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The Representation of Gender Trouble in Albee’s Plays
Who’s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? and The Goat, Or
Who Is Silvia?

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ABSTRACT

The dissertation presents an exploration of gender in *who's afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962), and *the Goat, or who is Silvia?* From the gender perspective, gender has become increasingly the issue of our time; discussion of gender in society has spread from the field of feminist research to mainstream public discussion on politics and everyday life.

For instance, one may legally female but feel more comfortable in practising as a man in terms of gender, or one may conceive as being either in between the gender categories or even not belonging to either of them. Butler, can be mentioned as one of the most important contemporary feminist philosophers, her writings, ever since the publication of her first book of gender " Gender trouble, Feminism and the subversion of Identity"(BUTLER1990) had remarkable influences on Feminism theorizing, as well as on different political movements motivated by question of sex,gender and sexuality. The aim of my work is to give an account of Judith Butler's theory of per formative gender in order to analyse Edward Albee's plays, *The Goat, or who is Silvia?* And *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

General introduction:

When you hear the word gender most likely you think of the distinction between male and female, but the term is a little bit more complex than most people think.

Gender is a set of expectations that society defines for you, that women and men are supposed to act, walk and dress a certain way. Society assumes that gender roles are a result of biology, there is an assumption that if you are born female you will be a woman and you will be feminine and you will be attracted to men, but Judith Butler says no gender is the repeated stylisation of the body. Butler the American philosopher, Gender theorist argues that gender roles are constructed by society, masculinity and femininity are not inherent.

Albee is credited with changing the course of American theatre history, many critics including Harold Clurman, Alan Schneider, believed Albee's early plays were the most original and powerful work I'd come across in years.

What Albee said about *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the play is an examination of whether or not we as a society have lived up to the principles of the American revolution. The play is an elaborate metaphor, Albee shows in the play the impact of materialistically oriented society on individuals, and attacks the conventional American society and the people living there

While in the second play *the goat, or who is Silvia?*, the play is about a happily married man who falls in love with a goat, Albee raises questions about the social boundaries of sex and love, Albee's message in this play is more focused on the breakdown of the relationships of his wife, his son and his best friend.

In this research many questions are raised to which answers should be found, in this research we are going to tackle Judith Butler's theory of performative gender in order to analyse Albee's plays *who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *the goat, or who is Silvia?*

The dissertation is divided into three chapters, the first chapter introduces an overview of Albee's life career and achievement, we are going to tackle the performative theory according to Butler based on her account of sex and gender, and the second chapter deals with the play *who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Psychological analysis of characters, and the representation of gender trouble in the play by tackling the issue of emasculation versus

empowerment, while in the third chapter we are going to deal with the play *the goat or who is Silvia?*, and we analyse the issue of gender troubles of bestiality and gay.

1.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the American Playwright Edward Albee, his career, and achievement. He has experimented with style, theme and content, and his plays maintain his signature voice. Moreover, Albee's targets were materialism, racism, artificial values, lack of communication, and "gender troubles" in the American society. We shall try then to tackle the latter issue borrowing our tools from Butler's performative theory based on her account of sex and gender.

1.2 Playwright Biography:

"All my plays are about missing the boat, closing down too young, coming to the end of their lives with regret at things not done, as opposed to things done. I find that most people spend too much time living as if they're never going to die. They skid through their lives. Sleep through them sometimes. Anyway, there are only two things to write about—life and death." (Edward Albee, Interviewed in 1991)

Edward Albee was born on March 12, 1928 in Washington D.C., he was adopted by very rich parents, his first attempts were with poetry. Hilton Als, an American writer and theater critic, offered his own summary of Albee saying, "Albee was a genius child of privilege, a sensitive boy reared in an adult world defined by money, gothic sexiness, callousness, and neglect. He was adopted as an infant, in 1928, by a wealthy couple, Frances and Reed Albee, of Larchmont, New York. Frances was an ambitious arriviste from New Jersey; Reed was an emotionally recessive philanderer who addressed his wife as Mommy. Albee's parents paid little attention to him; he was a bourgeois prop, meant to complete their specious idea of "family." Albee never saw his

adoption as a form of acceptance. It only exacerbated his sense that he was different—an observer, and not a participant.”

1.3 Summary of plays:

1.3.1 *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962)

The play *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is set on the campus of a small, New England University. It opens with the main characters, George and Martha coming home from a party at her father's house. The two of them clearly care deeply for each other, but events have turned their marriage into a nasty battle between two disenchanted, cynical enemies. Although the pair arrives home at two o'clock in the morning, they are nonetheless expecting guests: the new biology lecturer and his wife. As it turns out, this new, young colleague, Nick, actually works in the biology department. He and his wife Honey, walk into a brutal social situation in the first act "Fun and Games"; Martha and George try to fight and humiliate each other in new inventive ways. As they peel away each other's pretenses and self-respect, George and Martha use Honey and Nick as pawns, transforming their guests into an audience to witness humiliation, into levers for creating jealousy, and into a means for expressing their own sides of their mutual story. In the second act "Walpurgisnacht" these games get even nastier. The evening turns into nightmare. George and Martha even attack Honey and Nick, attempting to force them to reveal their dirty secrets and true selves.

