

CHAPTER : THREE

Violence in the Selected Plays of Tennessee Williams

CHAPTER - III -VIOLENCE IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Tennessee Williams the controversial modern playwright having experienced a troubled personal life, had to struggle with his own self doubts. He said, 'People are humble and frightened and guilty at heart, all of us, no matter how desperately we may try to appear otherwise....we are more interested in characters on the stage who share our hidden shames and fears, and we want the plays about us to say "I understand you. You and I are brothers, the deal is rugged but let's face and fight it together'It is not the essential dignity but the essential ambiguity of man that I think needs to be stated". (1) So the basic themes of his plays were the conflict between reality and illusion, between the sensitive and the insensitive, between flesh and spirit.

Williams felt a kinship with solitary people, with their loneliness and their rootlessness. He writes about disturbed people and is obsessed with the desire to illuminate the dark, fragmented nature of individuals. In his "Person to Person" preface to Cat On A Hot Tin Roof he says that the emotions that stir the artist deeply to demand expression and to charge the expression with light and power, are nearly all rooted in the concerns of the artist himself, the world of his passions and images of it that each of us weaves from birth to death, a complex web, spun speedily and to a length "from the spider mouth

of his own singular perceptions." (2) He further says,

"It is a lonely idea, a lonely condition, so terrifying to think of that we usually don't. And so we talk to each other, and write each other, call each other short and long distance across land and sea, clasp hands with each other at meeting and at parting fight each other and even destroy each other because of this always somewhat thwarted effort to break through walls to each other. As a character in his play once remarked, "We're all of us sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins;" (3)

The stark and lonely condition of man obsessed Williams in all his work. Thus the dominant theme in his work is the loneliness of human existence. The lonely, the frightened and the outcast are the people with whom he can sympathise most readily, those who by temperament or character or birth are the "fugitive kind". Williams wrote that his work dealt with the "destructive impact of society on the sensitive, nonconformist individual".(4) The universe is hostile, it is malignant and is the destructive antagonist who through time has destroyed a way of life and a tradition that once meant civilization and has evolved a society that is grasping, repressive and destructive."(5)

Williams sympathises with his romantic nonconformist individuals but at the same time is conscious that their quest is futile and that they are doomed to failure. Their ineffectuality does not allow them to triumph. They lack

the strength and the force to persevere, they just dream. This juxtaposition of the romantic and the realist in Tennessee Williams is seen in The Glass Menagerie, A Street car Named Desire, and The Cat On a Hot Tin Roof. The plight of the Wingfields, the destruction of Blanche DuBois and the struggle of Margaret and Big Daddy for Brick Politt though presented with compassion, perception and intensity, the plays are full of harsh realism and violence. But Tennessee Williams admits the complexity of his characters' plights and so the plays are not merely sensational, they compel us to reflect.

The tendency towards violence and sensational is present in all of Williams' work. In his effective plays it is tempered. But in plays like "Sweet Bird of Youth", Camino Real, Orpheus Descending Tennessee Williams moves away from complexity towards a very simple view of life, the plight of the individual becomes simplified, and the tendency towards sensationalism increases. There is lack of control on the material and the ability to objectify is missed. Thus there is sound and fury, chaos and morbid exhibition of violence and sexual depravity, in such plays.

The three plays that I have selected for the study of violence in the plays of Tennessee Williams are "The Glass Menagerie", which established him as a major American playwright, A Street car Named Desire, which was judged as the best American play of 1947 and received both the Drama critics circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize and

established him as the leading American playwright of his generation, and The Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, The most controversial play of the 1954-55 Broadway Season. It won the pultizer Prize and the Dramatic circle Award.

C H A P T E R - III - (A)"THE GLASS MENAGERIE" (1945)

"The Glass Menagerie" is in marked contrast to the usual Tennessee Williams tradition of dramatic violence. The outline of the stories of Blanche DuBois of A Street Car Named Desire, and Laura of The Glass Menagerie are similar. Each has suffered disappointment and disillusion in love. The environments of both are depressing, and drab, for Laura it is the dingy, sordid tenement flat, the overpowering, nagging mother, the rekindled love; for Blanche the repulsive environment of the Kowalski apartment, the violent brother-in-law, the cruel commitment. Blanche DuBois is excitable and frenzied and driven to neurasthenia by frustration, whereas Laura finds a measure of consolation in her silent glass menagerie. Though "A Street Car Named Desire" is a tragic play of the same design as The Glass Menagerie it is more intense and violent.

The violence in The Glass Menagerie is not bold and conspicuous, it is mute. There isn't sexual violence or even physical violence in this play. No violent acts like flying at each other's throats like screeching cats as in I Rise in Flame; Cried the Phoenix, or seduction, infidelity, murder, storm, as in Battle of Angels. This play is the most consciously biographical of all his plays. It is a moving portrait of the pathetic situation which was the author's home. It is the story of the disintegration of a family, and the desperate need of one to break free. Life over powers the characters and they are defeated.

This is a psychological conflict which presents the plight of the Wingfields. The theme is clash between two culture,- the materialistic (boorish) modern against the more graceful, relaxed and civilized old. The characters are confused by the change. They have no one with whom they can communicate and much of the time they cannot even communicate with each other. They are terribly lonely and lead a pathetic and glum life. The mother, Amanda remembers a myth of gracious living, the pleasant dream of Moon Lake Casino, Blue Mountain, the memory of seventeen gentleman callers in a single day. She is defeated by the realities of the depressing present and the crude indifference of the inhospitable surroundings. She is so much dominated by her lost gentility of past years that her intended goodness becomes in the chaotic present an unendurable cruelty to both Tom and Laura. The violence of her feelings rising out of her frustration is seen in her language.

Tennessee Williams in his introduction describes her as "A little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time or place, steeped in genteel illusions". He says "there is much to admire in Amanda and as much to love and pity as there is to laugh at. Certainly she has endurance and a kind of heroism and though her foolishness makes her unwittingly cruel at times, there is tenderness as in her little person." Living in a world of fantasies and memories she is indirectly responsible for the breakdown of her lonely crippled

daughter. This we may consider as mute violence. The violence due to which the daughter retreats, within and the son leaves home is her nagging, scolding, dreaming, playing the coquette and raging helplessly at them. And yet she emerges as a tender figure with valor, she is a strange combination of pettiness, tenderness which is intertwined with insensitivity and cruelty. In her attempt to cope with the bleak reality of her environment and foisting her illusions on her unwilling children, she is Shrewish, over powering and vulgar. She prods and goads her son for his inability and rages helplessly at him. She lives in the past, resenting her present poverty and tries to escape from it by self-deception and pretensions to glory. Critic Stark Young termed the characterisation of the mother as appalling and human, cold and loving. Benjamin Nelson says, "Amanda does cling frantically to the past, but she clings just as desperately to the present. She is attempting to hold two worlds together and realizes that both are crumbling beneath her fingers." (6) This attempt makes Amanda aggressive in her attitude towards her children.

