

Tribhuvan University

Crisis in Father-Son Relationship in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus, in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Master of Arts in English

by

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled “Crisis in Father-Son Relationship in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*” is my original work carried out as a Master’s student at the Department of English at Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus except to the extent that assistance from others in the thesis’s design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged.

All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which led to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.

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Letter of Approval

This Thesis entitled “Crisis in Father-Son Relationship in Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*” submitted to Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus Tribhuvan University, by Asmita Nepal has been approved by the undersigned members of research committee.

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Abstract

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Sales Man* is about the contrasting son-father relationship. This relationship is studied under psychological threat. The protagonist of the play, Willy Loman is failure in his career as he is confident to drive the car. He understands that he is sacked from the job. However, he thinks that his sons do not help him. He is more worried about his sons' failure in their job than his own. Consequently, he loses his sense and scolds his sons. Moreover, he is morally corrupt as he has relationship with other girl when his sons meet him in a restaurant with a girl. This is only his way of displacing his troublesome life to other people. The main reason of killing himself is the lack of harmony between real and imaginative life. He fails to understand that life is not what people expect; rather it is what they experience.

The thesis deals with the psychoanalytic study of the characters. It focuses on the conflicting relationship between the son and the father on the one hand and the expression of sorrow and depression on the other. 'Oedipal complex' the term use by Sigmund Freud to refer to the conflicting relationship between a child and a parent of same sex while having sexual attachment with the opposite sex. According to Freud, destructiveness comes from the unconscious desire of a person who is not happy with the present situation. It is another theme of the research work. As Willy cannot control his anger and he is driven by 'Thanatos' the death drive, he chooses death. He decides that death is ultimate solution of the problem. Willy's older son, Happy has conflicting relationship with his father while he is attached to his mother. Willy cannot tolerate such things and decides to end his life. Apparently, he kills himself for money but the real cause is psychological as he feels lonely and helpless due to the lack of love of his wife.

Table of Contents

Declaration	
Letter of Approval	
Acknowledgment	
Abstract	
Introduction: Psychological Traits of Human Behaviors	1
Psychological Traits of Human Behaviors	8
Crisis in Father-Son Relationship in <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	17
Conclusion: Death of Salesman: Crisis in Relationship	26
Works Cited	29

Introduction: Psychological Traits of Human Behaviors

The thesis deals with the psychological aspect to the relationship between father and son through Arthur Miller's *Death of a Sales Man*. Father and son relationship is determined by the psychological traits that is sometimes beyond their understanding. Based on the Freudian theory, there is conflicting relationship between child and parent of opposite sex whether they realize or not. As Freud, postulates mother and son are attracted to each other and the son resents his father because he comes between them. Consequently, they hate each other.

Relationship is generally defined as the connection between two groups or more than two, which are similar. They are connected to one another for various purposes. *Encarta World Dictionary* defines relationship as "a significant connection or similarity between two or more things or the state of being related to something else" (1585). Relationships occur which are close to one another in many ways.

Psychoanalysis is a term that is fully developed by Sigmund Freud and his pupils. It etymologically means mental analysis. We get different branches of psychoanalysis, but the psychoanalysis going to be dealt here is a mental analysis of a special kind that works with special instruments which is known as neuro-psychoanalysis. It means the analysis of normal and abnormal activities by a certain definite method through the analysis of dreams, psychopathological actions, hallucinations, delusions, and psychic attacks of all kinds, which we find in the abnormal spheres. While talking about its development, Brill writes that it was originally developed by working with the so-called border-line cases of mental diseases. Sigmund Freud has treated psychoanalysis as "cases of so-called nervous neurasthenia, hysteria, obsessions, and phobias" (1).

Psychological entries are regularly made, every history has been

comprehensively noted, and particular attention has been paid to the general behavior of the patient. We can note, for instance, what the patient says and does, whether he shows any hallucinatory and delusional trends. The patient's intelligence, memory, and orientation are thoroughly tested, and last but not least s/he receives a thorough physical and neurological examination. Only after such an examination one ventures the diagnosis. But there are more weaknesses in the analysis of such kind in the field psychoanalysis. Later, Sigmund Freud in his book *Being, Becoming, and Behaviour: The Psychological Sciences* says: "border-line cases of mental diseases" (3).

The subjects treated by psychoanalysis goes far beyond pure medical spheres, for when a human mind is entered for the purpose of studying the origin of an abnormal manifestation, all his normal mental and emotional expressions have to be considered. In the course of many years, Professor Freud, thus, has solved "the mysteries of many dreams, wit, mythology, fairy tales and threw much light on the history of civilization and on the development of religion and philosophy" (3).

