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The process of Individuation in Willy Loman

A Jungian Archetypal Literary Analysis of the Protagonist in Arthur Miller's Play *Death of a Salesman* Compared to the Classical Hero of Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey*

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Abstract

This study is an archetypal literary analysis of Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* and Homer's *The Odyssey*. The analysis aims to demonstrate how Arthur Miller's protagonist, Willy Loman, in *Death of a Salesman* demonstrates several stages of Carl Gustav Jung's theory of the individuation process, similar to Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey*. This is done by identifying set archetypes and stages of Jung's individuation process, the persona, the shadow, the anima, and the self. After that, the stages are applied to both Miller's play and Homer's epic poem. The analysis shows that both protagonists demonstrate and complete Jung's individuation process. Willy Loman completes a symbolic journey, whereas Odysseus completes a physical one.

Keywords: Archetypal Literary Criticism, Jungian archetypes, Individuation, Willy Loman, *Death of a Salesman*, Odysseus, *The Odyssey*.

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Introduction

“But the further my investigation proceeded, the more clearly two things emerged. The first was that there are indeed a small number of plots which are so fundamental to the way we tell stories that it is virtually impossible for any storyteller ever entirely to break away from them” (Booker 15-16). This is a quote from Christopher Booker, the author of *The Seven Basic Plots, Why We Tell Stories* (2005). Booker states that there are fundamental stories which are re-used in literature. Booker also states that the more familiar we become with stories, the easier it becomes to recognize that there are forces, forms, and patterns which are beyond the conscious control of the storyteller (16). Booker describes it as a hidden and universal language, “[...] a nucleus of situations and figures which are the very stuff from which stories are made” (16). What Booker writes about could be called archetypal stories or archetypal plots. Booker is not the first to make this claim, which has also been made by authors such as Joseph Campbell, the author of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* first published in 1949. Like Booker, Campbell claimed that there are reoccurring patterns within heroic fiction but Campbell calls the concept *the hero’s journey* or *the monomyth*. Campbell’s concept refers to a set of phases or encounters that heroes go through in their journeys in the stories.

Before Booker and Campbell made their claims others also made claims that there are structures within literature which are reoccurring. This was first claimed in 1916 by psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung. Jung theorized that there are two types of unconscious within men, one personal and one collective. Where the collective unconscious inhabited structures and images that were reoccurring in all men, these structures or images were called archetypes. Archetypes are the basis of Jung’s archetypal literary criticism. Campbell’s notion of the hero’s journey and its set stages and phases of a heroic story is also similar to a concept created by Jung referred to as *the individuation process*. Individuation is a process that

undergoes several stages where one connects one's conscious and unconscious and becomes whole, similar to how a hero finally completes his or her heroic journey.

Jung's theory of the individuation process is the basis of this study. This study aims to analyze Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* and its protagonist, Willy Loman, and Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey* and its protagonist Odysseus, with the claim that the protagonist in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* demonstrates several stages of Jung's individuation process, similar to Odysseus in Homer's *The Odyssey*. The reason for choosing Miller's play for this thesis is also based on Miller's own words. In the essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949), Miller argues for the fact that a common man can be a hero in tragedy in contrast to history where tragic heroes were noble men, gods, demigods, and royals: "I believe that the common man is as apt a subject for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were". Therefore, putting Miller's protagonist Willy Loman, a common man, in contrast with the ancient and known hero Odysseus in Homer's ancient Greek tragedy, is of course, a very interesting comparison.

Archetypal Literary Criticism

One of the founders of archetypal theory is Carl Gustav Jung. Jung describes archetypes as innate structures in the human mind (Knox 12). Jung also believes that there are two separate forms of unconscious, the *personal unconscious*, and the *collective unconscious*. The personal unconscious accommodates personal experience and is acquired personally, while the collective unconscious is not individual but universal and images and structures are the same for all. The collective unconscious is what is now known as archetypes (Jung 3-4). In Anthony Steven's book *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology. Theory, Practice and Application* (2006) it is also mentioned that Jung believed that the images and structures which could be seen in the collective unconscious could also be found in myths, religion, and

fairytale (75). However, Steven also mentions that this was not the belief of all psychoanalysts. For example, Jung's colleague and friend, Sigmund Freud did not share Jung's vision. Freud was the founding father of psychoanalysis, a method used within psychiatry that has also influenced literary critics who have adopted its concepts in the form of *psychoanalytical literary criticism*. Psychoanalytical literary critics focus on interpreting texts to find the unconscious feelings or motives of either the author or those of the characters in literary works. Unlike Jung, Freud believed that the unconscious mind was entirely personal and individual. Freud also believed that the unconscious mind was made up of traumatic memories or repressed wishes (75). This inevitably created a conflict between the two analysts. This study will focus on Jung's ideas and concepts regarding archetypes and the collective unconscious.