The violence in the play is limited to rough and immoderate vehemence as of feeling and language expressed in the quarrels between Amanda and Tom. The family instability created by the father vanishing one day and leaving them destitute, gives rise to stressful and frustrating conditions. Tom who is a poet by nature is caught in the web of his family that depends on him. He finds his job at the

shoe company stifling and unendurable and wants to break free. He wants to break away from his domineering mother and commit the cruelest act of his life abandoning his mother and sister. The frustrating situation makes the mother and son violent and we find them quarreling and being harsh to each other and hurting each other. Although there is no physical violence on the stage we find them injuring each other in thought and word. Amanda and Tom's harsh quarrels result in Tom running away beyond the confining room to the open sea, and Laura, the victim of her situation and surroundings breaks like her glass unicorn and resigns to continued rejection. The defeated Amanda then with quiet dignity comforts her daughter.

The structure of the play is very simple, the preparations for the gentleman caller are made, he arrives, and departs. But within this simple structure the characters are revealed as doomed to failure. They cannot comprehend and struggle against reality, because of their inability to do more than dream. No one is purposely cruel, but all are deeply hurt. The play presents the story of Tom a would-be-poet who breaks away from a dominating mother and a crippled, shy, introvert sister after failing to find a suitable husband for the girl.

Tom, the narrator-hero of the play is introduced by Tennessee Williams as, "His nature is not remorseless, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity." (7) Tom is not by nature violent, cruel or selfish, but sometimes

he seems so; all his actions are prompted by his desire to escape from the various traps that seem to suppress and engulf him. The most prominent trap he is trying to escape is his mechanical and prosaic job at the warehouse where he feels isolated. A poet at heart he finds the warehouse unbearable "I'd rather somebody picked up a crowbar and battered out my brains than go back mornings." (8) There is suppressed violence in the Amanda's over protective attitude, her anxiety about her son's health, her sermons to him all make him impatient and he compares her to a 'witch' and make 'home' a cage as suffocating as the warehouse To escape from this prison, the oppression of his life he goes to the movies night after night. Bouts of heavy drinking are a means of escape. He is oppressed under the financial hardships, the confinement in the warehouse, his mother's attitude towards him, the moral obligation to his sister, and the frustration of his poetic ambitions.

Amanda is much concerned about Tom's increasingly absorbing side activities which impair his efficiency at work and jeopardise his position at the warehouse. But she is considerably more anxious about Laura, who is excessively sensitive as a childhood illness has left her with one leg shorter than the other. She has given up the fight with real life and conceals herself from the world and retreats into a dream world of glass figurines and scratchy old records. Williams says, "stemming from

this Laura's separation increases till she is a piece of her own glass collection too exquisitely fragile to move from the shelf." (9) She washes, polishes, handles, and caresses her collection of glass figurines all the time. Her dearest figurine is a freakish thirteen-year old glass unicorn.

Amanda's misdirected ambition to turn her daughter into a career girl forces Laura to leave the protective apartment to register for a secretarial course. The weekly speed test proves too much for her and she instinctively seeks a substitute refuge at the city zoo or the hot house. Amanda is deeply upset both by the disappointing outcome of her plan and by the financial loss. She comes to the conclusion that, for Laura, there is only one solution, a suitable husband must be found to provide material and emotional security. It will be Tom's delicate task to select the eligible bachelor and to invite him to dinner.

Tom is skeptical at first, but his mother eventually persuades him to bring home a gentleman caller, a fellow employee at the warehouse, called Jim O'Conner, who is referred to by Tom as "the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary from a world of reality that we were somehow set apart from." (10) He is a contrast to Tom. The environment of the warehouse neither stifles him nor does he feel alienated from his fellowmen, it is not a prison for the 'enslaved' lower middle class as it is to Tom but it is to Jim a rung on the ladder

towards success. Lively, simple and hearty, a "High School hero,.... up and coming American boy", energetic, athlete, socially popular Jim "was shooting with such velocity through his adolescence that you would logically expect him to arrive at nothing short of the White House by the time he was thirty" (11) Even during Tom's presentation the image on the screen switches from the "High School Hero" to a mere desk* emphasising the decline. In school Laura had once had a 'crush' on him without Jim knowing it. At first, Laura is unable to come to table for dinner, the meeting with Jim is psychologically upsetting to her, At the dinner table he carries on a bantering discussion with Tom's mother. And alone with Laura after dinner he immediately begins to persuade her that her limp is only a minor disability, that she is beautiful and personable and need not have inferiority complex. He even gets her to dance, and is surprised to learn that she knows so much about him as a high school athlete and a leading figure in the school musical program. Finally, she shows him her glass menagerie which she treasures so much and which are her escape route to which she flees when the real world proves too oppressive for her. While dancing they break the horn of the glass unicorn, the one element that had made it unique, she is not disturbed, symbolically her calm reaction represents her desire now to become a normal person and no longer remain apart from others. Tim's interest in her, his ability to break through her reserve and the defenses which she has set up, bring

her a newly found moment of elation. In the ensuing kiss Laura comes closer to emerging into a new world; but her rediance is momentary. When Tim notices the emotions that he has aroused in Laura he stammers his confession that he is already engaged to a girl, he awkwardly departs and leaves Laura to retreat mutely into her glass world, with her lonliness intensified; she will never allow Jim O'connor to enter her life again. At Laura's relapse into her former dream world the mother berates Tom for not knowing that his best friend was going to be married, she accuses him of living in a dream world and manufacturing illusions. Tom who is disgusted says he will go to the movies.

"That's right, "his mother retorts," now that you've had us made such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense!. The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! All for what! To entertain some other girl's fiance! Go to the movies, go! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job! Don't let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure! Just go, go, go-go to the movies!"(11) Tom says that the more she shouts about his selfishness the quicker he will go. "Go, then! Then go to the moon-you selfish dreamer!" (12) Snaps the mother, Amanda becomes violent due to frustration.

