

Death of a salesmen literary analysis

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Maria Medina AP Literature 2nd Hour February 14th, 2012 Being Boxed In As humans, at some point in our life we may feel the sense of being boxed-in. In *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller shows the different factors that make for the frustrations of long time salesman Willy Loman. Being “boxed in” is a symbol of Willy’s serious desperation with his life in the city, his career, and his family that eventually led to his death. Willy is living in the cramped state of New York.

He feels as though the city has turned into a box for the inhabitants: “The way they boxed us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks.” (1301). Willy feels trapped about the innovating of cities and rapidly growing population: “There’s more people! That’s what’s ruining this country! Population is getting out of control. The competition is maddening! Smell the stink from that apartment house-!” (1301) He’s afraid of change, and can’t accept it.. Willy makes himself feel boxed in by not accepting the new city life along with his new family life.

The city changing reminds Willy that he now also has a failed relationship with his sons, and this attributes to his sense of feeling boxed in. Willy refers back to the past many times and longs for life to be like it used to be. While talking about the changing city he remembers his old relationship with one of his sons: “Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? When I and Biff hung the swing between them?” Willy wishes to go back to the old days when his sons and he got along. He’s very nostalgic and remembers old times to give him some comfort.

Unfortunately, having flashback of the good times affects him horribly and not being able to go back in time makes him feel trapped. Willy’s career has

also taken a huge toll on him. At the beginning of the play he tries to give his wife and himself hope that they eventually won't feel physically trapped and things will get better: " Before it's all over we're gonna get a little place in the country and I'll raise some vegetables and a couple of chickens. " This shows that Willy longs for a different life where routine isn't always necessary.

He wants freedom and hopes someday it will come. Willy admits that he feels physically trapped due to the city he's living in, but never admits that he is trapped in the sense that he tries to appeal to everyone. He tries to keep an image that does not truly reflect him: " We never told the truth for ten minutes in this house! "(1362) After being confronted by Biff, Willy still doesn't realize his failure in his career and success. He tries making things better by helping out Biff's success; he commits suicide to have Biff keep his insurance money and start his own life: " Imagine?

When the mail comes he'll be ahead of Bernard again! "(1364) This suicide makes for Willy to literally box himself. All of his frustrations make for Willy not think straight and making irrational decisions. showed the factors that led to Willy's feeling " boxed in". His city life, his failed relationship with his family, and his having to keep up an appearance led Willy to frustration. Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman showed that being " boxed in" occurs when many problems come up, and when not coped with correctly, can lead to tragic extremes.