

**Twentieth Century American Drama**  
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**Lecture - 20**  
**Arthur Miller's All My Sons Part 6**

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### Major Themes

- Criticism of American Dream
- Crisis of post-war society
- Responsibility and Morality
- Guilt and Atonement



This is an NPTEL course on Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons*. We realized that more things are being revealed into the plot line. We realize that there is much more than the unspeakability of death, there are its lot of baggage, there are lot of secrets to which the family is uncomfortable about. Those are the kind of secrets which has larger implications for the society, for the nation as well.

We are going to look at some of the major themes that this play is exploring. In a very significant way at the central level, the play explores the American Dream and the various facets of it. We find that all of these characters are trying to achieve something or the other in slightly in different ways perhaps.

Whether we look at a character like Joe Keller, who is a thriving industrialist in this case who is a self-made man, can tell a story which is like from rags to riches or we are looking at a character like Jim, who is doctor who is thriving in his profession. But also due to his the compulsions of his idealism, he would also want to get into some medical research.

We find that there are these different kinds of characters who have placed the American Dream at the center of their life in different ways and their trajectories are also very different in that sense. There is also Chris, who is an idealist to the core. Perhaps the most idealistic figure in this entire play. There is also Chris who cannot quietly digest the fact that things could be done, certain things could be done or things could be acceptable even emotionally or morally if it is done just to for the family.

For a person like Chris, the concern is that of the larger society which is where the title *All My Sons* also comes from. This is a concern we are not entirely sure whether all the characters in the play, really share this attitude this belief that Chris has in mind that the entire society the entire nation needs to be seen as an extension of the family.

We are not very sure whether all characters uphold that view, but we find that that is also a major that becomes a major dividing line in terms of trying to understand what is legitimate, what is not legitimate, what is acceptable morally, what is not acceptable, etc.

This is about the crisis of post-war society. Many ways in the play and we also find these different characters having different mechanisms to deal with the post-war crisis. The post-war crisis operates in a very different way in the American society.

The casualty is elsewhere, they all have lost their family members, particularly the male members of the family are in different parts of the world. The casualty, the sight of casualty is elsewhere and there is always this longing, there is always this endless wait for the sons to return home and the newspaper is also full of such stories we get to realize.

The crisis in the post-war period operates, in a slightly different way than that we see it operating in say Britain or any of the other European countries. If we take a look at a couple of characters like Larry, who has gone missing or Annie who tries to move on tries to pick up her life and continue to move on or Chris who would also ideally want to move on, but she is also torn with these between his family responsibilities and what he owes to Annie.

We find these characters torn in different ways largely due to the crisis that the post-war period has placed on them. A lot of things that the nation decides, the nation decides to pursue in terms of its territorial ambitions, in terms of the kind of relations that it has in the international scenario that also has a very direct implication on particular families though the site per se, those cities per se are not war sites.

Responsibility and morality, these two aspects are seen in most of the cases in this claim pulling in different directions. The moral may not always end up being the most responsible thing for the family. If we take these two characters Steve and Joe, the Keller family and the Annie's family, we find that the both these further figures, they both have committed something which is entirely unacceptable in moral ways, entirely unacceptable in terms of the interests of the nation, in terms of the interest of the larger society.

But they are also trying to place themselves as fathers. They are also trying to place themselves as a responsible family figures in an attempt, to a failed attempt to, in an attempt to get out of the feeling of guilt. This also brings us to the final theme over here in terms of the diverse pulls of guilt and atonement.

The critics are of different opinion, whether towards the end of the play whether Joe Keller actually receives his atonement or not. There is a deep-seated sense of guilt, there is a deep-seated sense of guilt, which manifests in many different ways. In the case of Steve, who is in prison it also comes out as anger because he also feels that he is been betrayed.