In the closing scene, we meet Tom in the role of the narrator, who stands aside to address the audience. Through sound-proof glass we see Amanda comforting Laura, huddled upon the sofa. Meanwhile, Tom explains that he has been fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoe box and from, then on, he followed in his father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space-" (13) Though he drifts away from them, he is never really far from Amanda and Laura. Laura and her glass menagerie keep haunting him With a sense of guilt he says:

"Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger-anything that can blow your candles out! (14) The Glass Menagerie is physically

The Glass Menagerie is physically the least violent of Williams' plays. The social situation filled with potential violence is the background of the play. The mother Amanda is from the highly cultivated south, having been transplanted to a Northern urban area she lives in a world of sentimental illusion. She is frustrated and does not accept the drab alley apartment in St.Louis at its real value. She is lost in the past. The play revolves round the retreat of the fragile, shy, crippled Laura, the victim of misplaced love. The sensitive artist-brother Tom looks on, sympathetic and helpless, whose artistic ambition is hindered by the necessity of contributing to the family upkeep through

the tedium of factory work. Finally he escapes following in his father's footsteps deserting his mother and sister. All the three Wingfields do not seem to be responsible for their trapped condition. They are not able to cope with it, they are doomed. Each one of the them has failed. Even Amanda, the most heroic of them all is doomed to failure despite her attempt to fight and right the things. Their life is a continuous retreat a mute withdrawal. The emotional shipwreck of the three sensitive characters is presented in a mood of nostalgia and frustration.

The beauty and magic of The Glass Menagerie is in its genuine, deeply moving pathos. The expression of violence under the stress of social and domestic circumstances can be traced in this play. It was in a way his preparation for the expression of psychological and physical violence which was to be depicted in his more mature later plays.

C H A P T E R - III - (B)

A STREET CAR NAMED DESIRE

When Williams lived on Royal street in the French Quarter of New Orleans there were two streetcars running on the same track down this street. One named 'Desire' and the other named 'cemeteries' "Their indiscourageable progress up and down Royal, struck me as having some symbolic bearing of a broad nature on the life in the Vieux carre and everywhere else, for that matter...."(1) This served as his inspiration to A Streetcar Named Desire. Two one act plays, one written in 1939, The Lady of Larkspur Lotion, a story of a a crumbling southern ex-belle who vainly tries to cling to respectability in a poor room in New Orleans under the illusion of getting dividends from her rubber plantation in Brazil; and another play - The Portrait of a Madonna dealing with an aged spinster about to be taken to an asylum reflect the development of the character of Blanche Dubois. Another scene exhibiting the traces of Streetcar is Blanche's Chair in the Moon which is a sketch of a woman sitting in the darkness near the window, through which moonrays stream upon her, suggesting lunacy. Thus the story of Blanche DuBois evolved slowly and many scenes and many characters fused into the play A streetcar Named Desire. The plays before Streetcar all exhibit traces of Blanche Dubois in their heroines.

A Streetcar Named Desire is a play about the disintegration of a woman. The moment Blanche Dubois enters the Elysian Fields the process of disintegration which had begun in her youth gathers speed in the violent atmosphere, until her final doom when she is taken away to the asylum. Blanche, a young woman born and bred on a now-decayed but once rich southern plantation, arrives at a poor but "raffish" quarter of New Orleans named Elysian Fields. Two street cars, one named 'desire', the other 'Cemeteries' bring her to the address of her sister Stella, whom she has not seen since her marriage to Stanley Kowalski, a rough and brutish Polish labourer. Blanche, a one-time English teacher dressed in a fluttering white garden party outfit looks incongruous against the shabbiness of the neighbourhood from her very first appearance. The proprietress of the building admits her to the Kowalski apartment some minutes before Stella's return. In that brief time, after a successful search for Stanley's whisky she drinks a half-glass of it neat. This establishes one of Blanche's primary weakness.

When Stella returns, Blanche hardly makes an effort to hide her dismay at her sister's surroundings and expresses her repulsion and surprise at the environment. Stella happy with her wild man regards Blanche's criticism with good-humored tolerance. Blanche suddenly turns on Stella and defends herself against a fancied accusation that she had allowed Belle Reve, the family mansion, to be lost. Her defense is a hysterical out burst which

ends on a violent note of accusation against Stella. "I let the place go? Where were you. In bed with your Polack!"(16) when Stanley enters some time later, he greets Blanche brusquely. When he mentions her dead husband, Blanche becomes confused and shaken, she looks sickly, extremely nervous and hears strange music when distressed. It is obvious that she is unwell; she is hypersensitive, giggling too much and talking too much. There is a spirit of refinement in her speech, action and physical appearance. She still clings to her clothing and furs, momentos of the refined Southern respectability. Her scorn for the life in which she has descended is unmistakable. She is shocked by the primitive animal spirit of her brother-in-law. He is antagonized by her obvious disdain for him. She is a disturbing element to him for she seems to threaten their rough and uncouth life-style. Later, while Blanche is in the bath, he and Stella discuss the implications of her sudden visit. Stella asks him not to tell Blanche that she is going to have a baby, a request that Stanley disregards. Stanley is suspicious over the loss of Belle Reve and imagines himself cheated of some property. He tears open Blanche's trunk looking for papers. Blanche enters, makes a pretext to get Stella out of the house, and presents him with legal papers detailing the forfeiture of all the DuBois property. Blanche demonstrates a bewildering variety of moods in this scene; she flirts with Stanley, discusses the legal transactions with calm irony, becomes abruptly hysterical when Stanley wickedly picks up some

old love letters written by her dead husband. Her reaction to the news that Stella is going to have a baby is reverent wonderment.

The third scene of the play is "The Poker Night" It is Stanley's poker night with two cronies as rough and violent as himself, and a third, Mitch a large sentimental man who lives with his mother. Stella and Blanche enter after an evening in the French Quarter that they have extended to two-thirty in the morning in order to keep out of the way of the poker game. Blanche begins undressing in a shaft of light through the portiers that she knows will expose her to the men in the next room. Mitch, out of the game, stops to talk to Blanche. During their conversation she adopts an air of primness and innocence. Not wanting Mitch to see how old she really is, she asks him to cover the naked light bulb with a little chinese lantern. They dance briefly to some music from the radio, but when the radio distracts the poker players, Stanley becomes violent, he stalks fiercely through the portiers into the bedroom. He crosses to the small radio and snatches it off the table. With a loud oath, he tosses the instrument out of the window. When Stella calls him drunk Stanley slaps her. Blanche and Stella flee to the upstairs apartment, leaving the men to deal with an outraged Stanley. The men try to pacify him and when they cannot, they rush to the poker table and sweep up their winnings on their way out. When Stanley discovers that he is alone, he

bellows up the stairway like a lost animal until Stella comes down to him. The violent man gets what he wants.

