

SEMESTER 3RD

UNIT 2

ALL MY SONS

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THEMES

- Miller's concern with large social issues is really the key to our understanding of the play.
- In *All My Sons* family relations are predominant. To Keller, nothing is bigger than the family. It's everything for him. When Chris discovers his father's complicity in the sale of defective cylinder heads to the Air Force, he turns against him. Rather than go on living, Keller kills himself.
- Keller's death is a parable of our times. Through it, Miller points to our inescapable social responsibilities. Any evasiveness is severely punished. Plays such as these are specially relevant today.

Relatedness

- issue of relatedness is the main one in *All My Sons*.
- introduces questions that involve an individual's obligation to society, personal responsibility, and the distinction between private and public matters.
- criticizes Keller's myopic worldview, which allows him to discount his crimes because they were done "for the family."
- The principal contention is that Keller is wrong in his claim that there is nothing greater than the family, since there is a whole world to which Keller is connected.
- To cut yourself off from your relationships with society at large is to invite tragedy of a nature both public (regarding the pilots) and private (regarding the suicides).

The American Dream

- Miller points out the flaw with a merely economic interpretation of the American Dream as business success alone. Keller sacrifices other parts of the American Dream for simple economic success.
- Miller suggests the flaws of a capitalist who has no grounding in cultural or social morals. While Keller accepted the idea that a good businessman like himself should patch over the flawed shipment, Miller critiques a system that would encourage profit and greed at the expense of human life and happiness.
- The challenge is to recover the full American Dream of healthy communities with thriving families, whether or not capitalism is the economic system that leads to this happy life.
- Economic mobility alone can be detrimental--consider George's abandonment of his hometown for big city success.

Denial and Self-Deception

- How do we deceive ourselves and others? We select things to focus on in life, but do we also need to deny certain things in order to live well? What toll does denial take on the psyche, the family, and society?
- Two main facts about the Keller family history must be confronted. One is Larry's death, and the other is Keller's responsibility for the shipment of defective parts.
- Mother denies the first while accepting the second, and Keller accepts the first while denying the second.
- The result is that both characters live in a state of self-deception, willfully ignoring one of the truths so that the family can continue to function in acceptable ways.

*THANK
YOU*