

## Arthur Miller's: *Death of a Salesman*(1949)

### *Notes and Terminology*

**Realism** in the [visual arts](#) and [literature](#) refers to the general attempt to depict subjects "in accordance with secular, [empirical](#) rules",<sup>[1]</sup> as they are considered to exist in third person [objective reality](#), without embellishment or interpretation. As such, the approach inherently implies a belief that such [reality](#) is [ontologically](#) independent of man's conceptual schemes, linguistic practices and beliefs, and thus can be known (or knowable) to the artist, who can in turn represent this 'reality' faithfully. As [Ian Watt](#) states, modern realism "begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through the senses" and as such "it has its origins in [Descartes](#) and [Locke](#), and received its first full formulation by [Thomas Reid](#) in the middle of the eighteenth century."<sup>[2]</sup>

Realism often refers more specifically to the artistic movement, which began in [France](#) in the 1850s. Realism in France appears after the 1848 Revolution. These realists positioned themselves against [romanticism](#), a genre dominating French literature and artwork in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Seeking to be undistorted by personal bias, Realism believed in the ideology of [objective reality](#) and revolted against the exaggerated emotionalism of the romantic movement. Truth and accuracy became the goals of many Realists. Many paintings depicted people at work, underscoring the changes wrought by the [Industrial Revolution](#) and [Commercial Revolutions](#). The popularity of such 'realistic' works grew with the introduction of [photography](#) — a new visual source that created a desire for people to produce representations which look “objectively real.”

The term is also used to refer to works of art which, in revealing a truth, may emphasize the ugly or sordid, such as works of [social realism](#), [regionalism](#) or [Kitchen sink realism](#).

### **Visual arts**

Main article: [Realist visual arts](#)

In general, realists render [everyday](#) characters, situations, dilemmas, and objects, all in a "[true-to-life](#)" manner. Realists tend to discard theatrical

drama, lofty subjects and [classical](#) forms of art in favor of commonplace themes. The term is applied to, or used as a name for, various [art movements](#) or other groups of artists in [art history](#).

## Literature

Main article: [Literary realism](#)

Broadly defined as "the faithful representation of reality",<sup>[3]</sup> was based on the dogma of "[objective reality](#)", and was focused on showing everyday, quotidian activities and life, primarily among the middle or lower class society, without romantic idealization or dramatization.<sup>[4]</sup>

While the preceding [romantic era](#) was also a reaction against the values of the [Industrial Revolution](#), realism was in its turn a reaction to romanticism, and for this reason it is also commonly derogatorily referred as "traditional" "bourgeois realism".<sup>[5]</sup> Some writers of [Victorian literature](#) produced works of realism.<sup>[citation needed]</sup> The rigidities, conventions, and other limitations of "bourgeois realism," prompted in their turn the revolt later labeled as [modernism](#); starting around the 1900, the driving motive of modernist literature was the criticism of the 19th-century bourgeois social order and world view, which was countered with an antirationalist, antirealist and antibourgeois program.<sup>[5][6][7]</sup>

## Theatre

Main article: [Realism \(theatre\)](#)

The achievement of realism in the [theatre](#) was to direct attention to the social and psychological problems of ordinary life. In its dramas, people emerge as victims of forces larger than themselves, as individuals confronted with a rapidly accelerating world.<sup>[8]</sup> These pioneering playwrights were unafraid to present their characters as ordinary, impotent, and unable to arrive at answers to their predicaments. This type of art represents what we see with our human eyes.

## Cinema

See also: [Neorealism \(art\)](#), [Poetic realism](#), and [Socialist realism](#)

[Italian neorealism](#) was a cinematic movement incorporating elements of realism that developed in post-WWII Italy. Notable Neorealists included [Vittorio De Sica](#), [Luchino Visconti](#), and [Roberto Rossellini](#).

**Pathos** (☞ /ˈpəθəs/; plural: *patha* or *pathea*; Greek: *πάθος*, for "suffering" or "experience"; adjectival form: 'pathetic' from *παθητικός*) represents an appeal to the audience's emotions. Pathos is a communication technique used most often in rhetoric (where it is considered one of the three modes of persuasion, alongside ethos and logos), and in literature, film and other narrative art.

