Different Shapes of Anarchy in Edward Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

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Abstract:

Edward Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1961) starts with chaos and anarchy, subverting the traditionally strict gender roles and cultural prescriptions and expectations. Albee's play has revolutionized dramatic writing by opening the play with a deep male identity crisis. The repressive and oppressive gender roles are mimicked. This paper will try to demonstrate that Albee's play is a one pervaded by different levels anarchy, instability of meanings and both verbal and structural turbulence. The play's title indicates two instances of anarchy and sources of fear: the female and the mad. This paper will demonstrate how the reversal of gender roles operates in the play: the husband is feminized while the wife is masculinized, the wife plays an emasculating and unfeminine role while the husband is dominated and in a submissive position. The play's anti-realistic and post-modern structure conveys ideas of improvisation, structural anarchy. It is unbound, fluid and both regressive and digressive. If anything, the play's structure is anarchically unstable, defying the traditional realistic strictures. It is written in a grotesque and comic way that subverts the conventions of the comic genre. The disruptive verbal energy and dueling in the play aims at displaying disrespect for some of the main American values and institutions: family, marriage and academia are constantly debunked. The play stages a state of anarchy beneath the happy and tranquil surface of these institutions. This paper will also attempt to show how the play of anarchy has eventually to be stopped in order for the social order to be restored and vindicated.

Keywords: staging, anarchy, gender, subversion, chaos, crisis, mimicry, structure, digressive

Introduction

The 1950's were dominated by conservative gender and social norms. In the aftermath of World War II, the American society emphasized the household role of women as the guardians of the American family and values. There was an abrupt return to conservative values. The Cold War only intensified the enforcement of strict gender roles as McCarthyism aimed at controlling both the political body and the physical body. The nuclear family was the ideal structure in which American values could be maintained and thrive. Masculinity was hailed as a salient American characteristic. Conversely, new heretic ideas started to emerge. The Beat Generation advocated subversive ideas and modes of behavior while rejecting traditional norms and lifestyles. There was a growing loss of faith in the main American values. As David Savran notes:

> Both the Beat writers and the beat subculture of the late 1940s and 1950s took up an avowedly oppositional stance during what is surely the most repressive period in modern U.S. history, the era that witnessed the apogee of the postwar economic boom, the Cold War, and McCarthyism...They consciously, if confusedly, rebelled against and critiqued the deeply conservative official culture that emerged at the end of World War II. (45)

Edward Albee's *Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf*? was written against this ambivalent background of both entrenched conservative ideas and the destabilizing emergence of new ideas related to gender and family roles.

Literature Review

The play has been interpreted from different perspectives. To start with, in "Illusion in Edward Albee's Selected Play '*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"*. Susan Jaf and Zhang Zaihong focus on the theme of illusion and on the relationship between illusion and reality. They agree that "the play seems to be about illusion, but in fact it examines and presents crises of modern American values and their way of life" (60). Indeed, the play represents the reality of being disillusioned with reality, deterioration of moral values and the effects of materialism. This paper will develop the same idea of oscillation between illusion and reality by demonstrating the role of modern crises in generating anarchy. On the other hand, in 'Pathological Interaction in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia* Woolf" Samira Susani focuses on the open endedness of the play. She argues that there is "a system of interlocking spiral perspectives in this play which leads to a pathological interaction, a game without an end" (1491). This idea about open endedness will be challenged in this paper by showing that the play has an end and order can be established when anarchy stops. The play is also approached from a postmodern angle. In this respect, in "Laughing out Loud in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf:* A Postmodernist Reading" Mourad Romdhani and Olfa Gandouz affirm that "Laughter transforms into an anti-foundational non-verbal expression against constraints and oppression" (107). Humor transforms into anarchy, chaos and disorder. Humor is meant to point out the modern socio-economic and ethical crisis. Other critics examine the role of

