

Introduction to Selected Plays of Tennessee Williams

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Abstract: *There are some people that an individual keeps in mind when making a purchase. Usually, such people disseminate opinions and other individuals are pressured into following their trend, becoming associated with them and using them as a standard of their purchase decisions. Such people are known as reference groups and they include entertainment figures, sports heroes, political leaders, parents, co-workers, teachers and peers. This paper seeks to contribute to the existing body of the literature on reference group influence. Specifically, it focuses on peer influence among young adults' products purchase decisions. A convenience sample of 101 university students participated in this study. The results of Analysis of Variance and t-tests indicated that there is more normative influence for a public luxury (sunglasses) than for a private luxury (cell phone) and private necessity (toothpaste). Informational influence was also more for a public luxury than a private necessity.*

REVIEW ARTICLE

The dramatic universe of Tennessee Williams is structured around dualities. The dualities, which plague life, also threaten art and artist. Art is like an X-Ray machine which indicates normal healthy blood cells and exposes the dark spots simultaneously. Life is too complex and complicated to be reduced to a single formula. It is too ambiguous to be presented in a cut and dried fashion. It cannot be painted in black and white. Dualities weave the texture of life. It is this bewildering ambiguousness of life Tennessee Williams celebrates that is so hard to be straitjacketed in one kind of ideological system or the other.

Drama, as an art form, is meant to hold mirror up to nature. All the plays of Tennessee Williams abound in dualities such as illusion- reality, tradition – modernity, body – soul, spirit – flesh, male – female, homosexuality-heterosexuality and realism – expressionism which are woven into bright and dark patterns. Tennessee Williams himself says, “I have always had a deep feeling for mystery of life and essentially my plays have been efforts to explore the beauty and meaning in the confusion of living” (qtd. in Devlin 28).

Before we proceed any further, it is important to look into the etymological meaning of the term duality. The word dual has been derived from the Latin word ‘dualis’ which means consisting of two parts and aspects. Encarta World English Dictionary defines duality as, “consisting of two parts, a situation or nature that has two states or parts that are complementary or opposed to each other.” For instance, illusion and reality are two aspects of life. Prima facie these are opposed to each other. What is illusory

cannot be real and what is real cannot be illusory. But in real life situations, illusion and reality are complementary, supplementary and interdependent on each other. Reality takes its birth from the womb of illusion. The term duality has come to us from ‘dualism’.

The New Encyclopedia Britannica defines dualism as, “the doctrine that the world (or reality) consists of two basic, opposed and irreducible principles or substances (e.g. good and evil: mind and matter) that account for all that exists”.

Collin’s Concise Dictionary explains the term ‘dualism’ as it is understood in religion and philosophy:

1. The state of being twofold or double. 2 Philosophy- the doctrine that reality consists of two basic types of substances, usually taken to be mind and matter or mental and physical entities. 3 (a) theory that the universe has been ruled from its origin by two conflicting powers, one good and one evil. (b) The theory that there are two personalities - one human and one divine.

The person who believes in dualism is called a dualist, Dictionary of The History of Ideas defines a dualist as “the one who believes that the facts which he considers... whether they be the facts of the world in general or a particular class of them.... cannot be explained except by supposing ultimately the existence of two different and irreducible principles.”

Dual in grammar denotes a form of a word indicating that exactly two referents are being referred to. Dualism contrasts with monism, which is the theory that there is only one category of thing or principle. Dualism also

contrasts with pluralism, which is the view that there are many kinds or categories.

In anthropology, dualist explains facts about man by two fundamental causes: reason and passion, soul and body, freedom and determinism. In religion, there are two powers – good and evil, which are in perpetual conflict and which have existed since time immemorial. It is believed that Thomas Hyde invented the term dualist and used it in his history of the religion of the ancient Persians. In theology, dualism signifies that there are two eternal principles, one good and other evil. In animism, both good and evil spirits are still considered to belong to the same genus. The Bible mentions how Leviathan, a sea monster of chaos was vanquished by God. Greek mythology relates battle of Zeus against Titans. 'The Mahabharata' narrates the war of Pandavas, born of Gods against the army of their demon cousin Droyodhana.

A dialectical formulation of life and death is also found in Hinduism, with Vishnu cast as the principle of creation and Shiva as the principle of destruction. In the Vedic hymns, two groups of divinities, equally venerated, are considered as opposed to each other, the Devas and the Asuras.

In Brahmana, the Devas remain, as Gods and Asuras become demons. The first words of Taoist text 'the Tao-te-ching' tell us about Chinese dualism i.e. that of two opposed and complementary principles, the Yin and the Yang i.e. feminine and masculine, terrestrial and celestial, dark and bright, passive and active, all are opposites. But the dialectics of Yin and Yang are the double manifestations of one and only undividable principle: Tao ("The way").

