

## The Hazardous Nature of Illusion in Human Life: An Analysis of Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and G. Sankarapillai's *Poojamuri*

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**Abstract:** Reality and illusion are often mixed in human life and this is not an alien subject in literature. Edward Albee is the most popular playwright and director of America who identifies the dangers of illusion. In Malayalam literature G. Sankarapillai was one of the eminent dramatist who daringly portrayed the illusion in human life on the stages of the Malayalam Theatre world. Albee portrays the disillusioned American people and their struggles to confront with reality. G. Sankarapillai tried to represent the common man's illusions in life and how it creates a chasm in family relations. Both of them tried some theatrical techniques to depict this theme on the stage. Though they foot on two different cultures, namely Western and Eastern, which are entirely diverse from each other, they are alike in presenting the mental conflict of human beings, which has a global appeal and they are incredibly successful in that. Hence this paper focuses on: - How reality is surrogated by illusions in life and why people prefer illusion to reality? It also focuses on the impact of illusion in the lives of the people, with the help of two most renowned plays - *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Albee and *Poojamuri* (Prayer Room) written by G. Sankarapillai.

**Key Words** - Edward Albee, G. Sankarapillai, Illusion, Poojamuri, Reality, and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

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### I. Introduction

"Literature is one of the oldest forms of human activity. It has a certain sameness of form throughout its long history; it expresses through the medium of words human emotion and thought generated during the course of man's struggle with nature. Yet it has subtly changed its tones and shades of feeling and expression, as consciousness has grown and developed during the conflict with reality. It is therefore useless to advance any cast-iron formula applicable to all enormous literary effort of the human race in its many and varied shifts and changes of fortune."(Gupta 33)

As we know literature is the reflection of life and human emotion is expressed through literature, irrespective of language. Thus literature replicates human mind, its imaginations, thoughts, and feelings. Illusion is not an alien subject in literature since; illusion and reality are often mixed in life. Human beings are capable to think, to imagine, and to differentiate between illusion and reality. Magicians create a world of illusion and for the time being people believe and enjoy it. But there lies a fact that truth and illusion are two opposite ideas. Children create an imaginary world when we narrate stories to them. They visualize unreal things as real, unreal beings as real beings. It is evident because that is why children cry or get afraid while the story is narrated by the elders. In the same way sometimes people create a world of goings-on while they read a book or watch a movie. *The online Dictionary Reference .Com* defines illusion as:

"A misrepresentation of a "real" sensory stimulus-that is, an interpretation that contradicts objective "reality" as defined by general agreement. For example, a child who perceives tree branches at night as if they are goblins may be said to be having an illusion. An illusion is distinguished from a hallucination, an experience that seems to originate without an external source of stimulation."

And the term reality is defined as, "something that constitutes a real or actual thing, as distinguished from something that is merely apparent."

There are plenty of works which deal with the theme of illusion and having some illusory scenes which are the creation of the disturbed minds of the characters like William Shakespeare's greatest tragedy *Macbeth*

(1602-1611). In American literature, Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* (1945) which has an Indian adaptation as a film in the Malayalam language entitled *Akale* (2004) directed by Shyamaprasad, a famous Indian director, also shares the similar theme. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949) deals with a salesman's illusion. Edward Albee's *The American Dream* deals with the illusion of the American dream of success and his *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* states that people today have been forced to create illusions for themselves because reality has become too difficult and too painful to face. Indian literature also is not an exception. A clear representation of this kind of illusion is present in the very popular Indian English fiction *The Serpent and the Rope* (1960) written by Raja Rao. The hero Ramaswamy explains the difference between reality and illusion to his wife Madeleine, with an analogy. In the dark it is possible to mistake a rope for the serpent. Actually the rope is the reality while the serpent does not exist at all. In Malayalam literature G. Sankarapillai playwright, critic, and director who was an experimenter in Indian Theatrical scene also experimented this theme in his most famous play *Poojamuri (Prayer Room)* (1966).

This paper tries to explore this theme of illusion in the lives of people and how it creates harms in human life. It also focuses on the unconstructive impact of illusion in the lives of the people, with the help of two most renowned plays - *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* by Edward Albee and *Poojamuri* written by G. Sankarapillai.

