THE EMERGENCE OF A CHARACTERISTIC CONTEMPORARY FORM IN THE AMERICAN DRAMA OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

DISSERTATION

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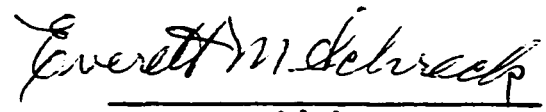

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PREFACE

When Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie opened in New York in 1945, an important phase of the history of the contemporary theatre was initiated. In the decade from 1945 to 1955, the new playwright produced a body of work which was to revolutionize the theatre in America and virtually create a new idea of form. The Glass Menagerie was followed by A Streetcar Named Desire in 1947, Summer and Smoke in 1948, The Rose Tattoo in 1950, Camino Real in 1952, and Cat On a Hot Tin Roof in 1955. Each of these plays substantiated the playwright's claim to a position of importance in American drama.

The rise of Williams is the central development in what is described as a "Renaissance" in the American theatre. The theatre of Williams is a symbol of a revitalization which characterized the theatre arts in the forties. The drama, the cinema, the dance, and even the traditional opera enjoyed, during this decade of Williams' ascendancy, a prestige unequalled in other periods of history, a prestige equalled in the mid-twentieth century only by the honor accorded the French theatre arts.

Williams is associated with the rise of a new mode of expression in the American theatre, with the development of an expressive form which is contemporary in its implications, and which is particularly American in its spirit. The playwright is important, not only for his own development of a new idea in the writing of drama, but because of his influence on the growth of a distinctively American dramaturgy, an art of directing, acting, and production. There are evidences that this American dramaturgy, the art of Williams and his interpreters, is an increasingly important influence in the theatre of the Western world, that the concept of form exemplified in the drama of Williams is producing a significant effect on the work of European dramatists. Indeed, the French theatre of the fifties seems to reflect many elements of technique in writing, production, and acting which have been identified with the American theatre, particularly with the theatre of Williams, Kazan, and Mielziner.

We are concerned with the drama of Williams as an important development in the emergence of a contemporary art of Western theatre. We believe his drama to be a significant phase in the maturation of a new genre which, at present, has two seemingly different modes of expression: the French drama of Sartre, Giraudoux, Cocteau, Anouilh, Camus, and others; and the American drama of O'Neill, Thornton Wilder, William Saroyan, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams.

We wish to identify this genre by reviewing the historical development of traditional concepts of form in the theatre, and by indicating the point of emergence of the new kind. We propose to treat the drama of Williams primarily as an historical phenomenon; to show how his idea of form came into prominence, and to indicate some of the reasons which have stimulated its growth and popularity. We propose to show that this dramatist's use of theme, myth, character, and action are not accidental, that they are specifically related to the emergence of a new purpose in the drama, to the interpretation of a new perspective. Finally, we seek to arrive at a tentative definition, a partial insight, which is one view of Williams' form, a view which may serve to stimulate further consideration of this dramatist and of the drama in our times.

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CHAPTER I

THE CHANGING FORM OF THE THEATRE

A review of criticism in Western theatre reveals four major historical cycles and four definitions of form which have dominated the development of the drama. When we say that there have been only four kinds of theatre, we obviously simplify the history of the theatre to accommodate explanation. For obviously, there have been many varieties of drama which have produced innumerable definitions of form in the Western theatre. In the opinion of historians of the theatre, only four of these varieties attained the level of maturation required of a significant form.[1] These major kinds of form in the drama are identified as Classicism, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, and Realism.

Because these cycles or revolutions in theatre are manifestations of perspectives which are associated with all aspects of man's experience, we may observe in the development of the theatre a kind of history of man. Each of these cycles in the drama corresponds to the rise, maturation, and decline of a world-view. Form in the theatre is not autonomous; it is shaped by the perspective of the artist, but it is even more dependent on the perspective of the civilization out of which it arises. Because the theatre is a changing art, the idea of form is itself dynamic. Those

modern critics who insist that the form of a contemporary dramatist must be governed by the limitations of an older definition fail to recognize the processive nature of art and the completely dynamic nature of theatre.

Aristotle, realizing that he is writing about a form at the height of its maturation, indicates that the Greek drama is the product of change, that, indeed, it is a synthetic form which developed from the coalescence of several factors.[2] Despite Aristotle's recognition of the dynamic nature of the drama, subsequent critics have been inclined to interpret the Poetics as law. In this interpretation reside many of the difficulties in the history of Western criticism.

The authority of the Aristotelian definition is based on many factors, not the least of which is the glory of Greek civilization. But more than that, the Poetics remains the most distinguished piece of criticism in the history of the theatre. It has never been equalled in its ability to create new insights. It is natural that subsequent critics should appeal to the Poetics for some basis of interpreting the drama.

The Poetics, since its introduction into Western Europe in the Middle Ages, has been the cornerstone of all the theatrical criticism. The critical passage which is

thought to embody the essence of the Aristotelian principles is given in this translation by S. H. Butcher:

> Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude; in language embellished with each kind of artistic ornament, the several kinds being found in the separate parts of the play; in the form of action not narrative; through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions.[3]

Now the difficulties with this definition as a basis of measurement for later forms in the drama, or even as a yardstick for the measurement of the drama of Aeschylus and Euripides, are documented in the history of criticism. Much of the problem in the application of this abridged statement may be traced to the fragmentary nature of the passage chosen, for the abridged definition, separated from the context of the Poetics, is misleading.

If the Poetics contains a definition, it is implicit in the context of the full discussion. Aristotle, despite the seemingly scientific nature of his inquiry, is conscious that the poetic nature of the Greek form offers resistance to analysis and discursive communication. The Critic does not actually attempt to define the Greek form, he rather seeks to illuminate certain features of dramaturgy of Sophocles. He is careful to say that the nature of expressive form of Euripides eludes the analytical technique:

> Euripides, faulty though he may be in the general management of his subject, yet is felt to be the most tragic of poets.[4]

The Poetics of Aristotle is not the statement of law; it is rather the presentation of certain comments which seek to provide an insight on the nature of an enigmatic form. The Critic actually creates a body of work which is filled with poetic ambiguity; the Poetics is analogous rather than strictly definitive, for Aristotle sees the drama as illusion, an experience which is, finally, inexplicable.

The comments of the Critic seek to illumine the drama of Sophocles, particularly to describe Oedipus. The form which Aristotle apprehends is the "apparition" of existence,[5] the total illusion of being. It is the Aristotelian form which is described by Kenneth Burke as an analogue, an irreducible paradox which symbolizes all levels of man's experience.[6] Aristotle found the Sophoclean technique capable of creating this illusion of total experience for the spectator. The Poetics describes the method through which the dramatist achieves his primary illusion of being, the Imitation of Reality.

The drama, then, is an attempt to recreate experience, in this case, the life-cycle of man, with its beginning, middle, and end. Dramatic action is patterned after the sequential movement of nature: the earth and its rhythms, the emotions and the movement of the passions, the intellect and its interplay of ideas. Within this symbolic universe,

the theatre, the Greek form seeks to explore causes, particularly to determine those causes which are at the root of an inexplicable human suffering. Because the ancient Greek took his existence to be the evidence of a universal intelligence, evil is represented in the drama of Sophocles as the result of man's transgression, his sin against cosmic law. The drama is the imitation of the movement of man through suffering, through the crises of a universal order.

Now it is doubtful that the Poetics adequately describes other forms of drama which do not share this world-view. H. D. Kitto, in a discussion of Greek drama, insists that the Aristotelian form is dependent upon a belief in universal law, and in a fixed world-order.[7] The specific details of Aristotle's theory, details describing the conditions of the hero, the nature of his transgression, and the manner of his suffering, are related specifically to the Greek world. The external structure is in the view of many critics, totally derived from the Greek world-view. George Saintsbury, writing in advance of scholars like Kitto, expresses a view roughly similar to that of the more contemporary writers:

> . . . It is impossible not to feel at every moment, that if he had the Divina Commedia and Shakespeare side by side with the Iliad and Aeschylus, his view as to both Epic and Tragedy might have been modified in the most important manner.[8]

Whatever Aristotle's intent, because of his historical position, he can only be held accountable for his definition of Greek form, particularly for the explication of the drama of Sophocles. The "laws" of drama would come from other sources, from the Neo-Classicists, the Romantics, and the Realists.

It is often surprising for students of the theatre to find that the most influential law-giver in the history of the Western drama is not Aristotle, but is the Latin critic, Horace. It is, indeed, Horace who has dominated the history of criticism. Saintsbury writes of him,

> We shall see, the authority of the great Greek was, during the three centuries which form the subject of this volume, more and more used as a mere cloak for the clever Roman.[9]

Unlike the Poetics of Aristotle, the Poetics of Horace does contain a definition of form which is specific, detailed, and discursive in nature. The variations between the Greek Critic and his Latin successor are not completely individual in nature. They reflect the essential differences between Latin and Greek cultures.

The Neo-Classic definition of Horace discerns form as external structure, the evidence of a rational interplay of essential elements. The Latin critic, a member of a cultivated, sophisticated and secular-minded society, reflects the concern of his audience with an orderly art as a form

of pleasant and intelligent entertainment. The critic admonishes his pupil:

> Do you attend to what I, and the public in my opinion, expect from you [as a dramatic writer]. If you are desirous of an applauding spectator, who will wait for [the falling of] the curtain, and till the chorus calls out "your plaudits" . . .[10]

Because Horace is concerned with the production of successful dramatists, he emphasizes those external elements which he believes to have been responsible for the success of the Greek drama of Euripides. He becomes the first major critic to commend the imitation of older forms over the creation of new modes of expression.

Nietzsche was later to observe that the Latin definition was not so much the imitation of the Greek drama as it was the imitation of the Platonic dialogues with their rational spirit and their intellectual analysis of the problems of man.[11] Horace's own commendation of the Socratic method appears to support this contention.

> To have good sense, is the first principle and fountain of writing well. The Socratic papers will direct you in the choice of your subjects; and words will spontaneously accompany the subject when it is well conceived.[12]

Form in the Neo-Classic definition is external in nature. The inner form, the illusion of existence which we observed in the Sophoclean drama, is rigidly subordinated to an outer demonstration of reason. Form for Horace is the

appearance of unity, a congruity of parts which is achieved by the application of reason. Now it is important to indicate that there are two concepts of unity, two principles of organicism, already apparent in the history of criticism. Aristotle commended a unity based on man's harmonious existence in the universe. Horace seeks an organicism which is evident to the reason of man. Horace begins his Poetics by discussing the principle of this organicism:

> If a painter should wish to unite a horse's neck to a human head, and spread a variety of plumage over limbs [of different animals] taken from every part [of nature], so that what is a beautiful woman in the upper part terminates in a ugly fish below--could you, my friends, refrain from laughter, were you admitted to such a sight? Believe, ye Pisos, the book will be perfectly like such a picture, the ideas of which, like a sick man's dreams, are all vain and fictitious: so that neither head nor foot can correspond to any one form. "Poets and painters [you will say] have ever had equal authority for attempting anything." We are conscious of this, and this privilege we demand and allow in turn: but not to such a degree that the tame should associate with the savage; nor that serpents should be coupled with birds, lambs with tigers.[13]

The difference between these two ideas cannot be overestimated. The emphasis in the Horatian definition, as in the Latin form of Seneca, has passed from a universe ordered by a supreme intelligence to a universe which can be ordered by man. The Neo-Classic definition must, therefore, regard form as the imitation of human intelligence, an intelligence which is capable of ordering its world.

The enormous vitality of this definition, its recurrence in French seventeenth century drama, its domination of the English theatre, and its return to a position of influence in modern drama is based on its relationship to the Humanistic tradition, a constant value in Western thought. The Neo-Classic idea remains alive because it is an attractive and comforting idea for civilized man. Nietzsche was to write of this impulse that it seemed to reduce the actual terrors of existence to the size of man's intelligence.[14] In modern criticism, Jacques Barzun attributes the persistent life of this form to the fact that it provides a flattering view of man, and his chief invention, society:

> Classic man is a kind of a Centaur--man above and horse beneath. Now, one of the features of Classical Reason is that it can be put into words and become common property. Hence a society can be built, embodying Reason, and helping each individual to drive his equipage on the straight road of duty and decency.[15]

The temporary decline of the Neo-Classic impulse in modern times was precipitated by the advent of the Romantic Revolution, a revolution which began much earlier than the nineteenth century in the drama. The Romantic Revolution in the drama begins in the seventeenth century, with the revolt of Corneille and Shakespeare against the domination of the Neo-Classic form. Although the Romantic practice was established in the drama of Corneille, Shakespeare, and

Lope de Vega, theorists were not to evolve the definition until two centuries later. The Romantic definition emerged at that time for quite another kind of reason. Primarily, it was the outgrowth of explorations in thought. Because of the impact of new philosophical perspectives in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, dramatists and theorists were forced to reconsider the affirmations of the Neo-Classicist consciousness, particularly the idea of man as a reasoning and reasonable being. The Romantic definition in the theatre emanated from a German movement which eventually culminated in the dramatic theories of Nietzsche.

The Romantic affirmation of Nietzsche was a denial, not of the validity, but of the adequacy of the Neo-Classic image of man and his universe. This denial has always been implicit in the drama, for the poetic apprehension must be concerned with the mysteries in existence, with the riddle of life itself. The Romantic bias, a perspective which persisted through the Neo-Classicist era in Europe, in the drama of Corneille, Lope de Vega, and Shakespeare, attempted to restore the whole image of man, to return the non-discursive functions of the drama to the theatre. The Romantic definition hoped to recapture certain crucial elements of the Greek and Shakespearean forms, especially to restore those internal elements related to the consciousness of man, to his sense of being in the world.

But despite the efforts of the Romantics to re-create these forms, the new perception discerned contours which were distinctive, contours related to the beginning of the modern world and to the juncture of cultures in that world. The Romantic definition was forced to embrace other traditions in art: Neo-Classic, Christian, and European pagan influences, colored by the exotic suggestion of Oriental ideas and forms.

Since the Romantic definition could not actually reconcile the several sources of its art into a congruent law, the Romantic playwright--and critic--were forced to address themselves to a new faculty in the spectator. Neither the catharsis of the Greek drama nor the sublimity of the Neo-Classicists had been the outgrowth of ambiguity of ideas, morality, or purpose. The Romantics, faced with contradictions growing out of the conflict of traditions, addressed themselves to the imagination, a faculty which could suspend judgment and thereby establish new concepts of the relationship between reason and feeling. We may borrow Nietzsche's term, "the aesthetic spectator," to identify the Romantic, located between the conflicting authorities of Greek, Christian, and pagan civilizations. The Romantic could not recreate the Greek form. He did succeed, in definition and in form, in mirroring the complexities of the modern world with its growing conflicts and moral ambiguities.

The Romantic form sought to re-create the "apparition" of a world characterized by change, by a stream of time and of events. To compensate for this seeming instability in the universe, and for the obvious decline of the authority of reason, the Romantic critics imposed a new principle of unity in the drama. Where the Greek drama had been governed by Cosmic law, and the Neo-Classic drama had extolled reason, the Romantics imposed, as a controlling factor in destiny, volition, the exercise of individual will.

We observe that the Romantic definition retains a sense of organicism. This time criticism requires in its definition an aesthetic unity, which is achieved through the ordering of experience around certain themes which are lyric in nature. The Romantic drama is a progression; it is not the metaphysical progression of the Greek drama, or the rational progression of the Neo-Classic form. It is an emotional progression, a thematic variation on love, power, death, hate, and religion. The drama is the imposition of a subjective order upon the stream of experience. Coleridge writes of the requirements of Romantic drama:

> But let us now consider what the drama should be. And first, it is not a copy, but an imitation of nature. This is the universal principle of the fine arts. . . . Suffice it that one great principle is common to all the fine arts, a principle which probably is the condition of all consciousness, without which we should feel and imagine only by discontinuous moments, and be plants or brute animals instead of men;--I mean that ever-varying balance, or balancing, of images, notions

> or feelings, conceived as in opposition to each other;--in short, the perception of identity and contrariety; the least degree of which constitutes likeness, the greatest absolute difference; but the infinite gradations between these two form all the play and all the interest of our intellectual and moral being, till it leads us to a feeling and a object more awful than it seems to me compatible with even the present subject to utter aloud, though I am most desirous to suggest it. For there alone are all things at once different and the same; there alone, as the principle of all things, does distinction exist unaided by division; there are will and reason, succession of time and moving eternity, infinite change and ineffable rest.[16]

The Romantic idea is the most complicated and the least organic of the three concepts of form which we have seen. Already we can anticipate the beginning of the contemporary sensibility with its consciousness of conflict, incongruity, and change. In his famous preface to Cromwell, Hugo, taking a negative point of departure from Horace's Poetics, reflects a consciousness of the external world which is often cited as an early example of the Existentialist perception of the Absurd.

