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Absurdist Subversiveness and Chaos in Edward Albee's Dramatic Discourse

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Abstract

This paper delves into absurdist subversiveness, non-conformity, and miscommunication themes in Edward Albee's plays, positioning them as postmodernist phenomena. The central character in Albee's works, the modern man, is depicted as lacking an effective communication mechanism, failing to find companionship that aligns with his mentality, ideology, and hopes. Albee's plays serve as a cautionary discourse, highlighting the need to reconcile conformity and non-conformity and warning against the negative consequences of miscommunication and the collapse of values in human societies. Furthermore, this paper explores the commonalities between Albee's plays and the Theater of the Absurd, as Albee integrates its features in themes that question man's existence in the modern world, the lack of communication among people, and man's non-conformity. Albee's plays generate many tensions and conflicts by juxtaposing opposing forces.

1. Introduction

Subversiveness, communicative chaos, and non-conformity result in interpersonal miscommunication or loss of communication, loneliness, and conflict in Edward Ablee's plays, mainly and for this study, Three Tall Women, The Zoo Story, and Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf? As an ideological, social value, non-conformity reflects the author's vision of his society through dramatizing his characters' relationship, where both non-conformity and lack of communication lead to different consequences in the whole society. These consequences include confrontation, verbal and physical violence, weak social and familial ties, mistrust, and death. Moreover, the non-conformity of some people results in denying each other's ideas and beliefs.

As a postmodern phenomenon, lack of communication and non-conformity might force some people to commit different actions and reactions. These actions and reactions may include hurting others, committing suicide, killing innocent people, loneliness, escapism, and internal and external

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conflicts. Besides, Albee's plays are full of pauses, silences, and gaps in characters' dialogues and monologues. This technique implies a hidden discourse that signifies the loss of the communicative process.

This also might invoke the absence of human collaboration and meaningful and consistent contact. Unquestionably, Albee belongs to the Theatre of the Absurd since his plays demonstrate many features of the Theatre of the Absurd, from the existentialist themes of loneliness, miscommunication, and non-conformity through several techniques such as the devaluation of language, the use of hilarious symbolism and extended allusions. Deconstructing Albee's plays enables us to define their ideological readings, which should explore "non-conformity" vs. "conformity," progressiveness" vs. "conservatism," and communication vs. loss of communication, according to Lois Tyson (2006, p. 256). Normand Berlin (2004) asserts that Albee fuses "the realism of O'Neil and Miller with the European Absurdism of Beckett," where clarity, simplicity, deep, wry humor, pity, and objectivity constitute "a realty we regretfully know [which] is truer than any we have invented to comfort and illusion ourselves" (770). Albee as a modern -and postmodern- playwright is "inextricably associated with the Theatre of the Absurd as he "attacks the very foundation of the American optimism" (Esslin, 1980, p. 267).

In Three Tall Women, the older woman is being cared for by a nurse in her middle age and observed by a young lady in her youth. They represent the past, present, and future in an absurd life. They weave together to reveal much about the world and being a woman in it. Through these characters, this play explores the human life cycle and how people make choices and live them out. In act one, the actions explore social elements such as love, hate, forgiveness, money, communication, and conformity vs. non-conformity. A is a character of selfhood, content, and conformism. She cannot communicate appropriately with C, who seems non-conformist in accepting what A feels and experiences. B is a practical character who tries to mediate between the non-conformist C and the conformist A. She shows an understanding of the former and tolerance to the latter. In this sense, Albee leaves us a thread of hope for reestablishing a communicative mechanism between generations as a possible solution for A's conformity and C's non-conformity.

As A represents her generation in her time, she bears in mind the social values and ideologies of this age despite what seems to be her poor educational background. Similarly, C is a character of a new generation, different from A's socially, educationally, ideologically, and even emotionally. We are told that A's husband has passed away, and her son has abandoned her.

