

***LOVE AND DEATH  
IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS***

**by**

**John J. Fritscher, Ph.D.**

**February 1968**











































































































































































































of time, as John tells the eccentric Alma.<sup>386</sup> The act of use, being rented, is not love that Chance seeks, "something permanent in a world of change."<sup>387</sup> The streetwalkers' birdcall of love-love in *Camino Real* is far from the love inherent in the term *hermano*, so important to that play's ethic. The mercenary cry of love is worse than hate.<sup>388</sup> In short, love in Williams' quite Christian economy is not groin-centered but is other-centered; for in the other becoming God to the lover the alienation of otherness transmutes into a mutual identity under the aegis of the Creator.

When love is not requited, the unloved lover rightly calls love an affliction; for this reason Alma in both her plays recites a William Blake poem "on the affliction of unrequited love." If Serafina can say that sex without love is without glory,<sup>389</sup> then Alma could make truism of the converse. Both elements are required in a fruitful relation of man to woman to make them one, to complete their union—in Williams' terms—physically and metaphysically as the tattoo transfers from one to the other to both. Quite rightly does Alexandra at the climactic revelation scene in *Sweet Bird* acknowledge that true love of another is salvific miracle:

Chance, the most wonderful thing has happened to me. Will you listen to me? Will you let me tell you?...I felt something in my heart for you. That's a miracle, Chance. That's the wonderful thing that happened to me. I felt something for someone besides myself. That means my heart's still alive, at least some part of it is, not all of my heart is dead yet. Part's still alive.<sup>390</sup>

She pleads with him to reciprocate; she emphasizes their mutual need.

Princess:        There's no one but me to hold you back from destruction in this place.  
Chance:         I don't want to be held.  
Princess:        Don't leave me. If you do I'll turn into the monster again. I'll be the first lady of the Beanstalk Country.<sup>391</sup>

She makes the characteristic Williams request that is too often superficially interpreted. She wants "To be warmed—touched—loved."<sup>392</sup> And while the celebration of this touch may be the act of sex, the implications of that act transcend for the Williams people purely physical gratification. Serafina can say: "We had love together every night of the week, we never skipped one, from the night we was married till the night he was killed in his fruit truck on that road there."<sup>393</sup> But it is not so much the physical act of love that Serafina misses; it is the psychic and existential reassurance which come from the act whose passing she laments.

Love is, therefore, more than a sexual phenomenon in Williams, although a Freudian interpretation may be placed on such mother-son relationships as Violet and Sebastian's in *Suddenly*, as Olga Kedrova and her golden son's in "The Mattress by the Tomato Patch," as the mother and son's in the poem "Photograph and Pearls." It is true in one Williams exception, at least, that Mr. and Mrs. Stone could not make their marriage functional until they assumed a mother-child relation; but normally sex is only species sign of Williams' more generic love. It seems, for instance, most unlikely that Tom Wingfield's love for mother and sister has incestuous designs; Chris Flanders, moreover, rejects any sexual suite of Sissy Goforth; and on the farther side of debit it is precisely

sex—its misuse—that obstructs pair after pair of Williams lovers.

Brick tries to correct the existential mendacity endemic to the misuse of love by sex. He and Williams employ a situation which requires a new set of tolerance from their audiences' straight middle-class values. The distortion presented tells much about more socially accustomed relationships of love.

Skipper and me had a clean, true thing between us!—had a clean relationship, practically all our lives, till Maggie got the idea you're talking about. Normal? No!—It was too rare to be normal, any true thing between two people is too rare to be normal. Oh, once in a while he put his hand on my shoulder or I'd put mine on his, oh, maybe even, when we were touring the country in pro-football an' shared hotel-rooms we'd reach across the space between the two beds and shake hands to say good-night, yeah, one or two time we—

Big Daddy: Brick, nobody thinks that that's not normal!

Brick: Well, they're mistaken, it was! It was a pure an' true thing an' that's not normal.<sup>394</sup>

In a more gee-whiz fashion Jim Connor tells *Menagerie's* Laura that "The power of love is really pretty tremendous! Love is something that —changes the whole world."<sup>395</sup> This change is precisely what Amanda and Big Mama desire as one confronts the absolute death of her past and the other the physical death of her husband. The desperate Amanda says: "In these trying times we live in, all that we have to cling to is—each other."<sup>396</sup> Big Mama says:

Time goes by so fast. Nothin' can outrun it. Death commences too early—almost before you're half-acquainted with life—you meet with the other. Oh, you know we just got to love each other, an' stay together all of us just as close as we can, specially now that such a *black* thing has come and moved into this place without invitation.<sup>397</sup>

Big Mama prescribes that only love can conquer Black Death; but Big Mama is only half-right. Lady-Myra's encounter with Jabe, the symbol of death, clarifies the fact that in Williams' economy literal death is of small import:

Lady: [Referring to Jabe's knocking] I know! Death's knocking for me! Don't you think I hear him, knock, knock, knock? It sounds like what it is! Bones knocking bones....Ask me how it felt to be coupled with death up there, and I can tell you....I endured it. I guess my heart knew that somebody must be coming to take me out of this hell! You did. You came. Now look at me! I'm alive once more! *I won't wither in the dark!*...Everything in this rotten store is yours, not just your pay, but everything Death's scraped together down here! [It became Val's because as life force he has conquered liter death, made it meaningless to Lady, and as a consequence deserves the spoils of the conquered.]—But Death has got to die before we can go.<sup>398</sup>

This defeat of death, this need to deprive death of its victory and its sting is a sentiment totally Incarnational and highly Williamsian. The parallel between the general Christian economy and

Williams' view is that biological death having been introduced by sin as an inevitability is in the last analysis transcendable in both economies by the determination of true love. The metaphorical mind, which is Williams', at once dramatizes this love as mutual human response; but to a poet-creator who is vividly conscious of his own creaturehood, the expression of this human response is defined as finding God in the other so that the entanglement is not simply a biological pas de deux but a theological triangle of existence.

