

Twentieth Century American Drama
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Lecture - 22
You Can't Take it with You Part 1

This is an NPTEL lecture on a new play jointly written by Moss Hart and George Kaufman, *You Can't Take it with You*. It is a comedy which was released in the mid-1930s, produced in the 1930's. It was a huge success, a huge Broadway hit, it was also adapted into a movie later on.

This was one of those plays which responded to the depression of the 1930s, the great depression of the 1930's in a slightly different way altogether. It has a comic take and it is a situational fust for most of it and the plot also revolves around the many eccentric ways in which the characters respond to situations.

This in some form is also a representation of how the American dream can also get manifested in many different ways not necessarily in the definitions of success which are predominantly accepted, but also in multiple ways which are individually very fulfilling.

As the title suggests that one can't take it with oneself at the end of or at the end of it all. It is about trying to underscore how money cannot buy everything and money and wealth and success that one accumulates in this world are not things that one could take with oneself.

It is a very hilarious take on life and it also gives us a number of lessons, a number of responses to the emerging capitalist as responses to the capitalist economy to the dominant definitions of success and how in certain individualistic ways one could navigate through these challenges and also the crisis of the economic crisis of the 1930's.

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"You Can't Take It With You" was produced at the Booth Theatre, New York City, Monday night, December 14th, 1936, by Sam H. Harris, with the following cast:

PERILOUS SYCAMORE	Josephine Hall
ESSIE	Paula Trueman
REBEA	Ruth Aronson
PAUL SYCAMORE	Frank Wilson
Mrs. DE PINNA	Frank Conlan
ED	George Heller
DONALD	Oscar Polk
MARTIN VANDERHOF	Henry Tivnen
ALICE	Margie Sevenson
HENRIKSON	Hugh Reznice
TONY KIRBY	Jess Barker
BORIS KOLBENKOV	George Tolson
GAY WELLSINGTON	Mimi Hayes
Mr. KIRBY	William J. Kelly
Mrs. KIRBY	Virginia Hammond
THREE MEN	George Lench Ralph Holmes Franklin Heller
OLGA	Anna Labowe
STAGE MANAGER	William McFadden

The scene is the home of Martin Vanderhof, New York.

ACT I

A Wednesday evening. (During this act the curtain is lowered to denote the passing of several hours.)

ACT II

A week later.

ACT III

The next day.



This was conceived as a play, a comedy in three acts. The setting is mostly a home, the in the home of Martin Vanderhof in New York as the play also explicitly states. The play is predominantly set in the home of Martin Vanderhof in New York and it is also how everything revolves around this family, the Vanderhof family, Martin Vanderhof being the grand patriarch, the grandpa, the grandfather who is around home where much of the action also happens and the entire family comes across as quite interesting in very eccentric ways.

They all have their own takes on how to deal with life and they all seem to be despite these eccentricities, they all came seem to be quite happy and very accommodating about each other.

We will meet them as the play progresses. Act I is set on a Wednesday evening. There are these very specific details giving a certain quotidian touch to this entire play. The curtain is lowered to denote the passing of several hours on Wednesday evening during this act.

Act 2 happens a week later, and Act 3 happens the next day. There is something very self-reflective Meta quality about this play that we will continue to notice. These stage directions and these settings are also brought together in that form.

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YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU



ACT I

SCENE 1: *The home of MARTIN VANDERHOF—just around the corner from Columbia University, but don't go looking for it. The room we see is what is customarily described as a living room, but in this house the term is something of an understatement. The every-man-for-himself room would be more like it. For here meals are eaten, plays are written, snakes collected, ballet steps practiced, xylophones played, printing presses operated—if there were room enough there would probably be ice skating. In short, the brood presided over by MARTIN VANDERHOF goes on about the business of living in the fullest sense of the word. From GRANDPA VANDERHOF down, they are individualists. This is a house where you do as you like, and no questions asked.*

At the moment, GRANDPA VANDERHOF's daughter, MRS. PENELOPE SYCAMORE, is doing what she likes more than anything else in the world. She is writing a play—her eleventh. Comfortably ensconced in what is affectionately known as Mother's Corner, she is pounding away on a typewriter perched precariously on a rickety card table. Also on the table is one of those plaster-paris skulls ordinarily used as an ash tray, but which serves PENELOPE as a candy jar. And, because PENNY likes companionship, there are two kittens on the table, busily lapping at a saucer of milk.

PENELOPE VANDERHOF SYCAMORE is a round little woman in her early fifties; comfortable looking, gentle, homely. One would not suspect that under that placid exterior there surges the Divine Urge—but it does, it does. After a moment her fingers lag on the keys; a thoughtful ex-

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When the play begins, the Act I, scene 1, the background is being described. The home of Martin Vanderhof just around the corner from Columbia University, but do not go looking for it. The room we see is what we customarily described as a living room, but in this house the term is something of an understatement.

The every-man for himself room would be more like it. For here meals are eaten, plays are written, snakes collected, ballet steps practiced, xylophones played, printing presses operated if they were room enough, they would probably be ice skating. In short, the brood presided over by Martin Vanderhof goes on about the business of living in the fullest sense of the word. From Grandpa Vanderhof down, they are individualist. This is a house where one does as one likes, and no questions asked.

The tone is already set for us right at the beginning in this description of this scene and as mentioned, there is a self reflexive Meta quality about it even when the setting is being described and specific details are mentioned, but at the same time, there are these semi-warnings for the audience do not go looking for it.

It is real and fictional at the same time and there is absolutely no effort being made to disguise those lines. On the other hand, this blending of fiction with reality and the consciousness of that is entirely fictional that is being celebrated. That Meta quality accentuates the comedy, the situational comedy that in some cases, it is also the

situational fuss that this play is about. We get to know about the eccentric setting into which we are about to enter.

At the moment, Grandpa Vanderhof's daughter misses Penelope Sycamore is doing what she likes more than anything else in the world. She is writing a play, her eleventh. Comfortably, ensconced in what is affectionately known as mother's corner, she is pounding away on a typewriter perched precariously on a rickety card table.

Also, on the table is one of those plastic Paris skulls ordinarily used as an ashtray, but which serves Penelope as a candy jar and because Penny likes companionship, there are two kittens on the table, busily lapping at a saucer of milk and this is a woman and Martin have so, Martin Vanderhof is the head of the family.

There is Penelope Sycamore who is in her early fifties, we get to know and she also loves to write plays, it does not mention anywhere that she has managed to publish or she has managed to perform, produce any of her plays she loves to write plays so, that is the beauty of this play as we move on, as we read further, we will get to know.

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pression comes over her face. Abstractedly she takes a piece of candy out of the skull, pops it into her mouth. As always, it furnishes the needed inspiration—with a furious burst of speed she finishes a page and whips it out of the machine. Quite mechanically, she picks up one of the kittens, adds the sheets of paper to the pile underneath, replaces the kitten. As she goes back to work, ESSIE CARMICHAEL, MRS. SYCAMORE'S eldest daughter, comes in from the kitchen. A girl of about twenty-nine, very slight, a curious air of the pixie about her. She is wearing ballet slippers—in fact, she wears them throughout the play.

ESSIE. (Enters U.R. as PENNY crosses back with skull and fanning herself takes paper out of typewriter.) My, that kitchen's hot. PENNY. (Finishing a bit of typing.) What, Essie? (Rises and crosses to R. a step.) ESSIE. (Crossing to R. of table.) I say the kitchen's awful hot. That new candy I'm making—it just won't ever get cool. PENNY. Do you have to make candy today, Essie? It's such a hot day. ESSIE. Well, I got all those new orders. Ed went out and got a bunch of new orders. (Leg limbering exercise on chair.) PENNY. My, if it keeps on I suppose you'll be opening up a store. ESSIE. That's what Ed was saying last night (She leans body forward.), but I said No, I want to be a dancer. (Points to c.) PENNY. (Returning to her desk.) The only trouble with dancing is, it takes so long. You've been studying such a long time. ESSIE. (Slowly drawing a leg up behind her as she talks.) Only—eight—years. After all, Mother, you've been writing plays for eight years. We started about the same time, didn't we?



There is no destination, there is no goal fixed for the acts in which they are engaged in. At the outset, we get a sense of the kind of things where what happens over there. Meals are eaten, plays are written, snakes are collected there is a that is one of Vanderhof's

hobbies, ballet steps practiced, xylophones played, printing press is operated, there is also there are also a firecrackers as we will soon come to know.

None of these things are being done with an intent towards making money or getting fame, they are doing it because they find it very fulfilling because it is also mentioned right at the outset, they are all; they are all very fiercely individualistic. This is a play which gives a very different meaning to individualism all together. They are all living life to the fullest, doing what they want to know regardless of what that activity is going to fetch them.

It is in some form, it is a parody of the capitalist; so, in some form, it is a parody of the capitalist system into which these characters, the play and the entire historical setting is steeped into and this is also happening in the wake of the economic crisis the great depression and it is also trying to respond to the situation in a hilarious way, in a fascicle and sarcastic way, but nonetheless also trying to dig deeper into the problem also trying to foreground that there are also other options or other ways of living one's life in individualistic ways so without necessarily going after fame or success.

There are other ways in which individual happiness could be sought without necessarily doing the things which will fetch one what the capitalist economy, the capitalist setting foregrounds as a foremost. That is at this play in that sense, the celebration of that, it is deeply philosophical at some level when we get into the core of it, but at no point, the play gets into a serious moment as we will know.

It retains the format of this fast, the situational comedy and manages to convey this profound truth into this layered truth through these different characters and their exchanges. We find the next character entering Essie Carmichael and she is 29, she is wearing ballet slippers, she wears them throughout the play.

That is the whole point of it. We do not come across any reference, any mention or even any aspiration of Essie Carmichael wanting to become a ballet dancer so, that is not there. There is no destination as mentioned the joy is in living every day to the fullest and just practicing and doing, playing xylophone and filling up the candy jars. The joy is in the moment and that is something which is being endlessly celebrated throughout this play.

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about twenty-nine, very slight, a curious air of the pixie about her. She is wearing ballet slippers—in fact, she wears them throughout the play.

ESSIE. (Enters U.S. as PENNY crosses back with skull and fanning herself takes paper out of typewriter.) My, that kitchen's hot.

PENNY. (Frustrating a bit of typing.) What, Essie? (Rises and crosses to R. a step.)

ESSIE. (Crossing to R. of table.) I say the kitchen's awful hot. That new candy I'm making—it just won't ever get cool.

PENNY. Do you have to make candy today, Essie? It's such a hot day.

ESSIE. Well, I got all those new orders. Ed went out and got a bunch of new orders. (Lag limbering exercise on chair.)

PENNY. My, if it keeps on I suppose you'll be opening up a store.

ESSIE. That's what Ed was saying last night (She leans body forward), but I said No, I want to be a dancer. (Points to C.)

PENNY. (Returning to her desk.) The only trouble with dancing is, it takes so long. You've been studying such a long time.

