

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Abou Bekr Belkaid University
Tlemcen**



**Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English**

**American Popular Culture in Arthur Miller's
Death of a Salesman (1949)**

Dissertation submitted to the Department of English as a partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master's degree in Literature and Civilization.

Presented by

Yasmina Otmani

Supervised by

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Board of Examiners

Prof. Wassila Mouro	Professor	Chairperson
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Dr. Meyem Mengouchi	MCB	Examiner

2023 – 2024

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this dissertation in the first place to my dear parents, my father Abdel Halim Otmani and my mother Karima Moulai Hadj who have supported me till the last minute

To my dear siblings

To all my family and friends

To all those who love me and support me

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my attitude and appreciation to my dissertation supervisor: Prof. Ithem Mortad Serir, for her guidance, assistance, and support.

I would like also to thank the honorable board of examiners Prof. Wassila Mouro and Dr. Meryem Mengouchi for reading, evaluating, and reviewing my dissertation and for the comments and remarks they would provide me with.

ABSTRACT

The current research paper entitled *The American Popular Culture on Death of a Salesman* seeks to analyze the play's elements of American popular culture. This research aims to investigate how Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* intersects with literature and popular culture, providing a detailed analysis of how the play both reflects and criticizes American society. The methodology of this study combines reviewing literature, analyzing the historical context, and qualitative approach. This systematic approach ensures a comprehensive exploration of both the literary background of *Death of a Salesman* and its importance in American popular culture. Through the analysis of Arthur Miller's play and the comparison approaches, this dissertation validates that American Popular culture exists in American literature work.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Popular culture, or pop culture, reflects a society's culture. American writers often integrate elements of popular culture from their backgrounds into their works. They showcase the customs and behaviors of a society. However, it is well known that there is a trend among American authors to incorporate popular culture into their works. Studying popular culture elements in American literature is essential because it allows us to understand how writers portray, criticize, and influence societal values and identities. This study will examine various aspects of pop culture found in *Death of a Salesman*. Thus, analyzing American popular culture within the play is essential, as it reveals the complex connection between cultural norms in the mid-twentieth century and literary representation.

Within the broader field of American literature, there are important works that serve as significant symbols, reflecting the cultural trends of their era. One such influential piece is Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Indeed, the enduring impact of *Death of a Salesman* in American popular culture has been a source of inspiration for me. The main aim of this research study is to examine the complex connections between literature, popular culture, and society by using *Death of a Salesman* as a centre of interest to explore these complex relationships. Focusing on the cultural insights and popular cultural themes in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* in relation to American literature and popular culture. In fact, the research seeks to provide a more profound understanding of how the play both reflects and critiques American culture.

Hence, the two following research questions are worth to be asked:

- 1- What is the impact of popular culture in American literature?
- 2- How does popular culture in *Death of a Salesman* affect reader ship from the book to the screen?

Based on the above research questions, we propose the following research hypotheses:

- 1- Indeed, popular culture is integral to American literature, more particularly in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*.
- 2- The move from the book to the screen positively promotes the understanding of popular culture in *Death of a Salesman*.

This dissertation is divided into two chapters; the first chapter entitled Literature Review, deals with an overview of the American literature and its pursuit of evolution through literary movements. Following this, the chapter discusses American popular culture, it then moves to the iconic play *Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller's profile, a summary of the play, and its historical context.

The second chapter, entitled Cultural Insights in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, discusses the popular cultural themes of the play. It then examines the various elements of popular culture within the play and analyzes how these cultural elements were translated from the book to the screen adaptation. Choosing this play allows for an opportunity to explore how American writers incorporate elements of popular culture into their work.

Chapter One: Literature Review

Chapter One: Literature Review

1.2 Introduction

1.2 Overview of American Literature

1.2.6 Colonialism

1.2.7 Romanticism

1.2.8 Realism

1.2.9 Modernism

1.2.10 Postmodernism

1.3 Introduction to Popular Culture in American Stream

1.4 *Death of Salesman* by Arthur Miller

1.4.1 Arthur Miller's Profile

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1.4.3 Historical Context of the Play

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1.5 Conclusion

1.1 Introduction

American literature acts as a diverse and detailed portrayal of the historical, cultural, and societal development of the United States. It has evolved from the early days of colonization until Postmodernism. The first chapter begins with an overview of American Literature, observing its evolution from the Colonial era to the post-war. Each Literary period offers a perspective on the societal and cultural changes of its era. Then, this chapter delves into an analysis of Popular Culture in the American context, exploring its diverse expression by studying Arthur Miller's influential piece, *Death of a Salesman*, and its impact on American literature. This chapter focuses on Arthur Miller's play. It delves deep into Miller's background, the play's summary, and the historical context of the play, including The Great Depression, World War II, and The American Dream Period. Ultimately, the first chapter sheds light on the connections between American Literature, Popular Culture, and society.

1.2 Overview of American Literature

Literature is an art form of creative written works and often gives consideration to the period in which it was written. Nevertheless, American Literature refers to the collection of written works created by authors who are either born or live in the United States. It encompasses a range of genres, such as novels, poems, short stories, plays and essays. American Literature reflects historical, social and cultural experiences. It contains different literary pieces from different time periods, such as Colonialism, Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, and Postmodernism. Edgar Allan Poe, John Smith, Mark Twain, and T.S Eliot are the most known and the most important writers in American literature.

1.2.1 Colonialism (1600s – 1700s)

During the early settlement era, American literature produced religious and historical writings that reflected Puritan beliefs and exploration narratives. Nathaniel Hawthorne, in his novel *The Scarlet Letter*, delves into the outcomes of

the Puritan settlement in early America, “Thus the Puritans elders in their black cloaks, starched bands, and steeple-crowned hats, smiled not , and frowned not, but sat like statues of the founders of New England, whom they resembled in their attributes of firmness and sagacity” (4).

The Colonial period of American literature emerged, and the evolution of genre and themes which continue to impact modern literature, “In sum, white racial solidarity developed in close tandem with the expansion of liberty among male colonists. The greater opportunity and freedom enjoyed by white men in the British colonies were a product of their encounter with a broader array of peoples - some of whom could be exploited in ways impossible back in Britain” (Taylor 13). Taylor examines the continued influence of slavery in American history from the past to the present day.

This period was also characterized by emphasizing the themes of portraying perspectives, challenging norms, and delving into matters of spirituality “Our life is frittered away by detail. An honest man has hardly need to count more than his ten fingers, or in extreme cases he may add his ten toes, and in lump the rest” (Thoreau 54). He criticizes colonialism and its effects on individual freedom.

The colonial era played a role in shaping the growth of Literature. The American colonial period touched upon influential writers, key events, and significant developments in colonial literature.

