

THE FORBIDDEN TREE AND THE AMERICAN DREAM OF WILLY LOMAN IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the analogous elements found between the Forbidden Tree as narrated in the *Holy Bible* and the American dream as woven into the texture of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Willy Loman, the protagonist, having Adam as the archetype, encounters the bewitching dream brought to him by instances that entitle success, and endeavors anticipating the realization. But contrarily, he is forced to inherit what is in store for him, on account of his yielding to it.

He experiences exactly like Adam. As Adam was emptied of all the divinity and banished from the Garden of Eden on eating the Fruit, Willy feels deceived by the dream and finds dénouement as a low man. Adam, who aspired to become like gods, ended up in death, and similarly, Willy, who wants to be supreme, also ends up in suicide. The deceitful deceit thus decides their destiny.

KEYWORDS: American Dream, Banishment, Conception, Death, Deception, Forbidden Tree, Misconception, Success

INTRODUCTION

Of Man's First disobedience, and the Fruit
Of that Forbidden Tree, whose mortal taste
Brought Death into the World, and all our woe,
With the loss of Eden...(Paradise Lost 1.1-4).

Arthur Miller, one of America's most renowned playwrights, is celebrated for his profound insight that could enter into the emotional and psychological realms of ordinary individuals, and for his earnest endeavor that could externalize their internal turmoil as precisely experienced by them, in direct consequence of their deluded dreams, distinct desires and debased values. *Death of a Salesman*, the classic among all his literary output, has been approached and analyzed through multiple perspectives, ever since it was staged in the Broadway Theater in New York. Elaborating it, E R Wood writes,

Different explanations have been put forward of its essential theme: some have regarded it as Communist propaganda denouncing the evils of Capitalism, while others have seen it as a sympathetic study of the problems of big business. Some have interpreted it in Freudian terms and attributed to its author abstruse psychological theories, while from a Catholic point of view it has been approvingly regarded as a warning of the meaninglessness of life where there is no religious faith (viii).

Following this critical convention, this article attempts to analyze the American dream which Willy Loman, the protagonist of the play lives for, through a Biblical perspective so as to bring out its similarities with the Forbidden Tree, mentioned in the Book of Genesis.

THE FORBIDDEN TREE: AN INTRODUCTION

According to the Bible, God created the heavens and the earth and restructured the earth as it was chaotic and void. Then, He created the sun, the moon, stars and all the beings that live on the land, in the water and in the air. After all of them, God formed man and called him Adam and planted a garden. About it, the Bible records, “And the LORD God planted a garden eastward in Eden....And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree ... the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil” (Gen 2:8, 9). God, then, brought Adam to the garden, made him its keeper and gave a single command that, “... Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2.16, 17). This was how He made all things and finally gave His decree to forbid him from eating the Fruit.

THE AMERICAN DREAM: AN INTRODUCTION

The American dream was propounded and propagated by the founding fathers of the New England and through centuries, it has earned millions and millions of devotees. The loss of Faith in America causes the American dream – “American worship of monetary success” to supplant it (Scott Donaldson and Ann Massa 208). Consequently, dollar has become the god. According to N.S. Pradhan, “...the ‘almighty Dollar’ is the new God...” (10). In the words of Neil Campbell and Alasdsir Kean, “The Church no longer dominates particular communities, regardless of orientation, in the way that it used to do” (106).

Commenting on the desire of the early settlers of America, Scott Donaldson and Ann Massa observe, “Winthrop and his fellow settlers brought with them not only an extraordinary royal charter, but a still more solemn and binding covenant with God to create a New Jerusalem in the New World” (191). Devoutly, America is compared to the city of God and the Garden of Eden. Metaphorically speaking, there are so many trees that bear fruits in the blessed land of America as it was in the Garden of Eden and all the Americans enjoy the freedom to pluck their fruits and eat.

INCEPTION OF THE AMERICAN DREAM

Every American is pregnant with a version of the ‘American dream of success’ and prizing it, he takes utmost care for its nurture. He is committed to carrying out any kind of sacrifice to give birth to it and to undertaking any kind of means to prevent a miscarriage. “Success is a requirement Americans make of life. Because it seems magical and inexplicable... it can be considered the due of every free citizen, even those with no notable or measurable talents” (Thomas E Porter 25). With this one mission, he persists to survive in the world. As literature reflects society in the truest sense, Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* also portrays the life as lived in America. According to Thomas E Porter, “*Salesman* deals with the Horatio Algerideal, the rags-to-riches romance of the American dream” (24) and Willy Loman, the protagonist, is a classic example as he is popularly identified as the icon of the American dream. The ‘Forbidden Fruit’ of the ‘Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil’ in the Garden of Eden and the American dream which Willy Loman hugs so dearly, so faithfully and so ‘piously’ have many astonishing comparable elements. And this article brings them to light.