ESSIE. (Slowly drawing a leg up behind her as she talks.) Only—eight—years. After all, Mother, you've been writing plays for eight years. We started about the same time, didn't we?

PENNY. Yes, but you shouldn't count my first two years, because I was learning to type. (At her desk.)

(From the kitchen comes a colored maid named RHEBA—a very black girl somewhere in her thirties. She carries eight napkins.)

RHEBA. (As she enters.) I think the candy's hardening up now, Miss Essie. (Puts napkins on U.S. chair of table.)

ESSIE. Oh, thanks, Rheba. I'll bring some in, Mother—I want you to try it. (She goes into kitchen U.S.)

(PENNY returns to her work, sits—puts fresh paper in and types—as RHEBA removes table centerpiece and goes to buffet.)

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This is also a play we will find that is pushing the limits of realism in very interesting ways. We get to know very minute details about what is happening at each specific scene, the responses of the characters and the things that they keep doing even while they are talking.

So, for instance here, when Penelope Sycamore is typing, she is endlessly typing out different plays, it is quite mechanically she picks up one of the kittens, adds a sheet of paper to the pile underneath and replaces the kitten. So, there are these minute details in depicted to us in very realistic terms also showcasing some of the eccentricities that these characters are living with.

It took a sense of how they are seriously invested in what they are doing in a slightly different way. Let us take a quick look at this dialogue between Penny and Essie. Essie Carmichael is also Penny's eldest daughter. "I want to be a dancer and Penny says the only trouble with dancing is it takes so long; you have been studying such a long time.

Essie, only eight-years. Mother, after all you have been writing plays for eight-years, we started about the same time, didn't we? But you should not count my first two years before I was because I was learning to type." In the second scene, we will also get to know that Penny actually starts writing plays not because she was into writing plays because she had an ambition to write plays because a typewriter was accidentally delivered to their apartment.

It what begins with an accident, it then becomes her vocation not necessarily a vocation which brings her fame or money, but something that she indulges, and she loves to indulge in on a daily basis and there is a maid Rheba, colored maid and she is a black girl, she is a that is how she is described, a very black girl somewhere in the 30's.

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RHEBA. *(Taking a tablecloth from buffet drawer.)* Finish the second act, Mrs. Sycamore?
 PENNY. Uh? What?
 RHEBA. *(Retrieving to table, she throws tablecloth over back of a chair and removes table cover.)* I said, did you finish the second act?
 PENNY. *(Crosses to R. a step with script, papers, and pencil.)* Oh, do, Rheba. I've just got Cynthia entering the monastery.
 RHEBA. She was at the Kit Kat, wasn't she?
 PENNY. *(Crosses to L. of table.)* Well, she gets tired of the Kit Kat Club, and there's this monastery, so she goes there.
 RHEBA. Do they let her in?
 PENNY. Yes, I made it Visitors' Day, so of course anybody can come.
 RHEBA. Oh. *(As she spreads tablecloth.)*
 PENNY. So she arrives on Visitors' Day, and—just stays.
 RHEBA. You mean she stays all night?
 PENNY. Oh, yes. She stays six years. *(Crosses to her desk and sits.)*
 RHEBA. Six years? *(Starting for kitchen.)* My, I bet she busts that monastery wide open. *(She is gone.)*
 PENNY. *(Half to herself, at the typet.)* "Six Years Later." . . .

(PAUL SYCAMORE comes up from the cellar. Mid-fifties, but with a kind of youthful air. His quiet charm and mild manner are distinctly engaging. He is carrying a frying pan containing several small firecrackers. He is smoking a cigarette.)

PAUL. *(Turning back as he comes through door d.r.)* Mr. De Pinna! *(A voice from below: "Yab?")* Mr. De Pinna, will you bring up one of those new skyrockets, please? I want to show them to Mrs. Sycamore. *(An answering "Sure!" from cellar as he crosses toward PENNY, who rises.)* Look, Penny—what do you think of these little firecrackers we just made? We can sell them ten strings for a cent. Listen. *(He puts one down in the pan on table and lights it. It goes off with a good bang.)* Nice, huh?
 PENNY. Yes, Paul, dear, were you ever in a monastery?
 PAUL. *(Puts half of firecrackers in pan, quite calmly as he crosses*



We get to know that the each ones a personal vocation is also immense family interest that is the stuff they talk about around the meal table, Rheba also asks her about whether she finished the Act-II. Such everybody is interested in each other's life in such minute details about which act they are completing, what steps they are practicing and about these nitty gritty as if they are also very life changing and very important.

We find Paul Sycamore entering who is a man in mid-fifties and there is also Mister De Pinna, Paul Sycamore is Penelope's husband and there is also a family friend mister De Pinna and both of them keep and spend a lot of time in the cellar, they are also experimenting and manufacturing firecrackers over there.

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RHEBA. She was at the Kit Kat, wasn't she?
PENNY. *(Crosses to L. of table.)* Well, she gets tired of the Kit Kat Club, and there's this monastery, so she goes there.
RHEBA. Do they let her in?
PENNY. Yes, I made it Visitors' Day, so of course anybody can come.
RHEBA. Oh. *(As she spreads tablecloth.)*
PENNY. So she arrives on Visitors' Day, and—just stays.
RHEBA. You mean she stays all night?
PENNY. Oh, yes. She stays six years. *(Crosses to her desk and sits.)*
RHEBA. Six years? *(Starting for kitchen.)* My, I bet the buses that monastery wide open. *(She is gone.)*
PENNY. *(Half to herself, as she types.)* "Six Years Later." . . .

(PAUL SYCAMORE comes up from the cellar. Mid-fifties, but with a kind of youthful air. His quiet charm and mild manner are distinctly engaging. He is carrying a frying pan containing several small firecrackers. He is smoking a cigarette.)

PAUL. *(Turning back as he comes through door D.R.)* Mr. De Pinna! *(A voice from below: "Yah!")* Mr. De Pinna, will you bring up one of those new skyrocketers, please? I want to show them to Mrs. Sycamore. *(An answering "Sure!" from cellar as he crosses toward PENNY, who rises.)* Look, Penny—what do you think of these little skyrocketers we just made? We can sell them ten strings for a cent. Listen. *(He puts one down in the pan on table and lights it. It goes off with a good bang.)* Nice, huh?
PENNY. Yes, Paul, dear, were you ever in a monastery?
PAUL. *(Puts half of firecrackers in pan, quite calmly as he crosses to her.)* No, I wasn't. . . . Wait till you see the new rocketers. Gold stars, then blue stars, and then bombs, and then a balloon. Mr. De Pinna thought of the balloon.

(DE PINNA enters.)

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Again, not necessarily an activity which gives fetches them any sort of revenue. In fact, they have a very interesting response to the economic system itself which we would very soon notice as well. Penny in between she also tries to take tips from her family members about how to take the plot structure of plays forward.

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PENNY. Sounds lovely. Did you do all that today? *(Crosses to desk chair.)*

PAUL. Sure. We made up—Oh, here we are. *(DE PINNA comes up from cellar. A bald-headed little man with a serious manner, carrying 2 good-sized skyrocketers. He crosses to PAUL. PAUL takes one to show PENNY.)* Look, Penny. Costs us eighteen cents to make and we sell 'em for fifty. How many do you figure we can make before the Fourth of July, Mr. De Pinna?

DE PINNA. Well, we've got two weeks yet—what day you going to take the stuff up to Mount Vernon?

PAUL. *(Picking up his pan and firecrackers.)* About a week. You know, we're going to need a larger booth this year—got a lot of stuff made up. *(PAUL starts r.)* Come on, we're not through yet. *(DE PINNA follows.)*

DE PINNA. Look, Mr. Sycamore, *(Examining rocket in his hand.)* I'm afraid the powder chamber is just a little bit close to the balloon.

PAUL. Well, we got the stars and the bombs in between.

DE PINNA. But that don't give the balloon time enough. A balloon needs plenty of time.

PAUL. Come on—come on. Let's go down in the cellar and try it. *(He exits D.R.)*

DE PINNA. *(Starting off.)* All right.

PENNY. *(Rising and crossing two steps r.)* Mr. De Pinna, if a girl you loved entered a monastery, what would you do?

DE PINNA. Oh I don't know, Mrs. Sycamore. . . . it's been so long.

(PENNY sits at her desk, as DE PINNA exits D.R. She starts to type again as RHEBA enters from kitchen bringing a pile of plates and salt and pepper shakers.)

RHEBA. *(Crossing down to table.)* Miss Alice going to be home to dinner tonight, Mrs. Sycamore? *(She puts pile of plates on table.)*

PENNY. *(Deep in her thinking.)* What? I don't know, Rhea. Maybe.



“She keeps asking, she is stuck in somewhere one of her characters got stuck in a monastery and that becomes a very real problem and she keeps asking everyone about if a girl loved, you loved entered a monastery, what would you do and she keeps asking

suggestions and opinions for each from each family member to help her out with this crisis, this writing block that she has got.”

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salt and pepper shakers.)
RHEBA. *(Crossing down to table.)* Miss Alice going to be home to dinner tonight, Mrs. Sycamore? *(She puts pile of plates on table.)*
PENNY. *(Deep in her thinking.)* What? I don't know, Rheba. Maybe.
RHEBA. Well, I'll set a place for her, but she's only been home one night this week.
PENNY. Yes, I know.
RHEBA. *(She puts down a plate or two.)* Miss Essie's making some mighty good candy today. She's doing something new with coconuts. *(More plates.)*
PENNY. Uh-huh. That's nice.
RHEBA. Let's see . . . six and Mr. De Pinna, and if Mr. Kolen-

know comes that makes eight, don't it? *(PENNY types. At which point, a whistling sound of a rocket followed by a series of explosions comes up from cellar. PENNY and RHEBA, however, don't even notice it. RHEBA goes right on.)* Yes, I'd better set for eight. *(Puts napkins from chair to table. Puts down one more plate, looks over her setting of the table, and starts off U.S.)*
PENNY. *(Rising.)* Rheba, I think I'll put this play away for a while, and go back to the war play.
(ESSIE returns from kitchen carrying a plate of freshly made candy.)
RHEBA. Oh, I always liked that one—the war play. Boom, boom!

We are introduced very briefly to this character Miss Alice who are supposed to join them for dinner and this is Penny's second daughter and this is where we get to know that the flippancy and the seriousness with which Penny is engaging with this act of writing plays it happens simultaneously so, she is putting this play for a while where a certain character is struck in a monastery and then, she is going back to the war play.

