

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Having discussed the themes of All My Sons and Death of a Salesman through characterization, I would like to draw some conclusions.

In both plays, Miller has created the protagonists with their different characteristics. In All My Sons, the playwright creates Joe Keller as an unscrupulous protagonist who places family above anything else whereas in Death of a Salesman, Willy Loman, the protagonist, is portrayed as a persistent character who equates success as a human being with success in the business world.

Besides their different traits, both of the protagonists possess different concepts of success and happiness within their family.

In writing All My Sons, the playwright successfully depicts Keller, who defines success to having a lot of material wealth. In order to show that Chris disagrees with his father, the playwright deliberately presents Chris' own concept of success, namely that success does not depend on material accomplishment; Chris wants to have a perfect family with children. The presentation of two contrasting concepts of success through Keller and Chris is very effective in

revealing the theme of the play.

To prove that Keller is very different from Chris, the playwright presents their different concepts of happiness. Providing his family with material wealth no matter what the means may be is Keller's main happiness. The playwright then describes that Chris wants to achieve success and gain happiness only through an honest way. Dishonesty is a trait which is closely related to the theme of the play. Miller makes a strong contrast between Keller, who is unscrupulous and Chris, who blames his father for his dishonesty uncompromisingly. The playwright also presents Kate, who is against her husband's dishonesty.

In writing Death of a Salesman, Miller creates Willy Loman, a persistent character, who is quite different from his elder son, Biff. They have also different concepts of success. Willy believes that an attractive person can gain success in the business field. On the other hand, Biff does not relate physical attraction to success. The theme is revealed through Willy's insistence that Biff should work as a businessman, especially as a salesman. The playwright then shows that Biff likes working on the farm better than pursuing a business career. In order to reveal the theme, it is important for the playwright to show that Biff can gain happiness outside the business world, which is on the farm.

Both of the protagonists are very concerned with material wealth and happiness for the family. They face a condition in which material wealth is the most important thing to possess in life. The protagonists' way to reach their goal has created conflicts within the family. While Joe Keller disregards business ethics and takes a fatal and dishonest action, Willy Loman keeps insisting too

much on his unfounded concept of success and happiness. Unfortunately, at the end of the plays, they face their tragic ending.

Keller's excessive ambition to achieve his goal only brings him to his own tragic ending. His obsession that material wealth is the most important thing to gain in life and his obsession to make his family happy have unfortunately led him to his failure as a man, husband, and father because of his unscrupulous action. It is obvious that Keller places family above anything, including the lives of young pilots who defend their own country and nation.

Through the characteristics of Keller and his family, the playwright manages to reveal the theme that a person should not place his responsibility to his own family at the expense of other people.

Willy's concept of success and happiness proves to be unfounded. His failure to make his son pursue a career in business and even his meaningless tragic suicide to make Biff start a new life are evidently intended to reveal the theme that a person should not equate success as a human being with success in the business world.

All My Sons is more difficult to analyse because the playwright presents contrasts between the protagonist and his whole family: his wife and two sons. In Death of a Salesman, Miller creates contrasts only between the protagonist and his son, Biff.

Referring to the theme of All My Sons, I personally agree that a person should dedicate himself to his family. However, in spite of such dedication, one should never sacrifice the lives of other people.

As far as the theme of Death of a Salesman is concerned, I fully agree with the playwright that a person's success should not be restricted to success in the business world. It is a pity, however, that even today, there are still many parents who force their children to pursue a career that the parents like but the children themselves dislike or hate.