

Twentieth Century American Drama
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Lecture - 29
The Glass Menagerie Part 4

This is an NPTEL lecture on the play *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams.

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- *The Glass Menagerie* was Tennessee Williams' first successful play.
- It is set in the backdrop of the Great Depression of the 1930s with the protagonist looking back on this time period from the 1940s.
- It won the Critics Circle Award in 1945.
- It is a memory play that has a tone that is melancholic and reflective.



This was Tennessee Williams' first successful play which is also set in the background of Great Depression of the 1930s and protagonist who is also the narrator of this memory play. Tom Wingfield, he is looking back on this period, on the period on the time period of the 1930s from the 1940s. This is a play which had won the Critic Circle Award in 1945 and which has been very critically received and has had many adaptations in subsequent decades.

This memory play has been referred to by Tennessee Williams and also by other critics later on. This has a tone that is very melancholic and reflective. It is the also that this tone as suggested in the stage directions and in the ambience that gets created when the play is staged.

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- The play introduced Williams's notion of plastic theatre, or sculptural drama
- he incorporated both sound and lighting into his stage directions in an attempt to heighten the audience's emotional experience.
- The play features recurring thematic preoccupations in Williams' work such as the Decline of the South, Familial Strife, Memory, Delusion and Nostalgia.

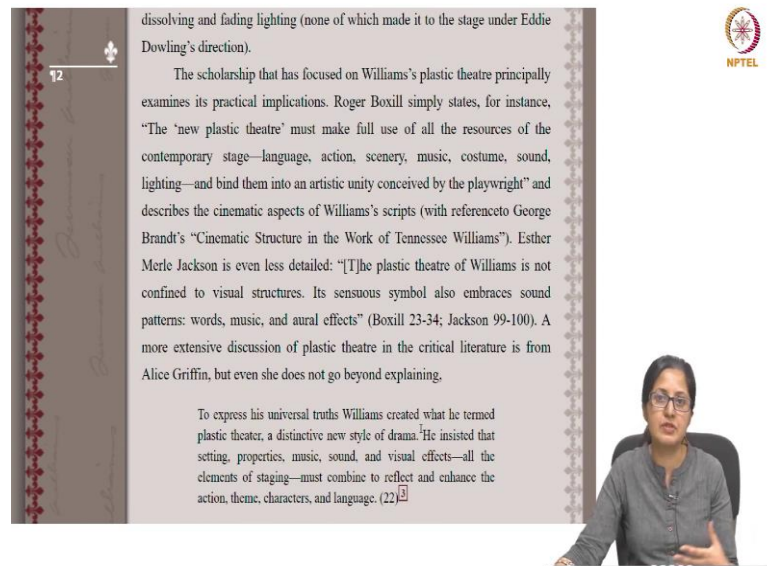
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This play also introduced William's notion of plastic theater or sculptural dramas and this is a way in which in these theatrical performance aspects of sound and lighting are incorporated into stage directions. This also heightens the audiences' emotional experience and this is something that we notice even when we watch the adaptations of this play, the movie adaptations of this play.

The setting is very carefully manicured in such ways that the sound and the lighting, they also reflect the emotional to mould, the psychological state that the narrator and the other characters are in.

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dissolving and fading lighting (none of which made it to the stage under Eddie Dowling's direction).

The scholarship that has focused on Williams's plastic theatre principally examines its practical implications. Roger Boxill simply states, for instance, "The 'new plastic theatre' must make full use of all the resources of the contemporary stage—language, action, scenery, music, costume, sound, lighting—and bind them into an artistic unity conceived by the playwright" and describes the cinematic aspects of Williams's scripts (with reference to George Brandt's "Cinematic Structure in the Work of Tennessee Williams"). Esther Merle Jackson is even less detailed: "[T]he plastic theatre of Williams is not confined to visual structures. Its sensuous symbol also embraces sound patterns: words, music, and aural effects" (Boxill 23-34; Jackson 99-100). A more extensive discussion of plastic theatre in the critical literature is from Alice Griffin, but even she does not go beyond explaining,

To express his universal truths Williams created what he termed plastic theater, a distinctive new style of drama. He insisted that setting, properties, music, sound, and visual effects—all the elements of staging—must combine to reflect and enhance the action, theme, characters, and language. (22)³

It might be very useful to briefly see what Tennessee Williams meant by plastic theater and how this feature has been discussed by the other critics later on. The scholarship on Williams plastic theater has largely focused on its practical implications as you could see in this excerpt over here.

One of the critics Roger Boxill, he states 'the 'new plastic theater' must make full use of all the resources of the contemporary stage language, action, scenery, music, costume, sound lighting. It is we also notice in this play that the background music, the background score, it has a major role in showcasing the emotions of the characters, in highlighting the mood of each scene and it bind them into an artistic unity conceived by the playwright.

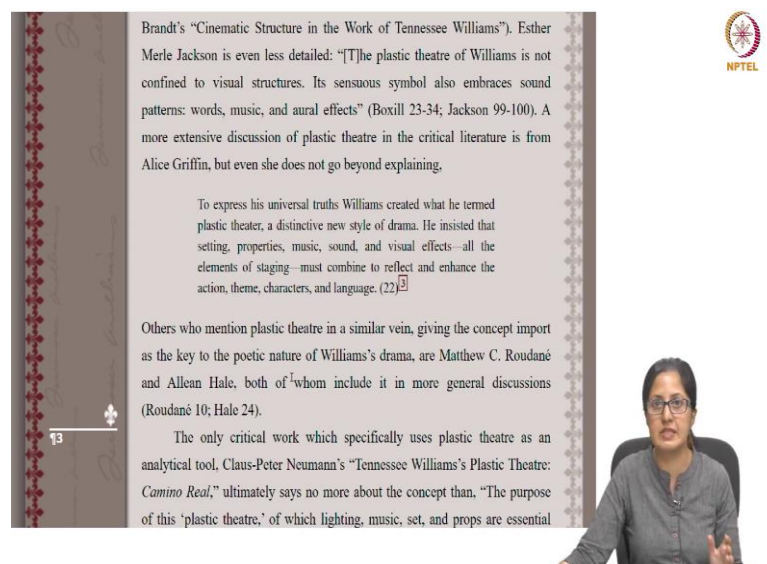
We find everything contributing to the way in which artistic unity has been conceived. We notice that it is a memory play, everything that happens are realistic which are being portrayed, but everything that happens is also a creation in the mind of Tom Wingfield; the narrator, on whose memory the entire play is based.

Everything in the play the language, the music, the sounds even the sound of the glass shattering, it has a very meaningful role to play in this entire setting. We find that everything comes together to accentuate the emotional drama which is also there in the background all the time. He also continues to describe the cinematic aspects of William's scripts with reference to George Brandt's 'Cinematic Structure in the field of Tennessee

Williams'. And here, while we are close reading the play we find that the frames are very cinematic, the way the scenes move from one to the other, the shift from one character to the other happens, the zoom-in zoom-out mode which has been very usefully theatrically used we find that its very cinematic in its depiction, in its movements, in this fade-in fade-out; the use in the fade-in fade-out techniques.