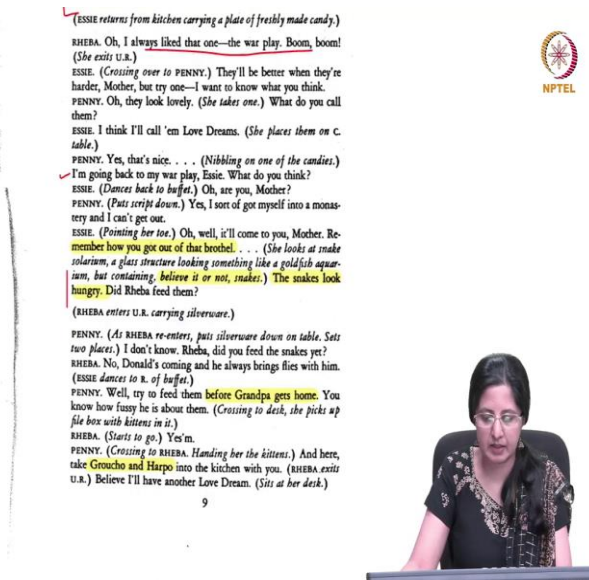
This is again very interesting, this is a 1930's play, this is after the First World War and before the Second World War and this is also a time, when America as a nation, they are kind of fitting themselves in the world economy, in the world order, in the world of politics.

There is a certain way in which the war situation also becomes interesting in a very fictional way that is something we notice over here, it is there is a distance, there is a set of a kind of a distance that this play as well as the characters are able to have from the situation of war, the reality of war.

If one compares this with the kind of war plays or the kind of artistic output which was coming out after the second First World War, we will find that it was very radically different say in Britain or in the rest of Europe. This is being referred to in a very flippant

way which is also critiquing which is also perhaps showing the kind of distance that America as a society has at this point of time the 1930's from these different historical events which had taken a toll on the rest of the world, almost the rest of the world.

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(ESSIE returns from kitchen carrying a plate of freshly made candy.)
RHEBA. Oh, I always liked that one—the war play. Boom, boom!
(She exits U.R.)
ESSIE. (Crossing over to PENNY.) They'll be better when they're harder, Mother, but try one—I want to know what you think.
PENNY. Oh, they look lovely. (She takes one.) What do you call them?
ESSIE. I think I'll call 'em Love Dreams. (She places them on c. table.)
PENNY. Yes, that's nice. . . . (Nibbling on one of the candies.)
I'm going back to my war play, Essie. What do you think?
ESSIE. (Dances back to buffet.) Oh, are you, Mother?
PENNY. (Puts script down.) Yes, I sort of got myself into a monastery and I can't get out.
ESSIE. (Pointing her toe.) Oh, well, it'll come to you, Mother. Remember how you got out of that brothel. . . . (She looks at snake solarium, a glass structure looking something like a goldfish aquarium, but containing, believe it or not, snakes.) The snakes look hungry. Did Rheba feed them?
(RHEBA enters U.R. carrying silverware.)
PENNY. (As RHEBA re-enters, puts silverware down on table. Sets two places.) I don't know. Rheba, did you feed the snakes yet?
RHEBA. No, Donald's coming and he always brings flies with him. (ESSIE dances to n. of buffet.)
PENNY. Well, try to feed them before Grandpa gets home. You know how fussy he is about them. (Crossing to desk, she picks up file box with kittens in it.)
RHEBA. (Starts to go.) Yes'm.
PENNY. (Crossing to RHEBA. Handing her the kittens.) And here, take Groucho and Harpo into the kitchen with you. (RHEBA exits U.R.) Believe I'll have another Love Dream. (Sits at her desk.)

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When Rheba also says, “I always liked that one, the war play boom, boom yeah. So, that is how they have this family response to war. It is not something offensive the way it is being presented, it is trying to showcase how in the 1930's when this American family is talking about war; they are able to take a flippant tone.

It is being sarcastically presented, that is being showcased in order to show how the American responses to various events, historical events is are radically different from Britain or from the rest of the world.

She also announces this to everyone that how she is going back to her war play and the different critical points, the crisis that she encountered in some of her other plays are also being referred to remember how she got out of that brothel so, just the same way in this play also, she will be able to get that character out of the monastery.

It is at this point that the audience's attention are being drawn to a snake solarium, a glass structure looking something like a goldfish aquarium, but containing believe it or not snakes. Another meta quality, another self-reflexive quality about this play where the

play is drawing attention to the kind of exaggerated so, the kind of eccentric things that the play is presenting.

“The snakes look hungry. Did Rheba feed them?” The almost normal, coated in way in which the snakes are being referred to, this sets the tone further for this play. Here is a house full of eccentric people where in an aquarium, they are instead of an aquarium, instead of goldfish, they have a snake solarium where they have, they are they have snakes as pets and they ask each other about whether the snakes have been fed.

This is also representative in some form on a very serious note this is also showcasing the kind of individualism that American society is capable of accommodating, it is sarcastic, its borders on situational fuss, but it is a critique as well as a comment on the limits of individualism.

If we compare this play with some of the other important plays of the time where the American dream is being critiqued in certain different ways, here we find that there is there are always this play is actually opening up a number of choices in the wake of everything that could go wrong.

In fact, it is an entirely different trajectory altogether, it is an entirely different political, socio-economic and cultural trajectory altogether that this play just through one family is opening up before us. They do have this brief conversation about how they have to feed the snakes before grandpa gets home and how he is fussy about the snakes and the kittens also have names Groucho and Harpo.

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(PAUL emerges from cellar again.)
PAUL. (Enters d.r. and crosses to ESSIE.) Mr. De Pinna was right about the balloon. It was too close to the powder.
ESSIE. (Points to plate.) Want a Love Dream, Father? They're on the table.
PAUL. (Starts for stairs.) No, thanks. I gotta wash.
PENNY. I'm going back to the war play, Paul.
PAUL. Oh, that's nice. We're putting some red stars after the bombs and then the balloon. That ought to do it. (He goes up stairs.)
ESSIE. (Crossing down to back of chair L. of table.) You know, Mr. Kolenkhov says I'm his most promising pupil.
PENNY. You'd think with forty monks and one girl that something would happen.
(ED CARMICHAEL comes down stairs. A nondescript young man in his mid-thirties. He removes his coat as he crosses to xylophone.)
ED. Essie! Heh! Essie! (PENNY sits as music starts. He hams a snatch of melody as he heads for the far corner of the room—the xylophone corner. Arriving there, he picks up the sticks and continues the melody on the xylophone. Immediately ESSIE is up on her toes, performing intricate ballet steps to ED's accompaniment.)
ESSIE. (After a bar, rising on toes—dancing—to r. below table.) I like that, Ed. Did you write it? (PENNY types.)
ED. (Pauses in his playing. Shakes his head.) No, Beethoven. (Music continues.)
ESSIE. (Never coming down off her toes.) Lovely. Got a lot of you in it. . . . I made those new candies this afternoon, Ed. (Dancing to the L.) (PENNY puts scripts from U.S. end to D.S. end.)
ED. (Playing away.) Yah?



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ESSIE. (Starts for stairs.) No, thanks. I gotta wash.
PENNY. I'm going back to the war play, Paul.
PAUL. Oh, that's nice. We're putting some red stars after the bombs and then the balloon. That ought to do it. (He goes up stairs.)
ESSIE. (Crossing down to back of chair L. of table.) You know, Mr. Kolenkhov says I'm his most promising pupil.
PENNY. You'd think with forty monks and one girl that something would happen.
(ED CARMICHAEL comes down stairs. A nondescript young man in his mid-thirties. He removes his coat as he crosses to xylophone.)
ED. Essie! Heh! Essie! (PENNY sits as music starts. He hams a snatch of melody as he heads for the far corner of the room—the xylophone corner. Arriving there, he picks up the sticks and continues the melody on the xylophone. Immediately ESSIE is up on her toes, performing intricate ballet steps to ED's accompaniment.)
ESSIE. (After a bar, rising on toes—dancing—to r. below table.) I like that, Ed. Did you write it? (PENNY types.)
ED. (Pauses in his playing. Shakes his head.) No, Beethoven. (Music continues.)
ESSIE. (Never coming down off her toes.) Lovely. Got a lot of you in it. . . . I made those new candies this afternoon, Ed. (Dancing to the L.) (PENNY puts scripts from U.S. end to D.S. end.)
ED. (Playing away.) Yah?
ESSIE. (A series of leaping steps.) You can take 'em around tonight.
ED. All right. . . . Now, here's the finish. This is me. (He works up to an elaborate crescendo, but ESSIE keeps pace with him, right to the finish, pirouetting to the last note.) How's that?
ESSIE. That's fine. (PENNY picks up half of pile of scripts, D.S. end desk.) Remember it when Kolenkhov comes, will you?
PENNY. (Who has been busy with her scripts.) Ed, dear. Why don't you and Essie have a baby? I was thinking about it just the other day.
(ED puts xylophone hammers down—comes down from alcove.)
ED. (As ESSIE busies herself with her slippers.) I don't know—we



ED Carmichael, another character enters the scene, he is in the mid-thirties and ED is Essie's husband. There is very little that he does not like except playing the xylophone. Again, none of them are professionally trained. They do try to take lessons, they do try to practice, but that is not their concern, they play, they dance ballets and they play the xylophone because they want to and of course, Penny writes plays because she wants to not because they are aiming to become something or the other.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:02)

could have one if you wanted us to. What about it, Essie? Do you want to have a baby?
ESSIE. Oh, I don't care. I'm willing if Grandpa is. *(And off into kitchen.)*
ED. *(Calling after her.)* Let's ask him.
PENNY. *(Running through a pile of scripts.)* Labor play, *(ED works printing press with a bang.)* religious play, *(Another bang. RHEBA enters U.S. with silverware. Puts table cover from chair on buffet arm.)* sex play— *(Still another bang.)* I know it's here some place.
DE PINNA. *(Coming out of cellar D.A., bound for kitchen to wash up.)* I was right about the balloon. It was too close to the powder.
ED. *(Who has crossed to his press.)* Anything you want printed, Mr. De Pinna? How about some more calling cards?
DE PINNA. No, thanks. I've still got the first thousand.
ED. Well, call on somebody, will you?
DE PINNA. All right! *(Exits U.S.)*
ED. *(Coming downstage—type stick in hand.)* What have we got for dinner, Rheba? I'm ready to print the menu.
RHEBA. Let's see. Corn flakes, watermelon, some of these candies Miss Essie made, and some kind of meat—I forget. *(Sets silverware.)*
ED. I think I'll set it up in bold face Cheltenham tonight. *(Going to printing press U.S.)* You know, if I'm going to take those new candies around I'd better print up some descriptive matter after dinner.
PENNY. Do you think anybody reads those things, Ed—that you put in the candy boxes? . . . Oh, here's the waf play. *(She pulls a script out of pile.)* "Poison Gas." *(The doorbell rings. Changes tone.)* I guess that's Donald. *(RHEBA smiles and starts for hall door, U.S.)* Look at Rheba smile.
ED. The boy friend, eh, Rheba?
(RHEBA is out of sight.)
PENNY. They're awfully cute, Donald and Rheba. Sort of like Porgy and Bess.
DONALD. *(Off stage.)* Hello, Rheba.
RHEBA. Donald! *(RHEBA having opened door, DONALD now looms*



Penny in fact, comes across as this, there is also the time when the in American theater history, a number of plays are getting produced of different kinds. This is also sarcastic take on this mass production where Penny is running through a pile of scripts, labor play, religious play, sex play.