Up to this point Williams is a fairly traditional Western writer who subscribes to the belief that created and creative life can indeed be explained and understood; he is not picked in the full vitriol of a self-mocking Stendhal, or in the superparodic tradition of Joyce, Proust, and Kafka: although of late he has, as have they, sent grotesque people with impossible names through mad worlds of his own creative imagination. Yet even in these maddest stories and vaudevilles—*The Knightly Quest* and *The Gnädiges Fräulein*—the main concern remains an existential triumph over death by means of love.

Williams truly believes that love is stronger than physical death; but the Puritan crosses the Cavalier in hybrid Williams and tends to negate the visible power of love. Like the characters of John O'Hara, the characters of Tennessee Williams almost as soon as they find the transcending love which frees or can free their existential are destroyed physically by literal death. It is almost as if the Puritan strain rising out of some national recessive gene makes insistent commentary that America's dream of physical Eden can never be realized.<sup>399</sup>

This trace in Tennessee Williams of the Puritan literalist's inhibition almost compulsively devaluates metaphorical Williams' restored and fruitful Eden of interpersonal love; but not completely, for though the physical base of the metaphor is destroyed by time or biological death (equable entities), the true lovers *accept* without self-pity the unidirectional *boom* of individual apocalypse. This they have learned is the last trial of active passivity before their acceptance into Nonno's eternal sea which laps cyclically and forever around Alma's retrieving fountain of Eternity.



1. Tennessee Williams, *The Knightly Quest* (New York: New Direction, 1967), p. 82.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 81.
3. V. L. Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1926), p. 3.
4. Joseph Gaer and Ben Siegel, *The Puritan Heritage: America's Roots in the Bible* (New York: New American Library, 1964), p. 3.
5. William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* contains in the fifty-three pages of Book One forty-six references to Providence. He is thus far removed from the forbidding, alienated Deity that will emerge on the other side of Eden in Williams' work.  
There is, however, a most interesting similarity, a gloss on Bradford by Williams. Although the parallel may be a totally accidental, the tone of the two texts indicates just how closely Williams works with the early American Puritan sensibility.  
Bradford: "Marvelous it may be to...consider how...wickedness did...break forth here, in a land where the same was so much witnessed against and so narrowly looked onto, and severely punished when it was known....Yet all this could not suppress the breaking out of sundry notorious sins....One reason may be that the Devil may carry a greater spite against the churches...and the gospel her, by how much the more they endeavor to preserve holiness....Satan hath...power in these...lands." *Of Plymouth Plantation*, edited by S.E. Morison (New York: Knopf, 1952), p. 316.  
  
Williams: "All at once...there was an outbreak of crime in the town of Gewinner interrupting a long period of...extreme orderliness....This was like the first eruption [in this town of the ideal American Project] of some epidemic small pox...increased to a score. Then to a hundred. [As a result] a record number of religious converts were made by all the churches and optimists in the pulpits referred to the crime wave...as 'the Devil's Last Stand.'" *The Knightly Quest*, pp. 71-72.
6. H. Henry Meeter, *The Basic Ideas of Calvinism* (Grand Rapids: Kriegel's, 1956), p. 91.
7. Parrington, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
8. James R. Hurt, "Suddenly Last Summer: Williams and Melville," *Modern Drama*, III (1961), 396-400.
9. Walter Blair, et al., *The Literature of the United States* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1966), II, p. 1085.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *You Touched Me* (New York: Samuel French, 1942), p. 19.



12. The influence of Lawrence on Williams has long been obvious:  
Tennessee Williams has frequently stated that he considers D. H. Lawrence the greatest writer of our time, and has freely acknowledged a considerable debt to him. Lawrentian themes and characters appear in every Williams play; there are recognizable quotations from Lawrence; there is a play *You Touched Me!*, based on the Lawrence short story, and a one-act play, *I Rise in Flames...*, based on the last days of Lawrence; and there is a poem dedicated to Lawrence, *Cried the Fox*. Cf. K. K. Sagar, "What Mr. Williams Has Made of D. H. Lawrence," *Twentieth Century* (August, 1960), p. 143.
13. Leslie A. Fiedler, *An End to Innocence: Essays on Culture and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 159.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
15. Nancy Tischler, *Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan* (New York: Citadel Press, 1961), p. 20.
16. Edwina Dakin Williams, *Remember Me to Tom* (New York, G. P. Putnam, 1963), pp. 148-149.
17. "The Yellow Bird," *One Arm and Other Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1954), pp. 199, 200, 202, 207.
18. From the present introductory discussion *Tattoo's* Serafina must nearly always be subtracted; for, a contrast to the rest of Williams' characters, she is his one, major comic creation.
19. *Summer and Smoke* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 214. Immediately before John's remark, Alma, on the other side of the dichotomy, had said about his "cavalier" anatomy lecture:  
...so that is your high conception of human desires. What you have here is not the anatomy of a beast, but a man. And I—I reject your opinion of where live is, and the kind of truth you believe the brain to be seeking!—There is something not shown on the chart.  
John: You mean the part that Alma is Spanish for, do you?  
Alma: Yes, that's not shown on the anatomy chart! But it's there. (p. 213).
20. *Kingdom of Earth, Esquire* (February, 1967), p. 100.
21. James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name* (New York: Dell, 1963), pp. 93-94; italics added.
22. *Three Plays of Tennessee Williams* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 336.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 337.

