

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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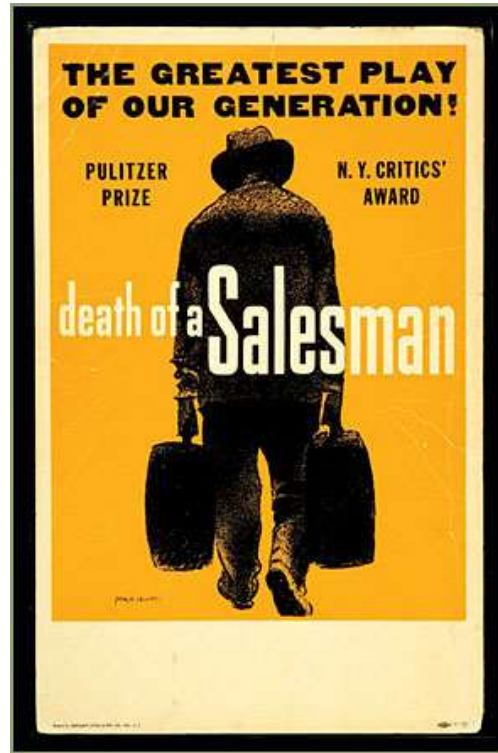
**DEATH OF A SALESMAN
BY
ARTHUR MILLER**

***A LECTURE PRESENTED AND
DESIGNED FOR THE FOURTH LEVEL
STUDENTS ON THE MODERN CONCEPT
OF THE TRAGIC HERO***

BY

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COURSE TITLE: 20TH CENTURY DRAMA/
AMERICAN DRAMA**

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THE MODERN CONCEPT OF THE TRAGIC HERO

For Arthur Miller, the tragic hero is,

“the man who cannot compromise, forget his own past, or explain away his own guilt, but who in his suffering asks his universe the desperate question, “Why?”

In his concept of the tragic hero, does Arthur Miller agree to the validity of the classical tragedy?

The answer comes fully through the words said by Willy Loman’s wife, Linda.



In the middle of Act I, Linda, Willy's wife, Linda holds the concept of the tragic hero through her sympathetic words about Willy. In a final attempt to save her husband, she reproaches her sons for underestimating and disrespecting him.

LINDA REVEALS MILLER'S VIEW OF TRAGEDY;

“I don't say he's a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him.”

With such poetic words, Linda is summing up the features of the tragic hero. Miller had never been convinced of the necessity of the tragic hero to be a royal figure, a VIP personage, or a wealthy figure. For him, any man can be a hero in his tragedy. It is a sufficient basis for tragedy that a human being and his life are on the stake, whatever his status is. Humanity has its own worth that any suffering of a man and his tolerance of that suffering can make of him a dramatic project for being a tragic hero.

WHAT IS THE MODERN TRAGIC HERO'S RESPONSE TO HIS SUFFERING?

Being a man who is unaided by the social and familial support, usually the tragic hero's solution to his suffering is articulated by his retreat to the past because of his inability to face his reality.

The core of man's torture lies in the emotional depravation and the surrounding negligence that he feels towards his pain. That is why he is in a constant questioning and blame to his universe why everything bad is happening to him that causes him exhaustion.

Linda, also, explains to her sons their father's need for such an attention that makes him forget the universal negligence and indifference:

“ So, attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person.... You don't have to be very smart to know what his trouble is. The man is exhausted.... A small man can be as exhausted as a great man.”