There are these different compartments into which these plays are being put. These playwrights are also ridiculing this kind of mass production and which is why this play continues to have this Meta quality at so many levels.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:45)

DONALD. *(Coming into room.)* I'm pretty good, Mr. Ed. How you been, Mrs. Sycamore. *(She starts B.)*
PENNY. Very well, thank you. *(Rises.)* Donald?
DONALD. Yes, ma'am?
PENNY. *(Were you ever in a monastery?)*
DONALD. No-o. I don't go no place much. I'm on relief. *(Reaching for bottle of fire in his pocket.)*
PENNY. Ah, yes, of course. *(Sits.)*
DONALD. *(Crossing to RHEBA. Pulling a bottle out of side pocket.)* Here's the fire, Rheba. Caught a big mess of them today.
RHEBA. *(Taking the jar.)* You sure did. *(RHEBA goes into the kitchen U.S.)* *(DONALD crosses to L.)*
DONALD. I see you've been working, Mrs. Sycamore.
PENNY. Yes, indeed, Donald.
DONALD. How's Grandpa?
PENNY. Just fine. He's over at Columbia this afternoon. The Commencement exercises.
DONALD. *(Crossing to table.)* My . . . my. The years certainly do roll round. M-m-m. *(Takes a candy.)*
ED. *(Wipes his typetting.)* M—E—A—T. . . . What's he go there for all the time, Penny?
PENNY. I don't know, it's so handy—just around the corner.
(PAUL comes down stairs, an impressive looking tome under his arm.)
PAUL. Oh, Donald! Mr. De Pinna and I are going to take the fireworks up to Mount Vernon next week. Do you think you could give us a hand?
DONALD. Yes, sir, only I can't take no money for it this year, because if the Government finds out I'm working they'll get sore.
PAUL. Oh! *(DONALD drifts up to buffet and feeds bits of candy to the snake.)* Ed, I got a wonderful idea in the bathroom just now. I was reading Trotsky. It's yours, isn't it?
ED. *(Crossing down.)* Yah, I left it there.
PENNY. *(Who is it?)*
PAUL. *(A step to PENNY.)* You know, Trotsky. The Russian Revolution. *(Showing her book.)*



Penny is still stuck in that question we realized where; even in the monastery. This loop-like quality about these characters is very interesting too. They are stuck in a certain time loop, sometimes much their advantage and this quality of being stuck does not bother them in any way.

For instance, somewhere in elsewhere in the play, when one of the characters in fact, only Alice and; only Alice in this family comes across as the same character. When she asks the others about time, they are clueless, somebody says it was perhaps 5 o'clock 2 hours back.

This is the time frame in which they are leading their lives and nothing seems to affect them, they are stuck in a time loop and it sometimes has serious consequences like paying taxes or violating certain legal regulations, but these are the things that do not seem to worry them at all.

Another important thing is in spite of this certain fancy detachment with which they are they seem to be living their life, they also seem to be quite interested at least some of them, they seem to be interested in what is happening in certain other parts of the world for instance, we find Paul continuing to talk about Trotsky and the Russian revolution.

There are these intertextual references here and there where sometimes these works, the names of these works are just placed there in order to accentuate the comic effect as well and it also shows how historically and politically and culturally removed this family's reality is from any other things, any other world events major or minor that one of those times.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:36)

loosely describes a couple of arcs, indicative of the eruption of Mr. Vanderhof.) That's where we met.
PAUL. Well, I'm going to do the Revolution! A full hour display.
DONALD. Say!
PENNY. Paul, that's wonderful!
ED. The red fire is the flag, huh?
PAUL. *(Crossing a step to r.)* Sure! And the Czar, and the Cossacks!
DONALD. And the freeing of the slaves?
PAUL. No, no, Donald—the Russian Revolution. *(The sound of the front door slamming. A second's pause, then GRANDPA enters living room. GRANDPA is about 75, a wiry little man whom the years have treated kindly. His face is youthful, despite the lines that scar it; his eyes are very much alive. He is a man who made his peace with the world long, long ago, and his whole attitude and manner are quietly persuasive of this.)* Hello, Grandpa. *(DONALD crosses to door U.S. ED up to L. of xylophone. PAUL sits above table.)*
GRANDPA. *(Patting his hat on newel post and surveying the group.)* Well, sir, you should have been there. That's all I can say—you should have been there.
PENNY. Was it a nice Commencement, Grandpa?
GRANDPA. Wonderful. They get better every year. *(He peers into make solarium.)* You don't know how lucky you are you're snakes. *(Crossing to alcove for his house coat.)*
ED. Big class this year, Grandpa? How many were there?
GRANDPA. Oh, must have been two acres. *Everybody graduated. (Removes street coat.)* Yes, sir. And much funnier speeches than they had last year. *(Crossing down to his chair, putting on house coat.)*
DONALD. *(Coming D.S.)* You want to listen to a good speech you go up and hear Father Divine.
GRANDPA. I'll wait—they'll have him at Columbia. *(Sits r. of table, as DONALD crosses to r.)*
PENNY. Donald, will you tell Rheba Grandpa's home now and we won't wait for Miss Alice.
(DE PINNA enters from kitchen, rolling down his sleeves.)



They do have some very serious discussions about things that do not affect them, things that do not matter and things that do not affect; their contemporary contemporariness in any way. So, now, halfway through first scene, we find the main character if one may call the grandpa that he enters and he is about 75, he is a wiry little man whom the years have treated kindly.

His faith is youthful, despite the lines that is scar it, and his eyes are very much alive. He is a man who made peace with the world long ago and his whole attitude and manner are quietly persuasive of this. This brief description is very important, this is something which could be used as a reference point in order to identify each character, in order to highlight the characteristics of each character.

We all have made peace with their worlds, and they seem to be ok in going along with it. So, what comes, what stutters this narrative we find that when anyone else from outside of that family comes in, there is a conflict because they have not made peace with the world, the way this Vanderhof family has seemed to have made it.

Vanderhof has returned from after attending a commencement, we get to know that is something that he likes to do, he attends, he loves to attend these commencement ceremonies and it was also mentioned right at the outset if you recall the house is almost right next to the Columbia University. Grandpas' home they are preparing to have dinner.

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MENT ORATOR and he'll drown out a whole carload of fireworks. (ED gets a new pair of hammers.) And say just as much, too.
PENNY. Don't the graduates ever say anything?
GRANDPA. No, they just sit there in cap and nightgown, get their diplomas, and then along about forty years from now they suddenly say, "Where am I?"
ESSIE. (ESSIE enters from kitchen, carrying a plate of tomatoes for the evening meal.) Hello, Grandpa. Have a nice day?
GRANDPA. Hello-lavos-a-nice-day. Don't I even get kissed?
ESSIE. (Kissing him.) Excuse me, Grandpa.
GRANDPA. I'll take a tomato, too. (ED strikes three tentative notes on xylophone. GRANDPA takes a tomato and sits with it in his hand, weighing it.) You know I could have used a couple of these this afternoon. . . .
ESSIE. (Offering plate to PAUL.) Father?
(Again ED strikes the keys of his xylophone.)
PAUL. No, thanks.
(ESSIE crosses to PENNY.)
ESSIE. Mother?
PENNY. No, thanks, dear.
GRANDPA. Play something, Ed.
ED. All right. (ED at once obliges on the xylophone. Immediately ESSIE is up on her toes, drifting through the mazes of a toe dance, placing plate of tomatoes on the table as the dances.)
ESSIE. (After a moment of dancing "The Dying Swan.") There was a letter came for you, Grandpa. Did you get it?
GRANDPA. (Cutting a tomato.) Letter for me? I don't know anybody.
ESSIE. It was for you, though. Had your name on it.
GRANDPA. That's funny. Where is it?
ESSIE. I don't know. Where's Grandpa's letter, Mother?
PENNY. (Who has been deep in her work.) What, dear?
ESSIE. (Dancing dreamily away.) Where's that letter that came for Grandpa last week?

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There is a brief mention here about a letter which came for grandpa and this is absolutely no fuss about it. Essie remembers that were in the middle of her ballet practice that there was a letter which came for grandpa, and this is a scene which will become, this is an instance which will very soon become extremely important. They are all asking each other where the letter is, and they also remember that the letter came from the United States government.

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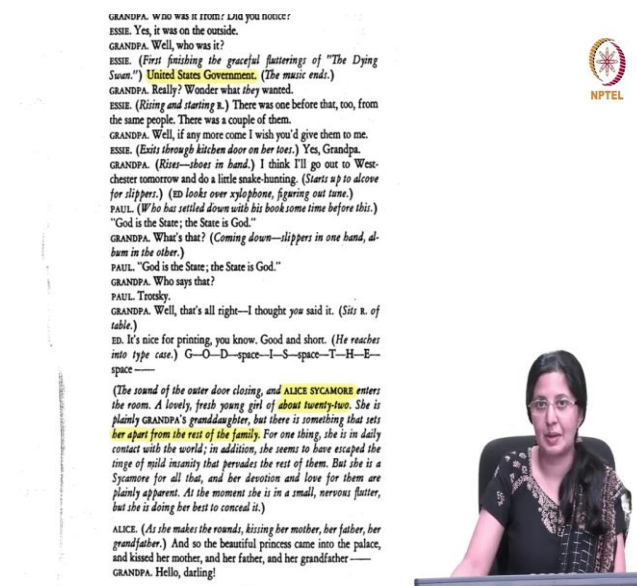
PENNY. I don't know. (Then brightly.) I remember seeing the kins on it. (ESSIE starts to floor.)
GRANDPA. Who was it from? Did you notice?
ESSIE. Yes, it was on the outside.
GRANDPA. Well, who was it?
ESSIE. (First finishing the graceful flutterings of "The Dying Swan.") United States Government. (The music ends.)
GRANDPA. Really? Wonder what they wanted.
ESSIE. (Rising and starting r.) There was one before that, too, from the same people. There was a couple of them.
GRANDPA. Well, if any more come I wish you'd give them to me.
ESSIE. (Exits through kitchen door on her toes.) Yes, Grandpa.
GRANDPA. (Rites—shoes in hand.) I think I'll go out to Westchester tomorrow and do a little snake-hunting. (Starts up to alcove for slippers.) (ED looks over xylophone, figuring out tune.)
PAUL. (Who has settled down with his book some time before this.) "God is the State; the State is God."
GRANDPA. What's that? (Coming down—slippers in one hand, d-beam in the other.)
PAUL. "God is the State; the State is God."
GRANDPA. Who says that?
PAUL. Trotsky.
GRANDPA. Well, that's all right—I thought you said it. (Sits r. of table.)
ED. It's nice for printing, you know. Good and short. (He reaches into type case.) G—O—D—space—I—S—space—T—H—E—space—
(The sound of the outer door closing, and ALICE SYCAMORE enters the room. A lovely, fresh young girl of about twenty-two. She is plainly GRANDPA'S granddaughter, but there is something that sets her apart from the rest of the family. For one thing, she is in daily contact with the world; in addition, she seems to have escaped the tinge of mild insanity that pervades the rest of them. But she is a Sycamore for all that, and her devotion and love for them are plainly apparent. At the moment she is in a small, nervous flutter, but she is doing her best to conceal it.)



