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Death of a Salesman Group 4

Characterization: Happy and Bernard

Happy and Bernard were both static characters. Their traits intensified throughout the play. When they were in high school, Happy wanted attention and to please everyone. He often noted to his father that “[he’s] losing weight.” However, his attempts to gain attention were often met with dispassionate responses from his parents, who’d often turn the other way and direct their attention to Biff, the older brother. Happy had always been a “bashful” womanizer who loved picking up girls. He looked up to his big brother, who “taught [him] everything [he] knew about women,” and always tried to see the best side of him.

Bernard was loyal and helpful to Biff, responsible as a friend, realistic, and persistent. Bernard always reminded Willy that “[Biff]’s gotta study” [to] Uncle Willy” because he “loved [Biff].” Bernard looked out for Biff all the time, exclaiming that “just because he printed University of Virginia doesn’t mean they’ve got to graduate him, Uncle Willy!” He wanted Biff to become successful and was persistent in trying to help him succeed. Seeing reality, Bernard wants to help Biff succeed in life through tangible steps, first by passing his classes to graduate high school.

The characteristics of Happy and Bernard intensified as they grew up. Happy now, in order to gain attention, told his parents that “[he’s] getting married...[he’s] changing everything. [He’s] gonna run that department before the year is up.” His parent’s cold responses did not put him down. He pursued his attempts to gain his parent’s approval as a son they can be proud of. Happy proudly exclaimed “The Loman Brothers” as the one that he completely trusted, illustrating his confidence in Biff. He was still optimistic, even after Willy died, and is “not licked that easily” and will be “staying right in this city,” and is going to try and “beat this racket!”

Bernard’s future was indicative of how much stronger his righteous morals and traits intensified. Because of his straightforward view on reality and ability to recognize the necessary steps he must take for his future, he had become a successful lawyer who argues for cases in the Supreme Court. However, he remained a modest man who, in order not to upset or brag to Uncle Willy, states that he’s heading to Washington for “just a case”. As an adult, during his conversation with Willy, Bernard revealed that he had always known that Biff “had always taken advantage of [him]”. Despite this, Bernard continued to seek after the Biff’s well-being because of his thoughtfulness and responsibility as a friend. Bernard also advises Willy on the issue

concerning Biff. Bernard becomes this person that even Willy, an older man, comes to. The reason that Willy confides in Bernard is because of his ability to see the truth hidden behind all of the fluff and delusions. Bernard can see how hard Willy was trying to enforce his values on his two sons and how it became a burden for Happy and Biff, especially from achieving their own futures.

Happy's character could also be seen as the younger version of Willy because he lives in a life of deception and in his own little world. Just like his own father, Willy, Happy fools around with women and tries to make himself seem like a bigger, more important person than he really is in actuality, but really "[he was only] one of the two assistants to the assistant." Happy is a good reflection of most if not all of Willy's flaws.

Happy also craves for authority and power because he was never satisfied with what he had. To create this illusion that he had power and control, he "went and ruined her, and furthermore [he] can't get rid of her... And to top it all, [he goes] to their weddings! ... [He] hate[s] [him]self for it because [he doesn't] want the girl [yet he] takes it and...loves it." When he is with women he is finally able to show that he has the power to influence their lives and to show that he is not as incompetent to his superiors- but just as good.

Subtext:

In the subtext, it shows that although Bernard was a "liked, but not well-liked" student in high school, Bernard eventually became a successful lawyer. Bernard disproved Willy's theory that "the man who makes an appearance in the business world...is the man who gets ahead. Be liked and [he] will never want." Even though Bernard was mocked as the one who "[got] the best marks in school" and that Happy and Biff will "be five times ahead of him" because they were "built like Adonises," Bernard was the one who comes out a success with his sincere hard work.

Throughout the subtext in Act I for Happy, he always wanted to please his father and repeatedly said that he was "losing weight." In Act II, Happy "take[s] other people's wives" and he "ruined" the women. He also unconsciously mimics his father and could not get rid of the women both Happy and Willy cheated with.

On page 1390 (4th Edition), it describes Happy as "tall [and] powerfully made." His "sexuality is like a visible color on him... a scent that many women have discovered." Like his older brother Biff, "well built, but... worn... and less self-assured," Happy was "lost, but in a different way, for he has never allowed himself to turn his face toward defeat and is thus more confused and hard-skinned, although seemingly more content."