Edward Franklin Albee born on March 12, 1928 in Washington D.C. is the most famous American playwright known for his works like *The Zoo Story* (1958) *The Sand Box* (1959) *The American Dream* (1961) and '*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*' (1962). He appeared on the stage of American drama in the late 1950 s with a variety of plays recording the agonies and disillusionment of that time. His career as a full time dramatist started at the age of thirty with his first one act play *The Zoo Story*. Today also his career continues in its full swing and the awards and honors, like Pulitzer Prizes and the prestigious Tony Award for Life Time Achievement, he achieved during this time shows his immense popularity.

G. Sankarapillai, one of the imminent personalities in Indian Literature was born on June 22, 1930 at Chirayinkeezhu, in Trivandrum District, Kerala. He was a dramatist and director too. He had worked as the Chairman of Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy. He was a member of the Kerala Sahithya Academy, Expert Panel on Performing Arts (U G C), interview Committee (U P S C) and worked as a member of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for Performing Arts. He also occupied the post of Dean of Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Calicut for a period and founded the School of Drama in Calicut University. It was he who established the Prasadhana Little Theatre in Kerala in the 1960s to experiment with new theatrical techniques. He was the patron of the organizations like Rangaprabhath and Rangachethana which are the theatre group for children in Kerala.

He received the Kendra Sahithya Academy Award, Kerala Sahithya Academy Award (1964) for his play *Railpalangal* and AIR Award for the Best Dramatist. He also won the All India Critics Circle Award (Kolkata) and a Fellowship from Kerala Sangeetha Nataka Academy.(1979) He had written many one-act plays, full length plays, radio dramas, verse plays, plays for children, articles on plays, essays, etc. Some of his famous works are *Poojamuri*, *Snehadutan (Messenger of Love)* (1953), *Moodupadam*, *Pushpakireedam (Flory Crown)*, *Nizhal (The Shadow)* *Gurudakshina (Offering to the Master)*, *Nidhiyum Neethiyum (Treasure and Justice)*, *Madhalangal (Drums)*, etc. He died in 1989 at Kottayam district in Kerala.

As mentioned earlier, an illusion is a false idea or belief or it is something that appears to exist but does not actually exist. We are not aware that illusion is a part of our life and all of us cherish a kind of illusion in our life, unknowingly. No need to predispose in a spiritual way to understand the illusion of world around us, which is changing always. But we must be aware that strong acceptance of illusion in our life will lead to tragedies only. People may have different reasons to choose some illusions in their life as in the selected plays. Albee's some plays portray how illusion is staged in the lives of the characters. It also tries to demonstrate the illusion in modern American life. He tries to touch the heart of American culture which believes in fantasies and dreams. The American Dream of success, satisfaction and prosperity lead people to illusions and many of his characters are obsessed with this dream and give up everything to it, their sense of ethics, morality, pleasure and truthfulness. They prefer fantasy to reality. And there is an assured reason behind this choice. Many of them are discontent in what they got in life and this directs them to a frustration. Their frustrated minds seek a solace in illusions. There the reality of life is surrogated by illusions. Albee tries to explore the same theme in many of his plays like *The Zoo Story*, *The Sandbox*, *The American Dream* and '*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*' and he is quite successful in that.

G. Sankarapillai was one pioneer experimenter in the Malayalam Professional Theatre world in Kerala. Influenced by the Western dramatists like Henrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill and Albee he tried to make changes in the conventional theatrical scene. His most acclaimed play *Poojamuri* is a best example for his theatrical renovation. It was for the first time in Kerala illusion was portrayed on the stage through the lives of the characters and which became quite successful with the help of theatrical techniques. Two acts out of the four in the play are merely the fantasy of the characters. The audience can understand it only at the end of the play. Moreover he portrays the hazards of such illusions in human life, through this play.

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* was Albee's first three act play. It is a masterwork which has worldwide acclaim. It has a total of 644 performances on Broadway now. In 1963 he got two Tony Awards, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, The Foreign Press Assoc. Award, American National Theatre and Academy Award and Outer Circle Award for this play. "It is now more than forty years since Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* – the play for which he is still best known – gave him his first Broadway hit and propelled him into the front rank of American playwrights."(Bottoms 1)

The play is set in George and Martha's apartment in New England College located in New Carthage. It represents the alternatively destructive and reconciliatory battle for dominance that ensued between, a middle aged history professor George and his wife Martha. They are rude; loud, offensive and insulting to each other. When they invite a younger couple Nick and Honey to their house, things quickly start to get out of control. George and Martha convince, Nick and Honey that they have one child. But towards the end of the play Nick and Honey realize the truth from George and Martha's conversation that the boy whom George and Martha created is a non-existent one. When Martha broke the rule of keeping the secret of the fantasy child George becomes furious and declares that their son is got killed in an accident. Thus their illusion is shattered and the play ends.