In Jung's book *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1977) the phrase *Individuation process* is often mentioned. The basic idea of the individuation process is, as described by Jung, "[...] the process by which a person becomes a psychological 'individual,' that is, a separate, indivisible unity or "whole"" (275). It is also further described as a process that brings the unconscious ego forward to what we call reality. It is also mentioned that it is dangerous to suppress whatever the inner unconscious ego does contain (288). Although there is no exact reference to the number of stages included in the individuation process, Jung does mention this process throughout his works on the collective unconscious, and some phrases and archetypes that are repeatedly mentioned are the archetypes of *the persona*, *the shadow*, *the anima*, and *the self*. These can be seen as crucial archetypes and symbols that help people find their identities.

The archetype of the persona is briefly mentioned as the first obstacle before finding the person's unconscious and can therefore be interpreted as the first stage of the individuation process. Jung uses the metaphor of looking at a personal reflection on the

surface of water. When looking at one's reflection, one might be disappointed because "The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor" (20). That is, the persona is a mask used to cover one's true self. After being presented with the unconscious without the mask of the persona, one can see the shadow in the water reflection. The shadow is described as a test and can be interpreted as the second stage of the individuation process. The person who bears knowing and accepting one's shadow is the one who brings forward the personal unconscious (20). The shadow can also be further described with the help of Christopher Vogler, a movie writer who has written several guides and handbooks based on the research of mythologist and archetypal critic Joseph Campbell, the writer of *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Vogler (2007) describes the shadow as often manifested as a villain, antagonist, or enemy, but it can also be repressed feelings rooted in guilt or traumas of the hero (65-66).

The archetype of the anima is the third stage and is described by Jung as a soul whom many see as something wonderful, but as Jung mentions, "We should not forget that this kind of soul is a dogmatic conception whose purpose it is to pin down and capture something uncannily alive and active" (26). Further, Jung also describes the anima as often personified as a siren, mermaid, wood-nymph, grace, lamia or succubus whose goal is to infatuate young men and suck their life out of them (25). The anima can also be further explained with the help of Vogler (2007) who describes the anima as a shapeshifter who is often manifested as a love interest to the hero but who later shows a two-faced personality and turns against the hero (59). The last stage of the individuation process is one of fulfillment, or as mentioned by Jung, the becoming of the self (35). That is, the last stage is also the final stage of the entire process. One will combine unconsciousness and consciousness and create the self.

In summary, the individuation process can include many phases and several archetypes, and, while reading Jung's *The Archetype and the Collective Unconscious* (1977), one can identify essential stages that are also chosen because they can easily be identified and applied to the two literary works of this thesis and analysis. The four stages or phases chosen for the individuation process are: *the persona*, *the shadow*, *the anima*, and *the self*.

Analysis

In this chapter, Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* will be analyzed. The analysis will be structured by the phases of the individuation process. Each phase will deal with both Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and the character of Willy and how he encounters the archetype and the phase and Homer's *The Odyssey* and the character of Odysseus. After each of the four phases has been analyzed, the entire individuation process will be briefly summarized to create a picture of the importance of each phase to complete the individuation process.

The Persona

Jung (1977) describes the persona as the mask of the actor (20), that is, a mask a character puts on to hide his true self. However, one does not easily present one's persona because one must then risk a confrontation with oneself. Jung describes it as looking into water and seeing a reflection of oneself. First, you see the face which the world sees, the persona, and if confronting that face seen in the water, one will see the face underneath the persona (Jung 20).

The initial scenes of *Death of a Salesman* present two versions of Willy. This can be seen as Willy's persona and his true self. Willy's persona is the most prominent character which Willy presents throughout Miller's play. Willy's archetypal persona character is projected whenever he speaks of himself as a vital part of the company, or as a great

traveling salesman, a well-liked human being, and a great provider for his family. Willy speaks greatly of himself throughout the entire play and dislikes people who are not as successful as himself, such as Uncle Howard, who might have been successful, but he was never well-liked (Miller 23). However, the reader is also presented with a Willy who struggles with his persona, because every time it is questioned, he acts out aggressively, such as when Willy's neighbor Charley offers him a job (Miller 33, 76). Charley offering Willy a job is an indicator of his failure, and it removes Willy's persona and the mask of his successes, which do not exist. One can also see this when Linda questions him for being home early and she assumes that the car broke down or that Willy crashed the car once again (Miller 8). Linda questioning Willy in this manner is an indicator of his failure because he is no longer a young successful traveling salesman.

