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Writers in conflict : a comparative study of Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote.

Al-Namer, Abdul-Salam

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Writers in Conflict:
A Comparative Study of Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote

By

Abdul-Salam Al-Namer

In fulfilment of the requirements of the
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

English Department
University of Wales, Bangor

1994

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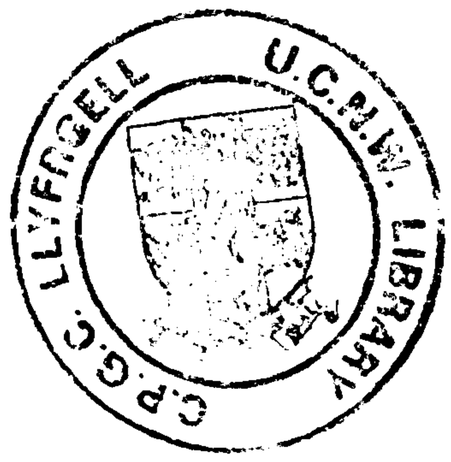

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a comparative study of the works of Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote, and is constructed around discussions of their Southernness and homosexuality which, contradictory as they are, are among the most distinguishing features of their canons. It falls into an Introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion.

The Introduction is an historical account of the development of Southern society, focussing on the historical, political, economic, and social circumstances which were most influential in shaping its tradition and culture. Attention is given to the effects of the Civil War on the South, and to the circumstances which created its myth. The main characteristics of the Southern Renaissance, the effects of modernization on the collapse of the region's tradition and culture are also underlined because they provide the framework within which Williams' and Capote's main concerns are examined.

The first chapter focusses on the influence of Williams' and Capote's Southern background on the stylistic aspect of their canons

The second chapter is mainly concerned with the thematic link of Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms with the South, and establishes ample grounds for comparison with Williams in the following chapter.

The third chapter investigates Williams' presentation of Southern subject matter in comparison with Capote's and in the light of the permanent characteristics of Southern culture and literature.

The fourth chapter examines Williams' and Capote's presentations of sexuality, and attempts to explore the influence of their Southern background on their treatments of homosexuality.

The conclusion focusses on the influence of the contradiction between Southern culture and gay culture, which is manifest in the unresolved conflict which characterizes every single aspect of the two writers' canons.

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FOR

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INTRODUCTION

Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote were both writers of the American South; they were contemporaries, and they were both homosexual. Necessarily, then--although there are many points of difference--they share much in common in their literary works, in the social and cultural aspects of their Southern background, in their familial circumstances, as well as in their approach to and treatment of the Southern issue. This chapter is an historical introduction to Williams' and Capote's Southern background in whose context the most prominent aspects of their works are to be examined throughout this thesis.

Southern culture acquires paramount significance in the course of this study of Williams' and Capote's works. For its tradition, its code of manners and honour, social and familial relationships, the social position of both males and females, as well as the slavery system and its social, political, economic, and psychological implications and effects on the South were crucial for the Southern Renaissance, and constitute the context in which both writers' literary views can be closely scrutinized. Hence, before addressing the main characteristics of Southern culture and literature which distinguish them from the mainstream of American life and literature, it is necessary to give the development and establishment of Southern culture more than a fleeting glance.

The social and cultural aspects of society are inseparable from the prevalent economic system. It is, moreover, almost axiomatic to associate Southern culture with the plantation system which was one of the dominant patterns of the Southern economy--a pattern which had the strongest influence

on the social and cultural aspects of the ante-bellum South, and which gave them their unique character. My aim in the first part of this chapter is to follow the development of Southern society, concentrating on the major factors which were most effective in shaping it.

This task, however, necessitates a survey of the economic, social, and political history of the South. In her essay "William Faulkner and the Rebirth of Dixie", Ursula Brumm highlights some of the distinguishing features of the Old South:

> There is, first of all, this peculiar part of the United States, 'the South', also popularly called 'Dixie', comprising the states of Virginia, North and South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Florida and Texas which united into a confederacy and fought against the rest of the country from 1861 to 1865. Different from the rest by its climate, social structure and a way of life, which depended, in good part, on the main reason for this war: the great 'burden' and guilt of slavery. . . .
>
> The hot and humid climate, the fertile land of the coastal regions called for a leisurely life on the great plantations where the work was done by Negro slaves. . . .
>
> The South, then, the 'Old South' or 'Dixie', is a way of life in the Confederate States, arranged towards the amenities of life, graced with the ideals of a gentlemanly existence and courteous manners, but burdened with the sin of slavery.[1]

This is a picture of a well-organized, well-established, plantation-centred, and traditional society. Nevertheless, "this quasi-aristocratic life of the leading families" (Brumm 215), and the social system of the traditional ante-bellum South did not come into existence overnight--it took the South a considerable time to settle. The task of the pioneers who migrated to the South from the Old World was harsh and bloody--as W. J. Cash says in his book, The Mind of the South, "the land had to be wrested from the forest and the intractable red man".[2] Farming was the typical way of life, yet, the early settlers of the South were not engaged in complicated economic relations. At this early stage, life in the South was simple, and the cash nexus extremely

limited.

The development and establishment of Southern tradition went side by side with that of Southern society and its economic system. But as a starting point, it is well to refer to one of the most salient characteristics that almost all Southerners, rich and poor, great planters and small farmers, shared. The Southerner, as Cash says, was

> primarily a direct product of the soil . . . not because he himself or his ancestors or his class had deliberately chosen it against something else . . . but because, given his origins, it was the most natural outcome of the conditions in which he found himself. (51)

In other words, farming was the predominant way of life in the Old South. This is a particularly significant fact because it sheds an important light on the Southerner's identity, and illuminates several crucial aspects of Southern culture and tradition.

However, Cash's above-quoted statement also suggests that the Southerner adopted farming as a way of life because there were no other alternatives--a suggestion which casts a shadow of doubt on one of the most distinguishing traits of the Southerner to whom farming was the most favoured profession. Cash's point might, with great reservation, narrowly apply to some of the early emigrants to the South who found themselves in a new world in which farming was the only means of sustenance. But once farming was adopted, the Southerner, unlike the Northerner, was renowned for his attraction to this way of life. For even after the South developed and careers other than farming could be easily established, the Southerner remained faithful to the land.

The roots and origin of Southern tradition could, then, be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when some of the Southern states like Virginia, Maryland, Carolina, and Georgia were established as colonies of the

British Empire. The colonizers' genuine devotion to the land, which was later to be passed over to the successive generations, had not been a new phenomenon--it had already been part of their former experience. In his book, The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South, Richard Gray says that "what strikes a reader in looking at their descriptions of this land is not so much a feeling of strangeness as one of familiarity".[3] Yet, the colonizers saw in the Southern colonies the new Eden, a virgin land, the land of hope where their dreams of success would come true. The future looked bright and promising to them, as they saw the South as the Promised Land. The terms "Eden", "Promised Land", which best describe the colonizers' vision of the Southern colonies, also appropriately suggest the link, in their view, between the past and the future.

The virgin land of the South both revived the colonizers' dream of a prosperous future and strengthened their bond with their past in the mother country. It was the focal point in which the future and the past coherently met. In a sense, the new land was the symbol of the past that still lived within those settlers and was an integral part of their identity, and a future to which they attached their hopes, and which promised much. The resurrection of the farming tradition and values was among the highest priorities of the colonizers in the new land. For they "tended to see the Southern colonies as a place appropriate for the recovery of an older style of life, long since abandoned in the mother country" (Gray 10).

However, given the diversity of the new settlers' backgrounds and the variety of their ideals, their views about the structure of the society to be re-established, and the nature of the values to be recovered, were inevitably different. Yet, "their versions of a lost Eden", as Richard Gray says, "fell into one or other of two categories. The more popular one . . . centred upon the

figure of the small independent farmer . . . [who] had been banished from the fields of England" (11). Thus, the virgin land of the South seemed to offer more than compensation for the lost farm:

> In the New World . . . the yeoman could have as much ground as he could farm, and in these circumstances would quickly recover his ancient virtues - his pride and independence, his love of freedom, his generosity, and his hospitality. (Gray 11)

The resurrection of the feudal aristocrat was an equally important concept for the recovery of the old way of life and values. Supporters of this idea saw the New World as "an appropriate context in which to recapture a system of values already lost to the Old. The landed gentry . . . had disappeared from England . . . With them had gone the virtues of benevolent patriarchy" (Gray 12). Strong as it was, the desire of English pioneers to revive the feudal system was the most decisive factor in the development and establishment of the plantation system. In his book, The Growth Of Southern Civilization: 1790 * 1860, Clement Eaton, for instance, says that "A potent force in the development of plantation society was the ideal of the English country gentleman".[4] And this was tremendously enhanced by the historical and economic realities of the American South in the seventeenth century. The "growing demand for tobacco abroad" produced enormous changes in the newly-established society (Gray 12). For not only did it precipitate the establishment and expansion of great plantations which were "based on the principles of commercial rather than subsistence farming", and whose owners "did attempt to assume the role of feudal aristocrat" (Gray 12-13)--it was also crucial for the introduction of the slavery system on a large scale. And this, in turn, had disastrous effects on the yeoman farmers. For as John Hope Franklin says in his book, The Militant South,

> As slavery grew, toward the end of the seventeenth century, the

> majority of the white farmers found it difficult to compete with the system. They either migrated to the West or remained to compete, against great odds, with those who owned slaves.[5]

However, the prosperity of those Southern states was hard hit by the exhaustion of much of the arable land by the tobacco culture, as well as by "The decline of the tobacco trade after the Revolution" (Eaton 4). The pace of the development of Southern society, therefore, considerably slackened. Yet, recovery was fast coming particularly after the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, which Eaton describes as "a technological break-through that affected nearly every phase of Southern life" (25). The emergence of cotton as a new economic power caused a revolution in all aspects of life in the South. A profitable source of income, cotton generated new forces which transformed the entire society: it gave life to that stagnant society and awakened it from its monotonous way of life. In other words, both man and the land were born again. Cash gives a full account of the metamorphosis the South underwent:

> cotton was on its way to be king. The despised backcountry was coming into its own . . . Cotton would end stagnation, beat back the wilderness, mow the forest, pour black men and ploughs and mules along the Yazoo and the Arkansas, spin out the railroad, freight the yellow waters of the Mississippi with panting stern-wheelers - in brief, create the great South. (31)

Highly profitable and marketable, cotton became an unrivalled staple, the great demand for which encouraged the development of large plantations. Competition was the immediate and direct result of these changes--the race for expanding the farms and obtaining as much land as possible characterized the mood of the South. Again, it was not an easy task; the people of the ante-bellum South had to invade the forest and compete with each other at the same time--a competition which produced far more losers than winners. For the majority of the farmers were unable to compete with the planters who had the money and the slaves--as Eaton says,

> The plantation organization had decided advantage over the small farm in the production of staple crops, so that the advance of cotton and sugar culture drove many of the small farmers from fertile soil either into the relatively poor lands of the vicinity or to westward emigration. (44)

The plantation system exerted enormous pressure on the farmers. It spelled doom for a large proportion of them. If some managed, with difficulty, to survive in this relentless race for success, others failed and were incompetent even to make an attempt. Even those who stood their ground and survived the advance of the plantation were too weak to enter into competition with the planters. For, "The lion's share of the staple crops were raised by slave labor" (Eaton 156). Yet, although this group of yeomen could not compete with the planters in terms of economic gain, they were capable of maintaining and cherishing their ideal of reviving the small husbandman. Some of them were so enthusiastic about this ideal that the race for possessing large holdings of land did not appeal to them. In a sense, these people were content to lead the life of yeoman farmers. However, such was not the case of the majority of the people who joined in the race for success, but who failed, and those who lacked any impetus to do so. The latter--lazy, indolent, and inactive--were thrown on the margin of life. On the whole, while the advent of the plantation system as a substitute for the small, self-contained farm in all of the Southern states unleashed new forces, it simultaneously and quite inevitably stifled others. In other words, the social map of the South underwent a total change.

* * *

This has so far been a brief account of the development of the economic system of the ante-bellum South up to the end of the eighteenth century and the

beginning of the nineteenth century when the plantation system sweeped the South as a whole and became the dominant economic pattern. This great event had a tremendous impact on the economic and social structures of ante-bellum Southern society--an impact which had its bearing on almost every aspect of life in the Old South. Crucial as it is for understanding the metamorphosis it created in the equilibrium of the economic structure of the Old South, and the great effect it had on the economic forces, the plantation system will be the focal point in the following few pages.

The introduction of the plantation system in the Old South as a whole resulted in the division of that society into different economic classes. Having acquired large holdings of the most fertile land, the planters emerged as a rich and wealthy class whose life was luxurious and of a high standard. The great plantation residences were, as Isaac Weld observed, "exactly similar to the old manor houses in England".[6] Eaton makes this image even clearer when he says that in Texas, for example, "Some of the plantations resembled old Virginia estates, with their worm fences, white-pillared mansions behind groves of trees, flower gardens and gangs of slaves" (45).

The planter class did not constitute a large proportion of the white population of the Old South. For, although the plantation was the dominant pattern, the number of small farms enormously exceeded that of the plantations. Necessarily, then, the yeoman farmers greatly outnumbered the planters, and they constituted the middle class which included also "the mechanics, tradesmen, and overseers" (Eaton 160). Yet, there were economic divisions even among the farmers because "a considerable number of yeoman farmers did (own slaves)" (Eaton 157), and, unlike the planters, they worked with their slaves in the fields. Nonetheless, this group of farmers was relatively small compared with the vast majority of farmers who did not own slaves.

In contrast with the luxurious life of the planter class, the standard of

living of the majority of the yeoman farmers corresponded with their economic circumstances which were, for the most part, somewhat straitened. Eaton describes "the low standard of living of most yeomen, . . . the lack of conveniences . . . and the chronic lack of money" (160). In other words, the vast majority of farmers were short of many essential requirements for a decent life in terms of food, accommodation, and education; things which were plentiful and easily available to the planter class. The new economic realities made it difficult for most of the farmers to get everything they needed. Nevertheless, they could not be classified as poor, though their living standard was relatively low. They had their farms which gave them their sense of independence and pride, and which made them self-sufficient.

Although there was a considerable difference between the standard of living of the planters and that of the farmers, the situation of the latter was even enviable compared with the bleak and miserable circumstances of the lower class who could most appropriately be regarded as poor. They fell under various classifications all of which denote their abject poverty--as Eaton says, they were "variously called 'poor whites', 'piney woods folks', 'sandhillers', 'Tackeys', 'crackers', and 'peckerwoods'. They were the poverty-stricken, slaveless group that lived on the poor soil areas" (169). The standard of their living, which was the lowest in the entire ante-bellum Southern society, was manifest in the miserable conditions in which they lived. Cash describes how their houses

> were mere cabins or hovels, with shutters for windows, with perhaps no other door than a sack, and with chinks wide open to the wind and the rain. Very often an entire family of a dozen, male and female, adult and child, slept, cooked, ate, lived and loved, and died - had its whole indoor being - in a single room. (45)

Inevitably, the planter class, by virtue of their economic power, were

the most powerful element in the entire Southern society. Wealthy and rich, the planters were well qualified to play a leading political and social role in their society. Economic power gave them every right to hold political power and enjoy social prestige. Hence, the idea of the gentleman was closely related to that of the rich man. The pyramiding of holdings in land and slaves, with the passage of time, gave a tremendous impetus to the gentlemanly idea. And to this end, the planters were more than enthusiastic to take advantage of their strong position as a wealthy class to assume the role of proper gentlemen. "Those wealthy few", as Franklin says, "began to emerge as slave-holding planters; soon their position in the social scale corresponded roughly to that of the old aristocrats" (65).

The aristocratic role assumed by the planters soon became one of the realities of ante-bellum Southern society--they "were coming to be regarded as members of the aristocracy, the dominant and domineering element in the local social order" (Franklin 65). By contrast, the political role of the farmers was marginal; that of the poor whites was inevitably diminished. Economically weak, they were also socially and politically even weaker, simply because "In old communities family influence often counted much in social prestige and in politics".[7] In other words, economic power was a prerequisite for that prestige and, consequently, leadership in the Old South was confined mostly within the planter class.

So, ante-bellum Southern society was divided into three main economic classes with corresponding social and political positions. This dramatic change in the social structure and the emergence of the aristocratic class had a tremendous impact on social relationships which were inevitably re-established on a class basis. For the aristocratic class was keen to establish a new pattern of social relationships, and set a code of manners and behaviour compatible with

its status and way of life. Therefore, however sociable and amicable the aristocrat remained towards his non-slaveholding or poor white fellowmen, the new social prestige he started to enjoy placed a check on his social activities. His relationships were now determined by and judged against his social status. He became a representative of a social class whose code of behaviour he had to observe--a code which, to some extent, had the effect of law. A varying degree of commitment to this code on the part of individual aristocrats was inevitable, but this remained within the acceptable limits.

The rise of the aristocratic class caused profound changes in social relationships. Distinctions sprang up and social barriers came into existence. Yet, distinction must be made between the type of the relationships between the aristocratic class and the farmers, and that between the former and the poor whites. On the one hand, despite the planters' sense of social superiority, social channels between them and the middle class were, to some extent, open. By contrast, the aristocrats were far less sociable with the poor whites--their relationships gradually became formal as the demarcation line was drawn. The division of Southern society was deeply reinforced by the slavery system which was the backbone of the plantation system. Nevertheless, some historians like Cash, Eaton, and Franklin tend to see its effects on the social structure of the Old South in rather positive terms. They believe that the slavery system was a unifying factor in the sense that it created a new ground on which all white classes of the Old South were united, and which, in turn, contributed to the lack of class consciousness.

However, this view is only hypothetical and theoretical and can be disposed of by a moment's reflection on the matter. Unity and cooperation were strictly confined within the boundaries of racial discrimination against the blacks. In other words, the race factor did not extend beyond the limits of white-black relationships, nor did it create a basis for social and economic

cooperation between white classes. Thus, if the poor whites were allowed to play any role in the Old South and were given any consideration by the planter class, it was only for keeping control of the slaves. That was why, in Franklin's view, "Southern planters paid considerable attention to the nonslaveholding element whenever its support was needed in the intersectional struggle" (86).

The Old South has always been associated with the slavery system--they have been linked together to such an extent that it is hard to think of one without relating it to the other. Moreover, the tangible influence of the slavery system was not confined to the economic and social aspects--it had tremendous bearings on the philosophy, politics, and psychology of the entire Southern society. The temper and behaviour of Southerners, and the code of manners were deeply influenced by the slavery system which was supported, for various reasons, by the entire South which went to war in order to maintain it.

However, the assumed inferiority of the black, on which slavery was based and justified, was irreconcilable with democracy and the principle of equality which were at the heart of the "Declaration of Independence". Hence, the slavery system was the target of severe criticism by the North and by some perceptive thinkers in the South. In response, the South became increasingly intolerant of any criticism. Indeed, the South was so sensitive to such criticism that it considered it as an encroachment on and a serious threat to its sovereignty. The South's defence against this threat took different forms--not only was the South suppressive of the development of such hostile ideas within its borders, but also, as Irving H. Bartlett says in his book, The American Mind in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, a host of its prominent thinkers also took upon themselves the task of justifying slavery--on religious, racial, and

philosophical grounds--and, consequently, refuting any criticism of that system.[8]

Various and multi-sided as they were, the proslavery arguments had basically one common factor: a firm belief in the inferiority of the black--a factor which was crucial for winning the absolute support of white Southerners. Franklin reflects on this particular point when he says that

> The successful defense of slavery, whether by argument or by force, depended on the development of a powerful justification based on superiority that would bring to its support all- or almost all - white elements in the South. (81)

The assumed superiority of the white on which slavery was justified fostered profound race consciousness in Southern society. The sensitivity of the South to criticism of slavery and its fear of the danger of abolitionist movements within its borders as well as in the North had a tremendous impact on its temper. As a result, the South nurtured militancy and developed a strong tendency towards violence which were manifest throughout the ante-bellum period and became characteristic of Southern life and culture. Yet, it is noteworthy that other factors like "The persistence of rural environment, the Indian danger . . . an old world concept of honour, an increasing sensitivity, and an arrogant self-satisfaction with things as they were", contributed to and explained the bellicosity of the South (Franklin VIII).

However, it is necessary to point out that violence against the slaves increased as opposition to the slavery system gained momentum. The South's fear of that opposition inevitably generated new hatred for the slaves which broke forth in relentless ferocity against them. Therefore, the South tightened its grip on the slaves, and the common whites seized this opportunity to discharge their deep-seated hatred for the slaves in terrible acts of violence. The savagery with which the slaves were treated "won for the ante-bellum

South the reputation of being a land of violence" (Franklin VII). The persistence of violence against the slaves was both a militant reaction to the pressure of the North as well as a part of pre-emptive measures against any possible revolt by the slaves. And this reflected the enormity of the challenge the South had to meet--it was, in effect, under internal and external pressure. But the South was adamant in its position and was prepared to defend it. And this situation inevitably created an atmosphere of tension and conflict which not only characterized life in the South, but also gave rise to what Franklin calls "the martial spirit" in Southerners--a spirit which "was a significant feature of their character" (3).

Moreover, the effects of the slavery system were not confined to the economic and political aspects of Southern society--the social and cultural aspects were profoundly influenced as well . But the most pernicious effect of slavery was on the character of the younger generation. The slaveowners' children contracted the habit of command and exercised their irresponsible and unlimited power in abusing the slaves, even those who guarded them and looked after them. In other words, the spirit of tyranny was contagious. On the whole, the excessive belligerency of Southerners was manifest in their predilection to develop skills in the use of arms, to demonstrate their manhood in horsemanship and duelling--as Franklin says, "Growing interest in military education, preoccupation with military activities, and many other phases of everyday life reflected a warm attachment to things of a militant nature" (VIII).

The Southerner's individualism, which the frontier helped to nurture, was preserved and even strengthened by the plantation system. Cash suggests that "intense individualism" was "the dominant trait" of the Southern mind (52). Whether he was a planter or a small farmer, the Southerner was generally independent. Both the plantation and the farm were self-sufficient and self-contained. Hence, not only did the Southerner's individualism remain intact,

but also was enhanced, particularly if he was a slaveowner, because his authority over his slaves was absolute. Apparently, the rural way of life in the South was a key factor behind the Southerner's individualism. For, as Franklin says, "The nature of the Southern economy discouraged the growth of compact communities which could provide diverse social experiences and where a sense of group interdependence could take root" (19).