Masks:

Happy tries to please his dad whenever he was home, but when there were women in public, he ignores his existence for his image and he doesn't "do something [anything] for him [Willy]." He cares about his image more than family, and although Biff begs "Hap, help him,"

Happy says he couldn't do anything, and after Biff runs out of the room, he turns back to the girls and tells the girls "come on girls, we'll catch up with him," and he seems to go on his regular womanizing ways even after an emotional conversation. Happy tries to hide his embarrassing father from the public and the women he's trying to impress with his charms. He lives his life in deception and lies his way through life. He puts on his mask in front of his family and pretends to be successful and a son that can earn money and contribute to the family. However in reality, Happy was only "one of the two assistants to the assistant."

Happy even fools himself into thinking that he actually contributes to the family financially. Linda accuses that "now that you get your spending money someplace else you don't trouble your mind with him [Willy]." However Happy responded that he "gave [them] money last [Christmas]." Linda says that the money Happy gave them was not that big of a deal. It was an insufficient amount, "[only] fifty dollars," that could not even pay off a small repair job which "costs ninety-seven fifty...to fix the hot water."

Unlike Happy who has many masks, Bernard does not have a mask. Bernard's character was just an honest, modest guy who genuinely attempts to help out and assist the Loman family in any issues that surface.

Diction/Syntax:

- The diction in the play is informal because it takes place in a family environment therefore the characters use familiar language. The way that they speak to each other also shows their social class- the Loman family being on the lower ladder of the society.
- The mentioning of Biff's shoes "printed University of Virginia" implies that they live in or somewhere near Virginia. The way they speak also demonstrate their use of slang and the region they're from, such as when Happy states, "Knock 'em cold in Providence, slaughtered 'em in Boston." This indicates that they aren't as sophisticated and they're from a rural type of city where the majority of the families that receive a lower income and live in.
- Many lines in the drama repeat: Happy- "I'm losing weight, Pop" shows his persistence and is evident through the repetition that he has been ignored for some time. Thus, he is always repeating himself, and he consistently says things like, "I'm getting married," which escalated from "I'm losing weight, Pop."
- Bernard speaks in a sophisticated manner which shows how well-educated he was and his motivation for success. Also, it demonstrates his family backgrounds since they are from a wealthier family that is able to employ others for their business. For Bernard's diction, it contrasts to the Loman's background of lower class to Bernard's family which is more from the elite families.
- The Loman's family speaks with profanity which shows how rough they are and aggressive. "Goddamn you, put up your hands! ...Who the hell do you think you are, better than everybody else? You don't know everything, you big, ignorant, stupid..." This demonstrates how their ignorance is reflected through the language of the Loman's family-Bernard's diction and his family is more reasonable and concrete and has good mannerisms and he is also always courteous and polite.

- Bernard speaks with a modest tone while Happy is very boisterous.
- When Willy asks why Bernard was going to Washington Bernard answered that it was “just a case” and later Charley reveals to Willy that “he is gonna argue a case in front of the Supreme Court,” which shows how modest and considerate Bernard is to Willy.
- Bernard’s voice is passive while Happy’s voice is very confident even though he doesn’t have much to boast about. His confidence and his diction mostly arises through the woman that he plays around with.
- Happy refers to Biff as “baby” and Willy as “dear” and he uses the nicknames to address them. Through these titles he shows his close affection for Biff and by referring to his father as “dear” it diminishes the authoritative respect that Willy should have as a father figure.
- Bernard does not use any crude or lewd language. He has polite and respectful manners towards all characters in the play despite the fact that they’re sometimes disrespectful towards him. In contrast, Happy uses crude and lewd language, for example when referring to women who at this time were viewed as sexual objects by men, “Strudel’s comin’,” and checks out her “binoculars.” He doesn’t see them as a woman but more as sexual objects. It indirectly implies that Happy is taking or will be taking away their virginity by devouring them like a “strudel”, a dessert.
- Bernard demonstrates how he has a higher education compared to Happy through his diction because of his concise and straightforward language. The difference in diction between Bernard and Happy shows the educational gap between the two men. Happy remains in his hometown while Bernard was able to venture out and go to college and was able to become a successful lawyer who “presents cases in front of the Supreme Court.”
- Bernard uses more euphonious words in contrast to Happy who uses more cacophonous words.
- The characters do not use any/much poetic language, but instead uses everyday language, prose.
- Bernard does not ramble on, and everything he says has been carefully thought of. What he says is usually said because it is not just a random statement, but something that might help others. This is suggested through his conversation with Willy specifically when they ran into each other at his father’s, Charley’s, business. Bernard was careful to not arrogantly boast about his accomplishments and successful career and avoids hurting Willy’s pride. He then advises Willy to “... just to walk away,” and stop trying to assert his expectations onto Biff.
- Neither character speaks in fragments but forms complete sentences except at instances where they are interrupted or cut off by other characters in the play.
- Happy rambles on as he often complains to Biff about “pompous, self-important executives,” that he believes he can “outboss, outrun, and outlift.” His rambling reflects how he always tries to voice his opinions and be heard, but was never able to concretely take action and prove his ability to achieve higher positions.