"Stella slips down the rickety stairs in her robe.... they stare at each other. Then they come together with low, animal moans. He falls to his knees on the steps and presses his face to her belly, curving a little with maternity. Her eyes go blind with tenderness as she catches his head and raises him level with her. He snatches the screen door open and lifts her off her feet and bears her into the dark flat." (17)

The marriage of Stella and Stanley is based exclusively upon sex. Though their relationship is little more than a continual round of love making, Stella seems content. It is a relationship which fascinates and horrifies Blanche, although she herself is not indifferent to sexual indulgence. She says,

"What such a man has to offer is animal force and he gave a wonderful exhibition of that; But the only way to live with such a man is to-go to bed with him! And that's your job-not mine!" (18)

But Stella defends her position,

Stella : "But there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark-that sort of make everything else seem-unimportant"

Blanche: What you are talking about is brutal desire-just Desire!- the name of that rattle trap streetcar

that bangs through the quarter, up one narrow street and down another.....

Stella : Haven't you ridden on that streetcar?

Blanche: It brought me here--where I'm not wanted and where I'm ashamed to be....

Stella : Then don't you think your superior attitude is a bit out of place? (19)

Blanche is the intruder in the "precincts of the uninhibited, uncomfortably hearty proletariat". (20) The Kowalskis. Their world is crude but normal. But Blanche with her illusions and pretensions is the intruder brought there precisely by the desire she finds nauseating in the Kowalskis. Her past is full of filth and decay.

Blanche persists in regarding Stella's situation as desperate which Stella herself has long since accepted as pleasantly normal. Blanche remembers an old admirer, Shep Huntleigh, who she thinks will rescue them. When Stella defends Stanley, Blanche retaliates with a long speech describing Stanley as a Stone Age Man.

"He acts like an animal, has an animal's habits! Eats like one, moves like one, talks like one! There's even something-sub-human, something not quite to the stage of humanity yet!.... Thousands and thousands of years have passed him right by, and there he is - Stanley Kowalski-survivor of the stone age!" Blanche pleads Stella "Don't-don't hang back with the brutes!" (21)

Stanley senses Blanche's attitude towards him and when he over-hears her harsh and violent words against him and her advice to Stella to leave him, he realizes that he must fight the woman for his home and Stella. So he fights Blanche by rooting into her suspicious past and baring it to her suitor, Harold Mitchell. Blanche and Mitch have been dating and she is hoping for a proposal of marriage. Now that she is an established resident in the Kowalski home, sometimes a silent and sometimes a loud battle is waged between Blanche and Stanley. Her scorn for him is unmistakable, and he is frank in his hostility towards her. He is obsessed by the belief that beneath all her pretensions, she is no better than he, and may be worse. He investigates into her conduct in Laurel, Mississippi and little by little he unravels her past from chance bits of information and torments her with what he has found out.

Blanche's first love and marriage to a young man was destroyed when she discovered that he was homosexual. When she confronted him with the knowledge, he killed himself. Since then life has been one long debauch. She was dismissed from the school where she was working, for seducing one of her students. After that she lived on a series of intimacies with everyone from a travelling salesman to soldiers, falling dizzily downward. After leading a violent life full of debauchery she finally arrives at the Elysian Fields as a last attempt to find salvation. Here she meets Mitch, the young man tied to his mother's

apron strings and longing for love. Blanche finds another derelict like herself, and for a moment she believes she has found the love and pity she so desperately needs. When she tells him about her sad marriage, the mood of the speech prompts the long awaited proposal from Mitch. Blanche is full of gratitude and relief. But Stanley cruelly and violently wrecks her last hope of marriage.

It is autumn, Stella prepares a birthday dinner for Blanche. Stanley spoils it as effectively as he can. He harshly announces to Stella that Blanche was ^a_L prostitute at a disreputable hotel in Laurel, a hotel she was asked to leave. At first Stella refuses to believe Stanley and defends her behaviour as a reaction to a tragic marriage. Stanley haughtily announces that he has revealed Blanche's past to Mitch and that he is not coming for the birthday dinner. The evening is a shambles. The violent Stanley climaxes the scene by smashing the dinner dishes on the floor and harshly giving, Blanche his birthday present, a bus ticket back to Laurel. At this Stella reveals that she is in labour, and Stanley takes her to hospital. After this violent events take place and every event contributes to further disintegrate the neurotic personality of Blanche.

Much later that same evening Mitch comes to the Kowalski apartment in an ugly mood. He repeats to Blanche the lurid details of her past that he learned from Stanley. Angrily she admits them and violently volunteers worse. Mitch who no longer wants to marry Blanche, begins

a clumsy sexual assault on her, treating her like a whore, she repels by screaming that the building is on fire.

After Mitch's departure she starts drinking and packing, a mood of hysterical exhilaration comes over her and she decks herself out in a somewhat soiled and crumpled white satin evening gown and scraps of old finery from her trunk. She murmurs excitedly as if to a group of spectral admirers. She is clinging to a last pathetic illusion that an old admirer of her will abandon his wife to go away with her. Stanley returns from the hospital where his wife has just given birth to a son. Their long conflict reaches a bizarre resolution in a violent scene when Stanley who had felt physical attraction for Blanche decides to settle his account with her by raping her. He senses that despite her revulsion for him she is also somehow attracted to him physically. He views her only in the light of her sordid, ugly and excessive past. Blanche smashes a bottle on the table and faces him clutching the broken top. He springs towards her and catches hold of her wrist, till she drops the bottle top. The violent man breaks her last thread with reality by raping her.

In the final scene Stella who has consented to commit Blanche to an asylum is packing Blanche's things. She has been crying. Stella cannot accept her sister's story that Stanley has raped her. To do so would mean the end of her marriage. To persuade Blanche to leave quietly Stella has told her that Shep Huntleigh has come for her.

Another poker game is in progress. A doctor and a matron come for the distraught Blanche. When Blanche sees the nurse she struggles with the attendant and falls to the floor. But the Southern Belle responds to the kind doctor who resolves to salvage her self-respect. He removes his hat, speaks to her courteously and gives her his arm as to a high-born lady. Blanche instantly brightens up and walks out as if on the arm of a gentleman. Her long exit is invested with real tragic import. Mitch rages at Stanley and has to be pulled off him by the other men. Stella weeps at her sister's catastrophe, is comforted and soothed by Stanley, to whom she returns as the curtain falls. The neighbourhood returns to normal, its values undisturbed.

