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Globalization, Innovation and Sustainability in Arthur Miller's The Crucible and All My Sons

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Abstract

This conference paper examines Arthur Miller's All My Sons (1947) and The Crucible (1953) through the intersecting lenses of globalization, innovation, and sustainability, arguing that Miller's drama anticipates many of the ethical dilemmas that define the contemporary global order. Rather than treating globalization merely as economic integration or technological advancement, the paper interprets it as a condition in which expanding systems of production, information, and institutional power generate consequences that increasingly transcend geographical and moral boundaries. Drawing upon the theoretical insights of Zygmunt Bauman, Ulrich Beck, Amartya Sen, Martha Nussbaum, Joseph Stiglitz, and Hans Jonas, the study develops a literary framework that connects Miller's dramatic vision with debates on responsible innovation, human capability, global risk, inequality, and ethical accountability. Joe Keller's industrial enterprise in All My Sons is read as a critique of innovation divorced from responsibility, while Salem's judicial machinery in The Crucible is analysed as a model of institutional innovation that manufactures fear, conformity, and epistemic violence. Through a comparative reading, the paper demonstrates that both plays expose two complementary forms of unsustainable modernity, one rooted in profit-driven production and the other in power-driven governance.Aligned with the conference theme, "Global Challenges in Business: Innovation and Sustainability," this paper contributes a humanities perspective to business and management discourse by arguing that sustainable innovation cannot be evaluated solely through productivity, technological efficiency, or institutional continuity. Instead, Miller insists that genuine sustainability rests upon ethical responsibility, human dignity, and collective accountability. The paper ultimately proposes that literary texts offer indispensable insights into contemporary global challenges by revealing the moral consequences of innovation when systems privilege survival over humanity and authority over conscience.

Keywords

Globalization; Innovation; Sustainability; Responsibility; Conscience; Accountability; Modernity; Risk; Dignity; Ethics.

I. Opening: The Question of Progress

The language of the contemporary world is increasingly organised around three apparently affirmative ideas: globalization, innovation, and sustainability. Together, they suggest movement, expansion and improvement. Globalization promises greater interconnectedness; innovation promises new ways of producing, communicating and solving problems; and sustainability promises that such development can be maintained without exhausting the human and material conditions on which collective life depends. Yet the apparent harmony among these concepts conceals a difficult ethical question: what happens when innovation advances faster than responsibility? And what happens when economic efficiency, institutional security or collective prosperity begins to justify actions whose human consequences are deliberately pushed beyond the immediate field of vision?

It is precisely at this point that Arthur Miller's drama acquires renewed significance. Although Miller's plays emerged from particular historical and political circumstances in the United States, their concerns repeatedly exceed those circumstances. His theatre places ordinary individuals inside systems larger than themselves—families, businesses, courts, communities, political institutions—and asks how moral responsibility survives when individuals become entangled in

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structures governed by competing pressures. Enoch Brater's *Arthur Miller's Global Theater* is itself evidence of the playwright's continuing movement beyond national boundaries: the volume examines how Miller's drama has travelled across linguistic and cultural borders and generated new meanings for audiences in different parts of the world. (JSTOR)

This transnational dimension is particularly productive when globalization is understood not merely as the expansion of markets but as an intensification of relationships, dependencies and consequences. What appears to be a private decision in one location may produce consequences elsewhere; what seems to be an institutional necessity may become a human catastrophe; what is presented as progress may conceal forms of exclusion, exploitation or moral displacement. In this sense, Miller's theatre does not need to be converted artificially into a discourse on contemporary business. Rather, it provides a dramatic vocabulary through which the ethical foundations of economic and institutional life can be questioned.