absurdity in framing the actions and reactions of characters. For example, in 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf toward the Marrow' Mathew Roudane states: "Language and action that these characters have developed in Beckettian sense into habit, their routines anesthetizing their responses to the self, the other and the language they inhabit" (39). Language plays a fundamental role in determining the responses of characters, their dislocation and meaningless existence. This paper will differ from Roudane's belief in Beckettian absurdity as we will decipher the meaning behind anarchy and chaos. Finally, in 'Who Can Keep Learning the Linguistic Games We Play: Linguistic Games and the Parody of Contemporary American culture in Albee's W*ho's Afraid of Virginia Woolf",* Olfa Gandouz uses a linguistic perspective to perceive the way Albee satirizes contemporary American culture. She writes, "Albee criticizes the nasty effects of popular culture but he also stages his belief in the implementation of a new American system based on encouraging creativity and on preserving the individuality of the human being" (Gandouz 16). In the same way, this paper develops Albee's belief in recreating a new order based on individuality and authenticity. Indeed, a new social order can be established when anarchy comes to an end.

Methodology

The critics we came across have dealt with psychoanalytic, gender and postmodern readings of the play. This paper brings an innovative study by linking anarchy to feminism, structure, plot and themes. French feminist hints will be applied to the play to grasp the playwright's criticism of anarchy, disorder and chaos. This paper will demonstrate how the reversal of gender roles operates in the play. This paper will try to show that Albee's play is a one pervaded by different levels of anarchy, instability of meanings and both verbal and structural turbulence. This paper will also attempt to show how the play of anarchy has eventually to be stopped in order for the social order to be restored and vindicated.

Research Questions

This paper is meant to answer the following research questions:

•How is anarchy presented in Albee's text? What is the relationship between structure, plot, themes and anarchy? How does French feminism help us study Martha's reversal of traditional gender roles? And how does this reversal create anarchy?

•In what ways do contemporary couples debunk the social institution of marriage? How do couples create illusions, linguistic games and anarchy to survive? How does the relationship between the signifier and the signified contribute to create anarchy?

•What is the relationship between illusion and real reality? How do George and Martha face reality? When does anarchy come to an end? and how does reality establish social order and stability?

Anarchy: Thematic and Structural Levels

Edward Albee's *Who is afraid of Virginia Woolf*? announces anarchy on the thematic and structural levels as it stages middle class marriage as a dysfunctional institution. The play stages a

seething state of anarchy beneath the happy and tranquil surface of this institution. In this play, parody and satire are the means used to unleash the anarchy, turmoil and utter absence of authority, thus subverting the traditionally strict gender roles and cultural prescriptions and expectations of American drama. The play opens with a deep male identity crisis as the husband is disempowered while the wife is empowered, the wife plays an emasculating and unfeminine role while the husband is dominated and in a submissive position. The reversal of the traditional gender roles is made clear through the use of puns and playing with words. For instance, when George asks: "For God's sake, Martha, it's two o'clock in the..." (Act 1,11), Mary responds in a harsh and sarcastic manner: "What a cluck! What a cluck you are." (Act 1, 11). The use of the sarcastic expression 'cluck' is meant to humiliate the husband. This humiliation creates a sort of anarchy. The repressive and oppressive gender roles are mimicked.

The reversal of gender roles is further indicated through verbal irony and Martha's description of her husband as 'a dump!' (Act 1, 12). Her condescending behavior and the view of the husband as a fool man indicates the secondary position of the husband. In addition to the opening scene, the play's title indicates two instances of anarchy and sources of fear: the female and the mad. In one of his interviews, Albee explains the meaning of the title using the following words: "Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf means Who's afraid of the big bad wolf.... Who's afraid of living without false illusions" (qtd. in Flanagan). The title translates the fear of facing the reality of failure, the illusions about achievement and the oscillation between bitter reality and fake illusions. The play's anti-realistic and post-modern structure conveys ideas of improvisation and structural anarchy. The play is a departure from conventional realistic expectations and mimetic clarity It is unbound, fluid, metatheatrical, both regressive and digressive. If anything, the play's structure is anarchically unstable, defying the traditional realistic structures of control and containment. Albee does not follow the traditional Aristotelian structure that is based on organic growth and continuity. The play encompasses three climaxes which create a sort of anarchy at the level of the dramatic structure. For example, the third climax occurs at the end of the play which is supposed to be the denouement. The third climax appears when George kills the illusionary son. George declares: "I could kill him any time I wanted" (Act 3, 138). The game of the son leads to anarchy and makes the couple and the audience vacillate between illusion and reality. There is a sort of absurdity and a doubt about the identity of the child. The imaginary son may stand for the American dream and its failure to endow some American citizens with productive success.