Contrary to Willy's archetypal persona, Willy's true archetypal self lies behind his mask and is presented in the initial scenes of Miller's play. At the beginning of the play, Willy is presented as a weak character who is incapable of driving his car, which is a vital part of his business as a traveling salesman. But one can also see Willy's true self during moments of weakness, for example, when being alone with Linda or his mistress when he confesses to being lonely, or when he admits to Linda that he was insecure about his looks (Miller 29). Willy's archetypal self will be described more thoroughly in a later part of the analysis.

In Stephen Marino's book, *Arthur Miller – Death of a Salesman/The Crucible* (2015), several studies on Miller's plays are presented. For example, Marino presents a study written by Michelle I. Pearson titled "John Proctor and the Crucible of Individuation in *The Crucible*". In Pearson's study the focus is not *Death of a Salesman* but another play written by Miller, *The Crucible*; however, interesting facts and examples of applying Jung's individuation process to a protagonist are presented. For example, Miller's protagonist in *The Crucible* is quite similar to Willy Loman, and one could say that Pearson's examples of John

Proctor's individuation process apply to Willy. Pearson argues that the persona which Proctor presents to society is of a respectable farmer and a hardworking man, while his true self is an adulterer and a lecher (Marino 107). The fact that Willy has two personalities is also further backed up by another study written by Stephen Barker and titled "The Crisis of Authenticity: *Death of a Salesman* and the Tragic Muse". In Barker's essay it is stated that "Willy from his first entrance on the stage, is in crisis and throughout the play 'gropes' his way to his downfall[...]" (Marino 95). Barker also further insists that *Death of a Salesman* dramatizes "the contemporary culture, which in turn is the perpetual crisis of authenticity that in itself is a crisis of identity" (Marino 96).

The initial scenes of *The Odyssey* are similar to Miller's play. The poem begins with Odysseus being absent, but throughout a journey made by his son, Telemachus, the reader is presented with a great and strong warrior, hero, and god-like man, while on the contrary, Odysseus himself is weak and has lost his ways during his journey home from the Trojan war. This can be seen in scenes where songs about his previous deeds are sung, but he cries because he no longer recognizes himself (Lawrence 81). Like Willy, Odysseus often reacts with anger when being questioned, such as when his sister's husband questions his actions and Odysseus responds by threatening to kill him (Lawrence 110). However, the difference between the two men is that Willy might show weakness as his true self, whereas Odysseus has lost his confidence and the strong and god-like version of him is his actual true self, and his weak version is his persona. One could also say that Odysseus presents different physical personas throughout Homer's poem by sometimes appearing in disguise and remaining hidden and unknown to people around him with the help of the goddess Athene, "Pallas Athene had thickened the air about him to keep him unknown while she made him wise of things. She would not have his wife know him, nor his townsmen, nor his friends, till

the suitors had discharged their forwardness” (Lawrence 138). In this passage, Athene creates a fog around Odysseus to hide him from townsmen and friends.

The Shadow

Jung describes the first confrontation with one’s self as the removal of the mask and the persona. During the removal one is presented with the true self of the character or oneself.

The second stage of the individuation process is that of the shadow. Even if the mask of the persona is removed, one is not left solely with the self, but we are also presented with the shadow that can either be accepted, which will help the character move forward in the individuation process, or denied, by projecting everything negative onto the environment (Jung 20). Vogler also describes the archetypal shadow as an enemy or repressed tormenting feelings such as guilt or traumas of the hero (65-66).

After a thorough reading of Miller’s play, one can identify two concerning characteristics of Willy. Firstly, he seems to have visions or hallucinations where he speaks and interacts with his dead brother, Ben. But he also appears to have visions or hallucinations of distant memories of the time when Happy and Biff were younger. Normally, of course, a man might reconcile with distant memories, but Willy seems to live in them. According to Barbara Lounsberry and her study “”The Woods are Burning”: Expressionism in *Death of a Salesman*”, Ben is a symbol who signifies the promise of wealth and material success but also death because he is the one who encourages Willy to take the final step to end his life (Marino 99). Lounsberry also agrees that the *nightmarish visions* are of symbolic nature (Marino 98), which further proves the fact that the visions or hallucinations Willy endures during the play must have a deeper meaning besides presenting Willy as delusional, crazy, or schizophrenic. One could see Ben as an archetypal shadow for Willy. Ben is a symbol of success, whereas Willy, without his archetypal persona, is quite aware of the fact that he is a failure. Ben is