This paper brings *All My Sons* (1947) and *The Crucible* (1953) into this conversation. The two plays are separated by historical circumstance and dramatic setting, yet both are concerned with the dangerous consequences of systems in which responsibility is subordinated to a supposedly greater necessity. In *All My Sons*, that necessity takes the language of business, production and family survival. Joe Keller repeatedly understands his actions through the immediate vocabulary of his own interests: "business," "family," and what he believes he had to do (Miller, *All My Sons* 30). The apparently private world of the Keller family consequently becomes inseparable from the wider consequences of industrial production. Scholarship has similarly identified the play's central concerns with responsibility, human connection, capitalism, materialism and the relationship between the individual and the social environment (Kim 5–30). (KCI)

The Crucible, by contrast, relocates the crisis from the industrial marketplace to the institutional world of Salem. Here the production of value is replaced by the production of certainty: accusation becomes evidence, suspicion becomes knowledge, and conformity becomes a condition of survival. Miller's language repeatedly exposes the frightening simplicity through which institutional authority can convert uncertainty into conviction. Proctor's resistance finally rests not upon economic calculation but upon the recovery of an individual moral identity: "my name" becomes inseparable from his sense of self and responsibility (*The Crucible* 71). The juxtaposition of these plays therefore permits a broader question about sustainable progress. If *All My Sons* asks what happens when productive and economic activity is detached from social responsibility,

The argument advanced here, therefore, is that *All My Sons* and *The Crucible* can be read together as dramas of unsustainable modernity. The former exposes the moral consequences of economic production without accountability; the latter exposes the consequences of institutional power without ethical restraint. Read through the contemporary concerns of globalization, innovation and sustainability, Miller's theatre ultimately asks a question that remains uncomfortable precisely because it is so contemporary: can any system call itself progressive when the human responsibility necessary to sustain it has been sacrificed?

II. Globalization and the Problem of Ethical Progress

Globalization is commonly associated with expansion, mobility, connectivity and accelerated exchange. Capital, technology, information and commodities increasingly cross geographical boundaries, yet their benefits and risks remain unevenly distributed. Zygmunt Bauman's formulation of globalization through its **"human consequences"** is therefore particularly useful: greater global mobility does not necessarily produce a corresponding distribution of power or responsibility (Bauman 1–2). What becomes increasingly interconnected materially may remain deeply unequal ethically. This distinction provides an appropriate point of entry into Arthur Miller's drama, where decisions made within restricted spaces repeatedly generate consequences far beyond them.

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Miller's *All My Sons* offers a concentrated representation of this problem. Joe Keller's factory is local, but its products enter a wider technological and military system. His decision regarding defective aircraft parts therefore transforms a private business calculation into a public human catastrophe. His assertion that "a man can't be a Jesus in business" (*All My Sons* 30) reveals the moral separation on which his reasoning depends. Bauman's argument helps illuminate the larger significance of this separation: when economic networks expand, the consequences of decisions become increasingly difficult to contain within the immediate community of the decision-maker (6–18). Miller's dead pilots expose precisely the impossibility of such moral containment.

Ulrich Beck's concept of the "risk society" sharpens this connection. Modernisation, Beck argues, produces not only wealth and technological capacity but also risks generated by the very processes through which modern societies pursue prosperity (Beck 19–24). *All My Sons* dramatizes this paradox with unusual economy. The aircraft components are products of industrial expertise, yet their defect transforms technological production into mortal risk. Joe's explanation—"It was a chance and I took it" (*All My Sons* 30)—reduces an ethical decision to a calculation of acceptable risk. The tragedy lies in the fact that those who bear the ultimate consequences are not the people making the calculation.

Hans Jonas provides the ethical dimension necessary to connect this problem with ***innovation***. Modern technology, he argues, has expanded the consequences of human action so greatly that responsibility must extend beyond immediate interests and foreseeable short-term effects (Jonas 3–10). Joe Keller thinks primarily about his factory, contract and family; a responsibility-oriented ethic asks what happens to those who depend upon what that factory produces. Jonas therefore supplies a crucial principle for reading Miller**:** expanded capacity requires expanded responsibility. Innovation without ethical foresight can enlarge vulnerability as readily as it enlarges productive power.

Amartya Sen's *Development as Freedom* similarly challenges the reduction of progress to economic growth. For Sen, development is ultimately concerned with the freedoms and opportunities through which people are able to live lives they have reason to value (Sen 3–11). Economic prosperity is therefore a means rather than the final measure of progress. This distinction illuminates Chris Keller's growing moral awareness. His recognition that "there's a universe of people outside" (*All My Sons* 30) enlarges responsibility beyond family and business toward a wider human community. Miller consequently makes visible what Sen theorises: economic success loses its developmental meaning when it diminishes human agency, security and social responsibility.

Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach takes the argument from freedom toward human dignity. Rather than measuring social progress primarily through economic indicators, Nussbaum asks what people are actually able to "do and to be" (18–20). Read through this perspective, the tragedy of *All My Sons* is not merely that Joe commits an unethical act. His decision places the fundamental capabilities of others—their ability to live, work, trust and participate safely in society—at risk. The pilots cannot be reduced to economic "costs"; they are human beings whose lives have been subordinated to an economic calculation. Sustainability, in this broader sense, must therefore concern not merely the survival of institutions but the preservation of human possibilities.

Joseph Stiglitz brings the question explicitly into the field of globalization. In *Globalization and Its Discontents*, he examines how global economic arrangements can distribute benefits and burdens unevenly, often privileging powerful interests while shifting costs toward weaker groups (Stiglitz 3–12). His perspective enables a sharper formulation of the question already embedded in Miller's play: who benefits from a decision, and who bears its consequences? Joe protects his business and family while the risks are borne by people outside his decision-making circle. The scale is different from contemporary globalization, but the ethical structure is recognisable: interconnected systems require

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responsibility proportionate to the distribution of their consequences.

The same conceptual framework prepares the movement into *The Crucible*. If *All My Sons* dramatises the unequal distribution of the consequences of economic and technological decisions, *The Crucible* examines the unequal distribution of institutional power, information and authority. Salem's crisis is not one of industrial production but of the production of certainty. Danforth's declaration that "a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it" (*The Crucible* 71) eliminates the space between obedience and opposition. In Sen's terms, an institution that should secure human agency instead becomes an instrument for restricting it (142–47).

Nussbaum's emphasis on dignity makes Proctor's later struggle equally significant. His anguished question, "How may I live without my name?" (*The Crucible* 133), transforms reputation into a question of moral agency. The court demands that Proctor surrender his identity in order to preserve its own authority; his refusal affirms the human dignity that institutional power cannot legitimately appropriate. Miller thereby shifts the sustainability question from economic life to communal life: can a society remain sustainable when institutional order is maintained by destroying conscience, trust and truth?

Jonas's principle of responsibility also extends naturally to *The Crucible*. Although the play is not technological in the same sense as *All My Sons*, it demonstrates a comparable danger: power becomes destructive when its consequences exceed the ethical imagination of those exercising it (Jonas 8–12). Danforth possesses institutional authority but lacks the humility to recognise institutional error. His court becomes sustainable only in the narrow sense of preserving itself; ethically, it is already collapsing.

Taken together, these perspectives establish an important distinction among technical progress, economic development, institutional efficiency and ethical progress. They are not synonymous. Bauman directs attention to the human consequences of globalization; Beck to the risks produced by modernisation; Jonas to responsibility proportionate to technological power; Sen to freedom as the measure of development; Nussbaum to human dignity and capability; and Stiglitz to the unequal distribution of globalization's gains and burdens. Miller's two plays give these abstractions a dramatic and human form.

The central proposition emerging from this framework is therefore simple but consequential: globalization expands interdependence, innovation expands human capacity, but neither guarantees ethical progress. Sustainability requires that responsibility expand alongside capacity. *All My Sons* will test this proposition through economic and technological production; *The Crucible* will test it through institutional power and the control of truth. In both, Miller asks whether a system can legitimately call itself progressive when its survival depends upon sacrificing the human values that make collective life possible.

III. *All My Sons*: Innovation without Responsibility

In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller places the language of production against the language of responsibility and allows the two to collide within the apparently ordinary world of the Keller family. The play is set in the aftermath of the Second World War, but its central ethical problem is not confined to wartime America. Joe Keller owns a manufacturing enterprise that has participated in the production of aircraft parts, and the decisive moral crisis begins when commercial survival is placed above the safety of those who depend upon the products of that enterprise. The dramatic situation therefore possesses a significance that extends beyond the immediate historical setting. As Patricia D. Denison observes, the play's apparently familiar suburban setting conceals a much wider set of "competing contexts and comparative scales" (Denison 46). The small backyard is thus never merely a backyard; it becomes a compressed social space in which private prosperity, industrial production, war, family loyalty and public responsibility intersect. (JSTOR)

Miller establishes this contradiction through Joe Keller himself. Joe is neither presented as an abstract embodiment of evil nor as a conventional villain. He

