CONCLUSION

During the course of this study we have seen that the western playwrights in each major epoch of stage history since the Age of Pericles have evidenced a keen interest in the portrayal of the female and her problem of dissatisfaction and frustration. In the Greek classic drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides if her suffering resulted from the perjury, invidiousness, impetuousity, and waywardness of her male counterpart, her overbearing passion for self-fulfilment, honour, and jealousy precipitated her doom. In the Renaissance drama, it was the pursuit of happiness and assertion of the personal will which led to her debacle and disaster. William Shakespeare's heroines, though gentle and upright, undergo suffering of the body and the spirit because of the unaccountable vanity, jealousy, suspicion, and waywardness of the heroes of flawed character. Only a few of Shakespeare's women, like Lady Macbeth, suffer because of some inherent flaws of character. In the post-Renaissance drama of the seventeenth century, French dramatists, particularly Jean Racine, dramatized the frustration of women resulting from their irrational passion and an incontinent longing for self-fulfilment. 

Hitherto the playwrights had concerned themselves with the portrayal of women from the higher strata of society, but as Europe became increasingly middle-class, the dramatists,
especially the German Romanticists — Lessing, Schiller, and Goethe — portrayed middle-class women and grappled with the realities of their problems. Their women who embody their aspiration for a higher nobler world suffer intensely at the hands of petty despots and autocrats. Later, a number of playwrights dramatized the sufferings of women, who are victims of the double standards of society. They pointed towards the unjust and dehumanized social stratification which caused untenable agony in women. Playwrights, like Dumas fils and Hebbel, depicted travails of their female protagonists who fall prey to the false set of social values. In the second half of the nineteenth century, Ibsen presented women suffering as a result of conventional morality and a false sense of honour. Through the depiction of the plight of his women, he suggested that a woman whose marriage was not based upon love, sympathy and mutual understanding should abandon it rather than countenance a false situation and suffer. Many other modern playwrights notably Chekhov, Strindberg, O'Neill to name only a few — have concerned themselves with the female and her frustration under the impact of their own ideological and psychological compulsions and the conditions of the contemporary life. However, it is in Garcia Lorca and Tennessee Williams that we find the theme of female frustration treated with a commitment and persistence hitherto unwitnessed in any other playwright of the modern era.
What fascinated Lorca and Williams in the female and why they returned over and again to the theme of female frustration is not difficult to understand. For reasons, both biographical and psychological, they felt a closer affinity to the female rather than the male sex. While they found men inscrutable and hence incomprehensible, they could understand women fairly easily. No wonder, they found it more expedient to articulate their feelings through women rather than men.

Lorca was acutely conscious of the social stratification and age-old conventions of the Spanish society which favoured men as the superior sex and allowed women neither any freedom nor any opportunity of self-realization. His visit to the United States in 1929-30 constrained him to compare the position of the oppressed Spanish woman with that of her emancipated American counterpart. No doubt, he found it difficult and even absurd and tragic. His condemnation of the brutal and hypocritical laws of the society was to manifest itself in the tragic suffering and frustration of the Spanish women in the three plays, viz., Blood Wedding, Yerma, and The House of Bernarda Alba which he wrote on his return from the United States.

Tennessee Williams made no secret of the fact that he was a deeply disturbed man and, therefore, he preferred to write about the disturbed people. Enmeshed in personal problems and frustrations, he felt close kinship for those whose lives were fraught with despair and desperation. His awareness of the pathetic plight of his mother, his sister Rose and of the
countless aristocratic Southern women like Laura Young, the
choicest people whom he knew so intimately, was too real to be
ignored and hence was bound to find expression in his work.
By writing about these troubled women, he believed, he could
release his own tensions. Besides, Williams' persistent
portrayal of frustrated females has a clear, definite purpose.
Through the delineation of their suffering, he intends to
universalize the suffering of womanhood. His depiction of the
gathes and melancholy of the disordered women is an effort to
expose chaos and turmoil in the society we live in.