Imagery:

- Act1- The scene is being described as the story starts with the “blue light of the sky” a “kitchen table with 3 chairs and a refrigerator” giving descriptions of the house and the bedroom. As Willy reminisces about the events that occurred in the past, Biff is seen in “his high school sweater, enters carrying a suitcase...” In the present Bernard is described as a “quiet, earnest, but self assured young man.” At the end of the story, Willy’s death was implicitly described as “music crashes down” when Willy drove off in his car. “Charley and Bernard somberly dressed... [and] Linda in clothes of mourning carrying little bunches of roses...lays down the flowers, kneels, and sits back on her heels. All stared down at the grave, and had lost a salesman, a “fine, troubled prince.”
- Willy describes the scenery of when he was driving to Linda and it demonstrates how his mind is beginning to deteriorate. “You can imagine, me looking at the scenery, on the road every week of my life. But it’s so beautiful there, Linda, the trees are so thick, and the sun was warm. I open the windshield and let the warm air bathe over me...and all of a sudden I’m going off the road.”
- Linda notes to Willy about “the smell of shaving lotion in the house” which indicates Biff’s arrival from his time away from home. Linda sees this as her boys growing up and “them shaving together” shows that they’re becoming independent and breaking away from Willy’s high expectations of his boys.
- “The way they box us in here. Bricks and windows, windows and bricks...the street is lined with cars. There’s not a breath of fresh air in the neighborhood. The grass don’t grow anymore...they should’ve had a law against apartment houses.” contrasts the hopeful and upbeat atmosphere before Biff lost his way “Remember those two beautiful elm trees out there? ... [were cut down] This time of year it was lilac and wisteria... peonies...and the daffodils. What fragrance in this room!” with the current situation where the family is stuck in their poor situation and the stalemate between Willy and Biff and the standoffish atmosphere in the house. Willy’s description of the house contrasts the past situation with the current situation.
- “The red Chevy...I coulda sworn I was driving that Chevy today,” reminds Willy of his past and the good relationship he had with his sons Biff and Happy because of the time they spent working and tinkering on the car. It was a time of happiness and when the family was still functioning as one.
- The continuous laughter of the woman Willy had an affair with that he hears in the background is his guilty conscious reminding him that he betrayed the trust and faith of his family, especially Linda who adores Willy so much that she believes he’s the “handsomest man” in the world.
- Willy remembers his dad as “a man with a big beard.” They were “sitting around a fire, and [there were] some kind of high music.” His father was “[playing] the flute...[in] a high, rollicking tune.” Willy’s father’s image lingered in his memory and it created a “rogued, well-liked, all-around,” character that he wants Biff to become.
- Willy remembers the championship/the night that Biff won the championship for football and Biff “was the tallest” of the team “and in gold...like a young god.” He looked like “Hercules...and the sun all around him.” Biff was glorified in Willy’s mind ever since he was young. Thus Willy expected greater things of Biff and thought Biff would obtain a successful future/career. *Irony Willy expects great things from Biff but in the end he just becomes a bum/unsuccessful man.