In Iranian Zoroastrianism, good is represented by God Ahura and evil by Ahra. The whole religion is based on their incessant warfare. Only at the end of time, evil spirits are defeated. This divides the world systematically in good and evil. But in one of gathas these good and evil spirits are called 'twins'. It means that these had the same origin. Once the boundary line gets blurred, the good often merges into evil.

These emblematic representations clearly point towards the differentiated as well as integrated nature of duality as posited in the religious thought. Interestingly enough, Leviathan was created by God. Zeus and Titans had the same origin and the combatants of Mahabharata were from the same family. These affinities are dualistic in the sense of contrasting principles or creating agencies.

In philosophy, dualism refers to a theory that there are two substances or principles viz. mind and body. Philip P. Wiener says in Dictionary of The History of Ideas "Christian Wolff first applied dualism to philosophers who

consider body and soul as two distinct substances". Pythagoras was a dualist in two senses. On the one hand, the Pythagoreans taught that all things are composed of contraries: the odd and the even, right and left, masculine and feminine and good and evil etc. On the other hand, they distinguished soul and body and gave the dictum, "The body is a tomb". Heraclitus attacked Pythagorean dualism and showed that contraries are inseparable and form a unity.

Plato was a dualist, who believed that soul exists independently of the body. Plato believed that true substances are not physical bodies, which are temporary, but the eternal forms like souls, of which bodies are imperfect copies. These forms make the world possible and intelligible. Plato's dualism says that soul is imprisoned in the body but it does not clarify what binds a particular soul to a particular body. Aristotle did not believe in Platonic forms existing independently of their instances. He believed in the union of body and soul by proving that the soul is the form of body. He ties the soul in an intimate relationship to the body. For Aristotle, there is no exact science of matter. How matter behaves is essentially affected by the form that is in it. Matter is determinable made determinate by form. Aristotle believed that a particular soul exists as the organizing principle in a particular parcel of matter.

French philosopher Descartes' conception of the relation between mind and body was quite different from what was held in the Aristotelian tradition. He was a substance dualist. He believed that there are two kinds of substances: matter of which the essential property is that it is spatially extended, and mind, of which the essential property is that it thinks. The modern versions of dualism have their origin in Descartes' 'Meditations'.

Descartes held that since mind and body are separate entities, each can exist without the other. He erects a split, a division, a dichotomy between two different kinds of reality: between mental, spiritual, thinking substance and physical, spatial, extended substance. These two kinds of substances constitute two different and separate worlds. As T. Z. Lavine states, "Cartesian dualism is called psychophysical dualism to indicate that duality consists on the one hand of the mental, psychological, conscious kind of reality and on the other hand, of the physical, material, spatial and extended kind of reality" (122). Descartes' psychophysical dualism is well expressed in the old English couplet, which is quoted by T.Z. Lavine:

"What is mind? No matter.

What is matter? Never mind" (123).

There is an important gap in Descartes' account, a gap

which can be noted in this theory. From the fact that essence of the mind is one thing, having consciousness, and the essence of the body is another, occupying space, it does not follow that the mind and body are two separate entities. One and the same thing can have both these properties, be both a thinking thing and at the very same time an extended thing. Like one person can both be a husband and a parent. This gap in the theory was pointed out by Spinoza as Jerome A. Shaffer comments, "Spinoza realized that although two attributes may be conceived as really distinct, we can not nevertheless conclude that they constitute two beings or two different substances" (36). Then breaking decisively with Descartes, Spinoza went on to maintain that in case of human beings, both thinking and space occupancy were characteristic of one and the same thing.

In our everyday life, mind and body are constantly interacting. Body influences mind, when body has to cope with a large intake of beer or hard liquor. Mind in that case will soon register that it has been affected, it becomes dull and ideas are no longer clear and distinct. And, conversely, evidence of everyday life shows that mind influences body that the causal relation can also be from the mind to the body. For example, mind decides to salute the flag or to shake hands, body salutes and shakes hands. But according to Descartes' dualism, these could not happen. Now one can plainly see that body and mind do interact as body acts on the commands of mind.

Spinoza made extension and thought no longer of two substances but two attributes of the one substance God. The old dualism of God and Devil is sometimes replaced by the idea that God contains both good and evil. David Hume rejected Descartes' metaphysical dualism and its claim that there are two kinds of substances by denying that we can ever have any proof that mental and physical substances exist. Kant criticized the thinking substance and extended substance theory. For him there are two worlds: one is the world of phenomena and the other, known only consciousness of moral duty, is reality in itself. Hegel brought the whole of the reality into a single chain by making contradictions, first posited and then transcended, the law of all thought. The existentialism philosophic point of view of Sartre gives priority to existence over essence. Where as rationalism claims that the individual is knowable only by means of essences or concepts, existentialism denies that individual existence can be comprehended by concept of essence. So it appears that Western philosophy is alternation of dualism and monism. In a nutshell, we can say that duality is a situation in which two contradictory ideas exist at the same time. We live in a world of duality: day and night, positive and negative, male and female. So the dualities are not always opposed to each other but these are complementary and supplementary.

