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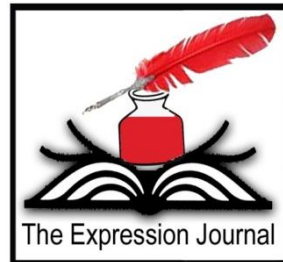
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AN ECOLOGICAL VIEWPOINT ON THE COEXISTENCE OF MAN AND NATURE IN ARTHUR MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN*

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Abstract

This focus of this paper is on analyzing the unbalanced ecological tensions that arise between Man and Nature in Arthur Miller's play *Death of a Salesman*. Miller illustrates to the audience both how societal progress destroys environment and how immensely beautiful and happy nature is for humans. The protagonist, Willy Loman, becomes a victim of the deteriorating natural environment in which American society lives as a result of the civilization's rapid expansion. He seems tense and afraid, like an animal in a box. The nightmare of the modern metropolis stands between man and nature's intimacy. Arthur Miller examines the unbalanced relationship between man and nature in *Death of a Salesman*. The author depicts here the the unbalanced man and excessive urbanization, industrialization, and commercialization's ecological conflicts. Man has destroyed nature in search of ease and comfort in modern life, as industrialization has continued to accelerate in the middle and late 20th centuries. Ecofeminism, which links the environmental movement with the women's movement, arose during a historical turning point in which the conflicts between nature and humanity grew more intense. The well-known tragic drama *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller explores a variety of ecofeminist themes, from the downtrodden weak to the harmony between women and nature, as well as men's dominance over women and the natural world. This essay aims to investigate the ecofeminist ideas expressed in *Death of a Salesman* by analyzing the film from an ecofeminist perspective utilizing the exemplification approach. Accordingly, this article discovered that *Death of a Salesman* suggests dominance within them and depicts the conflicts between nature and humanity as well as between men and women.

Keywords

Ecology, American society, Urbanization, Imbalance, Industrialization



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Humans are experiencing enormous ecological and environmental issues at the same time that they are enjoying a colorful and plentiful life thanks to scientific advancements and technological developments. The relationship between nature and humans becomes more and more tense. To stop environmental deterioration, certain specialized organizations have suggested striking a balance between human activity and the natural world. Women initiate initiatives to urge more people to safeguard the environment since they are the ones who first discover the negative impacts of environmental issues. Women of all races, ages, and social classes learn that they have a shared future with nature under human dominance and with those who oppress them as patriarchs; for this reason, environmental activism is a feminist agenda in the fight against environmental degradation. Denying the distinctions between humans and the natural world, as well as those within the human race, is not the goal of ecofeminism. On the other hand, it promotes creating communities and conceiving up novel approaches to life on Earth. Their primary ideas are: Firstly, the goal of ecofeminists is to draw attention to the historical, intellectual, and experiential linkages that exist between the dominance of nature and the control of women. Second, and somewhat connected to the first, ecofeminists aim to dismantle hierarchical dualisms and the dominance logic that underpins them; third, they aim to highlight the linkages between and among different types of oppression. In conclusion, the ecofeminist perspective holds that feminism must remove this entire mentality and embrace the ideal of egalitarianism, as opposed to only correcting the inequity of gender relations. Arthur Miller's Willy Loman, arguably the most well-known salesperson in American theatre history, is fired from his position of over 35 years, and his two sons desert him in a restaurant bathroom. He laments, "Nothing is planted. Nothing is in the ground that I own" (Miller 122). Many analysts have pointed to a competitive economic system, Willy's misplaced dreams, or a mix of the two as the cause of Willy's dilemma and eventual suicide since the 1949 debut of *Death of Salesman*. However, Willy's complaint that he has nothing "in the ground" has subsequently been taken more literally by certain detractors, who contend that his issues are ecological as well as sociological or psychological. One thing Jon

Dietrick has observed is Willy's apparent detachment from the natural world. Furthermore, Theresa May illustrates how Willy's damaged relationships with a variety of human and non-human entities (flowers, elm trees, his family, and his boss) have all contributed to his loss of ecological situatedness by utilizing the notion of social ecology. Willy expresses environmental concerns and values throughout the play, so it is appropriate for these scholars to focus on his feelings of displacement. He not only laments the overdevelopment of his massacred Brooklyn neighborhood, where the grass don't grow anymore" and you have to break your neck to see a star, but he also becomes enamored with the scenery while taking a car trip to New England. At a particularly exuberant moment, he even fantasizes about getting a little place out in the country" where he may "raise some vegetables". Given how inconsistent he is most of the time, we could assume that Willy is just being inconsistent when he expresses his yearnings for the pastoral life, which are to succeed in the "business world," acquire the newest consumer goods associated with that success, and take pleasure in the healthful pleasures of nature. Essentially, one could presume that Willy's consumerism conflicts with his environmentalist beliefs or what May refers to as the longings of his ecological self.