The significance of these factors is that they strengthened the Southerner's individualism and generated in him a strong sense of personal dignity and sovereignty which was inextricably linked with his sense of honour which was "something inviolable and precious to the ego, to be protected at every cost" (Franklin 34). Consequently, the assertion and perpetuation of the inviolability of the Southerner's personal honour invariably wove itself into his mind, and became an essential kernel of his character and a fundamental ingredient of Southern tradition. Linked with the Southerner's attitude towards affairs of personal honour was his remarkable respect for the white woman and his absolute protection of her honour. This reflected the social prestige the woman enjoyed and her central status which was deeply ingrained in the tradition of ante-bellum Southern society.

The woman's position was immensely enhanced by the social and moral system which was nurtured in the plantation which testified to the harmony and congruity of the family. The independence of the plantation reinforced the woman's position and raised her to play a central role in both the family and the plantation. The family was the centre of the plantation. Therefore, relationships between the members of the family tended to and were bound to be warm and close. Necessarily, then, the woman was entitled to hold a key position in the family, and to be the figure around whom all the family gathered (Cash 104-5).

However, although respect for the woman was proportional to the social position of her family, the white Southern woman, in general, took up a central status in Southern emotions, and was greatly respected by all Southerners, irrespective of their social descent--a fact which is better understood in the context of the racial structure of ante-bellum Southern society. The slavery institution was the major factor which enhanced, in many ways, the position of the white woman. Racial discrimination against the blacks, and the keen sense of white superiority were inevitably conducive to the glorification of the white woman. Cash believes that "the influence of the presence of the Negro in increasing the value attaching to Southern woman" was tremendous, because she was regarded "as perpetuator of white superiority in legitimate line" (103).

Having achieved such a high and sentimental position, the Southern woman became the symbol of honour and moral integrity of Southern society. Protection of her honour was, therefore, the responsibility not only of her family, but also of the white community as a whole. It is almost a given that the Southerner was, as Franklin remarks, "fiercely sensitive to any imputation that might cast a shadow on the character of the woman of the family. To him nothing was more important than honour" (35). In a sense, the white woman's honour bordered on the sacred and, therefore, the Old South took various strict measures to safeguard it. The marriage tie, for instance, was greatly respected and, at the same time, social relationships were arranged in such a way that female honour was revered and untainted. As a result, the Southern woman was so glorified that she was regarded as the symbol of purity, honour, and chastity--as Cash says, she was the "centre and circumference, diameter and periphery, sine, tangent and secant of all our affections" (106).

However, these notions were overemphasised and highly exaggerated and were, to a great extent, part of a defense mechanism against the North which attacked the lechery of Southerners and their indulgence in fornication

with black women. These accusations were not baseless, for in the context of the slavery system which was based on the assumption of the inferiority of the slaves, white Southerners claimed a quasi-paternal role--as Cash says, "To have heard them talk, indeed, you would have thought that the sole reason some of these planters held to slavery was love and duty to the black man" (103).

These claims were, as Maurice R. Stein states in his book, The Eclipse of Community, "a gigantic conspiracy", and constituted part of "a network of control mechanisms ranging from deference patterns to lynch violence".[9] The corollary of this attitude toward the slaves was that the "Whites . . . expected in return the privilege of exploiting them in various ways. . . . they had to permit White men free access to their women" (Stein 155). Moreover, the South's belief in the inferiority and degradation of the black race and the association of sexual looseness with the black woman, on the one hand, and of purity with the white woman, on the other, created a new moral concept in Southern society. It established "a scheme in which goodness is equated with chastity and badness with sexuality" (Stein 165)--a scheme which effectively contributed to the social control of sexual behaviour, and reinforced the position of the white woman. For, it increased her frigidity as well as the value attached to her as "a creature inaccessible to the males of the inferior group" (Cash 103).

The sexual exploitation of black women by white males entailed tremendous psychological damage and a deep "narcissistic wound" for black men (Stein 161-7). The fact that white males had free access to black women was based on the assumption of "Negro 'animality'" (Stein 168). For blacks were regarded as being impervious to humiliation because they did not have feelings. The blacks' awareness that their subordination to the whites was only because of the colour of their skin was bound to generate a feeling of self-hatred

which extended into contempt for their own race as a whole. And the humiliation black men were subjected to inevitably weakened their position and affected their relations with their own women who would be tempted to compare them with their white lovers.

By contrast, the relationship between black males and white females was absolutely prohibited and even unthinkable--given the unequivocal intransigence of the South to recognise the social existence of the blacks, it was highly dangerous for black men to approach white women. The irony was that

> the taboo against relations between Negro men and White women is seen as a way of protecting endogamy, so that its violation becomes the main occasion for violence; while the reverse relationship . . . is encouraged as long as it is not legalized or flaunted. (Stein 163)

Yet, this prohibition did not need to be rationalized--the assumed "Negro animality" and inferiority were a firm basis on which the whites prohibited such relations. However, behind the violent measures against black males loomed a subterranean psychological apprehension and even fear of Negro sexuality. The seductiveness of black women, which white men enjoyed and fully exploited, was juxtaposed with "the White assumption that Negro men were also more virile" than white men (Stein 165).

The influence of the slaves upon Southern society was multi-faceted and substantial--indeed, there was hardly an aspect of life where their impact was not tangible. Violence, militancy, intolerance, sensitivity towards female honour, the high status of the white woman, and the departure from American values were clear manifestations of that influence. The fact that the slaves were responsible for nursing the planters' children explains the slave's profound influence on the Southerner because "grey old black men were his most loved story-tellers, . . . black stalwarts were among the chiefest heroes and mentors of his boyhood" (Cash 69-70). In this context, it is noteworthy that despite his

bleak life, the slave was, as Cash suggests, "notoriously one of the world's greatest romantics and one of the world's greatest hedonists" (69). Therefore, "the tendency toward unreality, toward romanticism, and, in intimate relation with that, toward hedonism" (Cash 65), which characterized the Southerner's mentality testify to the slaves' profound influence on the Southerner.

Besides the influence of the slaves, there were various other factors which strengthened the Southerner's tendency toward romanticism and hedonism. It is noteworthy that the ante-bellum South witnessed the flourishing of the romantic spirit, and was inevitably influenced by it. Although "the Southern mind at this period", as Eaton suggests, "was a curious combination of romanticism and practicality" (320), the Southerner--given his intense individualism, egoism, his sense of sovereignty and honour, his predilection for freedom as well as his unlimited hope for a bright future and success--was perhaps romantic by nature. Cash refers to "the influence of the Southern physical world - itself a sort of cosmic conspiracy against reality in favour of romanticism" (66). At the same time, the rural way of life in the South enriched the Southerner's romantic spirit, for, as Eaton says,

> Plantation life, with its lonely homesteads, its monotony, its brooding quietness and closeness to nature, stimulated the social-minded individuals to frequent travelling and visiting and the introverts to escape into reverie, romantic dreams. (319)

Similarly, the cultural atmosphere in the Old South encouraged the flourishing of the romantic spirit. Eaton believes that the Southerners' "contact with the romantic spirit came chiefly through the florid rhetoric of Southern orators, their unworldly religion, their folk songs, and their absorption at second hand of the idea of 'Southern honour'" (320). However, if sentimentality and "florid rhetoric" helped the romantic spirit in the South to emerge and flourish, they were also closely associated with the passion for politics which

was running high in the Old South. Yet, politicians were not the only masters of rhetoric--men of religion were equally skillful. For their support for the slavery system and their overall role in the Old South were crucial. Religion was one of the most prominent features of the ante-bellum South which was the stronghold of Christianity--as Cash says, the South "was peculiarly Christian; probably, indeed, it was the last bulwark of Christianity" (99). Here it is necessary to point out that religion in the South was, as Eaton says, characterized by "its puritanism . . . The religious belief of an overwhelming majority of Southerners in 1860 was a type that would today be called fundamentalism" (315). This is particularly interesting, because many aspects of Southern culture and traditional values were deeply imbued with Christian values.

* * *

This has so far been an account of the history of the Old South up to the Civil War. In this account I have followed the development of ante-bellum Southern society, focussing on the factors which were most effective in establishing its institutions. The social aspect of the Old South and its tradition have been particularly scrutinized. The Southerner's mentality and way of life, which distinguished him from the Yankee, have also been analyzed. Next, I shall examine the effects and consequences of the Civil War on Southern society.

The Civil War was the most tragic event in the history of the American South. The pride upon which the psychology of the South was nourished was severely shattered and deeply wounded. Defeat and humiliation suddenly entered the history of the South and became a bitter part of the nation's

experience, which was to affect many generations to come. In his essay, "Southern Literature: The Historical Image", Louis D. Rubin, Jr. refers to this particular point when he says:

> Almost every Southern family had felt the war, shared in the defeat. The specter of the Lost Cause was there to contemplate. The war, memories of the war, results of the war, dominated life in the South for four decades or more.[10]

Moreover, the prosperity and settlement which had taken the South decades to achieve were completely destroyed in four years. Yet, although the damage which was inflicted on the South was comprehensive, the planter class was affected most. While many people had nothing to lose, planters lost virtually everything: their economic prosperity, political power, as well as their social prestige. The destruction and loss the planters sustained were irrecoverable, as the aristocratic status they enjoyed before the war became part of an irredeemable past. The consequences of the war were far greater than the military defeat itself, for the South lost the very basis on which it was established and its prosperity depended. The abolition of the slavery system, which was the backbone of Southern society, was an unmitigated socio-economic disaster for the South. In his book, The Literature of the United States of America, Marshall Walker says that

> The plantation system was destroyed, . . . the Southern states now became a vast stagnant region where impoverished whites and destitute Blacks lived in debt and ill-health as oppressed sharecroppers.[11]

The social structure of the South was bound to change as the aristocratic class declined and was no longer prestigious. The social and economic map of the South underwent a tremendous metamorphosis and all relevant aspects of life were subject to total change.

So, it was in the Reconstruction period that the South suffered severe

recession and decline in every field of life. As a result, it was unable to keep up with the technological progress in the World, and, compared with the North, was generations behind. For even before the Civil War, there was a gap between the North the South in terms of technology, as the latter was essentially an agricultural society. Hence, the decline of the South in the Reconstruction period made that gap almost unbridgeable. For while the North was making enormous progress as an industrial power, and was opening new frontiers of scientific knowledge, the South was still lagging behind and engaged in the reconstruction process.

The economic gap between the North and the South had a considerable impact on their mentalities and affected various aspects of their lives. On the one hand, encouraged by the great successes it achieved in industry, the North built deep confidence in its destiny as a leading nation in every other aspect of life. The South's hatred for the North extended to whatever the North stood for and professed--in this atmosphere of hatred, mistrust, and skepticism, the South totally rejected the new mentality of the North which embraced industrial progress. As Cash says,

> the parsons of the South regarded the growth of this modern mind with a terror . . . they saw in it simply the Faustian hell-compact, a gigantic conspiracy to crush truth out of the world . . . they were honestly convinced . . . that the use of any means to the purpose was justified, and even required of them by Heaven. (155)

The dismissive attitude of the South towards the mentality of the North was a stumbling block in the way of its progress, and rather destructive of its interests. The stern refusal to follow in the steps of the North rendered the South a closed society, contributed immensely to the slow pace of its recovery, and put the region decades behind. In a sense, the reluctance of the South to adopt the industrialism of the North reflected its lack of

pragmatism and of the sense of the inevitability of the movement of history. For it was not before the first two decades of the twentieth century that the South finally started to accept its inevitable fate as a part of the Union and to act accordingly, though it was rather late.

However, far from destroying, or even shaking, the South's belief in its values, the Civil War consolidated that belief and strengthened the South's tenacious attachment to its culture and way of life. The war lifted social barriers and united Southerners against the Yankee. Furthermore, the war enhanced the Southerners' belief in the cause they had fought for, and the image of the South as a distinguished nation acquired new dimensions in their minds. The way of life in the Old South was regarded with admiration heightened by nostalgia, and started to represent a lost Eden for Southerners. The aristocratic life of the leading families was at the centre of this nostalgic backward glance. In sum, the way of life in the Old South, as Brumm says, turned into

> a myth of powerful archetypal ingredients: there was the big plantation mansion with its shining front of Greek pillars, the home of a large family and the centre of a web of relations to other families on similar plantations, and this called for tribal gatherings on visits, dances, parties, weddings and funerals, prepared and served by an army of black slaves. (215)

The criterion for the new concept of patriotism was absolute conformity with whatever was Southern. Hence, an atmosphere of intolerance and strict conformity set the framework in which most aspects of life in the South were channelled. The old tradition and loyalties were strengthened, and, during this period of drastic social and political adjustment, they became the criterion of loyalty to the South. The attitude towards the newly emancipated slaves was one of the most crucial issues that put the conformity of Southerners to the test. It was after the emancipation of the slaves that the

inter-racial relationships between whites and blacks entered its most violent phase. The Emancipation Proclamation destroyed the economic infrastructure of the South by putting an end to the plantation system. Having lost their slaves, and consequently their economic prestige, the planters were also divested of their aristocratic position, although they maintained their leading role in society. It was the poor whites who were the most affected class in the South--abolition of slavery left them without status. Yet, it was the principle of equality with the slaves that posed the greatest threat to white Southerners as a whole.

The South was greatly obsessed with the threat which the emancipation of slaves would pose to the honour of the Southern woman. This obsession developed into what Cash calls "the rape complex" which relentlessly haunted Southerners (132). The prospect of sexual advance by the blacks to white women was regarded as an encroachment on the honour of the South. To eradicate the threat, the South had to keep the taboo against the blacks in effect. Yet, since the South no longer had the legal right or the political will to support its measures, it took the law into its own hands. Protection of the honour of the South was used as a pretext for maiming, torturing, and victimizing the blacks. Violence in the most horrible fashion, including lynching, was arbitrarily carried out against them.

While this sense of estrangement strengthened the resolve of the South and its pride in its culture and tradition, its detachment had disastrous long-term effects on its well-being and weakened its position as a nation within the Union. On the whole, the humiliation the South suffered stifled its voice for a long time to come. The result was that, as Brumm says, "Between the Civil War and the First World War, the South was silent from exhaustion, shame or wounded pride" (216).

Although Brumm is obviously concerned with the literary

exhaustion of the South during that period, this phenomenon applied perfectly well to all other aspects of life. Having been engaged in the long process of reconstruction, the role of the South within the nation was completely diminished. So was its contribution in every field of life. It was not until the second decade of the twentieth century that the South started to recover and assume a significant role, especially in the literary arena, within the nation. However, the remarkable literary achievement of the South in the 1920's synchronized with and was, to a large extent, instigated by the radical transformation of Southern society. In the following pages I shall examine all aspects of change the South underwent and concentrate on their impact on the Southern literary renascence.

The change which the South underwent can be said to have started immediately after the Civil War--it was slow, though rather turbulent and drastic. The whole world was also changing as a result of the great industrial progress--the South might well have undergone a similar process of change. But what made the change in the South after the Civil War unique was the fact that it was neither spontaneous nor an internal response to a world-wide phenomenon. That was why this change brought about confusion, chaos, and violence. At the same time, the peculiar economic and social structure of the South was a tremendous obstacle that hampered its transformation.

However, as the twentieth century unfolded, a new day in the history of the South dawned. Industrialization, modernization, and urbanization were not merely slogans in the new age--they became a reality the South had to come to terms with. They were both necessary and inevitable. For, as Thomas D. Clark and Albert D. Kirwan say in their book, The South Since Appomattox: A Century of Regional Change, the South "had to find its way back into the flow of national life in a world deep in technological

revolution".[12] World events encouraged the introduction of industry into the South and, consequently, accelerated the transformation of its economy. Prominent among those events was the First World War which, as Gray says,

> created an enormous demand for manufactured goods that could no longer be satisfied in Europe, because of its almost total participation in the conflict. The United States became a major supplier of material to armies and markets in Europe, and, in turn, those areas of the United States which had up until then escaped full involvement in the Industrial Revolution witnessed a sudden and radical transformation of their economy. (3)

The industrial revolution in the South was, in many ways, a response to the strong challenges of the new age. And not only did it reflect the vision of the new South, but also defined its approach towards the great challenges of the twentieth century. Moreover, the industrialization of the South transformed its demographic map, and brought about drastic changes in the social equilibrium, which the South was not prepared to cope with. On the one hand, the South was a homogeneous society--few European immigrants chose to settle in this region, because, as Clark and Kirwan say,

> Slavery was a fatal deterrent while it lasted, and of late years the climate, the presence of the negro, and the notion that work was more abundant elsewhere, have continued to deflect in a more northerly direction the stream that flows from Europe. (1)

The monolithic nature of the South was a major factor behind the sense of hatred it harboured for foreigners. The Civil War heightened that feeling so much that the presence of foreigners in the South was considered an intrusion. Thus, cast against this backdrop of the social structure of the South, the impact of industrialization on its society was tremendous and problematic. On the one hand, the remarkable homogeneity which Southern society had long maintained was for the first time under threat, as hundreds of thousands of "newcomers, drawn by the demand for labor at the government

naval stations and in the new industrial centres", poured into the South (Gray 4). This huge influx touched a delicate national feeling in the region, since not all of the newcomers were workers. Lacking the skill in industry and management, the South had to seek it in the North. Hence, the South "could hardly escape an intra-national colonialism which subordinated both people and resources to the bidding of outside capitalism and management" (Clark and Kirwan 12).

This transitional period was one of the most critical moments in the history of the South whose metamorphosis could not be achieved overnight. The introduction of industry during the First World War and the consequent growth of its economy were merely the beginning of that process. The transformation of Southern society during the 1920's was far from complete. For, "it has been only since 1930 that the region could truly lay claim to 'newness', and it is only since 1945 that this has been really true" (Clark and Kirwan 7). The process of change involved more than replacing one economic system by another--all aspects of life had to be changed as well. The fact that the South was renowned for its tenacious attachment to its traditional way of life was a key factor behind the slow pace of its metamorphosis.

So, during the 1920's the South was divided within itself--there were two Souths, old and new, which were pulling apart. This sense of division involved awareness of the erosion of inherited values. The region stood at a cross-roads which was also a point of no return. It is this crisis in the history of the South that is particularly interesting for the forthcoming analysis of the prominent features of modern Southern literature, because of its tremendous influence on the writers of what was called 'Southern Renascence'. Hence, this period will be the focal point in the following few pages.

The significance of this period lies in the fact that it was one of the most crucial turning points in the history of the region. Southern society was breaking up, and for the first time in its history "the American South was at last acknowledging the death of its traditional way of life" (Gray 3). For despite their strong efforts to defend the status quo, conservatives slowly, yet steadily, lost ground to the liberals. Moreover, the 1920's was a particularly significant period because of its great impact on modern Southern literature. It was during this decade that the Southern "Renaissance" came into being. And for the first time the South was able to assume a prominent role in the field of literature, and match or even surpass the North in the number of the writers it produced. It is noteworthy that before the renaissance, the South was, as Gray says, a "cultural desert" (35).

In his book, Essays of Four Decades, Allen Tate argues that in the ante-bellum period Southern talents were mostly absorbed in politics.[13] At the same time, Tate attributes the notable lack of great literature in the South to the fact that having been a rural, agricultural society, the South lacked "cities as cultural centers" (588). On the other hand, as Brumm says, "Between the Civil War and the First World War, the South was silent from exhaustion, shame or wounded pride" (216).

However, the various aspects of change which sweeped the South and divided it were--in Allen Tate's view--one of the major reasons for "the sudden rise of the new Southern literature" (590). He argues that "No doubt, without this factor, without the social change, the new literature could not have appeared" (590). Tate also underlines this cause-and-effect relation between the circumstances of the South in the 1920's and what he prefers to call "precisely a birth, not a rebirth" (577) of Southern literature, when he draws an analogy between this case and "the outburst of poetic genius at the end of the sixteenth century when commercial England had already begun to crush feudal

England" (533). In other words, the transformation of the South in the third decade of this century offered Southern writers a golden opportunity and a rich subject matter for creative writing.

These circumstances created what Tate calls "the perfect literary situation" (288)--a remark which forms the basis of his view on this particular point. Although this remark and the argument which supported it were made in an essay on Emily Dickinson, Richard Gray finds them closely relevant to the situation of the South in the 20th century. Gray sums up Tate's view as follows: when a society forms a 'homogeneous unit' the tradition which controls that society is both accepted and adhered to (Gray 8). Yet, such a situation is not conducive to the "creation of a genuinely critical literature" (Gray 8). The creation of such literature can be achieved only when the loyalty of society to the system of values which supports it starts to be ambivalent. This is only "possible when a relatively homogeneous society is breaking up" (Gray 8). Such circumstances provide a certain degree of detachment which constitutes the basic demand of literature to be really critical and capable of examining the defects of the system of values on which society was originally built (Gray 8). None of the aspects of metamorphosis which the South underwent could have been possible had the South not slackened its commitment to its inherited values. This situation had tremendous implications for Southern writers, for, "the primary result of the metamorphosis of the American South after the First World War was to send its writers back to an analysis of their own history and tradition" (Gray 9).

However, since the South had long been overshadowed by the North in almost every field of life, and particularly in the literary arena, the Renaissance reflected its defiance and self-assertion. Brumm describes this renaissance as "The first articulate revolt against . . . Northern tutelage"--a revolt which "came

after the First World War from a group of poets, writers and critics who took their name, 'The Fugitives', from a journal they published during the early Twenties" (217). Yet, "The Fugitives" was not the only group which contributed to the renaissance--other groups were equally active, and they all pioneered this sudden outburst of Southern literature. Clark and Kirwan point out that "The renascence began in several places, and largely in the same manner in each place. Tiny islands of creativity were formed in Charleston, New Orleans, Nashville, and Richmond, as well as other towns" (221).