1.2.2 Romanticism (1830-1870)

The philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson in his book called *Nature* mentioned that “Romanticism in American literature emphasized the importance of individualism, the beauty of nature, and the exploration of the self” (6). Romanticism in American Literature gave importance to individualism, the beauty of nature, and self-discovery. Authors celebrated personal freedom, drew inspiration from the environment, and explored the complexities of human feelings and self-perception.

American Romanticism was a period of literature that took place from 1830 to 1870. It explored themes like nature, individualism, and symbolism. This movement emerged as a reaction to the nationalist values, as Edgar Allan Poe cited in his essay: “Romanticism is a way of thinking that values the individual over the group, the subjective over the objective and person’s emotional experience over reason”.

The Romanticism movement witnessed the emergence of great authors who glorified the beauty and identity of American culture, such as Edgar Allan Poe, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Washington Irving, and some of masterpieces of American literature like the short story *Rip Van Winkle* (1819) By Washington Irving and *MobyDick* by Herman Melvill are one of the most recognized novels in the genre of Dark Romanticism and even *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne exemplifies Dark Romanticism.

Hawthorne believed that humans possess inherent imperfections and are often attracted to the gloomier side of life : “No man for any Considerable period can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true”(164).

Writers of American romanticism are often subjective and individualized to examine their life and their surroundings“romanticism may be (like all ism) a matter of a great debate, but little of that debate has had much to do with American poetry. When in 1924, Arthur O. Lovejoy proposed abandoning the term as a literally historical frame, complaining that “the word romantic has come to mean so many things that by itself, it means nothing », nineteenth century American poetry was not one of those too many thing” (Virginia 319).

Ralph Waldo Emerson emphasized the need for American Writers to break away from European literary traditions, “we have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe” (48). He advocated for American writers to seek inspiration from their own lives and environments rather than imitating European traditions. This highlights a call for originality and independence in American literature, reflecting a more prominent theme of American identity and cultural distinctiveness.

1.2.3 Realism (1860-1890)

The period from 1860 to 1819 in American literature witnessed the emergence of Realism as a literary movement that aimed to depict contemporary social realities. The experience of the war led to the rise of American Realism as over half of the population witnessed the horror of war. Survivors returned home profoundly changed by what they had seen, as advancements in technology made war more brutal and less glorified. Realism came as a reaction to romanticism, according to William Harmon and Hugh Holman “where romanticists transcend the immediate to find the ideal and naturalists plumb the actual or superficial to find the scientific laws that control its actions, realists centre their attention to remarkable degree on the immediate, the here and now, the specific action, and the verifiable consequence” (428).

In addition, the Realism was known with its greatest authors, including Mark Twain, which was one of the most iconic authors of this movement. His novel *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was one of his most important literary pieces. Yet it was a master class in American Realism fiction of all time. Another formidable writer from this era was Henry James; his famous novel was *The Portrait of a Lady*. Realist writers focused on portraying the lives of the middle class and working class. Indeed, their works continue to be studied and become well-known despite the significant social and cultural changes of that period. The intense engagement of American Realism with its social and cultural context has always been crucial to its power as literature (Philip 4).

Realism will continue as long as literature continues to thrive because every realistic writer shows something real since real-life experiences have always been one of the most important elements of realism’s legitimacy.

1.2.4 Modernism (1910-1945)

Modernism is a movement that emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Oxford Dictionary defines Modernism as “a style and movement in art, architecture and literature popular in the twentieth century in which modern ideas,

methods and materials were used rather than traditional ones". Stefan Kern argues that Modernism is dropping the outdated views of the world, stating that: "modernism is a primarily a set of new ways of seeing and interpreting the world and narrative forms are the literary manifestations of those ways" (2).

According to M.H Abrams, the term modernism is used to refer to the new changes in literature and arts that came after the First World War (1914-1919) and Modernist works are characterised by the break with the previous traditions of Western culture. Moreover, he distinguishes between Modernism and High Modernism, claiming that Modernism dates back to the 1890s, while high modernism is stamped by accelerated changes after the First World War (167). The Modernist movement is marked by the changes happened. The Harlem Renaissance and the Roaring Twenties occurred in this era also.

"This period was characterized by the irrational thinking and the changing of human position where the individuals is put in front of the social structure. Religious beliefs were no more credited, on the contrary, they started being questioned and criticized" (Modernism and Post Modernism 24). Modernist rejects the idea of objectivity of the word and instead argue that everything is subjective. This is to say that Modernism does not support the concept of absolute truth. "Modernist artists shifted their focus to exploring the inner working of the human mind, as a result to the first world war and the limitations of science in great explaining the complexities of reality" (Ibid 20-21).

Modernist writers like Virginia Woolf and James Joyce have tried out different forms, styles, and techniques to change the reader's perceptions of Reality. These writings are called "avant-garde" (Lodge 105). Modernist authors were more concerned with the structural aspects of their writing rather than the content. They focused on using rhythmic and concise language (Abrams 168). Modernist writers emphasized the importance of the structure of their writing over traditional themes, using techniques such as stream of consciousness and fragmentation. They aimed to use concise, rhythmic language to convey complex human experiences.

1.2.5 Postmodernism

After the Second World War, there was the emergence of a new movement known as Postmodernism. It arose in response to Modernism and aimed to criticise the terrible situation following the war. Like Modern literature, Postmodern literature was influenced by social, political, cultural, and historical changes that took place during the post-World War II era; the period marked the decline of the Old European empires and the subsequent opening for new literary expressions. Afforded that opportunity, Americans started exporting their culture to the world (Michal and Platt 24). Furthermore, according to Sheeba's article on Postmodernism Literature, she discusses how this genre is defined by a use of literary techniques like fragmentation, paradox, satire, dark humour and references to the author. Postmodern literature also challenges traditional hierarchies in art and writing, rejecting distinctions between different styles and narrative approaches (182). Postmodern Literature challenges the traditional categorization of art as either "High" or "Low" and shuns strict boundaries around styles and narrative methods, opting instead for a more inclusive and innovative diversity and experimentation.

Postmodernism is known for challenging established beliefs and rejecting the notion of "Grand narratives". Postmodernists view history as a subjective rather than an objective discipline (Esmat1). In American Literature: Postmodernism period, Sylar discusses how the Postmodernist era highlights themes such as identity, prejudice, and a yearning for positivity in humanity. Indeed, the term Postmodernism is fitting as it reflects how individuals coped with the challenges of the modern era, marked by significant events like world wars and the Great Depression, which left many Americans seeking hope in society (Sylar 1).

When discussing Modernism and Postmodernism in literature, what stands out are the characteristics that are evident in the writings of the twentieth century. One of these pieces of art is *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller.

1.3 Introduction to Popular Culture in American Stream

In the American context, popular culture encompasses the collective ideas, beliefs, customs, trends and practices that are widely accepted and adopted by the general population in the US. “Popular culture is always defined, implicitly or explicitly in contrast to other conceptual categories: folk culture, mass culture, high culture, dominant culture, working class culture” (Storey 1). Storey incorporated various elements of popular culture into his work, juxtaposed with elements from different cultural backgrounds. Thus, American popular culture includes various aspects like television, films, music, fashion, literature, sports, and technology that have a significant impact on shaping American society.

