

Twentieth Century American Drama
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Lecture - 33
Albee's Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf Part 4

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(etc.)

MARTHA (Going after them, looks back at GEORGE, contemptuously) Jesus! (Exits. GEORGE is alone on the stage)

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

WALPURGISNACHT

GEORGE, by himself: NICK reenters.

NICK (After a silence) I . . . guess . . . she's all right. (No answer) She . . . really shouldn't drink. (No answer) She's . . . frail. (No answer) Uh . . . slim-hipped, as you'd have it. (GEORGE smiles vaguely) I'm really very sorry.

GEORGE (Quietly) Where's my little yum yum? Where's Martha?

NICK She's making coffee . . . in the kitchen. She . . . gets sick quite easily.

GEORGE (Preoccupied) Martha? Oh no, Martha hasn't been sick a day in her life, unless you count the time she spends in the rest home. . . .

NICK (He, too, quietly) No, no; my wife . . . my wife gets sick quite easily. Your wife is Martha.



This course is on Twentieth Century American Drama. We were discussing the play *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee.

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sorry.

GEORGE (Quietly) Where's my little yum yum? Where's Martha?

NICK She's making coffee . . . in the kitchen. She . . . gets sick quite easily.

GEORGE (Preoccupied) Martha? Oh no, Martha hasn't been sick a day in her life, unless you count the time she spends in the rest home. . . .

NICK (He, too, quietly) No, no; my wife . . . my wife gets sick quite easily. Your wife is Martha.

GEORGE (With some rue) ! Oh, yes . . . I know.

NICK (A statement of fact) ; She doesn't really spend any time in a rest home.

GEORGE

Your wife?

NICK No. Yours.

GEORGE Oh! Mine. (Pause) No, no, she doesn't. . . / would; I mean if I were . . . her . . . she . . . / would. But I'm not . . . and so I don't. (Pause) I'd like to, though. It gets pretty bouncy around here sometimes.

NICK (Coolly) Yes . . . I'm sure.

GEORGE



Act-II is called “Walpurgisnacht”. It’s a German term. It means the night of Saint Walpurga. Saint Walpurga is someone who reads people of evils and witches and everything. There is Saint Walpurgas night, which starts on 30th April at night, and it ends with the onset of May 1.

It is almost like a Halloweenesque ritual that takes place over through the time. We can see the structure of the play also parallel something like that, that we have this whole night revelry almost which revelry of witches and evil devils. There are no proper or sober characters here. We have Martha who is almost like painted as a witch and everyone is called in animal terms, it is and it is probably also literally called witch at a point.

Another very important thing is to see that it is been put in German. We were talking about the shadow of the Cold War on this text in one of the previous lectures. The reason to put this in German, this title in German. It is one of the reason is, this play as we discussed it was first performed in 1962 and in 1961, 13th August, we see the Berlin Wall going up.

The Berlin Wall was an attempt by Russia to shield one part of Berlin from the other part, to create that east and west divide. And it seemed like there is this new order that is coming slowly, and that new order seemed very bleak, that there are divisions create being created, the divisions across Europe, and we discussed how this play kind of draws on the idea of European tradition of civilizations.

We see these walls are coming up in this European, where we have thought it as a pan country, across countries, international civilization that goes to other places also, we have seen references to that through many references to different places. But so, this is creating a geopolitical issue, and this is being written at the heels of such geopolitical issue.

This Berlin Wall is going up, there is Cold War and there is a lot of tension in the air. We see that the new order that is coming up, the new order that is being promised is not actually a very promising one; it is not a very optimistic one. Like, we will see later when the Berlin Wall is crashed, and that is not in the play; that does not happen in the play.

But, if we look at the jubilation when the Berlin Wall was brought down it was crashed, it was broken that people felt like a sort of connection was being made, felt like another new world was coming up, it felt like an event; that the old world will die away and the new will come. We see something like the idea of celebrating something through the night is also like that. We kind of celebrate a new year also through the night that it signifies with the ending of the night at an old order is coming to an end and a new order is coming.

Tennyson in one of his plays poems writes, ring in the new, ring out the old. But as were ringing in the new, there is something of a suspicion with the new in this play. There is suspicion with youth, there is a quite proper suspicion of youth that George cannot believe that Nick and Honey are the people of the future, that they will hold on to what probably traditional things are.

We have seen at a place, if we read the play also George says that there might not be any history or literature or philosophy after people like Nick takeover. So, there is also certain kind of pessimism of the old world passing, the old order passing, but as we also see through the figure of George, that the old order is also not presented as something very desirable.

The old order is also kind of emasculated, it is unproductive, if we see it through the figures of George and Martha that they have not reproduced, and they do not have a child. Though that is the central lie the central game that they play in this play.

So, there is this lack of reproduction, lack of proper organic production in the old world that is taken off and the production that the new world is also promising is not also organic in a sense. As we discuss, it is filled with ideas of cloning, it is filled with ideas of synthetic production, that kind of things.

So, it will probably be laboratory made and people will probably lose their intimacy. They will probably lose their proximity and that kind of world order that, the synthetic space of the laboratory that is where people are being produced.

So, there is a sort of scepticism about everything. Like, the old order that is passing it is not very fondly looked upon and the new order that is coming is not very fondly looked upon. So, we have this liminal period of the night time, and that kind of

stresses the idea of the rivalry of the devils and the witches, that this is a totally unproductive activity. Whatever, they are dead, they are just playing fun and games.

Fun and games are mostly unproductive, they are not work. While with the term work, we have connotations of productivity, production, with fun and games we do not have the connotation of productivity, and it is an unproductive activity in a sense.

We mentioned that this new production that is coming, it is still haunted by the old order that this creating the superhuman race that Nick is talking about. It takes into account the eugenics of Nazi regime, that the Nazis has this had this production of eugenicist ideology where a certain race is better than the others. Where a superhuman civilization could be brought ahead, pushed ahead through this production of these superhuman kind of people, who would bring that take that forward.

There is this idea of taking civilization forward, making history. That kind of idea is embedded in that, which is work, which is production. But on the opposite side, fun and games that they do not actually do anything. And by the end of the play we will see that nothing quite actually happens in a sense, but it is just like lot of chaos of an intermediate time.

But, that is probably what he is stressing here, Edward Albee this liminality of the time, what the experience of living in a time where we cannot very optimistically look back on the past and the future is also not looking very nice. So, we have this, we will get to the play. So, the play is starting, and we have only Nick and George on the stage right now, Martha and Honey are not on the stage.

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not . . . and so I don't. (Pause) I'd like to, though. It gets pretty bouncy around here sometimes.

NICK (Coolly) Yes . . . I'm sure.

GEORGE

Well, you saw an example of it.

NICK I try not to. . .

GEORGE Get involved. Um? Isn't that right?

NICK Yes . . . that's right.

GEORGE I'd imagine not.

NICK I find it. . . **embarrassing.**

GEORGE (Sarcastic) Oh, you do, hunh? . . .

NICK Yes. Really. Quite.



Honey is sick from the drinking, and she is puking. So, we have this image that Honey pukes a lot, she is sickly a lot, she is she also is told to have a sickly figure. So, there is this idea of sickness that is associated with Honey. So, she is getting sick and like one of the terms for vomiting is also getting sick.

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GEORGE (Mimicking him) Yes. Really. Quite. (Then aloud, but to himself) ITS DISGUSTING!

NICK Now look! I didn't have anything. . .

GEORGE DISGUSTING! (Quietly, but with great intensity) Do you think I like having that . . . whatever-it-is . . . ridiculing me, tearing me down, in front of . . . (Waves his hand in a gesture of contemptuous dismissal) YOU? Do you think I care for it?

NICK (Cold—unfriendly) Well, no . . . I don't imagine you care for it at all.

GEORGE

Oh, you don't **imagine it, hunh?**

NICK (Antagonistic) No . . . **I don't. I don't imagine you do!**

GEORGE (Withering) Your sympathy **disarms** me . . . your . . . your compassion makes me weep! Large, salty, unscientific tears!

NICK (With great disdain) \ I just don't see why you feel you have to subject other people I to it.

GEORGE

! ?



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GEORGE DISGUSTING! (Quietly, but with great intensity) Do you think I like having that . . . whatever-it-is . . . ridiculing me, tearing me down, in front of . . . (Waves his hand in a gesture of contemptuous dismissal) YOU? Do you think I care for it?



NICK (Cold-unfriendly) Well, no . . . I don't imagine you care for it at all.

GEORGE

Oh, you don't imagine it, huh?

NICK (Antagonistic) No . . . I don't. I don't imagine you do!

GEORGE (Withering) Your sympathy disarms me . . . your . . . your compassion makes me weep! Large, salty, unscientific tears!

NICK (With great disdain) \ I just don't see why you feel you have to subject other people I to it.

