

Death of a salesman

[Entertainment](#), [Movie](#)



The way in which the movie is directed by Volker Schlöndorff represents an interpretation that enhances the satirical nature of the play as it was written by Arthur Miller. This can be shown in the way that the director handles flashbacks within the play, in which he uses precisely the same actors despite the time lapse and the major physical changes that should have been evident. One notable example of this is seen in the flashback containing Biff and Happy Loman as well as their friend Bernard. The two boys play football, both behaving and speaking as teenagers.

The situations that surround them are ones that have to do with school and teenage life. Yet, the director uses the two adult actors who are obviously too old to be behaving in such a way. This decision by the director actually enhances the play as it amplifies the message that the boys have progressed very little since that stage of their lives. This scene, in fact, serves primarily to illuminate how Biff came to his current state, and his father's method of passing on his idealism to him is illuminated.

The director handles this well through the use of lighting and setting in a method that dramatizes the naivete and idealism of both the father and sons. The lighting conditions in Schlöndorff's film are very harsh, depicting a very sunny day where the two boys are playing football outside. The heavy lighting and the outdoor setting contrast well with the darker and confined indoor setting of the rest of the play. This light represents not just the youth and fervor of the two sons, but the bright hopes that their futures represented.

The representation of these hopes in the physical features of the grown men (as previously mentioned) allows the director to highlight the futile nature of

all their hopes. It is in this setting that Willy Loman demonstrates this idealism when he cries, “ That’s why I thank Almighty God you’re both built like Adonises. ” The overly lighted setting enhances the artlessness of the father in the way he misapplies the encouragement of his sons. It also highlights the fatal mistake made by Biff when he refuses to study for his math exam and relies solely on football as his means of social elevation.

The method chosen by the director of creating the props and the staging for the settings and sceneries of the movie also shows the creative lengths he goes to in order to cause the play to remain authentic. The house, yard, street, and business places seen within the movie adaptation of the play are very clearly built to look like a staged version of the play. The confined nature of a stage is used by the director as a tool to enhance and highlight the confined nature of Willy Loman’s life. The edges of the stage are subliminally represented to be like the edges of Loman’s life.

In fact, they seem to represent his prospects and the idea that he cannot go very far. The director uses the staging as a tool to communicate this to the audience, as he realizes that the usual true-to-life settings of movies create an air of freedom and hope that just is not present in the life of Loman and his family. The narrowed scopes of a stage therefore serve to represent the narrow scope of Loman’s life. The theme of futility in the midst of enthusiasm and hard work is demonstrated in the lives of these characters. The futility has already been hinted at in the prospects of the two Loman sons.

It is, however, most poignantly expressed in the life of Willy Loman who, after over thirty years of working in sales for his employer, is reduced to

working merely for commission in his old age. This movie points out the depressing idea that despite years of hard work, some persons may just be destined to lowness and inconsequence. Despite having done great things, some people like Loman are doomed to die in poverty and obscurity. This is shown in the juxtaposition of Willy and the boss' son Howard, who has done little work yet inherits the firm.

Loman, however, who has worked hard for the firm for 30 years—and who even had the honor of naming Howard—dies in poverty. Charley's speech to Loman is telling: " The only thing you got in this world is what you can sell. And the funny thing is that you're a salesman, and you don't know that. " Not only does this demonstrate the harsh conditions of the world that has been so cruel to Loman, but it highlights his determination to remain idealistic and never to learn from previous experiences. This attitude is the author of his life's futility.