

T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



**THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION IN  
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' WORKS**

M.A. Thesis

OLCAY ERGÜLÜ

İstanbul, 2013

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SUPERVISOR  
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## APPROVAL PAGE



T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

### Yüksek Lisans Tez Onay Belgesi

Enstitümüz İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Yüksek Lisans Programı Y1012.020020 numaralı öğrencisi **Olca ERGÜLÜ**'nün "The Concept Of Alienation In Tennessee Williams' Works" adlı tez çalışması Enstitümüz Yönetim Kurulunun 06.06.2013 tarih ve 2013/14 sayılı kararıyla oluşturulan jüri tarafından *Olca ERGÜLÜ* ile Tezli Yüksek Lisans tezi olarak *Olca ERGÜLÜ* edilmiştir.

#### Öğretim Üyesi Adı Soyadı

#### İmzası

Tez Savunma Tarihi : 14.06.2013

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Kemalettin Yiğiter for his professional guidance, his support and for encouraging me at every stage of my study; despite the huge amount of his work and responsibilities. His truly literary figure intuition has made him a great expert of ideas and passions in literature which inspires my growth as a researcher and a student. I also owe many thanks to my graduate professors, Prof. Dr. Visam Mansur, and Assist. Prof. Dr. Gamze Sabancı for contributing to my intellectual growth.

Words fail me to express my gratitude and appreciation to my parents, my father Gencer Ergülü and my mother Necla Ergülü, for their unfailing support and constant love. My brother Oğulcan Ergülü also deserves special gratitude for his continuous encouragement.

It is a pleasure to express my gratitude wholeheartedly to my friends Sinem Dursun, Nilay Kepekçi, Sevda Göncü, Ceren Demirel, Ezgi Gaga, and Nilüfer Esenlilioğlu who believed in and encouraged me to conclude this study. I thank all personally one by one for their continuous support and patience in my hard days. I am also much indebted to Cenk Demirel whose support and encouragement are invaluable.

I owe many thanks to Joey Guertin, Gerald Halligan, Andrejs Harbeck, Nicholas Page and Jade Kançıkımaz for proofreading and their great contribution in this study.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank everybody who has an important role in the completion of this dissertation, as well as expressing my apology that I could not mention one by one.

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## ÖZET

Ergülü O. Tennessee Williams'ın Eserlerinde Yabancılaşma Olgusu. İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı. İstanbul. 2013

Işık, müzik, sahne düzeni gibi tiyatro öğelerinin yanı sıra, şiirsel dilini ve olağandışı konuları ustaca kullanmasıyla tanınan Tennessee Williams yirminci yüzyılın en iyi Amerikan oyun yazarlarından biri olarak bilinir. Yetenekli bir yazar olan Tennessee Williams insan ruhunu ve insan davranışlarını belirleyen en güçlü güdülerini son derece iyi anlaması sayesinde birçok etkileyici karakter yaratmıştır. Williams eserlerinde bu karakterlerin sadece kimliklerini değil toplumun diğer üyeleriyle olan ilişkilerini de tasvir eder. Williams'ın birçok kadın ve erkek kahramanı, içinde yaşadıkları çevrenin yerleşmiş değerlerine uyum sağlayamadıkları için acı çekerler, bu yüzden genellikle bu karakterlerin zihni bulanıktır ve kendilerine biçilen rolleri yerine getiremezler. Bu bağlamda Williams'ın yarattığı karakterlerde, acı gerçeklerin baskısı altında yabancılaşma duygusunun olduğu görülür. Bu karakterler yanılısamanın gölgesinde bir sığınak bulabilmek için gerçeklerden kaçarlar. Ancak gerçeklerden kurtulamazlar ve sonunda yaşamlarına hayal kırıklığı, yalnızlık ve yabancılaşma duygusu içinde devam ederler.

Bu çalışma Tennessee Williams'ın, *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *Portrait of a Madonna* (1946), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), ve *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950) adlı eserlerindeki karakterleri yabancılaşma kavramı ekseninde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma için özellikle bu dört eserin seçilmesinin nedeni yabancılaşma temasının bu eserlerdeki karakterlerde daha açıkça görülmesi ve oyunun ana temasını oluşturmasıdır. Çalışmanın giriş bölümü Tennessee Williams'ın hayatı ve tiyatrosu hakkında yabancılaşma temasıyla ilişkili olarak genel bilgi vermektedir. İkinci bölümde ise yabancılaşma kavramı önemli düşünürlerin ortaya attığı çeşitli teoriler çerçevesinde tartışılmıştır. Üçüncü bölüm yukarıda adı geçen eserlerde yabancılaşma temasının nasıl işlendiğini incelemektedir. Sonuç bölümü ise genel bir değerlendirme sunar; Tennessee Williams yabancılaşma temasını, farkındalığa ulaşamayarak yanılısamalarını aşamayan karakterlerin iç dünyasını yansıtmak için kullanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yabancılaşma, Yanılısama, Soyutlanma, Öz farkındalık

## ABSTRACT

Ergülü O. *The Concept of Alienation in Tennessee Williams' Works*. Istanbul Aydın University, Institute of Social Sciences, English Language and Literature. İstanbul. 2013.

Tennessee Williams who is distinguished with the masterly use of dramatic devices such as light, music, and stage setting, his poetic language as well as the extraordinary themes on which his works are centered is often regarded as one of the greatest American dramatists of the twentieth century. As a gifted writer, Tennessee Williams managed to create many impressive characters since he had an empathetic understanding of the human soul and its most powerful motives, which direct the acts of individuals. He focuses not only depicting their identities but also their interaction with other members of society. Most of his heroes and heroines suffer because they fail to adapt themselves to the established values of the environment in which they live; therefore, they are usually confused and unable to fulfill their prescribed roles. In that sense in most of his works it is noticed that his characters, under the pressure of harsh reality, develop the feeling of alienation. They escape from the reality to seek refuge under the shadow of illusion. However they cannot get rid of the harsh reality and finally, they live their life with the very feeling of frustration, loneliness and alienation.

This dissertation aims at exploring Tennessee Williams' characters in some of his works in respect to the concept of alienation. It is important to note that this study covers Tennessee Williams' three major plays and one novel; *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *Portrait of a Madonna* (1946), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (1950). The reason to confine this dissertation to scrutinising these four works is that the feeling of alienation is so distinct in the characters and it plays the central theme in these works. The introduction gives a general information on Tennessee Williams' biography and his theatre in relation to the theme of alienation which shapes his works. In the second chapter the concept of alienation is discussed within the framework of various theories put forward by leading thinkers. The third chapter presents detailed studies of the works and analyse comparatively how this concept is reflected in these works. The conclusion presents a general evaluation that Tennessee Williams dealt with the theme of alienation to project the internal conditions of his characters who, by not showing the capacity to experience an awakening, cannot overcome their illusion.

**Key Words:** Alienation, Illusion, Isolation, Self- Awareness.



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Tennessee Williams as a Fugitive Self**

Tennessee Williams has been regarded as one of the greatest American dramatists of the twentieth century along with Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Edward Albee. Williams was gifted with portraying psychological conditions of individuals as he had a talent for exploring and examining every aspect of the human soul. His works have always been popular for the impressive and interesting characters. He was also a kind of playwright who had a poetic voice which means he has been compared to the famous poets of his time. Thanks to his outstanding characters and lyrical voice almost all of his works appeal to many readers and audiences all around the world.

Tennessee Williams's eagerness to become a writer was apparent in his early life. This seems to stem from his unsettled childhood which resulted in his incapacity to adjust to new environments. His father was a traveling shoe salesman and spent most of his time on the road. Because his father began his career before his children were born, Williams' mother decided to stay with her parents. Her stay was even extended long after her first two children were born because her husband never found a permanent home. Life with his grandparents provided Williams with a most peaceful childhood, but not a settled one. Thus he had the experience of being a constant new comer throughout his childhood. Being delicate by nature, having suffered several severe illnesses, Williams was confronted by his school mates' relentless hostility when he failed to join their games. He was often assaulted not only verbally but physically. The only refuge which Williams could seek in those days was his grandfather's library. The house of God, in Williams's case, saved not only his soul but also his body.

Probably one of the most profound influences on Williams during his childhood was his grandfather because he introduced Williams to the world of literature and it was in this world that many of his wounds were healed and all cruelties were forgotten. His grandfather's library was also the place that gave him security. Reading books with great enthusiasm, Williams's secret, private world began to shape. The excitement he received from books created a desire within him to write. Being a fugitive, like many characters he later created, Williams found writing to be a means of escape; he later confessed: "I discovered writing as an escape from the world of reality in which I felt acutely uncomfortable. It immediately became my piece of retreat, my cave, my refuge" (Tischler 29). Writing was also therapeutic for Williams. "For me this is a kind of therapy" (Weales 8). This idea is noted by Nancy Tischler when she points out how writing has served multi-purposes for Williams: "Because of his loneliness, he keeps working; and because of fear he has turned the stories of violence" (Tischler 30).

As a young man, Williams was influenced by the American Poet Hart Crane and under the influence of his delicacy and sensitivity, he began writing poems in order to find expression for his inner-self, but he was not satisfied with writing only poetry. Williams the poet was soon integrated with Williams the dramatist and the artist. The result was stunning. Williams combined his individual dramatic tension with a poetic vision and produced a profound and original theater technique, utilizing images of universal perception. His plays project a distinctive reality in all his complexities. An attempt at playwriting occurred during his college years at the University of Missouri at Columbia. During his studies he discovered the plays of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg and decided to write plays. There, he found a new means of communicating with other people. Before this, despite his successes, he never felt a strong bond of communication with others primarily because he was becoming more and more estranged from his family. The fact that his family moved from Mississippi to St. Louis, and the change from a small provincial town to a big city were very difficult for them. In St. Louis Williams realized the difference between rich people and the poor and his former life seemed more beautiful because of the ugliness

of urban life. He later stated about his life in St. Louis "...home was not a very pleasant refuge. If I had been born to this situation I might not have resented it so deeply. But it was forced upon my consciousness at the most sensitive age of childhood" (Leverich 51). The fact that he was made fun of by other kids because of his Southern accent made him alienated among them. However this accent would be one of his distinctive features as a playwright in the future. Because of his Southern origin he belongs to the American tradition which is called "Southern Gothic". In that sense his settings, his themes, his use of language show similarities with the works of other Southern writers like William Faulkner, Carson McCullers, Truman Capote and Flannery O'Connor (Hirsch15). In the afterwords which he wrote for *Reflections in a Golden Eye* by Carson McCullers Williams describes this common link of Southern writers as:

A sense, an intuition, of an underlying dreadfulness in modern experience...The true sense of dread is not a reaction to anything sensible or visible or even, strictly materially, *knowable*. But rather it's a kind of spiritual intuition of something almost too incredible and shocking to talk about, which underlies the whole so-called thing. It is the incommunicable something that we shall have to say mystery which is so inspiring of dread... that Sense of the Awful which is the desperate black root of nearly all significant modern art. (McCullers 132)

In addition to his southern origin; his own fears, paranoia, his maladjustment to the real world, his sexual conflicts, his intense guilt, are the prominent elements that shaped his works. One of the most important experiences that had a great impact on his literary figure was his sister's mental problem. Adolescence separated him from his only sister, Rose whose schizophrenia had already begun, an illness that would result in her gradual drift into a world of isolation. His mother was also so plagued by the problems of the family and that she did not pay attention to her son. These painful experiences and his intense depression during his adolescence made him produce more and more works. These years are well described by Nancy Tischler:

Despite his literary successes, which must have been gratifying to the novice writer, his surroundings continued to oppress him. With the prodding of poor health, his distaste for his St. Louis home blossomed into a cluster neuroses. One of his friends says that young Tom Williams developed a fear using his

voice in public and sat mute when called on to recite in the class. In the preface of a play written years later, Williams recalls the horror of his incapability to communicate with outsiders. This, he says, turned him irresistably toward written expression where his shyness was no handicap. Later, he was to find that he could "level" with an audience in a darkened theatre more easily than he could chat with a friend (Tischler 32).

Williams also stated that he was just too damn self-centered. The problems of his private life occupied too much attention for him. Besides he called himself one of the most egocentric persons (Hirsch 6). Thus it is possible to infer that in his plays he dramatizes his own disturbances. Theatre, as Tennessee Williams discovered, became his "out cry." He wanted to be heard and to reach out for contact with other human beings so that he could deal with the agony of loneliness. Once he found a means to voice his messages, he worked diligently. It took him five years to earn national fame.