In Tennessee Williams' plays, we witness dualities in some of the ways in which these have already been conceptualized here. The writing of a writer cannot be divorced from his own personal life. It is his subjectivity, which is objectified. As Nancy M. Tischler says about Tennessee Williams, "Writing for him, is a means of objectifying and universalizing the subjective, individual experience. Out of his milieu – the contemporary South-he constructs a microcosm, crystallizing all human experience, he projects his life as a pattern for the frustrations and satisfactions of modern man" (Rebellious Puritan 15). His characters correspond to his own tensions. The dualities in his personal life are reflected in his art. The work and the life of a writer are inextricably bound. In Williams' work, self-incorporation in extreme and barely disguised.

Tennessee Williams is one of the most complex, controversial and influential American dramatists of the twentieth century. As Robert F. Gross says, "Embraced as a genius and dismissed as a neurotic, substance-abusing failure, it is hard for readers to fuse the two figures into one. Studying his works and their reception, one often seems to be seeing with two eyes...something cloudy, something clear" (1). Tennessee Williams whose real name was Thomas Lanier Williams was born in the Episcopal rectory of Columbus in the state of Mississippi, on March 26, 1911. He was the first son and the second child of Cornelius Coffin and Edwina Dakin Williams. His father descended from pioneer Tennessee stock, which included the state's first Governor and first Senator. His mother descended from Quakers and being the daughter of minister, she was of genteel tradition. So the blood of cavalier and Puritan strains mixed in his veins, which resulted in the dualities in his plays. Tennessee Williams with his sister Rose and his mother lived with his grand parents in the rectory as his father was a travelling salesman for the international shoe company. He was brought up in an atmosphere of Southern elegance, genteel manners and sophistication. A black servant Ozzie took care of the children and household chores. Lyle Leverich says:

Tom Williams was in fact, growing up more a minister's son than the son of a traveling salesman, whom he scarcely recognized as a father. A puritan strain that would for all of his life become the gentle Dakin side of his nature came in direct conflict with a side born of the wild, cavalier disposition of the Williams' family. The dichotomy divided him against himself and was exhibited in contradictory behavior (37-38).

At the age of six, Tom had an attack of diphtheria with which he was confined to bed for a long time. So he could not play with the other children of his age. During this period, he had the company of grandparents, Ozzie, the

servant, mother Edwina and sister Rose. His grandparents narrated him the stories of 'The Bible' and Ozzie told him the fables from African folklore. The stories widened his mental horizons and laid the foundation of the playwright. He was in the constant company of his mother. As Dakin Williams and Shepherd Mead say, "Most important he believed at this time that his mother helped change his nature by being too solicitous. He believed she was making him into a sissy even a 'hybrid' (17).

He used the events from his childhood as material for some of his plays. His sister Rose's schizophrenia, his mother's Southern background and rough and brutal manner of his father had great significance for him. His sister Rose's schizophrenia and mother's Southern background appeared in *The Glass Menagerie* as Laura's schizophrenia and Amanda's Southern background respectively. The rough and brutal manner of his father appeared in his play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* in the form of Big Daddy. As Tischler says, "Tennessee Williams admits that his writing is a form of psychotherapy and as such brings to light much of his own tormented personality." (*Rebellious Puritan* 15).

When Tom was eight years old, young Williams' father was transferred to St. Louis office of the International Shoe Company. Tennessee Williams along with his sister Rose and his mother shifted to St. Louis. Again he had to face duality in life, the change from calm and quiet agricultural town of Clarksville to noisy industrial town further aggravated his problem. As Allean Hale says, "He would always consider his forced move from the tiny town of Clarkdale Mississippi, to the factory city of St. Louis a tragedy, although it became the irritant which provoked his early plays" (346). He could not adjust and adapt to the new environment. From the rectory to shabby apartment, from affectionate grandparents to stormy father, the change was too much for Tom. His father disturbed the tranquillity of the home by slamming the doors and banging the furniture. His parents were quarrelling at home all the time, which had disastrous effect on the kids. From 1918 to 1930, his mother was hospitalised eight times. Each time mother was hospitalised, Rose was paralysed with fear.

As Williams and Mead say, "The effects of this destructive home life on the children must have been traumatic. Tom already a neurotic and introverted child was having all kinds of psychological problems. He was even terrified to go to sleep at nights because he thought sleep was similar to death" (24). Playmates called Tom 'sissy' and made fun of his Southern accent. They teased him for his manners. Williams was not socially inclined towards the group.