Freud's theory of psychoanalysis has become the most influential personality theory of modern era. But in this process, he gives emphasis on sexual motivations in development of personality which has made his followers disagree with him. As a result, they have propounded their own theory about personality. Jung, an early adherent of Freud's theory, has propounded analytical psychology whereas the Austrian psychiatrist, Alfred Adler has propounded individual psychology.

Similarly, Freud recognizes that life is not ruled by two egoistic drives that are one for food and the other for sex; but by two passions of love and destruction that do not serve physiological survival in the same sense that hunger and sexuality do. Still bound by his theoretical premises, however, he calls them 'life instincts' and 'death instincts' and thereby gives "human destructiveness as one of two fundamental

passions in man” (Fromm 7).

The destructiveness is an innate impulse, which makes continuous efforts to destroy the organism itself. But the life or love instincts, self-preservative instincts, and the other components of Eros try to control and suppress the destructive instincts and obstruct their attempts of development and destruction. This pressure provided by the Eros to the Thanatos compels it to divert towards the external world coming to light in the instinctual form of aggressiveness and destructiveness. As Freud says, Eros is stronger than Thanatos, thus enabling people to survive rather than self-destruct. If the aggressiveness directed towards the external world does not meet any object to destroy or meets with too strong hindrances to overcome, it comes back to its own origin and starts working there in destructive way. Alcoholism, drug addiction, masochism, suicide and other teleological activities are the different forms of destructiveness. Moody writes, “Some clinicians feel that in many alcoholics their addiction is related to deep feelings of inferiority, coupled with an inability to cope with frustration. In other words, alcoholism is rooted in a desire for self-destruction” (15).

Willy Loman and his sons Happy and Biff fail to maintain their life. There is always conflict among them in one way or another. However, in reality there is misunderstanding among them due to psychological problem, as they feel insecure in each other’s presence. Nobody has any conflict with Loman’s wife because everyone wants her because she is of opposite sex. There is crisis in relationship among male members in the family because of oedipal complex as they all are attracted to one woman. When they all quarrel, Loman unnecessarily scolds his sons, he projects his failure to his sons, and it shows that there is unconscious desire of them to the female character. Bill blames his father he did not do important thing in his life. He contends:

BIFF: I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy I tried seven states and couldn't raise it. A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! (98)

The conversation reveals that there is conflicting relationship between the father and his son. He does not respect him as his father. However, we do not find anything that he blames his mother.

Will Loman kills himself due to fear of intimacy with every character of the family.

Related to crisis, Lois Tyson explains that oedipal complex is a situation in which there is conflict in family because of father, mother and child relationship to the parent of opposite sex. It begins unconsciously affects whole life later. As Tyson implies, father and son relationship can fall under oedipal relation as they are in competition with each other to get love from the mother and wife. Son prefers his mother to his father because of same and opposite sex with his parents: Tyson claims:

The oedipal conflict (competition with the parent of the same gender for the attention and affection of the parent of the opposite gender) and all the commonplace ideas of old style Freudian theory (for example, sibling rivalry, penis envy, castration anxiety) are merely descriptions of the dominant ways in which family conflicts can be lived. They give us merely starting points for understanding differences among individuals. (14)

Thus, Tyson argues that if there is conflict between father and child of the same sex, there can be oedipal conflict whether they realize or not. She believes that whatever

conflict begins within the family, it is related to psychological problem. The conflict, as Freud explains, arises due to the unconsciousness.

For the same aspect of oedipal complex, John Deigh postulates that there is ambivalent relationship between child and parent of the opposite sex. He expresses:

Freud realized that the young child's ambivalent relations to his parents created a store of unrelieved hostility towards them. This stored up hostility Freud then recognized as the source of the aggressive force with which a conscience is originally invested. Accordingly, he formulated the hypothesis that the large store of hostility towards one's parents that developed during early childhood became, through the process of identification with and introjection of them, displaced onto oneself, and in this way a conscience was formed. (74)

He argues that the complexity remains as a store in the mind. It can be manifest in various levels such as aggression.

Willy Loman and his son Happy have got misunderstanding. He is always aggressive with his son and wishes to take out from the house. Loman himself does not understand about it. His unconscious desire is his son has come between Loman and his wife. He is internally jealous with his son. Loman is always confused in his decision. In manifest level, he hates his sons because they are jobless but in reality he does not want to see them in front of him because they are rivals for him. Because of his insecurity, he kills himself being crushed by the car. They are rivals for him because he thinks that they have come between his wife and himself. He has oedipal conflict with his sons. Another reason of regarding them rivals is his failure in his career. He is unable to carry on his work because of his age, but projects this to his sons.

This thesis explores the reason behind the failure of the Biff, the elder son of Willy: the central character of the play. Lack of the realistic vision towards the life plays a crucial role for the failure of the both son and father who are very willing to grab the success but are never able to achieve that as they both do not have the realistic understand what a real success is. *Death of a Salesman* supports the child's unconscious desire for the opposite sex parents. Freud further proposed that the Oedipus complex, which originally refers to the sexual desire of a son for his mother, is a desire for the parents in both males and females and that they experience it differently. Here Biff is that son that comes to reality with himself and realizes his family's failure. He blames his father for this and gets really close to his mother.