They have been given the chaotic way in which they go about their lives, the letter seems to have got misplaced and there is absolutely no fuss about it, there is no stress about recovering that lost letter.

This is very important too because when the play writes, when these are because when we are being informed that here is a character, a set of characters who have made peace with their world a long time ago. They really mean that they made peace with a missing letter even if it is from the government, it does not affect them in any way, and it is just one among the other things which happens in this very chaotic in a very lively household.

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GRANDPA. WHO WAS IT FROM? WHO YOU NOTICE?
ESSIE. Yes, it was on the outside.
GRANDPA. Well, who was it?
ESSIE. (First finishing the graceful flutterings of "The Dying Swan.") United States Government. (The music ends.)
GRANDPA. Really? Wonder what they wanted.
ESSIE. (Rising and starting n.) There was one before that, too, from the same people. There was a couple of them.
GRANDPA. Well, if any more come I wish you'd give them to me.
ESSIE. (Exits through kitchen door on her seat.) Yes, Grandpa.
GRANDPA. (Rises—absent in hand.) I think I'll go out to Westchester tomorrow and do a little snake-hunting. (Starts up to alcove for slippers.) (He looks over xylophone, figuring out tune.)
PAUL. (Who has settled down with his book some time before this.) "God is the State; the State is God."
GRANDPA. What's that? (Coming down—slippers in one hand, album in the other.)
PAUL. "God is the State; the State is God."
GRANDPA. Who says that?
PAUL. Tootky.
GRANDPA. Well, that's all right—I thought you said it. (Sits n. of table.)
ED. It's nice for printing, you know. Good and short. (He reaches into type case.) G—O—D—space—I—S—space—T—H—E—space ———
(The sound of the outer door closing, and ALICE SYCAMORE enters the room. A lovely, fresh young girl of about twenty-two. She is plainly GRANDPA'S granddaughter, but there is something that sets her apart from the rest of the family. For one thing, she is in daily contact with the world; in addition, she seems to have escaped the tinge of mild insanity that pervades the rest of them. But she is a Sycamore for all that, and her devotion and love for them are plainly apparent. At the moment she is in a small, nervous flutter, but she is doing her best to conceal it.)
ALICE. (As she makes the rounds, kissing her mother, her father, her grandfather.) And so the beautiful princess came into the palace, and kissed her mother, and her father, and her grandfather——
GRANDPA. Hello, darling!

We are introduced to this character Alice Sycamore, who is about 22 and this is how she has been described. She is plainly grandpa's granddaughter, but there is something that sets her apart from the rest of the family. She is a Vanderhof's granddaughter and Penny's second daughter.

For one thing, she is in daily contact with the world. The way in which Alice Sycamore is being described. The rest of the family needs to be defined in accordance of what she is because they are what she is not. For one thing, she is in daily contact with the world which also signifies that in the rest of the family, they are not in daily contact with the world; they are clueless of what is happening.

There is one, it is one thing that they talk about Trotsky and they discuss Russian Revolution, but they are clueless about what happens right outside their apartment, they are clueless of how things work in the American society. In addition, she seems to have escaped the things of mild insanity that pervades the rest of them.

It is very clear, the kind of things that separate Alice from the others, but she is a sycamore for all that and her devotion and love for them are plainly apparent. At the moment, she is in a small, nervous, flutter, but she is doing her best to conceal it.

Alice is very different from the others, she is in touch with the real world outside, she has a real job, and she is also familiar with the socio, political and cultural realities, and the economic realities of the where wherever she is living. The others are just the others are living in some worlds that they have created for themselves, they have made peace with it, but Alice that does not come across is a conflict between them, their words are entirely different, but they also coexist.

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ALICE. Hi, Grandpa—and what do you think? They turned into the Sycamore family. Surprised? (Removing her hat.) (to gets another set of hammers.)
ESSIE. (Enters U.R. Examining ALICE's dress.) Oh, Alice, I like it.
ALICE. Do you?
ESSIE. It's new, isn't it?
FENNY. Looks nice and summery.
ESSIE. Where'd you get it?
ALICE. Oh, I took a walk during lunch hour.
GRANDPA. You've been taking a lot of walks lately. That's the second new dress this week.
ALICE. (Takes off gloves.) I just like to brighten up the office once in a while. I'm known as the Kay Francis of Kirby & Co. . . . Well, what's new around here? In the way of plays, snakes, ballet dancing or fireworks. Dad, I'll bet you've been down in that cellar all day. (to sees if hammers are straight.)
PAUL. Huh?
FENNY. I'm going back to the war play, Alice. (ESSIE does dance step exercise.)
ALICE. Really, Mother? (She takes her hat to the hatrack.) (to strikes a note on xylophone.)
ESSIE. Ed, play Alice that Beethoven thing you wrote.
(to at xylophone. He plays. ESSIE is up on her toes.)
GRANDPA. You know, you can mail a letter all the way from Nicaragua now for two pesos.
PAUL. Really?
FENNY. (Reading from her script.) "Kenneth! My virginity is a priceless thing to me."
ALICE. Listen, people. . . Listen. (The music dies out. She gets a scattered sort of attention.) I'm not home to dinner. A young gentleman is calling for me. (to fixes a xylophone hammer.)
ESSIE. Really, who is it?
FENNY. Well, isn't that nice?
ALICE. I did everything possible to keep him from coming here but he's calling for me.
FENNY. Why don't you both stay to dinner?
ALICE. No. I want him to take you in easy doses. I've tried to create



We find that very soon that Alice is dating his her boss's son and this is also evident in the way Alice is asking them about how things are in the family. "I just like to brighten up the office once in a while. I am known as the Kay Francis of Kirby and Company. Well, what is new around here? In the way of plays, snakes, ballet dancing or fireworks. Dad, I will bet you have been down in that cellar all day." This is the ordinary reality, the everyday reality that this family is experiencing.

Alice seems to be entirely okay with it while she also holds a job with Kirby and company and very soon, we get to know that she is also dating the boss's son and she is and rightfully so, a bit hesitant to introduce the boss's son Kirby, Tony Kirby into the family and tells the others "I want him to take you in easy doses because she is entirely prepared of what is in store for an outsider when they come to the family for the first time."

(Refer Slide Time: 27:37)

gentleman is calling for me. *(as fixes a xylophone hammer.)*
 ESSIE. Really, who is it?
 PENNY. Well, isn't that nice?
 ALICE. I did everything possible to keep him from coming here but he's calling for me.
 PENNY. Why don't you both stay to dinner?
 ALICE. No, I want him to take you in easy doses. I've tried to prepare him a little, but don't make it any worse than you can help. Don't read him any plays, Mother, and don't let a snake bite him,



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Grandpa, because I like him. And I wouldn't dance for him, Essie, because we're going to the Monte Carlo ballet tonight.
 GRANDPA. *Can't do anything. Who is he—President of the United States?*
 ALICE. *(Crossing to L. of c. table.)* No, he's vice-president of Kirby & Co. Mr. Anthony Kirby, Jr.
 ESSIE. The boss's son?
 PENNY. Well!
 ALICE. *(A step to PENNY.)* The boss's son. Just like the movies.
 ESSIE. *(Crossing down.)* That explains the new dresses.
 ED. *(Comes down a step.)* And not being home to dinner for three weeks.
 ALICE. Why, Sherlock Holmes!
 PENNY. *(Rises. All aglow, script in hand.)* Are you going to marry him?



"I want him to take you in easy doses. I have tried to prepare him a little, but do not make it any worse than you can help. Do not read him any plays mother, do not like; let a snake bite him grandpa because I like him and I would not dance for him, Essie because we are going to the Monte Carlo ballet tonight."

This is perhaps her trying to pre-empt certain things which perhaps have already happened when visitors from outside had come in and so, grandpa responds to this by saying "cannot do anything, who is he president of the United States?" And to this sarcastic remark, "Alice also tells who he is, he is vice-president of Kirby and Company, Mister Anthony Kirby junior so, this is Tony".

Alice's and Tony's romance and the way they negotiate with their lives is the central plot in this play and it is how the family moves around it and they all make peace with each other despite the walls that pull them apart that is the crux of that, the central theme of this play as well.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:38)

ALICE. (A step to PENNY.) The boss's son. Just like the movies.
ESSE. (Crossing down.) That explains the new dresses.
ED. (Comes down a step.) And not being home to dinner for three weeks.
ALICE. Why, Sherlock Holmes!
PENNY. (Rises. All aglow, script in hand.) Are you going to marry him?
ALICE. Oh, of course. Tonight! Meanwhile I have to go up and put on my wedding dress. (PENNY laughs, crosses to desk.)
ESSE. Is he good-looking?
ALICE. (Vainly consulting her watch. Starts U.S.) Yes, in a word . . . Oh, dear! What time is it?
PENNY. (Preoccupied with scripts.) I don't know. Anybody know what time it is?
PAUL. Mr. De Pinna might know.
ED. It was about five o'clock a couple of hours ago.
ALICE. Oh, I ought to know better than to ask you people. . . . Will you let me know the minute he comes, please?
PENNY. Of course, Alice.
ALICE. Yes, I know, but I mean the minute he comes.
PENNY. Why, of course.
(ALICE looks apprehensively from one to the other; then disappears up the stairs U.L.)
ALICE. Well, be sure.
PENNY. Well, what do you think of that?
GRANDPA. She seems to like him, if you ask me.
ESSE. I should say so. She's got it bad.
(ED crosses into the room.)
PENNY. (Crossing to R. a bit.) Wouldn't it be wonderful if she married him? We could have the wedding right in this room.