therefore a symbol, a shadow, for what *could have been*. This is also further proven by a study presented by Marino and written by Gordon W. Couchman, titled “Arthur Miller’s Tragedy of Babbitt”. According to Couchman, similarities can be seen between George Babbitt, the protagonist in Sinclair Lewis’s novel *Babbitt*, and Willy Loman because of their wonderment of ‘what might have been’. Couchman also further describes Ben as a nagging reminder of the success ethic and Willy, like Babbitt, is haunted and tormented by what he could have done if he had not gone into the business world (Marino 55). That is, Ben is one, and the first, of Willy’s archetypal shadows that have to be faced in Miller’s play. Willy must accept the fact that his brother Ben is successful while he himself is not.

If one continues to interpret the visions and hallucinations seen by Willy, one can also find a second archetypal shadow. As mentioned earlier, Willy has two main visions, firstly, interacting with his dead brother Ben, and secondly, of previous times when his two sons were younger. The symbolic meaning of the second vision is of guilt; Willy goes back to this time because it was before he ruined Biff’s opportunity for success. When Biff was younger, he was a great football player and was on his way to receive a scholarship to play college football, but he was unable to receive his scholarship because he failed math. When Biff realized he was failing math, he ran off to Boston to ask his father for help. However, when seeing his father, he also became aware of Willy’s affair with another woman. When realizing his father was a liar and lived a fake life Biff no longer wanted his help because he believed the teacher would never listen to him either way (Miller 94-95). Therefore, Biff never received the help he needed from his father to help him finish high school, which causes great guilt in Willy. Willy therefore must accept and forgive himself to be able to overcome this archetypal shadow.

Furthermore, one could also say that Howard and Bernard are symbols for the same guilt and shame repressed by Willy in the archetypal shadow of the meeting with Biff in

Boston. According to D.L. Hoeveler and his study “*Death of a Salesman as a Psychomachia*” all of the characters in Miller’s play represent an abstract quality, that is, they all have a deeper meaning, and according to Hoeveler, “Bernard and Howard are sons and father in whom Willy sees the failure of his sons” (Marino 64). This conclusion further backs up the claim that Howard and Ben are also part of the archetypal shadow of guilt and shame felt and repressed by Willy.

Willy encounters two shadows, both presented in visions and hallucinations which are seen and heard only by Willy. These shadows have something in common because they are both built on shame and guilt. In her study on *The Crucible*, Pearson claims that John Proctor accepts his guilt, which also leads to self-discovery, self-recognition, and finally self-accepting (Marino 105). By accepting his guilt, and in this case, shame, one defeats the shadow. Also, as argued by Vogler, an archetypal shadow does not necessarily have to be a character or an enemy but can also be represented by repressed feelings rooted in guilt or traumas of the hero (Vogler 65-66).

In Homer’s *The Odyssey*, the shadow is presented quite differently. Of course one could see the poem as presenting the shadow of Odysseus and the idea that he might never be able to get back home to his wife and son and the guilt felt by him, or the fact that Odysseus seems to have lost his identity. However, the archetypal shadow of Odysseus can also be of a classical demon or monster, a creature that has to be defeated for the hero to be able to continue the journey and the process of individuation. As described by Vogler, the shadow is often manifested as a villain or enemy to the hero (65-66). In *Odysseus*, this shadow could be seen as represented by the cyclops *Polyphemus*, the son of Poseidon. Odysseus manages to overcome his shadow by defeating and escaping the Cyclops, which made it possible for him and his men to continue their journey home. Of course many other characters and beings in Homer’s epic poem could be seen as Odysseus shadow, such as the

goddess Calypso. But unlike the cyclops, Calypso releases Odysseus while Odysseus physically defeats the cyclops which saves all his men and also allows him to continue his journey home.

The Anima

The third phase of the individuation process is the meeting with the anima. Jung describes the encounter with the anima as a test of courage (29). Jung describes the archetype of the anima by recourse to the water imagery he used when describing the persona archetype. The anima archetype can be found in the water as a nixie, a female half-human fish who sometimes ends up in a fisherman's net (24). The anima can also be seen in sirens, mermaids, succubuses, and other mythical creatures who, as Jung explains it, "[...] [infatuate] young men and suck the life out of them" (25). However, from this definition one might see the anima as solely evil, but she can also appear as an angel of light (Jung 29). But when the man is with his anima, his character becomes soft, he becomes moody, vain, jealous, and touchy (Jung 70). The anima is often represented by the opposite sex (Jung 124). In a man, the archetype is called anima and is projected as female, but in a woman the projection is called animus and is projected as male. Considering this thesis deals with two male protagonists, the focus will be on the anima, and not the animus.