Willy Loman has a tense and difficult relationship with his elder son Biff. He feels that Biff has let him down by not being anymore successful in the life than Willy himself has been. Willy seems to feel to feel that Biff has failed on purpose, just to spirit his father: you don't want to be anything, is what's behind it?" He accuses Biff during their confrontation in the restaurant. Even more damaging, though, from Biff perspective, are Willy's ideas of how to get on in life. Willy's concept of being well liked, rather than inculcating the virtues of study, and hard and steady work is the central reason for the failure of Biff. Biff feels that this led his failure in high school and thereafter he has been unable to apply himself to anything.

To the contrary, Biff loves his mother as a dutiful son does but both the sons consider her weak. For them, she is a role model what a wife should be and she falls short in their eyes. Biff takes her as a responsible member of the family who knows what a family needs to survive. Even though the characters follow and try to assimilate with the desire for success to achieve a comfortable and standard life, they fail to do so.

Death of a Salesman by Miller is about Willy Loman and his family. The play is mixture of past and present in flashback techniques. The whole story revolves around the conflict between Willy Loman and his oldest son Biff. Willy was very famous salesman in his youth but in his old age he was transferred to Boston implying firing him from job. As he cannot manage his sons and their career, he decides to kill himself by his own speeding car. Many critics have commented the play in various ways.

Jennifer L. Scheidt comments the play as loss of identity and inability of adaptation to the present society. He clarifies:

Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* addresses loss of identity and a man's inability to accept change within himself and society. The play is a montage of memories, dreams, confrontations, and arguments, all of which make up the last 24 hours of Willy Loman's life. The play concludes with Willy's suicide and subsequent funeral. (5)

Thus, Scheidt comments that it is tragic story of Willy Loman who loses his life at the end.

Similarly, Leah Hadomi claims that the play revolves around the conflict between Will and Biff in which Biff's homing out and homing in gives climax to the story. Hadomi presents:

The returning son in *Death of a Salesman* is Biff, who left home and became a 'one dollar man.' His return home, not, we note, for the first time, intensifies a continuous family crisis focusing on Willy, the father, as the protagonist of the play. Homecoming and its effects are a recurrent situation, and the final homecoming is dramatized as the climax of a lengthy, complicated inner process. (13)

Thus, there is deep and disturbing relationship between father and son.

Some critics like Jeremy Hawthorn view the play as attributing Willy's faults to both his circumstances and his internal motivation:

In many ways, the play is split between a recognition of the falsity of the dream of individual salvation, with the implication that the society that fosters such dreams is at fault, and a view that is itself fundamentally individualistic, that human beings have to work out their own salvation and choose the right life for themselves (95).

In contrast, Willy faces as an aging salesman and the lack of concern for those who cannot compete in the business world, it becomes clear that Willy's devotion to a system that places greater emphasis on what one can sell than on one's humanity leads to his undoing.

Psychological Traits of Human Behaviors

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Another early adherent of Freud's theory, the Austrian psychiatrist, Alfred Adler, has disputed the emphasis given to the sexual instincts by Freud in the study of personality. His mal-contentment influenced him to develop a new school of thought, against Freud's classical psychoanalysis called 'individual psychology'. In his individual psychology, it is "emphasized the individual's efforts to compensate for feelings of inferiority" (Zurcher 68). In his view, the motive force of personality is not the sexual instinct: rather "it is a 'drive to power' which leads an individual to

compensate for feelings of inferiority” (68).

His early works expressed human efforts to overcome feelings of inferiority by an intense pursuit of power and domination. Later, he modifies his theory to include the view that the healthy individual directs the striving for superiority into social interest acting to help to develop an ideal society for the benefit of all persons in that society. But the ideal society might be only a fictional finalism - an end which could never be reached, but its conceptualization provides an altruistic goal toward which the individual could productively direct energies. Adler subsequently introduces “the notion of creative self as the unifying component of personality” (69). Adler further says, “The creative self reflects autonomy, flexibility and freedom in the social world, yet manifests the ability to make serious commitments to serving the well-being of that social world” (70).