This may have resulted in her losing proper communication with others, particularly with characters of her gender. These women's confusing relationships are due to a lack of communication and intolerance of each other, manifesting the absurdity of modern human life. They never reach a consensus on their visions and thoughts about life and age. At the end of the play, we notice that B declares that her age, middle age, is the happiest time that every woman wishes and aspires for, reflecting an ideological thinking or vision that revolves around women in her society. She addresses A and C, "Standing up here on top of the middle of it has to be the happiest time" (109). Like many other Absurdists, Albee engaged himself in portraying the catastrophic modern world and the helplessness of the traditional religious and social beliefs of discipline and dignity. However, Albee maintains his hopes for modern man's purgation by revolting against the painful situations. Questing dignity in modern realities needs much more tolerance and patience as "… the dignity of man lies in his ability to face reality in all its senselessness; to accept it freely, without fear, without illusions—and to laugh at it" (Meserve, 1966, p. 148).

In the presence of lack of communication and non-conformity among these women, disappointment, loneliness, and a sense of hate emerge. Seemingly, these consequences of feelings and senses result from conflicting visions and non-conformism among the characters. Moreover, I believe there are internal feelings and conflicts in each of them, all of which drag them to confront

one's psyche and other characters. As a result of such confrontations, an addresses B and C, "You deny me? (to them all). Yes? you deny me? (to C) you deny me? (to B) I suppose you do too" (107). An also tells both younger ladies in the opening scene, "I do not know what you are talking about. (pause) besides" (7). This sentence shows A's enormous lack of communication, particularly when she frequently pauses and breaks her oral discourse. These stances of pauses mean that something is missing in the characters' communicative abilities. Instead of continuing her discourse, a cries in "self-pity" that she cannot come to reasonable terms with or conform to the other two women. Besides, C tells A, "Something you are so …" and after a pause, "Never mind. I was going to say something nice. Never mind" (8). This signifies C's inclination to non-conformity and her inability to address A or B completely. This stance of non-conformity and miscommunication strikingly suggests the absurdist aspect of these female characters' lives and psyches in the modern human age.

Daryush Feizollahnezhad (2005) indicates that Albee's characters manifest the dilemma of modern people in different regions of the world, those who are "entangled between the social pressure and [their] own weakness." She views such social pressures as a "reversal of values and lack of communication in the contemporary age," In contrast, modern men's weaknesses are concretized by their inability to manage the harsh realities of contemporary life and their "escape into … illusions." This view emphasizes the absurdist aspects of Albee's dramatic plays. Furthermore, the play is full of pauses and ellipses (periods), meaning there are missing words and dialogue among these women. The result is a secession of communicative abilities. This result leads to alienation and loneliness, filling their conversations' gaps. In an intense moment of alienation and loneliness, as if there is no one with her, a says, "… I do not have any friends anymore; most of them are dead, and the ones are not dead are dying [. . .] I do not see anymore" (40).

This means that A loses her acquaintance and ability to converse or communicate with people. The death image occupies a vast area in her mind and thinking, which signifies a loss of severe communication, manifesting a significant aspect of absurdity. She is no longer able to complete a meaningful dialogue with others. She pauses often and leaves many sentences unfinished. This means that either she cannot get involved in most women's habit of gossiping, or she rebels against the way B and C behave and talk. The latter signifies a case of non-conformity in an absurd society.

However, A's stroke might suggest the failure to continue the process of communication with B and C, who in turn fail to understand her psychology. C rebels against A's ideas and words, and B shows a kind of indifference towards her. She says to B, "To begin to lose it, I mean – the control, the loss of dignity, the…" (10). When B replies, there are a lot of pauses and gaps in her speech, "you take the breath in … the last one… well, the last one you let it all out…and that is it. You start … and then you stop" (13).

