

## A Review of the Play All My Sons by Arthur Miller

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### ABSTRACT

*"All My Sons" is one of Arthur Miller's most famous plays, first produced in 1947 in New York and running for 238 performances. The play is one of Arthur Miller's classic plays, and the production by Jack O'Brien is a riveting example of his work. The play's title is a reference to the famous line "All my sons." The show's cast includes a young John Lithgow, who plays the enigmatic Joe Keller. While the play is a morality tale about family, it is also an indictment on war profiteers. Despite its age, the play is still relevant today, especially as a study of war profiteering and the impact of greed on two families. The play's timeless message resonates today with the recent scandals involving Boeing and the 737 and 787 jets. In fact, it's hard to imagine a more poignant time for a play about greed and moral bankruptcy than now. The show is set in the 1950s, but its nuances have been remarkably recognizable over time. The cast, led by Cariou and Metcalf, worked on a sumptuous backyard set. Similarly, costume designer David Mickelsen provided a striking backdrop. Although a period piece, "All My Sons" is relevant to current events, including the threat posed by faulty military equipment and civilian profiteering. Despite its age, it still packs a powerful punch.*

**Keywords:** alienation, Arthur Miller, American dream, materialism

### INTRODUCTION:

This three-act play by Arthur Miller opened on Broadway on January 29, 1947, and closed on November 8, 1949, running for 328 performances. All My Sons is a must-read for anyone who enjoys classic dramas. The play was inspired by the Greek tragedy of the same name and follows Joe Keller, a successful aero plane engineer who made millions during World War II. He knowingly shipped engines to the Air Force that were unfit for use. He then allowed his partner to go to prison for his complicity, a crime which he denied at first but later admitted. The production is a good one, retaining Miller's naturalistic style while providing psychological insight. Director Jeremy Herrin skillfully narrates Miller's tragic tale. While the production is a bit lacking in the backslapping bonhomie of the last West End revival, Sally Field is superb as Kate Keller. She combines warmth and nervy anxiety to endow her character with the necessary myopic innocence (Roast, 2003). A conflict in values is an important theme in Arthur Miller's play, All My Sons. Set after World War Two, the play explores the clash between two generations. While the older generation believes in family values and the American dream, the younger generation focuses on idealism and not money. The play demonstrates how these conflicts can affect every generation. However, the conflict between the younger and older generations is not entirely symmetrical. It's possible to see both sides in different circumstances (Mishra).

As a father, we are responsible for setting the ethical standards within our family. While our children absorb the concepts, we hold dear from our community, teenagers are also responsible for developing their own ethical principles. When our parents' values conflict with ours, the conflict between us is the result. We often avoid talking about such issues, and this is especially true when we're dealing with life and death. "All My Sons" demonstrates that a conflict in values can result in death or separation. Kate Keller is a woman in her early fifties, referred to in the play as "Mother." While Joe Keller's guilt is clear from the beginning, his mother served as his accomplice in trying to escape responsibility for the crime. Mother has tremendous power in the Keller family,

and despite her obvious reluctance to discuss Joe's guilt with her sons, she refuses to challenge her son's innocence (Centola, 1985).

As the daughter of a convicted war criminal, Kate Keller is a difficult woman to love. While she has to make difficult compromises to care for her son Larry, she ultimately finds happiness in her marriage to Chris Keller. The play is a classic example of the complexity of grief and redemption. Though her mother is a strong character, Kate Keller's name is not. Arthur Miller's play makes her name stand out in a crowd of characters. we see a classic case of conflict between two sets of values, one of which is money. Horatio Alger, a self-made man from a humble background, achieved wealth, prestige, and respectability through unrelenting industry and personal fortitude (Moss, 1964)). On the other hand, Joe Keller, a blue-collar worker, rises through the ranks to become a factory owner. While this is seemingly an irrational idea, it turns out to be true in the end. The central conflict in *All My Sons* is about morality. Joe's values are based on his obligations to his immediate family above his commitments to his work. The dying apple tree represents Larry, and the elder Kellers' willingness to accept his death. In contrast, Chris, Joe's younger brother, is a self-absorbed man who would do anything to get ahead. The story of "*All My Sons*" exemplifies the conflict in values between fathers and sons.