GEORGE

!?

NICK

If you and your . . . wife . . . want to go at each other, like a couple of . . .

GEORGE



So, and we discussed last time how George and Nick are trying to; George is trying to connect with Nick on a level at a level, he is trying to connect with Nick in a way that they have not and. But Nick kind of thoughts that kind of; that kind of initiative on George's part to do this kind of interaction, to do this kind of connection.

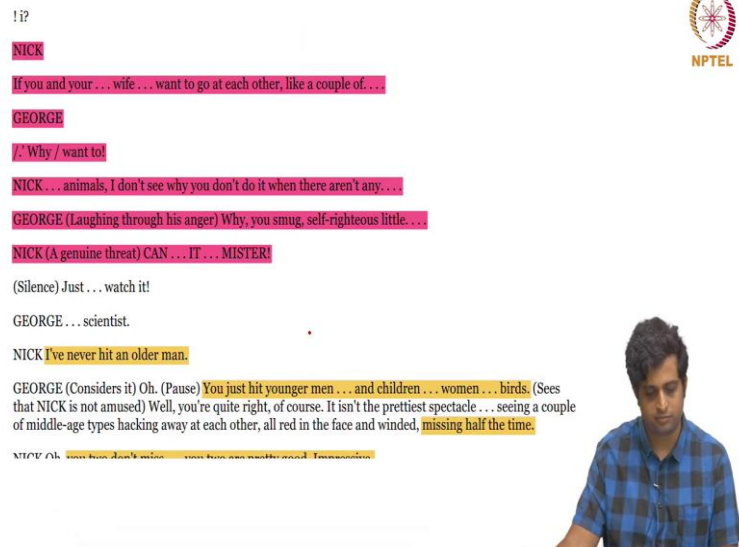
So, again like we will see here, this play also this act also starts like that and, since they have not connected, we will see that their relationship will go further downstream, due to the lack of that connection.

And, they are saying here that George says "you are ridiculing me or tearing me down in front of my wife. You think that I care for it?" Nick also is cold, unfriendly and we mentioned the importance of this immaculate stage descriptions that he is cold, he is unfriend, he is not connecting, and he is withdrawn from George.

That he says, "Well no, I do not imagine you care for it at all. George, you do not imagine it, huh?" We see that it is a slack fest of that, how less I care. It is like to tell the other person that "I know you are talking shit about me but look how less I care." So, this idea of I do not care, we would not be able to hurt me, this kind of isolation of the self from what happens outside, that becomes a sort of empowerment; that "look I am isolated from your words."

When we see that, they have come together to talk, to mix even though we have seen how problematic the references to mixing are in the play. But, they have come together to mix, but at the same time they say “like, no you cannot have any impact on me, whatever I am doing. I do not care for it at all.”

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The slide contains a transcript of a scene from a play. The transcript is as follows:

!?

NICK
If you and your ... wife ... want to go at each other, like a couple of ...

GEORGE
/ Why / want to/

NICK ... animals, I don't see why you don't do it when there aren't any. ...

GEORGE (Laughing through his anger) Why, you smug, self-righteous little. ...

NICK (A genuine threat) CAN ... IT ... MISTER!

(Silence) Just ... watch it!

GEORGE ... scientist.

NICK I've never hit an older man.

GEORGE (Considers it) Oh. (Pause) You just hit younger men ... and children ... women ... birds. (Sees that NICK is not amused) Well, you're quite right, of course. It isn't the prettiest spectacle ... seeing a couple of middle-age types hacking away at each other, all red in the face and winded, missing half the time.

NICK Oh ... you ... don't ... miss ... you ... see ... the ... good ...

In the top right corner, there is a circular logo with a sun-like symbol and the text "NPTEL" below it. In the bottom right corner, there is a video player showing a man in a blue plaid shirt looking down.

George at one point says that, “your sympathy disarms me, your compassion makes me weep! Large, salty, unscientific, tears! And, Nick says, I just do not see why you feel you have to subject other people to it. And, Nick is like, if you and your wife want to go at each other, like a couple of animals, I do not see why you do it do not do it when there are not any.

Why do not you do it in private? Why do not do it in the privacy? And, this idea of privacy and the private sphere and the public sphere as different, is very again a very problematic thing in the play, because the playhouse if we think as a structure is very interesting.”

Here we have the glimpse of the inside of a couple, which is a very intimate space. And another couple has been invited there and the things they are doing is kind of within the privacy of their space, but we would see like different mentions in the play where Martha says we have guests, we have people over. We see that it is a space that is again liminal between the private and the non-private, between the private and the public. It is a space that is in between those spaces.

This is a very self-reflexive play, this is a play that knows it is a play. That is why we have these mentions of truth and false of reality and illusion, because a play or literature, a work of art does those things. It mixes up what is true, it has its own order of truth in a way to say that, what happens in the book they have their own order of truth to them.

The playhouse if we think of it as a space, on the stage we have this idea of that it is the interior space of a couple's house and then we have the audience watching the play. So, every time this all this and we would see that there were a lot of charges against the play of profanity, of obscenity, that it is kind of showing in the public sphere what it should not be exposing in the public sphere. The idea is constantly there. The voyeuristic gaze of the audience is also accommodated in the play.

When they say like, we have guests over, we cannot do this right now; we have to also understand that it also refers to other people who are watching that time which are the audience. The audience is also very interestingly taken into account, into the fabric of the play. It is to explore this kind of meta-structures that the play employs, the self-reflexive ideas that the play employs, that it understand that it is a play. It is were also the plays of reality and illusion, and this kind of public sphere, private sphere, this problematization of these things come up.

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NICK Well, it's true... She... she does throw up a lot. Once she starts... there's practically no stopping her.
... I mean, she'll go right on... for hours. Not all the time, but... regularly.

GEORGE You can tell time by her, hunh?

NICK

Just about.

GEORGE

Drink?

NICK Sure. (With no emotion, except the faintest distaste, as GEORGE takes his glass to the bar) I married
her because she was pregnant.

GEORGE (Pause) Oh? (Pause) But you said you didn't have any children... When I asked you, you said....

NICK

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NICK She wasn't... really. It was a hysterical pregnancy. She blew up, and then she went down.

GEORGE And while she was up, you married her.

.....



Nick and George could not connect on a proper level. So, what happens is that we have seen already that this is a highly misogynistic play. Women, the portrayal of women is very demeaning at certain points to say the least. We will see like George and Nick here connect over one of the faulty things, one of those ugly things that that they kind of talk ill of their wives in front of each other. It is a very shallow bonding in a sense.

“While the previous attempt was bonding, I was on a more personal level on what probably brings them together at an existential level; this next one is a very frivolous very.” We would remember the reference to fun and games right, but again another thing that Albee does is to show that fun and games are not always innocent, that fun and games can have diabolic characters. As we see that the games they play are diabolic in nature in a sense.

This superficial shallow connect is going to start which seems like a very harmless, like banter that people do, it will soon turn very dark. The fun and games there is like it is all fun and games still someone loses an eye. So, people are can be said to like frequently lose an eye and their dignity in the play in a manner.

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NICK She wasn't . . . really. It was a **mysterious pregnancy. She blew up, and then she went down.**

GEORGE And while she was up, you married her.

NICK And then she went down.

{They both laugh, and are a little surprised that they do}

GEORGE

Uh . . . Bourbon is right.

Uh . . . yes, Bourbon.

GEORGE {At the bar, still} When I was sixteen and going to prep school, during the Punic Wars, a bunch of us used to go into New York on the first day of vacations, before we fanned out to our homes, and in the evening this bunch of us used to go to this gin mill owned by the gangster-father of one of us—for this was during the Great Experiment, or Prohibition, as it is more frequently called, and it was a bad time for the liquor lobby, but a fine time for the crooks and the cops—and we would go to this gin mill, and we would drink with the grown-ups and listen to the jazz. And one time, in the bunch of us, there was this boy who was fifteen, and he had killed his mother with a shotgun some years before—accidentally, completely accidentally, without even an unconscious motivation, I have no doubt, no doubt at all—and this one evening this boy went with us, and we ordered our drinks, and when it came his turn he said, I'll have bergin . . . give me some bergin,

please . . . bergin and water. Well, we all laughed . . . he was blond and he had the face of a cherub, and we all



Nick says “here that he married Honey, because she was pregnant, which is to say that I did not marry her because I loved her, but rather that she was pregnant.” George says

“but you said you did not have any children when I asked you, he said.” Nick says “it was a hysterical pregnancy. She blew up and then she went down.”

It is so, one sees it is like almost an object like way of talking, it is like inflating a tire or something that or a balloon, that “I the balloon got inflated then it got deflated; like she was not pregnant. This kind of carries with her idea of sickness and we see the term hysteria also coming in like, these are hysteric people, they are they do not quite have control over themselves and so.”

