

Chapter-V

CONCLUSION

The present critical study highlights the theme of crime and punishment in light of emerging analysis of Williams's plays done in the previous chapters. We can witness playwright's points of view on crime and punishment which display his multi-dimensional designs of temperament especially divided into three type-withdrawals from the reality, withdrawal from sexual life and denial of life and finally innocence at the crossroads. In some of these plays, the author has shown his familiar but brilliant style of presenting his experiences drawn from the world of tortured and troubled people. But it is noteworthy to learn that his plays are deeply influenced by D.H. Lawrence and Sigmund Freud, the noted psychoanalysts of the world.

The early plays of Tennessee Williams present the characters who are helpless to face the reality of the world. In *The Glass Menagerie*, Laura Wingfield, modelled after Williams's own sister Rose is not a character but characteristics of such kind of portrayals. Her little crippled body leads her to the world of fragility. All attempts of Amanda, her mother, to make her bold and self-reliant, goes in vain. She has joined a business college for two purposes: first, to develop her intimacy with outside world and also with people; secondly, to make her self-reliant and independent but Laura loves to visit the botanical gardens instead of studying in the classroom. It shows that

she is carefree and irresponsible and doesn't conscious either for her future or worry for her loss of the money invested by the family. She runs away from the world of reality and keeps the family in the dark. But the reality comes out when Amanda suddenly visits the school. The play is both autobiographical as well as psycho-analytical.

Laura willfully withdraws herself from the reality of the world and her collection of the glass articles indicates her escape from the world of reality, her childish nature and denial of her maturity. She has to accept punishment to live in malignant world for the remaining part of her life. It is a bizarre punishment of the playwright who feels that she deserves punishment for her escape from reality.

Amanda tries her best to make Laura bold and independent so that she may get a fiance for her. She employs her son, Tom to look after Laura's romantic activities and when play reaches its climax, Tom brings Jim home, a classmate of Laura of her school days and who also called Laura 'Blue Rose'. Jim's arrival proves a ray of hope for Laura for a moment. She breaths a sense of relief and comes out of her fragile world. Though a small ripple takes place in her personal life by Jim who tries to awaken strength of her personality. But she is more punished and hurt than earlier when Jim declares about his marriage with another girl. She is broken to pieces and fails to reconcile with the reality of the world. Her shy nature becomes her Achilles's heel and her introvert personality compels her to live in a dirty malignant world where she is being constantly punished. She is a pathetic

character of Tennessee Williams world where her innocent and shy nature is punished like the characters of Thomas Hardy.

Here, the role of her mother also fails to cultivate an appropriate atmosphere for her future. Amanda lives more in her past world than caring the future of her children. But she cannot be freed from the responsibility of the family and the future of Tom is also not bright. Thus the whole family is victimised and has to live in a shy hope of life which cannot be attained. Tom also looms illusions and he doesn't take the responsibility of the family. The lack of his responsible and independent behaviour also runs on the downward journey of the family.

In *The Rose Tattoo*, Serafina, the beautiful heroine of the play, is another creature of Tennessee Williams who goes far ahead in neglecting the world of the reality compared to Laura. She breaks her relationship from the whole world, after the death of her husband and lives like a disconnected island. She passes her sex-starved life for three years and cherishes the memory of her late husband by putting his ashes in the marble urn. But her neglect and torture of three years' sex has strengthened the lady to face challenges of the new world boldly. She herself determines her ways of life when she meets Alvaro, the truck driver and she even allows her minor daughter to see off her lover. Even, she has turned down the appeal of Father De Leo who advised her to return to the main streams of life and to marry once again. She has rejected as well as neglected the appeal and the demand of the body. But the arrival of Alvaro, a truck driver, having rose tattoo on his

chest reminds her expired husband, and attracts her which brings her out from the world of despairs and fragility. She comes forward on the road of life. She welcomes the sunshine of life once again. Thus, the arrival of Alvaro lightens the dark period of her life and ends her punishment. Her decision-making and bold personality makes her able to face the society and her life of love and happiness returns all treasures of life once again. The shadows of a dead's memory of her husband are once again removed and she is ready to welcome the fresh sunshine of healthy life once again because of her new faith in life. She becomes free from punishment of Tennessee Williams court of justice.

In the middle phase of his plays the playwright has presented the theme of crime and punishment in connection with sexual rejection. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, a very famous play of Williams, is one of the most famous of his plays dealing with the sexual transgression. Blanche DuBois, the heroine of the play, a learned lady with knowledge of classical writers, has to suffer in her life due to her non-adjustable nature. Her life turns troublesome because of her faults. When she learns about homosexuality of her husband, she doesn't retain it as secret of life and names him publicly. IN the party in which both, she and her husband, Allan, are present, she suddenly tells about the secret of his life, just known to her. It becomes unbearable to face the reality and he commits suicide by shooting his pistol into his mouth. After the death of her husband, she is involved with the immoral acts and continues to get sexual pleasure with students of her own school. As a result, she is

dismissed from the school. Even, she then tries to another home of sexual pleasure by getting her coupled with the soldiers. Every way she adopts a downward journey and continues to travel on the path of guilt.