### **Betrayal and Guilt in All My Sons:**

Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons* was one of his first commercial successes. It premiered on January 29, 1947 at the Coronet Theatre in New York and ran for 328 performances. The play was critical and commercially successful and earned Arthur Miller his first New York Drama Critics Circle Award. Even his detractors recognized the play's promise. In "*All My Sons: A Family Conflict and Joe Keller's Suicide*," Arthur Miller portrays the descent of an American family and the conflict that ensues. The novel explores the concept of family loyalty and social responsibilities. Joe Keller is so devoted to his family that he committed crimes during World War II to protect them. When he discovered that cylinder heads had developed hairline cracks, he was forced to send them to the army, because if he didn't, his business would fail. Although Joe acknowledges his own feelings throughout the novel, he does not fully acknowledge his sons' feelings, and he shames one of them to the point of suicide. This underlying conflict erupts in the final scene, which is devastating to the family and ultimately leads to Joe's suicide. The film's conclusion suggests that the conflict may have been prevented if Joe had known how bad he had become (Miller, 1949).

It is a play about the conflicts between father and son in a post-war America. The ravages of war had destroyed the families of millions of Americans. Arthur Miller delved into this topic in his first commercially successful play. The story concerns Joe Keller, a successful businessman, and his son Chris, who wants to inherit his father's business. Chris's crimes have ruined his relationship with his father, and his deteriorating relationship with his father is at the heart of the conflict.

The play shares many similarities with Sophoclean tragedies like *Oedipus Rex*. The play is also reminiscent of a number of classic films such as *Romeo and Juliet*. It is a compelling drama that is a must-see for fans of classic theater. The play has many classic elements. First, it follows the traditional structure of a Greek tragedy: three separate acts of time, place, and action. The action begins early in the morning and ends early the next day. The play follows the traditional structure of the Greek tragedy, with the play beginning at dawn and ending early the next day. The play also incorporates the use of a traditional Greek set. It is a powerful and moving drama about family and values.

In *All My Sons*, Chris is confronted with a moral dilemma that makes him question his own morality. He has the ability to see right and wrong, but he cannot give in to love and mercy. The ensuing conflict in his family and his innermost self-forces him to confront his moral failings. Consequently, he must choose between his ideal image of his father and the reality of his own life (Lamos, 2007). The resulting rift between Chris and his father will only increase the tension. In *All My Sons*, the author demonstrates the generation gap between the father and the child. Generations differ in their ideals of life and the way they view things. The father feels justified in doing evil, but he can only do it because he is "all for his sons." However, this guilt pushes Chris to find his own way to live. He must learn to accept the responsibility of his actions.

Joe Keller's suicide is not just an act of atonement, but also a way of avoiding guilt. While the death of Larry Keller represents the punishment for his crimes, it also serves as an escape from punishment. In his final moments, he realizes that he is incapable of real forgiveness. He must be forgiven by his family and Kate Keller, and this is not an easy task for him (Miller, 1949).

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

All My Sons by Arthur Miller is a dense drama set during the 1950s. Directed by Jeremy Herrin, the play depicts life in America from the war era to the present day. It explores personal responsibility and the costs of ignoring it. Ultimately, however, the play is a deeply moving work about what makes a family strong and what makes it unviable. The literary analysis of Arthur Miller's play All My Sons adopts the father/son conflict model, but its lessons are applicable to any conflict between a father and his child, regardless of gender. Women are now working outside the home, and the gender gap is fuzzier than in the 1940s. Still, these themes are relevant to the conflict between mother and son in modern society (Tokuzen, 1978).

In the Old Vic production, the play begins with the snapping of a young apple tree. The trembling tree has fallen during a storm, and anxious mother Kate Keller is waiting outside. She has been waiting for her missing son, a US Air Force pilot, since he went missing during the war. The tree is symbolic of her lingering grief and unhappiness. She is not the only one wondering where her son is, but also about the future of the whole family (Anderson, 2016). The Living and The Dead in All My Son's classical elements are echoed in the story of the family in the play. The concept of fate is introduced in the play when amateur astrologer Frank Lubey convinces Kate that her deceased husband Larry is still alive. Larry's horoscopes predict favorable days for his future. There is also a virtual observance of place and time in this classic Greek tragedy. Miller is careful not to rely on the cliché of "purely" this or that, or to psychiatric or sociological views of the play. These approaches have the tendency to simplify and oversimplify the story. But Miller avoids these pitfalls by creating a complex realism (Lamos, 2007).

