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Quest for Primitive Self in Edward Albee's *The Goat Or, Who is Sylvia?*

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Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Quest for Primitive Self in Edward Albee’s *The Goat Or, Who is Sylvia?*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Lokendra Bahadur Singh, has been approved by undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Lokendra Bahadur Singh has completed his thesis entitled “Quest for Primitive Self in Edward Albee’s *The Goat Or, Who is Sylvia?*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from November 2008 A. D. to March 2009 A. D. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Abstract

This research, based on Edward Albee's play *The Goat or, Who Is Sylvia?*, attempts to analyze Martin's shift from a successful architect and faithful husband to a sexual pervert who makes love with a goat. At the zenith of his professional success, Martin, the protagonist, fails to assemble his personal happiness around and between his wife, son, friends, and accolades he was bestowed with; rather, he finds his complacencies fulfilled in the love with Sylvia- a country she-goat. Albee punches in the middle of human existence projecting that human has chosen a wrong path to attain happiness in shunning primordial instincts. Martin's shift from a successful architect and faithful husband to a sexual pervert who makes love with a goat goes together with the idea that the unconscious and more generally, the functioning of the mental apparatus and cultural processes are analogous, and that, like the faulty action, they require analogous methods of analysis. This love for a an animal has been considered in this research paper as a metaphor of human being's submission to primordial instinct and his rejection of phony codes and conducts of civilization. Just as a dream tells us about the dreamer's infantile wishes, Albee tells us about the infantile wishes of the Martin.

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I. Psycho-Cultural Perversion and Albee's Goat Lover: an Introduction

This research attempts to excavate the causes of Martin's downfall from a successful architect and faithful husband to a sexual change who makes love with a goat. This is a symbolic of human being's quest for primitive self in Edward Albee's play *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*. The play ventures around a transformed life of Martin and his efforts to expose his love for a country she-goat. This love for an animal has been considered in this research paper as a metaphor of human being's submission to primordial instinct and his rejection of phony codes and conducts of civilization. Just as a dream tells us about the dreamer's infantile wishes, the play tells us about the infantile wishes of the Martin. The research apparatus is composed of four chapters which interact with each other; introduction, methodology, textual analysis, and conclusion. The relationships between these chapters provides with a model by means of which to consider the relationship between Martin's zoophile behaviors and the context he lives by. The research concentrates over Albee's work which is thought both to conceal from and attract the reader towards inadmissible desires and wishes.

Martin lies at the center of *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?* and is living social and family life with proper status and happiness. His deep affair with the goat and his abnormal attitude is his search for primitive self that causes the family degeneration. Billy's kin interest in homosexuality and other people's affair with animals caused family degeneration. Martin's degradation from his social and moral status is due to the erroneous aspects of never ending morality and generative epistemology of human beings. When people feel disenchanting with generative love, search for primitive self initiates which later results in family degeneration. There lies no guarantee of wish fulfillment of happiness in social codes and love.

The object of desire for Martin, a highly acclaimed architect who has just turned fifty, is right there in the play's title. In case Martin blurts out the truth of his passion in the first moments during some banter with his wife, Stevie. She laughs it off, as you would. "So we all get to share in the tension, build up in a brilliantly nervy circumstances, as Martin steels himself to share his burden of his secret with his best friend Ross," (113) Michael Portillo further writes in "Beastly Behavior":

'If they could see he through my eyes, may be they would all understand,' blurts the protagonist of the play *The Goat or, Who IS Sylvia?*, Martin while stepping out of his confessions. Edward Albee takes us one taboo further. Albee tells us that he is pushing the boundaries in a way that playwrights should. Now a day you have to push quite a distance to raise an eyebrow. It is possible that in our lifetimes, the play shocks people by challenging the intolerance of marriage between Martin and Stevie. (113)

Albee's play treads new ground with its portrayal of gay love. To reinforce the point, we find at first that Martin has taken in his stride, more or less the fact that his seventeen years old son Billy is a promiscuous homosexual. Billy does not find it easy to be quite so liberal when he discovers his father's penchant love for a goat and Martin retaliates but demeans himself by taunting his son with homophobic abuse. Then again, most of Martin's male friends are serial adulterers. The men have a laugh together as they brag about their mistresses.

Martin feels excluded and inadequate because, in twenty years of marriage, he has never had sex with any other women than Stevie. "So I suppose we are meant to ask how it is that adultery," Portillo interrogates, "which is debasing and destructive,

while bestiality, also debasing and destructive remains taboo” (116). Portillo contends:

Then Albee ask us to consider if the act itself is wrong, as the outrage Stevie naturally thinks, or whether what matters is the risk of being caught, exposed and destroyed, with is Ross’s main preoccupation. The question is made more difficult because Martin is not ashamed and says that he and the quadruped Sylvia are in love. (117)

Albee invites us to leave our prejudices in the cloakroom telling us that the play is not about bestiality but tolerance, love and loss.

Edward Albee’s *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?* is all about a man who falls in love with a goat, which is a metaphor for rejection of matrimonial and sexual restrictions. Critics have ventured over the comical side of the play, as Michael Portillo does in “Rude Awakening.” He writes, “the hero was comically infatuated, which took the credibility and sting out of his bestial tastes” (12). He further questions: “I wondered what it would have been like if Albee had addressed seriously a worse taboo such as pedophilia” (12).

The title has multiple readings. The goat could be literally a goat in which case the forbidden love spoken of in the play is bestiality. “The goat can be the metaphor for the sexual appetite, and apt theme for post-Clinton united states,” (164) Richard Brad Medoff traces the socio-political theme of the play. Medoff reiterates:

The goat can be a literary allusion to Dionysus, whereby the play can be read as a meditation on theater itself. The subtitle of the play, who is Sylvia?, comes from a song in *Two Gentleman of Verona*, a comedy about love and betrayal. This Shakespearean reference foreshadows the plot and sets up the normalcy that the tragedy reaffirms. It is not all

right for a man to betray his wife by loving a goat; however, it is normal for a man to betray his woman with another woman. (165)

The commonplace response of contemporary Albee critic is itself placed-in-nowhere logic: of course, there is no possibility of remembrance until this common human phenomenon continues to create a barricade for Martin to satisfy his living with his own pleasures-complacencies. Edward Albee's play has so colonized late-twentieth century Anglophonic drama culture that researcher can never now enter it for the first time. Instead, we must resemble members of that parade of guests Martin imagines both preceding and succeeding to interview him into their living room; given to his bestiality.

“Why can't I remember anything?”(5), Martin asks his human-wife Stevie. The question returns with each new reader and researcher approaching *The Goat Or, Who Is Sylvia* for the first time. There is more seriousness in this contention than first meets the eyes—Martin's freeing himself from the burden of remembrance is the masked representation of human being's wish to get rid from the abysmal taming-hole of ideologies and his desire to be united with what he was before, an animal. The present research continues to access Martin's 'fall from glory' as humanity's voluntary indignation to continue with ideology, logic, science, etc., at the backdrop of theorists advocating post-ideological complacencies.

Edward Albee is one of the most prominent American dramatists, who undoubtedly holds a place beside Eugene O'Neill, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. He was born on March 12, 1928 in Washington. Two weeks after his birth, he was adopted by a wealthy owner of the famous chain of Keith Albee Theatres named Reed Albee and his second wife, Frances. Though Albee

expresses no bitterness towards his adoptive parents, he has acknowledged a deep seated resentment against his natural parents for abandoning him.

Edward Albee has been an icon of the American stage since his play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?*, opened on Broadway in 1963. With a style that embraces existentialism, absurdism, as well as the metaphysical, Albee has enjoyed a successful career, highlighted by winning an astounding three Pulitzer Prizes and countless other awards. Known for writing plays that challenge, and even puzzle audiences, Albee's other plays include *A Delicate Balance*, *Seascape* and *Three Tall Women*. Without a doubt, Albee has one of the most distinctive voices in theatre.

Provocative as ever, Albee's latest play, *The Goat Or, Who Is Sylvia?*, is a daring and controversial play that has entertained and stunned audiences and critics, alike. The winner of the 2002 Tony Award for Best Play, *THE GOAT* was also voted Best Play of 2002 by the New York Drama Critics Circle, received a New York Drama Desk Award for Outstanding Play, and was a finalist for the 2003 Pulitzer Prize in Drama. Edward Albee described *THE GOAT* this way:

Every civilization sets quite arbitrary limits to its tolerances. The play is about a family that is deeply rocked by an unimaginable event and they solve that problem. It is my hope that people will think afresh about whether or not all the values they hold are valid. (qtd. in *Hudson Review*, 38)

At the center of *THE GOAT* is Martin, a renowned architect and family man. He is also a man on the edge. In the same week he turned fifty, earned a prestigious award and received a lucrative commission, Martin is consumed by a forbidden passion. At a time he should be celebrating his life, Martin is distracted and forgetful because of the secret he is carrying and unburdens himself on his oldest friend. Overwhelmed by the

revelation, Martin's secret is revealed. As the truth is told and the rest of Martin's family finds out, his life disintegrates in a disastrous and eye-opening way. *The Goat* is not so much a play about one man's mid-life crisis, but about how the decisions people make affects the lives of everyone around them.