John S Shockley discloses that, “... the American dream has meant different things to different people” (52). As the other trees in the Garden of Eden were “... pleasant to the sight and good for food...” (Gen 2: 9), the characters in *Death of a Salesman* pluck the fruits borne by the other trees in the land of America and eat. For example, Ben, the brother of Willy, and Charley, his neighbor also taste them. However, they do not face any of the problems faced by Willy, because Willy’s case is a different one. Being a different person, he plucks the Forbidden Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the most famous tree in America and is consequently required to reap the consequences.

Thus, he apes Adam who ignored the divine warning, ate the Fruit and invited His curses. In the same way, Willy also plucks the fruit from the tree of American Dream with a difference, and 'welcomes' woes.

PERCEPTION ABOUT THE TREE AND THE DREAM

The Bible makes a description about the nature of the Forbidden Tree. "...that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise..." (Gen 3:6). In this verse, three features of the Tree are referred to along with three qualifiers namely, good, pleasant and desirable. They are: Sustenance, Spectacle and Sense and the last property is the one that makes the difference. These three qualities with their three qualifiers speak volumes about the enticement it might have generated in the first onlookers. These three specialties are restated by John as, "... the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life..." (1 John 2: 16).

Likewise, Horatio Alger, Jr disseminated a myth regarding the American Dream to mesmerize the American youth:

... a virtuous young man from the country, comes to the city where he shines the shoes to such a gloss that he is noticed favourably by a business tycoon. Subsequently, the lad rescues the tycoon's daughter from a runaway horse-carriage, for which he is, first, rewarded with the hand in marriage of the daughter, who is, as always beautiful with long blonde curls, and, second, placed in full charge of the tycoon's vast business holdings, becoming an instant millionaire (Scott Donaldson and Ann Massa 196).

This myth sufficiently proves the power of the dream and the degree of the passion it can produce. Amazingly, Willy Loman and the American dream are intertwined and therefore inseparable. Arthur Miller, the architect of Willy, structures him to be an exceptionally faithful devotee of the dream. As Terry Otten points out, "In *Death of a Salesman* society assumes the role of the gods to whom Willy gives allegiance" (285). To be true to his vocation, Willy dedicates his entire life to its service, hoping for the fruition of the dream and the fulfillment of his aspiration. Though he serves it till his end, he is shocked to see that his pursuit of wealth takes him nowhere and every day passes by more ordinarily. So, the pangs of unproductiveness leave him with no other option but to end his life. Surprisingly, even at the end of his life, he has not done anything contrary to his earlier faith, nor has he spoken anything sacrilegious to contradict his earlier devotion to it. This is how he is drawn to be a true worshipper of the American dream.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT THE OFFERS

Adam might have been under the delusion that once he ate the Fruit, his life would be transformed rather transfigured. But tragically, Adam's hopes were shattered. Likewise, Willy is also under the deception that the American Dream would confer all the three specialties on him and his life would therefore, find a reverse. But desolately, he is not sanctioned any of them and it turns to be a wild chase.

Sustenance

When examined, the three boons believed to become Adam's on eating the Fruit bring to light the fascinating relationship between the Tree and the Dream. The declaration that, 'the tree was good for food' regarded as 'the lust of the flesh' was, as the first and foremost boon, concerned for satiating Adam's bodily instincts. Though there were numerous trees in the Garden and he was bestowed with the freedom to eat from any of them, Adam was attracted towards it because it was firstly restricted and secondly, he was made to believe the lie. Satan tempted him to show that 'the tree was good for food' as if the other trees from which he ate hitherto were bad for food. It exposes that Adam lost his contentment. The food meant here is 'the sustenance' for which man hunts after on and on in his life. The lust for food generally

encompasses all that man desires to make his life ‘enriching’ and ‘enjoyable’. Similarly, the American dream of ‘from rags to riches’ is also very captivating to the Americans.