This is also George drawing out secrets from Nick. This is him, giving him alcohol, giving him stuff and this is him getting drawing out secrets out of him. And so, George asks Nick “What will you have?” Nick says that Bourbon. So, getting Bourbon. George tells Nick a tale. Again, this is one of the tales that we do not know if it is true or false or who it happened with, but it is just like pure possibility in the terms it could be, it could not be.

But, if we would see that how they act out, even if in the context of the true play, they assume a truth value of their own which cannot be denied. And, it is about the tale of a few young boys who go to a bar and one of them orders begin. We can understand that he probably wanted to order Bourbon, but he could not he did not know what the name was. He said “begin”.

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laughed, and his cheeks went red and the color rose in his neck, and the assistant crook who had taken our order told people at the next table what the boy had said, and then they laughed, and then more people were told and the laughter grew, and more people and more laughter, and no one was laughing more than us, and none of us more than the boy who had shot his mother. And soon, everyone in the gin mill knew what the laughter was about, and everyone started ordering bergin, and laughing when they ordered it. And soon, of course, the laughter became less general, but it did not subside, entirely, for a very long time, for always at this table or that someone would order bergin and a new area of laughter would rise. We drank free that night, and we were bought champagne by the management, by the gangster-father of one of us. And, of course, we suffered the next day, each of us, alone, on his train, away from New York, each of us with a grown-up's hangover ... but it was the grandest day of my ... youth.

(Hands NICK a drink on the word)

NICK (Very quietly) Thank you. What . . . what happened to the boy ... the boy who had shot his mother?

I won't tell you. All right.

GEORGE

NICK

GEORGE

The following summer, on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket and his father on the front seat to his right, he swerved the car, to avoid a porcupine, and drove straight into a large tree.



Everyone laughed. If it was a matter of laughter, if we read through this passage that everyone laughed and everyone continued laughing, it is a joke that did not stop. Everyone else in the bar started ordering to mock the child's speech. This mocking of child speech, it is very interesting in the play because we have seen that how so many terms in the play are often childish, there is a sort of childish nagging a sense.

The playing of childishness and adult people is very interesting play. Then we will see other references to being childlike in the play also, later on. But George says "I was present there and we drunk we are drunk a lot and that was one of the grandest days of my youth".

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(Hands NICK a drink on the word)

NICK (Very quietly) Thank you. What . . . what happened to the boy ... the boy who had shot his mother?

I won't tell you. All right.

GEORGE

NICK

GEORGE

The following summer, on a country road, with his learner's permit in his pocket and his father on the front seat to his right, he swerved the car, to avoid a porcupine, and drove straight into a large tree.

NICK (Faintly pleading) No.

GEORGE

He was not killed, of course. And in the hospital, when he was conscious and out of danger, and when they told him that his father was dead, he began to laugh, I have been told, and his laughter grew and he would not stop, and it was not until after they jammed a needle in his arm, not until after that, until his consciousness slipped away from him, that his laughter subsided . . . stopped. And when he was recovered from his injuries enough so that he could be moved without damage should he struggle, he was put in an asylum. That was thirty years ago.

NICK (Faintly pleading) No.



It was by the boy, there was a boy who shot his mother and Nick asks "what happened to the boy, and George says no, I will not tell you. It is the same boy who tells this story of bergin, who orders that bergin misspells, it mispronounces it rather.

And, then George goes on to say that not only did the boy shoot his mother, he also killed his father when he was trying to learn driving in with in with his father, and he swerved with the car to save a porcupine on the road and crashed it against the tree, where the father also died. So, he inadvertently or advertently, we do not know like because intentions are very difficult to understand in the play kills his parents.

And, George says that, then what happens he was sent in the hospital. And I am reading this passage – when he was conscious and out of danger, and when they told him that his father was dead, he began to laugh. I have been told, and his laughter grew and he would not stop, and it was not until after they jammed a needle in his arm, not until after that, until his consciousness slipped away from him, that his laughter subsided, stopped.

And when he was recovered from his injuries through enough so that he could be moved without damage should he struggle, he was put in an asylum. That was thirty years ago.

So, see this thing, that this laughter, this maniacal laughter, this mad laughter. So, we just talked about witches and evils right, about witches and devils. So, this maniacal laughter sort of goes with that. That the laughing maniacally this child who has killed his parents and after that the child is given a shot, an injection through which he slumbers.

We realize that this kind of slumbering, this kind of escaping the world through an injection, escaping a reality or a very gross very gross reaction to the reality through slumber is also paralleled in the adults habit of consuming alcohol. So, the adults are also consuming alcohol in a way that kind of puts them in a place like this that they are trying to escape a world. And that the there is maniac laughter, there is weird fun and games over the misery of people.

The childishness is also something that does not quite leave the adults, one cannot separate the children from the adults in a sense in the play.

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from his injuries enough so that he could be moved without damage should he struggle, he was put in an asylum. That was thirty years ago.

NICK Is he . . . still there?

GEORGE

Oh, yes. And I'm told that for these thirty years he has . . . not . . . uttered . . . one . . . sound.

(A rather long silence: five seconds, please) MARTHA! (Pause) MARTHA!

NICK

I told you . . . she's making coffee.

GEORGE

For your hysterical wife, who goes up and down.

NICK

Went. Up and down.

GEORGE

Went. No more?



Nick is engrossed by the player story, and he says “Is he still there?” George says, “Yes and I am told for these thirty years he has not uttered one sound”. He has gone quiet for the last thirty years, he is just gone quite; does not has not said anything.

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NICK No more. Nothing.

GEORGE (After a sympathetic pause) The saddest thing about men . . . Well, no, one of the saddest things about men is the way they age . . . some of them. Do you know what it is with insane people? Do you? . . . the quiet ones?

NICK No.

GEORGE They don't change . . . they don't grow old.

NICK

They must.

GEORGE

Well, eventually, probably, yes. But they don't . . . in the usual sense. They maintain a . . . a firm-skinned serenity . . . the . . . the under-use of everything leaves them . . . quite whole.

NICK Are you recommending it?

GEORGE No. Some things are sad, though. (Imitates a pep-talker) But ya jest gotta buck up an' face 'em, 'at's all. Buck up! (Pause) Martha doesn't have hysterical pregnancies.



We have this reference here that Martha is making coffee for Nick, for Honey who is like hysterically going up and down constantly, there is no balance to her. We said like this so, brightly, moderation, propriety, balancing, these are also like things that do

not happen in the place. We have a character who is like going up and going down, according to these descriptions.

George says “about insane people that they do not change, that they do not grow old. So, again we see this childlike quality about insane people, and you also feel like these people while they are drunk, they are getting more and more insane. And, at one point if you read the play, you will see that, George saying Nick, Nick asking George do you get drunk beyond a certain point, even if you are taking drinks.”

Then George says “you do, but things slow down you slumber more, it is like a kind of being like losing the charge of your consciousness, slowly as you keep drinking and drinking. We would see that that is what he said happened to the boy who got injected with that kind of injection with that kind of shot.”

There is this parallelism. There is this parallelized parallelism that they do not change, that they do not grow old. And these are people who are also not refusing, refusing in a certain way to grow old. They are too busy in their fun and games, in the games that they are playing.

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GEORGE

Well, eventually, probably, yes. But they don't ... in the usual sense. They maintain a ... a firm-skinned serenity ... the ... the under-use of everything leaves them ... quite whole.

NICK Are you recommending it?

GEORGE No. Some things are sad, though. (Imitates a pep-talker) But ya jest gotta buck up an' face 'em, 'at's all. Buck up! (Pause) Martha doesn't have hysterical pregnancies.

NICK My wife had one.

GEORGE

Yes. Martha doesn't have pregnancies at all.

NICK

Well no ... I don't imagine so ... now. Do you have any other kids? Do you have any daughters, or anything?

GEORGE (As if it's a great joke) Do we have any what?

NICK Do you have any ... I mean, do you have only one ... kid ... uh ... your son?

GEORGE (With a private knowledge) Oh no ... just one ... one boy ... our son.

NICK Well ... (Shrugs) ... that's nice.



And, here George says that Martha does not have hysterical pregnancies. Martha does not have pregnancies at all. So, this is again a clue that the probably the lie they are telling, that the story they are telling about having a child, having a son is a lie.

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GEORGE (With a private knowledge) Oh no . . . just one . . . one boy . . . our son.
NICK Well . . . (Shrugs) . . . that's nice.
GEORGE
Oh ho, ho. Yes, well, he's a . . . comfort, a bean bag.
NICK A what?
GEORGE A bean bag. Bean bag. You wouldn't understand. (Overdistinct) Bean . . . bag.
NICK I heard you . . . I didn't say I was deaf . . . I said I didn't understand.
GEORGE
You didn't say that at all. Language Games.
NICK I meant I was implying I didn't understand. (Under his breath) For Christ's sake!
GEORGE
You're getting testy.