So, Esther Jackson another critic goes into a few more details about the plastic theater. 'The plastic theater of Williams is not confined to visual structures. It is sensuous symbol also embraces sound patterns, words, music and aural effects'. So, the way in which the dialogue delivery is being designed that also contributes to the overall emotion of the play, the overall background of the play.

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The image shows a presentation slide with a decorative border on the left and right sides. The slide contains text about Tennessee Williams' 'plastic theater'. In the bottom right corner, there is a small video inset of a woman with glasses, wearing a grey shirt, who appears to be the presenter. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of the slide area.

Brandt's "Cinematic Structure in the Work of Tennessee Williams"). Esther Merle Jackson is even less detailed: "[T]he plastic theatre of Williams is not confined to visual structures. Its sensuous symbol also embraces sound patterns: words, music, and aural effects" (Boxill 23-34; Jackson 99-100). A more extensive discussion of plastic theatre in the critical literature is from Alice Griffin, but even she does not go beyond explaining.

To express his universal truths Williams created what he termed plastic theater, a distinctive new style of drama. He insisted that setting, properties, music, sound, and visual effects—all the elements of staging—must combine to reflect and enhance the action, theme, characters, and language. (22)^[3]

Others who mention plastic theatre in a similar vein, giving the concept import as the key to the poetic nature of Williams's drama, are Matthew C. Roudané and Allean Hale, both of whom include it in more general discussions (Roudané 10; Hale 24).

The only critical work which specifically uses plastic theatre as an analytical tool, Claus-Peter Neumann's "Tennessee Williams's Plastic Theatre: *Camino Real*," ultimately says no more about the concept than, "The purpose of this 'plastic theatre,' of which lighting, music, set, and props are essential

To express his universal truths Williams created what he termed plastic theater, a distinctive style of new drama. He insisted that setting, properties, music, sound and visual effects all the elements of staging must combine to reflect the reflect and enhance the action, theme, characters and language.

With this very brief preview on what is plastic theater, we will continue to look at the play per se. I do strongly encourage you to read more about plastic theater, if this is something that you find interesting.

So, then this claim through these various theatrical techniques, we find that there are certain recurrent themes which are brilliantly captured. Such as that decline of the South as noted before Amanda Wingfield is a group in the south in her value systems are entirely different, it is conservative in a certain way, but there is also an aspiration to fit in to the world of materiality. So, that irony of the south with the south of the American South is very beautifully captured.

The account the various themes around Familial Strife about the father abandoning the family, about her brother who is about to abandon the family, the mother-daughter relationship which is very affectionate and strained at the same time. We find all of these things being captured very beautifully in this play. There are the aspects of memory, delusion and nostalgia, we find most of the almost all the characters inhabiting all of these traits simultaneously.

So, there it is difficult to say whether they are talking out of it is a whether it is a delusional talk or whether it is based on real memory. The play also challenges the concept of real memory and the line between the memory and imagination, the line between memory and delusion seems to be very thin over here. And there is certainly a sense of nostalgia either about the past or about the world that is yet to be. And in Laura Wingfield's case, the nostalgia is for a very unreal world too.

So, while Amanda, the mother she finds solace in these nostalgic memories about a past, we do not to know whether those narratives are entirely true or not. We find Laura Wingfield finding her solace in the world of these Glass Menageries, in this make believe makeshift world which she chooses to inhabit where her deformity becomes something very exotic. In the case of Tom Wingfield, he finds solace in these worlds created by movies and then, right after that alcohol too.

He also thinks about a time when he could perhaps become a writer, but at the beginning and end of the play when he appears in this merchant marine uniform, we also realized that he perhaps could never become the poet that he wanted to be, but he is in a world which is not confined to these four walls of his own home.

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- The lyrical romanticism of the play's ending is reflective of Williams' dramatic style
- testimony to the difficult choices people often have to make
- the most autobiographical of all his plays.

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So, the lyrical romanticism is something that we notice in the way the play progresses in some of these staccato sentences in some of the way in which the dialogue delivery is designed. We find that the ending is also shaped accordingly, it is very reflective.

Right at the beginning, we know that this is a memory play and that Tom has already escaped from his the confines of the family when the play begins. But that does not reduce the dramatic effect at the end of the play. It is also Tennessee Williams way of telling the audience that there are certain difficult choices that people have to make sometimes and this does not take a judgmental tone at any point.

Tom Wingfield is for instance is a character who is affectionate, but at the same time there are these difficult choices that he has to make in order to preserve his own sanity. For very various reason, this place also construed, it is very autobiographical and most of these writers since they were also writing during this post-depression, post-war period, they were also dealing with these trauma in an individual or an individual basis. It also has an autobiographical element in terms of betrayal, abandonment, the affinities towards families and such responsibilities which govern each individual's life.

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- The Wingfield family comprise the main characters of the play.
- Amanda Wingfield is a single mother who often reminisces about her past as a Southern Belle.
- She is desperate to secure the future of her children Laura and Tom.

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So, a very quick recap on the characters that we have already seen are the Wingfield family, the three members of the family including the and the father figure who is absent, but who is there just as a portrait. They are the major characters with the gentleman caller Jim O' Connor visiting them.

So, wing Amanda Wingfield comes across as a single mother who is very nostalgic about her life as a Southern Belle. The children are a bit skeptical about the details that she gives for instance, she boasts about these 17 gentlemen callers that she had at one point, but nevertheless she they know that this is an indulgence that she needs in order to sustain herself.

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- Laura Wingfield is a shy but perceptive young woman who is inhibited by her severe social anxiety.
- Laura has a limp which she views as a deformity.
- Tom Wingfield is the protagonist and the first-person narrator who is characterized by his dissatisfaction with his job and his family (though he feels a measure of love and responsibility towards his sister)



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Laura is a very shy, but a very perceptive young woman who is found very attractive by Jim O' Connor in a marginal sense, but she is also her deformity, her limp which her mother refuses to acknowledge, that also makes her diffident in the choices that she makes, diffident in her approach to life.

Tom Wingfield, who is the protagonist, who is the narrator and who also gives some the interlocutor's voice over here. He is characterized by his dissatisfaction with his job, he works in a warehouse and he is unhappy over there and he wants to become a poet and eventually, he finds escape in perhaps in a merchant navy; perhaps in a merchant marine career.

There is no way in which we can doubt his love and responsibility that he feels towards his sister. He comes across as very affectionate, he understands what his mother is going through as well, but he is unable to sustain that into a commitment. He is unable to sustain that emotions and execute them as a commitment no matter how much he tries.

So, even Amanda Wingfield knows at various points of this play that it is just a matter of time that Tom Wingfield also leaves home like his father; that he would also abandon his family just like his father did.

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- Jim O' Connor referred to by the old-fashioned term "gentleman caller" is a former classmate of Laura and Tom's colleague at the factory. He is regarded by Amanda as a way to secure Laura's future through marriage.
- The absent presence in the play is the father who abandoned his family. His photograph is a constant reminder to Amanda of all her losses and all that she stands to lose if her son chooses the same path.



And Jim O' Connor, who is more like a cameo presence in this play, he is referred to by this very old fashioned term gentleman caller that the term is used in order to also situate the way in which Amanda Wingfield's character is personified; it also showcases how Amanda Wingfield as a type, she chooses to inhabit a different world, that world that she is familiar with from the American South. That in some form it is also a contrast to the intense capitalist structure which is evolving in the poster, in the early 20th century America.