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We find the limits of the eccentricity, how this family is able to push the limits of their eccentricity, they are beginning to plan their wedding to how we could have the wedding right in this room. There is something very spontaneous and sweet about this family which also might come across as extremely offensive and unpalatable to an outsider.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:48)

PAUL. Now, wait a minute, Penny. This is the first time he's ever called for the girl.
(ESSE stretching exercise.)
PENNY. You only called for me once.
PAUL. Young people are different nowadays.
ESSE. Oh, I don't know. Look at Ed and me. He came to dinner once and just stayed. (Tee pointing.)
PENNY. Anyhow, I think it's wonderful. Don't you, Grandpa?
GRANDPA. She certainly seems happy about it.
PENNY. He must be crazy about her. Maybe he's the one who is taking her out every night. (Door bell.) There he is! Never mind, Rhea, I'll answer it. (She is fluttering to the door.) Now remember what Alice said, and be very nice to him.
GRANDPA. (Rising.) All right—let's take a look at him.
(PAUL rises, ED puts on his coat and comes into room. They all stand awaiting the stranger's appearance.)
PENNY. (At the front door; milk and honey in her voice.) Well! Welcome to our little home!
HENDERSON. How do you do?
PENNY. I'm Alice's mother. Do come right in! Here we are! (She reappears in archway, piloting the stranger, holding his hand.) This is Grandpa, and that's Alice's father, and Alice's sister and her husband, Ed Carmichael. (The family all give courteous little nods and smiles as they are introduced.) Well! Now give me your hat and make yourself right at home. (PENNY takes his hat.)
THE MAN. I'm afraid you must be making a mistake. (Reaching for his card.)
PENNY. How's that?
THE MAN. My card.
PENNY. (Reading.) "Wilbur C. Henderson. Internal Revenue Department."
(PAUL and GRANDPA exchange looks.)
HENDERSON. That's right.
GRANDPA. What can we do for you?
HENDERSON. Does a Mr. Martin Vanderhof live here?



While they are waiting for Tony Kirby to show up, there is somebody else at the door and this is a slight twist in the story as we would notice now.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:14)

make yourself right at home. (PENNY takes his hat.)
THE MAN. I'm afraid you must be making a mistake. (Reaching for his card.)
PENNY. How's that?
THE MAN. My card.
PENNY. (Reading.) "Wilbur C. Henderson. Internal Revenue Department."
(PAUL and GRANDPA exchange looks.)
HENDERSON. That's right.
GRANDPA. What can we do for you?
HENDERSON. Does a Mr. Martin Vanderhof live here?
GRANDPA. Yes, sir. That's me.
HENDERSON. (Coming down to table.) Well, Mr. Vanderhof, the Government wants to talk to you about a little matter of income tax.



PENNY. Income tax?
HENDERSON. You mind if I sit down?
GRANDPA. No, no. Just go right ahead.
HENDERSON. (Settling himself in a chair L. of the table.) Thank you. (GRANDPA sits. From above stairs the voice of ALICE floats down.)
ALICE. Mother! Is that Mr. Kirby?
PENNY. (Going to stairs.) No. No, it isn't, darling. It's—an internal something or other. (To HENDERSON.) Pardon me.
DE PINNA. (Entering from D.R. carrying a freeracker.) Mr. Sycamore . . . oh, excuse me.



A certain Wilbur C Henderson from Internal Revenue Department shows up and he wants to have a discussion with Mister Martin Vanderhof about a matter of income tax.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:30)

ALICE. Mother! Is that Mr. Kirby?
PENNY. (Going to stairs.) No. No, it isn't, darling. It's—an internal something or other. (To HENDERSON.) Pardon me.
DE PINNA. (Entering from D.R. carrying a freeracker.) Mr. Sycamore . . . oh, excuse me.
PAUL. What is it?
DE PINNA. (Crossing to PAUL.) These things are not going off. Look. (He strikes a match.)
PAUL. Not here, Mr. De Pinna. Grandpa's busy.
DE PINNA. Oh!
(They start for hall.)
PAUL. Pardon me.
(They start again for hall, DE PINNA looking at HENDERSON until PAUL and DE PINNA exit.)
HENDERSON. (Pulling a sheet of papers from his pocket.) Now, Mr. Vanderhof, (A quick look toward hall.) we've written you several letters about this, but have not had any reply. (PENNY sits in her desk chair.)
GRANDPA. Oh, that's what those letters were.
ESSIE. (Sitting on couch R.) I told you they were from the Government.
HEND. According to our records, Mr. Vanderhof, you have never paid an income tax.
GRANDPA. That's right.
HEND. Why not?
GRANDPA. I don't believe in it.
HEND. Well—you own property, don't you?
GRANDPA. Yes, sir.
HEND. And you receive a yearly income from it?
GRANDPA. I do.
HEND. Of—(He consults his records.)—between three and four thousand dollars.

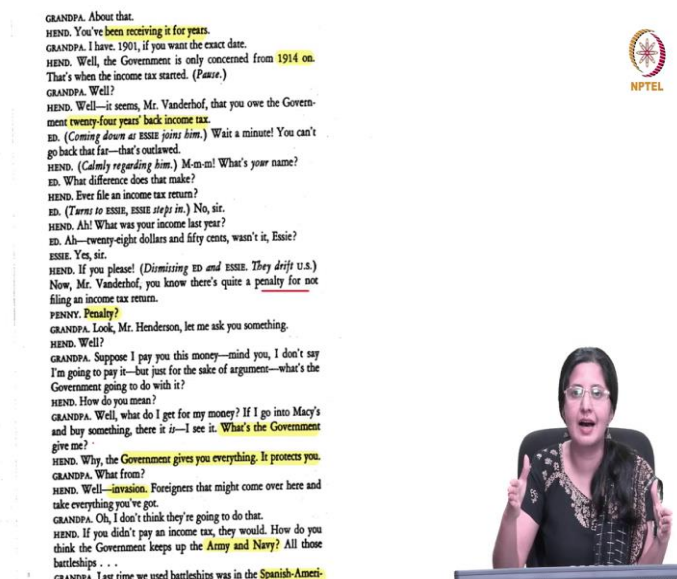


This is an interesting discussion over here where it is being revealed that Mister Vanderhof has never paid income tax and let us read through this discussion. We also get to know the missing letter; the missing letter and the other letter which came between came before that from the government which no one was paying attention to and the

letters did not mean anything to them these this was the those letters were actually about the income tax.

“According to our records, Mister Vanderhof, you never paid an income tax that is right. Why not? I do not believe in it. Well, you own property, don not you? Yes, sir and you receive a yearly income from it? I do. Of between three and four thousand dollars.” He is not very evident, and grandpa is not contesting that. It is a very interesting way in which he is responding to the inversion of taxes.

(Refer Slide Time: 30:13)



The slide contains a script of a play with characters GRANDPA, HEND, ED, ESSE, and PENNY. The script discusses income tax, with several lines highlighted in yellow. A video inset on the right shows a woman with glasses speaking. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide.

GRANDPA. About that.
HEND. You've been receiving it for years.
GRANDPA. I have 1901, if you want the exact date.
HEND. Well, the Government is only concerned from 1914 on. That's when the income tax started. *(Pause.)*
GRANDPA. Well?
HEND. Well—it seems, Mr. Vanderhof, that you owe the Government twenty-four years' back income tax.
ED. *(Coming down as ESSE joins him.)* Wait a minute! You can't go back that far—that's outlawed.
HEND. *(Calmly regarding him.)* M-m-m! What's your name?
ED. What difference does that make?
HEND. Ever file an income tax return?
ED. *(Turns to ESSE, ESSE steps in.)* No, sir.
HEND. Ah! What was your income last year?
ED. Ah—twenty-eight dollars and fifty cents, wasn't it, Essie?
ESSE. Yes, sir.
HEND. If you please! *(Diminishing ED and ESSE. They drift U.S.)*
Now, Mr. Vanderhof, you know there's quite a penalty for not filing an income tax return.
PENNY. Penalty?
GRANDPA. Look, Mr. Henderson, let me ask you something.
HEND. Well?
GRANDPA. Suppose I pay you this money—mind you, I don't say I'm going to pay it—but just for the sake of argument—what's the Government going to do with it?
HEND. How do you mean?
GRANDPA. Well, what do I get for my money? If I go into Macy's and buy something, there it is—I see it. What's the Government give me?
HEND. Why, the Government gives you everything. It protects you.
GRANDPA. What from?
HEND. Well—invasion. Foreigners that might come over here and take everything you've got.
GRANDPA. Oh, I don't think they're going to do that.
HEND. If you didn't pay an income tax, they would. How do you think the Government keeps up the Army and Navy? All those battleships . . .
GRANDPA. Last time we used battleships was in the Spanish-Ameri-

“You can been receiving it for years, I have 1901, if you want the exact date. Well, the government is only concerned from 1914 on that is when the income tax started.” We do get it despite this farcical, flipping situations that these characters are stuck into, and we also get some historical sense of how things are changing, it is changed economic order into which Vanderhof and the rest of the family are trying to fit in.

In some sense, we are also able to understand, we are also able to look at this family from a slightly different point of view when we are given this little piece of information, how they always had access they were always they come across as a very wealthy family who can fend for themselves maybe not the corporate kind like the Kirby's are, but the grandpa is clearly receiving enough income just to be able to be able to take care of his entire family.

He is not hiding that fact, but he is also not willing to part with that just because the order of the, economic order changed. There is something very conservative here and which is also very radical. This is the fine line which this play is trying to tread in so many ways.

Here is a person, here is a set of people who are conservative in many ways in refusing to comply with the standards set by the state refusing to comply with the new economic order, but they are also very radical when they are; when they are trying to remain in that conservative mode, but because that conservative mode is not something that would fit in with the corporate, with the American dream which also facilitates success and fame.

The government is only concerned from 1914 on. That is when the income tax started. “Well, well, it seems, Mister Vanderhof, that he owes the government twenty-four year’s back income tax. Wait a minute; you cannot go back that far, that is outlawed. What is your name? What differences that make? Ever file an income tax.” None of them have file an income tax and none of them care to do that either and we get to know about the petty money that ED is earning.

“Mister Vanderhof, there is quite a penalty for not filling an; not filing an income tax penalty. Suppose I pay you this money so, grandpa has a set of questions to this representative from the state, from the income tax department. Suppose I pay you this money, mind you, I do not say I am going to pay it, but just for the sake of argument, what is the government going to do with it? How do you mean? Well, what do I get for my money? If I go into Macy’s and buy something, there it is, and I see it.” This analogy is very interesting.

“When you are going to a store and paying money, you get something back. So, when one is paying taxes, what does one get back? “This is a very deep question, which comes from partly from grandpa’s eccentricity, but we also see the kind of social, political and economic critique that this play is trying to enact, within this very unusual situation, through this very unusual situation.

It is to question what does the government give. It is to keep in mind over and again that this is the 1930’s; this is also a society trying to deal with the economic depression. There are these questions which are there in the minds of every ordinary citizen and here,

it takes the playwrights are conveniently using these characters who look like, who behave like very eccentric outliers.

It makes it easier to make them ask such uncomfortable questions, it makes; it becomes easier for the playwrights to make a character like Vanderhof not to pay taxes and question the government and so, we do see what the play is trying to do at so many levels over here.


“Government gives you everything, it protects you. What from? Well, invasion. Foreigners that might come over here and take everything you have got and the parody here is that it is England sorry unlike many other countries, America is not a country which was ever invaded so, this joke yeah, this becomes a historic joke as well yeah about how America is getting taxes from his, from its citizens in order to protect them from foreigners that might come over here.