His first full length play *Battle of Angels* was produced in 1940 but it was not a success as it contained the mixed themes of religion and sexuality which didn't appeal to the audience or the critics. This play later would be revised as *Orpheus Descending* in 1957. His first critical triumph, *The Glass Menagerie*, "opened in Chicago on December 26, 1944, and in New York on March 31, 1945. The play ran for more than a year. From that time on, his career is a matter of public record" (Weales 12). The play received the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award for being the best play of the year. Being an autobiographical play it reflects the Southern memories of Tennessee Williams. In the play Tom Wingfield stands for his own life and his crippled sister Laura recalls his own sister, Rose. Tennessee Williams's second masterpiece *A Streetcar Named Desire* opened in New York in 1947, and became an immediate success. It won a Pulitzer Prize, and was filmed by the famous Hollywood and Broadway director Elia Kazan. The film adaptation also received great reviews, starring Marlon Brando and Vivian Leigh. Williams presents the decline of his most unforgettable character Blanche DuBois who is a fading southern belle.

Around this time, Williams met Frank Merlo. The two fell in love, and the young man became Williams's romantic partner until Merlo's untimely death in 1961. He was a steadying influence on Williams, who suffered from depression and lived in fear that he, like his sister Rose, would go insane. Another award winning play, *The Rose Tattoo* opened in 1951 and won a Tony Award. His plays were a great success in the United States and abroad, and he was able to write works that were well-received by critics and popular with audiences. When another major work *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was performed in 1955, Tennessee Williams received his second Pulitzer Prize. The play deals with the moral destruction of a Southern family and won two other major awards as well. Another great success of his, *The Night of the Iguana*, was staged in 1961 and filmed in 1964. Apart from these *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *Baby Doll* (1956), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959) are considered as his most important plays. He continued to write until overwork and drug use took their toll on him, and on February 23, 1983, Williams choked to death on the lid of one of his pill bottles.

He created unforgettable characters, an incredible vision of life in the South, and a series of powerful portraits of the human condition. His plays also seemed preoccupied with the extremes of human brutality and sexual behavior: madness, rape, incest, castration, nymphomania, drug abuse, homosexuality as well as violent and fantastic deaths. However, he also made use of contrast elements such as beauty, sensitivity, kindness. The characters became very successful at that time and they are as fresh and relevant today as when they first appeared because Williams's characterization is one of his strongest achievements as a dramatist.

He left behind an impressive body of work, including plays that continue to be performed the world over. In his worst work, his writing is melodramatic and overwrought, but at his best Tennessee Williams is a haunting, lyrical, and powerful voice, and one of the most important forces in twentieth century American drama. Starting his career as a poet, he was never satisfied with his writings and this dissatisfaction could be the reason for his drift into drama. When he watched Alla

Nazimov's performance in *Ghosts*, he was so inspired that he decided drama was the best medium for his artistic expression (Gruen 114). However this does not mean that he totally got rid of his poetic vision, on the contrary he united this lyricism with his drama. His success in creating a poetic voice in his drama made him one of the impressive playwrights of all time. As Leverich also states, his struggle between being a poet and a playwright is "the division in his artistic personality that would become the hallmark of Tennessee Williams' writings" (334).

Another duality which Tennessee Williams experienced is the conflict of body and soul which shapes the dominant struggles both in his life and plays. This conflict makes body and soul be separated from each other and it separates ego from the world and also one person from another one. This duality also provides the source of Cartesian dualism. Descartes's dualism is taken to be the source of the mind-body problem:

If the mind is active unextended thinking and the body is passive unthinking extension, how can these essentially unlike and independently existing substances interact casually, and how can mental ideas represent material things? How, in other words, can the mind know and influence the body, and how can the body affect the mind? (Audi 244).

The other conflict that takes places in most of Tennessee Williams's works is the collision between the dream of the past and realities of the modern world. Like Tennessee Williams himself recalls and longs for his past life in the South many of the characters he created try to survive in the harsh conditions of real life while having a strong desire for the past. Hence, Williams is obsessed with these social outsiders in his plays.

It is true to say that most of the characters he created are ones whose attitudes and destinies are determined by the conditions they live in and their reactions to these circumstances are conveyed in a pessimistic way which makes their fate so tragic and sad. They all suffer from physical and emotional mutilation or both. They are restless in their world, their communication with other people is difficult and often unattainable.

His heroes or heroines are not happy with the life and society they live in; however, they rarely have enough courage or strength to change their circumstances which they are not satisfied with or to deal with the prejudicial conditions in their life. Instead of resisting and fighting, they try to ignore the reality and find a way to hide themselves. Williams's characters can be called "fugitives"; desperately fleeing but still caught. If the act of these characters is a journey, they stop for a visit during their flights. They pretend to be happy or noble with all their courtesy and chivalry; although the journey will end up with an imminent and inevitable defeat. They seek protection when despair comes out and they need the affection and interest of somebody in order to survive. In that sense it can be said that these characters are a kind of reflection of his own life owing to the fact that he experienced many disappointments and exclusions especially in his childhood. In an interview he also stated:

I've always regarded myself as an incomplete person, and consequently I've always been more interested in my own kind of people, you know, people for whom the impact of life and experience from day to day, night to night, is difficult, people who come close to tracking. That is my world, those are my people (Terkel 82).

This image of an incomplete person can be regarded as the source of his characters who fail to succeed because they are unfit for the established rules of the aggressive and competitive world. As they fail to adapt to the values of their environment, they are usually bewildered and unable to perform the roles which society has cast for them. Most of these characters he created live in an illusion far beyond the reality and as their features of personality contradict the material characteristics of society, they cannot break this illusion; consequently they maintain the status they are in. In his plays Tennessee Williams makes the reader or audience aware of the cruel and complicated world. Through these vulnerable characters and their tragic fates Williams criticizes the modern world which lacks humanity, friendship, love and gentility and he feels sympathetic to his characters. In this regard Nancy M. Tischler states as follows:

There are no absolutes for him, no system of values outside of man, no morality outside of personal anguish. His ultimate ethic is to sympathize. In a universe

that rolls on its inevitable way, living in a society that we cannot change, we are powerless to influence or even understand our fate. The best we can do is to face our doom with fortitude and reach out hand in sympathy to our doomed fellowbeings (35).

In other words, he reflected the unfortunate experiences of the incomplete people of the modern world. When they struggle with the rough conditions, they try to adapt; however, they generally fail and as a result they isolate themselves and hide inside their fantasy world or go mad. Williams' plays describe man as a victim of his own conflicting desires, the conflict between soul and body, The image is generally centered upon the theme of alienation. The characters' struggle for self-realization comes out as the process of alienation.



## 2. THE CONCEPT OF ALIENATION

The concept of alienation has existed over hundreds of years in many fields all over the world. The primitive form of alienation is thought to have arisen from the inequality between man's need and wishes and his control over nature. Especially leaving its mark on the 20th century, "Alienation" is a term which not only has entered into philosophy and becomes the basis of social sciences but also it has entered into psychology and later on art and literature.

Being a concept that judges the place of the human being in the world, alienation means the isolation of the individual and as a result losing his inner integrity. One dictionary definition of alienation is: "the act, or result of the act, through which something or somebody, becomes alien to something or somebody, else" (Edwards 76). This term has more intensified and broader meanings. For instance, in law it refers to conveyance of property. The term also has a meaning in everyday usage: "turning away or keeping away from former friends or associates" (Edwards 76).

German sociologist and psychologist Eric Fromm states in his *The Sane Society* that in the past the word "alienation" was used to denote an insane person. It is also stated that the origin of the word "aliéné" in French and "alienado" in Spanish are older words for the psychotic and the term was used to refer an absolutely alienated person (111). The term of alienation is explained by Fromm as:

By alienation is meant a mode of experience in which the person experiences himself as an alien. He has become, one might say, estranged from himself. He does not experience himself as the center of his world, as the creator of his own acts-but his acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys, or whom he may even worship. The alienated person is out of touch with himself as he is out of touch with any other person. He, like the others, is experienced as things are experienced; with the senses and with the common sense, but at the same time without being related to oneself and to the world outside productively (111).

Besides this Fromm also states that human existence entails uniting with other living beings, to be related to them, and there are several ways of reaching this union such as submission to a person, to a group, to an institution, to God or on the contrary having power over the world. As a way of overcoming separateness, both submission and domineering never meet satisfaction. These passions result in absolute defeat. Fromm explains the reason of this defeat as follows:

...while these passions aim at the establishment of a sense of union, they destroy the sense of integrity. The person driven by any one of these passions actually becomes dependent on others; instead of developing his own individual being, he is dependent on those to whom he submits, or whom he dominates (36).

In his book *Outsider*, English philosopher and novelist Colin Wilson defines the alienated person " he is not himself, he has found an "I" but it is not a true "I" and states that "the Outsider's business is to find a course of action in which he is most himself that is, in which he achieves the maximum self-expression" (Wilson 67).

In *Existential Psychotherapy* Irvin Yalom analyzes isolation or the process of alienation in three categories: interpersonal isolation, intrapersonal isolation and existential isolation. Yalom states that *interpersonal* isolation ,experienced as loneliness, refers to isolation from other individuals and it is a function of many factors such as geographic isolation, the lack of appropriate skills, heavily conflicted feelings about intimacy or a personality style (such as schizoid, narcissistic, exploitative, or judgmental) that precludes gratifying social interaction. Cultural factors also play an important role in interpersonal isolation. According to Yalom, the decline of intimacy-sponsoring institutions -extended family, the stable residential neighbourhood, the church, local merchants, the family doctor- has in the United States at least, inexorably led to increased interpersonal estrangement (Yalom 353).

*Intrapersonal* isolation is a process whereby one partitions off parts off oneself. According to Yalom, intrapersonal isolation results whenever one stifles one's own

feelings or desires, accepts "oughts" or "shoulds" as one's own wishes, distrusts one's own judgement, or buries one's own potential (Yalom 354). One of the famous cases for intrapersonal isolation is that though as a child he was wholly independent of the opinion of others, she now is completely dependent on what others think. Furthermore she no longer has any way of knowing what she feels or what her opinion is and this is the loneliest state of all, an almost complete separation from one's autonomous organism (354).

Yalom places the most emphasis on existential isolation. According to Yalom, individuals are often isolated from others and from parts of themselves, but underlying these splits is even more basic isolation that belongs to existence. This is an isolation that persists despite the most gratifying engagement with other individuals despite consummate self-knowledge and integration. Existential isolation refers to an unbridgeable gulf between oneself and any other being. It refers, too, to an isolation even more fundamental - a separation between the individual and the world. Existential isolation is a vale of loneliness which has many approaches. A confrontation with death and with freedom will inevitably lead an individual to that vale (Yalom 356).

Alienation has also been a concept in philosophy. It is possible to associate the origin of alienation to Rene Descartes who was the pioneer of scepticism. In his statement " I doubt, therefore I think, therefore I exist " he puts all the ideas, matters and beliefs in doubt and that scepticism forms the source of questioning the individual himself and his environment. Thus Descartes' method of doubt leads one to question his existence as he is asking numerous questions about himself. While he is trying to find answers to those questions he begins to be alienated. According to Descartes "thought is completely alien to, and incompatible with, extension" (Audi 226). So he distinguishes the *res extensa* making up the material universe and *res cogitans* belonging to thinking. Thus the soul is completely distinct from the body. In this sense German-American neurologist Erwin Straus states that "the Cartesian dichotomy not only separates mind from the body but severs the experiencing creature from nature, the ego from the world, sensation from motion. It also separates one person from other one, me and you. The

Cartesian ego, looking at the outside world, is in no contact, has no direct communication, with any other ego” (Murchland 141-142). If the term of alienation is described as separation, Descartes is regarded as the first philosopher who isolated or separated the mind from the external world.

According to Hegel’s philosophy, there is no reality about the relations between the things and thinking man which points out the conflict between “subject” and “object”. This opposition arises from the alienation of mind from itself. There is only one reality which is the reality of man. Hence, the soul is the reality that can evolve itself. In that sense Hegel’s alienation means self-alienation: "the process, or result of process, by which a self (God or man) through itself that is through its own action becomes alien to itself that is to its own nature" (Edwards 78). First the soul creates a world of objects which it supposes that is different from its own world. This objective world begins to be dominated by external forces that cannot be controlled which means thought becomes estranged from reality. But later it realizes that this world is its own mental product and the world which it has created only exist in its actions. Even though it alienates itself, which at first it is not aware of, gradually it understands that this world is not outside of its own world. Hegel sees this process as the cause of alienation. As he ignores the external dimension of the alienation problem, he remarks that consciousness can be reached through alienation. The self develops through a process of alienation and its overcoming, self-estrangement self-recognition, a fall into division and reconciliation (Sayers 2). According to American politician and theoretician George Novack:

Alienation and estrangement are the most extreme expressions of "difference" or "otherness" in Hegel's idealist philosophy. In the process of change everything necessarily has a divided and antithetical nature, for it is both itself and, at the same, becoming else, its "other". But viewed as a whole, the "other" is simply a development of the "itself"; the implicit becomes explicit; the possible, actual. This process is a dual one. It involves enstrangement from the original form and the realisation of the essence in a higher form of existence.

The alienation will only end when people become fully conscious of the fact that all they create are the result of their soul. Hegel's student Bruno Bauer puts the alienation concept into religion and states that having religious beliefs creates division because it rejects the human consciousness.

