

*Domestic Instability and Lack of Communication In
Edward Albee's American Dream and Delicate Balance*
عدم الاستقرار المنزلي و قلة التواصل في مسرحيتي ادوارد البي (الحلم

الأمريكي و التوازن الدقيق)

أ.م.د. وضاح حسن الخزعلي^(١) Dr. Wadhah Hasan Alkhazali

الملخص

يمكن إقامة تواصل للعلاقات العائلية والاجتماعية في نمط الحياة الامريكية المعاصرة، بيد ان الكاتب البي يشخص في معظم مسرحياته الخواء والفراغ في هذه العلاقات كونها مجردة من المعنى. وما يقدمه الكاتب لقرائه من صور انعدام التواصل و فتور العلاقات العائلية و الانانية التي تتجسد في شخوص مسرحياته (الحلم الأمريكي و التوازن الدقيق) ليس الا انعكاس واقعي للمجتمع الذي اقر و سلم بمكثدا واقع مرير.

Abstract

Contact in social and familial relationships in Modern American way of life may be established and present, but Albee and through most of his plays diagnoses the void in those relationships where they are characterized by being abstract without meaning. The loveless, selfishness and the lack of proper contact and warmth of family relationships that the writer offers to his audience through his characters in the two plays under discussion, *American Dream* and *Delicate Balance*, are nothing but a realistic reflection of the society that recognized and approved such a bitter reality.

1.1 Introduction

Edward Albee (1928-2016) is an adopted child by wealthy instable couple.

^١ - جامعة أهل البيت - / كلية الآداب.

Perhaps, Edward Albee's handicapped emotions is largely due to this matter where his foster parents suffer a confused difficult marriage and, therefore, the family is a dysfunctional one. Moreover, Albee suffers "emotional sadism at the hand of his (foster) mother" (Kitteredge, 15), who regularly ridicules his artistic inspiration, his lack of athleticism and demeans him in front of his other friends.

Evaluating Albee's psychology and his work, Gerry McCarthy asserts that there is a close relationship between Albee's improper upbringing and the presentations of his themes and characters throughout his work (MacCarthy, 5). Albee reflects the psychology of his domineering foster mother in some of his plays, as he presents the instability and emasculating tensions of the marital couples. Accordingly, his foster dominant plays a significant "negatively inspiring" role in casting his theatrical female characters in a vicious frame and his opposing attitude to the "shallow, entrenched American values" (Mann, 8). Consequently, Albee has always been accused of being "a misogynist" (Brantley, 1). In his plays, Albee analyzes critically "the struggle of powerful frustrated women and their indeterminate, morally weak men partners" (MacCarthy, 5). Most parents in Albee's dramas are presented in negative images like a sterile couple or bearers of false principles, and accordingly, he explores the destructive forces that may cause the fall of the family and its members. In other words, Albee dramatizes the dehumanization of the American society that glorifies materialistic norms and comfort instead of bolstering familial and societal moral values which lead to a well-structured and stable family and society built on the principles of mutual love and understanding.

The stage for Edward Albee means the analysis and evaluation of the life of the American individual and society who have replaced real higher moral values with an artificial low life that is overwhelmed by materialism, selfishness and lack of communication. Therefore, most of his plays depict cruelty, spiritual and emotional emptiness, and psychological anxiety, which are at the same time a condemnation of the imaginary portrayal of the American dream which makes the American individual believe that everything in life is perfect and fine. Most of Albee's characters, who have been freed from the illusion of the promises of the hollow American dream, look for an ideal life, in which they enjoy economic sufficiency, psychological stability and compassionate communication among members of the same family and society, which is in many ways, far-fetched and beyond their reach.

What distinguishes Albee's plays is a social awareness to come to reality about the defects that the senseless individual, the family and modern American society suffer. Therefore, his plays represent, according to Albee himself, an

effort and "a stand against the fiction that everything in this slipping land of ours is peachy-keen" (Introduction to *The American Dream* 4).