Finally, in the last act “The Exorcism” everyone’s secrets have been revealed and purged. Honey and Nick go home, leaving Martha and George to try to rebuild their shattered marriage

1.3.2 The Goat, or who is Silvia? (2003)

The play begins with Martin and Stevie in their suburban living room on his 50th birthday, as they prepared for a television interview by their friend Ross, it is revealed but Martin is distracted and cannot remember anything, when asked about a woman’s scent, Martin denies having an affair, but he admits that he has fallen in love with a goat named Silvia. Stevie thinks it is a joke and leaves when Ross arrives, Ross soon gets frustrated at Martin. Martin confides to Ross about Silvia.

Ross asks repeatedly “Who is Silvia?” It turns out that Silvia is a Goat. For Martin, however, Silvia is much more than a Goat and he loves her. Unconditionally, when Stevie realizes that what he had said was not a joke, she leaves.

Billy, the couple’s son, is heartbroken when he gets to know that because of bestiality his happy family has been broken. He first runs out of the room to find it ruined, and tells Martin that he and Stevie are good people. He is then seen kissing Martin by Ross who gets disgusted, but Martin defends himself by implying that is normal. Ross, unmoved by Martin’s

speech, claims to have received a call from Stevie saying Martin needed him. Ross and Martin spar over Ross's letter and how Martin's public image can be saved from this incident. Then, with a sound at the door, Stevie reappears, dragging Sylvia's carcass with her. Martin cries out, Billy calls for help, and Ross stares as Stevie offers her reason for slaying the goat: "She loved you....you say. As much as I do." Billy calls out again in confusion, ending the play.

1.4 Sex and Gender

When you hear the word gender most likely you think of the distinction between male and female, you may imagine images of blue versus pink toy truck versus dolls, the term is actually a little bit more complex than most people think.

In order to understand this complexity we must first look at the difference between sex and gender.

Sex refers to the biological male, female, or intersex (a combination of both category) defined by our internal and external reproductive organs and chromosomes. Gender refers to socially created roles, feelings, and behaviours deemed appropriate for men and women by society, as Judith Butler rightly puts it: "Gender proves to be performative- that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be. In this sense, gender is always doing, though not doing by a subject who might be said to pre-exist the deed" (Butler,1990)

In fact, it is through our actions, through what we do that our gender identity is created, and not the other way around. Butler goes on to write : “There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender, that identity is per formatively constituted by the very “expressions” that are said to be its results” (Butler1990).

1.5 Gender performativity

In her book *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler writes that feminist theory has assumed that there is an already existing feminine identity known as “women” that grounds feminine interests, many feminist have believed that developing a feminine identity is essential to making women and their issues clear.

Butler relies on Foucault arguing that society built subjects and people come to represent them: “My suggestion is that presumed universality and unity of the subject of feminism is effectively undermined by the constraints of representational discourse in which it functions. Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism, understood as a seamless category of women, inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category. These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction” (Butler1990)

Some feminists believe that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex, if we do not understand where gender comes from and whether it could be different the monster “Anatomy/biology is destiny” could be replaced by another monster, “culture is destiny”.

“Is there a gender which persons are said to have, or is it an essential attribute that a person is said to be, as implied in the question “what gender are you” when feminist theorists claim that gender is the cultural interpretation of sex or that gender is culturally constructed” (Butler 1990)

Butler argues that gender roles are constructed by society that imposes on us codes of behaviour and roles to perform; she also argues that masculinity and femininity are not inherent but constructed too. . According to Butler gender is performative.

1.6 Emasculation

It can be defined as the deprivation of man’s masculinity. Through emasculation, patriarchy is said to have lost value in men thus decreasing male dominance in the family and also the society at large. The patriarchy that exist in male is breached so here female is unable to complete with men for existence. Emasculation of males has given females the opportunity to enter into the roles that made for male.

Many men believe that the world is now dominated by women and they lost their role in society.

Harvey Mansfield, a political philosopher who tackles the topic of Emasculation in his book *Manliness*, says the issue is ignored “A man has to be embarrassed about being a man, I am trying to bring back the word manliness, it’s not respected”

In the last decade, the number of men who have left their work to raise children has more than doubled in the United States .In today society many men have chosen to stay at home, while their wives work.

According to Sarah Wamack a social affairs correspondent in the Telegraph Magazine, asked what it meant to be a man in the 21st century, half of them thought that society was turning them into “Waxed and coiffed metrosexuals”, where as the other half say they had to live according to women’s rules.

1.7 Women Empowerment

Women empowerment means making them self-reliant, that means educating them to be able to think independently, so they will enable to take decisions of their own. With the slogan of women empowerment the question arise, that women become really strong. Many programmes have been done by governments such as International Women’s day, Mother’s day in order to bring awareness in their societies about the rights and value of women in the development of the nation.

According to the former UNSG Banki-Moon, more and more women are going power ,they are in all domains ,they are educators, they raise children, we need their engagement in government and business because they are natural leaders.

However, Women empowerment has disadvantages, when a woman reaches total equality, you might lose gender identity.