According to Dominic Strinati in *An Introduction to the Theories of Popular Culture* “It seems difficult to define popular culture independently of the theory which is designed to explain it” (17). Dominic suggests that the definition of Popular Culture is influenced by the theories we use to understand it. This implies that the human understanding and interpretations of Popular Culture are shaped by the theoretical lenses humans use to examine its different aspects and influences.

Indeed, popular American culture can also be defined by Michael, K as a combination of different phenomena that are generally acceptable to a majority of people in a given society. Many people in the US consider American popular culture to be representative of the majority while some enjoy this culture; others resist it, viewing it as a threat to their existing traditions and values. Popular American culture provides several benefits in terms of values and lessons which are always adopted by a majority of people (Walcott 3). Overall, American popular culture is a constantly changing and diverse that reflects the nation’s history, beliefs, and changing times. It is continuously adapting to the evolving times, not only impacting the US but also exerting its influence on global popular culture. American Popular Culture acts as a source of amusement for individuals, captivating them with engaging shows and media content. This not only grabs their attention but also offers a way to escape daily life’s pressure.

Elizabeth G. Traube, in her article *The Popular in American Culture*, said: “Since intellectuals invented Popular Culture in the eighteenth century, they have

never been more attentive to it, than they are today (127). The increased academic interest in popular culture is a response to its significant impact on society, emphasizing the importance of delving deeper into its workings.

Essentially, *Death of a Salesman* presents a critical view of the American Dream and mainstream culture by questioning the belief that fulfillment and achievement are determined only by wealth and acceptance from society. Through the tragic story of Willy Loman, Arthur Miller invites audiences to reconsider the beliefs and objectives that influence American culture and the potential adverse outcomes of pursuing a challenging and unreachable goal.

1.4 *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller

The play of *Death of a Salesman* is a classic American play in two acts and a requiem by Arthur Miller that was published in 1949. It was a significant achievement in American Literature. The play became one of the most famous American plays at that time.

1.4.1 Arthur Miller's Profile

Arthur Asher Miller came a long way for a Jewish boy born in Harlem, New York City, on October 17, 1915, and raised in Brooklyn. He was the son of an immigrant, a man who couldn't read English and who lost everything in the Wall Street crash of 1929. Miller grew up as a child during The Great Depression, which significantly shaped his views on society and politics and also brought financial ruin to his father, and that was to show his writing. Since graduating from high school in 1938, shortly before the outbreak of the Second World War, he worked in a store. With the money he got from the job, he attended the University of Michigan (The Editors of Britannica).

Arthur Miller is considered one of the greatest American playwrights of the 20th century. He began to write plays in 1938. By 1944, he declared his first play, *The Man Who Had All the Luck*. In 1945, Miller published a novel *Focus*, whereas his best-known plays are *All My Sons*, *The Crucible* and *Death of Salesman*.

Miller's work frequently delves into societal and political themes, with a particular focus on critiquing the concept of the American Dream. He achieved great success in his career, earning various awards, such as the Pulitzer Prize for drama and multiple Tony Awards. Overall, Arthur Miller's life and career revolve around his examination of ethical and societal concerns, his commitment to creative honesty, and his enduring influence on American theatre (The Editors of Britannica).

Throughout his professional life, Miller was a vocal supporter of social justice and political issues. His short-lived marriage to Marilyn Monroe, one of the most famous actresses at that time in the 1950s, also exposed him to the public eye. He was a respected playwright who addressed social and economic issues in his works based on realities in his life. His writing was influential at the time. He wrote about the difficulties people faced and how they managed to survive. Arthur Miller wrote what he saw in his life. He transformed it into literary works. Almost all of his works relate very much to his real life (The Editors of Britannica).

Arthur Miller continued his creative work, delving into significant, political, social, and moral issues through various mediums like plays, articles, film scripts, books, and speeches, until his passing in 2005 at the age of 89. He is remembered as a prominent figure in American theatre, and his work is frequently performed (The Editors of Britannica)

1.4.2 Summary of Death of a Salesman

Death of a Salesman takes place in New York and Boston. It tells the tragic story of the last 24 hours of the life of a salesman, Willy Loman, a man whose downfall is attributed to the beliefs of his society during the Second World War.

The play's narrative is split between the past and the present, showcasing Willy Loman's current struggles intertwined with his memories. Willy is haunted by his unfulfilled dreams and feelings of failure, impacting his relationships, especially with his son Biff. Soon later, Biff learns about his father's affair with a woman. While Happy is employed and has his place, Biff faces difficulties in finding success. Amidst growing tension, Willy's wife Linda worries about his

husband's mental state after trying suicide and hallucinations. Furthermore, he hallucinates even more than before, believing that he is back in a previous period of his life. For instance, he converses with his deceased brother, Ben. Seeking for a fresh start, Biff and Happy propose a business venture with Willy's endorsement, leading to a failed attempt and an unfortunate end where Willy takes his life to secure insurance money for his family.

The summary concludes with Linda's struggles to cope with Willy's tragic death. Eventually, she finds herself residing in a home he had paid for but with no one to accompany her.

1.4.3 Historical Context of *Death of a Salesman*

Arthur Miller wrote *Death of a Salesman*, which was first performed in 1949, only a few years after the Second World War ended in 1945 and within a decade of the end of the Great Depression (1929-1939). Both periods had a significant impact on the work of Miller and on the *Death of a Salesman* in particular, as well as the American Dream played a significant role in Arthur Miller's work.

1.4.3.1 The Great Depression

The period from 1929 to the late 1930s known as the Great Depression was marked by severe economic challenges, including high levels of unemployment, poverty, and financial uncertainty. It was a terrible economic period when America plummeted into the worst economic downturn when it had ever faced many banks, companies, and families lost everything leaving a bruised national psyche that lacked confidence about the future. When the Great Depression hit America in the early 1930s, Arthur Miller's family's lives were changed for the worse. His father's clothing business suffered, and the family had to move to a less expensive neighbourhood. Many people were struggling financially, and as you can imagine, few would have been able to afford luxuries at that time. Those people who were fortunate enough to keep their jobs realised that working hard did not necessarily

mean that you could live comfortably (Death of a Salesman: Time Period & Historical Context).

