CHAPTER VII

BEREAVEMENT VERSUS PSYCHOSIS

What finally becomes of the frustrated women of Garcia Lorca and Tennessee Williams and how they react to their despair are two vital questions to answer. Here also are discernible some striking similarities as well as some obtrusively noticeable dissimilarities.

According to George Kernodle, the theme of escape is one of the most common in modern drama because of the deterministic cynicism of the twentieth century which has left no other solution. This applies to the heroines of both Lorca and Williams who use some common modes to escape the reality and the agony of their tortured existence. One of the modes which is recurring in their women is the tendency to retire into a world of fantasy, dreams, and illusion because it is only by living in the imagined ideal world that they can forget their present. In Lorca, for instance, the young Shoemaker's Wife, fretting at her marriage to a dull old man, often takes recourse to fantasy. In the prologue of the play, Lorca calls her a "poetic creature" who is "ever fighting, fighting with the reality which encircles her and with fantasy when it becomes visible reality." She is ever creating ideal worlds of fancy for, if
she were to accept the mediocre and the real, which surround her, she would perish." Her world of poetic imagination is the way in which she achieves her independence and maintains her integrity."\(^3\)

Likewise, Yerma's "imagination is constantly preoccupied with visions of children shouting and weeping, and the blood within her tingles with the desire to be in another, to increase itself. Yerma dreams of a child, of a son from her own womb, who will some day come to her from far afar, and she sings tender lullabies."\(^4\) Williams' women such as Amanda Wingfield, Blanche DuBois, Laura, and Lady Torrance resemble Lorca's women in their preoccupation with imagination and vision. The most consummate example, however, is Laura, who her brother, Tom, tells us,"...lives in a world of her own — a world of little glass ornaments"\(^5\). Like the Shoemaker's Wife, she cannot face the reality of her surroundings. Commenting on Laura's mental absorption with fantasy, Stavrou has observed:

> Rendered morbidly self-conscious by her lameness, she has become... introverted to the point of losing contact with her environment. With her glass collection and her victrola, she has retired into a realm of her own making where the deceiving fancy shuts out the banality and cacophony of her surroundings. Through her glass animals and phonograph music, she drives the momentary escape from reality which her brother obtains through the movies... and her mother enjoys in her paranoiac memories of her gay youth...\(^6\)

> "Williams is particularly effective in treating his battered characters who try to retain the shreds of their former respectability in a gusty world", says John Gassner.
"Self delusion, he realizes, is the last resort of the hopelessly
defeated..."7 and since his early one-acters like "Portrait
of a Madonna" and "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion", he has studied
its various manifestations with clinical precision in such
memorable characters as Miss Colli's, Mrs. Hardwicke Moore,
Amanda, and Blanche. William grants "those unfortunates the
shelter of illusions as it pains him to know that the world is
less tender."8 The most pathetic delusion of these women is
their refusal to admit what exists and their insistence on
what does not. Mrs. Hardwicke-Moore's Brazilian rubber planta-
tions close to the Mediterranean, Miss Collins' beau who indulges
his senses with her and Blanche's Sheep Huntleigh who has promised
her security are all spectral things/beings who are pure products
of their imaginations. Amanda's delusion is evident in "her
refusal to face actuality... in her attitude to Laura—the
cotton wads she makes her stuff into her blouse (gay deceivers,
she calls them); her shrill denial that Laura is crippled."9

Strong though Lorca's Bernarda Alba is, she is akin
to Amanda in that she, too, takes refuge in illusion to shut
out the unpleasant as ets of the present. Her unwillingness,
or perhaps her inability, to marry off her aging daughters is
shrouded in her pathetic delusion that her family is far
superior to any family" for a hundred miles around."10 "It
is paradoxical that in adopting the code typical of the society
in which she lives, Bernarda has, in fact, divorced herself and
her family from that very group."11 Her delusion, combined
with her false pride, clouds her understanding and makes her
insist on an aristocratic withdrawal from the life of the
community.