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Emotional appeal can be accomplished in a multitude of ways:

- by a metaphor or story telling, common as a hook,
- by a general passion in the delivery and an overall emotion and sympathies of the speech or writing as determined by the audience. The pathos of a speech or writing is only ultimately determined by the hearers.

Pathos is often associated with emotions, but it is more complex than simply emotions. A better equivalent might be appeal to the audience's sympathies and imagination. An appeal to pathos causes an audience not just to respond emotionally but to identify with the writer's point of view - to feel what the writer feels. So, when used in tragedy, pathos evokes a meaning implicit in the verb 'to suffer' - to feel pain imaginatively or vicariously. Pathos is often employed with tragedies and this is why pathos often carries this negative emotional connotation. Perhaps the most common way of conveying a pathetic appeal is through narrative or story, which can turn the abstractions of logic into something palpable and present. The values, beliefs, and understandings of the writer are implicit in the story and conveyed imaginatively to the reader. Pathos thus refers to both the emotional and the imaginative impact of the message on an audience, the power with which the writer's message moves the audience to decision or action.

### **Sublime pathos**

In the many works of Friedrich Schiller, "Sublime Pathos" (German, *das Pathetisch-Erhabene*) appears as a privileged aesthetic concept. According to Schiller, sublime pathos in the context of art demonstrates human freedom and triumph in the struggle against suffering. As such, pathos no longer refers to suffering itself, but rather an effect produced by overcoming suffering. Generally, Schiller links the experience of suffering to "grand ideas" - such as the idea of freedom; in this sense, pathos

reminds one of [Milton's](#) Satan, when he cries out: "Hail, horrors, I greet thee!". Schiller's description of pathos continues to influence the use of the word today, in which such triumphant overcoming of suffering and other negative situations is seen as representing pathos.

**Allegory** is a demonstrative form of representation explaining meaning other than the words that are spoken. Allegory communicates its message by means of [symbolic](#) figures, actions or symbolic representation.

Allegory is generally treated as a figure of [rhetoric](#), but an allegory does not have to be expressed in [language](#): briefly, an allegory is a device used to present an idea, principle or meaning, which can be presented in literary form, such as a poem or novel, or in visual form, such as in painting or drawing.

As a [literary device](#), an allegory in its most general sense is an extended [metaphor](#). As an artistic device, an allegory is a visual symbolic representation. An example of a simple visual allegory is the image of the [grim reaper](#). Viewers understand that the image of the grim reaper is a symbolic representation of death.

Not every fiction with general application is an allegory.

## Etymology

First attested in English 1382, the word *allegory* comes from [Latin](#) *allegoria*, the [latinisation](#) of the [Greek](#) ἀλληγορία (*allegoria*), "veiled language, figurative",<sup>[1]</sup> from ἄλλος (*allos*), "another, different"<sup>[2]</sup> + ἀγορεύω (*agoreuo*), "to harangue, to speak in the assembly"<sup>[3]</sup> and that from ἀγορά (*agora*), "assembly".<sup>[4]</sup>

## Types

[Northrop Frye](#) discussed what he termed a "continuum of allegory," ranging from what he termed the "naive allegory" of *The Faerie Queene*, to the more private allegories of modern [paradox literature](#). In this perspective, the characters in a "naive" allegory are not fully three-dimensional, for each aspect of their individual personalities and the events that befall them embodies some moral quality or other abstraction; the allegory has been selected first, and the details merely flesh it out.

Many ancient religions are based on an [astrologic allegories](#), that is, allegories of the movement of the Sun and the Moon as seen from the Earth. Examples include the cult of [Horus/Isis](#).

## The classical era

In classical literature two of the best-known allegories are [the cave](#) in [Plato's Republic](#) (Book VII) and the story of the stomach and its members in the speech of Menenius Agrippa ([Livy](#) ii. 32). In Late Antiquity [Martianus Capella](#) organized all the information a fifth-century upper-class male needed to know into an allegory of the wedding of Mercury and *Philologia*, with the seven [liberal arts](#) as guests; Capella's allegory was widely read through the Middle Ages.