- Willy describe another salesman he met in Parker House named “Dave Singleman” and he was “eighty-four years old...and...he’d...go up to his room...put on his green velvet slippers...and pick up his phone and called the buyers...when he died, hundreds of salesmen and buyers were at his funeral...” This is why Willy had such great hopes of being a salesman because he wanted the respect one received like Singleman and he wanted to be well-liked by hundreds of people. It gave him false hope that everyone can easily become a well known and well-liked character. Unlike Willy, Singleman had a lasting impact on the people around him and “things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that.”

Symbolism:

Stockings

- The stockings represents Willy’s affair with a woman in his past and the betrayal of Linda who has always been loyal and loved him more than her own sons. In the past when Willy went on business trips he meets with “the woman” who loved “a lot of stockings” and he always presents them as gifts to her. Thus whenever Linda is “mending [her] stockings” Willy gets angry and demands that she “throw them out” (pg. 1715 5th edition) because while he gives new stockings for “the woman” Linda has to reuse tattered, “old, silk stockings.” The reoccurring image of Linda always mending the stockings is a constant reminder of Willy’s infidelity. While Linda has to make use of her worn and used stockings, Willy “gave [the woman Linda’s] stockings.” The stockings became a symbol of his financial competence to provide for the woman, also known as his mistress. However when Willy sees Linda mending those old stockings, it becomes a symbol of his betrayal of Linda and he insistently orders, “Will you stop mending stockings? At least while I’m in the house. It gets me nervous. I can’t tell you. Please.” (pg. 1733 5th edition) Willy is aware of the sin he had created when he had an affair with the mistress and through his pleading and persistence, it is evident that Willy somewhat regrets what he did/ does not want to remember the scandal. This incident also reminded him of the time when he lost Biff’s respect and trust as a father when Biff witnessed his father cheating on his mother.

Diamonds:

- Ben thinks that “it does take a great kind of man to crack a jungle.” The diamond symbolizes the material wealth and what Willy wanted to give to his children, Biff and Happy. Ben would say that “the jungle is dark but full of diamonds, Willy” and “one must go in to fetch a diamond out,” meaning that one must work as hard as he can, and in the end, the person who works hard in an obstacle-filled environment would be the financially successful one. Although “a diamond is rough and hard to touch,” Willy knows “it’s the best thing...The only way” in order for them to get out of the financial slump they are in.

- “Can you imagine that magnificence with twenty thousand dollars in his pocket?” Ben says “yes, outstanding, with twenty thousand behind him” that is the insurance money that Willy’s family will collect when he dies from the life insurance.
- “It’s dark there, but full of diamonds.” The darkness is associated with Willy’s death while the diamonds represent the money and wealth that his family will be able to obtain when he is no longer alive.
- The dark jungle that is “full of diamonds” represents Willy’s death that will bring “twenty thousand dollars” to his family. Ben constantly emphasizes that “it [will be] dark there” and that “one must go in to fetch a diamond out” because the diamonds there but someone has to go in and make the sacrifice and take the risk to obtain the wealth that the diamonds will bring but they’ll lose something in the process. The \$20,000 will be theirs for the taking from the life insurance only if Willy dies and he is aware of that therefore he struggles to choose between life and death because dead he will be able to finally provide for his family but alive he still has a chance of being a “family” but they will continue to suffer from their debts. Hence Ben stresses the fact that “it... [takes] a great kind of man to crack the jungle” because Willy has to weigh the value of his life against the value of his family’s financial stability.

Rubber Hose

- The rubber hose symbolizes Willy’s thoughts of committing suicide, in desperation for money. However, Linda discovered “... down the cellar...behind the fuse box...was a length of rubber pipe-just short...there’s a little attachment on the end of it.” Linda constantly fears that “he’s been trying to kill himself.”