The sense of guilt, the feeling of betrayal the acts of atonement, they are all getting played out in different ways, that there is no absolutely no way in which we could say which is the right format of the journey of the guilt and atonement over here. Critics are of divers opinion, whether Joe Keller receives his atonement or not by the end of the play. There are also a number of critics, who are of the opinion that just because he is guilty enough to take his life. It does not mean that he has been held responsible in the right legal way.

There is a closure, but it is also an open-endedness which makes this claim endlessly fascinating to approach in different ways. In all of these aspects, we find that the kind of memories that particular characters choose to linger on to, it also has a bearing on the

kind of decisions that they take, the kind of trajectories that their lives are taking them through.

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## 1. American Dream

- The American Dream is the **national ethos of US**.
- It is a belief that anyone can achieve success and prosperity through hard work, regardless of their class, in a society where there is equality of freedom and opportunity for upward mobility.
- Historian **James Truslow Adams** popularised the term American Dream in his work *The Epic of America* (1931). He defines American Dream as:  
"Dream of a land in Which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man, with opportunity for each according to his ability for achievement".
- It is criticised by many modern writers in US such as John Steinbeck, Arthur Miller, Scott Fitzgerald, and Tennessee Williams. They claim that it is an unrealistic, unattainable quest.



When we are trying to analyze the first aspect of the American Dream. This is American Dream as the notion that it is a dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for every man with opportunity for each according to his ability for achievement.

This is some kind of a reach towards success, towards prosperity through sheer hard work, regardless of where they are placed in terms of their class, where they are placed in terms of their ethnicity, in terms of their claim to any sort of claim to any kind of ancestral achievements. This is ultimately about equality, freedom and an opportunity for upward mobility.

But plays like this, and there are other playwrights too, who had aimed to criticize the notion of American Dream, like John Steinbeck, Scott Fitzgerald, and Tennessee Williams. They are all trying to argue through their play that it is an unrealistic and unattainable quest. It becomes entirely evident in the way we are looking at these specific characters and how things get played out in their lives.


All of them are in this quest which is unrealistic, which is unattainable in some form or the other. We find that even in the minor character such as Jim, who is in some sense his

families things that he is doing well, he is thriving in his medical practice, but he is also he has this quest to go for something slightly different. He wants to go into, he wants to get into medical research which his family thinks will not be good for them in the long run.

We find these characters being placed in different stages of their lives, trying to negotiate with the reality around them. But all the more believing in the American Dream, in some form of the other. This belief also becomes the central problematic over here for a character like arcade, the mother, who is waiting for her son to come back though deep within perhaps she also knows that he is not going to come back.

But that faith in the possibility of the son coming back, that is also something generated by the American Dream. The newspapers are full of this promise and hope which is not necessarily helping them move forward, but it is also pulling them backward. Not allowing them to get rid of their past in some form.



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### Criticism of American Dream in *All My Sons*

In the play Miller criticizes The American Dream on the following accounts:

- 1.It is not real success** – In the play Joe embodies the American Dream. On the outside he has everything- a good family, enough wealth, comfortable living, and social status. But he is not truly happy. In the end his guilt forces him to commit suicide. This way Miller shows that the American Dream ideal of measuring success and happy life in terms of economic mobility, is wrong.
- 2.It has the ability to corrupt people** – Joe Keller loses his integrity and morality in pursuit of material success. He believes that wealth and status makes a good life and one can do anything to achieve it, even if it means risking the lives of many and betraying one's own nation.



We find that Miller is critiquing The American Dream in two major ways, one arguing that it is not real success. The embodiment of American Dream is perhaps a character in the play, the central protagonist Joe Keller and we find that superficially when we look at him he is a very successful man.

He is a self-made man. We gather in the course of the play that he went to night school that he had worked really hard to reach where he has. He has a very good family, a very good and excellent support system. He seems to have gained enough wealth. There is this instance, where he says, now he has got enough money to make sure that there is a maid to take care of his wife's needs, but the wife does not let the maid do everything.