The Great Depression caused drastic declines in output, severe unemployment, and acute deflation and its deflation, and its social and cultural effects were no less staggering. The Great Depression represented the harshest adversity faced by Americans since the Civil War (Romer & Pells 251). The effects of the Great Depression were severe for every aspect of life: a decline in economic stability, an increase in the number of unemployment, and a decrease in people's purchasing power (Gordon 251). People got depressed and hopeless; some individuals resorted to taking their own lives as a way to escape their struggles. The Great Depression was a background of Arthur Miller's works. Arthur Miller effectively depicts the personal impact of the Great Depression in *Death of a Salesman*. Through the characters of Willy Loman, Miller reflects the broken dream of his own family and many Americans. As the main character of Death of Salesman, Willy fails to obtain his financial or emotional stability, although he has been a salesman for a long time, and he also fails to gain his emotional stability, albeit he married to a faithful and devoted wife (Coursehero 252).

Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* effectively portrays the personal impact of the Great Depression through the character of Willy Loman, highlighting the challenges and disappointments experienced by individuals like him.

1.4.3.2 World War II

The play takes place after the Second World War, during a time of economic boom in the US. However, this era was also marked by social tensions and worries about conformity, consumerism, and the American Dream. Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* was heavily influenced by the Second World War. Willy Loman's difficulties reflect the effects of the war on the economy and society, echoing a change in values and the American Dream. The play delves into the disillusionment and obstacles experienced by characters like Willy Loman amidst the evolving post war society. In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman's era faces challenges in the post-war period, where traditional beliefs of achievement clash with changing reality. The war's effects on the economy and societal norms add to

Willy's feelings of inadequacy his determined quest for success in a different American dream, and the erosion of conventional values.

The play explores how the relentless pursuit of material success can lead to personal tragedy and the loss of one's identity. In addition to that, the play identifies the impact of war on Willy, highlighting the psychological and emotional struggles he faces as he remembers his brother Ben's experiences of finding success and adventure in the Alaskan wilderness. The aftermath of the war is a powerful undercurrent throughout the play, shaping Willy's vision of success, masculinity, and his own value.

1.4.3.3 American Dream Period

Before the Great Depression, American society lived a prosperous life. People moved from any place to search for a better wealthier, and happier life. This dream is called the American Dream. "The American Dream grew over time and took different forms according to different people, not just politicians and historians, but also everyday Americans who aspired to a better future for themselves and their children" (Elias 2).

In *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman tries to make the American Dream concrete instead of just a concept. It has proven to be challenging to define in the context of everyday American life. Furthermore, *Death of a Salesman* examines the American Dream and the desire for success and riches. Willy Loman's tragic tale mirrors the obstacles and disappointments encountered by numerous individuals attempting to achieve success in the aftermath of World War Two.

The main character, Willy Loman, represents the American Dream, but his story highlights the flaws and drawbacks of this ideal. The play questions the belief in achieving success and wealth through hard work and ambition as Willy Loman struggles with disappointment and a sense of inadequacy.

In addition, Arthur Miller employs a series of visual signals to signify shifts in the timeline, mood, and tone of the play. These cues are used to represent flashbacks, helping to clarify the disparity between Willy's perception of success

and the harsh reality he faces (Hedhili 43). The play depicts the death of the dreamers who hope for wealth and happiness.

In general, although *Death of a Sales man* is set in the post-Second World War period, the lingering effects of The Great Depression still influence the character's desires, goals, and challenges, giving a broader historical backdrop for interpreting their lives and viewpoints.

1-5 Conclusion

American Literature has progressed through different periods like Colonialism, Realism, Modernism, and Postmodernism, each mirroring elements of American society. These literary movements have shaped Popular Culture by highlighting themes and values that resonate with the current societal mood.

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* serves as a powerful critique of the American Dream and the social pressures that impact personal identity and self-value. Through the character of Willy Loman, Miller explains the idea of unlimited success.

The play exposes the uselessness of a dream that promises wealth but delivers only disappointment and hopelessness, shedding light on the consequences of conformity on relationships, mental health, and individual identity.

Chapter Two:
Cultural Insights in
Miller's *Death of a*
Salesman

Chapter Two: Cultural Insights in Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Popular Cultural Themes in *Death of a Salesman*

2.2.1 American Dream

2.2.2 Reality vs. Illusion

2.3 Elements of Popular Culture in *Death of a Salesman*

2.3.1 Dialect

2.3.2 Sports

2.3.3 Proverbs

2.3.4 Games

2.3.5 Music

2.4 Elements of Popular Culture From The Book to The Screen

2.4.1 Media

2.4.2 Film Adaptations

2.4.3 Marketing and Promotion

2.4.4 Others Adaptations

2.5 Conclusion

2-1 Introduction

Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* has made a lasting impact on American literature by skillfully depicting the complexities of the human experience and the challenging pursuit of the American Dream. Taking place in the aftermath of World War 2 in 1949, the play's enduring popularity stems from its exploration of cultural themes that were prevalent at the time of its creation and continue to resonate with audiences today.

Chapter two discusses the themes of the play *Death of a Salesman* that have profoundly influenced American Popular Culture. One of the main themes is the American Dream, especially with Willy Loman. Another theme is reality vs. illusion, which aims to understand how the characters view themselves and the world around them. The second chapter explains also the complex connection between Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and aspects of Popular Culture. It investigates how various cultural elements like dialect, sports, proverbs, games, and music intersect with the play's themes and symbols. The chapter also looks at how these cultural elements have been adapted from the original text to various media forms, including movie versions. It examines the influence of media, the adaptation process, and the marketing and promotional strategies used to bring the story from the page to the screen. Through this examination, readers can understand the dynamic relationship between literature and popular culture, as well as how storytelling has evolved across different platforms.

The enduring relevance of *Death of a Salesman* to popular culture leads to reflecting on how Miller's classic work continues to connect with viewers of all ages, serving as a powerful critique of the relentless quest for the American Dream and the charge it takes on individuals.

2-2 Pop Cultural Themes in *Death of a Salesman*

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* delves into several themes that have significantly contributed to American Popular Culture. The play centers around two

main topics, the representation and disappointment of the American Dream, and the complex relationship between reality and illusion.

2-2-1 American Dream

The American Dream is the idea that everyone, no matter their starting point or situation, has the chance to attain wealth, triumph, and advancement by putting in effort, staying resolute, and persisting. Nevertheless, the American Dream is the central theme of the play. In *Death of a Salesman*, the concept revolves around the notion that success in business relies on being well-liked, having a charming personality, and being popular.

Willy Loman, the main character in the play, dedicates his entire life to working as a salesman, where he is just a tiny part of the system focused on mass producing new products and perpetuating the constant desire for material possessions. Willy's version of the American Dream revolves around being a charming and successful businessman and having access to all the luxuries that modern American life has to offer. However, Willy's perception is almost wrong as it is a superficial idea in comparison to the true essence of the American Dream. Therefore, Willy associates success with money and social standing, thinking that attaining the American Dream requires gaining popularity among others. This focus on the American Dream is clear in Willy's discussion with his son Biff, where he stresses the significance of being well-liked and reaching financial prosperity, "be liked and you will be never want" (Miller 26 Act 1 Scene 3).