The New York Times praised, “THE GOAT is about a profoundly unsettling subject [. . .] powerful and extraordinary!” (*Paperback, The Goat*). The Associated Press hailed, “although it is quite funny, *The Goat Or, Who Is Sylvia?* is a serious, thoughtful, even tragic play despite the comic outrageousness of its premise” (*Paperback, The Goat*). The New York Post raved, “unquestionably one of the wittiest and funniest plays Albee has ever written, 'a truly fascinating play' enthralling (*Paperback, The Goat*).

Albee’s plays are marked by themes typical of the theater of the absurd, in which characters suffer from an inability or unwillingness to communicate meaningfully or to sympathize or empathize with one another.

Edward Albee is widely considered to be one of America's greatest living dramatists. Winner of three Pulitzer Prizes and three Tony Awards for Best Play, Albee has challenged and beguiled theatre audiences for nearly fifty years. Albee is a member of the Dramatists Guild Council and president of the Edward F. Albee Foundation. He was awarded the Gold Medal in Drama from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters in 1980, and in 1996 he received both the Kennedy Center Honors and the National Medal of Arts. Albee describes his work as “an examination of the American Scene, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society, a condemnation of complacency, cruelty, and emasculation and vacuity, a stand against the fiction that everything in this slipping land of ours is peachy-keen (*Hudson Review*, 39).

Theatre Review by Matthew Murray compares the play with other Albee plays:

The Goat or, Who Is Sylvia? by Edward Albee, directed by David Esbjornson, is one of the most unusual and intriguing major plays to open in New York in many months has just arrived on Broadway at the Golden Theatre. In fact, Edward Albee's *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* is probably the strangest theatre experience since last year's *The Play About the Baby*, also by Albee. (*Hudson Review*, 11)

The Play About the Baby and this one have a fair amount in common, and both are unmistakably the property of the same author. But, despite what its title might lead to believe, *The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia?* is really more than a play about a Billy.

If you're interested in a fascinating take on truly unusual subject matter, Albee's your man. Does anyone handle it better?

The Goat, or Who Is Sylvia? starts off conventionally and even realistically, set in the smart, geometric living room designed by John Arone. The family housed there is headed by Martin (played by Bill Pullman), an architect who has won the prestigious Pritzker Prize, has obtained the contract to design a mammoth living community in the nation's heartland, and is celebrating his fiftieth birthday. "The sense that everything's going right," his wife Stevie, played by Mercedes Ruehl tells him, "is a sure sense that everything's going wrong" (*The Goat*, 8). She couldn't be more right, actually. Despite his many accomplishments, Martin is faced with two problems of great significance to him. First, his 18 year-old son Billy (Jeffrey Carlson) has recently come out of the closet, and it has been very difficult for Martin to accept the implications of that. Perhaps more significantly, for the last six months, Martin has been having an affair with Sylvia. And yes, Sylvia is a goat.

If the play, with its detached, staccato dialogue and speech patterns had not registered strongly as an Albee work by now, from this point on, there can be no doubt. As Albee covers all the bases--Stevie finding out in a letter written by Martin's oldest friend Ross (Stephen Rowe), the son's reaction, and the eventual retribution--a play of two wildly divergent attitudes emerges. The first is one of almost unrelenting comedy. No one involved shies away from the laughs the material brings out. For the audience, the laughter might be genuine or uncomfortable (it's hard to tell which, sometimes), but it's remarkably pervasive, affecting everything and everyone until the play's final moments, at which, for some strange reason, laughter is no longer enough.

Under this is the perhaps expected dark, tragic undercurrent. Martin's fall from glory, because of his love for an animal, is significant enough, but it is Miss Ruehl who brings it out best, giving a stunning performance, one of the Broadway's best. When Stevie rounds on Martin about his infidelity, the words, "how can love me when you love so much less?" (14) are truly stinging; she gets right to Martin's heart, and ours. No one balances the comedy out better than she does.

That is not to say, though, that the other actors do not give strong performances. Everyone does a good job here. Carlson infuses his Billy with strong pain and hurt and Rowe's portrayal of Ross is equal parts disgust and bemusement. Pullman has a tendency to read more than a bit stiff onstage, though it's difficult to imagine Martin's words being spoken by any other voice. Albee's dialogue, through Pullman, sounds comfortable and natural. Director David Esbjornson has done well almost across the board here, bringing a sense of reality to subject matter that frequently seems almost impossibly unbelievable. Kenneth Posner's lighting is an important contribution, but there's something about Arone's set design that steals the show away from almost everyone else. The house, which bears the strong look of an

architect, truly appears that it, like the family it contains, is about to come apart at the seams.

Yet there is something about the final moments of the play that strike a dishonest chord. It's the only time during the course of the show that the performances, writing, and direction don't really come together. It feels like Albee was settling, providing not a happy ending or even a correct ending, but merely an acceptable one. This choice is all the more curious, since no one involved refused to embrace difficult subject matter until that point.

It's an unfortunate conclusion to what had been a provocative and thoroughly original play. If you want to see what all the fuss is about, yes, you have to see *The Goat*. It's a play that realizes so much of its potential, yet is sadly unable to drive its final words and images home. From one of America's greatest living playwrights (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*), comes *The Goat*, a startling and poignant black comedy that cuts to the heart of modern love. In the same week that high flying architect, Martin, receives an international prize and is awarded a very lucrative contract, he is forced to make a shocking confession to his wife and son.

"There is smoothness in this transition from gags to gasps," Henry Swann writes on the performance of *The Goat* in Broadway, "in following the author's detailed stage directions, the director has in no way been hamstrung in maintaining the level of danger and mystery in this exhilarating exploration of the outer reaches of human behavior" (qtd. in Hudson Review, 45). Swann further praises: "She [the director] also elicits deeply affecting, deeply humane performances from her talented cast" (46).

The Goat in performance is a "taut, beautifully rendered chamber piece . . . it is a tour de force and Bartlett had every inch the work's measure" (46). A brilliant and

powerful production from Broadway, *The Goat* has been hailed as a powerful, contemporary look on what Albee called “love, and loss, the limits of our tolerance and who, indeed, we really are” (Hudson “Interview” 16). Kahrin Deines writes in “Players Start Season with Albee’s *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*,”

Jim loved Pat. Heather loved Sam. Martin loved Sylvia. Sounds like a series of prototypical pairings. But what if Pat is short for a man named Patrick, Sam for a woman named Samantha, and Sylvia is a goat? Do you think this might make many Americans pause mid-swoon, maybe even swerve breakneck from a good old heart-warmed reaction to romance into uncontained expressions of outrage? (215)

More to the point, Albee’s play bristles at the way that the above pairings link homosexuality and bestiality. Thanks to Edward Albee, master American playwright and absurdist provocateur. There is, in his Tony-award winning play *The Goat or Who is Sylvia?*,” Martin who loves a goat named Sylvia and he does have a gay son that he kisses lustfully at one point in the tale’s unfolding.

And now we have incest, homosexuality, and bestiality – Albee lays them all side by side, but not for the purpose of condemning homosexuality. He is, after all, and not that this should matter, a gay man himself. His purpose is rather to explore the nature of condemnation. As Albee explained in a 2002 conversation with Steven Drukman that was published in Interview, “it’s about the limits of our tolerance; what we will permit ourselves to think about” (*American Chronicle*, 21).

The Goat or, Who is Sylvia? drew the ire of many American critics when it debuted on Broadway in 2002, but it also earned Albee another Tony to line up next to his three Pulitzers and elicited wide praise when it hit European stages. His is theater that will make one think, without shortchanging on the entertainment. Albee

shows that the world leaves room for all of us to be bigots, accepting of some things and not of others, and usually drawing our lines of acceptance near what we have experienced or accepted in our own sexuality. Albee, the maker of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The American Dream*, and numerous other provocative plays, leaves it to researchers to find a way to make anyone who lives in a liberal society feel at once righteous and unenlightened, and with enough wit and warmth to make us stay through painful growth.

The subsequent chapters are to chronicle Albee's characters into the testimony of the aforementioned [psycho-cultural] theories. The textual analysis proposes to elucidate such emancipatory claims forwarded by the critics of post-ideology. Under the hindsight of theories, Martin's fall from glory will be accentuated as obvious against the burdensome world choreographed in multiple ideologies.