Blanche comes to her younger sister Stella, meets Mitch, a friend of her brother-in-law, Stanley Kowalski and both are the victims of loneliness. She foresees her future in him but she is raped by Stanley when her sister is in the hospital to deliver a child. Mitch neglects to accept her after knowing her past history. Stella also denies to believe the story of rape and she favours her husband. As a result, she loses her normal temper and becomes deranged, and starts to repent for the remaining part of her life. Her irresponsible and unadjustable behaviour is responsible for her crime and punishment.

Thus, we see Blanche getting the punishment for her own deeds in the play. In the portrayal of her character, the playwright has successfully delineated her story of downward journey yet she doesn't lose her greatness of a Southern lady. She gets punishment for the deeds which started with the revelation of the homosexuality of her husband by her. But, in the play, she lives up to her convictions and beliefs and accepts the punishment like the great heroes of the Greek tragedies.

We can see the other face of sex in *Summer and Smoke* which depicts the denial of the necessity of the sex in life. Alma, the heroine of the play, though having inner love for John, becomes unable to present her desire before him. When John shows her the anatomy chart and tells the necessity of sex in human body, she compares the chart with an animal and denies the

appeal of love and also the demand of life. Her such denial leads her to pass a sexually transgressed life at the end of the play.

Later on, when she realizes the necessity and vitality of sex in life, it becomes too late for her. Meanwhile, John gets the hand of another lady. Her early denial makes her unsuitable to get a suitable fiancé in her life. Finally, she has to depend on strangers who lead her to the life of prostitution. It is a sort of punishment which is caused due to her indecision and denial of the need of life at the proper time. Like Blanche DuBois, Alma Winemiller has to face same kind of punishment and has to lead a life of punishment for her sexual denial. Ultimately, she has to pass her rest of life in the malignant world.

The next play which depicts the life of the sexual denial is *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The play is closely related to *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Both plays are based on the rejection of sexual desire of a spouse, the difference in this play is that here it is not a female but a male who rejects. Blanche is here replaced by Brick Pollitt. The play also differs from the earlier ones in the sense that the rejecter admits his sin and returns to worship the baser instincts of life.

After his married life, Brick couldn't satisfy his wife. The needle of suspicion of homosexuality also stops him. After the death of his homosexual friend, Skipper, Brick is also sailing in the same boat. We find that though Brick charges his wife Margaret (Maggie) for the death of his intimate friend, yet she doesn't charge her husband for his homosexuality. She desires her

husband and craves his love for her. After the death of Skipper, Brick neglects even to sleep with her and sleeps on the sofa and charges Maggie for the death of his friend. When he neglects the love of his wife, it becomes not only the problem of Maggie but also the problem of Big Daddy and Big Mama. Big Daddy is rather desperate because of the childlessness of Brick and Maggie. He doesn't want to make Gooper, his elder son, the successor of his great property, though he has the five children and the sixth is about to come.

The play ends with the victory of love and sexual need of life. Brick is defeated by Maggie, and he returns to her. In this play the playwright has not punished the rejecter while justice demanded. In the similar case in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, he has made the rejecter a mentally deranged personality and the remaining part of her life becomes a life of great suffering, while in this play the playwright makes Brick a little crippled hurting his ankle. But here the rejecter confesses his sin and accepts the reality of life. In short, the crime of the rejecter is over and he lives a comfortable life.

The next play which depicts the rejection of sexual life is *Suddenly Last Summer* and in the play the rejecter of life Sebastian, himself a great homosexual has already been punished before the play begins. It is a play of the state of mind as well as the fate of a homosexual which projects life as the rejected and condemned one. After a preparation of nine months, he has been going to a foreign land to deliver his poem entitle, *Poem of Summer*.

It is noteworthy to record that the mother of the homosexual person and rejecter of life has always been with him in all the journeys and visits except his last visit which has been followed by cousin Catharine. It is interesting to learn that his mother has been attracting people for her homosexual son, but now her charm has decayed and she has now been replaced by Sebastian's cousin for such purpose in the visit. But unfortunately, he has been killed by a band of human flesh eaters.

The play becomes more torturous when Mrs. Venable, Sebastian's mother, wants a lobotomy for Catharine as she is the only witness of the last visit Mrs. Venable wants that part of her brain should be removed which has recorded the memory of the reality. To achieve the purpose, she wanted to bribe Dr. Cucrowicz, thus he becomes a prominent figure in the play as he takes care for the future lives of Mrs. Venable and Miss Catharine. Catharine's brother and mother are selfishly blind for the money willed by Sebastian. They knew that if the reality is spoken by Catharine they will lose a great amount of money. So, they silently support the lobotomy to be done on her. Thus we can see the most terrific and traumatic expression in the play.