Factually speaking, the old path shown originally with the emphasis on honesty and hard work has undergone changes and a new version of the dream is promulgated. Accordingly, the modern American dream means the dream of becoming rich overnight. The realization of the dream refers to the success of making money, owning a big house, having a costly car and possessing all the other material things that make life convenient and comfortable. Willy falls an easy prey to this seductive offer. So, he plucks the fruit and eats and keeps on waiting for this offer to turn true. He fails to realize that it is not Aladdin’s magic lamp to fetch him what all he aspires for, without “hard work, intelligence, aptitude, honesty, fair play, or any of the other... virtues” (Anthony R Collins 120).

Spectacle

The quality that ‘it was pleasant to the eyes’ restated as ‘the lust of the eyes’ refers to the ‘blessing’ the Forbidden Fruit was believed to offer. Just like other trees in Eden, the Tree of Knowledge also had that attribute. Adam might have been beguiled to eat it but in obedience to Him, he did not eat. However, he was entrapped by Satanic scheme and victimized. Likewise, Willy is tempted by the seductive dream of success. Because, “America is the country where the values of Capitalism, Free Enterprise, Big Business are seen at their most rewarding...” (E R Wood ix). So naturally, Willy who is completely absorbed and enthused in these rewards longs for grandeur and greatness to elevate him. He buys only things of repute as he wants to be identified strongly with products with commercial brand names to maintain his status. Commenting on this Robert W Corrigan writes, “He has completely embraced the American myth, born of advertisers, for this reason, the brand names that turn up in Willy’s speeches are more than narrow realism. He regularly confuses labels with reality.... [He says] that a punching bag is good ... because, “It’s got Gene Tunney’s signature on it”” (133). And he owns Chevrolet, “the greatest car ever built” (*Death of a Salesman* 147). Thus, he wants to be associated with esteem.

Sense

The last boon, the Fruit, believed to bless with was, ‘to make one wise’ which is rephrased as ‘the pride of life’. That was the attribute that made the Tree of Knowledge unique among all the trees in Eden as the other two qualities were shared by all the trees. So, the specialty, Adam thought, would endow him with the divine wisdom and he could become like gods. But it brought him the opposites. He was exiled with Eve once for all, being deprived of divinity -- goodness and innocence and totally disconnected from God. In its place, they were provided with evil and experience (knowledge). Similarly, Willy seems to be wise and valuable in his own eyes. He brags to his sons, Biff and Happy, “America is full of beautiful towns and fine, upstanding people. And they know me, boys, they know me up and down New England.... I have friends. I can park my car in any street in New England, and the cops protect it like their own” (145). Moreover, he eulogizes his son Biff as,

Like a young god. Hercules — something like that. And the sun, the sun all around him. Remember how he waved to me? Right up from the field, with the representatives of three colleges standing by? And the buyers I brought, and the cheers when he came out — Loman, Loman, Loman! God Almighty, he’ll be great yet. A star like that, magnificent, can never really fade away! (171).

Apart from the adulation of himself and adoration of his son, he has a great admiration for his philosophy of salesmanship. He says that, “...selling was the greatest career a man could want” (180). “It’s who you know and the smile

on your face! It's contacts, Ben, contacts!" (184) and adds, "Because the man who makes an appearance in the business world, the man who creates personal interest, is the man who gets ahead" (146). But in reality, he is a crushed and dying salesman just as, Linda, his wife testifies, "Willy Loman never made a lot of money. His name was never in the paper. He's not the finest character that ever lived" (162). She also divulges, "He drives seven hundred miles, and when he gets there no one knows him anymore, no one welcomes him. And what goes through a man's mind, driving seven hundred miles home without having earned a cent? (163). This is what actually happens to Willy, the wise.

CONCEPTIONS OF THE DESIRES

What the Bible says is true of both Adam and Willy that, "... every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sin, when it is finished, brings forth death" (Jas 1.14, 15). As the story goes, Adam was deceived by Satan through his wife, Eve. Satan talked to her splendidly and beguiled her saying, "... that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3.5). Yielding to the temptation of becoming like gods, Eve plucked the fruit, ate and gave to Adam and he also ate. Similarly, Willy is enchanted by a salesman to inherit such a life. The conception of the American Dream in the mind of Willy is a thrilling experience to him. For he accounts,

...I met a salesman in the Parker House. His name was Dave Singleman. ... he'd...pick up his phone and call the buyers, and without ever leaving his room, at the age of eighty-four, he made his living. what could be more satisfying than to be able to go ... and be remembered and loved and helped by so many different?... when he died , --- the death a salesman ... hundreds of salesman and buyers were at his funeral (180).

