

EDWARD ALBEE: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

- 1 **Either** (a) 'NICK: ... You've got history on *your* side ... I've got biology on mine. History, biology.  
 GEORGE: I know the difference.  
 NICK: You don't act it.'

Discuss the dramatic consequences of this debate for the action of the play as a whole.

- Or** (b) How might an audience react as the following scene unfolds? You should make close reference to detail from the passage.

*Nick*: Honey....

*Honey* [to NICK, snapping]: Stop that!

*George*: I thought it was fitting, Martha.

*Martha*: Oh you did, hunh?

*Honey*: You're always at me when I'm having a good time. 5

*Nick* [trying to remain civil]: I'm sorry, Honey.

*Honey*: Just ... leave me alone!

*George*: Well, why don't *you* choose, Martha? [Moves away from the phonograph ... leaves it to MARTHA.] Martha's going to run things ... the little lady's going to lead the band. 10

*Honey*: I like to dance and you don't want me to.

*Nick*: I like you to dance.

*Honey*: Just ... leave me alone. [She sits ... takes a drink.]

*George*: Martha's going to put on some rhythm she understands ... Sacre du Printemps, maybe. [Moves ... sits by HONEY.] Hi, sexy. 15

*Honey* [a little giggle-scream]: Oooooohhhhh!

*George* [laughs mockingly]: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha. Choose it, Martha ... do your stuff! 20

*Martha* [concentrating on the machine]: You're damn right!

*George* [to HONEY]: You want to dance with me, angel-tits?

*Nick*: What did you call my wife?

*George* [derisively]: Oh boy!

*Honey* [petulantly]: No! If I can't do my interpretive dance, I don't want to dance with anyone. I'll just sit here and ... [Shrugs ... drinks.] 25

*Martha* [record on ... a jazzy slow pop tune]: O.K. stuff, let's go. [Grabs NICK.]

*Nick*: Hm? Oh ... hi. 30

*Martha*: Hi. [They dance, close together, slowly.]

*Honey* [pouting]: We'll just sit here and watch.

*George*: That's *right!*

*Martha* [to NICK]: Hey, you *are* strong, aren't you?

*Nick:* Unh-hunh. 35

*Martha:* I like that.

*Nick:* Unh-hunh.

*Honey:* They're dancing like they've danced before.

*George:* It's a familiar dance ... they both know it. ...

*Martha:* Don't be shy. 40

*Nick:* I'm ... not ...

*George [to HONEY]:* It's a very old ritual, monkey-nipples ... old as they come.

*Honey:* I ... I don't know what you mean.

[*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 .... It is as if they were pressed together.*] 45

*Martha:* I like the way you move. 50

*Nick:* I like the way you move, too.

*George [to HONEY]:* They like the way they move.

*Honey [not entirely with it]:* That's nice.

*Martha [to NICK]:* I'm surprised George didn't give you his side of things. 55

*George [to HONEY]:* Aren't they cute?

*Nick:* Well, he didn't.

*Martha:* That surprises me.

[*Perhaps MARTHA's statements are more or less in time to the music*] 60

*Nick:* Does it?

*Martha:* Yeah ... he usually does ... when he gets the chance.

*Nick:* Well, what do you know.

*Martha:* It's really a very sad story.

*George:* You have ugly talents, Martha. 65

*Nick:* Is it?

*Martha:* It would make you weep.

*George:* Hideous gifts.

*Nick:* Is that so?

*George:* Don't encourage her. 70

*Martha:* Encourage me.

*Nick:* Go on.

[*They may undulate towards each other and then move back.*]

*George:* I warn you ... don't encourage her. 75

*Martha:* He warns you ... don't encourage me.

Act 2