His father called him 'Miss Nancy' because he never went for outdoor games and remained indoors, reading books.

Donald Spoto tells the effect in the following words, "From the moment of their arrival, the relocation had a devastating effect on the children, whose gentle, ordered, parochial life was at once replaced by a cruder, noisier, industrial atmosphere ill-suited both to Miss Edwina's social aspirations and to her children's physical frailty" (13). It appeared to them as expulsion from the Eden Garden. They had lost the paradise of South.

In the high school at St. Louis, Tom was an average student. After school in 1929, Williams joined University of Missouri in Columbia. He wanted that his beloved Miss Hazel Kramer should also join the University but his father did not allow it to materialize. Hazel lived with her grandfather, as her parents were divorced. Her grandfather worked with C.C. Williams in the same shoe company. Williams' father threatened Hazel's grandfather that if he got his granddaughter admitted in the University of Missouri, he would withdraw his son. So Hazel joined the University of Wisconsin. For this reason, Williams hated his father. In spite of this fact, he continued his studies and his father managed a job for him in his shoe company. He could not get the job satisfaction over there. To add insult to the injuries, he received the news that his beloved Hazel Kramer had just been married. All these factors precipitated his nervous breakdown, which to a certain extent was responsible for the dualities in his plays. His sister Rose too was suffering from schizophrenia. So he had to look after her in the hospital. Then he gave up his job in the shoe company and went to his grandparents in Memphis. There he started writing. In 1937, he enrolled himself in University of Iowa because of the good reputation of its drama department. He obtained his B.A. Degree from the University. In 1938, he came to New Orleans and had to work in a restaurant to earn his living. He continued his writing work. In the afternoons and evenings, he waited on tables. At night, he wrote or walked on the streets. He met gamblers and prostitutes and rootless people, which later appeared as characters in his plays. Francis Donahue says, "There was sampling of all who were too brave or too frightened, too pure or too corrupt, too angry or too gentle, too clear or too confused, to the peace and comfort of respectability. With these solitary people Williams felt a sense of kinship. He shared with them their loneliness and rootlessness" (12). These persons were responsible for the dualities in his writings.

He was oppressed with realities of life and he wanted some escape from the reality, so he started writing the plays where he found some consolation and solace. As Tischler says, "Shy personally and shocking professionally, an amoral moralist, voracious for applause but firmly independent, Williams is a paradox as a writer and as a person" (*Rebellious Puritan* 11). He hated his father for calling him 'Miss Nancy', obstructing his love affair with Hazel Kramer and for employing him in shoe

company. Later on, he changed his feelings towards his father.

Dualities in Tennessee Williams' plays are the result of many factors, which influenced his life. The first and foremost was his own unhappy life, which is depicted in his play, *The Glass Menagerie*. He was writing out of his own conflicts, tensions and disturbances. He was protesting against the lower middle class existence. He has used the characters of his relatives as prototypes for his various dramatic personae.

As Marie Saint says, "How difficult it must have been for Tennessee Williams to actually write about his life... the joy and pain of it... and then to see it on stage. At the same time, I'm sure it was a catharsis to get that out and get it on paper and put the words in the mouths of the actors. The process is almost like therapy or analysis" (38).

Secondly, he was influenced by the poetry of Hart Crane, a nineteenth century American poet. Williams' imagination was fired by his life and poetry. Crane committed suicide at the age of thirty-two, Tennessee Williams was impressed with his bohemian and homosexual life. He defied family, social and sexual taboos.

Thirdly, he was influenced by D.H. Lawrence. Lawrence's symbols, views of sex and his love and hatred for women influenced Tennessee Williams the most. Like him, Williams revolted against the suppression of sexual life and like Lawrence he believed in the inner instincts of man. Williams' play, *The Rose Tattoo* was inspired by D.H. Lawrence. But his Puritan upbringing came into clash with his thinking, which resulted in dualities in his plays. Williams would later write:

Lawrence felt the mystery and power of sex as the primal life urge and was the life long adversary of those who wanted to keep the subject locked away in the cellar of prudity. Much of his work is chaotic and distorted by tangent obsessions, such as his insistence upon the women's subservience to male, but all in all, his work is the greatest modern monument to the dark roots of creation (qtd. in Leavitt 50).

Further he was influenced by the Russian dramatist and short story writer Anton Chekov. Two Russian plays of Chekov, *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard* influenced Tennessee Williams. He appreciated these plays for their symbols and characters. Chekov's characters were defeatists and escapists. They were in tune with the characters of Williams. Like Chekov, he wanted to depict the inner reality of man. Chekov's influence can be seen in his two plays namely, *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Street Car Named Desire* and like him, he presents the moods

and mental processes of his characters. Chekov writes about the dying aristocracy of feudal Russia and Williams writes about the antebellum South and its dying aristocracy. Both of them share the same sense of isolation of human beings and inability to communicate with each other. Like Chekov, Williams poses many questions without answering them. He began to read Chekov in depth when he was hardly twenty-four. He got his short stories from the library. Later he read his plays. He felt an identification with his views of life.

