

The death of the salesman

Literature



The Death of a Salesman Many critics have considered “ The death of the salesman” by Arthur Miller as a modern masterpiece in literature. This has caused numerous debates, which has stirred emotions among the readers and audiences of this play. Willy Loman is condemned as an outcast by the common trend among the readers. Therefore, the new generation of readers does feel nothing especially for the plight of characters like Willy Loman. The readers believe that the actions of Willy merit his destruction as portrayed in the play. The play offers more invigorating challenges in the academic sector, which is seen to be a pawn in the games of the academia (Eagleton p. 106). In the play ‘ The death of the salesman’ the late century, has been a transition of the society from the rural and agrarian communities to a massive urban and an industrialized community. According to the play, the changes are monitored and thus seem more tangible and practical. In addition, small families in the play operated farms and businesses but have gobbled in the multicultural conglomerates. Furthermore, the days of employer to serve as surrogate parents towards the loyal employees are over. It is stated that ‘ our world does not recognize people like Willy Loman’ because they discarded due to burdensome, inefficiency and unnecessary with the claim of progressing. According to the play, Loman is an expendable commodity used and cast aside that depicts the real picture of society in that the changes in the societal attitudes, which do not sound tangible, are real fact. Therefore, to reconcile the play to fit in the modern society we deploy the literary theory of Marxist (Sterling p. 98). According to Bayn, the Marxist theory relates literature with the society, which produces it, and at the same time the society as a consumer of literature (p. 298). The ideologies in the play rely on the plot, form, and characters in the play. Two dominant two

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ideologies conflict in the play, which are the profit motive and the cult created by personality. The play moves right from homespun myth about the fierce individuals who has decided to pull him from the bootstrap to gain fortune and fame. Ben's brother and Willy's father move into the harsh realities of an industrialist in the capitalistic society. Thus, the ideologies in the play are not exclusive. The American dream is fueled by the insatiable greed in the society. The society tries to equate economic success with happiness. In the play, Willy thinks that he can just achieve this goal by just a handshake and a smile. He places the image he has before the substance. Furthermore, the sentiment, " you be liked but might never want" forms the basis of Willy's rise of motivation in the play. It has also formed the backbone of a strong struggle for Willy. Miller uses Willy as a common person in his play to propose his ideologies. This becomes his failure as Willy on the other hand struggles to challenge the fixed notion of the class system. The existence of the stable environment terrifies as no common person can be debarred from such actions or thoughts (Bayn p. 11). According to Miller, his champion poses to be blind in the dangers posed by the inherence in his ideologies. Howard who is Willy's boss is his ideological opponent. First, he embodies the ever-growing amoral view of the business that relies on the notion of the survival for the fittest where profit is acquired at any price. " Cause you have to admit that business is just business". This becomes an extension of the mechanization in the capitalistic society. Willy breakdown due to the machines, which has the efficiency ideology that transforms the society to become an entity, which produces people who are soulless, just like machines. The subjective humanity is extracted from people in the business world. The author states, " We have come for the service of the <https://assignbuster.com/the-death-of-the-salesman/>

machines.” In this regard, Willy and other peasants lives on and later dies while blind. Therefore, Miller suggests that the society, which is under influence of the cruel ideologies, promote blindness in the society. Willy’s destruction is a sign of evil or wrong in the modern society. According to Miller, the evil lies squarely among those who perpetuate environment either actively or passively. This ideology expresses the class struggle focused on Willy. Willy is annotated as a Marxist to everyone. He stands for the proletariat in the society and depicts the historical struggle towards freedom against oppression. Willy’s faith lies in the hearts of a common person whose fate goes up to the tragic proportions. The author asserts that the wrong is linked to the condition that suppresses the man and perverts the flow of his own love with the creative instinct (Miller p. 78). We can deduce that Willy seemed happier as a stonemason or a carpenter but the ideological pressure blinds him from his society that offers him with a false dream. He has the desire to die as a salesperson hinders him from understanding himself. The play forces its audience to be Willy and sympathize with all his predicaments. Happy, in the play is depicted as a sad person whose fate is foreshadowed and doomed but he continues to dominate and emulate his father. Ben exploits the others instead of submitting to the fate of the common person. Ben is greed and an imperialist who finds the lopes holes to exploit the world in order to earn a living. He asserts, “ At seventeen, I walked into a jungle but left it at twenty where I am rich by the power of god.” Ben believes in saving himself and not the others, which a show how greedy and selfish society is. His riches make him gain power to exploit the society. He offers to Willy to share his strengths but Willy refuses because he knows what kind of a person Ben is. According to Willy, he opts to make his

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own million despite lack of exploitative powers. Hard work seems that only way to prosper but Charley is smaller to Ben in terms of powers (Eagleton p. 123). Linda's decision is major downfall for Willy as she is optimistic in the false dream she has. She is optimistic that her dream will come true despite the possibilities of her failure. Linda is a Marxist as she figures the values of Willy and his importance in the play. She participates in suicide of Willy thus acts as a proletariat. Biff later acts as those who struggle with the world after his self-discovery. In conclusion, the play can be classified as modern because of the beliefs and feelings expressed by the readers. Marxist becomes the major theme in the play due to the nature of the capitalistic society as portrayed in the play. From critical analysis, Willy is perceived as the antagonist who manipulates the various Marxism ideologies in the play.

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