Forcibly acknowledging that he could not go beyond his
generational boundaries, he consistently drawn Spanish woman
who, caught in the moral and social confines of their sex, live
like intensely as mothers, wives, and shandies. They are
inverted with an overriding passion and a deep sense of honour,
the attributes which are invariably associated with the Spanish
district. Williams, on the other hand, has created a large
variety of women ranging from gentle patrician ladies like
Amanda Wingfield, Laura Wingfield, Blanche DuBois, and Alma
Miner Miller to voluptuous and full-blooded women like Serafina,
Stella, and Maggie whose very purpose of existence seems to
be the fulfillment of their physical passion. Among his females
are also women like Alexandra del Lago, Mrs. Karen Stone, and
Flora Sofeth who use sex as a distraction to forget things that
they don't want to remember.
Lorca and Williams differ vastly in the portrayal of women. Lorca is closer to the dramatists of the Greek classical tradition. Uninfluenced by such modern literary ideologies as psycho-analysis, psychological realism, etc., he creates characters who are men and women of action. They subject themselves not to self-analysis which is static, but to self-expression which is dynamic. Williams, on the other hand, is one of the most psycho-analytical playwrights. Responding to the spirit of the age, he has "psychologized" his women. More often than not he penetrates into the human heart by dissecting it. He probes the mental processes of his disordered women and records his observations with the precision and skill of a psychiatrist. But no matter what method of characterization they follow, both Lorca and Williams view the problems of their females with sympathy, compassion, and understanding. That is why, though their females belong to disparate social milieux, one can observe striking similarities, apart from some inevitable dissimilarities, in their problem of frustration.

Firstly, the women of both the playwrights are the victims of the double standards of the societies in which they are reared. These societies believe in gynaelatry and have exalted notions of feminine virginity and virtue. While the men enjoy the prerogative of seeking sexual release even through infidelity, the women are expected to preserve their innocence and chastity. Instinctively passionate, these women do want to belong to men, but the restrictive and puritanical
atmosphere obliges them to smother their normal urges. The unfulfilment of their enormous basic needs disposes them to erotic and psychological frustration.

Secondly, the frustration of these women springs from loneliness, both physical and spiritual. Williams' Southern ladies like Amanda, Blanche, Cassandra and others cannot adjust themselves to the post-war Southern society with its commercial and mercantile interests. As a result, they lose their sense of belonging and desperately look for shelter and protection. Lorca's women, on the other hand, are lonesome because of their endeavours to seek fulfilment of their urgent physical and emotional drives. The society expects them to accept their lot as the will of God and not to raise a voice against it.

Yerma, who longs to fulfill the function of a mother that she thinks nature has ordained for her as a woman, is regarded as a freak and becomes the subject of village gossip. Similarly, Adela suffers isolation when her affair with Pepe is known. Her mother and all her sisters join hands to thwart her efforts to seek fulfilment. Through depicting the loneliness of their tortured heroines, Williams and Lorca are, in fact, castigating the society which lacks compassion and understanding for the individual suffering.

Another common cause of frustration that joins the female protagonists of the two playwrights is their disappointment in love. Lorca's Dona Rosita and Williams' Laura and Alma face the same predicament: each of them sees the man she loves
marry another woman. Dona Rosita and Laura bear marked resemblance in more ways than one: both are delicate and fragile and both are only too well aware of the murk that surrounds them and of the inevitability of the role that they will come to occupy as spinsters in the society, a role that is the object of pity and derision and is bereft of all dignity. There is, thus, nothing left for them except shame and humiliation that they must suffer silently and ungrudgingly. Though Alma, too, is destined to grow into an old maid, her reaction to her disappointment is drastic and shocking. Unable to reconcile herself to the thought of losing the man whom she has loved crazily all along, she takes to the life of a town character pandering to the sexual needs of casual salesmen.