24. R. B. Nye and N. S. Grabo, *American Thought and Writing* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), I. xxxii.
25. *The Milktrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* (New York: New Directions, 1964), pp. 59-60.
26. *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow*, *Esquire* (March, 1966), p. 78.
27. "Afterword to *Camino Real*" in *Three Plays*, p. 163.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 164.
29. "Foreword to *Camino Real*" in *Three Plays*, p. 159.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 162.
32. *The Glass Menagerie* in John Gassner, *A Treasury of the Theatre* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), p. 1043.
33. *Streetcar Named Desire* (New York: New Directions, 1947), p. 41.
34. *Glass Menagerie*, p. 1050. Correlative to Williams' judging of himself as a playwright who "feels" as opposed to those who "think," it is interesting to read Erich Fromm on this basic dichotomy in the American psyche. The latter part of the quotation does double duty in supporting both Tom Williams and Tom Wingfield on the movies.
35. *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 101.
36. *Kingdom of Earth*, p. 100.
37. *Night of the Iguana* (New York: New Directions, 1962), pp. 85, 24.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
39. *Period of Adjustment* (New York: New Directions, 1960), p. 79.
40. The quotations in this paragraph are from Paul A. Hummert, "Preparing for Godot," *Today* (June, 1966), p. 21.
41. Gassner, *op. cit.*, p. 1032.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 785.
43. *Esquire* (August, 1965), p. 95.

44. Tennessee Williams, "Questions without Answers," *New York Times* (October, 1948), sec. 2, pp. 1,3.
45. William Sharp, "An unfashionable View of Tennessee Williams," *Tulane Drama Review* (March, 1962), p. 171.
46. K. M. Sager, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
47. *Battle of Angels* (New York: New Direction, 1940 and 1958), p. 215.
48. Signi Falk, "The Profitable World of Tennessee Williams," *Modern Drama* (December, 1958), I, 175.
49. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (New York: New Direction, 1955), p. 111.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
51. *Camino Real in Three Plays*, p. 192.
52. Falk, *op. cit.*, p. 192.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Although Williams has adapted several of his dramas into film scenarios, *Baby Doll* was his first "original" screenplay. His feeling for this dramatic form, most indigenous to the time, is patently obvious in the technical fluidity and literary easiness of the shooting script, published as written. It might also be noted that while at MGM he finished a shooting script called *The Gentleman Caller*: MGM read it and fired him. In its second form, *Glass Menagerie*, Warner Brothers outbid MGM for the play written, ironically, on Metro's time.
55. Robert Brustein, *The Theatre of Revolt* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1964), pp. 26-27.
56. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.
58. *Streetcar*, p. 151.
59. *The Slapstick Tragedy*, *Esquire* (August, 1965), p. 134.
60. *Battle of Angels*, p. 166.
61. *Orpheus Descending*, p. 47.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48.
63. *The Rose Tattoo in Three Plays*, p. 155.
64. *Milktrain*, pp. 44-45.
65. *Period of Adjustment*, pp. 14-15.
66. Brustein, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.
67. *Milktrain*, pp. 70 and 111.
68. R. H. Fogle, *The Romantic Movement in American Writing* (New York: Odyssey Press, 1966), p. 1.
69. *Ibid.*
70. Tischler, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-302.
71. In *Modern Drama* (1958), I, 166-171, Richard Vowles has set out to determine "the lineal descent of Williams from Strindberg" despite the fact that in a Stockholm interview in 1955 "Williams explicitly denied the influence of Strindberg." Vowles sees a correlation between the two playwrights on point of moral inquiry, treatment of Life's tense struggles, and theatricality. It is, he decides, "a poetry of the theatre" that they have in common.
72. *Camino Real in Three Plays*, p. 313.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
74. *Ibid.*, p. 281.
75. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
76. Tischler, *op. cit.*, p. 191.
77. Marion Magid, "The Innocence of Tennessee Williams," *Commentary*, XXXV (January, 1963), p. 34.
78. A. B. Kernan, "Truth and Dramatic Mode in the Modern Theatre: Chekov, Pirandello, and Williams," *Modern Drama* (1958), I, 101.
79. *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.
80. *Ibid.*, 111.

81. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
82. *Ibid.*, 113.
83. Brustein, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
84. *The Knightly Quest*, pp. 81-82.
85. Magid, *op.cit.*, p. 34.
86. Gore Vidal, "Tennessee Williams," *McCall's*, XCIV (October, 1966), p. 107. Williams "is the best playwright the United States has ever produced. And though from time to time the fashion goes against him, he is still there, at work, making a world like no other; and we are all fortunate to have lived in his time."
87. Pauline Kael, *I Lost It at the Movies* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap's Bantam, 1966), p. 126.
88. *Streetcar*, p. 11.
89. Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* in Gassner, *op. cit.*, p. 936.
90. *Streetcar, Suddenly Last Summer*, "One Arm," "Angel in the Alcove," "The Coming of Something to the Widow Holly," "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion," "Auto-Da-Fe," "Lord Byron's Lover Letter," "Something Unspoken," and "The Mutilated."
91. Taos, New Mexico: "The Purification"; Manhattan: "Talk to Me Like the Rain"; Santa Monica: "The Mattress by the Tomato Patch"; the Midwest: "The Malediction," "The Long Goodbye."
92. *The Slapstick Tragedy*, p. 102.
93. *The Knightly Quest*, pp. 8-9, 42.
94. *Suddenly Last Summer*, p. 13.
95. *Camino Real*, p. 169.
96. *Sweet Bird of Youth*, p. 362.
97. *Camino Real*, pp. 264-265.
98. *Streetcar*, p. 110.
99. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

