



A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE : STUDY IN ABSURDISM

Dr. Bimlesh K. Singh

Associate Professor, Dept. of English,
C.R.A. College, Sonipat (HR) Email:drbimleshksingh@gmail.com

Tennessee Williams' plays depict the pathos of human failure in modern age. He has concentrated on the inner/the psychological lives of characters impinged by harsher reality. The characters (Amanda, Blanche etc.) emerge as victims of absurd outward pressures of brutal social realism thereby disillusioning them and shattering them to pieces.

ISSN 2454-308X



The decadence of the Southern myth and its pristine glory rightly subjects its creatures to crushing discomfiture. Robbed of ideal world of illusion, the characters abide a complacent seclusion which leads them to neurosis, frustration etc. Hence Williams' play end on the irremediable plight of creatures of a moribund culture which had, to quote Margaret Mitchell, gone with the wind of the Northern invasion.

Keywords: Decadence, Neurosis, Illusion, Reality, Absurdism

Williams plays are an in-depth exploration of “the now” and “the then”, the bright past/illusion and the dismal present/reality. The central characters in Williams' plays are victims suffering from the insoluble conflict between the illusion and reality. Be it Amanda or Blanche, they find it helpless and difficult to come to terms with the present, the new social order of mass culture and therefore they have to retreat into the world of illusions and the past times. Naturally enough, Williams presents the striking clash between two worlds. Having lost the southern, mythical, illusory life of gentility and aristocracy in the past, the Williams characters appear to be completely misfits in the present scenario of modern, material civilization. The present paper is a critical endeavour to approach Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire* in the light of absurdism. It is a kind of focus on the existential dilemma and sense of nothingness in life of modern humanity characterised by William's characters. The famous philosopher Albert Camus in *The Myth of Sisyphus* describes the absurd condition of man so beautiful :

In a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of light, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile... This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of Absurdity.

(Camus, 18)

The Williams' characters (esp. heroines) are utterly fade up with the present world and hence they look back to the world of illusion. Sometimes Williams' heroines undergo mounting tension between their mythical aristocracy and natural instincts and this dis-integrates their personality. *A Streetcar Named Desire* is a powerful study of the absurd condition of Southern American through the character of the heroine, Blanche Dubois. Appareled in the Southern myths which is “gone with the wind”, Blanche is now subjected to the world of