Due to the complexity of the topics and problems that Albee writes about, he uses various methods, like "naturalism, surrealism, symbolism, one-act satirical farce, full-length tragicomedy, and metaphysical allegory" (Paolucci 33) in order to clarify his ideas to be an effective tool for communicating his message and making a tangible impact. Albee's "stylized naturalism" (Stenz 2) lies in his use of subliminal audio-visual impact of staging, intensified language of long dramatic monologue and stage stands. Albee also addresses the audience directly to evoke their mentalities by making his characters step out of the action as Grandma does in *The American Dream*. These strategies do not only serve the playwright's main objectives, but also go beyond them to become experimental and thus revolutionize the traditions of the American theater.

1.2 American Dream (1961)

Contact in social and familial relationships in Modern American way of life may be established and present, but Albee and through most of his plays diagnoses the void in those relationships where they are characterized by being abstract without "the gestures meaning" (Bloom, 17). Therefore, Albee's characters are isolated from each other in little worlds of selfishness, impotence, lovelessness, and all warmth of human contact is lost. His characters may express their passionate words towards each other, but the appearance contradicts reality of the essence of what may be said in a farcical manner. Albee is distressed and anxious to the failure and impotent extent to which these relations have come. The lovelessness, selfishness and the lack of proper contact and warmth of family relationships that the writer offers to his audience through his characters are nothing but a realistic reflection of the society that recognized and approved such a bitter reality.

The protagonists of *The American Dream* are a couple, Mommy and Daddy, who live in the city, where their lives are characterized by everything that is trivial and ridiculous. Mommy's hilarious repeated speech about buying a "hat a lovely little beige hat" (59) does not indicate that she is thoughtful, but rather confirms that she is undignified reckless middle-class consumer. Through Mammy's trivial speech, Albee asserts the rigidity of the middle-class language that focuses continuously on shopping obsession and merchandise acquisition.

If Mommy is inane, the emasculated Daddy is ineffective and isolated from the world and all that surrounds him to the extent that he wants "to get everything over with" (70). Being aware of his inanity, he is unable to cope with his meaningless life. Therefore, he turns to be part of the triviality of the shallow life of his wife.

The play contains many absurd elements, like nameless main characters (to stress their anonymity or their being representatives of anyone) and absurd conversations and actions about the deterioration of family and community relations in modern American life. The couple, Mommy and Daddy, are married despite the lack of mutual understanding and love, where the opportunist Mommy marries a rich man to become wealthy and enjoys his money. In addition, Mommy's relationship with her mother, Grandma, lacks the respect and affection known according to the right moral and cultural values. The couple looks for satisfaction by adopting another child as they killed a child they adopted earlier because he usually does all the things that other children do.

The play also depicts cultural and moral decadence in the lack of respect of the American individuals for each other as Mommy insults, her guest, Mrs. Barker, for having a husband who is confined to a wheelchair. When the Young Man arrives looking for work, Mommy wrongly believes him as the van man whom Grandma fears as she is threatened of expulsion from the family home to the nurse home according to Mammy's order in exchange for the Young Man. The Young Man suffers the agonies of separation from his identical murdered twin. He seems to be their own replacement for the disappointing son they murdered twenty years ago.

The play sheds light on one of family diseases represented by the psychological instability of American family. Grandma, Mommy's mother, who is "much more likable than Mommy or Daddy, is a victim of the couple callousness" (Hayman 24). She is asked by her daughter to perform multiple house-works, such as cleaning, cooking, and other things in not only a disrespectful, but also a distressful manner. Through the couple heinous treatment for the elderly Grandma, Albee tries to make the audience aware of the perverted and not straight situation of this family, or perhaps the American family in general. Instead of the necessary care for old age from her family, Mommy's consumer mentality wants the old to "earn her keep" and to do the necessary house-works (69).

