

A death of a salesman

Literature, Russian Literature



A Death of a Salesman is a post war, modern drama published in 1949, dealing with the American society in the phase of the excessive domination of the economic world over the political, where consumerism, materialism and capitalism were changing the country, the society and the old tenets. Arthur Miller, the realist American playwright, who rejected oppression, was keen on reflecting the society particularly at that time, in relation to the American Dream and the deterioration in the use of it, keeping an eye on the changing philosophy of success and how a dream may turn into a nightmare.

Miller mingled the realism and the expressionism schools; he portrayed reality in an objective way with ordinary middle class people, where characters are more important than actions and ethical issues are at risk, and expressed in a diction filled with colloquialism. But he used some expressionist techniques, such as day dreams showing the protagonist's sufferings and the failure of social values.

In the main definition of the American Dream by Historian James Adams “ that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement”.

Things were different at that time, and it actually had a noble goal, but soon afterwards people started to misuse it, as a result the philosophy of success took a different lane, and the materialistic world overpowered the life of the people. Miller pictured this in the family of Willy Loman, and represented their financial strata by the name (low-man), and by important lines in the play:” once in my life I would like to own something outright before its broken! I’m always in a race with the junkyard! I just finished paying for the

car and it's on its last legs. The refrigerator consumes belts like a goddam maniac. They time those things. They time them so when you finally paid for them, they are used up". The life of people was just like a race, them running to get anything they need or don't need and spend their life paying for it. All of this evolved a gap between the American Dream and how people practice it; this changed America from the land of dreams and achievements to the land of devastation.

Miller introduces the tragic hero in a contemporary approach, to follow realism, keeping only a few things from the old tragic hero definitions, he presented in the play the shift from individualism to social conformity in the industrial progress that was witnessed along with the shift in social and economic values. Willy Loman who's presented as a modern tragic hero in order to comply with the age, nobody will understand a nonrealistic character. Hence, he has to be persuasive. However, he lives in the past grasping to old values of individualism.

Moreover, he refused to follow any of the success ideals around him like Charlie and Ben who combined old and new values, and locked himself in the old ways to success clinging to the profession of a salesman as it's a life achievement, rejecting to cope with reality, as a consequence of this he's never there. He was influenced long ago by a salesman named Dave Singleman and was impressed by his life. " And when I saw that, I realized that selling was the greatest career a man could want". In addition to this, Willy raised his children from a very young age that being loved, well liked, famous and having a charismatic personality is the way to success, which is

at the end of the day a wrong fallacy of success which appear to be true but it's ultimately inaccurate.

Although Willy chose this life refusing any attempt to change, still he's a victim of capitalism, after all of these years, he's still paying off his debts, wandering what went wrong in his plans. Willy tried to transfer his dreams to his son Biff, who already had seen reality and the deception, which caused father son quarrels all the time.