According to Corrigan, "The belief that if things
are not said although we know full well they exist they won't
be so is one of our greatest delusions;"¹² and this precisely
is a fatal illusion that Bernarda suffers from. Invested
with a tendency to gloss over things and to present a facade
of order in the face of turmoil, she is satisfied so long as
do people not know what is going on within the walls of her prison-
like house. She knows very well that the passions smouldering
in her repressed daughters will ultimately destroy the whole
facade of decency that she has so painstakingly built up, but
she refuses to admit their existence. "Nothing's happening
here,"¹³ she says and reassures herself. And so when Foncia
tries to warn her of the impending disaster, she shouts at
her, "There you go again! Sneaking up on me — giving me bad
dreams. But I won't listen to you..."¹⁴ She closes her eyes
to the reality and deludes herself into believing that she has
the situation well under control. Finally, her delusions precipi-
titate her defeat and bring about the catastrophe.

Lorca's Dona Rosita and Mariana Pineda resemble Williams'
Blanche DuBois with regard to their reliance on delusive hope.
Curiously, all these three women wait for men on whom they
have pinned their life hopes. But the men are nothing but
phantoms who will never make their appearance in the world
of reality to save their sweethearts. Mariana Pineda, despite
her awareness of her lover's desertion, desperately calls him
to save her from her captor, the wicked Pedrosa:
...even if your horse is stamping four moons upon the roadway's dust and fire on the greening breeze, the fainting breeze of spring, run faster still! come look for me!15

Similarly, Dona Rosita is deeply in love with hope and cannot face the reality of her abandonment by her fiance. Though she knows that he has rejected her by marrying another girl, she continues to live in the illusory hope of a reunion with him. Her delusions leave her a pitiable spinster, exposed to the jibes of the society which regards such rejection a stigma.

Williams' Blanche detests reality and, like these Lorcan women, lives in the shadow of the hope that her gentleman will come and shield her from the brutal forces personified by Stanley. "Desperately seeking a haven, she looks increasingly to fantasy. Taking refuge in... the illusion that a beau is available at her beck, she seeks tenderness in 'the broken world' and traces 'the visionary company of love',"16 But her hope, too, remains unrealized. The unequal fight in which she finds herself engaged proves too much for her and impairs her reason. Her last refuge, rationalistically, is a psychotic world where there is no distinction between the real and the illusory.

Another common mode of escape which the women of Lorca and Williams adopt is a tendency to relive in the past in order to overlook the harsh realities of the present. The past to which nostalgia often returns in Williams is the personal
past and the historical past of the aristocratic Old South—a past, which, at least, in retrospect was civilized and in which the values of gentility and gentleness were cherished and defended. Lorca's women, on the other hand, have no knowledge of such a historical past since for ages they have known only oppression and subjugation in the restrictive and hermetic atmosphere of a primitive society. The historical past they have known is best characterized in the speech of Bernarda in the opening act of *The House of Bernarda Alba*: "For... eight years... not a breath of air will get in this house from the street.... That's what happened in my father's house—and in my grandfather's house."17 It is, therefore, only the personal past to which Lorca's women look with an admixture of both fondness and regret.

The Mother in *Blood Wedding* is constantly preoccupied with the thought of not having possessed her husband for longer than three years. She vividly recalls how he had loved her, taking her to the wheat fields to consummate their love: "Your father, he used to take me. That's the way with men of good stock; good blood."18 To her, all men must be as productive as wheat, as her husband who, in three years, gave her two strong sons. Just as Williams' Amanda superimposes her past on her daughter, Laura, the Mother superimposes her past on her son, the Bridegroom. She wants him to be as virile and productive as his father was. Sitting in the Bride's house, she exclaims, "A four hour trip and not one house, not one
tree....Your father would have covered it with trees." His father would have made the arid land productive just as as he had enriched everything he touched, including the Mother. She has similar expectations of her son as a man.

