

Tv series angels in america



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

An Examination of Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* Kushner's epic drama addresses a variety of themes that are viewed from the various perspectives of its characters. Storylines overlap as they work to flesh out characters struggling to find their own way, set against a backdrop of greed, politics and AIDS. This paper will describe how the main characters move toward self-discovery, wrestle with the stigma of homosexuality and struggle with national and historical themes that closely affect their lives.

The six main characters are in many ways forced to begin their own voyage of self-discovery, as painful experiences push them into examining their choices and life-changing events. Prior Walker, a gay man who discovers he has AIDS, must deal with the end of a relationship while facing his own mortality. Through his numerous heavenly visions, he learns that he is a prophet, perhaps symbolizing hope and survival. At the beginning of the story, Louis Ironson is Prior's neurotic boyfriend; later, however, he abandons the relationship once he discovers Prior is suffering from AIDS, unable to deal with a tragedy that symbolizes his own fears. Harper and Joe Pitt must address their own life-changing events: she attempts to numb her repressed life with drugs and must eventually face her husband's homosexuality; and Joe must struggle with his sexual identity and issues of politics and homophobia. Two main characters are based on actual people: Roy Cohn and Ethel Rosenberg. Cohn's voyage is not easy; he continually denies his sexuality and, until the end, holds tightly to his judgmental nature and conservatism. The ghost of Rosenberg visits Cohn in the hospital as she struggles with her unjust execution and the desire to confront her prosecutor. Each character's journey begins with tragedy and personal struggle, as these elements work well as dramatic sources of self-discovery.

The various ways in which the main characters deal with the issue of homosexuality can be seen in their personal relationships and how they look at the world. Whether in or out of the closet, each character must face the stereotypes and social expectations of their sexuality. It is clear that the characters who refuse to face the truth of their sexual orientation struggle with the avoidance of their true nature and, in many ways, this dishonesty eats at their souls. Joe is living a lie through his marriage to Harper and gradually understands he must live a somewhat truer life, while Harper faces the repercussions of his decision. Cohn is perhaps the most repressed and drowning in the denial of the truth of his life. Ravaged by AIDS, he continues to live in denial, only seeing signs of the truth as he faces death.

National themes are important aspects of Kushner's sexual themes. *Angels* showcases the beginning of AIDS in America and the lack of support for its victims and an eventual cure. By using real events, the playwright showcases national issues through the eyes and experiences of his characters. The play works as an educational tool to show the human struggles of AIDS victims and to share the need for action on a national level.

Various historical events help highlight the context of the story. The Rosenberg trial is a main focus that allows the writer to pull together the personality and repression of Cohn with the prosecution of Rosenberg. From a historical standpoint, Rosenberg was executed for treason. The focus of Cohn's denial of his past meeting the tragic facts of his present state shows the dramatic repercussions of denial and repression. Together with the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, Kushner uses these two historical events to illustrate the undeniable fallout of ignoring the truth.