In addition to Bruno Bauer, German philosopher Feuerbach uses the concept of alienation to criticize religion. He believes that religion leads human beings to be alienated from themselves. He states that "It is the man himself who creates all the thoughts and dignifications associated with God and this makes him alienated from his natural reality. It is only when the man breaks this illusion, he will overcome the alienation problem" (Sunat 69).

According to Marx the concept of alienation results from the private property and labour division. He analyzes the relationship between labour force and its products and discovers that if the man works in such conditions that he cannot control or becomes obliged to, his life becomes diverged from himself because products becomes much more important than the labour force. The result of this process is that the value of objects increases while the value of man decreases. Therefore he sees the materialistic society as the reason of alienation. This materialistic society loses its mind along with its free will and starts to live like a robot. Marx who bases the concept of alienation on social background describes four types of alienation in the *Political and Ecomical Manuscripts of 1844*: alienation from the process of work; alienation from the products of work; alienation of the worker from himself and alienation of the workers from others. The state of alienation can be considered from two aspects as Marx states:

1. The relationship of the worker to the product of the labour is as an alien object which dominates him. This relationship is at the same time to the sensuous external world, to natural objects, as an alien and hostile world.

2. The relationship of labor to the act of production within labour. This the relationship of the worker to its own activity as something alien and not belonging him, activity as suffering (passivity), strength as powerlessness, creation as emasculation, the personal physical and mental energy of the worker, his personal life, as an activity which is directed against himself, independent of him and not belonging to him (Moody and Schmitt 25).

According to him, under capitalism workers lose their control over the process of production as a result of mechanization. In other words mass production leads the worker to become alienated to his own labor force. Thus alienation may disappear only if the economical and social conditions which are based on private property alter.

In a capitalist society the man loses his individualism owing to the fact that he is now a consumer rather than a person. In other words losing his subjective identification he becomes an economic object. Besides in such conditions individuals are not the ones who create their own behaviours as they are behaving in the way that the society expects. In that sense it is inevitable to arise a conflict between the things that the society expect from the individuals and the own needs of the individuals. Consequently the individuals become alienated from society, furthermore they suffer from various mental disorders. Those individuals are unsuccessful in social relations and gradually they isolate themselves from the society.

In *Alienation and Social Criticism* Moody and Schmitt describes the alienation of the victims of sexism, racism, ageism, and class prejudice. In this case alienation is no longer powerlessness in the economic or the political realm but finding oneself in a world which one has not created, in which one not only does not recognize oneself, but is constantly reminded that one does not really belong (3).

According to Herbert Marcuse, in a capitalist society the man became unconscious of his own behaviours with the external world due to mass media. He defines alienation as the process of *one dimensional society*:

We are again confronted with one of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial civilization: the rational character of its irrationality. Its productivity and efficiency, its capacity to increase and spread comforts, to turn waste into need, and destruction into construction, the extent to which this civilization transforms the object world into an extension of man's mind and body makes the very notion of alienation questionable. The people recognize themselves in their commodities; they find their soul in their automobile, hi-fi set, split-level home, kitchen equipment. (Marcuse 11)

Theorized by Emile Durkheim the concept of anomie is also similar to Marx's interpretation of alienation in the aspects of isolation and disorientation. However, Marx alienation deals with division of labor in modern society and how it separates men from other men and eventually from themselves. Durkheim's anomie deals more with the attitudes and expectations of the society. One broad definition for anomie is "a social condition characterized by instability, the breakdown of social norms, institutional disorganization, and a separation between socially valid goals and available means for achieving them. It also refers to the psychological condition of futility, anxiety, and a morality afflicting individuals who live under such conditions" (Osco 105). That is to say, unless the expectations are fulfilled by society, the individual will experience the feeling of futility and anxiety which will result in solitude and disengagement with society. Durkheim wrote in *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* "No living being can be happy or even exist unless his needs are sufficiently proportioned to his means" (207). The relationship between society and individual is expressed by Durkheim as:

On the one hand the individual gets from society the best parts of himself, all that gives him a distinct character and a special place among other beings, his intellectual and moral culture. If we should withdraw from men their language, their sciences, arts, and moral beliefs, they would drop to the rank of animals. So the characteristics of attributes of human nature come from society. But, on the other hand, society exists and lives only in and through individuals. If the idea of society were extinguished in individual minds and the beliefs, traditions and aspirations of the group were no longer felt and shared by the individuals, society would die. We can say of it what we just said of divinity: it is real only in so far as it has a place in human consciousness, and this place is whatever one we may give it...society, of which the gods are only a symbolic expression, cannot do without individuals anymore than these can do without society (Durkheim 347).

From this background it is concluded that there is a mutual relationship between man and society. The individual is completely aware of himself and accepts the norms of society. However if he does not integrate himself with society he becomes an outsider who loses his identity and meaning. In this case what is left is an artificial combination of illusory images and the life no longer corresponds to anything actual (Durkheim 213).

The idea that the conflicting relationship between the individual and society results in alienation met clarification with Sigmund Freud. His psychoanalysis enables us to understand this relationship in a more clear level. Freud who defines the individual with the terms of id, ego and superego, states that the superego arises from cultural and social norms:

The superego is primarily the higher- order normative pattern governing the behaviour of the different members in different roles in the family as a system. Its origin is also primarily social and cultural. As such the concept provides a bridge between the theory of personality to the theoretical analysis of culture and social system (Parsons 31, 96, 109).

As the relationship between society and the individual also depends on the experiences, the behaviours and the views of the individual may alter in terms of his experiences. Yalom indicates that Freud used the term "isolation" to describe a defense mechanism, especially apparent in obsessional neurosis, in which an unpleasant experience is stripped of its affect, and its associative connections are interrupted, so that it is isolated from ordinary process of thought (Yalom 354). In this regard accepting social circumstances and repression can prevent the individual from neurosis:

The feeling of uniqueness, spontaneous in childhood, is always present and has only been repressed. It is quite easy to see how that repressed material can return, for example, in individual 'exploits' which can either be socially acceptable or completely antisocial. If... identity must be achieved... it is simply because uniqueness must be repressed. Identity is nothing but the socially accepted form of lost uniqueness. (Mannoni 185)



Yalom also states that Harry Stack Sullivan was keen on the phenomenon by which one excludes experience from conscious awareness or makes parts of the psyche inaccessible to the self. This process was regarded as “dissociation” instead of “repression” and he elevated it to a central position in his schema of psychopathology. In the contemporary psychotherapy scene “isolation” is used not only to refer formal defense mechanism but in a more casual way to connote any form of fragmentation of the self (Yalom 354). When we get back to Freud, he mentions the importance of culture, family and society in terms of constituting the individual. Unless the individual has been formed by the society, he will feel repressed thus he has to struggle and fight with it. That kind of a society will include many individuals who suffer from identity crisis and the feeling of alienation. The life of one shows characteristics of emptiness and loneliness. According to Kernberg this emptiness has a deeper meaning when it’s compared to loneliness:

Suffer from an unconscious sense of guilt... the emptying of their subjective experiences that reflects their superego’s attack, as it were, on the self. The harsh internal punishment inflicted by the superego consists in the implicit dictum that they are condemned to be alone. On a deeper level, and in severe cases, internal fantasies determined by superego pressures are that because of their badness they have destroyed their inner object and are therefore left alone in a world now devoid of love. (Kernberg 223)

Such a characteristic portrays the psychology of the alienated characters’ who begin to live in a fantasy world being detached from the others. This makes them isolated without any sense of affection. They are not aware of the meaning of their existence and they become stuck into a prison which they do not dare to leave as they develop a great fear and anxiety about outside. Thus they continue their life without any real aim. In this case this is psychologically accepted as a mental disorder which is called schizoid personality. This person becomes emotionally cold, detached, and solitary which ultimately lead him to live in a fantasy away from the realities of life.

Alienation has also an important role in existentialism. The father of this philosophy Jean Paul Sartre defines existentialism as follows: Each object has an

essence and existence. Essence means the set of permanent qualifications whereas existence means being actively in the world. Many believe that the essence precedes existence. However existentialism argues the opposite: Existence precedes essence. Because the man creates his own essence after he exists (Sartre 8). As existence is completely individual; he makes choices, struggles, even suffers in order to define his essence. This process can cause a problem that the individual loses his essence and turns into an object which means his alienation to his own self. According to Sartre the human existence mainly depends on freedom and it is impossible to distinguish being free from human reality as he indicates:

First, there is the issue of freedom as a primary characteristic of human existence; second, there is the claim that since there is no God, there are no priori value that can serve as the basis for ethical decisions (and even if there were a God, it would make no difference in this regard, since values too are ultimately dependent on free choice); and third, there is the claim that my freedom necessarily is linked to other's freedom. Indeed I am not free unless others are as well. It is however, one thing to say that freedom and human identity need to be thought alongside one another; the difficulty is to find a way of doing so. (Sartre 103)

As humans are obliged to be free they are always in situations which provides them with many choices and preferences. We are, as he puts it in words, 'condemned to be free,' by the fact that we are always in situations that present alternatives, and so our lives have to be understood in terms of the choices we have to make, even if it is only by doing nothing" (Olafson 268). However self's choice may lead to self-deception such as bad faith which was defined by Sartre as an inauthentic and self-deceptive refusal to admit to ourselves and others our full freedom, thereby avoiding responsibilities for actions and attitudes (Audi 70) .Self-deceiving can be in different forms such as embracing other people's view in order to avoid having to form one's own or disregarding options so that one's life appears predetermined to move in a fixed direction. In this sense Sartre states that if the individual ignores the responsibilities of his freedom, then it is inevitable to suffer from alienation.

One aspect of alienation is ignorance. It is a mode of inter-human relations. Its type is that of refusal in the sense that to be judged ignorant by others acts as a cause does on my freedom. When I am ignorant in solitude, either I'm unaware that I am ignorant or I know it, it must be mentioned that in the first case, to be unaware of my ignorance clearly is not equivalent to knowing what I am doing, but the double negative lifts from ignorance its limiting exteriority. My knowledge is limited by nothing, since my unawareness of it is nothing. There is no outside to consciousness or to knowledge. There is just an impulse toward the project, toward understanding, toward truth which is positive. There are affirmations but no consciousness comes along and puts them between parentheses. There is a finite but not limited positively, my freedom is still completely there. (Sartre 294)

Another existentialist Kierkegaard sees alienation as an existentialist problem and asserts that the reason of this problem is the weakness and pitifulness of the individual against God and nothingness (Sunat 69). In contrast to Hegel's notion which describes alienation as self-constitution and reconciliation, according to Kierkegaard's philosophy the estrangement of individuals from themselves and from the world is uncongenial to subjectivity and individuality. Heidegger claims that the alienated is the one who fails to become authentic. Authenticity that means one's being true to his own personality is the feature of an existentialist individual." In fact existentialist individuality and authenticity seem to imply one another. One is not born an individual (in the existentialist sense) than is one born authentic. To be truly authentic is to have realized one's individuality" (Flynn 74). Thus if one cannot reach self-realization, he becomes inauthentic which makes him alienated from himself. Moody and Schmitt summarize the ideas of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre on alienation:

Kierkegaard describes alienation as an inability to act or to commit oneself. Alienated selves are too indecisive, too vague and unfocused to say: This is who I am; this is what I want; this is what I am going to do. Nietzsche criticizes modern men and women in very similar terms. Their desires are flaccid, their wills corrupted, they lack the courage to engage in risky projects or to pursue their goals through difficulties and conflicts. Heidegger sees alienation in our unwillingness to strike out for ourselves, being anxious, instead, to follow the latest fashion, to wear, say, or do whatever everyone else wears, says, and does. Sartre, finally, detects an inevitable distance between oneself and

what one does: we are, he says, always pretending to be someone, but we never fully are that particular person because a part of us is always standing aside, observing our own performance of a role (3).

The concept of alienation which has been the main realm of the modern world has also been one of the chief motives of the works of literature all over the world especially creating tremendous impression on western culture. After two devastating World Wars, the economic corruption ended and a vast development began in America. For many people, this developing modern world offered many opportunities with a limitless hope to realize their dreams. However the deep moral values in people were removed. A lot of people find themselves in conflicts as well as under assault from outside. In this case for those who cannot adapt themselves to the new rules and norms of the new world it means to be trapped in deep isolation and disappointment. The lack of identity in modern man resulted in many psychological and social troubles and their lives do not have a meaning anymore. This sense of meaninglessness and alienation have been mentioned in literature and especially in drama. The modern American Dramatists often deal with this depression such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, Sam Shepard, Edward Albee and Tennessee Williams. The concept of alienation which appeared both in society and individuals is apparently portrayed in the works of Tennessee Williams who applied this concept on the basis of the predicament of the characters in his plays as well as in his novels. He dramatizes the mental tension and alienation of contemporary American outsiders.