1.8 Albee and Misogyny

Albee was accused of misogynist treatment of women in his plays especially in his early one *who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Misogyny is the hatred or prejudice against women or girls, Misogyny can be manifested in numerous ways, including social exclusion, sex discrimination, hostility, patriarchy .

“Albee the twentieth –century American playwright dramatizes the twentieth century American womanhood on the stage. In his play *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Albee portrays female characters as homemakers and their counterparts as fighters, In the play, George treats woman as useless creature except for she is able to fulfil the need at the time of emergency like World War II because the regular male workers are in the armed forces. Martha is confined within the web of the American Dream ignoring her duties and

responsibilities of womanhood assigned by nature. Throughout the play, she readily embraces inequality between sexes and conforms herself to male expectations, first, to her father to fulfil the American Dream and then to her husband to keep body and soul together”(Rabindra kumar ,anti-feminism In Edward Albee *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*)

Misogyny reflects in George’s hatred of Martha in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*:

MARTHA. I WANT A BIG SLOPPY KISS!

GEORGE. (Preoccupied). I don’t want to kiss you, Martha

MARTHA. . . . Make me another drink . . . lover.

GEORGE. (Taking her glass). My God, you can swill it down, can’t you?

MARTHA. (Imitating a tiny child). I’m firsty.

GEORGE. JESUS.

MARTHA. (Swinging around). Look sweetheart, I can drink you under any goddamn table you want . . . so don’t worry about me!

GEORGE. Martha, I gave the prize years ago . . . There isn’t an abomination award going that you. . . (Albee16-17)

2.1 Introduction:

Many critics believed Albee's early plays were the most original and powerful works, these early works are diatribes against public, national sins. The anger of the play *who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Reflects Albee's rebellion against a culture whose identity was transformed during his youth .Albee said about *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* the play is an examination of whether or not the American society, have lived up to the principles of the American revolution , Albee plays called America to be self-reflexive at the beginning of a period in which the John Kennedy and Martin Luther King assassinations, the watts riots in Los Angeles, the Vietnam war, and the stone wall protests of gays and bisexuals .

2.2 Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?

2.2.1 Psychological Analysis of George and Martha

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? is a play, it examines the complexities of the marriage of jMartha and George, he is a less than successful associate professor of history. Martha his wife is an angry and remarkably strong woman, the purpose of their relationship is the psychological destruction of each other, George is seen as Martha's house boy, someone who will open the door, mix her drink.

“Edward Albee is concerned about the nature of the bond between husband and wife he explores the potentially destructive forces which can operate on all members of a family, wether male or female his mains areas of inquiry are failures in human relationships in whatever combination they occur”(Samuel French,1966)

Albee provides the couple with classical American names with association to American first President George Washington and his wife Martha

Judith Butler in her 1988 essay "per formative Acts and Gender constitution write extensively about the formulation of gender and how its influenced by both societal expectation and by one's own internal desires "Gender being a social construct and not inherent trait, is something that is adopted and performed by each individual in whatever way is authentic for them"(Butler, per formative acts and gender constitution)

George is defined by his physicality and his status, Martha is disappointed in George's professional failure, perhaps more than he is which causes trouble for him. According to Martha George is bogged down in the history department. He is an old bog in the history department:

- that's what George is a bog... A fen...A G.D.swamp.Ha.ha.ha! A swamp!hey,Swamp!hey swamp.

Later Martha says

-"George, here doesn't cotton much to body talk...do you sweet heart?(No reply)
George isn't to happy when we get to muscle. You know...flat bellies, pectorals..."

and refers to him as "Paunchy". Martha imitating a child like here "I'm firsty" (who s Afraid of Virginia Woolf p146) like her child hood was one of conflict and painful.

"A sense of continuation ...history...and he'd always had it in the back of his mind to...groom someone to take over...sometime, when he quit. Succession...which is natural enough. When you've made something you want to pass it on, to somebody...it wasn't Daddy idea that i had to necessarily marry the guy. I mean, wasn't the albatross...it was something I had in the back of my mind"(Who s Afraid Of Virginia Woolf ,p207)

Their marriage is portrayed as quite dysfunctional with George inability to take care of Martha like she wishes

George: Do you want me to go around all night braying at every body, the way you do?

Martha: I do not bray.

George :(softly) all right...you don't bray.

Martha :(hurt) I do not bray.

George: All right I said you didn't bray. (Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? P158)

Though modern society offers greater freedom for deviation from the gender roles. Martha said "I am the earth Mother, and you are all flops"(who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?P276)

To show that she is superior .deviation for Martha turn from feminine physicality to masculine physicality.