This technique of pausing and filling the characters' discourse with gaps manifests the style and themes of the drama of the absurd. It mingles them into the modern original American form (Bigsby, 1992, p. 23). Such pauses signify the inability to concentrate and complete meaningful sentences, consequently implying a loss of communication. C is never on good terms with A since the gap between them is enormous regarding age, education, mentality, and social values. In a clear reflection of non-conformity, as an absurd aspect in Albee's plays, B informs A that "infidelity is a matter of spirit --- isn't that what they say? Aside from bad taste, disease, confusion as to where you live, having to lie all the time --- and remember the lies!" (81). B rebels against what she considers "bad taste," "disease," and "confusion" of A's time. So, B exposes herself to A's experience and ideas as a non-conformist. She thinks these ideas and thoughts are a commodity of the past generation regarding ideology and values. C says, "I will never become you --- either of you [at B and A 's age]" (101). It signifies a sense of non-conformity to A and B's mentalities and values. Such a denial implies a willingness to stop communication among them and the absurdity of modern life.

Through his brilliant portrayal of the evolution of women's personalities, Albee calls attention to change, human fallacy, loss of communication, and non-conformity, all of which burden the current

reality in which we live. Furthermore, a no longer cares about the luxurious surroundings she has spent her entire life struggling to obtain. She says, "It is all glitter," suggesting that her struggle is no longer worth her life, but C disagrees with her, "No, it is tangible proof we are valued" (47). In this sense, a suggests ending her communication with others, as it is a worthless value at her age. C contradicts her, showing extreme disapproval of what A refers to. These women's miscommunications and subversive non-conformity result from loss of faith, trust, and personal ambition. In this regard, Feizollahnezhad (2005) views Albee as an absurdist who pictures the modern man as "a deformed figure at the hand of contemporary life," and his plays are a sort of "protest against the resentful life." Accordingly, Albee seems to complement the "revolting movement of the Absurdists," and he keeps showing the presence of the "potential power" of modern man needed to manage the hardships which may cause a possible swift of the current situations (Feizollahnezhad, 2005).

In The Zoo Story, Albee juxtaposes two opposing characters who seemingly represent opposing aspects of modern society. Jerry meets Peter in Central Park, where the latter appears neat, ordered, and conventional and conforms to his society's values, ethics, and habits. In contrast, Jerry is Peter's antithesis, an undisciplined, unconventional person, signifying non-conformity to his society's conventions and norms. He longs for communicating with anybody to get rid of his estrangement, loneliness, and alienation. However, Jerry and Peter fail to communicate authentically. Instead, they disagree with and confront each other. Jerry lacks a communication mechanism and fails to find a companionship that suits his mentality, ideology, and hopes. Peter is a well-to-do, content man who lives in peace with his family. He tries to avoid communicating with Jerry to escape his follies.

Peter embodies the notion of conformity and refuses to cope with Jerry's unconventional statements and ideas. Moreover, this sort of miscommunication is an inevitable result of much chaos in the modern world, which undoubtedly suggests a state of insecurity in the world and life. The idea of insecurity and meaninglessness dominates the postmodern attention of several thinkers and critics. For example, Martin Esslin (1980) refers to such an idea as a sort of reaction to the two world wars, Nazi mass destruction, and similar social and political anarchies that resulted in human despair and insecurity (p. 13). Thus, the Theater of the Absurd seems realistic because it explores human societies' illogical and chaotic realities. Albee himself states that the Theatre of the Absurd deals with "man's attempts to make sense for himself out of his senseless position in a world which makes no sense—which makes no sense because the moral, religious, political and social structures [that] man has erected to "illusion" himself have collapsed." (Berlin, 2004, p. 770). Also, Rocamora (2008) states that Albee admits, "I write about man's absurd position in a world that makes no sense. We have to create our sense."

Besides, modern man's sacrifice to make communication practical and valuable is metaphorical and alludes to the story of Christ's sacrifice. However, the symbolism is not outside the story he has to tell; the story of modern man and his isolation is a hope for salvation. He uses the allusion to support his own story. I think he has chosen traditional Christian symbols not because they are tricky attention-getters but because the sacrifice of Christ is perhaps the most effective way that the story has been told in the past (p. 53). For example, Jerry addresses Peter: "Every once in a while, I like to talk to somebody, really talk, like to get to know somebody, know all about him" (p. 8). He shows his eagerness to identify with anyone according to his vision and ideology. He is unwilling to comply with others' systems in life; he wants to escape people's conventional, conformist reality. Peter tells Jerry this: "I do not mean to seem ... ah ... it is just that you do not carry on a conversation, you just ask questions, and I am... I am normally ... uh ... reticent" (p. 9). Again, Peter pauses, leaving gaps in his communication ability. These gaps signify his rejection of coming to terms with Jerry, an indication that embodies the absurdist aspects of Albee's dramatic plays. Ronald Hayman (1973) describes the contact between Jerry and Peter as meaningless since it is established through "a tired exchange of

