

Comparison of the glass menagerie with death of a salesman as an expression of si...

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Compare The Glass Menagerie with Death of a Salesman as an expression of significant themes in modern American culture. This essay presents a deep insight of the vision of loss and defeat in modern American dramas; The glass Menagerie and Death of Salesman focusing on different themes that relates to the American culture. The work of Arthur Miller and William Tennessee has analyzed the modified image of loss that exposes a touching truth that rises above the troubles of specific persons or families and has spread a universal attraction to a varied audience. The story of The Glass Menageries is planned around a sequence of abandonments. As Dipa Janardanan observes " Indeed, the fact that it is a " memory" play based on Tom Wingfield's recollection of a part of his life that he has never been able to reconcile or escape sets the stage for the " loss" that will serve as the driving force of the play". The characters of the play are the victims of time, destiny and of a dull and devastating reality. It is not only the tale of a destroyed family devastated by their inability to accept the reality but instead it is a tale in which the vision of loss is a tool through which William reaches to the core of a general truth that physical space doesn't effect an individual's ability to get away from a loss of psychological space. This is what happens to Tom whose love and affection for his mother and sister is the basic reason of his remorse and guilt. Therefore, memory turns out to be his everlasting prison as he strives to bring together his present and past. Similarly the theme of loss permeates Death of a salesman as well. Willy Loman is the image of the deficit of physiological, moral and physical space like the ruined picture of the gone father that is hanged in the house of Wingfeild symbolizing the image of loss, the failure of moral courage and

trustworthiness. The difference is that where remorse and loss causes the return of Tom Wingfield, although in reminiscence of a sorrowful part of his life he tries to make up for his past deeds, Willy Loman surrenders to the desolation of loss that, results in the eventual demolition of character, body, soul, and mind. According to Roudane " Death of Salesman transcends its own borders, its American heritage and claims to American essentialism The play continues to engage audiences on an international level, not only because it traverses intercultural borders, but also because it brings audiences back to the edges of prehistory itself" Willy Loman's unwavering belief in his underdeveloped version of the American dream leads to his quick psychological weakening as he is not able to comprehend the difference between his real life and the mythic dream. Undoubtedly, the troubles of the Lomans in their chase of the American dream is sated with the calculating traditions of " we must", " we must keep up with joneses" and " if only". The catastrophic element is that Lomans don't understand that the satisfaction they wish for are things that cannot be paid for. He associates victory and cheerfulness to being " personally attractive". As A. D Choudhuri states "" Dreams of a better future slowly take the shape of wishful fantasies, so much so that the sharpness of the conflict between illusion and reality, between Loman's little dreams and the impersonal forces of society, seem to be apparently lost in comprehensive images of extraordinary poetic force" similarly in The Glass menagerie every character is incapable to face their problems and thus retire into a personal world of fantasy where they find their own ease. The Glass Menagerie recognizes the invasion of actuality by delusion as an enormous and increasing feature of

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the human state in its era. The Glass Menagerie also correspond to the destruction that can happen when normal people fails to develop a contact or affiliation. It is another attraction for the audience of America as William brings forward the vulnerability of family interaction and the agony an individual face when torn between personal satisfaction and family responsibility. In the same way in the Death of a salesman Willy never cares for sincere love, warmth and relations and association with family and in fact substitutes those with mythical traits like “ appearances are everything” and “ making connections”. This turn out to be an everlasting source of aggravation for his sons because they have also grown up with illusions. According to Bigsby “ Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, who dominated the American theater for nearly a decade and a half, both began their careers as political playwrights. Formed by the 1930’s, they responded to the economic and social realities of the age”. Work cited : Janardanan, Dipa, " Images of Loss in Tennessee Williams's The Glass Menagerie, Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, Marsha Norman's night, Mother, and Paula Vogel's How I Learned to Drive" (2007). English Dissertations. Paper 23. Bigsby, C. W. E. “ Arthur Miller.” Major Literary Characters: Willy Loman. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991. Roudane, Matthew C. American Drama Since 1960: A Critical Study. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1996 Choudhuri, A. D. “ Death of a Salesman: A Salesman’s Illusion.” In Major Literary Characters. Ed. Harold Bloom. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991