In the conversation between George and Martha, George tells her of his resentment of the humiliating way she has treated him. Martha assumes that George is masochistic enough that he wants to be treated or humiliated the way he has been: "YOU CAN STAND IT!! YOU MARRIED ME FOR IT!!She believes that George needs her to whip him so that he will not have to make any blame for his failure .Although George sees the truth in this, he feels she has gone too far and his future actions will allow him to try to correct his situation (James L.Roberts,p 34)

2.2.2 Sexuality in the play as a hidden subject

When Martha seduces Nick, She approaches him “being such a good boy Nick can you give her a kiss...a friendly kiss” (Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf :265)

Martha emasculating George with her harsh, on-feminine behaviour she deviate from the norm “There is nothing about femaleness that is waiting to be expressed; there is on the other hand a good deal about the diverse experiences of women that is being ex-pressed and still needs to be expressed”(Butler per formative Acts 531)

“One way in which this system of compulsory heterosexuality is reproduced and concealed is through the cultivation of bodies into discrete sexes with natural appearances and natural heterosexual dispositions” (Butler per formative Acts)

Martha has no problem sharing with her guests her infidelity and dissatisfaction with her husband, Martha's character illustrates female masculinity she comes across as strong,loud,drunk and violent in the first scene, and George refers to her as vulgar when George provokes Martha at the end of act two ,Martha dances closely with Nick Martha comes across Nick as sexual women she puts on a sexy dress in her attempt to defeat George and seduces Nick.

“Is the construction of the category of women as a coherent and stable subject an unwitting regulation and reification of gender relations? And is not such reification precisely contrary to feminist aims? To what extent does the category of women achieve stability and coherence only in the context of the heterosexual matrix?”(Butler Gender Trouble8-9)

Martha does not fit into the public's view of the category of woman, behaving like feminine and innocence seen as the norm her ambiguous character was interpreted as either a gay man or Lesbian

“As George is about to open the door, he says things that arouse Martha's anger to the point that she screams “SCREW YOU!” Just as the door is opened so that it appears that she screams this invective at the newly arrived guests, Nick and Honey. This comment becomes the central metaphor for the rest of the drama. It becomes obvious that Martha invited Nick and Honey because she is physically attracted to Nick and constant allusions will be made about Nick's body which he keeps in a good shape. The fact that she yells the comment to Nick conforms with her later attempts to seduce the young man” (James L. Roberts, P22)

“Other than the term having sexual meaning, “screw” also carries a connotation of getting to someone or getting even with someone or confusing someone. Each of these meanings also applies to the play. (James L. Roberts, p23)

2.2.3 The Imaginary child

The biggest illusion of in the play is the imaginary son, this play is full of baby images. First of all George and Martha call each other “Baby” George and Martha also refers to Nick and Honey as if they were children, when they arrive George greets them with “You must be our little guests” (p64) and Martha says to them “Hey, kids... sit down” (175) also we should point out that Martha sometimes talks to George in baby talk like here “I'm firsty” (p146), the reason for all this baby imagery becomes clear we learn that both couples had imaginary children.

In who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, the relation between George and Martha was deep rooted in illusion, and absolutely absurd. The image of the child was created in their minds only and

day after day it grew up, at the same time the gap of mutual disrespects became wider. In fact, living with illusion meant living with unreal life forever .so the idea of an imaginary child was totally absurd. As we knew the absurd drama was one reflecting the human emptiness, frustration and disappointment in life. What the writer intended to clarify here was the failure of a mother who was in a constant conflict between motherhood and sterility (Lazuli 2013; p125)

At the end George insists to kill the imaginary child in order to hurt Martha deeply because she revealed his secrets

George: Now listen, Martha; listen carefully we got a telegram.

There was a car accident, and he is dead. POUF! Just like that now how do you like it?

Martha:NOOOOOoooooo

George :(to Nick):let her go (Martha slumpsto the floorin sitting position)

She will be all right now

Martha: (pathetic): No;no, he is not dead; he is not dead.

George: He is dead.kyrie.eleison.christe,eleison,kyrie,eleison.

Martha: you cannot .you may not decide these things. (p247)

2.2.4 Psychological analyses of Nick and Honey

Nick and Honey are both couple in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Who are also the products of American society, function as a contrast to George and Martha .Nick is a young man and ambitious biologist, and is full of smugness. He does not like to get involved with

people but get married to honey because of her hysterical pregnancy, and for her money. On his sexual attractiveness Nick makes himself a foil for Martha and in the sterile world they act for sham partner. (Lazuli; p125)

As an allegory of American society, *who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Attacks the conventional American society and the people living there, we can say the couple got married for wrong reasons but not for attraction and love. They pretend to be happy in public, but abuse each other in public.

The play illustrate that familial success in modern American society means to be happy one should have a child, good wealth and a lovely wife. (Jenkins; p32)

Albee would appear to be referring to the materialistic corruption of religion by the American dream in George's allegory of Nick and Honey in the "Get-the-Guests», she was a money baggage among other thing...Godly money ripped from the golden teeth of the unfaithful, a pragmatic extension of the big dream. Further more,Stenz says "like the earlier plays ,Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf? Is a castigation of a society obsessed with the mystique of success or the appearance of it".Nick,as the representative of the next generation American in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Exhibits the attitude, as Paloucci notes "For George, Money means compromise;for Nick, it is the one sure sign of success"(Bruce J.Mann; p51)

2.2.5 Martha's Masculinity

Martha generally possesses the most undesirable qualities in women. She curses. She drinks. She's loud. She wears tight pant. She has a sexual appetite. She flirts with the younger man, eventually sleeping with him. And she can't have a baby. As her husband prepares a surprise in the background, Martha is the life of the party. I don't mean to say that Martha is a

bad character, or an unsympathetic one. But I think there is a deliberate correlation here with her personality and her inability to bear kids. We never really find out whether it's Martha or George's infertility causing the problem, but it is all about Martha, in the end.