The play *Poojamuri* portrays the life of a typical Indian woman who struggles because she had a love affair before her marriage. The play is set in the apartment of Govindan Nair. All the settings in the living room show the affluence of Govindan Nair. Pricey furniture and a stuffed face of animal are very much attractive. When the play goes on the spectators can understand that the good looking appearance and ambience of the apartment is quite contrary to the life of the persons who live there. When we look at the plot, one can simply feel it as a failed love story. But underneath it portrays the mental conflict and agony suffered by the distressed protagonist Rema.

When the play begins she is the wife of a prosperous businessman who runs a saw mill. But her life is not a happy one. She had a love affair before her marriage. But her family was against it because of their status quo and she was forced to marry another man. Hence she married this man named Govindan Nair. After her marriage she entered into a new life and loved her husband as 'God'. She never thought to go back into her failed love affair. But now her husband who knew about the former affair of his wife is torturing her. He doubts that she is continuing an illegal relation with her former lover and imagines that she is plotting against him. And moreover he misunderstands her when she becomes pregnant, that it is the result of the immoral relation between Rema and her former lover Sukumaran Nair. All these are the creation of his perturbed mind; his illusion which ultimately leads to the death of the protagonist Rema.

When we look deep into *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the setting of the play itself is an example of confinement in life as C. W. E. Bigsby put it in his *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama*: "Its single set, a womb like living-room stands as an image of a refusal of life by those who enact their fears and illusions within it" (264). George is a history professor married to Martha. Her father is the president of the college. Martha's wish is George would become her father's heir. But he dislikes her father. So she is unhappy and she always taunts him and describes him as "an old bog in the History Department, that's what George is. A bog... A fen... A G.D. swamp" (187). Here starts the frustration of Martha. Then a child is always a bond between husband and wife, for it can reinforce the relationship amid them. But unfortunately this couple is childless. This infertility in their life lead them into the illusion: they created a child in fantasy, which is the core theme of the play.

For years George and Martha kept the matter of the fantasy child as a secret under the agreement that they should not disclose it to anybody. Now the son is twenty one, a college student. At the beginning of the play it is said that he is coming on next day to celebrate his birthday. But the happenings in the apartment on that late night makes the things turn into upside down. In three acts Albee depicts the illusory life of the couple. In the first act "Fun and Games," they try to combat and insult each other as their usual activity. When they keep

on this verbal duel Honey and Nick, the expected guests arrive. They convert their guests into viewers to see disgrace, and engender a kind of humiliation and jealousy in them by expressing their private story. The second act is "Walpurgisnacht," in which their games become crueler. The evening turns into a nightmarish one. They even attack Honey and Nick, attempting to force them to reveal their dirty secrets and true selves. In the final act, "The Exorcism," everyone's secrets have been exposed. Honey and Nick go home, leaving the couple to try to rebuild their shattered illusion.

George and Martha cherished their fantasy of the child because the child was created as an escape from the reality and to forget their sterility. Martha is very fond of this imaginative child. Her happiness in bringing up the child as a real mother is clear in her explanation of the child. She details how they celebrate his birthdays, describes him in a loving manner, and pictures his colour of eyes, his pranks, his toys, and the banana boat made for him on Saturday nights.

"Martha's dedication to the child is apparent: She is almost lyrical in describing the child: "And I had wanted the child." George sparks her memory: "A son? A daughter?" Martha responds deliberately, "A child! (Quieter) A child. And I had a child" (298). When she describes him as "beautiful", George comments, "There is a real mother talking" (298). (Dircks 89)

In the opening scenes, we can see that, Nick and Honey believed that the child really exists. Through out the play, illusion seems impossible to differentiate from reality. But finally George understands that Martha can't escape from that illusion and he kills their imaginary child. And for this he finds out a reason that she disclosed the secret to an outsider. In the older version of the play at the outset itself George warns Martha not to disclose about their secret about the kid. This part is entirely omitted from the latest edition of the play. Martha broke the rule and reveals the secret to Honey.