Seeds

- The seeds that Willy plants represent his effort for his own success as a salesman and a father. However, despite his hard work throughout the years, his labor yields no fruits. The seeds that never grew into anything tangible are associated to his failures in his career, life, and in his role as a husband and father. When Biff found out about his father’s affair, Willy immediately wanted to “get some seeds, right away.” He wanted to plant seeds because there was “nothing planted. [He doesn’t] have a thing in the ground” which shows that Willy had nothing concrete to present for his hard labor. His past effort as a father does not help his sons to obtain greater achievements in life like he expected them to. When Willy was planting the seeds he continually doubts himself about the location of where to plant the seeds because he is still searching for the right pathway or advice to help his two sons toward success. This time he was determined to plant the seeds perfectly with the “carrots...quarter-inch apart. Rows ... one foot rows...one foot...beets.” While he was planting Willy was talking to himself about how much Linda has suffered and that “a man can’t go out the way he came in... a man has got to add up to something.” His mumbling indicates his acknowledgement of his own inadequacy as a husband and father of a family who is suppose to financially support them. However “you can’t see nothing out here! They boxed in the whole goddamn neighborhood!” This demonstrates that although Willy tries to better his situation, he has been confined to this one job and life that is not going anywhere. The factors that surround Willy are preventing him from reaching the goals as a father and salesman that he yearns for.

The Flute

- The flute music shows the transitions from past to present (and vice versa) in Willy's mind. Every time the flute is heard, Willy's state of mind transfer from the present and back. This also indicates his memory of his father.

Irony:

- The audience knows more than the characters within the story, such as when Willy is committing suicide, Ben says "the boat. We'll be late," signifying that he will die soon.
- If all of the family members, Willy Loman and Happy Loman, have at least one aside to tell about how they feel about the way they are treated, the audience would be able to relate with the family members of the play.
- Ben gave Willy a "diamond watch fob", which Willy pawned to pay for a correspondence course for Biff. Linda reminded him that he pawned the watch for "Biff's radio correspondence course." Willy commented that "[the course] was a beautiful thing" It's ironic because Willy thought the course, which was useless, was beautiful instead of the diamond watch which has more monetary and sentimental values. It shows how Willy places more faith and hope upon Biff than the well-being of his family.
- Happy Loman is not as regarded within the family, and he should talk about how he wants to be more regarded within the family, instead of wanting to get attention and spouting out phrases such as, "I'm getting married." Willy would be able to talk about how much he wants Biff to become successful, and that he wants him to "really be makin' a hit."
- Ironies:
 - o Verbal Irony: Willy keeps telling Linda he will buy stockings for her, but in the end, he did not buy it for her and bought it for the woman he had an affair with.
 - o Situational Irony: When Willy felt that there was no other way but to die, or to leave for "the boat." Another example is when Willy feels that he is worth more dead than alive and he could "walk out rich."
 - o Dramatic Irony: When Ben comes out and says "the boat. We'll be late," and Willy starts to go out of the house, wanting to commit suicide, and nobody in the household knew that he was going to die.
 - o Paradox: When Biff says that he is going to see Bill Oliver, and Willy knows that "together [they] could absolutely lick the civilized world!"
 - o Oxymoron: When Willy wakes up, he says, "I slept like a dead one," but this is ironic because dead men don't sleep.
 - o Euphemism: When Willy wants a raise and Howard refuses to let him work on a stable desk job, Howard says there is no "single, solitary spot." Willy gets angry and asks why, but Howard says, "Cause you gotta admit, business is business," implying that Howard just doesn't think that Willy is made for the desk job anymore.
 - o Hyperbole: When Linda has sees Biff in a blue suit and tie, she gets excited, and although there is not much hope for Biff, she believes that "he could be a-anything in that suit!"

- Understatement: When Willy asked about his father, Ben was implying that Willy was a terrible salesperson, and that their father “made more in a week than a man like you could make in a lifetime,” but instead, Willy became excited and disregarded the fact that Ben insulted him.
- Litotes: When Willy realizes that Charley is his “only friend,” he says, “Isn’t that a remarkable thing?” Willy actually wants to say that this is something terrible, that he was unable to have stable relationships with his other friends, and that he was left with only one friend that stuck with him until the end.
- Double Entendre: When Happy sees that “strudel’s comin,” he was indicating it to Miss Forsythe, and he thought that she was some delicious pasty and was looking at her sexually.
- This relates to the characterization because it describes their personality, and how they are truly like through the words they say. As for theme, the irony Willy wanted the “American Dream” for both Happy and Willy, but this was all an illusion in the end.
- The dramatic irony that are built into the play as time progresses are:
 - When in the beginning, Willy kept on inhaling gas through the rubber pipe, and eventually, Willy kills himself, but only the audience members know when he would kill himself.
- Willy over time trying to keep on killing himself shows that he is fed up with the life he wants, and he also realizes that he is worth more when dead than alive, and can “walk out rich.”
- It appears in the end because it is to increase the irony in that Willy had no reason to die, because they paid “the last payment on the mortgage,” and Willy was loved by his son, and dying did not solve anything emotionally and mentally.