II. Theoretical Modality: Psycho-Cultural Theory

The methodology of this research relies on psychological and cultural discourses and critical discussions on the relationship of culture in forming human psychology. For the purpose of our study, that is, excavation of the cause after psycho-cultural perversion in Albee's protagonist, Martin, theoretical voices of Sigmund Freud and Michael Foucault seem most relevant. Whereas Foucault contributes to outline the role of society in restricting human sexuality and blur lines drawn between various forms of sexual expressions, Freud seems to claim that sexual perversion is the consequence of cultural and social restrictions. Society, for Freud works like a lid of the bottle that restricts elements of human unconscious from

pouring out. The works of Freud and Foucault will be discussed in length in this chapter.

Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, may justly be called the most influential intellectual legislator of his age. His creation of psychoanalysis is at once a theory of the human psyche, a therapy for the relief of its ills, and an optic for the interpretation of culture and society. Despite repeated criticisms, attempted refutations, and qualifications of Freud's work, its spell remains powerful well after his death and in fields far removed from psychology as it is narrowly defined. The American sociologist Philip Rieff contends, "psychological man replaced such earlier notions as political, religious, or economic man as the twentieth century's dominant self-image, it is in no small measure due to the power of Freud's vision and the seeming inexhaustibility of the intellectual legacy he left behind" (qtd. in Foucault 59).

Sigmund Freud's "Three Essays on Human sexuality" (1905) is the first ever published discourse, which helps to shape the fate of psychoanalysis. This work is an investigation on human sexuality. At that time the topic of sex was taboo and any public expression of it might have been resulted in social isolation. Before defining the concept of sexuality, Freud questions and requests his neurotic patients to speak openly about their sexuality. And he assembles all the findings and the details in the Three Essays. Freud's theoretical work extends the concept of sexuality as follows:

That extension is of a two-fold kind. In the first place sexuality is divorced from its too close connection with the genitals and is regarded as a more comprehensive bodily function having pleasure as its goal and only secondarily coming to serve the ends of reproduction. In the second place the sexual impulses are regarded as including all of those

merely affectionate and friendly impulses to which usage applies the exceedingly ambiguous word 'love'. (272)

The citation encapsulates the broader concept of sexuality, which is not only related with the sexual organs but rather is such a bodily act directed to pleasure primarily, and reproduction secondarily. Thus sexuality got its hitherto unexplored and unexpressed dimension- pleasure. Moreover feelings and emotions like love have their roots in the very same sexual impulses.

In the first essay "The sexual Aberration", Freud has investigated the nature and characteristics of sexual instinct. He introduces two technical terms: 'sexual object' and 'sexual aim'. He defines sexual object as "the person from whom sexual attraction proceed" (282), and sexual aim as "the act towards which the instinct tends" (282). Then, the deviation in respect of the sexual object and the sexual aim is listed and explained.

The people whose sexual object is of same sex are described as having contract sexual feeling, or as inverts. According to the behaviors of inverts Freud categorizes three types of inverts: "absolute inverts are those whose 'sexual objects are exclusively of their own sex', Amphigenic inverts lack the characteristics of exclusiveness and it is 'psychosexual hermaphrodites', and Contingent inverts are capable of deriving satisfaction from sexual intercourse with the sexual object of their own sex whenever there is 'inaccessibility of any normal sexual object' (282). The characterization of inversion involves two suppositions. Either it is innate or it is acquired. However Freud is critical of both these suppositions. In his explanation of inversion he argues:

The nature of inversion is explained neither by the hypothesis that it is innate nor by the alternative that it is acquired. In the former case we

must ask in what respect it is innate, unless we are to accept the crude explanation that everyone is born with his sexual instinct attached to a particular sexual object. In the latter case it may be questioned whether the various accidental influences would be sufficient to explain the acquisition of inversion without the cooperation of something in the subject himself. As we have already shown the existence of this latter factor is not to be denied. (286)

Thus, Freud shows the problems inherent in both suppositions. If one believes it to be innate, one must accept that one's sexual instinct is attached to a particular sexual object by birth. If inversion is taken as acquired, how can it be acquired without the cooperation of something within himself? Though the theory of psychical hermaphroditism assumes that "the sexual object of an invert is the opposite of that of a normal person" (289), it cannot be applied universally. In conclusion Freud writes:

It has been brought to our notice that we have the habit of regarding the connection between the sexual instincts and the sexual object as more intimate than it in fact is. Experience of the cases that are considered abnormal has shown us that in them the sexual instinct and the sexual object are merely soldered together- a fact which we have been in danger of overlooking in consequence of the uniformity of the normal picture, where the object appears to form part and parcel of the instinct. (292)

In the 1960s and 1970s, sociologists (along with anthropologists and others) contributed significantly to a fundamental shift in the theorization of sexuality and homosexuality. Against naturalized conceptions of sexuality as a biological given, against Freudian models of the sexual drive. Sexuality was naturalized in two senses:

first, in the dominant assumption that human sexuality should be understood as a biological function rooted in evolutionary imperatives which are then translated straightforwardly into social institutions and cultural norms; second, in the acceptance of the corollary that certain expressions of sexuality are natural, while others are therefore unnatural.

Freud develops the technique of [free association](#) in part of an extrapolation of the automatic writing, a result of his own clinical experience with other hysterics. This revolutionary method is announced in the work Freud published jointly with Breuer in 1895, *Studien über Hysterie (Studies in Hysteria)*. By encouraging the patient to express any random thoughts that came associatively to mind, the technique aims at uncovering hitherto unarticulated material from the realm of the psyche that Freud, following a long tradition, called the [unconscious](#). Because of its incompatibility with conscious thoughts or conflicts with other unconscious ones, this material is normally hidden, forgotten, or unavailable to conscious reflection. Difficulty in freely associating--sudden silences, stuttering, or the like--suggest to Freud the importance of the material struggling to be expressed, as well as the power of what he calls “the patient’s defenses against that expression” (134). Such blockages Freud dubs as resistance “which had to be broken down in order to reveal hidden conflicts” (134). Freud comes to the conclusion, based on his clinical experience with female hysterics, that “the most insistent source of resisted material is sexual in nature” (136). And even more momentously, he links the etiology of neurotic symptoms to the same struggle between a sexual feeling or urge and the psychic defenses against it. Being able to bring that conflict to consciousness through free association and then probing its implications is thus a crucial step, he reasons, on the

road to relieving the symptom, “which is best understood as an unwitting compromise formation between the wish and the defense” (136).

Freud’s work on hysteria has focused on female sexuality and its potential for neurotic expression. To be fully universal, psychoanalysis will also have to “examine the male psyche in a condition of what might be called normality” (138). It has to become more than psychotherapy and develop into a complete theory of the mind. To this end Freud accepts the enormous risk of generalizing from the experience he knew best: his own. Significantly, his self-analysis is both the first and the last in the history of the movement he spawns; all future analysts would have to undergo a training analysis with someone whose own analysis was ultimately traceable to Freud's of his disciples.

Freud’s self-exploration is apparently enabled by a disturbing event in his life. In October 1896, Jakob Freud, his father, died shortly before his eighty-first birthday. Emotions were released in his son that he understood as having been long repressed, emotions concerning his earliest familial experiences and feelings. Beginning in earnest, Freud attempts to reveal their meaning by drawing on a technique that had been available for millennia: the deciphering of dreams. Freud's contribution to the tradition of dream analysis is path-breaking, for in insisting on them as “the royal road to the knowledge of the unconscious,” he provided a remarkably elaborate account of why dreams originate and how they function.

The next development in Freud’s theory stems from his observations on dreaming. He comes to see that many of the characteristics of dreams are shared with the symptomatic memories recalled by his patients in the narrative of free association. In his therapeutic relationship with his patients, Freud has abandoned hypnotic suggestion in favor of encouraging the person to speak freely about whatever came

into his or her mind. Unintentionally, the patient would bring order to these free associations, whose structure and content Freud used to try to understand underlying unconscious processes. Freud comes to understand the mind as a series of layers, with the most superficial layers in conscious appreciation and the deeper layers containing repressed memories and remaining unavailable to conscious thought. He terms this “the topographical model” (qtd. in Freud 25) and likens it to an iceberg, “a small part of which is visible above the surface while the greater submerged part remains obscured from view” (25).

In what many commentators consider his master work, *Die Traumdeutung* ([*The Interpretation of Dreams*](#)), Freud presents his findings. Interspersing evidence from his own dreams with evidence from those recounted in his clinical practice, Freud contends that “dreams play a fundamental role in the psychic economy” (5). The mind’s energy which Freud calls “[libido](#)” and identifies principally with the sexual drive is “a fluid and malleable force capable of excessive and disturbing power” (5). Needing to be discharged to ensure pleasure and prevent pain, it sought whatever outlet it might find. Freud contends: “If denied the gratification provided by direct motor action, libidinal energy could seek its release through mental channels” (6). Or, in the language of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, a wish can be satisfied by an imaginary wish fulfillment. “All dreams,” Freud claims, “even nightmares manifesting apparent anxiety, are the fulfillment of such wishes” (6).

In dreams Freud notes the same apparently unstructured experiences of thoughts and images coming into the mind that seems to be representative of some underlying unconscious processes. To explain these phenomena, he suggests the existence of an “inner censor that affects a compromise between conflicting mental forces and in the process disguised their meaning from conscious appreciation” (27).