Quite a number of women of both Lorca and Williams suffer because they are unhappily married. One hardly witnesses the attainment of hope and joy in the relationship of a man and a woman in their plays. Their women are generally caught in conjugal relationship with men who are either too old or sexually too deficient to fulfil their function as husbands. Lorca's Shoemaker's Wife and Belisa, for example, are married to aging men for whom love-making constitutes a nightmare of torment. Yerma's frustration, too, is the result of her husband Juan's impotence who is incapable of stirring himself sexually to the pitch of the passion that Yerma needs for sensual gratification. He remains totally unconcerned for Yerma's
maternal needs; not once does he show any affection, tenderness, love, or even desire for her. Likewise, Williams' Lady Torrance after her marriage to impotent and malignant Jabe feels so warped that she thinks her life has neither any meaning nor any purpose. Blanche DuBois, too, is a victim of an unfortunate marriage to a homosexual who, out of disgust for his sexual inadequacy, committed suicide, leaving Blanche to face the buffets of misfortune. Mrs. Karen Stone's troubles also spring from her unpromising marriage to the decrepit and impotent Mr. Stone. These women, their creators seem to suggest, might have been happy if they had found proper fulfilment of their physical and emotional drives in their marriage.

There is, nevertheless, a basic difference that marks the attitude of the heroines of Lorca and Williams to marriage. Though sexually unrequited, the Lorcan women generally remain loyal to the man to whom they are bound. They are women of intrinsic quality who cannot make any compromise with their honour. Williams' heroines, on the contrary, feel no qualms of conscience in seeking sexual satisfaction even outside their marriage.

Unfulfilment of longing for motherhood constitutes another significant cause of suffering in the females of both Garcia Lorca and Tennessee Williams. For a Spanish woman, motherhood is both a duty and a mission; before all else she has to be a mother. Her children are the continuation of her own being. Without them her whole life collapses into a state of despair. This is best elucidated in Lorca's Yerma, who
longs for the whole physical and emotional experience of maternity but whose thirst for a child remains unslaked. The American woman, on the other hand, has found other possibilities in life and motherhood is not of necessity her highest goal. That is why some of Williams' women like Mrs. Karen Stone show ineluctable repugnance for maternity; to them children signify an obstacle rather than an asset. Yet, in Williams' world there are women for whom motherhood is a mystic ritual and its non-realization a cause of great anguish. Trinket in The Lutined, for instance, is frustrated because she has been denied participation in this ritual. Margaret of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and Lady Torrance of Orpheus Descending share Yerma's despair on account of frustrated motherhood. While Margaret's husband Brick abstains from physical love, Lady's husband Jabe is sexually inadequate. Eventually, Margaret seems to succeed in awakening desire in Brick and Lady Consummates her love with Val and conceives. Yerma's rejection of all possibilities of self-fulfilment other than through her socially-sanctioned marriage and Lady's solution of her problem of barrenness bring in focus the respect that the women of these playwrights have for the ethics of conventional morality. While Lorca's women adhere to the rigid, immutable code of honour, Williams' heroines blatantly violate it for the fulfilment of their passion for motherhood.
A major cause of suffering in Williams' women is the excruciating sense of impermanence. Given as they are to introversion, they are troubled by the reflection that their youth, good looks, and creative vitality are transient and evanescent. Not only that, some of them, like Cassandra Whiteside and Flora Goforth, are constantly haunted by the spectre of death. They are so possessed by this fear that they cannot live properly the short life that they have. Lorca's women, on the other hand, distinguished as they are for their extroversion, are troubled neither by a fear of loss of beauty and youth nor by a fear of death. Possessing characteristic Spanish temperament, they have a passion not only for living but for dying also. Death loses much of its horror for them when they are faced with the question of preserving their honour or fulfilling their enormous, basic physical needs. The Mother, the Bride, Yerma, Bernarda Alba, for instance, look at death face to face unflinchingly.

It is interesting to see how the heroines of Lorca and Williams react to their problem of frustration and what finally becomes of them. There are two paths left open to them: either they should shut their eyes to the reality of their pathetic plight or they must revolt against the dogmatic conventions and brutal forces that have smothered the joy of life in them and warped their personalities. Here, too, we observe some striking points of convergence and divergence.
Firstly, they use some common modes to escape the reality of their desperate situations. One of the modes they adopt and the one that is recurring over and again, is their tendency to retreat into a world of fantasy and dreams because it is only by living in the ideal unreal world that they can find some comfort from the distress and tedium of their agonized existence. Lorca's Shoemaker's Wife and Yerma and Williams' Amanda, Blanche, and Lady Torrance— to name just a few— are for ever creating Utopian worlds in their imagination, worlds which are free from the banality and hopelessness of the real world which they physically inhabit. They must of necessity reconstruct and nurture such dream worlds because acceptance of the reality that surrounds them would mean their annihilation.