> Behold, then, a new religion, a new society; upon this twofold foundation there must inevitably spring up a new poetry. Previously . . . following therein the course pursued by the ancient polytheism and philosophy, the purely epic muse of the ancients had studied nature in only a single aspect, casting aside without pity almost everything in art which, in the world subjected to its imitation, had not relation to a certain type of beauty. A type which was magnificent at first, but, as always happens with everything systematic, became in later times false, trivial and conventional. Christianity leads poetry to the truth. Like it, the modern muse will see things in a higher and broader light. It will

> realize that everything in creation is not humanely beautiful, that the ugly exists beside the beautiful, the unshapely beside the graceful, the grotesque on the reverse of the sublime, evil with good, darkness with light. . . . It will set about doing as nature does, mingling in its creations--but without confounding them--darkness and light, the grotesque and the sublime; in other words, the body and the soul, the beast and the intellect; for the starting point of religion is always the starting-point of poetry. All things are connected.[17]

The decline of the Romantic perception was made inevitable by the advent of the machine age and by the everwhelming influence of a new and promising era, the Scientific Age. The fourth cycle, Realism, represented the appearance of Science in the theatre. Once again, the drama, a receptor-art, always immediately sensitive to changes in the world which it imitates, became the mirror of a new reality. Realism sought to represent experience in the language of the scientists and the social-scientists. Once again, the spirit of rational inquiry returned to the drama, for the Realistic form proposed to construct plays which should conform to the new "Socratism" of the scientific method. Realism sought to displace poetry, and to return logic to the theatre. Alexandre Dumas, fils, wrote of this scientific theatre in 1868, in the waning years of Romanticism:

> The first of these endowments [of the playwright], the most indispensable, the one that dominates and commands, is a logic--which includes good sense and clearness. The truth may be absolute or relative, according to the importance of the subject and the milieu. But the logic must be implacable from beginning to end; it must never lose sight of this

> end, while developing the idea and the action. The dramatist must unflaggingly place before the spectator that part of the being or thing for or against which he aims to draw a conclusion. Then comes the science of contrasts; that is to say, the blacks, the shadows, the balancing, the totality of effect, harmony; then conciseness and tempo, which prevent the listener from being distracted or reflecting, or taking a momentary breath, to discuss in his own mind with the author; the knowledge of the fore-ground and background, keeping the figure which ought to stand out in the high-light from falling into the shadow, and those which belong in the middle distance from assuming a position of too great prominence; and then the mathematical precision, inexorable, fatal, which multiplies scene by scene, event by event, act by act, up to the denouement, which must be the sum-total, the Q.E.D.;. . .[18]

The realistic definition differs from the concept of the Neo-Classicists in a basic fashion. It is not concerned with structure and design for purposes of contemplation, reflection, or aesthetic delight. The realistic definition is, rather, a utilitarian concept. It is concerned with the application of scientific principles, based on empirical evidence, to the solution of the problems of man. George Bernard Shaw, in his preface to Mrs. Warren's Profession, explains the grounding of the realistic form in a scientific approach to the problem of society:

> In trying to produce the sensuous effects of opera, the fashionable drama has become so flaccid in its sentimentality, and the intellect of its frequenters so atrophied by disuse, that the re-introduction of problem, with its remorseless logic and iron framework of fact, inevitably produces at first and overwhelming impression of coldness and inhuman rationalism. . . . Only in

> the problem play is there any real drama, because drama is no mere setting up of the camera to nature; it is the presentation in parable of the conflict between Man's will and his environment: in a word, of problem.[19]

The Realists propose to examine a thesis against the background of the human situation. They hope to solve the problems of society by utilizing the scientific method, and by seeking to introduce as evidence, psychological, sociological, political, and biological data.

One of the major theorists of the social play in America is John Howard Lawson. Lawson, in his study of form in his Theory and Technique of Playwriting postulates a "dynamics of realistic construction." The elements of his technique include: (a) the problem, (b) a schematization or framework, (c) a body of documented facts, (d) a system of causes, and (e) a group of documented characterizations.[20] The Realistic form is defined by theorists like Lawson as a form which is logical, concrete, and expository in nature.

> But these factors must be grounded in social reality, as dramatized in the framework of the action. Action cannot be motivated by "abstract" sentiments such as pride...This (weakness of structure) is due to the failure to analyze the conscious wills of the characters to build a system of causes which underlies the acts of will.[20]

An examination of the masterpieces in the genre, the work of Chekhov, Strindberg, Shaw, and Ibsen, reveals that these dramatists evidence a serious disagreement with the stated requirements of the form. Rosmersholm, The Master

Builder, Peer Gynt, The Cherry Orchard, The Wild Duck, Saint Joan, The Father, and Miss Julie are only superficially acceptable as Realistic plays. Indeed, the external Realism barely masks the metaphysical universe in which these plays have their primary existence. These dramas are, at the first level of their creation, the concretion of a mythic apprehension of the universe. They are filled with the signs of the non-discursive: with symbol, myth, ritual, and poetic statement.

The movement of these dramatists away from Realism to poetic drama in the late years of the nineteenth century reflected the dramatists's realization that the Realistic formula had proved inadequate as a design for a drama. For there existed a major contradiction between the idea of theatre and the idea of Science as the Realists interpreted it. The major dramatists, such as Strindberg, resolved this contradiction by a kind of schematization in which they utilized the language of the Realists as signs, poetic symbols, which could suggest a kind of density not apparent in the truly Realistic form of writers like Brieux and Becque. Strindberg, for this reason, employs Darwinism as a kind of Greek Fate. Later dramatists like O'Neill used Freudian psychology as poetic symbology. Still other dramatists such as Hauptmann were to use Marxian class conflict as a symbol of an essentially poetic struggle to find meaning in existence.

Many factors led to the collapse of Realism in the theatre. Historians of the theatre symbolize these revolutionary forces in the spectre of World War I. The "Great War" marked the end of a belief in the perfectibility of society, the virtue of intelligence, or the essential goodness of man, ideas which had to varying degrees, characterized the values of Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, and Realism. The disillusion of the artist in the twentieth century made the basic pre-suppositions of the Realistic form untenable as a world-view. The optimism of the Realistic form was replaced, especially in Europe, by a profound pessimism about society, about man, and about the very nature of existence itself. These lines spoken by the Tempter in T. S. Eliot's Murder in the Cathedral reflect the world-view of artists in the years which followed World War I.

> Man's life is a cheat and a disappointment;
> All things are unreal,
> Unreal or disappointing;
> The Catherine Wheel, the pantomine cat,
> The prizes given at the children's party,
> The prize awarded for the English Essay
> The scholar's degree, the statesman's decoration.
> All things become less real, man passes
> From unreality to unreality.
> This man is obstinate, blind, intent
> On self-destruction,
> Passing from deception to deception,
> From grandeur to grandeur to final illusion,
> Lost in the wonder of his own greatness
> The enemy of society, enemy of himself.[22]

The time had clearly arrived for the emergence of a new form.

II

The new form arose out the same set of conditions which had always necessitated new modes of expression, a change in perspective. The dramatist of the early twentieth century was unable to accommodate his perception of the universe to any single tradition of thought and expression which had preceded his era. The new theatre emerged from a comprehensive revolution in our times, a revolution which is reflected in the total change in the intellectual climate of the Western world, a change exemplified in the ideas of Freud, Einstein, Bergson, and Marx.

An equally significant change was evident in the design of human history in the twentieth century, in the wars, political up-heavals, and spiritual decay which have characterized this epoch. In every phase of expression new forms developed to reflect the concern of the artist with the terrifying "apparition" of the modern world. These new forms reflect certain common elements. Perhaps the most persistent theme which underlies the development of new forms in the arts of the twentieth century is one which Herbert Read sees as emanating from Hegel.[23]

The Heglian sensibility sees the world of the twentieth century as a universe characterized by force: energy, movement, tension, and antagonism. All of the thought which has become so important in our time reflects this perception. Einstein

described physical energy; Bergson talked of creative energy; Freud searched to find a constructive use for psychic energy; Marx sought to exploit political energy. The modern mind of the twentieth century is a mind conscious of process, of masses in a dynamic state.

All of the early efforts to find new theatrical forms in the early years of the twentieth century were based on this Hegelian perspective. The Expressionists and the Surrealists were particularly vocal in the admission of their debt to the German philosopher. Artists who seem more remote from philosophizing, artists such as the film director Sergei Eisenstein, declared that all of the new forms found their concept of reality in the Hegelian tradition.

It is perhaps natural that German Expressionism should seek to represent the contemporary dilemma as an intellectual crisis, a tension between warring ideas. For Expressionism, according to Huntly Carter, grew out of German Idealism. Carter, writing of the German drama, described the intent of the new form in this manner:

> To them it was man himself that mattered, not society. Man was to take the centre of the stage, and he was to be the protagonist in a form of drama which should link together all of the experiences emerging from and merging in him. . . . To them, the stage was no longer a stage, but the world--a world of chaotic events whence truth must somehow be extracted, and human beings drawn to be stripped bare of hypocisy and pretence. Man was no longer reflected in the phenomenal world, but the phenomenal world was man himself. . . .[24]

In this world of ideas, the Expressionists sought a drama which would return the individual to a position of responsibility in the world. The Expressionists conceived of drama as an internal conflict of intellectual and spiritual dimensions. The dramatist sought to create a consciousness, an Ego which was itself the ground of conflict, the living objectification of tensions between good and evil, religion and irreligion, reason and unreason, humanity and bestiality.

No significant theorists arose to interpret the Expressionistic form in the theatre, because these dramatists wished to retain the advantages of experimentation. Indeed, the dramatists wished to escape definition so that they might continue to find new and radical aspects of method. The Expressionistic phase of the Contemporary form is the methodological phase of development. It represented a change in intent. It involved the theatre in new ideas; it made the new drama conscious of a new concept of reality, the reality of process, change, energy, becoming, a process evident in all phases of existence.

The Expressionistic era marked the return of a drama which concerned itself with man and his position in the universe. The apprehension of the Expressionists indicated clear parallels to the earlier apprehension of the Greek drama. The dramatists sought to find explication for the spectre of suffering in the modern world. The Expressionists

sought answers. They believed that such answers existed, but they found none. Expressionism remained an exploratory drama, the imitation of search, of quest, of man's efforts to find an answer to the ascendancy of evil in his world.

Expressionism, according to some historians of the theatre, died in the second decade of the century, but its influence upon the contemporary arts, especially upon the contemporary art of the theatre, remains significant. Tennessee Williams, like other artists of the contemporary species, admits his basic indebtedness to the experimental techniques of this historical movement: Williams identifies himself as an Expressionist in the preface to The Glass Menagerie.

> Expressionism and all other unconventional techniques in drama have only one valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth. When a play employs unconventional techniques, it is not, or certainly shouldn't be, trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality, or interpreting experience, but is actually or should be attempting to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are.
>
> The straight realistic play with its genuine frigidaire and authentic ice-cubes, its characters that speak exactly as the audience speaks, corresponds to the academic landscape and has the same virtue of a photographic likeness. Everyone should know nowadays the unimportance of the photographic in art: that 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.

> These remarks are not meant as a preface to a particular play. They have to do with a conception of a new, plastic theatre which must take the place of the exhausted theatre of realistic conventions if the theatre is to resume vitality as a part of our culture.[25]

O'Neill had written in the twenties of his utilization of this technique:

> Yet it is only by means of some form of "super-naturalism" that we may express in the theatre what we comprehend intuitively of that self-obsession which is the particular discount we moderns have to pay for the loan of life. The old "naturalism"--or "realism," if you prefer, . . . no longer applies. It represents our fathers' daring aspirations toward self-recognition by holding the family kodak up to ill nature. But to us their old audacity is blague. We have taken too many snap-shots of each other in every graceless position. We have endured too much from the banality of surfaces.[26]

Arthur Miller describes of his mater work, Death of a Salesman:

> I had willingly employed expressionism but always to create a subjective truth, and this play, which was so manifestly "written," seemed as though nobody had written it at all but that it had simply "happened." I had always been attracted and repelled by the brilliance of German expressionism after World War I, and one aim in Salesman was to employ its quite marvellous shorthand for humane, "felt" characterizations rather than for purposes of demonstration for which the Germans had used it.[27]

The Expressionists bequeathed certain characteristics to the contemporary dramatists who were to follow them. Perhaps the most important element of this perception is that which involves the perception of Reality. The contemporary dramatists, are heirs to the Expressionistic use of the

Hegelian dialectic which passed directly into the contemporary drama from the Surrealists. The contemporary dramatists, like their predecessors, interpret dramatic action in terms of tensions, antagonisms, and lines of force. More importantly, the Expressionists transferred to the younger dramatists their concept of the drama as exploration, as quest, the search for synthesis in thought, in art, and in life itself.

The Contemporaries, as we shall see, share the same major objectives as do their Expressionistic predecessors, but they have virtually abandoned the belief that intellectual clarity can solve the fundamental problem of man. The Contemporary attitude and its essential progression towards a more comprehensive pessimism is apparent in this statement from Jean-Paul Sartre:

> There has been a great deal of discussion in France about "a return to tragedy," about the "rebirth of the philosophic play." The two labels are confusing and they should be rejected. Tragedy is, for us, an historic phenomenon which flourished between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries; we have no desire to begin that over again. Nor are we anxious to produce philosophic plays, if by that is meant works deliberately intended to set forth on the stage the philosophy of Marx, Saint Thomas or existentialism. Nevertheless, there is some truth attached to these two labels: in the first place, it is a fact that we are less concerned with making innovations than with returning to tradition; it is likewise true that the problems we wish to deal with in the theatre are very different from those we habitually dealt with before 1940.[28]

The Contemporaries, to a greater degree than their predecessors, reject the validity of any single system of thought in favor of a consideration of all intellectual alternatives,

for the purpose of quest, search, for the Jungian "Odyssey" of modern man: Sartre writes of this rejection of systematization:

> For them [playwrights] man is not to be defined as a "reasoning animal," or a "social" one, but as a free being, entirely indeterminate, who must choose his own being when confronted with certain necessities, such as being already committed in a world full of both threatening and favorable factors among other men who have made their choices before him, who have decided in advance the meaning of those factors. He is faced with the necessity of having to work and die, of being hurled into a life already complete which yet is his own enterprise and in which he can never have a second chance; where he must play his cards and take risks no matter what the cost. That is why we feel the urge to put on the stage certain situations which throw light on the main aspects of the condition of man and to have the spectator participate in the free choice which man makes in these situations.[29]

We believe the Contemporary drama to represent a distinct development which may be distinguished from the earlier methodological phase of Historical Expressionism. Since the decline of the earlier movement, two generations of playwrights have appeared Each of these successive currents of change have intensified certain fundamental characteristics of a new genre, a fifth kind which is neither Classical, Neo-Classical, Romantic, or Realistic, a kind which now can be distinguished from Historical Expressionism in its maturation. We believe that we are witnessing the rise of a fifth form, the synthesis of a fifth form which is <u>significant</u> in the history of the theatre. This theatre has two distinct manifestations which show indications of a gradual coalescence

in the increasing number of correspondences which appear throughout the genre in theme, concept of action, use of character, and construction of myth.

The new drama is anti-traditional in form. It is specifically anti-Aristotelian in the sense of its rejection of those perspectives which produced the Aristotelian form. The intent of the drama is expressed in these lines from Eugène Ionesco, one of the younger dramatists of the contemporary European group:

> I aspire to another logic and another psychology, I shall bring from the contradiction in the non-contradiction, to the non-contradiction in that which common sense judges to contradict. . . . We abandon the principles of identity and of unity of characters, in favor of movement, of a dynamic psychology. . . .
>
> . . . . . .
>
> As for action and causality, we will not speak of it. We must ignore it totally, at least in its old forms, too heavy, too gross, too evident, false, as is all which is evident. No more drama or tragedy; the tragic has become comic, the comic is tragic, and life becomes gay . . . life becomes gay.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> We are not ourselves. . . . Personality does not exist. There are only in us forces of contradiction and non-contradiction. . . .[30]

In the succeeding phases of this discussion, we propose to verify the evidences of a fifth definition in the drama of Tennessee Williams. We are concerned with the idea of form in the major work of this playwright, with his intent in the drama, and with the techniques through which this new idea is being realized.

CHAPTER II

WILLIAMS AND THE IDEA OF FORM

> And so it was I entered the broken world
> To trace the visionary company of love, its voice
> An instant in the wind (I know not whither hurled)
> But not for long to hold each desperate choice.[1]

This quotation from Hart Crane's The Broken Tower is the epigraph which Tennessee Williams uses to introduce the published version of the play which many critics regard as his major work, A Streetcar Named Desire. In his selection of these lines, the playwright provides an appropriate point of departure for this discussion of his idea of theatre. For these lines from Crane's poem embody a kind of definition of Williams' expressive form. The drama of Williams is the re-creation of poetic vision, the concretion of a "moment of intuition" in the complex language of his "plastic theatre." Williams describes his intent in the drama in these lines from the preface to Camino Real:

> My desire was to give these audiences my own sense of something wild and unrestricted that ran like water in the mountains, or clouds changing shape in a gale, or the continually dissolving and transforming images of a dream.[2]

In "Person to Person," an essay which introduces the published version of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Williams confirms our belief

that the "poetic vision" is the basic concept from which his idea of form develops:

> Of course it is a pity that so much of all creative work is so closely related to the personality of the one who does it.
>
> It is sad and embarrassing and unattractive that those emotions that stir him enough to demand expression and to charge that expression with some measure of light and power, are nearly all rooted, however changed in their surface, in the particular and sometimes peculiar concerns of the artist himself, that special world, the passions and images of it that each of us weaves about him from birth to death, a web of monstrous complexity, spun forth at a speed that is incalcuable to a length beyond measure, from the spider mouth of his own perceptions.[3]

Now we recognize that this theory of form as poetic revelation is essentially Romantic. The dramatist seeks to imitate his own consciousness, to reconstruct his vision of that Reality which is apprehensible only to the poet. Throughout his drama, Williams claims the Romantic perogative: the right of the artist, indeed, the duty of the artist, to affirm the truth of his personal perception:

> . . . I want you to observe what I do for your possible pleasure and to give you knowledge of things that I feel I may know better than you, because my world is different from yours. . . .[4]

Williams finds substantial authority for his perspective in the writings of Romantic theorists, especially in the writings of those Romantics and post-Romantics who affirm the theory of Intuition. Williams' concept of art as the revelation of poetic Reality, the "moment of insight," is supported

by Henri Bergson. In his famous essay, Laughter, Bergson had this to say:

> What is the object of art? Could reality come into direct contact with sense and consciousness, could we enter into immediate communion with things and ourselves, probably art would be useless, or rather we should all be artists. . . . So art, whether it be painting or sculpture, poetry or music, has no other object than to brush aside the utilitarian symbols, the conventionally and socially accepted generalities, in short, everything that veils reality from us, in order to bring us face to face with reality itself.[5]

> Hence it follows that art always aims at what is individual. What the artist fixes on his canvas is something he has seen at a certain spot, on a certain day, at a certain hour, with a colouring that will never be seen again. What the poet sings of is a certain mood which was his, and his alone, and which will never return. What the dramatist unfolds before us is the life-history of a soul, a living tissue of feeling and events--something, in short, which has once happened and can never be repeated. We may, indeed, give general names to these feelings, but they cannot be the same thing in another soul. They are individualised. Thereby and thereby only do they belong to art; . . .[6]

Because of his important tie with the Romantic idea of form, many critics are inclined to regard Williams as a Romantic, or at least to identify him as a dramatist in a hybrid form, a fusion of Naturalism and Romanticism. Certainly the idea of form as vision links this playwright with the whole of the Romantic tradition, not only with the theatre of Nietzsche and Wagner, but also with the post--Romantic theatre of the Symbolists.[7] There are, however,

important differences between Williams and the Romantics, as well as between Williams and the Realist-Naturalists. The most crucial of these divergences relates to the playwright's Contemporary concept of Reality.