He defines “resistance” as “the unconscious defense against awareness of repressed experiences in order to avoid the resulting anxiety” (28). He traces the operation of unconscious processes, using the free associations of the patient to guide him in the interpretation of dreams and slips of speech. Slips of speech, now known as “Freudian slips,” Freud claims, “are revelations of unconscious wishes” (29).

More precisely, dreams are the disguised expression of wish fulfillments. Like neurotic symptoms, they are the effects of compromises in the psyche between desires and prohibitions in conflict with their realization. Although sleep can relax the power of the mind's diurnal censorship of forbidden desires, such censorship, nonetheless, persists in part during nocturnal existence. Dreams, therefore, Freud reiterates, “have to be decoded to be understood, and not merely because they are actually forbidden desires experienced in distorted fashion” (29). For dreams undergo further revision in the process of being recounted to the analyst.

The Interpretation of Dreams provides a hermeneutic for the unmasking of the dream's disguise, or [dreamwork](#), as Freud calls it. The manifest content of the dream, that which is remembered and reported, must be understood as veiling a latent meaning. Dreams defy logical entailment and narrative coherence, for they intermingle the residues of immediate daily experience with the deepest, often most infantile wishes. Yet they can be ultimately decoded by attending to four basic activities of the dream work and reversing their mystifying effect. The first of these activities, [condensation](#), “operates through the fusion of several different elements into one” (30). As such, it exemplifies one of the key operations of psychic life, which Freud calls “over-determination”: “no direct correspondence between a simple manifest content and its multidimensional latent counterpart can be assumed” (30). The second activity of the dreamwork, [displacement](#), refers to “the decentring of

dream thoughts,” (31) so that the most urgent wish is often obliquely or marginally represented on the manifest level. Freud defines displacement as “the associative substitution of one signifier in the dream for another, say, the king for one’s father” (31). The third activity Freud calls representation, by which he means “the transformation of thoughts into images” (32). Decoding a dream thus means translating such visual representations back into intersubjectively available language through free association. The final function of the dreamwork is [secondary revision](#), which provides some order and intelligibility to the dream by supplementing its content with narrative coherence. The process of dream interpretation thus reverses the direction of the dreamwork, moving from the level of the conscious recounting of the dream through the preconscious back beyond censorship into the unconscious itself.

Freud attempts to psychoanalyze works of art as symbolic expressions of their creator’s psychodynamics. The fundamental premise that permits Freud to examine cultural phenomena is called [sublimation](#) in the *Three Essays*. “The appreciation or creation of ideal beauty,” Freud contends, “is rooted in primitive sexual urges that are transfigured in culturally elevating ways” (49). Unlike repression, which produces only neurotic symptoms whose meaning is unknown even to the sufferer, sublimation is “a conflict-free resolution of repression, which leads to intersubjectively available cultural works” (49). Freud extends the scope of his theories to include anthropological and social psychological speculation as well in *Totem und Tabu* (1913; [Totem and Taboo](#)). Drawing on Sir James Frazer’s explorations of the Australian Aborigines, he interprets the mixture of fear and reverence for the totemic animal in terms of the child’s attitude toward the parent of the same sex. The Aborigines’ insistence on exogamy was a complicated defense against the strong

incestuous desires felt by the child for the parent of the opposite sex. Their religion was thus a phylogenetic anticipation of the ontogenetic oedipal drama played out in modern man's psychic development. But whereas the latter is purely an intra-psychic phenomenon based on fantasies and fears, the former, Freud boldly suggests, "is based on actual historical events" (50). Freud speculates that the rebellion of sons against dominating fathers for control over women has culminated in actual patricide. Ultimately producing remorse, this violent act led to atonement through incest taboos and the prohibitions against harming the father-substitute, the totemic object or animal. When the fraternal clan replaced the patriarchal horde, true society emerged. For renunciation of individual aspirations to replace the slain father and a shared sense of guilt in the primal crime led to a contractual agreement to end internecine struggle and band together instead. The totemic ancestor then could evolve into the more impersonal God of the great religions.

A subsequent effort to explain social solidarity, *Massenpsychologie und Ich-analyse* (1921; *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*), draws on the antidemocratic crowd psychologists of the late nineteenth century, most notably Gustave Le Bon. Here the disillusionment with liberal, rational politics that some have seen as the seedbed of much of Freud's work was at its most explicit (the only competitor being the debunking psychobiography of Woodrow Wilson he wrote jointly with William Bullitt in 1930, which was not published until 1967). All mass phenomena, Freud suggested, are characterized by intensely regressive emotional ties stripping individuals of their self-control and independence. Rejecting possible alternative explanations such as hypnotic suggestion or imitation and unwilling to follow Jung in postulating a group mind, Freud emphasized instead individual libidinal ties to the group's leader. Group formation is like regression to a primal

horde with the leader as the original father. Drawing on the army and the Roman Catholic Church as his examples, Freud never seriously considered less authoritarian modes of collective behavior.

Freud's bleak appraisal of social and political solidarity was replicated, if in somewhat more nuanced form, in his attitude toward religion. Although many accounts of Freud's development have discerned debts to one or another aspect of his Jewish background, debts Freud himself partly acknowledged, his avowed position was deeply irreligious. As noted in the account of *Totem and Taboo*, he always attributed the belief in divinities ultimately to the displaced worship of human ancestors. One of the most potent sources of his break with former disciples like Jung was precisely this skepticism toward spirituality.

Freud contends that obsessional neuroses are private religious systems and religions themselves no more than the obsessional neuroses of mankind. He elaborates this argument, adding that "belief in God is a mythic reproduction of the universal state of infantile helplessness" (24). Like an idealized father, "God is the projection of childish wishes for an omnipotent protector" (24): "if children can outgrow their dependence, he concluded with cautious optimism, then humanity may also hope to leave behind its immature heteronomy" (25).

The simple Enlightenment faith underlying this analysis quickly elicited critical comment, which led to its modification. In an exchange of letters with the French novelist Romain Rolland, Freud came to acknowledge a more intractable source of religious sentiment. The opening section of his next speculative tract, *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930; *Civilization and Its Discontents*), was devoted to what Rolland had dubbed the oceanic feeling. Freud described it as a sense of indissoluble oneness with the universe, which mystics in particular have celebrated as

the fundamental religious experience. Its origin, Freud claimed, is nostalgia for the pre-Oedipal infant's sense of unity with its mother. Although still rooted in infantile helplessness, religion thus derives to some extent from the earliest stage of postnatal development. Regressive longings for its restoration are possibly stronger than those for a powerful father and thus cannot be worked through by way of a collective resolution of the Oedipus complex.

Civilization and Its Discontents, written after the onset of Freud's struggle with cancer of the jaw and in the midst of the rise of European Fascism, focuses on the prevalence of human guilt and the impossibility of achieving unalloyed happiness. Freud contends that "no social solution of the discontents of mankind is possible" (13). All civilizations, no matter how well planned, can provide only partial relief: "for aggression among men is not due to unequal property relations or political injustice, which can be rectified by laws, but rather to the death instinct redirected outward" (13).

Even Eros, Freud suggests, is not fully in harmony with civilization, for the libidinal ties creating collective solidarity are aim-inhibited and diffuse rather than directly sexual. Thus, there is likely to be tension between the urge for sexual gratification and the sublimated love for mankind. Furthermore, because Eros and Thanatos are themselves at odds, conflict and the guilt it engenders are virtually inevitable. The best to be hoped for is a life in which the repressive burdens of civilization are in rough balance with the realization of instinctual gratification and the sublimated love for mankind. But reconciliation of nature and culture is impossible, for the price of any civilization is the guilt produced by the necessary thwarting of man's instinctual drives. Although elsewhere Freud had postulated mature, heterosexual genitality and the capacity to work productively as the hallmarks

of health and urged that “where id is, there shall ego be,” it is clear that he held out no hope for any collective relief from the discontents of civilization. He only offered an ethic of resigned authenticity, which taught the wisdom of living without the possibility of redemption, either religious or secular.

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, the state broadened its jurisdiction to include petty offences, minor indecencies, insignificant perversions; and lastly, “all those social controls cropping up at the end of the last century, which screened the sexuality of the couples, parents and children, dangerous and endangered adolescents -- undertaking to protect” (qtd. in Foucault 30). Michael Foucault speculates over the nature of modern societies in terms of their treatment of sex: “what is peculiar to modern societies, in fact, is not that they consigned sex to a shadow existence, but that they dedicated themselves to speaking of it *ad infinitum*, while exploiting it as *the secret*” (35). Foucault further illumines the emergence of perverts and illnesses related to sex:

Through the various discourses, the legal sanctions against minor perversions were multiplied; sexual irregularity was annexed to mental illness; from childhood to old age, a norm of sexual development was modern societies defined and all the possible deviations were carefully described; pedagogical controls and medical treatments were organized; around the least fantasies, moralists, but especially doctors, brandished the whole emphatic vocabulary of abomination. (36)

Prohibitions bearing on sex were essentially of juridical nature. The nature on which they were based was still a kind of law. For a long time hermaphrodites were criminals, or crimes offspring, since their anatomical disposition, their very being, and “confounded the law that distinguished the sexes and prescribed their union” (38).