Sigmund Freud’s notion of two fundamental forces in human beings is life instincts and death instincts that are the primal determining forces of human existence. But every striving is not subsumed under life instincts. In this way aggressiveness, destructiveness, sadism, the drive for control and mastery are in spite of their qualitative differences of manifestations of the same force - the death instincts. Freud presumes that aggression is an innate drive possessed by human beings from the moment of birth works against sexual drive contributing the development of personality, which find expression in behavior. Although initially he takes aggressiveness as a part of sexual instincts, later he revises this theory in *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes* (1915), and theorizes aggressiveness independent from sexual instinct as a quality of ego instincts which opposes and hates the intrusion of outside stimuli and obstacles to the satisfaction of sexual and self-preservative needs. Freud uses death instincts synonymously with instincts of destruction and

aggressive instincts. But in his later writings he premises aggression as an innate impulse which at first destructively directs against the self and only becomes turned outward against other people, or the world in general as secondary phenomena. But he proposes aggression as an inherited fighting instinct as significant in human as it is in other animals. He contends that suppression of aggressive instincts, common among human societies, allows these instincts chance to build up occasionally to the point where they are released during instances of explosive violence.

Winnicott argues that aggression is similar to activity. He gives the example of activities of a baby inside the womb of its mother. All the activities are aggression according to him. He says that before personality develops, aggressive nature is manifested. In his words: "At origin, aggressiveness is synonymous with activity; it is a matter of part-function" (204). In this way, aggression is the activity done by human beings.

Similarly, Laura Marcus and Anghi Mukherjee claim that aggression arises from the truth of desire. The desire is related to psychology and there are mainly two consequences according to them. First, one does not agree with the reality and one is unable to sustain the absolute enjoyment. The second is that we cannot let go absolute enjoyment that is hidden in psychological level. They postulate:

This assumed truth of desire has two major consequences. First, the fantasy of the absolute is diagnosed as the cause of our inability to come to terms with reality. The reason why we develop neuroses, phobias, and resentful aggression is ultimately because we sustain the fantasy of an absolute enjoyment that no actual object or real human being ever can provide. Second, this diagnosis assumes that if we were able to let go of the fantasy of absolute enjoyment we would be able to

come to terms with reality. Lacanian analysis therefore sets out to dispel the idea that there is a Thing out there that can be obtained by the subject. (325)

Therefore, the aggression is psychological entity. They give two explanations which are related to aggression and they express their reasons. One of the reasons of aggression, they argue, is because of inability while another is lack of enjoyment with reality.

Laplanche and Pontalis believe that aggression is a psychoanalytic term that has been used for the manifestation of the internal behaviours. Laplanche and Pontalis define aggression as: “Tendency or cluster of tendencies finding expression in real or phantasy behaviour intended to harm other people, or to destroy, humiliate or constrain them, etc. violent, destructive motor action is not the only form that aggressive can take: indeed, there is no kind of behaviour that may not have an aggressive function” (17). Thus, aggression is a negative motor function that leads to violence and destruction, according to them.

Similarly, Celia Harding says that aggression is recognizable in violence and destructive motor action. She further says: “Violence involves bodies of both perpetrator and victim may thus be defined as a bodily response with the intended of infliction of bodily harm on another person” (4). Psychoanalysis detects aggression where it is not immediately apparent. Celia Harding argues that aggression is related to sexuality that does not follow social rules and regulations. In her own words: “Aggression, like sexuality, is subject to social disapproval and constraints, and it is therefore repressed and expressed in many disguises” (4).

Likewise, Robert Huber et al talk about aggression and pose that it is misunderstood concept among other behaviours. They say that aggression occurs

because of conflict between/among two people or more. They argue:

Aggression ranks among the most misunderstood concepts in all the behavioral sciences. It is commonly viewed by the general public as an aberrant form of behavior, with situations of conflict pictured as unfavorable and stressful circumstances, brought about by amoral urges, in critical need of our cognitive control, and with negative consequences for all involved. Such a view fundamentally misunderstands the biological significance of the behaviors that occur during conflict. Deeply rooted in the demands of the natural world, an individual must fulfill its demands for self-preservation, defend its interests, or compete for limited vital resources. (1)

Although they do not say clearly, it implies that it is psychological aspect that arises from inner beings of human beings.

Likewise, Emil F. Coccaro argues that the aggressive behavior is not uniform in all people because it is psychological feeling. It differs from one person to another. Apparently, aggression is taken as the manifest of anger due to conflict with opponent. But theorists like Coccaro explain that it is related to psychology remain hidden in the unconscious level. Coccaro views:

The underlying premise of the phenomenological study of aggressive behavior is that such aggressive behavior is not uniform but despite its disparity can be grouped according to certain externally observable characteristics. Moreover, the utility of such descriptive grouping provides the structure that leads to a clearer understanding of these phenomena and affords a means to manipulate behaviors. The study ultimately provides an understanding of behavior in the human

condition. Said another way, animal models of aggression tells us which questions to ask about human aggression and which biological systems to study in the human animal. (2)

The aggression, therefore, is taken as human instinct as animal. According to biologists, in terms of aggression there is no difference between humans and animals.