Willy sees his brother Ben as a representation of the success he aspires to achieve in his own life. Willy has a conversation with Happy regarding Ben "the man knew what he wanted and went out and got it! Walked into a jungle and comes out, the age of twenty-one, and he's rich! (Miller 32 Act one Scene 4). This is how Willy perceives achieving the American Dream; Ben's wealth makes him a successful man in Willy's opinion.

Bernard, Charley's son, is the character in the play that Willy criticizes. Bernard is seen as an outsider, with few friends and a focus on his studies, "Biff, where are you? You're supposed to study with me today" (Miller 25 Act 1 Scene 3). However, Willy views his son Biff as the embodiment of his ideal American

Dream, citing Biff's popularity in school and attractive appearance, "You are going to be five times ahead of him" (Miller 25 Act 1 Scene 3). Bernard achieves great success, while Biff faces challenges in his life. Willy perceives Biff as unsuccessful and believes that he did not achieve the American Dream. However, Willy had an incorrect understanding of the American Dream.

Furthermore, one of Willy Loman's most significant desires is to have a grand and impressive funeral. As he passes away, his wife Linda says, "Why didn't anybody come...where are all the people he knew?" (Miller 110 Act 2 Scene 14). Throughout his life, he holds to a fantasy without ever honestly confronting the reality of achieving it. It is his idealized vision of historical figures that influences Willy to choose a specific path, ultimately resulting in his downfall.

Generally, the American Dream has a significant impact on American Popular Culture by motivating, encouraging, and provoking critical analysis. The idea of the American Dream remains influential, inspiring people and defining the American story.

2-2-2 Reality vs. Illusion

The contrast between illusion and reality is a prominent theme in Arthur Miller's play as all members of the Loman family struggle to distinguish between the two. This theme delves into how characters like Willy Loman use illusion to cope with the harsh realities they face.

Willy Loman is obsessed with illusions and escapes into fantasies rather than confronting the harsh truths of his existence. Indeed, he overestimates his own success compared to reality in the play; Willy has the illusion that "he's the new England man. He is vital in New England" (Miller 10 Act 1 Scene 1). In truth, anyone could have filled Willy's job at work. This misconception contributes to his downfall, as his life unravels and he convinces himself that he has the financial means to provide for his family, failing to acknowledge the need to confront his unraveling reality. As the play progresses, in a burst of anger, Willy rejects being called "a dim dozen" and says, "I am Willy Loman, and you are Biff Loman" (Miller 105 Act 2 Scene 14). Willy's lack of understanding of his social position leads to his downfall. Believing that he is living life to the fullest, he fails to see the

reality of his situation. This confusion between reality and imagination is the direct cause of the chaos that follows Willy.

During the intense argument between Biff and Willy at the restaurant, the stage direction guides their interactions “the woman laughs, off left” (Miller 29 Act 1 Scene 5). This laughter not only represents the chaos and difficulties in Willy’s life but also leads him into another one of his frequent flashbacks. The contrast between illusion and reality is essential for these flashbacks to have a lasting impact on the play.

Willy’s hopes of starting his own business are shattered when he shares with his sons that he is unable to make that dream a reality, “Tell you a secret, boys. Don’t breathe it to a soul someday I’ll have my own business, and I’ll never have to leave home anymore” (Miller 23 Act 1 Scene 4). He then tells his wife, “You wait, kid, before it’s all over we’re gonna get a little place out in the country, and I’ll raise some vegetables, a couple of chickens” (Miller 56 Act 1 Scene 10). Willy’s dream of starting his own business and owning a home in the countryside where he can be at ease is mentioned in the text, but unfortunately, he is unable to fulfill this dream due to his declining business, as revealed in his conversation with Linda “My God, if business don’t pick up I don’t know what I’m gonna do!” (Miller 28 Act 1 Scene 5).

Willy’s dream for Biff to achieve great success is shattered when he sees the reality that Biff has not lived up to those expectations. Willy believes Biff is making it big out west, but in truth, Biff has not achieved much. By the end of the play, Biff is the only family member who can see the truth and separate it from illusion. He understands who he truly is, not a successful businessman like his father envisioned.

Biff chooses to live his own life, not following in Willy’s footsteps, chasing the American Dream.

Willy’s desire to be popular and well-liked is exhausted when he realizes that people do not actually like him, as revealed in his conversation with Linda “You know, the troubles are, Linda, people don’t seem to take to me” (Miller 28 Act 1 Scene 5). This means that Willy finds out that people do not like him, which is difficult for him as it goes against his desire.

The theme of reality versus illusion in *Death of a Salesman* has dramatically impacted American Popular Culture. By delving into the discrepancy between what seems true and what is true, the play encourages viewers to challenge the false perceptions that dictate their lives and to address the unsettling realities hidden beneath the surface.

2-3 Elements of Popular Culture in Death of a Salesman

Arthur Miller's classic play *Death of a Salesman* goes beyond being just a theatrical piece to offer a deep reflection of popular culture in mid-20th century in America. Amidst the background of post-war economic growth and the continuing pursuit of the American Dream, the play skillfully integrates various elements of Popular Culture, dialect, sports, proverbs, games, and music, as mentioned in the space of this study.

2-3-1 Dialect

In *The Death of a Salesman*, Arthur Miller uses dialect to accurately reflect the characters' backgrounds, social standing, and their origins, serving as a representation of popular culture. Arthur Miller uses dialect to add authenticity and complexity to the characters while also emphasizing the cultural disparities present in American society.

Willy Loman speaks with the New York or Brooklyn accent as it is clear in the play while saying: "I'm tellin' you, I was sellin' thousands, but I had to come home" (Miller 26 Act 1 Scene 4). As well as, Willy Loman's Brooklyn accent is also present when he said, "The trouble was that three of the stores were half-closed for inventory in Boston. Otherwise, I would a broke records" (Miller 27 Act 1 Scene 5). Willy Loman's accent reflects his working class and his portrayal as a salesman struggling with the American Dream: "they don't need me in New York. I'm the New England man. I'm vital in New England" (Miller 10 Act 1 Scene 1). Willy Loman's way of speaking, word choices, and informal language help to define his character and offer clues about his personality and background. He used colloquialism and informal language: "Gee on the way home tonight I'd like to buy some seeds" (Miller 55 Act 1 Scene 10). The additional example highlights Willy

Loman's speech patterns, "I'm tired to the death. I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it Linda" (Miller 8 Act 1 Scene 1).

However, Linda Loman's dialect, vocabulary, and expressions convey a gentle and nurturing tone: "Sleep well darling!" (Miller 53 Act 1 Scene 10). Her dialect reflects her role as the emotional support for her family: "That's all you are, my baby! What happened to the love you had for him? You were such pals?" (Miller 45 Act 1 Scene 9). Furthermore, her speech pattern also reflects her caring nature and vital concern for her husband, Willy, as well as their sons, Biff and Happy: "attention, attention must be finally paid to such a person" (Miller 44 Act 1 Scene 9). Through her sincere and empathetic words, Linda showcases her deep love and understanding: "Oh, my dear, you should do a lot of things, but there is nothing to do, so go to sleep" (Miller 42 Act 1 Scene 9). Linda's dialect often conveys practicality and pragmatism, reflecting her position as the voice of logic and reason within the Loman household.