MARTHA. All right. Our son. Our son was born in a September night, a night not unlike tonight, though tomorrow, and twenty . . . one . . . years ago. (295)

She adds "it was an easy birth. . ." "and I was young, and he was a healthy child, a red bawling child, with slippery firm limbs . . ." (295)

At this point, the humiliated and emasculated husband in George comes out. He wants to take revenge on his wife, who was insulting him in front of the guests. Moreover he is afraid that Martha is not able to escape from illusion. So he announces the death of their son. He says that he got a telegram which reports their son's death in a car accident. Martha is shocked and says he has no right to kill him.

MARTHA. You have no right . . . you have no right at all.

GEORGE. I have the right Martha. We never spoke of it; that's all. I could kill him any time I wanted to.

MARTHA. But why? Why?

GEORGE. You broke the rule, baby. You mentioned him . . . You mentioned him to someone else." (307)

It is comprehensible that he has the right because Martha has uncovered the secret to the outside world and moreover, it was he, who created the child to alleviate Martha's sorrow of being childless. Martha is broken. Her image as the Earth-mother is destroyed to the outer world. She became infertile. She is forced to face the reality. Thus the unfulfilled mother Martha is attempting to face the unknown future and only George is there to console her.

All over the characters represent the frustrated people in Albee's society. The sub plot of the younger couple also is relevant. Both of them are disappointed in life. Nick is a biology professor in the same college where George works. He is physically attractive and tries to attain degrees at a very early age as Honey puts it as a conventional wife. At the beginning they also seem as ideal conventional partners in life. They are in George and Martha's apartment as late guests at the special request of Martha's father. Later in a conversation with George their veil also is uncovered. He reveals to George that he married Honey to avoid a scandal, because of her hysterical pregnancy and she has enough money left over by her father. Initially Honey tries to mediate between George and Martha, but, when their verbal assault increases she sits silently and enjoys her brandy. When she realizes that Nick has told her secrets to George, she is worried and consumes more brandy. Meanwhile Martha is trying to seduce Nick to enrage George. Anyway that was a futile attempt.

Honey is afraid to have a child. She admits this secret to George that she is keeping a secret from Nick that she has been taking pills to avoid pregnancy. She feared bearing a child. She is afraid of the pain of the child birth but when Martha speaks about the beauty of parentage she becomes desperate. Feeling Martha's love for the child, Honey frantically cries out that she needs a child. "(Suddenly; almost tearfully) I want a child."(298) This is a parallel. Out of immaturity and fear she rejected the happiness of parenthood. A great irony is Martha wanted children and hasn't any and Honey avoided pregnancy deliberately. Both live in illusion. At the end both of them realizes the agonized reality.

When we turn into the play Poojamuri, G. Sankarapillai has presented the illusion in a different angle. Here Govindan Nair lives in illusion. When he married Rema, he was happy. But when he learns about the former affair of his wife, he is disturbed. Prof. M. R. T. Nair, one of the friends and colleagues of G. Sankarapillai mentioned about the character of Govindan Nair as a man who become suspicious of his wife. After watching the play M. R. T. Nair wrote a letter to the playwright, and that is given as the preface to the play. A comment about the character of Govindan Nair reads as:

"When Govindan Nair, the rough husband of Rema learns the old love affair of his wife, he becomes doubtful. He is not ready to have a discussion openly to Rema and to understand the reality. Instead of that he hunts for the past of Rema and becomes more and more doubtful. He imagines that Rema is continuing her affair after their marriage also" (10)

If Govindan Nair is set to clarify his doubts or if he is ready to believe the truth, when Rema opens her mind to him, the tragedy will not happen. But he was not ready to understand the mind of his wife, he keeps his misapprehensions with him and when Rema tried to convince him, he is not ready to accept the truth. His mind turns a battle field and he always thinks about this problem which leads him into illusion. When the play opens we can see that Kesavapillai, father of Rema appears on the stage as he got a telegram from Govindan Nair to start immediately.

When the play commences Kesavapillai appears on the stage and from his facial expressions it is clear that he is very much worried and tensed. He is afraid that something had happened to his daughter or son-in-law. But when he reaches in the apartment and understands the difference in the approach of his son-in-law, he feels something else had happened. Moreover when he asks Govindan Nair about it he behaves in an insulting manner, without telling what had happened.

Kesavapillai. What happened to you today?

Govindan Nair. Nothing happened today. It happened to me days before, months before, years before. (Sankarapillai 17)

Govindan Nair doesn't speak openly. He hints about his marriage with Rema. And then he harasses Kesavapillai asking about Rema's love affair. He says he has all the evidences regarding her past relations. He accuses Kesavapillai for hiding the truth. Kesavapillai tries to convince him that nothing erroneous had happened. But Govindan Nair is not ready to accept it. When Kesavapillai asks about Rema, Govindan Nair gets angry and says she is hiding in the Poojamuri.