It is Martha who first brings up their pretend son, It is Martha who tenderly recounts his nonexistent birth and childhood, and it's Martha who admits to being afraid of Virginia Woolf as George sings to her. These moments, and the lack of parallel emotional depth from George on the issue of their son, suggest that this is a deeper, more complex problem for Martha than it is for him. Her womanhood is directly in challenge because she cannot have a child and is therefore unable to pursue motherhood. The crassness is a cover up.

In short, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is about the emasculation—so to speak—of woman. The literal definition of emasculation is to castrate a man, but the way its most often used is to deprive a man of his strength or power. In pop culture, male figures are emasculated when they are made fun of for being feminine, which implies they've "lost" their masculinity. There's no exact opposite of "emasculation" which can be applied to women. After all, in a society where masculinity and power are such closely linked concepts, who would be afraid of losing weakness (femininity)? The closest I could find was a scholar in 1986, who used "defeminate", but even that seemed only to describe equivalence in terms of sexual satisfaction, or lack-there-of (a woman is defeminated when a man denies her sex). I'll use "defeminate" as an opposite of "emasculate" to suggest that the crux of femininity is lost when a woman deviates from gender norms. When she deviates, she loses her femininity, and is therefore defeminated. (Rachelle, article 2017)

2.2.6 The emasculated George

Albee thus illustrates the now-common belief that gender is not interior, fixed, or private, but rather, in Butler's formulation, a "public action" (Gender Trouble 140). occurring within

particular social situations in front of observers. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* demonstrates repeatedly that gender not only has to be acted but also must have an audience. No matter how hurtful Martha's insults might be were she and George alone, to issue them in front of an audience, and especially in front of a virile, up-and-coming young scientist like Nick (Claire Virginia Eby 2007)

George also speaks obliquely to his virility in response to Martha's insinuation that he may not be the father of their son, declaring, "There are very few things in this world that I am sure of ... but the one thing in this whole sinking world that I am sure of is my partnership ... in the ... creation of our... son" Strictly speaking, no man can ever be certain of his biological paternity, however committed he may be to assuming the responsibilities of fatherhood. Albee again anticipates contemporary thinking about gender as a matter not of individual identity but of one's relation to others (Butler, *Gender Trouble* 10).

At the beginning of the act one, George talks as if everything reflects his precarious masculinity. Even when conversation turns to Honey's hysterical Pregnancy, George manages the not-insignificant feat of making it speak to his emasculation:

NICK: I told you ... she's [MARTHA'S] making coffee.

GEORGE: For your hysterical wife, who goes up and down.

NICK: Went. Up and down.

GEORGE: Went. No more?

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. (Albee 107, 108)

Early in Act Two, Nick articulates an issue that arises for all viewers and readers of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and one worth raising in the classroom:

“I just don't see why you feel you have to subject other people” to a display of marital problems . Part of the answer is that George and Martha must perform their marriage before an audience and in this respect, any audience will do. But George specifically needs a hyper-masculine audience both to confirm his masculinity and because he can no longer fight Martha directly. As he says, “I've got to figure out some new way to fight... Martha. Guerrilla tactics, maybe... Internal subversion. ... Something” (Albee; p139) That “something,” George's “guerrilla tactics,” will be to fight Martha through Nick. It is here that the play's triangulated masculinity assumes critical importance. The homosocial rivalry is not an end in itself, for George will use it ultimately to shore up his patriarchal authority within his marriage.(Claire Virginia Eby ;P609)

Albee has shown remarkable patience in answering questions about whether (or as the question has been even more crudely phrased, how) his sexual orientation influences his writing. I should not care to perpetuate the essentialist idea that the playwright views gender, sexuality, or marriage in certain ways because he is gay. (Claire Virginia Eby; p614)

2.2.7 The significance of the title “who 's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?”

Critics noticed that in Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, the presence of “Myth” comes within the symbolism of it's title, a rhetorical device of the mythic folklore as well as the name of British novelist who became insane and put an end to her life by drowning herself. The title of this play is also related to the nursery rhyme, “The Three Little Pigs”, which echoed with the symbolism Dies Irae, Easter, and The Birthday. Originally, Albee named the play as *The Exorcism*, but he relegated it as a title of the third act (Allan1964:34).

Virginia Woolf was a feminist writer who pioneered the novelistic technique called "stream of consciousness" Virginia Woolf was one of the first woman to write the truth about the female psychological state of mind in a male dominated world. She wanted to see the world without illusions. When Martha asks, "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?" she is really asking who's afraid to see the truth clearly without illusion.

On the most basic level, the title is the substitution of the name of the famous British novelist Virginia Woolf for the name of the Big Bad Wolf of the nursery rhyme. The obvious correlation is the homophonic relationship of the last names Woolf and wolf. The hilarity which the substitution causes can be accounted for most directly as the result of the drunkenness of the guest who in a drunken stupor finds the intellectualizing of a nursery rhyme to unaccountably comic. The use of the nursery rhyme, however, becomes central to the "fun and games" which characterize so much of the drama. Other than the obvious similarity of the last names, the title seems to make an oblique comment on the drama itself.