Grandma is denied the peaceful life of senility and such a cruel treatment contradicts the moral and cultural norms of the original principles of the American Dream, therefore, she finds refuge in death instead of a death-in-life or a life which is not worth living. Treating a human in the American family, or perhaps in the American society in general, according to the commercial capitalist (the Current American Dream) principles that is s/he is required to be productive regardless of old age or any other hindering circumstances, leads to the deterioration and decadence of the basic filial duty and the essence of the societal human bonds. Grandma clarifies the ordeal and desperate feelings of

an old lady living in a commercial family (or society), which believes in the principles of American Dream, in the following speech:

When you get old, you can't talk to people because people snap at you ...[and] people talk to you that way. That's why you become deaf, so you won't be able to hear people talking to you that way. And that's why you go and hide under the covers of the big soft bed, so you won't feel the house shaking from people talking to you that way. That's why old people die, eventually. (Dream 65)

A representative of the "ethic and vision" of the compassionate previous generation before the country falls into a ruthless and immoral materialism, Grandma indirectly condemns the actions of the present generation which is called then (by Grandma's generation) "a darkly prophesied future generation" (Baxandall, 81). Grandma's following subliminal monologue represents an impressive indictment and sharp criticism leveled at modern age norms, in general, and the American Dream principles, in particular, in treating elderly members of the same family callously:

Most people think that when you get so old, you either freeze to death, or you burn up. But you don't. When you get so old, all that happens is that people talk to you that way.... sense of dignity – that's all that's important. [...] When you get so old, you can't talk to people because people snap at you. When you get so old, people talk to you that way. That's why you become deaf, so you won't be able to hear people talking to you that way. And that's why you go and hide under the covers in the big soft bed, so you won't feel the house shaking from people talking to you that way. That's why old people die, eventually. People talk to them that way. (Dream 65)

Although the Grandma does not play an important role in the events of the play, she enjoys self-esteem and even makes her bold remarks and comments about what happens of negative situations represented by the generation and society of the American Dream. Moreover, Albee, who loves his grandmother humanity and compassion, gives Grandma a unique humane character with which she is enabled to communicate the audience, or rather modern generation.

After introducing the characters of the play, the remaining events indicate that Mommy and Daddy endeavor to adopt a child they call "a bumble of joy" (97). Meeting Mrs. Baker, the representative of Bye-Bye Adoption agency, who

attends to see the couple, Grandma tells her about 'the bumble' the family intends to adopt. She asserts her that because Mommy and Daddy cannot have "a bumble of their own", they decide to buy "something much like a bumble" (98). Thus, Grandma asserts the spiritual and physical impotence of her daughter and son in law who are unable to tinker the course of their hollow life and at the same time they seek to buy (not adopt) a consumer goods rather than a child.

Even though, she is given a definite name, Mrs. Baker, who represents a specimen of modern American individual, proves to be immoral and shallow character. Her approval and her assertive gestures of all the moral and cultural defects that are said and done by Mamma, especially against elderly people like Grandma, are evidence of societal hypocrisy and the lack of societal moral norms for the modern era which are widely spread and generally accepted. Rather, it is a clear indication that the decline, deterioration and deviation of the principles of the American Dream are general and not specific.

The couple's desperate marital relationship proves to be a little more than ugly physical senseless attachment as the opportunist, Mommy, tells her husband frankly and sardonically that she has "a right to live off you because I married you, and because I used to let you get on top of me and bump your uglies; and I have a right to all of your money when you die" (67). Albee, here, sharply attacks the deterioration of the family life which extends even to their sexual life; in other words, in the age of the American Dream the husband-wife sacred bond becomes merely pantod material pondering governed by lack of necessary sentimentality of a couple meeting. Even when they exchange affectionate words of love, they revolve around a narrow physical axis as the following conversation proves when Daddy informs Mommy that in case his life is exposed to any risk, she will have enough money to secure her life:

DADDY. At any rate, you're well provided for.

MOMMY. You're my sweet Daddy; that's very nice.

DADDY. I love my Mommy. (68)

The couple looks for a consumer "satisfaction" by adopting another child to compensate the child they murdered. The murdered child's eyes are gouged out, hands cut off and castrated by Mommy and Daddy for trivial reasons. In Albee's American Dream society "all the capabilities for connection—eyes to see, sexual organs with which to love, hands to touch, and tongue to speak—are destroyed, and the victim of the socializing process of the American Way of Life dies" (Way 79).

