



## Capitalism Is Destructive to Social Responsibility: Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*

Atheer J. Muhsin

University of Basrah  
Atheer.jabbar@uobasrah.edu.iq

### ABSTRACT

*All My Sons*, is the beginning of the great success of Arthur Miller right after World War II in 1947. The play is an ideal review of the writer's attitudes towards the capitalist system. At the same time, it is a presentation of individual and social relationships, personal and public responsibilities and individual and public interests. This research refers to the writer's criticism of the capitalist system by some of the characters in the play and its devastating effects on society, according to Arthur Miller's viewpoint. The research also addresses the importance of personal responsibility towards society and the extent to which these responsibilities affect the behavior of the personalities. This research shows that the love of money and wealth is not an ultimate goal in life, and if it becomes so, it will become a destructive force, as what happened with Joe Keller's family. love of money and wealth

### Keywords:

Arthur Miller, Capitalist system, love of money and wealth

*All My Sons* Arthur Miller is telling a story of American family, the Keller. It tells events happened in 1947 directly at the end of the Second World War (WWII). In the drama single capitalism has been shown to have negative influence on social norms and ethics. The play is highly concerned with rough interest of achieving financial victory and gain of money in whatever means and prices. It narrates the struggle between practicality and idealism. Capitalism is displayed as having undermining force of family and social relationships. Miller presents his reader the character of Joe Keller who is a plant possessor, equips airplane pieces in wartime and succeeded collecting sufficient wealth during depression years. Joe has two sons, an idealist soldier Chris who survives war, the elder one Larry is a soldier in air force and a pilot. Larry is missing in war. Joe's wife Kate Keller is fated to have a belief that Larry is not dead. Chris

loves Ann Deever Larry's fiancée, the issue which never pleases the Mother.

The title refers to the word 'sons', it does not mean only Joe's Larry and Chris sons. It is a sign to all those soldiers killed in the war in defense of their nation and land "Sure, he was my son. But I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were. I'll be right down." (Miller, Act III: 54). In ambiguous and undecided times *All My Sons* has a mistaken orientated capitalism and a strong meaning of responsibility. It tells success at the cost of others. Though it releases different kinds and swift shift in modern economical technical social life, capitalism may have blasting and drastic effects on customs and modes of tenets existed within society.

Miller's decision to structure the play around the relationship between a father and son implies a historical logic whereby the

assumptions of capitalism are challenged, defeated and replaced by a new generation whose values, forged in wartime, are now to be socially and morally operative in peace.

(Bigsby, 2005:92)

As Miller raised during the years of depression in the first half of the twentieth century, he holds keen concerns with politics. Thus the author has great estimate to working class importance. As Joe Keller is presented with excessive preoccupation of wealth and love of gain, the play is seen to reject the risks and viciousness of capitalism, which extremely values individual contest and consuming at the expense of community. Therefore, Joe's haunts of money become the source of deterioration in the play. Capitalism is not always means to construct economy with an unethical form. That is why capitalism has constantly been recognized with greed. Aspiration and cupidity existed long before capitalism and this what Max Weber stresses about greed in 1904:

This impulse exists and has existed among waiters, physicians, coachmen, artists, prostitutes, dishonest officials, soldiers, nobles, crusaders, gamblers, and beggars. One may say that it has been common to all sorts and conditions of men at all times and in all countries of the earth, wherever the objective possibility of it is or has been given.

(Weber, 1958: xxxis)

Greed leads individual to act and behave irresponsible. In this respect, social duty and perceiving devotion have not taken into consideration a person who is determined to have financial success at any rate. Success and wealth are the stimuli for competitors. As a result, in the play, great affairs and facts concerning the community are not in the estimations of capitalist-minded individuals.

Egocentric advantages regardless of others are exhibited as the extreme goal of capitalism.