the conventional questions and answers of casual conversation" (p. 7). Also, these pauses imply a lack of communication between both of them, a thing that results in continuous confrontation and violence, verbal and physical. All of these manifest the absurdist elements in Albee's dramas that characterize current trends of writing postmodern plays in light of the dramatic events and natural phenomena that take place worldwide. In this respect, Carol Rocamora (2008) asserts that Albee is the pioneer American writer who introduced the theatre of the absurd to literary legacy worldwide and that he earned "international recognition" after that (p. 115).

Jerry and Peter stand for individuals with different backgrounds, interests, and ideologies. Peter tells Jerry, "I find it hard to believe that people like that really are." Jerry seems to agree sarcastically with Peter, where "fact is better left to fiction" (p. 15). Moreover, Jerry tries to brainwash Peter and teach him his ideas and values, "it is just that if you cannot deal with people you have to make a start somewhere WITH ANIMALS" (p. 19). Jerry reveals his inability to intimately communicate with anyone because no one is willing to communicate with him. This behavior also signifies society's rejection of Jerry's emergent beliefs and ideas if we consider Peter to represent most people in society. They are not equipped to deal with each other's ideas and ideologies. Jerry asks Peter, "Don't you have any idea, not even the slightest, what other people need?" (p. 23).

Lucina P. Gabbard (1982) notices that Jerry has become "so offended by society's rejection" that he decides to make a kind, friendly approach to whomever he meets on his walk (p. 99). Albee's vision in the play exposes various mechanisms such as abandonment, ambivalence, escape into fantasy, and preoccupation with hopelessness and death. These mechanisms are people's ways of separating themselves from one another in order to prevent what Gabbard calls their "mutual destruction by hate and violence" (1982, p. 100). Accordingly, such maneuvers signify non-conformity and loss of communication deepened by different values, habits, visions, and ideologies. However, Hayman describes Albee as "a social constructionist" who tries to "destabilize models of communities and expose the inherent weakness" they bear (1973, p. 129). Kujuk Hale (2008) suggests, "... in a world that is essentially absurd, communication is not easy." In this sense, the play connects pessimism to the possibilities of communicating with the self and others.

Therefore, Hayman (1973) argues that Albee in The Zoo Story is misinterpreted in terms of the theatre of the absurd, relying on what Esslin says about Albee, that the latter comes into this category because his play "attacks the very foundations of American optimism" (p. 15). Also, Esslin says that Albee has tried the "theatre that attempts to convey the situation of mankind in a universe without meaning" and that this sort of theater "forced the audience to experience and come to terms with frightening reality" (1980, p. 68). Albee fully understands his way of experimenting with the Absurdist drama as it is an "absorption-in-art of certain existentialist and post-existentialist philosophical concepts" (Meserve, 1966, p. 147). Albee forwards his views to his readers, who want to manage "reality in all its senselessness and to accept that reality without illusions" or fantasy (Berlin, 2004, p. 770).

Furthermore, Jerry's death at the end of the play is a good illustration of the impossibility of living by the values that he represents. In this sense, this melodramatic end is "a void analogy of human relationships" in our contemporary societies, and Peter is a "personification of contemporary conformism," states Hayman (1973, p. 16). In our modern societies, alienation, miscommunication, and subversiveness are central themes in Albee's plays. These themes signify the symptoms of postmodernist writings and life. In this respect, Berlin notices that both Peter and Jerry talk without "true confrontation with their inner lives," where "Peter is Peter, underwritten or overwritten" (2004, p.773).

In Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf? The characters try to communicate on a deeper level with each other, but this seems unsuccessful. For example, in their way of communication, Martha and George continuously insult each other. They hardly establish a polite, healthy conversation, and their communication is repeatedly cut or incomplete. They both show incompatibility in visions, ideas, and

ideological values. Equally, Nick and Honey seem to communicate superficially and deceive each other. Besides, violence, as a form of abnormal communication among these characters, is demonstrated through the tale of George and Martha's boxing match, George's fake rifle, and the physical confrontations between them. Their inability to communicate properly is translated into psychological violence as the only way to communicate.

In this play, Albee offers us a stance of quest for companionship or friendship where George and Martha need each other "to face reality without the fantasy child." Both characters uncover their inner psyches and "touch large questions about truth and illusion" (Berlin, 2004, p. 774). Kujuk (2008) also agrees that Albee's idea of marriage is "no cure for loneliness or solitude." He also notices that George and Martha's verbal communication, like Jerry's, is "a failure" because it never reflects their "real intentions." For example, When Martha uses "provoking words" against George, her real intention seems not to "humiliate" him but to "activate" him into dynamicity. Moreover, the play suggests the prices paid for "observing ... values" of which Albee offers his critique, according to C.W.E. Bigsby (1992, p. 39). In addition, he describes Albee's characters as "incomplete" and their values "betrayed" with abandoned hopes and "attenuated relationship" (150). Here, Albee offers a universal theme about the inability to communicate that is replaced by different and harsh ways of approaching each other. A good scene that illustrates infertile communication is when Nick, Martha, George, and Honey are involved in an incomplete, interrupted dialogue with lots of pauses and gaps:

Nick: who . . . who did the . . . ?
Martha: that? On, that's by . . .
George: . . . some Greek with a mustache Martha attacked one
night in . . .
Honey: on, ho, ho, ho, Ho.
Nick: it's got a . . . a . . .
George: a quiet intensity . . .
Nick: well, no . . . a . . .
George: on, (pause) well, . . . a certain noisy relaxed quality, may be? (21-22)

Again, such pauses and gaps signify missing words in their communication that result in "quiet intensity" among the speakers. At the utmost of their intense confrontation, George is forced to kill his illusionary son. This happens when Martha shows misunderstanding of the communicative game. That is, she does not know the rule of such communication, as George tells her,"(with disgust), you know the rules, Martha . . . you know the rules!" (p. 235). But, Martha does not actually know the rules and ignores his appeal. This signifies her non-conformity and inability to communicate with George's ideological, intellectual, and social projects. Thus, because of their different visions and ideas, Martha and George suffer an unsatisfactory marriage that complicates the possibility of successful discourse and communication between them. It is an indication of a postmodern phenomenon of current human web of sophisticated life. Both George and Martha got their illusionary son, a thing that signifies George and Martha's "tempestuous marriage," George decides to "kill" this illusion as Martha brings it from her web of illusions and puts it into reality (Garcia, 2002). Martha keeps referring to George's lack of stable psyche that results in a crack in their marriage. Martha says, "I swear…if you existed I'd divorce you […] I haven't been able to see you for years […] you're a blank, a cipher" (1.144-1.148).

Meanwhile, illusions of such sort look mysterious and unreal for George and Martha's "empty marriage revolves around an imaginary son," where reality "lacks any deeper meaning." Also, Albee creates such a symbolic "unhappy marriage as a microcosm for the imperfect state of America," suggests Carol Garcia (2002). Carol adds that such a marriage is revealed as "a sham based on the illusion of an imaginary son," where readers and critics may view it as an illusion that "props up the

American dream." Yet, it is the marriage that can survive and last as Martha clarifies that George is the sole partner and protector of her privacy and psyche, suggesting that there are "positive aspects to their marriage," that even though they fight, they still need each other (Garcia, 2002). Martha says, "I'll make you sorry you made me want to marry you," (2.191) a statement that proves Martha's having real desire for George at the beginning of their marriage which suggests that it will last for their life.