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is a successful businessman, a father and a neighbour who understands his responsibilities primarily through the immediate world surrounding him. His moral vocabulary is consequently narrow. When he declares, "a man can't be a Jesus in business" (*All My Sons* 30), he draws an artificial boundary between economic conduct and ordinary morality. The statement is important because Joe does not deny morality altogether; he simply believes that business operates according to different rules. Joe Sarnowski's formulation that Miller's play reveals the inseparability of "ethics and economics" is especially relevant here (Sarnowski 142). (Scholarly Publishing Collective)

The problem becomes more serious when Joe's conception of business is linked to technological production. The defective cylinder heads are not passive objects. They are products entering a technological system in which a manufacturing decision can become a matter of life and death. Cambridge's scholarly overview of the play identifies Joe as the manufacturer who knowingly permits faulty cylinder heads to reach the Army Air Force because he fears losing the contract and the business he hopes to leave to his sons (Denison 46). (Cambridge University Press) The play consequently exposes an uncomfortable distinction between technical capacity and ethical capacity**.** Joe's factory possesses the ability to manufacture; what it lacks at the decisive moment is the willingness to accept responsibility for what that manufacturing makes possible. Joe's own explanation is revealing:

"It was a chance and I took it" (*All My Sons* 30).

The brevity of the statement conceals the magnitude of the decision. Joe converts an ethical choice into an apparently unavoidable business calculation. The word *chance* reduces responsibility to circumstance, while *took* restores agency almost inadvertently. He did not merely encounter the situation; he acted within it. The tragedy therefore resides partly in the language through which individuals rationalize their choices. Miller makes Joe's vocabulary itself a site of moral conflict.

Sarnowski's argument is particularly valuable because he refuses to treat the play as a simple condemnation of economic activity. His study identifies a relationship between "idealism and pragmatism" in Miller's treatment of economics (Sarnowski 142–59). (Scholarly Publishing Collective) The distinction matters for our reading because the problem in *All My Sons* is not that Joe is pragmatic. It is that pragmatism becomes detached from an ethical horizon. Economic necessity becomes a justification for actions whose consequences are transferred to others. The question therefore moves beyond whether Joe is individually guilty and toward a larger question: what happens to a system when its calculations exclude the human beings affected by those calculations?

Miller makes that question increasingly difficult to evade through Chris Keller. Chris has returned from war with a conception of fellowship that conflicts sharply with his father's understanding of business and family. His moral consciousness extends beyond the immediate household. When Chris speaks of the men with whom he served, his language moves toward a collective conception of obligation. His recognition that "there's a universe of people outside" (*All My Sons* 30) challenges Joe's restricted moral universe. The contrast between father and son therefore becomes a contrast between two definitions of responsibility.

Kim's study of *All My Sons* is useful at precisely this point. He identifies "responsibility and connection" among Miller's central concerns and argues that the play finally moves beyond the immediate family toward a wider conception of social responsibility (Kim 5–30). (KCI) The title itself becomes significant in this context. "All my sons" ultimately refuses Joe's assumption that responsibility ends with one's biological family. The dead pilots become morally connected to him. The private factory is therefore revealed as part of a much larger human network.

This is where the play can be brought into meaningful conversation with the conference's concern with innovation and sustainability. Contemporary innovation is frequently assessed through productivity, efficiency, competitiveness and technological advancement. Miller introduces another criterion: responsibility for consequence. A technologically successful product cannot be

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regarded as an achievement if its production depends upon knowingly transferring risk to others. The question is not simply whether something can be produced, but whether the manner of its production can be ethically justified.

Miller's dramatic structure makes this point without turning the play into a theoretical treatise. Joe repeatedly attempts to shrink the scale of his responsibility. His concern is the factory; then the contract; then his family; then his sons. Chris, by contrast, gradually enlarges the scale. His moral awakening leads him from family loyalty toward social obligation. As Kim argues, Miller's social tragedy ultimately insists upon responsibilities that extend "beyond the immediate family" (Kim 5–30). (KCI) The tension can be seen again in Joe's desperate defence of his conduct:

"I was afraid maybe I'd lose my business" (*All My Sons* 30).

