plant which she names “Breath of Life.” (110) What she aspires to do as a woman in this life is what she wants her plant also to do, the plant as a metaphor of any new female comes to this world, “to break it up and smash” the confines:

Plants do it. The big leap—it’s called. Explode their species—
because something

In them knows they’ve gone as far as they can go. ... So—go mad—
that life may

not be prisoned. Break themselves up—into crazy things—into
lesser thing, and

from the pieces –may come one silver of life with vitality to find the
future. How

beautiful. How brave. (34)

Claire’s purpose, of course, is to deconstruct all kinds of stifling forms around her, the forms that engender people like Harry, Adelaide, and even Elizabeth, her daughter. Claire wants to be “free in the air. To look from above on the world of all my days. Be where man has never been”. (31) She desires to take the lead and make initiatives to outperform men.

More aggressive and more assertive than Ann, Claire severely reproaches and attacks whoever tries to confine her or to intervene in her “myself-ness”: “I’m tired of what you do—you and all of you. Life—experience—values—calm—sensitive words which raise their heads as

indications. And you pull them up—to decorate your stagnant little minds—and think that makes you” (19). As Marcia Noe explains, Glaspell through Claire’s detachment is “showing us what it feels like to be the Other.” Noe further elaborates that the play, in compliance with Helen Cixous’ theory, is one of “various ways to establish a uniquely female form of writing, a mode of using language that opposes itself to the kind of discourse that males typically create with its linear movement, logical pattern of organization, and reasoned arguments supporting a thesis” (132).

Echoing the feminist fervor that has taken place in the postwar America, Claire condemningly asks her sister, “Well, isn’t it about time somebody got loose from that? Why need I too be imprisoned in what I came from?” (11). Adelaide, like Crothers’ Daisy, is one type of women who are more abusing to other women probably than men are. All she hopes for is shelter and comfort under man’s control. Like Keith, Adelaide’s mind fails to understand what freedom, creation, and transcendence mean for a free spirit like Claire. Ironically, Adelaide understands Claire’s song “Nearer My God to Thee” as just madness or blasphemy. To Claire, the song is a hymn of freedom and communication, like the song of the Negro in prison by the end of *Machinal*. Adelaide, however, considers herself as more advantageous than Claire simply because of her “family [and] the things that interest them; from morning till night” (12). Reminiscent of Remington’s function, Adelaide’s purpose is to domesticate her sister and to “lock me in,” as Claire says (13).

Unlike Ann, whose husband was her rival in sculpture, Claire has no rival in scientific experimentation. Ann starts the struggle but fails to finish it, but Claire commands her own life from first to last. Ann is sociable, warm, and ready to cooperate; Claire is detached, cold, and individualistic. She lets no room for anybody to interfere into her own world. Ann is elbowed because of her daughter; Claire never regards her daughter’s affairs. To her, Elizabeth is “just like one of her father’s portraits. They never interested me. Nor does she” (60). To Ann, Millicent is more important than her art; to Claire, the plant is more important than anybody else is. When Harry tells her that Elizabeth is “due here to-day,” Claire replies, “I knew something was disturbing me” (32). As Anthony comments, Elizabeth, to Claire, is a “finished experience” (40). Claire sees her daughter in the same way she sees her sister and her husband, all are “dead things [that] block the way...and may only make a prison” (54, 55). All are parts of the fettering patterns that may suffocate her free spirit.

Harry, to Claire, is a “Stick-in –the –air aviator” like the previous husband, whom Claire divorced because he was merely a “Stick –in-the-mud artist” (32). Freer than Ann, Claire takes a lover (Tom) and makes an affair with Dick. She even flirts Dick in front of Harry. Despite these different relations, Claire finds in Tom the man who understands her and expresses her love to him, “the only one—all of me wants” (76). Her hope in Tom is to find a man with the same intellect like herself, one to whom she can commune in “healing oneness” (83). Tom is the only person in the play who supports Claire’s creative experiments and detachment. He calls her a “brave flower of all our knowing” (83).