Although other groups made substantial contributions to the renaissance, the 'Fugitives', or 'Agrarians', group was the most prominent. This can be attributed to the fact that to this group "belonged poets and critics of the first order, like Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom and Robert Penn Warren" (Brumm 218). The central position these writers took up in Southern literature did not emanate merely from their personal contribution in this field--they had a profound influence on American literature in general, and on Southern literature in particular. In his book, The Fugitives: A Critical Account, John M. Bradbury says:

> As editors of important critical magazines and as teachers of creative writing and criticism, the Fugitive group has effected a near revolution in American letters.
>
> From this handful of men has sprung perhaps the major impetus for what has already become known as the 'Southern Literary Renaissance'.[14]

Although these literary groups made remarkable contributions to the renaissance, "it was the individual authors who gave the renascence a deeper significance" (Clark and Kirwan 222). This is certainly true, at least of a great writer and a literary genius like William Faulkner, whose achievement as an individual author was remarkable, and whose contribution to Southern literature was invaluable because he appeared at a critical moment when the

South earnestly needed a figure of his calibre to establish its regional identity. And he did just that, for, as Brumm says,

> By the middle of the 1930s, after the publication of Faulkner's great novels The Sound and the Fury, As I Lay Dying, Light in August, Absalom, Absalom! the South is firmly established on the literary map of the United States. (216)

Moreover, not only were the circumstances in the South during the 1920's crucial for the emergence of the Southern renaissance, but they also had a tremendous impact on the direction the renaissance took and many of the characteristics of its literature. Heralding the emergence of the 'Southern Renaissance' and referring to the major factors behind it, Allen Tate also defines the approach which the renaissance adopted, when he says:

> With the war of 1914-1918, the South reentered the world - but gave a backward glance as it stepped over the border: that backward glance gave us the Southern renascence, a literature conscious of the past in the present. (545)

The circumstances which motivated and inspired the outburst of literature in the South were influential in deciding the main approach of that literature. The shift in the attitude of the 'Fugitives' group toward the issues which concerned the region most was a clear manifestation of that influence. For not only did that shift reflect the disorientation of Southerners in that period, but also underlined the strong commitment of Southern writers to their region--a commitment which was manifest in their efforts to invoke the past and regard it as a criterion for the present. This is clear in Tate's statement in which he considers the analysis of the linkage between the present and the past as the main task which the literature of the South took upon itself.

However, not only did this regionalism in Southern literature represent a literary trend, but also it reflected the writers' social and political orientation and their loyalty to the region. For not only were they critical of the new

South--they also distanced themselves from it and asserted their Southern identity by declaring their commitment to the past and its values. Most relevant here is the stand that the 'Fugitives' took by adopting a new name: 'Agrarians'--a stand which demonstrated their disenchantment with the materialistic spirit which penetrated the South, and which also reflected the attitude of the main body of Southern writers.

The response of these writers to the transformation of their region revealed their deep-seated awareness of the consequences of industrialism on their society. The attitude of the Agrarians was characteristic of Southern writers'--as Brumm says,

> The 'Fugitives' or 'Agrarians' presented themselves proudly and defiantly as reactionaries; as Southerners they felt ploughed under by the push and drive of a materialistic American civilization. Thus they stood up for tradition and individual attachment to family, kinship, place, and region. As defenders of an agrarian society they expressed their experience of 'how difficult it was to be a Southerner in the twentieth century' and attacked the failings of modern industrial civilization. (217-8)

These were the major themes which Southern writers treated--though, of course, there were differences between individual writers. The backward glance was one of the most distinguishing features of the literature of the renaissance, which was deeply imbued with a strong sense of nostalgia. Resurrected and revived as it was, the past was not only sweetened with remembrance--it also assumed a mythical dimension whose roots extended back to the Civil War. For, although the military defeat in the Civil War destroyed the Southern way of life, it, as Brumm remarks,

> established the conditions for its imaginative rebirth. . . . Defeat created the myth of the South, which for some time manifested itself in Southern writing as a nostalgic and cheaply sentimental picture of mansions, magnolias, pure women, and splendid gentlemen. (215-6)

The South's backward glance which, as Tate suggests, produced the Southern 'Renaissance' was in itself an act of nostalgia through which the Southern heritage was glorified. And although the history of the Old South was pruned of the legendary dimensions, as was the case in Faulkner's works (Brumm 216), the mere fact that it was the subject of intensive study and close scrutiny made its significance almost legendary. On the whole, the cultural heritage of the South was the main resource upon which Southern writers drew in an effort to discover its bearing on the present, and to reconstruct it as well. Yet, as Thomas Daniel Young says in his book, The Past in the Present: A Thematic Study of Modern Southern Fiction, "Whereas the past meant something quite specific to each writer, its meaning varied a great deal from one artist to another".[15] For the Old South was distinguished not only by its rural way of life, but also by its tradition and culture, and by the system of values and the code of honour which controlled all aspects of its life. Hence, it was this tradition and its implications on the Old South that interested Southern writers most--an interest which arose from what they believed to be the need for a moral system in this age when modern society was on the verge of disintegration. They saw that the decay of manners and religion in modern society were products of industrialism which unleashed the materialistic spirit in their society. Hence, depiction of the encroachment of materialism on the traditional values of the South was both a common subject for Southern writers and one of their essential priorities.

Southern writers firmly believed that the way of life in the Old South was the perfect social and moral framework in which man could realize his humanity. Tate, for instance, underlines the significance of Southern tradition for the social aspect of life, and his argument betrays the anxiety of Southern writers over the disintegration of the social institutions in the modern South

which was brought about by industrialization and urbanization (521). This anxiety strengthened their fascination with the values of the Old South and its rural way of life which they were enthusiastic to revive. For, they underlined the strong connection between a set of values and a relevant social framework. They believed that each society promotes a certain system of values appropriate for its way of life--as Tate says,

> the way of life and the livelihood of men must be the same; that the way we make our living must strongly affect the way of life; . . . that we can not pretend to be landed gentlemen two days of the week if we are middle-class capitalists the five others. (547-8)

The inference is clear: harmony between the social and moral systems of society is crucial. Southern writers recognized this link and believed that the traditional values of the rural Old South were in total contrast with the industrial way of life in the modern South. Hence, they held the view that the resurrection of a rural traditional society was a prerequisite for the revival of traditional values. Their pride in the cultural heritage of the region and their profound belief in "the enormous superiority of the Southern and rural mode of life to the one practiced in the cities of the North" were at the heart of the Agrarians' manifesto: "I'll Take My Stand" (Gray 42).

The double focus of Southern writers, that is, the juxtaposition of the past and the present, is one of the interesting aspects of their writings. Criticism of modern society acquired greater significance as it was often reinforced by strenuous efforts to present a viable form of the traditional Old South. As Louis D. Rubin, Jr. says "The present was focused into perspective by the image of the past lying behind it" (37). Thus, having become the criterion against which the present is viewed, the past was tremendously glorified. Yet, the juxtaposition of the past and the present was a primary product of the historical perspective through which Southern writers focussed on the issues of their

region. Hence, central to their concerns was the individual's relationship with society, because this was the cornerstone on which they tried to revive the old way of life. The writers witnessed the deterioration of the traditional social institutions and the slackening of the individual's commitment to them. Industrialism and modernism made a huge rift between the individual's commitment to his society and his sense of individualism. In an age which gave priority to materialism over values, the individual was faced with a hard choice. As reconciling the two conflicting tendencies was difficult within the new social context, the individual was encouraged by the new system to opt for his own interests, severing ties with both his family and society.

The disintegration of modern Southern society was a recurrent theme in the literature of the renaissance. Southern writers were greatly concerned about this unusual phenomenon in their society which had been--up to the beginning of the twentieth century--renowned for its coherence, homogeneity, and strong familial ties. Revival of the traditional way of life was, in their view, the answer to the problems which were created by modernism. For despite the strong individualism of the Southerner in the Old South, he remained devoted to his family and community. That is to say, in a traditional society the individual achieves unity within himself.

The depiction of the individual as committed to his society was one of the characteristics of the literature of the Southern renaissance which distinguished it from mainstream American literature in that period. Rubin and Jacobs believe that, for instance, "the Hemingway character can set up his own private code and exist within it, outside of and in personal isolation from society".[16] They also believe that, by contrast, "in the Southern novel man as an individual does not exist apart from a social framework", and that such an existence is often portrayed, as "In the novels of . . . William Faulkner", as

having "tragic proportions" (13). This trend underlines the belief of Southern writers that in a traditional society the individual does not think of himself as a separate entity whose interests are in conflict with those of his society. Abiding by the codes of society is the key factor behind this balanced relationship, and it is the demarcation line between stability and chaos. Hence, as Brumm says, "Attachment to family, to a clan of relatives and to place and region has thus been a characteristic of Southern writing, as the lack of these ties became a theme of tragic alienation" (218).

Brumm's statement also reveals other dimensions of the individual's commitment to society as presented in Southern literature. Significant among them is the individual's attachment 'to place and region'--an attitude which is inseparable from the individual's loyalty and commitment to the family and society. And although the presentation of this image in Southern literature reveals the writers' fascination with it, the attachment of Southern writers to their region was equally significant. The fact that their novels were, in general, exclusively set in the South revealed a sense of communion with the physical world of their region. Within this southern framework the family, clan, community, and the surrounding natural world were of crucial thematic significance.

Place, as a fictional setting, is given paramount importance in Southern literature--for not only does it acquire a human dimension, but also it functions as an extension of the characters themselves whose lives are defined in terms of their relationship with it. Characters and place are interrelated in the sense that each gives meaning and value to the other. In his essay, "The Sense of Place", Frederick J. Hoffman says that

> The values of place in literature (as distinguished from scene, which is merely unindividualized space) come from its being fixed but also associated with neighboring spaces that share a history, some communicable tradition and idiom, according to

which a personality can be identified.[17]

Southern writers showed considerable awareness of the significance of this idea and its crucial influence on the human attitude toward nature, tradition, and even human beings. In other words, the literature of the renaissance was a literature of a specific place. And Southern writers were traditionalists who, as Young says, believed that

> land is a tangible concrete place that evokes certain feelings in those who have a proper respect for it. Land is not a place . . . where one grows wealthy; it is a place where one grows corn. On it . . . man can live fruitfully only if he is bound by the agreements he has made with nature. (9)

It is beyond the scope of the present investigation to go into much detail about the treatment of place by individual writers. Slight differences between them on this issue are inevitable. Yet, as Young says, "A sense of belonging to a specific place, and of having definite feelings toward it, is an essential ingredient in the credo of the traditionalist" (9). Interaction between nature and man is a broad theme which serves as a centre around which most of the works of the renaissance writers evolve. Nevertheless, such interaction is not isolated from its social, emotional, and historical dimensions. In his essay, 'Time and Place in Southern Fiction', H. Blair Rouse says that Faulkner's

> use of place and time is clearly in relation to their meaning for his characters. . . . they are meaningful for the human beings with whom they are involved; thus they assume spiritual stature and a significance far greater than as simple elements of an action or a scene.[18]

Having been given such a significance in the literature of the renaissance, the treatment of place became closely associated with Southern literature. For, not only was it one of the prominent features of the literary heritage of the Southern renaissance, but also it became a major criterion for

Southern writers of later generations. And since it was through the literary renaissance that the South entered the literary arena of the United States, adherence to the major aspects of that renaissance was essential for a Southern writer to be regarded as a representative of Southern literature. The different senses of value attributed to place, for instance, were among the major differences between two Southern writers of a later generation, like Eudora Welty and Walker Percy.

This difference between Welty and Percy reflects the fundamental contradiction between a traditionalist and a non-traditionalist, or, to use Tate's terms, between "regionalism" and "provincialism". For regionalism, in Tate's view, is

> that consciousness or that habit of men in a given locality which influences them to certain patterns of thought and conduct handed to them by their ancestors. Regionalism is thus limited in space but not in time. (539)

The connection here between tradition and place is crucial. Tradition can flourish only in a stable community in a specific locality. Similarly, it is only the traditional community which gives place a spiritual dimension which, nonetheless, is not limited in time, because it is an essential element in tradition which implies continuity. For as Gray says, "the very concept of tradition involves at its best the idea of growth and development" (9). This means that the interaction with history, which is inseparable from the element of locality, influences the development of tradition over long periods of time. In other words, continuity is an essential characteristic of tradition, because it involves, as John Crowe Ransom says in his book, The World's Body, "inherit[ing]" forms which he classifies into two categories: "the aesthetic forms" and "the economic forms".[19]

Tradition and regionalism are, therefore, as much interrelated as they

are in total contrast with provincialism which is, in Tate's words, "that state of mind in which regional men lose their origins in the past and its continuity into the present, and begin every day as if there had been no yesterday" (542). The juxtaposition of regionalism and provincialism is necessary here because it is the basis for analyzing the fundamental difference between Eudora Welty and Walker Percy on the significance of place. Percy's novel, The Movie-goer, deals with Binx Bolling's self-inflicted limitations which are the direct result of his provincial attitude. Binx Bolling, the main character, represents what Tate calls "the provincial man" who

> cuts himself off from the past, and without benefit of the fund of traditional wisdom approaches the simplest problems of life as if nobody had ever heard of them before. A society without arts, said Plato, lives by chance. The provincial man, locked in the present, lives by chance. (539)

Binx's plight is best described by Tate's words--he is caught up in the present moment. Indecision and hesitancy characterize his attitude toward the problems he encounters. He cannot make a decision because he does not know what he wants from this world. His life is a huge vacuum--it is aimless, senseless, and without a direction. For a long time he has embarked on a search for something he is not sure about: "My idea of a search seems absurd".[20] Yet, it is his identity that he is in search of because, to him, "Any doings of my father, even his signature, is in the nature of a clue in my search" (Percy 64). The uncertainty and absurdity of his search are a crucial key to his character and behaviour.

On the social level Binx's relationships with his secretaries are shifting and unstable. There is neither harmony nor understanding between them. They have nothing in common; consequently, they can not establish a lasting relationship. His aunt Emily--a "well-born Southern lad[y]", who took charge of him when he was eight and looked after him--eventually tells him of her

frustration:

> The fact that you are a stranger to me is perhaps my fault. It was stupid of me not to believe it earlier. For now I do believe that you are not capable of caring for anyone, Kate, Jules, or myself - no more than that Negro man walking down the street - less so, in fact, since I have a hunch he and I would discover some slight tradition in common. (Percy 187)

The fact that this statement comes at the last part of the novel is significant in the sense that it is in the nature of a final verdict on Binx. His dilemma is symbolized at the beginning of the novel by a film he once saw, which "was about a man who lost his memory in an accident and as a result lost everything: his family, his friends, his money. He found himself a stranger in a strange city" (Percy 10). The man's loss of memory is suggestive of Binx's dilemma; he is a "provincial man", solitary and isolated. He is cut off from his family and the world at large. He is a stranger in a strange world in which he "discovered that most people have no one to talk to, no one, that is, who really wants to listen" (Percy 67).

On the technical level, the way the novel is laid out is particularly significant because it begins with Binx's narrative of the catastrophe that befell him: the death of his brother and the absence of his mother who got married after the supposed death of his father. Like the man in the film, with whom he is associated because he is a movie-goer, Binx lost everything. On the other hand, the novel ends with his aunt's verdict on him. The rest of the novel is a detailed account of his plight and a justification for Emily's verdict on him which reflects her frustration with him--all her efforts to foster the Southern values in him and bring him up according to them have been futile:

> I did my best for you, son. I gave you all I had. More than anything I wanted to pass on to you the one heritage of the men of our family, a certain quality of spirit, gaiety, a sense of duty, a nobility worn lightly, a sweetness, a gentleness with women -

> the only - good things the South ever had and the only things that really matter in this life. . . . But how did it happen that none of this ever meant anything to you?. (Percy 190)

Having rejected all those values, Binx cut himself off from the past, from his family, and from the world around him. He is a wanderer searching for identity. There is no place that he feels associated with except the movies. The irony is that he understands the significance of associating with place. For he believes that

> Every place of arrival should have a booth set up and manned by an ordinary person whose task is to greet strangers and give them a little trophy of local space-time stuff . . . and put a pinch of soil in their pockets - in order to insure that the stranger shall not become an Anyone. (Percy 172)

Yet, this awareness, like the values his aunt tried to foster in him, are neglected. Hence, he lives on the margin of life, or rather in a vacuum, where he wanders aimlessly. He is deracinated and lost in the everydayness of his monotonous life--he becomes, to use a key phrase in the novel, "an Anyone living Anywhere" (Percy 63).

Welty's works take a totally different approach to the values associated with place. This is closely related to the fact that, perhaps more than any other Southern writer, Welty is personally attached to the South and to her state Mississippi, in particular. Early in her life, Welty showed a keen interest in and fascination with her region. She travelled extensively in Mississippi, photographing its landscapes and people. Welty's personal association with her region had its emotional and cultural correlation. Paul Binding believes that Welty's journeys

> round Mississippi must have intensified [her] awareness of herself as an heir to Southern culture. It can be surely no accident that it is poor Mississippi, which contains the highest ratio of blacks to white, and in which more people live in the country than in the towns, which has produced the most

> influential and *sui generis* of all Southern writers, William Faulkner and Eudora Welty.[21]

Welty's emotional and cultural intimacy with the South is not hard to discern in her literary works. In fact, all her works, without exception, bear testimony to her personal, emotional, and literary commitment to the region. Prominent among her literary attributes are her views on the significance of place in literature, and its treatment in her fiction. The social, spiritual, and literary values Welty attaches to place in her fiction put her in the forefront of traditionalist writers of the Southern renaissance, although chronologically she does not belong to that group. In his essay, "Traditionalism and Modernism", Chester E. Eisinger says that Welty is "irrevocably committed to traditionalism in fiction".[22]

Eisinger also makes a connection between the significance of Welty's sense of place and regionalism in literature--he says: "Her deep attachment to place and her firm sense of the past are among her most closely cherished mandarin pieties. They arise from her fierce defense of regional writing" (6). In Welty's novels place, nature, the family, the past, history, and imagination are intermingled and interrelated. Yet, it is place that is the most essential element and the thread which connects the other elements to form a closely-knit fabric. In her essay, 'Place in Fiction', Welty says:

> Location pertains to feeling; feeling profoundly pertains to place; place in history partakes of feeling as feeling about history partakes of place. Every story would be another story and unrecognizable as art if it took up its characters and plot and happened somewhere else . . . From the dawn of man's imagination, place has enshrined the spirit; as soon as man stopped wandering and stood still and looked about him, he found a god in that place; and from then on, that was where the god abided and spoke from if ever he spoke.[23]

The god speaks in Welty's fiction. He is the god of harmony, or rather he is harmony itself between man and his social and natural environments. For

Welty, this is a personal experience in the sense that the god speaks to her through her close intimacy with her native Mississippi and Natchez Trace country where she lived most of her life: "I have felt many times there a sense of place as powerful as if it were visible and walking and could touch me".[24] Welty's personal intimacy with place is clearly reflected in her fiction: in the attachment of her characters to the physical world around them, in their various social activities, as well as in the harmony between the artistic elements within her novels. Helen McNeil reflects on this point when she says:

> Action is appropriate to place: journeys and visits, above all where the destination is already known (the journey "up home"), weddings, deaths, sinister processions, funerals, trials and the work of the seasons".[25]

The fact that in two of Welty's novels, Delta Wedding and Losing Battles, the setting is illustrated in the form of a map indicating and pinpointing the locations where the actions of the novels take place is greatly suggestive of Welty's profound sense of place. The reader, having known the places where the actions are taking place, is invited to be emotionally involved in the narrative, because he is assured that he, like the characters in the novels, will not be "Anyone Anywhere" (Percy 63). That is to say, the intimacy which exists between the characters and their physical surroundings is subtly extended to the reader. McNeil suggests that in Welty's novels "Always the place is set: homestead, cabin, farm, river, village and occasional city--the glittering Memphis of The Ponder Heart, the New Orleans of Delta Wedding and The Optimist's Daughter" (VII).

Welty's preference for villages over cities for the setting of her novels reflects her traditionalism and abhorrence of urbanization. Moreover, Welty's traditionalism and regionalism are further reflected in the connection she makes between place and characters, between place and the past, and between

the past of her characters and their present as well as their future. Yet, Welty values place to such an extent because of its human association, past and present. With regard to this particular point, Paul Binding believes that

> The Robber Bridegroom is above anything else Eudora Welty's almost mystic sense of place made visible, walking and tangible. It is an expression of American landscape as one rich in the secrets of earlier inhabitants, an attribute often denied to it . . . by the Americans themselves, professing as they do to treasure their land's virginity, its absence of human associations.[26]

Strong as they are, the identification and association of Welty's characters with place characterize their relationship with the physical world around them. Moreover, as Binding says, "This relationship to the land extends to its non-human inhabitants, animals, birds, insects, plants" (Binding 1 VII). On the other hand, in contrast with Percy, whose novel lacks a harmonious family and whose characters have nothing in common, Welty displays a strong passion for the depiction of family, its inter-relations, and its social activities. McNeil believes that

> Eudora Welty's classic subject is the family, which sometimes grows to almost Homeric size, as in Delta Wedding . . . but which can display its passions through a minimal pair, like the happy couple in "Death of a Travelling Salesman". (VI)

The gathering of Welty's characters and the recurrent patterns of social activities which require the involvement of many characters are suggestive of the harmonious relationships between the members of the community. The frequent meetings of neighbours in Welty's novels demonstrate their intimate social atmosphere. On the family level, the image is that of tremendous coherence--as McNeil says, "In and around the beehive house are family rituals of cooking, baking, sewing, gardening, woodworking and, above all, talking" (VII). The terms, 'beehive' and 'rituals', which describe the family and its

everyday activities, refer not only to its size but also to its harmony which the characters in Percy's novel lack.

Another point of difference between Percy and Welty is the significance each gives to the relationship between the past and the present. In Percy's novel the link between the past of the characters and their present is virtually severed--the past has no influence on the present. The past, symbolized by aunt Emily and her traditional values which she tried to foster in Binx, is utterly rejected. By contrast, the past of Welty's characters is always conjured into the present, forming an essential part of the narrative in her novels, and is portrayed as having a considerable bearing on their present. Binding says that Welty's characters "touch us, they surprise us; we learn about their pasts, which, as in a novel, are shown as having shaped their present lives, and we find ourselves caring about their futures" (Binding II V).

The fundamental differences between Percy and Welty arise from and indicate the difference between their artistic approaches and even social orientations: between provincialism and regionalism, and between traditionalism and nontraditionalism. Moreover, the significance which traditionalists give to place is directly related to their reverential approach towards nature. Young believes that the ruthless exploitation of nature by nontraditional American society is the result of the 'gospel of progress', which runs contrary to the traditional doctrine. Traditionalists insist that the relationship between man and nature has to be balanced, in the sense that there has to be a limit to the material necessities that man secures from nature. Such an attitude of self-restraint and discipline arises only from the deep respect and reverence of the bounties of nature--a doctrine which traditionalists cherish (Young 15).