Williams was influenced by Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. His play *Ghosts* inspired him a lot. In the characters of this play, Tennessee Williams saw his own family members. This play was one of the things that made him want to write for the theatre. He identified himself with Ibsen. He had a youth like Ibsen's. Ibsen too had to face dislocations from comfortable to inhospitable new residences like Tennessee Williams. Ibsen too was shy in personality and undistinguished in academic pursuits like Tennessee Williams, so he felt the special bond with him.

Williams' dualities are also due to the influence of Scandinavian writer, August Strindberg. Strindberg himself led a very morbid and miserable life. He learnt from Strindberg how to use his personal experience as dramatic material. Like him, Tennessee Williams had an insecure childhood. In his plays, *The Father*, *Miss Julia* and *The Creditor*, he depicts psychological cases destroyed by their neurosis. Williams' dualities in the subject matter and manner are to an extent due to the influence of Strindberg. Like him, he presents the psychological cases and sexual conflicts and uses symbolism, realism and expressionism. As Richard Vowel remarks, "Williams does write in the Strindberg tradition. In at least three fundamental ways: philosophy, dramatic action and theatrical effects - he perpetuates and ingeniously elaborates the genius of Strindberg" (qtd. in Donahue 217). Williams shares Strindberg's pessimism and sexual conflicts as projected in his play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

Furthermore, dualities of O'Neill's plays are also visible in Tennessee Williams' plays. Dualities of illusion and reality, realism and expressionism, Dionysian and Apollonian forces are there in the plays of Eugene O'Neill like *The Emperor Jones*, *The Hairy Ape*, and *Desire Under the Elms*.

During the period of Tennessee Williams' infancy, O'Neill had full sway on the American theatre and was very popular. He too was interested in depicting the characters who were lost souls in the modern age. As Donahue says, "Williams was shaped as a playwright in a dramatic world presided over by Eugene O'Neill" (218).

Before proceeding further, it is important to have a bird's eye-view of the history of American drama. American drama as an art form was not an important force until the twentieth century. Some writers before that period made an important contribution to the local cultural scene. In the beginning, it was purely imitative form of entertainment. To quote Gassner, "America has a theatrical past and it is mistake to assume that modern American theatre was suddenly born on a certain date.... The fact is that theatre moved into the modern world, gradually, in a stream of mingled currents, some of them faintly observable in American decades before 1920" (Treasury 771). For a considerable period, American drama followed the commercial standards of British theatre. American dramas were mainly typical, satirical, political burlesque, musical extravaganza etc.

By the 19th century, Puritan prejudice against drama had disappeared and many plays were produced. Drama of 19th century included tragedies, melodramas, farces and burlesques developed from French and English sources. These plays were commissioned by actors who had large personal following. The quality of the play was determined by stage effectiveness and not by literary merit. The tyranny of the actor and the producer held sway in America. Imported plays like *Our American Cousin* of English playwrights were enacted. Even novels like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by H. B. Stowe and others were transformed into plays. There was a sudden revival of English drama in the end of the 19th century with the influence of Strindberg and Ibsen. In England, the drama was revived by G.B. Shaw.

American drama was revived from the Little Theatre Movement of the 20th century. In 1915, a group of amateurs calling themselves the Washington Square Players opened the Bandbox theatre near the corner of 57th street and Third Avenue. In 1917, another group of young men took possession of a stable in Mac Dougal street which came to be known thereafter as Province Town Theater. In four years, Washington square group produced sixty two one act plays and six full length plays. Similarly Province Town Theater production varied under leadership of George Cram Cook. After 1915, a number of insurgent groups performed plays which were imitations of Russian expressionism.

American theater in 1920's tried to moralize and satirize. There was a lot of novelty and experimentation in the American drama. It began to be influenced by expressionism. The expressionists rejected naturalism because it dealt with surface reality only. They wanted to project the inner crisis of man. O'Neill brought about a revolution in American Theatre. Clyde Fitch and August Thomas, a decade before O'Neill, appeared on the scene and strengthened the conventions. O'Neill: is the greatest

dramatist America has produced. Among his important works we could include: *Beyond the Horizon*, *The Emperor Jones* (1920), *Anna Christie* (1921), *The Hairy Ape* (1922), *Desire under the Elms* (1924), *The Great God Brown* (1926), *Strange Interlude* (1928) and *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931). O'Neill's creativity declined in later years because he was not keeping good health. Later he produced *The Iceman Cometh* (1946) and *Moon for the Misgotten* (1952). His plays are known for their bold experimentation. *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* were experiments in mono drama: a type of play whose purpose is the exhibition of a single character. In *The Great God Brown* (1926), he tried the addition of masks as an experiment in dramatic effects. *Lazarus Laughed* (1928), carried the use of masks to an extreme complication.