Environmental criticism, sometimes referred to as "green" criticism or eco criticism, is a fast developing area of literary analysis that examines how humans interact with their surroundings. Environmental critics study how nature and the natural world are imagined through literary texts, as noted by Cheryll Glotfelty in the introduction to the Eco criticism Reader. "Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective . . . and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts" (Fromm and Glotfelty 115). Similar to how gender stereotypes are evolving, these literary representations are not the product of certain societies. Thus, literary history is a great place to start if we want to understand our attitude toward the environment now. Humans are experiencing enormous ecological and environmental issues at the same time that they are enjoying a colorful and plentiful life thanks to scientific advancements and technological developments. There is a growing tension in the relationship between humans and nature. Americans had experienced both the Great Depression and World War II in 1949. The American Dream, which holds that anybody may achieve a better life through perseverance, hard effort, and thrift, was dashed. Humans are experiencing enormous ecological and environmental issues at the same time that they are enjoying a colorful and plentiful life thanks to scientific advancements and technological developments. The relationship between nature and humans becomes more and more tense. To stop environmental deterioration, certain specialized organizations have suggested striking a balance between human activity and the natural world. Women initiate initiatives to urge more people to safeguard the environment since they are the ones who first discover the negative impacts of environmental issues. Women of all colors, ages, and social classes learn that they have a shared future with nature under human dominance and with women oppressed by patriarchy; for this reason, environmental activism is a feminist agenda in the fight against environmental degradation.

Arthur Miller was inspired by his personal experiences to write the renowned sad play, *Death of a Salesman*, which tells the melancholic tale of the collapse of the American Dream. Furthermore, this drama mirrors the downtrodden weak and nature that is exploited. Man has destroyed nature in search of convenience and comfort in modern living, as industrialization accelerated in the middle and late 20th centuries. For example, Willy once gripes about

laborers felling trees in order to construct homes. In a manner akin to nature's exploitation, women are subjugated by the patriarchal system, which grants men authority over them. Furthermore, matrimonial relationships and social standing are also manifestations of this type of oppression, which is seen in this drama. A word that unites feminism with ecology is ecofeminism. The phrase was first used in 1947 by French author Françoise d'Eaubonne as part of her appeal for women to protect the environment. Ynestra King later developed it, and in 1980 it was adopted as a movement. Following around three decades of development, ecofeminism reached a mature state. It's the elevating of the two aforementioned fields, not just the quantity of feminism and ecology. The tragic protagonist of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, Willy Loman, is wrecked by false dreams. His steadfast adherence to the maxim "Be liked, be successful" is frequently interpreted as an odd fusion of "materialistic" and "humanitarian" ideals. But a deeper examination of Willy's tragedy brings to light an implicit theme of ecological deterioration that coexists with Willy's psychological breakdown. The modern materialistic society's anthropocentric approach brutally destroys the long-standing human-natural relationship and pushes humanity down the entropic abyss, as Miller foresaw in Willy Loman's ecological angst.

All forms of cultural dominance, including racism, sexism, class oppression, and the exploitation of the environment, are criticized by ecofeminism. The American people experiences a sharp decline in sales, an unhappy marriage, and a tumultuous connection with his sons. This drama mirrors the nature of the oppressed weak and nature that is exploited. Man has destroyed nature in the mid- and late-20th centuries as industrialization has accelerated further in search of comfort and ease in modern living. Willy once grumbled about workers cutting down trees to make way for dwellings. Like the nature that is exploited. The United States emerged from World War II as one of the world's most powerful nations. As a result, the Americans adopted many new techniques and contemporary amenities. For example, Willy's family owns a refrigerator, a washing machine, and a vacuum cleaner. But modern civilization has taken over and devastated the land to build roads, and they have chopped down trees to build buildings. To put it simply, they devoured nature to create an iron city. Arthur Miller tells the tale of the Lowman family, a typical American family. Willy is a very ambitious individual who ultimately failed in business. His wife Linda is a devoted, thoughtful, and powerful woman who constantly looks out for the family and supports her husband no matter what. The older son of Willy, Biff, is a truly frail and sticky-fingered man who loves his father but never fails to disappoint him. Willy's second kid, Happy, is a man who enjoys smoking but has never achieved success. It told the tale of 64-year-old salesman Willy Lowman who, because to his two sons' passivity, must travel and make sales every day in order to support his family. He possesses a massive power. As noted by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*. "Either nature seems to be all that Willy has been longing for throughout this drama."