Williams' Blanche DuBois and Lorca's Mother bear a close resemblance in looking back at the past and remembering their dead relations. Commenting on Blanche's preoccupation with the past, Frenshaw has observed, "Blanche is most admirable when she turns backwards in her account of her selfless devotion to her dying relatives and in her self-condemnation for her cruelty to her young husband. Past prides — her own and that of a lost family line — taint her life, but she earns her dignity in dealing with them." Like Blanche, the Mother is most effective when she looks backwards and talks of the need, of the grievous loss of her husband and a son. Though literally she inhabits the present, she is incapable of doing so except in terms of her past sorrow which has haunted her ever since she lost her most valuable possessions. And like Blanche, the Mother is proud of her family line, but unlike Blanche, she is endowed with great moral strength to face the present.

If it is with regret that the Mother remembers the past, another heroine of Lorca, namely, the shrewish Shoemaker's Wife, romanticises her past, like Williams' Amanda Wingfield, to ameliorate her miserable present situation. Largely unrequited in her marriage to the insipid, phlegmatic Shoemaker, she
makes romantic flights to the past. Her eloquent reminiscences of her gallant suitors remind one of Amanda's unending references of her gentleman callers. Just as Amanda clings to the illusion that she could have married anyone of her gentleman callers—wealthy planters and sons of planters—if she had not fallen in love with the genial, carefree man in a soldier suit, the fiery Lorcan heroine takes it as a certainty that she could marry anyone of the gallant suitors if she had not accepted the Shoemaker as her husband:

Cursed be the hour... when I listened to my friend... with as good suitors as I've had... The best in these parts. But the one I liked best of them was Emiliano... 'the one who used to ride a black mare covered with tassels and little mirrors, carrying a willow wand in his hand with his copper spurs shining. And what a cape he had that winter! What sweeps of broad-cloth and what trimmings of silk.21

Amanda's nostalgic memories of her gentleman bear a close resemblance to those of the Shoemaker's Wife's:

AMANDA: That Fitzhugh boy went North and made a fortune — came to be known as the Wolf of Wall Street! He had the Midas touch, whatever he touched turned to gold! And I could have been Mrs. Duncan J. Fitzhugh, mind you! But — I picked up your father.22

The Shoemaker's Wife's gallant Emiliano, who courted her, is as unreal and a figment of her imagination as Amanda's Fitzhugh whom she might have married. But trapped in the miserable situation, both these women tinge their present with some colour with flights to the romantic past — flights which are, no doubt, comforting for a moment but which finally aggravate their difficulties.
Still another common means of escape that the female protoagonists of Lorca and Williams resort to is motion or mobility. In Williams', Blanche's odyssey from Laurel to New Orleans, Alexandra del Lago's cross country run, Hannah Jelkes' journeys with her grandfather, Nono, Laura's escape to the floral gardens - to name just a few - are attempts to find a refuge where they can find peace and an anodyne to relieve the pain of an agonized existence. In Lorca, significantly, it is the enormity of the basic but insatiable and uncontrollable needs of the heroines which impels them to take recourse to motion. In Blood Wedding, for example, the Bride, motivated by animal passions, escapes to the woods with a former lover. Yerma, despite the injunction of her husband to remain confined within the four walls of her house, steals away to the house of the sorceress, Dolores, before she makes her fatal journey to the mountains to participate in the panon ritual of fecundity. In The House of Bernarda Alba, Adela's reaction to the falling star is symbolic of her unfulfilled longing to escape through motion: "... I like to see what's quiet and been quiet for years on end running with fire." The star's burst of freedom prefigures Adela's escape (to the barn) to slake her thirst for physical love.

Curiously, however, the efforts of neither Williams' women nor those of Lorca's are destined to meet with any success through motion. Williams' women are condemned to carry on their search for peace until death or destruction overtakes
them. And Lorca's women, whose escape, incidentally, is in contravention of the dogmatic mores of society, encounter death or bereavement.

Apart from the above refuges into which they escape as a result of their frustration, the heroines of both Garcia Lorca and Tennessee Williams are joined in a common premise in that they transgress the code of morality of their society under the impulse of their long-suppressed desire. This is quite logical because, as Corrigan argues, "if desire has no release, it rots inside and turns back in on itself with poisonous destruction.... The attempt to impose uniformity on the common life defeats its own end, encourages a revolutionary individualism and promotes a subterranean hostility."