In most of his early works, Miller attacks the hazard which capitalism has on the society. He sees and compares business to corruption and racketeering. Miller notices that some people are ready to be ordinary because of the moral values within the individual. Larger needs of the community are not the same of the family, exploitation force is a destructive and degenerating. Throughout the play, social demands versus individual greed of power and success are exposed in the context of language and desires of capitalist-minded persons. Here, one can recognize *All My Sons* as a mirror which reflects the examination of society in terms of a matter of expression on theater. Behind the world of capitalism which diminishes of man's energy does exist a combatting world. A world which is striving against mechanization and deprivation of human character and spirit of sociality. This dehumanizing force takes away individual far from his liability which is a constant recurrent theme in the play. Sometimes obligations of the family are taken in the wrong direction to make one think familial responsibility is bigger than what is else.

Keller is a man who is isolated from the rest of the world mainly because he has no education and has difficulties putting himself in the situation of others. Family is the only thing that matter to Keller..... Thus, the choice of shipping out the parts is not difficult one to him to make. As long as he is acting out of his responsibility towards his family, Keller believes he is the right thing.

(Aberg, 2006: 17)

This makes Joe put his family responsibility upper than anything which may be the whole nation. As an uneducated businessman, the fundamental human faith could not be realized by him. Thus, to a society wider than the one he created (his family and neighbors), to high and noble goals far from greed of business, Joe is

reluctant to be responsible even in the last moment of the play or his life in general.

Sometimes oppression occurs within the same class, Joe denies his responsibility for selling the faulty cylinders, claiming that Steve signed the deal without his knowledge. By this, the court exonerated him as he had misled justice and they sent Steve to prison.

(Ghazal, Almasaeid, 2013: 37)

Due to his capitalist view, he decides to manage the work so as to get the biggest amount of gain. Getting as much as money is Joe's appeal by working harder and harder does not recognizing it is false emblem. This makes him in odds with social responsibility. The play has a moral lesson, it appeals to the audience ethics as how to play role and take attention and care of bigger world issues far from individual interests. That is why Chris is seen as an idealist and his attitudes go against his fathers'. Chris is always aware of something bigger than the family and bigger than father-son relation. At the same time, he is a man of good principles:

but honor was real there, you were protecting something. But here? This is the land of the great big dogs, you don't love a man here, you eat him! That's the principle; the only one we live by—it just happened to kill a few people this time, that's all. The world's that way.

(Miller, Act III: 52)

This plea from Chris to Ann comes to explain that Chris is seeking noble reasons as part of his likely personality. He is of the idea that ideal tenets cannot work in the society unless people are ready to lend themselves to virtuous state of mind and set honor first for good reasons. Chris may find that his family is enclosed jail, they cannot go further than these walls and prefer to live in this small society represented by the house and the garden. They live in their own world of fraudulent and

misleading manner. In this shocking reality, Chris finds it is logical to go on with his responsibility though it goes better with his father's mind of business and capitalist thoughts. Chris's responsibility for him stems from the hard wartimes and the looseness of his friends for the sake of larger society. He takes it for granted to remove all egoism and self-interest worth. Chris as a responsible person finds that feeling of togetherness is the uniting moral force towards a society which is larger than his relation to his father and the family as well.

Responsibility is the central theme in the play and both Joe and Chris are chosen to investigate it. War was the leading instructor of Chris which taught him the meaning of responsibility.

Men like Chris and Larry Keller who had gone to fight were changed by their experiences. Affected by the sacrifices they saw their comrades make, they developed a heightened sense of social responsibility. This leads Larry to kill himself for shame at what his father has done, and Chris to set himself impossibly idealistic standards by which to live. Shaken by the horrors of World War II, society recognized the need for change, but the soldiers who fought often held different views from those who stayed at home as to how to initiate that change.

(Abbotson, 2000: 63)

Chris stands opposite to the capitalist commitment of his father. Ethics are of secondary rate in comparison to Joe's financial duties. Joe Keller is concerned only with his own self-interest. He never takes care of the negative results of his job which may influence others. Social appeal that goes ill with that of the individual success is admitted in the start of *All My Sons* "...the major criticisms of capitalism, that it encourages self-centered material success and power over the

importance of ethical and fair treatment in human relationships” (Meyer, 2008: 88)

It offers different course of values which are expressed through contradictory individuals. Joe stands for physical world of materialism and Chris that represents moral attitudes. For Joe, the capitalist minded and self-made man the reasons for earning are transcends these of community. He puts himself ahead since he feels that nobody will support him in case he has no money. This is clear in his talk where he is ever mentioning money.