Biff and Happy Loman, the sons of Willy and Linda Loman in *Death of a Salesman*, exhibit distinct dialects that reveal their upbringing and personalities. Biff's speech reflects his complex relationship with his father, struggles with identity, and disillusionment with the

American dream: "I'm not a leader of a men. Willy, and neither are you" (Miller 105 Act 2 Scene 12); in addition to that, he said "pop, I'm nothing I'm nothing. Pop. Can't you understand that?" (Miller 105 Act 2 Scene 12). On the other hand, Happy's dialect resembles Willy's, as he tries to emulate his father's confidence and pursuit of success: "I'm not licked, Willy. I'm gonna win it for you. Just watch" (Miller 111 Act 2 Scene 13).

The character's dialects in *Death of a Salesman* mirror their working class and enhance the play's realism. Their dialects are influenced by the characters' relationships, personalities, and educational background.

2-3-2 Sports

In Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*, sports are not the main focus of the play, but their presence serves to enhance the characters and themes. The play sheds light on the complexities of family relationships, pressures, and the pursuit of

success. Sports are portrayed as a component of popular culture that mirrors the values and dreams of American society in the mid-1900s.

The play frequently references Biff Loman's prosperous high school football career. Willy often thinks back about Biff's glory days in football, believing that his athletic achievements would lead to future success. In a flashback, Willy said, "That boy – That boy is going to be magnificent" (Miller 106 Act 2 Scene 11). This discussion highlights Willy's dedication to Biff's sports achievements and his belief in the importance of athletics as a pathway to succeed. However, Willy expresses disappointment in Biff's failure to take advantage of his athletic potential, "I want you to know, on the train, in the mountains, in the valleys, wherever you go, that you cut down your life for spite" (Miller 103 Act 2 Scene 11). The difference between Willy's idealized image of Biff as a sports star and Biff's real difficulties underscores the struggles between illusion and reality in the quest for achievement. Biff's refusal to conform to Willy's hopes and his loss of faith in American ideals ultimately cause a break in their bond and play a part in Willy's tragic downfall.

Biff reflects on his disappointment in his former football coach and the reality of his athletic career: "and he gave me one look and never even waved to me! But I was a quarterback, and he was the coach, and we were friends" (Miller 82 Act 2 Scene 5). This passage draws attention to Biff's understanding that his past achievements in football do not assure him any privileges or triumphs in life, which adds to his sense of disappointment.

Arthur Miller uses sports to critique the American Dream and Post-War American society in *Death of a Salesman*. Sports in the play are a complex symbol that shows the character's ambitions, challenges, and the overall cultural backdrop of post-war America.

2-3-3 Proverbs

Proverbs are indeed present in *Death of a Salesman*, giving to the play's exploration of popular culture and the complexities of human nature. As well as, proverbs are important in the play as they offer a window into the character's beliefs, principles, and perspectives on life.

Arthur Miller uses a range of traditional sayings in the play to communicate timeless truths and ethical messages that relate to the character's situations. Miller used the proverb as follows: "The grass is always greener on the other side". This proverb is mentioned indirectly in Willy Loman's desire for achievement and approval. He frequently compares himself with others, convinced that their circumstances are superior, leading to the feeling of inadequacy and disillusionment.

The play also delves into the themes of responsibility and consequence, reflecting the same message as the proverb "you reap what you sow". Willy's decisions and actions eventually result in his tragic downfall, illustrating the notion of owning up to the outcomes of one's choices. As the play unfolds, Willy consistently chooses to prioritize material success over his own values and authentic self, all in the name of chasing the elusive American Dream.

In Act 2, Willy talks to Biff about feeling unappreciated in the business world and society as a whole: "You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away – a man is not piece of fruit" (Miller 64 Act 2 Scene 1). These sentiments show the importance of human worth and the belief that people should not be rejected. Willy's concern revolves around the fear of being rejected by society as he grows older and loses his success in his career.

In *Death of a Salesman*, the use of proverbs and aphorisms enhance the dialogue and delves into the themes of identity, success, and the American Dream. They offer valuable insights into the character's thoughts and values, as well as present universal truths that connect with the audience on a deeper level.

2-3-4 Games

In Arthur Miller's play, games are used to symbolize popular culture and represent both societal values and the challenges faced by the characters. Although

Death of a Salesman focuses on significant themes and does not involve literal games, it does touch on the idea of competition, the symbolic “game of life”, and card game, as it delves into the influence of popular culture.

For instance, the play's figures are characterized by intense competition. Willy attributes the extreme competition to a population increase: “there's more people! That's ruining this country! Population is getting out of control. The competition is maddening!” (Miller 12 Act 1 Scene 2). The main characters face competition in different ways. Happy believes he is the smartest guy in his office, and he tries to do better than his managers by dating their partners and dreaming of surpassing them (Miller 19 Act 1 Scene 3). Moreover, Willy views his neighbor Charley, who has his own business, as a constant adversary. He mentions to Happy his plan to start a business from home, to which Happy excitedly asks if he'll be like Uncle Charley; Willy replies, “bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not – liked. He is liked, but he's not – well liked” (Miller 23 Act 1 Scene 4). Willy indicates that success is not sufficient for him; he values recognition and having a good reputation even more.

Despite Bernard, Charley's son, assisting Biff with his schoolwork, Willy turns him into a competitor as well: “Bernard can get the best mark in school, y' understand, but when he gets out in the business world, y' understand, you are going to be five times ahead of him” (Miller 25 Act 1 Scene 4). Willy then said: “Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interests, is the man who gets ahead” (Miller 25 Act 1 Scene 4). This competitive drive eventually results in Willy taking serious measures, such as committing suicide, to secure his family's future and also to help his sons to begin a business together. Willy's actions are pushed by his desire to see Biff reestablish himself as a successful man, “When the mail comes he'll be ahead of Bernard again” (Miller 107 Act 2 Scene 13). Within Willy's imaginative realm, his deceased brother, Ben, gives a valuable life lesson to Biff, “Never fight fair with a stranger, boy. You'll never get out of the jungle that way” (Miller 38 Act 1 Scene 6).

The play makes multiple references to card games, especially playing cards, to symbolize life's uncertainty and the concept of risk-taking. For instance, Willy

hallucinates playing cards with his brother Ben as a representation of the risks involved in striving for success, “what’s the answer? How did you do it?” (Miller 36). This conversation occurs while Willy is playing cards and imagining talking to Ben. Similarly, the card game between Willy and Charley signifies brief moments of happiness and companionship amidst Willy’s troubled life, “I’m gonna knock Howard for a loop, kid. I’m gonna knock him for a loop” (Miller 57 Act 1 Scene 8). Miller also mentions card game when Charley and Willy are playing, Willy says: “All right. You got cards?” (Miller 33 Act 1 Scene 5).