Coccaro says that there are mainly two types of aggression: impulsive and instrumental. Impulsive aggression is motivated by anger and the primary goal of such aggression is to harm another. On the other hand, instrumental aggression is motivated by power. Its primary goal is to get power over others. He explains aggression:

The aggression literature also classifies aggression based on the motivation for the aggressive act. Impulsive aggression occurs in response to a perceived attack or provocation. It is motivated by anger and its primary goal is harm to another. In comparison, instrumental aggression is more thoughtful, is less influenced by anger, and uses aggression as a means to obtain a goal rather than as an end in itself. Despite this distinction in the literature, measures of aggression rarely discriminate between the two types. This is likely, in part, due to the difficulty in distinguishing between purely instrumental and purely impulsive acts. (171)

It means what aggression is seen in people, they are guided by mainly these types of aggression.

Coccaro further defines aggression and says that aggression comprises several complex psychological and social events, and thus requires a multivariate approach. The following definition tells more about aggression: "Aggression is any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another human being who is

motivated to avoid such treatment” (64). This definition assumes that aggression is an overt behavior that occurs in a complex psychosocial context. Nothing in this definition requires the behavior to be a physical act that results in bodily injury. Thus, a verbal tirade or property damage that results in psychological harm can be an act of aggression. He says that the harmful behavior must also be goal directed. Accidental harms, such as an unintended motor vehicle crash, are therefore not aggression.

Berman argues that aggression has multi-determined behaviors that are not fixed and one-dimensional. However, he says that accepting the notion that aggression is a multi-determined behavior does not guarantee that efforts to explain and control aggressive behavior will be advanced. He gives two reasons for behaviors:

First, as noted above, few biopsychosocial theories of human aggression are sufficiently developed to allow relevant hypotheses to be derived and tested. Second, even a casual observer of the field would note that most contemporary aggression research focuses on variables from a single domain. That is, even if researchers and clinicians believe that aggression is multi-determined, most behave as if aggression has relatively simple causes. This inconsistency is reflected in the aggression treatment literature. (70)

In this way, aggression is not linear but have many factors that cannot be treated quite easily like others.

The destructiveness is an innate impulse, which makes continuous efforts to destroy the organism itself. But the life or love instincts, self-preservative instincts, and the other components of Eros try to control and suppress the destructive instincts and obstruct their attempts of development and destruction. This pressure provided by the Eros to the Thanatos compels it to divert towards the external world coming to light in the instinctual form of aggressiveness and destructiveness. As Freud says,

Eros is stronger than Thanatos, thus enabling people to survive rather than self-destruct. If the aggressiveness directed towards the external world does not meet any object to destroy or meets with too strong hindrances to overcome, it comes back to its own origin and starts working there in destructive way. Alcoholism, drug addiction, masochism, suicide and other teleological activities are the different forms of destructiveness. Moody writes, "Some clinicians feel that in many alcoholics their addiction is related to deep feelings of inferiority, coupled with an inability to cope with frustration. In other words, alcoholism is rooted in a desire for self-destruction" (15).

Thus, in conclusion it appears that death instinct such as aggression and depression whether innate or originated later, is the destructive behavior, which can lead an individual towards inevitable as well as inescapable destruction and disorder of personality.

Crisis in Father-Son Relationship in *Death of a Salesman*

As the drama begins, Willy Loman comes back home distressed and nervous. His wife Linda attempts to convince that he should talk to his boss for letting him work in New York. As Willy fails in his job, he transfers it to his older son Biff though Linda shows her dissatisfaction being critical to Biff. Linda asks Willy to go to his boss Howard and requests for cancelling his transfer. She advises: "LINDA (taking the jacket from him). Why don't you go down to the place tomorrow and tell Howard you've simply got to work in New York? You're too accommodating, dear" (1.1-118-21). Linda plays a great role for pacifying him. She treats him mentally and psychologically rather than physically. He may be old and weak but as people see him, he feels weak more psychologically than bodily. It is the beginning of his psychological torture.

There is feeling of hallucination to Willy who talks to himself in the kitchen. He projects his problem to his sons Biff and Happy. Willy believes that his sons are failure to make their career. Willy is nervous and depressed. He has lost his confidence in driving. The lines prove how he suffers from psychologically:

WILLY (with wonder). I was driving along, you understand? And I was fine. I was even observing the scenery. You can imagine, me looking at scenery, on the road every week of my life. But it's so beautiful up there, Linda, the trees are so thick, and the sun is warm. I opened the windshield and just let the warm air bathe over me. And then all of a sudden I'm goin' off the road! I'm tellin'ya, I absolutely forgot I was driving. (12)

He tries to persuade his wife that he is weak and can drive his car no more. As Freud says, when one has psychological problem it increases day by day. It pushes people to

be weaker every moment. It is the feeling of Thanatos, according to Sigmund Freud. He does not find meaning in his life then he spills his anger to his sons.