**KELLER:** Because sometimes I think you're ... ashamed of the money.

**CHRIS:** No, don't feel that.

**KELLER:** Because it's good money, there's nothing wrong with that money.

(Miller, Act I: 23)

Joe believes the end justifies the means and making money through business is the ultimate goal. In this way, he never leaves a space for moral demands and social needs. As a result, during time of war whatever action he is doing in business is a way of protecting his special world of wealth (family and money). Though, Joe Keller is proud of himself, as a man who achieves success while he is not educated person, his perfect job derives him to ruin himself and his family as well. This leads us to the fact that is the ruin of the family comes from the individual wrong resolution. Again this fact puts *All My Sons* in the heart of Greek tragedy. The influence of wrong decision taken by the main character will prevail all other characters whom he loves. Here, the impact of the bad decision influenced not Joe himself alone, but tragically all his family. This type of wrong doing stems from his love and responsibility of his family Joe thinks. Miller representation of this downfall is part of his assault on capitalism which Miller believes it promotes people to estimate business and money over ethical responsibilities. This kind of materiality could be found in the mind of many characters in the play. Dr. Jim, who likes to write researches again finds money and materialism fences his ambition saying:

Nobody realizes how many people are walking around loose, and they're cracked as coconuts. **Money. Money-money-money-money.** You say it long enough it doesn't mean anything... Oh, how I'd love to be around when that happens!

(Miller, Act III: 47)

It is clear, the times of war prevent people from realizing the truth of material world which is one of the other reasons that cost them their lives and leads to vicissitude. This is really seen from the author's hopelessness in the world of capitalism which is rejected by the spiritual Chris. He appears distressed returning from war which taught him responsibility towards his fellows to a world where he is going to lose this sense of morality and will indulge in materiality.

**CHRIS:** I've been a good son too long, a good sucker. I'm through with it.

**KELLER:** You've got a business here, what the hell is this?

**CHRIS:** The business! The business doesn't inspire me.

**KELLER:** Must you be inspired?

(Miller, Act I: 9)

The play is a view of character's conflict as they clash with the sinister fluctuation of materialist capitalism. Miller presents his characters as they were real individuals, they are expressed as real in life, busy with how the America is war country, and how the American make their money by wartimes. Furthermore, the relationships among characters are portrayed in terms of their complicated opposition to each other's, and to whom they love or hate. *All My sons* is a drama of family relations, as Joe's to his son Chris. But, these relations and characters are viewed in the light of bigger thing and wide outlook. The author depicts how the personal's preferences are subject to capitalism and its influences on these choices. *All My Sons* discloses the cruelty of

brutal capitalists who in continuous search of interest and benefit at the expense of others:

*All My Sons* is the best representative play of the American capitalist society. In this play almost all the characters are hypocrites. They hide the facts from one another in some ways or other. This hypocrisy of their nature is, in fact, the demand of the society in which they are living. In a materialistic world one has to be a hypocrite if he wants to survive in a capitalistic society. By believing this Miller is criticizing the capitalistic American society in this play

(Ansari, 2017:319)

Miller presents the American capitalists as ready to devastate and corrupt everyone with cursed business. The play is a panorama of tragedy, of a pragmatic exploitation just after the end of the Second World War. The drama is a manifestation of intricate persona caused by the manufacturing processes contracted with the American army during wartimes. Joe Keller is set forth as one who is connected to the military war, a man who achieves success by hitting his chance and starts small work of supplying airplane parts. On certain occasions, Joe likes playing a policeman with kids, this shows him as a justice advocator "Then you couldn't've made a complete inspection of the block. In the beginning, when I first made you a policeman you used to come in every morning with something new." (Miller, Act I: 6). Ironically, the policeman role is clear, it is to protect people and keeping of law and order. Policeman is responsible for others' safety and welfare. While Joe partly is correct, on the one hand he sees his duty is his family, therefore, providing them with all they need and securing good future for them and security is a kind of protection which is like a policeman responsibility. What he has done is for his family.