II

Williams' commitment to a poetic art, a drama of vision, prohibits his serious consideration as a Realist. There is more justification for his consideration as a Romantic. For both the Romantic form, and the Contemporary form of Williams are derived from a Reality which is transmitted through the poetic consciousness. The Romantic form is, however, dual in its basic concern; despite its emphasis on the subjective, on the perception of the individual artist, the Romantic form seeks to discern a Universal. What the artist perceives, ideally, is Nature. The Romantic sensibility is conscious of a Nature which is whole, unified, and Real. The function of the artist is to bring this existent Reality into the view of man. Hugo wrote of an art which re-created Nature:

> Art turns the leaves of the ages, of nature, studies chronicles, strives to reproduce actual facts (especially in respect to manners and peculiarities, which are much less exposed to doubt and contradition than are concrete facts), restores what chroniclers have lopped off, harmonizes what they have collected, divines and

> supplies their omissions, fills their gaps with imaginary scenes which have the color of the time, groups which they have left scattered about, sets in motion anew the threads of Providence which work the human marionettes, clothes the whole with a form at once poetical and natural, and imparts to it that vitality of truth and brilliancy which gives birth to illusion, that prestige of reality which arouses the enthusiasm of the spectator, and of the poet first of all, for the poet is sincere. Thus the aim of art is almost divine: to bring to life again as if it is writing history, to create as if it is writing poetry.[8]

The contemporary perception of Williams and others sees quite a different Reality. If it envisions a Nature, it is de-realized, a universe in fragments. The "mirror" which the Romantics held up to Reality is a shattered glass; it reflects the "broken world" of Crane's description. Williams, in one of his short stories, describes this fragmented Reality:

> The sins of the world are really only its partialities, its incompletions...A wall that has been omitted from a house because the stones were exhausted . . . these incompletions are usually covered up or glossed over by some kind of make-shift arrangements. The nature of man is full of such make-shift arrangements, devised by himself to cover his incompletions. He feels himself to be like a missing wall or a room left unfurnished.[9]

Williams understands his partial universe to be the concretion of his personal vision, rather than the evidence of universal Truth. In the twentieth century, however, it is doubtful that any artist can, without presumption, lay claim to universality. The researches of science and psychology would indicate that the artist must ordinarly

content himself with the knowledge that art is most often the concretion of a partial truth, a truth which Aesthetician Christopher Caudwell describes in Illusion and Reality as a perception:

> The truth is an organized product of man's struggle with Nature. As that struggle accumulates capital (technique and knowledge) and grows in complexity, so the truth which is the reflection of reality blossoms in man's head. Only a partial aspect of that truth, at any time can be in any one man's head. Distorted, partial and limited, in one head, this perception of reality yet acquires the power of truth, of science, in the heads of all living men, because it is organized by the conditions of society which themselves spring from the necessities of economic production. Thus at any time truth is the special complex formed by the partial reflections of reality in all living men's heads. . . .[10]

Caudwell describes a truth in process, in the state of becoming:

> There is no absolute truth, but there is a limit to which the truth of society at any moment continually aims. This limit of absolute truth is the Universe itself. When man shall have completely interpentrated with Nature. . . . Yet even this theoretical limit supposes both a Universe that stands still and a truth which is outside the Universe. Truth, however, is a part of the Universe. Yet truth is generated by man's struggle with the rest of reality, and hence, with each stage of the struggle, new reality is generated and the world made more complex. As a result, reality itself is enriched, and the goal-post of "absolute truth" removed a stage further by that very increase in the complex of reality.[11]

Caudwell bases his argument in regard to the partiality of all perception on the writings of Bergson and Freud. According to these theorists, the contemporary artist must

recognize that he is a part of the Reality of process, and that as such, he is subject to the apprehension of a relative truth. Caudwell describes the truth which Williams realizes in his drama:

> In each man "truth" takes the form of perception --what he seizes of reality with his senses--and memory--what is active at any moment of former perception, affecting his present perception. . . .[12]

Williams writes in the preface to The Rose Tattoo of his fragmentary truth:

> Truth is fragmentary, at best: we love and betray each other not quite in the same breath but in two breaths that occur in fairly close sequence. . . . And this is the very truth that drama wishes to bring.[13]

This Contemporary view of Reality demands an adjustment in the function of art. For Tennessee Williams, the primary function of the art of the theatre is not to imitate Reality, but to provide man an escape from it.

Williams is a part of what is described as the contemporary "flight from Reality," a flight partially symbolized in the contemporary arts by the destruction of time. The dramatist writes on the problem of escape from time in the preface to The Rose Tattoo:

> The great and only possible dignity of man lies in his power deliberately to choose certain moral values by which to live as steadfastly as if he, too, like a character in a play, were immured against the corrupting rush of time.[14]

> It is this continual rush of time, so violent that it appears to be screaming that deprives our lives of so much dignity and meaning, and it is, perhaps more than anything else, the arrest of time which has taken place in the completed work of art that gives to certain plays their feeling of depth and significance. . . . Contemplation is something that exists outside of time, and so does the tragic sense. . . . If the world of a play did not offer us this occasion to view its characters under that special condition of a world without time, then, indeed, the characters and occurrences of drama would become equally pointless, equally trivial, as corresponding meetings and happenings in life. . . .[15]

The dramatist asserts that his objective is to fix man's true value in a moment outside of time.

> In a play, time is arrested in the sense of being confined. By a sort of legerdemain, events are made to remain events, rather than being reduced so quickly to mere occurrences. The audience can sit back in a comforting dusk to watch a world which is flooded with light and which emotion and action have a dimension and dignity that they would likewise have in real existence, if only the shattering intrusion of time could be locked out.[16]

Williams, like other Contemporary artists, is impressed with the corrosive and destructive influence of process in the twentieth century. Reality is for these newer writers, as for certain of their predecessors in all ages, the apparition of decay, of diminution, and of destruction by time and in time. Nature for Williams is not benign. It is a malign process from which man must find escape.

Williams is, in most of his drama, a Surrealist; that is, he is committed to the creation of an art which must transcend the chaos and destruction of Reality. Williams,

the Anti-Realist, seeks values which are not apparent in Nature, which transcend Reality. For Williams, man's salvation exists in that reflection which is possible in a darkened theatre where the spectator may penetrate the World as Image.

> Contemplation is something that exists outside of time, and so is the tragic sense. Even in the actual world of commerce, there exists in some persons a sensibility to the unfortunate situations of others, a capacity for concern and compassion. . . . If the world of a play did not offer us this occasion to view its characters under that special condition of a world without time, then, indeed. the characters and occurrences of the drama would become equally pointless, equally trivial, as corresponding meetings and happenings in life.[17]

A new relationship exists between the Artist, Reality and the Symbol. In the "broken world" of which Williams writes, the poet is, in a Nitezschean sense, the creator, not only of art, but of the world--a synthetic world which is more real than the world of nature. Williams writes of this world in the preface to Camino Real:

> It is amazing and frightening how completely one's whole being becomes absorbed in the making of a play. It is almost as if you were frantically constructing another world while the one you live in dissolves beneath your feet. . . .
>
> More than any other work that I have done, this play has seemed to me like the construction of another world, a separate existence. Of course, it is nothing more nor less than my conception of the time and world that I live in, and its people are mostly archetypes of certain basic attitudes and qualities with those mutations that would occur if they had been continued along the road to this hypothetical terminal point in it.[18]

III

The early work of Williams, especially The Glass Menagerie and those short plays which preceded it, plays like The Purification, This Property is Condemned, and Auto-Da-Fé, are all representatives of what the author is later to identify as expressions of "Personal Lyricism."[19] These plays seem to represent the technique of Williams at an early stage of its development, a stage which is fundamentally lyric. All of these dramas represent the effort of the dramatist to translate his moment of "intuition" into the language of theatre. Because they are not complicated by other features which characterize the later work of the playwright, these early plays serve as excellent examples for a discussion of Williams' basic technique, especially his concept of external form.

Williams' early form is almost entirely poetic. These first plays are experiments with several kinds of theatre poetry, with the Surrealist drama of Strindberg, Apollonaire, and Cocteau; with the Chekhovian drama of portrait; and with the symbolist drama of Yeats and Lorca. Williams seeks in each of these forms to find techniques for the transposition of images to the theatre. The Last of My Solid Gold Watches is a kind of Chekhovian image; Auto-Da-Fé and This Property is Condemned are Surrealistic portraits, and The Purification is a kind of Symbolist poem for theatre.

Each play is the concretion of an image, a single figure which is the symbol of the playwright's vision. Because Williams' early concept of image demanded that he transpose his vision in pre-verbal symbols, the early theatre is an Irrational theatre, committed to a truth which escapes discursive language. Williams incorporates into the body of The Purification, one of the earliest of these plays of image, much of his early belief about the nature of form:

These lines are spoken in the drama by a poet-figure, one of many who appear throughout Williams' drama as actors, musicians, and poets. The Purification is a vision which emanates from the Son. Into the speeches of the character, Williams incorporates his desire for an Irrational theatre, the theatre of Nietzsche's Dionysos.

> Ask it if him, the player--
> for truth is sometimes alluded to in music
> But words are too loosely woven to catch it in.
>
> I know that truth
> Evades the certain statement
> but gradually and obliquely filters through
> the mind's unfettering in sleep and dream.
> The stammered cry gives more of truth than the hand
> could put on passionless paper.
>
> A bird can be snared as it rises
> or torn to earth by the falcon.
> His son which is the truth,
> is not to be captured forever.[20]

In this passage from the play, the basically irrational nature of the author's dramatic purpose is indicated:

Judge:
I ask you first
to speak concerning your daughter--
You, the mother,
what do you have to say?

Father: She cannot speak.

Williams seeks to return to the theatre the language of vision:

Judge: The boy would speak?

Mother: (quickly) He is not able to speak!

Judge:
I think he can speak,
but in the language of vision.
Rasalio, would you
speak concerning your sister?[21]

The Purification is a drama of vision, a vision which is both internal and external to the play. The playwright structures his own image of the girl, Elena, a vision which he attributes also to the Son within the play, and to some extent, to a second Poet-figure, the musician. The play is the "apparition" of super-imposed images which are created in the total theatrical instrument: acting, music, dance, design and language.

IV

It is evident, especially in these early plays, that Williams is creating a drama which is the revelation of a vision through the successive presentation of component images. The structure of the play is essentially the structure of a poem. The playwright seeks to arrest the attention of the spectator through his use of design, movement, color, light, harmony, and dissonance. The play form has substituted an aesthetic structure for a narrative structure. This aesthetic structure dominates the drama of Williams.

This Property is Condemned, a short play, is an excellent example of Williams' design. This play is the presentation of a portrait of the grotesque doll-child, Willie. This vignette has no narrative line, nor does it seek to create anything further than a portrait of this figure. The play does not present a thesis; it does not develop; it simply exists. Williams describes the entrance of his subject in the following manner:

> The girl Willie is advancing precariously along the railroad track, balancing herself with both arms outstretched, one clutching a banana, the other an extraordinarily dilapidated doll with a frowsy blonde wig.
>
> She is a remarkable apparition--thin as a bean-pole and dressed in outrageous cast-off finery. She wears a long blue velvet party dress with a filthy cream lace collar and sparkling rhine-stone beads. On her feet are battered silver kid slippers with large ornamental buckles. Her wrists

> and her fingers are resplendent with dimestore jewelry. She has applied rouge to her childish face in artless crimson daubs and her lips are made up in a preposterous cupid's bow. She is about thirteen and there is something ineluctably childlike and innocent in her appearance despite the makeup. She laughs frequently and wildly and with a sort of precocious, tragic abandon.[22]

About twenty theatrical minutes later, Willie leaves, the same figure as she entered:

> (She starts back along the railroad track, weaving grotesquely to keep her balance. She disappears. . . . Willie is heard singing from a distance.)[23]

Now between this entrance and this exist, the author is simply concerned with creating an image of the child, a portrait analogous to her own description of her doll:

> Crazy doll's hair needs washing. I'm scared to wash it though 'cause her head might come unglued where she had that compound fracture of the skull. I think that most of her brains spilled out. She's been acting silly every since. Saying an' doing the most outrageous things.[24]

We may see this principle of aesthetic structure throughout the short plays of Williams' early period. Each of the plays in the series, Twenty Seven Wagons Full of Cotton, is created in this manner. The author gives us images for our reflection in This Property is Condemned, The Last of My Solid Gold Watches, Auto-Da-Fé, The Lady of Larkspur Lotion, and The Purification. Now these brief visions are organically static; that is, they are devoid of

action in the Aristotelian sense. No element of their essential situation experiences any change. The characters do not disintegrate; nor does the play experience organic movement or progression. All things have, throughout the play, an existence, an existence which the author reveals to the spectator.

Now the major plays retain this basic level of form. The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, and Camino Real follow this pattern of structural organization. Each of these plays is the exposition of a key image. Williams writes that he seeks to communicate the quality of experience through the use of these symbols:

> We all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images, and I think all communication is based on these images as are our dreams; and a symbol in a play has only one legitimate purpose which is to say a thing more directly and simply and beautifully than it could be said in words.[25]

Williams divides his image into these component visions or images. The Glass Menagerie is composed of seven such figures; A Streetcar Named Desire is presented in eleven images; Summer and Smoke is seen in twelve component visions.

At the first level of his form, Williams seeks to know the world as image. This rendering of the drama in the "language of vision" is related to several developments in the twentieth century. The first of these influences we may describe as the rise of Irrationalism in the theatre, and

indeed, in Arts and Letters in general. Williams' theatre is a part of a general tendency to attack knowledge and its symbol of communication, discursive language, as the evidences of the kind of corruption in man which has produced so much of his suffering in modern times. The Irrational philosophies of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Bergson, and the Existentialists urge a return to <u>feeling</u> in man, to <u>Sympathy</u>, to a perception which transcends knowledge. Bergson writes that only through such <u>Sympathy</u> can the intent of life be apprehended:

> But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us--by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested. self-consciousness, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely. . . . That an effort of this kind is not impossible is proved by the existence in man of an aesthetic faculty along with normal perception. Our eye perceives the features of the living being, merely as assembled, not as mutually organized. The intention of life, the simple movement that runs through the lines, that binds them together and gives them significance, escapes it. This intention is just what the artist tries to regain, in placing himself back within the object by a kind of sympathy, in breaking down, by an effort of the intuition, the barrier that space puts up between him and his model.[26]

This rise of Irrationalism in art in the twentieth century has been paralleled by the revival of religion, by the reappearance of a kind of religion which is symbolized in the Neo-Orthodox commitment of Tillich, Niebuhr, and Karl Barth. These theologians are, too, affected in their reconsideration of the role of religion in the life of Western man,

by many of the same rents of thought which are associated with Nietzsche and Bergson. This religious revival is based on an apprehension of modern man similar to that which appears in these philosophers. Both philosophy and religion, in this case, agree that man is corrupt, that his knowledge is the agency and the instrument of his corruption, and that he must return to a feeling concern for himself and mankind.

The theatre of Williams begins at this point of concern for mankind. The dramatist is concerned with the drama as a means of inducing man to experience and to contemplate the suffering of humanity. This intent affects the external structuring of the drama in a radical manner. It affects the idea of dramatic action even more. For the new drama of Williams is an example of what has come to be characteristic of the Contemporary form: the Existential nature of the drama. The new drama seeks to involve the spectator in contemplation, rather than in narrative flow.

Williams and other dramatists of the genre are concerned with the reconstruction of Existential moments. They propose to create "felt time." It is possible that The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire or Summer and Smoke would involve only seconds of contemplation in actual time. In the theatre, these moments are extended, arrested for the length of the spectator's interest. Arthur Miller, describing Death

of a Salesman, writes of his efforts to create such Existential time in the theatre.

> The first image that occurred to me which was to result in Death of a Salesman was of an enormous face the height of a proscenium arch which would appear and then open up, and we would see inside of a man's head. . . . The Salesman image was from the beginning absorbed with the concept that nothing in life comes "next," but that everything exists together and at the same time within us; that there is no past to be brought forward at every moment and that the present is merely that which his past is capable of noticing and smelling and reacting to.[27]

> As I have said, the structure of events and the nature of its form are also the direct reflection of Willy Loman's way of thinking at this moment of his life. He was the kind of man you see muttering to himself on the subway, decently dressed, perfectly integrated with his surroundings except that he can no longer restrain the power of his experience from disrupting the superficial sociality of his behaviour. Consequently he is working on two logics which often collide. . . . He is literally at that terrible moment when the voice of the past is no longer distant but quite as loud as the voice of the present. In dramatic terms, the form, therefore, is this process, instead of being a once-removed summation or indication of it.[28]

Now actually Bergson wrote that this idea of time could not be communicated but he suggested that it could be more readily understood through images than through concepts:

> No image can replace the intuition of duration, but many diverse images borrowed from very many orders of things, may, by the convergence of their action, direct consciousness to the precise point where there is a certain intuition to be seized.[29]

Actually, what the dramatist wishes to produce is probably comparable to a field of images, which can be apprehended simultaneously--much in the manner of a Cubist painting.

Because simultaneous structure is impossible to create in the theatre, the drama evolves as a linear structure, with no real beginning or end. The form of Williams is, theoretically, infinite in its possible extensions.

The form which develops is described by Arthur Miller in his discussion of Death of a Salesman:

> The play grew from simple images. From a little frame house on a street of little frame houses, which had once been loud with the noise of growing boys, and then was empty and silent and occupied by strangers. . . .
>
> It grew from images of futility--the cavernous Sunday afternoons polishing the car. Where is that car now?. . .
>
> And the endless, convoluted discussions, wonderments, arguments, belittlements, encouragements, fiery resolutions, abdications, returns, partings. . .
>
> The image of aging. . .
>
> The image of son's hard, public eye upon you no longer swept by your myth. . .
>
> The image of ferocity when love has turned to something else and yet is there, is somewhere in the room if one could only find it.
>
> The image of people turning into strangers who only evaluate one another.
>
> Above all, perhaps, the image of a need greater than hunger or sex or thirst, a need to leave a thumbprint somewhere on the world. A need for immortality. . .[30]

Williams abandons the earlier formal traditions of the drama for a new idea of form, form as image, a broken icon, sign of a partial existence in a shattered universe. The dramatist creates a discontinuous structure, a linear design which is a succession of arbitrarily chosen moments, transfixed in time. The Contemporary idea of form is poetic. Like many artists of the twentieth century, Williams believes

art to be the concretion of the superior insight of the poet. At this first level of his form, the playwright seeks to re-create for the spectator the illusion of his vision. The dramatist is not, in the strictest sense, the medium through which images of an unseen but coherent nature pass. He is the agent of a deliberate transformation. His vision requires the synthesis of a symbol, a synthetic image, a symbol conscious of division, a composite mirror pieced together from fragments of other "glasses."