Willy bemoans "the way they boxed us in there with bricks and windows and bricks" in Act I (de Beauvoir 14). These phrases presented a vivid image of city life. Willy is imprisoned inside the tiny brick "boxes," with just the windows providing access to the outside world. Denying the distinctions between humans and the natural world, as well as those within the human race, is not the goal of ecofeminism. On the other hand, it promotes creating communities and conceiving up novel approaches to life on Earth. Their primary ideas are as follows: first, ecofeminists aim to highlight the historical, conceptual, and experiential

connections between women's dominance over nature; second, and somewhat related to the first, they want to dismantle hierarchical dualisms and the logic of dominance that sustains them; and third, they want to highlight the connections between and among different types of oppression throughout the World War II and the Great Depression. The American Dream, which holds that anyone may live a better, more comfortable life through diligence, thrift, and willpower, was dashed. Arthur Miller, who lived through a turbulent time and was influenced by his personal experiences, penned the well-known tragedy *Death of a Salesman*, which conveyed to audiences the depressing tale of the collapse of the American ideal. Salesman Willy Loman experiences a sharp decline in sales, an unhappy marriage, and a tumultuous connection with his sons, all of which inevitably result in his suicide.

But is the environment outside the windows truly the natural world? Definitely not there are many cars lining the street. The neighborhood is devoid of any fresh air" (Miller 14). Without a question, cars provide some convenience, but they also contribute to pollution. These exhaust gases enter the air we breathe after being released from the cylinders. Because of the contaminated air that permeates everything, either she yields to man's desire and allows assimilation, making it impossible for him (man) to own her without also killing her, or she is an impersonal barrier and remains foreign. (Miller13). Examining the Natural Ecology Symbols within Following a salesman's death, Willy frequently has flashbacks to the past. His backyard serves as the primary setting for most of his dreams. "The grass doesn't grow any more. Remember those elm trees out there? Do you still recall the two elm trees outside? It was wisteria and lilac this time of year. Next, the daffodils and peonies would emerge. This room smells so good! (Miller 5) "The warm air bathes me in the symbols of nature that are my backyard memories" (Miller 14). His delusion of the lovely surroundings expresses his desire for a pastoral lifestyle and for taking a vacation.

Additionally, there is a phrase in the play's opening. "A tune is audible, performed on a flute" (Miller14). In actuality, Willy experiences auditory hallucinations and hears the tune in his head. In most rural areas, one may typically hear the sound of a flute playing a melody. Willy's subliminal longing to enjoy nature is hidden. As mentioned above, nature plays a significant part in *Death of a Salesman*. On the one hand, humans have not used it much, but on the other hand, it protects human souls. Bad air and "box-like" housing are byproducts of industrialization and urbanization, whereas fresh air is what keeps people's souls healthy. "The grass don't grow anymore, you can't raise a carrot in the backyard" (Miller14), as a result of these industrial items. The weak are comforted by nature, which provides, nurtures, and feeds them. When confronted with harsh realities, the protagonist Willy attempted to find solace in nature.

He thought he saw lovely countryside while traveling to New York, but it turned out to be an illusion. The sun was warm and the trees were so thick, he observed. "I rolled down the windshield and let it go. As a result, Willy claims that there is proof that humans exploited nature by upsetting natural order and creating human laws."(Miller 68) The United States emerged from World War II as one of the world's most powerful nations. As a result, the Americans adopted many new techniques and contemporary amenities. Willy's family, for example, owns a refrigerator, a washing machine, and a vacuum cleaner. But the contemporary lifestyle Americans enjoyed came at the expense of the natural world. They cleared trees to build dwellings, and they occupied and demolished the property to build roads. They basically destroyed the natural world to construct an iron-steel city. Willy bemoans, "The way they

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boxed us in there," in Act I. Windows and bricks, brickwork and windows. These phrases presented a vivid image of city life. People like Willy are confined to the tiny brick "boxes," with windows serving as their only access to the outside. But is that the true outside world as depicted in the windows? There are cars lining the street. Not a breath of fresh air can be found in the neighborhood. Without a question, cars provide some convenience to individuals, but they also contribute to pollution. These exhaust gases enter the air we breathe after being removed from the cylinders. Actually, the amount of air pollution caused by car exhaust gas is very small when compared to the amount of air pollution caused by industrial waste. Humans cannot breathe clean air since it is so polluted everywhere. Bad air quality and "box-like" housing are byproducts of industrialization and urbanization. As a result of these industrial products one can't raise a carrot in the backyard and the grass doesn't grow anymore. Willy is complaining about evidence that shows how humans abused nature by destroying natural order and imposing human norms.

