In the play *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee, the hollowness of the American Dream is exposed. Through the two couples, Martha and George as well as Nick and Honey, Albee is able to coherently portray the American Dream as nothing more than an illusion. Success is defined through materialism; in order to be perceived as accomplished, one is expected to own a house, have a car, two to three children, a well-paying job, and a dog. Albee, however, takes the ‘American dream’ and conveys it in its true form, revealing the shallow and meaningless nature of contemporary society. George and Martha represent the failed American dream. They distract themselves from facing their disappointing lives by turning their bitterness into a source of entertainment. They go as far as to create an imaginary son as a form of escapism. The vulgar jokes, frenetic drinking, and ruthless games reflect their frustration in not being able to fulfill their marriage to society’s expectations. Nick and Honey are portrayed to embody a conventional American dream couple. However, they are also disclosed to be presenting a false buoyant facade. Nick married Honey for money, not love; although he appears robust and powerful, he is impotent. Honey, in return, deceives him by terminating her pregnancies. Through his play, Albee demonstrated the unsatisfied lives of the couples’ empty marriages, based solely on illusions, successfully conveying the unrealistic nature of the American dream.

When Albee first introduces the characters of Nick and Honey, they seem to be the ideal couple. They’re young, good looking, and full of potential; they are well on their way to achieving the American dream. Nick seems destined to one day become president of the university and Honey, despite being somewhat empty-headed, enthusiastically supports all his decisions. They appear to be the exact opposite of George and Martha, but as the play progresses, the reality of their relationship begins to present itself. It comes to light that Nick’s motivation for marrying Honey was entirely selfish. He believed her to be pregnant and so to remain a respectable member of society and reap the benefits of her wealthy family, he proposed. Their marriage that follows is dull and unfulfilling, especially due to the fact that they are unable to have a child. Early on in the play, Nick believes that Honey simply cannot get pregnant, but by the end of the night, George uncovers her secret; out of the fear of motherhood, Honey has been terminating each of her pregnancies. Honey drinks to distract herself and escape from her unhappy life and when George notices this, Nick remarks that “she gets a lot of headaches and things, and she always lies on the floor” (161). Nick himself is not entirely satisfied either. While Honey is lying drunk on the floor, he cheats on her with Martha To anyone looking at their marriage from the outside, it seems like they are the perfect American husband and wife and yet the reality is that their relationship is filled with deceit and disloyalty. By revealing the true nature of their marriage, Albee is depicting the falsity that is the American dream, for not even Nick and Honey, who seem to be the epitome of the happy American couple, can achieve it.

George and Martha are named after George and Martha Washington, making them symbolic of America as a whole. So, if the American Dream is about having a happy stable family, what does it say to have George and Martha represent all Americans? They don’t even try to hide the fact that they're not happy nor do they appear stable. George and Martha’s inability to conceive also plays into the extended metaphor of Albee’s play. The stereotypical American dream does not promise a life of hardship. The fact that the most meaningful connection between them, their son, is imaginary, seems to suggest that perhaps the entire American Dream itself is really just an unattainable illusion. The imaginary son signifies the empty relationship between George and Martha. As their son grows, so do the developments in their relationship and their inability to be anything more than the delusions they have brought to it. Martha says their son grew to walk “evenly between” them, protecting them from their own weaknesses. Hinting how the illusion tried to bridge their relationship. Albee suggests that, behind the facade of the American dream, the pretense of romanticized American ideals, and the false front of the tranquility of American society in the early 1960s, America's internal corruption and emptiness threatened, and perhaps continues to threaten, the country with a similar fall. This play breaks the facade of the American dream. Through character representation, this literary work is able to portray America’s vulnerability and its desire for power. By creating the illusion of a seemingly perfect appearance, the flaws of American society are revealed. Albee also effectively displays the social backlash one faces when failing to live up to other’s expectations as well as their own.