Because form is a "dynamic concept" for Williams, his later drama, from A Streetcar Named Desire to Camino Real, indicates a continuous process of growth and complication. The major development in Williams' expressive form in his more mature drama is the appearance and development of a second level of experience, a level which we may describe in Nietzsche's term, the Apollonian state. In the chapter to follow, we should like to examine the evidences of this second level of expression in the drama of Williams, to determine the reasons for its development, and to ascertain the nature of its effect upon the idea of form in the major plays: The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and Camino Real.

CHAPTER III

THE SYNTHETIC MYTH

The elemental form of Tennessee Williams is fundamentally lyric; it is derived from the "moment of vision" and the playwright's attempt to reconstruct that moment in the complex language of theatre. As Williams develops as a dramatist, however, he becomes increasingly concerned about the limitations of this purely lyric theatre. In the preface to Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, the dramatist records some of his reflections about problems in form:

> The fact that I want you to observe what I do for your possible pleasure and to give you a knowledge of things I feel I may know better than you, because my world is different from yours, as different as every man's world is from the world of others, is not enough excuse for personal lyricism that has not yet mastered its necessary trick of rising above the singular to the plural concern, from personal to general import. But for years and years now, which may have been passed like a dream because of this obsession, I have been trying to learn how to perform this trick and make it truthful, and sometimes I feel that I am able to do it.[1]

The playwright's problem is one which is common to all artists who must make a subjective experience meaningful to a wide audience. It is a problem shared by all of the playwrights in the Contemporary genre. Williams attempts to solve the problem of "rising to a plural concern" in two

ways: by appealing to the elemental passions in a kind of primitive drama, and by rising to a level of abstraction through the creation of myth.

We have seen that in the early drama, the playwright created a kind of archaic drama of primitive passions. Williams does, in fact, retain this level of expression in his later drama.

In the process of his maturation, the playwright adds a second dimension to his expressive form, a dimension which we may interpret as a reflective and interpretative plane, Nietzsche's Apollonian order of art. Williams' Byron, the poet-figure in Camino Real, describes the playwright's Neo-Nietzschean organization of a Dionysian lyricism and an Apollonian order:

> But a poet's vocation, which used to be my vocation, is to influence the heart in a gentler fashion than you have made your mark on that loaf of bread. He ought to purify it and lift it above its ordinary level. For what is the heart but a sort of--
>
> [He makes a high groping gesture in the air.]
>
> A sort of--instrument!--that translates noise into music chaos into--order. . . .
>
> --a mysterious order![2]

Williams' Neo-Nietzschean form, like that of other Contemporaries, is inorganic; its poetry and its logic do not find complete synthesis within the form of the drama. There exists between these two levels of the expressive form

of the Contemporaries, a fundamental antagonism. Williams, like most of the playwrights in the genre, is aware that his drama is a discontinuous form, embracing a fundamental division. Throughout his development as a playwright, we observe his efforts to find a synthesis, a mode of schematization in which all of the disassociated aspects of form can be unified.

Williams, like Miller, Cocteau, Wilder, O'Neill, and others, claims to use the dream-organization of the Surrealists. In Camino Real, there is a prologue in which these explanatory lines are spoken by Don Quixote:

> And my dream will be a pageant, a masque in which old meanings will be remembered and possibly new ones discovered, and when I wake from this sleep and this disturbing pageant of a dream, I'll choose one among its shadows to take along with me in place of Sancho.[3]

The Contemporaries only appear to use a dream form, for a close examination of the plays of Williams and others reveals that the dream form is only the external rationalization for the structure of the drama. The mythic pattern of Williams is far more complicated and inorganic than is the dream-logic of Shakespeare or Strindberg. The myth of Williams is not a construct fashioned from naive images surfacing from the Unconscious, individual or collective. The myth of Tennessee Williams is a synthetic form, consciously fashioned from the structuring of vision. It is a

theory of man created by the cinematic technique of montage.[4] This synthetic myth is created from the remnants of ideas, systems of thought, and partial perceptions which remain from other epochs of the drama. Its purpose is the creation of an artificial level of interpretation, a kind of language through which the playwright may articulate the contemporary dilemma.

The Synthetic Myth is ideally adapted to accommodate the aversion of the new dramatists to syllogistic thinking. Myth permits the writer--and the spectator--to apprehend many aspects of existence simultaneously. The mythic organization substitutes a new concern for the interest of traditional forms in narrative. It permits the spectator to reflect on poetic correspondences and contradictions in the playwright's vision. Myth becomes, in the Contemporary form, a perceptual apparatus, the "language of vision."

Now the use of myth as language in the contemporary forms is deplored by critics such as Ortega y Gassett. Gassett, who talks extensively of the new mechanism of vision and articulation in the arts, charges that the imposition of a rigid formal system in myth and design, a system which he regards, in the main, as external to organic form, has resulted in the reduction of the arts to a kind of mathematics, to a "Euclidean Geometry."[5]

Jean-Paul Sartre, in his essay, "Forgers of Myth," explains why it has been necessary for the theatre to take this radical route, which he admits to be an assault on language and on systems of thought. To the dramatist in the twentieth century has fallen the responsibility formerly held by religion, ethics, and philosophy: to explore man's present experience and to help him arrive at the formulation of new principles:

> For them [the young authors] the theatre will be able to present man in his entirety only in proportion to the theatre's willingness to be moral. By that we do not mean that it should put forward examples illustrating the rules of deportment or the practical ethics taught to children, but rather that the study of the conflict of characters should be replaced by the presentation of the conflict of rights. . . . In each case it is, in the final analysis and in spite of divergent interests, the system of values, of ethics and of concepts of man which are lined up against each other.[6]

II

While most critics are aware that European dramatists utilize a complex myth, few seem to realize that the American drama employs an intricate mythic structure as an important element of its form. The Naturalistic fallacy has prevented much of American criticism from recognizing the organization of perception inherent in the work of our major dramatists. The problem is particularly acute with Tennessee Williams,

whose power as a playwright of emotions has often functioned to the detriment of his acceptance as a dramatist occupied primarily with issues relevant to the human condition. Although many American critics see Williams as a Realist or even as a Naturalist, European critics are inclined to regard him as an Expressionist, to link him with the development of the Anti-Realistic drama in Europe.

In a seminar on Camino Real at Bochem, Germany in 1953, German scholars related the work of Williams to the expressive form of Kafka, Picasso, and the Claudel of The Satin Slipper.[7] These critics recognized in Camino Real themes which are common to Expressionistic drama and to the movement of European art since World War I, but more important to this discussion, is the fact that they discerned in the form of Williams an elaborate and intricate symbolic construct which they judged to be a distinctive rendition of a contemporary myth.

Williams utilizes a myth of modern man which is the synthesis of many perspectives: literary, religious, aesthetic, psychological, and cultural. These partial perspectives serve to interpret the incongruous vision which is life and to explain the Absurd being who is man. Through them the dramatist looks at a world which is characterized by two major themes: by the spectre of suffering and by a condition of non-being. Williams schematizes his myth so

that he may present this image of existence. The two perspectives which are most important in his symbolic construct are the Existentialist Myth of the Universe as Theatre, and the Freudian-Jungian Myth of Man.

The most important element of myth in the Contemporary theatre is that which reverses the normal order of reality to affirm that existence is spectacle and that spectacle is existence. We have already seen in the Surrealists, the suggestion that the theatre is the Real universe. Williams and other Contemporaries inherit this apprehension of existence from other sources as well. The idea passes directly into the drama of Williams from Pirandello. In The Glass Menagerie, Tom begins the play with this Pirandellian affirmation:

> Yes, I have tricks in my pocket, I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you the illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you the truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.[8]

Now because we believe form to be affected by contemporary patterns of thought, we are especially interested in the movement of this idea into the drama of Williams from the Existentialist tradition of Sartre and Camus. For the Existentialists have made of the actor, the image of man in the universe. This perception, which is explained by Camus in his essay on the "Absurd Man,"[9] seems to orginate from

two sources: from the theatre itself, and from the Irrational tradition of Nietzsche. Both Shakespeare and Nietzsche see the world as illusion, the universe as mime. Nietzsche's perception of the world as theatre looks backward to Shakespeare and forward to Camus:

> I feel inclined to the hypothesis that the original Oneness, the ground of Being, ever-suffering and contradictory, time again has need of rapt vision and delightful illusion to redeem itself. Since we ourselves are the very stuff of such illusions, we must view ourselves as the truly non-existent, that is to say, as a perpetual unfolding in time, space, and causality--what we label "empiric reality." But if, for the moment, we abstract from our own reality, viewing our empiric existence, as well as the existence of the world at large, as the idea of the original Oneness, produced anew each instant, then our dreams will appear to us as illusion of illusions, hence as a still higher form of the satisfaction of the original desire for illusion.[10]

Williams, like the Existentialists, considers the problem of suffering through the use of the Myth of the Theatre. In A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and Camino Real, we see the actor as sufferer. Williams engages in a kind of ritualization throughout his drama, even in those plays which we are accustomed to regard as Realistic. The plays follow a formal plan which theatricalizes the suffering of everyday existence.

We see this ritualization in the short sketch, The Unsatisfactory Supper Or the Long Stay Cut Short:

> The curtain rises on the porch and side yard of a shot-gun cottage in Blue Mountain, Mississippi. The frame house is faded and has a greenish-gray cast with dark streaks from the roof, and there

> are irregularities in the lines of the building. Behind it the dusky cyclorama is stained with the rose of sunset which is stormy-looking and the wind has a cat-like whine.
>
> Upstage from the porch, in the center of the side yard, is a very large rose-bush, the beauty of which is somehow sinister-looking.
>
> A Prokofief sort of music introduces the scene and sets a mood of grotesque lyricism.
>
> The screen door opens with a snarl of rusty springs and latches: this stops the music.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The evenly cadenced lines of the dialogue between Baby Doll and Archie Lee may be given a singsong reading, somewhat like a grotesque choral incantation, and passages may be divided as strophe and antistrophe by Baby Doll's movement back and forth on the porch.[11]

Now there is this same ritual plan in the seemingly realistic play, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Williams' instructions for Maggie's opening soliloquy give an indication as to the nature of this facet of his mythic organization:

> In her long speeches she has the vocal tricks of a priest delivering a liturgical chant, the lines are almost sung, always continuing a little beyond her breath . . .[12]

Williams accompanies the movement of suffering in this play with the primitive incantations of children and servants:

> Skinamarinka--dinka-dink
> Skinamarinka--do
> We love you.
> Skinamarinka--dinka--dink
> Skinamarinka--do.[13]

In The Purification the analogy to the Crucifixion is drawn:

Rancher:
Yes.
I set up the ladder.

Son:
Set up the steep, steep ladder--
Narrow. . .

Rancher:
Narrow!--Enquiring
If Christ be still on the Cross!

Chorus: Cross!

Son: Against the north wall set it. . .

Rancher:
Set it and climbed. . .
(He clutches his forehead.) Climbed!

Chorus: Climbed!

Son:
Climbed!
To the side of the loft
that gave all things to the sky.
The axe--
for a single moment--
saluted the moon--then struck!

Chorus Struck!

Son: And she didn't cry . . .

Rancher:
Struck?
Aye, struck-struck-struck!

Chorus: Struck!

(Dissonant chords on the guitar, with cymbals. The two men surge together and struggle like animals till they are torn apart. There is a rumble of thunder.)[14]

This ritual plan is utilized throughout the plays of Williams, more emphatically in plays such as A Streetcar Named Desire, The Purification, and The Camino Real, but also in the more realistic plays such as The Rose Tattoo, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and Twenty Seven Wagons Full of Cotton. For Williams action is suffering, a suffering which ranges from physical pain to intolerable anxiety. For Williams the whole world suffers, then, and the theatre is the image of that suffering:

> The earth's whole population twisted and writhed . . . the answer perfection was slowly evolved through torture.[15]

Francis Fergusson sees the Myth of the Theatre as an important element of schematization throughout the Contemporary genre.[16] It provides the dramatist with what Fergusson calls a "formal plan," a kind of symbolism which has many levels of application. The Myth of the Theatre returns the drama of the twentieth century to its beginning, to the formal ritual of Greek drama. The Myth of the Theatre provides the dramatist with a schematic organization through which he may look at the world and through which he hopes to induce the spectator to consider the present condition of man.

III

There is a second facet of Williams' myth which is important to this discussion. If the world about which the dramatist writes is the theatre, the man whom the playwright describes is drawn in the language of a second symbology, in the language of the psychological myth, the twentieth century legend of Freud and Jung. The use of the Freudian-Jungian construct by American dramatists like Williams makes form content distinction extremely difficult. Much of the problem in regard to Williams arises, not so much because of the playwright's use of this language, but because of the popularity of the Freudian perspective in America. The Freudian system is, for many spectators and critics, an assertion of fundamental truths.

Critics, like David Sievers regard Williams' plays as definitive types of a Freudian genre.[17] They are, for Sievers, studies of the "biologic self," of the effect on the personality of the demands of the all-powerful Id. This critic sees the Williams plays as demonstrations of the destructive conflict between the Id and the ideals of the Ego and Super-Ego. He identifies several major elements of theme in the drama of this playwright: sexual anxiety, sexual antagonism between male and female, sexual ambivalence and inversion, and revolt against the primal father.[18] Now there is support for placing these elements in the category

of theme in the drama of Tennessee Williams. Certainly, this is one level of Williams' presentation. But we feel that it is primarily a linguistic element rather than the concretion of truth.

The Freudian scheme is for Williams an instrument of exploration. The dramatist uses its language as symbol, the tri-partite division of personality as signs of modes of experience, and its clinical conditions as symptoms of human illnesses which have complex dimensions.

Perhaps one of the most effective examples of his use of the Freudian system as language may be seen in Williams' structuring and communication of crisis in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. In this play the dramatist illustrates the alienation and progressive despair of Brick through an incident which is psychological in its description but not in its total interpretation. The Freudian language is the outer sign of an inner disaster. Williams comments on Cat on a Hot Tin Roof seem to confirm this interpretation:

> Some mystery should be left in the revelation of character in a play, just as a great deal of mystery is always left in the revelation of character in life, even in one's own character to himself. This does not absolve the playwright of his duty to observe and probe as clearly and deeply as he legitimately can: but it should steer him away from "pat" conclusions, facile definitions which make a play just a play not a snare for the truth of human experience.[19]

Williams' comments are supported by this explanation from Sartre's essay:

> It is easy to understand, therefore, why we are not greatly concerned with psychology. We are not searching for the right "word" which will suddenly reveal the whole unfolding of the passions, nor the "act" which will seem most lifelike and inevitable to the audience. For us psychology is the most abstract of the sciences because it studies the workings of our passions without plunging them back onto their human surroundings. . . . For us a man is a whole enterprise in himself.[20]

Williams uses the Freudian Myth to explore the second problem of major concern in his drama: the problem of reality. This problem is explored first in the quasi-trilogy: The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, and Summer and Smoke. These plays are a study of the difficult lines of separation, of the ambiguities for modern man involved in the distinction between truth and illusion. "What is truth?" is the question of Tom, of Blanche, and of Alma. Williams asks: Is there a truth in existence? What is this principle of reality? How may it be known? These do not appear to be simply psychological questions. They are questions which involve man at every level of his existence.

Each of these three plays is the record of a struggle to find reality, truth, being. Tom, in The Glass Menagerie, envisions this struggle as a basic conflict between the ideals of society and the personal and individually oriented ideals of the artist. In A Streetcar Named Desire, the

problem of reality is that of choosing between two cultural approaches to life, between the demands of the animal man and those tendencies in civilization which foster concern for fellow man; between the truth of a Naturalistic order and the truth of a Humanistic order. In Summer and Smoke, the struggle to know truth moves within the individual. The explorations between Alma and John are the explorations within the Self, the search to find a binding principle for a divided inner perception of truth. In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, the playwright pushes his idea even further. The pessimism of the earlier plays seems to deepen as the author now characterizes existence as an essentially false condition in which the protagonist must fight illusion both without and within.

> Mendacity is a system we live in, Liquor is one way out an' death's another.[21]

In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Williams illustrates the now extremely complicated problem of the inextricability of truth and illusion within the human consciousness. The playwright illustrates this problem by presenting the dilemma contrapuntally: in the outer illness of Big Daddy and in the inner-illness of Brick. Both of these illnesses are involved with a "truth" which cannot be determined a truth. Williams comes face to face with one important aspect of his theme:

> Big Daddy:
> Anyhow now!--we have tracked down the lie with which you're disgusted and which are drinking to kill your disgust with Brick.

> You been passing the buck. This disgust with mendacity is disgust with your self.
>
> You!--dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it!--before you'd face the truth with him!

Brick:
His truth, not mine!

Big Daddy:
His truth, okay! But you wouldn't face it with him!

Brick:
Who can face truth? Can you?[22]

Williams' attitude experiences a marked development from its position in The Glass Menagerie. In Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, he detaches truth almost completely from event. The "event" which has precipitated the crisis in the Brick-Maggie and the Brick-Big Daddy plots, throws little if any light upon the truth. The truth, a possibility which once existed in the heart of man, eludes him even there. Life is itself, in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, a condition of falsity, and men are,

> Yes, all liars, all liars, all lying dying liars! --lying! Dying! Liars.[23]

The Freudian Myth does not provide the answers for Williams; to be sure, it may not really ask the crucial question. For the question is one in which the Freudian system has little interest. The question which the Williams

figures ask about Reality is, rather, stated in the Existentialist writings of Karl Jaspers:

> It is the predicament of man which achieves expression in the parables of the play Hamlet. Can truth be found? Is it possible to live with truth? The condition of man supplies an answer to this question: All life force stems from blindness. It grows from imagined knowledge, in myth taken for faith, and in the substitute myths; in unquestioning acceptance, and in mind-narrowing untruths. . . . It is forever the same question: Must man die of truth? Does truth spell death?[24]

The Freudian language is important for its power of communication in the drama of Williams. Through it the playwright is able to demonstrate for the audience something of the dilemma which faces his characters: the division of Reality, the state of non-being.

IV

The Freudian theory provides a language for the explication of certain themes. But Williams, like many artists of the twentieth century finds the major construct which can accommodate all facets of his "patched perspective" in the eclectic construct of Jung. Jung's adaptation of Freudian theory is essentially poetic since it admits the simultaneous possibility of many contradictory poetic apprehensions; it is sympathetic to the poetic importance of the Unknown.