In his works the outsider characters have some features which were stated in Colin Wilson's *The Outsider*: The outsider wants to put an end to his situation. He wants to be balanced. He wants to achieve emotional spirit. He wants to escape from being unimportant and weak, in contrast; he prefers to be a strong-willed person in order to play an active role in life. The way to solve his problem is generally by creating an illusion which can be regarded as a kind of play that is acted consciously or unconsciously. This play can be defined as a way to escape from reality or a way to create one's own reality. In this addition creating one's own reality means that he tries

to leave his current situation. However, it is not very easy to succeed this. Awareness is sometimes the only way to take the outsider to the salvation but not all the outsiders have the ability or personal features to accomplish it like the outsiders of Tennessee Williams.

### 3. ALIENATION IN WILLIAMS' WORKS

#### 3.1. The Glass Menagerie

“ I went down the river,  
I sat down on the bank.  
I tried to think but couldn't,  
So I jumped in and sank.”

Langston Hughes

The *Glass Menagerie* premiered in Chicago on December 26, 1944 and a year later won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award. This play was Williams' first great success but he later on produced other highly successful plays and became one of America's most highly-regarded playwrights.

The play is set in a poor section of St. Louis in 1967 and portrays the disruptive relationship between an aging mother, Amanda Wingfield, and her painfully shy daughter Laura Wingfield, as told by the son and brother, Tom Wingfield. Williams depicts the breakdown of the family as a result of social and ideological infrastructure of America. The image of place that Williams depicted in the notes of Part I Scene I clearly represents the condition of American society which avoids fluidity and differentiation and exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism. He states that the scene is memory and is therefore nonrealistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license (Williams 99). As the story is told by Tom, he begins the play telling that he is the opposite of a stage magician: "He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion" (Williams 100). In that sense it is very clear that the technique he uses to seek for the truth is the realism but expressionism. He explored the very consciousness of the characters through expressionism. In the production notes of *The Glass Menagerie* Williams states "...truth, life or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those which were merely present in appearance" (Williams 95). From this background it can be said that he used expressionism in order to examine the feeling of

alienation. His ultimate aim is to bring the alienation of the individuals into light using expressionistic devices.

Being obsessed with her Southern childhood Amanda is a character who recalls the days when many gentleman callers would visit her. She is not aware of the reality that she is an old woman now. The father Mr. Wingfield, who is only shown by photograph, left the family a long time ago. This fact forced his wife to take care of her two children alone which was very difficult for a woman during those times. Her son Tom is a poet who works in a warehouse. He goes to the movies and write poems. Although Tom seems to care for his family, he is sometimes indifferent to them. Laura is delicate, shy, romantic and unprepared to face the frightening world outside where people are supposed to be cunning, strong and sociable in order to achieve a better position in life. She wears her mother's dresses, listens to old songs and has a collection of a "glass menagerie" which consists of little crystal animals. She is a complete failure as she fails to fulfill her mother's expectations. When Amanda learns that Laura dropped out of typing school after only a few days' attendance, she sees that the only alternative for her is to marry. In scene 3, when Tom and Amanda have a quarrel, Tom breaks some of Laura's glass animals which she is very fond of and as a result she burst into tears. After that, Tom feels sorry for the fight and apologizes and Amanda wants him to find a man to introduce to Laura. Although he does not want to do this, he finds one named Jim O' Connor who works in the same warehouse. Amanda prepares the house and Laura for his arrival. When he arrives, Laura feels very shy and nervous at the dinner table. Meanwhile the lights go off because Tom has spent the electric-bill money. Candlelight, however, suffices. Amanda leaves them alone and Jim feels that Laura suffers from an inferiority complex and tries to comfort her. They start to chat and her shyness begins to melt. She shows him her glass menagerie and tells him that the unicorn is her favorite. However, when they are dancing, he stumbles and breaks the horn of the unicorn. As Jim thinks that she suffers from an inferiority complex, in order to cure her psychology, he kisses her. Yet, he does not want her to misunderstand him; so he suddenly reveals that he is already engaged. Within this context, the broken unicorn represents Laura's broken heart as she learns that Jim is not an eligible

gentleman caller.

Once Jim leaves, Amanda blames Tom for this situation because he does not know of Jim's engagement. She shouts at him that he can go to the moon as he is a selfish dreamer (Williams 177). The play ends with Tom's soliloquy which states that he escapes from them like his father. At the end of the scene, Laura appears blowing out the candles, leaving darkness.

Williams believed that the modern world was not a good place and wouldn't become better. Under the influence of the Great Depression and Social Darwinism, Williams saw a very unstable world when he wrote *The Glass Menagerie*. Like most of his plays, this play also deals with characters who contradict the objective and material characteristics of society in which Social Darwinism is prevalent. These characters who are unfit for this aggressive and competitive world cannot integrate themselves into the place they live in and suffer from alienation. They move themselves from the world of reality into the world of illusion. Amanda and her two children create an illusion which carry them away from the harsh reality; however, when this illusion encounters with reality, it breaks into pieces.

As it is rich in symbolism, at the very beginning of play, the place is described as; the alley represents the dirty, degrading and hostile world symbolizes the reason of their alienation. "This building is flanked on both sides by dark, narrow alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clotheslines, garbage cans, and the sinister lattice-work of neighboring escapes" (Williams 99). As Tishler states:

The meaning of these alleys is clear if the reader recalls Tom's picture of "Death Valley," where cats were trapped and killed by a vicious dog. The predicament becomes a symbol of his factory work, murderous to his creative imagination. For Laura, the alley represents the ugly world from which she retreats to gaze into her tiny glass figures. For Amanda, too, the alley is the world of her present hopeless poverty and confusion from which she retreats into her make-believe world of memory and pretence.



Inside the apartment, where she tries to create an illusion of gentility, her husband's portrait grins at her futile efforts. (201)

Mr. Wingfield, who is shown only by photograph, has left his family on its own care. Therefore he holds a part in the formation of this dramatic situation although he never appears on stage. Leaving his family for the world of loneliness, he has escaped from reality and his relations to life. It is evident that he was emotionally alienated from his wife and children which leads to his escape. Also for Tom his father represents escape as he describes him as a “telephone man who fell in love with long distances; he gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town...” (Williams 101).

Mrs. Amanda Wingfield feels that Tom will also follow his father's step and she wants Laura to marry a decent man who can support them in other words she seeks someone to provide them a shelter. Nancy Tishler states that “Amanda is disillusioned romantic turned evangelical realist” (32). When she ignores the reality of her current life, she remembers her youth when she lived in a world of wealth and gentility as a southern belle. In this addition, if her present situation afflicts her, she escapes to her loving memories as a refuge.

Moving from the deep South to St. Louis for his story, Williams retains the memory of the South, as a haunting presence under the superimposed Midwestern setting. The audience, never seeing the gracious mansion that was the scene of Amanda's girlhood, feels its remembered glory and its contrast to the mean present. Awareness of the past is always an element in Williams's plays. His characters live beyond the fleeting moments of the drama--back into a glowing past and shrinking from a terrifying future. For both Amanda and the later Blanche of *Streetcar*, the South forms an image of youth, love, purity, all of the ideals that have crumbled along with the mansions and the family fortunes. (Tishler 89)

In that sense it is true to say that Amanda fails to become authentic which is the feature of an existentialist individual according to Heidegger. As she cannot reach self-realization, this makes her alienated from herself. Her plans and hopes about her daughter makes her self-deception clearer. Laura, who lives in a solitary universe along

with her glass menagerie trying to protect herself from the real world, is such a weak, delicate, and shy girl that it is clear that she cannot satisfy the expectations of her mother. First she ignores the reality that Laura is not a talented girl and she wants Laura to learn type-writing; however, her dream ends up when she discovers that she is not attending school. Thus she finds another alternative to shape her daughter's life; to marry an eligible bachelor. Amanda knows that Tom can abandon them like her husband did; so she wants to ensure herself and her daughter both financially and physically which is impossible without the support of a man during those times in America. The cultural and social background forces her to search for a husband as a way to become happy and safe.

Amanda: So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay at home and watch the parade go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonographs records your father left as a painful reminder of him? We won't have a business career- we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion! (she laughs wearily.) What is there left but dependency all our lives? I know so well what becomes of unmarried woman who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the- barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife!- stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room- encouraged by one in-law to visit another- little birdlike women without any nest- eating the crust of humility all their life!

Is that the future that we've mapped out for themselves? I swear it's the only alternative I can think of! (She pauses.) It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it? (She pauses again)Of course some girls do marry. (Williams 110)

Although it is seen that Amanda is doing the right thing because she wants them to reach happiness and security, she ignores Laura's ideas and feelings. Laura who lives in a fantasy world away from her reality is being drifted into another illusion by her mother. In this sense we cannot blame Amanda as she also cannot face her own position. She rejects to acknowledge the fact that Laura can never be the charming girl she dreams her to be.

Throughout the play, Amanda lives in an inauthentic world much like Laura's

crystal world of glass animals and Tom's fantasy world of the movies. Her way to escape from the real world is recalling her own glorious past or being obsessed with the expectations for the future. In this regard, time is stopped; as they are not living in the past nor in reality. However the arrival of Jim O'Connor, who is the most realistic character in the play, results in the falling of her fantasy world. She becomes incapable of reaching her goal and her family has been left in isolation again. Despite her efforts to prevent her children from failing in their life, she drives them into more alienation at the end of the play.

Her delicate daughter Laura with her favorite collection of tiny glass animals is the most evident embodiment of the feeling of alienation in the play. Her brother Tom is also aware of her alienation when stating " She lives in a world of her own- a world of little glass ornaments, Mother..." (Williams 137). It is very ironic that the unicorn being her favorite image symbolizes her isolation as it is different from the others. Besides, the fact that it is damaged by Jim O'Connor refers to Laura's failure. In addition to her tenderness, shyness, romanticism and restraint, she is also crippled. This physical defect is one of the reason which cut her off from society and the outside world. She believes that she cannot meet a gentleman caller because of this reason. However, Amanda refuses to accept and tries to encourage her.

Amanda: Girls that aren't cut out for business careers usually wind up married to some nice man. (She gets up with a spark of revival.) Sister, that's what you'll do!  
(Laura utters a startled, doubtful laugh. She reaches quickly for a piece of glass)

Laura: But, Mother-

Amanda: Yes?(She goes over to the photograph.)

Laura (in a tone of frightened apology): I'm- crippled!

Amanda: Nonsense! Laura, I've told you never, never to use that word. Why you're not crippled, you just have a little defect-hardly noticeable, even! People have some slight disadvantage like that, they cultivate other things to make up for it- develop charm-and vivacity-and-charm! That's all you have to do! (She turns again to the photograph.) One thing your father had plenty of- was charm! (Williams 112)

But her inferiority complex makes her to live in the world of glass animals without any contact with the external world. Because of her physical and emotional

weaknesses she is not able to adjust to the real world or integrate with other people including her own family members and isolates herself. She is out of touch with every one as she is out of touch with herself. When she tries to get in touch with someone - that's Jim O'Connor- she misses the only chance to integrate herself into the real life. Missing the chance or symbolically losing the unicorn prevents her to even leave imaginary world she lives in; on the contrary she hides herself somewhere deeper in this world. This unicorn also symbolizes her identity because it is peculiar among the other glass animals. It looks like a horse but what makes it different is its horn. Being her own image, as it is different from the others it gives her a sense of identity which she loses when the unicorn is broken. Although it seems that Jim is a redeemer who can teach Laura to be self-assured and strong so that she can come out of her shell, he abruptly shows her a new world for which she is completely unready. In that sense, it is possible to infer that Jim becomes the mirror of Laura's real life which she does not want to be faced with. Hoping that he'll fall in love with her and can marry her Laura thinks that he can be her salvation. However, he turns out to be the mirror which tells the harsh truths about her:

JIM (abruptly): You know what I judge to be the trouble with you? Inferiority complex! Know what that is? That's what they call it when someone low-rates himself! I understand it because I had it, too. Although my case was not so aggravated as yours seems to be(...) Yep- that's what I judge to be your principal trouble. A lack of confidence in yourself as a person. You don't have the proper amount of faith in yourself. (...) For instance that clumping you thought was so awful in high school. You say that you even dreaded to walk into class. You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education because of a clump, which as far as I know was practically non-existent! A little physical defect is what you have. Hardly noticeable even! Magnified thousands of times by imagination! You know what my strong advice to you is? Think of yourself as superior in some way! (Williams 165)

It is clear that Laura contradicts with realistic Jim in the same way that Jim sees the clump in her leg as an unimportant defect whereas she believes that it is an obstacle which can affect her for all of her life. Being the only character who comes from world of reality and goes back there, Jim does not belong to the alienated world of the Wingfield family; the world of illusions, fears, and confinement.

Throughout the play, it can be seen that Laura is always dependent on what her family members think and decide. She never states her own feelings or desires. Her mother was is convinced when she tells Tom “ (...) I say for your sister because she’s young and dependent” (Williams127). Laura does not know what she feels or what she wants which emphasises her alienation. Furthermore her mother is the one who always makes decisions for her. At this point Laura carries one of the famous case for intrapersonal isolation as Yalom states in *Existential Psychotherapy*. According to him being dependent on what others think is an almost complete separation from one’s autonomous organism (Yalom 354).

