

Arthur Miller @ 100

by Richard Kostelanetz (December 2015)

We were all going slightly crazy trying to be honest and trying to see straight and trying to be safe. Sometimes there are conflicts in these three urges.

—Arthur Miller on the 1950s

Every time I hear his single most famous play, *Death of a Salesman*, characterized as a critique of American capitalism or even of traveling salesmen, I cringe, because I know that isn't finally true. More pointedly, can we agree that the play exposes a business in which workers are fired easily, often for trivial hurtful reasons. The contrast is meant to be socialism, if not communism, where citizens have "job security." [more>>>](#)