100. *Ibid.*, p. 110.
101. *Sweet Bird*, p. 361.
102. *Orpheus Descending*, p. 103.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
104. *Battle of Angels*, p. 172.
105. *Camino Real*, p. 326.
106. *Glass Menagerie* in Gassner, *op. cit.*, p. 1059.
107. Donald Justice, "The Unhappy Fate of the 'Poetic,'" *Poetry*, XCIII (1959), p. 402.
108. The quotations in the following three paragraphs are taken from Tennessee Williams, "The Timeless World of a Play" in *Three Plays, op. cit.*, pp. 3-8.
109. R. W. Emerson in *Selections from Ralph W. Emerson*, Stephen Whicher, editor (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 47.
110. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
111. "Sutpen's Hundred is another such island, though in the rich texture of a novel it can be surrounded, in both space and time, by the familiar waters of reality. *Everyman* man also come to mind, and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *Penguin Island*." Jacob Adler, "The Rose and the Fox" in Rubin and Durene's *South: Modern Literature in Its Cultural Setting* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), p. 353.
112. *Ibid.*, pp. 353-354.
113. *Camino Real*, pp. 279, 283.
114. *Suddenly Last Summer*, pp. 70, 47.
115. *Camino Real*, p. 246.
116. *Milktrain*, pp. 8, 89, 111, 109.
117. *Sweet Bird*, p. 352; in the following plot precis, pagination is included in the text.
118. William Sharp, "An Unfashionable View of Tennessee Williams," *Tulane Drama Review* (March 1962), p. 1961.

119. *Glass Menagerie* in Gassner, *op. cit.*, p. 1051.
120. *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow*, pp. 78-79.
121. *Glass Menagerie* in Gassner, *op. cit.*, p. 1046.
122. "Foreword to *Camino Real*" in *Three Plays*, p. 159.
123. W. J. Bates, *Criticism: The Major Texts* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1952), p. 514.
124. Leo Tolstoy, *What Is Art?* in Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 516.
125. Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 276.
126. Aristotle, *Poetics* in Bates, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
127. *Three Plays*, p. 4.
128. Gassner, *A Treasury of the Theatre*, p. xii.
129. *Ibid.*, p. xiv.
130. *Ibid.*, p. 1033.
131. "Something wild...", *27 Wagons Full of Cotton and Other Plays* (New York: New Directions, 1953), pp. vii, viii.
132. *Ibid.*, p. xii.
133. "Tennessee Williams' POV," *loc. cit.*
134. Jacob Adler's "Rose and the Fox: Notes on the Southern Drama," already cited, deals with both Williams' and Hellman's basic allegories of human existence. The symbolic motifs of *Roman Spring* have been discussed by A. Gerard, "Eagle and the Star," *English Studies*, XXXVI (1955), 145-153. The imagistic heritage of Williams has been examined by J. R. Hurt, "Suddenly Last Summer: Williams and Melville," *Modern Drama*, III (1961), pp. 396-400.
135. *Cat*, p. vii.
136. "Something wild...", *op. cit.*, p. xii.
137. Williams in Tischler, *op. cit.*, p. 300.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 300.

139. "Afterword to *Camino Real*" in *Three Plays*, p. 163.
140. *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.
141. Gassner, *A Treasury*, pp. 1033-1034.
142. *Ibid.*, p. 1034.
143. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
144. *Cat*, pp. vii, viii.
145. *In the Winter of Cities* (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 44.
146. *Gnädiges Fräulein* p. 130.
147. Leslie A. Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Stein and Day, 1966), p. 27.
148. *Suddenly*, p. 15.
149. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
150. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
151. In his "POV" essay Williams wrote: "I am giving away no trade secrets when I point out how many artists, including writers, have sought refuge in psychiatry, alcohol, narcotics, way-in or way-out religious conversion, and so forth."
152. *Suddenly*, p. 73.
153. *Milk Train*, p. 25.
154. *Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* (New York: New Directions, 1950), p. 101.
155. *Milk Train*, pp. 110-111.
156. *Suddenly*, p. 73.
157. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
158. Williams describes Hannah as "ethereal...she is totally feminine and yet androgynous-looking—almost timeless." *Iguana*, p. 18.
159. *Suddenly*, p. 17.



160. *Iguana*, p. 125.
161. *One Arm and Other Stories* (New York: New Directions, 1954).
162. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
163. *Milk Train*, p. 26.
164. "Foreward to *Camino Real*" in *Three Plays*, p. 161. In a January 14, 1967 interview of the Irv Kupcnet Television Show following the Chicago premiere of *Eccentricities*, Williams said of III, ii, the hotel room set, that:  
I think the scene that didn't come out last night for me was the scene in which John tries to bed down Alma in the rented room. Now that was a symbolical scene about a rather delicate matter.

Sidney Harris:	I almost went out with the fireplace.
Williams:	A delicate matter of whether or not a man will be able to perform the sexual act with a woman he is not in love with but who loves him desperately. It looks as if it won't come off, and then all of a sudden the fireplace is lit. I suppose that's one of my corny symbols, but for met it worked, although it didn't seem to work in the production.

Williams had hoped that John Buchanan's dialogue would ease the working of what was certainly a heavy-handed symbol.

Miss Alma, the fire has gone out and nothing will revive it....It never was much of a fire, it never really got started, and now it's out....Sometimes things say things for people. Things that people find too painful or too embarrassing to say, a thing will say it, a thing will say it for them so they don't have to say it. (p. 99)

165. From the beginning, the Dark Lady had represented the hunger of the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon male not only for the rich sexuality, the dangerous warmth he had rejected as unworthy of his wife, but also for the religions which he had disowned in fear, the racial groups he had excluded and despised. The black woman is typically Catholic or Jew, Latin or Oriental or Negro. Wherever the Dark Lady plays a serious role in our literature, she is likely to represent...our relationship...with the Mediterranean Europe from which our culture began; she is surrogate for all the Otherness against which an Anglo-Saxon world attempts to define itself and a Protestant one to justify its existence. Fiedler, *op. cit.*, p. 301.
166. *Gnädiges Fräulein*, p. 130.
167. *Milk Train*, pp. 84-85.