Throughout Miller's play, Willy encounters two women. If one defines the anima as a dark desire, the most iconic anima symbol in Miller's play is, of course, Willy's mistress. Willy's mistress is present throughout the play as visions and memories only heard and seen by Willy. For example, we can see her laughing while Willy confesses to Linda that he is insecure about his looks (Miller 29). But we are also presented with a second anima in Miller's play, Linda, Willy's wife. Linda takes an entirely different role compared to Willy's mistress, but these are the two women who are most impactful to Willy and the ones that are

given the most attention by Willy in the play. Marino also presents a study written by Frank Ardolino titled “Miller’s Poetic Use of demotic English in *Death of a Salesman*”. Ardolino claims that Willy’s mistress and wife are connected by symbolic imagery, such as the stockings (Marino 113). Linda mends her stocking, and Willy gives his mistress stockings.

Previously Pearson’s study on *The Crucible* was mentioned in regards to how the archetype of the self was represented in the play and how similarities can be seen in *Death of a Salesman*. According to Pearson the protagonist in *The Crucible* encounters two sides of the anima in his journey, one which can be seen as the dark side of the anima and the other as its light side (Marino 106). This same interpretation can be made in *Death of a Salesman*. Jung mentions a few characteristics to the archetypal dark anima; for example, it is someone who weakens the man and hurts the man (Jung 25 & 70). During Willy’s encounters with his mistress these characteristics are presented. Therefore, one could say that the dark side of the anima is Willy’s mistress. She is the dark side of the anima because she weakens Willy and compromises his persona by being the reason why Willy’s son, Biff, becomes aware of his father’s faults (Miller 94-95). But she also presents the weak Willy by listening to his confessions regarding his loneliness and troubles as a traveling salesman (Miller 29). That is, if the mistress did not exist Willy would not be presented to the reader as weak, aside from Willy’s conversations with his wife, Linda.

However, there can be a light counterpart. In Pearson’s study, the light side of the anima presents maturity, goodness, honesty, love, and wisdom (Marino 106). The light side of the anima can be seen in Willy’s wife, Linda. Linda plays a different role as the light side of the anima in comparison to Willy’s mistress. The characteristics mentioned in Pearson’s study in regards to the light anima can all be seen as projected in Linda. However, in “Linda’s role in *Death of a Salesman*”, Guerin Bliquez claims that Linda plays a significant role in Willy’s downfall. This is because Linda is blinded by her admiration and love for

Willy, which causes her to create a hero figure out of him and makes her repress his weaknesses (Marino 69). That is, even if Linda does fit the criteria mentioned by Pearson as suitable for a light anima, Linda might still have a negative effect on Willy. However, since the repression of Willy's weaknesses is created because of her blind love and admiration for Willy, the claim that she is a light anima is still substantial. Linda's love can be seen when she sings for Willy to help him sleep, but also in the way that she comforts him when he is insecure (Miller 29 & 54). Linda can also be seen as honest, compared to Happy and Biff who continuously lie to Willy. For example, even if the entire family is aware of the suicide attempts made by Willy, Linda is the only one who initially talks about it and therefore does not ignore or hide the fact that Willy needs help (Miller 47). According to Hoeverler and his study, Linda is also a symbol or a character who represents security (Marino 64), which further makes Linda an archetypal light anima.

In contrast, the anima which Odysseus encounters through *The Odyssey* is quite different. According to Carol Leader, the author of *The Odyssey—A Jungian perspective: Individuation and Meeting with the Archetypes of the Collective Unconscious* (2009), Odysseus meets several forms of the archetypal anima. For example, he encounters Calypso who keeps him from continuing his journey for many years, but he also meets Sirens who tries to seduce him with their singing (509). These two forms of the anima can all be seen as dark, in comparison to Willy who encounters two sides of the anima, one light, and one dark.

The Self

The final goal of the individuation process is to achieve the archetypal *self*, the meeting of the unconscious and the conscious. One could see this as the creation of awareness. The analysis has presented how the protagonist in Miller's play and the protagonist in Homer's epic poem

use personas to hide and disguise their true self. During this phase the persona should be removed, and the actual self should be presented and accepted.

