

THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE AMERICAN DREAM IN DEATH OF THE SALESMAN

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Abstract:

Social density is evolved in 'Death of the Salesman' through a clear focus on the family unit the Loman household. The meaning of the ambivalent relationships of the members is enlarged by contrast with the ways of life symbolized by the neighbor, Charley and with Uncle Ben. This larger meaning, in turn, is deeply colored by Willy's personalized false dream of success and the cult of personality. The typical middle-class culture is well understood when the Lomans discuss things such as 'aspirins, spectacles, time payments, advertising Chevrolets, faulty refrigerators, life insurance, mortgages and the adoration of high school football heroes'. The documentation of the middle-class life of Willy Loman and his faith in the myth of success, and his conformity to the American dream is so deep and simple that his rare moments of doubt easily shade into bafflement.

Keywords: American dream, middle-class, reality vs illusion, abandonment, social density.

Introduction:

Arthur Miller is one of the top most important playwrights of the 20th century. He stepped boldly and firmly which placed him in the high roads of American dramas. Miller's plays like the plays of most of his contemporaries focus on a small segment of human conflict. All his plays are domestic dramas that see the family as the resting place for the protagonist, his resentments great concern for the psychological and social forces that form and distort the family and the individual. Miller's characters appear as flesh and blood. The most vital factor in his play is the portrayal of the individual in conflict with society.

Miller's reputation lies in the large measure on the Pulitzer Prize-winning play 'Death of the Salesman', a tragedy of a common man caught in a false prestige and values imposed by the middle-class American society. The play depicts a belief that the common man is a 'fit-hero' for tragedy. Willy Loman the protagonist in the play is certainly firmed to be fitting into this principle of tragedy, who lays his life for the sake of his family

Willy Loman and American Dream:

It relates the story of a common man who portrays this lifestyle in American society. The issues explored in the play include materialism, procrastination, and alienation. Willy Loman believes that if he succeeds in living the American dream is accomplished.

Willy is left alone with nothing of monetary value or that of a legacy. Shortly thereafter Ben leaves and travels to Alaska, allowing Willy to lose himself, to view the concept of the American Dream.

Throughout Biff's childhood Willy was very supportive of him and his own dreams; visualizing to become a football star - to make something of himself. Willy wanted his elder son to be fulfilling his wish of becoming a great personality which he dreamt for himself to be was baffled by Biffs prolonged absence and impromptu returns seem to shatter the Dream for Willy many numbers of times. Mr. Oliver, but his hope is ultimately devastated by Biff who along with Happy, Willy's second son, abandons and mislead their father in the restroom.

Willy Loman! is seeking for a kind of ecstasy in life, which the mechanic-civilization deprives people of. In a flashback, Willy explains to his sons how to be successful in America, according to his ideals.

This gives the readers as for how such an idea of the American Dream did not affect one's view of Willy Loman as a tragic hero. Rather, his idealistic dreams and indolence were to blame. When Biff says, "I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been."

Ben, the American business adventure, is aggressive and unscrupulous. He is Willy's idea of success. At the same time, he is bewildered and cannot understand the reason why and where it went wrong with this dream.

Willy has reached the zenith of the American Dream because he is well-liked and personally takes an interest in his business. However, he is taunted by his fellow salesmen behind his back, rejected by his customers, and suddenly, his material world starts to collapse underneath his feet. The tremulousness in Willy's personal life reflects the instability of the larger society he was born into, because in Willy's society, having a solid identity means being wealthy and having material possessions - Willy not fitting into the equation of success with personal relationships seems to fail him, as people around him do not see him as he wanted to be seen.

Miller purposely has Willy's customers to reject him to mention the scientific and technological development of American society. Loman's helplessness to ultimately perceive the reality is demonstrated through the absence of the product that he sells, not only reflects his financial and personal instability, but also the instability of the greater American society. This constitutes why the American Dream is continuously shifting and is an ambiguous idea, at best. Miller's portrayal of Willy's failed American Dream conveys a dark and dull future of American society, where success is associated with objects and a sense of the material; human interaction and relationships are no longer respected.

Conclusion:

Willy Loman, the protagonist in the play is a salesman who first sells commodities and then sells himself as a commodity. To showcase how America has and is being infused by such a capitalistic and materialistic society, Miller illustrates, through Biff, that to achieve any level of success, someone must devote their entire livelihood to being only at a moderate level. Miller demonstrates that the continuous -changing American Dream is harmful because it continues to expand to such a level where it becomes an unattainable fruit to the common public. Like Willy Loman in the play, there are many Willy's around the society who are not able to fulfill this dream and put an end to their life as Willy Loman does in the play.

Miller through this play 'Death of the Salesman' is making us be aware of failed dreams and visions of both Biff and Willy, opening our eyes to the unsteadiness of the American society because they correlate success with material possessions. He ultimately makes it clear that in American culture it is quite unusual to separate the identity and the material in one's life.

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