Moreover, traditionalists underline the importance of religion for the traditional society they wanted to revive. Yet, as Young says, the nature and

function of religion in the modern world were matters upon which there was a considerable difference between the renaissance writers, though most of them shared Ransom's view (XIV). For Ransom believed that "religion is an institution existing for the sake of its rituals, rather than . . . for the sake of its doctrines" (43). In this context, as Young says:

> Flannery O'Connor is the only modern or contemporary southern writer whose fiction is firmly anchored in the tenets of Christianity, in what she calls the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob" . . . O'Connor's Christian conviction . . . makes her unique among her contemporaries. (XV)

Ransom's opinion on the role of religion is inseparable from what he calls his "program" for the traditional society he wanted to revive--a program which is built on three principles: "In manners, aristocratic; in religion, ritualistic; in art, traditional" (42). Hence, he regards "manners, rites, and arts" as "aesthetic forms" or "play forms", that a traditional society hands down to its members (29-40). He laments the absence of these forms in modern society, when he compares it with the old one:

> Societies of the old order seemed better aware of the extent of their responsibilities. Along with the work-forms went the play-forms, . . . The aesthetic forms are a technique of restraint, not of efficiency. They do not butter our bread, and they delay the eating of it. They stand between the individual and his natural object and impose a check upon his action. (31)

The corollary of Ransom's argument is that it is only traditional society which is aware of the importance of fostering these aesthetic forms in its members. For, in doing so the traditional society helps its members transcend the animal side of their being--it humanizes them, because, as Young says, "they are the only creatures who cultivate aesthetic forms" (17), and the only creatures who can live by them. Summing up Ransom's view on this point, Young says:

> The deterring of man's natural impulses and the insistence that he take indirect rather than direct means of gratifying his basic desires is the most significant function of these aesthetic forms. They offer . . . no less a service than raising man from a barbarous to a civilized state, a valuable contribution of a society in which traditional action is cherished. (17)

However, the function of these "aesthetic forms" extends the mere transformation of the "instinctive experience" of the human being into "aesthetic experience" (Ransom 42)--their social implications are equally significant. In the modern age where man is absorbed in his worldly affairs, and where both his spirituality and faith are wearing thin, religious rituals and ceremonies offer tremendous moral, spiritual, and social assistance in the time of crisis or disaster. This line of thought is the essence of Ransom's view on the purpose of the aesthetic forms in the traditional society he wishes to resurrect. He believes that on occasions like: "birth, marriage, death; war, peace, the undertaking of great enterprises, famine, storm; the seasons of the year, the Sabbath, the holidays" (Ransom 43-4), members of a "traditional society may rely on ritual, rite, ceremony, or manners" (Young 19).

Underlining the efforts of the renaissance writers to recover a viable form of the traditional society of the Old South was a profound sense of nostalgia for the past. For it spurred their thorough examination of the South's past in an effort to resurrect it in the present. In a sense, the past features in the literature of the renaissance more than the present circumstances of the South. Clark and Kirwan say that "The renascence of this century was less indicative of a search for new methods to meet the challenges of a new age than an attempt to recapture the strongly humanistic factors in the South's past" (224).

However, the South's past is inseparable from the Civil War--the most tragic event in the entire history of this region. It was with the Civil War that the sense of history was kindled in Southerners, because it "had engendered an

entirely new sense of the past, and had given history a new implication" (Clark and Kirwan 225). And for the writers of the renaissance the Civil War was an inexhaustible source of subject matter--it was the cornerstone of their works and of their analysis of the past. In his essay, "Southern Novelists and the Civil War", Walter Sullivan reflects on the significance of the Civil War for Southern writers:

> To the Southern writer who would deal with the past, the Civil War is the most significant image of all. For . . . the War is the pregnant moment in Southern history, that instant which contains within its own limits a summation of all that has gone before, an adumbration of the future. To put it another way, the war is important not merely in itself, but in what it implies; . . . Indeed, in many Civil War novels the actual conflict exists only as a background against which certain ramifications of the traditional Southern code are developed.[27]

The significance of the Civil War in Southern literature lies in the fact that it served as a context and perspective through which the past and, particularly, the tradition were examined. The Civil War was the demarcation line in the history of the South and its tradition--it was the major event after which the tradition and the whole structure of Southern society started to crumble. Hence, as Sullivan suggests,

> the War, taken alone without reference to the tradition, is meaningless. It functions in the Southern novel as a dramatic symbol; in a sense, it is the catastrophe at the end of the play. For the character of the *ante-bellum* South was essentially that of the conventional tragic hero. It was strong and great and good, but it had a flaw. (116-7)

Having been the moral basis on which Southern culture was constructed, the tradition received close scrutiny, and the flaw which caused its collapse after the Civil War was central to the interests of Southern writers. Sullivan suggests that Tate's view, which he expressed in his novel, The Fathers, and his critical works, is that

> the War must be understood as the climax of southern culture, the last moment of order in a traditional society. Before 1861, the inherited code of the South remained an adequate guide for ethical conduct. . . . After 1865, the old morality was no longer sufficient to serve as a valid standard of behaviour. (116)

However, Sullivan has certain reservations about the conventional interpretations of Southern literature especially that which deals with the Civil War. He says that "This reading of Southern literature as the story of traditional men who must either violate their own code or suffer defeat is one that has been suggested many times before" (115). Sullivan is not fully satisfied with this view because it stops short of analyzing the "underlying reason for the failure of the traditional Southern culture" (116). He even refutes that sort of reading of Southern literature and the general impression it produces, when he argues that

> We can not believe . . . that in this world victory is always with the right, but neither are we justified in assuming that the warrior unrestrained by rules will always overcome the man who fights by an ethical code. (116)

Sullivan comes to the conclusion that, as a careful reading of Tate's, The Fathers, Andrew Lytle's, The Long Night, Caroline Gordon's, None Shall Look Back, and Faulkner's, Absalom, Absalom, suggests, the dilemma of the Old South lay in the fact that its code was doomed to failure: "The old code is no longer adequate, because the time has finally come when even Southern aristocrats like John Sartoris are no longer willing to live within the limits of the tradition" (124). Sullivan hints here at the time factor and the historical, and even economic, circumstances of the South on the eve of the Civil War--a hint which Absalom, Absalom seems to imply through the commercial enterprise of Sartoris. Yet, he shifts the emphasis again back onto the initial flaw of the tradition itself when he remarks that in Tate's novel, The Fathers, Major

Buchan "was doomed in the end to be defeated by Posey and all that Posey represented not because he lived by traditional rules, but because the tradition itself was founded on a political and not a religious ethic" (116).

* * *

This has so far been an examination of the prominent features of the literature of the Southern renaissance which extended from the 1920's to the end of the 1930's. The characteristics which the literary works of the writers of the renaissance have in common are deeply rooted in their regionalism and historical consciousness which were, by and large, a reaction against the social and economic transformation of the South at the beginning of this century. For, "Most of the authors of the renascence years in the South were writing when the region was in the first phases of revolutionary change" (Clark and Kirwan 224). The next generation of Southern writers lived in and experienced a different world and, consequently, their concerns were inevitably different. This means that the historical consciousness which characterized the literature of the Southern renaissance was limited in time, or as Tate puts it, "the focus of this consciousness is quite temporary" (533).

Having been the major historical event in the twentieth century, especially after the emergence of the Southern renaissance, the Second World War brought about world-wide economic, political, and social changes. By this time the South underwent considerable transformation in all aspects of its life. Southern writers had to shift their focus and reflect the spirit of the age, for as Clark and Kirwan say,

> After World War II the South underwent such rapid changes that there arose a question whether its literary figures would continue to speak with a strong and distinct regional voice. Regional

> conditions and emotions which had stimulated such a high degree of creativeness no longer prevailed. It was impossible for modern southern writers to 'go home again'. By 1950, nevertheless, new voices were emerging in the South which were aware of the social and economic revolt occurring in the region and prepared to describe it. (228)

Having so far described the economic, social, and historical circumstances which shaped the peculiar Southern culture, and having examined the major thematic patterns and features of modern Southern literature, I have established the perspective from which I shall approach Tennessee Williams' and Truman Capote's canons and analyze them in the light of this Southern social, cultural, and literary heritage, with the aim of establishing the extent of the influence of the Southern culture on their works, how that influence features in their writings, and to what extent they represent the region to which both of them belong. This perspective is also particularly significant for examining their presentations of homosexuality which is, both as a social phenomenon and a literary theme, in sharp contrast with Southern tradition and culture which have already been described. For contradictory as they were, Williams' and Capote's Southern background and homosexuality were to produce an unresolved conflict which characterizes every aspect of their canons. Hence, it is also particularly important to explore the interaction between their Southernness and their homosexuality. In the first chapter, I shall examine the influence of Williams' and Capote's Southern background on the stylistic aspect of their works. The second and third chapters will concentrate on the extent of that influence on the thematic aspect of their canons, on their treatment of the Southern issue, and on their response to the challenges which their contemporary South encountered. And the fourth chapter will be concerned with their presentations of sexuality.

Notes to Introduction

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CHAPTER ONE

Southernness and Style: The Imaginary Worlds of T. Williams and T. Capote

Any examination of the relationship between Williams and Capote, on the one hand, and the South and its literary tradition, on the other, must be multi-faceted. For not only did Williams and Capote distinguish themselves as Southern writers, but also homosexuality was one of the most distinguishing features of their personal and literary concerns. And these two prominent characteristics of Williams' and Capote's writings are inevitably often linked in various intricate and elusive ways, because each one destabilizes the presentation of the other. Analysis of the various aspects of both writers' works is, therefore, crucial not only for evaluating that relationship with the South and the extent of both writers' commitment to or departure from the Southern literary tradition--but also for assessing the link between the Southern aspect of their canons and their homosexual concerns. The main purpose of the first three chapters of this thesis is to make a comparative and contrastive study of the works of Williams and Capote as writers of the post-renaissance South; the fourth chapter will focus on their presentations of homosexuality.

The significance of this approach for the whole thesis is that it illuminates many important aspects of the works of these two authors which cannot be illuminated when they are considered separately. What interests me most in this study is the extent of Williams' and Capote's association with the South to which they both belong, of the influence of their Southern background on their works and the manner in which their Southern heritage features in them. To accomplish this, I shall concentrate mainly on Williams' drama and

Capote's fiction, and approach them from a broad perspective--the criterion for this comparison is not the achievement of a certain Southern writer at a definite period of time. Rather, it is the Southern cultural heritage which has long distinguished the South as a society, and which has moulded permanent values which have characterized Southern culture and literature. While this approach does not probe the influence of individual Southern writers on Williams and Capote, and does not regard their achievements as a criterion against which to measure the adherence of both writers to their Southern heritage, it acknowledges the significance of the renaissance as such.

It is necessary at this stage to establish some points which have to be taken into account throughout the whole study. First and foremost, the historical method, which has been adopted in the "Introduction" as a basis for examining the development of Southern society and the emergence of the renaissance, will also be the grounds on which the Southern aspects of Capote's and Williams' works are to be evaluated. Hence, it is necessary to reiterate what has already been established in the "Introduction" that not only was the renaissance the product of the historical, social, and economic circumstances of the South at that time, but also the issues which were at the heart of its literature were a response to those circumstances. Necessarily, then, Capote's and Williams' literary concerns were naturally different from those of the renaissance writers who focussed on the issues which concerned the South most when it was at a cross-roads. For these two writers belonged to a different generation, and witnessed entirely different circumstances, from the writers of the renaissance.

However, Williams' and Capote's commitment to the South is also to be examined in the light of the Southern literary tradition which was mainly established by the renaissance. That is to say, if Williams and Capote are to be regarded as Southern writers, there have to be certain elements in their works

which are pertinent to the permanent characteristics of the Southern literary tradition. But they also had to deal with the challenges the South encountered in the post-World-War-II-period, that is, the modernization and urbanization of Southern society as well as the death of the tradition of the Old South. For it was precisely in that period that both Capote and Williams established their literary careers. Bearing this in mind, it is particularly interesting to see how Williams and Capote established their relationship with the South, and the nature and dimensions of that link. And this chapter will explore that link in the general form of their canons: the settings, the style, and the imaginary world of each writer; the second and third chapters will focus on the thematic link.

The early recognition and establishment of both Williams and Capote as Southern writers was of paramount significance for modern Southern literature. The two talented and promising writers tremendously enhanced the reputation of the South on the literary map--a reputation which had already been established by the Renaissance. Their literary achievements and contributions to Southern literature were considered by some critics as a continuation of the Southern Renaissance. In his book, The Literature of the United States of America, Marshall Walker, for instance, says that Truman Capote helped "to carry the energies of the Southern literary renaissance well into the second half of the twentieth century".[1] And despite Capote's statements in which he dissociated himself from the South and declared that he was a "Southerner only by accident", his "early writing . . . is distinctively Southern" (Walker 186, 188).

Similarly, Williams' literary achievement is an invaluable contribution to Southern literature. It is well known that Williams was a prolific writer, the Southern quality of whose output is unquestionable and reinforced his reputation as a leading Southern dramatist. Jacob H. Adler believes that

> By almost all standards--literary, dramatic, commercial, or national identification with the South--the first among Southern playwrights is Tennessee Williams. He has had nine productions on--in one case "off"-- Broadway, all but one of them, Camino Real, about the South.[2]

However, the commonest critical view about modern Southern literature is that it is overwhelmingly dominated by William Faulkner who is recognized as the greatest literary figure the South has ever produced. His literary achievements are generally taken as a yardstick against which to measure the stature of other Southern writers. For example, in her essay, "William Faulkner and the Rebirth of Dixie", Ursula Brumm says: "It is, perhaps, today a handicap to be a Southern writer and to deal with the matters of the South for the reason that they are measured against the towering figure of William Faulkner".[3] Such a view reflects the general approach of critics when they deal with the writers of the modern South. Obviously, such an approach is too narrow to accommodate other views or to allow for second opinions about such a sensitive and complex subject. Yet, it is not the validity of this statement that is questionable at the moment; rather, it is the narrow perspective through which this subject is approached that arouses certain reservations.

Narrow as it clearly is, Brumm's approach also lacks the fundamental basis for a comparison on this scale and, consequently, her view is vague and offers little, if anything, of critical insight into the subject. The basis which she adopts for this comparison, that is dealing "with the matters of the South", is also both vague and unreasonable. For she does not specify what matters and which South the writers of the new generation had to deal with. If by "the South" she means the post-world-war-II-South, then, there is no unified common ground for such a comparison, simply because the new generation had to deal with a world neither Faulkner nor any other writer of his generation had fully explored. Hence, there is no reason to believe that the writers of the

new generation, like Williams and Capote, are totally overshadowed and marginalized by Faulkner.

If, on the other hand, Brumm refers to the South between the two wars, which seems to be the case, the peculiar circumstances of the South during this period--which were crucial for the emergence of the renaissance--and the metamorphosis the South underwent after the Second World War, are not fully taken into account. The renaissance and the issues which provided the subject matter for Southern writers, and which gave this literary movement its unique characteristics were peculiar to that time and, as Tate anticipated, temporary. Having been at a crossroads, the South experienced a high tension and deep disorientation which both inspired the renaissance writers and were reflected in their literature. After the second World War the metamorphosis of the South was almost complete--circumstances changed and different challenges appeared as the new South emerged. Hence, the writers of the later generation, like Williams and Capote, had to reflect the spirit of the new age and deal with the issues which concerned their contemporary South and, consequently, would not be expected to write about a South they knew little about and had little contact with. As Richard Gray says, these writers

> have been born too late, really, to benefit from the stimulus of crisis, and from the subtler advantages accompanying it . . . They are without the large, new perspectives available to men writing at a moment of transition, and, what is perhaps worse, the perspectives they do enjoy have been overused, most of them, already.[4]

Although Gray recognizes the advantages which the renaissance writers enjoyed over the later generation, he adopts an approach similar to Brumm's: dealing with the particular Southern subject matter which the renaissance writers addressed is regarded as a criterion for the comparison he makes between the two generations of writers. The conclusion he arrives at is,

therefore, not different from Brumm's: Faulkner and his generation are peerless, and that the later generation can only walk in the shadow of these giants of the literature of the American South. Gray expresses this view many times over, severely criticizing the new writers of the South, particularly Williams and Capote, for--as he believes--their failure to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors. At one point he writes about the "problem of survival" which he regards as "a major one for Southern literature now" (257); at another, he reflects on the "danger" that is facing Southern literature:

> Southern writing . . . is in the same danger that any body of writing is after a period of immense achievement. It is in danger of going stale, and it does not necessarily help matters that . . . some Southern writers are themselves aware of this. (258)

Substantiating his argument by citing the views of other critics, Gray believes that the "difficulty of 'getting out from under Faulkner'" is the major danger that is facing Southern writing (258). In doing so, he narrows both the perspective and the basis of his comparative study of Southern literature. For he makes it a comparison between Faulkner, on the one hand, and Williams and Capote, on the other. Consequently, he takes the works of the latter as an example of the staleness of the new Southern literature:

> But one broad danger, one trap into which many tend to fall is illustrated well, I think, by two authors . . . I mean by this the dramatist Tennessee Williams . . . and Truman Capote . . . The trap is, essentially, one of style: the writer takes the familiar characters, situations, and themes and then weaves them into a baroque conceit possessing neither original substance nor extrinsic value. (258)

However, the major flaw of a study of "Southern Literature since World War II", such as Gray has done, is similar to Brumm's: he writes about Williams, Capote, and some other modern Southern writers with an eye solely focussed on Faulkner. And, consequently, he, as his last statement shows,

fails--as will be demonstrated in the second and third chapters--to recognize the Southern quality of Williams' and Capote's works. I in no way intend to underestimate the tremendous influence of Faulkner on American and world literature. Indeed, he is such a great literary figure that no subsequent writer can ignore him. But since the aim of this investigation is to offer a critical account of the works of Williams and Capote as post-World-War-II-Southern writers, the Southern literary tradition is the most appropriate framework for this purpose. This certainly means that the influence of Faulkner as a leading Southern literary figure is not excluded--it is placed in its proper Southern literary perspective, that is, the Southern Renaissance.

In such a comparative study, it is not unreasonable to begin with the assumption that there are as many points of difference between Williams and Capote as those of agreement. This is axiomatic, for total agreement between any two writers is a remote possibility. Yet, their similarities in background are crucial because they draw attention to the convergencies and divergencies in their thought and their personal and literary concerns.

The general difference between Williams and Capote as Southern writers is highlighted by their personal attitudes towards the South as a region and society to which they both belong. On the face of it, this approach seems to suggest a shift in the focus from the literary to the personal aspect of the comparison between the two writers. Yet, as will be demonstrated in the course of this investigation, the personal and literary concerns of both writers are, to a great extent, inseparable and, therefore, a double focus on both aspects of concerns is crucial for illuminating the significant aspects of their canons. It is, admittedly, the textual critical analysis of a writer's work which matters most. For a writer's opinion cannot be taken for granted, because it is sometimes at odds with what lies at the heart of his work. Yet, in the final

analysis, a writer's personal concerns are a key to his literary outlooks and are, therefore, crucial for full understanding of his art.

Given the fact that this comparative study of Williams and Capote is based on the Southern tradition, in general, and the achievement of the writers of the Renaissance, in particular, this approach assumes considerable significance. For it must be borne in mind that the Renaissance generation of writers, perhaps more than any other, distinguished themselves as Southerners mainly because there was strong harmony between their personal, literary, and even emotional commitment to their region. As has been suggested in the "Introduction", it was their profound emotional attachment to the South that instigated the 'Fugitives' to declare their loyalty and commitment to it. Similarly, Welty's profound affection for the South was an inexhaustible source of inspiration for her and was one of the most distinguishing features of her fiction. In other words, the personal concerns of the writers of the Renaissance, which are the premises of this study, were a key factor behind their literary concerns.

Viewed from this perspective, Williams' and Capote's personal attitudes towards the South are worlds apart. On the one hand, Capote shrugs off any notion of a particular association on his part as a writer with the South. He says: "they call me a Southern writer. I've lived in many places besides the South and I don't like to be called a Southern writer".[5] In doing so, Capote flatly denies any specific element of Southern cultural influence on his imagination as a writer or on his writing, equating, thereby, any influence the South had on him, if there is any, with that of the other places he lived in. Capote's statements about the influence of the South on him contradict the established facts about his early childhood and the factors which conditioned his character and shaped his thinking and imagination as a writer. For it was in the South, where, as a child, he lived with his relatives, that he discovered his

literary talent and developed a keen interest in writing. In retrospect, he says: "I lived there (in Monroeville, a remote part of rural Alabama) until I was ten, and it was a very lonely life, and it was then that I became interested in writing" (Inge 38).

Although it is difficult to pinpoint the source of influence on a writer, or to attribute his literary outlook to a single factor, the influence of the Southern cultural, social, and rural atmosphere on Capote was not only tremendous but also instrumental for the development of his imagination and sensibility as a writer, especially at the beginning of his career. His life with his relatives in Monroeville is a key-factor and of a particular significance. In his book, Capote: A Biography, Gerald Clarke describes the familial atmosphere in which Capote lived:

> It was a strange household he entered in Monroeville, unique to the South, peculiar to the time: three quarrelsome sisters in late middle age, their reclusive older brother, and an atmosphere heavy with small secrets and ancient resentments. Jennie, Callie, Sook, and Bud, united by blood and the boundaries of the rambling old house on Alabama Avenue, divided by jealousy and the accumulated hurts of half a century.[6]

It was Sook, who was in her middle age but who was mentally childish, who looked after Capote, took him under her custody, and kept him company. He was closely attached to her and, thus, her influence was too great and obvious to be overlooked; indeed, it was instrumental in the development of his skill as a Southern writer. His long attachment to Sook stimulated and broadened his imagination and sharpened his talent for story-telling. In his book, Truman Capote, Kenneth T. Reed reflects on the peculiarly Southern element of Sook's influence on Capote as a writer: "Undoubtedly, the inspiration for much of Capote's skill as a southern local colorist comes from Miss Faulk and her immediate surroundings".[7] She was later to feature in two

of Capote's best-known stories: "A Christmas Memory" and "The Thanksgiving Visitor". Moreover--apart from the subject matter of Capote's works, and despite his reluctance to be particularly associated with the South--Southern landscapes, particularly Monroeville, betray his strong and undeniable association with the South. For as his aunt, Marie Rudisill and James C. Simmons say in their book, Truman Capote, "Monroeville . . . served as the setting for some of his best-known works, such as "A Christmas Memory" and The Grass Harp".[8] However, the extent of the Southern influence on Capote's subject matter and the way it features in his works will be thoroughly examined in the next chapter.