And take everything they have got and this becomes a more of a historical parody when we look back at it from the contemporary times, from where the contemporary world affairs stand. If you did not pay an income tax, they would. How do you think the government keeps the army and navy? And this is a very hilarious response he gives.


Last time we used battleships was in the Spanish-American war, what did we get out of it? Cuba and we gave that back. I would not mind paying it to a something sensible.” We may find how the international affairs are being critiqued over here, how the policies are being critiqued over here.

These characters become convenient tools in articulating these uncomfortable questions which otherwise, there would not be any forum to raise these things.

(Refer Slide Time: 35:49)




HEND. Sensible? Well, what about Congress, and the Supreme Court, and the President? We've got to pay them, don't we?
GRANDPA. Not with my money—no, sir.
HEND. (*Furious. Rises, picks up papers.*) Now wait a minute! I'm not here to argue with you. (*Crossing L.*) All I know is that you haven't paid an income tax and you've got to pay it!
GRANDPA. They've got to show me.
HEND. (*Yelling.*) We don't have to show you! I just told you! All those buildings down in Washington, (*To PENNY. She nods.*) and Interstate Commerce, and the Constitution!
GRANDPA. The Constitution was paid for long ago. And Interstate Commerce—what is Interstate Commerce, anyhow?
HEND. (*Business of look at PENNY—at ED—at GRANDPA. With murderous calm, crosses and places his hands on table.*) There are forty-eight states—see? And if there weren't Interstate Commerce, nothing could go from one state to another. See?
GRANDPA. Why not? They got fences?
HEND. (*To GRANDPA.*) No, they haven't got fences. They've got laws! (*Crossing up to arch L.*) My God, I never came across anything like this before!
GRANDPA. Well, I might pay about seventy-five dollars, but that's all it's worth.
HEND. You'll pay every cent of it, like everybody else!
ED. (*Who has lost interest.*) Listen, Essie—listen to this a minute.
(The xylophone again; ESSIE goes into her dance.)
HEND. (*Going right ahead, battling against the music.*) And let me tell you something else! You'll go to jail (*PENNY rises.*) if you don't pay, do you hear that? That's the law, and if you think you're bigger than the law, you've got another think coming. You're no better than anybody else, and the sooner you get that through your head, the better . . . you'll hear from the United States Government, that's all I can say. . . . *(The music has stopped. He is back- ing out of the room.)*
GRANDPA. (*Quietly.*) Look out for those snakes.
HEND. (*Jumping; exits off L.*) Jesus! *(An explosion from the hall. He exits through hall door.)*
ED. How was that, Essie?
ESSIE. Fine, Ed.
PAUL. (*Entering from hall with DE PINNA.*) How did that sound to you folks? *(ESSIE sits on couch.)*




The grandpa also makes this point that the constitution was paid for long ago and interstate commerce, what is interstate commerce, anyhow. He is trying to logically find his way, Henderson is trying to logically find his way through this argument, but then he realizes towards the end that it is pointless.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:08)





HEND. Sensible? Well, what about Congress, and the Supreme Court, and the President? We've got to pay them, don't we?
GRANDPA. Not with my money—no, sir.
HEND. (*Furious. Rises, picks up papers.*) Now wait a minute! I'm not here to argue with you. (*Crossing L.*) All I know is that you haven't paid an income tax and you've got to pay it!
GRANDPA. They've got to show me.
HEND. (*Yelling.*) We don't have to show you! I just told you! All those buildings down in Washington, (*To PENNY. She nods.*) and Interstate Commerce, and the Constitution!
GRANDPA. The Constitution was paid for long ago. And Interstate Commerce—what is Interstate Commerce, anyhow?
HEND. (*Business of look at PENNY—at ED—at GRANDPA. With murderous calm, crosses and places his hands on table.*) There are forty-eight states—see? And if there weren't Interstate Commerce, nothing could go from one state to another. See?
GRANDPA. Why not? They got fences?
HEND. (*To GRANDPA.*) No, they haven't got fences. They've got laws! (*Crossing up to arch L.*) My God, I never came across anything like this before!
GRANDPA. Well, I might pay about seventy-five dollars, but that's all it's worth.
HEND. You'll pay every cent of it, like everybody else!
ED. (*Who has lost interest.*) Listen, Essie—listen to this a minute.
(The xylophone again; ESSIE goes into her dance.)
HEND. (*Going right ahead, battling against the music.*) And let me tell you something else! You'll go to jail (*PENNY rises.*) if you don't pay, do you hear that? That's the law, and if you think you're bigger than the law, you've got another think coming. You're no better than anybody else, and the sooner you get that through your head, the better . . . you'll hear from the United States Government, that's all I can say. . . . *(The music has stopped. He is back- ing out of the room.)*
GRANDPA. (*Quietly.*) Look out for those snakes.
HEND. (*Jumping; exits off L.*) Jesus! *(An explosion from the hall. He exits through hall door.)*
ED. How was that, Essie?
ESSIE. Fine, Ed.
PAUL. (*Entering from hall with DE PINNA.*) How did that sound to you folks? *(ESSIE sits on couch.)*



He uses his final weapon and says “you will then go to jail if you do not pay, do you hear that? That is a law and if you think you are bigger than the law, you have got another think coming. You are no better than anybody else, and the sooner you get that through

the head; through your head, the better you will hear from the United-States government that is all I can say, and the rest of the family is going about their business.” So, one is playing xylophone, the other one is attending to the snakes and there are also the firecracker sound from the cellar.

(Refer Slide Time: 36:39)



GRANDPA. I liked it.
PENNY. My goodness, he was mad, wasn't he?
GRANDPA. It's not his fault. It's just that the whole thing is so silly.
PENNY. He forgot his hat.
GRANDPA. Say, what size is that hat?
PENNY. Seven and an eighth.
GRANDPA. Just right for me.
DE PINNA. Who was that fellow, anyway? *(Door bell. At bell rings DE PINNA makes for cellar door to get his coat.)*
PENNY. This must be Mr. Kirby.
PAUL. Better make sure this time.
PENNY. Yes, I will. *(She disappears U.L.)*
ESSIE. *(Rises.)* I hope he's good-looking.
(The family is again standing awaiting the newcomer.)
PENNY. *(Head at the door.)* How do you do?
MAN'S VOICE. Good evening.
PENNY. *(Taking no chances.)* Is this Mr. Anthony Kirby, Jr.?
TONY. *(Business. PAUL affirms it. ED and ESSIE come D.S.)* Yes.
(GRANDPA rises.)
PENNY. *(Giving her all.)* Well, Mr. Kirby, come right in! We've been expecting you. Come right in! *(They come into sight; PENNY expansively addresses the family.)* This is really Mr. Kirby! Now, it's Alice's mother, and that's Mr. Spangore, and Alice's grandfather, and her sister Essie, and Essie's husband. *(DE PINNA waves for recognition. There are a few mumbled greetings.)* There! Now you know all of us, Mr. Kirby. Give me your hat and make yourself right at home.
(TONY KIRBY comes a few steps into the room. He is a personable young man, not long out of Yale, and, as we will presently learn, even more recently out of Cambridge. Although he fits all the physi-

“This government official, he is also at his wits end my God, I never came across something like that.” This is in fact the audience’s response to this has been factored perhaps to show the audience that there is this Meta quality which is required in this play.

Even the audience have never come across anything like this before perhaps. This man leaves his hat behind which the grandpa also conveniently prefers to keep with him.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:11)

GRANDPA. Say, what size is that hat?
PENNY. Seven and an eighth.
GRANDPA. Just right for me.
DE PINNA. Who was that fellow, anyway? (Door bell. As bell rings DE PINNA makes for cellar door to get his coat.)
PENNY. This must be Mr. Kirby.
PAUL. Better make sure this time.
PENNY. Yes, I will. (She disappears U.L.)
ESSIE. (Rises.) I hope he's good-looking.
(The family is again standing awaiting the newcomer.)
PENNY. (Heard at the door.) How do you do?
MAN'S VOICE. Good evening.
PENNY. (Taking no chances.) Is this Mr. Anthony Kirby, Jr.?
TONY. (Business. PAUL affirms it. ED and ESSIE come D.S.) Yes.
(GRANDPA rises.)
PENNY. (Giving her all.) Well, Mr. Kirby, come right in! We've been expecting you. Come right in! (They come into sight; PENNY expansively addresses the family.) This is really Mr. Kirby! Now, I'm Alice's mother, and that's Mr. Sycamore, and Alice's grandfather, and her sister Essie, and Essie's husband. (DE PINNA awaits for recognition. There are a few mumbled greetings.) There! Now you know all of us, Mr. Kirby. Give me your hat and make yourself right at home.
(TONY KIRBY comes a few steps into the room. He is a personable young man, not long out of Yale, and, as we will presently learn, even more recently out of Cambridge. Although he fits all the physical requirements of a boss's son, his face has something of the idealist in it. All in all, a very nice young man.)
TONY. Thank you.
(Again the voice of the vigilante ALICE floats down from upstairs. "Is that Mr. Kirby, Mother?")
PENNY. (Shouting up stairs.) Yes, Alice. It is. He's lovely!
ALICE. (Aware of storm signals.) I'll be right down.
PENNY. (Pats TONY's hat on desk.) Do sit down, Mr. Kirby.

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We are introduced to the next important character Tony Kirby, who was not long out of Yale and even recently out of Cambridge and there is an idealist look at this description. He is also not the typical American who is aspiring for fame and success. Although he fits all the physical requirements of a boss's son, his face is something of the idealist in it. All in all, a very nice young man.

(Refer Slide Time: 37:38)

TONY. (PAUL places TONY's chair.) Thank you. (A glance at dinner table.) I hope I'm not keeping you from dinner?
GRANDPA. No, no. Have a tomato? (He sits. Also PAUL.)
TONY. No, thank you.
PENNY. (Producing candy-filled skull, crosses to TONY.) How about a piece of candy?
TONY. (Eyeing the container.) Ah—no, thanks. (DE PINNA again steps forward.)
PENNY. Oh, I forgot to introduce Mr. De Pinna. This is Mr. De Pinna, Mr. Kirby. (An exchange of "How do you do's?")
DE PINNA. Wasn't I reading about your father in the newspaper the other day? Didn't he get indicted or something?
TONY. (Smiling.) Hardly that. He just testified before the Securities Commission.
DE PINNA. Oh.
PENNY. (Slowly.) Yes, of course. I'm sure there was nothing crooked about it, Mr. De Pinna. As a matter of fact—(She is now addressing TONY. Drawing forward her desk chair, she sits.)—Alice has often told us what a lovely man your father is.
TONY. (Sitting L. of table.) Well, I know Father couldn't get along without Alice. She knows more about the business than any of us.
ESSIE. You're awful young Mr. Kirby, aren't you, to be vice-president of a big place like that?
TONY. Well, you know what that means, vice-president. All I have is a desk with my name on it.
PENNY. Is that all? Didn't you get any salary?
TONY. (With a laugh.) Well, a little. More than I'm worth, I'm afraid. (DE PINNA lights pipe.)
PENNY. Now you're just being modest.
GRANDPA. Sounds kind of dull to me—Wall Street. Do you like it?
TONY. Well, the hours are short. And I haven't been there very long.
GRANDPA. Just out of college, huh?
TONY. Well, I knocked around for a while first. Just sort of had fun.