As Willy cannot face the reality he remembers his past life as he was happy in his young age. He used to enjoy with woman during his youth. It is his psychological problem that he suffers. He goes beyond reality and enjoys in the present. Not only Willy but also Happy and Biff are suffering from psychological problems. Biff has sibling problems and he envies his younger brother as he thinks that Willy loves Happy more than him. Biff and Happy talk:

BIFF. I noticed that this morning. But he always mumbled.

HAPPY. But not so noticeable. It got so embarrassing I sent him to Florida. And you know something? Most of the time he's talking to you.

BIFF. What's he say about me?

HAPPY. I can't make it out.

BIFF. What's he say about me?

HAPPY. I think the fact that you're not settled, that you're still kind of up in the air. (19-20)

This is the example of sibling conflict in which the older thinks that the younger is more loved by the father than himself. This conflict is psychological that remains unconscious in one's mind whether the person realizes or not.

Similarly, there is oedipal conflict between Willy and Biff. They do not talk to each other politely. Biff regards his father enemy or something like that. According to Freud, it is because of his unconscious rivalry with him. He may not know the cause but it remains within him to make feel so. The conversation reveals his enmity with his father:

WILLY. No kiddin', Biff, you got a date? Wonderful!

HAPPY. Go on to sleep. But talk to him in the morning, will you?

BIFF (reluctantly getting into bed). With her in the house. Brother!

HAPPY (getting into bed). I wish you'd have a good talk with him.

(The light of their room begins to fade.)

BIFF (to himself in bed). That selfish, stupid...

HAPPY. Sh . . . Sleep, Biff. (25-26)

Biff has psychological conflict with his father. He does not like his father projecting his anger to him. Happy plays middle role to bring his father and younger brother come together.

Whatever Willy has unfulfilled desire that he could not achieve in his young age, he wants to get fulfilled from Biff and Happy. The feeling of inferiority comes when Willy and Biff talk about Uncle Charley. They think that he is successful and happy. Willy wants to open a business bigger than his. Inwardly, he thinks that Charley is successful person. They have strong desire and discuss:

WILLY. Don't say? Tell you a secret, boys. Don't breathe it to a soul.

Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home any more.

HAPPY. Like Uncle Charley, heh?

WILLY. Bigger than Uncle Charley! Because Charley is not - liked.

He's liked, but he's not - well liked.

BIFF. Where'd you go this time, Dad?

WILLY. Well, I got on the road, and I went north to Providence. Met the Mayor.

BIFF. The Mayor of Providence! (29)

The conversation reveals that they are feeling inferior to Charley. They are in the line of competition with him. They do not realize that they can do differently from Uncle Charley. Rather they have the feeling of rivalry with him. There are many reasons that Willy is not confident about his driving. He has many desires but they are not fulfilled as per his wants.

Biff and Happy discuss Willy's condition with their mother. Linda scolds Biff for judging Willy harshly. Biff tells her that he knows Willy is a fake, but he refuses to elaborate. Linda mentions that Willy has tried to commit suicide. Happy grows angry and rebukes Biff for his failure in the business world. Willy enters and yells at Biff. Happy intervenes and eventually proposes that he and Biff go into the sporting goods business together. Willy immediately brightens and gives Biff a host of tips about asking for a loan from one of Biff's old employers, Bill Oliver. After more arguing and reconciliation, everyone finally goes to bed. When Biff decides to ask for ten thousand dollars from Oliver Willy shows his dissatisfaction commenting it as low:

BIFF. Gee, I don't know...

WILLY. And don't say Gee. Gee is a boy's word. A man walking in for fifteen thousand dollars does not say Gee!

BIFF. Ten, I think, would be top though.

WILLY. Don't be so modest. You always started too low. Walk in with a big laugh. Don't look worried. Start off with a couple of your good stones to lighten things up. It's not what you say, it's how you say it — because personality always wins the day.

LINDA. Oliver always thought the highest of him... (62-63)

In this way, all members are suffering from unconscious desires. Willy's unconscious

feeling of insecurity and inferiority is manifested in the language he has used.

There is conflict between Howard and Willy. Willy reminds him that he contributed a lot to the farm as Howard's father requested him to work there. But Howard does not like to remember this, which makes Willy angry. He feels bad because of lack of evaluation. Psychologically, his internal aggression is manifested when he feels that Willy is not given importance. In aggression he yells at Howard but feels regret later. It means aggression is psychological entity, it remains hidden and comes out of the people as they are triggered by anything. Willy expresses remorse:

WILLY. Pull myself together! What the hell did I say to him? My God, I was yelling at him! How could I? (Willy breaks off, staring at the light, which occupies the chair, animating it. He approaches this chair, standing across the desk from it.) Frank, Frank, don't you remember what you told me that time? How you put your hand on my shoulder, and Frank... (He leans on the desk and as he speaks the dead man's name he accidentally switches on the recorder, and instantly)

(79)

In this way, he expresses his anger with him. It may not be a single reason that Willy is aggressive. He is not satisfied with his life as he does not see his sons successful.