Neither the walls of respectability nor those of conventionality are strong enough to hold desire which is always bursting to get out. This congruity of pattern is discernible in the emotionally-starved women of both the dramatists.

In Lorca, for example, the Bride in Blood Wedding and Adela in The House of Bernarda Alba are the figures of revolt whose desires have not been controlled. Ignoring all established norms of conventionality and unmindful of the consequences, the Bride betrays her husband and elopes with Leonardo, and Adela offers her body to Pepe. In Williams, Lady Torrance of Orpheus Descending, with the strength provided by her passion, breaks the code of morality of her society and satisfies her physical lust with Val Xavier. Likewise, in The Purification,
a verse drama of honour and passion, written in the manner of Lorca, Elena, dissatisfied in the physical relationship with her husband, has incestuous relations with her brother, Rosalio. Many other Williams' passionate women like Blanche, Cassandra (Carol Cutrere), and Alma Winemiller transgress the social code much more blatantly than do the Lorcan women. Reared in an atmosphere of southern refinement and niceties, they regard themselves as ladies and, at least in their own eyes, excuse themselves the transgression of the social code. Blanche has continual sexual orgies with strangers and boys from the army camp; Cassandra indulges in indiscriminate, loveless promiscuity; and Alma, cutting loose from her puritanical shackles, takes to a life of complete profligacy.

A significant point of divergence that separates the women of Lorca and Williams is, therefore, that while a Lorcan woman always confines herself to a single man in her sexual relationship, a Williams' woman has nymphomaniac tendencies. Hutman observes:

In Lorca's dramas... capacity for passion is anthropomorphized in a particular person; thus Leonardo is the lone identified human in a cast of archetypes; Adela wants not merely to flee her family but to escape with Pepe el Romano; Yerma can find fulfilment not merely by escaping her husband but specifically with Victor.25

A pertinent question to answer is: where does the fulfilment of their desire lead these women to? As Morris Freedman perceptively notes, "passion unrooted in an ordered universe cannot survive beyond the initial momentum. It can
only frustrate..."\(^{26}\) In other words, if desire ever gets out of control, it is bound to end in catastrophe. Nowhere is it more evident than in Lorca's _The House of Bernarda Alba_. Through the servant-confidante, Poncia, Lorca explains that "when the dam breaks, 'you're powerless against the sea of pent-up desire'... but the river of desire does not produce any ripe fruit; it only drowns.... Even when desire successfully rebels, it is doomed to death for the arms of the lover turn out to be the arms of death."\(^{27}\) Thus, desire leads Adela to her physical death. As for the Bride, she meets with spiritual death. Ironically, she destroys what she had sought to enliven through her passion. What now awaits the Bride is a life of remorse and social ostracism, a fate which is worse than death.

Similarly, Williams' women also ultimately come to the realization that there is no fate worse than desire. Desire mauls and often kills in the most violent fashion. Blanche in _The Purification_ is done to death by her husband, and later, in an act of self-purification, her brother and husband commit suicide. Lady Torrance meets with an identical end. Incidentally she is the only woman in Williams' theatre who dies during her stage life.

Most Williams' women, however, are destroyed by their passion in less physical and sensational ways. Blanche soon discovers "the truth that the trolley Desire does not lead to the traditional southern mansion where the traditional Southern gentleman awaits her, but debauches, rather, upon slums where the slow and implacable fires of human desperation are always
burning. And this is the truth which finally proves too exruciating and precipitates her insanity. Some other Williams' women such as Miss Collins and Mrs. Hardwicke-Moore, the heroine of "Portrait of a Madonna" and "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion" respectively, share Blanche's fate and retire into a psychotic world. Despite Williams' ambivalence in Summer and Smoke, it is evident from the course alma sets on that her end can't be any different.

Thus, in short, passion which surges up briefly in the Lorcan women ends in suicide or death while in Williams it leads to death or psychosis.