From a different viewpoint, she lets others define her character and her choices as she chooses to be ruled by others due to the fact that she cannot untangle herself. She should act the role which society or her family casts for her. In that sense she denies her freedom. When her mother says that she should marry, Laura does not tell what she thinks because someone decides on her behalf. Furthermore, Amanda is also a woman who tries to live her life or shapes her children’s lives within the frame of social forms. For instance she wants Laura to marry since she traditionally thinks that every woman is in need of a male protector. In order not to form their own views and avoid the anxiety in making decisions, they prefer to follow and adopt others’ opinions. This tendency can be seen as a form of “bad faith” which was theoritized by Sartre. He claims that “bad faith” is a form of self deception which “ is a kind of lie- a lie we tell ourselves” (Sartre 133). In the view of such information alienation takes places in the bad faith that rejects the responsibility or freedom of the individual. As Sartre does not believe God exists, he thinks that it is the man itsef who is responsible for his acts and the flow of his life. Hence, when the individual denies his responsibility, he begins to suffer from alienation in an inauthentic world.

Jim’s arrival to the Wingfield’s house makes all the members of the family face the reality of the world which is far away from their alienated world. He unintentionally breaks up the dreams of the family. After Jim’s departure Amanda tries to comfort Laura. However, she is also doomed to failure, as her dream has also been

shattered by the reality. When she says her final line “Go, then! Go to the moon – you selfish dreamer!” she accuses Tom of being a dreamer but in fact she is the one who lives in her fantasy. Her attempts to teach Laura and Tom to survive are useless as she is also unfit for the outside world. She is already weak and frustrated by what she has experienced so far but, nonetheless tries to help her children especially Laura. What is tragic is that no one can help them, not even themselves. And so this helplessness leads to their feeling separated and lonely. As Fromm says “to be separate means to be helpless, unable to grasp the world- things and people-actively; it means that the world can invade me without my ability to react” (Yalom 366). People have to be strong, competitive, fearless and independent in order not to be defeated in that hostile world whereas the members of the Wingfield family are not capable of carrying on the social norms as they are not prepared enough so they create a fantastic world to escape into. Despite this shelter they cannot reach happiness but meet with disappointment at the end of the play. This end is similar to what Durkheim wrote in *Suicide*. According to him “society alone has the power necessary to stipulate the law and set the point beyond which the passions must not go” (Durkheim 249). However, when people do not have the strength to achieve their goals and so cannot reach the targets that society sets, then the inevitable result is anomie which is another condition much like alienation.

One of the strongest depiction of alienation is seen in Tom who like his father wants to escape from the responsibilities. His attitude towards his mother and sister is distant, in fact he lives with them but emotionally he is far away. He is also aware of the fact that he is not happy at the warehouse where he works but instead of facing the actual problems both at work and home, he wants to run away from them. He tries to write poems and spends his nights watching movies which shows his indifference to his family and his desire to escape. When Amanda yells at him about jeopardizing his job and their security, he remarks that:

JIM: Listen! You think I'm crazy about the ware-house? (...) Every morning you come in yelling that Goddamn “Rise and Shine!” “ Rise and Shine!” I say to myself, “How lucky dead people are!” But I get up. I go! For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being ever! And you say self- self's all I ever

think of. Why, listen, if self is what I thought of, Mother, I'd be where he is –GONE! (He points to his father's Picture.) (Williams 117).

It is clear that Amanda is continuously trying to get Tom to be satisfied with his job and position and wants him to quit being a desperate dreamer. Yet, Tom is not interested in a life which results in his self- estrangement. At the end of the play his closing speech begins with “I didn't go to the moon, I went much further – for time is the longest distance between two places...” and closes in saying “ Blow out your candles Laura- and so goodbye...” (Williams 178) and Laura blows the candles out. It shows that Tom is sorry for having abandoned Laura when he says “ Oh, Laura, Laura I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be” (178). He feels sad but most probably he will continue escaping his past and his disappointing life since he is not strong enough to deal with the harsh reality of the aggressive world. He has suffered from the conflict between reality and fantasy and starts to search for a kind of self-realization. Furthermore it is possible to infer that Laura cannot survive long because of her purity and sensitivity.

Once the tragic flaws of the characters have been analyzed, it is clear that each member of the Wingfield family often has feelings of anxiety. As Fromm believed, the feeling of anxiety results from separateness. He states that “human being's most fundamental concern is existential isolation, that the awareness of separateness is the source of all anxiety” (Yalom 370). That is to say that the individual's aim is to overcome this separateness. However at the end of the play no one -except the outsider Jim- has overcome this situation and they continued to live desperately in their illusion because there is no way for them to leave their cage whose bars have been built by themselves. They do not have the courage or strength to break those bars and they are “sentenced to a solitary confinement inside their skins” as Tennessee Williams stated.

It is commonly agreed that Tennessee Williams is a kind of playwright who reflects personal experiences and agonies in his works. He provides characters that he is familiar with in real life and personalities that embody different features of his own identity and people in his family. From this point of view it is possible to say that the crippled and sensitive Laura refers to his own sister Rose who suffered from a mental disease; and Tom represents his own identity who has a sense of guilt over his sister's lobotomy like Tom's sense of guilt when he leaves Laura at the end of the play. Amanda also stands for Williams' own mother who tries to take care of her two children without their father. For that reason, *The Glass Menagerie* has been believed to be "Williams' most autobiographical play, accurate to the imaginative reality of his experience even when it departs from facts in detail" (Parker 3)

### 3.2. A Streetcar Named Desire

"In my sleeveless summer dress I have no protection  
And they are all gloved and covered, why did nobody tell me?  
..... I am as nude as chicken neck, does nobody love me?"  
Sylvia Plath

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) is regarded as one of the best plays ever written in American Drama. It has always attracted the audience, readers and also the critics and it won three major awards, "Pulitzer Prize", "The New York Drama Critics Circle Award" and the "Donaldson Award". Tennessee Williams himself also sees this play as his masterpiece. Like many literary critics, Tischler speaks highly of this play; "Nowhere has Tennessee Williams made better use of his abilities; his talent for picturing violence, for accurate dialogue, for passionate revelation, for understanding of basic human problems" (Tischler 56). It is a play whose language is as dense as poetry, that is why Tennessee Williams has often been compared to famous poets like T.S Eliot. Since he was gifted with a poetic sensibility, he was concerned about modern life. *A Streetcar Named Desire* takes place in a world which has suffered from two World Wars and financial crisis. After the years of conflict and depression, in post war America people are trying to get back to their normal lives but the effect of the



war has caused many modern men to have social and psychological problems. They have encountered the death of morality and inauthenticity which results in their alienation and displacement. Williams, who works with characters that do not get along well with the society and are wounded because of the strict rules of life, emphasizes the alienation and frustration as the clear evidence of the predicament of his characters.

*A Streetcar Named Desire* deals with the tragic story of a southern belle Blanche Dubois, her sister Stella, and Stella's brutish husband Stanley. In this play most of the characters are alienated sufferers in the real world, yet it focuses more on the internal condition of the protagonist Blanche DuBois. This is the story of her journey from desire to madness. She is an outsider who is not capable of integrating herself into a new new world which she is not prepared for. Actually she is an educated woman who was brought up in a rich family. However, this will not be enough for her to deal with her new life which ultimately drives her into alienation.

Even in the beginning of the play Blanche is already a woman who has lost her family fortune and her husband to suicide and she is also sidelined from society because of her improper sexual behaviour. The probable reason reason for her love affairs is that she compensates for her loses. It is a way of escaping her loneliness as she needs people to show her affection. As the structure of the play is that of a journey and a guest Blanche enters carrying a suitcase and daintily dressed wearing gloves, a hat, and white clothes with something about her uncertain manner. The play centers upon that visit of hers. Her opening words symbolizes her journey in the life and also the theme of the play: "They told me to take streetcar named Desire, and then transfer to one called Cemeteries and ride six blocks and get off at Elysian Fields!" (Williams 11). The names of the streetcar and her destination symbolizes the Blanche's long and difficult life journey. She was a teacher and had a plantation called Belle Reve (Beautiful Dream) but upon losing them she visits her sister Stella and her husband Stanley Kowalski in order to have some kind of protection. She arrives in a house which consists of only two rooms. The depiction of this house is just the opposite of what she had expected because she had thought that her sister lived in a mansion with a rich husband. Her

beautiful plantation is contrasted with the harsh reality of the Kowalski dwelling throughout the play.

In the Kowalski household, Blanche creates a fake identity for herself in order not to show her weakness and pitifulness. Hence she pretends to be a dignified and respectable woman. She wears showy clothes, puts on make up but she does not hold back her perpetual state of panic. Her manners are delicate and insecure and, moreover she always talks in order not to be asked anything that will make things more difficult for her. These feelings of anxiety and panic are one of the common symptom of alienation. One suffers from extraordinary anxiety owing to the instability and lack of authenticity of his selfhood. Though she has had many lovers and has strong sexual urges, she behaves as if she has never known indignity. She has been maladjusted because she is adjusted to an abnormal family life; so Blanche tries to adapt her life through finding a husband; that's why she seeks for a mate whom she believes that he will rescue her like Laura of *The Glass Menagerie*. That kind of an attitude implies that she is a person for whom giving up her orientation is very difficult and when she has to adapt to some new conditions, it arouses her anxiety and she feels like giving up all security. That is the reason why she seeks a man's protection. Erich Fromm depicts that kind of a feeling as:

It is like being thrown into the ocean when one does not know how to swim. They do not know that when they have given up the crutch of property, they can begin to use their own proper forces and walk by themselves. What holds back them is the illusion that they could not walk by themselves, that they would collapse if they were not supported by the things they have. ( 73)

In that sense she thinks that the support she needs in order to be protected from the collapse is finding a mate. By marrying she hopes to escape from poverty and the bad reputation that follows her. Blanche tells lies about her past and she does not live in the reality. Moreover, that she lies to herself and others allow her to make life be seen as it should be for her. And the struggle between Blanche and Stanley symbolizes the struggle between appearance and reality. However Blanche refuses reality and lives in her fantasy land but reality transcends the fantasy. In that sense one comes to know that Stanley is like a mirror which forces Blanche to see her

reflection. The appearance is that she comes to the Kowalski dwelling as an attempt to save her soul; however the reality is that this attempt actually makes her corruption accelerate. As Stanley has no patience for Blanche and her illusions, her delicate manners and sense of propriety are often offended by Stanley. His brutality and virility assault her. The play shows Stanley and Blanche as polar opposites with Stella as a link between them although Stella is also an opposite character to Blanche. She was a dutiful child, staying with her parents trying to save the family estate while her sister Stella went out to live with Stanley. Since Blanche has adjusted to an abnormal family life, she was unable to keep in step with Stella's life. She is not accustomed to the way of life of her sister and her husband and she seeks someone not to fall in love but to rescue her from her past and recent situation. As Blanche sees it, Mitch is her only chance for contentment, even though he is far from her ideal. In that sense her feelings for Mitch are totally self-centered. She sees him as "a cleft in the rock of the world that I could hide in!" (Williams 89). However her sister Stella Kowalski is a woman who subordinated herself to a superior one; her husband and she does not rebel. When her sister Blanche cannot believe that Stella is happy with her crude husband, Stella tells her that: "There are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark – that sort of make everything else seem – unimportant" (13). As it is seen Stella subordinates herself to this way of life because they have a satisfying sexual relationship. In scene three, Stanley being drunk turns off the radio and when Stella yells at him he attacks her, the beating is seen on stage. Stella cries out and Blanche takes her upstairs; Eunice's apartment and the other men pull Stanley off. Then he stumbles out in the street and calls for Stella. She appears, they stare at each other and rush together and he lifts her and carries her to their dark flat. At that time Blanche emerges looking for Stella. Mitch who, is interested in Blanche, tells her not to worry because Stella and Stanley are crazy about each other. This situation underscores the villain way in Stanley's character and their relationship that is only bound to sexual relationship. In this addition, Blanche's endeavour in order to defend and save her sister, makes her affectionate and sensitive. However these will not be enough to make her a heroine. Tennessee Williams builds a variety of sin into the prehistory of

Blanche. She has sold her ancestral home without consulting her sister; she lies about her past and the most interesting part is the brutality of hers when she discovered her young husband was bisexual. She caught him with a boy in bed and she told him how much he disgusted her. Afterwards he put a revolver into his mouth and fired a bullet through his head. Blanche knew her husband's weakness and used this weakness to destroy him. And this mystery of her comes out. She reveals about her husband and tells Stanley: "I hurt him the way you would like to hurt me, but you can't! I'm not young and vulnerable anymore. But my young husband was and I – never mind about that!" (26).

She thinks that her age and experience will protect her from the assaults of Stanley. However Stanley is already aware of her weakness. So these daring words do not protect Blanche or make Stanley recede. As he knows that Blanche speaks ill of him, it is clear that his primary function is to destroy her. He is investigating her past and will expose her secrets and lies in order to take his revenge. He starts to ask questions that will be difficult to answer for Blanche:

Stanley: "Say do you happen to know somebody named Shaw?"