Willy's self was briefly mentioned as a contrast to his archetypal persona earlier in the analysis. Willy's persona is that of a successful traveling salesman and provider, whereas his true self is a weak man who feels great shame, guilt, and has great insecurities. For example, as mentioned previously, Willy confesses to both his mistress but also Linda that he is very insecure about his looks, which is one part of his true self (Miller 29). But he is also a failure as a businessman because he has substantial problems with his economy, which can be seen when Willy must ask Charley for money to be able to pay his insurance (Miller 75). During the conversation with Charley we also see Willy struggling with his persona and his true self. He presents characteristics of his persona by being proud and not accepting a job offer by Charley and insisting that he is a successful traveling salesman, while on the contrary he also presents himself as weak and in desperate need of help by asking for money and mentioning the fact that he was just fired.

After confessing to Charley that he was fired from his job, Willy continues his day and meets his sons for lunch, where he again confesses his true self by also admitting to them that he was fired, "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 any story left in my head, Biff [...]" (Miller 84). During the conversation something else becomes clear: Willy fears to present his true self to his wife, he feels guilt and shame that she has been faithful to him all these years and he once again has failed her, and he no longer has any stories, lies, left to tell her. After the lunch, Willy has a grave vision or hallucination, which once again symbolizes guilt. The vision is from Boston when Biff became aware of his mistress. After the memory has been presented, Willy states that he no longer needs money and goes home, and, continuously confused, he has a long conversation

with Ben while doing garden work (Miller 96 & 99-101). In a sense, this conversation shows a Willy that accepts the fact that he is a failure. The conversation leads to Ben being able to convince Willy that it is a good idea to take his life because he is a failure, and his last act should be to help Biff succeed. By taking his life, Biff will receive insurance money, which will hopefully help him achieve his dream and to find success. We are also presented with a final intense scene between Biff and Willy where Willy becomes aware of the fact that Biff loves him, which finally releases him from the guilt and shame created by knowing he destroyed all chances Biff had to achieve success (Miller 106).

Willy's archetypal self is very similar to the archetypal self analyzed in Pearson's study of *The Crucible*. Pearson concludes that Proctor becomes complete by accepting himself, "[he] can stand tall and proud, as opposed to the shame and guilt he felt, and has become a fully integrated individual" (Marino 107). Once again, Pearson's study, despite being on a different play by Miller, shows similarities between the two protagonists and helps identify that Willy Loman undergoes a process of individuation. Marino also presents a study written by Christopher Bigsby, *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*, where Bigsby claims that Willy's suicide is an attempt to "justify his life and expiate what he sees as his responsibility for his son's willful self-annihilation" (Marino 68). That is, Bigsby claims that Willy takes his life as the last chance of redemption and restitution for his betrayal and failure, which is similarly claimed by another study written by Robert Martin, "The Nature of Tragedy in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*". Martin claims that Willy's suicide is not a way to escape or an act of desperation but rather a sacrifice for the good of the family and for Biff, "Martin judges that in this act the common man has gained a kind of noble stature in acting heroically in facing death" (Marino 96-97). This is also something which Miller himself discusses in his essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949): Miller argues that the genre and mode of tragedy is archaic, obsolete, because tragedy

is commonly seen as story built on heroes who are royals, noblemen, gods, and demigods of the past, and since stories are no longer written with a focus on characters of this kind tragedies are rarely written. But Miller also argues for a new era of tragedy where a tragic hero does not need to be of a higher stature but instead can be a common man. In this scene where Willy sacrifices himself Miller proves that modern common men can be tragic heroes just like in past tragedies. Willy is made aware of his faults, he is released of the guilt by being forgiven by Biff, and he is also released of the guilt by being made aware of the love Biff feels for him. In the awareness of his completion, Willy decides to perform a heroic gesture in which he sacrifices himself for the better good of the family. His last sacrifice might help Biff succeed, and henceforth, Biff's success might help the entire Loman family. But in the end Biff decides to leave the city and therefore also leave the Loman family without any money and Willy remains as much a failure in death as he was when alive.

In Odysseus's case, he is finally able to accept and present his true self in the ending scenes of Homer's poem. During this scene, he completes his journey and establishes his identity as the true king, the strong and god-like Odysseus. As stated by Leader, "Next day, the suitors all fail even to string the bow but, as soon as Odysseus picks it up, he strings it skillfully and then shoots an arrow straight through twelve axes that have been set up as a part of the test. The challenge can only be met by the true king whose identity is now unquestionably established" (513). By completing the last challenge and proving himself, Odysseus has now completed his individuation process and has gained his rightful place on the throne again.

