**American Dream in "Death of a Salesman"**

In the United States, many actively pursue the American Dream, intending to live a better and richer life. The philosophy that characterizes the American Dream began in the twentieth century when immigrants came to the United States to seek economic opportunities that would empower them to live better lives. In the play "Death of a Salesman", Arthur Miller offers a commentary on the American Dream, specifically highlighting this dream in the character of Willy Loman, the play's protagonist. Willy's interpretation of the American Dream means to use his charm and charisma to establish himself and his business. However, he fails to achieve this dream, which leaves him destitute and hopeless, eventually leading to suicide. Upon closer inspection, one can delineate that the death of their dream becomes the onset of the death itself as they have nothing else to live for. Miller uses the different characters to portray the interpretations of the American Dream, highlighting their successes and failures in realizing this dream.

**Different Interpretations**

Ideally, each person has their interpretation of the American Dream which drives them in their endeavors. For Willy, America grants success to the personable and physically attractive lot who are liked by the rest of society. This notion is true for many Americans who see the American Dream as easily achievable to those who are charismatic, contrasting what the American founders believed in, which is character. Due to the innate differences in each individual, there are different interpretations of the American Dream, with the overall goal being to secure good fortune and live comfortably (Kamp, 2009). In the end, some realize their version of the American Dream, whereas others, like Willy, end up frustrated to the point where they do not want to live anymore.

Willy Loman's immediate society provided him with an image that he would model after. His brother Ben is successful, while Charley, his business acquaintance, has also established himself. These individuals impact Willy's dream overall as he constantly endeavors to attain success similarly (Hooti & Azizpour, 2011). For instance, his older brother Ben is successful and thus becomes a figure of reference for Willy's vision. Willy looks up to Ben, who has easily accrued wealth without hard work due to the growth of his enterprise. Ben's success inspires him to use his persona and charisma in a quest to establish himself and acquire a good network. However, things do not go smoothly for Willy, who misses the opportunity to go to Africa with his brother and win wealth, leaving him on a job he does not like, making him unsuccessful and dissatisfied.

**Failure**

Miller proceeds to provide different perspectives of the American Dream as the characters of his play see it. Through Willy's character, the author criticizes the American Dream, which is interpreted to mean success and wealth (Hooti & Azizpour, 2011). Willy fails to attain this success, is bitter and unsatisfied, and eventually takes his own life. Essentially, this emphasizes that his version of the American Dream was more of a nightmare that finally consumed him. Willy's version of the American Dream is greedy, leading to his failure and eventual demise. The author thus establishes that one's interpretation of the American Dream will lead to his eventual success or failure. While others, such as Charlie and Ben, succeed, Willy cannot realize his dream as he fails to change to the norms and ideals of the new society, choosing to cling to his father's ideals.

**Success**

Through the character of Charley, a successful businessman, Miller shows that the American Dream continues to thrive. Charley has established his own business without shortcuts, with his accomplishment being a fruit of hard work (Elhawa, 2018). Even though he does not have as much charisma as Willy, he can set up his business and thrive in society. Willy admits that he admires Charley, a man of few words, unlike himself, who cannot stop talking too much. Charley's character contrasts Willy's as he earns respect through his reserve and not by charisma or personal appearance. In the end, Charley appears to embody the American Dream better as he establishes himself and thrives, while Willy becomes frustrated and commits suicide.

Today, many Americans are in Willy's shoes as they struggle to make ends meet, hoping that someday they will acquire great fortune and thus live better and more prosperous lives. As such, Willy represents a generation constantly facing the pressure of realizing the American Dream, which has led many people to depression and suicide. In reality, many people in the United States are struggling, going to the extent of maneuvering through three to four jobs so that they can pay their bills. The culture of capitalism has affected many Americans and has become their major drive as they seek to secure good fortune and live out the rest of their lives in luxury. When this is not achieved, it often results in disappointment and frustration, leading to the onset of disease and suicide. However, through patience and hard work, others can make the American Dream come true and live comfortable lives.

**References**

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