Preface

This study, Reconstructing the Political Unconscious - A Reading of the Plays of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller, is an attempt to historicize the works of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. It is done with the belief that exploring the political unconscious is very significant as it synthesizes many other interpretative modes within a political interpretation of literary texts.

No text has one unique point of origin. It rather emerges from a complex interplay of events, influences and feelings which together constitute the subtext. Fredric Jameson’s theory of the “Political Unconscious” explores the matrices of the causality of a text, with the final contention that any text is a “socially symbolic” statement. In the present dissertation Jameson’s theory has been applied to the selected plays of Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. In Jameson’s perspective, each given period and the aesthetic acts produced in the period form episodes in a vast unfinished plot of human struggle through ages: texts salvage the struggles of the times.

The plays of Williams selected for the study are The Glass Menagerie (1944), A Streetcar Named Desire (1947),
Orpheus Descending (1957), Suddenly Last Summer (1958), and Sweet Bird of Youth (1959). The plays of Miller selected are All My Sons (1947), Death of a Salesman (1949), The Crucible (1953), A Memory of Two Mondays (1955), and A View from the Bridge (1956).

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