In a patriarchal society, it is assumed that men are superior to women, that the rich are superior to the poor, that white people are superior to black people, and so on. More valuable refers to something that is not just stronger but also inherently more value, worthy of authority and privilege. More valuable males blatantly display patriarchal society's sexist prejudice. May claims that after World War II, Americans jumped right into starting families. More housewives result from expanding families. One of these family angels in the patriarchal American society is Willy's devoted and devoted wife Linda. Linda dedicated her life to her husband and their two sons; she is a lovely, compassionate, and selfless woman. Being a mother and a wife placed a lot of responsibility on Linda Loman. In keeping with the expectations of conventional women, Linda had to put up with her husband's minor cruelties and bad temper as a wife and mother. When her husband's enormous ambition failed to materialize, she had to console him. She needed to ease the tension that existed between her sons and her husband. Her sons' futures were something she had to think about. She was a nice wife and mother, living in a patriarchal society, and she unavoidably had aphasia. Despite her efforts to uphold patriarchal ideals and be a decent mother and wife, she eventually developed aphasia. As a decent wife and mother while adhering to the patriarchal mindset, she unavoidably suffered from speech impediment. Linda informed Willy she had a new kind of American cheese when she attempted to pull him away from painful recollections. Willy became enraged about that and exclaimed, "Why do you get American when I like Swiss?" Change is not what I want! Swiss cheese, please. While switching out cheese is a typical occurrence, Willy's quick thinking is not. It displays Linda's familial situation. She is probably a housekeeper rather than a hostess. Even worse, Willy had a romantic relationship with the woman in Boston. Willy revealed this information to Biff and said that he was terribly lonely. Linda was undoubtedly aware of what transpired in Boston, but she chose to keep quiet about it to protect their family's stability. In conclusion, Linda suffered numerous psychological wounds as a result of Willy's abuse and treachery. Willy acknowledges that Linda has experienced pain. Linda is a broken family angel and a victim of patriarchal culture. Women are seen as sexual tools by others outside of the household. Willy slept with "the women" in Boston in an attempt to get over his loneliness. Given that she works, "the woman" gives off the impression of being both spiritually and financially independent, as seen by the fact that she believes she chose Willy for this affair. But when "the woman" asks Willy where her stockings are, which he promised, the viewer eventually learns that they are meeting for financial gain. Even though they were very

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expensive, stockings in the 1940s attracted a lot of female devotees. Stockings purchased at the expense of one's own physique reflect "the woman's" financial predicament. Her economic predicament forces her to seek for strong masculine protection, which oppresses her and contributes to her financial predicament. She takes advantage of a vicious cycle in the patriarchal society. Happy, Willy's second son, is a man of pleasure who has dedicated his life to the unrelenting quest of physical gratification. With his heightened feeling of rivalry, he wooed Charlotte, the vice president of the store's fiancée. Happy stated, "I went and ruined her, and furthermore I can't get rid of her," (Miller 45) while discussing that. Happy, Willy's second son, is a man of pleasure who has dedicated his life to the unrelenting quest of physical gratification. With his heightened feeling of rivalry, he wooed Charlotte, the vice president of the store's fiancée. Happy stated that he went and ruined her, and furthermore he can't get rid of her, while discussing that. He's also the third executive he had done it with. The word "ruin" refers to the situation of women in the patriarchal culture. Men see women as nothing more than objects that are theirs. Because of their inferior status, they have the power to ruin them, humiliate them, and do whatever else to them. Regarding the two girls who hang out with Biff and Happy, they are simply thought of as "easy girls" who they can have sex with without much difficulty. In summary, Linda, the "family angel" in *Death of a Salesman*, is ensnared by the traditional feminine value that expects women to be decent mothers and wives. Despite not being constrained by conventional values, the Woman, Charlotte, and the other two girls—the "devils"—submit to males.