In the nursery rhyme which deals with fear of the unknown or possible evil in the person of the big bad wolf, the first two pigs ignore the possibility of the evil of the wolf and, as a result, are destroyed the third little pig, recognizing the danger of the wolf, makes provision against destruction and consequently survives. Characters in the novels of Virginia Woolf can often be characterized as being apprehensive about, if not terrified of, life and like the first two little pigs, fail to make (or are unable to make) the proper provisions to cope with life. Virginia Woolf's own life was characterized by periods of madness. The references, then to Virginia Woolf could function as portent because George and Martha are playing a dangerous game which could drive either or both of them into madness since both of their lives are intolerable (James.L.Roberts;p19)

2.3 Conclusion:

who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? Was an allegory on American life, attacks the conventional American society referring to the materialistic corruption. "All [his] characters are real people, real three-dimensional people or lizards, they're all real" (Albee, personal interview)

3.1 Introduction

In the second chapter we dealt with the first Broadway play *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf?* as one of Albee's earliest plays (1962). In this chapter, we shall deal with a recent play of Albee's who still attracts the audience with his work: *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* (2003)

Four decades after *Virginia Woolf* sent shock waves through the mainstream theatre Edward Albee still asks questions that no other U.S. playwright dares to ask, writes Ben Brantley. The play is about a happily married man who falls in love with a Goat. Here, Albee raises questions about the social boundaries of sex and love, while his play is more focused on the breakdown of the relationships of his wife, his son, and his best friend. Albee said that his interest with the play to make people "Think afresh about whether or not all value they hold are valid"

Albee uses elements from both comedy and tragedy in his plays, as the absurd drama just presents human condition and does not give a lesson or to criticize the people or the world.

We are going to introduce the third chapter with an interview with Mr Albee made by the Journalist Drukman about the recent play, *The Goat, or who is Sylvia?* :

DRUKMAN: Now with your other new play, *The Goat*, I think it was about three years ago when I saw it in your notebook.

ALBEE: I was beginning it then, and I finished it about a year and a half ago. [sigh] What can I tell you about it? It's one long act, three scenes, four characters and a goat.

DRUKMAN: [laughs] Well, that's a beginning. You told me it was your most overtly political play.

ALBEE: It's about the limits of our tolerance; what we will permit ourselves to think about. I saw how we don't behave properly when Susan Sontag wrote her piece in *The New Yorker* [after 9/11, in which she tried to play the event in an historical context] and really got castigated. This play relates to that, what we may permit ourselves to think about, and I consider that to be political.

DRUKMAN: So the goat is not a scapegoat.

ALBEE: No. I chose the title *The Goat or who is Sylvia?*—the goat is name Sylvia—because I wanted the double goat. There's a real goat and also a person who becomes a scapegoat. It is a play that seems to be one thing at the beginning, but the chasm opens as we go further into it. And I think it is going to shock and disgust a number of people. With any luck, there will be people standing up, shaking their fists during the performance and throwing things at the stage. I hope so!

DRUKMAN: Oh great. I love plays that cause problems; there are so few of them now. So there's this question that journalists keep asking you—"What do your plays mean?"

ALBEE: They mean what they say. Any halfway decent work of art has metaphor and resonance and subtext, and no two people receive the same play because no two people bring the same equipment, or willingness to participate, in the play.

DRUKMAN: Do you think you write with the sensibility of someone who was adopted?

ALBEE: Well, being adopted, my allegiances were toward inventing myself, like Nevelson. I didn't have all sorts of extranea, like family ties. I had to be the first person in my line.

DRUKMAN: But there's also the idea that no matter how well a person is adjusted to their new family, they are still playing a role.

ALBEE: To treat your own life stuff as subject matter, you mean? Yes, I've always liked to think that I can stand off and observe myself in any situation without participating in it.

(Drukman, Interview with Edward Albee)

We can understand from the Interview that Albee in his play *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* wants to tackle the issue of sexuality as a direct subject and not in an ambiguous way like in *Who's Afraid of Virginia woolf?*

The play is about the ambiguities in the chain of development from animal to human. Albee sees humans as animals, driven by animal passions, and thus he believes, we are humans, driven by conflicts about our animal passions.

3.2 The Goat as a Tragedy for Stevie

The individual can reject this world and prefer living according to his own norms by accepting the truth of his emotions, that the society did not like or appreciate such emotions, as in *who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Play, the subject of sexuality was hidden where as in *The Goat, or who is Sylvia* the playwright Edward Albee talk about sexuality as a direct subject.

When the play starts Martin tells Stevie about his affair with Sylvia and the conversation starts like that:

- Martin: If we were, we would.

Martin does not convince her, and she asks him to tell more:

- Martin : her name is Sylvia.

- Stevie : Sylvia? Who is Sylvia?

- Martin : She's a goat.