Blanche: "Why, everybody knows somebody named Shaw!"

Stanley: Well this somebody named Shaw is under the impression he met you in Laurel, but I figure he must have got you mixed up with some other party because this other party is someone he met a hotel called Flamingo.

Blanche: I'm afraid he does have mixed me up with this "other party" The Hotel Flamingo is not the sort of establishment I would dare to be seen in! (54)

Stanley's questioning of Blanche about her acquaintance with Shaw is the play's first direct mention of Blanche's blemished past. Blanche does a poor job of pretending not to know Shaw while talking to Stanley her voice has a tone of fear and she seems to panic that when they are alone she asks Stella whether she has heard of any unkind gossip. Blanche is horribly shaken. All she needs is to quiet her hysteria but she admits that she wasn't so good the last two years after Belle Reve had started to slip through her fingers.

Blanche: I was never hard or self sufficient enough. When people are soft – soft people have got to court the favor of hard ones, Stella. Have got to be seductive – put on soft colors, the colors of butterfly wings, and glow – make a little temporary magic just in order to pay for –one night’s shelter! That’s why I ‘ve been –not so awf’ly good lately. I’ve run for protection ,Stella ,from under one leaky roof to another leaky roof because it was storm – all storm and I was caught in the center....People don’t see you –men don’t – don’t even admit your existence unless they are making love to you.And you have got to have your existence admitted by someone , if you’re going to have someone’s protection and so the soft people – shimmer and glow – put a paper lantern over the light ... But I’m scared now –awf’ly scared. I don’t know how much longer I can turn the trick. It isn’t enough to be soft. You have got to be soft and attractive. And I – I’m fading now! (Williams 91).

This scene of Blanche clearly portrays her pitifulness, fear, desperation, and loneliness in life, that she hopes for help even from somebody who stays with her only one night. She is in such a desperate condition that she does not dare to tell about a lifelong happiness but only a temporary magic. In this addition Tennessee Williams perfectly illustrates the vulnerability and frailty of his character against the brutality of life. The story shows the depths of Blanche's loneliness and depravity; she sought comfort and protection in impossible places, with men who were only interested in one thing. She might as well have been alone at Belle Reve, and in all the beds she frequented. Blanche is terribly isolated.

In her desperate loneliness, her desires became more and more difficult to control, and more and more unhealthy. The play consists primarily of the punishment that Blanche endures as atonement for her sin in terms of Williams’ morality. She is not unaware of the fact that she is describing the crime that now condemns her, she tells Mitch of her discovery that her husband was homosexual and consequences of her disgust and revulsion:

Blanche: He’d struck the revolver into his mouth,and fired so that the back of his head had  
 been - blown away(she sways and covers her face)It was because on the dance floor –  
 unable  
 to stop myself –I’d sudenly said –“I saw ! I know! You disgust me...” and then the  
 searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one

moment since has there been any light that is stronger than this kitchen candle...(Williams 113)

That is the turning point for Blanche in this drama. It is the climax of her feelings and also the climax of the play. As Blanche says that since her husband, Allan's suicide, the bright light has been missing for her. Williams indicates the most striking symbol for the understanding of her characterization. Throughout the play, Blanche avoids appearing in bright light especially in front of Mitch. She puts a Chinese paper lantern on the lightbulb in the Kowalski apartment. It underscores the fear of her fading beauty that she refuses to be seen or to be met in day light. Generally thinking light symbolizes the reality of Blanche's past. Like she does not want to confront the truths, meaning her past, she does not want to face with the light because it will show the things that she hides. And when Mitch learns her story, he forces her to stand under the light which means her fantasy comes to an end. The fact that she hasn't been close to the bright light since Allan's death means that bright light represents her youth and innocence while poor light represents her frustration and deprivation.

One of the most striking elements that closely relates to Blanche in the play is her habit of always bathing. It suggests the traditional association of water with purification. Throughout the play she bathes herself, she says these baths calm her nerves and soothe her. She always announces that she feels like a new person. The bathroom is the only place where she is comfortable. In a small place, she is perpetually cleaning herself as if she is purifying herself from the dirt of her past thus she forgets her past wearing showy clothes after every new bath. The baths are a cleansing ritual, but the feeling of refreshment and renewed strength is not long lasting. One bath is never enough because she cannot erase the past; it does not wash away so easily Blanche's bath is a pathological bath which is for redemption.

After learning Blanche's sexual dalliances Stanley reveals everything he has learnt to Mitch so that Blanche would be stuck in destruction. After Mitch has found out about her past and rejects her as insensitively as she rejected her husband, Blanche has

lost the last chance at happiness and " her uncovered sexual identity pushes Blanche over the edge; once her secret life has been revealed, Blanche stumbles into madness as the ultimate refuge" (Hirsch 33). It is very tragic that there is nowhere to take shelter except her illusion. From this time onward, she starts to live in the illusion; the fantasy means self-defense. She tells things not as they are, but as they ought to be. She does carry any malice why she behaves like that because of her weakness and inability to face the truth. Her fantasy world protects her from the tragedies that she has to bear. At the beginning of scene five, Blanche is seen writing a letter to Shep, her millionaire friend but the letter is full of lies:

Darling Shep , I am spending my summer on the wing making flying visits here and there. And who knows ,perhaps I shall take a sudden notion to swoop down on Dallas! How would you feel about that?Ha – ha ! (52)

The truth is much less interesting and delightful than the illusion she creates. She has written or mentioned about a life that she wants to lead. However it has got nothing to do with the real life that is going on. She creates such an illusion since she has a taste for a fantasy life which is much better than reality. From the beginning of the play, she is constantly trying to escape her ownself making up stories or situations that are not even true or will never become true. When Stanley discovers Blanche's real past her fantasy world has been shattered and then when Mitch learns about it, Blanche's fantasy world begins to go to its inevitable end. Stanley continues to drive her to the edge of corruption. After she is rejected by Mitch, the night when Stanley has destroyed Blanche once more; he rapes her. It is extremely tragic that when she seeks for protection in the arms of strangers, she finally finds brutality in the arms of her sister's husband. This final assault will ultimately bring destruction to Blanche who is already beaten. In a letter to Joseph I. Breen, the chief censor for the Production Code, Williams wrote about this rape: " The rape of Blanche by Stanley is a pivotal, integral truth in the play, without which the play loses its meaning, which is the ravishment of the tender, the sensitive, the delicate, by the savage and brutal forces of modern society" (Weales 26). Thus when the play closes in the end the points that shows her destruction in the end have become more apparent. Blanche is deeply isolated. In her desperate loneliness,

her desires became more and more difficult to control, and more and more unhealthy. In scene nine a Mexican woman comes by, selling flowers for the dead. When she opens the door and talks to the woman she recalls the deaths of the elderly Dubois family members:

Blanche: I used to sit here and she used to sit over there and death was as close as you are..... We didn't dare even admit we had ever heard of it!

Mexican woman: Flores para los muertos ,flores flores .....

Blanche: The opposite is desire. So do you wonder? How could you possibly wonder? Not far from Belle Reve, before we had lost Belle Reve was a camp where they trained young soldiers.

On Saturday nights they would go in town to get drunk.... (Williams 142)

In this scene these flowers foreshadow Blanche's destruction. Her fall into madness can be seen as an ending which is caused by her inability to act appropriately on her desire and her desperate fear of human. The appearance of the Mexican woman announces Blanche's fate in an ironic way. When it comes to the last scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Blanche's destruction is portrayed through a very well manipulated manner by Williams. Blanche comes out from the bathroom once more. She is happy and cheerful as she has refreshed herself. Stella and her neighbour Eunice tells her that she is going to have a holiday. Hearing that, Blanche gets excited and she supposes that she is going to have her vacation with Shep Huntleigh her millionaire friend. At once she dreams about the sea and living by the ocean until she dies. While she is speaking it is sensed that William associates this idea of living by the ocean to her habit of constant bathing and the general idea of water and purification. She subconsciously believes that she will be far away from her past and will be completely fresh and clean:

Blanche: I can smell the air . The rest of my time I'm going to spend on the sea. And when I die, I'm going to die by the sea. You know what I shall die of?(she pluck a grape) I shall die of eating an unwashed grape one day out on the ocean. I will die – with my hand in the hand of some nice-looking ship's doctor, a very young one with a small blond mustache and a silver watch. "Poor lady," they will say, "the unique did her no good. That unwashed grape has transported her soul to heaven"(The cathedral chimes are heard) And I will be buried at sea sewn up in a clean white sack



and dropped overboard-at noon – in the blaze of summer- and into an ocean as blue as (Chimes again) my first lover’s eyes.(Williams 162)

She has so convinced herself to go on holiday that she waits for Shep to take her from the Kowalski house. However when she sees a doctor and a nurse entering, she goes back to her room. The nurse goes in to capture her. Blanche struggles with the nurse but there is no longer any way out for her. When the doctor enters, he takes off his hat and approaches Blanche gently. He holds her in his arms and leads her. Blanche reveals her most important line: ”Whoever you are- I have always depended on the kindness of strangers’ ” This line forms her last statement in the play. Blanche, like Laura, depends on strangers’ kindness. She believes the doctor is the person who has come to rescue her. It is true that she has always depended on strangers and sought protection under the arms of men who are interested in her for only one thing. Eventhough they have always abused and left her, she continues to hope for help from a stranger. She speaks of hope in her madness and her line shows her deep loneliness; she was alone in Belle Reve as she lost her family members and then she is alone again when she is looking for protection from the strangers. This final remark states her detachment from reality and her strong inclination to see life as she so wishes.

It is very evident that Blanche’s failure is due to the fact that her personal features contradict the objective conditions and she is unfit to struggle with these harsh conditions and cruel people. However hard she tries to convince both herself and the others that she is respectable, her past reveals all the things she hides. Throughout the play her self deception becomes more and more apparent because the only place where she thinks she can find peace is the fantasy world she creates. Whenever she catches a glimpse of the reality she desperately turns to her refuge which she considers secure. Hence, Blanche who is already refined, weak, cowardly, and lonely cannot compete or fulfill the expectations of the external world in order to survive. In that sense Tennessee Williams presents us a character who is not only deserted from the values of society and other people but also that she is alienated from her own selfhood. She refuses to admit

the real conditions and even when she is being taken to the asylum, she still supposes that someone will help and rescue her. That is to say that her self deception goes on till the last moment of the play. This self deception from which Blanche is suffering is a form of “bad faith”. Sartre describes it as denying one’s own actual character by ascribing to oneself a nature comprised of qualities that are opposed to one’s actual character (79), it corresponds to Blanche’s denying herself and instead creating a dignified woman which is not real. Being trapped in a world that she cannot abandon, Blanche thinks that she can be saved by a male protector and this implies that she embraces the traditional way of thinking (every woman is in need of a male protector) avoiding her freedom and choices which is another aspect of having bad faith. In a way, she lets other people and conditions to rule and define her instead of forming her own opinions and choices. According to Sartre such individuals have the inclination to consider the current circumstances to be fixed natures over which we have no control and they would rather not acknowledge their responsibility for the way they are, the way things seem to them and the way they respond to them (88).

### 3.3. Portrait of A Madonna

“We live as we dream- alone.”

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Tennessee Williams’s play *Portrait of a Madonna* centers upon a female protagonist. Although this work of Williams is a one - act play, its portrayal of the major female character who suffers from alienation has deep characterization, similar to those of the female characters in Williams’ other works. In this beautiful little play the main character, Miss Lucretia Collins, behaves almost the same as Amanda, Tom, Laura and Blanche within the concept of fugitive self. Miss Collins tries to get rid of reality by creating a dreamy world which she is convinced herself is reality just as the other aforementioned characters do. She was a good and respectable girl being a minister’s daughter and she fell in love with a boy; however, he got married to someone

else and Miss Lucretia Collins has never recovered from that trauma. This fact has made her continue her life in deep isolation. She is now living in a small apartment and believes that Richard, who is the man she once loved, breaks into her room every night to indulge her senses. At the opening of the play, her scream is heard because he has come again. This person is not real it is her fantasy come to life. Her condition is very tragic because she not only struggles with isolation but also this feeling has caused her to suffer from schizophrenia. That is to say, it can be claimed that alienation is one of the leading causes of mental disorders. What Fromm stated also supports this claim: "As a disorder of the self, alienation can be seen the source of mental diseases of the modern individuals (Fromm 89).

