

*The Illusive Dreams and
Nightmares in Selected Plays of
Edward Albee.*

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Chapter **three** exhibits the illusive dreams and nightmares of daily life in the American family in The Sandbox and The American Dream .The plays depict the American family and the false values it lives by. The family is guided by the promises of power, sex and material fulfillment, which have replaced love, compassion and authentic living.

Chapter **four** focuses on the discussion of the illusive dreams and nightmares in Peter and Jerry. In this play, Albee mourns the loss of the spiritual confidence which characterizes the individual identity .He depicts a society where individualism has collapsed into an alienated solitarism and enterprise into death. The conclusion sums up the findings of the thesis.

Abstract

To the dream of a paradise on earth is essentially utopian .In spite of the impossibility of finding this utopia; the dream of the Lost Eden goes on. In several cases this becomes more nostalgia, or a subjective, escapist condition. The end of such dream is usually disappointment and despair, but the dream itself becomes a source of strength for life. Consequently, this dream never dies, and in one form or another, man still desires to hitch his wagon to a star.

Edward Albee (1928-) is one of the playwrights who challenges and exposes the presumptive dreams of American society. Albee shows that when the dream is illusive, distorted or unfulfilled, it will be followed by endless nightmare suffering. In his works, Albee gives different insights and meanings to those illusive dreams and nightmares .The purpose of this study is to outline the illusive dreams and nightmares in five selected plays of his. The thesis consists of four chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter **one** is an introduction, which is divided into two sections. Section one exhibits the psychological definitions of dream .It also traces the historical development of the concept of dream and its relation to drama. Section two traces Albee's career and his contribution to American drama.

Chapter **two** discusses the illusive dreams and nightmares that inflict the American society in two plays: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? and The Death of Bessie Smith. The two plays embrace and penetrate the illusion of that society .They delve beneath the surface to reveal a society where intolerance, racism, and discrimination are present; a society which has seen the collapse of moral, religious, political and social structures.

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ' إِنَّنَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَى
وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّنَا كَرَمًا
بِحَدِّ اللَّهِ أَنْتُمْ ' إِنَّنَا اللَّهُ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 The Concept of Dream

Dream is defined psychologically as “a hallucinatory experience that occurs during sleep.”¹ It is also defined as “a combination of thoughts, feelings, sights and sounds experience when awareness of the surrounding world is diminished by sleep, feverish illness, drugs, and periods of drowsy relaxation boarding on sleep.”² Throughout different historical periods, there have been many ways to interpret dreams, and one of the reasons of dream interpretation from antiquity is its prevalence in the literature of the same period.

A unique aspect of the way the ancient Greeks interpreted dreams in their contribution of dream interpretation from previous cultures, as well as their own ideas. Major contributors to dream interpretations in ancient Greece were the Egyptians. Most of what is known about Egyptian dream interpretation is revealed from the archeological and literary remains of Egyptian society .The Egyptian people believe that gods revealed themselves in dreams, but the soul was not transported to another place or time. The Egyptians believed that dreams served as warnings, advice and prophecy. They also had ways to distinguish between good and bad dreams. However, most of the dreams recorded from Egypt were those of important people and they tend to fall in three categories .The first is the gods giving warnings or advice, the second is the gods demanding a certain