This is the singular event that makes him draw the conclusion that "...selling was the greatest career a man could choose" (180). And this enticement steers him to become a salesman and to climb the stairs to prosperity and popularity. Apart from it, Willy is greatly enticed by Ben, his brother. He exclaims, "Ben! That man was a genius, that man was a success incarnate!" (152). These are the two instances that make him lust after the world of success and experiment himself as a salesman.

DECEPTION OF THE TEMPTATIONS

Enraptured by the words of Satan, Eve failed to act in consonance with God's command and so did Adam. Only after eating it, they realized that they were cheated by Satan. They were satisfied with the fruits of all the trees in the Garden till the temptation. But dissatisfaction sneaked in and the desire to taste it led him to disobey God's pronouncement. Finally, it ended in deception and their realization about the deception was instantaneous. And in the case of Willy, the temptation from Dave Singleman and Ben drives him to yield to it. But it takes much time for Willy to understand that he is deceived. Alice Griffin aptly quotes Jeremy Hawthorn that, "Willy ... has never realized that his dreams are dreams ... [and] can never actually be lived" (43).

RECEPTION OF THEIR DOOMS

Disobedience to God's command brought forth many an irreparable effect and irretrievable forfeiture in the life of Adam and Eve. Since the temptation was so strong, they were not able to escape that Satanic snare. Satan hoodwinked the first parents and forced to experience the Fall. Both of them lost joy, peace, fellowship and the like and had to inherit despair, deprivation, destitution, desolation and so on. Having lost the Paradise, their lot was marked with never-ending miseries. The Bible enlists the results of their sin of disobedience. It is extremely unfortunate that both Adam and Willy failed to use their faculty of reason and prudence. Having suspended their forethought and foresight, they gave no thought

about their future. Willy fails to find out the secrets of success and he devises his own formulae of success. And it finally makes him land in a heart-breaking state.

Death of the Spirit and Death of the Self

Spiritual death was the first result of disobeying and of eating the Fruit. For, "God is the Spirit" and He created Adam with triune components as spirit, soul and body, according prominence to his spirit. Despite God's warning that, "...for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen 2:17), he ate the Fruit and lost his fellowship with God. And this is identified as his spiritual death.

Likewise, Willy chooses salesmanship, believing the 'lie' of the American dream and faces 'spiritual' death. He loses all his self-confidence, hope, and interest, the forces behind a man to drive his spirit. In other words, he loses his original self, and the actual Willy meets with this death and subsequently becomes an inheritor of mental otherness. Since his dream of becoming a successful salesman does not materialize, he becomes a victim to wishful thinking, hallucination and so on. Alarming, his psychological behavior turns different from the rest of the members of his family and his neighboring community. This is the first consequence faced by Willy.

The dramatic opening of the play validates it. For, Willy complains to Linda, "I'm tired to the death... I couldn't make it. I just couldn't make it. Linda." (131) and in her reply she tells him, "Your mind is overactive, and the mind is what counts, dear." And advises him, "Take an aspirin... It'll soothe you." And in continuation, Willy is seen narrating his experience on his way back home.

I was driving along, you understand? And I was fine. I was even observing the scenery... 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... So I went on again --and five minutes later I'm dreamin' again... I have such thoughts, I have such strange thoughts. (132)

The Sense of Nakedness and the Sense of Nothingness

As the glory of God which girded Adam hitherto departed, he recognized that he was naked. As the Bible describes, "... they knew that they were naked." This is the second consequence recorded in the Bible. Similarly, as a consequence of his 'spiritual death', Willy identifies his defeat as a salesman and experiences a sense of nothingness in his life. He has to lead a dog's life unlike many others who are very prosperous. And this exposure makes him vexed. Actually, the reason for his nothingness springs from the values he esteems -- the values of money, standing and success. His failure unearths his inability to make those values functioning in his life. His confession that he has spent his life 'ringing up a zero' confirms it.

The Covering with Fig Leaves and the Camouflage by Words

'The deadly fruit' primarily brought Adam and Eve, a sense of separation from God, a sense of sin and a sense of shame. It drove them to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. "...they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons." the Bible records (Gen 3. 7). A covering made out of fig leaves normally wither and dry. Similarly, Willy tries to cover his failure of realizing the American Dream by indulging in tall talks.