In contrast, Joe's suicide is a form of atonement and a way to escape his guilt. While the crime is a terrible one, Joe realizes that there is no real forgiveness. He turns to confession and death as a means to get out of the pain and humiliation he feels. His guilt, however, is not a secret. The author uses this idea to evoke the feelings of guilt, and Joe's death offers both. The main characters in All My Sons are all flawed people, and their actions aren't always in the best interests of the community. This is a story of morally corrupted men. In the end, the two brothers' families must come together and forgive each other, but the morality of the characters is at stake. While Joe Keller may have done wrong, he is a good man.

The story also explores the role of faith in the survival of the human spirit. As a member of society, Chris' desire to marry Ann Deever is driven by guilt. His mother cannot accept that Larry has died, so she tries to enlist his father's support in the marriage, but it is too late. Despite this, Chris's love for Ann drives him to confront his father's death. Actor Len Cariou is a regular fixture on Broadway (Hebert, 2014). He has starred in the title role of Macbeth, as well as the role of Richard Nixon in the Canadian stage's production of Frost/Nixon. His other notable roles include starring in the Broadway revival of Sweeney Todd and The Demon Barber of Fleet Street. In addition to playing Joe Keller in All My Sons, Cariou has appeared in numerous productions at The Geffen Theatre. In addition to acting in Arthur Miller's play, he has appeared on TV and film (RAY P. , 1992).

The classic play is a powerful study of family loyalty, and its main character, Joe Keller, is played by Roger Mueller. Despite his idealistic tendencies, Joe Keller remains a decent man who is loyal to his family. While he is not a particularly charismatic character, his ambition and optimism make him an excellent character. The play also has its share of amusing lines (Smith, 2006). The production of Arthur Miller's All My Sons, which first premiered in 1947, is a powerful study of the fallout from World War Two. It highlights the plight of unfit men who did not pay the ultimate price for their country. In the process, the play highlights the contempt of home front profiteers, whose fathers and husbands died in service to their nation. The plot of All My Sons is a classic example of a tragedy. It follows the pattern of a traditional family tragedy, with the tragedy of a father ripping apart his family in order to gain a living. The play ends with catharsis, a re-establishment of moral order, and lessons for society. This structure of family conflict has a universal impact on our society (RAY, 1992).

The tragedy of Joe Keller's downfall in the play is that he loses not only the respect of his family, but also his life. When his son Larry ends up dead, he realizes that his mistake is the reason why he killed him, and this makes him feel as if he'd lost all of his children. In the end, his downfall is inevitable. Throughout the play, we see how these two men become estranged and unhappy. Their relationship between their fathers is strained, and Joe is destined to become a recluse. The play follows the Kellers' escapades until the fateful night that changes their lives forever. But how does Joe Keller end up with such a tragic ending? Here, Miller reveals the secret behind Joe Keller's downfall (Lutterbie, 1989).

## CONCLUSION:

The structure of All My Sons is based on the Greek tragedies. A series of events that disturb the moral order are revealed piecemeal throughout the play. The ripple effects of those originating events take over the play action and cause a crisis, resulting in the reestablishment of moral order. A major conflict in the play is between father and son. Chris Keller and Joe Keller are close friends and shared many ideals, but their relationship changed due to their conflict. Joe Keller, in effect, metaphorically kills Chris. Miller uses these character changes to examine the conflict between men in modern America. He reveals how material concerns skew the morality of men. Even though the Kellers are loyal to each other, Chris's passion for retribution and atonement force Joe to acknowledge his own guilt. The structure allows the audience to see a glimpse of hidden reality, peeping around the corners to reveal the appearance that lies beneath. I find this comparison troubling, particularly in the context of Arthur Miller's work. Although the themes of the plays are similar, I find the dramatic structure of All My Sons to be more affecting and dramatic than its predecessor

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