

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND LITERARY INFLUENCES IN ARTHUR MILLER'S PLAY ALL MY SONS

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Abstract

Completed and first performed in 1947, winner of the New York Drama Critics Award for the best play, *All My Sons* launched Arthur Miller's long and distinguished career in the theatre. It deserves a special space in the playwright's canon because it constitutes his first major theatrical achievement and displays his extraordinary skill in handling dramatic form. It also presages that better things yet to come from one of America's greatest dramatists. Many critics think that this play paved the way for the masterpiece *Death of a Salesman* as it contains the main topics that we will find in his writings. In all Miller's plays the influence of social forces is clearly felt. They are permeated by Miller's personal viewpoint that the human being, as an inseparable part of the society, has the power to create or destroy, to improve or deteriorate the social context, society and history; Miller through his main plays, disposes the society to self-awareness and self-responsibility; he strongly holds forth to the idea that the human being's behaviour should reflect social and individual responsibility and contribute to the balancing of the society he belongs to. This paper aims to analyse and bring forth the role of moral, social, political forces and literary influences in Miller's play *All My Sons* mainly through the downfall of the main character. Its analysis and study follows the same pattern as Miller did in his play. However, it tries to find the perfect balance between the different forces influencing the play. If Miller's thematic and philosophical intention is to draw us in two opposite directions in *All My Sons*, to dramatize the polar conflict between the familial and the social, this paper goes beyond this conflict and tries to see the universal force lying beyond the sheen.

Keywords: *Modern Literature, influences, World War II, self-awareness, American drama.*