One of the aspect of Miss Colins' character is that she tries to cover her alienation through glorifying herself. She phones the manager Mr Abrams about her complaint when she says "I don't want any reporters to hear about this but something awful has been going upstairs!" (Williams 109). It draws attention to her glorifying herself because she is infact an average woman who does not have any excellence. However, everybody in the play knows what kind of a woman she is so she does not have time to make them believe in her fantasy world. In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche has time and opportunity to do it but this will not change the end these of two women as their departure from their dreamy space nearly the same. When the elevator boy and the porter meet Miss Collins in her house, her manner becomes that of a slightly coquettish lady. Although she has not got a maid she lies about it by saying that it is the maid's day off and she reveals her favourite remark in the play "Mother will bring in something cool after while..." This underscores her recent madness as her mother died years ago. Hence, it is very clear that she is the one who completely fails to become authentic. In addition, Miss Colins' condition corresponds to Heidegger's definition of alienation which was stated in the previous parts of this study. The fact that she becomes inauthentic means that she cannot reach self-realization and this makes her alienated from herself. While illustrating the miserable state of Lucretia Collins, Williams shows other people's attitudes towards her which makes her scene more ironic:

Elevator boy- ...I seen a guy that could do that once. He crawled straight up the side of the building. They called him The Human Fly! Gosh, that's a wonderful publicity angle, Miss Collins – ‘Beautiful Young Society Lady Raped by The Human Fly!’ (116)

Humiliating her with a heavy hand and not considering her feelings, he thinks that Miss Collins is a creature of fun to be laughed at. In that sense, the elevator boy represents a man of the corrupted world the kind of which Miss Collins attempts to hide herself from. Also, when she encounters his attack, her vulnerability makes itself clear. Her feeling of disturbance when she receives this remark from the elevator boy in fact indicates her disturbance by the corrupted world. 'The basis of the corruption is that the earthly representatives treat human being as objects' ( Costello 26). In other words, man's alienation arises when a human being is besieged with external forces which are hostile to his basic instincts with respect to his survival. That is why she escapes from reality and seeks comfort in a fantasy which she creates in order to defend herself in a way. This is the way Tennessee Williams often created his characters.

Tennessee Williams, in his short and full-length plays, employs the metaphors of "corrupted world" and "fugitive self" which he borrowed from D.H.Lawrence and which determine his dramaturg in terms of style, content and form. In his short plays which generally depict American local life, the "corrupted world" is a detailed representation of physical, social and moral degeneration. In these plays the fugitive protagonists try to escape this corruption through various defense mechanisms but usually fail. They cannot adapt to the world and cannot establish a harmony between their inner lives and the outside world. Eventually, they are either trapped into various forms of destruction or simply perish. (Ezici 46)

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche has so often been obsessed with her sexual and moral behaviour that she constantly felt the need to tell about her dignity and innocence. Her fake dignity is what she wants to draw attention to and what Collins does is the same. Throughout the play she tries to proclaim that she is a virtuous woman. This is another way of glorifying herself.

Miss Collins-...When men take advantage of common whitetrash women who smoke in the public there is probably some excuse for it, but when it occurs to a lady who is single and always *completely* above reproach in her moral behaviour, there is really nothing to do but call for police protection! (Williams, 119).

All of her attempts to pretend to be different from who she really is, are of no avail and consequently, she is seen in the depths of her fantasy near the end of the play. When she is sometimes confronted with the real life she escapes further into the deeper parts of her imaginary world like Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*. But wherever she hides, the hints of reality find her. When Miss Collins flees from the harshness of reality, this time the bitter experiences of the past haunt her. So, she is trapped in her imagination. While she walks in the garden of the fantasy land she suddenly has a bitter experience.

Miss Collins: His house is right in the middle of that awful leafless block, their house, his and hers, and they have an automobile and always get home early and sit on the porch and *watch* me walking by – Oh, father in Heaven – with malicious delight! (*She averts her face in*

*remembered torture*.) She has such *penetrating* eyes, they look straight through me. She sees that terrible choking thing in my throat and the pain I have in here – (touching her chest)- and she points it out and laughs and whispers to him, ‘‘There she goes with her shiny big red nose, the poor old maid – that loves you!’’ (*She chokes and hides her face in the rag*.)

The scene lucidly portrays the deep pain behind Miss Collins’s fantasy. The sarcastic approach of people towards her has caused her to look for help from something other than humans. She does not trust anybody which has resulted in her lack of communication with the environment. When she loses contact, she finds herself in a deep state of loneliness and then becomes stuck in an imaginary world, the only place she can find comfort. Meanwhile she finds it extremely difficult to face even the smallest part of the real world. She does not want to get in touch with any other person

from outside. She is so accustomed to this kind of life that she does not dare to abandon it.

Miss Collins-.If only I had the courage –but I don't. I've grown so used to it here, and people outside – it's always so hard to face them!

Porter-...you won't – have to face nobody, Miss Collins. ( *The elevator door clangs open.*)

Miss Collins ( *Rising fearfully* ): Is someone coming – here? (123)

The elevator door here may represent the door that has been closed to the outside by Miss Collins. As a fugitive character she closes herself in where she lives and does not reveal her physical and emotional life to anyone. She has closed the door of both her house and her interior world and when the possibility of someone entering arises, she begins to worry and hesitates about how she will behave. According to Fromm, this feeling of anxiety is one of the prominent feature of an alienated self. The reason of anxiety is feelings of helplessness and vulnerability which result from separateness.

The awareness of his aloneness and separateness, of his helplessness before the forces of nature and of society, all this makes his separate disunited existence an unbearable prison. The experience of separateness arouses anxiety; it is indeed the source of all anxiety. Being separate means being cut off, without any capacity to use his human powers. (Yalom 357-358)

She is so trapped in her illusions that she comes to believe she is pregnant with her fantasy- lover's baby. The title of the play comes into focus here: *Portrait of a Madonna*. This image of Madonna and Child is important with regard to an understanding of the play. This religious allusion forms an ironic meaning in the point of Lucretia Collins's pregnancy without a father. It indicates a child born of a woman virginal in body and heart. This emphasizes her desire to show herself as a proper lady. Her main characteristics in her fantasy are innocence and purification like Blanche's in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Therefore the concept of "Virgin and Mother" is closely

related to characteristics that Miss Collins wants to possess. In addition to this, Williams' two plays have a common symbol as in the last scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, though it is not as apparent as in *Portrait of a Madonna* another reflection of Madonna is seen. Blanche DuBois who wears various showy clothes throughout the play, tries to hide herself in these dresses. She arrives at the first scene with a white dress which is related to her innocence and when it comes to the final scene she is seen in a jacket she describes as "Della Robbia blue. The blue of the robe in the old Madonna pictures" (Williams 161). Tennessee Williams applies the same image gracefully while drawing attention to his female protagonists's obsession with innocence and purification. These two character who resemble each other in many ways have also the same departure scene; as they go crazy they are taken to an asylum. Like Blanche, Miss Collins struggles with the nurse however time has run out of for her too. The last remark of her "Mother will bring in- something cool- after while....." states her becoming completely detached from reality once more. As well as that departing remark she leaves a note to Richard: "Dear Richard. I'm going away for a while. But don't worry, I will be back. I have a secret to tell you. Love Lucretia" ( 126). With this note Williams draws attention to her loneliness as she leaves a note for someone who does not exist. At the beginning of the play she complains about Richard breaking into her house in order to invade her however she then writes him an affectionate note while leaving in the end. Like Blanche she depends upon a stranger even if he abuses her. That kind of an ironic and tragic end illustrates the great desperation that Miss Lucretia Collins suffers from.

### 3.4. The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone

"I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.  
I do not think they will sing to me."

T.S Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

During his career, Tennessee Williams migrated across a landscape of many forms. He is the master of full-length plays and one act plays which gained great

success on Broadway for years and they have always been popular; therefore, they are acted, filmed and also they are still in the center of critics. Moreover he is also best known for his fascinating short stories and he can be regarded as a novelist. *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* is the most famous and best work of his, when he is considered as a novelist. Donald Windham claims it was Williams's "first fictionalized self-portrait after his success - and it displays a hair-raising degree of self-knowledge" (Spoto 166). This time Williams carries his dominant female protagonist of his plays to the world of a novel and portrays the alienation of the same kind of character in the concept of short fiction. Karen Stone of *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* is another female character who, rejecting her essential truths, escapes from it and seeks for a kind of refuge in order to be able to stand in life. This journey is similar to those of Blanche DuBois of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Lucretia Collins of *Portrait of a Madonna* and the Wingfield family in *The Glass Menagerie*.

Karen Stone is a famous American actress who is no longer bright as a star on the stage as she becomes older. After her retirement from the stage her life was shattered by her husband's sudden death. Karen's wealthy husband protected her that she never had to struggle with life which implies that she is unprepared to live on her own. However; she begins to live in Rome which is very well illustrated in the first part of the novel. The illustration of the city of Rome and the season of spring give the impression that there is a new beginning for Karen Stone. However this beginning is not different from entering a kind of exile. Like Blanche she becomes a fugitive character because she flees away into another city as she does not want to confront the bad experiences of her life. Devastated by her husband's death and recent failures in her job she leaves them behind and believes that she can handle the loneliness of living in Rome by herself. At this point the conflict between reality and dream comes out. Dissatisfied with her past, she tries to strive for the achievement of her dream. Although she abandons her experiences which give her discomfort, she continues living with a sense of complexity in her mind. This is what Yalom defines as existential conflict which is the tension between our awareness of our absolute isolation and our wish for contact, for protection,



our wish to be part of a larger whole (Yalom 9). Karen Stone cannot deal with her loneliness and vulnerability. She often has a disturbing sense of not being in control; she drifts into a world that she does not have the courage to rule it. She is afraid of interfering with any occasion because she is always worried.

There are intervals when a life becomes clouded over by a sense of irreality, when definition is lost, when the rational will, or what passed for it before, has given up control, or the pretence of it. At such times there is a sense of drifting, if not of drowning, in a universe of turbulently rushing fluids or vapours. This was the condition that Mrs Stone had lately been conscious of..... (Williams 13)

This feeling of anxiety springs from her fears from the external world, her rootlessness as she ignores her past and the meaninglessness of her life. Freud felt that anxiety was a reaction to helplessness; is a signal which announces that there is 'danger' and the individual is expecting a situation of helplessness to set in. In that sense the individual should find a way to fight with this sense of anxiety so that he could keep and develop his essence. According to Yalom, if one can transform a fear of nothing to a fear of something, one can have some self protective campaign that is avoiding the thing that one fears, seek allies against it or plan a systematic campaign to detoxify it (Yalom 43). Karen also tries to build a defense mechanism against the sources of her anxiety and fears; however her way is nothing like the ways Yalom states. She creates a dreamy world with little contact with other people, where she believes that she could be secure. In that sense, she believes that she may find protection by ignoring and keeping herself away from the sources of anxiety instead of demolishing them. Hence, she is never prepared to face with any factor that can result in her restlessness. That's why when she is about to contact someone in order to get rid of her loneliness and share and discuss certain things in her life, Karen Stone becomes frightened to face these things. Sometimes the feeling of anxiety is so extreme that she began to search for excuses:

So she had said to Meg Bishop, Yes, come over this afternoon to my apartment and we can talk. I have so much to tell you. But a little while after Mrs Stone became frightened of the impending exposure. Just before it was time for Meg Bishop to arrive at her apartment, Mrs Stone had called up other people. She had filled the apartment with new acquaintances that she used as a shield against the past. She had hoped there would be no occasion for confidential talk...(13)

She suffers extraordinary anxiety due to the imbalance and lack of authenticity of her selfhood. Heidegger explains this tendency towards inauthenticity in terms of cultural existence: “As we become initiated into the practices of our community, we are inclined to drift along with the crowd, doing what one does, enacting stereotyped roles, and thereby losing our ability to seize on and define our lives” (Audi 372). In this case to be authentic means one’s awareness of his responsibilities. Avoiding her responsibilities, Karen Stone refuses her full freedom which Sartre refers as the main reason of one’s alienation. According to him, freedom consists in the fact that we have control over the motives that we find ourselves with and freedom is to be found in nature and origins of motives, not in the relation between those motives and the actions that manifest them (Sartre 61). So the fact that Karen ignores her freedom of responsibilities leads her to lose her control over the motives that constitute her identity. Karen who loses her past; then, loses her existential meaning and at last her identity. All she has is the world of fantasy that she has created as her refuge. There is no other link that clings her to real life. Durkheim explains that situation as:

All that remains is an artificial combination of illusory images, a phantasmagoria vanishing at the least reflection; that is, nothing which can be goal for our action.... For the only life to which we could cling no longer corresponds to anything actual, the only existence still based upon reality no longer meets our needs. (Durkheim 213)

Karen Stone too seeks a shelter like many female protagonists in Williams’ works; in this drifting mood she needs someone to depend on and share her life. In this sense she resembles Blanche who sees a mate as a kind of refuge and Laura for whom her mother seeks for a gentleman caller and also to Mrs Collins who has created a fantasy lover for herself in her deep isolation. Mrs Stone strikes up a friendship with the young man Paolo di Leo, and things soon turn serious and sexual. She falls in love with this gigolo and it is a desperate situation that she pays money to him for being with her.”The central question is about the wrongness of buying sexual pleasure. But as in so many of Williams’ works, the theme of buying sexual favors is dovetailed with the theme of aging, Karen is presented as primarily a victim of the aging process” (Hayman

129). As a keen observer of human nature and his own sexuality Tennessee Williams provided a deeper insight into the most private territories of the human soul. In this case he depicts sexuality as a major component of people's identity. What Karen seeks is both sexual pleasure and also not; this is somehow the effort to prove her existence. This is a great irony that she wants to convince herself that she is still a desirable woman. In fact she is still attractive and rich with a fabulous past, which could acquire her a respectable mate. This indicates that she cannot reach self-realization. Each human being has an innate set of capacities and potentials and if one fails to become aware of these potentials at any time throughout his life, he suffers from self deception and alienation. German psychologist Karen Horney stated that psychopathology occurs when adverse circumstances inhibit a child from growing toward the realization of his or her own possibilities. The child then loses sight of its potential self and develops another self image: 'an idealized self'. She speaks of the sense of alienation, of being split from what one really is, which results in one's overriding one's genuine feelings, wishes and thoughts. Yalom describes it as 'existential guilt' which is a deep, powerful feeling; one experiences when one fails to live as fully as one can (279). This is what Kernberg called 'emptiness' which he distinguishes from loneliness:

Suffer from an unconscious sense of guilt...the emptying of their subjective experiences that reflects their superego's attack, as it were on the self. The harsh internal punishment inflicted by the superego consists in the implicit distum that they are condemned to be alone. On a deeper level, and in severe cases, internal fantasies determined by superego pressures are that because of their badness they have destroyed their inner objects and are therefore left alone in a world now devoid of love. (Kernberg 223)

These individuals like Karen keep themselves away from society with the sense of emptiness and meaninglessness. Feeling imprisoned in a world that she cannot leave due to her lack of capacity, she turns into an isolated individual. This is what Yalom referred to as the reason of schizoid personality. In respect to her behaviour and expectations she stands apart from the society and she develops a tendency towards a solitary life and emotional coldness.