Jung provides the playwright with a theory of man and a theory of existence which tend to reconcile poetic and practical considerations. Something of the value of Jung to the totality of myth in the drama and in the arts may be deduced from these comments by Ira Progoff in a study entitled, Jung's Psychology and Its Social Meaning:

> From the points that have been mentioned so far, we can see that Jung's psychology does not involve just psychology per se, but the totality of the personal and historical lives of Western Europeans. His purpose is to go beyond the academic side of psychology and come to grips with the actual problems of individuals as their lives are lived now in the turmoil of history.[25]

The Jungian myth is able to accommodate many elements of perception which are associated with the theories of other thinkers.

> Jung's psychological view of life requires the confrontation of the world--cosmic and social--by the individual who has struggled with the psychic contents that are within himself to find his own essential nature. This is the same emphasis that is found in the oriental philosophies, where the burden is placed on the individual human being in the belief that each person must struggle through to find the light for himself. In the present situation of western culture, the effect of such a view is to stress the separation between the modern man and his cultural symbols. the modern personality is forced to live in search, in search of itself, psychologically, spiritually, and historically. Jung's work thus reaches its central problem at the point where all the pressures of modern civilization converge and exert their impact on the individual's existence.[26]

Throughout his drama Williams refers to the Jungian theory of the Collective Unconscious, especially to the idea

of an archaic system of images which are the basis of poetic communication:

> We all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images, and I think all human communication is based on these images as are our dreams; and a symbol in a play has only one legitimate purpose which is today a thing more directly and simply and beautifully than it could be said in words.[27]

> More than any work that I have done, this play has seemed to me like the construction of another world, a separate existence. Of course, it is nothing more nor less than my conception of the time and world that I live in, and its people are mostly archetypes of certain basic attitudes and qualities with those mutations that would occur if they had continued along the road to this hypothetical terminal point in it.[28]

Williams transposes certain elements of his myth from Jung. His drama utilizes the concept of life as the "dark journey," the "search for self and soul," the "Jungian Odyssey." Now the spiritual journey is a recurrent idea throughout literature. But it is Jung who relates the idea specifically to the consciousness of the contemporary man, and who makes the journey a symbol of all our present seeking, of our longing to "become" in our own age. Jung creates a symbol for existence which is extremely valuable for the poet, as the symbol has depth meanings which extend its implications past psychology to history, philosophy, and religion. For Williams it becomes a frame upon which many other ideas are hung, a tapestry into which other ideas are woven.

Williams uses the Freudian-Jungian construct, as do O'Neill and Arthur Miller, as a sign of the world in which his characters live.

It is this use of psychological myth which primarily differentiates the Americans from the Europeans who are inclined to use ideological symbols to represent these same realities. Sartre writes that the Europeans believe that the implications of the Freudian Man are too limited for a full consideration of all of the problems of the contemporary world. These limitations can only apply to the drama of Williams and O'Neill in the degree to which the American spectator is willing to accept the psychological construct as a truth. Many scholars are now willing to admit that these ideas about man, explanations names, and symbols which are the tools of the Freudian explorations are, like art itself, not the truth, but a means of representing the truth. From this perspective the Freudian-Jungian myth serves the American drama well as a means of communication, as a kind of language which can communicate certain ideas of theme related to the intellectual level of the drama.

The synthetic myth is a development which is characteristic of the Contemporary drama. It represents the playwright's attempt to find an explanation for the stream of experience, to arrive at an interpretation of existence which is meaningful. The myth of Williams is composed of

fragments which are structured in the same manner as is the synthetic image, through montage. Williams' myth is part Existentialist, part Freudian, and part theatrical. Through it, the dramatist looks at life in his world. He provides no answers; he simply wishes the spectator to consider his own image, the image of suffering in our time.

The form which Williams develops is, like his perception of Reality, divided. The two levels of experience create an antagonism within the form, an antagonism which John Gassner describes as a fundamental tension between "underground and overground," between "dark and light."[29] The division which Williams represents manifests itself in the inorganicism of the form, in an aesthetic tension between motion and arrest, reality and illusion, experience and art.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANTI-HERO

> Caught in the form of limitation
> Between un-being and being.[1]

One of the most controversial developments in the form of Tennessee Williams is the emergence of an Anti-hero as the protagonist in his drama. Williams point by point reverses the Aristotelian definition of the hero, but more significantly, he denies the validity of traditional concepts of man himself.

The concept of a hero as defined by Aristotle is obviously an impossibility as a symbol of man in this world of contemporary perception. The hero of Williams, like the hero of Camus, Sartre, and Anouilh, is faced with a new task, a task which Camus and Sartre define as religious. René-Marill Albérès, writing of the contemporary theatrical revolt, defines this new responsibility of the hero in our time:

> . . . Each of their heroes has for his mission to work out his destiny in solitude without the help of social patterns or divine grace, and each of these heroes also invents for his life an ethic for which the price is the refusal of all attitudes already achieved and modeled on social dishonesty and pretext.[2]

The Contemporaries deny that man is reasonable, that he is complete or unified, or that he has a definite place in the universe. The skeptical explorations of dramatists such as Williams have produced an image of a man who is instead partial, incomplete, disunified; an image of man, in exile from God, from his fellow man, and from himself; an image of man, the "Stranger."[3] This man Albérès describes:

> The universe which is presented to our present writers pre-supposes that there exists no order in the world. Man is not a brother to the universe with God or Providence for a father. He is a stranger.[4]

The theatre, returning to a primarily religious function, does not celebrate and exalt man in the twentieth century. It seeks instead to define him, to know him, and to affirm his being in a universe of chaos:

> . . . The contemporary theatre, like the novel becomes a research and a quest. It makes itself idealistic, its characters force themselves toward that which they can never find.[5]

Albérès describes a new sense of tragedy:

> Our climate is that of tragedy, where man fights against destiny. The human being is not linked to the Universe, but affronted by it; he does not find himself in the Universe of Spinoza, where his place awaits him, but in a total chaos where nothing is made for his intention.[6]

The Contemporaries are, then, concerned with the image of man, the sinner, an anti-heroic concept, for his transgressions in the modern world have not even appeared to bring man grandeur, but destruction, alienation, and

despair. Man is characterized in the drama of the twentieth century by a sense of diminution, a wasting away, an inner division which has reduced him to an existence as a partiality. The Contemporaries see man as an absurdity, a conglomerate of particles, an untidy heap of fragments. The Anti-hero of Williams and his colleagues is the end-product of a process of reduction. He is in the description of Wylie Sypher,

> An outsider struggling vainly somehow to belong to an order that is impregnably closed by some inscrutable authority. . . .[7]

The Anti-hero whom the new drama describes is the Absurd, an image of man moved but not moving, from unknown to unknown. He is described by Sypher as a "madman in the grip of a 'merciless logic for a futile purpose.'"[8] He is for Camus, "A traveller in time . . . a hunted traveller, pursued by souls."[9] He is not good; he is not unified; he is not a developing human being. He is lost, fixed by sin and transgression, "Caught in the form of limitation between un-being and being." Tennessee Williams describes such a protagonist in his short story, One Arm:

> He never said to himself, I'm lost. But the speechless self knew it, and in submission to its unthinking control, the youth had begun as soon as he had left the hospital to look out for destruction.[10]

Contemporary transgression would appear to be of another order from that of Sophocles, of an earlier and more

primitive description, or of a later and more degenerate kind. The hero of Sophocles and Aristotle is a good man, a man possessed of a single flaw, an Hamartia. The contemporary dramatists are not concerned with a flaw, but with a schism, with the spectre of a profound and comprehensive evil within man himself, an evil which Albérès, like other critics, is forced to identify as Original Sin:

> In the plays of Anouilh . . . there remains, as in all of our great writers an analysis of the human condition. At bottom, there exists an original sin . . . despair, absurdity or impure ugliness. And are these not different names for the same reality?[11]

II

The problem of the contemporary Anti-hero, the image of man in our time, is essentially the problem of being.[12] Man has lost his identity in the world. He is "the Outsider," the "Stranger." The playwrights of the new genre use the drama as an exploration, a means of seeking the verification of life, the affirmation of being; they seek a way to transcend man's essential condition of alienation, solitude, and despair. Albérès attributes this purpose to both atheistic and Christian dramatists alike:

> Whether one finds among them an atheist or a Christian . . . their concept of the struggle is the same.[13]

In their attempt to explicate their vision of man, the Contemporaries have returned to the images of other protagonists in the history of the drama. Because this vision of "Man in Exile" is not wholly discursive, they have often chosen parallel images from myths which developed in other times of chaos. The Contemporary drama utilizes the Christian myths of Adam, Noah and Everyman to demonstrate its vision of man. But the two most illuminating images in both European and American theatre come from Greek drama, from the archaic concept of Aeschylus and from the cynical and skeptical explorations of Euripides. The modern consciousness is illustrated through the consideration of two primal figures who seek <u>being</u>, through Prometheus and Orestes.[14]

Now it is important to indicate that neither of these Greek images corresponds to the Aristotelian concept of the hero. H. D. F. Kitto writes of the Aeschylean hero:

> We may now inquire what is the relation of Aristotle's theory to Aeschylus, the answer is, roughly, None whatever. Aristotle's tragic hero who must be neither good nor bad, but average (or a little better) and "like" us, is the Sophoclean hero who in himself prefigures the human tragedy, all of it. . . . The Aeschylean hero, who is not intended to sum up and typify in his own breast the tragic strength and weakness of man, need not be a blend and therefore cannot be "like us"; he must be only the sinner with so much characterization as to make him intelligible.[15]

Kitto indicates a factor which is extremely important to the Contemporary form:

> . . . He [the Aeschylean hero] is not a complete man at all, for we see . . . only that part of him, that belongs in the drama, and it is a single part. . . .[16]

Edith Hamilton, in her essays on the Greek drama, explains the rather different appeal of Euripides, whom she calls the "first modern mind."

> He feels, as no other writer has felt, the pitifulness of human life, as of children suffering helplessly what they do not know and can never understand. . . . Out of the pages written more than twenty-three hundred years ago sound the two notes which we feel are the dominants in our world today, sympathy with suffering and the conviction of the worth of everyone alive. . . .
>
> There is an order of mind which is perpetually modern. All of those who are possessed of it are akin, no matter how great the lapse of time that separates them. . . .
>
> Always those in the vanguard of their time find in Euripides an expression of their own spirit. He is the great exponent of the forever recurring modern mind.[17]

Miss Hamilton indicates why the Euripidean man has become an important part of the Contemporary image. She relates Euripides to a kind of suffering which concerns Williams, especially:

> Above all, they [the modern minds] care for human life and human things and can never stand aloof from them. They suffer for mankind, and what preoccupies them is the problem of pain. They are peculiarly sensitized to "the giant agony" of the world. What they see as needless misery around them and what they envisage as needless misery to come is intolerable to them. The world to them is made up of individuals, each with the terrible

> power to suffer, and the poignant pity of their own hearts precludes them from any philosophy in the face of this awful sum of pain and any capacity to detach themselves from it.[18]

She describes the terms of the Euripidean revolt:

> They behold, first and foremost, that most sorrowful thing on earth, injustice, and they are driven to it by a passion of revolt. Convention, so often a mask for injustice, they will have none of; in their pursuit of justice at any cost, they tear away veils that hide hateful things: they call into question all pleasant things and comfortable things. They are not those who take "all life as their province"; what is good in the age they live in they do not regard; their eyes are fixed upon what is wrong. . . .[19]

Now while the Promethean and Oresteian images of man have commonalities, they also have distinctions which are apparent for dramatists in the new genre. The image of man which appeals to the rational and Humanistically inclined French drama is that of the Prometheus of Aeschylus. Charles Blend, in a study of "Promethean Humanism," writes that in the minds of French writers such as Malraux this Promethean image is seen as a parallel direct of the idea of man in our time:

> Of all the Attic tragedies, the one which perhaps dramatizes more than any other the distilled essence of this vision of human existence is Aeschylus's Prometheus Bound.[20]

The Promethean image defines a contemporary sense of heroism. In the French drama a new condition of heroism is dervied from the Promethean condition of revolt, the affirmation of Self by the denial of prior values, and the

substitution of a new imperative in existence, that of perpetual and unceasing question:

> That which distinguishes these characters from those who surround them is that a problem poses itself for them, a problem which others ignore or dare not confront, it is that he is more and more tormented. None of these persons who has attracted our great writers is remarkable in the sense of those who have preceded them. They are men like others but they ask themselves certain questions while others allow themselves to live.[21]

Albérès describes the Promethean existence:

> A man raises himself among other men. He sets himself, by the requirement that he chooses to lead up to its end, in a total solitude, social and metaphysical . . . They [the heroes] wish to be alone, and it is in this sense that they refuse from the beginning, the solutions of other men, the guaranteed proven solutions. . . .
>
> Solitude defines the condition of the hero, and his heroism is that he has not been born to accept the help of proven formulae. Prometheus is alone because he is the only one to dare, and his solitude expresses only the audacity of his enterprise.[22]

According to both Blend and Albérès, the Promethean hero is willing to accept solitude, to seek knowledge, to confront despair, and to search for purity.

III

The American dramatists employ a different legend as a parallel of their image of modern man; they are attracted to the legend of Orestes, man in exile, pursued by the Furies of Vengeance and Guilt. The "exile of Orestes" is a phenomenon in the spiritual history of man comparable in its

implication to the "Adamic Fall." Both myths explain man's condition as the result of primal sin. Now unlike the Promethean legend, the Oresteian myth tends to attribute the confusion in man's universe to man himself.

Orestes makes a free choice to kill his mother, and the brutal manner of her slaying, a murder devoid of passion, calculated in vengeance, and executed without pity is enough to stir the wrath of the gods. Orestes is possessed, as is Electra, of more than an Hamartia. He presages the Contemporaries and their studies of the enveloping power of the Satanic in man. It is Orestes himself, who admits this:

> O! human nature, what a grievous curse thou art
> in the world! and what salvation too, to those
> who have a goodly heritage therein![23]

Because he is without compassion, Orestes is pursued by guilt; his ultimate penalty for his crime is that disease of mind, division, the state of un-being. Orestes is exiled, not simply by the independent existence of his sin, but by the consciousness of sin. He recalls the prophesy of the Furies:

> Woe on you, younger gods! the ancient right
> Ye have o'erridden, rent it from my hands.
>
> I am dishonored of you, thrust to scorn!
> But heavily my wrath
> Shall on this land fling for the drops that blast and burn,
> Venom of vengeance, that such work shall scathe
> As I have suffered; where that dew shall fall,
> Shall leafless bright arise,

> Wasting Earth's offspring,--Justice hear my call!--
> And through all the land in deadly wise
> Shall scatter venom, to exude again
> In pestilence on men.[24]

The curse of Aeschylus's Furies is repeated, perhaps emphasized, by the Dioscuri in Euripides's Electra:

> But haste thee to Athens, seeking to escape these hounds of hell, for they are on thy track in fearful wise, swart monsters, with snakes for hands, who reap a harvest of man's agony.[25]

The revolt of Orestes is clearly not of the same order of heroism as the revolt of Prometheus. Euripides, according to Professor Kitto, sought to diffuse the image of man among the whole of mankind. Orestes, for both Aeschylus and Euripides, is not a man, he is the distillation of the fatal weakness in man.

When the Contemporary dramatists began to search about for a protagonist who could mirror modern man in his knowledge, his ambiguous morality, his decadence, and his guilt, they found that Orestes reflected exactly this Contemporary sensibility. Sartre's Orestes mirrors modern man in these lines:

> Foreign to myself--I know it. Outside nature, against nature, without excuse, beyond remedy, except what remedy I find within myself. But I shall not return under your law; I am doomed to have no other law but mine. Nor shall I come back to nature, the nature you found good; in it are a thousand beaten paths all leading up to you--but I must blaze my trail. For I, Zeus, am a man, and every man must find out his own way. Nature abhors man, and you too, god of gods, abhor mankind.[26]

IV

It is the image of Orestes which has attracted the American dramatists, O'Neill, Miller, and Tennessee Williams, for reasons which are not entirely evident. The Oresteian concept seems always to have been present in the transgression-conscious American literature, especially in writers such as Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville. This consciousness is, in the opinion of D. H. Lawerence, one of the well-springs of creativity in the American arts. The revitalization of the Oresteian image in the twentieth century seems to have been stimulated by Freud, whose basic concept of man appears to have been greatly influenced by, if not patterned after Euripides's Orestes.

The Oresteian image appears to have a second route into the American drama through those currents in the theatre which have been most influential on the development of the American dramatists. The Oresteian Anti-Hero has moved through European drama. He is the ancestor of Hamlet, of Racine's Nero in Britannicus, of Ibsen's Brand and Peer Gynt, and of Strindberg's whole catalogue of a sick and divided humanity.

Whatever its history, the Orestes-Electra image serves Tennessee Williams ideally for the demonstration of his character themes: the commonality of human guilt and the essential division of man, his state of non-being.

The Anti-hero of Williams is not a good man. He is the image of a man who has knowledge of his guilt and who is willing to confront that knowledge in the manner of Sartre's Orestes:

> I say there is another path--my path. Can't you see it? It starts here and leads down to the city. I must go down--do you understand?--I must go down into the depths, among you. For you are living, all of you, at the bottom of a pit.[27]

Williams returns to a primitive idea of suffering as expiation and as purification. The idea of suffering as atonement is clearly seen in Blanche. A Streetcar Named Desire is an account of a ritual purification:

> I, I, I took the blows in my face and my body! All of those deaths! The long parade to the graveyard! . . . And funerals are pretty compared to deaths. . . . You didn't dream, but I saw! Saw! Saw and now you sit there telling me with your eyes that I let the place go! How in Hell do you think all that sickness and dying was paid for? Death is expensive, Miss Stella. . . .[28]

Blanche is perhaps the best illustration of Williams' sense of guilt. She suffers, first of all, for the sins of the race, for the legacy of sin which is the human heritage:

> There are thousands of papers, stretching back over hundreds of years, affecting Belle Reve as piece by piece, our improvident grandfathers and fathers and uncles and brothers exchanged the land for their epic fornications--to put it plainly! The four-letter word deprived us of our planation, till finally all that was left--and Stella can verify that!--was the house itself and about twenty acres of ground including a graveyard, to which now all but Stella and I have retreated.[29]

But Blanche is aware that she suffers also for her own guilt. It is her consciousness of her own complicity in the suffering of others which reveals the true nature of her character:

> He'd stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired--so that the back of his head had been--blown away! It was because--on the dance-floor--unable to stop myself--I'd suddenly said--"I saw! I know! You disgust me. . . ." And then the search light which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that's stronger than this kitchen candle.[30]

There is a more direct parallel to the Orestes to be seen in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. In the character of Brick, Williams transposes the image of an Orestes almost exactly as it appears in Euripides' drama. Brick, like his predecessor, is haunted by an ambiguous guilt; that is, a guilt for which he has been legally acquitted. The true nature of transgression for Williams is illustrated in this figure. For although Brick has been acquitted by external forces, he is condemned in his own inner consciousness.

