

Analysis of death of a salesman play by miller

Literature



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I realized what a ridiculous lie my whole life has been". The play by Arthur Miller, *Death of a salesman* can indeed be seen as a play of self-discovery. It is used to address the inability by man to accept change within him and the society as well as to show loss of identity. This is demonstrated when Willy says, " They dont need me in New York. Im the New England man. I'm vital in New England." The setting of the play depicts the last day of the life of Willy Loman characterized by dreams, memories, arguments, and confrontations which end with suicide and subsequent funeral of Willy.

The author uses this family to show cycles of denial, order against disorder, and contradictions. For instance, he shows how the affair by Willy while still married to Linda and its aftermaths can define an individual and how people can attempt to disguise such events. Before discovering the affair, Biff adores his father, believed in him and his philosophies that anything is possible.

However, upon discovering the affair, Biff is forced to re-evaluate his father's sentiments and perceptions of the world shown when he says, `I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them!'(Miller, 1996). He discovers that his father is living a lie and has created a false image of himself for the society and his family based on his utterances, `don't touch me, you — liar!' Willy is not a faithful husband or a successful salesman as he would rather have people believe. He fantasizes about his lost opportunities for fame and wealth while still blaming his son Biff for being lazy.

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The play shows how a self-perpetuating cycle can expand to include other people. Willy effectively blocks out the affair from his memory and lives in self-denial as Bernard claims when he says, ' I've often thought of how strange it was that I knew he'd given up his life', which explains why he cannot understand why his relationship with his son changed for the worst.

Biff's brother Happy is also caught up in the web of creating a favorable reality of himself or editing facts while manipulating the truth (Miller, 1996). This is illustrated in act 2 when Willy's brother says, " I'm gonna show you and everybody else that Willy Loman did not die in vain. He had a good dream. Its the only dream you can have - to come out number-one man. He fought it out here, and this is where Im gonna wins it for him." He lies that he is an assistant while in reality he just assists the assistant buyer at work.

Upon the discovery of the affair, Biff loses his faith in his father as a model and even his motivation to succeed. Willy grows old and his ability to make sales is lost as well as the ability to distinguish fantasy from real events. Bad behavior separates him from other and he is drawn to the past where order exists to relive old memories.

This play affects audiences and can be a means of self-discovery. The situation by Willy is not unique. He makes a mistake that separates him from the rest of his family and when all his attempts to remedy the mistake fail, he makes one final plunge to correct it by taking his life. He strongly fails to

admit the claim by Biff that they are both the same ordinary people, `` Im a dime a dozen, and so are you'' (Miller, 1996).