This kind of a sensitive individual's struggle for proving her existence is a kind of inevitable psychological struggle and hysterical situation which has resulted from the constant clash of the real conditions of her life and her desires. She is between the desire of continuous enthusiasm and her feeling of inadequacy, lost beauty that are truths of her. This conflict in fact develops between the illusion and reality; therefore the outcome of this conflict makes her splendid existence destroyed. When the illusion of life is collided with the reality, not only her abstract existence has been destroyed but also her physical existence which is ignored has been demolished.

Nobody was aware of the automatic quality of her gestures than Mrs Stone herself. This was something she neither condemned in herself nor condoned, however that as time went on the birdlike opacity of her eyes and the voice that stimulated an emotion not felt began to show more plainly through the gradually collapsing fortification of beauty which had helped so much to make her *King On The Mountains*. Mrs Stone knew it. She did not fail to discover this creeping attrition and to do everything in her power to compensate for it by increased exercise of skill (86).

Like Blanche Mrs Stone is obsessed with her lost beauty. Beauty is something which makes these women feel self-confident and self respectable. So the loss of it brings about the loss of self-respect. When the individual loses her faith in herself she cannot protect herself she becomes vulnerable. In that kind of situation she tries to protect herself with other sources. Mrs Stone does it with her wealth. That she can buy anything, even her sexual pleasures makes her feel strong and in a way protected.

The problem of keeping her dignity was not one that she had been forced to consider much in the past. In the arrogance of her beauty and her prestige in two worlds, theatrical and social, that dignity had seemed beyond the danger of compromise; but with the decline of her beauty and her removal from those spheres in which she had been a person of inviolable eminence, there was left her no protection but of wealth: and wealth does not insure dignity. (101)

She tries to find meaning in life by obtaining what she wants; this may be a kind of survival. In this sense, according to Williams, sexuality is not only a concept that only has to do with body and skin; it is also a method of winning and losing. In this argument of power initially it is not clear who is the exploiter and exploited. Karen pays money for Paulo so she seems she has the power however she is in need of him so this time Paulo has the power as he makes use of her. Williams indicates that whether

the individual is materially powerful or not, the problem is her inner world. What makes Mrs Stone isolated and desperate is her inner conflict and her not being able to control the movements of her life. She desperately continues drifting into vacancy.

All those things she remembered, all those names and faces and characteristics of people who might conceivably be use to her, were like articles stored in shelves about the walls of some great vacant chamber. This vavancy was not the vacancy of a trivial person. Mrs Stone knew what sort of vacany was,as well as anyone knows it. It was a sort of vacancy which permitted so many people of her acquaintance to lead the sort of lives they led without any evident conciousness of taking part in a vast ritual of nothingness. Mrs Stone knew of that ritual. She took part in herself. She went to parties; she pursued the little diversions. She moved in the great, empty circle. But Mrs Stone glanced inward from the peripheries of that circle and saw the void enclosed there. She saw the emptiness. She knew that it was empty. (86)

Even if she is aware of that vacancy, throughout her story she does not do anything to stop the movement of life but only drift. “ I am drifting, drifting, Mrs. Stone said to herself”(44). It indicates her not being able to defend herself against life and this is the thing that will bring her inevitable destruction. Going to another city with the hope of rescue from her past experiences Karen Stone finds herself in another world that is not different from the other. What she escapes from finds her immediately because she is infact herself what she wants to get rid of.

The corruption or dissolution of this sensitive and beautiful woman resulted from her inability to adjust to the reality. She had little ability to resist to overcome by this maladjustment that she is driven to live in her inner world as an alienated self. Unfortunately the cruel reality finally fails her wishes. When she is not able to stand for her own needs and desires and cannot fulfil the requirements of society she drifts into destruction.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

In his works reflecting the conflict and degeneration in 1940's America, Tennessee Williams portrays the reaction of his characters to that situation which threatens their existence. Having encountered the death of morality and inauthenticity, these characters refuse the agreement with the conditions that are caused by the conflict. The characters who do not compromise with the reality like the members of Wingfield family, Blanche DuBois, Lucretia Collins and Karen Stone find escaping as a defense and rescue. In that sense their way to escape is ignoring reality and instead creating a world of illusion. It drives them to go away not only from their surroundings but also from their selfhood which leads them towards frustration and alienation. The concept of alienation and its characteristics, which appeared in society as well as in most individuals after World War II are evidently portrayed by Tennessee Williams. It is possible to infer that he was deeply upset because of the social exploitation which caused alienation on individuals and society. He applied the concept of alienation on the basis of predicament of his characters in most of his plays as well as in his novel. He handles the theme of alienation to explore and reflect internal conditions of his characters. Williams looks steadily and wholly into the private agony of these characters. As Brooks Atkinson remarks:

He supplies dramatic conflict by introducing characters to an alien environment that brutally wears on their nerves. But he takes no sides in the conflict. He knows how right all the characters are and how right they are in trying to protect themselves against the disaster that is overtaking them... (2)

Williams does not judge these characters but he sharply portrays their vulnerability, fragility, unhappiness, disturbance, desperation and alienation. In that sense his displaying the characters without judging provides us the opportunity to come close to them. When we approach them it is clear to see that they are the victims of the same situation. Even if they live in different times and environments, what they suffer from is the same. They are in the same kind of world in that they have many common points in their struggle. They are all escapist which forms the fugitive

character concept of Williams' works. The common characteristics of these alienated characters can be summed up as: they are out of touch with themselves and any other person but have the inclination to be dependent upon others, they are deprived of the appropriate skills which can help them to succeed in their struggle for survival, besides when their expectations are not fulfilled by society they develop great anxiety and fear, they are also the ones who fail to become authentic which means that they are not true to themselves and to others; therefore, they do not have the courage to face reality, ignoring their responsibilities and freedom they hope for help from others, even from strangers, they have conflicted feelings about intimacy and finally they are the ones who cannot reach self realization.

As discussed in the previous chapters these four works depict the alienation of contemporary American individuals. In *The Glass Menagerie* the members of Wingfield family suffer from alienation in different ways. Having been estranged from her husband Amanda tries to care for her two children especially her fragile daughter Laura. Recognizing that her son Tom can abandon them like his father she seeks for a decent mate for Laura with the hope that they can be rescued. She does not live in reality but in her past memories which makes her fail to be authentic. Tom who is dissatisfied with his job lives in a world without destination. With this feeling of displacement he wants to go away from his family which means ignoring his detachment and responsibility to his family. His feeling of alienation never allows him to lead a normal life. At the end of the play it is seen that he chooses the way of escaping. The other member of Wingfield family who suffers from alienation is Laura. Being fond of her collection of Glass Menagerie Laura is depicted as a character who does not have any connection to the external world. Being different from the others the unicorn image represents for Laura herself in terms of isolation. Because of her physical (she is crippled) and emotional imperfection she is not capable of getting in touch with the others or integrating herself with society. Like many of the alienated women characters of Williams, Laura sees her possible salvation as marrying. In that sense she ignores her freedom and prefers to be dependent on a mate. When she is about to face someone from outside she develops a great sense of anxiety. From the background information about alienation it is possible to infer that one's alienation to himself indicates that he lacks enough self confidence to

realize oneself. In that sense the inferiority complex that Jim has diagnosed in Laura can be seen as a result of alienation process.

The Portrait of Madonna is a story of woman losing her grasp on reality. Miss Collins once was a respectable girl with a bright future but when the boy she fell in love married someone else she never recovered from that trauma. Now she lives plagued with delusions in her house that she believes the boy once she loved breaks into her house to take advantage of her. Everybody is aware of her madness but she still insists in her illusion. She closes the door to the outside and lives in her fantasy. She has convinced herself of her fantasy and pretends to be peaceful as Blanche does so. Her self deception is more clear and tragic than the characters of other works that she gets pregnant with her fantasy lovers's baby in the end. When Williams underscores her deep alienation he draws attention to her madness resulting from her need for a mate. Although this need of man seems something emotional, it is a kind of refuge which may make her protected and safe. Ignoring one's full freedom and his desire to be dependent on someone is a typical tendency of the alienated individual. That's why Blanche is interested in Mitch, Laura wants Jim to love her, Miss Collins has created a ghost lover and Mrs Stone pays for Paulo to be with her. Their attempt to find protection through sexual relationships brings them nothing but a great despair. The end of the play is similar to *Streetcar* with the kindly doctor leading away the fearful insane woman.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Williams places alienation in the most striking character Blanche DuBois. She is an outsider who cannot integrate herself into a new world because she lacks the necessary personality features to adapt. She escapes from her past and the real life that she does not want to face. She endeavours to find a comforting place in her sister's dwelling. She comes to another environment thinking it can be a new beginning however it is not so easy to make a new beginning because of the fact that the past experiences haunt her and the reality oppresses her. In the wildness of her dilemma she clings desperately to illusions of refinement; pretty clothes that soothe her ego, perfumes and jewelry, artifices of manners, forms and symbols of respectability. This inauthentic attitude means that she does not reach self realization; but instead she develops self deception. However she cannot receive happiness or



satisfaction in her fantasy world as she is often disturbed by her sister's brutal husband Stanley who stands for a man of the corrupted world. He destroys her possible salvation of marrying Mitch and never gives up attacking her. Blanche's desperate situation reaches its climax when Stanley rapes her which leads Blanche to madness; therefore, she is totally disengaged from the real world. As the play ends she is sent to a mental hospital where she would depend on the kindness of strangers. This shows that her feelings of alienation have resulted in her destruction. In her tragic life she cannot depend on the people in her close life circle but on 'strangers' goodness'.

Mrs Stone is the other one who escapes to another place to leave her unlucky experiences behind and tries to adjust to a new life. Obsessed with the loss of beauty, she hides herself behind clothes and make up like Blanche does. Unlike the other characters of the works that have been examined throughout this study Collins is wealthy which can be considered as an important weapon to fight against the rough conditions of modern life; however, it does not change the tragic fate of her. In that sense it is possible to infer that the alienation problem is the problem of the self. However hard the conditions of the corrupted modern world leads the individual to the valley of alienation, in fact it is the man itself and his personal features that results in his alienation.

Subjected to many flaws and weaknesses the alienated characters of Tennessee Williams always have a fear of an uncertain future, insecurity and humiliation. Since they ignore their essence and freedom of responsibilities, they become characters who have no choice, no voice. With their vulnerability they try to create a false world in which they can hide. They all hesitate to confront something which belongs to reality or contact with somebody that can remind them their truths. In these four works Williams reflects the desperation due to the alienation of the major characters who unconsciously like Laura, Amanda, Blanche and Miss Collins and also consciously like Tom and Mrs Stone try to run away. However there is no hope for them when they reach the final destination on their journey. These characters cannot do anything to change their drift into the end that is inevitable for each of them.

Laura, Amanda, Tom, Blanche DuBois, Lucretia Collins, and Karen Stone are infact forms of one common identity. Tennessee Williams leaves Blanche and Lucretia in an asylum and even if Karen Stone does not go crazy she is left in a deep nihilizm in the end. This deep vacancy shows that she is kept in a place which has borders by the others like in the asylum of Blanche's and Lucretia's. So wherever they go, whatever they pretend to be they would still be lost and they will always flee reality.

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