We find that there is a certain way in which the family seems to have reached a very comfortable level of living. They also have achieved enough social recognition, reputation is good enough. There is a doubt have been we wonder in between especially when Annie visits. When Annie and Sue are having this conversation we wonder whether the neighborhood is still talking about them. But the point is the even Sue who seems to have a lot of discontentment against Chris.

She also realizes that the Keller's were always the kind of family for whom everyone wanted to do things. No one speaks ill of them to their face. We find that that tells us a lot about the kind of social standing that the family has in the neighbourhood. He is also quite well-known in his circles, and he is quite well respected as well.

There is a flip side to it, the ending of the play presumably now must have read the entire play by now. Towards the end of the play, we realized that this is all very superficial. He is never been truly happy, and he is just been ignoring things, and avoiding things, and avoiding a direct confrontation about anything and he is been trying to live in this make willy-world.

In the end, it is guilt which forces him to commit suicide. There is a gunshot at the background towards the end of the play. We know that he has taken his life, and it is not a momentary guilt, it is not a momentary consumption of guilt. It is something which had been growing, which is why he is always been avoiding all the uncomfortable discussions around what happened in the past.

Miller in some form in this play showing that the American Dream, The way in which success is measured, happiness is measured in the context of the American Dream is not entirely right. The architects are perhaps not entirely right. A lot of things are perhaps misplaced.

In various ways, in a very uncanny way, in a very ironic way, we find that Annie's family, Annie, George and father Steve, they seem to be a bit more in sync as a family towards the end of the play than Joe Keller's family, which is clearly disintegrating.

Larry had already died and we realized towards the end of the play, that through the letter that Annie is revealing that Larry died as a man, as a son, feeling extremely ashamed of what his father had done, with the sense of betrayal that he had faced from his father who was otherwise his hero figure.

We also find that Chris also loses this respect for Joe Keller, this man whom he thinks he always thought was the epitome of success, and integrity, and he was partly ashamed of the money, but he also realized, also had this sense of realization that Joe Keller was never wrong in anything.

These yardsticks of measuring success, measuring happiness, measuring integrity, they all seem to be misplaced in this context of the American Dream. Because economic mobility, the upward mobility, the reputation, all these things seem to be accentuated much more than it should, in terms of analyzing success, in terms of evaluating the happiness quotient. That gets exposed very clearly. Not just in all my sense, but also in the *Death of a Salesman* as we had very clearly seen before.

The problem with the American Dream as *All My Sons*, and other similar plays foreground it, it has the ability to corrupt people. Joe Keller, he we find that he is a man who had to compromise on his integrity, and his sense of morality in his pursuit of material success. This happens very inadvertently.

We also know that at that point when the police raid and other things were happening about the flood cylinders, the broken cylinders, which had to go into those aircrafts. He was largely trying to protect himself and his family, and which is why there was never an intention for him to deliberately put anyone else's life at risk.

But in the in while weighing, and fixing his priorities we realize that he ends up making a lot of terrible choices, with this deep-seated belief that with wealth and status, much could be preserved in terms of family peace in terms of the family the close knit feeling. We find that Joe Keller is entirely wrong, though he fails to realize it till the end of his life.

We like to see it that way or not, he also becomes the this embodiment of the kind of person who is willing to risk the lives of many people, and who is willing to even betray his own nation, while he is again ironically pursuing this American Dream.

There is a lot of selfish interests had stake over here, while one is also pursuing this dream and this is the irony which Arthur Miller's play *All My Sons* is in some form trying to foreground by placing the nations interests. Larger societal interests vis-a-vis the impress of the family interest of father, who is trying to protect his family, who is trying to provide for his family. This is a dichotomy which is seen as very ambivalent for a man like Joe Keller.

But for someone like Chris it seems to be very clear, which is why halfway through the play Joe Keller points out that Larry never flew a P-40, he immediately intervenes and asked, so who flew the other planes. It is human lives whether it is a son in this family or any other family, it is all human lives, and which is why again the title of the play becomes very significant, *All My Sons*.

