

LANGUAGE A LITERATURE
ENGLISH
HIGHER LEVEL
PAPER 2
CANDIDATE SCRIPT X

"Techniques of characterization in drama are often directed to foregrounding an overall driving theme or idea. Using two plays you have studied show how the presentation of a character or characters can serve such a purpose."

The presentation of Willy Loman, the protagonist of *Death of a Salesman*, personifies the themes of the play. Though Willy's presentation with his constant "rememberings," the audience learns that life in the past was not as positive as Willy's rememberings, first suggesting that Willy was not as close to Ben as he seems to portray. Through the same techniques of "a mobile concurrency of time," (Miller, *Collected Plays*, 1958) the audience also learns of the development of Willy's pride, his hubris. This is a central part of the presentation of Willy's character, and one which illustrates what leads to the guilt that eventually culminated in his suicide, Miller's characterization of Willy allows the playwright to explore Willy's inability to adapt to the changing world—"how can they whip cheese?" The contradictory aspect of Willy's character is symbolized in his appraisal of Biff as "a lazy bum," followed by the near-immediate statement that there's "one thing about Biff – he's not lazy. These contradictions, another part of Willy's character, are also symbolic of the conflicts within the play and Willy's interior life. Such conflicts are found in the divide between truth and lies—between Willy's love for Linda and his affair with "the woman."

Biff, on the other hand, is presented in a manner which contradicts Willy. Whilst Willy holds Biff in high esteem, Biff breaks down the lies and illusion, revealing to Willy that they are both "a dime a dozen." This aspect of his character contrasts bitterly with Willy—whilst Willy is happy to protect himself with illusion, Biff destroys that barrier. He admits that he is a failure, that he has never had a job that pays more than "a buck an hour," whilst Willy still persists—"that boy will be magnificent." Through Biff, Miller challenges Willy's pride. Biff suggests that he become a carpenter, but Willy argues "your grandfather was better than a carpenter."

In a similar fashion, the presentation of Alan and Dysart work in tandem in *Equus* to convey the themes of the play. Alan is presented as a boy, who, through the actions of his parents and lost and then found different forms of "worship." Shafer presents Alan in such a manner that the audience may understand that through the removal of the picture of "our Lord on his way to Calvary" and his father's repressive attitude toward religion, he finds a new worship in "Equus the God." Through the use of psychological techniques, such as hypnosis and the giving of "the old placebo pill," Shaffer presents Alan's character in a light which elucidates the turmoil in his mind. Alan's reenactment of parts his life, such as

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his first encounter with a horse, or the 'stabbing' of horses, demonstrates the physical effects of his worship of Equus.

As Alan progresses through therapy, Dysart's presentation challenges the audience. Dysart reacts to Alan – eventually realizing that he has met Alan's "double" in himself, and that he too envies the "chains of worship" he is envious of in Alan. Alan and Hesther are used to provoke Dysart to reveal, through dramatic monologue and soliloquy, that his marriage is unhappy, his life worshipless, and raises fundamental questions about his job. Shaffer presents Dysart's dream as a symbol of problems in his job, 'tearing the insides out' of a 'herd of about five hundred children.' This reflects Dysart's feeling that he is doing a job in which he has no confidence – that he can 'take away feeling' but that they cannot be 'reattached like sticking plasters.' These problems add to the dramatic force of the play by challenging the audience to consider the problems themselves. Similarly, Dysart questions the concept of normality in his closing monologue. Directed at the audience, this aspect of his presentation challenges the audience to ask themselves if Alan can be 'returned' to a 'normal' world of 'multilane highways,' conflict and decay. His presentation suggests that Alan had security in his worship, yet the world he is asked to return him to is worshipless and bears other 'chains.'