

22/23 May 2017



Mr and Mrs Arthur Miller, in 1957

image from

http://assets.nydailynews.com/polopoly_fs/1.1128631!/img/httpImage/image.jpg_gen/derivatives/gallery_1200/arthur-miller-marilyn-monroe-1957.jpg

Greetings, AmLit Scholars—

Today: more Modernism!

Here's how we'll roll:

1. WEDGE—For roughly ten minutes, jot down your initial response to Act I of *Death of Salesman*.

2. Quick Review of Western Drama—Now that you've reviewed the material on the handout posted to the Moodle page, we'll tease out the parts of classical drama theory that are most important. After all, if we're going to understand Miller's response to Ezra Pound's dictate to "Make it new!", we need to understand what "it" was.

3. Preparation for Discussion of the Play—Our main discussion of the play will occur during the next class meeting, after we have read the complete text. In order to set ourselves up for that discussion, we'll use the bulk of today's class for a little individual preparation.

Open a word processing document. In response to three (3) of the following topics/prompts, craft an analytical paragraph for each topic/prompt that includes

- A header to indicate which of the topics/prompts below inspired the paragraph
- A paragraph topic sentence that presents an arguable claim in this form: C→E.
- An appropriate amount of textual evidence derived from Act I
- Clear language that establishes the dramatic context (when in the play the text occurs) for the evidence
- Careful reasoning explaining how the evidence supports the claim
- Your name at the end of the ¶ to indicate authorship.

Here are the topics/prompts:

A. Symbolism: Consider the use of symbolism in *Death of a Salesman*.

B. Willy as Tragic Character: Consider the character of Willy Loman as tragic hero. How does Willy define success? Does he consider himself a failure by his own standards?

C. Nomenclature: Consider the names of characters.

D. Women: Consider Linda Loman and the way the Loman men regard women.

E. Biff: Consider Biff's relationship with his father and brothers. It may help to break this analysis into three periods: first 17 years, 17-34, and the play's future.

F. The title: Consider the significance of the title. The original title was *The Inside of His Head*.

G. Foils: Consider the roles played by minor characters.

H. Stagecraft: Consider the stagecraft of the play: the sound effects (including the flute), lighting, set, etc.

I. Modernism: Consider *Death of A Salesman* as a Modernist text.

When you have completed all three paragraphs, paste them into the single GoogleDoc to which I will invite you. We will return to these paragraphs for additional consideration during the next class.

4. Getting a Jump on the Homework—Time permitting, of course.

Tappa! Tappa! Tappa!—
Mr Leo

Homework:

1. If you have not completed your three paragraphs, do so.
2. Actively read Act II of *Death of a Salesman* and the brief essay, "Tragedy and the Common Man." Identify possible ID passages, literary terms related to drama, and examples of expressionism and naturalism. Also, annotate with particular care all passages that are related to the three topics/prompts you addressed during this class plan. You will extend your work on those three topics during our next class meeting.