168. *Cat*, p. 30.

169. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

170. Chance has the "kind of body that white silk pajamas are, or ought to be, made for." The Princess pronounces his body "hairless, silky-smooth gold." (*Three Plays*, pp. 342, 354) Oliver Winemiller of "One Arm" is a "statue of Apollo" whose "one large hand made joyless love to his "sculptured" body. He offers his flanks to the minister whose own dreams had been of a golden panther's "narcotic" lick of his loins. The heroes of "angel in the Alcove" and "The Poet," are used unnaturally and the hero of the short story "Kingdom of Earth" revels throughout in autoeroticism. In *Hard Candy's* "Two on a Party" Williams describes all of his young heroes from Brick to Kilroy: "The motorcyclist...has one of those blond and block-shaped heads set upon a throat which is as broad as the head itself and has the smooth and supple muscularity of the male organ in its early stage of tumescence." P. 69. Williams' formal poetry is especially ripe in sexual imagery.

171. "...His left hand removed/ from the relatively austere pocket of the blue jacket/ and thrust now into the more companionable pocket of the gray pants....The interior of the pocket is dark as the dark room he longs to sleep in;...in it the hot white hand of the boy is closed on itself/ with a betrayal of tension his eyes have refused to betray....the hot white fingers unclose, they com unknotted and they extend/ slightly sidewise, to offer again their gesture of reassurance/ to that part of him, crest-fallen, on which he depends/ for the dark room he longs to sleep in." *In the Winter of Cities*, pp. 35-36.

In *Orpheus* Lady attacks her estranged lover David Cutrere on this same point after her abortion and his desertion, both done for "Good reasons." "You sold yourself. I sold my self. You was bought. I was bought. You made whores of us both!" (P. 61) Val says: "Lady, there's people bought and sold in this world like carcasses of hogs in butcher shops." (P. 41) The image of merchandizing, especially oneself, is constantly functional in Williams' ethical esthetic.

172. *Iguana*, p. 65.

173. *Suddenly*, pp. 13, 17, 18.

174. *Summer and Smoke*, p. 238.

175. *Rose Tattoo*, p. 153.

176. Val: "They say that a woman can burn a man down. But I can burn down a woman." Lady later agrees: "You can! You can burn down a woman and stamp on her ashes to make sure the fire is put out!" *Orpheus Descending*, pp. 40, 107.

177. *Camino Real*, p. 243.

178. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

179. *Milk Train*, p. 245.
180. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
181. *Suddenly*, p. 40.
182. *Ibid.*, pp.39, 61.
183. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
184. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
185. Gassner in Tischler, *op, cit.*, p. 303.
186. Gassner, *Best American Plays: 1945-1951* (New York: Crown, 1952), p. xii.
187. *Orpheus*, p. 66.
188. Esther Jackson, *op, cit.*, pp. 36-37.
189. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
190. *Ibid.*, p. 39. "Many artists, including Hart Crane, have been convinced that there is, operating in contemporary symbol-making, a 'machine aesthetic.' Williams, like Joyce, Eliot, and Pound—and like plastic artists such as Léger—seems to create such 'synthetic' symbols: to invent shapes and forms out of the fusion of organic elements. The great film artist Sergei Eisenstein discussed this technique in modern art. He claimed, for example, that Joyce was aware of using the cinematic technique of montage....Arthur Miller also discusses the use of the camera eye in his *Introduction to Collected Plays* (New York, 1957), pp. 23-36." *Ibid.*, p. 37.
191. Williams in Kupcinet Interview.
192. Tischler, *op. cit.*, p. 294.
193. *Ibid.*, p. 295.
194. *Milk Train*, p. 7.
195. *Orpheus*, p. 47.
196. Sissy Goforth says: "Everything that we do is a way of--*not* thinking about it. Meaning of life, and meaning of death....Just going from one goddam frantic distraction to another, till finally one too many goddam frantic distraction leads to disaster." *Milk Train*, p. 60. Williams calls "the worst of all human maladies, of all afflictions" the felling of existential dispossession, "the thing people feel when they go from room to room for no reason, and then they go back from room to

room for no reason, and then they go *out* for no reason and come back *in* for no reason." *Ibid.*, p. 88.

197. *Ibid.*, pp. 68-69.

198. Mrs. Goforth: You *are* what they call you!

Chris: ...As much as *anyone* is what anyone calls him.

Mrs. Goforth: A butcher is called a butcher, and he's a baker. A--

Chris: Whatever they're called, they're men, and being *men*, they're not known by themselves or anyone else. *Ibid.*, p. 114.

In Williams' economy this is the inherent failure of the created existential.

Chance: We've come back to the sea....The Gulf.

Princess: The Gulf?

Chance: The Gulf of misunderstanding between me and you.

*Sweet Bird*, p. 364.

199. *Camino Real*, p. 210.

200. Mrs. Williams read "Tom the Piper's Son," "Little Tommy Tucker," and "Little Tommy Tittlemouse" to her son who objected: "'Evvy'body's [sic] named Tom.'...The name had no distinction to him, even then." *Remember Me to Tom*, p. 19. Williams himself gives various reasons for the change, the most pretentious being that "the Williamses had fought the Indians for Tennessee and I had already discovered that the life of a young writer was going to be something similar to the defense of a stockade against a band of savages." *Ibid.*, p. 190.

201. Valentine Xavier is "the very name of one of Tom's ancestors on his father's side, a sixteenth-century Basque who was a younger brother of St. Francis Xavier." *Ibid.*, p. 120. In addition, internal to Val's characterization is the fact that he admits to Myra that he has changes his name to Val Xavier. *Battle*, p. 190.

202. *Suddenly*, p. 64.

203. Mary McCarthy, "A Streetcar Called Success" in *Sights and Spectacles* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Cudahy, 1956), p. 131.