In its absurd aspects, the play shows elements of such a philosophical movement: miscommunication is strife among individuals, the language is distorted, and both actions and images are dominant. In this respect, existential scholars view life as meaningless, communication as impossible, resulting in inhuman chaotic modern societies. Commenting on the character of George, Hayman describes him as an outsider who has a "rebel inclination" and who is "conformist" to his institution as a history lecturer (1973, p. 41). The failing contact among the characters in the play signifies the "decline of [the] West." Hayman mentions what Albee says about the play that it attempts to examine "the success of failure of American revolutionary principles" (1973, p. 64). Seemingly, this description is derived from the failure to reconcile the conformist and non-conformist. It is the failure to establish a fruitful, logical communication among all of society's members. The characters in Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? continuously address each other with gaps and pauses throughout the play. Seemingly, their communication is a series of monologues; each one of them tries to hurt the other with a speech of abusive words. In this respect, Martha says to George, "Well…you're going bald," and George replies "So are you. (Pause…they both laugh) Hello, honey," a thing that proves a state of complex web of passion and hatred and shows their skill of harsh insult, mainly when Martha insists that George give "a big sloppy kiss" (1.28-1.131).

Moreover, Albee uses the technique of repetition of some words to refer to "a recurrent topic sentence and casual echoing or deliberate mimicking of others' words" (Kujuk, 2008). For instance, the talk between Martha and George is full of such a technique,

Martha : You didn't do anything; you never do anything; you never mix. You just sit around and talk
George : What do you want me to do? Do you want me to act like you? Martha: (Braying) I DON'T BRAY!
George : (Softly) All right…you don't bray.
Martha : (Hurt) I do not bray.
George : All right. I said you didn't bray. (p. 158)

In this sense, the mutual violations of confidence among the characters result in non-conformity and endanger the sound modern ways of communication. Thus, Martha announces that the order of their world has broken down and tells George, with incomplete sentences, that he knows what happens between them, and he always makes "all sorts of excuses" to himself (p. 156). This also signifies Martha's non-conformity to George's projects and ideas. She accuses him of killing their mutual project of the illusionary son. I wonder how such projects will become fruitful in such a conflicting environment and in the absence of logical communication! Obviously, three main purposes dominate the plays, as in The Zoo Story. First, it shows that George and Martha are dominated by vulnerability and alienation that make their task of coping with daily disappointments overwhelming. Second, it argues that their "commitment to survival" is heroic. Finally, it explores the cause of their painful experiences as a "dehumanizing force in the American culture" (p. 148). Yet, Martha and George's loss of communication is the result of a world that does not offer them any help or support in getting out of the conflicting circle.

Brian Way (1987) attacks such plays, describing them as "savage attacks on the American way of life." He claims that what happens among the characters is a "pattern to which many Americans tend

to conform" (p. 9). Nevertheless, we do not have to forget that in every society there are conformists and non-conformists. Also, the mechanisms of their communication are almost absent as long as both parties insist on their visions, ideologies, values, and the patterns of their lives. Yet, Way (1987) justifies Jerry's death as Jerry finally succeeded in making contact with another person, meanwhile, he says that because of "human isolation is so great," the contact which ends it is "so formidable difficult to obtain" (p. 21). Thus, Jerry tries to let Peter feel that he's in "a cage of convention and effeminate domesticity and false values" (Berlin, 2004, p. 775). Then how can Jerry break the circle of his isolation if he is depicted as non-conformist to the majority of the society's people? I think he must master a logical, realistic way of communication, tolerance, and understanding.

