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Englisch

Lektüren im Unterricht – Death of a Salesman

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Death of a Salesman

Lektüren im Unterricht

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Lektüren im Unterricht

Arthur Miller – Death of a Salesman

Literatur unterrichtsfertig aufgearbeitet

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Death of a Salesman – Aspects, understanding and possibilities

DEATH OF A SALESMAN – SOCIAL CRITICISM THROUGH DRAMA

Arthur Miller's tragedy, *Death of a Salesman*, is a play made up of two acts that ends with a Requiem. Having won a Pulitzer Prize among others, in 1949, it is still hailed as one of the masterpieces of modern American dramas even to this day.

The play primarily focuses on the so called "American Dream", critically reflecting on its influences on the American society, and showing the faults in American national values. The author also displays his obvious disapproval towards the man-eat-man aspect of capitalism that renders a common man dispensable, and towards mass consumerism that leads people into equating success with material wealth and goods, than with good education, good morals, and healthy family relationships.

By using the narrative device of flashbacks throughout the play, Miller introduces the readers to protagonist Willy's past. These flashbacks play a big role in providing insight into Willy's life, principles and his, as well as the American society's, psyche.

RELEVANCE TO LESSON PLANNING

With regards to the central Abitur in North Rhine Westphalia and the theme given to the English class, "The American Dream then and now", Miller's ideas in "Death of a Salesman" would play an important part in its deeper understanding.

If the lesson plan allows it, a multidisciplinary approach can be used in order to highlight the socio-historical and/or political aspects of this theme as well. The question of its practicality and the realization of the American Dream should then also be dealt with.

GENRE

Modern Tragedy

Death of a Salesman would basically fall into the genre of modern tragedy. Whereas in a Classical tragedy the protagonist was always of noble birth, such as a King, modern tragedy revolves often around ordinary people and their sufferings. Due to being ordinary themselves, the readers or the audience are apt to identify well with the characters and empathize with them.

Willy Loman does not possess a high social status, nor any noble qualities. He does however, have tragic flaws like the protagonists of Classical tragedies that lead him to his ultimate death, his self-deception and false idealism/ambitions.