The Process and the Journey of Individuation.

The process of individuation is, as mentioned earlier, a process of becoming whole and accepting one's conscious and unconscious. During the journey, or process, one must

complete a few set stages, which in this case were encountering and accepting the archetypal persona, the archetypal shadow, the archetypal anima and lastly the archetypal self. In previous parts of the analysis each of the four stages, their characters, actions, and symbols have been mentioned. In this part of the analysis, the four parts will be put together to be able to understand the importance of all parts in relation to each other.

Willy Loman begins the play as a lost man. The reader is made aware of this by Miller's way of presenting Loman as weak and delusional, and by making us aware of Willy's flaws by presenting hallucinations or visions of distant memories from Willy's past. The reader of the play is presented a clear vision of the two parts of Willy, a self, and a persona. If Miller had not written Willy's hallucinations or visions, it would have been harder to see that there were two sides of Willy, but not impossible. Willy would have still been hurt when questioned, and he would have also still had to go to Charley and ask for financial help. Miller chose to present the reader with the two versions of Willy early, which makes the analysis of the process straightforward because it is chronological. We are presented with Willy as a split man; therefore, the next step is to find out why. What is the reason behind Willy's delusional character and hallucinations? To answer this question, one should look for the archetypal shadow, which will project what is tormenting Willy. In meeting the shadow once again, the hallucinations or visions are quite important. The visions present us with a distant memory of Biff becoming aware of Willy's affair. This is a memory of great shame and guilt for Willy, and therefore also symbolizes one of his shadows. In the hallucinations, we are also presented with Ben, Willy's brother, who is another archetypal shadow for Willy. Ben symbolizes Willy's failure as a traveling salesman, as a successful man, and as a provider for his family. Without Miller's use of hallucinations, the two archetypal shadows for Willy would have been harder to locate, yet not impossible. Biff speaks of lies throughout Miller's play, and during these moments it terrifies Willy, such as the ending scene where Biff wants them to

talk to Linda together, but it terrifies Willy, probably because he does not want Linda to know that he was fired, but he especially does not want Linda to know about the affair (Miller 102). Ben is also presented outside of the hallucinations or visions, for example, when Willy is seen as remorseful in a conversation with Happy in the initial parts of the play where he wishes that he would have gone to Alaska with Ben (Miller 32). The functions of the shadows are that they create guilt and shame in Willy, feelings which torment him and which need to be removed in order to achieve the true self and complete the process. To do so, one needs to accept the shadows, which Willy does at the end of the play during the lunch with his two sons, and the final intense conversation between him and Biff.

The third stage of the analysis and the process of individuation is the meeting with the anima. Willy encounters two females throughout Miller's play, his mistress and his wife. These two women are in ways equal but serve different purposes. For example, one could say that Willy is drawn to both women because of loneliness and because they make him feel needed. However, according to a study titled "Shame, Guilt, Empathy, and the Search for Identity in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*", written by Fred Ribkoff, Willy is not drawn to the mistress because of loneliness, "but in reality she is a relief for his feeling of inadequacy and failure because she makes him feel important and powerful" (Marino 109). That is, Willy uses his mistress to create a place where he is not a failure as a traveling salesman, whereas the second anima, his wife, is very aware of their situation. However, because Linda is aware, it creates a place where Willy is quite confident and a place where he can always go when he needs someone to take care of him, which is seen by Linda helping Willy sleep by singing or offering him aspirin for his pain (Miller 9 & 54). The function of the anima is that it creates space where the protagonist can be weak and be presented without the archetypal persona. Therefore, the function of the anima is to present a protagonist who is similar to the one that is finally achieved in the archetypal self.

Lastly, the fourth and last phase is that of the encounter with the archetypal self. After being presented with a split Willy through Miller's entire play, we now see an accepting and, in some ways, relaxed, Willy. During the encounter with the persona, the shadows, and the animas Willy seems stressed and there is much guilt. Willy in a way accepts the fact that he will not be successful, and he is finally allowed to spend time in his back yard and do garden work, "WILLY[...]Here – here's some more, I don't need it any more (*After a slight pause.*) Tell me – is there any seed store in the neighborhood?" (Miller 96). Willy gives all his money to the waitress, Stanley, because he no longer needs success, he needs his seeds. But his true self is realized in the fact that Biff no longer blames him. He is finally released from the guilt and the shame and the possibility that he ruined Biff's life. Biff wants to break free from his father's demands, but, when separating from his father, he also releases Willy from his tormenting guilt. However, despite accepting himself, Willy still decides to take his life. Even if he can live without the guilt, he still wants to help Biff succeed, because if Biff succeeds, maybe the entire Loman family will finally succeed.