Albee keeps showing his interest in exposing the inevitable dilemmas of his society because of the presence of conflicting values, visions, and ideologies. To Kujuk (2008), Jerry is the "lonely outcast whose life or death concerns no one else" and that Peter is the counterpart of Jerry. Bigsby (1992) describes The Zoo Story and Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? as a "protest" against what the author sees as "a growing conformity," which is "a retreat from individuality and moral responsibility" (p. 148). Miscommunication is a feature of the absurdists where language is unreliable and deceptive, for the actors' words often contradict their actions. Kujuk (2008) emphasizes that the absurdists "object to normal usage of language for its futility in expressing the essence of human experience." Accordingly, language seems "incoherent, ambiguous, and full of clichés." This is clear in the dialogue between Jerry and Peter,

> Jerry : I've been to the Zoo. (Peter doesn't notice) I said, I've been to the zoo. MISTER, I'VE BEEN TO THE ZOO!
> Peter : Hm?...What?...I'm sorry, were you talking to me?
> Jerry : I went to the zoo, and then I walked until I came here. Have I been walking north?
> Peter : (Puzzled) North? Why… I … I think so. Let me see.(p. 16)

Furthermore, Albee presents his valuable observation about human relationships and his responsible warning about the collapse of values in society. In this sense, Albee is fully aware of the residual values and ideologies as well as the emergent ones among people. It seems that the conformity or conformism and conventional standards of life are the privileged ideologies or values. Seemingly, the majority of people resist the acceptance of such new values and visions. This is a postmodernist phenomenon that Albee draws our attention to. Bigsby (1992, p. 126) summarizes his vision about Albee's plays, ". . . they dramatize the lack of social or moral cohesiveness," which is a distinguishing characteristic of the modern absurd world.

Generally speaking, Albee offers us themes and concerns of a "post-nuclear" era from his own understanding of "apocalypse and eschatology" in order to expose the collapse of "communality," and the "other" as threat, in Bigsby's eyes (1992, p. 127). This means that Albee reacts against the postmodern products and values by exposing the extreme confusions of human with the residual and emerging values in society.

Moreover, Gabbard argues that non-communication, artificiality, and false values are corruptive and destructive, as we see in Jerry's death, A's stroke and hallucination, and George and Martha's illusionary son's death (1982, p. 47). All of these stances affirm the death of the communicative mechanisms among conformists and non-conformists as well as among old and modern values. In such a way, Richard Farr (1996) describes Albee's plays as portraits of the inability to communicate with each another or to achieve "intimacy" with the dominant values and norms (p. 40). Besides, these dramatic portraits expose people's failure to recognize that they have spent their lives paying "homage to false gods," such as social status and material comforts, and non-conformity-conformity complex, in Farr's eyes (1996, p. 44). Accordingly, Albee's vision and intention are meant to signify

the miscommunication and intolerance of people in contemporary societies, in particular, the American one.

Strikingly, Albee's plays serve as cautionary discourse to tell us that people will learn to reconcile conformity and non-conformity and to warn against the inevitable bad consequences of their miscommunication or loss of communicative mechanisms. Albee reminds us why he has intended to do so, that is, because of his objection to the "environment's social, political values" (Farr, 1996, p. 40). Thus, Albee is completely aware of his society's cultural and ideological life, and he employs deep insights to warn against destructive differences in values and ideologies too.

Thematically, Farr says that Albee's featured theme in his plays is centered on exposing and resolving "people's tendency to erect psychological barriers" so as to avoid "intimacy" (1996, p. 41). This postmodernist phenomenon is a universal theme that exists in almost every society in the world because of people's lack of communication and the conflict between conformists and nonconformists. It is clear then that loneliness, miscommunication, and non-conformity are universal themes in modern philosophy of life that assimilates with the Theatre of the Absurd. Kujuk (2008) points out that Albee indulges himself into the public ideology and fuses all possible themes of the theater of the Absurd in his plays. Therefore, Esslin called Albee "the first American playwright who translated the theatre of the absurd into a genuine American idiom" (1980, p. 133).

Apparently, Albee has certain commonalities with the Absurdists, where he fuses features of the Theater of the Absurd in themes that question man's existence in the modern world, the lack of communication among people, and man's non-conformity. Albee maintains depicting the harsh modern and postmodern world that faces people and man's inabilities to come in good terms with the traditional religious, social, or political principles regarding his own dignity and existence. Yet, Albee leaves some hopes for salvation by ways of successfully managing the miserable milieu, where he hints to modern man's wish for a catharsis from the deadly life and where his characters seem to reach a final apprehension of their situations and decide to transform it for better states.

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