

Failure of American dream in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the failure of the American Dream as well as its consequences, as experienced by Willy Lowman, a representative of American society. This study was written using a qualitative descriptive research method that is interpretive by nature. Willy Lowman is used by Arthur Miller to represent the failure of the American Dream. Willy's pursuit of the American Dream concludes in failure, as he fails repeatedly throughout his existence. Tragically, the result of his failure was suicide, which he viewed as a success because a large number of people would attend his funeral as a symbol of his renown, and he would receive a substantial amount of insurance money for his family. The current study demonstrated that not all Americans and immigrants share the same conception of the American Dream, nor can they all realize it. The present study confirms that Willy Lowman is the real face of the American dream. He failed in everything, not only in saving a big fortune but also, he failed in his life as an ideal father and as a businessman. Arthur Miller depicts Willy's character as a conceited, vain, deceived man and he is a big zero in life. The current study confirms that Willy's character is an ideal father in the world of dreams, not the world of realities. Reality is very disheartening to Willy Lowman. Finally, this study concludes that the idea of the American dream is just an illusion among people. Willy's proudness, pomposity, self-importance, and pride are illusions of the American dream that lead him to real failure.

المُلخَص

فشل الحلم الأمريكي في مسرحية آرثر ميلر "مقتل رجل بائع متجول" الغرض من هذه الدراسة هو التعرف على فشل الحلم الأمريكي وعواقبه ، كما عانى ويلي لومان ، ممثل المجتمع الأمريكي. تمت كتابة هذه الدراسة باستخدام أسلوب بحث وصفي نوعي تفسيري بطبيعته. استخدم ويلي لومان من قبل آرثر ميلر لتمثيل فشل الحلم الأمريكي. سعى ويلي لومان لتحقيق الحلم الأمريكي الذي أنتهى بالفشل ، حيث فشل مراراً وتكراراً طوال وجوده في المجتمع الأمريكي. بشكل مأساوي ، كانت نتيجة فشله الانتحار ، والذي اعتبره نجاحاً لأن عدداً كبيراً من الناس سيحضرون جنازته

كرمز لشهرته ، وسيحصل على مبلغ كبير من أموال التأمين لعائلته. أظهرت الدراسة الحالية أنه ليس كل الأمريكيين والمهاجرين يشاركون نفس مفهوم الحلم الأمريكي ، ولا يمكنهم جميعاً تحقيقه. تؤكد الدراسة الحالية أن ويلي لومان هو وجه حقيقي للحلم الأمريكي الفاشل. لقد فشل في كل شيء ، ليس فقط في توفير ثروة كبيرة ، ولكن أيضاً فشل في حياته كأب مثالي وكرجل أعمال. يصور آرثر ميلر شخصية ويلي على أنها رجل مغرور ، مخدوع ، وهو لاشيء في الحياة. تؤكد الدراسة الحالية أن شخصية ويلي هي الأب المثالي في عالم الأحلام فقط ، وليس عالم الواقع الحقيقي. الواقع الحقيقي كان محبط للغاية لشخصية ولي لومان. أخيراً ، لخصت هذه الدراسة إلى أن فكرة الحلم الأمريكي مجرد وهم بين الناس. فخر ويلي وغروره وأهميته الذاتية واعتزازه هي أوهام الحلم الأمريكي التي أدت به إلى الفشل الحقيقي ثم الانتحار.

١. Introduction

The concept of the American dream may be something we come across in the ٢٠th century, but before we can dig into what it means, we need to trace its roots. The idea of the American Dream, like everything else, has humble beginnings (Cullen, ٢٠٠٣). It was initially utilized by someone, and from there, the concept expanded throughout American culture and subsequently over the globe. The concept of the American Dream began to be discussed and written about by politicians, authors, playwrights, journalists, economists, and historians (Pells, ١٩٧٣). It was the voyage to the New World that kicked off the American dream.

