Death Of A Salesman: Analysis Of The Main Character

Willy Loman is presented in the book, written by Arthur Miller, as a frustrated and confused old man. He is a man who lives in his own world and finding himself in denial about his entire life; past, present and future. He recalls his sons' teenage years/his older days, as an idyllic past, which was spent by his two sons, Biff and Happy. Because he's having such a hard time now, failing to cope with his feelings, dealing with making money, and having issues with his son Biff of not making something of himself yet, Willy escapes reality by reminiscing on his past days as being blissful. But that is far from the truth. Willy has always made sure to brag about his son Biff, who he favored over Happy because of his sports skills in football. He perceived Biff as the wonder boy who has Top Universities lined up for his football career and ability to make girls fall for him with just one glance, the illusion of the American life.

However, as great as Biff was at sports, as bad he was academic. He was lazy and not willing to study even if he had all the help he could get from Bernard. He was told many times that he needed to study, otherwise, he was going to fail math and not be able to graduate to go to college. Biff has a history of stealing, as a teenager and as an adult. In one of Willy's memory scenes, Biff stole a football from the school's locker room, which shows that his father, Willy, instead of admonishing Biff for the cause, says: 'Sure, he's gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn't he? Coach probably congratulates you on your initiative! That's because he likes you. If somebody else took that ball there'd be an uproar.'' Willy suggests that he can get away with stealing because of his popularity. By having a tendency of stealing, it stands in the way of Biff's success and Willy's poor parenting.

Another evidence that shows this was not a memorable past was when Biff becomes an adult. His thievery continues and is faced with being held 3 months in jail in Kansas City for stealing a suit. As that wasn't enough, Happy is so neglected by his father, that he always thinks that he can't live up to his older brother Biff. Therefore, he is always trying to impress Willy with nothing but lies. Willy didn't observe that Happy was always neglected as a teenager and assumes that he had a happy childhood. By making up for his self-confidence, Happy made himself an available person for everyone. The more attention he seemed the better. He earns his living by being an assistant to an assistant buyer, which presents him as someone who does not have a proper job. Although he portrays himself as someone who is of high social standards. ''Why don't you bring her, excuse me miss, do you mind. I sell champagne…''. This relates back to his teenage years when he didn't have attention paid to him by his father Willy, and now he is trying to make himself presentable and feel better about himself by making up stories, like his job for instance.

A big piece of evidence that shows this wasn't an idyllic past as Willy imagines it to be, is when he went to Boston for his business trip. Willy's relationship with his wife isn't perfect as Willy sees it. He does not demonstrate complete honesty about his marriage by neglecting it. Willy's business trips to Boston are when he would find himself a woman to spend the night with. Willy's never been a good father to his children, especially by giving them advice. There was one time in Biff's teenage years when Willy gave his advice to women. ''Just wanna be careful with those girls, Biff, that's all. Don't make any promises. No promise of any kind. Because a girl, y'know, they always believe what you tell them''. The time period that Arthur Miller wrote

this book, Death of a Salesman, was when women were portrayed and objectified as objects and housewives. In the book, Arthur wanted to show and advertise the typical housewife that does what she is told by her husband and showing how Willy treated his wife as an object.

Moreover, Biff went to Boston to catch up with his father before his college visit and tell him that he flunked math and not having enough credits to graduate. Willy got surprised by his son's visit and hid his mistress in the bathroom. When Biff starts conversing to his father, never had he thought his father having an affair. When he finds his father with another woman, his world comes crashing down on him, and realizes that his father is a fake and does not have the great qualities which Biff had formerly believed his father held. He says to Willy: ''You liar! You fake, you fake!'' and throws him on the bed before rushing out of the room.