Other early allegories are found in the [Hebrew Bible](#), for instance in the extended metaphor in [Psalm 80](#) of the [Vine](#), which is Israel[5] and [Ezekiel](#) 16 and 17.[6]

## The medieval era

Main article: [Allegory in the Middle Ages](#)

Medieval thinking accepted allegory as having a *reality* underlying any rhetorical or fictional uses. The allegory was as true as the facts of surface appearances. Thus, the bull [Unam Sanctam](#) (1302) presents themes of the unity of [Christendom](#) with the pope as its head in which the allegorical details of the metaphors are adduced as facts on which is based a demonstration with the vocabulary of logic: "*Therefore of this one and only Church there is one body and one head—not two heads as if it were a monster... If, then, the Greeks or others say that they were not committed to the care of Peter and his successors, they necessarily confess that they are not of the sheep of Christ*" ([complete text](#)).

In the late 15th century, the enigmatic [Hypnerotomachia](#), with its elaborate woodcut illustrations, shows the influence of themed pageants and [masques](#) on contemporary allegorical representation, as [humanist dialectic](#) conveyed them.

The denial of medieval allegory as found in the 11th-century works of [Hugh of St Victor](#) and [Edward Topsell's](#) *Historie of Foure-footed Beastes* (London, 1607, 1653) and its replacement in the study of nature with methods of categorization and mathematics by such figures as naturalist [John Ray](#) and the astronomer [Galileo](#) is thought to mark the beginnings of early modern science.[7]

## The modern era

Since meaningful stories are nearly always applicable to larger issues,

allegories may be read into many stories, sometimes distorting their author's overt meaning. For instance, many people have suggested that [The Lord of the Rings](#) is an allegory for the [World Wars](#), in spite of [J. R. R. Tolkien](#)'s emphatic statement in the introduction to the second edition, "It is neither allegorical nor topical.... I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence." Where some requirements of "realism", in its flexible meanings, are set aside, allegory can come more strongly to the surface, as in the work of [Bertold Brecht](#) or [Franz Kafka](#) on one hand, or on the other in science fiction and fantasy, where an element of universal application and allegorical overtones are common, as with [Dune](#).

### Examples by genre

Not every resonant work of modern fiction is an allegory. [Arthur Miller](#)'s [The Crucible](#), for instance, is character-driven historical drama with contemporary relevance, but is not an allegory in spite of its parallels with McCarthyism, linking the hunt for communists in the 1940s and 1950s to the hunt for witches in the late 17th century. [L. Frank Baum](#)'s [The Wonderful Wizard of Oz](#) is plot-driven fantasy narrative in an extended fable with talking animals and broadly-sketched characters. [J.R.R. Tolkien](#)'s [The Lord of the Rings](#) is another example of a work seen by many as allegorical yet, as the author explained, is not - rather it is an example of what he referred to as applicability.

### Literature

#### Classical literature

- [Aesop](#) – [Fables](#)
- [Plato](#) – [The Republic](#) ("[Plato's allegory of the cave](#)")
- [Plato](#) – [Phaedrus](#) ([Chariot Allegory](#))
- [Euripides](#) – [The Trojan Women](#)
- [Qu Yuan](#) – [Encountering Trouble](#)
- [Book of Revelation](#) (for allegory in Christian theology, see [typology \(theology\)](#))
- [Martianus Capella](#) – [De nuptiis philologiae et Mercurii](#)

#### Mediaeval literature

- [Prudentius](#) – [Psychomachia](#)
- [Christine de Pizan](#) – [The Book of the City of Ladies](#)

- [William Langland](#) – [Piers Plowman](#)
- [Pearl](#)
- [Dante Alighieri](#) – [The Divine Comedy](#)
- [Everyman](#)

## Modern literature

No good book has ever been written that has in it symbols arrived at beforehand and stuck in. ... [In [The Old Man and the Sea](#)], I tried to “make a real old man, a real boy, a real sea and a real fish and real sharks. But if I made them good and true enough they would mean many things.”