We have references to language games. George says to Nick that, “oh, well, he is a comfort, a bean bag, about his son. And, Nick says, a what? George says, a bean bag. Bean bag. You would not understand, and then he spell like over pronounces it like bree bean bag. And Nick says I heard you, I did not say I was deaf, I said I did not understand.”

George says, “You did not say that at all. And, we again come back to this idea of language games, that we had discussed before like, what are people saying? What are people communicating? Are you saying what you are trying to say?” This gap between what you are saying and what you are communicating, that opens up the play. That opens up this play that makes this possible this play, and that opens up also the language, the play of languages.

There will always be a little bit of a gap, a little bit of slipperiness in it. And there is the possibility of multiple meaning making, multiple observations coming. That is the possibility that is what makes play possible.

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GEORGE (Mocking appreciation) Oh . . . well, thanks. Now! That makes me feel all warm and ninny inside.
NICK
Well, if you're going to . . .
MARTHAS VOICE HEY!
NICK ... if you're going to start that kind of stuff again. . . .
GEORGE Hark! Forest sounds.
NICK Hm?
GEORGE **Animal noises.**
MARTHA (Sticking her head in) Hey!
NICK Oh!
GEORGE Well, here's nursie.
MARTHA (To NICK) We're sitting up . . . we're having coffee, and we'll be back in.
NICK (Not rising) Oh ... is there anything I should do?



And, here at this place, if you see that when Martha is coming again, she is entering the stage, Nick George says hark forest sounds. Those animal metaphors become very explicit and very animal noises, forest sounds.

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NICK Have you been trying for years?
GEORGE
{After a long pause . . . looking at him} **Accommodation, malleability, adjustment. . . those do seem to be in the order of things, don't they?**
NICK
Don't try to put me in the same class with you!
GEORGE (Pause) Oh. (Pause) No, of course not, **things are simpler with you. . . you marry a woman because she's all blown up. . . while I, in my clumsy, old-fashioned way. . .**
NICK There was more to it than that!
GEORGE Sure! I'll bet she has money, too!
NICK (Looks hurt. Then, determined, after a pause) Yes.
GEORGE
Yes? (Joyfully) YES! You mean I was right? I hit it?



There is an idea to why do you marry a person? Why, what are the motivations of marrying another person and, somehow money becomes a huge motivator of why somebody is marrying someone. We see that Martha's father is also the president of

the college where they teach, and Nick says that Honey's father also had a lot of money.

So, money becomes a huge motivator of why people would marry someone. And he is saying that things are simpler, with you marry a woman because she is all blown up, "I lie in my clumsy old-fashioned way". But their real intentions if we can ever get to such real intentions, we do not know why they actually got married.

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NICK Well, you see...

GEORGE My God, what archery! First try, too. How about that!

NICK You see...

GEORGE

There were other things.

NICK Yes.

GEORGE To compensate.

NICK

Yes.

GEORGE There always are. (Sees that NICK is reacting badly) No, I'm sure there are. I didn't mean to be... flip. There are always compensating factors... as in the case of Martha and myself... Now, on the surface of it...

NICK



(Refer Slide Time: 23:33)

NICK

Yes.

GEORGE There always are. (Sees that NICK is reacting badly) No, I'm sure there are. I didn't mean to be... flip. There are always compensating factors... as in the case of Martha and myself... Now, on the surface of it...

NICK

We sort of grew up together, you know...

GEORGE

... it looks to be a kind of knock-about, drag-out affair, on the surface of it...

NICK

We knew each other from, oh God, I don't know, when we were six, or something...

GEORGE ... but somewhere back there, at the beginning of it, right when I first came to New Carthage, back then...

NICK (With some irritation) I'm sorry.

GEORGE Hm? Oh. No, no... I'm sorry.

NICK



Nick says that wait you see it is not like that. Nick says, “There were other things why I married her, and George says yes, to compensate. Nick says, yes. And, George says that, yes, there are, I mean I know that there always are things to compensate, but it seems like there it is more about themselves, how they feel about themselves, than it is about how actually they feel about their wives.”

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NICK (With some irritation) I'm sorry.
GEORGE Hm? Oh. No, no... I'm sorry.
NICK No... it's... it's all right.
GEORGE No... you go ahead.
NICK No... please.
GEORGE
I insist... You're a guest. You go first.
NICK
Well, it seems a little silly... now.
GEORGE Nonsense! (Pause) But if you were six, she must have been four, or something.
NICK Maybe I was eight... she was six. We... we used to play... doctor.
GEORGE That's a good healthy heterosexual beginning.



Nick says that our relationship goes a long back, because when they were very young, they used to play when he was probably 6 or 8, and one sees the play like, again it talks about childhood sexuality in a way, which makes it very problematic and because we see that this childhood adult dichotomy is often taken away.

The world of the child and the world of the adult somehow mix very violently. It is something we often also fail to take into consideration, that we think that the world of the child is very different from the world of the adult. While we discount the fact that the child lives in the same world that the adult lives in, that they often encounter in their everyday world the same things that adults would.

So, to protect them from encountering certain experiences that we believe should be reserved for adults, we have different things like parental logs, parental guidance, we have ratings on movies like 12 plus or 13 plus or 16 plus or 18 plus. We have this different threshold set for the child that, ok this is what it can take, this is what it cannot take. But, in this play, we will see this mixing of; again we talked about how

this play does these devious mixings, which make things problematic, this child and the adult.

They used to play Doctor, Nick and Honey when they were very young. George calls that very good heterosexual beginning.

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NICK (Laughing) Yup.

GEORGE

The scientist even then, eh?

NICK (Laughs) Yeah. And it was . . . always taken for granted . . . you know ... by our families, and by us, too, I guess. And . . . so, we did.

GEORGE (Pause) Did what?

NICK **We got married.**

GEORGE When you were eight?

NICK No. No, of course not. Much later.

GEORGE

I wondered.

NICK I wouldn't say there was any . . . particular passion between us, even at the beginning ... of our marriage, I mean.

GEORGE Well, certainly no surprise, no earth-shaking discoveries, after Doctor, and all.



These are two heterosexual couples that are talking with each other here, amongst each other. They got married because they had this connection from a very young age.

(Refer Slide Time: 25:28)

The scientist even then, eh?

NICK (Laughs) Yeah. And it was . . . always taken for granted . . . you know ... by our families, and by us, too, I guess. And . . . so, we did.

GEORGE (Pause) Did what?

NICK **We got married.**

GEORGE When you were eight?

NICK No. No, of course not. Much later.

GEORGE

I wondered.

NICK I wouldn't say there was any . . . particular passion between us, even at the beginning ... of our marriage, I mean.

GEORGE Well, certainly no surprise, no earth-shaking discoveries, after Doctor, and all.

NICK (Uncertainly) No

GEORGE Everything's all pretty much the same, anyway ... in spite of what they say about Chinese women.

NICK What is that?



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GEORGE Well, you do ... but it's different ... everything slows down. ... you get soaden. ... unless you can up-chuck ... like your wife ... then you can sort of start all over again.

NICK Everybody drinks a lot here in die East. (Thinks about it) Everybody drinks a lot in the middle-west, too.

GEORGE We drink a great deal in this country, and I suspect we'll be drinking a great deal more, too ... if we survive. We should be Arabs or Italians ... the Arabs don't drink, and the Italians don't get drunk much, except on religious holidays. We should live on Crete, or something.

NICK (Sarcastically ... as if killing a joke) And that, of course, would make us **cretins**.

GEORGE (Mild surprise) **So it would.** (Hands NICK his drink) Tell me about your wife's money.

NICK (Suddenly suspicious) Why?

GEORGE Well ... don't then.

NICK

What do you want to know about my wife's money for? (Ugly) Huh?

GEORGE



We mentioned how George is slowly getting like weaving a net and weaving a web. George says, “Tell me about your wife’s money. Like it is a very impertinent request to make, and Nick suddenly suspicious says, why? George is, well, do not then. Nick says, what do you want to know about my wife’s money for? Huh?”

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GEORGE (Still deceptively bland) All right. ... I want to know about your wife's money because ... well, because I'm fascinated by the methodology ... by the pragmatic accommodation by which you wave-of-the-future boys are going to take over.

NICK You're starting in again.

GEORGE Am I? No I'm not. Look ... Martha has money too. I mean, her father's been robbing this place blind for years, and ...

NICK

No, he hasn't. He has not.

GEORGE He hasn't?

NICK

No.

GEORGE (Shrugs) Very well. ... Martha's father has not been robbing this place blind for years, and Martha does not have any money. O.K.?