Tennessee Williams' favourite theme of the destruction of the sensitive and the romantic by the insensitive, the conflict between flesh and spirit, the destructiveness of time, the consequence of non-conformity is reflected in the victory of Stanley. Although Stanley is violent, brutal and coarse he has drive, is practical and worldly and calls a spade a spade. He says,

"I am not a Polack. People from Poland are Poles, not Polacks. But what I am is one hundred percent American, born and raised in the greatest country on earth and proud as hell of it, so don't ever call me a Polack" (22)

He is the alive, rough, tough new American who gets what he wants. He is not an ineffectual dreamer. He obtained Stella who first thought him common by pulling her down the 'columns' of her decayed aristocracy and she liked it. She adjusted to his brute force and thrived. Blanche could not and would not, she lived in the past and Stanley administered her a violent, final, swift push and sent her to her doom. Stanley's violence which is a part and parcel of his character is that of a hedonist. The very first scene when he throws a package of bleeding meat to his wife is a key to his character. His talk to Stella of "getting the coloured lights going" and screams of pleasure is another illustration of his supreme hedonism. He lives according to his code of sensuality. Williams describes him as - "Animal joy in his being is implicit in all his movements and attitudes. Since earliest manhood, the centre of his life has been pleasure with women, the giving and taking of it, not with weak indulgence, dependently, but with the power and pride of a richly feathered male bird among hens. Branching out from this complete and satisfying center are all the auxiliary channels of his life, such as his heartiness with men, his appreciation of rough humour, his love of good drink and food and games, his car, his radio, everything that is his,....He sizes up women at a glance, with sexual classification, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them." (23)

Stanley is extremely indifferent to anyone around him-unless provoked' says Nelson. He is selfish and self-centered. He equates sex with domination. He is the embodiment of animal force and brute life. He is scornful of every value except sensuality and crude energy. His world is barbaric. Blanche says he is "ape-like" and is a "survivor of the stone age", she describes his poker-night as a gathering of grunting, swilling, gnawing and hulking apes where somebody growls and some creature snatches at something and the fight is on. Blanche wants Stella to give up this world and retire to a world of art, music, poetry and tender feelings. She feels it's her duty to make the tender feelings grow, "And cling to, and hold as our flag! In this our dark march toward whatever it is we're approaching... Don't, don't hang back with the brutes." (24)

Blanche chooses the dead past, she chooses defeat rather than yield to the barbaric type adjustment of Stella. She fights heroically for survival. Blanche is lonely, she craves for love and as there is no love she tries to fill the void with desire. She tries to fill the barrenness in her life with sex, with "intimacies with strangers". Though Blanche has come to the alien world of the Kowalski's by choice, she is not ready to accept its realism. She will not compromise and will not surrender the dream she has of herself as some one special a 'lady'. Her dreams, airs, mannerisms, clothes her moth-like quality, her need to be special, her adherence to codes and tradition, all

alienate her from the pungent world of the Kowlaskis'. Out of intense isolation she does give in to "brutal desire". In Mitch she finds another lonely, sensitive person like her, who needs tenderness and love as she does. He is good and kind, he is a gentleman. But when Stanley exposes her Mitch is not able to bear the truth, his sole opportunity to free himself from the domination of his mother is lost. When he tells Blanche she is not fit to bring into the house of his mother he destroys himself as well as her.

The violence in the play is the result of the insensitivity of Stanley Kowalski against the delicacy of Blanche DuBois. Both Stanley and Blanche fight for the love of Stella. Stella is caught between duty to her sister and the physical need for Stanley. The final scene when Stella surrenders her hold on refinement, the submerging of everything that is good even to the extent of submerging of personal dignity is terrifying. She closes her eyes to what might have been, she builds a world of her own, rejecting traditions. Tenderness, gentility, art, music, such aspects of life have become foreign in her relationship with Stanley. She rejects Blanche and chooses to remain the woman Stanley has made of her. In her heart she knows that what Blanche said about her life with Stanley is true, but she does not accept it, her life with Stanley may never be the same again. Blanche's presence challenges her security and her existence with Stanley. So she closes her eyes very tightly and chooses the brutal sensuality of Stanley.

Though the last scene of Blanche' being taken away to the asylum is violent it is essential for the theme of the play. After Blanche's departure Stella stands weeping on the porch, whispering the name of her sister, conscious of her guilt. It is revolting to see Stanley pulling her to him, touching her body, and whispering voluptuously "How, now love. Now, love", but life with Stanley is on Stanley's terms and Stella accepted these terms when she married him.

Stanley and Blanche are opponents using different techniques and weapons. Blanche cannot triumph in the world of the Kowalskis as she adheres to traditions that are not valid in their world. Thus it is not shocking to see that Stanley and even Stella wants to be rid of Blanche. The pretensions and illusions of the moth like Blanche are a poor, pathetic and futile defense against the brutal force; 'crash and clamour' of Kowalski. Blanche struggles violently but there is never the possibility of success. Blanche DuBois can do nothing to prevent her destruction.

Stanley's rape of Blanche is not just a touch of sensationalism on the part of Williams. Though it is unbearably brutal it is dramatically essential. It is an "integral element in the fabric of the drama..... it is literally and figuratively symbolizes the triumph of Stanley's illusion" (25) Stella is a symbol of life, of sex which can create new life, Blanche is a symbol of death, of sex which can



destory life. Stanley destroys Blanche with sex. It is the final act of destruction of something that challenges his very existence. He must destroy her or rid his household of her, exposing her sordid past is step one where he triumphes by proving that she is not "superior" to him, and her rape is the final act of his scheme of destruction.

Thus as Atkinson described it, it is a drama of a gentle woman's "panicky flight from the catastrophe of a gentle way of life that can no longer sustain her in an animalized world". (26)

Though there is verbal, physical as well as sexual violence in the play, it is consistent with the theme of the play. But. Stanley Kowalski is a sad speciman of the virtues of sensual awareness.

CHAPTER - III - (C)CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF

In the preface to Cat On a Hot Tin Roof Tennessee Williams says, "I still don't want to talk to people only about the surface aspects of their lives, the sort of things that acquaintances laugh and chatter about on ordinary social occasions. ... I feel that they get plenty of that, and heaven knows so do I, before and after the little interval of time in which I have their attention and say what I have to say to them". (27) Thus he does not look for his subject matter in the everyday aspects of life, he tries to probe into the inner, the hidden, the spiritual concerns which people do not ordinarily talk about. Mostly he tries to probe the primitive elements that lurk beneath the superficial civilization of the south. In Cat On A Hot Tin Roof, William deals with an unorthodox subject like homosexuality which is generally taboo. The characters and setting are Southern. He always turned to the South because, "I know and understand their mood and personality better and because I am both familiar and in complete sympathy with the flavour and mood of their speech." (28)

It is a drama of a wealthy South American family whose life is laid bare of pretense revealing the greed, envy, self-deception and hypocrisy in the family unit. The family conflicts are suddenly and relentlessly exposed when the family gathers together for the celebration of

of Big Daddy's sixty fifth birthday. The Mississippi Delta family of the Politts is not a pretty one. Each member of the family has gone his separate way, each has been living a lonely life but has put up a front for the sake of appearances. When they come together under the pretext of Big Daddy's birthday, they come out in their true colours and a violent drama full of seething passions, greed, envy, deception, hypocrisy, love, hatred is unravelled.