204. "Foreword to *Sweet Bird*," p. 335.

205. *Iguana*, p. 42.

206. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

207. *Baby Doll*, pp. 78-79.

208. *Orpheus*, p. 67.
209. *Sweet Bird*, p. 450.
210. *Iguana*, p. 42. "In the South slavery and in the North industry which fattened on slave-produced cotton were outward signs of the inner fall of man who always perverts the freedom which his Creator provided. Even when given a New World..., he again lost Paradise. He carries into every beginning the configuration of the end, his lustful, proud, gluttonous self. That this corrupted nature sows and reaps little except destruction is abundantly dramatized." Louise Y. Gossett, *Violence in Recent Southern Fiction* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1965), p. 42.
211. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
212. Robert Fitch, *La Mystique de la Merde*," *The New Republic*, CXXXV (September 3, 1956), p. 17.
213. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
214. *Battle*, pp. 130-131.
215. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
216. *Ibid.*, p. 207.
217. *Ibid.*, pp. 210-211.
218. *Orpheus*, pp. 92, 68.
219. *Battle*, p. 161.
220. Signi Falk, *op. cit.*
221. Gossett, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
222. K. M. Sagar, *op. cit.* p. 151, comments wryly on various inconsistencies between Kowalski's character and language.
223. *Milk Train*, p. 72
224. *Battle*, p. 194.
225. Gore Vidal, *op., cit.*

226. Williams: Today the theatre seems almost all musical comedy..., so I don't go to it very much. I like to see every Albee play and every Pinter play. And I can't think of anybody else.  
Ann Southern: There is a young man named Neil Simon who has written a few funny plays.  
Williams: Who?  
Ann Southern: Neil Simon.  
Williams: What did he write, dear?  
Ann Southern: Didn't he write *Odd Couple* and *Barefoot in the Park*? Are you putting us on, Mr. Williams, by asking us who Neil Simon is?  
Williams: I really didn't know. *Kupcinet Interview, op. cit.*
227. The connection between Welty and Williams has been established by Winifred Dusenbury, "*Baby Doll* and *The Ponder Heart*," *Modern Drama*, III (1961), pp. 393-395.
228. Gossett, *op. cit.*, p. 107.
229. *Period*, p. 26.
230. *Knightly Quest*, p. 11.
231. Flannery O'Connor in "The Fiction Writer and His Country." *The Living Novel: A Symposium*, ed. Granville Hicks (New York: MacMillan, 1957), pp. 162-163.
232. Marya Mannes, "The Morbid Magic of Tennessee Williams," *The Reporter*, XII (May 19, 1955), pp. 41-43.
233. Charles Marowitz, "Notes on the Theatre of Cruelty," *Tulane Drama Review* (Winter, 1966), p. 172.
234. Williams: Someone in one review of *Eccentricities* said it was a sexless play which astounded me because I thought the play was almost nothing by a woman's effort to integrate sex into her sexless life.  
Sidney Harris: I almost said in my review that it made one realize that the word *hysteria* comes from the Greek meaning *womb*.  
Williams: I know that. And it seems to me that Alma's hysteria was the whole folium of the play. *Kupcinet Interview, op. cit.*
235. *Iguana*, pp. 80-81.
236. *Knightly Quest*, p. 100.
237. Jackson, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
238. *One Arm*, pp. 9-10.

239. Jerzy Grotowski, "Towards the Poor Theatre: The Spectacle as Act of Transgression," *Tulane Drama Review* (Spring, 1967), p. 67.
240. *Knightly Quest*, p. 22.
241. A truly excellent study of Williams by R. B. Vowles elaborates at great length upon the fluidity of Williams' plays, their flow of verbal image intermingling with stage setting. *Tulane Drama Review*, III (1958), 51-56. Confer also Esslin on the union of ritual with the dramatic, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
242. *Iguana*, pp. 54-56. Henry Popkin, *op. cit.*, p. 62, notes Williams' heavily anti-institutional bias: "For Williams, religion is a convenient source of symbolism, but [in institutional form] it seems to be without real value in the world of his plays."
243. *Ibid.*, pp. 56-57.
244. *The Knightly Quest*, p. 59.
245. H. C. Rümke, *The Psychology of Unbelief: Character and Temperament in Relation to Unbelief* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1962), p. 20.
246. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
247. *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.
248. Edwina Dakin Williams, *Remember Me to Tom* (New York: Putnam's Sons, 1963), p. 8.
249. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
250. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
251. Rümke, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
252. *American Blues* (New York: Dramatist's Play Service).
253. Rümke, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
254. "Last year [1958] I thought it might help me as a writer to undertake psychoanalysis and so I did. The analyst, being acquainted with my work...[recognized] the psychic wounds expressed in it." "Foreword to *Sweet Bird in Three Plays*, p. 335.
255. Edwina Williams, p. 25.
256. Shannon in his pseudo-crucifixion admits an equation: he is in "rage at Mama and rage at God" (p. 95.) This is the exact equation Maxine had made when she said that because Shannon

had been caught masturbating by Mama the confusion of sex-mother-God started his problems. Shannon agrees, as she says:

And once she caught you at it and whaled your backside...because she said she had to punish you for it because it made God mad as much as it did Mama, and she had to punish you for it so God wouldn't punish you for it harder than she would....You said you loved God and Mama..., but it was your secret pleasure and you harbored a secret resentment against Mama and God. (p. 81)

257. *I Rise in Flame, Cried the Phoenix* (New York: Dramatist's Play Service). In heavily supportive repetition of the ravaging female, *vagina dentata* theme are the following:

*Iguana's* Shannon: "All women, whether they face it or not, want so see a man in a tied up situation. They work at it all their lives." p. 97.