Tom, however, eventually proves to be like any of the agents of the system. He too has bounds: “I love you, and I will keep you—from farderness—from harm. You are mine, and you will stay with me!” (112). Feeling that he is unworthy of trust and that he, like others, intends to “make [her] stop,” Claire chokes her lover and sings the song of communion with god instead. If this is madness, it is, as Claire previously said, “the only chance for sanity” (68). Claire started free and ended up free. She has persistently freed herself and also “saved- myself” as she says to her husband after killing Tom. As the stage directions symbolically tell, Claire “has taken a step forward, past them all...feeling her way” (115). As Christine Dymkowski argues, “Claire’s madness at the end of the play is a personal triumph” (101).

In terms of the differences in characterization, action, and reactions between Ann, and Claire, *the Verge* signals bigger advances in the handling of women’s independence and ability to create their own world, to reject being mammied, and to live life the way they like. Lisa Maeve Nelligan notes that, “The Verge...breaks stride not only with feminist thought of the period but also with prevailing public sentiment, by insisting that the institutions[s] deserved continued and careful scrutiny” (96). Nelligan further links the play to the feminist movement as a whole, by pointing out that: “The Verge cogently explores the shifting definitions of feminism in the early 1920s, exploiting them to their furthest limit, just as Claire attempts to push her plants (and herself) as far as they can go” (98). Claire’s “leap”, far wider than Ann’s, includes two essential points for women: freedom of intellect and freedom of body.

Claire’s main statement “Saved-myself,” (115) which she says after killing Tom, echoes Helen’s statement “To be free” (Treadwell 526), when asked why she killed her husband. But first, why did Helen marry Mr. Jones? Part of the answer relates to the basic issue of women’s economic non-

independence. Helen's acceptance of this marriage is based on the purpose of getting rid of the financial problems she and her dependent mother are going through: "Rent –bills—installments—miscellaneous" (498). Helen also shortsightedly saw marriage as "Mrs. George H.Jones--money--no work--no worry--free!--rest--sleep till nine... sleep till noon...now you take a good rest this morning—don't get up till you want to" (501). Helen also wants to escape the heavy toil of getting to the "subway" to reach her workplace—a daily journey. All press her life, and she asks, "What am I going to do?" (499).

Despite Helen's awareness that she does not love Mr. Jones, his offer of marriage under these circumstances is realistically irresistible. Helen's worries about her living conditions, intensified by her dependent, yet merciless, mother, weaken her resistance and coerce her to accept this loveless marriage. After a long argument with her mother about Mr. Jones's being unloved and old-aged, her mother convinces her that "love" will not "clothe" her, will not "feed" her, will not "pay the bills" (503). When Helen asks: "What can you count on in life?" if there is no love, she receives the same answer from her mother. Helen's mother is not only dependent, but she is also with "no pity" towards her daughter. As Helen reacts in anger to her mother's greed, "Go away! Go away! You don't know anything about anything! And you haven't got any pity—no pity –you just take it for granted that I go to work every day—and come home every night and bring my money every week—you just take it for granted...you'd let me go on forever" (504). The mother here is just one micro image of the relentless patterns in which Helen and her likes are entangled. Helen's consent to the marriage could be an attempt to escape this motherly prison. She is, therefore, not to blame for marrying Jones. Her situation evokes a sense of pity and sympathy because she agrees to sell her body to be economically secure. By putting her protagonist in such conditions, Treadwell is basically exploring an arena (the importance of economic independence for women) which Crothers and Glaspell did not touch on, at least in *He and She and The Verge*.

Ann has found her vantage in art; Claire has found hers in scientific experimentation and transcendence, whereas Helen, still close to the post war bad living and closer to the horrible circumstances of the 1930s Economic Depression, has found her vantage in ensuring better living conditions than hers. Actually, this dream is no less important than that of having better life conditions, that is, "somebody young—and attractive—that I'd like—that I'd

love—but I haven't found anybody like that yet...I've hardly known anybody...My mother never let me go with anybody" (503). Such an unattained dream, frozen so far by priority, will, like the "artist" inside Ann, "yell to be let out" (Crothers 962).

