

Review of: tragedy and the common man by arthur miller



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Miller's thesis in this essay is that the common man is just as able to experience tragedy to the greatest extreme just as much as the highest of kings are. He says that this should be obvious given that today, psychiatrists base their reasoning's on " classic formulations" (Miller) such as Oedipus complexes for even the lowliest of common clients. This is due to that fact that although royalty played out these problems, they apply to everyone in similar situations.

The royal and higher-ups have the same mental processes as commoners; therefore they are just as apt to tragedy. Miller believes that the sense of tragedy comes into being when a character is willing to sacrifice all he has, and lay it on the line, to preserve one thing – " his sense of personal dignity" (Miller). Sometimes this happens when people try to regain their " rightful" position in the community, and other times when people are trying to reach that position for the first time.

Therefore tragedy comes when a man completely and utterly tries to portray and evaluate himself fairly. This is the fatal flaw in these characters, the fact that unlike the rest of us, who accept our position in society without retaliation, they strike out and are willing to lose everything in the battle against what they think is a challenge to their dignity, and their image of their rightful status. Unfortunately they find themselves in an unchangeable environment, and in a losing battle against mankind.

The quality in plays that shakes audiences lies in the fear that all of us have of being pulled away from what we desire to be, and who we want desperately to be in the world. In modern times, perhaps more then ever, the common man is most afraid to have his desired image thwarted. Kings
<https://assignbuster.com/review-of-tragedy-and-the-common-man-by-arthur-miller/>

and royalty are often associated with tragedy because their characters have size and therefore have more to lose. But even in the tale of Job, there is a moment when the common man defies what is happening and stands up for themselves, which gives them as much size as any king.

This willingness to lose everything just to not lose one's dignity makes the commonest of men attain the stature of any king. A misconception of tragedy, according to Miller, is that it is associated directly with pessimism. While on the other hand, it seems to be more directly associated with optimism. This is due to the fact that tragedies portray man's perseverance in the face of unmatchable odds, and desperate yet indestructible strive for humanity.

One facet that even more increases the tragedy is the fact that this strive for humanity has a chance of possibility. Possible victories must be present in tragedies according to Miller. A balance between what is possible and what is impossible, makes victory appear possible and therefore elevating defeat to a higher level. It seems that Miller's thesis is true, that the worst of tragedies can happen to either a King or a common man.