Anarchy and "the Masquerade of Femininity"

The play is written in a grotesque and comic way that subverts the conventions of the comic genre. The disruptive verbal energy and dueling in the play aims at displaying disrespect for some of the main American values and institutions: family, marriage and academia are constantly debunked. This paper will make use of the French feminist Luce Irigaray's ideas of 'mimicry' and 'masquerade' to demonstrate how the gender and aesthetic orders are subverted and are supplemented by anarchy. Irigagray never envisions a radical gesture of emancipation from masculine discourse. She rather thinks women have to start from the inside of masculine discourse, turning 'mimesis' into 'mimicry.' For her,

"the issue is not one of elaborating a new theory of which woman would be the *subject* or the *object*, but of jamming the theoretical machinery itself, of suspending its pretention to the production of a truth and of a meaning that are excessively univocal" (Irigaray, *The sex* 78). By 'jamming' the masculine hegemonic discourse, women can show that the univocal truth and meaning conveyed by such discourse is an illusion. 'Masquerade' is another concept theorized by Irigaray. Irigaray believes women are induced into masquerade, it is imposed on them. They masquerade marriage and other social institutions that silence them. Women perform their roles playfully. Irigaray defines masquerade:

> What do I mean by masquerade? In particular what Freud calls "feminity," the belief for example, that it is necessary to *become* a woman, a "normal" one at that, whereas a man is a man from the outset ... A woman has to enter into *the masquerade of feminity*...The female Oedipus complex is woman's entry into a system of values that is not hers and in which she can "appear" and circulate only when enveloped in the needs/desires/fantasies of others, namely men. (134)

The female has to remain a stranger, other to herself, in order to be part of the dominant male ideology. The female is never herself because she has to act, to perform, to appear. A female has to undergo the process of becoming what she is not: a representation, a role, an imposed image. Irigaray adds that

> the value of a woman would accrue to her from her maternal role , and, in addition , from her "feminity". But in fact that "feminity" is a role, an image, a value, imposed upon women by male systems of representation. In the masquerade of feminity, the woman loses herself, loses herself by playing on her feminity... Masquerade has to be understood as what women do in order to recuperate some element of desire, to participate in man's desire. (132-133)

By entering into this 'system of values' alien to them, women indulge in subversive mimicry of their prescribed gender roles, thus questioning the patriarchal system. They have to perform some "playful crossing and an unsettling one, which would allow woman to rediscover the place of her "self-affection" (This *Sex* 77). The male needs a mirror to maintain his sense of wholeness. The female, is such a mirror, in Irigaray's terms "*a flat mirror* as most apt to capture the image, the representation, the auto-representation" (*Speculum* 77). In addition, Irigaray wonders: "How can we introduce ourselves in such a tightly-woven systemacity?" (*This Sex* 76). For Irirgaray women are left with only one alternative, which is that of mimicry. As she puts it,

> One must assume the feminine role deliberately. Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus to begin to thwart it... To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it (76).

By flagellating each other, Martha and George perform a distorted form of middle-class marriage. Martha tells George: "If you existed I'd divorce you...I cannot even see you...I haven't been able to see you for years..." (18) They insist on the theatrical aspect of marriage: acting, playing roles.

Anarchy and the Institution of Marriage

George and Martha transform marriage into a game where anarchy wreaks havoc. For example, they play with the word bit to refer to the game of the kid. George informs Martha: "Just don't start in on the bit about the kid" (Act 1, 19). The kid refers to the dream of being fertile, having a son and a balanced couple. Martha responds: "I'll start in on the kid if I want to" (Act 1, 19). Martha's response shows that she is the dominant partner and she patronizes over George. The unconventional relationship between husband and wife transforms traditional marriage into anarchy.

The couple also debunk the traditionally prescribed roles of husband and wife, satirize the conventional meanings and truths the middle class audiences expect to see performed and eventually confirmed on Broadway. In trying to seduce the guest Nick and by dressing for him, she masquerades the male objectification of the female body. She lets her body express what conventions forbid but what the male gaze craves. To be a mimic for a female

> means to resubmit herself – inasmuch as she is on the side of "perceptible," of "matter" – to "ideas," in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make "visible," by an effect of playful repetition, what was supposed to remain invisible: the cover-up of a possible operation of the feminine in language. It also means "to unveil" the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are not simply resorbed in this function. *They also remain elsewhere:* another case of the persistence of "matter," but also of "sexual pleasure" (Irigaray 76).