Moreover, he envies over the success of Charley, his friend. Charley is fed up with him when he asks money frequently. Moreover, Willy does not accept the job offer from Charley. As Willy asks for more money than Charley usually loans him, Charley again offers Willy a job. Willy again refuses and eventually tells Charley that he was fired. Charley scolds Willy for always needing to be liked and angrily gives him the money. Calling Charley his only friend, Willy exits on the verge of tears. Willy has problem when he talks to Charley. Willy asserts:

WILLY. Apologize to Bernard for me when you see him. I didn't mean to argue with him. He's a fine boy. They're all fine boys, and they'll end up big — all of them. Someday they'll all play tennis together. Wish me luck, Charley. He saw Bill Oliver today.

CHARLEY. Good luck.

WILLY. (On the verge of tears): Charley, you're the only friend I got. Isn't that a remarkable thing? (He goes out.)

CHARLEY. Jesus! (95)

This is the example of instinct aggression as expressed by psychologists. It has remained in unconscious level. It comes out whenever it gets chance.

As Willy and Biff are talking Biff has long story to share with his father but Willy says that he does not want to listen to his stories. Consequently, he resents his father for being unwilling to listen. Willy and Biff have angry discussion:

WILLY (angrily). All right, now listen to me...

BIFF. Why don't you let me finish?

WILLY. I'm not interested in stories about the past or any crap of that kind because the woods are burning, boys, you understand? There's a big blaze going on all around. I was fired today.

BIFF (Shocked). How could you be?

WILLY. I was fired, and I'm looking for a little good news to tell your mother, because the woman has waited and the woman has suffered. The gist of it is that I haven't got a story left in my head, Biff. (104)

It is Willy's projection of his psychological problem to his son. He is suffering from

being sacked from the job. As he realizes that he is failure in his profession, he demonstrates his agony with everyone: his wife, friends, sons and so on. He is waiting for the good result so that he can tell his wife but in vain.

As Willy and Biff have debate about the business matter and job, they do not listen to each other as both of them blame one another. It occurs due to psychological problems. They might have oedipal complex. They do not like each other because of their insecurity. Willy thinks that he expected so much thing from Biff but he could not achieve. On the other hand, Biff thinks that father could not do anything. They express:

WILLY. You don't want to be anything, is that what's behind it?

BIFF. (Now angry at Willy for not crediting his sympathy). Don't take it that way! You think it was easy walking into that office after what I'd done to him? A team of horses couldn't have dragged me back to Bill Oliver!

WILLY. Then why'd you go?

BIFF. Why did I go? Why did I go! Look at you! Look at what's become of you! (109-110)

Thus, Biff refers to failure whenever Willy attempts to blame him. He has the feeling of inferiority as Willy is sacked from the job. He regards himself unable to face the world. His psychological problem is torturing him more than his age.

As the father and son are talking Willy hears The Woman laugh and he shouts back at Biff, hitting him and staggering. Miss Forsythe enters with another call girl, Letta. Biff helps Willy to the washroom and, finding Happy flirting with the girls, argues with him about Willy. Biff storms out, and Happy follows with the girls. After a while, Willy and The Woman enter, dressing themselves and flirting. The door

knocks and Willy hurries The Woman into the bathroom. Willy answers the door; the young Biff enters and tells Willy that he failed math. Willy tries to usher him out of the room, but Biff imitates his math teacher's lisp, which elicits laughter from Willy and The Woman. Willy tries to cover up his carelessness, but Biff refuses to believe his stories and storms out, dejected, calling Willy a phony little fake. Back in the restaurant, Stanley helps Willy up. Willy asks him where he can find a seed store. Male characters have lost their morality. They have involved in sexual activities. Two sons and one father are with their girls in the restaurant. It may be one of the reasons that they have failed in their career. It is also a matter of question, Willy is not confident to drive but he brings his youth to play with girl. Willy asserts: "WILLY. (Pushing her away from him). All right, stay in the bathroom here, and don't come out. I think there's a law in Massachusetts about it, so don't come out. It may be that new room clerk. He looked very mean. So don't come out. It's a mistake, there's no fire" (113). From the conversation, it is revealed that he is immoral person. He is angry at his sons because he cannot succeed in his career. As Biff fails his math he asks his father to talk to his teacher for passing him. He tells his father about his failure:

BIFF. Birnbaum refused absolutely. I begged him, Pop, but he won't give me those points. You gotta talk to him before they close the school. Because if he saw the kind of man you are, and you just talked to him in your way, I'm sure he'd come through for me. The class came right before practice, see, and I didn't go enough. Would you talk to him? He'd like you, Pop. You know the way you could talk. (114)

It can be clearly interpreted that he has lost his morality. He does not hesitate to provoke to talk to his teacher. It reveals that both father and son are morally corrupt.