Williams' personal attitude towards the South was completely different from Capote's. Williams strongly identified himself with the South, both as an individual and as a writer. His statements about it emanated from a close personal attachment to it and reflect a deep-seated sense of belonging to it. Proud as he is of his Southern origin, not only does Williams, unlike Capote, acknowledge the strong element of Southern influence on him, but also he attributes almost every aspect of his character to his Southern heritage and background. It is noteworthy that Williams' ancestors represent the two extreme, and rather paradoxical, aspects of Southern tradition: puritanism and Cavalierness. His maternal grandfather, Rev. Walter E. Dakin, was an Episcopal minister with whom Williams spent his early childhood years; on the paternal side he is a descendant of "a Tennessee pioneer".[9]

The familial atmosphere in which Williams was brought up was typically Southern, representing, as it did, the Southern paradox. In her essay, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams", Peggy W. Prenshaw says that "it was a productive coincidence that the contrarieties of experience, and especially the southern experience, should have been so fully and simply focused in his family".[10] His mother represented the genteel

tradition of the South, while his father's feckless lustiness and robustness represented its other side. The influence of this paradoxical Southern heritage on Williams was tremendous and was later to become one of the most distinguishing features of his art--in his book, Where I Live: Selected Essays (SE), he admits that "Roughly there was a combination of Puritan and Cavalier strains in my blood which may be accountable for the conflicting impulses I often represent in the people I write about".[11] Prenshaw strongly supports this view--she believes that "Largely as a result of this influence, I judge, an influence of manifold manifestation . . . Tennessee Williams has perceived and portrayed in his work a world of singular paradox. His characters and themes are built upon paradox" (7)--one which Prenshaw believes consistently characterizes his view of "the effect of the past on the present, especially that of the Southern past, the consequence of human sexuality, and the role of the artist" (8-9).

Williams' Southern background produced a unified pattern of personal thought and literary concerns which characterized his attitude towards the South. He repeatedly, and rather proudly, acknowledges the influence of the region on his art. At one point he admitted that it was in the South where he, as a writer, belonged: "my roots are in the South, at least my creative roots are" (Devlin 94). At another, he stresses that the South is the source of inspiration behind his literary creativity: "when writing, I nearly always return to the South" (Devlin 16).

It is necessary at this stage to distinguish between Capote's and Williams' personal attitudes toward the South, and to explore their implications on the literary commitment of both writers to the region. For it is common knowledge that both writers lived in the South as well as in the North, particularly in New York, and both travelled a lot around the world. Also, they

wrote about the South and used Southern subject matter and settings in their works. Yet, their attitudes to it are tremendously different. On the one hand, there is a great contradiction between Capote's personal attitude towards the South and his literary attachment to it. For although it was Capote's Southern Gothic style which earned him early success and reputation which were also firmly established by his Southern works such as Other Voices, Other Rooms, The Grass Harp, "A Christmas Memory", and "The Thanksgiving Visitor", he dissociated himself from the South and denied its influence on his art. Yet, although his literary association with the South is undeniable and is established on various levels, as will be demonstrated throughout the first three chapters, his personal attitude, perhaps, explains the relatively small number of his Southern works in comparison not only with Williams' but also with his own diverse canon.

By contrast, there is no distinction between Williams' personal attachment to the South and his literary association with it. His attitude towards the region, like the Renaissance writers', was one of affection which he describes as being a strong stimulus for him to write about it: "I write out of love for the South" (Devlin 43). Affection, love, nostalgia, gratitude, and sympathy are key-words which best describe Williams' attitude towards the region. For his life and experience in the South hold the key to his tremendous literary concern with it and his vast interest in Southern subject matter. He deals "in most of his plays with the people and settings of the Deep South of his struggling boyhood" (Devlin 35), because, as he states, "I know and understand their moods and personalities better and because I am both familiar and in complete sympathy with the flavor and mode of their speech" (Devlin 35, 36).

Although there is a connection between Williams and Capote in that not all of their works are about the South, the difference between them on this

point is not hard to discern. Capote's commitment to or departure from his Southern background can be distinguished in the stylistic and thematic aspects of his works. By contrast, in Williams' canon, such a demarcation line hardly exists, for there is always a Southern touch, varying in degree but never absent.

* * *

This has so far been an examination of the Southern background of both Williams and Capote, and the main factors which shaped their imagination and influenced their literary outlooks. It is clear by now that both writers grew up in the South and were profoundly conditioned by its rural and cultural atmosphere, and that their personal attitudes towards their region were entirely different. Yet, in their works, both writers show a great, yet varying, degree of interest in the South. Hence, in the following pages, I shall examine the extent and the fashion in which the South features in their works, focussing on their settings and stylistic aspect, and on the imaginary worlds of both writers.

The emphasis on the Southern quality of Capote's early writing is particularly interesting, because it demonstrates that Capote's association with the South was temporary and rather inconsistent. On this and other interrelated points the difference between Capote and Williams is clear. Williams' association with the South was a matter of fact; it started with The Glass Menagerie, and was firmly established through a long series of works in which the South was, more or less, at the centre of his dramatic concerns. His was a world-wide reputation, but he was always regarded first and foremost as a Southern writer--as Peter Davison says, "Williams is particularly associated with the South, but his range is much wider".[12]

The fact that the South served as a background for Capote's and

Williams' imagination and functioned as a setting for their works is one of the most important aspects of their relationship with it. At the same time, the Southern settings of their works have, as will be demonstrated later, significant thematic associations and cultural implications which are crucial for examining the imaginary worlds of both writers. Nevertheless, Southern landscapes do not feature equally in the canons of the two writers--a fact which may well be attributed to the difference between their attitudes and commitment to the South.

Viewed from the perspective of setting, Capote's fiction falls into two categories: the New York stories and the Southern ones. The first group includes: "Miriam", "The Headless Hawk", "Shut a Final Door", "Master Misery", "Among the Paths to Eden", "The Walls are Cold", and "Mojave"; those which are set in the South include: "A Tree of Night", "My Side of the Matter", "Jug of Silver", "Children on their Birthdays", "A Diamond Guitar", "A Christmas Memory", "The Thanksgiving Visitor", and "House of Flowers", not to mention Other Voices, Other Rooms and The Grass Harp. This shows that, as Reed suggests, "southern settings prevail in almost half of what he has written" (Reed 121).

Similarly, Williams' canon betrays his genuine predilection for Southern settings. And, like Eudora Welty, he is more at home with the Southern landscapes of the native Mississippi of his childhood than anywhere else. That is, perhaps, why the South remained, with few exceptions, the favourite setting and the central background for his work. In this context, it is particularly interesting that certain locales of Two River County in Mississippi--such as Moon Lake, Glorious Hill, and Blue Mountain--are familiar landscapes in Williams' most distinguished Southern plays: Battle of Angels, The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Orpheus Descending, and Baby Doll. The significance

of these locales is that even in the plays which are not set in Two River County, such as The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, they are linked with the central background of the dramatic structure of these plays. Hence, it is misleading to consider these settings and their prominent locales individually and in isolation from Williams' imaginary world. For if a writer's world is taken piecemeal, the result will certainly be one of distortion, and, consequently, the significance of the settings would be limited to the individual plays in which they feature.

Yoked together and placed in a proper perspective, the settings of Williams' Southern plays form an integrated and multi-dimensional world of their own--one which provides and represents the various elements and aspects of Williams' drama. Reflecting on this point, Roger Boxill says in his book, Tennessee Williams:

> The centre of Williams's mythological world is a place within the Mississippi Delta called Two River County. Analogous to Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha, it provides the setting, or at least the background, for the playwright's most characteristic work.[13]

It is also most interesting that not only do the plays which are set in Two River County have certain locales in common, but also they are thematically connected. This point assumes paramount significance for this chapter and the thesis as a whole. For, sharing thematic aspects with the others, each individual play functions as a significant component not only in Williams' dramatic world but also in a larger play, that is Williams' play of the South. The connection between Williams' Southern plays reflects their unity and coherence which are a prerequisite for an enduring literary world which is larger than its individual components. And, at the same time, it reveals a fundamental aspect of Williams' literary thought and concern--a unified pattern of thought which manifests itself in a variety of ways but remains coherent.

The interconnectedness of Williams' plays, especially those which are set in Two River County, is evident, for instance, in the settings and the complementarity of the basic themes and leitmotifs. Two River County is a world of its own, "with its towns of Lyon, Sunset, Blue Mountain and Glorious Hill, its Moon Lake and Moon Lake Casino, its Reverend Tooker and Dr Buchanan" (Boxill 166). The numerous places within this imaginary place lend it a real geographical dimension. The fact that other Williams' plays are also connected with the Two River County plays, even in terms of settings, enhances the credibility of this world, and multiplies its resonances. Williams manages to achieve this effect by making a certain locality feature in many plays and function as a setting for various actions which are analogous in nature and interrelated in his dramatic world.

Moon Lake is a familiar territory, then, wherein acts of violence and death take place, and which is associated with feelings of longing and desire. In Summer and Smoke, for instance, as Boxill says,

> Moon Lake Casino . . . , operated by the pistol-carrying Papa Gonzales, is a dangerous attraction for drinking, gambling and easy sex, where Alma Winemiller will not watch the illegal spectacle of cock fighting and John Buchanan receives a knife wound in a brawl. (167)

Similarly, in A Streetcar Named Desire Moon Lake is remembered for its association with the initial and most devastating calamity which paved the way for Blanche's final destruction. For, "It is at the edge of the Moon Lake that Allan Grey shoots himself after leaving the dance floor of the casino, where minutes earlier his young wife, Blanche, told him that he disgusted her" (Boxill 167). In The Glass Menagerie Moon Lake is also connected with Amanda's memories of love as well as of sadness, for it was there that "One of [her] beaux dies in a shooting duel at the casino, and another drowns in the

lake" (Boxill 167). Also, Moon Lake, "by whose shore the wine orchard of Lady Torrance's father was once a haven for drinking and love-making until burned down by the Mystic Crew", is all the more central to Orpheus Descending (Boxill 167).

Moreover, not only does Moon Lake link these plays as the locale of some of their important actions, it also connects them thematically, in the sense that it is associated with a central Williams' theme. Most noticeable in this particular case is the juxtaposition of death and desire, one which is recurrent in almost all of them, and which acquires special significance in A Streetcar Named Desire (SND) where Blanche says one of the most memorable lines in Williams' canon and which was to become one of the hallmarks of the play: "Death . . . The opposite is desire".[14] Summing up this point, Boxill says that "Death and desire mingle at the Moon Lake" (Boxill 166). Furthermore, other parts of Two River County play an equally significant role in connecting some of the other plays around a common action which takes place at a certain locale. Yet, the above-mentioned example is enough to illustrate this aspect of the settings of Williams' plays.

Not only is Two River County central to Williams' 'mythological world', but it also influences a great deal of his thought and sensibility. It does not merely provide the setting for many of his works; indeed, it is, in many ways, a major source of inspiration for him. Two River County is closely associated with Williams' early childhood in Mississippi, and in particular in Clarksdale, "a city built on the confluence of the Big and Little Sunflower Rivers, was the Williams home for the last three years . . . before the family moved to St. Louis" (Boxill 168). For it was there that he spent his first eight years of childhood which he describes in his Memoirs (M) as "the most joyously innocent of my life", and the happiness of which he attributes to "the beneficent homelife provided by my beloved Dakin grandparents", and to "the

wild and sweet half-imaginary world in which my sister and our beautiful black nurse Ozzie existed".[15]

However, the happiness of Williams' early childhood did not last long--it was interrupted by unfortunate incidents which had traumatic and irreversible effects on him. In his book, Tennessee Williams: His Life And Work, Benjamin Nelson places special emphasis upon Williams' early childhood which provides a major clue for his development as an artist. Nelson points out that Williams' life in Mississippi was particularly marked by two incidents which were to be of a major influence on his thought and sensibility. The first was the departure of Ozzie after he once called her a "nigger"--an incident which, Nelson believes, "left him with a strong sense of guilt which has evolved over the years into a definite abhorrence of racial discrimination".[16] The other incident was an illness, a serious diphtheria, which "left him partially paralyzed and with kidney ailment" (Nelson 18). Williams' illness and long confinement to bed were traumatic and left deep scars in his psyche, the elements of which were to be prominent among his dramatic concerns. For this severe experience

> intensified his subjective, highly introspective world and in time his amusements became private and isolate, except for the companionship of his one indispensable playmate, Rose. He became a child living in a semi-solitary universe, hovering delicately between fantasy and reality. (Nelson 18)

Given these facts, the roots of many a Williams' fundamental theme can be traced back to his personal experience in his early childhood--his profound fear of death, obsession with loneliness, and "abhorrence of racial discrimination", and even his homosexuality--as will be discussed in the fourth chapter--are manifestations of the effect of his childhood experience. Here there is a strong connection with Capote whose most prominent and recurrent

motifs--childhood fears, loneliness, and particularly the collapse of family and death--are also deeply rooted in his personal experience. Reed underlines this point when he says that "Death is an omnipresent reality in a great deal of Capote's work" (126), and that "Probably the only other prevalent recurring motif in Capote's writing is that of family disunity and discord, a motif that is obviously and understandably autobiographic in origin" (127). Similarly, biographical as it is, the collapse of the family is one of Williams' prominent themes which, in his Southern plays, as also in Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms in particular, is inextricably linked with a wider Southern theme--as has been suggested in the "Introduction"--that is, the collapse of traditional social institutions in the modern South. It is also linked to the paradox which characterizes their works and which is the product of the conflict between their Southernness and homosexuality. The significance of this connection between Capote and Williams is that not only are these motifs similar and interconnected, but also, biographical in origin as they are, they underscore the striking similarity between both writers' troubled childhoods.

However, to explore fully the origins of Williams' imaginary world, Two River County, and the inspiration it offered him, it is necessary to examine another important aspect of his childhood which is closely related to it--that is, the traumatic experience and the hard psychological blow he sustained when his family moved from Mississippi to St. Louis. It is noteworthy that prior to that move, Williams' illness sharpened his sensitivity, and his childhood became, as Nelson suggests, "a careful, crystalline existence. It was almost too delicate to maintain itself, and when it was shattered the consequences were to be chaotic" (Nelson 19).

By moving to St. Louis, Williams left the "rural, leisurely community of Clarksdale" and was deprived of the tremendous care and invaluable tenderness of his grandparents (Nelson 19). Viewed against this background,

the movement of Williams' family to St. Louis was, as Nelson calls it, an "uprooting", which for Williams and his sister, Rose, "was a violent one, which, in their minds was nothing less terrifying than a fall from grace" (Nelson 19). The traumatic impact of that move on Williams was strongly intensified by the unpleasant social and familial atmosphere in St Louis. Reflecting on that catastrophic turn in his life and its influence on his character and art, Williams says: "It was a tragic move. Neither my sister nor I could adjust ourselves to life in a Midwestern city. The schoolchildren made fun of our Southern speech and manners" (SE 59). At home, Williams was equally unhappy because of the harsh treatment he received from his father who, having been promoted from the post of a travelling salesman to a managerial position, stayed at home. In other words, Williams was persecuted both at home and outside. This experience inevitably intensified Williams' yearning for the rural Clarksdale which was associated in his mind with an irrecoverable, happy, and innocent past--Clarksdale became Williams' "paradise lost". In this context, Williams' profound sense of loss can most properly be connected with a wider Southern theme: the South's loss, as it believes, of its pre-Civil War edenic self. For in both cases, the loss was considered as tragic and, consequently, the past was mythologized.

It is clear that the move to St Louis put a sad end to a period the sweet memories of which always inflamed Williams' nostalgia and remained a rich and inexhaustible source of inspiration and imagination. It was an experience whose resonance was to be echoed in an elegiac tone which filters throughout his canon, a substantial part of which seems to be an elegy for "the sweet bird of youth" and innocence, and for a "paradise lost". In this context, the manner in which the influence of this experience features in Williams' canon is typically Southern--nostalgia for a past which is nothing less than edenic is a

prominent characteristic of his work, and is best exemplified in The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, and Orpheus Descending. The last two plays are particularly significant for this point because both Blanche DuBois and Lady Torrance yearn for a past which is associated with orchards that have edenic sonority. No wonder, then, that Williams' imaginary world, Two River County, bears the echo, the resonance, and the yearning of his tormented soul for a world the destruction of which relentlessly haunted him and, consequently, shaped his imagination. Boxill reflects on the dimensions and the roots of Williams' imaginary world:

> Since Williams felt that the end of early childhood in the deep South was like the loss of paradise, it is likely that the inspiration for the two rivers of his mythological county was not only the Big and Little Sunflower but also the Tigris and Euphrates, which framed the ancient land known in Greek as 'between rivers' or Mesopotamia, and at the source of which the first Eden was said to be situated. (Boxill 169)

Emanating from this premise is Williams' view that man's earthly existence is, in many ways, a re-enactment of his initial fall from paradise. Placed in a Southern perspective, this view could also be properly considered as having been determined by a wider social and political experience connected with Southern history. The inspiration behind all this is unmistakably that of Two River County, a world that is reminiscent of that of his childhood. It is, indeed, a view that is both central to Williams' thought and recurrent in his work. In Orpheus Descending, for instance, soon after he appears, Val Xavier, "whose name incidentally is a version of a Williams family name, Sevier" (Prenshaw 9), sings 'Heavenly Grass', a song which depicts an experience and reflects a leitmotif both of which are typical of and associated with Williams' world of Two River County:

> My feet took a walk in heavenly grass.
> While the sky shone clear as glass.

> My feet took a walk in heavenly grass.
> All night while the lonesome stars rolled past.
> Then my feet came down to walk on earth,
> And my mother cried when she gave me birth.
> Now my feet walk far and my feet walk fast,
> But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.[17]

Bearing these aspects of Williams' world in mind, it is possible to conclude that his is a world which is broadly established on many levels: the personal, mythological, metaphorical, and the historical levels which are closely associated with the South, and the influence behind which is unmistakably Southern.

However, this line of thought is contrary to that of Richard Gray who divests Williams of any genuine creativity as a Southern writer. For he believes that Williams' world has little pertinence, if any, to the South and the Southern literary tradition outside shallow and unsuccessful endeavours to follow in the paths of William Faulkner. He argues that

> The world so imagined hardly exists--or, at least, hardly deserves consideration--on any other level than the decorative: it offers us a group of charming grotesques, preserved in amber. What is Southern about it, really, is not a certain quality of perception, a sense of engagement between past and present, the public and the private, myth and history: but a turn of phrase or personality, a use of the bizarre and sensational for their own sake, which has the net effect of creating distance. (258)

Before examining the validity of this pejorative view, it is necessary to point out that it is made in the context of Gray's discussion of the danger which faced Southern literature in the post-renaissance period, a danger which was posed by the difficulty of "getting out from under Faulkner", and one which for him is exemplified by the writings of both Williams and Capote (258). In other words, Gray's criticism is directed at the two writers at the same time. This, of course, is a major flaw in his approach simply because the points on which he criticizes Williams and Capote are too many to apply equally to both writers.

Moreover, Gray's argument and the points he raises give the impression that there is a total consonance between Williams and Capote on these points. Gray is certainly mistaken; a close examination of the works of Williams and Capote proves that such a view is unfounded.

Indeed, there is a substantial, yet varying, degree of difference between Williams and Capote on every single point of Gray's argument, as will be demonstrated in the course of this investigation as well as in the following two chapters. Hence, the generalization in Gray's argument creates vagueness which intensifies when he goes on to say:

> For regionalism is substituted a form of local color, and a very precious and slightly decadent form at that, in which the gap between drama and audience seems deliberately widened so that the latter can revel without compunction in contemporary "Gothick" fantasy. (258)

Unsubstantiated as it is, Gray's argument is also unfounded. And although it will be dealt with in the course of the next two chapters, it is necessary to cite Reed's view on this point with regard to Capote. For he believes that "There can be little disagreement that Capote qualifies both as a Southern regionalist and local colorist" (121). At the same time, Reed argues that "Quite a number of Capote's pages, however, not only have the South as setting, but also convey a regionalist's response to his environment" (121). On the other hand, one wonders which of the two writers is being referred to in Gray's argument, because the words "local color" and "drama" cannot apply properly to both writers at the same time. For it is common knowledge that Capote was a local colorist but never a dramatist; Williams was quite the opposite: a dramatist, not a local color writer. And although Williams' fictional works constitute a substantial part of his canon, it is as a dramatist that he is best known, and as such is taken by Gray. It is clear that Gray's approach is vague, and as his argument progresses, it becomes even less clear and unsubstantiated. As a

result, his view borders on the abstract. For example, resuming the above-mentioned statement, he says:

> With Williams this reductive process is slightly more complicated than it is with Capote, because the author himself, I think, remains less than fully aware of it. Of course, Williams does have some suspicion of what he is doing, as his references to his own literary exhibitionism indicate. (259)

However, it is the first of the above quotations that deserves consideration. For it specifies the points on which Gray criticizes Williams and Capote--that is, for instance, the absence of the imaginary world and the engagement between past and present in their works. At this stage, having demonstrated and examined the major dimensions of Williams' imaginary world and its association with the main aspects of his Southern background, it can be said that, as far as Williams is concerned, Gray is mistaken. His view about Williams' imaginary world is both reductive and destructive of that world. For Gray completely ignores Two River County and its distinctively Southern characteristics, most important of which, ironically, is the strong "sense of engagement between past and present". Such an engagement is, perhaps more than anything else, one of the most distinguishing features of Williams' dramatic concerns. In fact, it is both central to and characteristic of many of Williams major plays: The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and Orpheus Descending, to mention just a few. Significant as it is for this comparative study, this point will be one of the central issues which will be dealt with in greater detail in the next two chapters.

The difference, which I have referred to earlier, between Williams and Capote on the points Gray raises arises from the basic contrast between their imaginary worlds. Traced back to its origin, this divergence is clearly related

to the function of the settings of their works. It has already been established that most of the Southern settings of Williams' plays are so interrelated that they form an integrated world, Two River County. This is the starting point of dissimilarity between Williams and Capote from which difference on other interrelated matters follows.

Although the South features in nearly half of Capote's works, the Southern settings do not, any more than the New York ones, create a unified imaginary world on any of the levels Williams' is established on, except the personal, which is closely related to the biographical element which permeates a substantial body of his work. First and foremost, there is no strong geographical link between the locales of Capote's works in the fashion Williams skillfully establishes between the settings of his Southern plays. For although, for instance, both "A Christmas Memory" and The Grass Harp are set in Monroeville, the link here pertains less to the geographical features of the area than to Capote's sense of place which, characteristically Southern as it is, is also self-evident in his local color pieces. And at the same time, in these two works, the emphasis is less on a particular locale with larger social dimensions than on the harmony between nature and human beings--dead or alive--which characterizes these two works in particular and the romantic touch of which does not elude Capote even in his non-fictional novel, In Cold Blood.