But O'Neill incorporated both realism and expressionism in his plays like *The Emperor Jones* (1920) and *The Hairy Ape* (1922). O'Neill's plays are interesting for their psychological insight. In *The Emperor Jones*, the theme was the breakdown of a Negro under the stress of fear. In *The Hairy Ape*, he projects a worker's loss of motivation, especially the loss of his sense of belonging, In *Strange Interlude*, he depicts the mental and moral disintegration of a woman whose fiancé had been killed in war. O'Neill's vision of life was essentially tragic. The human predicament is the theme of his plays. He writes tragedies of modern life which do not follow Aristotelian form. Due to the efforts of O'Neill, American Drama made contribution to the World theatre, which could be considered as modern. He reformed American drama and gave it a name and a direction. The era of O' Neill is called the Renaissance in American Drama. Next decade of the 30s had less activity in drama because of the nation wide depression. Sidney Kinsley, Clifford Odets and Lillian Hellman were concerned with social problems. Maxwell Anderson dominated the American Theatre. He was propagating individualism in the age of collectivism. He was a little out of tune with his times.

Post War American Drama was dominated by Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. With them, new horizons opened up. Miller is a rebel against and Williams a refugee from the familiar ogre of commercialism, the killer of values. Miller's plays are concerned mostly with men and Williams' are concerned mostly with women. The common factor is their love for bruised individual soul and its desperation. Miller's dramas are social dramas of the thirties. They responded to social and economic reality of the age. His plays: *All My Sons* (1946), *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953), *A Memory of Two Mondays* (1955), *A View from the Bridge* (1955) are domestic dramas that use family as the testing place for the protagonist. He deals with social and psychological forces that form and distort the family and the individual.

American drama reached its apex in Tennessee Williams (1911-1983). He produced twenty five full length plays, more than forty short plays, a dozen produced (and unproduced) screen plays and an opera libretto, two novels, one hundred poems, sixty short stories, a novella, an autobiography, a published volume of letters and introductions to plays and books by others. His works have been translated into many languages including Tamil, Marathi and Hindi. Tennessee Williams ushered a new era in the annals of Western Theatre, an era, in which Williams succeeded O' Neill, as the chief architect of form in American Theatre.

Critics and scholars have pursued Tennessee Williams as a playwright of the twentieth century. A lot of critical and analytical work is available on Tennessee Williams. The work done on Tennessee Williams' life and plays has proved immensely helpful in understanding him as a playwright.

Many biographies of Tennessee Williams have been published. These biographies throw a flood of light on the life and works of Tennessee Williams. These biographies tell a lot about the dualities in the personal life of Tennessee Williams. Lyle Leverich is the official biographer of Tennessee Williams authorized by him in 1979. His biography *Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams* brings out the duality of public figure Tennessee Williams and private individual Tom. It focuses on Williams' youth and the forces that influenced him. Lyle Leverich had exclusive access to letters, diaries, journals and unpublished manuscripts and family documents. This book tells us about the unknown life of young, introspective schoolboy, his stalled academic career and the early success of his writing and the confusion over his sexuality.

Donald Spoto's *The kindness of strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams* is an authentic account of his life. Before writing about Tennessee Williams, he personally went to places where Williams had lived, met the people whom he knew. He went to the theatres and studios where he worked. He went to University of Texas at Austin to have access to his letters and papers. All this was done to determine the accuracy of the facts. Williams' public statements and public disclosures were distorted, coloured and whitewashed. There was dichotomy in his private and public life. So this book throws light on his life in ten chapters.

Tennessee Williams: An Intimate Biography by Dakin Williams and Shepherd Mead, has been written by two writers, who lived four thousand miles apart, one in Collinsville, Illinois, the other in London in England. Dakin Williams, a lawyer, had been collecting material and making notes about his brother and about his life.

Shepherd Mead who was older than Dakin and younger than Tom lived for twenty two years in St. Louis, about a mile from one where the Williams' family lived longest-on the opposite side of Washington University, where all the three took playwriting course. So, this biography reveals Tom from the close quarters.

To list the other few: *Remember Me to Tom* by Edwina Dakin, the mother of Tennessee Williams, and Ronald Hayman's *Tennessee Williams: Everyone Else is an Audience* tell us about the life of Tennessee Williams.

Conversations with Tennessee Williams edited by Albert J. Devlin has been selected from innumerable interviews that Tennessee Williams granted during his literary career spanning over five decades and range from standard to the more obscure. The interviews are filled not only with revealing insights into Williams' works and career but also with dualities. Some of the interviews are interesting, some are revealing and some are provocative.