This essay is a comparison between the protagonist in Homer's classic and epic poem *The Odyssey* and Miller's protagonist in the play *Death of a Salesman*. The thesis argues that the protagonist in both of the works undergoes and experiences Jung's individuation process. Miller's does so, but still in a very tragic manner because despite accepting himself and finally separating from his repressed feelings, shame, and guilt, Willy still decides to take his own life, whereas Homer's Odysseus undergoes a similar process but with a different outcome. Odysseus is presented as a split man, the reader is presented with a god-like man, but we are also presented with a weak and tragic man who is lost. Odysseus manages to encounter and physically defeat his archetypal shadow. During his journey home, and towards individuation, he also encounters several archetypal animas. He is captured but manages to escape the great Calypso, and he also manages to defeat the Sirens and not be

mesmerized by their seductive singing. After managing to overcome both his archetypal shadow and anima he makes it home and by presenting his great god-like strength he is presented as his true self. With psychological strength, he has managed to complete all four phases of the individuation process.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman* with a theoretical focus of archetypal literary criticism and Carl Gustav Jung's individuation process. The analysis was centered on the protagonist Willy Loman and his transformation throughout Miller's play. Willy's transformation was also compared with the great Odysseus, the protagonist, and hero of Homer's epic poem *The Odyssey*. Jung's individuation process was summarized with a focus on four archetypes, four phases, which had to be encountered and faced in order to complete the process, the first phase was of the archetypal persona, the second phase was of the archetypal shadow, the third phase was that of the archetypal anima, and lastly, the fourth phase was that of the archetypal self.

The analysis found evidence that both protagonists, Willy Loman and Odysseus, do complete Jung's process of individuation. However, they take a very different journey through their separate lives. Odysseus takes a mythical journey in which he encounters demons and monsters that he physically has to face and beat in order to continue his journey home and to complete his individuation process, whereas Willy Loman does complete his journey in an entirely different way. He never has to psychically encounter, face, nor beat any monsters or demons. However, he does have to face repressed feelings of guilt represented and projected into both his archetypal persona, his archetypal shadows, and his archetypal animas. This result is consistent with what Miller states in his essay "Tragedy and the Common Man" (1949). Miller argues that tragedies are no longer written because they are all

based on heroes who are royals, gods, demigods, like Odysseus. Odysseus does complete his journey in a more common heroic manner since he does physically defeat demons and monsters through his journey towards individuation. However, this does not diminish Willy's tragic story in his journey through individuation and completion.

The two protagonists complete two different journeys, but they are both introduced in a very similar manner. They are both men with split personalities; Willy has a weak and insecure side, but also a very demanding and proud side, which makes him believe he is the best traveling salesman, father, and provider there is. By contrast, Odysseus is absent through most of Homer's epic poem and is presented as god-like and incredible. However, when the reader is presented with Odysseus in person, he is weak and lost. But through his journey, he once again finds his strength, and is able to complete his journey home and finds himself once again placed on the throne which he has rightfully earned. On the other hand, Willy has to encounter archetypal shadows, archetypal animas, and his archetypal self before being able to understand his actual worth. Willy is finally able to release his guilt in the very end of Miller's play when Biff finally forgives him, and Willy realizes that he has the opportunity to make everything better for everyone and as a last foolish attempt he takes his life for the good of his family. However, before taking his life we are presented with Willy as his true self, he is forgiven by Biff, and he realizes that despite his faults he can finally release his guilt because, despite everything that has happened, Biff still loves him.

In continuance of this study, one could focus on other characters in Miller's and Homer's work. For example, a more typical analysis of Jungian individuation process could have been applied to Biff Loman, Willy's son, and Biff could have been compared to Odysseus's son, Telemachus, two characters who also take great journeys of self-discovery through both literary works. One could have also chosen to analyze the play in a Freudian manner since Freud, in contrast to Jung, believes that archetypes are solely made and seen

through the personal unconscious and on an individual level. But Freud also believes, as mentioned in the initial parts of the archetypal literary criticism chapter of this essay, that archetypes within the unconscious are created by either repressed wishes or traumatic memories. Therefore, since many of Willy's troubles are deeply rooted in guilt and repressed feelings, a Freudian perspective could have been made on the analysis.

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