On the other hand, the settings are not thematically interconnected, although, as Reed says, the characters and their dilemmas are "closely related either to the urbanized impersonality of city life, or to the hidebound agrarian personality of the Southern mode of life as it is lived mostly in Louisiana and Alabama" (34). For there is no larger world in which they function as integral components. Certainly, there is some similarity between the New York stories in that they are dominated by fear. Yet, the world of fear they portray pertains more to their subjective orientation and style than to their thematic aspect.

Similarly, "A Christmas Memory", "The Thanksgiving Visitors", and The Grass Harp share many common points which are related to Capote's depiction of the way of life in the rural South, and to their underlying sense of nostalgia which is, ironically, counterbalanced, or somewhat neutralized, by the overriding concern of Capote's orphaned characters to grow up.

However, it is Capote's style which, as Ihab Hassan says in his book, Radical Innocence: Studies In The Contemporary American Novel, "we are likely to identify with his achievement"[18], and which is a crucial basis on which his stories are interrelated. In this respect his fiction falls into two distinct categories--the one characterized by the bright, and the other by the dark style. It is also particularly significant that the stylistic aspect of Capote's works is inextricably linked with their locales. Indeed, with a few exceptions, there is a clear distinction, in terms of Capote's style and the world he portrays, between his New York stories and the Southern ones. The first category is mainly characterized by a dark mood and an atmosphere of horror and fear; the latter by a bright style. The association between the stylistic aspect and the locale of Capote's fiction is crucial in the present investigation for exploring the nature of Capote's relation to the South and revealing the cultural background and implications of his fiction. For any examination of the dichotomy in Capote's style taken in isolation from the settings of his fiction, as it is by Nance and Hassan, falls short of achieving this objective.

In his book, The Worlds of Truman Capote, William L. Nance, for instance, examines the stylistic aspect of Capote's stories in their chronological order, and divides them into two groups: "The Dark Stories" and "The Later Stories". The dark stories, in Nance's view, are those which were written in Capote's early career.[19] However, this is misleading, for these are not exclusively the early fiction of Capote; other stories, which do not fit in this

category, appeared during this period. At the same time, Capote's works are diverse and, therefore, as Reed says,

> An examination of the tales in order of chronology, however, does not altogether illuminate the intriguing diversity of the shorter pieces. Much depends on Capote's keen sense of place, and the diversity of his short stories is compounded by his tendency to select either the rural South or metropolitan New York as the locality-setting for most of his work. (34)

Yet, before revealing the defects of Nance's method, and examining Ihab Hassan's approach concerning the dichotomy in Capote's style, it is necessary to present his argument first.

Nance believes that the 'dark stories' are predominantly characteristic of the early phase of Capote's career. He suggests that

> The early fiction of Truman Capote is dominated by fear. . . . The stories set in this dark world include "A Tree of Night" (1943), "Miriam" (1944), "The Headless Hawk" (1946), "Shut a Final Door" (1947), and "Master Misery" (1948). (16)

As has been demonstrated earlier, all these stories which are set in "this dark world"--with the exception of "A Tree of Night", which is set in the South--are set in New York. By contrast, all those which Nance classifies as "the later stories", that is, "A Diamond Guitar" (1950), "House of Flowers" (1951), "A Christmas Memory" (1956), and "Among the Paths to Eden" (1960) (65), are set in the South, except the last one which belongs, on the ground of its setting, to the New York stories. In other words, the dark stories are those which are set in New York; the later stories are the Southern ones.

The difference between the two groups of stories, in Nance's view, is that the stories of the early period reflect Capote's obsession with the dark side of life, or rather, describe the world as absolutely dark and hermetic, where people are permanently trapped in the depths of fear. In the later stories this nightmarish mood gives way to a bright one: "If Capote's early stories are

about captivity . . . , the later stories--though some of their characters are quite literally imprisoned--have about them an air of limitless vistas" (65). Thus, having classified Capote's fiction on a chronological basis, Nance shows that as time went on, Capote's artistic views and concerns changed. The later stories represent a total break with the past--they mark a new phase in Capote's career in as much as they clearly indicate a tremendous shift in his personal outlook and artistic orientation. He strongly confirms this view when he says that "the changes in Capote's career have not been casual but are the result of a strong and highly conscious effort at growth" (11).

However, the various contrasts between the two categories of stories reinforce the dichotomy in Capote's style which, nevertheless, is not as much based on the chronological development of Capote's career as Nance clearly wants us to believe. For Nance adopts a selective approach, in the sense that he chooses the best-known stories within a period of time and classifies them according to their prevalent mood, and so arrives at his two categories. In this process many stories in each period are left out. Such an approach merely helps to establish the general and the most prominent mood of a collection of stories. Attributing this dichotomy to the chronological development of Capote's career, Nance's method leaves huge gaps unbridged and many questions unanswered, particularly about his nonfictional works such as In Cold Blood and Handcarved Coffins, which are about horrifying and brutally-executed crimes. For although they were written at a later stage in his career--even after what Nance calls "the later stories"--they belong on the basis of their nightmarish mood to what he calls the dark stories. The main flaw of this approach is that it establishes a division in Capote's style for its own sake--it does not probe the cultural influences behind this dichotomy, nor does it refer to any possibility of cultural patterns that Capote wanted to express through it,

or to the conflictual elements which characterize his canon. For this conflictual element has its origin not only in the stylistic element of his work, but also arises from the way the gay culture and Southern culture continually disconcert each other. Hence, the chronological approach is too general to apply, and does not offer much insight into this point. By contrast, this investigation aims at drawing a demarcation line between two distinct patterns of Capote's style in his fiction, in relation with the cultural implications behind them.

In his afore-mentioned book, Hassan approaches Capote's fiction from a stylistic perspective. On this basis, he establishes the fact that Capote's fiction is characterized by the division between his "daylight" and "nocturnal" styles, and that both styles are "developments of a central, unifying, and self-regarding impulse which Narcissus has traditionally embodied" (231). He believes that this approach is crucial for perceiving "the specific concerns of Capote's fiction" (231). Hassan follows up this division through the chronological development of Capote's career. But unlike Nance who suggests that the division in Capote's style represents a chronological break or change in Capote's career--that is the end of one phase and the beginning of a new one--Hassan believes that the division in style was merely deepened by the chronological development of his career. At one point he says: "the chronological development suggests a deepening awareness of the tension between self and world, a redistribution of love between ego and object, a movement toward light which retains the knowledge of darkness" (231).

The divided mood of Capote is, therefore, a response to the "tension" within him--a tension which cannot be associated with a particular period of time, any more than his stories which, as has already been suggested, resist classification on this basis. And although the words "a movement toward light" might suggest a shift from one mood to another, the fact remains that the two moods run parallel to each other in Capote's canon; the dichotomy in style was

originally caused and maintained by the "impulse" which Hassan referred to, and is most plausibly linked to a wider and more comprehensive conflict which characterizes his work. For it is this impulse, rather than the chronological development, which "brings together dread and humor, dream and reality, 'in-sight' and 'ex-perience'" (231).

The inference is clear: Hassan's argument is in total contrast with Nance's view about the reasons for the dichotomy in Capote's fiction. Nevertheless, Hassan's and Nance's approaches share a common flaw: they both overlook the cultural factor behind this dichotomy. Such a flaw is inevitable, because they do not probe the link between style and setting in Capote's fiction. Yet, not only does such a link exist, but it is also crucial for assessing the extent of Capote's relation to the South. Moreover, this association between style and setting has significant implications for the cultural background of the patterns of social relationships which Capote's fiction conveys. To illustrate this point it is necessary to establish the distinction, on a thematic basis, between the two groups of Capote's fiction. For although the settings in each group are not thematically interrelated, in the fashion Williams' are, there is a general similarity between the leitmotifs of the stories in each group. For instance, the Southern stories are generally, as Schorer suggests, "about people who, inhabiting a world of love, live peaceably with their selves, and are even capable--as in the instance of Miss Bobbit in 'Children On Their Birthdays'--of transforming those around them".[20]

The difference between the New York stories and the Southern ones is not limited to their locale and style; it extends also to their thematic aspect. The inference is that the locale, style, and theme are interrelated in each story. This is a prerequisite for the coherence and unity within each story. Yet, its recurrence in a collection of stories establishes a pattern which distinguishes

them from the other group. Thus, the stories which are set in New York are characterized by their "Nocturnal" style as well as by their characters who are trapped in a dark world, a world of distorted images and blurred realities. As Schorer says,

> They are stories whose central concern is the theme of the *Doppelganger*, the alter ego, and the supernatural is, in fact, a metaphor of the world in which that other self, which we cannot ever confront in the busy social world, exists. (VII, VIII)

It is noteworthy that the "theme of the Doppelganger" and the world of fear, which are central to the dark stories, are particularly crucial for Capote's presentation of homosexuality, and will, therefore, be fully explored in the fourth chapter. At the same time, the suggestion in this quotation that the "busy social world" is absent in these stories is quite interesting, because not only are the characters grotesque and bizarre, but also the "persons encountered by the protagonist are most properly viewed as projections of inner personae" (Nance 16). Hence, the nightmare mood of horror and fear, which reflects the egoistic orientation of the characters, depends "most for its effect on the disordered surrealistic imagery of the dream state" (Schorer IX). And since these stories are deeply subjective in their concerns, they reflect none of the problems and the social relationships that one encounters in everyday life. As Nance suggests, "The stories take place in an inner world almost entirely devoid of social or political concern" (17). We find neither the people we encounter in the Southern stories, nor the warm and familial mood of "The Thanksgiving Visitor", "Children on Their Birthdays", or that which characterizes the relationships between the inhabitants of the tree in The Grass Harp, or the traditional Southern hospitality which Capote describes in one of his reminiscences which is titled "Hospitality", when he says:

> Once upon a time, in the rural South, there were farmhouses and

> farm wives who set tables where almost any passing stranger, a travelling preacher, a knife grinder, an itinerant worker, was welcome to sit down to a hearty midday meal. Probably many such farm wives still exist. Certainly my aunt does, Mrs Jennings Carter. Mary Ida Carter.[21]

However, the fact that the New York stories are "generally about lonely, loveless people" is particularly significant here (Schorer VIII). For although loneliness is characteristic of Capote's characters, it is the causes of that loneliness which illustrate the difference behind these stories and the others. Here the characters are "alone because they are loveless", and because they "encounter strange, often offensive creatures" (Schorer VIII). By contrast, none of the horrible scenes and violent turbulences which overwhelmingly dominate stories like "The Headless Hawk", "Shut a Final Door", "Miriam", and "Master Misery", are to be found in the Southern stories, whose characters can be properly described as dreamers. The atmosphere in the New York stories is skillfully described to form an integral part of the dark mood in which these stories are shrouded.

These points of contrast between the New York stories and those of the South are sufficient to illustrate the difference in terms of the general social atmosphere which is conveyed by each group of stories--a difference which can be summed up by the fact that, as Reed says, "It is impossible that the Southern tales could have been rewritten with New York as the setting, nor could his citified stories have been adapted to the isolated backlands of rural Alabama" (34). Bearing this in mind and given the association of the dark style with the New York stories and the "daylight" style with the Southern ones, it might well be said that Capote aims at showing, through this dichotomy, the stark difference between the urban life and the rural way of life in the South. And by extension, it can be argued that Capote makes a parody of urbanism which is epitomized in the New York stories. The Gothic atmosphere of these

stories is instrumental for achieving this effect, as it is crucial for his presentation of homosexuality, as will be discussed in the fourth chapter--it exaggerates the elements of urbanism, for instance, the loneliness, isolation, and exploitation of the individual, to the extent that it seems parodic. The New York stories depict a world where the human being is lost and exploited, and even his dreams are stolen, and where "the 'wizard man', in one guise or another, is everywhere" (Schorer VIII).

This notion is further underlined by juxtaposing it with the image of the way of life in the rural South as exemplified by the Southern stories. Immediacy, warmth, and familiarity, which the New York stories absolutely lack, are abundant in the Southern stories and, simultaneously, reflect the intimacy which characterizes the relationships between the characters, and their harmony with nature. These elements, combined with a subtle touch of sentimentalism and romanticism sweetened by nostalgia for the past are not only typical of Southern literature, but also epitomize the Southern mentality and way of life, which were fully described in the "Introduction". That is to say, the Southern stories demonstrate the Southern quality of Capote's writing in terms of settings, mood, and the pattern of social relationships between their characters. Nevertheless, although these points mark the demarcation line between the Southern stories and those which are set in New York, the Gothic style of the latter can be singled out as being typical of Southern writing. Certainly, this explains Marshall Walker's remark, which was quoted earlier, that the "early writing of Truman Capote is distinctively Southern". For, the gothic style was one of the prominent features of his early fiction which associated him with the South--a fact which Hassan strongly emphasizes when he says: "it is, of course, as a Southern and gothic writer that we insist on knowing Capote" (230).

Bearing all these points in mind, it is possible at this stage to conclude

that there is a considerable association between Capote's canon and Southern literature. For it demonstrates, in a varying degree, some of the important and permanent characteristics of Southern writing. This applies both to his New York stories as well as to those which are set in the South, such as "A Christmas Memory", "The Thanksgiving Visitor", Other Voices, Other Rooms, and The Grass Harp. For while the former, or what Nance calls the early stories, are stylistically linked with the South through their gothic mood and dark style, the latter are characteristically Southern in every aspect. They are set in the South, and their bright style reinforces their connection with Southern writing. For not only does it correspond with the elegiac tone and the thematic aspect of these stories which describe the innocence of the characters' childhood experiences, but it also reflects the warmth, the simplicity, and the immediacy and the sense of community and hospitality which characterize life and social relationships in the rural South. At the same time, it is also crucial for conveying the sense of place which is central to Capote's Southern works. Yet, Other Voices, Other Rooms is, in many ways, an exception--for although, as will be demonstrated in the next two chapters, the gothic style is one of its most distinguishing features, the first part of the novel is predominantly bright in mood and style.

Combining the two stylistic patterns which characterize Capote's fiction, Other Voices, Other Rooms demonstrates that, contrary to Nance's view, the division of Capote's canon on a stylistic basis is not related to the chronological development of his career. Rather, the division reflects the thematic aspects of Capote's fiction and the mode of its narrative as is best exemplified by Other Voices, Other Rooms. For while the gothic style is crucial for the novel's treatment of homosexuality through Joel's subterranean journey and his quest for identity--which will be dealt with in the fourth

chapter--the combination of the two modes of style is particularly significant for the novel's regionalistic aspect and its treatment of Southern subject matter, which will be the main topic of the next chapter.

Similarly, although Williams adopts different dramatic techniques, his drama is characterized by a strong gothic element--violence, ranging from eviction to rape and castration, and from arson to lynching and even cannibalism, is the hallmark of his drama. And while the violence in his Southern plays reflects a corresponding mode of Southern life, as has been established in the "Introduction", its recurrence in his canon betrays a strong link with the "Gothic tradition which runs from Melville, Hawthorne and Poe down to Faulkner, McCullers and Capote" (Boxill 4).

However, Williams is, as Boxill says, "a theatre poet" (25), whose "typical dramatic form, early and late, is not . . . narrative but lyric" (22), and in whose canon

> The interest is not in plot so much as it is in character, mood and condition. The Glass Menagerie (1944), for example, . . . is a loosely connected series of scenes which conspire to create the narrator's nostalgic recollection of his family. (22)

Hence, not only are most of Williams' characters either artists or endowed with artistic sensibility, but also his Southern belles possess the poetic eloquence which is deeply rooted in their traditional background. In The Glass Menagerie (GM), for instance, Amanda demonstrates some aspects of the mannerisms and charm of Southern culture, identifying herself with the past, with a time when it "wasn't enough for a girl to be possessed of a pretty face and graceful figure . . .. She also needed to have a nimble wit and a tongue to meet all occasions".[22] Hence, she tells Tom and Laura that as a young belle, she "understood the art of conversation" (237; sc. 1).

Amanda's claim to eloquence enjoys Williams' clear and strong

endorsement. He says:

> My great bête noire as a writer has been a tendency . . . to poeticize, . . . and that's why I suppose I've written so many Southern heroines. They have the tendency to gild the lily, and they speak in a rather florid style which seems to suit me because I write out of emotions. (Devlin 99)

Roger Boxill is outspoken in his support for this idea--he believes that "the outstanding literary quality of his [Williams'] drama is in the dialogue that he creates out of the natural poetry of Southern American speech, an idiom that is at once rhythmical, imagistic and genuine" (25). In this context, Amanda is one of a host of belles in Williams' artistic gallery who are endowed with poetic sensibility and grace. It is sufficient here to cite Blanche's poetic lines, most moving and touching of which is the exit line where she addresses the doctor: "Whoever you are--I have always depended on the kindness of strangers" (SND 225; sc. 11). Boxill believes that this is "the most famous line in the play, if not in all Williams"--one, which, "resonant with the plight of Blanche, hangs in the air for long afterwards" (25-6).

This has so far been an examination of Capote's and Williams' association with the South, in terms of the general form of their works, that is, the settings, the imaginary world that each writer established, as well as the stylistic aspect of their arts. It has been clearly demonstrated that, on these grounds, Williams is more in line with mainstream Southern literature, the general outlines of which were established in the "Introduction". That is to say, Williams' affinity with the South is stronger, broader, and more consistent than Capote's. For the latter's works lack the unified imaginary world which Williams skillfully established in Two River County. This inconsistency in Capote's works is most appropriately reflected by the title of Nance's book: The Worlds of Truman Capote--indeed, Capote created worlds which have very little in common, and each is linked with Southern literature in a different

way.

Notes to Chapter One

[1] Marshall Walker, The Literature of the United States of America, gen. ed. A. Norman Jeffares, 2nd ed., Macmillan History of literature (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1983) 186. Henceforth referred to as Walker.

[2] Jacob B Adler, "The Rose and the Fox: Notes on the Southern Drama," South: Modern Southern Literature in its Cultural Setting, eds. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jacobs (1961; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1974) 350.

[3] Ursula Brumm, "Williams Faulkner and the Rebirth of Dixie," American Literature Since 1900, ed. Marcus Cunliffe, (London: Sphere, 1975) 219. Vol. 9 of History of Literature in the English Language, 10 vols. 1970-1988. Henceforth referred to as Brumm.

[4] Richard Gray, The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South (London: Arnold, 1977) 258. Henceforth referred to as Gray.

[5] M. Thomas Inge, ed., Truman Capote: Conversations (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987) 6. Henceforth referred to as Inge.

[6] Gerald Clarke, Capote: A Biography (1988; London: Sphere, 1989) 15. Henceforth referred to as Clarke.

[7] Kenneth T. Reed, Truman Capote, ed. Warren French, Twayne's United States Authors Series 388 (Boston: Twayne, 1981) 18. Henceforth referred to as Reed.

[8] Marie Rudisill and James C. Simmons, Truman Capote, 1st ed. (New York: Marrow, 1983) 13-4. Henceforth referred to as Rudisill and Simmons.

[9] Albert D. Devlin, ed., Conversations With Tennessee Williams, gen. ed. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1986) 5. Henceforth referred to as Devlin.

[10] Peggy W. Prenshaw, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams," Tennessee Williams: 13 Essays, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980) 7. Henceforth referred to as Prenshaw.

[11] Tennessee Williams, Where I Live: Selected Essays, eds. Christine R. Day and Bob Woods (New York: New Directions, 1978) 58. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[12] Peter Davison, "Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, and Edward Albee," American Literature, ed. Boris Ford (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) 555. Vol. 9 of The New Pelican Guide to English Literature, 11 vols.

[13] Roger Boxill, Tennessee Williams, eds. Bruce King and Adele King, Macmillan Modern Dramatists (1987; London: Macmillan; Hamburg: Petersen-Macmillan, 1987) 166. Henceforth referred to as Boxill.

[14] Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Bird of

Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 206; Sc. 9. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[15] Tennessee Williams, Memoirs (1976; London: Star-Allen, 1977) 11. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[16] Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams: His Life and Work (London: Owen, 1961) 18. Henceforth referred to as Nelson.

[17] Tennessee Williams, In the Winter of Cities (New York: New Directions, 1956) 97.

[18] Ihab Hassan, Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1961) 231. Henceforth referred to as Hassan.

[19] William L. Nance, The Worlds of Truman Capote (1970; London: Calder and Boyars, 1973) 16. Henceforth referred to as Nance.

[20] Mark Schorer, Introduction, Selected Writings of Truman Capote, by Truman Capote (London: Hamilton, 1963) IX. Henceforth referred to as Schorer.

[21] Truman Capote, "Hospitality," Music for Chameleons, by Capote (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) 40.

[22] Tennessee Williams, The Glass Menagerie, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1948; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 238; sc. 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

CHAPTER TWO

The Southernness of Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms

In this chapter I shall address myself mainly to the thematic link of Capote's canon to the South and to his treatment of Southern subject matter. This single focus on Capote is necessitated by various considerations which are particularly pertinent to the comparative perspective of the thesis. First and foremost, although Capote is generally recognized as a Southern writer, and although, in my opinion, his canon is linked in many ways to the Southern literary tradition and has strong elements of regionalism which characterized the renaissance literature, critics are generally skeptical about and rather dismissive of these notions. Richard Gray, for instance--as has been mentioned in the first chapter--believes that Capote's writings, like Williams', typify the danger which Southern writing encountered after the renaissance.[1]

Others, and particularly Capote's main critics, like William L. Nance, Kenneth T. Reed, Helen S. Garson, and Ihab Hassan are even less convinced of the Southern qualities of the thematic aspect of Capote's works. For although they unanimously agree that his Gothic style is typically Southern, they fail to recognize the regionalistic elements in his works. Hassan, for instance, as has been cited in the earlier chapter, says: "it is, of course, as Southern and gothic writer that we insist on knowing Capote".[2] Yet, although he reflects extensively on the dimensions of Capote's gothic style, he does not address Capote's treatment of Southern issues.

