Introduction

South America, before the Civil War (1860 – 1865) was a rich part of America teeming in every kind of material and social affluences. Materially speaking, it was like a beautiful spectrum of rainbow decorating the American sky with different colours. But, the Civil War (1860 – 1865) was able to break all the colours of the rainbow into various bits of glass scattered all around in the physical, moral and spiritual world of America. Hardly when the south was reconstructed into a healthy nation on par with the North, the First World War (1914- 1919) started. The result of this World War was, a large number of disgruntled youngsters, whom Gertruded Stain; called “the Lost Generation”1. The entire world had the danger of turning into a wasteland, full of hopelessness, faithlessness, rootlessness, isolation, alienation, disintegration and dissociation. Hardly had the conditions of the world improved, when the Second World War (1939- 1949) started. The result of this war was total loss of faith among people who had no hope to get up materially, socially and spiritually again. The rainbow of the affluent South America had been totally broken into pieces.

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) who was born and brought up in the atmosphere of first and second world wars was primarily the dramatist of the broken spectrum of South America. Therefore he portrayed a dark and distorted world that he saw around him. We see in his plays sympathy for the decaying aristocrats, an affinity for those of South America who are materially and socially lost in society but are on the lookout for happiness. Therefore, some of the common themes in his plays in which he is preoccupied are: irony of illusion and reality, necessity of illusions, brutality and cruelty of industrialism, human failure and loneliness, men’s failure to communicate, the
strife of spirit and flesh, sexual relations, homosexuality, castration and the atrocities of the time’s wheel – all themes of post modernism are his concern.

According to Gerald Weales “Williams is one of America’s most important playwrights”\(^2\) who has worked miracles in treating his themes. He belongs to the group of post war, post modern American dramatist like O’Neil, Arthur Miller, Edward Albee and with them he “made lasting plays of the drama of introversion, the drama of social futility, the drama of absurd.”\(^3\)

The complete life of men in a democratic society means the social, political and economic problems of the society which Arthur Miller takes in his own way with American dream of rise and shine in his plays. But all that Miller lacks is the real view of the inner feelings and emotions of the post modern man and his failure to cope up with the material progress of the country. This part of the internal reality is taken up by Tennessee Williams. If Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) in England was the theatrical portent of the 20\(^{th}\) century, Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) can aptly be called the theatrical symbol of post modern American culture.

Williams was a gifted and prolific writer of America who wrote a large number of plays, novels, poems, short stories, screenplays and essays. A man gifted with poetic lyricism and vivid frankness. Williams was celebrated as a “poet of human heart and the laureate of the outcaste”\(^4\). But basically he is known and celebrated as the dramatist who wrote several popular plays dealing with the life and predicament of the post modern man of America. His popular plays are: \textit{The Glass Menagerie}(1945), \textit{A Streetcar Named Desire}(1947),\textit{Summer and Smoke}(1948), \textit{The Rose Tattoo}(1948), \textit{Cat on a Hot Tin Roof}(1955), \textit{Sweet Bird of Youth}(1959), \textit{The Night of}
Iguana(1961), Orpheus Descending(1957), Something Unspoken(1958), the Milk Train doesn’t stop here anymore(1962).