The logic of competition has made theft seem acceptable to both Biff and Happy, who are influenced by their extremely ambitious father. In *Death of a Salesman*, games are used as powerful symbols that represent the complexities and uncertainties of life. They emphasize the themes of competition, deception, and the search for identity and purpose in a world that can seem unfair.

2-3-5 Music

In Arthur Miller’s play, Willy Loman experiences moments where he hears the flutes played by his deceased father. This recurring auditory hallucination is a motif in the play, symbolizing Willy’s yearning for a return to a more uncomplicated past and his longing to restore the innocence and idealism of his youth.

Throughout *Death of a Salesman*, music plays a crucial role in setting the mood, characterizing, and evoking emotions; the haunting flute at the start and end symbolizes a sense of sorrow and tragedy, “A melody is heard, played upon a flute” (Miller 7 Act 1 Scene 2). Past memories are intensified through sound, echoing happier times with cheerfulness. Ben’s theme music underscores his influence on Willy and his aspect of success, “The flute plays on. He hears but is not aware of it” (Miller 8 Act 1 Scene 2). There are indeed pieces of evidence in Act 1 when Willy fondly recalls his father and mentions hearing the music of the flute: “suddenly I realize I’m goin’ sixty miles an hour and I don’t remember the last five minutes. I’m – I can’t seem to – Keep my mind to it” (Miller 9 Act 1 Scene 2). Because he hears flute music in the distance, he can’t remember the road. Willy hears the music again, then laughs, “I was thinking of the Chevy again. The seven hundred-dollar

job. That's what I should have" (Miller 13 Act 1 Scene 3). This passage highlights how the flute's sound awakens memories for Willy, taking him back to joyful and validating moments from his past, especially those with his fathers. It focuses on Willy's desire for meaning and importance that he feels he once had but now struggles to find in his pursuit of the American Dream.

Several musicians and bands have been inspired by *Death of a Salesman* to create concept albums or songs that delve into themes such as identity, societal pressures, and the quest for success. These musical creations often mirror the challenges faced by Willy Loman and his family. An example of this is the indie rock band *The Get Up Kids* song *Willy Loman*, which alludes explicitly to the protagonist and his difficulties.

Music plays a significant role in setting the tone, mood, and emotional depth in *Death of a Salesman*. The music in the play symbolizes the betrayal of the past as Willy's failures come to light and confront him. Overall, music serves as a powerful tool in enhancing the audience's understanding of the characters and themes in the play.

2-4 Popular Culture from the Book to the Screen in *Death of a Salesman*

Arthur Miller's iconic play *Death of a Salesman* has been adapted to the screen several times. There are some of the elements of Popular Culture that make their way from books to movies or TV shows, such as Media, Film adaptation, Marketing, and Promotion.

2-4-1 Media

In *Death of a Salesman*, the element of media plays an important role in the play's characters within popular culture. It highlights how popular culture powerfully shapes both personal identity and societal norms, exposing the contrast between consumerism's allure and the complexities of human life. By examining media and mass culture, it reveals the impact they have on our beliefs and behaviors.

Throughout the play, Willy is swayed by depictions of wealth and success found in advertisements, radio shows, and various media sources. Willy is a devoted follower of popular culture and recognizes the significance of having a

beloved celebrity as a role model for society. He not only surprises his sons with a punching bag but also highlights that it bears the signature of the renowned boxer Gene Tunney (Miller 22 Act 1 Scene 5). During a disagreement with Linda about Biff's future, Willy expresses his sentiments: "certain men just don't get started till later in life. Like Thomas Edison, I think" (Miller 13 Act 1 Scene 3). Willy seems to admire the inventor, but he never bothered to learn about Thomas Edison's true identity.

When Biff is at a crucial football game, Willy likens him to the accomplished football player Red Grange when speaking to Charley (Miller 70 Act 2 Scene 9). The culture industry plays a role in conveying these messages, turning culture into a commodity. It is marketed as a set of dreams for people, conveyed through media like Hollywood films and advertisements. The underlying message is to strive hard and emulate successful figures, hoping to gain admiration and fame. Happy demonstrates respect and admiration for celebrities when he flirts with the girl in the restaurant: "You ought to be on a magazine cover" (Miller 80 Act 2 Scene 4). He not only compliments her look but also implies that she is someone worth admiring, showing society's importance of idolizing certain individuals.

Death of a Salesman has been adapted for radio, "and this automatically goes with the radio" (Miller 61 Act 1 Scene 10). It provides audiences with the chance to engage with the play's impactful dialogue and intense scenes through the medium of audio storytelling. These radio versions typically include skilled voice actors and sound effects to immerse listeners in the world of the characters and the story. Radio dramas serve as a convenient way for people to experience the play who may not have the opportunity to see it live or in a film adaptation. Audiences can enjoy the drama from wherever they are, at home or on the move, making it a flexible and accessible form of entertainment. Miller used the term radio several times: "I think to myself, what I must be missing on the radio" (Miller 61 Act 1 Scene 10). In the play, Willy frequently listens to the radio, symbolizing his yearning for the success and contentment that the American Dream guarantees.

Video hosting platforms like YouTube and Vimeo, along with streaming services, can feature a variety of content related to *Death of a Salesman*, including

performances, interviews, and educational materials. More than that, Social Media sites serve as places for users to talk about the play, sharing quotes and thoughts on its themes and characters. Hash tags and online groups focused on literature and theatre can encourage interaction with the play. Social media platforms are being used to generate excitement and anticipation for the upcoming movie adaptation. The film's official accounts share exclusive content, behind-the-scenes montages, and interactive activities to involve fans and stimulate online discussions.

In general, *Death of a Salesman* remains an important cultural landmark, as its themes continue to impact different forms of media. The play presents the societal setting of post-World War 2 America, where media began to greatly influence collective beliefs and personal goals.

2-4-2 Film Adaptation

There have been various film adaptations of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, each offering unique interpretations of the play's themes, such as the American Dream, family relationships, and the main character's disillusionment, Willy Loman.

Numerous adaptations have been created, including TV shows like *Everybody Loves Raymond* by Philip Rosenthal. This American sitcom portrays a multigenerational families and their everyday struggles, showcasing conflicts of *Death of a Salesman*, such as the frequent disagreements between father and son and financial challenges leading to strained family relationships.

Similarly, *The Simpsons* cartoon series also explores family conflict, focusing on the comedic tensions between Homer and the rest of the family through exaggerated and humorous arguments. The episode *Marge vs. the Monorail* in the cartoon showcases a spoof of the opening scene from the play where the character Lyle Lanley is portrayed as a salesman who is persuading the townspeople to put their money into a monorail. However, *Death of a Salesman* delves into more serious and somber themes; other adaptations touch upon the complexities of modern family life. Indeed, in *Breaking Bad*, Walter White draws a comparison to Willy Loman from *The Death of a Salesman*, emphasizing the challenges he faces in defining his identity and purpose.