Similarly, Reed states that "Quite a number of Capote's pages, however, not only have the South as setting, but also convey a regionalist's response to his environment".[3] Nevertheless, he does not elaborate on this point and,

consequently, his view is general and vague. And one of his earlier statements on Other Voices, Other Rooms is typical of the critics' reductive attitude when they deal with Capote's Southern works. For although he says that "The book is a fine specimen of southern regional fiction", he falls short of accepting its central theme as being related to the South and, therefore, confines the significance of this element to

> conveying . . . the flavor of backwoods life with its 'steaming . . . fried eggs and grits, sopping rich with sausage and gravy,' its overt racism (expressed, but not condemned), its sense of historical heritage (as stated , for example, in the tale of 'a fiendish Yankee bandit who rode a silver-grey horse and wore a velvet cloak stained scarlet with the blood of southern womanhood'). (77-8)

The same can be said about the views of Capote's other critics and reviewers who overlook the regionalism in Capote's works, in general, and in Other Voices, Other Rooms, in particular, as will be mentioned in the course of this chapter. This is most surprising and, indeed, although Reed's afore-mentioned view is limited in scope and range because it depends on minor elements and leitmotifs, it is, in comparison with the views of other critics, relatively reasonable and represents a slight departure from mainstream critical opinion about the novel. For, at least, he recognizes the regionalistic element in Other Voices, Other Rooms, though he regards it as a minor element in the novel. Yet, these critical views seem to be partly encouraged by Capote's statements in which he, as has been mentioned in the first chapter, dissociates himself from the South and denies its influence on him. Hassan, for instance, is quick to capitalize on such statements--he says: "Southern he is by accident of birth more than natural affinity" (230). And, referring to Capote's statement, Hassan argues that Capote

> is right. We are quick to sense that the elemental quality in the

> fiction of Faulkner, Warren, or McCullers is consciously poeticized in his fiction, and that their loving adherence to the manners of Southern life often vanishes before the surrealist appearance of his reveries. (230-1)

On the other hand, Capote's statements betray his lack of concern--his views on Other Voices, Other Rooms, for instance, particularly illuminate this point. For he confines the significance of the novel to the autobiographical element which permeates it. In his book, Truman Capote: A Memoir, his close friend John Malcolm Brinnin mentions a conversation quoting Capote as saying:

> There was less imagination in Other Voices than you think, . . . That was a record, too. . . . a lot of facts all wrapped in the gauze of a daydream. . . . Other Voices was my way of finding metaphors for what I knew but could not understand.[4]

And in an interview, Capote emphasizes that Other Voices, Other Rooms

> was all about me and my problems. . . . I realized that the book is a prose poem in which I have taken my own emotional problems and transformed them into psychological symbols. Everyone of the characters represented some aspect of myself.[5]

However, the biographical nature of Other Voices, Other Rooms, or any other work, does not limit the scope of its interpretation or its wider applications. Rather, the biographical element and the writer's background offer much insight into the understanding of the literary work. This is particularly true of this novel as much as it is of The Glass Menagerie, one of Williams' most biographical works, in which the South, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter, is a central concern. And although the biographical element in this novel is more pertinent to the theme of homosexuality, as will be discussed in detail in the fourth chapter, its significance for the present investigation is, by no means, diminished.

By contrast, the critical views about Williams' Southern works are

varying, and although many important points are overlooked or unreasonably interpreted, the thematic link of his canon to the South is not seriously questioned. Some critics, however, like Richard Gray, for instance--as has been mentioned in the first chapter--are skeptical about the originality of some of Williams' Southern themes. And, therefore, his achievement is more often compared with the renaissance writers' and with Faulkner's, in particular. And on the whole, Williams' Southern canon has received more attention than Capote's. It is particularly important for this study that this aspect of Capote's canon is illuminated so that comparison with Williams can be properly conducted in the next chapter. Hence, in this chapter, I shall focus mainly on Other Voices, Other Rooms in order to reveal its strong thematic link with the South, and to bring to light its unmistakable Southern qualities which are unduly overlooked; other works are to be examined in the comparative context of the next chapter. To accomplish this, it is necessary to examine Capote's works in a chronological order in order to decide the pace and the degree of his interest in the South as a source for his subject matter, and the way he approached it.

Capote started his career in the early 1940's. Within a few years he wrote most of his best-known short stories. Yet, although some of these stories--as has been mentioned in the first chapter--are set in the South and portray its rural way of life, they lack the depth and range of this novel's link with the region, and none of them deal directly or indirectly with the challenges the South encountered at that time, nor do they treat any of the traditional Southern issues. At the same time, many other stories of this period are set in New York, are concerned with horror and childhood fears, and are essentially characterized by their dark mood, gothic style, and subjective orientation which are particularly significant for Capote's treatment of homosexuality, as will be

discussed in the fourth chapter.

So, it was not until his first novel, Other Voices, Other Rooms, appeared in 1948, that Capote wrote anything of substance about the South. On the stylistic level, this novel does not represent a break with what Nance, as has been mentioned in the first chapter, calls, the "dark stories"[6]; rather, it is a continuation, on a larger scale, of that category of Capote's fiction. For it is heavily invested with elements of Southern gothicism, and also reveals the subjective orientation not only of the protagonist, Joel Knox, but also of Capote himself--an orientation which is closely related to the biographical element in the novel, and which is crucial for Capote's treatment of homosexuality. In his book, Capote: A Biography, Gerald Clarke traces the inspiration behind the novel back to a personal experience of Capote's childhood in rural Alabama when he "had been bitten by a cottonmouth moccasin".[7]

Viewed in relation with Capote's earlier fiction, Other Voices, Other Rooms assumes paramount importance. For it was Capote's first novel and earned him renown and established him in the literary arena. And although its Southern setting and gothic style link it with Capote's Southern stories and the "dark" ones, it is different from both. For, with the exception of "A Tree of Night" whose Southern setting--as has been suggested in the earlier chapter--has no thematic implications, it is the first "dark" work that has a Southern setting and theme. Moreover, it is the first work that is both gothic in style and, thematically, unmistakably Southern. So, Other Voices, Other Rooms is most properly regarded as a growth of the two categories of Capote's earlier fiction, and it is, perhaps, for this reason that it resists simple classification. The novel is so rich in imagery, metaphors and symbols, and the narrative so intricate, yet sometimes so elusively simple, that it is open to various interpretations.

Moreover, this novel inaugurated a new pattern in Capote's fiction in

which he relied entirely on the South for his subject matter--a pattern which includes The Grass Harp, "A Christmas Memory", and "The Thanksgiving Visitor", which are different in style and mood from Other Voices, Other Rooms. Here Capote harnesses his Southern background to produce some of his most enduring works which are characteristically Southern in every aspect. Yet, chronologically, these works do not represent a phase in Capote's career--a long span of time separates one work from the other, during which Capote wrote other works which do not fit in this pattern. Bearing this in mind, and given the variations in the locale of Capote's fiction, in his subject matter and artistic concerns, fictional and non-fictional, and in his style, these four works constitute a small portion of his canon. And this demonstrates that, comparatively, his works in which the image of the South is central represent sporadic endeavours and show little reliance on his part upon the South for his subject matter.

However, although the delay in presenting the South as a central theme in Capote's work might be considered as a confirmation of his reluctance to be associated with it, the fact that it is at the heart of some of his best-known works underscores his literary affinity with the South, and the extent and inevitability of the influence of his Southern background on his art. The significance of this influence is tremendously endorsed by the fact that the South prominently features in Capote's first novel, Other Voices, Other Rooms. The novel is typically Southern--its setting, characterization, mood, general atmosphere, and its intense and distinctively Southern gothic style testify to its link with the Southern literary tradition and to the influence of Capote's Southern background as well. Indeed, on these points it is hard to cite any critic who suggests otherwise. And it is with emphasis on Capote's gothic style in this novel and other works that Hassan, as has been mentioned earlier,

says: "it is, of course, as a Southern and gothic writer that we insist on knowing Capote" (230). Similarly, in her book, Truman Capote, Helen S. Garson suggests that "Because of Capote's dark stories, and his first published novel, Other Voices, Other Rooms, people have always associated his work with the tradition of Southern gothicism".[8]

The suggestion that Other Voices, Other Rooms is thematically based on and linked with the South is, therefore, certainly bound to run contrary to the general critical view about the novel. For although critics indisputably recognize the Southern quality of the novel's gothic style, setting, and characterization, their rejection of its thematic link with the South is unequivocal. Garson, for instance, says that when the novel appeared it was rejected on both the national and regional levels: "it was criticized as being out of the main stream", because "American literature in the thirties and forties was dominated by social consciousness. The preferred fiction was sociological prose, much of it naturalistic" (13). Perhaps, more than anything else, it was the homosexual theme of the novel that instigated most of the unfavourable reviews that it received. This topic, as Garson points out, was

> considered taboo in American work prior to the advent of contemporary fiction. When the subject did appear in the past, it was usually carefully masked. Capote, however, uses no disguises other than symbols, dreams, and images . . . . (14)

Capote's treatment of the theme of homosexuality caused him and his novel to be rejected for some time, for that treatment broke a strict social and literary taboo on more than one level. Yet, it was in the South, the region which, as has been suggested in the "Introduction", had been renowned for its stringent ethics and code of honour, and which was, therefore, the last to entertain such ideas, that the novel was bound to damage him most. Thus, having been earlier associated with the South, the motherland of some of the

giants of modern literature, it was inevitable that Capote would be compared with Faulkner and his contemporaries. No wonder, then, that, as Garson suggests, "Capote's work did not seem familiar", because

> Unlike Faulkner or Tate, he is not concerned with the destruction of a region, the downfall of a class, or the decay of a family. His first novel, as well as those that succeed it, is narrower in scope than theirs. (13)

However, divesting Other Voices, Other Rooms of all these concerns and, thereby, denying its thematic link with the South, seems to be influenced by prejudice over the homosexual theme of the novel. Yet, in my opinion, the novel's treatment of homosexuality is overstated--almost all critics regard it as the novel's major theme. The narrative is explained in a way which suits this approach--Joel's journey is that of "an adolescent boy for whom growing up meant the acceptance of homosexual love" (Inge 74). This undue over-emphasis on, or rather exaggeration of, Joel's whole-hearted acceptance of Randolph and, consequently, of homosexuality is to be dealt with in detail in the fourth chapter. Nonetheless, it must be pointed out that this single focus on the theme of homosexuality has always overshadowed and diverted attention from an equally, or probably more, important theme which is at the heart of the novel, that is, its treatment of Southern issues.

Objections to emphasis on the novel's thematic link and concerns with the South can be dispensed with by careful scrutiny of its narrative. The main flaw of the other critical views is that by concentrating on the homosexual theme of the novel, they leave crucial questions unanswered. This can be partially attributed to the fact that, as Nance points out, "Other Voices, Other Rooms is an almost unbelievably intricate novel" (63). Therefore, no single method can bring to light all the novel's images, metaphors, and narrative, and illuminate its concerns at the same time. For as Hassan says, "The peculiar

mixture of fantasy and reality in Capote's first novel begs for allegorical interpretation" (239). In other words, the versatile nature of the novel demands it be approached from more than one perspective.

To establish the novel's thematic concerns with the South, I must inevitably contradict the general view, which has been quoted earlier, that this novel is untypical of Southern literature because it "is not concerned with the destruction of a region, the downfall of a class, or the decay of a family". For as Chester E. Eisinger, in his book, Fiction of the Forties, says, "All the evidence attests to the collapse of a civilization, that of the ante-bellum South, that has been replaced by nothing else".[9] Yet, Eisinger believes that in this novel,

> The past exists only as a memory of faded grandeur or as a reproach to the present; surely the past has no vital connection with the present. As a result, the decadence here described is isolated, existing for its own sake. (238)

Eisinger's latter point falls in line with the other critical views, most prominent of which is Gray's that, as has been mentioned in the earlier chapter, Capote's works, like Williams', lack the sense of engagement between the past and present (258).

In fact, this novel deals, it seems to me , with all these themes and possesses all these qualities, and for that reason seems to be pre-eminently Southern in character. So, the words "destruction", "downfall", and "decay", which are mentioned in the earlier quotation, acquire special significance for my argument. They are key-words, in the sense that no other words could better describe the novel's concern with the deterioration of the various aspects of Southern society. Indeed, the images which the novel, from beginning to end, presents about the "decay", "downfall", and "destruction" of the South are too myriad to be cited all at once.

Numerous as they are, these images are also so central to the novel that, if they are not taken into consideration in any interpretation of the novel, the result will be one of reduction and distortion. For example, Garson suggests that "The novelist has combined elements of gothicism with both a Southern setting and Southern characters" (13). The novel's central images and leitmotifs, which not only are typically Southern but also basic for its thematic link with the South, are reduced to mere elements of gothicism. In other words, the Southern thematic aspect of the novel is reduced to a stylistic one and the novel is not interpreted from a Southern perspective. This is certainly distortive. For it is unreasonable to divest a novel of its thematic connection with the South when its setting, characters, episodes, mode, and style are all emphatically Southern.

However, this attitude is persistent in Garson's study of Other Voices, Other Rooms--time and again, she separates these Southern characteristics of the novel from its theme: "A decaying Southern mansion far removed from ordinary life provides the setting for characters so different from the norm that they are grotesque" (14). Although later Garson suggests, as almost all critics believe, that "The major theme of the novel is homosexuality", she immediately says: "But there is purpose in Capote's creation" (14). This is certainly true. It is also true that the task of any critique is to probe the purpose of a writer's creation. Hence, the question which poses itself here is: what is the connection between the "decaying Southern mansion", in particular, and the Southern setting of the novel, in general, and a homosexual theme that was a taboo in the South and nation-wide? Obviously, there is no direct link whatsoever. And if there is any, it is indirect, that is, through the grotesque characters who are closely interrelated with elements of Southern gothicism in the novel. This is what Garson and other critics want us to believe. Yet, in this case it could be argued that if the combination of grotesque characters and

gothic style is necessary for this theme, it is not crucial for the novel to be set in the South or to deal extensively as it does with Southern issues. For Capote skillfully made such a combination in his earlier stories which were set in New York and which deal with homosexuality, as will be discussed in the fourth chapter. But the novel is heavily invested with Southern elements and has a clear thematic connection with the South.

When Other Voices, Other Rooms (OV) is approached from this perspective, the Southern setting and the decaying Southern mansion of Skully's Landing become crucial for the novel. In this context it could be said with certainty that "there is purpose in Capote's creation". For not only are Noon City, Jesus Fever, his sword, and Zoo, the two Southern sisters Idabel and Florabe, Skully's Landing and its mansion, the bell, and the Cloud Hotel interrelated and instrumental in Joel's journey--they are also historic signposts which are inexorably associated with the essence of the journey. Yoked together, these elements provide a broad and viable framework in which they integrate with the interpretation of the purpose and meaning of the journey. In other words, viewed from this perspective, Joel's journey can be interpreted in an entirely different way, which totally contradicts the general view that, as Garson suggests, "Joel takes a . . . journey to discovery of self" (14), and that, as Hassan says, "Joel is in search of an image which reflects darkly his own identity" (240). For, since the novel, as Hassan suggests, requires "allegorical interpretation", Joel's Journey can be most properly regarded as that of the South in its search for identity.

Having been identified as the South's search for self and identity, the journey acquires its meaning and significance by its ramifications through time. The time factor is pivotal in the novel. For not only are the past, present, and future linked by the journey, they also provide ample avenues for the

search. That is to say, the past, present, and future represent a wide area of manoeuvre wherein that search takes place. The journey starts with a scope wide in time and space. Yet, as the story develops, the scope gradually gets narrower until, at the end, it becomes focussed on and encapsulated in one voice, one room.

The first few pages of the novel are interesting for the development of the story and the first page, in particular, is of paramount significance. For not only does it represent the starting point in which the threads of the story intermingle and start to converge, but also it gives insight into the atmosphere of the journey. The novel opens with a reference to the first stages of the route of the trip which Joel, who represents the South, is to take, as well as to its means. The trip starts from Paradise Chapel through Noon City, which is a significant stopover en route to Skully's Landing. The names of these towns do not so much refer to real locations, as they are allegorical and have possible historic resonances. Bearing in mind that Joel's journey is that of the South, the names of these towns, the route of the trip, and its destination become particularly associated with the South. In a sense, the trip is a re-enactment of the history of the region. Having been defeated in the Civil War, the South went into decline. In the present to which the book refers, it stands exhausted at a cross-roads, contemplating a way out of its dilemma. The present is a temporary stage from which it prepares to launch itself into the future. But in this enterprise, the South is both haunted by and attracted to the past. Being in search of identity, the South probes the present to find clues for the future, with an eye on the glorious past.

The novel opens with a reference to "Noon City" as being the main stage from which Joel is to start his trip to his final destination, that is, Skully's Landing. "Noon City" represents the cross-roads at which the South is standing at present. It is a mid-point: on each side of it, at opposite ends, stand Paradise

Chapel and Skully's Landing. If, on the other hand, the route of the journey is thought of as a straight line, to a traveller who arrived at Noon City from Paradise Chapel, the latter can be referred to as something behind him; the Landing is, therefore, ahead of him. Similarly, the three dimensions of time: the past, the present, and the future, are also successively applicable to the three stages of the journey. In other words, Paradise Chapel is associated with the past, Noon City with the present, and the Landing with the future.

These associations of the three towns which are on the line of the journey are not arbitrary. Indeed, if we are to believe that there is "purpose in Capote's creation", this purpose must be fully examined. In the first page Capote establishes certain signposts which are not only connected with the crux of the novel, but also require such associations. Hence the reference, in the first line, to Noon City whose significance is not as strictly limited to symbolizing Joel's journey as a movement from light into darkness as Garson wants us to believe when she says:

> since most of the trip is described by images of death, the movement from Paradise to Noon to Skulls can also be seen as a symbolic one from light to darkness, even as Joel's actual journey takes him from morning to night. (14,15)

The significance of Noon City, however, lies in a larger symbolic context with historic, social, and economic associations whose foundations are skillfully established.

It is common knowledge that noon represents a fixed time of day when an object loses its shadow. This phenomenon is most noticed on a clear, sunny day. In the novel, Capote is keen to reinforce this symbolic dimension of Noon City. At the start of a paragraph, he indicates that the journey starts on a "sizzling day in early June".[10] Bearing this in mind, the position of the South at present is most properly associated with Noon City. Having been defeated and

long lost its identity, the South resembles an object at noon; it has no influence, no dimensions, and no shadows.

However, the present circumstances of the South are not isolated in the novel from their historical background. The first stage of the trip starts from a town which is most appropriately called Paradise Chapel. The past is nothing less than a "paradise lost" for the South. The process and the circumstances through which the South passed after the destruction of its glory up to the present time were hard and hazardous. Hence, Joel's journey from Paradise Chapel is reminiscent of that of the South: "It is a rough trip no matter how you come" (3; sec. 1). This image of the difficult and rather dangerous trip is further reinforced by stating that the only way to go from Paradise Chapel to Noon City is to "catch a ride with the driver of the truck, Sam Radclif" (3). The name of the driver is most significant and suggestive of the past dangers the South went through. Sam, being biblically associated with one of Noah's sons, is suggestive of pastness; Radclif is a slight variation of "road-cliff", which evokes an image of a dangerous and fatal fall from a high position--an image which best describes the downfall and destruction of the South.

On the other hand, images of death are central to the novel as a whole, and particularly significant for the trip. Most importantly, the trip from Paradise Chapel to Noon City, which represents the South's movement since the Civil War up to the present, is described by a cluster of images of death: "here in the swamplike hollows where tiger lilies bloom the size of a man's head, there are luminous green logs that shine under the dark marsh water like drowned corpses" (3). These images are also crucial for describing the social and economic atmosphere in the modern South. For not only do these images of death suggest stagnation, but they are also described in terms which are suggestive of stillness and perilous immobility, such as "swamplike".

Stagnation, which best describes the economic aspect of the South, is further illustrated by the notion that "there are no buses or trains heading in that direction", that is, that of Noon City (3).

The primary idea which Capote conveys through these images and associations is that the South is isolated both on the economic and social levels. Hence, he is keen to emphasize that "this is lonesome country"--one where "often the only movement on the landscape is winter smoke winding out the chimney of some sorry-looking farmhouse, or a wing-stiffened bird, silent and arrow-eyed, circling over the black deserted pinewoods" (3). Social and economic activities are virtually non-existent in this country which is dreary and drab, featureless and lifeless. This image of the South has a melancholic touch which not only suits the general context of the novel, that is, the journey, but also corresponds with nostalgia which, as has been suggested in the "Introduction" and the first chapter, is both typical of Southern writing and recurrent in Capote's canon. For while the words "lonesome country" mean 'isolated country', they can also be understood as 'a country which arouses pity'. Similarly, the "farmhouse" is described as "sorry-looking" (3). On the other hand, although the journey takes place on "one sizzling day in early June", the landscapes are portrayed in a wintry context; the smoke is "winter smoke", and the bird's wings are "stiffened" (3).

The focus at the very beginning of the novel on the present social and economic circumstances of the South assumes considerable significance for the development of the story and for its meaning as well. For it directs attention to the major issues which lie at the heart of the novel. Capote starts the novel by establishing a general economic and social framework which he furnishes with greater details. In doing so, Capote stresses the significance of this framework which provides the background and backdrop for the narrative. The bleak economic image of the South is one of the most prominent images the novel

presents. It persistently features throughout the novel from beginning to end. Yet, although it changes in colour and locale, it is, in essence, one and the same image all over again.

As the novel develops, this image of the South becomes clearer and acquires further dimensions. Capote introduces other elements: human, social, natural, and environmental, all of which are inextricably associated with and reinforce the economic image. The result is a detailed image of the South, which Capote clearly portrays as a wasteland, not only economically, but almost in every aspect. In doing so, Capote provides an essential framework in whose context the story has to be placed if it is to be properly evaluated. Crucial as they are, these elements are too central to the novel to be overlooked, as critics have done, because they make all the difference between this line of thought and the others. Indeed, not only are these elements closely knit into the fabric of the story, but also they have tremendous bearing on the entire structure and meaning of the novel. This shows that Capote is keen to highlight in no uncertain terms the significance of this aspect of his novel--that is, its connection and concern with the South.

Crucial to the general framework which Capote establishes from the beginning is characterization. The human element in the novel is most pertinent to the run-down image which he presents of the South. Hence, it is most appropriate for this effect that the characters are depicted as grotesque. They are either freakish in appearance or they behave abnormally. As has already been suggested, Noon City is associated in Joel's journey with the South at present. It is, therefore, interesting that from this stage on the novel starts to introduce the grotesque characters. In Noon City Joel first meets "a bandy-legged, little one-armed man", who runs a barbershop with his wife (20; sec. 1). Then he sees "a girl with fiery dutchboy hair" who "wore a pair of brown

shorts and a yellow polo shirt", and who was "thumbing her nose at the barber and twisting her face into evil shapes" (20). Her face "was flat, and rather impertinent; a network of ugly freckles spanned her nose", and she had "pencil-thin, bony-kneed legs" (26; sec. 1). She is described by Miz Caulfield as "so confounded mean", and as "a freak", because she "never saw that [girl] in a dress yet" (21). Of course, this girl is Idabel Thompkins with whom Joel is to have a relationship later in the novel.