Williams, like O'Neill, seems to interpret his sense of transgression in the language of the Freudian Guilt Complex. We believe that this is only one dimension of the explication of theme, a linguistic dimension. For if the root of the suffering in these figures were Freudian, in the sense in which we are inclined to use this language in the American Culture, then the solution of the drama would lie in the elimination of guilt by the confrontation of Reality.

If we accept this interpretation, then the guilt-consciousness of the protagonist is of a hallucinatory nature.

Careful examination of these plays and their parallels in other periods would seem to suggest that such is not Williams's intent. The guilt which interests Williams, O'Neill, and others among the Contemporaries is far more extensive in its implications. It is, in effect, the reappearance of Original Sin, the comprehensive involvement of all human beings in the annihilation and destruction of their fellow men, either by direct participation or by assent. It is a guilt which Jaspers describes in Tragedy Is Not Enough:

> Man cannot escape his guilt through right and truthful conduct: guilt itself seems incurred guiltlessly. Man takes this guilt upon himself. He does not try to evade it. He stands by his guilt, not out of personal stubborness, but for the sake of the very truth, which is destined for failure in his necessary sacrifice.[31]

Williams seems to be interested in creating an image of man who will involve the spectator directly in the consideration of events in our own time. Williams, like the Existentialists, wishes to affront all men with a sense of culpability, of responsibility for evil in the world. The Anti-hero is meant to shock men, to attack their sense of moral complacency, their indifference to suffering.

IV

Now in the organization of this personality who appears in the drama of Williams, we see another reversal of the Aristotelian principles, for not only is the protagonist in the contemporary not a good man, he is not, in the terms of the Aristotelian description, a man at all, an organized, coherent being. He is, on the contrary, an un-being "caught between in the form of limitation between being and non-being." The Contemporary hero is a partiality, and to present him as such Williams employs an organization which is necessarily different. The theory of personality organization which Williams employs specifically is that of Pirandello, who wrote in Six Characters In Search of an Author.

> For the drama lies all in this--in the conscience that I have, that each one of us has. We believe this conscience to be a single thing, but it is many sided. There is one for this person and another for that. Diverse consciences. So we have this illusion of being one person for all, of having a personality that is unique in all our acts. But it isn't true. We perceive this when, tragicallyperhaps, in something we do, we are as its were, suspended, caught up in the air on a kind of hook. Then we perceive that all of us was not in the act, and that it would be atrocious injustice to judge us by that action alone.[32]

Pirandello's perception of the personality is very close to that of Nietzsche and even closer to the modifications of this basic idea of a divided man in the theory of Jung.

Williams reflects the general modern preoccupation

with man as a complex, an aggregate of personnae or masks, a discontinuous and disharmonious conglomerate of aspects in search of a Reality principle, a "Transcendent Ego," a "Reconciling Symbol." Williams' Alma explains herself in Summer and Smoke

> I've thought many times of the thing you told me last summer, that I have a doppelganger. I looked that up and I found that it means another person inside of me, another self, and I don't know whether to thank you or not for making me conscious of it!--I haven't been well. . . . For a while I thought I was dying, that was the change that was coming.[33]

We have seen this idea of a disassociated man before; at least the Contemporary dramatists believe that we have seen him in Hamlet. Camus writes that Hamlet is the most perfect example in all letters of the Absurd Sensibility, the discontinuous Self. It is the "Hamlet Personality" which is the model for the organization of the contemporary hero.

The Hamlet image moves into the drama of Williams and the Contemporaries from many routes, but perhaps the most direct of these that we may identify is that of Expressionism and the Neo-Expressionistic theory of Pirandello. Pirandello constructs a "play within the play," which is the mirror of conscience for the revelation of an Absurd personality.

Hamlet is not a single being. Like the Contemporary hero, he is a composite of many essentially unrelated

personalities. He is organized much in the manner of a Picasso painting, structured from component and often discontinuous visions. Shakespeare reconciles these contrary visions of Hamlet by attributing to him the consciousness of an actor, a consciousness which is both internal and external to the play. Charles Van Doren suggests this idea in his preface to this play:

> Hamlet is an actor. Like any character in whom Shakespeare was greatly interested he plays a role. He plays indeed many roles, being supreme in tragedy as Falstaff was supreme in comedy. . . . Like Falstaff he shows the man he is by being many men. . . . He acts with the King and Queen, with Ophelia, with Polonius, with the court at large; taking on and putting off each role as occasion dictates, and at the climax of the tragedy wearing them all simultaneously.[34]

The Contemporaries take this Existentialist Hamlet as their point of departure; the affirmation of the present world <u>is</u> becomes the key to character. Man is cut away from an effective past and the hope of future. The Contemporary dramatists concern themselves in the play with the isolation of the present condition.

Williams uses this disassociative process as his basis for organization. Each of his plays is peopled with figures who seem to be extensions of a single self, alternative faces, personnae. These selves, which Sartre calls the personification of rights, could represent a total being, if the author or the protagonist could find a single unifying principle. These facets of the Self are stages of human

realization. Character, like the rest of the world in Williams, is a projection of consciousness.

Though Williams appears to be engaged in the creation of people, he is, like Sartre and the French dramatists, primarily concerned with the delineation of the human struggle by the creation of partial images, the abstraction of qualities: virtues, transgressions, rights, hopes, and dreams. The drama is a kind of morality and the characters are, like those figures who appear in Everyman, first of all actors, wearers of masks, masks which demonstrate the patched and contrary nature of man.

One of the most interesting illustrations of this possibility may be seen in The Glass Menagerie. Williams creates in this drama an Observing and Reflecting "Tom" who stands outside of the stream of experience to watch the flow of life--a flow distorted and ordered in recall. As Tom recounts the past, it seems evident that each of the figures in the drama has two roles; (1) as a character who in empirical Reality exists apart from Tom, (2) as an extension of Tom's own divided identity. In one way, The Glass Menagerie is the account of Tom's search for being, for a unifying Self. On this plane the problem of the play is the problem of choice for him, a choice which seems to be represented in two figures: in Laura, the Self of Reflection, and

in the father, the Existentialist Self of Action. Tom makes a choice which he explains:

> I didn't go to the moon, I went much further--for time is the longest distance between two places--Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoebox. I left Saint Louis. I descended the steps of this fire-escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space.[35]

This choice, as he indicates at the end of the play, does not resolve his problem. He cannot escape his Soul-Image Laura:

> The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored but torn away from the branches. I would have stopped but I was pursued by something. It always came upon me unawares, taking me altogether by surprise. Perhaps it was a familiar bit of music. Perhaps it was only a piece of transparent glass--Perhaps I am walking along a street at night, in some strange city before I have found companions. I pass the lighted window of a shop where perfume is sold. The window is filled with pieces of colored glass, tiny transparent bottles in delicate colors, like bits of a shattered rainbow. Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes. . . .[36]

The Anti-hero seeks being in the world, a being which is the result of choice. In each of the major plays Williams' protagonist searches among the alternatives of the play, among the Selves of his consciousness for a unifying principle. In The Glass Menagerie, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Summer and Smoke, and A Streetcar Named Desire, this choice is approached, but not really made. Williams shows us one moment in a dilemma which continues beyond the confines of the play.

Williams is a part of the representation of man's search for identity in the twentieth century. It is because of this search that the Contemporaries reject the Sophoclean man, the model of the Aristotelian hero as a present symbol of mankind. For he is according to Professor Kitto, even in the Greek context, a <u>being</u> who prefigures tragedy, a ritual typification of all things within himself, and as such, he exempts man from the necessary contemporary function of contemplation of his role:

> In Sophocles it is the hero himself who prefigures Man; he is strong and weak; he, and no one else (except incidentally) pays for his weakness. It is from this concentration of the tragic idea into one hero that the Aristotelian drama gets its Aristotelian virtues; . . .[37]

Perhaps the significant question is, are these figures which Williams draws images of a man who has intrinsic value, a man possessing human nobility? The answer is, that in the Aristotelian sense, they are not, but neither are many of the figures drawn by Aeschylus and Euripides. They share with these, as with Hamlet, the nobility of a suffering humanity. The Contemporary protagonist of Williams is designed to "show man the image of his own terror and pain." The organization of this figure is, like his age, different from that of other eras. The protagonist of Williams is created in pieces, in fragments from other epoches and from other forms. He is not an aristocrat, nor is he intended to

be. He possesses no endowment except the capacity for suffering and the will to knowledge.

We may ask why does he matter? Why should the theatre be concerned with the fate of an Anti-hero: an alcoholic, a cripple, a nymphomaniac, a repressed and half-crazed Southern spinster? The answer lies in the assertion of these dramatists that these figures, no less than ourselves, represent the condition of humanity, the fate of the role, the very present image of man.

CHAPTER V

THE CAMINO REAL: THE WORLD AS SPECTACLE

We have, in the preceding chapters of this essay, attempted to discern the concepts of form which comprise the definition of drama in the contemporary theatre. It seems evident that the Contemporary form is poetic in its intent, that it seeks to present contemporary man with the image of his present condition, a condition which such dramatists as Williams believe to be characterized by moral, spiritual, and intellectual disintegration. This intent in the drama has necessitated sweeping changes (1) in the concept of dramatic action, (2) in the use of myth, and (3) in the nature of the protagonist.

To facilitate the realization of these changes in external form, the drama has developed complex and abstract patterns of modern myth; it has created new symbols; and it has evolved a new image of the hero. The Contemporary form is a synthetic entity derived from the union of diverse forms and techniques, "borrowed" from literature, the painting arts, and the cinema in the twentieth century. Like these forms, the new theatre expresses a sensibility peculiar to the present time.

Tennessee Williams' Camino Real, like The Skin of Our Teeth, The Infernal Machine, The Flies, and Waiting for Godot, may be considered as an archetype of the new genre. For this play demonstrates all of the basic changes which mark the Contemporaries' notion of theatre. So different are Camino Real and like plays from what have we known as drama, that writers like Ionesco describe the drama of his species by invented names such as anti-drama, comic-tragedy, anti-theatre, and grotesque mime. American critic Eric Bentley describes theatre, in its extended form, the form of Camino Real as "magic theatre," theatre which seeks to be more than drama, to transcend former definitions.[1] Certainly Williams makes a definitive break with the Naturalistic tradition of the American drama, a break more calculated than that of O'Neill in plays such as The Great God Brown and more radical than that of Wilder in The Skin of Our Teeth. Williams' Camino Real established the playwright's position, not only as a Contemporary dramatist, but as an artist whose world view reflects current developments in philosophy, in the plastic arts, and in literature.

We are primarily concerned with the fact that Camino Real illustrates for the student of contemporary theatre the necessity of new criteria, of a new definition. Clearly, neither the Aristotelian definition, the Horatian imperative, the Romantic concept, nor the Realistic law can provide a satisfactory basis for understanding or judging such plays.

Camino Real is not drama in the sense prescribed by any of these former definitions. By these older definitions, it is tableau, lyric, poetry, or dance. It is, in the ancient language of Horace,

> [The image of] a sick man's dreams . . . vain and fictitious . . .: so that neither head nor foot can correspond to any one form.[2]

The contemporary dramatists would agree with Horace, but they would point out that the "sick man" of his description is humanity.

We should like to examine Camino Real as an illustration of Williams' idea of form, an idea which has, in the years of his activity as a professional playwright, undergone complication and definitive change. Our authority for this choice of an illustrative work is the playwright himself. Williams writes that in the Camino Real, he has given more attention to the problem of internal and external design than in any other work:

> My desire was to give these audiences my own sense of something wild and unrestricted that ran like water in the mountains, or clouds changing shape in a gale, or the continually dissolving and transforming images of a dream. This sort of freedom is not chaos nor anarchy. On the contrary, it is the result of painstaking design, and in this work I have given more conscious attention to form than I have in any work before. . . .[3]

In our earlier discussion of form, we indicated that the playwright conceived of the basic contour of the drama, like that of all art, as vision. To realize vision, Williams,

like other contemporary artists, seeks to extend the dimensions of the arts. The Contemporaries, because of a number of factors, see the theatre primarily as a complex, but while they embrace many aesthetic sensibilities, they tend to redefine all elements, including music, sound, and language, in visual terms. They use as their coordinating principle the consciousness of rhythm. The new drama follows a principle set out by Joyce in The Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man:

> Rhythm, said Stephen, is the first formal esthetic relation of part to part in any esthetic whole or of an esthetic whole to its part or parts or of any part to the esthetic whole of which it is a part.[4]

The drama is vision, but it is dynamic vision; Williams calls Camino Real a symbolic progression, a moving image. In his effort to transpose this moving image to the stage the dramatist demands the perogative of a painter, a sculptor, or a composer. He seeks plastic realization for a poetic image. The Contemporaries find the words of Horace prophetic:

> Poets and painters [you will say] have ever had authority for attempting anything.[5]

Williams and the contemporary dramatists conceive of themselves then as playwrights in the theatre, not in a theatre of words, but in a complex medium. Their instrument is not merely language; it is a composite of all elements of

theatre: gesture, sound, music, dance, light, color, action, and design.

> . . . I think of writing as something more organic than words, something closer to being and action. I want to work more and more with a plastic theatre than I have (worked with) before.[6]

The Camino Real has its primary existence in the theatre. The written play is, in the language of Williams, only the score:

> And in my dissident opinion, a play in a book is only a shadow of a play and not even a clear shadow of it...The printed script of a play is hardly more than an architect's blueprint of a house not yet built or built and destroyed.[7]

For Williams, as for Appia, the dramatist is the composer; drama, like music, is an ineffable substance whose existence is only symbolized on the page:

> The score is set down on paper, just like the manuscripts of the dramatists; the conventional symbols of music are the equivalent of those other conventional symbols, the letters of the alphabet; and the presence of the composer is the same human presence as that of the dramatist. Where, then, lies the difference?[8]

Camino Real illustrates, more than do many other examples of the major works of the genre, this plastic idea of form; form as multidimensional design, design in motion. This movement of this playwright toward a plastic art reflects, of course, the pre-occupation of all of the arts in the twentieth century with the visual image and with poetic symbols which appeal to visual and tactile senses. This consciousness, especially as it reveals itself in

Camino Real, is constructed by many critics as the virtual rejection of literary theatre, the denial of language:

> These phantasmagories like Camino Real form perhaps a great danger for the stage--but not, as you said, for the values contained. Behind it is hidden an enormously large amount of reflection. Danger exists for the drama as a linguistic work of art. . . . The word gets the worst of it, it is degraded in favor of a theatrical presentation.[9]

Certain critics, like those reviewing the Camino Real at Bochem, see this visualization in poetic symbols as an attempt to escape the responsibility of an open attack on social and political systems. They charge that art's movement toward a virtual inexplicability is the result of fear in the modern world:

> There exists, however, in fact everywhere, the worry that man who says his truth is simply brought to silence. And thus the truth of modern poets is said locked up. You see this process indeed in Camino Real presented scientifically: to speak openly with another is forbidden--if the policeman goes by, one breaks off and whistles a tune. One cannot show it any more clearly.[10]

Williams seems to support this point of view, at least to some degree, for in the Camino Real he has Jacques Casanova say,

> The exchange of serious questions and ideas, especially between persons from opposite sides of the plaza, is regarded unfavorably here. You'll notice I'm talking as if I had acute laryngitis. I'm gazing into the sunset.[11]

But the obscuring of ideational content, if indeed this is a valid observation on the poetic symbolism of the plastic theatre, is not the major motivation for a visual

means of expression. We have seen that in these dramatists, the essential problems of man seem to defy expression in the linguistic terms of older definitions. The dramatist feels that he is forced to attempt to transcend the limitations of his perception by an appeal to a Universal, either to the universality of emotion and primitive feeling, or to the universality of abstract representation of human values. Williams claims, in the Camino Real, to appeal to such universality of emotions, emotions enlarged and enhanced, emotions which have undergone the refining process of the creative imagination of the poet:

> My desire was to give these audiences my own sense of something wild and unrestricted that ran like water in the mountains or clouds changing shape in a gale or the continually dissolving and transforming images of a dream. This sort of freedom is not chaos nor anarchy. On the contrary, it is the result of painstaking design, and in this work I have given more conscious attention to form and structure than I have in any work before. Freedom is not achieved simply by working freely.[12]

II

Camino Real apparently began life as a short sketch, a frankly poetic piece for actor-dancer-musicians. The title of this early lyric drama, published in 1948, was Ten Blocks on the Camino Real. A second version, produced by Director Elia Kazan on Broadway in 1953, was, according to the author,

the result of considerable revision in which the director took active part:

> Elia Kazan was attracted to this work mainly, I believe, for the same reason--its freedom and mobility of form. I know that we have kept saying the word "flight" to each other as if the play were merely an abstraction of the impulse to fly, and most of the work out of town, his in staging, mine in cutting and revising, has been with this impulse in mind: the achievement of a continual flow. Speech after speech and bit after bit that were nice in themselves have been remorselessly blasted out of the script and its staging wherever they seemed to obstruct or divert this flow.[13]

The final version, which is the main basis of this discussion, is according to the Editor's note, the result of still more extensive reshaping:

> Three characters, a prologue and several scenes that were not in the Broadway production have been added, or reinstated from earlier, preproduction versions, while other scenes have been deleted.[14]

Now this extensive reorganization of the play, which may not yet be finished, would seem to indicate that a discrepancy existed between the vision of the artist and its series of realizations in dramatic form. For this reason we are interested, first of all, to compare the fundamental differences between these two evidences of creative process, to discern the stages of the author's development toward an expression which he regarded as a more mature form for the play. For in this comparative analysis something of the nature of the contemporary form may be illustrated.

The basic construct of both versions of the Camino Real is that of a vision, a poetic revelation. Williams' vision in this drama is Apocalyptic. Like Strindberg, like Blake, like Dante, and like Saint John, he foresees the end of Humanity. But Williams sees a humanity adjuged, by some uncertain power, to spiritual death:

> I know this place. Here it is on the chart. Look, it says here: "Continue until you come to the square of a walled town which is the end of the Camino Real and the beginning of the Camino Real. Halt there," it says, "and turn back, Traveler, for the spring of humanity has gone dry in this place and--"[15]

This vision of a world condemned to death is the internal form of the Camino Real.