Foucault makes a critique of systems conceived by the West for governing sex: “the law of marriage and the order of desires” (40). He brings the instance of Lord Byron’s famous character Don Juan as a figure of rebellion—“and the life of Don Juan overturned them both” (40). Foucault mimics the then social system, “we shall leave it to psychoanalysts whether he was homosexual narcissistic, or impotent (40). Although not without delay and equivocation, the natural laws of matrimony and immanent rules of sexuality began to be recorded in two separate registers. There emerged a world of perversion that partook of that of legal or moral infraction, yet was not simply a variety of a letter: “from the end of the eighteenth century to our own they circulated through the pores of society” (40). Foucault describes the social treatment of those who transgress the sexual boundaries created by society:

They were always hounded, but not always by laws; were often locked up, but not always in prisons; were sick perhaps, but scandalous, dangerous victims, prey to a strange evil that also bore the name of vice and sometimes crime. In the course of the century they successively bore the stamp of ‘moral folly,’ ‘genital neurosis,’ ‘aberration of the genetic instinct,’ ‘degenerescence,’ or ‘physical imbalance.’ (40)

Human sexuality, however, does not follow the rules of restriction. The more society attempts to repress it, the more it flourishes in different colors. “Homosexuality appeared as one of the forms of sexuality when it was transposed from the practice of sodomy onto a kind of interior androgyny, a hermaphroditism of the soul,” Foucault examines the overt expression of homosexuality, “the sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species” (43). He endows the emergence of homosexuality to nineteenth-century bourgeois society:

Nineteenth-century “bourgeois” society – and it is doubtless still with us – was a society of blatant and fragmented perversion. And this was not by a way of hypocrisy, for nothing was more manifest and more prolix, or more manifestly taken over by discourse and institutions. Not because having tried to erect too rigid or too general a barrier against sexuality, society succeeded only in giving rise to a whole perverse outbreak and a long pathology of sexual instinct [. . .] pleasure and power reinforced one another. (47)

The changing economic and political scenario did not set up a barrier; it provided places of maximum saturation. It produced and determined a sexual mosaic. Modern society is perverse, “not in spite of its Puritanism or as if from a backlash provoked by its hypocrisy; it is in actual fact, and directly, perverse” (47). “The growth of perversions is not a moralizing theme that obsessed the scrupulous minds of Victorians,” Foucault outlines, “It is the real product of the encroachment of a type of power on bodies and their pleasures” (48).

The second two volumes, *The Use of Pleasure* (*Histoire de la sexualité, II: l'usage des plaisirs*) and *The Care of the Self* (*Histoire de la sexualité, III: le souci de soi*) dealt with the role of sex in [Greek](#) and [Roman](#) antiquity. Both were published in 1984, the year of Foucault's death, with the second volume being translated in 1985, and the third in 1986. In his lecture series from 1979 to 1980 Foucault extended his analysis of government to its wider sense of techniques and procedures designed to direct the behavior of men, which involved a new consideration of the examination of conscience and confession in early Christian literature. These themes of early Christian literature seemed to dominate Foucault's work, alongside his study of Greek and Roman literature, until the end of his life. However, Foucault's death left the work

incomplete, and the planned fourth volume of his *History of Sexuality* on Christianity was never published. The fourth volume was to be entitled [*Confessions of the Flesh*](#) (*Les aveux de la chair*). The volume was almost complete before Foucault's death and a copy of it is privately held in the Foucault archive. It cannot be published under the restrictions of Foucault's estate.

Dr. Gary W. Wood theorizes the characteristic features of homosexuals, though the society has already witnessed the overlapping/blurring of sexual boundaries. “There is more at stake because a strong component of attitudes to male homosexuality is the sense of deviation from the narrow confines of the traditional male role, Wood contends in *Sex Lies and Stereotypes: Challenging Views of Women Men and Relationships*, “transcending these restrictions and breaching boundaries of masculinity represents a challenge to male power” (163). Wood furthers his argument:

The term ‘homosexual’ was first used to refer to effeminate men who took the passive role in sex with masculine men. Thus, it was acknowledged at the same-sex desire had different meanings for each of the participants. A man who allowed to be penetrated by another man undertook the role traditionally ascribed to a female. (qtd. in Wood 163-64)

Wood’s observation denies the categorization of sexuality: female and male roles are present in any forms of sexual practices. For him construction of human sexuality depends more on gender roles assigned to male and female.

A significant part of discourses on sexuality comes from Judith Butler. Butler's argument concerns the role of sex in the construction of natural or coherent gender and sexuality. In *Bodies That Matter: on the Discursive Limits of Sex* (1993), Butler explicitly challenges biological accounts of binary sex, reconceiving the sexed body

as itself culturally constructed by regulative discourse. The supposed obviousness of sex as a natural biological fact attests to how deeply its production in discourse is concealed. “The sexed body, once established as a ‘natural’ and unquestioned ‘fact,’ is the alibi for constructions of gender and sexuality, unavoidably more cultural in their appearance,” she argues, “which can purport to be the just-as-natural expressions or consequences of a more fundamental sex” (6). On Butler’s account, “it is on the basis of the construction of natural binary sex that binary gender and heterosexuality are likewise constructed as natural” (7). In this way, Butler claims that “without a critique of sex as produced by discourse, the [sex/gender distinction](#) as a feminist strategy for contesting constructions of binary asymmetric gender and [compulsory heterosexuality](#) will be ineffective” (8). Butler further argues:

The abject body can be a "critical resource in the struggle to rearticulate the [. . .] terms of symbolic legitimacy and intelligibility" for contemporary body- subjects. Practices such as performance art, drag, women's bodybuilding, and anti-aesthetic cosmetic surgery, as well as the scarring, branding, tattooing, and piercing in body modification subculture, have been conceived from this viewpoint as radical or countercultural, potentially undermining normative, hegemonic, or traditional categories of identity. (3)

In Judith Butler’s formulation, gender is performed as the body is stylized. Following Foucault's insistence that subjectivities are produced through discursive regimes and technologies of the self, Butler argues that the everyday production of hegemonic heterosexuality is accomplished through bodily practice and figures centrally in women's subordination, in the subordination of those who reside outside the sexual mainstream, and in the buttressing of oppressive, binary gender roles. Yet because

they are constituted by and within the practices of embodiment, gender and gendered bodies are not wholly immutable. This feminist emphasis on practice affords not only a dynamic reading of discursive formations such as (hetero) sexuality but also the possibility of agency--the body--subject is not only socially controlled, but because it is constituted by practices, it is open to the possibility of deconstruction and re-inscription. Some poststructuralist feminist and queer theorists have taken up the ambiguous/anomalous body as a space that potentially elides the effects of normative gender socialization.

III. Quest for Primitive Self in *the Goat or, Who is Sylvia ?*: A Textual Analysis

This chapter borrows the critical insights of psycho-cultural discourses discussed in the previous chapter to claim that Martin's fall from glory is the inevitable consequence of society's restriction of human sexuality. The leading character of Albee's play, Martin, all humans for that matter, is an animal by instinct. But his civilization, and culture, works to prevent Martin from exposing the instinctual self. This chapter traces multiple instances of rejection of such cultural values in Edward Albee's play *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*. Edward Albee's play *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?* is about a man who falls in love with a goat. Sounds weird, but this is a major work that tackles themes of obsessive love, forbidden desire and

repressed sexuality. Albee's timeless drama *The Goat Or, Who Is Sylvia?* is not only a representational work of art that depicts social life in the 1960s but also a strong comment on the concept of the American dream that survived during the corrupt period of the sixties. In addition the drama shows the corruption, carelessness, cold-heartedness, selfishness, romantic illusions, lust for money and sex and other types of frivolities that dominated the lives of the American people in this decade.

On reading Albee's *The Goat*, despite the puzzling ambiguity of stated meaning, we feel that many of the problems of modern life are reflected in its images, symbols and subtexts. This unit is a discussion of crises in the modern world, which is represented in the text, and illustrated in textual analysis. These problems include crisis in communication, in human relationship and values, disintegration of mind of modern people, curiosity and frustration, anxiety and despair, etc. These problems that comprise the crisis of identity, chaos and professional failure are the main discussion of this study.

The existential conundrum opens early in the play, which can be traced in these opening dialogues that takes place in Martin's living room with his wife:

MARTIN: [Rueful.] Probably. Why did I come in here?

STEVIE: I heard you in the hall; I called you.

MARTIN: Aha.

STEVIE: What's my name?

MARTIN: PARDON?