—Ernest Hemingway in 1954[10]

- [V for Vendetta](#), [September 11 Attacks](#), the [Holocaust](#), as well as [the War on Terror](#)
- [Edmund Spenser](#) – [The Faerie Queene](#)
- [Edwin Abbott Abbott](#) – [Flatland](#)
- [Joseph Addison](#) – [Vision of Mirza](#)
- [Antoine De Saint-Exupery](#) – [The Little Prince](#)
- [Jorge Luis Borges](#) – "[The Library of Babel](#)" and "[The Babylon Lottery](#)"
- [Peter S. Beagle](#) – [The Last Unicorn](#)
- [John Bunyan](#) – [Pilgrim's Progress](#)
- [William M. Burwell](#) – [White Acre vs. Black Acre](#)
- [Albert Camus](#) – [The Plague](#), [The Stranger](#), and [Myth of Sisyphus](#)
- [Wu Cheng'en](#) — [The Journey to the West](#)
- [J.M. Coetzee](#) – [Waiting for the Barbarians](#)
- [Charles Dickens](#) – [A Christmas Carol](#)
- [William Faulkner](#) – [A Rose for Emily](#) (Emily symbolizes the decline of the Old South)
- [William Golding](#) – [Lord of the Flies](#)
- [Daniel Handler](#) – [A Series of Unfortunate Events](#)
- [Roger Hargreaves](#) - [Mr. Happy](#)
- [Nathaniel Hawthorne](#) – "[The Great Carbuncle](#)", "[Young Goodman Brown](#)"
- [E. T. A. Hoffmann](#) – [Princess Brambilla](#)
- [John Irving](#) – [A Prayer for Owen Meany](#)
- [C.S. Lewis](#) – [The Chronicles of Narnia](#) (most notably in the book [The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe](#))

- [David Lindsay](#) – *A Voyage to Arcturus*
- [Jack London](#)- "[A Piece of Steak](#)", short story about youth vs. old age
- [George MacDonald](#) – *Phantastes*
- [Naguib Mahfouz](#) – *Children of Gebelawi*
- [Bernard Malamud](#) – *The Natural*
- [Cormac McCarthy](#) – *The Road*
- [Herman Melville](#) – *The Confidence-Man*
- [Hualing Nieh](#) – *Mulberry and Peach*
- [Herman Melville](#) – *Moby Dick*
- [George Orwell](#) – *Animal Farm*
- [Edgar Allan Poe](#) – "[The Masque of the Red Death](#)" (though Poe did not believe in allegory, this story is generally assumed to be one)[\[11\]](#)
- [Theodore Francis Powys](#) – *Mr. Weston's Good Wine*
- [Philip Pullman](#) – *His Dark Materials*
- [Jose Saramago](#) – *Blindness*
- [Anna Sewell](#) – *Black Beauty*
- [John Steinbeck](#) – *Of Mice and Men*
- [John Steinbeck](#) – *The Pearl*
- [Jonathan Swift](#) – *A Tale of a Tub* and *Gulliver's Travels* (political allegory)
- [Koushun Takami](#) – *Battle Royale*
- [Rex Warner](#) – *The Aerodrome*
- [Mohsin Hamid](#) – *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

## Plays

- [August Wilson](#) – *Fences (play)* (Troy's fence is "designed" to keep the grim reaper away)

## Film

- [James Cameron](#)'s *Avatar*, Native American Extermination for riches eg. gold, mahogany, ect.
- [Fritz Lang](#)'s *Metropolis*
- [Ingmar Bergman](#)'s *The Seventh Seal*
- *El Topo*
- *Star Trek: The Undiscovered Country*, the Cold War
- *The Matrix*
- *Dawn of the Dead*
- *The Virgin Suicides*
- *District 9, Apartheid*

- [Gojira](#)
- [Cannibal Holocaust](#), sensationalism
- [Foodland \(film\)](#)
- [Ana's Playground](#)[12]
- [The Wall \(film\)](#)
- [Planet of the Apes \(1968 film\)](#), racism, creationism, evolution, animal rights, anti-nuclear politics, McCarthyism, and socio-economic stratification.
- [Beneath the Planet of the Apes](#), [Vietnam War](#), [torture](#), [Catholicism](#), [jingoism](#), [Mutual assured destruction](#).
- [The Dark Knight](#), [The War on Terror](#)
- [Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows – Part 1](#), [The Holocaust](#)
- [Pandorum](#), the degradation of the human condition in [Works and Days](#) and [Paradise Lost](#). As well as The [Divine Comedy](#)

## Television

- [The Twilight Zone](#) (varied themes)
- [Star Trek](#) all series, (varied themes, though frequently addressed the issues of prejudice and racism)
- [Star Trek: The Next Generation](#) Season 5, Episode 2: [Darmok](#)
- [The Prisoner](#)
- [Lost](#)

## Comics

- Various [X-Men](#) comics (mutants as an allegory for various social and racial minorities)