Now the first problem in the design of the play is the problem of the transposition of this vision in all of the strength of its initial revelation. Like Sartre in The Flies, Cocteau in The Infernal Machine, and Wilder in The Skin of Our Teeth, Williams proposes to decipher the future of the human race through symbol. The Camino Real is by definition, a fable, an allegory, a twentieth century morality drama.

In the first play the dramatist attempts to reveal his vision in purely poetic images. Ten Blocks on the Camino Real is a kind of Yeatsian play for dancers. The preliminary description includes these directions:

> As the curtain rises there are stationary figures about the plaza. These figures will be variously used as vendors, dancers, and chorus of the

> "Laboratory" scene. A group of ten dancers would suffice for all chorus uses. They are crouching, leaning and lying about the plaza in their dust-colored rags. . . . One of the street-figures is distinct from the others. She is an ancient woman who wears a snow-white rebozo and who is vending those glittering and gaudy flowers made of tin that are used at peasant funerals in Latin America. Her voice is softer and more musical than the others, and her face remains hidden by the blanket until the "Laboratory" scene when she becomes La Madrecita de las Soledadas. . . .
>
> Also distinct from the others is a guitar player whose instrument is blue: he is dressed as a Mexican street-musician, though he may wear a domino to indicate that he is somewhat outside the play, being a sort of master of ceremonies. The guitar and singing may be used at more points than are indicated in the script: the same is true of dancing; though it should not impede a lively progress of scenes. . . .[16]

The first play, then, is a lyric drama, organized in much the same fashion as The Glass Menagerie was organized, as a presentation of images, images barely elaborated by exposition. There are in this play ten such images, some almost completely without explication. The burden of communication rests on visual theatre: on dance, on mime, and on the total design of theatrical elements. We are conscious of the structuring of this vision around key visual images; around the Madonna figure, around Picasso's "Blue Guitarist," around the images of the Commedia dell 'arte.

Williams' consciousness of spectacle, like that of many contemporary artists, is essentially medieval. It is related to the popular form of the Commedia dell 'arte, a visual theatre which has influenced many dramatists, including

Shakespeare. The first Camino is a medieval masque, a pageant, a grotesque mime of the spectacle of existence. Williams, like Cocteau and Guillaume Apollinaire, approximates the quasi-religious mime of the Middle Ages, the profane and near-sacriligious mimicry of festival days. The images of Camino Real are grotesques drawn from the secular medieval comedy. In the early version of the play the following description is given of the Death Mummers:

> The Street-Cleaners enter through arch at the top of the alley and advance into plaza, trundling their big white barrel on wheels, old German prints of the "Dance of Death" will suggest their appearance, except that they wear white jackets and caps and have brooms.[17]

The playwright makes this consciousness emphatic in the later versions of the drama:

> A Hunchback Mummer somersaults through his hoop of silver bells, springs up and shakes it excitedly toward a downstage arch which begins to flicker with a diamond-blue radiance; this marks the entrance of each legendary character in the play. . . .[18]

> . . . Weird-looking celebrants or carnival mummers creep into the plaza, silently as spiders descending a wall.[19]

The first Camino Real is primarily a spectacle of the same genre as the unwritten mime of the secular medieval theatre. It is in this correspondence that the contemporary drama draws parallels to certain perspectives of Shakespeare. For Shakespeare retains an absurd sensibility which is traceable to the profane popular theatre of his time. From

the Commedia, Shakespeare draws a concept of life as ironic spectacle, as inarticulate mummery, as grotesque and meaningless ritual. While this sensibility is evident in certain of the Shakespearian comedies, it is particularly apparent in Hamlet, especially in the play within the play.

The contemporaries adopt, in the plays of this subspecies of ironic comedy, this "alter-face" of Hamlet. They use the theatre, not to celebrate man's heroic stature, but to emphasize his futility and his essential absurdity. Camino Real, like Cocteau's Infernal Machine, Kafka's Trial, Brecht's The Caucasian Chalk Circle, and Miller's The Crucible is basically a dumb-show, an ironic charade which reveals the triumph of evil over good, and which perceives the interchangeability of the tragic and the comic. Its figures, like the Sphinx of Cocteau, appear, disappear, reappear; they unroll, divide, extend, contract, and merge in a manner which is essentially demonic.[20]

In his grotesque mime, the consignment of the world to spectacle, Williams seeks to decipher, in plastic terms, the same enigmatic problem, which has been evident in all his works: the problem of meaning, of intelligibility, and of being. In this first Camino Real, he lyricizes the problem to which he cannot give adequate explication. But even in the first drama, a moral implication is already evident.

Man's alienation is the result of sin. He is beset by devils:

> The scene gathers wild momentum, is punctuated by crashes of percussion. Grotesque mummers act as demon custom inspectors and immigration authorities, etc. Baggage is tossed about, ripped open, smuggled goods seized, arrests made, all amid the wildest importunities, protests, threats, bribes, entreaties; it is a scene for improvisation.[21]

III

The progress from the first play to its later version repeats the general pattern of the playwright's development. Camino Real is essentially different from the earlier drama in its intellectual complication, in the addition of a second and even a third level of experience.

Williams begins the second version by declaring a moral and intellectual intent, the exposure of value systems. Like Sartre, he not only exposes value, he does not hesitate to attack what he considers as immorality. Now Williams' morality is not based on the conventional concept of the term in American life. This point is the occasion for much confusion in the American audience about the essential concern for ethical principle in his work.

Williams is concerned, like Bergson and Schopenhauer and like the Neo-Orthodox Christian thinkers such as Tillich, with a morality which is based on human compassion. He is,

in addition, concerned about a kind of integrity which the Existentialists affirm: the honor of the individual in confronting his essential human weakness.

Williams seems to regard the loss of honor as the beginning of chaos in the modern world. He begins his drama with the search of Don Quixote for a new meaning and a new interpretation of this word:

> Quixote:
> It also reminds an old knight of that green country he lived in which was the youth of his heart, before such singing words as Truth!
>
> Sancho: (panting)
> --Truth.
>
> Quixote:
> Valor!
>
> Sancho:
> --Valor.
>
> Quixote: (elevating his lance)
> Devoir!
>
> Sancho:
> --Devoir. . .
>
> Quixote:
> --turned into the meaningless mumble of some old monk hunched over cold mutton at supper![22]

Transgression on the Camino Real is the loss of honor.

> "Leave with honor?" Your vocabulary is almost as out-of-date as your cape and your cane. How could anyone quit this field with honor, this place where there's nothing but the gradual wasting away of everything decent in us . . . the sort of desperation that comes after even desperation has been worn out through long wear! . . . Why have they put these screens around the table?[23]

This loss of honor on the Camino Real is illustrated in regard to each of the major figures in the drama. Significantly, it is the sin of the poet, Byron:

> That was my vocation once upon a time, before it was obscured by vulgar plaudits!--Little by little it was lost among gondolas and palazzos!--masked balls, glittering salons, huge shadowy courts and torch-lit entrances! . . . .
> . . . . . .
> There is a passion for declivity in this world!
>
> And lately I've found myself listening to hired musicians behind a row of artificial palm trees--instead of the single-pure-stringed instrument of my heart. . . .[24]

Williams concludes the play with a final prayer for the return of honor to the world:

> . . . Of sometime and somewhere, let there be something to mean the word honor again.[25]

There is a second value to which the playwright addresses himself, the loss of human compassion:

> The Dreamer: Hermano!
> . . . . . .
> Gutman to the waiter:
> Put up the ropes!
>
> The word was spoken. The crowd is agitated. Hang on!
>
> Jacques hoarsely, shaken:
> He said "Hermano." That's the word for brother.
>
> Gutman calmly:
> Yes, the most dangerous word in any human tongue is the word for brother. It's inflammatory. -- I don't suppose it can be struck out of the language altogether but it must be reserved for strictly private use in back of soundproof walls. Otherwise it disturbs the population. . . .

Jacques:
The people need the word. They're thirsty for it!

Gutman:
What are these creatures? Mendicants. Prostitutes. Thieves and petty vendors in a bazar where the human heart is a part of the bargain.

Jacques:
Because they need the word and the word is forbidden!

Gutman:
The word is said in pulpits and at the tables of councils where its volatile essence can be contained. But on the lips of these creatures what is it? A wanton excitement to riot, without understanding. For what is a brother to them but someone to get ahead of, to cheat, to lie, to undersell in the market. Brother, you sat to the man whose wife you sleep with! --26

Williams illustrates the gravity of his concern for the destruction of value in contemporary life by holding up traditional poetic themes: love, power, success, and death. He shows the disintegration of these Romantic concepts in a way which distinguishes the contemporaries from the Romantics. The progression on the Camino Real re-creates experience around the destruction of these ideas; its use of them is, like its visual tone, ironic.

The first of the Romantic values which is examined is individualism. Williams perceives the total devaluation of man in the present world:

Now you want to know what is done to a body from which the soul has departed on the Camino Real.-- Its disposition depends on what the Street-cleaners happen to find in its pockets. If its pockets are

> empty as the unfortunate Baron's turned out to be, and as mine are at this moment-- the "stiff" is wheeled straight off to the Laboratory. And there the individual becomes an undistinguished member of a collectivist state. His chemical components are separated and poured into vats containing the corresponding elements of countless others. If any of his vital organs or parts are at all unique in size or structure, they're placed on exhibition in bottles containing a very foul-smelling solution called formaldehyde. There is a charge of admission to this museum. The proceeds go to the maintenance of the military police.[27]

Perhaps the most ironically treated of these Romantic themes is the theme of death. Death for Williams, is not the symbol of finality and grandeur which it is in Romantic literature. For Williams, death is like life, an absurdity, a futility.

> The Survivor stumbles forward. The Officer fires at him. He lowers his hands to his stomach, turns slowly about him with a lost expression, looking up at the sky and stumbles toward the fountain. During the scene that follows, until the entrance of La Madrecita and her Son, the Survivor drags himself slowly about the concrete rim of the fountain, almost entirely ignored, as a dying pariah dog in a starving country.
> . . . . . .
> The Survivor has come out upon the forestage, now, not like a dying man but like a shy speaker who has forgotten the opening line of his speech. He is only a little crouched over with a hand obscuring the red stain over his belly. Two or three Street People wander about calling their wares.
> . . . The Survivor arrives at the top of the stairs descending into the orchestra of the theatre, and hangs on to it, looking out reflectively as a man over the rail of a boat coming into a somewhat disturbingly strange harbor.[28]

Death is not heroic for Williams; it is a grotesque jest. He re-creates the sensibility of Hamlet's Gravediggers' scene in his concept of the Street-cleaners:

> There is the sound of the Streetcleaners' piping. They trundle their white barrel into the plaza from one of the downstage arches. The appearance of these men undergoes a progressive alteration through the play. When they first appear they are almost like any public servants in a tropical country; their white jackets are dirtier than the musicians' and some of the stains are red. They have on white caps with black visors. They are continually exchanging sly jokes and giggling unpleasantly together.[29]

IV

Now the consideration of values crucial to civilization makes of the play more than a charade, a simple procession of images in a plastic medium. The Camino Real, like Claudel's The Satin Slipper, Wilder's The Skin of Our Teeth, Sartre's The Flies, Anouilh's Antigone, and other representatives of the genre is a drama of ideas. The problem on the Camino Real is the same basic problem which we have seen in all of the rest of Williams' drama: the problem of being.

Through the superimposition of myth, Williams proposes to bring into focus the intellectual implications of his image of man. It is this schematization which provides much of the characteristic complexity of the formal organization of Camino Real. For the highly schematized myth imposes a multiple consciousness, it is a montage which diffuses the images of man and which emphasizes movement and process.[30]

Williams seeks to give intellectual unity to this play through the creation of a Joycean myth, a literary legend which embraces all phases of the history of modern man. The playwright fuses his legendary perspectives to a dream rationale and to the basic concept of the world as theatre. Like Joyce and like his disciple, Thornton Wilder, the dramatist seeks to understand man's dilemma and to find a hope of salvation in the reconsideration of the alternatives posed in cultural history. To this end he extracts from literature several images of man: Don Quixote of Cervantes, Marguerite Gautier of Dumas, Baron de Charlus of Proust, and the legendary poet, Byron. To these he adds a figure of American popular legend in World War II, the symbol of the common man, Kilroy. Like Sartre, Williams reduces characters and actions to intellectual values. The author admits that he is engaged in a process of abstraction:

> . . . This play has seemed to me like the construction of another world, a separate existence. Of course, it is nothing more nor less than my conception of the time and world that I live in, and its people are mostly archetypes of certain basic attitudes and qualities with those mutations that would occur if they had continued along the road to this hypothetical terminal point in it.[31]

Through the perspective of this synthetic myth, Williams examines the values of the world. He states these values as intellectual alternatives which have been adopted by individuals and by modern civilization at various stages

of its development. The Bochem critics feel that the dramatist achieves a new perspective through his myth. This literary myth shifts the nature of Williams' language from that of the Naturalistic tradition in America to that of the Expressionists: from the actual to the abstract, from the psychological to the intellectual:

> Williams has also perceived the drive in the arts to seek a whole new world in an abstract way.[32]

The Bochem critics point out, however, that Williams, like other contemporaries, does not reveal the unity of idea which the Expressionists possessed. The play is skeptical in form. Its only unity is its seeking among the possibilities for an answer.

> . . . I must say: the poet leaves open out of what impulse he has written the play. Indeed, he offers us several things: a Kafka-feeling more or less, this hopeless being, absorbed by an abyss, against which the individual can accomplish nothing. Or he offers religious emotional values--as, say, whenever the word "brother" sounds. But other elements contradict that again. One doesn't know, is it a yearning, the romantic yearning which is basically his sustaining feeling? He offers me a key in his own explanations for the play--he writes there: "There are only directions for the use of a play." He leaves it up to the theatre, therefore, up to the public, to make something out of it.[33]

Williams refocuses his myth, then, to create a cultural legend of man's life from the dawn of the modern epoch, with Don Quixote, to its apparent demise in the near-twentieth century, with Kilroy. Between these two extremities, who are manifestations of the same figure, Quixote-

Kilroy, the man of honor, he poses other symbolic figures who embody the specific qualities of various epochs. He writes in the instructions of the final version of the play:

> This [music] marks the advent of each legendary character in the play. The music follows: a waltz from the time of Camille in Paris.[34]

Williams sees history as spectacle, a "panorama of lost legends": in Marguerite Gautier, the "Lady of the Camellias"; in Jacques Casanova, the "Great Lover": in Byron, the Poet; in Proust's Baron de Charlus, the Decadent Aristocrat; in Mulligan, the Tycoon of the twentieth century. Each of these figures symbolizes an era of modern history:

> Ah, there's the music of another legend, one that everyone knows, the legend of the sentimental whore, the courtesan who made the mistake of love. But now you see her coming into this plaza not as she was when she burned with a fever that cast a thin light over Paris, but changed, yes, faded as lanterns and legends fade when they burn into day.[35]

With the movement of these characters across the stage, we watch the rise and fall of heroes," the movement of time and history, in a kind of theatrical abstraction.

Williams apparently sees each of these figures and their civilizations as having lost in "the game of being against non-being." The problem of an absurd existence is given this statement by Marguerite:

> What are we sure of? Not even of our existence, dear comforting friend! And whom can we ask the questions that torment us? "What is this place?" "Where are we?" --a fat old man who gives sly hints

> that only bewilder us more, a fake of a Gypsy squinting at cards and tea-leaves. What else are we offered? The never-broken procession of little events that assure us that we and strangers about us are still going on! Where? Why? and the perch that we hold is unstable! We're threatened with eviction, for this is a port of entry and there are no permanent guests! And where else have we to go when we leave here? Bide-a-while? "Ritz Men Only?" Or under that ominous arch into Terra Incognita? We're lonely. We're frightened. We hear the Street-cleaners' piping not far away. . .[36]

The "Lady of the Camellias," a nineteenth century figure, expresses what in the twentieth century is described as man's essential anguish, his despair.

V

The Bochem critics see a third dimension in this play. To its aesthetic and intellectual planes, they add theology. Now as the Bochem critics regard the Camino Real as a theological vision, an effort to render Dante's Divine Comedy into contemporary terms, Professor Sawatzi sees in this classic a clue to the nature of the playwright's vision:

> . . . In order to understand Camino Real completely, one needs a Baedecker and the Divine Comedy is this Baedecker. The beginnings compare: Wayward persons come to this unusual place where things happen intolerably and where everyman tortures the others, where an eternal complaining and groaning, pressing and pounding rules. This puzzling locality is described precisely in Dante: it is that middle realm between life and death where at the end of their life's journey all men gather. They are already dead but still have not lost their memory

> of earthly life; their memory burdens and pains them yet; they always want to go back again, while the way back is barred.[37]

Williams, as these critics point out, fashions an Inferno based on a legend of the American southwest:

> The title is consciously supposed to enclose an ambiguity. If one expresses Camino Real in English, that means "the way of reality." If one expresses it in Spanish, then it means "Royal Road." . . . In this double meaning already lies hidden what Tennessee Williams wants to say . . . the road of the Spanish knights who conquered the land, but also the road upon which Christianity came to the West coast of America. Thus, moreover, is the division of the play into sixteen stations also explained--the missionary stations . . . lay upon this way, a day's journey from one another. . . . Today, however, the old missionary way has become a street of industry, of money, of tourist trade--a business reality.[38]

Williams has other models for his "Inferno," such models as have become apparent in the suffering of the war years. The ports after which the author models his condemned city have emprisoned thousands of refugees, displaced persons, for whom the city has meant a "place of intolerable transition between life and death." Williams' city has the contour of scores of American movies by the name of Casablanca, Tangiers, Lisbon, Shanghai, Vera Cruz, Havana. In this universe Williams, like Dante,and like Eliot in the contemporary drama seeks to know the cause of humanity's death.