At the same time, the play refuses to allow distance to erase responsibility. The dead pilots return symbolically to the Keller household. The supposedly external consequences become internal. Larry's letter makes this moral reversal devastatingly explicit. His death cannot remain an unfortunate wartime event separate from Joe's business decision. Joe is forced to confront the fact that what he regarded as a business calculation has entered the most intimate space of his life.

A recent ethical reading of the play similarly locates Joe's crisis in the conflict between his identity as a businessman and his obligations to his family and society (Liu). The significance of this interpretation lies in its refusal to separate individual morality from social structures. Joe's failure is personal, but the conditions that make his rationalization possible are social. His moral vocabulary has been shaped by a culture in which commercial success can appear to legitimate the means through which it is achieved.

The play therefore exposes the inadequacy of a purely economic definition of sustainability. A business may survive; a contract may be preserved; a factory may continue to operate. Yet none of these constitutes genuine sustainability if the system progressively destroys trust, responsibility and human relationships. Muhsin similarly argues that *All My Sons* presents the destructive consequences that arise when the pursuit of wealth overwhelms social responsibility (Muhsin 11–21). (Genius Journals) The crucial issue, however, is not simply "capitalism" as an abstract system. Miller's sharper concern is the moral imagination of the individual operating within that system**.**

Joe Keller finally discovers what his earlier reasoning had concealed. His anguished recognition, "I think to him they were all my sons" (*All My Sons* 54), destroys the distinction upon which his life has been organised. The possessive pronoun changes its meaning. "My" can no longer refer exclusively to Larry and Chris. The dead pilots have entered the circle of his responsibility. What Joe had previously regarded as somebody else's loss becomes his own moral burden.

In this sense, *All My Sons* does not reject innovation or economic ambition. It asks a more demanding question: what kind of innovation deserves to be called progress? **Joe** Keller's factory can produce efficiently, but Joe himself cannot imagine responsibility at the scale of his production. The tragedy begins precisely at that gap. His technological capacity expands beyond his moral imagination.

Miller's enduring relevance consequently lies in his insistence that economic systems are human systems**.** Behind every product are decisions; behind every decision are values; and behind every value are consequences borne by particular human beings. Sarnowski's observation that "there is no economics without ethics" captures the ethical structure that Miller dramatizes (142). (Scholarly Publishing Collective) The sustainability of any economic order therefore depends not merely upon its ability to continue producing but upon its capacity to preserve the moral relationships that production inevitably affects.

IV. *The Crucible*: Innovation, Information and the Machinery of Fear

If *All My Sons* exposes the danger of production without responsibility, *The Crucible* shifts the problem from the economic sphere to the institutional sphere. Here Miller is less concerned with the production of commodities than with the

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production of belief, suspicion and authority**.** Salem becomes a community in which information is no longer simply exchanged; it is manufactured, controlled and converted into institutional power. The result is a system that appears to protect social order while progressively destroying the ethical relationships upon which that order depends.

Miller establishes this atmosphere almost immediately through Reverend Parris's fear of what others may discover. His anxiety is not simply religious; it is institutional and reputational. He asks, "There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit" (*The Crucible* 12). The word *faction* is revealing. Before the witch trials have properly developed, Salem is already understood through the language of opposition, suspicion and political threat. Parris's primary concern is not yet the truth of what happened in the forest but the consequences that knowledge might have for his authority.

Thomas P. Adler's discussion of *The Crucible* as a drama of "conscience and community" is particularly valuable here because it places individual moral choice against the pressures of collective institutions (Adler 89–103). The community in Miller's play is not simply a collection of individuals; it is an organised moral structure. Once that structure begins to define dissent as danger, conscience itself becomes threatening. (Cambridge University Press) The transformation from uncertainty into institutional certainty is accelerated by Abigail Williams. Her first major strategy is not the discovery of evidence but the control of language. She warns the other girls:

"Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things" (*The Crucible* 20).

The passage is significant because speech itself becomes a regulated commodity. The girls' subsequent accusations demonstrate how rapidly such an information system can reproduce itself. One accusation validates another, and the accumulation of accusations begins to appear as evidence of truth. Abigail's cry. "I saw Sarah Good with the Devil!" (*The Crucible* 48), does not establish knowledge; it establishes a pattern. Once the court accepts the pattern, other accusations become easier to believe. Fear generates information, and information generates further fear.