STEVIE: Who am I? Who am I?

MARTIN: [Acted.] You are the love of my life, the mother of my handsome and worrisome son, my playmate, my cook, my bootlewasher. Do you?

STEVIE: What?

MARTIN: Wash my bottles?

STEVIE: [Puzzles it.] Not as a habit. I may have—washed one of your bottles. Do you have bottles?

MARTIN: Everyone has bottles. (7, Scene I)

Martin's conversation with Stevie exposes simultaneous threat in individual existence of both characters. Religion and science drove the development of professionalism, the economic system of commerce-driven market exchange, which in turn serves to create lack of individual identity. Martin is inclined to forget his name despite professional success. He takes Stevie as his 'honey' who is ever ready to 'spill' over him': Martin identifies her with his 'bottlewasher,' 'cook,' 'playmate,' and the 'mother of his handsome and worrisome son.' The rise of professionalism (capitalism) itself influences people's beliefs, values, and ideals in many present-day, large, civilized societies. In these societies, such as in the United States, many people view the world and shape their behavior based on a belief that they can understand and control their environment and that work, commerce, and the accumulation of wealth serve an ultimate good. The governments of most large societies today also assert that human well-being derives from the growth of economies and the development of technology.

Albee painstakingly dissects the 'American dream' in many of his plays; he even gives one of his early one-act plays that title. In *The Goat* he attacks many of the values that traditionally comprise that dream: marriage, children, success, wealth, education, religion and so on. He claims each of these values to be empty, resulting in loveless and sterile marriages, failed careers, ill-gotten wealth, squandered education, powerlessness or corrupt religion. With these values so decayed, Albee seems to be

saying, the country is a barren wasteland, where people must imagine another reality in order to compensate for what is missing. In *The Goat*, Albee has painted a bleak and unflattering portrait of a country whose ideals have disintegrated so fully that they can be portrayed by a desperate, sad and seemingly hopeless couple. The exposition of conflict is marked by Martin's confession that he is in love with (and even has made love with) Sylvia, a country goat:

STEVIE: SOMETHING'S GOING ON, ISN'T IT!?

MARTIN: Yes! I've fallen in Love!

STEVIE: I knew it!

MARTIN: Hopelessly!

STEVIE: I knew it!

MARTIN: I fought against it!

STEVIE: Oh, you poor darling!

MARTIN: Fought hard!

STEVIE: I suppose you'd better tell me!

MARTIN: I can't! I can't!

STEVIE: Tell me! Tell me!

MARTIN: Her name is Sylvia!

STEVIE: Sylvia? Who is Sylvia?

MARTIN: She's a goat; Sylvia is a goat! [Acting manner dropped, normal tone now; serious flat.] She's a goat. (9-10, Scene I)

The Goat represents the general human condition or predicament where men have lost their old meanings and not yet achieved new ones. In short, it represents man 'in transition'. The other aspect in the play is the atmosphere of fear for reasons that are unknown. There is anxiety, fear and tension not only due to hostility between

characters, but also due to some underlined 'menace'. Such instinctive fear and anxiety is seen in most of his plays. A similar type of fear for unknown future is echoed in Stevie's mind as Martin confesses his love for Sylvia-the goat.

The first half of the twentieth century itself was a time of innumerable problems including the erosion of human values, hostility, depression, moral degradation and a general collapse of the foundations of civilization. It is in response to so many problems of life such as the above that the philosophy of existentialism and absurdity came into being. Harold Clurman accuses Albee of employing a “slick and automatic” morbidity which borrows from avant-garde fashion without justifying itself: “the right to pessimism has to be earned within the artistic terms one sets up; the pessimism and rage of *The Goat* is immature; immaturity coupled with a commanding deftness is dangerous” (78).

Taken together, these two characters-Ross and Martin-- these have been thought by Albee enough to dispose of the whole question of ideology. The end of ideology school is palpably the creation of Ross's political right beliefs, whereas our own post-ideological complacency often enough sports radical credentials in Martin's speech. Martin views all of the ideological products as inherently closed, dogmatic and inflexible, where he promulgates postmodernist thought that tends to see all ideology as teleological, totalitarian and metaphysically grounded. Grossly, the concept of ideology is obediently written in the conversation between Ross and Martin:

MARTIN: [Gentle admonishing smile.] You don't understand.

ROSS: NO? No blonde hair? No tits?

MARTIN: No. And there she was, looking at me with those eyes.

ROSS: And it was love.

MARTIN: No. Yes; yes, it was love, but I didn't know it right then.

[To himself.] How could I?

ROSS: Alright; let me help you. You're seeing her. You're having an affair with her. [Hard.] You're screwing her.

MARTIN: [Sudden vision of it.] Yes, I'm screwing her. Oh, Jesus! (22, Scene I)

Albee takes *The Goat* as an examination of the post-ideological human scene, American Scene in particular, an attack on the substitution of artificial for real values in our society, a condemnation of complacency, cruelty and emasculation and vacuity, a stand against the fiction that everything in this slipping land of ours is peachy keen. He expresses his pangs through a protagonist, Martin.

The revolutionary approach to the nature of human life and reality developed by Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Sartre, Camus, Heidegger and Husserl is a reflection of the condition of human life in this age. The grandiose myths and taboos of religion were proven as cheap and childish illusions by World War II, and high sounding political theories were also shattered with the fall of Nazi dictatorship. The thinkers of the second half of the twentieth century scornfully discarded the basis of human identity, their faith and ideas, and other fallacies. The familiar world of reasoning and the 'reality' of man's faith were undermined by incredible happenings and developments. Human existence was now seen as transcending into nothing. Man's struggle for freedom, the justification of his actions and beliefs, the validity of the true, right or good against the false, wrong or evil, his existential problems of alienation, loneliness, mystery, menace, anxiety, despair, insecurity, disillusionment and death are common themes of the literature of the time.

Albee's drama represents in his own way the bitter realities of contemporary human condition. His plays deliberately leave the audiences in an ambiguous and confusing state from beginning to end as if they are being made to experience the crisis of life in the Fifties and Sixties, instead of being told about it. The hostility lurking behind family relations as well as behind the relationship between guests, the mutual malevolence threatening their security, the uncertainty of any prospect for life, the indifference about one another's identity and welfare, and all such problems that we witness in his dramas were real problems of real life during the two decades of the fifties and sixties.

The more ideology restricts the unconscious the more the latter tends to outburst. End of ideology theory observes and analyses the implications of ideological complacencies which comes to pair up with Martin's assertion that "someone who was entirely the victim of ideological delusion would not even be able to recognize an emancipatory claim upon them" (23) when arguing on his relationship with Ross:

ROSS: [Genuine.] You're in very serious trouble.

MARTIN: [Pause; little boy.] I am?

ROSS: [Quiet; shaking his head as he looks at the photo.] You sure are, buddy; You sure are.

MARTIN: But, Ross, You don't under. . .

ROSS: [Huge.] THIS IS S GOAT! YOU'RE HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH A GOAT! YOU'RE FUCKING A GOAT!

MARTIN: [Long pause, factual.] Yes. (23, End of Scene I)

The conversing characters always fail to understand each other. This is a main feature of man in the modern world. Albee depicts Martin's mind: the lack of relationship,

rapport and communication may not be true to many people in the real world but the dramatic situations are true to everyone's feelings very often.

Albee's views about women, and Stevie to be precise, can be put this way in Peter Wolfe's words, "Albee's view of contemporary women as vessels of shrieking sadism is theatrically exciting . . . he advances the ideas that today's women often find themselves compelled to act against the principles . . . he shows the artificiality of women and men and their destructive role in American society" (qtd. in Stein et. al. 7). Stevie blurts out her consolations, all of her life principles:

STEVIE: We all prepare for jolts along the way, disturbances of the peace, the lies, the evasions, the infidelities—if they happen. [Very offhand.] I've never had an affair, by the way, all our years together; not even with a cat . . . or anything. Something can happen that outside the rules, that does not relate to the way the game is played. Emotional disengagement gradual, so gradual, you don't know its happening. You've read about spouses –god, I hate that word!—" who all of sudden start wearing dresses, "Spouses"—wives gone dyke . . . but there's one thing that you don't put on your plate, no matter how exotic your taste may be . . . bestiality. That's the one thing I've not been taught about, and you have not thought about. (30, Scene II)

Turning to the domain of sexuality, Albee attacks socially normalized sexuality by bringing homosexuals and zoophiles to the stage. One of today's commonplaces is that so called virtual or cyber sex presents a radical break with the past: Martin obtains the contacts of escorts and perverts online. Here, Albee seeks the post-psychological answer to this phenomenon. His analysis of present commonplace through Martin—"we have to expose the myth of 'real sex' allegedly possible before

the arrival of virtual sex” (21)—reveals that there is no sexual relationship, to mean precisely that the structure of real sexual act is “already inherently fantasmic” (22).