The 'Cat' in the title is Margaret Politt, the passionate Maggie the cat. Her situation is like that of a cat on a hot tin roof which is not sure how long it can stay there. Brick her husband is not only indifferent to her father's estate but also to Margaret because he blames her for distorting his relationship with his best friend Skipper. He tries to find solace in alcohol and keeps drinking till he feels the peaceful 'click'. His brother Gooper and his wife Mae have arrived with their five-children for Big Daddy's birthday as they say, but they plan to cut Brick out of his father's estate by impressing on Big Daddy's mind the fact that Brick and Margaret are childless. Margaret who cannot provide an heir is tormented by her longing for her husband and her craving for security. She is not a defeatist, she is indomitable and wonders how long her punishment will go on and how long she'll be able to endure it. She compares herself and her insecure position to a cat on a hot tin roof trying

to stay on it as long as she can bear. She admits that she can't live on and on in this position.

Big Daddy Politt's estate is twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the valley Nile. Big Daddy is a patriarch. He started as a rough field hand, became overseer of a cotton plantation and after inheriting it became a millionaire. As Martin Brown says, he has the warmth of the soil in him. He is a loud mouthed, aggressively frank man who exults in his lust for life. He is ignorant of the fact that the doctors have found him fatally ill with cancer. He is under the impression that the recent medical examination actually proclaimed him free of cancer and that he suffers only from a spastic colon.

Brick is Big Daddy's favourite son. He is a dipsomaniac. He is an ex-football hero, has broken his ankle in a drunken attempt to relive past glories when he attempted to go over a hurdle on the local athletic field in the early hours of the morning. He is tortured by the death of his best friend Skipper, and the guilt about their relationship has turned him into an alcoholic. Margaret is the frustrated but indomitable wife of the dissolute and disturbed Brick. She is childless. She is tormented by her longing for her husband and she craves for security. She is childless.

Gooper the first born son of Big Daddy. Brick's older brother has arrived with his wife Mae, and their

five children (going on six) to presumably celebrate Big Daddy's birthday, but much more to get possession of the plantation and vie with Brick for Big Daddy's mammoth estate in the Mississippi delta. Gooper and Mae know that Brick is his father's favourite, but they are relying on the fact that Brick is a dipsomaniac and that his wife is childless. They also know that Brick doesn't care and is indifferent to the estate. It is no secret to any of the Politts that there is deep trouble between Brick and Margaret. They also know that Margaret will fight them for the inheritance of the huge estate.

The first act is virtually a monologue by Margaret, punctuated by Brick's comments and the interruptions from Gooper and Mae's gruesome brood of "no-neck monsters" as Margaret calls them. Brick hobbles around the room, crutch in one hand and a drink in the other. Margaret tells him that Big Daddy is dying of cancer and everyone is aware of it but Big Daddy and Big Mamma from whom they hope to keep the secret as long as possible. Margaret tells Brick of his brother's designs on the inheritance and admits that although she has great regard for Big Daddy, she does not intend to allow Gooper and Mae to disinherit her or Brick. Margaret tells Brick that Gooper and Mae's frequent allusions to Rainbow Hill a place famous for treating alcoholics and 'dope friends' indicates their intention to send Brick there. Margaret vehemently declares-

"....and that's where they aim to ship you-over

my body! Yep, over my dead body the'll ship you there, but nothing would please them better. Brother Man could get a hold of the purse strings and dole out remittances to us and may be get power-of-attorney and sign cheques for us and cut off our credit wherever, whenever he wanted! Son-of-a bitch! How'd you like that, Baby?" (29)

The, shrewd, practicle and worldly Margaret is violent in her speech. She is not an ineffectual idealist who finds the world alien. She has experienced poverty, "poor as Job's turkey" as she says and has fought her way to the present position which she will fight viciously to keep at any cost.

Brick refuses to have to do anything with Margaret he is almost oblivious of her. They have been living under a sort of truce since the death of skipper, a young man who had been Brick's closest companion in college and former football teammate. Brick and skipper being a successful pass combination in College had organized a professional football team after graduation. Margaret by then married to Brick went along with them and the team. Margaret suspected the relationship between Brick and Skipper. She suspected Skipper of homosexuality. She was afraid that the overpowering and unnatural relationship would destroy Brick, and his marriage in time. One day when her husband lay injured in a hospital she accused Skipper of his unnatural love for her husband, and both

got drunk-skipper tried to prove himself to her by making love to her. He failed in his attempt and from then on became addicted to alcohol and drugs until his recent death. Brick accuses Margaret of distorting the friendship between himself and Skipper and seems to hate her and refuses to sleep with her. He takes refuge and tries to find solace in alcohol. Each day he drinks until he feels a "click" in his head that promises peace for a while and makes him patient in an impersonal sort of way.

Although Margaret realizes that Brick is disgusted with her, she intends to stay if she can because she loves Brick. She feels that the situation has become so intense that she feels "all the time like a cat on a hot tin roof". (30) The desperate and frustrated Brick says, "then jump off the roof, jump off, cats can jump off roofs and land on their four feet uninjured. Do it! for 'Gods sake, do it."

"Do what?" asks Margaret, Brick's harsh answer is "Take a lover".

The passionate Maggie says that she sees no man but he, "Even with my eyes closed, I just see you. Why don't you get ugly, Brick, why don't you please get fat on ugly or something so I could stand it?" (31)

Here we get to see the violence of the alcoholic Brick against his wife who he thinks "destroyed" his pure relationship with his friend. The rejected Maggie

too becomes violent in her attempt to recapture her husband's physical attention. She is a realist, she says, "But one thing I don't have is the charm of the defeated, my hat is still in the ring, and I'm determined to win!" (32) She admits that she is violent and catty because she is "consumed with envy an' eaten up with longing" (33) She wants Brick and she is not afraid to admit it. She wants her share of the plantation and she wants to make Big Daddy happy. she tells Brick, "You know, if I thought you would never, never, never make love to me again... I would go downstairs to the kitchen and pick out the longest and sharpest knife I could find and stick it straight into my heart, I swear that I would!" (34) She recognizes that love and greed exist in her side by side and honestly admits it and passionately tries to rouse Brick.