This is why the conventional description of *The Crucible* as a play about "mass hysteria," though not entirely wrong, is insufficient for the argument being developed here. Recent scholarship by Hazrat Abbas and Laiba Tariq explicitly examines hysteria as a mechanism of power, arguing that fear, social pressure and ideology allow authority to control behaviour and silence opposition (Abbas and Tariq 2867–78). (Academia) Their argument strengthens the movement of our analysis from psychological panic toward institutional process: fear becomes consequential when an authority structure learns how to use it. The court's language makes this process unmistakable. Deputy Governor Danforth declares:

"a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it" (*The Crucible* 71).

Aamir Aziz's analysis of the play is particularly useful because he interprets *The Crucible* as Miller's theatrical intervention against the political spectacle of McCarthyism. Aziz argues that Miller uses the historical Salem trials to expose the mechanisms through which political spectacle creates an apparently unassailable framework of authority (Aziz 169–80). (Cambridge University Press) The importance of this interpretation for our present argument is that spectacle itself becomes a form of institutional technology. The court does not merely discover truth; it stages truth before the community.

This distinction becomes increasingly important as the trials progress. Danforth insists:

"We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment" (*The Crucible* 71).

Here Miller anticipates a fundamental problem of institutional modernity**:** the desire for perfect certainty can itself become destructive. An institution that cannot tolerate ambiguity will eventually begin manufacturing evidence to eliminate it. The issue is therefore not simply whether the court possesses information. It is whether the institution possesses the ethical capacity to admit that its information may be incomplete.

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David Barnett's analysis of *The Crucible* is instructive in this regard. His study of the play's political dramaturgy argues that its apparently democratic commitments are complicated by the coercive effects of its own theatrical strategies (Barnett 325–40). (Cambridge University Press) This contradiction is important. Miller is not simply opposing one form of authority with an uncomplicated alternative. He is dramatizing the difficulty of maintaining critical judgment within systems that demand agreement.

The play's treatment of evidence intensifies this problem. The court accepts invisible forces as legitimate evidence because the institutional framework has already determined what kind of knowledge is admissible. Danforth's confidence becomes almost epistemological:

"a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it" (*The Crucible* 71).

The repetition of this logic matters. Once the institution has decided what counts as truth, disagreement can no longer function as correction. It becomes proof of guilt.

The comparison should not be overstated. *The Crucible* is not a prophecy about digital media, artificial intelligence or contemporary information platforms. Such a claim would weaken rather than strengthen the literary argument. Its enduring relevance lies elsewhere: Miller demonstrates how systems of information become dangerous when authority determines truth before evidence is allowed to challenge authority**.**

Deanna Marie Mattia's study similarly argues that *The Crucible* can be read beyond the conventional McCarthyism analogy, particularly through Miller's manipulation of irony, language and political allegory (Mattia). Her analysis observes that officials in both Salem and the McCarthy era could manipulate language and blame to conceal political agendas. (Montclair Digital Commons) This is particularly relevant to our concept of innovation because it shows that institutional power does not always require new physical technologies. The innovation may occur at the level of language itself.

The most disturbing example is the institutionalisation of confession. Reverend Hale initially believes that expertise can help identify the truth. His confidence in the procedures of investigation gradually collapses. When he finally cries, "I come to do the Devil's work" (*The Crucible* 121), the statement represents more than personal despair. It marks the moment when an individual who entered the system believing that knowledge could serve justice recognises that the machinery has begun serving something else.

This is why the court in *The Crucible* can be understood as an unsustainable institution. It initially promises stability. It claims to protect Salem from invisible danger. Yet its method of protection destroys the trust necessary for communal life. Neighbours begin accusing neighbours; private grievances become public evidence; reputation becomes a weapon; truth becomes subordinate to survival. The play captures this collapse in Proctor's desperate recognition that his name has become inseparable from his moral identity:

"How may I live without my name?" (*The Crucible* 133).

The statement is often read primarily as a declaration of personal integrity. Thomas Adler's discussion of conscience and community becomes particularly pertinent here: Proctor's final resistance is simultaneously individual and communal because his conscience cannot be separated entirely from the moral condition of the society around him (Adler 89–103). (Cambridge University Press) Proctor finally refuses the institutional demand:

"Because it is my name!" (*The Crucible* 133).

