

Topic Page: [Hellman, Lillian, 1905–1984](#)

Definition: **Hellman, Lillian** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

US dramatist and writer. Her debut play, *The Children's Hour* (1934), set the tone for her enduring interest in Marxist theory. She received acclaim for her memoirs, beginning with *An Unfinished Woman* (1969), and concluding with *Maybe* (1980).

Summary Article: **Hellman, Lillian**

From *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

1905–84, American dramatist, b. New Orleans. Her plays, although often melodramatic, are marked by intelligence and craftsmanship. *The Children's Hour* (1934), her first drama, concerns the devastating effects of a child's malicious charge of lesbianism against two of her teachers. *The Little Foxes* (1939) and *Another Part of the Forest* (1946) constitute a chilling study of a wealthy and rapacious Southern family. Several of Hellman's dramas—notably *Watch on the Rhine* (1941) and *The Searching Wind* (1944)—treat international political themes such as isolationism and the rise of fascism. In 1952 she was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee because she had attended Communist party meetings in the late 1930s. She made several English adaptations of French plays and, with Richard Wilbur, wrote a libretto for a musical version of Voltaire's *Candide* (1955). Her other plays include *Days to Come* (1936), *The Autumn Garden* (1951), and *Toys in the Attic* (1960). In 1931 she met the writer Dashiell Hammett, who remained her constant companion until his death in 1961.

See her autobiographical works, *An Unfinished Woman* (1969), *Pentimento* (1973), and *Scoundrel Time* (1976);

biographies by W. Wright (1986), C. Rollyson (1988), and A. Kessler-Harris (2012);

Feibleman, P. , *Lilly: Reminiscences of Lillian Hellman* (1988);

Mellen, J. , *Hellman and Hammett* (1996).

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Hellman, Lillian. (2018). In P. Lagasse, & Columbia University, *The Columbia encyclopedia* (8th ed.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/hellman_lillian_1905_1984



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