Psychological Criticism

1. Arthur Miller's father, Isidore Miller, had lost his business and fortune during the depression. Thus, the family was forced to move on and change their ways of life. Arthur Miller noted that this inevitable need to adapt had strongly influenced him. The house of the Loman family, described as being "a solid volt of apartment houses around the small, fragile-seeming home", reflected the new, small frame house the Miller's family moved into in Brooklyn after losing their fortune. The character of Willy Loman was fired from his job as a salesman, similar to the experience of the Miller family when they lost their business. However, Willy, unlike the author's family that was able to move on and adapt themselves in their new situation, could not move on and has hallucinations about past events. He was trapped in his stubborn ways and values that also bound his children, Biff and Happy, from pursuing their personal goals and carving their own road to success. Linda Loman knows that Willy Loman was "not the finest character that ever lived, but... a terrible thing is happening to him, so attention must be paid." Her compassionate traits demonstrate Arthur Miller's opinion that society lacks that specific trait. He notes individuals, such as ones portrayed by Willy Loman, often give their lives to a company or government. But when they age or no longer have the talent the companies need, they are thrown aside and given little compensation. This possibly reflects many individual's situations when the depression hit in his childhood. Willy wanted to hold onto his old image of a well-liked salesman. The major themes in *Death of a Salesman* were the pursuit of success and the American dream.
2. How does your understanding of the characters, their relationships, their actions, and their motivations in a literary work help you better understand the mental world and imaginative life, or the actions and motivations, of the author?

The relationship between Willy and his two sons Happy and Biff are greatly biased. Willy places all his hope, love, and attention onto Biff since childhood. The relationship between Happy and Biff is one of mutual brotherly love even though Happy was often secluded by his parents; he holds no grudge or resentment against Biff and still looks up to his big brother. All he yearns for is the same love and attention that Biff gets from his parents.

Linda was the typical household woman that was restrained to the house and she fits the stereotype of women at that time period. Like other women of that time, Linda willingly accepts her role as an ordinary housewife. She was always faithful to Willy and always cared for him unconditionally insisting that "Willy, darling, you're the handsomest man in the world." However, Willy treats Linda as an inferior being and often at times neglects his wife and acts rashly towards her, for example telling her to "Shut up! Shut up!"

Willy also reminisces many times throughout the play which provides more information about the characters lives, giving us a better understanding and sense of their past.

Miller also uses expressionism which shows the inner life of a character, portraying external reality as he or she sees it and the readers, audiences, and critics raise concerns over the status of this play being a tragedy.

3. How does a particular literary work- its images, metaphors, and other linguistic elements- reveal the psychological motivations of its characters or the psychological mindset of its author?

The metaphors reveal the way the author thinks about what the objects mean to him, and how significant they are to be parts of the whole household. Willy is struggling to keep his bills be paid, and the objects were what shaped Willy's decisions and actions throughout the whole play that affected everyone around him. The images are to make the audience feel that they are part of the play itself, and to show how hopeless it was for a family that tried endlessly to become part of the "American Dream."

4. To what extent can you employ the concepts of Freudian psychoanalysis to understand the motivations of literary characters?

After Biff saw Willy at the hotel with another woman, he lost all faith in his father, and he wanted to protect his mother and make his mother happy. Biff feels that Linda needs to be helped because his father is useless and "crazy." So, Biff and Happy want to take the place of the incompetent husband, Willy's place, to provide and satisfy Linda. For this reason, after Biff found out about the affair and Willy's unemployment he was more motivated to "stay and ...apply [himself]...make good." Biff promises to Linda that "I'll stay and I swear to you, I'll apply myself... I'll try, and I'll make good."