**MOTHER:** Joe, Joe, please ... you'll be all right, nothing is going to happen ...

**KELLER :** For you, Kate, for both of you, that's all I ever lived for ...

**MOTHER:** I know, darling, I know

(Miller, Act III: 50)

On the other hand, Joe is distorting the world, its law and order, his family obligations make him blind to other bigger issues of the society and people. In a more particular sense, his family's responsibility subverts the communal one. The social obligations are larger than the family's.

Though, Joe is a typical capitalist and is of great love of money and business, his son Chris is fighting in fortitude to keep his spiritualism going straight forward. His idealism is his leading responsibility "Everything was being destroyed, see, but it seemed to me that one new thing was made. A kind of ... responsibility. Man for man." (Miller, Act I: 21). Chris's hope of duty always does not hit with the world of materialism and wealth. A person who does well is going to be shocked by world money and capitalism like Chris.

**CHRIS:** I don't know why it is, but every time I reach out for something I want, I have to pull back because other people will suffer. My whole bloody life, time after time after time.

(Miller, Act I: 8)

It is clear that a benefactor could not drive a good, pleasant, and proper moral life.

It is not strange when one looks at the entire theme of the play will find it is telling the story of the impact of materialism on morality. Amoral investigation of names will cast light on one idea. The choice of name is not happened unintentionally, Joe and his son Chris stand for moral religious names. They are reminiscent of Joseph and his son Christ:

Meanwhile, Chris can be seen as a martyr, or even a Christ as his



name suggests, but he is a Christ who has lost faith in his father and so is unable to raise his Lazarus (Larry) from the dead. Chris's character, in conflict as much within himself as against his father, is summed up in his military epithet, "Mother McKeller"

(Abbotson, 2007:47)

Whatever the case concerns capitalism and its influence on spiritualism, *All My Sons* reflects this sense of the collision between good and evil represented by the two opposite forces. This means, it is a struggle between the evil of capitalism which cares of only elites and their fortune and the sense of moral responsibility towards larger affairs of society in particular and the whole world in general. While Miller's play is a drama that mainly displays capitalism in the light of the American dream, *All My Sons* deals with the terrible face of war and its capitalists' profiteers like Joe "he is eager to include Chris in his business. This desire to bond with his son is, in a sense, what frees him from moral responsibility and allows him to ship those faulty parts with a clear conscience" (Abbotson, 2007: 51).

Both of the two conflicting worlds are brilliantly lighted by Arthur Miller. Chris knows well his world of morality and the realization of his duty. Unfortunately, he finds himself living in the world where his father is. This happened when Chris perceives his father's guilt in the case of faulty parts. It is a secret which is kept hidden by his mother. At the same time Chris talks bravely with strictness to his father saying:

For me!—I was dying every day and you were killing my boys and you did it for me? What the hell do you think I was thinking of, the Goddam business? Is that as far as your mind can see, the business? What is that, the world—the business? What the hell do you mean, you did it for me? Don't you have a country? Don't you live in the world?

(Miller, Act II: 46)

Chris seems more responsible than his father. It is his ideal moralism which leads him to think in high patriotic nationalism. For Chris business which would cause the missing of his fellows is no more than a crime out of responsible mind man. Chris's duty towards his people makes him put it forward, and business of making money is in the second rank. Business is to support the nation not to kill for the sake of money. Chris understands one thing that his father is living in a world full of faulty perception of the society and people as well. Chris considers his father following the corrupt concepts of capitalism. Joe holds his greed and maintains the whole family to follow his ways which at the end of the day cause them to live in eventual distress. The consequence of Joe's irresponsibility is that he never realizes his concern with his own personal profit and pleasure. Furthermore, he is often proud of himself because he is a self-made man. Joe looks at himself as different; therefore, what causes his downfall is his pride.