When Helen expresses her admiration of the hotel room on the first night of marriage, she receives no romance from Mr. Jones. He, instead, cares about how much he paid and how much he will get in return: "Twelve bucks a day! They know how to soak you in these pleasure resorts. Twelve bucks! Well—we'll get our money's worth out of it" (505). To him, Helen is just an exchange "commodity" for the money he paid. Helen now is "an object...a commodity of exchange value determined by the society in which the object is exchanged," as Lois Tyson explains (58). Nevertheless, we need to remember that Mr. Jones, to Helen, is also a commodity of big value—she exchanges her hard life with a ghoulish mother for comfort and stability with an unloved, old-aged but rich husband. This, however, was the only outlet in front of her.

Since the very first day of marriage, Helen discovers that the new situation is as bitter as the old, if not even more. When her heavy-handed husband tries to approach her, she becomes "very still...with a curious, helpless animal terror." Her tears are crossed by the "sound of a girl weeping" outside (506). A precedent of Arthur Miller, Treadwell uses this technique to magnify the ordeal of the whole gender, young or grownups--the cries of all women are compressed in one under a cold man she does not love. Helen never thinks of Mr. Jones as a human being. When she cries out asking "I want my mother...I want somebody" (506). Helen never gets the emotional satisfaction she needs: "when he puts a hand on me, my blood turns cold...his hands are fat, and they sort of press" (503). With Mr. Jones, Helen never felt she is a woman, nor even a mother for her newly born girl.

Reminiscent of Claire's cold and indifferent reception to her long absent daughter, Helen, when asked to breast-feed the baby girl, refuses "Let me alone—let me alone—let me alone—I've submitted to enough—I want submit to anymore" (508). Helen's shouts of rejection to more submission are, again, crossed by the outside voice of the "riveting machine," this time to mean: whatever high Helen's voice has become, the society's is still higher. Realizing the futility of her shouts, Helen resorts to silent gestures: "Nurse. Aren't you glad it's a girl? (Young Woman makes sign with her head, "No".) You're not... Men want boys—women ought to want girls. (No response.) Maybe you didn't want either? (Young Woman signs "No." riveting machine. ...your milk hasn't

come yet—has it? (Sign— “No.”) It will! (Sign— “No.”) (507). Helen, by nature, is not submissive. She is “one of the restless babies” (510). The thoughts of killing are not new to her; they are there in her mind ready to use them when she needs to. She formerly threatened to kill her mother: “Ma –if you tell me that again I’ll kill you! I’ll kill you” (504). In the stage directions, Glaspell tells us that Helen’s “fingers are protective [and] clutching” (516). When she reads, she reads about prisoner escapes—life breaks jail—shoots away to freedom... woman finds husband dead...any prisoners. All free.” Echoing her plight and her turbulent feelings, the outside voices repeat frequently, “Free—free—free” (518,519). Helen needs nothing now but freedom and love. When her husband mentions that “Sale hits a million,” she replies hurriedly, “woman leaves all for love” (517). So she points at her husband as the enemy of freedom.

Love is what she is looking for; the quest for better life is over. With Roe, Helen finds love, warmth, and the long-lost sexual pleasure. He says things which she likes to hear, “you got mighty pretty hands...you got a fine voice” and she answers, “I like to hear you say it. Say it again” (514,515). She feels pleasure with him in a basement room—something she never felt in her husband’s luxurious house. With Roe, Helen flies high, dreams high, sings freely with a spirit that reaches, like Claire’s, “on top of the world” (516). Claire wanted to be “free in air. To look from above on the world” (Glaspell 69), and so does Helen. Her frozen dream is now awoken again, this time irresistibly.

Liberated more and more by Roe’s love and youth, Helen needs to put an end to her oppressor, the statue at home. We cannot argue that Roe planted the seeds of murder into her innocent mind; they are already there. He just mentioned to her how he once killed two men “to be free.” Like her lover, she wants to be really free.

In the courtroom, Helen is turned into an object of laughter. When asked by the judge, “Why didn’t you divorce him?” she replies, “Oh I couldn’t do that!! I couldn’t hurt him like that!” (526). As Ginger Strand explains, “When she [Helen] tells the fundamental truth of her story—that she had not been striking out against her little, human husband, but rather against the entire repressive system...Helen receives no understanding but laughter” (172). Realizing that there is no use addressing the agents of the “Machine,” (Young woman cannot speak). They have already her own story. Even the defense attorney must resort to the “Machine’s” notions of duty and virtue to be able to

defend her. He more speaks of a different story than hers; he even speaks of her than she of herself. Revealing how the “Machine” works, Helen Cixous notes, “The philosophical constructs itself starting with the abasement of the feminine to the masculine order which appear to be the condition for the functioning of the “Machine” (quoted in Ginger Strand 167). Helen’s struggle is twisted and trivialized to fit the male’s order.