The playwright punishes Sebastian's act of homosexuality and rejection of life and his sexual transgression is naturally punished as he is eaten up by the flesh-eaters. But the punishment of Catharine of her single visit with a homosexual person seems to be unjustified and unsuitable. She had a love for

Sebastian in her heart and wanted to marry him but she is sorry for proving helpless to save the life of Sebastian.

Mrs. Venable, a lusty and money-minded mother, is selling the flesh of his own son, and in order to mask the reality she is trying to do lobotomy on her niece who has been the only witness of the situations. But playwright is not appropriate in punishing her and she deserves the suitable punishment for her sinful deeds.

We can also witness another scenario for the sinful innocent wanderers who are set by Williams for appropriate punishment for their sinful acts and sexual transgressions. In *Camino Real*, Kilroy, an innocent wanderer, who comes to Camino Real leaving his innocent wife while she was sleeping and is a boxer champion and wears a belt of CHAMP. He becomes centre of attraction for Rosita, Marguerite and Esmeralda. Esmeralda is daughter of the Gypsy, whose virginity is restored every month with the rising of the full moon. Kilroy also tells that he has a golden heart as big as a head of a baby.

This moth also, with the rising of the full moon, the virginity of Esmeralda is restored and Kilroy is declared here by her. But a band of street cleaners is waiting outside to punish him. He is knocked down by them when he comes outside and loses his heart. His heart is operated out by the doctor when he is unconscious due to the knock of the street cleaner. He gets appropriate punishment for his sinful acts.

Orpheus Descending is the most representative play of the sinful innocent wanderers. In this play, Val Xavier, the handsome young man and the hero of the play comes in a small town of Southern Mississippi. He becomes a source of hope and love for the three sex-starved ladies-- Lady Torrance, Carol Cutrere and Vee Talbott. But Lady Torrance, wife of Jabe Torrance, the owner of the mercantile store, captivates his heart where he is employed. He fulfills all the physical requirements of the Lady and she becomes pregnant very soon. Her pregnancy brings her happiness but her announcement makes her husband angry. He tries to kill Val, but Lady is killed in defending Val. Jabe starts shouting that Val has killed his wife and has robbed the store. His shouting attracts the crowd of people who kill him. Thus, we see Val responsible for the death of three ones including himself.

Val Xavier, the Orpheus finds it difficult to spread love and to be lovable. He turns neither Saviour like Christ nor Valentine like Saint Valentine but he becomes a mainstream of hatred and destruction in the play and fails to bring the fountain of love and peace. His killing by a band of people justifies an appropriate punishment for his sinful acts. Here, Williams successfully builds the character of Val like a 'golden pot with poison' who brings destruction and gets appropriate punishment in the play.

Sweet Bird of Youth, the next play dealing with not only a male innocent wanderer but also a female one, highlights the most corrupt side of life. It deals with two fragmentary and bitter characters, Princess Kosmonopolis (pseudonym of Alexandra Del Lago in films), a dissolute

movie star and Chance Wyane, a self-centered innocent person, who live the miserable life of hopelessness. They become intimate to each other, in St. Cloud, a small Southern town on the Gulf of Mexico. The former has lost her beauty and charm while the latter is a spoilt person. His aim is to claim his childhood sweetheart Heavenly Finely, the daughter of Boss Finley, a local politician, in order to be an established person in politics.

On the other side, Boss Finley and his son Tom Finley Junior are the symbols of hated in the play. Both are ready to avenge Chance, who is responsible for causing the venereal disease of Heavenly. Chance is unaware of the infectious disease of Heavenly caused by him. The venereal disease plays a vital role in losing her ability to produce the child thus the entire play becomes symbol of destruction, of Heavenly's life and Princess becomes instrumental in spreading an aura of guilt. The playwright punishes both of them by an act of castration Chance with Princess, has surrendered and repents for his sins. He is compelled to suffer more than Heavenly and Princess and gets punishment for his sinful acts.

The present study concludes that Tennessee Williams is the exclusive playwright of his self-styled court of justice where all cases of sexual crimes, criminals as escapists from sexually denied or withdrawn world, and innocent wanderers are duly considered and punished. The sexual transgressions are the sinful acts and they are generally and naturally punished. The sexual victims are the pitiable psychological characters in his plays. The shaping influences of the creative artists, philosophers and thinkers like Freud, Jung,

Lawrence and others play a vital role upon his creative mind which proved a great corrective while delineating his characters in their relative world of crime and punishment. The playwright feels that sexual crimes and criminals are endless biological and psychological phenomena which will ever continue with new faces and new challenges in all the times. The human mind is not static but dynamic. No judgment is the last word in life of any criminals as well as judges. Man is the process of making but not made. His real face is yet to come which is a source of inspiration to the creative artists. After the study of crime and punishment, a study of man and woman relationship in the plays of Tennessee Williams needs further investigation. As a consummate playwright, Tennessee Williams twinkles like a shining star in the galaxy of American drama where he stands as a pioneer playwright of the world.