Martha constantly refers to her unmanageable sexuality, to her supposed infidelities in order to further make the two male characters anxious. In this context, Martha invites Nick to dance with her: 'Nick and Martha move apart now, and dance on either side of where George and Honey are sitting. They face each other, and while their feet move but little, their bodies undulate congruently" (Act 2, 80). Martha tries to seduce Nick and to provoke George's jealousy. She is a playful woman who masquerades the commodification of the female body. The masquerade is meant to debunk the patriarchal system from within. Mary tries to attract Nick revealing: "I like the way you move' (Act 2, 81). She is a dominant lady who intends to make Nick and George anxious. Nick responds in a passive way: "I like the way you move, too." (Act 2, 81). His response shows that he oscillates between male gaze and the fear of being unfaithful to his wife. On the other hand, George informs his wife: "You have ugly, talents, Martha" (Act 2, 81). The ugly representation of reality suggests George's failure to seduce his wife and his anxiety about infidelity. The common point between the two male characters of the play is that they remain situated between desire and fear.

Anarchy and Setting: Public vs. Private spaces

Another anarchic element in the play is the absence of separation between the public and private spheres as is traditionally the case. The public and the private spaces interact and are performed concurrently, simultaneously, hence the scandalous and subversive aspects of the play. The guests, the younger couple, enter the flat with expectations of order, assigning the female strictly

domestic roles as the two wives are housewives. The domestic paradigm expects women to be docile, obedient, and passive. Martha turns these normalcy expectations into anarchy by behaving violently, like a shrew, using vulgar and bawdy language. The wife in modern American drama has traditionally had a passive family-centered role. Martha's verbal energy is the most conspicuous aspect of her anarchic behavior. George claims "Martha is a devil with language" (20). Like her body, her language is temporarily free from the grammatical and syntactical restrictions, refusing to be a complement or an object. Martha does not respect the sanctity of the house and she humiliates her husband in front of the guests: "Look, muckmouth. You cut that out" (Act 1, 20). The use of the pejorative term 'muckmouth' proves that Martha deploys verbal violence and she does not respect the privacy of the couple. When she verbally travels to the edge, the stage overflows. She anarchically oversteps, she finds some room from which to maneuver. Martha's self-created signifieds slip the two men's conventional male understanding. Despite being a housewife, Martha occupies center stage and manipulates much of the verbal action in the play. George objects to his wife's attitude in front of the guests and he describes her using the following words: "Vulgar girl! with guests here" (Act 2, 22). She unleashes anarchy as she aggressively addresses her husband and the guests. She stages and performs the masquerade of marriage and femininity. The guests try to resist the anarchy besieging them but, with the subversive help of alcohol, they eventually fall into the older couple's trap and reveal the hidden secrets of their marriage and the pathological relations inside that marriage.

Anarchy and Inventing Games

George invents "Hump the hostess" (Act 2, 85) to trap the young couple and to make them reveal the reality about their dysfunctional marriage. George reveals: "His mouse, she tooted brandy immodestly and spent half of her time in the upchuck" (Act 2, 88). The mouse stands for Honey who drinks heavily and she is often sick. Honey blames her husband for revealing the secret about their intimate relationship and she starts getting sick. Honey screams "[hysterically] Leave me alone … I'm going …to…be…sick" (Act 2, 90). Honey is organically sane, but psychologically traumatized by the institution of marriage. She reveals to the audience: "the doctors say there's nothing wrong with me organically" (Act2, 75). Sickness suggests the pathological relationship between Honey and Nick. Honey adds "I don't want any children. I'm afraid! I don't want to be hurt…please!" (Act 2, 105). Sterility reflects the failure to establish a balanced family. In reality, there is a sense of isolation and miscommunication between Honey and Nick. In this way, the play becomes a stage for "the painful striving of isolated individuals for communion [which] leads mainly to even more terrifying solitude" (Kolin and Davis 90). The couple disclose the anarchy inside, the institution of marriage, an institution supposed to breed order and containment.