The reliance on delusory hope is another common method of making their miserable life a little more tolerable. Mariana Pineda and Dona Rosita in Lorca and Blanche in Williams are particularly distinguished for their proclivity to feed on delusions. All of them wait for their gallant men who, they are sure, will rescue them from the anomalous and desperate situations in which they are caught. They are only too well aware of the inevitability of their defeat and so, their tenacity to cling to their delusions helps only to exacerbate their frustration rather than mitigate it.

Even relatively stronger female characters in both Lorca and Williams, like Bernarda Alba and Amanda Wingfield, take
refuge in delusions in order to shut out the bitter and unpalatable facts of life. The problems which these two mothers face are as excruciating as they are identical. Amanda has a shy, introverted, and crippled daughter for whom she must find a husband to save her from the pitiable plight of the old maids and Bernarda has five daughters the arrangement of whose marriages constitutes a nightmarish torture for her. Amanda deludes herself into believing that her daughter is exceptional and even closes her eyes to her physical deformity. Bernarda, likewise, shrouds her helplessness in pathetic delusions that for miles around there are no worthy suitors for her daughters. Closing her eyes to the repressed libido of the girls, she deceives herself by imagining that she has the situation under control. Needless to say, the delusions of Amanda and Bernarda precipitate their defeat and leave them crestfallen. Amanda fails to find a gentleman caller for her daughter and Bernarda drives her youngest daughter to suicide.

Their propensity to relieve the romantic and unforgettable aspects of the past constitutes yet another important device of escape to which the women of both the playwrights take recourse. However, while in Williams, nostalgia often returns to both the historical and personal pasts of the characters, in Lorca, it is only the personal past which exerts an irresistible fascination over his women. The Shoemaker's Wife and Amanda Wingfield bear close similarity in romanticizing their past to tint their unenviable present. Both these women
nourish nostalgic memories of the young and dashing suitors whom they could have married if by queer quirks of fate they had not chosen the men to whom they were eventually bound. Their suitors are, no doubt, pure products of imagination, but they are an essential contrivance as a worthy compensation for the harsher realities of life. Ironically, however, their absorbing preoccupation with the past, instead of buoying them up, only aggravates their distress, and mental agony because the reminiscences of the idealistic past only make them more aware of their physical and emotional deprivation. When in touch with reality, Amanda realizes only too well that she is a poor, lonely woman and the Shoemaker's Wife becomes all the more conscious that she is irrevocably condemned to honour her marriage to a wrinkled old man.

Yet another means employed by the heroines of the two playwrights to escape their frustration is mobility or motion. Lorca's women, on their part, resort to impulsive physical flight for the fulfilment of their urgent but unsatisfied physical and emotional urges. The Bride in Blood Wedding and Adela in The House of Bernarda Alba are driven by their repressed passion to escape with their lovers while Yerma escapes to the mountains for participation in the pagan rites to overcome her sterility. Williams' troubled women like Blanche, Alexandra, Mrs. Stone and a host of others, however, are perpetually on the move in quest of a haven where they may alleviate their suffering and find peace. However, none of these heroines succeeds in
finding what she seeks through mobility. Williams' women are cursed to continue their search until death or devastation puts an end to it, and the Lorcan women remain unfulfilled for ever.

Apart from the various escape mechanisms that these women adopt, some of them are impelled by the erotic frustration to revolt against the conventional code of morality of the society to which they belong. Though, by and large, Lorca's women adhere to the sexual and moral code and lead lives of sacrifice and renunciation, some like the Bride and Adela are driven by the forces of desire to transgress the code. However, in Williams' theatre, there are few women who show respect for conventionality. Most of them treat the code with flippancy. Cassandra, Blanche, Alma, Lady Torrance and countless others violate the moral and sexual code and capitulate to desire in order to achieve life and escape death. Nevertheless, a significant difference sets apart the women of the two playwrights: while a Lorcan woman confines herself to a single man, a Williamsian woman has nymphomaniac propensities.