Ben's the underlying subconscious of Willy. Willy hallucinates about Ben and uses Ben as an excuse to leave for "the boat," when truly; it was all his decision put into the form of his older brother that he admired greatly. Deep in his mind, Willy knows that the best way to bring the family out of debt will be with his life insurance money, which was "the diamond" that Ben constantly refers to. However, he still treasured his life and hoped to find a way to earn money without killing himself. But, Biff failed at borrowing money from Oliver, and in result, Willy and Biff argued more. Whenever Willy seemed to have an emotional breakdown, Ben appeared more and more about "the diamond." As Ben's existence began to amplify, Willy's plans for the life insurance money slowly surfaces until Willy at last commits suicide.

5. What kinds of literary works and what types of literary characters seem best suited to a critical approach that employs a psychological or psychoanalytical perspective? Why?

The metaphors employ to the psychological perspective because it shows the struggle that Willy is going through mentally, and how the objects, such as the "rubber hose" and "stockings" add on to the mental and emotional pain that he went through. As for the irony, it was more under psychoanalytical perspective because the dialogue, irony, and satirical irony shows how society acted back then, and how their actions also showed the hidden feelings or meaning they felt when saying what they said.

6. How can a psychological or psychoanalytical approach to a particular work be combined with an approach from another critical perspective- for example, that of biographical or formalists criticism, or that of feminist or deconstructionist criticism.

You can combine it with Marxist criticism because they both focus on what are the social norm, behavior, and personality. It also focuses on the people and not on other things as much. It also focuses on the background of the person and their economic status, in "Death of a Salesman," such as when Willy sees Linda "mending the stockings," he gets all anxious and angry when he sees her doing so. In this case, we would not only infer that his action was because of his infidelity to his wife (psychoanalytic), but it also would be that he did not like that they could afford to buy new stockings, yet Linda kept mending hers. Willy's pride got in his way (Marxist).

Archetypes/Mythological Questions

1. Willy can be seen as a tragic hero; however, he fails to achieve self-realization the typical of the tragic hero. Willy dies still half ignorant of the truth. Willy's affair is a common action and is symbolic because the woman can be seen as the Temptress because she causes the downfall of Willy and Biff's relationship. Biff's failure in math is symbolic of his failure to live up to his father's calculated plan for him. Willy believes so blindly in his interpretation of the American Dream that he expects Biff to achieve success through "[being] liked, [he] will never want." The unshakeable strength of Willy's belief is evident when he attempts to plant the vegetable seeds. He plants exactly as the direction instructs, "carrots . . . quarter-inch apart. Rows . . . one-foot rows." He uses these same instructions to teach his sons how to be successful while he struggles with those instructions in his own life.
2. The woman in Boston is the archetype "Temptress" because Willy is physically attracted to her and she brings about the downfall of Willy's relationship with Biff. Bernard is the loyal retainer to Biff before the incident. He followed Biff's beck and call always wanting to "[carry his] helmet." Linda is the loyal retainer to Willy. She stays by his side and tries to protect him from Biff's harsh words and always tells Willy that he is "the handsomest man in the world." Willy is the mentor to Happy and Biff. They idolized him and followed his every word. Willy is the tragic hero. He has the flaw of excessive pride in both his work and his sons but also his womanizing habits. These flaws eventually led to his downfall in his work and being an idol to his son, Biff. Willy is so used to lying that his downfall is devastating because he must admit that the world he created is not the reality. Biff is the mentor to the boys in the football team and Happy.
3. The seeds are a symbol of Willy's life. No matter how hard he tries to grow something from the seeds he was unsuccessful which is similar to his life because no matter how hard he worked he never got the appreciation he believed he deserved. He wanted to plant seeds because there was "nothing planted. [He doesn't] have a thing in the ground" which shows that Willy had nothing to present for his hard labor. The rubber hose (or pipe) is symbolic because it shows Willy's first attempts to commit suicide. Linda constantly fears that "he's been trying to kill himself" after she discovers the pipe in the

basement. The diamonds are a symbol of the wealth that he could have gained by accepting his brother's offer. Ben said that "the jungle is dark but full of diamonds, Willy" and "one must go in to fetch a diamond out," meaning that one must work as hard as he can, and in the end, the person who works hard in an obstacle-filled environment would be the financially successful one. What Ben says is Willy's subconscious trying to give him the reality that he refuses to see causing him to always be in conflict with his beliefs. Also they symbolize the wealth he wanted all his life. The jungle is a symbol for Willy's eventual death. The stockings are a symbol of Willy's infidelity and guilt towards his wife, Linda. The reoccurring image of Linda always mending the stockings is a constant reminder of Willy's infidelity. While Linda had to make use of her worn and used stockings, Willy "gave [the woman Linda's] stockings." The flute is a symbol for Willy's transition between the past and present and also represents his unknown father; that he wants and needs. The car is the symbol of Willy's confusion and shows how he gets lost, even in reality. It was his transportation and ironically, his transportation to death.