NICK We were talking about my wife's money ... not yours.

GEORGE O.K talk.



It is like something very personal. They both say that, ok our fathers-in-law they have money, Martha’s father has been robbing this place blind for years. Nick says “His father was more like a preacher, who made a lot of money, God’s money.”

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does not have any money. O.K.?

NICK We were talking about my wife's money ... not yours.

GEORGE O.K talk.

NICK No. (Pause) My father-in-law ... was a man of the Lord, and he was very rich.

GEORGE What faith?

NICK

He ... my father-in-law ... was called by God when he was six, or something, and he started preaching, and he baptized people, and he saved them, and he traveled around a lot, and he became pretty famous ... not like some of them, but he became pretty famous ... and when he died he had a lot of money.

God's money.

No ... his own.

GEORGE

NICK

GEORGE What happened to God's money?

NICK He spent God's money ... and he saved his own. He built



He says “my father-in-law, he was a man of the Lord, and he was very rich. So, we see a lot of God men becoming rich these days also. You can become rich by becoming a God man”. We see that, if we seeing that this is a man who is preaching Christianity and Christ himself preached against this accumulation of wealth, but here we have a different kind of preaching which is also for the accumulation of wealth.

These paradoxes we have made part of our lives, that is much highlighted very nicely and those paradoxes become which would otherwise be very obvious to us, they kind of become stark, the opposition in the logic becomes stark to us by this kind of place.

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But not God's money.

NICK

No. Her own.

GEORGE Well, I think that's very nice.

(NICK giggles a little) Martha's got money because Martha's father's second wife ... not Martha's mother, but after Martha's mother died ... was a very old lady with warts who was very rich.

NICK

She was a witch.

GEORGE She was a good witch, and she married the white mouse...

(NICK begins to giggle) ... with the tiny red eyes ... and he must have nibbled her warts, or something like that, because she went up in a puff of smoke almost immediately. POUF!

NICK POUF!

GEORGE POUF! And all that was left, aside from some wart medicine, was a big fat will. ... A peach pie, with some for the trunchin of New Carthana, some for the rollana, some for Martha's daddy, and just this much



We see that they both had a lot of money. Nick till now in his motivations for marrying Honey, he has mentioned that Honey had Honey's father had money and she had got pregnant hysteric pregnancy, not is there once a mention of love that I loved her; that we were together since childhood and our parents thought we will always get married, stuff like that.

Here, like Nick says about Martha's got money because Martha's fathers second wife, not Martha's mother, but after Martha's mother died, was a very old lady with warts who was very rich. Nick says "she was a witch and George, she was a good witch and married the white mouse".

We see like this kind of bestiality, the idea of bestiality, this Walpurgisnacht, this kind of the night of revelries of devils and witches. This becomes so interesting here, we actually have references to witches and animals and bestiality.

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NICK (Quite beside himself) Maybe . . . maybe my father-in-law and the witch with the warts should have gotten together, because he was a mouse, too.

GEORGE (Urging NICK on) He was?

NICK (Breaking down) Sure . . . he was a church mouse! (They both laugh a great deal but it is sad laughter . . . eventually they subside, fall silent) **Your wife never mentioned a stepmother.**

GEORGE (Considers it) **Well . . . maybe it isn't true.**

NICK (Narrowing his eyes) And maybe it is.

GEORGE

Might be . . . might not. Well, I think your story's a lot nicer . . . about your pumped-up little wife, and your father-in-law who was a priest . . .

NICK

He was not a priest . . . he was a man of God.

GEORGE

Yes.

NICK



Nick says “Your wife never mentioned the stepmother. You do not know at any point which narrative is true, which narrative is false. You are just always left hanging; what is true? You do not even know that.” George says, “Well maybe it is not true, but that is the thing. Nick has been blurting out certain truths.” That will know after a certain time.

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O.K.

GEORGE

You realize, of course, that I've been drawing you out on this stuff, not because I'm interested in your terrible lifehood, but only because you represent a direct and pertinent threat to my lifehood, and I want to get the goods on you.

NICK (Still amused) Sure . . . sure.

GEORGE

I mean . . . I've warned you . . . you stand warned.

NICK **I stand warned. (Laughs) It's you sneaky types worry me the most, you know. You ineffectual sons of bitches . . . you're the worst.**

GEORGE **Yes . . . we are. Sneaky. An elbow in your steely-blue eye . . . a knee in your solid gold groin . . . we're the worst.**

NICK

Yup.

GEORGE



George says that he has been building a way for him. “I have been drawing you out on this stuff, not because I am interested in your terrible life hood, but only because you

represent a direct and pertinent threat to my life hood, and I want to get the goods on you.”

He is saying “I am I want to get the goods on you, I want to tease out information from you. Nick says, still I mean sure, sure. So, he is not very sure of the damage that George can do to him, yet. And, George says I mean, I warned you and you stand warned.”

Nick says “I stand warned. It is you sneaky types that worry me the most. You ineffectual sons of bitches, you are the worst. George says yes”. An elbow to your steely-blue eye, a knee to one’s solid gold groin, we are the worst.

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GEORGE Yes ... we are. Sneaky. An elbow in your steely-blue eye ... a knee in your solid gold groin ... we're the worst.

NICK

Yup.

GEORGE

Well, I'm glad you don't believe me. ... I know you've got history on your side, and all ...

NICK

Unh-unh. You've got history on your side. ... I've got biology on mine. History, biology.

GEORGE I know the difference.

NICK You don't act it.

GEORGE No? I thought we'd decided that you'd take over the History Department first, before you took over the whole works. You know ... a step at a time.

NICK (Stretching ... luxuriating ... playing the game) Nyaah ... what I thought I'd do is ... I'd sort of insinuate myself generally, play around for a while, find all the weak spots, shore 'em up, but with my own name plate on 'em ... become sort of a fact, and then turn into a ... a what ...?



We will see how sneaky George gets, we will see that soon.

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NICK
You're kidding!

GEORGE (Like a father) I wish I were. . . I'll give you some good advice if you want me to. . .

NICK Good advice! From you? Oh boy! (Starts to laugh)

GEORGE You haven't learned yet. . . Take it wherever you can get it. . . Listen to me, now.

NICK Come off it!

GEORGE I'm giving you good advice, now.

NICK Good God . . . !

GEORGE There's quicksand here, and you'll be dragged down, just as. . .

NICK Oh boy . . . !

GEORGE . . . before you know it . . . sucked down. . .

(NICK laughs derisively) You disgust me on principle, and you're a smug son of a bitch personally, but I'm trying to give you a survival kit. DO YOU HEAR ME?

NICK (Still laughing) I hear you. You come in loud.



That idea of taking in taking him in it has been like, if we think of it a way, but it is also been referred to her, it is the metaphor of the quicksand. “The quicksand is also something. You walk on it, you think it is the same land, but once you get on it slowly sucks you and the more you kind of try to get out of it the more you get enmeshed in it, and it finally takes you win slowly”. George says “before, sucked down”. So, we have these stages being built for something now.

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(NICK laughs derisively) You disgust me on principle, and you're a smug son of a bitch personally, but I'm trying to give you a survival kit. DO YOU HEAR ME?

NICK (Still laughing) I hear you. You come in loud.

GEORGE ALL RIGHT!

NICK Hey, Honey.

GEORGE (Silence. Then quietly) All right . . . O.K. You want to play it by ear, right? Everything's going to work out anyway, because the timetable's history, right?

NICK Right . . . right. You just tend to your knitting, grandma. . . * . Tll be O.K.

GEORGE (After a silence) I've tried to . . . tried to reach you. . . to. . .

. . . make contact?

Yes.

. . . communicate?

Yes. Exactly.

NICK (Contemptuously)



George says “I have tried to, have tried to reach you, to communicate, to make contact? Yes. Nick says, to communicate? Yes. Exactly.”

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GEORGE (After a silence) ... to ...
... make contact?
Yes.
... communicate?
Yes. Exactly.
NICK (Contemptuously)
GEORGE
NICK (Still)
GEORGE
NICK Aw ... that is touching ... that is ... downright moving ... that's what it is. (With sudden vehemence)
UP YOURS!



Nick says, “Aw that is touching, that is downright moving, and that is what it is. Then with sudden vehemence says, up yours!” That is what we are talking about, this need to make contact, this need to make. He says that “I know, I have been trying to do that”. Nick says, “Up yours”.