Williams presents his theology in contemporary terms. Camino Real is an Absurd Universe. It is absurd because there

is apparently no cohesive force which exists in it. The Camino is merely a place of entry and departure. It is described by Gutman:

> But this is a port of entry and departure. There is no permanent guests.[39]

Gutman describes the nature of man's existence:

> They suffer from extreme fatigue, our guests at the Siete Mares, all of them have a degree or two of fever. Questions are passed among them like something illicit and shameful, like counterfeit money or drugs or ill indecent postcards--. . .
>
> My guests are confused and exhausted but at this hour they pull themselves together, and drift downstairs on the wings of gin and the lift, the drift into the public rooms and exchange notes again on the fashionable couturiers and custom tailors, restaurants, vintages of wine, hair-dressers, plastic surgeons, girls and young men susceptible to offers. . . .[40]

Gutman points out the universality of anxiety and despair on the Camino Real:

> When the big wheels crack on this street, it's like the fall of a capital city, the destruction of Carthage, the sack of Rome by the white-eyed giants from the North! I've seen them fall! I've seen the destruction of them! Adventurers suddenly afraid of a dark room! Con men and pitchmen and plumehatted cavaliers turned baby-soft at one note of the Street-cleaners' pipes! When I observe the change, I say to myself: "Could it happen to me?"--The answer is "Yes!" And that's what curdles my blood like milk on the doorstep of someone gone for the summer![41]

Williams answers that the cause of death is man's own sins. He creates a new and contemporary catalogue of the Damned, a catalogue reminiscent of Eliot's catalogue in Four Quartets. Williams describes his book of transgressions in the language of the city. Like Cocteau in The Infernal

Machine, he renders his ancient idea in the present idiom; in this case in the pseudo-poetry of film love scenes, in jargon of advertising agencies, in the "hipster" talk of the "beat generation," in the intimate tones of gossip columnists, in the technical language of social agencies, in the official "tough talk" of guards and police. In the early version of the play, he explains his intent.

> In this scene I am really trying to catch the quality of really "tough" Americana of the comic sheets, the skidrow bars, cat-houses, Grade B movies, street-Arabs, vagrants, drunks, pitchmen, gamblers, whores, all the rootless, unstable and highly spirited life beneath the middle-class social level in the States.[42]

Basically he seeks to create an image of the common man's Inferno, the Divine Comedy retranslated into the terms of the popular theatre, where it had its birth.

Williams makes man wholly responsible for the state of the world. In Camino Real there exists no real and effective Providence. It is true that the playwright seems to create an Omniscient figure in Gutman, but the real nature of this figure is ambiguous. For he does not seem effectively tied to Camino Real as a cause. He exists as an official, a kind of cosmic policeman, an enforcer of rules.

We recall Williams' Nietzschean tendencies to suggest that God is, like man, a victim of the world, a detached and bewildered observer. The playwright seems to structure a universe which approximates that of the Existentialist

dramatists, Sartre and Camus. On the Camino Real, God is absent, whether by choice or necessity. Man is his own cause, his own reason; it is he who has achieved his destruction. The problem of rebirth is then likewise man's problem. The Bochem critics state the intellectual proposition in these terms:

> All right, where are there, then, ways out? How must we conduct ourselves that the well-springs of humanity may flow again--of that humanity which we have lost in today's society? He shows us all the vain attempts to break out and allows only a few to go the right way over the Terra Incognita.[43]

VI

Williams, the American, finds in Kilroy the answer to the problem of humanity. Kilroy provides a new possibility for heroism in the Absurd Man. We are particularly interested in the dramatist's choice of this figure as his protagonist, for many reasons. First of all, it would seem logical that Williams, the poet, might have chosen one of the more Romantic figures as his hero. Indeed, he makes of Casanova and Marguerite, near-heroes. Actually in subordinating these two figures, the playwright has rejected aspects of his former image of the protagonist, the "weak and beautiful" figure of his earlier dramas. In Camino Real, Williams, seemingly, rejects these Romantic figures on the basis of

their indifference to suffering. Marguerite confesses her capacity for self-seeking to Jacques:

> So now and then, although we've wounded each other time and again--we stretch out hands to each other in the dark that we can't escape from--we huddle together for some dim communal comfort--and that's what passes for love on this terminal stretch of the road that used to be royal.[44]

The Camino Real, the playwright demands a more rigorous courage in his protagonist. His attitude seems to have undergone change, as he seeks to determine a new condition of heroism. Kilroy, legendary G.I. of World War II, modern "Ulysses" in search of meaning in the unnamed ports of the world, former hero, lover and conqueror, is for Williams a new image of the ritual figure. Gutman welcomes his arrival:

> Ho ho!--a clown! The eternal Punchinella!
> That's exactly what's needed in a time of crisis.[45]

Williams sees Kilroy as suited for this ritual suffering, a comic and absurd anguish. He symbolizes this figure's capacity for compassion, for suffering in the name of others as well as for himself. Kilroy is the man "with a heart."

> Feel my chest! Go on, feel it! Feel it. I've got a heart in my chest as big as the heart of a baby. Ha, ha![46]

Kilroy has retained throughout his travail a sense of honor:

> These are my gloves, these gloves are gold, and I fought a lot of hard fights to win 'em! I broke clean from the clinches. I never hit a low blow,

> the referee never told me to mix it up! And the fixers never got to me. . . . Yep, I'm a sucker that won the golden gloves.[47]

But most importantly to this play, Kilroy is able to signal the word "brother" even when it cannot be spoken, with the blinking of his comic nose. He uses his badge of affliction as a common denominator, a bond. Because he has these attributes: courage, honor, sympathy, Kilroy is chosen the "Patsy."

> Gutman:
> Here, Boy! Take these.
>
> [Gutman displays and then tosses on the ground at Kilroy's feet the Patsy outfit--the red fright wig, the big crimson nose that lights up and has horned rimmed glasses attached, a pair of clown pants that have a huge footprint on the seat.]
>
> Kilroy:
> What is this outfit?
>
> Gutman:
> The uniform of a Patsy.
>
> Kilroy:
> I know what a Patsy is--he's a clown in the circus who takes prat-falls but I'm no Patsy!
>
> Gutman:
> Pick it up.
>
> Kilroy:
> Don't give me orders. Kilroy is a free agent--
>
> Gutman:
> But a Patsy isn't. Pick it up and put it on, Candy Man. You are now the Patsy.[48]

The idea of man as clown is consistent with Existentialist myth of the theatre. Williams pushes the idea of the actor to one of its logical extensions, man the clown, the Absurd. Kilroy is chosen "Patsy" by some powers which are ambiguous and over which he has no control, but his courage lies, first of all, in the valor with which he resists his fate. He searches for an answer:

> How so I git out? Which way do I go, which way do I get out? Where's the Greyhound depot? Hey, do you know where the Greyhound bus depot is? What's the best way out, if there is any way out? I got to find one. I've had enough of this place. I had too much of this place. I'm free. I'm a free man with equal rights in this world! You better believe it because that's news for you and you had better believe it. Kilroy's a free man with equal rights in this world! All right, now help me, somebody, help me find a way out, I got to find one, I don't like this place! It's not for me and I'm not buying any! Oh! Over there! I see a sign that says, EXIT. That's sweet word to me, man, that's a lovely word, EXIT! That's the entrance to Paradise for Kilroy! Exit, I'm coming, Exit, I'm coming![49]

Kilroy seeks an exit, an escape from the Street-cleaners. He misses "The Fugitive," the Charon's Boat. He makes an unsuccessful attempt at escape by falling in love with Esmeralda, the reincarnation of innocence. Finally, he is forced to face the terror of his situation, the sound of the "Street-cleaners" piping in the distance. Kilroy makes what approximates the Existentialist affirmation of Orestes,

in a demonstration of greater courage than Williams has been inclined to reflect in his anti-heroic figures.

> Washed up!--Finished!
>
> [Piping]
>
> . . . that ain't a word that a man can't look at. . . . There ain't no words in the language a man can't look at . . . and know just what they mean, and be. And act. And go!
>
> He turns to the waiting Streetcleaners.
>
> Come on! . . . Come on! . . . COME ON, YOU SONS OF BITCHES! KILROY IS HERE! HE'S READY!
>
> [Kilroy swings at the Streetcleaners. They circle about him out of reach, turning him by each of their movements. The swings grow wilder like a boxer. He falls to his knees still swinging and finally collapses flat on his face.]
>
> [The Streetcleaners pounce, but La Madrecita throws herself protectingly over the body and covers it with her shawl.][50]

Williams chronicles the ordeal of the common man in this time. He interprets his ordeal, the same ordeal which the continental dramatists wish to interpret as suffering born of growing realization, of knowledge of the human condition. Williams interprets Existentialist Dread in the language of the American streets:

> Had for a bottom! Stewed, screwed, and tatooed on the Camino Real! Baptized, finally, with the contents of a slop-jar!--Did anybody say the deal was rugged?![51]

When Kilroy is destroyed by the Streetcleaners, Williams mourns his hero, the symbol of all "maimed creatures,

deformed, mutilated and homeless," throughout the world. For reasons which are not completely evident, the author creates in the sixteenth block of the new version, a coda. Like Eliot in the Cocktail Party, he creates an addendum which appears to lessen the essential pessimism of the drama. Block Sixteen celebrates the resurrection of Kilroy, the "rise of the Phoenix," and it allows the dramatist to pose a possibility of hope. Williams prays for a humanity characterized by error:

> God bless all con men and hustlers and pitchmen who hawk their hearts on the street, all two-time losers who're likely to, lose once more, the courtesan who made the mistake of love, the greatest of lovers crowned with the longest horns, the poet who wandered far from his heart's green country and possibly will and possibly won't be able to find his way back.[52]

Williams asks blessings on those knights--Quixote and Kilroy, who face life with the vestiges of an assaulted honor:

> Look down with a smile tonight on the last cavaliers, the ones with thrusty armor and soiled white plumes, and visit with understanding and something that's almost tender those fading legends that come and go in this plaza like songs not clearly remembered.[53]

The fountain of humanity is set flowing again by tenderness, compassion, the "violets in the mountains." Williams is, in his exhortation to endurance with compassion and courage, close to the basic Existentialist affirmation which is so apparent in continental literature.

VII

Williams in this later drama transposes his vision on two levels. The Camino Real, like Giraudoux's The Madwoman of Chaillot, Miller's The Crucible, and O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh, combines didacticism and poetic revelation. The divided nature of this enterprise provides, as we have seen throughout the examples of the genre an unhealed division, a separation, an inorganicism which is indigenous to the genre. The two levels of vision, in most of the authors within the genre. never find that perfect synthesis, that reconciling symbol which can integrate both planes of presentation.

The factor which remains constant on every level of the playwright's presentation is the search, the quest for meaning. The questions are asked by Gutman in Camino Real:

> What is this place? Where are we? What is the meaning of --[54]

These questions are elaborated by the Gypsy:

> Are you perplexed by something? Are you tired out and confused? Do you have a fever? Do you feel yourself to be spiritually unprepared for the age of exploding atoms? Do you distrust the newspapers? Are you suspicious of governments? Have you arrived at a point on the Camino Real where the walls converge not in the distance but right in front of your nose? Does further progress seem impossible to you? Are you afraid of anything at all? Afraid of your heartbeat? Or the eyes of strangers! Afraid of breathing? Afraid of not breathing? Do you wish that things could be straight and simple again as they were in your childhood? Would you like to back to Kindy Garten?[55]

The Camino Real is related to the modern arts, not only in the matter of essential concept of form as vision but in the idea which it wishes to express: in its concern with the necessity for modern man to pursue the question of his own being. Williams, like other dramatists, believes in the prophetic function of the theatre. For the Contemporaries, the theatre envisions the whole of man's existence more effectively than any of the other arts.

We see how the author develops a complex structure with many facts. segments of many ideas, legends, forms, styles and approaches. as a means of illustrating an idea, an idea which becomes increasingly universal in the contemporary arts. Williams utilizes a perspective which is religious, philosophical, cultural, intellectual, and commonsensical to transpose his vision of the world,the image of man's present suffering to the stage. The world of the Camino is spectacle.

Williams is in general distinctive in American drama, in this kind of attack on the whole achievement of civilization. His Camino Real, in its moral, religious, and intellectual considerations, is a part of the shock literature designed, according to European critics, to challenge the basis of security which the American public retains:

> Williams would like to say to Americans: Your imagined security is false, your belief in this way of the Camino Real, of money, is unreal--this world is not in order.[56]

Williams poses a question for which he does not have an answer. He seeks rather to have the spectator look at himself, not at the remote image of men past, but at the image of humanity present.

There are in the concept of form as seen in the Camino Real three levels of transposition of the original vision of the playwright. We observe the synthesis of the basically American form of experiential drama with two other basically European modes of expression: with the Neo-Horatian dialogic form of the French drama and with the learning drama of the German Expressionists. In Williams' drama these three lines of development account for three aspects of the form: (1) for the Dionysian stream of images, (2) for the structuring of a rational system in myth, and (3) for the imposition of a didactic purpose.

The Camino Real, as an exercise in form, represents considerable complication over the earlier plays in which these tendencies were not so fully developed. Because of the emphasis of this drama on the Apollonian level, critics see in Williams a movement toward abstraction not discernible in the earlier dramas.

In the American drama, the line of development toward this concept of synthetic form begins in the experiments of O'Neill. We see O'Neill's efforts to create a myth in Emperor Jones and The Hairy Ape continued in the work of

Williams, especially in his creation of Kilroy. Williams probably has had most to gain, in his American heritage, from the schematic organization of Thornton Wilder in both Our Town and The Skin of Our Teeth. For Wilder creates the first example of the complex contemporary myth on the American stage. Moreover, Wilder is successful in welding together the collage-like structure of poetic, rational, and didactic elements which are the components of Camino Real.

While Williams approaches this form from the side of the Naturalistic tradition, the drama of experience, the Continental dramatists approach the mixed form from the side of the rational drama, the dialogic form. The similarities between Camino Real and certain of the European plays such as Waiting for Godot arise from the fact that certain of these dramatists, notably Camus, Sartre, and Beckett, have begun to utilize the American drama of emotional--if not psychological--experience as a level of presentation. Developments in European drama since the production of this play, the recent drama of Beckett, Tardieu, and Ionesco demonstrate the importance of this play in its synthesis of ideas, conventions, ideas and forms which are expressive of the contemporary sensibility. The play is an important link in the total development, the gradual coalescence of a universal form in Western theatre.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The drama of Tennessee Williams is a part of a new movement in the theatre of the twentieth century, a movement which historians of drama link with a general revolution in the arts which began in the years near the beginning of World War I. This revolution in the arts, which has produced new forms in the painting arts, in music, in literature, and in the theatre, followed a radical change in thought, which in the late nineteenth century, had already made itself evident in philosophy, in science, in politics, and in history. From these revolutions in Arts and Letters there has emerged a new perception of Reality which governs the creation of all art forms in the twentieth century. The theatrical form of Tennessee Williams is one of those manifestations of the new "perspective."

The artist of the twentieth century discerns a Reality which is processive, which is the evidence of a constant change, both within man and without. While nineteenth century artists took this change to be the face of progress, twentieth century artists, such as Tennessee Williams, see process as division, disintegration, and decay. Their

perception of a Nature which is in itself disunified is supported in the writings of those thinkers who are most influential in the twentieth century: in Hegel, Freud, Bergson, Einstein, and Marx.

Williams proposes to examine this Reality, its effect on man, and his relationship to it. To accomplish this objective, the playwright, like other dramatists in the genre, has found it necessary to reject former traditions in the theatre. The new drama seeks a new tradition for what it considers to be a new situation. To create a new tradition, dramatists have borrowed techniques from other arts. In his form, this dramatist borrows from poetry, dance, the painting arts, and from the American novel. Its most important influence is, perhaps, the American popular form of the cinema. The playwright constructs a form which is comparable to the Contemporary collage, a synthetic entity, which is composed of fragments, fragments which represent the condition of his world.

The drama of Williams is poetic in nature. Its form is derived from the "moment of insight," the instant of poetic vision. Its external contour is the evidence of the poet's effort to transpose this vision into the language of the theatre. Williams, like Nietzsche, believes that the function of the theatre in a world of chaos is to give to existence greater clarity than is present in Reality. The drama, in this tradition, seeks to impose an order upon the stream

of experience, to interpret events, which in the actual life of man would be incoherent and meaningless. To this end the dramatist has as his fundamental responsibility the search for a principle of unity, a mode of reconciliation. The synthesis which the Contemporaries propose is aesthetic, but it is not the same aesthetic unity which was evident in the Romantic drama, for the consciousness of the Contemporary dramatist has been affected by the presence in his world of the machine.

The drama of Williams, like all of that in the genre is machine drama. Its images are constructed in the manner which the camera uses, by a technique called montage. Its myth is joined together in the same way in which fabrics are united, by mechanical process. The machine aesthetic indicates another important perception in the Contemporary consciousness, an element more evident in the American theatrical arts. The Contemporary is impressed by the resistance of Nature to unity, by the disintegrative quality of the Natural. He is, at the same time, impressed with the power of the machine as creator, and much of this spirit has infused the art of the theatre.

The synthetic process joins those elements in Nature which are antagonistic to each other. The form retains within itself, however, a fundamental tension, an antagonism, a discontinuity which is the imitation of the modern consciousness.

The nature of this antagonistic form has necessitated a new concept of dramatic action. The drama has discarded its concern for narrative development and seeks instead to involve the spectator in creation. The form of Williams suggests that the Spectator become Artist, that he participate in creation by discerning in the drama significant form: the image of reality; correspondences and harmonies, tensions and dissonances, rhythms and movement, in life itself.

The form of Williams reflects the total design of the Contemporary arts. We see in this theatre the transference of an intent which has been apparent for some time in poetry, in painting, and in the novel. The intent of the theatre of Williams is basically the same as that which produced Symbolist poetry, Cubist painting, and the "Stream of Consciousness Novel." Williams' most significant contribution lies in his ability to translate these currents in art and in thought into the language of the American popular theatre.

Form, in the theatre of the twentieth century, is the imitation of consciousness, the re-creation of a moment of insight in the language of a "plastic theatre." It is the attempt to dissolve the division and conflict of a "broken Reality" in image. It is man's effort to create an existence in which the unknown can be known, in which the intent of life can be perceived. Form is the re-creation of existence in a new order which informs Reality.

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I, Esther Merle Jackson, was born in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, September 3, 1922. I received my secondary education in the public schools of El Dorado, Arkansas, and my undergraduate training from Hampton Institute, Virginia. In 1946, I was granted the Master of Arts degree in Theatre from the Department of Speech of the Ohio State University. In 1956 I was granted a fellowship for advanced study by the John Hay Whitney Foundation. In 1957, I was appointed University Fellow by the Graduate School of the Ohio State University. During the term of this appointment, I completed requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy in Theatre.

Since my graduation from college, I have been actively engaged in direction and production in the college and university theatre. I have held appointments as director of theatre, at Arkansas A.M. and N. College, at Hampton Institute and at Clark College, Atlanta.