"Brick, I'm not good, nobody's good. The rich or the well-to-do can afford to respect moral patterns, conventional moral patterns, but I coul't never afford to, yeah, but I'm honest! Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer?! Skipper is dead! Maggie the cat is-alive! I am alive, alive, I am.... alive!" (35)

The first act closes with Margaret's revelation that it is her time to conceive and Brick's retort that he has no intention whatever of going to bed with her. It is a problem with which she will have to grapple, and

she is prepared to do so. Nervous and frustrated she is determined to fight vigorously for her marriage, and to help get her husband's rightful share of the inheritance, which will mean a security she has never known. Although Margaret's speech preoccupied with sex and money may seem violent, it establishes not only her positive attitude to life, but also her fierce honesty and her urge for life and creation. She wants to create not just to provide Big Daddy with an heir after Brick, but because she is decidedly female with an urge for creating and loves her husband. She does not want him to throw away his life.

The discussion between Brick and Big Daddy forms the second act. Brick has not been able to attend the birthday dinner due to his broken ankle. He has not yet been able to drink enough to feel the click that brings him peace. The rest of the family intends to celebrate the cutting of the birthday cake in his room to have him join in the festivities. The impatient and inarticulate Brick wants nothing to do with any of them. He just wants to drink. Margaret persuades him to be as gentle as possible with Big Daddy, who does not know that the doctors have found him fatally ill with cancer. After the candles on the cake have been lighted, Big Daddy who is disgusted with the birthday party orders the rest of the family out of the room. He is determined to uncover the reason for Brick's drinking. Brick is evasive, the father afraid

of overreaching himself probes warily and cautiously. It seems like the discussion will end nowhere like so many discussions they had . But Big Daddy is adamant, refuses to give up and probes to the particular disgust which is forcing Brick to drink till he attains the peaceful 'click'. Brick tells him about skipper and about his disgust with Margaret because of the doubt of his relationship with Skipper and her consequent actions. Big Daddy probes further till he finally forces Brick to admit that when skipper called him for the last time, he had hung up the telephone on him. Brick denies the charge of his father, and claims that the estrangement from his wife is because she had accused Skipper of unnatural affection and Skipper tried to disprove it by having an affair with Magie. When this was unsuccessful, Skipper himself came to entertain Maggie's suspicious and turned back to alcohol and drugs. Big Daddy pierces through Brick's protective armor by showing that he has had to develop a tolerance for people in spite of their habitual lying and by admitting that he has to endure the company of Big Mamma and Gooper, although he has hated them for years. He says,

"What do you know about this mendacity thing? Hell I could write a book on it!....think of all the lies I got to put up with! Pretenses! Ain't that mendacity? Having to pretend stuff you don't think or feel or have any idea of? Having for instance to act like I care for Big Mama!..

....Pretend to love that son of a bitch of a Gooper and his wife Mae and those five same screechers out there,... church! it bores the Bejesus out of me but I go!.....

I've lived with mendacity! why can't you live with? Hell, you got to live with it, there's nothing else to live with except mendacity, is there?" (36)

Brick nods and holds up his liquor glass, Big Daddy tells him that, that's not living, it is dodging away from life. To convince Brick that life may be rotten but it must be lived and only in living is there hope and possibility", he lays bare his personal life, thoughts and opinions in very vulgar and obscene language. Big Daddy contains all the deplorable evils. Marya Mannes suggested, the study of him is a study of the violence of "an obscene, gargantum perceptive man.... against his body's end, against his own frustrations, against the traps of his family".(37) But his violent language is a part of his ruggedness, vitality and honesty. Communicating with a son who is a dipsomaniac and is indifferent to Big Daddy's inheritance is vital. He loves his son deeply and can't bear to see him throw away his life. Though his language is violent and vulgar he reaches through to Brick. He makes his son realise and admit that disgust with Maggie is really disgust with himself and that his ideal relationship with Skipper was something much less than ideal and he had hung up on a telephone call during which skipper had tried to make a drunken confession, and had turned

his back on the boy in the final moments of his life.

"An how now! - we have tracked down the lie with which you're disgusted and which you are drinking to kill your disgust with, Brick..... You! dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it - before you'd face truth with him! (38)

Brick in a defensive rage says "His truth, not mine!" Brick then tries to get back at his father for the probing which has led to his revelation, by letting slip the fact that Big Daddy's medical report is positive and that the doctors have lied to him. Big Daddy, stunned now shuts himself up in his room. He is hot with anger at the lies told him. In spite of the deep love for one another, the father and son violently hurt each other, Big Daddy has made Brick face his own guilt and Brick has made his father face his personal truth. They leave each other to face the harsh truth.

In the third act Gopper tells Big Mama that her husband really has cancer and suggests a plan of trusteeship for the plantation after Big Daddy dies. Big Mama will have none of Gopper's plan. Instead she turns to Big Daddy's favourite, Brick, and suggests that Big Daddy would like to leave the place to Brick's son if he had one. Margaret tells a lie. She tells Big Mama and the rest of the family that she and Brick are going to have a child. She is fighting desperately for the plantation, fighting for her husband and father-in-law. Her lie is

an alternative to death. The play ends with Margaret determined to make her life-lie come true. Gooper and his wife pounce on Margaret and declare that she is lying. But Margaret is determined to make her lie a reality by forcing or enticing Brick into fathering a child, She hurls his liquor bottles and throws his crutch (his means of support) over the balcony railing. She tells him :

"And so to night we're going to make the lie true, and when that's done, I'll bring the liquor back here and we'll get drunk together, here to night, in this place that death has come into..."(39)

Forcing him to go to bed with her, she exclaims :

"Oh, you weak people, you weak, beautiful people!- Who give up - what you want is someone to take hold of you. Gently, gently, with love! And I do love you, Brick I do! (40)

Although the end is inconclusive, the implication is that Brick will thus conquer over his condition and Maggie the cat, by her life lie has won against the jealous, insensitive Gooper and his wife.