Anarchy and the Theatricalization of Marriage

Martha and George perform marriage to show the elsewhere of marriage, its unspoken and hidden pathological and dysfunctional aspects The elder couple stage their marital problems in front of the young couple and later make them speak about their own dysfunctional marriage. The unsaid

and unspoken is anarchically on the stage. What is traditionally tacit is now explosively explicit. The apparent surface harmony of Nick and Honey, the young couple, is revealed to hide simmering materialism, self-interest and corruption. The wife, Honey, is a priest's daughter who made a fortune using god's name. In this respect, Nick criticizes his father-in-law: "He built hospitals, and he sent off mercy ships, and brought the outhouses indoors, and he brought the people outdoors into the sun and he built three churches" (Act 2, 69). The sarcastic tone conveys Nick's denunciation of the priest as a materialistic man who builds churches as an opium to divert some citizens' attention away from important issues and to steal money. It is the traditional paradoxical combination of the material and the spiritual in the American Dream. There is no fusion of egos in marriage but it is rather a wedding of interests. Through the theatricalization of marriage, George and Martha destroy the young couple's illusion that has held them together. When Martha retells her marriage story she dismisses romance, as socially nothing is had for nothing. Her first marriage quickly aborted because it was a romance while her marriage with George has external social motivations. The president of the university, Martha's father, needs a male heir and so she loves him for what he has to offer. She cannot love him gratuitously but only in turn for the security required by her father. Only then is it safe to love George.

Anarchy, Satire and Plot

Aesthetically, confusion replaces realism as the play slips out of the social structures and strictures implied by realism. The realistic requirements of typicality, life-likeness and plausibility are played with. Characters are not predictable; the linear plot is constantly subverted by regressions to the distant and even mythical past, fictionalized by the characters. Causality is disavowed as characters create their own narratives regardless of the laws of probability and temporality. George remembers his teens during the Punic Wars, then mentions the Prohibition era to speak of the same period in his life. He anachronistically states:" when I was sixteen and going to prep school, during the Punic Wars, a bunch of us used to go into New York on the first day of vacations…this was during the Prohibition". (61) Again aesthetically, satire and parody are used as forms of anarchy for they destabilize and decenter the verbal and social meanings from their fixed comfortable connotations. Parody is a form of distorted imitation that aims to ridicule or make fun of the imitated idea. Using an extravagant and exaggerated style, parody burlesques established meanings. The concepts of masculinity and feminity are played with and they therefore lose the solidity of their constructed meanings.

Throughout most of the play and under the satiric and parodic gestures of Martha, the concepts of feminity and masculinity glide. The emasculation of George appears through the story of boxing. Indeed, George refuses boxing which is supposed to be a male activity related to strength and physical power. Martha mocks at the vulnerability of her husband "and George wheeled around real quick and he caught it right in the jaw… Pow! [Nick laughs]… Right in the jaw and he was off balance…he must have been …and he stabmled back a few steps, and then, crash, he landed" (Act 1, 40). The funny situation indicates the emasculation of George and the virilization of Mary. In this

way, meaning in this play becomes puzzling as the audience, Nick and Honey and even the reader puzzle over what is meant by any statement. Their received meanings are dislodged.

Anarchy and Metatheatricality

The constant reference to the illusion-truth dichotomy is a metatheatrical element meant to make the play self-reflexive and destabilize the audience's ontological security. When Martha feels George may be tired of playing/acting, she wonders: "what's the matter with you, George? You given up" (Act 2, 77), to which George replies: "No... no. it's just I've got to figure out some new way to fight you, Martha. Guerilla tactics maybe... internal subversion... I don't know. Something" (Act 2, 77). Martha acts as a theatrical creature who unmasks the artificiality of the traditional gender roles and rules. Martha explains the significance of theatricality and playing games: "tis the refuge we take when the unreality of the world weighs too heavy on our tiny heads" (Act 3, 111). In other words, Marthat's theatricality is meant to escape the tragic reality about failure. In fact, "reality exists at the moment when language stops" (Bigsby 282). By playing with words, theatricalising life and herself, Martha engages in a fluid narrative while her husband George remains obsessed with closure and unity. Martha has slipped out of being into becoming. this slippage is the moment "when a woman moves away" (Act 1, 14). In Lacanian psychoanalysis, slippage is defined as an "unstable relationship between the signifier and the signified" (*Lacanian* 190). The unstable relationship is made conspicuous through the games when the signifier and the signified do not correlate. For instance, Martha and George refer to the son as a 'Bean Bag' (Act 2, 63), but Nick does not grasp the meaning of the game. He affirms: "I didn't say I was deaf. I said I didn't understand. I meant I was implying I didn't understand" (64). Nick does not grasp the meaning of 'Bean Bag' (63) because the signifier does not correspond to the signified. Only Martha and George grasp the meaning of the words they use and they try to divert the guests' attention away in order to entrap them about their dysfunctional marriage.