Jim O' Connor is a former classmate of Laura or in on home she had a crush during her high school days and he is also Tom's colleague at the warehouse at the shoe factory. And Amanda thinks that Jim O' Connor is perhaps the savior figure who would rescue the entire family and will secure Laura's future.

Once Laura's future is secured through marriage and also we need to bear this in mind that Amanda also locates a marriage as the way to a secure future because everything else fails in the case of Laura Wingfield. She was sent for typewriting lessons which she fails to take and that is a scene is a deception by Amanda. And there is no other way in her mind to secure Laura's future except by way of marriage.

In some sense is also a passport, it is also a ticket to Tom Wingfield's freedom. Amanda also assures him once Laura's life is secured through marriage, Tom is also free to leave wherever he wants to. His absent-presence of the father and who is hung there as a

portrait, he is a reminder, he is also a warning that this is perhaps the past as well as the future for the family.

The past about a family; the past about a father who abandoned the family, and the future is about the brother, the son who is about to abandon the family. It is just a constant reminder and a constant warning in the family about how they are just sandwiched between these two major choices that the men in this family take, who are unable to live up to the pressure, who are unable to; who are forced into these difficult choices because of the living conditions, because they are not able to fit in to the familial system or the financial system which has emerged.

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SCENE 1

- There are overt metanarrative elements in the play such as Tom Wingfield-in-the-present referring to his family members as characters and commenting on the play being “memory”



In the front of scene 1, we find a lot of metanarrative elements like, the characters and the particularly, Tom Wingfield commenting on the play being memory.

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"The play is memory. Being a memory play, it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic."

"I am the narrator of the play, and also a character in it. The other characters are my mother, Amanda, and my sister, Laura, and a gentlemen caller who appears in the final scenes."

- The first scene reveals the anxieties of the Wingfield family about their future prospects or rather the lack of them.



This meta-narrative structure is something that Tennessee Williams and many other playwrights of the early 20th century, they have experimented with it quite extensively. This notion of plastic theater also fits in perfectly in that sense about how a number of objects, a number of other tangible as well as intangible components are arranged together to give us give a sense of this plasticity.

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he does not use the word, he describes a theatre that is, by definition, expressionistic—where the emotions of the play are rendered visually or aurally on the stage—an artistic style he specifically names in the *Glass Menagerie* note.

In all the analyses, however, there has been little speculation about where Williams got the ideas that coalesced into the concept or how he came to coin the term itself. There seems, however, to be a connection between the dramatist's plastic theatre and the notion of "plasticity" as defined by painter Hans Hofmann. Williams had a pervasive interest in painting, even turning his hand to it himself,^[1] and he knew Hofmann from Provincetown, Massachusetts, in the early 1940s when Hofmann ran a summer art school there and Williams vacationed there with his circle of friends and lovers; they had many acquaintances in common, and later Williams even wrote an appreciation of the artist.^[2] Hofmann wrote extensively about plasticity, already publishing in English as early as 1930, and defined space in terms identical to what Williams calls "plastic space" in Act 2, scene 2 of *Will Mr. Merrivether Return from Memphis?*

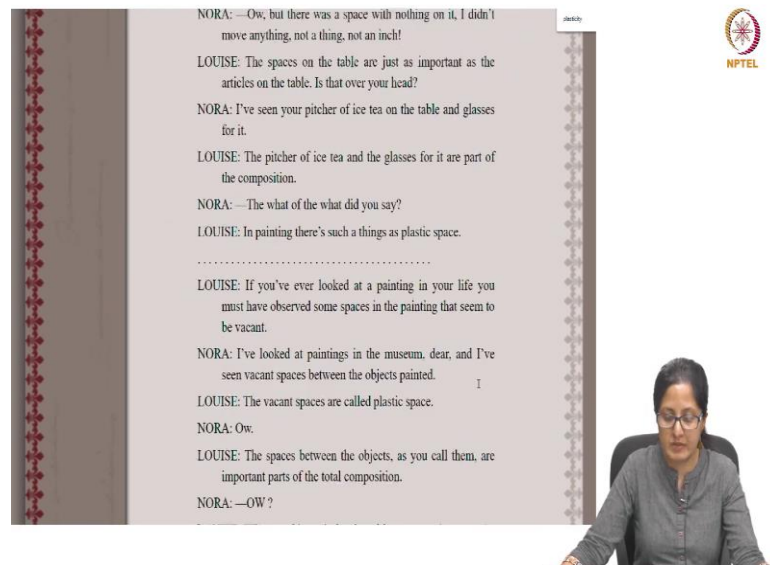
LOUISE: Did you set something on the table?



So, to get a quick sense of how plasticity as a term is used in this context. There seems to be a connection between the dramatist's plastic theater and the notion of plasticity, it was

initially the term defined by the painter Hans Hofmann and Williams also incidentally had a very acute interest in the painting. Williams Hofmann wrote extensively about plasticity from the early 1930s onwards.

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The slide displays a transcript of a conversation between two characters, Nora and Louise, discussing the concept of plastic space in painting. The text is as follows:

NORA: —Ow, but there was a space with nothing on it, I didn't move anything, not a thing, not an inch!

LOUISE: The spaces on the table are just as important as the articles on the table. Is that over your head?

NORA: I've seen your pitcher of ice tea on the table and glasses for it.

LOUISE: The pitcher of ice tea and the glasses for it are part of the composition.

NORA: —The what of the what did you say?

LOUISE: In painting there's such a things as plastic space.

.....

LOUISE: If you've ever looked at a painting in your life you must have observed some spaces in the painting that seem to be vacant.

NORA: I've looked at paintings in the museum. dear, and I've seen vacant spaces between the objects painted.

LOUISE: The vacant spaces are called plastic space.

NORA: Ow.

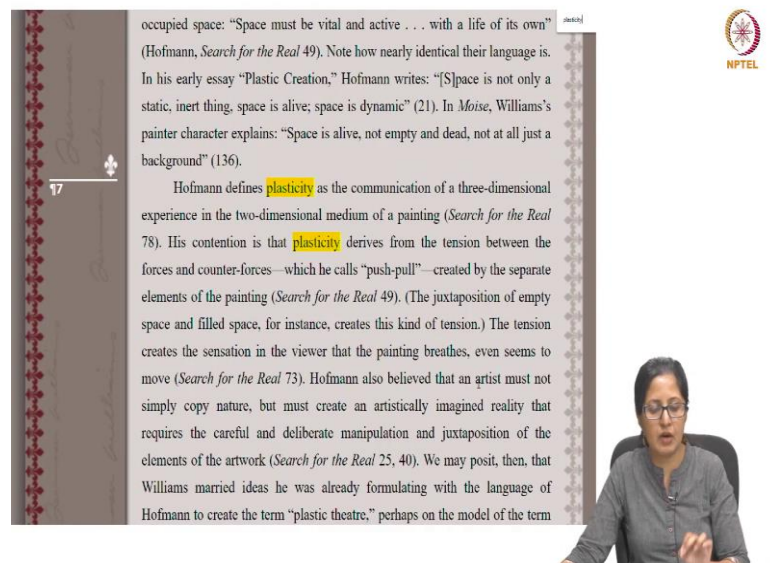
LOUISE: The spaces between the objects, as you call them, are important parts of the total composition.