Govindan Nair. Did I say? When she became answerless, she went inside the poojamuri and locked the door. (Sankarapillai 19)

In reality Rema has suffered a lot of mental struggle from her husband and at last she finds a refuge only in God. She spends all her time in prayers, in the prayer room. Govindan Nair even finds fault with this activity.

Kesavapillai was shocked to hear all these indictments. He tells Govindan Nair that nothing happened in the past. Sukumaran Nair, the accused lover got a job in their locality and when he reached there, Kesavapillai arranged a lodging facility for him in his house. It is true that Sukumaran Nair had fell in love with his daughter and as a good person requested the permission of Kesavapillai to marry her. At that time Kesavapillai was rich and was a man of status. So he was not ready to give his daughter to Sukumaran Nair. Humiliated Sukumaran Nair left the place immediately, and Rema never continued her relation again. But Govindan Nair is not ready to believe all these stories. He says "Rema was acting that she loves me" (Sankarapillai 22). He proudly admits that he has the intelligence to guess out all that happened in the past.

Govindan Nair reveals to Kesavapillai that he has sent a telegram to Sukumaran Nair, Rema's former lover too, to come to his home. Because he thinks that he can find out the truth, when that man comes. He wants to prove all his doubts.

Kesavapillai. What are you going to do?

Govindan Nair. Everything should be proved. I am going to prove everything without doubt.

Kesavapillai. Then?

Govindan Nair. I want to be free from all these burdens.

Kesavapillai. (Anxiously) What?

Govindan Nair. Why are you getting anxious? What makes you scared if all those are not true? (23)

Govindan Nair has decided something in his mind. So he made inquiries and finds out the address of Sukumaran Nair and asks him to reach immediately in his home, without mentioning the reason.

The next scene is a fantasy scene. Every action on the stage actually happens in the mind of the character. In the last scene, when the curtain falls a chiming of the door bell is heard. Govindan Nair thinks that Rema's lover is coming. Setting and time of the scene are the same while the scene begins. Govindan Nair opens the door and Sukumaran Nair enters into the room. He seems to be a civilized person in modern dress and with a burning cigarette on his lips. He reveals that he came there only because of the letter written by Rema to take her along with him. Govindan Nair and Kesavapillai stand as if stunned. Kesavapillai says "I won't believe it" (Sankarapillai 26). Then there happens a verbal duel in between Govindan Nair, Kesavapillai and Sukumaran Nair. Sukumaran Nair tells them that he is going to take Rema along with him and Rema appears on the stage as a woman of strong determination. Long days' suffering has given her the strength for endurance. Govindan Nair and Kesavapillai stand as startled when she goes with Sukumaran Nair. Govindan Nair shouts to stop Rema and Sukumaran Nair and Kesavapillai asks him why he is shouting. Then only he comes into reality and understands that it was his mind's illusion.

Though it is an illusory scene the audience can understand what happened in between the couple. They were leading a good life; but the seed of qualms creates a chasm in between their relation. It grew daily and now the aversion in between the couple is exceeded its limit is explicit here. Govindan Nair considers her as a whore. It is evident that he sees her as an adulterous woman and when she gets pregnant he asks her to do an abortion. Because he doubts that the kid in her womb is her lover's kid. Without accepting the truth that he is planning to kill his own child, he has given a medicine too to her. In the next scene we can watch another fantasy scene; that is Rema's father also visualizes that Sukumaran Nair is coming to take Rema to his home. From this scene also the viewers realize the mental struggle which Rema had faced, since her marriage. She loved a man, hoped to live with him, but considering her parent's love she set aside her love and dreams and married Govindan Nair. But what she got instead was mere neglect and loveless, callous behaviour from her husband. Now in this scene also she appears as a helpless woman. She is ready to go with her lover, but out of her father's convincing words and love towards her family she is retreating from her decision. The lost Sukumaran Nair goes back unhappily.