Except I wasn't, and there was a court paper in my pocket to prove I wasn't, and I walked ... past ... the porches. Result? Fourteen months later I had one of the best shops in the state again, a respected man again; bigger than ever.

(Miller, Act I: 17)

It is not only Chris who felt ashamed of what his father did, the letter from the lost son who never returns home two years after the war ends uncovers that he commits suicide in one of the missions. The reason as written in the letter is his father's involvement in the killing of twenty-one captains.

"My dear Ann: It is impossible to put down the things I feel. But I've got to tell you something. Yesterday they flew in a load of papers from the States and I read about Dad and your father being convicted. I can't express myself. I can't tell you how I feel—I can't

bear to live any more. Last night I circled the base for twenty minutes before I could bring myself in. How could he have done that? Every day three or four men never come back and he sits back there doing **business**... I don't know how to tell you what I feel ... I can't face anybody ... I'm going out on a mission in a few minutes. They'll probably report me **missing**.

(Miller, Act III; 53)

Again, within the same family, Larry could not stand what happened to his fellow pilots. His sense of shame of his father's fault is the cause of his confusion, which led to another fault, i.e. suicide. Though, suicide does not go in line with religious morality, an interpretation of this act could be true, Larry is responsible person and distance cuffed his hand from taking his role regarding his father's crime "I tell you, Ann, if I had him here now I could kill him." (Miller, Act III: 53). Meanwhile, he sees suicide as a way to purify his soul from not taking action towards his father. Responsible people constantly are sensitive to larger cases; thus he could not tolerate making profit out of killing others in war. As a result of this, the irresponsibility of Joe does not cause the death of the pilots only, but, his son Larry's too.

The greed of the capitalist Joe is the central action in *All My Sons*. This sense of wealth loving at the expense of others is explored by Miller in the light of the American dream. In *All my Sons*, the author presents the way the people look for society in the twentieth century. Joe Keller is shown eager for money and success in his dream, but his dream comes true without taking heed of society. He appears to be ready for killing in favor of his dream which is business and accumulating wealth. His dream of fortune makes him urge Chris to follow him the same way of living and be a businessman "It's dollars and cents, nickels and dimes; war and peace, it's nickels and dimes," (Miller Act III: 53). Joe's mind is busy of a crucial idea, as Chris should share his father the same

way of thinking in business, while Chris is worried about the way his father collects all this money. Chris feels that his father's release of the case of the cracked parts is not genuine.

Here, Arthur Miller sets Joe as a real capitalist who never sees his faults and the impacts of his decisions on others. The whole drama is a presentation of the tremendous negative effects of capitalism on society responsibility. The play depicts the central character in the middle of capitalist world. Welfare and feeling to keep himself and his family far from financial worries are the main goals of Joe's family. The father is not like his Chris. Chris as a soldier who fought bravely learns how to be responsible for his duty and people.

Chris, who had fought bravely in battle in the war and seen many of his troops perish under his command, has a different outlook from his father on the question of an individual's social responsibility. After several powerful scenes of intense debate about the individual's relation to society, Chris finally discloses his father's guilt and challenges him to accept responsibility for his actions

(Biggsby, 1997: 50)

Another interesting fact is that Miller uses common names with denoting connotation using ordinary words, like 'keller' that is close in speech to 'killer', the title of Joe the businessman who is ready to kill for profit, Arthur Miller uncovers the depressing face of capitalism "The names of Miller's central characters are also significant. It is not by chance that the name *Keller* sounds like *killer* or the *cellar* in which Keller metaphorically hides his guilt" (Abbotson, 2007:47).

In other words, Miller brings out his concept through familiar words. *All My Sons* shows that most of community undergoes the dismal side specifically the innocent and poor people. Miller's *All My Sons* is a cautionary drama to inform of the well-known

circumstances of harm could cause to society by capitalism.