First of all, he talks splendidly about his fame and popularity he is endowed with and the reception being hosted to him during his business trips. He spends his time in singing the praises of the towering personalities of his sons. His proclamations like, "Someday I'll have my own business..." (144) speak of his attempts to cover his nakedness of hollow life.

Hiding from God

Fleeing from God's presence and hiding from Him is yet another result brought forth by yielding to the temptation. "...Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD..." (Gen 3: 8). It is really disastrous that instead of going to God after the Sin, they preferred to flee from Him. God had to call them on their missing. Had they gone to God, the history would have been different. Similarly, Willy Loman tries to safeguard himself from manual labor. To say, his rejection of manual work costs him an opportunity to recast him into a carpenter. According to Anthony R Collins, "It is made clear in the play that Willy would have been a first-rate carpenter" (292), had he chosen it and could have escaped the untold sufferings he faces. He also flees from Charley's offer of a job considering it undignified.

Covering by God

"...Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Gen 3. 21). God was compassionate to cover their nakedness with the coats of skins of animals. In a like manner, the nakedness, the failure of Willy has been covered by people like Charley and Linda. It is like God sending these two people to cover the nakedness of Willy by offering monetary and moral support. 'The divine' in Charley has made him be considerate towards Willy and lend him a helping hand. The sacrificial love of Linda is poured out extraordinarily to cover the failures of her husband both from his own view and their sons'. "But you're doing wonderful, dear. You're making seventy to hundred dollars a week" (149), "...there's more good in him than in many other people" (165) and her 'attention must be paid' speech testify to her love that covers his nakedness.

Earning by Sweat

After planting Eden, God placed Adam in it for cultivation. But as a result of the sin He pronounced, "...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; ... In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen 3.17-19). As Adam toiled to earn his living, Willy also has to survive in the cruel and inhospitable world. He toils and toils but fails to earn in proportion to his labour. His exhaustion and his expressions exemplify that he is defeated and dying. He cries, "I'm tired to the death" (131); "Work a lifetime to pay off a house. You finally own it, and there's nobody to live in it" (133) and "The woods are burning! I can't drive a car!" (152) give vent to his desperation. Thus, having embodied the agonized feeling and the fatigued physique of Adam, Willy stands as a 20th century Adam.

Banishment

"... the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden..." (Gen 3. 24). This saddest part of the eventful event speaks of God banishing Adam from the Garden. Likewise, Willy is seen being expelled from the company in/for which he has served for thirty six years. When his request for extension of service is rejected, he tells Howard, the present owner of the company, "You can't eat the orange and throw the peel away — a man is not a piece of fruit!" (181) Willy is seen just existing to experience the vanity of the American dream.

As Howard fires him Linda mourns, "He works for a company thirty-six years this March, opens up unheard-of territories to their trademark, and now in his old age they take his salary away" (163). When Willy begs Howard for 40 dollars a week, Howard retorts, "Kid, I can't take blood from a stone" (181). In an agony of elimination Willy addresses Howard, "You mustn't tell me you've got people to see I put thirty-four years into this firm, Howard, and now I can't pay my insurance!" (181). This is how Willy is banished from the dream world of success as an employee good for nothing.

Physical Death and Suicide

Adam died as God predicted. He started so grandly with all supremacy and sovereignty over the whole of the earth. But sin entered and his state of affairs got collapsed beyond recovery or restoration. Banished from both God and the Garden, he spent his days cursing the day of the deception and pitying his predicament. It was too late for him to cry over the spilt milk. Thus, in regret about the past and dread about the unknown and unseen death at any moment, he might be dying daily. By dying and living and living and dying, he finally died one day marking the end of an era. Thus, Adam was exiled from the face of the earth as 'dead and gone'.

On comparison, Willy seems to have a similar kind of lot, owing to the choice of his vocation and his philosophy of life. Resultantly, Willy encounters an expulsion from the business world and experiences an exile from both the actual life and the actuality of life. He realizes that it is not right to live any longer in the world as a deluded salesman tricked by the lures of the American dream of success. His comprehension that his philosophy of life that, "appearance, personal interest" (146), "contacts" (184), "well liked personality" (169) and "riding on a smile and a Shoeshine" (222) are the criteria that promote sales and the factors that fetch success to a salesman. But in contrast, all these values lead him nowhere but to his downfall and also hasten him to hug his doom, his destiny, his death. This is how the 'mortal taste' of the American dream has pronounced death to its faithful follower and devoted devotee, Willy Loman. And things that happen successively in his life find culmination in his suicide. Like Shakespeare states,

Cowards die many times before their deaths.