- Stevie : (giggles) you are too much (exits)

-Martin... you try to be honest...they laugh at you. (Albee 547)

According to Gainor in his book *Rethinking tragedy* he claim that Sylvia is a tragedy for Stevie, she was shocked from Martin bestiality ,and she cannot bear how Martin can claim to love both her and Sylvia, and how Martin fall in love with a human being and animal in the same time ,Stevie told him that she has two breasts, she walks up right, and gave milk only on special occasions not like animals ,she feels that Martin undermine here status and start crying.

Stevie remembers how her mother gave her a piece of advice to live a happy married life:

- Stevie : ... And she (mother) said to me-I never told you this - “Be sure you marry someone you are in love with-deeply and wholly in love with-but be careful who you fall in love with, because you might marry him ... she said to me. And I was. I fell in love with you and have – what-cherished? You all these years... I have been happy.

- Martin : (Moves to her; touches her) oh, Stevie!

- Stevie : (Swipes objects of coffee table): Get your goat fucking hands off me!!!

(Retreats to wall, arms wide, sobbing greatly)

- Martin : (Reacts as if he has touched a live wire/hot stove)

- All right! No more! (594-95)

To Stevie Martin’s relationship with Goat something disgusting. Stevie feels cheated that somebody else has shared his love and not a human being but a beast this is difficult for her to accept this fact. For Stevie, Sylvia is her enemy whom her husband loves, at the end Stevie kills the goat.

- Martin :(crying) what did she do? What did she ever do!?

- Stevie :(quietly) she loved you...you say. As much as I do.

3.3The Gay Billy

In order to understand well the term “Gay” we are going to define the term “Queer”to get the full meaning of “Gay”:

“Queer is a word appropriated by the contemporary Queer theorists to embrace all forms of sexual otherness, not just the gay/Lesbian lives indicated by “homosexual” ,frequently bisexual characters in these works and the unconventional communities that those characters create, after all, not all queers are gay”(Wilkinson)

so the term “gay” describes one type of Queer.

“Stevie physical destruction of her surroundings in this scene turns their perfect living room into a visible manifestation of their shattered marriage, we might see, then, in Billy’s offer to help to put the room to rights in scene, following Stevie’s departure and his own battle scene with his father, a gesture of hope for the reconstruction of at least one of the family relationships:

Billy: Then there’s no point in setting all this right.

Martin :(sad chuckle) it does look pretty awful, doesn’t it.

Billy: let’s do it anyway. (Albee, 97)

However, their new rapport must be built on a greater foundation of understanding. Billy thanks Martin for letting me think you’re putting up with me being gay far better than you probably really are. Martin in turn must come to accept his son desire with equanimity” (J.Ellen.Gainor; p214)

Butler’s idea of “Gender Trouble” has been linked to Queer theory. The theory explores and challenges the way sexuality is constructed, heterosexuality is normal while homosexuality is represented as a sin.

Billy a gay finds it hard to accept his father’s affair with the goat later on he accept his father love and Martin accept his son gay desire

Billy (to Martin) you are doing what?

You are fucking a goat?

Martin (Indicating Stevie at the window) Billy! Please! You know you own sex life

Leaves a little to...

Billy (to Martin) At least what I do is with ...persons(571-72)

3.4 The Ambiguity of the title “*The Goat, or who is Silvia?*”

The title *The Goat or who is Silvia?* announces that this play is a tragic comedy of Shakespearean proportions. The goat itself is a symbol on a larger level. Pan, half man, half goat was the Greek symbol for music and passion it is also a symbol for lust.

According to Prophecy Coles in her book the uninvited guest from the unremembered past gave the titles of the play a clear explanation, she says that Albee provides the play with two titles the goat, or who is Silvia?, the title belong to Schubert’s his famous song, its origins comes from Shakespeare’s, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the title between brackets (note toward a definition of tragedy) has origins from Greek tragedy.

Coles claims that Albee is exploring issues to do with sexual identity between fathers and sons and Martin affair of falling in love with goat why a goat?

However the second title of the play is the name given to the goat, and the goat is associated with the search for love of the mother. “Love doth to her eyes repair /to help him of his blindness/And, being helped, inhabits there”(Shakespeare,1966)”

3.5 Psychological analyses of Martin

Individual should decide for himself freely, but in most of Albee’s characters are afraid of taking decisions, afraid of what will come after, for Albee individuals have to be aware of their freedom, and they should not escape from their responsibilities .

During the interview made by his friend Ross, Martin is not his usual self and his answers to Questions are disconnected

Ross: Quite a week Martin!

Martin: (A little puzzled): yes; it was quite a week.

Ross: How does it feel Martin?

Martin: Becoming fifty?

Ross: (Pushing) No, All of it yes...

Martin: Well...

Ross: (Sensing no answer coming) It must be amazing! No, thrilling!

Martin: Turning fifty? No, not really.

Ross: (Not amused) No! the other! the world city: the Pritzker! All that!

Martin: (Genuine surprise) oh! that! well, yes... amazing, thrilling. (556)

Ross: ... and you act ... like you don't know where you are.

Martin: (Self absorbed, almost to himself) May be it's ... love or
Something. (557)

Ross: (Softer) ... and you are in love?