Norman J. Fedder's *The influence of D.H. Lawrence on Tennessee Williams* brings out the influence of D.H. Lawrence regarding sex on Tennessee Williams. It highlights the duality of flesh and spirit and of the fox and the moth. Like Lawrence, Tennessee Williams believes that natural instincts are to be trusted and to be relied upon. Because he is condemning what he most desires to pardon, the duality results.

Charles S. Watson's *The History of Southern Drama* tells about the history of American Drama before Tennessee Williams and it has a chapter "The Cultural Imagination of Tennessee Williams" which divides Tennessee Williams' outlook towards life into two phases. During the first phase, he was nostalgically addicted to past and then he started criticizing the racial injustice in the later years of his life. This history was written because in the *History of Southern Literature* (1985) a volume of 605 pages, there is just one paragraph on The Old South Drama 1815-1840 and seven pages on 'Modern Southern Drama'. The early plays of South tell us about Southern life by highlighting the political, social and moral concerns of the days. But Southern Drama has changed radically in its political orientation while remaining consistent in cultural distinctiveness. The Southern Drama through Civil war years is concerned with politics and slavery but from World War-I to present, it explores the rich cultural resources of the South.

Regarding South, Thomas E. Porter's *Myth and Modern American Drama* discusses South in the context of the play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. This book examines a number of representative American plays in the light of cultural milieu. It considers plot structure, characters types and setting to discover how these elements of drama

relate to the milieu, which comprises the immediate cultural situations, dramatic conventions, traditions and heritage of the culture.

Understanding Tennessee Williams by Alice Griffin deals with nine major plays of Williams. It gives the detailed analysis of the each play in a separate chapter. For the basic understanding of Tennessee Williams and his plays this book provides exhaustive information. It looks at Tennessee Williams both as literary figure and stage innovator. It makes in-depth study of the characters, language, theme, dramatic effects and staging. The nine plays which he discusses are:

The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, The Rose Tattoo, Camino Real, Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, Orpheus Descending, Sweet Bird of Youth, The Night of the Iguana.

Nancy M. Tischler's Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan is a very useful book. The book deals with the playwright and his plays. It brings out the contradictions in his plays. It tries to establish a link between the plays and the life of the author. It establishes Tennessee Williams as a 'rebellious puritan'. The biography of the playwright has been discussed in the first three chapters titled The Early Years, Education and Apprenticeship and Bohemia. Rest of the chapters discuss the plays at length. The author tries to prove that Tennessee Williams is a romantic and non-conformist, both in his life and his writings. He has tried to establish that in this jungle world, the romantic can only destroy himself while competing with other animals. Destruction is the only salvation. Damnation comes not through destruction but through apathy. Action is salvation. The brute eats the dreamer but its repetition brings revolt. That will sacrifice the revolutionary. That is the only possible positive action.

Francis Donahue's The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams is a very helpful book in understanding Tennessee Williams. It aims at interweaving of Williams' life with his works. Williams had a troubled life. This book tries to present the spirit of bohemian artist struggling with self doubt. His short stories and poems have also been discussed. His basic themes as conflict between illusion and reality, the destruction of sensitive by insensitive have been discussed in detail. It has the critical opinions of Broadway drama critics, academic critics and personal views expressed by Williams himself.

Roger Boxill's Tennessee Williams has got ten chapters. In the first chapter, he gives us introduction and the life of Tennessee Williams. In the second chapter, he discusses the form, theme and characters in his plays. Then he discusses his early One Act Plays (1939-1946) after that he discusses The Glass Menagerie, A Street Car Named

Desired, Summer and Smoke, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof in separate chapters and clubs other plays in three other chapters: Wanderer Plays (1957-59), Reversals of the pattern (1943-61) and Late Plays (1962-81). He classifies the characters from Williams' plays as "Wanderers" or "Faded Belles".

Benjamin Nelson's Tennessee Williams: The Man and His Work as the title indicates deals with Tennessee Williams' life and his achievements before 1960's. Three chapters deal with the life of Tennessee Williams and the rest of the chapters discuss the plays up to The Period of Adjustment. It discusses the themes, techniques and basic beliefs from the particular and individualistic point of view of Tennessee Williams. There is a special emphasis upon the early years of Tennessee Williams which manifest his development as an individual and artist. It is not a final statement about life and art of Tennessee Williams which is constantly evolving. It was written in 1960. After that some of the plays of Tennessee Williams received their Broadway premieres. But this book is very helpful in understanding his plays and life.

