**Fiche de lecture de Death of a salesman**

**Fast Facts (About the boock): Death of a Salesman**

* **Title:**Death of a Salesman
* **Author:** Arthur Miller
* **Year Published:**1949
* **Genre:**Tragedy
* **Premiere Date:**2/10/1949, at the Morosco Theatre
* **Original Language:**English
* **Themes:** The American dream, family relationships
* **Notable Adaptations:**1984 at the Broadhurst Theater, with Dustin Hoffman playing Willy; 2012 at the Ethel Barrymore Theatre, with Philip Seymour Hoffman as Willy Loman.
* **Fun Fact:** Arthur Miller provided two alternate versions of a physical insult in the play: If Willy Loman is played by a small man (like Dustin Hoffman) he is called a "shrimp," but if the actor is large, Willy Loman is called a "walrus.”

Characters :

**Willy Loman:**

An aging salesman (63 years old). He suffers from depression and anxiety as a result of his dissipating career, his estranged relationship with his oldest son, Biff, and his guilt over an extramarital affair. As the play progresses, Willy loses the ability to distinguish between the present and his memories of the past.

**Linda Loman:**

Willy Loman's wife. She is Willy's champion and takes it upon herself to reconcile her family. She will protect Willy at all costs, even if she must perpetuate his fantasies and deny his suicidal behaviour.

**Biff Loman:**

The Loman's older son. Biff has been estranged from Willy for over 15 years, during which time he has not been able to hold a steady job. Biff is the only member of the family who knows about Willy's affair, and he resents his father bitterly.

**Happy Loman (original name: Harold)**:

The Loman's younger son. Happy is a womanizer driven by his sexuality. He works as an assistant but exaggerates his position and his authority.

**Uncle Ben**:

Willy's older brother. He made a fortune in the African jungle by the time he was 21 years old. He once offered Willy a job in Alaska. Ben appears in the play only in Willy's memories and fantasies.

**Charley**:

A long-time acquaintance of the Loman’s. Charley supplies Willy with a weekly loan once Willy is put on straight commission, and he repeatedly offers him a job. Charlie is a true friend to Willy, even though Willy is jealous of him. Charley appears in Willy's memories, as well as in the actions of the present.

**Bernard**:

Charley's son. He provided Biff with answers while they were in high school and attempted to help Biff study so that he would graduate, even though Willy and Biff would criticize him. He is a successful lawyer. Bernard appears in Willy's memories, as well as in the present.

**The Woman**:

Willy's former lover, with whom he had an affair many years ago in Boston. Biff discovered the affair when she came out of the bathroom while he was in the room. She appears only in Willy's memories and fantasies; however, as the play progresses, Willy has difficulty distinguishing between his memories of the Woman and his memories of Linda.

**Howard Wagner**:

Willy's current boss. He put Willy on straight commission prior to the play's beginning, and later he fires him. Howard is a businessman, unaffected by the facts that Willy worked for his father and named him as a child.

**Jenny**: Charley's secretary.

**Stanley**: A waiter.

**Miss Forsythe and Letta**: Young prostitutes.

Origin of the book (a bit about the author):

In the spring of 1948 Arthur Miller retreated to a log cabin in Connecticut with the first two lines of a new play already fixed in his mind. He emerged six weeks later with the final script of Death of a Salesman - a painful examination of American life and consumerism. Opening on Broadway the following year, Miller's extraordinary masterpiece changed the course of modern theatre. In creating Willy Loman, his destructively insecure antihero, Miller himself defined his aim as being to set forth what happens when a man does not have a grip on the forces of life.

**My impressions:**

Death of a salesman is a particularly good book that give a glimpse of the life of an American family struggling to cope with the changes that were happening in the work society of the time. It also gives an idea of how far delirium can lead to.

**Summary**

*Death of a Salesman*is, at first glance, about the last day in the life of salesman Willy Loman, who, at 63, has failed at his career. While at home, he dissociates from reality, entering in time switches that explain why he turned out the way he did through interactions with his brother Ben and his mistress. He also constantly fights with his eldest son Biff, who, after dropping out of high school, has been getting by as a drifter and as an occasional thief. By contrast, his younger son, Happy, has a more traditional—albeit lacklustre[[1]](#footnote-1)—career and is a womanizer.

In the play’s climax, Biff and Willy fight and a resolution is reached when Biff explains how his father’s ideal of the American Dream has failed them both. Willy decides to commit suicide so that his family can collect his life insurance.

**About the author: \/**

**About the film:\/**

**Brief Summary: \/**

**Main Characters: \/**

**My feelings (Impressions): \/**

1. Althought lacking shine [↑](#footnote-ref-1)