Critical reaction to Cat On A Hot Tin Roof was mixed. Some felt it to be a masterpiece, while others considered it just sensatonal and felt that Williams' tendency towards sensationalism was increasing alarmingly. No doubt the play is full of violence of every kind. There is verbal, psychological, physical as well as sexual violence in

the play. Marya Mannes considered the play "Shock treatment" with a stage full of violent people "thrashing in the net of their own errors and deceptions" (41) Robert Hatch writing in "The Nation" felt that sex, death and money preoccupy Williams' characters in the face of death and that sex is regulated to get the money. Hatch's comment indicates that he found no trace of humanity in the Politts. On the surface it does appear that Gooper and Mame and Margaret do regulate sex to get money but they are at the same time attempting to solve the problem of their existence and Margaret is desperately trying to create a meaningful life with her husband and save herself as well as Brick. Marya Mannes termed the play as "a special and compelling study of violence". (42) It is true that there is violence in the character of the enormous Big Daddy, violence in the character of alcoholic Brick against his life and violence in the rejected Maggie in her fight for her husband's attention. Tennessee Williams has heightened his characters and has intensified their tensions. He deals with hypocrisy, homosexuality, disease, greed, envy, hate love that affect a family, all this compressed in the short span of a play makes it seem sensational and melodramatic and makes the characters appear larger than life. Williams himself said

"I can't handle people in routine situations. I must find characters who correspond to my own tensions." (43)

Norman Fedder in The Influence of D.H.Lawrence on Tennessee

Williams says that Williams' concern with homosexuality is product of his inverted tendencies, he had personal difficulty in identifying himself with male sexuality may be due to his early psychic rejection of his father who always mocked the sensitive Williams as "Miss Nancy" when Williams in his adolescence experienced a rush of new, fightening impulses, they were unfortunately homosexual ones. Thus Williams' interest in homosexual relationship. In Cat On A Hot Tin Roof Williams also seems to approve of the sexual excesses of his characters. The play does seem to be preoccupied with sexuality as seen in Big Mama's exclamation when she points at Brick and Margaret's bed and says that "When a marriage goes on the rocks the rocks are there, right there!" (44) This is also seen in Big Daddy's talk with Brick when he is convincing him that though life is rotten, it must be lived. He tells his son of his hatred for his wife, his desire for women, how he never had enough, how he let chances slip by because of scruples and convention and that he is now going to satisfy his desire, He says :

"I'm going to pick me a good one to spend'em on! I'm going to pick up a choice one. I don't care how much she costs, I'll smother her in -minks! ha, ha! I'll strip her naked and smother her in minks and choke her with diamonds! Ha, ha!....." (45) The father laying bare his sexual life to his son in this manner is very violent, vulgar and obscene.

Inspite of the play being obsessed with sex and inclined to sensationalism the play has a positive approach to life. The characters are not doomed like Blanche DuBois or Laura Wingfield. They are not paragons of virtue, they are flesh and blood people who are violent and vicious, attempting to solve the problems of their own lives. Margaret knows who she is, what she wants and how to get it. She is honest and positively alive. She not only wants to awaken her husband sexually but also wants to have a child to provide Big Daddy with an heir, to save Brick and herself from being disinherited and to bring back Brick from the brink of extinction. She admits to her evils and has no illusions about herself. Margaret's sexual frustration due to her husband's indifferent attitude and the thought that she may lose her share of Big Daddy's fortune makes her harsh and violent. But there is genuine feeling in her desperate attempts to create a meaningful life with her husband.

Big Daddy is violent, conceited, shrewd, powerful vulgar, obscene and filthy. He is violent in his language and whiplashes the members of his family, but he is honest and like Margaret admits to his evils. Benjamin Nelson says that Big Daddy is the strongest character Williams has created and the author's sympathies are with Big Daddy. Williams' sympathies are usually with his weak and broken people like Blanche DuBois and Laura Wingfield, but in this play they definitely seem to be

with Margaret and Big Daddy. Big Daddy's vitality, honesty and his love for his son outweigh his obscenity and vulgarity. His concern for his son makes him violent in the clash between them. Brick and he lacerate each other, hurt each other deeply and make each other face a terrifying truth. Brick does it in bitterness to get back at his father, but Big Daddy does it to make Brick realize that life may be rotten but it must be lived. In the face of death they violently destroy each other's illusions. Neither is fully prepared for it, but they know that they must face it. The violence results in Brick realizing that his disgust with the world and with Margaret in particular is actually disgust with himself; and Big Daddy realizes the crushing fact that he is dying. Although Big Daddy does not solve Brick's problem he brings it into the open. Margaret's lie that she is going to have a child and her desperate attempt to make the lie come true are further attempts to solve the dilemma.

In spite of the violence, the hypocrisy and preoccupation with sex and money, the play leads us to a simple truth of life-life is to be lived and not evaded. Detachment and indifference do not resolve anything. There is hope in living. Big Daddy wants Brick to accept a relationship with its flaws and weaknesses i.e. its humanity.

Notes

- 1) Francis Donahue : The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams (New York : Frederic Ungar publishing Co 1964)p.233.
- 2) "Tennessee Williams : Cat On A Hot Tin Roof And Other Plays",
(Penguin Plays 1982)p.7
- 3) Ibid., p.7
- 4) Benjamin Nelson : Tennessee Williams-The Man and His Work.(Ivan Obolensky, Inc., New York Conclusion 287.
- 5) Ibid., p.287
- 6) Ibid., p.103
- 7) Tennessee Williams : The Glass Menagerie , (Secker and Warburg London 1956)p.ix
- 8) Ibid., p.14
- 9) Ibid., p.ix
- 10) Ibid., p.31
- 11) Ibid., p.61-62
- 12) Ibid., 62
- 13) Ibid., 62
- 14) Ibid., p.63
- 15) Fancis Donahue : The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams(Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co., New York, 1964 p.30

- 16) Tennessee Williams : A Street Car Named Desire
in Four plays by Tennessee
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- 17) Ibid., p.97-98
- 18) Ibid., p.103
- 19) Ibid., p.103-104
- 20) John Gasnner, Forum cix (February, 1948) p.86 cited by
Benjamin Nelson p.135
- 21) Tennessee Williams : A Street Car Named Desire"
in Four plays by Tennessee
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- 22) Ibid., p.131
- 23) Ibid., p.77
- 24) Ibid., p.105
- 25) Benjamin Nelson : Tennessee Williams-The Man
and his work (Ivan Obolensky,
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- 26) Best American Plays ed. with an introduction by John
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- 27) Tennessee Williams : Cat On A Hot Tin Roof and
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- 28) Francis Donahue : The Dramatic World of Tennessee
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Co., New York) p.71
- 29) Tennessee Williams : Op. at. p.20
- 30) Ibid., p.31

- 31) Ibid., p.31
- 32) Ibid., p.26
- 33) Ibid., p.30
- 34) Ibid., p.26
- 35) Ibid., p.44
- 36) Ibid., p.72
- 37) Benjamin Nelson : Tennessee Williams-The Man and His work (New York,Ivan Obolensky) p.214
- 38) Tennessee Williams Op. cit. p.81
- 39) Ibid., p.105
- 40) Ibid., p.105
- 41) Marya Mannes : The Morbid Magic of Tennessee Williams the Reporter XII (May 15, 1955) p.42 cited by Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams The Man and His work p. 206
- 42) Marya Mannes, Ibid., p.41
- 43) Tennessee Williams, in Newsweek (April 1957) p.81
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- 44) Tennessee Williams : Cat On A Hot Tin Roof and Other Plays p.36
- 45) Ibid., p.65