Otherwise, Biff would not dare to say so to his father. These are the hidden reasons that can be found everywhere. Their manifest manners are rooted in latent content which can be read through psychological study.

Father and son have hot discussion. Biff wants to take vengeance against his father. He inwardly blames his father for his failure. He looks at other people's success and compares his condition. In fact it is because of his own failure. Linda might have same role to his failure but he does not blame her. He never talks negatively about her. It may be because of his psychological attachment with her regarding his father enemy. Biff reveals:

BIFF. I am not a leader of men, Willy, and neither are you. You were never anything but a hard-working drummer who landed in the ash can like all the rest of them! I'm one dollar an hour, Willy I tried seven states and couldn't raise it. A buck an hour! Do you gather my meaning? I'm not bringing home any prizes any more, and you're going to stop waiting for me to bring them home! (129)

This is the expression of anger because of Biff's failure in his mission. He does not study himself for the cause of failure but moves outside to find the reason that is beyond his reach to understand.

Therefore, the drama presents the conflicting relationship between son and father. They are product of society. They do not know how to be serious in their mission. As they fail to keep on going ahead for future career, they show their aggression to each other. It is because of their psychology hidden within.

Conclusion: Death of a salesman: Crisis in Relationship

The research work is about the psychological conflict or oedipal conflict between father and son primarily and among other characters as well in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Sales Man*. Oedipal complex between them starts when they blame each other as they are jealous to get Linda. To be destructive life, Linda has equal role but they do not blame her because of their love to her. Likewise, in most of the family, unconscious bitterness comes in the relationship between a child and a parent of the same sex. People may not realize this but it comes from the psychological point of view. The research work is based on the theory of Sigmund Freud and other psychologists who have talked about the child parent relationship. Although there are many themes in the play, the researcher focuses on the psychoanalytic study. Freud uses id, ego and superego to talk about human psychology. He claims that sex is the best way of understanding these three components to study the human psychology. He does not mean sex as other people understand but he means to say the life force. On the other hand, he uses Thanatos referring to death force. Thus, if a person is energetic he has life force in dominance while if the person is sad, depressed or frustrated he has been dominated by death force. Thus, life is only the interplay between sex and Thanatos according to him.

Other important aspects of understanding human psychology is destructiveness and aggression. The destructiveness is an innate impulse, which makes continuous efforts to destroy the organism itself. According to Freud Eros is energetic force which is stronger than Thanatos, thus enabling people to survive rather than self-destruct. If the aggressiveness directed towards the external world does not meet any object to destroy or meets with too strong hindrances to overcome, it comes back to its own origin and starts working there in destructive way.

In the play, Willy Loman and his sons Biff and Happy are failure to maintain their life. There is always conflict among them in one way or another. However, in reality there is misunderstanding among them due to psychological problem. Apparently, Willy seems aggressive with his sons and people may think that there is something wrong with his sons, so he is angry. However, from the psychological point of view, the opposite is true. He is aggressive with them because he himself is the victim of his own psyche. They are only his medium of expressing his depression. He is always aggressive with his son and wishes to take out from the house. Loman himself does not understand about it. His unconscious desire is his son has come between Loman and his wife. He is internally jealous with his son. Loman is always confused in his decision.

Death of a Salesman supports the child's unconscious desire for the opposite sex parents. Willy Loman has a tense and difficult relationship with his elder son Biff. He feels that Biff has let him down by not being anymore successful in the life than Willy himself has been. Willy's concept of being well liked, rather than inculcating the virtues of study, and hard and steady work is the central reason for the failure of Biff. On the other hand, Biff loves his mother as a dutiful son does but both the sons consider her weak. For them, she is a role model what a wife should be and she falls short in their eyes. Biff takes her as a responsible member of the family who knows what a family needs to survive. As Willy cannot face the reality he remembers his past life as he was happy in his young age. He used to enjoy with woman during his youth. It is his psychological problem that he suffers. He goes beyond reality and enjoys in the present.

They do not talk to each other politely. Biff regards his father enemy or something like that. According to Freud, it is because of his unconscious rivalry with

him. As Biff and Happy discuss Willy's condition with their mother, Linda scolds Biff for judging Willy harshly. Biff tells her that he knows Willy is a fake, but he refuses to elaborate.

Willy's aggression is not limited to his family but also his friend Charley. He envies him and displaces his failure to his sons. It is due to psychological problem. Aggression and depression are common themes of the play. The father and sons are enemy to one another. They show their aggressive nature blaming each other it is because of their failure to face the world. Linda might be also responsible but they do not blame their mother. This is the proof that there is oedipal conflict of the same sex.

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