The son in the family is a complement of the mother. As Irigaray notes, "it is the coming of the boy, the birth of a son, that will solve the squaring of the circle. The family circle. ... by giving life to one who has the right to power, she wins the right to be perfectly happy" (107). In other words, a woman becomes powerful and she gains more attention in the patriarchal society when she becomes a mother. The son in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* is a parody of mimesis. He is "their son". The possessive adjective is without any mimetic representation in reality, a mere illusion. Accordingly, Martha does not easily accept the act of killing the son. When George authoritatively kills the fantasy son, Martha protests against George's authority: "NO! NO! YOU CANNOT DO THAT! YOU CANNOT DECIDE THAT FOR YOURSELF! I WILL NOT LET YOU DO THAT" (135). The motherhood that Martha needs to validate her femininity is an illusion imposed by patriarchy.

Anarchy, Illusion and Reality

George has been the playwright and director of the play within the play. He knows the precarious line separating illusion from reality and the danger of mixing them. George reminds

Martha: "I warned you not to go too far" (93) again George seems to be pulling the strings: "you try it and I'll beat you at your own game" (95). He asserts his author's authority. Martha is sad because George has accepted her as she is while she hates being fixed; she wants to be in a state of flux, flow, a state of becoming. Martha addresses her husband:

> Who keeps learning the games we play as quickly as I can change the rules; who can make me happy and I do not wish to be happy, and yes I do wish to be happy. George and Martha: sad, sad, sad ... who I will not forgive for having come to rest; for having seen me and having said: yes; this ill do; sad, sad, sad (Act 3, 113).

His return to reality aims at a utopian and secure reunion of her signifier with her strictly socially defined signified. The couple's life is threatened by the loss and blurring of boundaries. He asks her to come back to the real and social because she has lost track of her fixed 'WHO.' George wants to arrest the endless anarchic movement of signification initiated by Martha's satiric acting of her wifely function. She becomes a character rather than a person. Madness, anarchy par excellence, is a refuge from the "unreality of the world": the heavy weight of rules, the law of the father, the obligations, the endless masking. At the end of the play a new glimmer of hope is created when George declared that "There is a moon, the moon went up" (Act 3, 117). The image of the moon may stand for regeneration, truth and facing reality. Facing reality paves the way towards eternal happiness and inner-peace.

Conclusion

To conclude, the present paper has sought to delineate the manifold shapes of anarchy in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and the way characters move from chaos to order, from illusion to reality and from meaninglessness to meaningfulness. Anarchy is not only present through the structure of the play, the linguistic games, the instability of meaning, satire, parody and the reversal of gender roles. Albee problematizes anarchy when he deploys metatheatricality to accentuate the way gender roles, the institution of marriage and the sanctity of the family are subverted. Debunking the traditional institutions creates disorder and anarchy. From the lens of French feminism, Luce Irigaray' ideas of "mimicry" and "masquerade" show that gender orders are subverted and this subversion creates anarchy. Martha's "masquerade of femininity" is meant to debunk gender roles, to mimic the patriarchal system from within and to challenge the system. Anarchy at structural, thematic and linguistic levels distorts the ideas of traditional order and creates a new concept about postmodern order. Consequently, the stage becomes like an optical prism where order is mirrored. Each ray mirrors real reality and excludes anarchy. Anarchy stops at the end of the play when the older couple go back into real reality. They succeed at facing reality, going beyond anarchy, transcending mystery and re-establishing social order. The main finding is that facing reality is the beginning of happiness.

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