An important difference that marks the women of Garcia Lorca and Tennessee Williams is with regard to their attitudes towards life and their problem of despair. Lorca's women, despite the awareness of their own anachronism in the society in which they live, are "incapable of looking to the future with anything but a realistic and resigned determination not to surrender altogether to despair." An example of such determination appears in his tragi-comedy, Dona Rosita the Spinster. When Rosita is obliged to leave her house with its beautiful gardens, she asks her widowed aunt what she intends to do after that and the older woman replies that she intends to "live - and let you take a lesson from me." Anderson finds that "this almost pathetically diminished quality of spirit ironically amounts to heroism in these pathetically diminished circumstances." This heroic quality of the spirit
to continue to live in the face of all odds is one that dis­tin­guishes Lorca's women from Williams' defeated heroines. Lorca's women constantly struggle against what they call their sino. The heroines of Williams also do struggle, but there is never the possibility of success. For instance, Blanche is tragic in her refusal to surrender the special dream of herself and Amanda makes valiant efforts to keep the family from destruc­tion. But, by and large, to quote Jones, Williams' women:

... are more the passive pawns of social forces and their own emotions than active participants in what Williams seems to consider life's tragedy. No one of them battles her destiny because no one of them seems to realize what it is. Blanche, representing a cultured yet corrupted tradition, has not the strength of character even to triumph over the brutal Stanley Kowalski, for whom culture is just a dirty word. Cassandra and Alma have no sense of real dignity. Believing their birth and breeding to have given them innate dignity, they are still weak, neurotic, and intellectual beings...32

Lorca's women "battle their destiny" and refuse to surrender or resign till their last breath. They do not compro­mise with their destined lot. They are invested with resolve to transcend the social and moral confines of their sex in order to lay claims to the possibilities of self-determination. It is their resolve which gives impetus to both heroism and their tragedy. In The House of Bernarda Alba, for instance, Adela is least resigned to her fate under her mother's despotic domination. She wages a grim struggle to free herself from the sinister, restrictive atmosphere. Her struggle soon becomes a clash of wills when Bernarda and everyone else stand
up against her. But "Adela's youth, and her superior strength of will, make her unable to resign herself to a future in her mother's home, and at the same time give her the desperate courage to rebel against her parent and the dehumanized morality she (Bernarda) represents."  

In the same way, Yerma does not capitulate to her fate but rather carries on a relentless struggle to fulfill the function of a mother that she thinks nature has ordained for her. She stoutly tells Juan, "I didn't come to these four walls to resign myself. When a cloth binds my head so my mouth won't drop open, and my hands are tied tight in my coffin then, then I'll resign myself!" and true to her word, Yerma does continue her inexorable fight against her barrenness — from seeking advice from the old village women to participating in the superstitious rites of fecundity — till she herself eliminates the last vestige of her hope.

Williams' heroines, particularly those of the aristocratic origin, are defeated before they appear on the stage. As Jones observes:

We watch them grovelling before their fate, their machinations with destiny, their defeated pride.... We watch their attempts at compromise: Amanda in choosing a husband for her daughter; Blanche coming to stay with Stella.... They are social fossils in an age of commercialism and tawdriness.... We may understand and pity them but it is difficult for us to admire them as noble in any sense of the word.

In a society which is ruled and dominated by men, the Lorcan women try to be tough despite their gentleness. They wish to acquire the traits that the males have and thereby
try to bridge the gap that separates the male and female roles. For instance, the bride is proud of her ability to do men's work; Adela wants to work like men in the fields. Yerma tells Maria, "I'll end up believing I'm my own son. Many nights I go down to feed the oxen — which I never did before, because no woman does it — and when I pass through the darkness of the shed my footsteps sound to me like the footsteps of a man." Similarly, Bernarda, the most authoritarian of Lorca's women, is able to contend with difficulties like a man. In the absence of her husband, she controls the property and even handles and breeds stallions. When Prudencia says, "you have to fight like a man", Bernarda replies, "That's it." And when the occasion demands, she takes up a gun, like a man, to avenge the disgrace of her family on Repe.