The Young Man, who appears later in the play, is called the "American Dream" (108) by Grandma and he describes himself as having "straight nose, honest eyes, wonderful smile" (107). Although he has a perfect external

countenance, he has no emotions and no longer has "the capacity to feel anything", therefore, he "must compensate" (113). Suffering from spiritual vapidity as he has no feelings, he wanders in vain from work to another to obtain money in order to fill his personal defects. Before asking Mrs. Baker to achieve the adaptation bargain, Grandma, who wants to leave the couple's home for good, asks for the help of The Young Man, who is the personification of the 'American Dream', which leads but to death. Her departure can be associated with the death of all old good values which cannot live in such suffocating atmospheres.

At the end of the play, Grandma carries her boxes out of the apartment and leaves with the Young Man, or with the Angel of death, for good because this might provide her with a single safe haven against persistent merciless persecuting policies and disrespect for family values and senility. Moreover, the satisfaction Mommy and Daddy enjoy at the end as Grandma leaves is merely superficial and artificial; it contradicts their reality.

However, Grandma appears at the end of the stage and talks directly to the audience telling them that what is presented is part of the story; if the tale goes on, the audience satisfaction will be spoiled. It is worth mentioning that the names Mommy and Daddy, which have quite expressive connotations of love, passion and mercy, turned to be abstract characters characterized by mercilessness, lovelessness, selfishness, cruelty, psychological instability and material interests.

Albee's *The American Dream* portrays the deviation and decadence of the American Dream. Albee asserts that "Abundance produces emptiness, satisfaction unhappiness, and communication ends only in isolation" (qtd. in Lask). The play, which is, according to Thomas Lask's article in the New York Times, is "bizarre Comedy" and "social commentary" on "a loss of Values". It attacks sharply the perverted family bonds wherein Mommy and Daddy's happiness of 'satisfaction' is shallow and unreal. Moreover, the emasculated Husband cannot confront the authoritarian wife's defects even if they exceed the familial, moral, and cultural boundaries.

1.3 DELICATE BALANCE (1966)

The play deals with the subject of the spiritual and physical isolation of the couple, and their relentless attempt to find an appropriate atmosphere to get rid of this knot that pollutes the family stability. For more than 37 years, Tobias and his wife, Agnes, who are from the upper-middle class, have lived a life filled with anxiety and despair, which is more like a life-in-death.

Living in his private room after his son, Teddy, dies while he is still a little boy, Tobias has not any sexual attachment with his wife for more than twenty years

as a result of the despair that he is under control and his lack of desire for a new adventure, the results of which may be dire according to his perspective. Tobias determines the course of his life which is "Nothing ventured, nothing lost" (Kolin, 169). Potter notices that the attitude that causes the complex situations in the play is Tobias' early awareness of the void he experiences and this makes him the axis around which the events of literary work revolve. (Kolin, 168).

Such psychological complexity is not limited to Tobias only, but also transcends the other characters of the play. His daughter Julia experiences four failed marriages, and his sister-in-law, Claire, searches unsuccessfully for love in a world that lacks true human values and suffers from the complexity of existence and isolation. The family life and those around it are fraught with sterility, vague fear, lack of communication and self-confidence, and irresponsibility as if each one of them has no life, so we find them lost and introverted, psychological instability accompanies them to the extent that makes them completely unwilling to live.

Tobias and Agnes do not know the warmth of feelings and passions between the husband and wife even when they kiss each other, as these kisses appear rigid, insensible, and not expressing their genuine meaning. This atmosphere makes them lead meaningless lives interspersed with fear and lack of initiative. To confront these circumstances, Tobias has almost completely abandoned everyone who surrounds him and locked up his feelings so strongly that he sleeps in a room isolated from his wife and speaks as little as possible, avoiding emotional confrontations and trying to bring peace to the ongoing quarrels between his wife, Agnese, and her sister, Claire.

Tobias' reactions to anything, whatever serious it is, usually rigidly cold, irrational and out of position. For example, when Agnes denounces her sister "ingratitude", and that it is "sharper than a serpent's tooth" (16), he indifferently replies that "the saying does not have it that way" (ibid) Even when the contention transcends its boundaries between Agnes and Claire, his answer but "No Agnes ...Please, Agnes" (24).