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GEORGE (Brief pause) Hm?
NICK (Threatening) **You heard me!**
GEORGE (At Nick, not to him) You take the trouble to construct a civilization ... to ... to build a society, based on the principles of ... of principle ... you endeavor to make communicable sense out of natural order, morality out of the unnatural disorder of man's mind ... you make government and art, and realize that they are, must be, both the same ... you bring things to the saddest of all points ... to the point where there is something to lose ... then all at once, through all the music, through all the sensible sounds of men building, attempting, comes the Dies Irae. And what is it? What does the trumpet sound? Up yours. I suppose there's justice to it, after all the years. ... Up yours.
NICK (Brief pause ... then applauding) Ha, ha! Bravo! Ha, ha! (Laughs on)
(And MARTHA reenters, leading HONEY, who is wan but smiling bravely)
HONEY (Grandly) Thank you ... thank you.
MARTHA Here we are, a little shaky, but on our feet.
GEORGE
Goodie.
NICK



He does not care. Nick says, “Threatening, you heard me! So, he kind of gives him the license like do whatever you please to do.”

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NICK Of course there isn't.

HONEY

Why, just before we got married, I developed . . . appendicitis . . . or everybody thought it was appendicitis . . . but it turned out to be . . . it was a . . . (laughs briefly) . . . false alarm.

(GEORGE and NICK exchange glances)

MARTHA (To GEORGE)

Get me a drink.

(GEORGE moves to the bar) George makes everybody sick. . . . When our son was just a little boy, he used to.

. . .

GEORGE Don't, Martha. . . .

MARTHA

. . . he used to throw up all the time, because of George. . . .

GEORGE

I said, don't!

MARTHA



We have Honey has again entered the stage and so, Nick has been talking about her behind her back; she does not know what has been told about her. She comes, and she says that, why, just before we got married, I developed appendicitis or everybody thought it was appendicitis, but it turned out to be it was a false alarm.

She kind of thinks that it was not appendicitis. The narrative was that she might have been pregnant. She is lying again, but this is a lie we have caught very easily, because Nick just gave a contradictory account right now, which will point out turn out to be the true one. So, people are lying. This is also a lie that might have passed if we had not known the countering narrative to it.

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Gee.
GEORGE
HONEY
I dance like the wind.
Yeah?
MARTHA (Without comment)
GEORGE (Picking a record) Martha had her daguerrotype in the paper once ... oh 'bout twenty-five years ago. . . . Seems she took second prize in one o' them seven-day dancin' contest things . . . biceps all bulging, holding up her partner.
MARTHA Will you put a record on and shut up?
GEORGE Certainly, love. (To all) How are we going to work this? **Mixed doubles?**
MARTHA Well, you certainly don't think I'm going to dance with you, do you?
GEORGE (Considers it) Noooooo ... not with him around . . . that's for sure. And not with twinkle-toes here,



Honey is in the set and so, there are different references to other things also happening.

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~~GEORGE (Murmuring) Let's . . .~~
MARTHA
Yeah! (To NICK) Thanks, sweetheart.
GEORGE (To them all) I didn't want to talk about him at all ... I would have been perfectly happy not to discuss the whole subject. . . . I never want to talk about it.
MARTHA
Yes you do.
GEORGE **When we're alone, maybe.**
MARTHA . . .
We're alone!
GEORGE Uh . . . no, love . . . we've got guests.
MARTHA (With a covetous look at NICK) We sure have.
HONEY **Could I have a little brandy? I think I'd like a little brandy.**
NICK Do you think you should?
~~GEORGE~~ . . .



George again like the mentioned the voyeurism how it takes into account, this play takes into account, the gaze of the people, the audience, the people present that. George says that about like, when we are alone maybe, to stress that they are not alone. Martha says we were alone, but George says “No, love we have got guests”.

These scenarios where these kind of things take place, that where they mentioned that we have guests and we are being looked at, we are in the presence of company, which takes into account also the audience would also know that we are being taken into account.

They would be rather than being like this ominous like this third person, omniscient rather not ominous, third person omniscient watchers; they would also be implicated in the play. They cannot just sit back and watch, they would also be implicated in the play, implicated in their watching.

At one point that they are like talking that Martha is saying that we have had enough of trash talk, “Will you put a record on and shut up? George says, certainly, love. How are we going to work this? Mixed doubles?” We see again like mixing has this very weird connotation in the play, very problematic connotations and mixed doubles also has a very problematic connotation here.

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either.
HONEY I'll dance with anyone. ... Til dance by myself.
NICK Honey....
HONEY I dance like the wind.
GEORGE All right, kiddies ... choose up and hit the sack. (Music starts.... Second movement, Beethoven's 7th Symphony)
HONEY
(Up, dancing by herself)
De, de de da da, da-da de, da da-da de da ... wonderful ...!
NICK Honey....
MARTHA



It is like a couples have come and they are mixing, and their mixing creates another kind of problem. “I do not know how they are going which coupling is going to take form next, and with that idea of other people watching and getting at it, we have this idea of spilling secrets. What can you say and what can you not say? What secrets, what intimate secrets can you share with another person and what you cannot share?”

(Refer Slide Time: 32:49)

He warn you . . . don't encourage me.

NICK

I heard him . . . tell me more.

MARTHA (Consciously making rhymed speech) Well, Georgie-boy had lots of big ambitions In spite of something funny in his past. . . .

GEORGE (Quietly warning) Martha. . . .

MARTHA

Which Georgie-boy here turned into a novel. . . . His first attempt and also his last. . . . Hey! I rhymed! I rhymed!

GEORGE

I warn you, Martha.

NICK

Yeah . . . you rhymed. Go on, go on.

MARTHA But Daddy took a look at Georgie's novel. . . .

GEORGE You're looking for a punch in the mouth. . . . You know that, Martha.



Martha at a point says that the story of the boy that George was talking about, it is actually his own story that he killed his parents and everything. He is planning to write it as a novel and something funny in his past. And which Georgie-boy here turned into a novel. His first attempt and also his last. “Hey! I rhymed! I rhymed! And, George is saying, I warn you, Martha.”

We said like George and Martha being an elderly couple, who have been together longer they also have their own rules of engagement. They also know how they are engaging, how they are making it.

He is also telling like, he is playing this game that as Martha is telling that this hideous secret about George. George is also playing like do not say it, do not say which makes it like the makes the secret seem real more real than it probably actually is. Makes it seem more hideous than it probably is or even like real that gives it a sense of reality.

If he did not protest if he just said that is a lie, then it display would not work like that. He is also while she is spilling the secrets, he is also protesting the more vehemently to almost show that these are very hideous dark secrets that we keep that are being spilled.

Another couple has been brought in who are looking at this and Nick has already started playing that game, he has already inadvertently given out some secrets about his life which are actually true. Well, we do not know a lot of things whether they about the other couple, George and Martha whether they are true, the centre story that they say about their son that is not true.

But, through that kind of game playing, that kind of make-believe, the make-believe the real-world crashes into the make-believe. Nick probably cannot make the distinction anymore that, ok these are make believe secrets or whatever and he kind of contributes with his own reality.

Honey in a sense, has a better sense because she says that I was sick because of appendicitis. She really still believes that secrets should be secrets, they should be kept in a manner they should be honoured, but Nick has gone beyond that point. And, here we see that, it is again that emasculating figure of the Daddy returning for George who again like towards George's dream stuff of his novel calls it a bad novel and, says.

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Yeah . . . you rhymed. Go on, go on.
MARTHA But Daddy took a look at Geogie's novel. . . .
GEORGE You're looking for a punch in the mouth. . . . You know that, Martha.
MARTHA
Do tell! . . . and he was very shocked by what he read.
NICK He was?
MARTHA
Yes . . . he was. . . A novel all about a naughty boy-child
GEORGE (Rising) I will not tolerate this!
NICK (Offhand, to GEORGE) Oh, can it.
MARTHA
. . . ha, ha!
naughty boychild
who . . . uh . . . who killed his mother and his father dead.



We see this a novel about a naughty boy-child. Naughty boy-child, a naughty boy-child who's not quite a boy-child is almost this naughtiness has a very ominous sense, that this naughtiness makes him not quite a child. This says who killed his mother and his father dead.

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MARTHA
And Daddy said . . . Look here, I will not let you publish such a thing. . . .

GEORGE (Rushes to phonograph . . . rips the record off) That's it! The dancing's over. That's it. Go on now!

NICK What do you think you're doing, hunh?

HONEY (Happily) Violence! Violence!

MARTHA (Loud: a pronouncement) And Daddy said . . . Look here, kid, you don't think for a second I'm going to let you publish this crap, do you? Not on your life, baby . . . not while you're teaching here. . . . You publish that goddam book and you're out . . . on your ass!

GEORGE DESIST! DESIST!

MARTHA
Ha, ha, ha, ha!

NICK (Laughing) De . . . sist!

HONEY
Oh, violence . . . violence!



So, makes it about George, that it was George he was telling about himself. “Honey is like enjoying this kind of thing. Violence! Violence! And she is having a lot of fun.”

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publish that goddam book and you're out . . . on your ass:

GEORGE DESIST! DESIST!