*Sweet Bird's* Chance curses the Princess who warns him of the coming of his castrators: "That [castration] can't be done to me twice. You did that to me this morning, here on this bed...." p. 448.

*Cat's* Maggie viciously tries to subjugate Brick by telling him now she had destroyed Skipper and made him only a *passive receptacle*: "When I came to his room that night...I destroyed him....From then on Skipper was nothing at all but a receptacle for liquor and drugs." p. 43. "At the center of most of Williams' plays there is the same slightly repellent pas de deux: the man austere, eager to keep his purity; the woman turning to him like Potiphar's wife unto Joseph." Magid, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

258. *Suddenly*, p. 62. Aunt Rose, rejected by her family, actively resigns herself to the hands of her Savior in "The Unsatisfactory Supper," a playlet whose very title continues the communion-cannibalization eating imagery. Through her active passivity she triumphs over the cannibalization attempted upon her by her selfish relatives.

259. *Ibid.*, p. 84.

260. *One Arm and Other Stories*, p. 85.

261. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

262. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

263. *Camino's* Esmeralda talking of institutionalized religion says:

And how do you feel about the Mumbo Jumbo? Do you think they've got the Old Man in the bag yet?

Kilroy: The Old Man?

Esmeralda: God. We don't think so. We think there has been so much of the Mumbo Jumbo it's put Him to sleep!



264. "Cupidity and Stupidity, that is the two-armed cross on which you have nailed me!" "The Strangest Kind of Romance" in *27 Wagons*, p. 151.
265. Making an allegory of people in the house of dubious master, Chris says:  
Have you ever seen how little animals sleep together, a pair of kittens or puppies? All day they seem so secure in the house of their master, but at night when they sleep, they don't seem sure of their owner's true care for them. Then they draw close together....Their owner's house is never a sure protection, a reliable shelter. Everything going on in it is mysterious to them, and no matter how hard they try to please, how do they know if they please?...We're all of us living in a house we're not used to....We're left alone with each other. pp. 73-74.
266. *Camino* is particularly concerned with *hermanos*, brothers in brotherhood, to waylay the dispossession man feels under the ambivalent deity.
267. Etienne Gilson, *A Gilson Reader*, edited by Anton C. Pegis (New York: Doubleday Image, 1957), p. 101.
268. *Camino Real* in *Three Plays*, p. 221.
269. *Ibid.*, p. 215.
270. *Ibid.*, p. 212.
271. This is Kilroy's plea throughout *Camino*. For example, confer *ibid.*, p. 220.
272. Serafina in her doubt repeatedly asks for a sign from the Virgin Mary. Act One, for instance, ends with the plea: "Lady, give me a sign!" and Act Two begins with it.
273. Shannon says: "Now Shannon is going to go down there with his machete and cut the damn lizard loose so it can run back to its bushes because God won't do it and we are going to play God here." *Iguana*, p. 122. Once again, in lieu of a dubiously silent God, people must be responsible for each other. Only in *Slapstick* is there any kind of providence or divine intervention: in *Mutilated*, set at Christmas time, Celeste and Trinket are reconciled by and "apparition," the presence of the Virgin Mary; in *Fräulein*, the Fräulein says that God threw her a fish. In both instances, the individuals are sub-normal. Celeste and Trinket are delusional drunken whores and the Fräulein, torn to shreds by birds, is merely translating her own act of love and calling it "providence" as she knows all too well the sacrifice of her being God to Indian Joe.
274. *One Arm and Other Stories*, p. 193.
275. *Camino Real*, p. 189.

- 
276. *Streetcar*, p. 146.
277. *Summer and Smoke*, p. 134.
278. *Eccentricities*, p. 75.
279. *I Rise in Flame*, p. 8.
280. *Iguana*, p. 96.
281. *Summer and Smoke*, p. 151.
282. *Camino Real*, p. 240.
283. *Milk Train*, p. 1.
284. *Camino Real*, p. 327. The imagery of milk in Williams is intricately meaningful. Its best summary is here in *Camino*. When mother's milk turns bad, when the milk of human kindness is not the cup, specifically named as *consecrated* in *Milk Train*, then men cannot mean God one to another and they become *leche mala*, sour on themselves and each other.
285. *Iguana*, pp. 98, 115, 99.
286. *Knightly Quest*, p. 29.
287. *Summer and Smoke*, p. 178.
288. *Milk Train*, p. 73.
289. *Ibid.*, p. 82, 110, 65, 92, 113, 114, 105.
290. The long "resistance" passage of *Suddenly* begins on page 66 with Doctor Sugar's injection into Catharine's arm.
291. *Adjustment*, p. 118.
292. *The Knightly Quest and Other Stories*, p. 172.
293. *Sweet Bird*, p. 433.
294. In his [Gewinner's] vision was that alchemy of the romantic, that capacity for transmutation somewhere between a thing and the witness of it. The gods used to do that for us. Ceaselessly lamenting women were changed into arboreal shapes and fountains. Masterless hounds became a group of stars. The earth and the sky were full of metamorphosed beings. Behind all of this there must have been some truth. Perhaps it was actually the only truth. Things

may be only what we change them into, now that we have taken over this former prerogative of the divine. *Knightly Quest*, p. 84.

295. *Iguana*, p. 21.

296. *Sweet Bird*, p. 412.

297. *Baby Doll*, p. 58.

298. Marguerite:...What are we sure of? Not even of our existence....And whom can we ask the questions that torment us? "What is this place?" "Where are we?"—a fat old man who gives sly hints that only bewilder us more, a fake of a Gypsy squinting at cards and tea leaves....Where? Why?...the perch that we hold is unstable. *Camino*, p. 264.

299. *Ibid.*, p. 263.

300. *Period of Adjustment*, p.. 12-13.

301. *Camino*, p. 223.

302. *Suddenly*, p. 9.