Martin: (begins to cry) yes! Yes! I'm in love with her Oh! Jesus! Oh
Sylvia!

Ross: ... Who is Sylvia? (568)

Martin pauses; goes to the wallet brings out a photo, hands it to Ross

Ross: This is Sylvia...who you are fucking?

Martin: Don't say that.

Ross: This is a goat! You're having an affair with a goat! You are
fucking a goat!

Martin: (Long pause, factual) yes. (569-570)

Martin situation of breaking the rules of the society is visible in his behaviour and he is aware that his wife son and his friends will be shocked when they know the truth:

Stevie: I shook my head and laughed at the awfulness of it, the absurdity the awfulness; somethings are awful you have to laugh...I realized...(580)

Martin breaks the societal norms by having sex with an animal, according to the traditional society this act considered as a crime, so Stevie is shocked and she is unable to bear the truth:

Stevie: knowing it. Knowing it's true is one thing but believing what you know ...well, that is the tough part. (580)

But Martin thinks that what he is doing and what he feels toward the goat something personal and normal, he is wondering why people are unhappy when they listen to his affair.

Martin: I didn't understand why they were there-why they were all so ...unhappy, what was wrong with...with...being in love. (589)

Albee in this play is trying to say that the social world and the individual world are separated and the individual has the freedom to decide which world to live in.

Martin's feelings cannot be understood by the traditionalist society, and Stevie is unable to understand how her husband can love both her and Sylvia:

Stevie: how much do you hate me?

Martin (Hopeless): I love you (pause) and I love her (pause) and there it is.

(Stevie howls three times, slowly, deliberately; a combination of rage and hurt)

Stevie: you love me? I don't understand. (599)

Stevie wants to bring Martin down instead of forgiving him:

Martin: Stevie, I...I promise you, I'll stop .I'll...

Stevie: How stopping has nothing to do with having started?...you have brought me down, you goat fucker, you love of my life!...you have brought me down, and Christ ,I'll bring you down with me.(605)

“Albee and DeGeneres calculatedly use bestiality as an aberration to make homosexuality appear normal by comparison. DeGeneres makes argument subtly and humorously in *The Beginning* and then moves on to the other issues. But for Albee these personal predilections represent points along a spectrum of human sexuality that overlaps with a larger range of social and private behaviours. *The Goat* tackles some of the most salient of these behavioural intersections to interrogate contemporary culture and humanity within a microcosm of privilege and success ...Albee refuses to allow a comfortable distance of denial from the environment he depicts.” (J. Allen Gainor 200)

In my point of view Albee's characters experience inner and outer pressures in *the goat, or who is Silvia?* Play, we notice that society did not accept the truth of Martin's emotions, when the individual want to live according to his own norms and reject this world, they did not accept the real feeling or support him especially when it comes to a relation with a goat, for his wife and his friend bestiality is a crime something unpardonable, it is difficult for them to understand such emotions, whereas his son accept his father desire because Billy is a gay ,and Martin also accepts his son gay desire.

Albee's believes that not only inner conflicts but also outer forces build the individual's, the norms and the rules all represent obstacles for an individual to become who he wants.

Society, parents and family want to shape a person without paying any attention that the individual is free to think to act the way he want.

3.6Conclusion

Albee believes that his plays should reflect the society, and he tries to deal with the reality of society and reality of the individual. In *The goat, or who is Sylvia?* as in Martin's acceptance of his son's homosexuality and the latter's acceptance of his father's weird love. But for society, both Martin's bestiality and Billy's homosexuality are looked down as unpardonable acts. Leaving the play open-ended indicates that according to Albee's thoughts, that the society will start viewing such sexual behaviour with open minded in the future.

General conclusion

My research explores the representation of gender trouble in Albee's plays *who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and *the goat, or who is Silvia?*, throughout the plays, Albee target were materialism, racism, artificial value lack of communication and gender troubles in the American society, Albee 's plays called America to be self-reflexive in the era of political, economic and social changes in the life of the Americans, the era of drastic changes the American society became materialistic and individualistic, loss of the moral values, what is important for this generation is to be rich with the right or the wrong manner.

Albee has said that there are only two things to write about, life and death, Albee is particularly known for his contribution to the theatre of the absurd

In this research we dealt with gender troubles in both plays borrowing our tools from Butler's per formative theory based on her account of sex and gender.

Butler argues that gender roles are constructed by society that imposes on us of behaviour and roles to perform, she also argues that masculinity and femininity are not inherent but constructed too, from this perspective we analysed Albee's characters.

Albee said about *who's Afraid of Virginia woolf?*the play is an examination of whether or not the American society, have lived up in the principles of the American revolution, who's afraid of Virginia woolf?it examines the complexities oh the marriage of Martha and George,

Moreover the second couple Honey and Nick got married for wrong reasons for materialistic purposes but not for attraction and love, they pretend to be happy and abuse each other in public.

Whereas in the second play *the goat, or who is Silvia?* As we know is about a happily married man who falls in love with goat and his son is a gay, what Albee want to say is that bestiality is not bad as rape .Albee thinks that a play Wright must not give solutions to problems, he just to present his point of view.

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