NORA: —OW ?

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We particularly find certain scenes in other place to as instances where the plasticity of spaces, the plasticity of human lives are getting reflected.

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The slide contains a paragraph of text defining plasticity, followed by a detailed explanation of Hofmann's concept. The text is as follows:

occupied space: "Space must be vital and active . . . with a life of its own" (Hofmann, *Search for the Real* 49). Note how nearly identical their language is. In his early essay "Plastic Creation," Hofmann writes: "[S]pace is not only a static, inert thing, space is alive, space is dynamic" (21). In *Moise*, Williams's painter character explains: "Space is alive, not empty and dead, not at all just a background" (136).

Hofmann defines **plasticity** as the communication of a three-dimensional experience in the two-dimensional medium of a painting (*Search for the Real* 78). His contention is that **plasticity** derives from the tension between the forces and counter-forces—which he calls "push-pull"—created by the separate elements of the painting (*Search for the Real* 49). (The juxtaposition of empty space and filled space, for instance, creates this kind of tension.) The tension creates the sensation in the viewer that the painting breathes, even seems to move (*Search for the Real* 73). Hofmann also believed that an artist must not simply copy nature, but must create an artistically imagined reality that requires the careful and deliberate manipulation and juxtaposition of the elements of the artwork (*Search for the Real* 25, 40). We may posit, then, that Williams married ideas he was already formulating with the language of Hofmann to create the term "plastic theatre," perhaps on the model of the term

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So, we will quickly take a look at how Hofmann defines plasticity. Hofmann defines plasticity as a communication of three-dimensional experience in a two-dimensional

medium of painting. His contention is that plasticity derives from the tension between forces and counter forces which he calls “push-pull” created by the separate elements of the painting.

We find this juxtaposition and this tension between different forces, different memories, and different value systems at work very pertinently in a play like *The Glass Menagerie*.

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This may be how Williams conceived the term “plastic theatre,” but it is not an assertion that the playwright took the *idea* of plastic theatre from Hofmann—he surely put the concept together from several sources over his early years, including the University of Iowa, Erwin Piscator’s Dramatic Workshop at the New School for Social Research, and other influences. At Iowa, where Williams studied in 1937-38, the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts required every student to gain practical experience in all aspects of production from acting to stagecraft. While the 26-year-old playwright was a poor scenic art student—he failed the stagecraft course, delaying his graduation until he made up the F—he dutifully fulfilled the requirements (Calmer 17). Piscator had the same policy at the New School, where Williams took the Playwrights’ Seminar in the Spring 1940 term. The Seminar was chaired by Theresa Helburn, a producer at the Theatre Guild, and John Gassner, a teacher, critic, drama anthologist, and writer who was a playreader at the Guild.^[10] Gassner was a champion of disquieting, new theatre writers and introduced innovative dramaturgical ideas in the Seminar. While Williams took only the Playwrights’ Seminar and was therefore not obligated to take courses in the other stage arts, all students of the Dramatic Workshop, whether enrolled in one course or more, were required to attend the “final talk” of Bennett H.

So, it is presumed that Tennessee Williams borrowed this term and conceived the term plastic theater from Hofmann. But it is not an assertion that the playwright took the idea of plastic theater from Hofmann, he surely put the concept together from several sources over his early years including the University of Iowa and other influences; .

The plasticity is important which has been woven into a play like *The Glass Menagerie* where objects, where emotions, there is a plastic nature about everything, there is also a certain coming together, there is a blending of a number of things which accentuates the emotions as well as the psychological trauma, and psychological abstract emotions that the play is trying to foreground.

So, what makes Tennessee Williams play and the use of plasticity and the experiments in plastic theater particularly pertinent is the fact that this was also a time when American theater, American stage was predominantly about realism. The anxieties which these characters have about various things in their life, they are all revealed in the first scene

itself in the way in which the props are placed, in the way in which they talk to each other.

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- Tensions within the Wingfield household– Amanda, Laura and Tom live impoverished lives and conflicts arise mainly from Amanda's expectations of her children

"The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living-units that flower as warty growths in overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class populations and are symptomatic of the impulse of this largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society to avoid fluidity and differentiation and to exist and function as one interfused mass of automatism."



The tensions that they are facing the inter-personal tensions as well as the tensions within them, they all get reflected very perfectly and their impoverished conditions, the expectations that Amanda has; the contrast between what she had before and what her children are living through.

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- Monotony and Entrapment are recurring themes within the play and this is reflected in the Wingfield's living arrangements.
- Tom's frustration with his circumstances and his feelings of entrapment are evident in his various outbursts and fights with Amanda throughout.



All of these are captured right from the first scene itself and there are a lot of meta-narrative elements which accentuate the monotony and entrapment of these characters. We find that there is a certain pattern, there is a certain boring recurrent pattern, a predictable pattern in these characters life which leads into monotony. And this is also a very clever technique which is used given that. The narrator Tom Wingfield is a character who is fed up with the monotonous life that he had been living.

So, when he is recollecting the life that he was part of when he, when it is his memory play, it is only perhaps very appropriate that the entire thing sounds very monotonous, and the characters feel entrapped. Because that is a mindset through which Tom Wingfield was also narrating this.

His frustration, and what he had been going through everything is revealed very well in the way he is recollecting. And which is why this meta-narrative and this structure becomes extremely important for us to understand how the play is progressing and what the characters are feeling.

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Scene 2

- Amanda is convinced that the only way to secure her daughter's future, considering her crippling shyness, is to get her married.


"Is that the future that we've mapped out for ourselves? I swear it's the only alternative I can think of! It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it? Of course - some girls do marry."

- Amanda is afraid her daughter, without career or matrimonial prospects would end up as an "old maid", dependent on the goodwill of relatives.



So, we did see these where we were reading through the play, we did notice certain scenes where the tension between the family members are very evident too.


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SCENE 3

"Let me tell you—" "I don't want to hear anymore!" (Tom to Amanda).

- Tom often goes to the fire escape in order to avoid being confined to the apartment and his family. It is literally the place he escapes to when at home.



And when there is a conflict between the mother and the son, we find that there is again a pattern to it which the; which Amanda where Amanda begins her sentences with let me tell you and Tom responding with I do not want to hear any more. Amanda comes across this nagging mother figure whom Tom Wingfield cannot stand anymore.

So, the fire escape here becomes that space where Tom's; Tom keeps going back to just to avoid being in the company of her of his mother. And this literally is a space when he escapes to when he is at home. And it also metaphorically suggests the ways in which he will eventually escape when he cannot take it anymore.

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- Tom shuts out reality by frequently escaping to the movies and Laura does the same by devoting her attention to her glass menagerie. Amanda switches between reminiscing about the past and planning for the future. She then fixates on a specter from her past – the gentlemen callers she received as a Southern Belle– as a solution for her daughter.