All the same, submission to illicit passion does not lead to any haven in either case. It leads Lorca's women to violence and death: the Bride meets with spiritual death after both her husband and lover are slain in a duel, and Adela goes to her physical extinction. Williams' women hardly have a better fate to endure. The punishment for giving oneself over to desire in Williams' world is either death or destruction in a less physical and sensational way. Elena in the early verse
drama The Purification and Lady Torrance in Orpheus Descending are done to death by their men. Some, like Blanche, suffer psychosis and are committed to state mental institutions and others such as Alma, Alexandra, Mrs. Stone, etc., are at an intermediate stage, enticing men or buying physical love, the logical and inevitable cessation of which in Williams' conception can only be psychosis and insanity.

Lorca's and Williams' women differ significantly in regard to their attitude to despair. Lorca's women are like Chekhov's characters who struggle against the odds rather than surrender to their fate. Yerma, for instance, carries on an inexorable fight against her barrenness despite Juan's advice to compromise with her destiny, and Adela resolutely combats all opposition for self-fulfilment. The tragic Lorcan women try to achieve the right of self-determination by striving to transcend the social and moral limitations of their sex. Aware of their status in the hierarchy of the Andalusian society, they try to be tough and acquire the traits that are largely regarded to be male prerogatives in order to claim equality with men.

Williams' women, on the other hand, are weak, delicate, fragile, and neurotic. They lack the meliorism and optimism of the Lorcan heroines. They do not possess the strength of character to fight against the brutal forces much less vanquish them. They coddle their frustrations and submit rather supinely to their disease or defeat. Instead of battling their destiny, they make pathetic attempts at compromise. Very often they turn
to sex in order to find comfort and escape from the sordid reality that surrounds them.

Ironically, however, whether the exceptional women of these playwrights struggle against their destiny or surrender to it, the outcome is invariably death and devastation. In Lorca's theatre, except in The Shoemaker's Prodigious Wife, where the heroine is happily reunited with her husband, the women generally suffer isolation, bereavement, and widowhood. Dona Rosita, at the end, is left alone, condemned to bear the stigma of rejection by her fiancé in quiet. Belisa, the Bride, Leonardo's wife, and Yerma are widowed. Fettered to their homes, they are lost in the murk which permits no escape. The mother, too, suffers crushing bereavement with the death of her only surviving son. However, the stark tragedy of the Lorcan women is not without a faint note of peaceful resignation. The Mother would be able to sleep without the terror of guns or knives while other mothers would go to the windows, lashed by rain, to watch for their sons' faces, and Yerma would not startle awake to see if she felt in her blood another new blood. The death of hope brings to these women supremely ironic release from suffering.

Unlike the Lorcan women, Williams' heroines do not generally suffer bereavement and widowhood, but they are destroyed in one way or the other. Victims of neurasthenia, some of them like Laura, Alma, Blanche, and others, mentally withdraw from the reality which is too excruciating to bear. Morbidly conscious of their own anachronism in a universe which does not admit weaklings like them, they usually lose touch with
their environment so completely that they can hardly make any 
distinction between the real and the illusory. Their minds 
are diseased, and they suffer the worst type of psychosis.

To conclude discussion, Garcia Lorca and Tennessee 
Williams have excelled in portraying abiding images of the 
female that compare favourably with some of the most memorable 
female characters of the western drama. They compel our 
admiration not only for their subtle characterization but also 
for the dramatization of their pathos. If Lorca presents women 
struggling against the narrow and oppressive confines of social 
morality of the primitive Spanish society, Williams shows 
women of fragile beauty waging a hopeless battle against the 
brutal forces of the materialistic world symbolized by Stanley, 
Jabe and the like. Both the playwrights show remarkable 
understanding of the female psyche and deal with frustrated 
womanhood with profound insight and admirable objectivity. 
Though the milieux from which their exceptional women have 
been drawn are vastly different, yet, as we have observed, 
there are remarkable points of convergence and divergence not 
only in the way these women suffer but also in their attempts 
to escape and overcome their frustration. Their efforts 
notwithstanding, they remain anachronisms in society and 
their irrevocable destiny is destruction, both physical and 
spiritual.