Conversation between Martin and Billy, father and son, further unfolds:

BILLY: You’re doing what?! You’re fucking a goat?!

MARTIN: [Indicating Stevie, who is at window, facing out.] Billy!
Please!

BILLY: [Scoffing laugh.] You’re fucking a goat and you tell me not to swear!

MARTIN: You know your own sex life leaves a little to . . .

BILLY: At least what I do is with . . . persons!

MARTIN: Fucking faggot!

BILLY: Goat fucker.

The riveting dialogue is noteworthy for its use of nonsense language and mocking of theatrical conventions as is peculiar of Edward Albee and the late 20th-century dramatic trend in general. Albee sought to employ the subconscious mind by creating works of art spontaneously, without conscious thought; the sometimes bizarre, disjointed, or illogical products of this process resemble post-ideological existence. The characters keep speaking or making noise to overcome their loneliness and alienation. Martin and Stevie frequently call each other by names, but they hardly respond to the call. She makes satire over Martin’s character with her son:

STEVIE: [Cool.] I said your father’s sorry for calling you a fucking faggot because he’s not that kind of man. He’s a decent, liberal, right thinking, talented, famous, gentle man [Hard.] who right now would appear to be fucking a goat. And I would like to talk about it, if you don’t mind. (24)

Communication gap is seen from the very first act. Martin does not have any idea of the arrival of guests, Ross's television crew.

The disillusionment of modern man about the meaninglessness of his own existence is represented in this dialogue delivery:

MARTIN: I'm getting there. I'm getting to her.

STEVIE: Stop calling it her!

MARTIN: [Defending.] That's what she is! It is she! It is a she! (32)

This is absurd in that Martin is devoid of purpose, cut off from his religious, metaphysical anti transcendental roots, man in lost, all his actions become senseless, absurd and useless. Similarly, Stevie highlights the burden of living: "did you ever think you'd come back from your splendid life, walk into your living room, and find you had no life left?" (30, Scene II).

The conjugal life of Martin and Stevie stands on the base of their familial conflict and verbal attack. Stevie is portrayed as a dominating force and her relation with Martin is hollow. She always leaves him at the threshold of complexes and Martin always feels insecure and humiliated. The faithlessness in the conjugal life is due to the collapse of values, due to the subversion of the foundation of our accepted mode of thought-- a terrible experience that has rebelled against the meaninglessness of existence--is due to the revelation of the underlying abyss and void of life on which meaning and security were supposed to be suspended, as well as the realization of such realities that the world of Albee's plays are as they are, like our own world.

Elysa Gardner writes in "A Perverse Albee Gloats in *The Goat*" that "with his latest play, *The Goat or Who Is Sylvia?*," which opened at Broadway's Golden Theatre, "Edward Albee has accomplished something even more perversely impressive" (*Cultural Critique*, 41). Albee recently told a reporter that he wrote *Goat*

to test “the limits of tolerance” in theatergoers, musing, “I suppose some people will be offended and enraged” (Interview, *Hudson*, 26). The play is simply perplexing and sickening by this self-indulgent mess, in which the cynical, disdainful view of family life that has informed some of Albee's more eloquent works reaches its nauseating nadir.

The marriage that comes under siege in this play is, at first blush, the very model of a happy, healthy modern partnership. After more than two decades together, Martin, a renowned architect who has just turned fifty, and Stevie, his witty and devoted wife, remain passionately and comfortably in love. Relaxing in the den of their stylish suburban home, fashioned by scenic designer John Arnone as an elegant refuge filled with books and art, the two seem cozy, playful and engaged in each other's concerns, though not to the point of being co-dependent.

Any shrink would tell that this couple is too good to be true -- for before the first scene is over, we learn that Martin has a dark secret, one that can be gleaned by referring to the play's title and imagining the most obvious worst-case scenario. *The Goat* then degenerates into what is an awkward, mean-spirited black comedy or an even crueler and pettier reflection on relationships, in which Martin and Stevie's union is reduced to a construct for promoting moral relativism. Martin's earnestness and sweetly hapless edges make the character's crisis more credible and affecting. Albee establishes Stevie as an earthy persona and handles her unraveling with instinctive comic prowess, and relays easy warmth that makes some of Albee's nastier flourishes easier to stomach.

Billy is gamely irksome as the couple's seventeen-year-old son, a mincing, glowering creature who becomes a wellspring of convenient metaphorical references

to Dad's deviant behavior. Martin declares about his son, "you're gay, and that's fine . . . and I don't give a shit what you put where" (24).

Ross is more obnoxious still as Martin's oldest friend, whose interaction with his good buddy is so fraught with vague hostility and curious physical tension that one wonders why he doesn't just strangle Martin, or his wife, rather than merely help wreck their marriage. Ross comes huge very moment he hears Martins confession: "THIS IS S GOAT! YOU'RE HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH A GOAT! YOU'RE FUCKING A GOAT!," (24) Ross says.

Granted, through this motley bunch, Albee does succeed in challenging our tolerance. If one can endure fifty four pages of their harried babbling without being tempted to sneak out during a scene transition, he/she surely deserves some sort of prize him/herself.

John Heilpern compares *The Goat*, in "A Man, a Women and a Goat-What's New About That?," with Rochelle Owen's *Futz!*, an Off Broadway hit about a guy who falls helplessly in love with a pig. "It was named Amanda," Heilpern writes, "Sylvia is the goat" (*Hudson Review*, 136). "Ms. Owens was working at Sotheby Parke Bernet in New York City when she wrote *Futz!*," he further contends, "and her play for pig lovers did for the pig what Mr. Albee tries to do for the goat . . . it put zoophilia on the map" (136). He writes:

The innovative 1968 *Futz!* also included various acts of bestiality, sadism; transvestitism and what the most erudite John Simon called in The Times "troilism" (man, woman and pig). I'm not sure whether Amanda the pig was bisexual or just going with the program. Anyway, the cult-movie version of *Futz!* -not to be confused, of course, with *Das Frohliche Dorf* (1955), the hilarious German comedy concerning a

sow named Jolanta—which was directed by Tom O' Horgan, of Hair fame, is principally remembered today for Sally Kirkland riding naked on Amanda. (138)

Lucky Amanda. Like Futz! 's heroine, however, Mr. Albee's Sylvia could be, just might be, a symbol. Dramatist wants us to figure these things out for ourselves. Mr. Albee's goat is sweet, if a little predatory with her come hither eyes. "And it was then that I saw her," confesses Martin, Mr. Albee's tragic hero, explaining to his understandably stunned wife his first eye-lock with the goat, "and she was looking at me . . . with those eyes" (38, Scene II).

Even so, Sylvia symbolizes innocence. The goat possesses an Edenesque purity of soul, whilst also seeming to be a most charming spokesperson for fundamentalist vegetarianism. "I've never seen such an expression," Martin, the cross-species lover, says of his epiphany, "it was pure . . . and trusting . . . and innocent; so . . . so guileless" (39).

We don't actually see Sylvia, and perhaps it's as well. It would spoil the illusion. But in their different, so guileless ways, Mr. Albee's goat and Ms. Owens' pig amount to the same morality tale. Sylvia and Amanda are inevitably killed in acts of blind retribution--making them heavily symbolic martyrs to society's censorious conformism and its judgmental spoilsports. Albee's hero, Martin, is another martyr to the cause, and the dramatist seems to see himself as one, too. He's even thrown in references to Christ and Saint Sebastian, crushed for Heaven's sake.

Edward Albee — or St. Ed, as he is sometimes known--intends to shock us, obviously. The renowned dramatist, anxious to condition us in what to expect, announced before *The Goat* opened at the Golden on Broadway: "there's one thing I'm

doing in this play: testing the tolerance of the audience . . . testing the limits of tolerance” (Interview, *Hudson*, 136).

He has written play that's shocking. Far from pushing the limits of theater, he's doing everything new—call it avant-garde or revolutionary. The message that married couples kill each other was first told by Mr. Albee a generation ago with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. He has actually pulled his punches about the boundaries of love and sex. In *The Goat*, we're given the hero's vague, stammering romanticism of illicit love, but no sense whatsoever of its reality. He and the goat nuzzle but how do they actually get the show on the road? “I won't go into the specifics of our sex with you,” (39) Martin announces primly about his new love. At best he has written a conventional drawing-room comedy with serious undertones. One of Mr. Albee's dubious messages is that some things in life are too serious to be taken seriously. That is why Mr. Albee's married couple likes to impersonate Noel Coward. Mr. Albee, and Sylvia, get their laughs, but there are more bad jokes than there ought to be. After all, the life and marriage of Stevie, the betrayed wife, have been ruined and tragically diminished. Yet, she still has time for jokes about their teenage “kid.” At another side-splitting moment, she teases her husband, “oh, you kid” (29). The wife's anger, when it arrives, amounts to campy melodrama:

STEVIE: [abrupt, cold.] stay away from me. Stay there. You smell of goat, you smell of shit, you smell of all I cannot imagine being able to smell. Stay away from me!