So, Tom's way of shutting out reality is either by disappearing into the fire, into that space disappearing from the house through the fire escape or escaping to the movies. It is the same way that Laura also escapes by giving her attention, unwarranted attention perhaps to her the collection of glass animals.

And Amanda's is more she is; she has to stay rooted in some sense because she also has to support her family and be there and take some practical decisions. But she also she is also fixated in many ways on her past which also makes things difficult for her. Her value system is entirely determined by what she experienced during her life in the South and that sort of informs that sort of teems all her decisions and how she chooses to make decisions for her children too.

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- *"An evening at home rarely passed without some illusion to this image, this specter, this hope...Even when he wasn't mentioned, his presence hung in Mother's preoccupied look and in my sister's frightened, apologetic manner – hung like a sentence passed upon the Wingfields!"*

The language Tom uses to describe the gentleman caller is reminiscent of the effect on the audience of the hanging portrait – thus, the gentleman is for the future what Tom's father is for the past.



So, when that the gentleman caller; the arrival of the gentleman caller is it is reflected upon in different ways by these characters. The mother waits upon the gentleman caller with a lot of hope, but for Tom, he is like a sentence he is hung like a sentence passed upon the Wingfield's. The very notion of the gentleman caller is something not just disgusting, but it is also something which eventually will lead to their devastation, eventually which would lead to their crumbling apart entirely and that also becomes true as we would see.

And here Tom also has the advantage of having known the past, even when since this is a memory play and since this is all based on his recollection, he also places the characters, and he also gives the audiences the right kind of warnings to be prepared for the impending doom.

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- It can be argued that while Amanda appears to be a “nagging mother” her concerns are primarily for her children’s well-being. Her scrutiny and interrogation of Tom’s habits are out of a fear that he would turn out to be an alcoholic like his father.



So, towards the end of this play, we find that the family does fall apart and here again we need to draw a comparison between the other places that we have read too. Even towards the end of *All My Sons*, we find that the family which ideally, technically would want to stay together, they just fall apart, the father. *All My Sons* of the father shoots himself to death and the mother is in this intense state of guilt. The son is also feels responsible at some level it is a moral responsibility that he feels even at the end of their other play and one son has already been dead.

We find that even the characters who are affectionate to each other, who would want to ideally execute their responsibilities well towards their families, they are also forced into a number of difficult situations because of these external factors.

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SCENE 4

- *"I go to the movies because—I like adventure. Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies."*

Tom, according to Amanda, has the temperament of a dreamer, and is therefore discontent with the humdrum of his working-class life.

- *"I guess she's the type that people call home girls."*

There's no such type, and if there is, it's a pity! That is unless the home is hers, with a husband." (Tom and Amanda).



Amanda is she is very disappointed with the attitude that Tom has towards life hm. According to Amanda, he has this temperament of a dreamer and which is why he does not fit into this is the work that he has the; that is why which is why he is not able to find any career prospects in whatever he is doing now.

She also is quite judgemental in a mixed way about her daughter as well and she is as she says "I guess she is a type that people call home girls". There is no such type, and if there is, it is a pity! That is unless the home is hers, with the husband.

One of the things that she fears most for Laura is a future where she would be left as an old maid where she would not be married, and she will be at the mercy of the other relatives. That is something that she has perhaps seen some women experiencing during her time in the South, and she does not want her daughter to end up like that.

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- Amanda's efforts to 'settle' her daughter's future are unsuccessful as Laura drops out of the business school. The obvious alternative in Amanda's view is for Laura to marry well.



The alternative in that sense is for Laura to marry all gentlemen caller who would be calling on her.

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- *"And you-when I see you taking after his ways! Staying out late-and-well, you had been drinking the night you were in that-terrifying condition! Laura says that you hate the apartment and that you go out nights to get away from it! Is that true, Tom?"*

Amanda points out that Tom takes after his father with regards to his drinking and his nights out and implicitly foretells his later abandonment of the family.



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SCENE 5

- In referring to The Paradise Dance Hall Tom recognizes that many others use dancing, movies and sensual gratification as a means to escape the monotony of their own lives.
- Tom eventually fulfills Amanda's demand that he bring home a gentleman caller for Laura.
- *"You just don't know. We can't have a gentleman caller in a pigsty! All my wedding silver has to be polished, the monogrammed table linen ought to be laundered! The windows have to be washed and fresh curtains put up. And how about clothes? We have to wear something, don't we?"*



So, finally, towards the end of the play, we find that Tom Wingfield is somehow able to fulfill the demands of his family, of his mother particularly by bringing home a gentleman caller. It just turns out that it is his Jim O' Connor who was the former classmate of Laura on whom she also had a romantic interest.

Eventually when Tom manages to bring home this gentleman caller, Amanda also wants to tidy up the home, prepare themselves. "You just do not know. We cannot have a gentleman caller a pigsty! All my wedding silver has to be polished, the monogrammed table linen ought to be laundered! The windows have to be washed and fresh curtains put up. And how about clothes? We have to wear something do not we?"

So, this is she responds to this visit, just a single visit; she responds to this as if it is a grand occasion, as if it is almost like a wedding. She wants to put up their best front, their best foot forward. The house is almost like undergoing a radical change, this certainly is not something perhaps they can afford, but this is the only thing which would give them something to hope for.

And there is also a way in which this could be the references to The Paradise Dance Hall when she is he is referring to it when he is recalling it, it is also like a means to escape some kind of a monotony. So, the visit, this visit by Jim O' Connor could also be seen as something that disturbs a monotony, but it does not necessarily have a good ending. But this disturbance, this destruction of the monotony is a welcome change for all of them.

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While Amanda believes it is Tom's duty to bring home money, she takes on for herself many domestic responsibilities. She also places an inordinate amount of hope in a dinner visit. Tom on a other hand does not share her optimism, as he says he says of Laura:

"She lives in a world of her own—a world of little glass ornaments, Mother...She plays old phonograph records and—that's about all—"



So, Amanda does believe that there are certain responsibilities that the male figures in the family should handle. She is clearly disappointed with how her husband turned out to be and she expects Tom to bring home money which he does too because he does mention it in between about how he pays the rent.

But he also takes upon herself a number of domestic responsibilities and of course, she we have seen that play how dauntingly she pursues this telephonic campaign for the magazine subscription. And she also places an inordinate amount of hope here we can find in this dinner visit.

And if this is she is willing to invest emotionally as well as financially into this, because she thinks there is much that could that she could gain out of it, maybe this is that perfect visit which would eventually help Laura settle. But Tom does not entirely share that optimism, he also shares his concerns with Laura. "She lives in a world of her own, a world of little glass ornaments, Mother, she plays old phonograph records and that is about all".

So, Tom perhaps understands what both Amanda as well as Laura are going through. And he is he tries to sound practical, but that practical those practical concerns also sound very negative to both; to particularly to Amanda.

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Tom, despite his disgruntlement, is always concerned about Laura and the ways in which she could be hurt by a world that is different from her own.

• *"A fire escape landing's a poor excuse for a porch." [She spreads a newspaper and sits down, gracefully and demurely as if she were settling into a swing on a Mississippi veranda].*

Amanda's actions reflect the extent of her self-delusion and the way in which she is trapped in an image of her past younger self. This nostalgia can also be read in the context of the decline of the problematic 'glory' of the American South



So, but Tom we find that he comes across as this brother figure who is always concerned about Laura and he also knows that she is very fragile like the glass animals that she takes care of, she is very fragile and she could be hurt, she could get hurt in this entire process. And every now and then, we find Amanda escaping into this nostalgic world about her past about the American South, the life in the American South.

