

English Literature

Death of a Salesman

Revision

- Is an example of the very small population who are successful without much work the dream of everyone is to have that happen to themselves.

Charley

- Willy cannot understand Charley's success, his own formula seems to have broken down, and yet he can never admit this
- Helps break down Willy's belief that to be well liked is the most important quality in a salesman.

Bernard

- Biff's foil.

Woman

- At first makes Willy feel wanted, has made him feel as though he were the salesman that he imagines himself as being
- Willy's longing to be seen as a successful man and to be placed in a position where he can reach all the to buyers is obviously connected to the woman, while it also reveals the superficiality of Willy's family life
- His concern for Linda is genuine but his need for success overcomes his feelings of loyalty.

Howard

- Represents the professional business man-consideration for the firm must come first. He has no sentiment which probably accounts for his success.

Protagonist

- Willy Loman (the common man)
- Miller attempted to personify certain values which civilized men in the twentieth century share
- Symbolizes the cruel paradox of human existence
- Seen as ritual head of his family
- Seeks to discover a sign in the paradoxical movement of life; to impose upon it a sense of meaning greater than that conferred upon it by reality
- His life experiences seem to intermingle and disturb the logical flow of reality
- Views his life as a totality. conventions of time and place are not relevant for him.
- Has high ideals-perhaps unattainable ones
- Wants to be loved by all; wants to succeed by terms that do not suit his nature; wants to leave his mark upon the world
- Feels he has to succeed, and the only way to show his success is to acquire money and material goods. He does not want to face the fact that he is not earning enough
- When he finally evaluates his performance, he realizes that he has fallen far short of his goals at that point, suicide becomes an act of valor for him.

Plot structure

- Follows an aesthetic, rather than a logical mode of development
- Represents the protagonist's attempt to reconstitute the progression of his experience
- "Stream-of-consciousness"
- Miller does not divide his vision of reality into discrete unit. He conceives Will's mind as a place out of time, as a state in which all boundaries have been erased, in which all things are coexistent.
- Aesthetic progression: a reconstruction of the movement of consciousness: the perception of facts, events, and ideas; fears, passions, and superstitions; hope, dreams, and ambitions, in their various stages of maturity and immaturity
- Return to the past in Willy's mind happens because:
 - the family is all important to him