A Portrait of the Artist: The Plays of Tennessee Williams by Foster Hirsch concentrates on the sexual aspect of Williams' life and plays. It deals with only one aspect and other aspects are ignored. So it gives a partial picture of the plays and does not deal with other themes. It tries to establish that there is duality in his treatment of sex. On the one hand, Williams considers sex as form of grace and on the other he feels that sex is impure. Almost all his plays are homosexual fantasies. The homosexual impulse often masquerades as heterosexual courtship in his plays. It tries to prove that Williams has tried to transmute his private fantasies into art. It concludes that Williams is a confused moralist and his plays are filled with tantalizing ambiguities. He has made an attempt to study the plays which appeared after The Night of The Iguana.

C.W.E. Bigsby's, A Critical Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama Vol. Two studies Miller, Albee and Tennessee Williams in the socio-political context. The three volume study thoroughly studies Tennessee Williams. Its 120 pages on Williams are very useful for his early plays. C.W.E. Bigsby's, Modern American Drama 1945-2000 has a chapter on the 'theatricalising self' on Williams' life and plays. It is a study of socio-political context of Post-War period.

The Broken World of Tennessee Williams by Esther Merle Jackson deals with the dramatic art of Williams. It deals with both matter and manner of Tennessee Williams. It lays emphasis on the 'Plastic Theatre' and his techniques of the stagecraft. It is an attempt to place Williams into the context of American dramatic development. Its concentration is on the playwright's dramaturgy.

Signi L. Falk's *Tennessee Williams* is an authentic study of the playwright and his plays. This study divides the characters into types like gentle women, desperate heroes and artists. It shares with Hirsch's book a condemnation of the plays written after 1961.

Another book of essays on Tennessee Williams has been edited by Mathew C. Roudane titled *The Cambridge Companion to Tennessee Williams*. It has fourteen essays written by different critics, who see Tennessee Williams' plays from different angles. It is a wide ranging volume. The contributors cover a healthy sampling of Williams' works from the early apprenticeship years in 1930's through his plays before his death in 1983. It also surveys the major critical attainments of the dramatist.

The Faces of Eve : A Study of Tennessee Williams's Heroines by Gulshan Rai Kataria categorises the heroines of Tennessee Williams in archetypal categories like The Mothers (Serafina, Isabel, Amanda, Violet Venable), The Hetairas (Maggie, Myrtle, Blanche), The Amazons (Lady Torrance, Princess Kosmonopolis, Maxine Faulk) The Mediums (Alma, Hannah, Carol Cutere). The feminine characters have been outlined conceptually, mythically and psychologically.

Jac Tharpe's book *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute* contains the collection of different essays on Williams by different writers. The essays deal with various aspects of Tennessee Williams' plays like themes, techniques, style, prose and poetry. It has got essays on 'themes of the play', 'on prose and poetry' 'on techniques', 'European context' and 'assessment'. It has the material from the unpublished manuscripts at the University of Texas. It reflects the interests and opinions of the contributors.

Stephen S. Stanton's book *Tennessee Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays* is a very significant book, which contains essays on various topics by different critics. It has been divided into three parts: i) plays ii) themes iii) work in progress. It includes the essays like *Anti Hero of Tennessee Williams* by Esther Merle Jackson, *Tennessee Williams and Predicament of Women* by Louise Blackwell, *Tennessee Williams Fugitive Kind* by Donald P. Costello, *Tennessee Williams: A Desperate Morality* by Arthur Ganz etc.

Magical Muse: Millennial Essays on Tennessee Williams edited by Ralph F. Voss is another good collection of essays on Tennessee Williams. It contains introduction and twelve essays on Tennessee Williams by different writers. The chapter *Tennessee Williams scholarship at the turn of century* by George W. Crandell provides a comprehensive view of the work done on Tennessee Williams till the turn of the century.

Tennessee Williams: A Casebook edited by Robert F. Gross is a very significant book. It contains different essays by numerous writers on various topics. There are essays on his plays: *The Rose Tattoo*, *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *A Street Car Named Desire* in addition to other essays.

Expressionism in the Early Plays of Tennessee Williams by Mary Ann Roman Corrigan. This dissertation which has been microfilmed and deals with Williams' employment of expressionistic techniques in which he uses setting, lighting and music not as a mere background for the action but as symbolic manifestations of the intangible especially in *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Street Car Named Desire*. In the first chapter of introduction, he traces the history of expressionism.

This shows that the various critics and scholars have pursued Tennessee Williams from different angles. But no study has so far been made exclusively on dualities in the plays of Tennessee Williams. So this thesis will explore a new dimension in the plays of Tennessee Williams and contribute significantly towards Tennessee Williams' scholarship. Critics and scholars have made references to dualities and touched the dualities but no detailed research on dualities has been done.

Moreover, the understanding of the dualities in the plays of Tennessee Williams will help us to negotiate dualities in our lives. When we see the characters facing dualities in their lives, we learn to negotiate these dualities to find the way out in our lives as well. As George Niesen has rightly commented, "Tennessee Williams is telling us all how to survive. He insists that both horror and beauty surround us and we must learn how to relate to them" (465).

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