In search of the famous "City upon a Hill," a group of sailors set sail on the Arabella. This idea came from the head of the navy, John Winthrop. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" was the best thing in their eyes. We think this is the real start of the American dream (Stepman, ٢٠١٩). Gale Student Resources says that the Founding Fathers may have been the first people to have the idea of the American Dream. First, they said that they were no longer under British rule. This was done because people thought they had rights that could not be taken away. The Founding Fathers wanted to make a country where people could live freely and try to find their happiness, no matter how much money they had (Gale, ٢٠١٦). They thought that everyone could have the right to life, freedom, and the search for happiness. The meaning of the idea changes over time and in different situations.

Americans have stopped following traditional, conformist ideas of society and have started looking for new ways to find happiness and self-fulfillment. Because of these changes, American society changed in many ways (Guinier, ٢٠٠٤). These parts of popular culture, especially the large number of young people who wanted to change their lives, were recorded and saved so that people in the future

could study them. Only by looking at what people have made and bought in a certain period, as well as what they have said about their hopes and dreams in cultural records, is it possible to track the dream's constant movement (Laitinen, ٢٠٠٩). The American Dream is a deep and complicated idea that is hard to explain or put into words, mostly because there are no similar ideas (Elhawa, H. A (٢٠١٨). Other countries do not have a goal they can strive for as the United States does (Eagleton, ١٩٩١). The American Dream is very important because it helps them stay in charge. Marxists say that this passionate pursuit of the American Dream is inherently dangerous (Horning, ٢٠١٣).

٢. Objectives of the study

- ٢.١. To become familiar with the concept of the American dream.
- ٢.٢. To investigate the kind of impact that the American Dream has on American society.

٣. Literature review

In Arthur Miller's ١٩٤٩ play *Death of a Salesman*, the main character, Willy, wanders around denouncing himself and then defending himself. This is the opinion of Arthur Miller scholar Gerald Weales as well. He does not like Willy very much because he is so argumentative. (Can, ٢٠١٩). Eventually, this would lead to violent confrontations between him and his son, Biff. His connections with his boss, his other son Happy, and his wife are all the same way (Miller, ١٩٩٦). Willy is a man undergoing many complications in his life. He was involved in a car crash that left him in a sorry state of mind. His wife has negotiated with his boss so that he works in his hometown so that he does not have to travel going to work. Willy's boss agrees to this arrangement. When Linda, Willy's wife, comes back home after a botched business trip, we see the first incidence where Willy's defensive and condemning character is displayed to the viewers. He immediately goes on to point out that he is disappointed in his son Biff. He says that Biff has not yet made anything of his life. While this might be true according to his standard, we already have started seeing the level of bias and hate he has against his son's performance (Miller, ١٩٩٦).

At another point in the play, Biff and Happy are talking about how things have changed in their family. They specifically talk about how their father's mental health has degraded. They specifically talk about how he often talks to himself (Mesina Da Costa, ٢٠١٤). This has greatly worried them, as his vacillations were only getting worse. As they are discussing this, their dad Willy walks in on them. Immediately Willy goes into a frenzy showing just how displeased he is that his

sons amounted to nothing. This prompts them to tell him that Biff is attempting to get through with a business proposition. This was just an effort to calm him down. This is just one of the few incidences that we see Willy displaying his condemning attitude.

The condemning and bad-mouthing by Willy does not end there. When Willy goes to town and asks for a job from his boss, he does not get what he wants. This prompts him to get into an argumentative mode. Willy's boss cannot take more of this and decides to fire him. He tells Willy that he needs to recover and rest, that being laid off is actually, what is good for him and the company. On his way home, he meets up with the son of one of his old friends. The boy is now a successful lawyer. He was a former classmate of Biff (Miller, ١٩٩٦).

This lawyer tells Willy that Biff was originally intending to succeed in school, but something changed when he (Biff) went to visit him (Willy). This reminds Willy that at this point Biff found him with another woman. This was the start of Biff's downfall. He could no longer concentrate in class and his performance deteriorated. It is after this event that Will continuously condemns Biff for his poor grades. In real essence, he is taking a defensive position for his actions instead of confronting them and solving the problem.