What distinguishes Tobias in his home greatly is the policy of avoidance and indifference that he follows, so he resorts to drinking alcohol, which he takes a long time in preparing to deliberately waste time near the home bar, as a refuge to escape from his reality and keeps him away from communicating with his wife and what she arouses of argumentative topics. Consequently, Tobias follows a routine lifestyle that enables him to avoid thinking and arguing about his frightening meaningless existence.

Although he can be decisive and courageous to alter the course of his and his family lives, he chooses to be almost completely paralyzed and sparse,

therefore his life is useless and it is death-in-life. He drifts aimlessly near his home bar accomplishing nothing and indicating nothing so that he cannot do anything even the necessary requirements of care and passion for his wife and daughter. His face is without a countenance or perhaps it is a colorless shade; his strength is crippled and his gestures are without movement.

However, if Tobias is a distorted lost spirit, that staggering between fear and negligence, lying outside the circle of men who supposed to be full of life and will, in comparison to him, Agnes has experienced purportedly difficult times, sticking to a feeling of security much more than him. She talks submissively about her fear of madness, but what makes her disgruntled more is her thought of an incestuous relationship between Claire and Tobias. Agnes asserts that "what I find most astonishing in this world, and with all my years ... is Claire" (15). She tells Tobias frankly that her "burdens ... with the exception of Julia's trouble with marriage" is his "instinctive ... [and] reflexive defense of everything Claire ..." (16-17) does even when she (Claire) comes drunk to the dinner table. Her real fear of madness stems from the lack of obtaining confirmation from her husband that there is no sinful physical attachment between him and Claire. When Agnes has some suspicions about this relation as once notices Claire's "knees all bloody", she tries to ask her, in a little sarcastic way, to find out whether her husband "cheat on" (109) her or not. However, she cannot get the answer that drives her madness away. She also asserts to Tobias that he "and Claire make so much sense together, talk so well". Tobias denies continuously that he talks to "Claire alone save – publically (132). However, his tone of reply to her questioning, which she pretends not noticing, arouses her doubts more and more.

Agnes' accusations of her husband and her allegations of infidelity are never proven explicitly throughout the play, therefore, Agnes' fears of this issue cannot be assured whether they are relevant or not. Despite her accusations against her husband and Claire, it is noticeable that she maintains calmness and self-respect when she talks to them, for example, she tells Claire that:

If I scold, it is because I wish I needn't. If I am sharp, it is because I am neither less no more than human, and if I am to be accused once again of making too much of things, let me remind you that it is my manner and not matter. I apologize for being articulate. (23)

Unlike her sister, Claire tends to embrace alcohol and delusions, which provides her with an escape from despair and the disappointment that dominates the course of her life. Claire is constantly aware that the meaning of life is love, which she is not able to find anywhere, and her actions turns to

mystery and lack of clarity. Claire's name is quite suggestive and ironical; she is as clear as her name and she is the only person who has insight into the depths of all the complications that take place at her sister's home including herself. However, because of her indifference and escapism, she does nothing to change the course of unhappy life that surrounds the Tobias' home as well as not try to change the course of her unhappy life.

Tobias' complex life extends even to the direct needs of his daughter, Julia, who tries to stimulate him with memories of her childhood once, and another by directing a bitter blame on him, but with no mentioned avail as in the following serious conversation:

Julia: Your transformation amazed me. How can I have changed or is it really you? (He hands her a drink) Thank you.

Tobias: (As they both settle) I told Agnes that I'd speak to Doug ... if you think that would do any good. By golly, dad, that is a good martini! (71-72)

His reply is ironical as he changes the course of the conversation by offering Julia a good martini and, thus, again he finds an escape in alcohol even when Harry and Edna, the family friends, are present. What Tobias suffers is inertia, spiritual impotence, and inactivity.

Julia's feeling of frustration, fear, and the search for love results from her not giving her the support, confidence, communication and adequate care by her parents. Her father's denial of emotional needs leads to an emotional void inherent in her life that extends to affect even her four marriages.