The American Dream, Marxism, McCarthyism, Money and Commodity

**McCarthyism** is the practice of making accusations of disloyalty, subversion, or treason without proper regard for evidence. The term has its origins in the period in the United States known as the [Second Red Scare](#), lasting roughly from the late 1940s to the late 1950s and characterized by heightened fears of [communist](#) influence on American institutions and [espionage](#) by [Soviet](#) agents. Originally coined to criticize the [anti-communist](#) pursuits of [Republican U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy](#) of

Wisconsin, "McCarthyism" soon took on a broader meaning, describing the excesses of similar efforts. The term is also now used more generally to describe reckless, unsubstantiated accusations, as well as demagogic attacks on the character or patriotism of political adversaries.

During the McCarthy era, thousands of Americans were accused of being Communists or communist sympathizers and became the subject of aggressive investigations and questioning before government or private-industry panels, committees and agencies. The primary targets of such suspicions were government employees, those in the entertainment industry, educators and union activists. Suspicions were often given credence despite inconclusive or questionable evidence, and the level of threat posed by a person's real or supposed leftist associations or beliefs was often greatly exaggerated. Many people suffered loss of employment and/or destruction of their careers; some even suffered imprisonment. Most of these punishments came about through trial verdicts later overturned,<sup>[1]</sup> laws that would be declared unconstitutional,<sup>[2]</sup> dismissals for reasons later declared illegal<sup>[3]</sup> or actionable,<sup>[4]</sup> or extra-legal procedures that would come into general disrepute.

The most famous examples of McCarthyism include the speeches, investigations, and hearings of Senator McCarthy himself; the Hollywood blacklist, associated with hearings conducted by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC); and the various anti-communist activities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under Director J. Edgar Hoover. McCarthyism was a widespread social and cultural phenomenon that affected all levels of society and was the source of a great deal of debate and conflict in the United States.

**Marxism** is an economic and sociopolitical worldview and method of socioeconomic inquiry that centers upon a materialist interpretation of history, a dialectical view of social change, and an analysis and critique of the development of capitalism. Marxism was pioneered in the early to mid 19th century by two German philosophers, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Marxism encompasses Marxian economic theory, a sociological theory and a revolutionary view of social change that has influenced socialist political movements around the world.

The Marxian analysis begins with an analysis of material conditions, taking at its starting point the necessary economic activities required by human society to provide for its material needs. The form of economic

organization, or [mode of production](#), is understood to be the basis from which the majority of other social phenomena— including social relations, political and legal systems, morality and ideology— arise (or at the least by which they are greatly influenced). These social relations form the [superstructure](#), of which the economic system forms the base. As the forces of production, most notably technology, improve, existing forms of social organization become inefficient and stifle further progress.

These inefficiencies manifest themselves as social contradictions in society in the form of [class struggle](#). Under the [capitalist mode of production](#), this struggle materializes between the minority who own the means of production (the [bourgeoisie](#)), and the vast majority of the population who produce goods and services (the [proletariat](#)). Taking the idea that [social change](#) occurs because of the struggle between different [classes](#) within society who are under contradiction against each other, the [Marxist analysis](#) leads to the conclusion that [capitalism](#) oppresses the [proletariat](#), the inevitable result being a [proletarian revolution](#).

Marxism views the [socialist system](#) as being prepared by the historical development of capitalism. According to Marxism, [Socialism](#) is a historical necessity (but not an inevitability [1]). In a socialist society [private property](#) in the [means of production](#) would be superseded by cooperative ownership. The [socialist](#) system would succeed capitalism as humanity's mode of production through worker's [revolution](#). Capitalism according to Marxist theory can no longer sustain the living standards of the population due to its need to compensate for falling rates of profit by driving down wages, cutting social benefits and pursuing military aggression. A socialist economy would not base production on the accumulation of capital, but would instead base production and economic activity on the criteria of satisfying human needs - that is, [production would be carried out directly for use](#).

Eventually, socialism would give way to a [communist](#) stage of history: a classless, stateless system based on [common ownership](#) and free-access, superabundance and maximum freedom for individuals to develop their own capacities and talents. As a political movement, Marxism advocates the creation of such a society.