The valiant never taste of death but once. (Julius Caesar. 2.2. 32, 33)

Willy dies many times before his actual death and the death of a salesman is the culmination of deaths of the salesman.

IDOLIZATION

Among all the prospects that Satan pronounced, Adam and Eve would have been delighted to hear that, "ye shall be as gods...." (Gen 3: 5). But claiming that promise demanded a huge cost and they were ready to pay it so that they also could become supreme beings. With this hope, they ate the Fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. At once, they acquired the sense of good and evil losing the state of innocence. Apart from this sense, they attained nothing else. Instead, they lost all the divine blessings and became heirs to His curses. That was how their ultimate goal landed them in the greatest tragedy.

Correspondingly, the American dream of success steers Willy to build castles in the air and as a subsequence, he is seen determined to realize it. According to Thomas P Adler, "The dream of being Number One propels him, and the tenacity with which he pursues the dream in itself makes him nonordinary" (101).

Willy's assertion to Linda that, "Someday I'll have my own business, and I'll never have to leave home anymore." (144) attests to Willy's ultimate aim in his life: to own a company and to be the boss of that company. But sadly, in the pages of the play no such things happen. Actually, he buys almost every household appliance on installment basis. Regarding this fact, Linda makes a statement, "Well, there's nine-sixty for the washing machine. And for the vacuum cleaner there's three and a half due on the fifteenth.

Then the roof, you got twenty-one dollars remaining" (148). "Work a lifetime to pay off a house" (133) talks about the pitiable plight of Willy's story. And the saddest thing in his life is, that the American dream leaves him to make

the last payment towards owning the house and then to get lost forever. Thus, the ultimate longing of Willy gets thwarted and he vanishes into vanity with no return whatsoever.

CONCLUSIONS

The function of the Forbidden Tree, as a prototype is visualized in the annals of human history and is envisaged in the pages of literary works of art. In the same way, the relevance between the Tree and the dream is found in the play, *Death of a Salesman* and this article has tried to highlight it validating the view of E R Wood that, "*Death of a Salesman* is a play which merits several readings and justifies much discussion and argument" (xxv). As seen, Adam was deceitfully tempted to eat the Fruit and thereby to lose all the divine bliss and blessings he was entitled to enjoy in the Garden. Being stripped of them, he was banished to till the earth and toil all his life to earn his living in the cursed inhospitable world. As the deadliest of all his punishments, he had to return to the ground: "for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" (Gen 3.19). Thus, Adam who wanted to become like gods pathetically found his place in a pit losing eternally God, Garden, ground, his wife, his children and even his life.

Likewise, Willy Loman yields to the temptation and sells himself to the dream. Eventually, he becomes a victim of the dream. He loses the opportunity to be "his true, more agrarian personality" (John S Shockley 49). Had he been true to it, it would have blessed him with health and happiness, contentment and co-existence. "... the whole flavour of the play would have been different if Willy had been a civil servant, say, or a school master" (E R Wood ix). Instead, he has become a salesman. This is how, "Willy Loman has given himself entirely to shallow dreams of commercial success that distort the characters of himself and his sons and that finally destroy him" (Arthur Ganz 125.) Willy Loman, who has aspired to reach the pinnacle of salesmanship, is pitifully pushed to the pit being deprived of the 'low man's possessions. "... as Mr Miler can say it," Brooks Atkinson writes, "dust returns to dust. Suddenly there is nothing" (At the Theatre). It is pathetic that Willy descends to the pit as a forgotten man with no one attending his funeral except Charley.

The Forbidden Tree brought the unbidden deception and division, and the hidden decay and death to Adam thus sealing his destiny for eternity. Similarly, the American dream of Willy repays him with unwelcome delusion and despair and unwarranted disease and decease. "...the hero [Willy] dies in the full flush of his illusion. (Bamber Gascoigne 177) announcing how deceit can devour the gullible and send him to the grave. Those who decide to be deceived by deceit deserve to be doomed.

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