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## 2. Crisis of Post-War Society

- Effect of war can be seen in every characters
- **Chris** - He says to Annie he enjoyed the camaraderie in war camps where people helped each other in spite of the difficulties.  
As a survivor he has to live his whole life, not only with survivor's guilt, but also facing the realities of selfish society.
- **Joe**- He prospered through war. But at last he becomes a victim of war as he shoots himself in guilt of being responsible for the death of, not only his son, but several sons of America (Betraying one's own country).
- **Kate and Annie**- Lost their loved ones due to war.
- **George Deever**- Lost his father's reputation and his girlfriend Lydia due to war.

This shows that not only soldiers but everybody in the society were part of the war. Peace becomes impossible for them even after the end of the war.



The crisis of the post-war society, and was mentioned the effect of the war can be seen in every character. We are looking at particular characters Chris, who also went out, he was also part of the war. He comes back alive. He also talks about how he enjoyed those friendships and the brief relationships that he forged during in the war camps.



He is also burdened with this survivor's guilt. In two different ways, he is burdened with this guilt one within his family, he is the only survivor. In the beginning when Joe Keller talks about this tally, the war has in so many ways disturbed this tally, he had two sons, and he has only one.

The son who is alive now, Chris, he in some way he is also made to feel guilty though in very inadvertent ways. Particularly, it becomes that the trigger is when Annie visits and when Chris declares that he would like to go ahead and get married to Annie, who earlier was Larry's girl.

We find that he is unable to make peace at that level at home. Later, when he comes to realize that his father and his business partner, Joe Keller and his partner Steve, were actually involved in the selling and shipping the flawed cylinders for the aircraft that also places him in a very difficult situation. He becomes a survivor who is burdened with guilt in many ways.

He becomes a survivor, he had served the country. But he also realizes that he is placed in a very precarious position, where he also though not directly had betrayed. He was part of that business too and though he was occasionally ashamed of the money, ashamed of the rat race, but still he technically was being fed, all his comforts had come from that money which Joe Keller made, by betraying the nation too.

In such ways, we find that the effect of the war is in perhaps more on him, though he is also a survivor. Joe Keller, he is someone who prospered through the war. It is very ironically placed over here. War does not necessarily become something which always destroys people.

Here there is a possibility the American Dream the capitalist society also opens up this possibility for people to thrive because of war, to achieve material prosperity because of war. He becomes a victim of war towards the end, when he is consumed by guilt and he decides to take his own life because he realizes that he is guilty for the death of not just those 21 young men, who flew that flawed aircraft, the damaged aircraft.

But he realizes that inadvertently he was responsible for his own son's death, because the son could not take the kind of betrayal that he faced. The prosperity that war brings in and the flip side of it the money that war brings in spite of the terrible things that it

leaves behind that is also something that this play is trying to foreground as well as critique.

Kate and Annie are two women, who lost their loved ones due to war. One lost Larry, both of them lost Larry for Annie loses her lover and Kate loses her son. For them their life is forever fixated in these losses and trying to move away from these losses. They are women, they are also required in while they are also grieving, they have this additional responsibility which they themselves placed on them and to protect their family.

A little more than halfway through the play more centrally only in the third act we realized that Kate is actually not preserving herself. Her the inability, her unwillingness to accept her son's death is largely to protect the family, to protect her husband from that feeling of guilt because if Larry's death is proven it means that Joe Keller was also responsible for that. We find that these women trying to do multiple things at the same time, dealing their own grieves, but also trying to protect their family.

Annie has more problematic background her father is in prison, and she is not been talking to her father thinking that he is guilty and towards the end she also realizes that it is not her father who is guilty, but the man whom she had been idolizing. But the man because of him Larry lost his life, a man because of him, because of whom Chris is getting estranged.