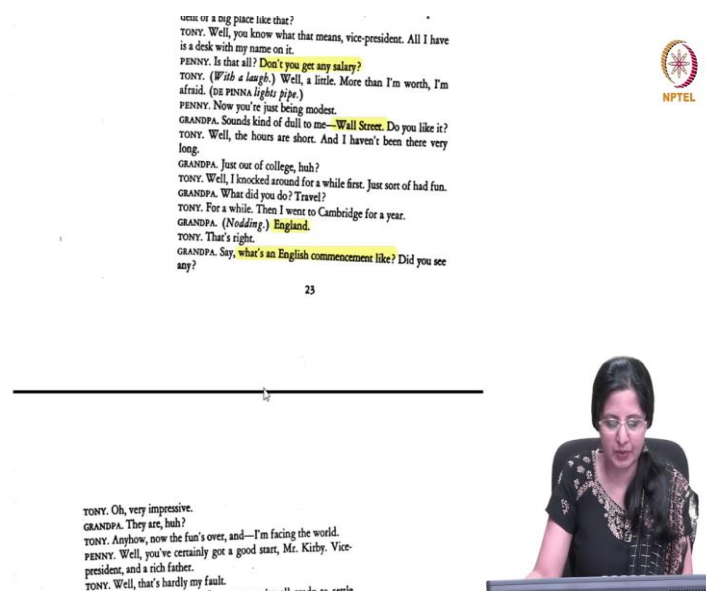


“We are the family gets to meet him and we also find some of grandpa’s responses to the kind of work that he does it is very original. They also do not know how to ask the

politically correct questions. First, De Pinna asked, wasn't I reading about your father in the newspaper the other day? Didn't he get indicted or something? Hardly that. He just testified before the securities commission."

In some form, we find that they are in tune with what is happening and here is the family they are not scared to say the most uncomfortable things, there is absolutely no division, no compartmentalization in their minds between the kind of things which could be said out aloud and the things which should be hushed up and this political incorrectness also makes this family more endearing, also makes this critique, more humane and pertinent at the same time.

(Refer Slide Time: 38:40)



um or a big piece like that?
TONY. Well, you know what that means, vice-president. All I have is a desk with my name on it.
PENNY. Is that all? Don't you get any salary?
TONY. *(With a laugh.)* Well, a little. More than I'm worth, I'm afraid. *(On PENNYA lights pipe.)*
PENNY. Now you're just being modest.
GRANDPA. Sounds kind of dull to me—Wall Street. Do you like it?
TONY. Well, the hours are short. And I haven't been there very long.
GRANDPA. Just out of college, huh?
TONY. Well, I knocked around for a while first. Just sort of had fun.
GRANDPA. What did you do? Travel?
TONY. For a while. Then I went to Cambridge for a year.
GRANDPA. *(Nodding.)* England.
TONY. That's right.
GRANDPA. Say, what's an English commencement like? Did you see any?

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TONY. Oh, very impressive.
GRANDPA. They are, huh?
TONY. Anyhow, now the fun's over, and—I'm facing the world.
PENNY. Well, you've certainly got a good start, Mr. Kirby. Vice-president, and a rich father.
TONY. Well, that's hardly my fault.

"They are also asking some questions about whether he gets paid when he is working for his father and grandpa comes with this thing, sounds kind of dull to me, Wall Street. Do you like it yeah? And it is also a very unconventional way to talk about some of the happening things in New York yeah, Wall Street being one of them during that time."

"There is a very brief discussion about the commencement and the grandpa asks what an English commencement is like? Did you see any? Very impressive. They are? Yeah so, he is certainly not willing to buy that because he in spite of the ways in which he is refusing to pay the pay the income tax or refusing to comply with the legal standards within his country, he is certainly in all of the commencement ceremonies which happen

in America and he is unwilling to accept though he does not spell it out over here, he is unwilling to accept that the English commencements are also equally impressive.”

(Refer Slide Time: 39:38)

TONY. Oh, Miss Alice, you look deeeerful. *(The door bell sounds. RHEBA puts platter on table and crosses to hall door.)*
ALICE. *(Making the best of it.)* I'm going out, Rheba.
RHEBA. *(Noticing TONY—looks at him.)* Stepping, huh?
(The door bell sounds. RHEBA puts platter on table and crosses to hall door.)
ESSE. That must be Kolenkhov.
ALICE. *(Unnately. She crosses to U.L.)* I think we'd better go, Tony.
TONY. *(Crossing to desk.)* All right.
(Before they can escape, however, DONALD emerges from kitchen U.R. bearing a tray.)
DONALD. Grandpa, you take cream on your corn flakes? I forget.



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GRANDPA. Half and half, Donald.
(DONALD exits U.R. The voice of BOBIS KOLENKHOV booms from outer door.)
KOLENKHOV. Ah, my little Rbebiuhka!
GRANDPA. Yes, that's Kolenkhov, all right.
RHEBA. *(With a scream of laughter.)* Yesuh, Mr. Kolenkhov!
KOL. Good evening, everybody!
ALL. Good evening.
(He appears in archway, his great arm completely encircling the delighted RHEBA. MR. KOLENKHOV is one of RHEBA's pets, and if you



We are introduced to a couple of other minor characters Kolenkhov, who is teaching ballet is a Russian character. This Russian man is also teaching his ballet teacher who visits the home and he also fits in his own very eccentric ways.

(Refer Slide Time: 39:59)

(He appears in archway, his great arm completely encircling the delighted RHEBA. MR. KOLENKHOV is one of RHEBA's pets, and if you like Russians he might be one of yours. He is enormous, hairy, loud, and very, very Russian. His appearance in the archway still further traps ALICE and TONY. RHEBA exits U.R.)
KOL. *(As he comes U.S.)* Grandpa, what do you think? I have had a letter from Russia! The Second Five-Year Plan is a failure! *(Throws hat on buffet. He lets out a laugh that shakes the rafters.)*
ESSE. I practiced today, Mr. Kolenkhov!
KOL. *(With a deep Russian bow and a click of heels.)* My Pavlova!
ALICE. *(Crossing down.)* Well, if you'll excuse us, Mr. Kolenkhov. *(PENNY hands TONY his hat.)*
KOL. My little Alice! *(He kisses her hand.)* Never have I seen you look so magnificent.
ALICE. Thank you, Mr. Kolenkhov. *(KOLENKHOV steps back.)*
TONY, this is Mr. Kolenkhov, Esse's dancing teacher. Mr. Kirby.
TONY. How do you do?
KOL. How do you do? *(A click of the heels and a bow from KOLENKHOV.)*
ALICE. *(Determined, this time. A step down.)* Will you pardon us, Mr. Kolenkhov—we're going to the Monte Carlo Ballet.
KOL. *(At the top of his tremendous voice.)* The Monte Carlo Ballet! *(It stinks. Crossing U.C.)*
ALICE. *(Panicly now.)* Yes. . . . Well—good-bye, everybody. Good-bye.
TONY. Good-bye. I'm so glad to have met you all.
(A chorus of answering "Good-byes" from the family. The young people are gone. The sound of hall door closing.)
DE PINNA. Good-bye.



25



The connection between this the Russian connection which keeps getting foreground in this plays is very important and the political aspects of it.

(Refer Slide Time: 40:15)

KOL. (Still furious, crosses L.) Monte Carlo Ballet!
PENNY. Isn't Mr. Kirby lovely? . . . Come on, everybody! Dinner's ready! (PAUL indicates chair.)
ED. (Pulling up chair from alcove.) I thought he was a nice fellow, didn't you? (Gets another chair from hall.)
ESSIE. (Doing her toe steps.) Mm. (Bending.) And so good-looking.
PENNY. And he had such nice manners. Did you notice, Paul? Did you notice his manners?
PAUL. I certainly did. You were getting pretty personal with him.
PENNY. Oh, now, Paul. . . . Anyhow, he's a very nice young man. (DE PINNA brings chair from alcove.)
DE PINNA. (As he seats himself.) He looks like a cousin of mine. (ESSIE bends.)
KOL. Baks! Diaghileff! Then you had the ballet!
PENNY. I think if they get married here I'll put the altar right where the snakes are. You wouldn't mind, Grandpa, would you?
GRANDPA. Not if the snakes don't.
ESSIE. (Crossing to chair back of table and sitting.) Oh, no, they'll want to get married in a church. His family and everything.
DE PINNA. I like a church wedding. (Together.)
ED. Yes, of course they would.
KOL. Of course.
GRANDPA. (Tapping on a plate for silence.) Quiet, everybody! Quiet! (They are immediately silent. . . . Grace is about to be pronounced. GRANDPA pauses a moment for her to bow then raises his eyes heavenward. He clears his throat and proceeds to say Grace.) Well, Sir, we've been getting along pretty good for quite a while now, and we're certainly much obliged. Remember, all we ask is to just go along and be happy in our own sort of way. Of course we want to keep our health but as far as anything else is concerned, we'll leave it to You. Thank You. (SHEBA to KOLENKHOV. The heads come up as SHEBA and DONALD enter through kitchen door with steaming platters.) So the Second Five-Year Plan is a failure,



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we'll leave it to You. Thank You. (SHEBA to KOLENKHOV. The heads come up as SHEBA and DONALD enter through kitchen door with steaming platters.) So the Second Five-Year Plan is a failure, eh, Kolenkhov?
KOL. Catastrophic! And wait until they try the Third Five-Year Plan!
PENNY. (On the cue "Thank You.") Of course his family is going to want to come. Imagine. Alice marrying a Kirby!
ESSIE. Think of that. Isn't it exciting?
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ED. I'll play the wedding march on the xylophone.
PAUL. What have we got for dinner? I'm hungry.

CURTAIN

ACT I

SCENE 2: Late the same night. The house is in darkness save for a light in the hall. An accordion is heard off stage n., then suddenly a good loud BANG! from the cellar. Somewhere in the nether regions, one of the Sycamores is still at work. As the accordion player finishes the song the sound of a key in the outer door. The voices of seven and more fill it.



They continue to talk about Alice marrying Kirby and how they will have the altar set up where the snakes are, there is absolutely no difference in their mind about how political certain things are, how sacred certain ceremonies are, everything coexists in this ideal world and we also realize that at the end of everything, they are also happy in this world, there is a genuine pursuit of happiness in all of these things that they are doing.

We come to the end of scene 1. The scene 1 has given a sense of how this play is unfolding and we may not be able to do a close reading of the rest of the play. But this

was the close reading of the first scene that was done to give a hang of how different characters act and how there is from even within the situational comedy, there are a lot of historical and political undertones.