The incidents in the second and third acts were not true actually; only at the end of the play the viewers perceive that those scenes were the creation of the minds of Govindan Nair and Kesavapillai. The fourth and last scene is a significant one. When the curtain rises Govindan Nair and Kesavapillai are expecting Sukumaran Nair. When the door opens he comes inside and he looks quite different from the last scenes. He is a very poor man and he doesn't know why he is called for there. Govindan Nair talks invectively and harshly to Sukumaran Nair. He challenges and threatens Sukumaran Nair. But the things changes opposite to his expectations. He takes others to the Poojamuri. He thought that Rema will accept her former lover and he can win his match. But the scene they see there was a shocking one that they can see the dead body of Rema there. All are worried and Govindan Nair has no words to say. Even the minor character Pachupillai, the servant of that house gets a prominent role at this time. He sees Govindan Nair, as the murderer. Because he understood that Govindan Nair has given a medicine to abort the pregnancy of Rema. Govindan Nair surely knows that he himself is responsible for this tragedy. There the play ends and Govindan Nair is utterly a broken man now.

G. Sankarapillai succeeded in presenting the fantasy scenes of the play through some stage directions like lights and dim imagery. Exceeding the limitations of the theatre, he has given a new dimension and meaning to the stage craft. A kind of expressionistic method is used by the author to present the inner mind of the characters. It seems that he was influenced by the European movement of Expressionism. In drama it is a method that emphasizes on the inner reality of individuals. The inner reality is communicated through various devices such as masks, asides, soliloquies, broken dialogues, stage-effects, such as lighting costumes etc. No specific form of plot and characterization are there. The characters, events, and the scenes are less in number. Expressionistic writing,

"The expressionist artist or writer undertakes to express a personal vision – usually a troubled or tensely emotional vision – of human life and human society. This is done by exaggerating and

distorting what, according to the norms of artistic realism, are objective features of the world, and by embodying violent extremes of mood and feeling.”(Abrams 119)

Here the author was successful in presenting the illusory scenes through the stage arrangements as no specific part was allotted to the entry of the characters on the stage. They can come at any time and from any direction. But in other two scenes the characters are entering from the prescribed place. Thus through an innovative type of theatrical experiment in the Malayalam Theatre world he recorded his own landmark. Moreover he was quite successful in presenting the grave point of the relationships between human beings through this new performance of illusion at the stage. Albee pictures the illusory human beings in a real manner. The society, people and situations are real. Their worries and search for happiness and success is real. Their illusory behavior also is real. That is the ability of the dramatist in Albee. Illusion depicted through real characters, natural dialogues and flow of events is praise worthy. It seems real selves of the characters are masked by a surface level truth. They are not what they look like. The dominative and offensive Martha is in fact a helpless woman. She needs protection in the world. At the end of the play George only is there to support her. The couple becomes close to each other in the dark cold night. George seems passive and feeble at the beginning but at the end he takes control of his and Martha's lives. Nick becomes powerless in his sexual game with Martha and Honey, the seemingly simple and ingenuous personality reveals that she has been deviously using birth control to prevent a pregnancy. Through entertaining elements Albee shows the audience the progress of the play into a serious topic. “Even the illusion of a child planted at the heart of the drama has been introduced playfully, suddenly.”(Chaudhuri 132) The unborn, unseen imaginary child, a creation of frustration of George and Martha also plays a role in it. He is the private illusion fondled by the couple and later when it becomes a publicly known matter, that illusion is forced to be broken.

There is an illusion on the title of the play also. The title *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* means “Who's Afraid of Big Bad Woolf? Means “Who's Afraid of Living Life without False Illusions” “Albee's own explanation of the play's title is that he derived it from a sign which he had seen in a Greenwich village bar, and that it means, ‘Who's Afraid of Living Life without False Illusions?’ (Bigsby 265) At the end of the play, Martha says that she is afraid.

George: Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf. . .  
Martha: I . . . am . . . George. . . I . . . am (311)

The similar aspects in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* and in *Poojamuri* are the staging of illusion and the illusory characters. In both the plays the illusion is broken down at the end and the characters are forced to face the reality. Martha, with the help of George is disillusioned at the end and she accepts George's consolation. But in *Poojamuri*, Govindan Nair has to live his remaining life in the society as an executioner; since his illusions were the reasons for his tragedy in life and the loss of the life of his wife. If he was ready to consider the words of Rema and her father, the tragedy will not happen. ‘Rema’ and ‘the child’ in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* are illusory characters. They never appear on the stage. But they have very considerable roles in the plays. They become very lively characters in the plays. In both the plays, only at the end; the illusion is unraveled. It's true that illusions have the capacity to change a person into insane nature. One search his self within him, tries to pursue his happiness around him, longs for status and success, and creates myths. It is the hazardous nature of illusion in human life.

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