It is a very complicated scenario in terms of the post-war surviving though the characters are not directly involved with war, though the characters are not directly present in any of the sites of war, which is why the American post-war narratives becomes more. They become more interesting and more intriguing than they are perhaps in the other and in the rest of the world.

George Deever is someone who lost his father's reputation because Steve Deever is in jail and George has not been able to move on with his life after that. Lydia gets married and she also has three kids when we meet her. We find that he left for war and then he could never resume this relationship with the Lydia, which he majorly regrets, when he finds that his life had not really moved on much after these various crisis which had before led him.

Its personal, it's familial, it is also about the family suffered a major reputation crisis too. It is multifaceted in terms of the crisis that they are trying to go through. Some of which they can overcome and most of which they cannot. It seems to be like a permanent damage has been done when we look at some of the characters such as George Deever.

The participants of the war we realize were not just the soldiers, were not just the ones who went out to war, not just the ones who came back or did not come back. It is a very deep-seated problem that eats into the individuals, the families, the ones that surround them and also it becomes a national crisis in that sense.

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### 3. Responsibility and Morality

- People's sense of responsibility and morality was affected by the Great Depression and War.
- Due to high rate of inflation and poverty during the great depression, people started feeling that their only responsibility is to earn enough for the well being of their family.
- In the play Joe tries justify his corrupt action by saying he was full-filling his duty by earning for his family.
- In this society a man's value is defined by his ability to fulfil his duty towards his family, which is measured by the financial security he can provide.



Even after the end of the war, even after war becomes just a national memory, we find these characters being unable to move on with. Even as mentioned before the stories of people coming back from after getting lost in the war, even those stories are its very morbid in a sense that not allowing the family to move on.

When we look at the aspect of responsibility and morality, so we find that their sense of, the individual sense of responsibility, morality, they all get mixed up in this because there is a mixing up, there is a clear mixing up of priorities also over there. There is also a very practical, pragmatic side to it, there is a higher rate of inflation, and there is a high rate of poverty. The 1930s were a huge blow on the American economy. At some level these families they are also trying to recover from that.

Joe Keller is also an individual, who is trying to stay afloat during this crisis. The priorities, clearly shift towards keeping his family safe. Providing for his family, one cannot entirely blame him for taking that attitude either because if the damaged cylinders, if the incident of the damaged cylinders, and the following crisis and that tragedy of losing 21 young men if that had not happened, we would not have found anything going wrong in Joe Keller's family.

It is a very difficult moral position which also makes it difficult for us to judge it in any form. One cannot entirely blame a character like Joe Keller for feeling that as long as he is taking care of his family everything is fine because each one had to defend for themselves particularly after the 1930s crisis, in terms of getting out of the, in terms of getting out of that crisis, the economic crisis which really had taken a toll on individuals as well as the nation.

A character like Joe is forced to justify his reason towards the end saying he was fulfilling his duty by being a good father, by earning for his family, by providing for his family, by protecting his family. Chris's idealism, Chris's idealism is found perhaps not practical, not feasible, not just within his family, even Sue the that the neighbor's family, even Sue finds that his idealism could perhaps affect families in the long run because that is not how things work when your priorities shift towards taking care of your family.

It is a very problematic sense of responsibility and morality that this play is trying to explore through. It is always seen as a very male thing. In terms of defining a man's value and his sense of responsibility it is also equated with the kind of financial security that he can provide.

It is not just in Keller's family, we find that when Sue is having this brief conversation with Annie she also talks about that in terms of how one should always look for financial security before one gets married. It is very clear foundation on which a lot of other emotional things also rests.

We do find a shifting sense of responsibility, and shifting the sense of morality due to various reasons. It is opposed to a period, it is a post-depression a period economic depression period, and it was also this change this mad rush towards pursuing the American Dream.

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- This sense of responsibility is so much ingrained in his psyche that he is willing to endanger the lives of other human beings for it.
- He forgets or forsakes his responsibility towards his business partner, his customer, and his nation.
- Here Miller criticizes the value system, which puts material success above moral obligation towards other humans beings.