MARTHA
Ha, ha, ha, ha!

NICK (Laughing) De . . . sist!

HONEY
Oh, violence . . . violence!

MARTHA Why, the idea! A teacher at a respected, conservative institution like this, in a town like New Carthage, publishing a book like that? If you respect your position here, young man, young . . . whippersnapper, you'll just withdraw that manuscript. . . .

GEORGE I will not be made mock of!

NICK
He will not be made mock of, for Christ's sake. (Laughs) (HONEY joins in the laughter, not knowing exactly why)

GEORGE I will not!



Martha says, “Why, the idea! A teacher at a respected, conservative institution like this, in a town like new Carthage, publishing a book like that? If you respect your position here, young man, young whippersnapper, you will just withdraw that manuscript.” There is the contradictory talk about propriety and the lack of propriety.

We see that in this society in this how could any propriety be possible, but at the same time there is a lot of on the face surface propriety, that people carry on with them.

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MARTHA (Pushing on) Imagine such a thing! **A book about a boy who murders his mother and kills his father, and pretends it's all an accident!**

HONEY (Beside herself with glee) An accident!

NICK (Remembering something related) Hey . . . wait a minute . . .

MARTHA (Her own voice now) And you want to know the clincher? You want to know what big brave Georgie said to Daddy?

GEORGE NO! NO! NO! NO!

NICK Wait a minute now . . .

MARTHA

Georgie said . . . but Daddy . . . I mean . . . ha, ha, ha, ha . . . **but Sir, it isn't a novel at all . . .** (Other voice) Not a novel? (Mimicking GEORGE'S voice) No, sir . . . it isn't a novel at all . . .

GEORGE (Advancing on her) You will not say this!



Martha here says that Georgie said, but Daddy, “I mean, ha, ha, ha, but Sir, it is not a novel at all. Not a novel? No, sir it is not a novel at all. Then George says that you will not say this!”

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NICK (Sensing the danger) Hey.

MARTHA

The hell I won't. Keep away from me, you bastard!

(Backs off a little . . . uses GEORGE'S voice again) **No, Sir, this isn't a novel at all . . . this is the truth . . . this really happened. . . TO ME!**

GEORGE (On her) I'LL KILL YOU!

(Grabs her by the throat. They struggle)

NICK HEY! (Comes between them)

HONEY (Wildly) **violence! violence!**

(GEORGE, MARTHA, and NICK struggle . . . yells ; etc.)

MARTHA IT HAPPENED! TO ME! TO ME!

GEORGE YOU SATANIC BITCH!

NICK STOP THAT! STOP that!

HONEY VIOLENCE! VIOLENCE!



We see that kind of thing that it stresses the idea of how hideous a secret is being revealed, even though all of this might not have happened. There might not have been

a child who killed his parents, George might not have written a novel on that, and that child might never be George, but we do not know that.

He said, no, sir, this is not a novel at all, this is the truth, this really happened, to me! And George says, “I will kill you!” We see these things that how they highlight the sense of telling the secret, these reactions, this these prohibitions that work as a sort of enabling gesture. The more he is prohibiting, the more he is saying “No, he is actually almost saying yes, yes do it continue.” It is a very problematic area to go there.

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NICK HEY! (Comes between them)
HONEY (Wildly) **violence! violence!**
(GEORGE, MARTHA, and NICK struggle . . . yells ; etc.)
MARTHA IT HAPPENED! TO ME! TO ME!
GEORGE YOU SATANIC BITCH!
NICK STOP THAT! STOP that!
HONEY VIOLENCE! VIOLENCE!
(The other three struggle. GEORGE'S hands are on MARTHA'S throat. NICK grabs him, tears him from MARTHA, throws him on the floor. GEORGE, on the floor; NICK over him; MARTHA to one side, her hand on her throat)
NICK
That's enough now!
HONEY (Disappointment in her voice) Oh ... oh ... oh. . .
(GEORGE drags himself into a chair. He is hurt, **but it is more a profound humiliation than a physical injury**)



We have here George colleague calling a Martha the satanic bitch. We have this reference to which is constantly coming up. And if you keep in mind the next act is called the exorcism. We get that sense that we have this ghost piling up, piling up, piling up and secrets are also like ghosts, they are also like figures of the past that haunt us to come to haunt us. We will talk about that more as we read through.

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NICK
That's enough now!

HONEY (Disappointment in her voice) Oh ... oh ... oh ...

(GEORGE drags himself into a chair. He is hurt, but it is more a profound humiliation than a physical injury)

GEORGE (They watch him ... a pause. ...) All right ... all right ... very quiet now ... we will all be ... very quiet.

MARTHA (Softly, with a slow shaking of her head) Murderer. Mur ... der ... er.

NICK (Softly to MARTHA) O.K. now ... that's enough.

(A brief silence. They all move around a little, selfconsciously, like wrestlers flexing after a fall)

GEORGE (Composure seemingly recovered, but there is a great nervous intensity) Well! That's one game. What shall we do now, hunh?

(MARTHA and NICK laugh nervously) Oh come on ... let's think of something else. We've played Humiliate the Host ... we've gone through that one ... what shall we do now?

NICK Aw ... look ...

GEORGE AW LOOK! (Whines it) A www ... looooook. (Alert) I mean, come on! We must know other games.



This has all happened, George recovers his composure, and he says “Well that is one game. What shall we do now? Martha says, let us think of something of George himself is saying, let us think of something else. We have played humiliate the host, we have gone through that one, what shall we do now?”

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GEORGE Let's see now ... what else can we do? There are other games. How about ... how about ... Hump the Hostess? HUNH?? How about that? How about Hump the Hostess? (To NICK) You wanna play that one? You wanna play Hump the

Hostess? HUNH? HUNH?

NICK (A little frightened) Calm down, now.

(MARTHA giggles quietly)

GEORGE Or is that for later ... mount her like a goddamn dog?

HONEY (Wildly toasting everybody) Hump the Hostess!

NICK (To HONEY ... sharply) Just shut up ... will you?

(HONEY does, her glass in mid-air)

GEORGE You don't wanna play that now, hunh? You wanna save that game till later? Well, what'll we play now? We gotta play a game.

MARTHA (Quietly) Portrait of a man desecrating



They plan that one of the games, like again it is very vulgar in this manner, that George says that we could play a game called hump the hostess, but it is a game they put up for a later time.

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MARTHA (Quietly) Portrait of a man drowning.
GEORGE (Affirmatively, but to none of them) I am not drowning.
HONEY (To NICK, tearfully indignant) You told me to shut up!
NICK (Impatiently) I'm sorry.
HONEY (Between her teeth) No you're not.
NICK (To HONEY, even more impatiently) I'm sorry.
GEORGE (Claps his hands together, once, loud) I've got it! I'll tell you what game we'll play. We're done with Humiliate the Host... this round, anyway... we're done with that... and we don't want to play Hump the Hostess, yet... not yet... so I know what we'll play... We'll play a round of Get the Guests. How about that? How about a little game of Get the Guests?
MARTHA (Turning away, a little disgusted) Jesus, George.
GEORGE Book dropper! Child mentioner!
HONEY I don't like these games.
NICK
Yeah... I think maybe we've had enough of games, now...



But instead of that he suggests that now we play get the guests. It is another game; that it is get the guests. Honey is already kind of not into it, he says “She says I do not like these games. We realize that she says that she is already not liking it.” So, what is coming will probably like increase her inconvenience, increase her disturbance more. So, it kind of sets the stage if we pun intended, if we look at it like that. It sets the stage for every kind of interaction.

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GEORGE No.
(He starts quietly but as he goes on, his tone becomes harsher, his voice louder) Well, it's an allegory, really—probably—but it can be read as straight, cozy prose... and it's all about a nice young couple who come out of the middle west. It's a bucolic you see. AND, this nice young couple comes out of the middle west, and he's blond and about thirty, and he's a scientist, a teacher, a scientist... and his mouse is a wifey little type who gargles brandy all the time... and...
NICK
Just a minute here...
GEORGE
... and they got to know each other when they was only teensie little types, and they used to get under the vanity table and poke around, and...
NICK
I said just a minute!
GEORGE This is my game! You played yours... you people. This is my game!
HONEY (Dreamy) I want to hear the story. I love stories.



George does here is that he kind of comes in and says bears the secret that Nick had told him. We remember that Nick had told him it in a very off handed way, in a very off manner kind of way like, it is just something he is saying, but now we understand that what the repercussions of such games can be.

He says that it is a bucolic. The story about Nick and Honey. This nice young couple comes out of the middle-west, and he is blonde in about thirty, and he is a scientist, a teacher, a scientist and his mouse is a wifey little type. This is again like his wife is not a mousy little type, but his mouse is a wifey little type who gargles brandy all the time and. And they got to know each other when these there was only teensie little types, and they used to get under the vanity table and poke around.

