

# A SYMBOLISM IN TENNESSEE WILLIAM'S SELECT WORKS

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## Abstract

*The theme of Williams seems to be the utter loneliness of man in a world without beliefs, and man's chief enemy is time. Tennessee Williams is a major American dramatist as Henri Ibsen, whom he admired, dwelt upon several controversial Subjects. His plays made dramatic history not only thought their phenomenal successes but also by leaving each succeeding ideas. His handling of such themes as homosexuality, emasculation, drug-addiction, venereal diseases and cannibalism kept the greatest of his admirers guessing about what he would deal with next. He always seemed to flout the social and moral code by rebelling against it. In his personal life he was more or less a travelling worker., always o the move. His love life and his frank confessions about it left his friends cold. On the positive side he earned the enviable reputation of an artist who would know, understand and interpret the feminine sensibility and aspirations dramatically, something that no one else had done as successfully.*

**Keywords:** *symbols, masculation, loneliness, aspiration, travel, etc.,*

## INTRODUCTION

### TENNESSEE WILLIAMS POINT OF VIEW:

William's also, from yet another point of view, a poet of the Symbols adds greatly to the value and significance of The Glass Menagerie. They are essential to its poetic nature and treatment. The symbols play a significant role in underlining the isolation of the characters in the play. There are more than a dozen major symbols in the play. In his first major play, The Glass Menagerie, the mother figure, Amanda Winfield is constantly haunted by her beautiful and romantic memories. These include Sunday afternoons on the Blue Mountains entertaining her seventeen gentleman callers and her love for Tom's father whom she chose out of so many richer and worthier wooers. Her present is miserable – poverty, insult of being deserted by her selfish husband, a worthless, and equally selfish son, a crippled, shy, morose daughter who cannot get strangers, cannot help herself and hangs like a heavy cross upon her and above all her fast fading youth. She perhaps draws her sustenance and tenacity to fight with dignity and heroism for survival from her past. In such circumstance she often forgets or rather gets very little time to communicate with others. Her zest doe life, her attempt to defeat or ignore the depression, catastrophe and uncertainty that hang like a dark cloud threatening to engulf her are really pathetic, especially when she is trying to get over with every motion without the help others

The symbol of The Glass Menagerie, which is full of little glass animals, suggests the isolation, fragility, and lonesome soul of Laura. They have to be protected from the malice outside world. This is a dominant symbol which reveals the isolation in the life of Laura. Williams also suggests that like the glass animals, the life of Laura is cold, and inanimate, and she, too cannot move from shelf. Her world is a sterile and static one."Blue Mountain' represents Amanda's' illusions about the gentle, beautiful life she led as a girl. It is her retreat, the only source of charm and beauty in an otherwise isolated life. It represents her inability to cope with the established norms of society Laura is identified with blue roses in the play. Roses are sweet and symbolize earthly beauty, but at the same time blue roses never exist in the present world is a contradiction in itself.

The Unicorn, which is a mythological creature, plays a symbolic role by depicting the isolation in the life of Laura. Like the blue colored roses, the unicorn does not exist in the real world. The unicorn is a symbol of Laura's fragile life. Because he is unique, he has enjoyed a special place among the animals in Laura's glass menagerie, when his horn is broken, Laura is not upset. She is temporarily sheltered by Jim, and her calmness symbolizes her attempt to put aside her world of fantasy for the real one. When she finds out that Jim, her gentleman caller is already engaged. She gives him the unicorn for a souvenir. This symbolizes her retreat into her indifferent and abnormal life.

Life is a lonely idea, a lonely condition, so terrifying to think of that we usually do not. And so we talk to each other, write and call each other short and long distance across land and sea, clasp hands with each other at meeting and parting, fight each. The focus Williams' play is not on characters reveals themselves the full reality of their inner disharmony.

### **THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE FAMILY:**

A particular young man may condemn certain aspects of his family and refuse or fail to identify with that culture and in the process may feel isolated from the mainstream of the affairs of the family, but at the same time he may show his profound regard for certain values of his society.

Popular culture is one thing, fundamental values other. Disenchantment with one does not necessarily imply disenchantment with the other, when an individual considers his family and tries to withdraw, he is alienated no doubt from the prevalent culture sick or demands absolute conformity of all, but he is at vantage point. He is at a vantage point because he takes upon himself the full responsibility of his self-inflicted alienation. He is not sick, nor does he consider himself sick or guilty. He is search of new frontiers, in a position to transcend his milieu. But invariably, the characters in Williams' plays are victims of their own society. They themselves are guilty and degraded. So their stern indictments of the moral lapses of their society do not have earnestness and urgency that expected from the genuine does not have earnestness and urgency that are expected from the genuine rebels. Their protests fall invariably flat because they are also alienated from themselves. They lack inner direction and conviction; hence of their revolt against the banality prevalent in the society rather it is the outcome of their guilt and their inability to adjust. Their antagonism is not directed against the cultural patterns also against the fundamental values of their tradition and culture. To those who are crippled by their own inconsistency and vulnerability, basic institutions like family serve as crutches.

The modern individuals while hungering for protection, understanding, guidance and love, are not willing to yield to the family norms and patterns. They consider that places like clubs can be a substitute for home. It is not possible to establish a lasting and meaningful rapport with strangers. Sometimes they do not also try to establish one because intimacy demands restriction of independence, because love means belonging to another in a responsible way. They want to be understood without trying to understand others; want to be loved without loving others; they want the protection of the family without loving others; they want the protection of the family without surrendering their selfish particularly, and these are the basic contradictions in their attitude.

Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* deserted his family in the hope of realizing his dreams; Blanche Dubois is the worst sufferer of a family collapse; he comes out of Belle Reve, confronts a brutish, violent and hostile society, goes deep down in her self-esteem and others' esteem, and ends up in an asylum; Brick polite in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* turns alcoholic to forget the oppressive air of a family infested by "mendacity" Alma in *Summer and Smoke*, unable to strike up a significant relationship with her parents and her lover John, desperately goes in for strangers in a brothel. All these characters are both causes and effects of broken families, thought the playwright implicitly informs us that they are only victims of circumstances.

### **CONCLUSION:**

The *Glass Menagerie* Laura Winfield is isolated so is her mother, Amanda Winfield. The factors responsible for the withdrawal of Laura into a themselves her own world of glass animals are her shyness, her being a cripple, the gap between her attitude and her mother's, her lack of hope, indifference, her acceptance if her condition, and the absence if a character who would release her from the bonds of isolation. These factors integrate at various levels and close the possibility of her release. Chances of rehabilitation seem to be low in the life of Laura since nobody comes to marry her. The scheme of the play lacks a character, which may illuminate the dark world of isolation of Laura, and grant her a new sheltered and happy life. Although Jim appears to be a groom, and she gets momentary relief from her withdrawn and secluded world, soon she plunges back into frustration when Jim

discloses to her about his engagement. Jim, the only gentleman caller, comes in her knife, but he too is engaged and isolation remains in her life as it was before. The play is of tragic dimension. The dramatist reveals that isolation is the condition of the modern man. The readers or audience feels the impact of isolation in the life of human beings. They feel that in society the trait of isolation is present in everybody.