Death of a Salesman is a classic tragedy that explores the personal and professional issues of a typical American family as well as the dysfunctional bond between parents and children. Ecofeminism, which combines environment and feminism, offers a fresh approach to research. This paper concludes with an analysis of certain storylines and visuals from *Death of a Salesman* from an ecofeminist perspective. One excellent example of ecofeminist literature is *Death of a Salesman*. The drama criticizes urbanization and industrialization from Willy's point of view. Trees are being cut down, the population is out of control, the apartment building is smelling, the street is lined with cars, the grass isn't growing, and so on. The interactions between many people depicted the psychological and physical oppression of women by patriarchy. Linda is revered as an exemplary woman who lived her life serving her family and submitting to her husband. "The woman" ends up being Willy's stocking mistress, but Willy doesn't care for her. All that's happening to Charlotte and the other girls is Happy's passion. They suffer oppression in the same way that nature is abused. In summary, this essay demonstrates how, despite its abundance of ecofeminist ideas, *Death of a Salesman* accurately depicts to its audience the living conditions and status of women in New York. The unique outcome of the American social structure now and its past is *Death of a Salesman*. When the play debuted in 1949, the industrialization process was still forcing people to battle out of the Great Depression. Following the Second World War in 1949, many, particularly adults, found themselves disoriented in the intricate social structure. 1949 was also a significant year in the rise of female consciousness since an increasing number of women were leaving their little families and joining the workforce. Miller's own experiences combined with these social realities to create a fantastic drama that explores ecofeminism and the American ideal.

Possibly the most developed example of a modern-day myth to date is Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The primary significance of this play is in its endeavor to unveil the ultimate meanings concealed inside contemporary existence. Its impact on audiences, both

domestically and internationally, may warrant more discussion about this play than its literary merits in and of itself. This drama, which debuted in 1949, is still having an impact on World Theater. It does this by articulating some new facets of the human issue in a language that is understandable to a broad audience. Miller's subjects, themes, and dramatic goal are a reflection of his own experiences, which were shaped by the Great Depression, which he saw as a 'moral catastrophe' that was only surpassed in its profound influence on American culture by the Civil War. Miller was born in New York City in 1915. His father was a successful coat manufacturer who had left Austria when he was six years old. He was wealthy enough to hire a driver and live in a spacious apartment with a view of Central Park. For the Miller family, who embodied the American dream of hard work and reward for determination, the 1929 stock market crash was a game-changer. After the business failed, the family was forced to relocate to a small frame house in Brooklyn's Flatbush neighborhood, which served as a model for the Lomans' home, under drastically different circumstances. Miller's mother was frequently unhappy and resentful of the family's lack of wealth, and his father never entirely recovered from his business loss, but both of them persisted in hoping for a future economic upturn. Miller believed that the Great Depression revealed the social unfairness ingrained in an economic system that claimed so many innocent lives, as well as the hollowness and fragility of the American goal of material achievement. The tension it produced between self-interest and societal obligation, as well as the contradictions of American success—its stimulation of both dreams and remorse when lost or unrealized—would emerge as recurring topics in Miller's writing. Miller was more interested in sports than academics when he was a high school student. Miller said that it was safe to say that, up until the age of seventeen, he never read a book heavier than Tom Swift and Rover Boys, and he only dabbled in literature with some of Dickens. He made it through the public school system without incident. Following his high school graduation in 1932, Miller started working in a Manhattan auto parts warehouse. Miller started reading on his way to and from work on the train, where he learned how serious literature could alter one's perspective on the world and about his line of work. I don't know how or why, but I picked up *The Brothers Karamazov* and it instantly made me feel as if I was destined to be a writer. That book transformed my life.

Assuming that nature and human culture—in this case, the city—are polar opposites would be incorrect. That was the prevailing opinion during the early stages of the ecocriticism movement in the 1960s and 1970s. The human being originates from that very "wild," "pristine," and "untarnished" nature. Later, with the development of technology, he or she built the metropolis, much like Kolkata, India, or New York, the United States, as we can see in these two passages. People in the city have forgotten where they originally evolved from nature, living in the luxury that machines and technology have brought them. They have excluded it, just as they have their fellow, less evolved natural creatures (from the smallest to the biggest). They don't think it's necessary to involve them. Even if their rapacious exploitation of natural resources is making it harder for other living things to survive, they don't seem to care. In this sense, these people were also denied access to their inherent ideals and loving feelings. Then the fallout begins. It turns out that nature is a place that one cannot avoid. A person's life crumbles if they attempt something like that. The individual's identity crumbles. Nature, after all, shapes and defines the personal personality of every living thing. When a person disconnects from nature, their personal identity vanishes. From an ecologically conscious perspective, *Death of a Salesman* reveals that they are actually closer than most people would

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have thought. The apparent cultural, linguistic, and physical disparities between Calcutta and New York in the two books vanish due to their shared experiences, fates, and ways of living.

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