The repetition transforms "name" from a private possession into an ethical principle. The connection with *All My Sons* is now becoming clearer. Joe Keller's system collapses because economic calculation excludes human responsibility; Salem's system collapses because institutional authority excludes moral doubt. Joe's factory and Danforth's court therefore represent two different versions of the same structural danger: a system becomes unsustainable when it begins protecting its own

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continuity at the expense of the human values that originally justify its existence.

In this respect, *The Crucible* significantly expands the argument begun in *All My Sons*. Innovation is not only about machines, factories and products. It also concerns the institutional mechanisms through which societies classify knowledge, distribute authority and regulate behaviour. When those mechanisms become detached from conscience, innovation ceases to enlarge human freedom and begins to narrow it.

And this is precisely where *The Crucible* brings the conference theme into a deeper literary register. Globalization may connect institutions across unprecedented distances; innovation may give those institutions unprecedented capacities; but neither guarantees ethical progress. The sustainability of collective life ultimately depends upon whether human beings retain the courage to ask what those capacities are being used to achieve—and whom they may harm.

V. From Keller to Proctor: Two Forms of Unsustainable Modernity

The movement from *All My Sons* to *The Crucible* reveals that Miller's deepest concern is not confined to any single institution. The factory and the court belong to different worlds, yet both operate through a powerful claim of necessity. Joe Keller sacrifices morality for business and family, while Danforth sacrifices individual conscience for the authority of the court. In both plays, the preservation of the system gradually becomes more important than the human beings it is meant to serve.

Joe's assertion that "A man can't be a Jesus in business" (*All My Sons* 30) exposes his restricted conception of responsibility. As Sarnowski argues, Miller refuses to separate "ethics and economics," showing that economic decisions inevitably carry ethical consequences (142–59). Chris challenges Joe's narrow moral circle when he recognises that "there's a universe of people outside" (*All My Sons* 30). Kim similarly identifies "responsibility and connection" as central to the play's social tragedy (5–30). Joe's later realisation—"I think to him they were all my sons" (*All My Sons* 54)—marks the painful expansion of responsibility beyond family and business.

A comparable transformation occurs in *The Crucible*. Proctor initially keeps the crisis at a personal distance, but his admission, "I have known her, sir" (*The Crucible* 102), converts private guilt into public responsibility. Like Chris, Proctor discovers that private silence can have public consequences. Adler's emphasis on "conscience and community" is therefore central to Miller's dramatic vision (89–103).

This movement from private decision to wider consequence also resonates with Beck's concept of the "risk society," in which modernisation produces risks that escape traditional boundaries (19–21). In *All My Sons*, defective components move from Joe's factory into the national war effort; the physical boundaries of the factory cannot contain their consequences. Denison's "competing contexts and comparative scales" help explain how Miller connects domestic experience with larger historical forces (46–59). In *The Crucible*, information follows a similar trajectory: Abigail's private accusation becomes a community-wide institutional crisis. Aziz's analysis of "spectacular framing" shows how Miller transforms the Salem trials into an examination of political spectacle and public intervention (169–80).

The two plays consequently offer contrasting responses to sustainability. Joe recognises responsibility only after catastrophe has made its consequences unavoidable. Proctor, however, struggles to preserve moral integrity before surrendering to the court's authority. His question, "How may I live without my name?" (*The Crucible* 133), and his insistence, "Because it is my name!" (*The Crucible* 133), transform personal identity into an ethical resistance to institutional power. As Barnett demonstrates, the court's authority depends partly upon the appearance of legitimate procedure (325–40). In both plays, legitimacy is sustained by appearances until suppressed truth becomes impossible to contain.