In 1985, Volker Schlöndorff directed a film adaptation of *Death of a Salesman*. The movie closely follows Arthur Miller's original play from 1949. The sets are intentionally not realistic, but the film maintains a theatrical feel with minimal cuts. The adaptations of Arthur Miller's tragic play on screen reveal the book's ending. Volker Schlöndorff's presentation of *Death of a Salesman* vividly portrays the struggles of the average American, as depicted in Miller's affecting novel. The novel illustrates the deterioration of the American Dream of success and recognition. Miller's writing is concise and intense, devoid of filler, building tension until the climax unfolds. However, the film adaptation is unsettling and gloomy, encouraging viewers to reflect on their own lives.

Gabriele Muccino's adaptation of *The Pursuit of Happyness* mirrors *Death of a Salesman* by showcasing a family conflict set in modern times. The film explores themes of abandonment and betrayal when the mother leaves due to financial struggles. The father's dream of success through hard work is a central theme that rings true in the story. Despite the differing conclusions, the influence of *Death of a Salesman* is evident in the shared themes of both the play and the film. For instance, in Dustin Hoffman's film adaptation of *Death of a Salesman*, the initial scene's orange and blue-lighted setting is left out. The flexibility of the special effects in the play allows for various interpretations in different productions. The stage directions mentioning leaves could be portrayed using actual leaves scattered on the stage, or they could be depicted through lighting effects, resulting in a completely different visual impact.

Film adaptation of literary works like *Death of a Salesman* provides a unique chance for audiences to encounter classic stories in a fresh and visually appealing manner. These adaptations allow filmmakers to explore the themes and characters more deeply, presenting new perspectives and interpretations that can connect with contemporary audiences.

2-4-3 Marketing and Promotion

The success and cultural impact of transitioning *Death of a Salesman* from the book to the screen heavily rely on effective marketing strategies.

The way a film adaptation is marketed and promoted substantially influences how it is perceived in popular culture. Various tools like trailers, posters, interviews, and promotional events work together to build excitement and anticipation among audiences.

Before initiating a marketing campaign, studios identify the specific audience for the film adaptation of a play like *Death of a Salesman*, which could involve fans of the actors and those interested in classic literature or drama. Various marketing materials such as trailers, posters, and promotional stills are then produced to pique interest in the film adaptation by showcasing key themes, iconic scenes, and other vital figures also engage in press events, interviews, and talk show appearances to promote the film, discussing the adaptation process, story themes, and connecting with fans.

For successful adaptations, studios may run awards campaigns to secure recognition and accolades, which may involve submitting the film to prestigious festivals and ceremonies, as well as hosting screenings and Q&A sessions for industry voters. In addition, efforts are also made to tailor marketing and promotion strategies for International markets to ensure the film adaptation reaches a global audience, including localized advertising, translated materials, and targeted outreach to foreign media.

Due to the importance of the piece of art by Arthur Miller in literature, there are plans to promote the film through educational institutions. This could include screenings for students, resources for teachers to facilitate discussions, and collaborations with educational groups to integrate the film into teaching materials. Alongside conventional advertising methods, digital marketing is also being utilized to promote the film adaptation. This last incorporates specialized online advertisements, partnerships with social media influencers, and immersive digital activities aimed at capturing audience interest and boosting ticket sales.

These extra marketing and promotion tactics underscore the diverse strategies studios employ to guarantee the success and cultural significance of the movie version of *Death of a Salesman* within the competitive realm of popular culture.

2-3-4 Other Adaptations

- Soviet film, directed by Theodore Wolfvitch as *You Can't Cross The Bridge*. (1960).
- Swedish film *En Handelsresandesdod* starring Kolbjorn Knudsen and directed by Hans Abramson. (1961).
- German film *Der Todeines Handlungsreisenden* starring Heinz Ruhmann and directed by Gerhard Klingenberg. (1968).
- American TV film starring Brian Dennehy, Elizabeth Franz, Ron Eldard, Ted Koch, Howard Witt, and Richard Thompson and directed by Kirk Browning. (2000).
- Play within the American film *Synecdoche, New York*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman. (2008).
- Radio Drama, starring David Suchet and Zoe Wanamaker, directed by Howard Davies, and broadcast on BBC Radio3.(2015).

2-5 Conclusion

The shift of *Death of a Salesman* from the page to the screen explains how elements of popular culture impact how the story is perceived and understood by audiences. It serves as a reflection of how popular culture influences literary stories and their adaptations.

Chapter two has delved into the complex relationship between Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and aspects of popular culture. By studying the dialect, sports, proverbs, games, and music in the play and how they are adapted to different media, this research has shown how literature interacts with popular culture. Analyzing the portrayal and interpretation of these elements in various mediums enriches the understanding of how the play connects with audiences and adapts to modern cultural contexts. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinary approaches in studying literature, demonstrating the value of considering broader cultural influences when analyzing classic works.

The second chapter analyzed also how elements of popular culture were incorporated into Arthur Miller's play and how they were adapted from the written

text to a visual medium. Ultimately, this chapter highlights the enduring significance and cultural impact of Miller's masterpiece within the ever-changing realm of popular culture.

This research contributes to a deeper grasp of the lasting importance and cultural value of Miller's classic work in the continuously changing world of literary and cinematic analysis.

General

Conclusion

General Conclusion

This research paper has provided an accurate examination of the play's use of pop culture aspects. The conclusion that can be drawn from this analysis is that pop culture is present in many forms throughout *Death of a Salesman*, indicating that popular culture influences American literature.

According to this study, popular culture impacts American literature since it gives authors a rich fabric of social norms and behaviors to draw from when creating their works. Through this integration, literature is able to critique and affect society's values and identities in addition to reflecting the historical period in which the works are set. Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is an example of that effect, as it critically examines mid-20th century American culture by interacting with and challenging the American Dream narrative through popular culture aspects.

The impact of *Death of a Salesman* adaptations for film and television was also investigated in this research. Cultural components in the book were translated to the screen and showed how these changes improved our understanding and appreciation of the play's themes. Adapting Miller's play from the book to the screen affects readership by broadening the play's accessibility and interpretive richness. Screen adaptations bring visual and auditory dimensions to the story. This multimedia approach allows new readers to encounter the play in varied formats, often leading them back to the original text in order to fully understand its thematic and cultural nuances.

This study has confirmed that popular culture has a significant influence on American literature, especially in *Death of a Salesman*, by answering the research questions raised in the general introduction. The dissertation has emphasized the fundamental relationships between popular culture and literature by showing that *Death of a Salesman* is a major critique of American society.

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