MARTIN: [Arms wide, hopeless.] I love you!

STEVIE: You love me. Let's see if I understand the phrase. You love me.

MARTIN: Yes!

STEVIE: But I'm a human being; I've only two breasts; I walk upright; I give milk only on special occasions . . . how can you love me when you love so much less?! (25, Scene II)

She smashes symbolically primitive art works as she learns of her husband's primitive new love. "I've laid it all out for you," she cries. "I'm naked on the table; take all your knives! Cut me! Scar me forever! (38).

Meanwhile, fifty-year-old Martin, the placid goat lover and architect who's just won the Pritzker Prize, is a pedantic semantician who's meant to be as cool ironist. He corrects people for saying "who" (26) when they mean "whom," (27) and "ranunculi" (26) for the plural of "ranunculus" (27). He's a dope. He's far more concerned about the betrayal of his lifelong best friend Ross, the Judas and liberal-minded hypocrite who ratted to his wife about the goat, than he is about his wife. "I'll tell you what's sick! Writing that fucking letter . . .," (41) Martin says.

Be that as it may, *The Goat* is little more than a shrill domestic drama about infidelity ending with a crime of a passion. "What did she do?," the broken Martin cries to the betrayed wife over the corpse of the lover at the end of the play, "what did she ever do? I ask you: What did she ever do?" (50).

Well, she stole the husband. She pained a blissfully happy twenty-two year marriages. But what Martin sees in a coarse 1950's fink in a blazer like Ross is more of a mystery. It's a pity, or an easy mark, that Ross is the voice of reason, in the play. If we happen to think that liberty (on balance) has borders, we therefore find ourselves agreeing with a contemptible informer.

The Goat is a smug play that way. A brief moment-not too unexpected-when Martin's adolescent son, who's gay and confused, kisses his father sexually while they comfort each other. There's also one fleeting story that Martin tells about a man who

held his baby in his lap and became aroused. "Things happen" is his casual conclusion-the moral equivalent of a shrug.

Anything goes, according to Edward Albee. "Is there anything anyone doesn't get off on, whether we admit it or not-whether we know it or not?"(46) Martin asks as the opening comes to its close. The answer is yes, plain and simple. Ask the baby. But for Mr. Albee to suggest that everything is right is as mindless as saying everything is wrong. He would not claim there's no such thing as bad art or- bad day.

By contrast, but by every means in conflict, Edward Albee in writing *The Goat or who is Sylvia?* speaks against the ideological development of human beings which tends and legislates to control theatre managements, actors, plays, and by implication playwrights. For a play to be acceptable to the ideological jurisdiction of American people, and humanity in general, it needed to be perfectly free both in dialogue and plot from anything immoral. *The Goat* distinguishes itself by successfully negotiating this kind of trenchant embargo.

What stands out in Albee's lively account is that the eventual triumph of mirth did not come before the protagonist, Martin, has his head turned in the direction of bestiality. From the play, the immanent context of the problem of the humanity, in general, that was the burden of a hegemonic, dishonest, corrupting authority, is elucidated. Ideological hegemony is the enduring structural problematic for repeated questions about the identity of the American people, and consequently one theme of American play is the interplay of individual complacency and Ideology. Yet we should not forget that, under different circumstances, overriding ideological authority is also the history of Anglo-phonetic drama which struggled with the long shadow of the Christian censorship.

The play of Edward Albee is exceptional in contemporary American drama in that all of his characters leave the audiences/readers unsure if they have understood them. In fact, there is an unclear portrait of characters, an undeveloped design of plot, together with a close and restricted setting in Albee's drama which makes it difficult to understand. Consequently, readers are compelled to pass different judgments on Albee's plays from the very beginning. Definitely, the oblique and unfamiliar plays of Albee--in contrast to his contemporaries such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller who produced tangible subjects — cause people to associate him with the Theater of the Absurd which was dominant in Europe at the time when Albee appeared. This association is incited by Albee's play, *The Goat*. Moreover, this impression is further reinforced by the idea Albee cherished: lack of communication in the world, which should have been a result of his “exposure to Beckett and the late O’Neil,” he admits, “when he started as a playwright” (Interview 33).

Embodying the spirit of the post-war consciousness of the possibility of the American play, *The Goat* is emblematic of post-ideological complacencies. However, Albee's play is misguided guided tour of American working-class life, and apart from that class-orientation, we should also bear in mind, in relation to the play, the prominent father–son conflict. Albee speculates that the long avoidance of the middle classes in our American play is due to the substitution of imported ideological models. Herein lays another negotiation of ideological hegemony, and the subsequent generation realized yet one more, between the professional success of Martin's work and the intervention bestiality.

IV. Conclusion

In its anxiety to highlight Martin's quest for primitive self in Edward Albee's play *The Goat or, Who is Sylvia?*, this research finds rejection of all forms of liberating claims that civilization had served to maintain in the span of human development. Martin, Albee's protagonist, fails to assemble his personal happiness around and between his wife, son, friends, at the zenith of his professional success,

and accolades he was bestowed with; rather, he finds his complacencies fulfilled in the love with Sylvia-- a country she-goat. The networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers; Martin's sexual engagement with a goat, his act of childhood caressing of his son, and many other instances of sexual perversion is taken in this paper as a point of departure, an outburst of instinct. We gain access to psycho-cultural transformation by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach.

Albee punches in the middle of human existence that makes readers laugh at the beginning but can no longer bear to sustain the weight of this terrific experience: along with Martin, readers bounce upon the ground of success stories which instead bounce back to hollow sphere of epiphany—that human has chosen a wrong path to attain happiness leaving his primitive self far behind.. However, this research ventures around similar other critical discourses which flourish from psycho-cultural school to rescue the hapless hero, Martin, from his socially misfit action of loving an animal.

Albee's Broadway play shocks the readers/audiences with its techniques now common in avant-garde theater and in some mainstream works. Among contemporary playwrights whose work shows the influence of the theater of the absurd include American dramatist Edward Albee whose play often dispense with almost everything that makes the well-made play well made. Amplified breathing is the only hint of human response in some cases, little or no plot, minimalist theatre, offering a stage reality that seems cut to the bone, without the usual realistic devices of plot, character, development, and intricate setting are the characteristic features of Albee's play.

THE GOAT assumes that the world is meaningless, that meaning is a human concept, and that individuals must create significance and not rely on institutions or

traditions to provide it. Martin's movement grows out of existentialism, a postwar French philosophy demanding that the individual face the emptiness of the universe, and create meaning in a life that has no essential meaning within itself. *THE GOAT* thus captures the modern imagination and establishes a landmark in American drama.

Albee seems to be saying that in present world such gestures are necessary to create the sense of significance that people need to live. His characters' awareness of an audience and his refusal to create a drama in which an audience can lose itself in a comfortable surface of realistic illusion are all, in their own way, indebted to Absurdist plays. Albee's play reflects the values of the culture from which they spring. *THE GOAT* makes comments on life in the modern world and questions the values that the culture takes for granted. This play of this part of the twentieth century is a drama of examination. Moral values are the traditional socio-cultural standards, which encourage and expect human beings to behave responsibly for the smooth and sustained functioning of the society. These are the codes of conduct which aim at establishing social order and achieving the ideal of society. These values are instrumental in getting peoples socially eligible, faithful to proven institutions in all spheres of life: cultural political, economic, social, professional and the similar. The Goat brings all these 'living standards' under the scrutiny.

In addition to standing for official set standards of society at large, moral values also encompass individual's conscience independent of social prosperity. Personal conscience itself distinguishes good from bad and prevents a man from falling a prey to evils. It inspires a man to face up to the challenges and catastrophes of life without ever going way to wrongdoings. Thus, Albee's play represents the rejection of established social norms as well as independent individual capacity for truth, goodness and virtue.

The family at times appears to be chaotic in the play, as when there is hysterical rush toward an impending crisis, but no order is restored and society gets going. The play trespasses moral values which are said to be cultural standards that indicate the general goods dimmest desirable for an organized social life. Moral values disintegrate when people feel disenchanting with social codes and start violating them. They are also endangered when people go astray in the face of danger and disaster. The disintegration of moral values finally results in cultural fiasco giving rise to anarchy and upheavals. Albee's characters seem to dream about affluence and success in society at the cost of moral values. He revolts against the corrupt society in which he grew up. He refuses to be integrated with it. He focuses on twisted human relationships within social norms based on materialism and parasitism and deceptive ambition.

Taken together, this research examines Martin's 'pervert' behavior as a slap against conscious values created by civilization and professionalism. Albee's characters refuse to compromise with conventions. They are involved in the process of rejection and destruction. They lose their ultimate goal and fall to sterility and self repetition. It is a world in which brutality governs instead of rationality. One crucial similarity among them is moral carelessness. There is no stable scale of values or ethical system, no implicit belief in the goodness and perfectibility of man discarding instincts.

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