The final parallel is therefore between two forms of systemic collapse. Joe's recognition that the dead pilots were "all my sons" (*All My Sons* 54) destroys

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the boundary between private business and public responsibility; Proctor's defence of his "name" (*The Crucible* 133) challenges the court's claim over individual conscience. The system, Miller suggests, begins by serving human beings but eventually demands that human beings serve the system**.**

Thus, *All My Sons* and *The Crucible* dramatise two routes toward unsustainable modernity: one through profit and production, the other through authority and information. Miller's larger warning is that progress remains sustainable only when responsibility grows alongside human capacity. His challenge is therefore not to innovation itself, but **to** innovation without conscience; not to globalization itself, but to globalization without responsibility; and not to institutional continuity, but to continuity purchased at the cost of human dignity**.**

VI. Conclusion — Rethinking Innovation through Miller

Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* and *The Crucible*, though rooted in different historical circumstances, converge upon a common ethical question: **what happens when systems created to serve human beings begin demanding that human beings serve the system?** In *All My Sons*, the system is economic and technological; in *The Crucible*, it is institutional and ideological. Joe Keller protects his business at the cost of lives, while Danforth protects the court at the cost of truth. Miller thus exposes the destructive moment when institutional survival becomes more important than human responsibility.

This makes Miller particularly relevant to contemporary debates on **globalization, innovation and sustainability**. Globalization expands interconnectedness, while innovation expands human capacity; neither, however, guarantees ethical progress. Beck's concept of the "risk society" demonstrates how modernisation can generate consequences that escape the boundaries within which decisions are made (19–21). Miller gives this abstract problem a human face. In *All My Sons*, Joe's fear—"I was afraid maybe I'd lose my business" (*All My Sons* 30)—reveals how economic survival can become a justification for moral failure. His eventual recognition that "they were all my sons" (*All My Sons* 54) destroys the distinction between private interest and public responsibility. Sarnowski's emphasis on the inseparability of "ethics and economics" reinforces this central insight (142–59).

The Crucible extends the argument from the production of goods to the production of information, authority and fear. Danforth's declaration that "a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it" (*The Crucible* 71) reveals an institution unable to accommodate doubt. As Aziz demonstrates, Miller transforms historical material into an examination of political spectacle and power (169–80), while Barnett highlights the pressures surrounding the representation of authority and ideology (325–40). Against this institutional absolutism stands Proctor's unforgettable declaration, "Because it is my name!" (*The Crucible* 133). His resistance affirms that institutional power must remain answerable to individual conscience. Adler's formulation of "conscience and community" is therefore crucial to understanding Miller's ethical vision (89–103).

Joe and Proctor consequently embody two contrasting relationships with systemic power. **Joe accommodates the system until catastrophe forces recognition; Proctor resists the system even when resistance demands personal sacrifice.** Their difference sharpens Miller's conception of sustainability. A factory may continue operating and a court may continue functioning, but neither is genuinely sustainable if its survival destroys **trust, truth, responsibility and human dignity**. Sustainability, therefore, must be understood not merely as institutional continuity but as the preservation of the human values that make continuity worth having.

This perspective also reframes the conference theme of innovation. Miller does not reject business, technology or institutional development; he challenges the assumption that greater capacity automatically constitutes progress. **Innovation must ultimately be judged by the human future it makes possible.** A technology that increases capacity while diminishing accountability, or an institution that strengthens control while suppressing conscience, may be efficient and

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powerful, but it cannot easily be called sustainable progress.

The significance of globalization lies precisely here. As networks expand, the distance between decision and consequence also expands. Economic actions affect people beyond their immediate locations; technologies transform lives far from their point of origin; information travels beyond the capacity of institutions to evaluate it. Miller's worlds are historically smaller, yet their ethical logic anticipates this contemporary condition: **consequences cannot remain confined to the place where decisions are made**.

Ultimately, *All My Sons* enlarges the meaning of family until Joe recognises that the dead pilots were "all my sons" (*All My Sons* 54), while *The Crucible* places Proctor's conscience within a crucible of institutional pressure and allows integrity to survive where authority collapses. Together, the plays suggest that **sustainability is first an ethical achievement and only afterwards an economic or technological one**. Economic growth without responsibility becomes destructive production; institutional order without truth becomes coercion; innovation without accountability becomes risk disguised as progress.

Miller's final lesson is therefore not anti-business or anti-innovation. It is **pro-responsibility**. Globalization expands our connections, innovation expands our capacities, but **only responsibility can make either sustainable**. In an age increasingly defined by global interdependence and accelerating innovation, Miller's enduring question remains profoundly relevant: **can humanity enlarge its power without diminishing its conscience?**

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