In the “prison Room,” Helen remains hunted by the agents of the “Rule...Regulations...Routine.” Though part of the Priest’s speech reflects her own inner feelings, she never listens to him—he is, after all, a member of the rotten system. Instead, she listens to the voice of a Negro prisoner singing offstage and asks to “let him sing. He helps me. ...I understand him. He is condemned” (527). The Negro’s is the hymn of the oppressed, whereas the priest’s is of the oppressor.

Helen receives the message of the system again, this time by the Barber: “You’ll submit my lady. Right to the end, you’ll submit!” (527). Helen, who bears the message of all women, replies, “No! I will not be submitted...am I never to be let alone... Is nothing mine? [Even] The hair on my head!... never to have peace!” (527). Retaliating for the system’s ridicule of her in court, Helen asks, “When I’m dead, won’t I have peace? life has been hell to me... [God] was never around me...I sought something –I was always seeking something...I have been free! When I did what I did I was free! Free and not afraid... how can that be? A great sin—a mortal sin—for which I must die and go to hell—but it made me free! One moment I was free. (527-28). Helen’s situation is more tragic than Ann’s and Claire’s , she has come in confrontation with almost every agent of the oppressive system: a pitiless, dependent mother, a cold and repressive husband, a lover who convicts her, a prosecutor, a judge, a jailer, a priest, a senseless barber, guards, an electrocutor, and before all, miserable living conditions. Compared to Helen, Ann and Claire never suffered Helen’s financial problems or her deep yearning for the bodily sexual pleasure

In conclusion, reading the three plays in the light of both Miller’s tragic theory and the tenants of feminism highlight the fact that the three female protagonists expose the tragedy of all women in different degrees. What Ann and Claire felt and said in part was felt and said by Helen in full. According to feminism , Lois Tyson believes that “no ideology succeeds in fully programming all of the people all of the time”. (92) so there is always hope for change. That is why Ann, by the end of the play, awards her artistic masterpiece "for all women;” Claire awards her “Breath of life” a “gift to you

[Tom],” Whereas Helen awards her life to every woman and everyone who is oppressed.

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مستخلص

تهدف هذه الورقة إلى البحث في أزمات "آن" في مسرحيه راشيل كروزرز "هو وهي" (١٩١١)، و"كلير" في مسرحيه سوزان جلاسييلز "الحافه" (١٩٢١)، و"هيلين" في مسرحيه صوفي تريديويل "ميكينال" (١٩٨٢) وذلك في مواجهتهم مع نماذج المجتمع المتمزته. مثل هذه النماذج التي تعيق استقلالية المرأة وإبداعها. تثير الشخصيات النسائية الثلاث، في محاولتهن لحماية هويتهن، تثير فينا مفهوم آرثر ميللر عن المشاعر المأساوية. تعرض هذه الورقة الإناث الثلاث المستهدفات في صراعًا شديدًا مع الأشخاص المقربين الذين تربطهم بهم علاقات شخصية أو عاطفية. في تحدياتهم الشرسة ضد أنماط المجتمع والمؤسسات المقيدة لهم، تقدم البطلات الثلاث ثلاث جولات متتالية ومعقدة في معركة واحدة. يمر نضال "آن" المتحفظ بخلق الذات الإيجابي "لكلير" وينتهي بكفاح "هيلين" الواقعي من أجل الاستقلال الاقتصادي. ستعتمد هذه الورقة على النهج النسوي كإطار نظري للمسرحيات الثلاث قيد المناقشة. سيكون التركيز على الأدوار المجتمعية المحددة للشخصيات النسائية ومحاولاتهن لاختراق جميع عوامل التقييد؛ بما في ذلك قواعد المجتمع والزواج والأسرة والتبعية الاقتصادية. على الرغم من كل المؤامرات على البطلات الثلاث، تحمل المسرحيات الثلاث لمحة من الأمل والتفاؤل لجميع الإناث.