American potential sides with the opinion which rests on winning fortune, this is a substance which cannot be separated from what the play adapted in after the Second World War people. Making himself stand in the new world, and earning money through whatever business can be for the sake of his family and the future of his sons are the what Joe supposes "Nothin's bigger than that. And you're goin' to tell him, you understand? I'm his father and he's my son, and if there's something bigger than that I'll put a bullet in my head!" (Miller, Act III : 49). What helps him in acquiring wealth is his deep intelligence though he is not educated man. He manages to keep going of his business at different times whether wartime or peace time. In wartime any failure is not acceptable and will be an occasion for terminating his contract. Joe knows this truth well.

Joe does not appear the only character in the play who is obsessed of money and wealth, Chris and Ann have been commanded several times by Sue and Kate to acquire money. *All My Sons* demonstrates a belief that money is the means which is the insurance of welfare and a blessed life. Dr. Jim Bayliss the neighbor of the Keller likes to do medical researches despite that these researches profit little money but he is satisfied. Jim seems moral who believes in spiritual world than that of materialism. He has his own responsibility towards his society and nation. This responsibility presses him to achieve something of benefit to his own people through medical researches:

The main problem is Jim's desire to become a medical researcher, a desire that he has had to sacrifice for the needs of his family. He tried once to pursue this dream, but when Sue came and cried for him to return, his sense of guilt brought him back to an existence that he despises and that he sees as worthless, being at the beck and call of rich patients who have little wrong with them.

(Abbotson, 2007:49)

He is a really good man in the lost world of capitalism "And now I live in the usual darkness; I can't find myself; it's even hard sometimes to remember the kind of man I wanted to be. I'm a good husband" (Miller, Act III: 48). Unlike her husband, Sue is another example of the opposition binary. Jim's wife Sue is another one who looks for interests and money whatever the means are.

On various occasions, she confirms her attitudes in regard with acquisition of wealth and money. She insists on Jim to find job with good profit rather than doing researches "Research pays twenty-five dollars a week minus laundering the hair shirt. You've got to give up your life to go into it" (Miller, Act I: 27). Being a realistic woman, she has great faith in welfare as the key for securing future, Sue resents moral idealism which Chris has. She feels the danger of the existence of Chris close to her husband as Chris is an idealist individual whom she suspects influencing Jim the way she does not like. For her, Chris's thoughts are corrupting her Jim's life and hers as well. Sue is constantly repeating her views of what Chris believes, these ideas she hates more, thus she tells Ann:

They give him credit for being smart. I do, too, I've got nothing against Joe. But if Chris wants people to put on the hair shirt let him take off his broadcloth. He's driving my husband crazy with that phony idealism of his, and I'm at the end of my rope on it!

(Miller, Act I: 28)

Sue strongly echoes how she regards winning money is of crucial significance in life. This really does not go in line with Jim's wishes and hopes in ideal life. She is a typical dramatization of capitalist-minded persona. Sue is obsessed with accumulation of money by whatever means would be. This is why she talks of money continuously "It seems to me that for ten dollars you could hold his hand" (Miller, Act I: 4). Both Joe and his neighbor's wife Sue are of the same direction of realistic



capitalism. This appears clear when Joe praises her “Yeah, sure....You were a nurse too long, Susie. You’re too ... too ... realistic” (Miller, Act I: 4) The victims of materialism again are still in the heart of the crisis and dominating the whole scene in *All My Sons*. Kate Keller lives in fancy that her son Larry is still alive and she is obsessed with his ghost “When Larry, a pilot, goes missing, Kate Keller refuses to acknowledge his death, not least because to do so would be to accept a symbolic connection between her husband’s action and her own loss” (Bigsby, 2005: 78). Though these victims are victims of capitalism, they make their own victims again. Larry’s missing and Mother’s faith make Kate refuse the marriage of Chris to Ann, partially it is a social obligation to marry a brother’s girl and partially Kate who is compassionately thinks that Larry is not dead and marrying his fiancée is harming her psychologically:

**CHRIS:** Then I don’t belong here.

**MOTHER:** She’s Larry’s girl.

**CHRIS:** And I’m his brother and he’s dead, and I’m marrying his girl.

(Miller, Act II: 44)

The emotional existence of Larry in his Mother’s mind who forces the entire family to believe it prevents Chris’s marriage to Ann and causes them frustration. More than this, it causes a lasting pain and lets the family in sterile arguments and debates which are part of the distressing depression of the family ruin. A more destructive appearance is that of Gorge Deever. George returns back to the neighborhood for clearing his father innocence, Steve Deever who is another victim of capitalism sent to prison by Joe Keller. Victimized Steve is a nightmare hunting Joe:

*All My Sons* is an Ibsenesque well-made play in which characters from the past (Ann, her brother George) return to the neighborhood to set in motion a plot which eventually exposes the hidden truth about Joe’s past criminal act—a plot that climaxes after the production of a three-year-old

letter reveals the most devastating consequence of the crime

(Bloom,2007: 49)

It is clear that even these sacrifices of materialism are again reasons of the calamity of the capitalist Keller. The play carries the theme of cause and effect which dominates its action. It looks like a capitalist who victimizes an innocent and the innocent leads to the disaster of the capitalist in turn. However, still in the middle of the story is the dreadful repercussion of the capitalist system on society.

Certainly, the ethical intricacies which come as consequences of the war are the fill the mind of people to overcome by the hunt of richness. In reality, this chase of money leads to the downfall of the whole family of the Kellers and their business partner Steve. It is not conditioned that money is always the source of joy and excellency. As the play shows, the blight of the Kellers is the love of money which they think is the essence of their bliss. By expressing the evil of capitalism, Arthur Miller prepares his characters with certain qualities of distinctive merits. In this part, Miller views Joe with potential injustice and viciousness of materialist man who is irresponsible for his decisions and action. A man who makes his responsibility to his family a source of the acquisition of money at the expense of the society. He is never seen by his neighbors as innocent in pushing his partner into jail:

**SUE:** I resent living next door to the Holy Family. It makes me look like a bum, you understand?

**ANN:** I can’t do anything about that.

**SUE:** Who is he to ruin a man’s life? Everybody knows Joe pulled a fast one to get out of jail.

(Miller, Act I: 28)

The nature of man is well surveyed in *All My Sons*. This nature is viewed by the Author in the light of contradiction between the family members and Joe’s work and the neighbor. It is shown in binary of contrast; Joe and Chis; Dr. Jim and Sue; George and Ann. The

contradiction of these characters is not of ordinary habits or conduct at specific incident, but comes from social and psychological sets of belief, every individual has a particular way of living. Some are having tendencies of making their life in the way they see it right and by different facilities. They think that their decisions are theirs regardless of what are the consequences on others. This is the heart of selfishness which is the outcome of material world. Miller's Joe is the typical character in the core of the capital world, the world of pursuit of wealth ignoring the larger responsibilities in favor of personal interests "The beast! I was the beast; the guy who sold cracked cylinder heads to the Army Air Force; the guy who made twenty-one P-40's crash in Australia" (Miller, Act I : 17). This irresponsibility contrasts the other side of the binary, people who are attentive of the evil of the material world which is a real danger on their lives. This kind of chasing money leads to destruction as has been described by Bigsby in his *Modern American Drama, 1945-2000*, saying:

Capitalism, the other master story, equally fails to find a place for the poor and disadvantaged, the pursuit of money carrying a virus no less virulent than that of a once triumphant and now historically irrelevant communism

(Bigsby, 2004: 423)

As a result of this, the play is a full view of social warning of the risk of capitalism. *All My Sons* is of sharp criticism of the political capitalist system which Miller sees as hazardous. Money is a facility but not an ultimate aim. Miller's *All My Sons* shows the American capitalist-directed people; views people who face the new world of industrialism; takes decisive decisions which lead to ruin denying the result of their action; tells their contest to get wealth and ignoring social issues and responsibilities just after the impact of the war:

the blurry line between private and public interests, fierce competition, and the emphasis of

treating future profits as actual numbers, was profoundly affecting how people made moral decisions, treated others, and conceived of authority and responsibility for their actions