So, this could be read in the context of the decline of the glory of the American South which began to be witnessed in a major way from the early 20th century onwards. This decline is something which has it is not just about the material decline, it also has an emotional quality about it when we look at the way in which characters like Amanda respond to it. It is as if something glorious has been robbed away from them.

And this glory which they inhabited earlier, the fact that it had come at a cost, that is something that characters like Amanda never perhaps seem to realize. And look side it also gives us this feeling that these are the characters who would perhaps live an entire life feeding from this nostalgia and never getting a grasp of the new order, the new political order, the new economic order which has changed their glorious past in so many ways.

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- *"You are the only young man I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes present, the present past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you don't plan for it!"*

Although Amanda is astute in her observations of the nature of time and regret, she finds herself often unable to move beyond her own past.



And the, there are these moments certain pockets of time which Amanda seems to inhabit a sense of reality. Like when he says “you are the only young man I know of who ignores the fact that the future becomes present, and the present past, and the past turns into everlasting regret if you do not plan for it!”. But she herself is also unable to move out of the past that she is stuck into.

And even when she has these momentary epiphanic moments about the reality; even when she gets a bite of this reality which is eating this family, she always chooses to come out of it as quickly as she could. Like this scene where she refuses to acknowledge that Laura is acknowledged Laura’s disability or she refuses to acknowledge that perhaps there is nothing more that these her children could aspire for in terms of material gains, in terms of career advancement.

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SCENE 6

- *"I was valuable to him as someone who could remember his former glory."*

Jim O' Connor is described as polite and good-natured. He is amused by Amanda's girlish excesses. But Tom's description of their friendship points to the fact that like Amanda, Jim too revels in the memory of his glory days.

- *"A fragile, unearthly prettiness has come out in Laura: she is like a piece of translucent glass touched by light, given a momentary radiance, not actual, not lasting."*

Laura's beauty is inherently tied to her fragility and it sets her apart for Jim as someone whose uniqueness would be unnoticed and unappreciated because of her social anxiety.



When Jim O' Connor is introduced in the play, he is also introduced as a very good character, very nice character, an amicable character. That is another thing about these plays, the plays that we have read before and the one that we are reading now, all the characters in these plays they are all amicable characters.

It is just that they are unable to fit in together due to the various socio-political reasons. And these reasons are not very it is not there out on your face, these are the subtle backgrounds; these are always there in the subtle background influencing the way in which people respond react influencing almost dictating and determining the way in which day-to-day affairs function.

So, Jim O' Connor is described as a very polite and good-natured person. He is very amused by the girlish way in which Amanda responds to him, but Jim also thinks about we find in those conversations that he too revels in the memory of his glory days a fragile . So, when that is when he when he is talking, he says that is valuable to him as someone who could remember his former glory. So, this is how Tom recollects about Jim also, because Jim also inhabits the past maybe not so much in such a dangerous way, such painful ways as a Wingfield family.

So, while Tom is interact while sorry while Jim is interacting with Laura, he is also aware intensely aware of her fragility. "A fragile unearthly prettiness has come out in Laura; she is like a piece of translucent glass touched by light, given a momentary

radiance, not actual, not lasting”. This is perhaps one of the finest descriptions about Laura in this play.

It is there is radiance, but it is very momentary, and it is not lasting. There is nothing in the play which is real in some sense, there is nothing which is actual, and it is a memory play which is spelled out very clearly from the beginning. And the characters while they are real characters, what surrounds them, the reality which is surrounded by them, and the reality which they choose to inhabit are never actual. And particularly, *The Glass Menagerie* the title refers very directly to the character Laura.

We find that her character, her beauty, and her responses everything is intricately trying to have fragility. And this is a fragility which begins to affect the family to it's because of this fragile, physical and emotional nature that she could not continue with her typewriting classes either.

And this sets apart, sets her apart from the rest of the world, but not in a very unique way, not in a way that she would be noticeable. But it sets her apart in such ways that it gives her anxiety that this uniqueness makes her visible in ways that she does not want to be visible. Because she is remembered in the typewriting classes which she had to stop too because of this humiliation, she is remembered as the girl, the shy girl who could not take the pressure and who eventually threw up on the day of her exam.

So, this social anxiety; we do not know whether this is an extension of her physical disability or the emotional trauma that she had been going through. But both when both of these aspects come together in her, we find that this anxiety takes a different level altogether. Even within her family, she is anxious, even within the even in the presence of Amanda and Tom, she seems to be anxious, and she seems to be always trying to maintain some order between these two forces, her brother as well as her mother.

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- *“People go to the movies instead of moving! Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them! Yes, until there's a war. That's when adventure becomes available to the masses!”*



This is where this reference about the movies. And this is something that we had briefly spoken about in the previous session too, how entertainment had become something very central in early 20th century America.

“People go to the movies instead of moving! Hollywood characters are supposed to have all the adventures for everybody in America, while everybody in America sits in a dark room and watches them have them! Yes, until there is a war. That is when adventure becomes available to the masses!”

This is very ironical, it is some dark irony over here about how the economy, the entertainment system, the market conditions, they all continue to thrive in various ways despite the depression, despite the difficulties of the war. And how movies provide a pseudo kind of entertainment to people until there is a war. War here is also very ironically seen as how adventure becomes available to the masses.

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William's commentary on American consumerism and the ways in which capitalism exists often through the dehumanization of its subjects, is woven throughout the play.

• *"It's rare for a girl as sweet an' pretty as Laura to be domestic! But Laura is, thank heavens, not only pretty but also very domestic."*

Amanda's standards for ideal womanhood are defined by the type of magazines that she sells subscriptions to and are rooted in a traditional understanding of gender roles.



There are different kinds of commentaries which are available in this play. One is about the commentary on American consumerism, this strive towards the American dream, and about how a certain kind of dehumanization is at work while this system works relentlessly.

But at the same time, there is also the theme of the American South about how Amanda's obsession with ideal womanhood, Amanda's obsession with securing Laura's life through marriage. These are also certain sorts of ideals, certain sorts of notions which were prevalent. And ironically co-existing the capitalist the structures as well as these regressive conservative idealistic structures all of those inhabiting together.

So, this play is a commentary on these various things and how they inform each other, sometimes they are in conflict with each other. But the resultant fact is that the characters who are trapped in these systems, they are made to make difficult choices, they are rendered helpless. And this helplessness and this difficult nature of these choices and sometimes there are no choices at all they just have to go with the flow and this is something which gets foregrounded in most of the plays that we discussed.

And the traditional understanding of various gender roles that is also very prevalent over here in terms of the expectations from the characters, in terms of what the parental expectations, in terms of the expectations of based on one's gender location, the kind of

career that one is expected to take based on one's family location . So, all of these things are being commented upon.

The important thing to be noted here that; noted here is that Tennessee Williams never takes a judgmental tone about it which is why the character who escaped the situation, he is being made to narrate this, taught to accentuate the pathos over here.