Whenever Julia tries to take refuge with her parents in search of passion and security, she finds the same indifference of cold rejection, therefore, she can neither find the right passionate familial atmosphere at her parents' home nor outside it. The failure of Julia's four marriages is just an extension of her failure in the different schools she experiences during her adolescence; moreover, her continuous escape from guilt at this period is just a kind of search for love. The four men whom Julia marries and whom she does not succeed with could not provide her with love and care that she misses in her parents' home. Julia is a victim of her parents' precarious emotional relationship punctuated by lack of communication and indifference.

The other characters in the play are the anxious and instable couple Harry and Edna. To achieve, at least, a superficial stability, Harry and his wife, Edna, Tobias's family friends, try to communicate with their friends, Tobias and his wife, in search of security from the unknown fear that controls their lives and to feel the warmth and affiliation that they fail to find throughout their marriage. The "nothingness" (55), which makes Harry and Edna lose psychological stability,

becomes Claire's existence of life and the reality she believes in.

All the characters that surround Topias, including Edna and Harry, wait for something from him to remedy their situations. However, he finds himself unable to do anything for any of them. Julia wants her father to regain her room that Adana and Harry have hosted. Interestingly, Julia's room is womb-like as a symbol for her lost maturity. Agnes wants him to put an end to the deterioration of their emotional relationship, as well as get Julia back to Doglus, her fourth husband. Claire wants him to exchange her with the love that rages in her heart. Harry and Edna looks for Tobias's security of their terror of nothingness. However, according to Agnes "the helpless are the cruelest lot of all" rather than Tobias' share only.

The structure of the play is based on the fear of the characters, according to the background and psychological stability of the character itself. The circular and unattainable love, which is present-absent factor in the play and all long for, forms an essential part of the structure. Claire, the clairvoyant of the play who sees in the depth of things, asserts the vain circularity of the play to Tobias when she tells him "You love Agnes and Agnes loves Julia and Julia loves me and I love you". We all love each other; yes, we do" (I. 27)

The play represents a vortex of endless complications interspersed with periods of fragile peace which does not last and soon turns upside down. The better life they search for is associated with the reality which is denied by most of them as illusions become part of their own life. Gilbert Potter ends his essay "Toby's Last Stand" in the following words:

A Delicate Balance is a spiraling exploration of the quest for love and the various forms of insularity available to disguise the absence of love in contemporary society of wealth, clubs, . . . [and other outer forms of life]. (Kolin177).

No doubt, the play focuses on the disillusionment of self from illusion, and the family unit. Submission to 'nothingness' and accepting it as a reality leads to the emergence of a dominant alienation from the family members and distances each one of them from the necessary critical thinking. Therefore, 'nothingness' is but an epidemic of delusion and panic, creating the sense of meaninglessness and decadence of moral, human and cultural values.

The structure of well-knit family is beyond their reach because achieving this objective of awareness of the illusion, which controls the current of their lives, may cause pain and losses, despite the fact that this awareness will provide the fulcrum for family relations based on true foundations and mutual understanding. The delusions of almost all the characters in general and Topias in particular have been subjected to without resistance and have been taken for

granted without challenging or resisting them.

Despite the fears of insanity and the vague possibilities that Agnes invokes at the beginning of the play, she proves that, with the progress of play, she does not give much importance to delusions, rather she prefers permanent facts and radical solutions to the difficulties facing the family. Agnes asserts that "I am concerned with peace ... not relief". (20) The balance that Agnes enjoys and hopes to pass on to her family equals the balance between the illusion and the truth, which the writer wishes every individual has in his life. Agnes emphasizes that the blood bond is the main factor which provides communication, unity and understanding, in the interconnectedness of family members.

The title of the play "Delicate Balance", is quite suggestive because this "Balance" is necessary and pivotal to the characters of the play and its overall structure. It is greatly associated with Agnes's awareness of her illusion and her attempt to convey this awareness to her husband and whoever surrounds her to achieve psychological stability and real communication that are missing from her home and those who live in it.

