

## The Fall of Alger's Success Myth in Arthur Miller's Play

**Dr. Marsela Turku**

*Aleksander Moisiu University Durrës, Albania*

### Abstract

Alger's theory supported the idea that the key to success lies in the character. His heroes rise to the top by being devout (but not pious). They are likeable chaps with a ready quip and a vigorous sense of humour. Alger's belief that all people are equal in God's eye, implied that opportunities offered to people are equal, thus their success lies inside their personality, their personal magnetism, their virtues, their gifts. Therefore it is only our character that seals our success or failure. This theory not only prevailed before the twentieth century, but also was a model that many people believed and created their way of living. Arthur Miller in his play *Death of a Salesman* examines the fall of Alger's success myth in modern society through the main character. Willy's restless and uneasy psychological aspect is the main aspect where Miller based this tragedy. In this paper we will focus in the Alger's myth theory, its influence in the play and the tragedy it provokes by not changing the attitude.

**Keywords:** myth, Alger's theory, failure, American dream.

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