It there is a; there is a tragedy in the choice that Tom Wingfield has made. But that does not make him an evil character that does not make him a scheming character. It makes him all the more helpless when he knows what he had done, when he knows what he was supposed to do and this difficulty in making the right kind of decision.

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SCENE 7

• GO, then! Go to the moon—you selfish dreamer!"

Amanda is frustrated with Tom's attitude toward his work and family. The audience has to determine for themselves whether Amanda's anger and Tom's subsequent actions are reasonable.



(Refer Slide Time: 35:48)

TOM: What's peculiar about it?



AMANDA: Didn't you call him your best friend down at the warehouse?

TOM: He is, but how did I know?

AMANDA: It seems extremely peculiar that you wouldn't know your best friend was going to be married !

TOM: The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people !

AMANDA: You don't know things anywhere ! You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions !



When it comes to the final scene which we will also take a very quick look at.

(Refer Slide Time: 35:53)

TOM: JIM? Engaged?



AMANDA: That's what he just informed us.



↳

TOM: I'll be jiggered ! I didn't know about that



We will skip those sessions where Jim O' Connor and Tom had been interacting. While there is a momentary kind of hope which is raised, there is a momentary kind of expectation about a future getting secure, we find that it does not really work out.

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AMANDA: Come in here a minute. I want to tell you something awfully funny.



TOM [enters with macaroon and a glass of lemonade]: Has the gentleman caller gotten away already?

AMANDA: The gentleman caller has made an early departure. What a wonderful joke you played on us!

TOM: How do you mean?

1

AMANDA: You didn't mention that he was engaged to be married.



“Tom enters, has a gentleman caller gotten away already? The gentleman caller has made an early departure. What a wonderful joke you played on us!”

It takes a tragic turn and ironically tragic turn all together. They had been waiting for the gentleman caller as this figure who would rescue them. But what happens on the other hand is right after the gentleman caller shows up, things taken a very ugly turn, there is a very dramatic end to the play, also there is a very dramatic end to the family that they are; they are no longer there. We find everything begins to disintegrate.

“How do you mean? You did not mention that he was engaged to be married. Engaged? That is what he just informed us.”

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TOM: I'll be jiggered ! I didn't know about that



AMANDA: That seems very peculiar.

TOM: 'What's peculiar about it?

AMANDA: Didn't you call him your best friend down at the warehouse?

TOM: He is, but how did I know?

AMANDA: It seems extremely peculiar that you wouldn't know your best friend was going to be married !



“I will be jiggered! I did not know about that. That seems very peculiar. What is peculiar about it? Did not you call him your best friend down at the warehouse? He is, but how did I know?”

It also tells us about the shallow nature of what they refer to as friendships. Tom have been interacting with Jim O’ Connor, but, it is very obvious over here that they never had; they never have had any intimate conversation about what is happening in their personal lives.

It seems extremely peculiar that you would not know your best friend was going to be married!

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married !



TOM: The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people !

AMANDA: You don't know things anywhere ! You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions !

[He crosses to door.]

Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going to the movies.



“The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people!”

Amanda and Tom also share; Amanda also shares a very different notion of the workplace so, she expects Tom to socialize in the place where he is working, to know things about people, because this is what that is what she has that is the world that she is familiar with from her experience with the American South.

Where you work with people, where you meet people and all about their lives too. The intrusive nature of each family knowing about the other family, individual knowing about the other individual that is something which is entirely lacking in this new capitalist structure, in this new order of work. And this is something that Amanda is entirely unfamiliar with, and she expects Tom to exactly know what Jim's intentions were even before he was brought home.


“The warehouse is where I work, not where I know things about people! You do not know things anywhere! You live in a dream; you manufacture illusions! Which is entirely true too given that he is the one who is instrumental in staging this memory play.

He crosses to door. Where are you going? I am going to the movies. This is his one stop solution to everything which becomes frustrating as we can also see over here, there is such a crisis in the family and perhaps all that Amanda is hoping in this stage is for him to step up and offer comfort to Laura, but all that he can respond to is by going to the

movies. This is the only thing that he knows, this is the only response that he knows just to leave everything, to ignore everything and move away.”

This quality of the ignoring what is going around between them, this infinite capacity to ignore reality and focus only on what is out there as a dream, as an illusion that something we find as a recurrent quality in most of these place.

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AMANDA: That's right, now that you've had us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense ! The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura ! all for what? To entertain some other girl's fiancé ! Go to the movies, go ! Don't think about us, a mother deserted, an unmarried sister who's crippled and has no job ! Don't let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure I just go, go, go - to the movies !

TOM: All right, I will ! The more you shout about my selfishness to me the quicker I'll go, and I won't go to the movies !

AMANDA: Go, then ! Then go to the moon - you selfish dreamer !

[Tom smashes his glass on the floor. He plunges out on the fire-escape, slamming the door . LAURA screams -cut by door.

Dance-hall Music up. TOM goes to the rail and grips it desperately, lifting his face in the chill white moonlight penetrating narrow above of the alley



That is right, now that you have made us make such fools of ourselves. The effort, the preparations, all the expense! The new floor lamp, the rug, the clothes for Laura! It is getting starkly realist over him, all for what? To entertain some of the girl's fiancé. Go to the movies go, do not think about us, a mother deserted. An unmarried sister who is crippled and has no job, do not let anything interfere with your selfish pleasure, just go, go, go to the movies.

This is where again Amanda inhabits this real world very momentarily. We do not know what happens to this family right after this because the place also coming to an end and we do not know and perhaps this is all that Tom Wingfield knows too, maybe there is nothing more that he knows about his family that he can convey and share with the audience either.

“All right, I will! The more you shout about my selfishness to me the quicker I will go, and I want to go to the movies! Go, then! Then go to the moon you are selfish dreamer!

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[Tom smashes his glass on the floor. He plunges out on the fire-escape, slamming the door.
LAURA screams -cut by door.

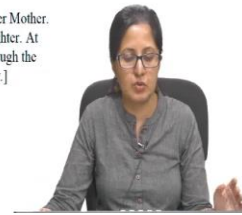


Dance-hall Music up. TOM goes to the rail and grips it desperately, lifting his face in the chill white moonlight penetrating narrow abyss of the alley.

LEGEND ON SCREEN: ' AND SO GOOD-BYE...'

TOM's closing speech is timed with the interior pantomime. [The interior scene is played as though viewed through soundproof glass. AMANDA appears to be making a comforting speech to LAURA who is huddled upon the sofa. Now that we cannot hear the mother's speech, her silliness is gone and she has dignity and tragic beauty.

LAURA's dark hair hides her face until at the end of the speech she lifts it to smile at her Mother. AMANDA's gestures are slow and graceful, almost dancelike as she comforts the daughter. At the end of her speech she glances a moment at the father's picture - then withdraws through the portières. At the close of Tom's speech, LAURA blows out the candles, ending the play.]



Tom smashes his glass on the floor. He plunges out on the fire-escape, slamming the door. Laura screams cut by door.” This is the symbolic presence of the metaphorical presence of the fire escape becomes quite real over here when he plunges out onto the fire escape. Tom goes to the rail and grips it desperately, lifting his face in the chilled white moonlight penetrating narrow abyss of the alley.