A Marxist understanding of history and of society has been adopted by academics studying in a wide range of disciplines, including [archaeology](#), [anthropology](#), [2] [media studies](#), [3] [political science](#), [theater](#), [history](#), [sociological theory](#), [art history](#) and [theory](#), [cultural studies](#), [education](#),

[economics](#), [geography](#), [literary criticism](#), [aesthetics](#), [critical psychology](#), and [philosophy](#).<sup>[4]</sup>

## Criticism

Raymond Williams: *The Realism of Arthur Miller*

“The most single important fact about the plays of Arthur Miller is that he has brought back into the theater, in an important way, the drama of social questions. . . Looking at it from one point-of-view, he has restored active social criticism to the drama, and has written on such contemporary themes as the social accountability of business, the forms of the success ethic, intolerance and thought-control, the nature of modern work relations. Yet he has written “about” these in such a way as to distinguish his work quite clearly from the ordinary sociological problem-play, for at best he has seen these problems as living tissue, and his most successful characters are not merely “aspects of the way of life,” but individuals who are ends and values in themselves:

“I don't say he is a great man. Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived. But he's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.”

Emphasis: He's a human being, and a terrible thing is happening to him. So attention must be paid. . . Attention must finally be paid to such a person” (314-15).

Marx's concept of alienation is best expressed in the sad and pathetic ways all of the men in the “Lo-man” house are failures to some degree within the larger sense of capitalism, commodity and a culture built on money. Raymond writes: “. . .for I think in the end it is not Willy Loman as a man, but the image of the Salesman, that predominates. The social figure sums up the theme referred to as alienation, for this is a man who from selling things has passed to selling himself, and has, become , in effect, a commodity which like other commodities will at a certain point be economically discarded. The persuasive atmosphere of the play (which the slang embodies so perfectly, for it is a social result of this way of living) is

one of false consciousness—the conditioned attitudes in which Loman trains his sons—being broken into by real consciousness, in actual life and relationships” (320). Arguably, *Death of a Salesman* is a development of expressionism.

Judah Bierman, James Hart, and Stanely Johnson, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

“Centering on the quality of the protagonist, most of the comment on this play has argued the question of whether Willy Loman has sufficient stature to be a tragic hero”(266).

We begin to make sense of this play through its structure of “Time”. We are able to shift between the reality of present day in the play and the movement to the past as it appears in Willy's mind. “This treatment of time, by putting emphasis on the earlier scenes, reduces the impact of the final suicide. On the other hand it serves to raise that suicide to the level of sacrifice by linking it with Willy's early dreams” (266). We follow the last 48 hours of the hero's life.

The family scene is at the center of this play. What is the trauma at the center of this play?

Biff, Happy, Linda & Willy

Charly, Bernard, Ben, Howard.

“These scenes (and other visualizations of the past, the episode of the woman in Boston), give dimension to the portrait of the protagonist. Without them, the plays theme-statements would be what they are sometimes unwittingly taken to be: sentimental idealizations of a failure. With them, it become clear that Willy's failure stems from the quality of his aspirations, and not of his spirit” (267).

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

attention must be paid. He's not to be allowed to fall into his grave like an old dog. Attention, attention must finally be paid to such a person.

“Can we, for example, accept Linda's demand that “attention be paid,” knowing as we do the shallowness of his past? Does this knowledge degrade him below the level of interest? Plain could like this salesman are of interest to their families and to God; but we need greatness to inspire us.

Discuss. The key to understanding this play and its meaning as a tragedy are found in the plot, in the characters and in the conflict that engages them. “The conflict that Miller chose to communicate his vision is that between Willy as a salesman and Willy as a man” (268). Furthermore, “Willy is blind to the fundamental contradiction between his progress as a salesman and his self-realization as a man, and his blindness is almost allegorically reflected in his children” (268).

Discuss recognition and tragedy as it is reflected in the two sons. Does Willy have an epiphany or a moment of self-recognition? Happy lives the life of the business ethic and Biff is set free when he realizes that he is a nobody. But what about the father?

“The whole question of Willy's hidden identity is curiously like that in *Oedipus*. The key words—he does not know who he is—point the parallel almost unmistakably. . . The question we are really asking is whether Willy Loman recognizes anything equal in quality to that which drove Oedipus to his self-mutiliation and Othello to his suicide” (269).

Why does Willy kill himself? Discuss. See pages, 270, 271.