The necessary communication attempts in the play usually face failure, such as Harry's going his close friend's home to seek security. Such an attempt should be accepted according to the social and cultural norms. However, in this modern world and in Tobias's home and what surrounds it, Harry and Edna's offer seems awkward and inappropriate. While Agnes believes that Harry and Edna's coming disturbs their 'delicate balance' because they bring their fears with them, Julia asks for their expulsion because she wants to regain her womb-like room, which they occupied by their arrival. The arrival of Harry and Adna to their forty years best friend home and the unknown fear they bring with them further complicates the scene in this delicately-balanced home.

The repetition of the phrase 'beat friend' paradoxically confirms the deterioration and decline of modern moral and social values. Knowing that Harry and Edna have come to soothe their anxiety and fear rather than paying a tribute of social communication, Agnes and Tobias reluctantly receive them.

Conclusion

Albee reflects the psychology of his domineering foster mother in some of his plays, as he presents the instability and emasculating tensions of the marital couples. In his plays, Albee analyzes critically the struggle of powerful frustrated women and their indeterminate, morally weak men partners. Most parents in Albee's dramas are presented in negative images like a sterile couple or bearers of false principles, and accordingly, he explores the destructive forces that may cause the fall of the family and its members. In other words, Albee dramatizes the dehumanization of the American society that glorifies materialistic norms

and comfort instead of bolstering familial and societal moral values which lead to a well-structured and stable family and society built on the principles of mutual love and understanding.

The stage for Edward Albee means the analysis and evaluation of the life of the American individual and society who have replaced real higher moral values with an artificial low life that is overwhelmed by materialism, selfishness and lack of communication. Therefore, most of his plays depict cruelty, spiritual and emotional emptiness, and psychological anxiety, which are at the same time a condemnation of the imaginary portrayal of the American dream which makes the American individual believe that everything in life is perfect and fine. Most of Albee's characters, who have been freed from the illusion of the promises of the hollow American dream, look for an ideal life, in which they enjoy economic sufficiency, psychological stability and compassionate communication among members of the same family and society, which is, in many ways, far-fetched and beyond their reach.

References

- Albee, Edward. Edward Albee's *The American Dream, The Sandbox, The Death of Bessie Smith, and Fam and Yam*. New York: Dramatists, 2009.
- Baxandall, Lee. "The Theater of Edward Albee" Ed. Alvin B. Kernan. *The Modern American Theater: A Collection of Essays*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967. 80-98.
- Bigsby, C.W. E. *Edward Albee*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975. 76-79.
- Bloom, Harold. *Edward Albee*. New York: Chelsea, 1987.
- Brantly, Ben. "Stage View; Albee's Tigers, Albee's Women". *The New York Times* 12 April 1996.
- Hayman, Ronald. *Contemporary Playwrights: Edward Albee*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., 1971.
- Kittredge, James F. *Chasing A Myth*. Arizona: Arizona UP, 2000.
- Kolin, C. P. Davis, J.M. *Critical Essays on Edward Albee*. Massachusetts: G.K. Hall & Co., 1986.
- Lask, Thomas. "Dramatist in a Troubled World". *The New York Times* 22 January 1961.
- Mann, Bruce J. *Edward Albee: A Singular Journey*. New York: Applause, 2001.
- McCarthy, Gerry. *Macmillan Modern Dramatists: Edward Albee*. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1987.
- Paolucci, Anne. *From tension to Tonic: The Plays of Edward Albee*. Illinois:

Illinois UP, 2000.

- Rutenberg, Tu1ichael. *A Delicate Balance, Edward Albee: Playwright in Protest*. New York: Drama Book Specialits, 1969.
- Stenz, Anita Maria. *Edward Albee: The Poet of Loss*. New York: Mouten Publishers, 1978.

Way, Brian. "Albee and the Absurd: The American Dream and The Zoo Story." In Ed. C. W. E. Bogsby. *Edward Albee: A Collection of Critical Essays. in Sex, Gender, and Sexualities: New Perspective in Edward Albbe Studies*. Ed. Michael Bennet. Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2.