Williams' heroines, on the other hand, are fragile and delicate. They are soft like butterflies. Blanche tells Stella in _A Streetcar Named Desire_, "Soft people have got to court the favour of hard ones.... Have got to put on soft colours, the colours of butterfly wings." So Williams' soft females, instead of fighting their destiny, look for comfort and shelter from the mounting horrors of their existence. Christopher Fender's metaphorical speech in _The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore_ best underscores the tendency of Williams' heroines to seek refuge in contact with others. "He describes men as kittens or puppies, 'living in a house
we're not used to', creeping close together - 'those gentle little nudges with our paws and our muzzles' - to find in contact some escape from fear." Quite often, this contact takes a sexual form. Williams' tortured heroines turn to sex as a refuge from the nightmarish reality. Blanche Du Bois, for instance, is not motivated by carnal desire, but she indulges in sex in order to escape the loneliness of her existence and to feel the touch of human compassion. Mrs. Karen Stone, Alexandra del Lago, and Flore Coforth, all left alone and aimless, can forget that their physical and artistic powers are waning if they can have the distraction of love-making. Lorca's women, incidentally, never use sex degradingly as a means of escape. To them, sex is essentially telluric, a basic biological human necessity and a means to procreate. Their innate dignity and deep sense of honour will never permit them to employ sex as a distraction or as a means to forget the unpleasant aspect of their existence.

Finally, the female protagonists of García Lorca and Tennessee Williams suffer desolation and destruction whether they struggle against their destiny or surrender to it meekly. In Lorca, except in The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife in which one witnesses the felicity of the reunion of the Shoemaker's Wife with her husband, in all other plays, the women are left alone, lettered to their homes. Dona Rosita must suffer anguish, despair, and shame all by herself in the oppressive social circumstances. In the trilogy,
too, "women bear the tragedy, for they are the bearers of life, and are left alone to mourn in silent suffering the renewal of their fate and the emptiness of their bodies." In Blood Wedding, for instance, frustration will be for the three women who survive the men's deaths, a fate whose only surcease is death. The Mother's deepest dread has been realized. Her son has followed his brother and father in a violent confrontation. She has, thus, been deprived of her life-promoting work. She has no function, for the mother, bereft of her young ones, loses identity. The Bride's loss, though less ironic, is striking in terms of the tragedy as a whole. She has been widowed on the very night of her wedding and she encounters the bleak prospect of isolation for the rest of her life but with added shame. Unlike the Mother, the Bride has neither been a wife nor a mother. Leo's wife is at a stage intermediate to that of the Bride and the Mother, but, like the Bride, she can have no hope of flight from her prison.

Yerma, thanks to her own criminal hands, "stills the pounding blood of her clan and, like the Mother of Blood Wedding, is left forever alone and childless. ... By killing Juan, her last hope, she has killed her child and through it herself, because the universe will have no meaning for her unfulfilled life." Adela's death in The House of Bernarda Alba is symbolic of the extinction of the revolt against the dehumanized social code. It also signifies the final isolation of her
four surviving sisters and consequential annihilation of any hope that they might have for the future.

Yet, in spite of the tragedy that the Lorean women suffer, there is a faint saving note of a kind of peaceful resignation. For instance, now there is nothing left that can make the Mother face another tomorrow with the fear of death. Lima observes, "Sorrow is not all bleak. In the losing of her last son, the Mother has gained a spiritual peace and though that seems hardly like a worthy compensation, it serves to distil what might otherwise be despair."42 Verma, too, attains the same spiritual peace in the end when she strangles Jun to death. For Verma "as with the Mother in Blood Wedding, the death of hope is also the supremely ironic release from suffering,"43 observes Anderson.

Williams' well-known women, barring a few like Matilda of You Touched me! and Sarafina Dalle Rose of The Rose Tattoo, who are saved through sexual love, are destroyed in one way or the other. Unlike the Lorean women, however, few of them suffer the pangs of widowhood and bereavement. They are victims of the social forces and those of their own unconscious which make them psychic cripples, unable to deal with their environment. Williams, one of the most psychoanalytical of the modern dramatists, has a keen insight into his characters and studies with clinical accuracy their mental processes of disguise and withdrawal.