(Sniderman, 2015:51)

During a time of massive shift over various levels, the story relates the distress of war confronted by the American people and its aftermath. The atmosphere of the play is downfall and destruction that happen by wrong and selfish decisions far from the luxurious happiness in the start. Arthur Miller marks out a tragic image of Joe, a small-scale businessman whose obsession with wealth on account of others derives him to the breakdown and the people whom he loves. This happens under the motive of selfish capitalism and making wealth at the expense of others as Miller criticized it "many critics of capitalism use 'self-interest' and 'selfishness' (or 'greed') interchangeably, but they are quite different. Selfishness implies indulging oneself at another's expense" (Snowdon, 2015: 5)

People are viewed as in permanent search for constancy. The capitalists see this stability cannot be gained without money; therefore, they make money and welfare as their eventual goal. Though they appear hurry to get as much as possible of wealth, they do not pay any attention to the social needs. They are shown as not accountable to higher matters; the author presents them as blind.

## Conclusion

In *All My Sons*, Arthur Miller, criticizes the capitalist system in general that arose immediately after World War II in 1947 in the United States of America also after the economic downturn. The writer described greed that accompanied this system as well.

The author presents different characters with orientations in form of opposites binary. The first part views the capitalist greed with all its pros and cons. They are people who have been affected by the circumstances that followed the war and its aftermath. The other

side represents the human ideals which are contrary to capitalism. They love the perfect life that is characterized by the love of others and society.

The first party is professionally set forth by Miller, represented by Joe Keller's main character. His main concern is to raise money and wealth by various means, even if it has a negative impact on the lives of others. Joe made a firm decision and did not care what the results would be. The decision ended in his work partner being put in jail after Joe disclaimed responsibility, which causes serious consequences for Steve Deever's family. The writer presents Joe as a symbol of the capitalism that prevailed in American society after the great depression. Through Joe Keller, the capitalist Miller describes materialists as people chasing money and wealth regardless of what and how this would influence their communities.

The play is a view that shows the capitalists relinquishing public responsibilities in the society which they live in. They present their personal and utilitarian interests over the society even if the results of their actions are negative. Welfare and prosperity do not mean Joe Keller abdicates the larger societal responsibility and presents his responsibility to his family over the social responsibility so as to secure the future for his two sons.

## References

1. Abbotson, Susan. (2007). *Critical Companion to Arthur Miller A Literary Reference to His Life and Work*. Facts On File, Inc: New York.
2. Abbotson, Susan. (2000). *Student Companion to Arthur Miller*. Greenwood Press: London.
3. Aberg, Mattias. (2006). *Social Awareness in the Works of Arthur Miller*. Lulea University of Technology.
4. Ansari, Asghar Ali. (2017). Conflict and Denial in Arthur Miller's Play "All My Sons". *Research Journal of English Language and Literature*. Vol.5.Issue 4. pp.316-321.

5. Bigsby, Christopher. (2005). *Arthur Miller a Critical Study*. Cambridge University Press: UK.
6. Bigsby, Christopher. (1997). *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Cambridge University Press: UK.
7. Bigsby, C.W. (2004). *Modern American Drama, 1945-2000*. Cambridge University Press: UK.
8. Ghazal, Ansam and Almasaeid, Ali. (2013). Arthur Miller's *All My Sons* Through a Marxist Lens. *Cross-Cultural Communication*. Vol. 9, No. 4, 2013, pp. 36-40.
9. Max Weber. (1958). *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
10. Miller, Arthur. (1947). *All My Sons*. Penguin Book. New York.
11. Sniderman, Alisa. (2015). *The Modern Stage of Capitalism: The Drama of Markets and Money (1870-1930)*. Harvard University.
12. Snowdon, Christopher. (2015). *Selfishness, Greed and Capitalism*. The Institute of Economic Affairs: London.
13. Sterling, Eric J. (2008) *Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*. Editions Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam: New York.