Nick is starting to understand what this story about, he says “like just a minute you cannot say that”. And if we realize that this, this, the audience have already heard this story once before. But, it is the way of presentation, it is the way one tells this story that hurts. It is more about the reaction of Honey than it is about telling the story again. This is how its operating right now, because the audience already knows it, but how devastating it can be for someone to know what that person has not known yet.

This is my Honey dreamily says, “I want to hear stories, I love stories”. She thinks that she said a little bit before that I am not comfortable. But, now she says that she was not comfortable with games, but she is comfortable with stories. But, we see that here game stories everything becomes very convoluted, everything becomes very problematic. There is nothing innocent about them at all.

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GEORGE **This is my game! You played yours... you people. This is my game!**

HONEY (Dreamy) I want to hear the story. I love stories.

MARTHA George, for heaven's sake...

GEORGE and! And Mousie's father was a holy man, see, and he ran sort of a traveling clip joint, based on Christ and all those girls, and he took the faithful... that's all... just took 'em...

HONEY (Puzzling) This is familiar...

NICK (Voice shaking a little) No kidding!

GEORGE... and he **died eventually, Mousie's pa, and they pried him open, and all sorts of money fell out...**
. Jesus money, Mary money... LOOT!

HONEY (Dreamy, puzzling) I've heard this story before.

NICK (With quiet intensity... to waken her) Honey...

GEORGE

But that's in the backwash, in the early part of the book. Anyway, Blondie and his frau out of the plain states came. (Chuckles)



And, he talks about taking money from the father-in-law.

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MARTHA

Very funny, George...

GEORGE

... thank you... and settled in a town just like nouveau Carthage here...

NICK (Threatening) I don't think you'd better go on, mister...

GEORGE Do you not!

NICK (Less certainly) No. I... I don't think you'd better.

honey I love familiar stories... they're the best.

GEORGE

How right you are. But Blondie was in disguise, really, all got up as a teacher, 'cause his baggage ticket had bigger things writ on it... H.L. HI! Historical inevitability.

NICK

There's no need for you to go any further, now...

HONEY (Puzzling to make sense out of what she is hearing) Let them go on.



Nick says “I do not think you are doing this by and Nick threatening George now, I do not think you would better go on mister. See this is the same way that George has been threatening Martha that do not go on. So, Nick has been participating in their place, he has been picking up rules, yes. These are also rules, how do you stop someone when they are spilling a secret.”

These are also rules, these are also like rules of suffering in a way. “What do you say when you are at the point of suffering, when you are feeling like you are about to suffer? And, Nick says, no, I do not think you would better do not say this story.” And, Honey says “I love familiar stories, they are the best”. This is such a she does not know what is coming right now and the familiar stories are probably the worst.

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HONEY (Puzzling to make sense out of what she is hearing) Let them go on.
GEORGE We shall. And he had this baggage with him, and part of this baggage was in the form of his mouse.
...
NICK We don't have to listen to this!
HONEY
Why not?
GEORGE Your bride has a point. And one of the things nobody could understand about Blondie was his baggage ... his mouse, I mean, here he was, pan-Kansas swimming chain pee n, or something, and he had this mouse, of whom he was solicitous to a point that faileth human understanding ... given that she was sort of a simp, in the long run. ...
NICK This isn't fair of you. ...
GEORGE
Perhaps not. Like, as I said, his mouse, she tooted brandy immodestly and spent half of her time in the upchuck. ...
HONEY (Focussing) I know these people. ...
GEORGE Do you! ... But she was a money baggage amongst other things. ... Godly money ripped from the



He says that, and he had this baggage with him, and part of this baggage was in the form of this mouse, that to get the money had to marry the mouse. Nick says that, “this is not fair of you as you cannot be saying these things. And George says that perhaps it is not, but like I said his mouse, she treated brandy modestly and spent half of her time in the up chuck, which is vomiting”. Honey said “I know these people and if we are at this point also, like we also know these people. We are knowing these people”.

She is like this is a defamiliarize knowing. This is the defamiliarizing the familiar. So, literature if we think about there is an issue “I say by Viktor Shlovsky, on this lines I will put it in the forum about the art of defamiliarization.” This is a familiar story being presented as unfamiliarized as defamiliarized which when Honey is hearing, she is getting familiarized to it again, but in a different manner. She cannot be familiar with it the way she was before.

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this mouse, of whom he was solicitous to a point that taieth human understanding . . . given that she was sort of a simp, in the long run . . .

NICK **this isn't fair of you . . .**

GEORGE

Perhaps not. Like, as I said, his mouse, she tooted brandy immodestly and spent half of her time in the upchuck . . .

HONEY (Focussing) **I know these people . . .**

GEORGE Do you! . . . But she was a money baggage amongst other things . . . Godly money ripped from the golden teeth of the unfaithful, a pragmatic extension of the big dream . . . and she was put up with . . .

HONEY (Some terror) **I don't like this story . . .**

NICK (Surprisingly pleading) **Please . . . please don't . . .**

MARTHA

Maybe you better stop, George . . .



Honey says “I do not like this story. Nick says, Please do not; there is pleading.”

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GEORGE . . . and . . . oh, we get a flashback here, to How They Got Married.

NICK

no!

GEORGE (Triumphant) yes!

NICK (Almost whining) Why?

GEORGE How They Got Married. Well, how they got married is this . . . The Mouse got all puffed up one day, and she went over to Blondie's house, and she stuck out her puff, and she said . . . look at me.

HONEY (White . . . on her feet) I . . . don't . . . like this.

NICK (To GEORGE) Stop it!

GEORGE

Look at me . . . I'm all puffed up. Oh my goodness, said Blondie . . .

HONEY (As from a distance) . . . and so they were married . . .

GEORGE . . . and so they were married . . .

HONEY . . . and then . . .



There is pleading against which it is done, this is very sadistic in a way. There is this sadistic pleasure, this masochistic pleasure that is being taken in this kind of infliction of pain. “You want the other person to say no, if I am hurting, I do not want you to inflict this kind of pain, but the more the other person says, the more you feel relish in your infliction of pain in the play.

And, see George as says, beg, baby.” It is something he is enjoying. He wants him to beg. And, says like “how they got married, we are going to a flashback. And, he says, the mouse got all puffed up one day, and she went over to Blondie’s house, and she stuck out her puff, and she said look at me”.

Honey said, white on her feet. So, the blood is leaving her, “I do not like this. She is understanding what is up, what is how it is being told. And you see also that how storytelling and sympathy works that a story being told with a certain sympathy will read in a different manner, but this is a world devoid of any sympathy.”

There is only pain and hurt left, and there is only inflicting of more pain and more hurt. There is no place for sympathy here. The same way, Nick never sympathized with George, there are no sympathetic connections. Nick was laughing at George and everything and so, this is like an eye for an eye kind of society.

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HONEY (With outlandish horror) You ... told them! You told them! OOOOHHHH! Oh, no, no, no, no! You couldn't have told them ... oh, nooooo!

NICK Honey, I didn't mean to...

HONEY (Grabbing at her belly) Ohhhhh ... nooooo.

nick Honey ... baby ... I'm sorry ... I didn't mean to...

GEORGE (Abruptly and with some disgust) And that's how you play Get the Guests.

HONEY I'm going to ... I'm going to be ... sick ...

GEORGE Naturally!

NICK

Honey...

HONEY (Hysterical) Leave me alone ... I'm going ... to ... be ... sick. (She runs out of the room)

MARTHA (Shaking her head, watching HONEY'S retreating form) God Almighty.

GEORGE (Shrugging) The patterns of history.

NICK (Quietly shaking) You shouldn't have done that ... you shouldn't have done that at all.



And so, in the culmination after he is done telling the story, we see Honey with outlandish horror, “you told them, you told them. No, no, no, no. You could not have told them, no!” This is a violation of tales one cannot tell stories, one cannot say, this is a violation of trust. But we see that is what has been happening and a relationship of a husband and wife is a relationship of trust, and that code is being destroyed slowly through this play.

George says “abruptly and with some disgust, and that is how you play with the game get the guests. Honey says, I am going to; I am going to be sick. And George says naturally. With a sort of like he is kind of showing a sort of distance almost, but you see that abruptly and with some disgust.”

It is like almost eviscerating someone and while we are pretending to take joy in it, we also do not direct people do not know if he is actually had taken a lot of joy in it or it is just bitter retaliation. There is this problem also that, what kind of joy is it after he is done, he is probably disgusted with himself. This is not a cathartic activity if we think about it.

There was this idea of the Aristotelian play which would be cathartic, which would be a release of emotions, which would bring one to a level, but this kind of increases disgust, this kind of increases the vehemence, the bile that one fills inside at this point of the play.