In his first major theatrical success, The Glass Menagerie Laura, fragile as her glass animals, is broken as her gentleman
caller reveals that he is engaged to be married to a girl named Betty. Williams, typically ambiguous and evasive, does not tell us what finally becomes of Laura. But when we last see her, she is blowing out the candles and clinging herself into gloom which neither Amanda nor Tom can dispel. Laura is patterned on Williams' sister, Rose, whose psychological isolation led to her commitment to an asylum. Logically, therefore, all that is left for Laura is a psychotic world where she won't become aware of the banal realities of life. As for Amanda, her whole unreal world crashes in the end. The only way left to her to survive in the gusty world is through disguise and delusions of her gay youth.

In a Streetcar Named Desire Williams, with a mastery that no other modern playwright has equalled, shows the disintegration of a personality in a compelling theatrical pattern. In this play, according to David Sievers:

Williams has depicted profoundly the origin and growth of schizophrenia. He has shown Blanche struggling... to live up to an inner image of a belle of the Old South while living in circumstances in which it is an anachronism. At first, she is in rebellion against her own nature but in touch with reality. As the various doors are closed to her and she finds Stanley across her remaining path, her mind is unable to come with this impossible conflict. She closes the door to reality and escapes to a psychotic world.44

Her psychological destiny is too inevitable to be changed. She mentally withdraws from reality. In the final scene where the doctor from the state asylum uses gentleness and charm,
Blanche takes her for the gentleman she had seen awaiting and, holding tight to his arm, accompanies him only to be consigned to a mental institution.

Alma Vinemiller of *Summer and Smoke* is, in fact, "Blanche DuBois at the beginning of the downhill slide to degradation". When she proffers herself to a travelling salesman for an assignation at the casino, she is entering the same phase of life where Blanche was before her misadventures forces her to leave Laurel. Alma's loveless promiscuity is logically bound to precipitate her destruction in the same way as it did Blanche's.

These cases, not to mention the early brief portraits of Mrs. Boone in "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion" and Miss Collins in "Portrait of a Madonna", who lose touch with reality completely and are representative of the general plight of Williams' women. Either their reason is impaired or they end up as derelict prostitutes, living with delusions as their pathetic defences.

To sum up, the frustrated heroines of both Lorca and Williams take recourse to some common modes, e.g., fantasy, illusion, motion, romantic flights to the past, etc. to escape the anomalous situations they find themselves in. While Lorca's heroines desperately struggle to raise themselves above their confines—both social and moral—in which they are caught, Williams' heroines make only half-hearted efforts to ameliorate their lot. What distinguishes them is their endurance. More
often than not, they compromise with their destiny. They have neither the will nor the spirit to challenge the brutal forces which wreck their lives. Lorca's women, despite the weakness inherent in their sex, toughen themselves and endeavour to acquire male traits in order to minimise the differentiation between the sexes. On the other hand, Williams' women, raised as ladies in the old Southern tradition, remain soft, gentle, and fragile, like butterflies, wooing the hard people for security, protection, and compassion. Their craving for human compassion to fill the vacuum and loneliness of their barren lives often manifests itself in sexual surrender and turns them into nymphomaniacs. In the end, while Lorca's heroines either lead lives of quiet desperation or suffer crushing bereavement, or die violently as the consequence of their urgent drives, Williams heroines are reduced to psychic cases with minds either shattered or preoccupied with manufacturing illusions in an effort to shut out the reality which is too excruciating to bear.
Notes


8. Ibid., p. 2.


17 Three Tragedies, p.164.
16 Ibid., pp.35-36.
19 Ibid., p.48.
21 Five Plays, p.68.
22 The Class Menace, p.239.
23 Three Tragedies, p.201.
24 Corrigan, p.186.
27 Corrigan, pp.157-59
28 Stavrou, p.30.
29 Anderson, p.85.
30 Five Plays, p.165.
31 Anderson, p.95.
33 Anderson, pp 130-31.
34 Three Tragedies, p.130.
35 Jones, pp 218-19
36 Three Tragedies, p.133.
37 Ibid., p.197.
38 A Streetcar Named Desire, p.169.


42 Lima, p. 215

43 Anderson, p. 117.


45 Fonte, p. 19.