In Joe Keller's life, which could be an extreme case portrayed here as well what happens is once he is shifting, one he is gravitating mostly towards fulfilling his responsibilities as a father, as a family person. It comes to in a very shocking way, it is also revealed that he is willing to betray his business partner, his customers, his nation, and it also leads to this major tragedy which he is trying to ignore, that is where the central problematic lies.

All this while he had known that this had was a problem that his decision or his lack of decision had caused this the tragic death of 21 young men. He is able to take refuge in the fact that he was providing for his family, that he was protecting his family, that is a central problematic that Arthur Miller in this plays trying to explore as well as very severely critique.

Such an extreme instance had to be placed at the center of this story, which is why perhaps a character of such extreme natures and such extreme decisions had to be made, the protagonist as well. Miller here is actually not pointing fault pointing fingers at particular individuals and blaming them or trying to judge them, but he is trying to critique the value system over here.

The misplaced value system over here, where there is a possibility of certain kinds of things getting legitimized, certain kinds of things getting overlooked because the American Dream has mixed up so many things, value system, the priorities, the economic social pursuits, and the moral obligation towards other human beings. It seems

to be the least preferred item in this journey, in this trajectory, in this pursuit towards the American Dream.

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#### 4. Guilt and Atonement

- Guilt is a recurring theme in the play
- Joe feels guilty even before the climax. His guilt and his attempts for atonement are foreshadowed several times before in the play.
- Joe's suspicion of Annie is a projection of his guilt. His suspicion arises from the constant fear of his secret being revealed.
- Joe promises that he would provide a decent job for Steve when he gets out of the jail. He makes it sound like a help but in reality he is trying to atone for his betrayal.
- Kate who knows about her husband's guilt, tries her best to believe that her son Larry is alive so that she doesn't have to accept the idea of her husband being the murderer of their son.



We come to the final a bit where the play is also centrally about guilt and atonement that is how it ends about different characters coming to terms with realities and taking responsibility even if that means, bringing their own life to death. Whether that is a good way of taking responsibility, whether that is a good legitimate closure or not, that is a different thing that we will not debate at the moment. But guilt is certainly a recurring theme in the play.

Even a character like Chris who remains quite blissfully unaware of the realities until he is exposed to a lot of uncomfortable truths, unpleasant tragic truths, we find that even he feels a sense of guilt, a sense of embarrassment about the money which is coming to him, about being up partaking in that fortune that his father is making.

That is an unspoken sense of guilt in his dealings, the guilt of being a survivor, the guilt of not being able to do enough either for his family or towards Annie. It is guilt seems to be a very recurring theme in so many ways over here. If we are looking at Joe Keller's character who is also the protagonist in many ways, it is interesting to explore this question whether he was always guilty from the beginning.

It is to question whether he always knew, whether he always feel this guilty even before the truth about Larry was exposed. The plates possible to argue that his guilt and his attempts for atonement, they foreshadowed several times in the plane, several instances. In those seemingly childish games, that he plays with the children, and in his the way in which he is dealing with his wife, with his son, and also he is reminiscing about the past. There is a selective kind of memory which is at work.

In one of the telling scenes is where he is in an attempt to justify Annie's father, he keeps saying a father is a father. It is in some sense he is trying to get himself, it is his guilt feeling that he is trying to salvage over here. It is a very inherent sense of guilt and unconscious way in which he is trying to seek atonement for that.

His suspicion of Annie is also a projection of his guilt, because there is this secret, there is this constant fear of the secret being revealed. The moment the family gets to know that, George is visiting his father Steve Deever, the sense of fear, the sense of anxiety, and suspicion everything comes up.

It is at this point that we realize that in fact, Kate's suspicion, anxiety, everything is an extension of what Joe had gone through as well. It is again because of the guilt that Joe also wants to offer a place or he keeps saying that he tries to play this big man over here, he tries to become this very benevolent industrialist over here by saying the moment Steve Deever comes back from jail there is a place here waiting for him.