Tom’s closing speech is timed with the interior pantomime. The interior scene is played as though viewed through soundproof glass. Amanda appears to be making a comforting speech to Laura who is huddled upon the sofa. Now, that we cannot hear the mother’s speech, her silliness is gone, and she has dignity and tragic beauty.

It almost looks like this language, the Amanda’s language is something that she used to cover up what she has beneath that, without now that her speech is inaudible, she is attempting to comfort Laura and she has dignity and tragic beauty. And without her words, she becomes something else altogether. This is perhaps warrants a different discussion altogether about the how the American South gets represented in the early 20th century plays.

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LEGEND ON SCREEN: ' AND SO GOOD-BYE...'



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TOM: I didn't go to the moon, I went much further - for time is the longest distance between places. Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoebox.



Laura's dark hair hides her face until the end of the speech she lifts it to smile at her Mother. Amanda's gestures are slow and graceful, almost dance like as she comforts the daughter. At the end of her speech, she glances a moment at the father's picture, then withdraws through the portieres. At the close of Tom's speech, Laura blows out the candles ending the play.

This is Tom's moon log again at the end bringing the play to a closure. "I did not go to the moon; I went much further for time is the longest distance between places. Not long after that I was fired for writing a poem on the lid of a shoebox."

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I left Saint Louis. I descended the step 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 - I travelled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly coloured 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 coloured glass, tiny transparent bottles in delicate colours, like bits of a shattered rainbow.

Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes ...

Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be !

I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger - anything that can blow your candles out !



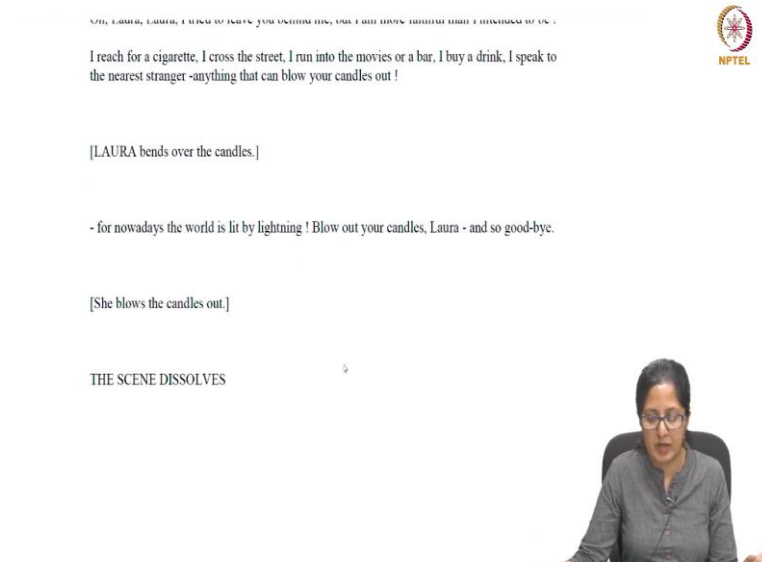
“I left Saint Louis. I descended the step of this fire-escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father’s footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space. I traveled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves, leaves that were brightly colored, but I know away from the branches. I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something.

It always came upon me unawares, taking me all together 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 a 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. Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be. This memory play, this recollection also serves as an atonement, he is giving those characters life through his play. He says, the distance between them is not the geographical distance now, it is a distance of time. There are things that he should have done at a certain point of time now, he has traveled away from that time.”

The significance of time becomes very tragically for grounded towards the end. “I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger anything that can blow your candles out!”

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“For nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura and so goodbye. She blows the candles out and the scene dissolves.”

When the play comes to an end, we do not quite know how to place these characters and their future, we do not know what happened to the mother and the daughter. But we do know that there is a an image of dignity, there is an image of peace, there is an image of comfort that Tom Wingfield chooses to retain in his mind about the mother and daughter; that is the image that he wants to leave the audience with too. It is the intention in his mind, but we do not know how the events transpired in reality.

He seems to have found his escape and, in some ways. His life has not changed much either he continues to go to the movies, he finds solace in others’ lives. He also the statement towards the end is very telling. Nowadays, the world is lit by lightning, not by candles.

It is also this bringing back the entire scene back into reality about the reality of lightning and not the it is very temporary, but it is can also have very devastating effect ,

just like the visit of our Jim O' Connor which had offered a temporary light, but eventually it had a very devastating effect too.

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- *"My signature isn't worth very much right now. But some day—maybe—it will increase in value! Being disappointed is one thing and being discouraged is something else. I am disappointed but I am not discouraged."*

Jim's idealism toward the future reflects the American Dream of progress and growth.

- *"They're common as—weeds, but—you—well, you're—Blue Roses!"*

The Blue Roses, unlike the jonquils that Amanda frequently mentions, are a product of imagination that does not exist in reality, perhaps indicating that Laura will never be a part of the practical 'reality' that the rest of the world occupies. Despite the tenderness between Laura and Jim, the play ends with dismantling the expectations of the characters and bringing them back to where they were before Jim's brief interruption.



Perhaps the only reason for bringing this the character of Jim O' Connor into the play is just to heighten the sense of idealism that is was prevalent during that time. A sense of idealism which the Wingfield family cannot perhaps even access. Jim's idealism towards the future in so many ways it reflects the American dream of progress and growth, when he says "my signature is not worth very much right now. But someday maybe it will increase in value being disappointed is one thing and being discouraged with something else. I am disappointed, but I am not discouraged".

This attitude makes at least it looks like it makes a whole world of difference over here, it is not as if they were they both work in the same way house , but we do know that his social standing is slightly different, his aspirations are slightly different. He is also his the way in which he looks at the future is about finding worth in what he is; finding worth making his signature turn into something that will turn money, it is very materialist.

Those are not the aspirations that a character like Tom Wingfield has. If we examine, these plays in totality, these plays they have chosen characters which do not fit into this new economic order; where the pursuit of material comforts, where the axis of material comforts is not seen as the end. There is always something else that they are aspiring for

something either from the old world or something in an ideal world which the kind of idealism which does not fit into the material concerns.

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"Then all at once my sister touches my shoulder. I turn around and look into her eyes. Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! I reach for a cigarette, I cross the street, I run into the movies or a bar, I buy a drink, I speak to the nearest stranger—anything that can blow your candles out! For nowadays the world is lit by lightning! Blow out your candles, Laura—and so, goodbye..."



The play essentially ends by with a note of goodbye as we had seen. This is also the end of a certain kind of value system, it is also the end of a certain kind of world order. Tom's escape also symbolizes the need to inhabit the next system, the next the nearest possible alternate system in order to continue to live. Because there are very few options limited and these difficult choices are also the result of these new orders which have begun to settle.

We also realize that *The Glass Menagerie* as a memory play, it opens up immense potential, it opens up a lot of ways in which the play could be re-read, the play could be interpreted, and there are a number of theories which could be used to there are a number of theories which could be used to access the play from multiple vantage points as well.

It is to conclude that some of the frames and themes have also encouraged us to take a more sustained critical interest on the play, which will help us to identify more nuances, identify more interpretations.