American Dream, Abandonment And Betrayal In Death Of A Salesman

A tragedy about the American dream, abandonment and betrayal. Arthur Miller is making a tremendous impact on theatrical history with his play “Death of a Salesman”. It is a remarkable and fulfilling play directed marvellously by Elia Kazan and executed perfectly by the wonderful cast that discusses the hardship of family life and the expectations that accompany it.

Two years ago Arthur Miller first showcased his play “All My Sons”, which is still showing as we speak. Similarly to Death of a Salesman, it too was directed by Elia Kazan. Furthermore, both dramas delve into the values we uphold as humans and our sense of morality. Although these plays may share a number of themes, they are each very unique. Where All My Sons centers around the peoples indifference and often crooked principles as well as the extent to which they go to cover up what is their reality, Death of a Salesman hones in on the hardship in failure to achieve ones aspiration and the impact this has on families.

In Death of a Salesman Willy Loman is a deluded aging salesman who is a profound believer in the American Dream, but ever fails to reach it. Yet he is continuously in denial of this fact and never stops stating that he and his sons are ‘going to be big someday’. Throughout the play he gradually grows more and more detached from reality and relives moments of his past as if they were happening in his present. In this play Mr. Miller portrays Willy as one of capitalisms many victims whose livelihoods were ruined by the notion that is the American Dream.

Perhaps, Willy Loman could best be put alongside to the “It’s a wonderful life” character George Bailey whose is a naturally gifted youthful man who longs to break out of the prison he deems his town to be. Like Willy at no time did George accomplish to leave and faces certain financial troubles he loses faith in life and lingers towards his final rest. Yet unlike Willy he, assisted by a guardian angel, is made aware of the impact that he has made on tons of lives and the worth of the life that he has. So in the end, George deters from taking the easy way out and lives his ‘wonderful’ life. Mr. Miller has written his play so that there is no guardian angel and the protagonist does end up doing away with his self. This way there is no happy ending that is predictable, but a shocking realization that sometimes life is just too much for someone. Partly as a result of this the play attains a sense of poetry, whether Arthur Miller intended for it to be or not.

Besides this Mr. Miller also dives into the disloyalty in marriage, the often complicated relationships between father and son, the frustration and struggles that come with paying the bills and the unnerving appeal of death. And possibly above all the illusions that Willy has been living by; his delusion regarding his place in the world, the success of his sons and the chances he missed out on.

Even though, these motifs are all controversial, Mr. Miller manages to approach them in a praiseworthy manner by which no man is to be offended. Herein lies our playwrights genius, as well as in his ability to understand his audience. The play has something to relate to for everyone. Be that as it may, this ability ought to have been played out more than just to be identifiable. In Death of a Salesman Mr. Miller raises a plethora of problems, yet he

unmistakably falls short on solutions since he cannot manage to state a single one. Had he done this, it could have provided us with possibilities on how to deal with our own issues.

Death of a Salesman has a sometimes confusing narrative structure, especially when reading the text since it jumps from reality to illusion frequently, without indicating so. However, on stage the actors cleverly indicate this by walking through walls in illusions, which of course would be impossible to do in reality.

This play expresses criticism towards modern society and its' beliefs beyond the shadow of a doubt. Arthur Miller shines a light on the false pretence that can be the American Dream of success and wealth. For only a small percent of people will their American Dream genuinely be achieved, others will always try and try but never be satisfied. This is very cleverly demonstrated in the Loman household.

Moreover, it is evident that Arthur Miller is the playwright of this play. The themes and the writing language are similar to his previous works (once again referring to 'All My Sons'). Therefore, the subject and plot of the play is not exceedingly original. Yet, Death of A Salesman is greatly appreciated by its' audience.

All in all, Death of A Salesman is a terrific play that is definitely worth viewing. It might not be perfect, but then again; what play ever is?