4. Biff changes from being the son that idolized his father into one that looks at his father in disgust. This is due to the event of Biff's discovery of his father's betrayal to his mom that causes him to "[burn his sneakers] up in the furnace" and "[have] a fist fight" with Bernard while "crying right through it." Happy and Biff change from trying to please their father into more of an independent people. They no longer want to please their parents. Willy changes as well. At first, he forces his expectations onto Biff but later takes Bernard's advice "to walk away" and allows Biff to do what he wants.
5. Willy's quest to achieve the American Dream as well as help his children to achieve the dream is a pseudo-religious quest like the Christian Crusades during the Middle Ages. In the Crusades, the Roman Catholic forces tried to restore Christian control of the Holy Lands in the Middle East, however, they were unsuccessful. Willy's quest is quite similar to the Crusades because he tried to achieve the American Dream as well as help his children achieve the American Dream but his efforts were unsuccessful.

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Death of a Salesman Book Questions (Group 4):

3. Comment on the significance of the title. What kinds of deaths might be referred to? Explain.

The title, “Death of a Salesman” is significant in which it predicts both the figurative and literal death of Willy. Figuratively, the death refers to his inability to “pull [himself] together”, his road to dementia, and the end of his salesman career. He began working on commission and lost the respect of his customers and employers. He lost his authority and pride as a proper husband and father figure for his wife, Linda, and his sons, Biff and Willy. He no longer contributed financially to the family, which emasculated himself as a man, and he blamed himself for the failure of Biff to have a good career in his late thirties. Literally, Willy died in the end of the story and he goes off to “the boat” that Ben often refers back to. In contrast to Dave Simpleman, who had attained fame and love across “thirty-one states” by calling buyers from his room “at the age of eighty-four,” Willy did not reach the American dream. “Old Dave” showed Willy that “selling was the greatest career a man could want.” Willy wanted to be remembered by the people just as Dave had done, in which he “died the death of a salesman, in his green velvet slippers in the smoker of New York...” At Dave’s funeral, there were “hundreds of salesmen and buyers...and things were sad on a lotta trains for months after that.” However, not only did Willy fail to keep his job as a salesman, he committed suicide. At his funeral, instead of the magnificent funeral of Dave Simpleman, there were only his family and Charley. This shows the great difference between the deaths and aftermath of the two salesmen.

4. What significance do you attach to the names of the characters?

The characters in the story are:

- Happy who is not as happy as he truly is, and is portrayed as the character that is usually ignored and disregards his father in public as “just a guy.”
- Bernard is loyal and faithful like the St. Bernard dogs and likes to do things such as “carrying your [Biff’s] helmet.”
- Willy who is supposed to be seen as a good father and protector of his sons, he has a will to make his children successful, although it was too late. For example, Willy wanted Biff to succeed, but in the end, he “flunked math” and would refuse to go to summer school, and Willy “begged him to go,” but it was too late.
- Uncle Ben’s name is significant in that he is like, Big Ben, the clock in England that chimes every hour. Ben keeps reminding Willy of the time and death and emphasizes “the boat. We’ll [They’ll] be late.”
- Linda means pretty and confident in Spanish, but in this case, she is passive and off to the side, not having a strong role within the family besides being a homemaker. Sometimes when she tries to make a compliment or remark, Willy wants her to “don’t interrupt.”

- Charley is a free man that lets Willy take money, and he does not emphasize on how much Willy owes him for the “fifty dollars” he gives him weekly.
- Biff is similar to his name because he is as aggressive as his name, but he can also be sentimental. And he can be opposite to his name in aggression, stating that he is “nothing,” and when Biff was angry at Happy that he just “don’t give a goddam about him.”
- Howard tries to avoid the situation and is a coward when trying to fire Willy. He lags while trying to fire Willy, trying to drag it at the best time and had “been meaning to tell you [him] for a long time now.”