

**SHAKESPEAREAN SHADOW ON MILLER: A COMPARATIVE
STUDY OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S *KING LEAR* AND
ARTHUR MILLER'S *DEATH OF A SALESMAN***

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ABSTRACT

William Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1605) and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949)—both the plays need no introduction, neither their writers need any. As the Elizabethans were overwhelmed by *King Lear*'s intense struggle for securing his dignity as a human being in a chaotic universe, so the modern people are moved by Willy Loman's desperate striving to attain, in Miller's own words "his "rightful" position" (Miller, "Tragedy and the Common Man") in a grim world governed by sheer business principles. And both the plays are endowed with certain wonderful qualities which have irresistible appeal to everyone, everywhere. Therefore, both these plays have several interesting fundamental similarities. This paper attempts a comparative study of these two texts to focus on their common features which are largely connected with their dramatists' concern about man's eternal conflict with the indifferent, pitiless universe. Of course, Miller's play is not of the same order of merit as one of the greatest English tragedy like *King Lear*. What this paper aims to highlight is that both the plays draw their tragic force from some similar universally significant aspects of human life.

KEYWORDS: Tragedy, William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*, Struggle, Isolation, Self Knowledge