303. *Battle*, p. 168.

304. *Menagerie*, p. 1041.

305. "Kingdom," p. 162.

306. *Camino*, p. 262.

307. When the big wheels crack on this street it's like the fall of a capital city....I've seen them fall! I've seen the destruction of them! Adventurers suddenly frightened of a dark room! Gamblers unable to choose between odd and even! Con men and pitchmen and plume-hatted cavaliers turned baby-soft at one note of the Streetcleaners' pipes! *Ibid.*, p. 226.

308. *Cat*, p. 38.

309. *Camino*, p. 183.

310. *Menagerie*, p. 1043.

311. *Kingdom*, p. 134.

312. *You Touched Me*, p. 116.

313. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
314. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
315. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
316. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
317. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
318. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
319. *Cat*, p. 190.
320. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
321. *Roman Spring*, p. 107.
322. *Orpheus*, p. 40.
323. *Battle*, p. 148 and *Orpheus*, p. 32.
324. *Orpheus*, p. 61.
325. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
326. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
327. *Battle*, p. 134.
328. *Battle*, p. 179 and *Orpheus*, p. 69.
329. *Battle*, p. 179 and *Orpheus*, p. 69.
330. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
331. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
332. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
333. *Ibid.*, p. 109.
334. *Battle.*, p. 227.
335. *Ibid.*, p. 175; *Orpheus*, p. 63.

336. *Battle*, p. 223.
337. *Ibid.*, p. 229.
338. *Orpheus*, p. 114.
339. *Sweet Bird*, p. 416.
340. *Streetcar*, pp. 25-26.
341. *Cat*, p. 75.
342. *Property*, pp. 201-202.
343. *Cat*, pp. 111-112.
344. Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you—gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of—and I can! I'm determined to do it—and nothing's more determined than a cat on a tin rood—is there? Is there, baby? *Ibid.*, p. 197.
345. *Phoenix*, p. 9.
346. *Cat*, p. 72.
347. *Sweet Bird*, p. 54.
348. *Ibid.*, p. 372.
349. *Mooney's Kid Don't Cry*, pp. 11 and 13.
350. *Streetcar*, pp. 138-139.
351. Karl Rahner, *On the Theology of Death* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1962), p. 48.
352. Blanche: I can smell the sea air. The rest of my time I'm going to spend on the sea. And when I die, I'm going to die on the sea. You know what I shall die of?...I shall die of eating an unwashed grape one day out on the ocean. I will die—with my hand in the hand of some nice-looking ship's doctor, a very young one with a small blonde mustache and a big silver watch. "Poor lady," they'll say, "the quinine did her no good. That unwashed grape has transported her soul to heaven."...And I'll be buried at sea sewn up in a clean white sack and dropped overboard—at noon—in the blaze of summer—and into an ocean as blue as...my first lover's eyes! *Streetcar*, pp. 158-159.
353. *Cat*, p. 73.

354. *Eccentricities*, p. 54.
355. *Iguana*, p. 22.
356. *Camino*, p. 169.
357. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
358. Proprietor: Any my death will be like the fall of a capital city, the sack of Rome or the destruction of Carthage—And, oh, the memories that will go up in smoke!...You mean to tell me that all this flesh will be lost? *American Blues*, p. 50.
359. *Iguana*, p. 123.
360. *Phoenix*, p. 17.
361. *Milk Train*, p. 56.
362. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
363. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
364. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
365. *Ibid.*, p. 72.
366. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
367. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
368. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
369. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
370. *Ibid.*, p. 103.
371. *Ibid.*, p. 117.
372. Chris:...We—all live in a house on fire, no fire department to call; no way out, just the upstairs window to look out of while the fire burns the house down with us trapped, locked in it. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
373. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
374. *Ibid.*, p. 112.

375. In *I Can't Imagine Tomorrow* Williams makes rare reference to suicide and his opinion of that act. A small man is refused entrance to the house of Death because he comes twenty years too early:

The small man started to cry. He said if you won't let in for twenty years, I'll wait twenty years at the gate, I can't go back down the mountain. I have no place down there. I have no one to visit in the evening, I have no one to talk to, no one to play cards with, I have no one, no one. But the guard walked away, and the small man, who was afraid to talk, began to shout. For a small man he shouted loudly, and Death heard him and came out himself to see what the disturbance was all about. The guard said the small man at the gates had come twenty years too early, and wouldn't go back down the mountain, and Death said, Yes, I understand, but under some circumstances, especially when they shout their heads off at the gates, they can be let in early, so let him in, anything to stop the disturbance. Pp. 78-79.

- 376. *Orpheus*, p. 33.
- 377. *Milk Train*, p. 106.
- 378. *Cat*, p. 77.
- 379. *Milk Train*, pp. 94, 118.
- 380. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 381. *Period*, p. 28.
- 382. *In the Winter of Cities*, p. 20.
- 383. *Streetcar*, p. 45.
- 384. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
- 385. *Sweet Bird*, p. 372; *Camino*, p. 237.
- 386. *Eccentricities*, p. 91.
- 387. *Sweet Bird*, p. 378.
- 388. *Battle*, p. 220.
- 389. *Rose Tattoo*, p. 82.
- 390. *Sweet Bird*, pp. 424-425.
- 391. *Ibid.*, p. 432.

392. *You Touched Me*, p. 50.

393. *Rose Tattoo*, p. 50.

394. *Cat*, pp. 104-105.

395. *Menagerie*, p. 1057.

396. *Ibid.*, p. 1043.

397. *Cat.*, p. 184.

398. *Orpheus*, p. 109.

399. In the latest Williams' novella, Billy Spangler Calvinistically regards the act of love as an evil brought about by the animal nature of the female whom he equates—perhaps because of Eve's role as temptress—with the devil. Confer *The Knightly Quest*, p. 49.