At this point in the play, Willy starts to see his wrongdoing. He is starting to become aware of his own mistakes. In addition, he starts to understand how his actions have contributed to the situation that they are in. However, he has formed a habit of condemnation rather than reason. When Biff tells Willy that he was not successful in his business proposal, another argument ensues. This causes Willy to remember the situation that was the beginning of all this when Biff walked in on him with another woman (Miller, ١٩٩٦). This caused them not to have the same level of relationship from then onwards. It causes Biff to completely change and become a man who is rather adrift and in contempt of his father. After this argument, his two sons run off leaving him behind.

The argument is taken to their home where Linda confronts his sons for leaving their father. Being touched by his mother's words, Biff goes to talk to his dad in an attempt to pacify matters. Biff's effort to reconcile with his father however changes into another argument. This time is more heated than ever before. Biff decides to tell his father to stop with the never-ending dreams he has for him (Warner, W., Meeker M., & Eells K. ١٩٤٩). He tells Willy that they are both normal men with normal capabilities. He hugs his father while crying. All that Biff wants is for his father to accept him as he is. Instead of doing so, the

defensive side of Willy reasons that his son is now willing to do something with his life. He is now ready to partake in a business or something. Willy then crashes his car so that when he dies, Biff will use the life insurance money to start the business. This however is not what turns out to be the truth as Biff keeps on living his life as he did (Weber, M. (١٩٤٧).

٤. Methodology

This research was written utilizing a descriptive qualitative research method that is naturally interpretative. The researcher is the most significant tool since he gathered data, conducted analyses, and finally created meaning through discussion and interpretations. The researcher discussed the events of the play to learn more about the failed American Dream in Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman, particularly Willy Lowman, as the main character.

٥. Findings and discussion

Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman looks at the promises and risks of the American Dream. As the members of the Loman family try to figure out what it means to be happy and successful in America after World War II, they become symbols of that battle. The play ends with the death of a salesman's Sisyphean desire for wealth and fame, but there is a glimmer of hope for his son, who finally turns towards a life of meaningful work and self-realization. This study looks at how Willy fights against the unrealistic goals he has for his children. He often says things that don't make sense because he looks back on his boys' childhoods with a nostalgic eye and gives them optimism that wasn't always there. The present study proves that the main character of the play, Willy Lowman, has two faces. He acts like the perfect seller, but in reality, he puts a lot of pressure on his children to do things he can't do himself. He is neither a good salesman nor "well-liked," but he plays the part of a salesman with his wife and kids by making them think he is more successful and liked than he is. Willy is forced to face the truth, which he tries to avoid. He hasn't been able to understand or reach the American Dream, which has hurt his children. Willy's lack of real and family roots is a metaphor for his unfulfilled dreams, and the fact that their home is now surrounded by apartment buildings is a sign of how their dreams haven't come true. Willy can't tell the difference between his work and his feelings, and he doesn't know that the American Dream is based on family love, total support, and freedom of choice.

٦. Conclusion

This study shows that the concept of the American dream is a mirage in the minds of contemporary Americans. "Death of a Salesman" protagonist Willy Lowman represents the ideal of the American dream. Willy is a metaphor for genuine defeat. He received nothing but inflated fantasies and false beliefs. This study proves that the American dream was always based on lies and deceit. The dream seems great and rewarding, but it is the complete opposite. In conclusion, the "American Dream" is a concept that is not widely known in today's society. Readers need to start devoting more time to English literature to explore this subject so that they can fully grasp its meaning. Willy has operated as though his magnetism guarantees him a successful outcome. He has always believed in the possibility of the American Dream and prosperity for all Americans. As the study concludes, it is clear that not all Americans or immigrants have the same understanding of what it means to achieve the American Dream. The American Dream can seem like a Utopia to those who have no idea of their limits.

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