He is trying to make atonement for his betrayal through these different ways. His lack of stance, he fails to take a stance either with Chris or with his wife Kate, that also reflects this fluid nature of his temperament, also reflects the sense of guilt and the sense of atonement that he is trying to seek.

Kate, incidentally comes across as this character who knew everything from the beginning. Though she comes across in the first half of the play as someone who is trying to run after a lot of irrational things like horoscopes and a memorial tree, we find that she is perhaps the one character who knew what exactly was happening.

She is aware of her husband's guilt. She did not know the truth about Larry's death for sure. Her attempt to keep her son alive in her mind as well as in her family is also trying

to protect her husband, from being consumed by this idea that he was a murderer of their son.

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- Kate's own guilt of knowing her husband's hand in the death of her son Larry shows in the form of denial and superstitions.
  - Joe's decision to kill himself stems from his realization that there is no chance left for him to atone for his guilt.
  - Larry suffers from the guilt of knowing about his father's corrupt activities. But instead of facing the realities of his guilt, he chooses to commit suicide.
  - Chris suffers from Survivor's guilt. Later he also blames himself for the death of his father. But unlike Larry, Chris shows courage to face his guilt and atone for it by deciding to lead a good life.
- This way Miller shows the power of guilt and how the memory of a guilty past will have a continuous effect on one's present and future.



The kind of denial, the superstitious beliefs that Kate has an extension of this knowledge that her husband had actually though inadvertently murdered their son. While Joe's decision to kill himself is perhaps a tangible a marker of how he wants to seek atonement.

As many critics have also pointed out, one is not very sure, whether that really makes up to what he had done before the way in which he had wronged perhaps his business partner, the way in which he had wronged his family, his son, all the other the 21 young men and their families and by extension the nation.

This is an escapist thing that he does, since he cannot live with it anymore because that is the moment when he massively gets exposed. He finds that he cannot find refuge anymore in the fact that he was actually trying to do this to protect his family, because his family is not with him anymore at that point. He has to take this decision to end his misery. It could be seen as a very selfish decision as well.

Larry takes his life, Larry is the first man who commits suicide over here. He is also able to unable to live with this guilt of the knowledge of the corruption that his father had



committed. It is a there is a kind of an escapism too, which is allied with this feeling of guilt.

The men over here, both men in fact, though they commit suicide for various reasons, Larry as well as Larry as well as Joe Keller. We find that they are unable to take responsibility in the real sense of the term. We find that in that sense, we are even forced to acknowledge that perhaps Annie's father the Deever, the Deever family comes across as perhaps more heroic in some form.

Towards the end of the play, they come together as a family, they appear at least a bit more closed than they were before. There is no more disintegration. But the Keller family entirely disintegrates. In terms of the tally we find that even the father is missing there. It is a post-war crisis. It is a post-war tragedy, and war did not take their lives directly.

But we find that in many indirect ways in that the war had completely devastated their family. Miller in this play is trying to showcase, foreground the power of guilt, and how the memory of a guilty past can completely destroy one's present as well as future that is what we find happening to every single character over here particularly in Keller's family where the memory of what had happened is stronger than what actually had happened to.

This denial the misplaced belief in these different systems, the mixed priorities, it is all part of the flawed memories, the incomplete memories that each one is carrying. We cannot even call them as flawed memories. That is the kind of memory that they choose to have.

We do not know how Chris is going to continue with his life because he perhaps blames himself for multiple deaths. Unlike Larry, however, he is more courageous and he decides to continue with his life, he decides to lead a good life in a very ideal form perhaps, but not entirely consumed by the baggage that the other characters are affected with,.

We will take a one closer look at the final act, and then see how some of the things are coming together in the final act. And also, take a look at how certain theatrical aspects are also replicated in very telling ways in the in this play.