

Edward albee's presentation of nick and his role in who's afraid of virginia wool...

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In 'Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf' by Edward Albee, a main character that is revealed in this play is Nick who plays an important role presented by Albee in different ways. The play which, "shows malicious humiliation and love and tenderness and bitterness" is set on the campus of a small, New England university. Nick is presented in part as an on-stage audience for George and Martha to act out their verbal banter. Moreover the character of Nick is used as a compare and contrast to George. The audience sees Nick as an image of youthful pride, unblemished, athletic whose very life is dedicated to eliminating the imperfections in human genes, but is himself revealed as flawed in the play.

The young couple Nick and Honey are presented as "passive observers. They serve solely as the objects of manipulation". George and Martha simply use the younger, less experienced couple to manoeuvre for advantage in their own bitter struggle. This is further shown in act two by George when he states, "I'll tell you what game we'll play. We're done with humiliate the hosts... how about a little game of get the guests?" George attempts to regain power which is an ongoing theme in the play by humiliating Nick and Honey. He uses what Nick told him about Honey's hysterical pregnancy against them.

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Secondly, Nick's role as a compare and contrast to George is important as both of them possess certain traits that the other lacks and envies. While George is frustrated with his life and the illusions that Martha and he have made, Nick contrastingly is yet to rise in his conquest for power. Throughout

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the entire play, George and Nick proceed through an ongoing verbal battle, competing for the position of high standing power. George attacks Nick's profession because he is afraid of artificially changing the way that people are supposed to turn out, "I've been drawing you out on this stuff, not because I'm interested in your terrible lifehood, but only because you represent a direct and pertinent threat to my lifehood. George openly admits that he's intimidated by Nick's youthful potential, and that he's seeking a way to undermine it.

The audience sees Nick as an ideal man, coldly ambitious, good-looking and athletic who represents the idea of technological advancement. According to Martha he depicts, "the perfect paragon of beauty and achievement". But as George and Martha ruthlessly involve them in their verbal battles, Albee reveals many flaws in Nick in particular. It becomes revealed that the marriage of Nick and Honey is less than perfect and has serious problems. The appearance of a perfect marriage between Nick and Honey is shattered by Nick's admission that they got married because she was pregnant as stated by Nick, "I married her because she was pregnant. [...] It was a hysterical pregnancy. She blew up, and then she went down". Additionally Nick, the perfect model of a new faculty member, is rather easily seduced by Martha, "That's right, lunkhead; answer the door...or are you too drunk to do that, too? Can't get the latch up, either? Since Nick failed to perform in the bedroom, he has lost all status in his relationship with Martha. This also makes one doubt the love in his marriage to Honey.

In *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee, Nick is a very important character presented by Albee. Not only is he presented in part as an on-stage audience for George and Martha, he also exposes the falseness of "The American Dream" through his relationship with Honey. As the perfect image of Nick and Honey crumbles, the final idealization of marriage and family also collapses. Edward Albee suggests that people in America are living in an illusion to which they hold on dearly to avoid facing the reality of a perfect marriage, children, wealth, success, education and religion. All of which compromise the American dream and hence Albee attacks and mocks this idea in the play which is revealed by the main characters to the audience.