In Noon City, Joel also walks into a shop in the "R.V. Lacey's Princely Palace", where he is welcomed by the proprietress, Miss Roberta, who is described as "a muscular woman who . . . had long ape-like arms that were covered with dark fuzz, and there was a wart on her chin, and decorating this wart was a single antenna-like hair" (22-23). Miss Roberta's freakish character is also matched and reflected by her behaviour, as "two of her dirty-nailed fingers reached out to give his [Joel's] cheek a painful pinch" (23). She was so rough with Joel that he "wondered if the woman was lunatic. And his eyes scanned the sour-smelling room as if it were a madhouse" (23). Later Joel is introduced to Jesus Fever who has been waiting for him to take him to the Landing on his wagon. He is "a kind of gnomish little Negro whose primitive face was sharp against the drowning green sky" (28; sec. 1). He has "yellow feeble eyes dotted with milky specks" (28), and "His face was like a black withered apple, . . . his sickle-curved posture made him look as though his back were broken, a sad little brokeback dwarf crippled with age" (29; sec. 1). More to the point, what "impressed Joel's imagination " is that "there was a touch of the wizard in his yellow, spotted eyes; it was a tricky quality that suggested . . . magic and things read in books" (29).

At his final destination, the Skully's Landing, where he is to join his father, Joel meets Randolph, Miss Amy--his stepmother--Zoo, and later his father and Little Sunshine. These people are not different from those Joel had

already seen in Noon City--they are grotesque in appearance, and abnormal in behaviour. The first person Joel sees in the Landing is Miss Amy who "was slight, and fragile-boned, and her eyes were like two raisins embedded in the softness of her narrow face" (42; sec. 2). It is noteworthy that fragility and physical weakness are characteristic of almost all the characters in the novel--an aspect whose significance will be referred to later. On the other hand, not only is Miss Amy's appearance grotesque, but also her behaviour is absurd, particularly when she tries to catch the bird in Joel's bedroom while he is asleep.

At the Landing Joel also meets Zoo who is the granddaughter of Jesus Fever. She is a naive and wretched coloured girl. Yet, her role in the novel is significant because of Joel's attachment to her. She is both the source of moral support for Joel and the subject of his sympathy. Having been disappointed by the lack of care at the Landing, and frustrated at being unable to see his father, Joel turns to Zoo who looks after him and offers him love and sympathy. Similarly, having been long neglected , ridiculed, and maltreated by Amy and Randolph, Zoo finds relief and comfort in Joel's company. Their relationship and conversations reveal much of Joel's character and ordeal after arriving at the Landing. Indeed, a considerable part of the novel evolves from their meetings in which Joel confesses his agony and frustration. However, Zoo falls in the same category as the other characters--she is grotesque: "she was slant-eyed . . . . The length of her neck was something to wonder upon, for she was almost a freak, a human giraffe" (54-5; sec. 2).

Moreover, Little Sunshine, the hermit, was not less freakish--he was "a short, bullet-headed Negro . . . too old . . . and ugly. He had a blue cataract in one eye, hardly a tooth in his head, and smelling bad" (94-5; sec. 5). However, it is Mr Sansom's freakishness that is most shocking and disappointing to Joel.

Having made such an arduous journey in the hope of joining his father on whom he pins his hopes for a bright and safe future, Joel is utterly dismayed and disappointed to see that his father

> was paralyzed, helpless; he could say a few words . . . , move his hand a little . . . and one arm (to drop a tennis ball, the signal for attention) . . . and his eyes, like windows in summer, were seldom shut, always open and staring, even in sleep. (125; sec. 7)

Hence, Joel wishes "he'd never seen Mr Sansom. Then he could have gone on picturing him as looking this and that wonderful way, as talking in a kind of strong voice, as being really his father" (171; sec. 10). To Joel's disappointment "This Mr Sansom was nobody but a pair of crazy eyes" (171). Therefore, Joel denies his father: "Certainly this Mr Sansom was not his father" (171). Consequently he leaves him and runs away with Idabel.

Besides Joel's father, Randolph is the most significant character in the novel. He is the architect of Joel's journey and the mastermind behind his final decision to stay with him at the Landing. Hence, his character is most carefully drawn for its central role. Yet, on the physical level, his character does not represent a departure from the pattern of characters in the novel. In other words, he is a grotesque. For although he is not as deformed as the other characters, he is described in a way which suggests abnormality--his face "was round as a coin, smooth and hairless; two discs of rough pink colored his cheeks, and his nose had a broken look, as if once punched by a strong angry fist" (78; sec. 4). And his hair "fell in yellow childish ringlets across his forehead", and he had "womanly eyes" (78-9; sec. 4). Furthermore, not only does Randolph look like a woman, but also he behaves like one--he uses make-up, and his "toenails had a manicured gloss" (85; sec. 4). Later in the novel, as Joel gets to know Randolph at close quarters, he discovers the absurdity and nothingness of Randolph's character: "Faceted as a fly's eye, being neither man

nor woman, and one whose every identity cancelled the other, a grab-bag of disguises" (211; sec. 12). Here, it is noteworthy that Randolph's transvestism and sexual ambivalence are crucial for Capote's presentation of homosexuality, as will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Elaborate as it is, characterization is one of the prominent aspects of the novel because it is a crucial element in the general framework in which the narrative is placed. It is given considerable attention and, in the context of the novel, acquires particular significance. Throughout his journey, Joel meets many people who come from various walks of life. But their striking similarity makes them one and the same character. They are, without exception, grotesque in character and abnormal in behaviour. This type almost exclusively dominates Other Voices, Other Rooms. Hence, a crucial question about the function of characterization in the novel is inevitably raised. The most plausible answer, in my view, is that by reducing his characters to freaks, Capote presents a social phenomenon for scrutiny and inspection in association with the historical background of the region. In a sense, the freakishness of the characters is symptomatic and symbolic of the bleak social and economic aspects of life in the South. In other words, the characters are synecdochic of the state of affairs in the modern South.

Moreover, the characters are as much of freaks in their own way as their freakishness is indicative of the larger social and economic circumstances of their society. On the one hand, their physical deformity is primarily symbolic of their spiritual inadequacy and incapacity. What can also be said about these characters is that they are people who are trapped in time and space. Theirs is a limited role which hardly deserves consideration except to suggest idleness, inaction, and isolation. Doing little, if anything at all, the people Joel encounters in Noon City are, in a way, analogous to statues in a museum. The

other characters: Zoo, Little Sunshine, Amy, Mr Sansom, and Randolph, are also isolated and have little contact with the outside world. Idabel is energetic and well-travelled, but her isolation is insisted upon--she is a social outcast. Yet, it is Randolph who is the most isolated of all--his is a manifold isolation: physical, social, and spiritual. Also, it is self-inflicted because it is the product of his narcissistic character. His behaviour is merely indicative of his self-concern and egocentricism. He moves around in a closed circle--that of his own personality. This aspect of his character is most properly suggested by his passion for mirrors, which are numerous in his room where he spends most of his time, and which Garson describes as

> a self-contained world, for Randolph is a man isolated from the ordinary, daily affairs of men. His room seems completely separate from the other rooms of the house as well as the outside. In numerous ways Randolph's room suggests an imprisoned existence. (19)

In contrast with all these characters, Joel is the only character in the novel who develops in the course of the story. His manoeuvrability in time and space is unlimited. His journey covers a long distance and various places. And he moves in time forward and backward, reflecting on the past, scrutinizing the present, and contemplating the future. The freedom he enjoys is most appropriate for his role as a traveller and explorer. For this particular purpose, Joel inspects all the places he visits and the people he encounters with a considerable degree of detachment, inviting us, thereby, to reflect on the bleak circumstances of the region. On the other hand, as a representative of the South at present, Joel is a weary traveller, whose very complexion betrays his exhaustion and agony: "A kind of tired, imploring expression masked his face, and there was an unyouthful sag about his shoulders" (4-5). In the final analysis, apart from their grotesqueness, the difference between Joel and the other characters can be briefly summed up: they are flat characters; Joel is a

fully-rounded one.

This aspect of contrast between Joel and the rest of the characters is most interesting. The fact that all of them are flat characters has broader implications on various levels. These characters do not change in the course of the novel because of their spiritual incapacity and isolation which are suggested by their freakishness. What is certain is that they are not involved in any form of social activity or relationship. But this may well be attributed to a different reason--they are denied the opportunity to change, and they are not placed in a social context in which they might alter or develop. Indeed, the novel lacks the complexity of social life. With the exception of Jesus Fever's funeral, which was attended only by Zoo and Joel, the novel does not present any social occasion in which the characters are involved, nor does it offer any account of the activities of their daily life. The characters it provides are people who are thrown on the margin of life by circumstances.

The isolation of the characters and the absence of social activities in the novel indicate the barren quality of social life in the modern South. In this respect, the grand image which the novel provides is that of social stagnation--an image which perfectly corresponds and intertwines with that of economic stagnation which the novel presents at the beginning. Intermingled as they are, the barren economic and social aspects of life in the modern South are not isolated from the historical circumstances of the region. Throughout the novel these elements are so linked together that they are inseparable. In other words, the wretched conditions in the South are strongly linked to its historical background. In this context, the novel makes a strong connection between the South's past and its present, underlining the tremendous bearing of the former on the latter.

The sense of engagement between past and present which the novel

clearly establishes is particularly significant for this investigation. For not only does it refute Gray's and Eisinger's arguments which have been cited earlier, but also it confirms the novel's thematic connection with the South which is overlooked and rather denied by almost all critics. Indeed, the link between the past and present is one of the prominent motifs which are central to Other Voices, Other Rooms--in a key statement in the novel, Randolph tells Joel: "Have you never heard what the wise men say: all of the future exists in the past" (89; sec. 4). On the social and economic levels, the grand image which the novel presents of the South is that of a wasteland--vast landscapes are empty and derelict, and towns are mostly forsaken and uninhabited.

Taken in isolation from its connection with the past, and in the absence of any other background, this image would be meaningless and entirely out of place in the whole structure of the novel. It is only when the past is persistently thrust into the forefront of this image that it acquires such importance. This is why the images of bleak economic and social conditions in the South are closely juxtaposed with those of decaying towns and villages which are associated with the past. In this respect, Noon City, the Landing, and Cloud Hotel are particularly significant because they embody all the elements of the general framework which is established at the beginning of the novel.

Crucial to this point is the squalid condition of these places. For not only does it fully correspond with the wretched circumstances of the modern South, but also it is suggestive of the historical background of the region. That is to say, these places represent a link between the past and present in the sense that the past affects the present. In this context, it can be plausibly argued that the reasons for the sordid conditions of the modern South are to be found in the historical events of the South's past. Indeed, the novel suggests this idea in crystal clear terms. Undoubtedly, decay is the commonest feature of these places. Yet, alone, images of decay might be merely indicative of the passage

of time. Hence, to spell out and enhance their connection with the past, images of decay are entwined with images of destruction which are linked with the past.

Given the stages of the journey, the introduction of the images of decay and destruction at the second stage, that is, Noon City, is quite interesting--it coincides with that of the freakish characters, which has been referred to earlier. The result is a full and an integrated image of the modern South with a clear reference to its historical background. The manner in which these places are described is not less interesting, though. The description of Noon City, for instance, starts with a sentence of precaution that the reader is not to expect much from it because it does not belong to the modern world: "Noon City is not much to look at" (17).

This broad, and rather repulsive, image of Noon City is immediately followed by others which describe the bleak state of affairs of this Southern city. First, "There is only one street", and the city lacks the basic urban architectural design (17). For, few as they are, the buildings along this street "are grouped so closely together they seem to form a ramshackle palace haphazardly thrown together overnight by a half-wit carpenter" (17). Juxtaposed with this image is another which suggests isolation and dereliction: "across the road in isolation stand two other structures: a jail, and a tall queer tottering ginger-colored house" (17).

Moreover, it is with this image that the connection is most properly made with the South's past--these two buildings are successively associated with the most prominent features of the South's history: racial discrimination against the blacks which is originally associated with its pre-Civil War era, and the humiliation the South suffered at the hands of the Yankees after its crushing defeat. On the one hand, we are told that "The jail has not housed a

white criminal in over four years" (17); on the other,

> the freakish old house, no one has lived there for God knows how long, and it is said that once three exquisite sisters were raped and murdered here in gruesome manner by a fiendish Yankee bandit who rode a silver-grey horse and wore a velvet cloak stained scarlet with the blood of Southern womanhood. (17)

The order in which these images and their historical references occur in the novel is quite significant particularly when they are followed by images of decay and destruction. For it was in this order that the historical circumstances of the South developed. That is to say, the South's racial discrimination against the blacks was the root cause from which other historical events evolved, especially the Civil War and the destruction that accompanied it. Therefore, the decay and disintegration of all aspects of life in the South were an inevitable result of that process and the decades of chaos and disorientation which prevailed in the South, as has been outlined in the "Introduction". Viewed from this perspective, the sequence of the images which describe Noon City, and which correspond with the South's historical circumstances in their chronological order gives the novel more depth and a significant historical dimension.

The fact that the novel focusses on this angle of Noon City, that is, the jail and the "old freakish house", and later on the Landing and the Cloud Hotel is particularly interesting. For it demonstrates that although Capote is keen to establish the historical dimension of the novel and its connection with the South, he is not interested in the historical details. Rather, he presents these places as representative of the historical background of the region. This approach falls, more or less, in line with what Louis D. Rubin, Jr. and Robert D. Jacobs suggest that "As one distinguished historian has declared, 'The Southern novelist is more concerned with the meaning of events than with the

technical accuracy of their recording".[11]

In this context, these places assume the significance of an emblem which embodies the history of the South. Hence, it is most appropriate that the description of the decay and destruction of the "old freakish house" follows the story of the rape and murder of the three Southern sisters. We are told that

> The windows of the house are cracked and shattered, hollow as eyeless sockets; a rotted balcony leans perilously forward, and yellow sunflower birds hide their nests in its secret places; the scaling outer walls are ragged with torn, weather-faded posters that flutter when there is a wind. Among the town kids it is a sign of great valor to enter these black rooms after dark and signal with a matchflame from a window on the topmost floor. (18)

Connected with the past as they are, these images of decay are also associated with the present, in the sense that they reflect the historical background of these places as much as they demonstrate the wretched conditions of the modern South. Obviously, this shows the strong sense of engagement between the past and the present which the novel constantly provides. On the other hand, the fact that the present circumstances of the South are described in economic terms is crucial for the present investigation which is based mainly on an historical and social approach. The economic situation in Noon City is one of stagnation--economic activities are dreary because

> New people rarely settle in Noon City or its outlying parts; after all, jobs are scarce here. On the other hand, seldom do you hear of a person leaving, unless it's to wend his lonesome way up onto the dark ledge above the Baptist church where forsaken tombstones gleam like stone flowers among the weeds. (18)

As the story develops, the focus shifts onto the Landing and, later, to the Cloud Hotel. Here the novel presents ample and tangible images of the decay and destruction of the South with more specific historical references. To

understand fully the significance of these images in connection with the historical background of the region, it is necessary to reiterate what has already been established that Capote takes these places to symbolize the South. In this context, accounts of the history of both the Landing and the Cloud Hotel, and of the families who lived there show in no uncertain terms that in this novel Capote is concerned with "the destruction of a region, the downfall of a class, the decay of a family".

The development of Joel's journey and his movement from one stage to another are indicative of the extent of the deterioration and decay of the next stage. For as he moves from one stage to another images of decay intensify. Hence, as Joel leaves Noon City heading for the Landing, he moves from "the comparatively ordinary world of Noon City to the removed, unnatural environment of Skully's Landing" (Garson 16). This is suggested by the fact that Joel arrived at the Landing at night. Here the characters, the setting, and the atmosphere are far removed from normal existence, and are all suggestive of disintegration and deterioration. Images of the dereliction of the Landing are myriad in the novel. The Landing is isolated from the outside world--it is "so deserted-looking, silent" (110; sec. 5), "stagnant" (93; sec. 5), and there is not "a sign of life anywhere" (111).

Moreover, decay is the most prominent feature of the Landing: "The white, pillared house, an old Southern mansion, has an air of decay and death about it" (Garson 17). The room where Joel is to live is

> stifling . . . [and] musty; it smelled of old furniture . . . ; gnat-like motes of dust circulated in the sunny air, and Joel left a dusty imprint on whatever he touched . . . This room had not been used in many years certainly; the only fresh things here were the bedsheets, and even these had a yellowed look. (43; sec. 2)

The other rooms in the house are not generally different--the "wallpaper had

once . . . been blood red, but now was faded to a mural of crimson blisters and maplike stains" (50; sec. 2). The chamber is "bleak and unfurnished", and the house is lit by "kerosene lantern[s]", for the Landing is without electricity (50). The garden is "a jumbled wreckage of zebrawood and lilac . . . Massive chinaberry and waterbay formed a rigidly enclosing wall" (47-48).

The present decay and deterioration of the Landing are inextricably connected to the past destruction which befell it, and whose relics, the white pillars, still stand as a testimony to that link. At the far end of the garden, we are told, "opposite the house, was an unusual sight: like a set of fingers, a row of five white fluted columns lent the garden the primitive, haunted look of a lost ruin" (48). In a sense, these pillars are as much of images of decay as they are of the link with the past. Underlining the significance of the latter, Joel establishes the historical dimension of these columns: "In ancient history class at school, we had to draw pictures of some pillars like those" (48).

Confirming this linkage with the past and, in a way, accounting for the present decay, Amy reveals the historical background of the columns and the Landing as a whole. In "a reminiscing voice", she tells Joel that "The pillars . . . were once part of the old side porch", which was "Burned" down by a mysterious fire a long time ago when "Angela Lee [Randolph's deceased mother] was a young bride" (48). Recounting the details of that horrible incident, Amy also draws a broad picture of the old house which was a relic of aristocracy: the fire "simply rose out of nothing, burned away the dining room, the music room, the library. . . . and went out" (49). The message is not lost on Joel, for he is actually impressed: "And this garden is where the part that burned up was? . . . Gee, it must've been an awful big house" (49).

Joel's appreciation of the hugeness of the house functions as a feedback which encourages Amy to bring to light the aristocratic background of the family. Certainly, the white, pillared house is typical and suggestive of the Old

Southern aristocracy. Nevertheless, Amy's accounts of the aristocratic way of life the family led are crucial--they provide a bright and lively image of the past which sharply contrasts the gloomy and lifeless image of the present. Thus, in a nostalgic way she tells Joel how "In the evening we would sit on the side porch, sipping cherryade and listen to the crickets and wait for the moonrise" (48). Memories of the sweet past emerge as she says: "There, by the willows and goldenrod . . . that is the site of the music room where the dances were held" (49). Amy tells Joel that Angela Lee had her own entourage, "those who came to her little evenings," and whom she "cared to entertain" (49). At those dances "Angela Lee played the harp, . . . and Mr. Casey the piano, and Jesus Fever, though he'd never studied, the violin, and Randolph the Elder sang" (49).

However, a sad and pitiful note aborts the flow of these memories of the sweet past--the stark reality of the present casts its shadows on them and forces itself upon the consciousness of both the narrator and Joel. The splendour of the family's aristocratic past, which was characteristic of that of the Old South, as has been established in the "Introduction", had the same tragic end. The past is irretrievably lost--it is dead, and what remains is the bitter-sweet memory: "the willows were willows and the goldenrod goldenrod and the dancers dead and lost" (49). Yet, although the past vanished, its influence on the present is far from diminishing. For not only does it stir up the Southerners' deep-seated feelings of nostalgia which characterized their culture and literature, but also its splendid and cherished image haunts their present. The relics of the past are a living witness of its glory whose bright image renders the present more distasteful, and inevitably creates ambivalent feelings of nostalgia and frustration.

The other aspect of the South's past, that is, defeat and destruction, is

inseparable from the first, and is far more influential on its present and even future. In a sense, the Landing is, in many ways, as much a symbol of the South's enfabled past as it is an emblem of its deplorable present which was caused by the destruction of that past. The condition of the Landing reflects, on a larger scale, that of the South--it is lifeless and stagnant, primitive and, in Joel's vision, haunted: "An old house like this would most likely be riddled with hidden passages" (51; sec. 2). Also, the Landing lacks the basic requirements for a modern house: "there are no radios, . . . and if you want to take a bath you got to fill a washtub with water from the well" (93; sec. 5).

These contrasting images of the past and present continue unabated throughout the novel. As Joel's journey progresses, they develop gradually and become larger and deeper until they reach their utmost at the Cloud Hotel. Here the images of the destruction and decay of the Cloud Hotel and the Drowning Pond assume particular significance for various reasons. First, these images are comparatively larger and far more detailed. The sense of engagement between the past and present which they reflect is even more vigorous. They provide a broad picture of the scale of the deterioration and decay of the modern South, and establish its historical background at the same time. The Cloud Hotel and the "Cloud Lake", now called the "Drownin Pond", are symbols of the glorious, aristocratic past. They were owned by Mrs Jimmy Bob Cloud, "a widow lady bloodkin to the Skullys" (98; sec. 5).

Enhancing the connection between the Cloud Hotel and the Landing as they are, the blood ties between the Clouds and the Skullys reveal yet another significant aspect of the social relationships in the Old South. That is to say, familial and blood ties were, as has already been established in the "Introduction", a prominent feature of the relationships between the aristocratic families. On the other hand, the ties which connected these two families suggest a great degree of similarity between their ways of life, which the novel

clearly confirms. Little Sunshine unfolds the historical background of the Cloud Hotel, bringing to light many aspects of the prestigious way of life which the aristocratic class enjoyed in the Old South. He tells Joel that "Mrs Jimmy Bob's hotel housed gala crowds come immense distances to parade the wide white halls" (99; sec. 5). The guests were typical of the Southern aristocratic class: "cotton-rich gentlemen" and their "verbena-scented ladies who twittered like linnets in the shade of parasols" (219-220; sec. 12).

The reference to the "cotton-rich gentlemen" is particularly significant for the economic and social context of the novel. For it is suggestive of the link in the ante-bellum Southern society between economic status, "cotton-rich", and social position, "gentlemen". The description of the luxuries which the aristocrats relished at the Cloud Hotel enhances this idea and provides a clear picture of the social structure of that society. The image which the novel presents of the Old South is, as has been described in the "Introduction", that of a racial and a multi-class society. For, on the one hand, it underlines the racial division of that society in that the role of the blacks was to serve the whites: "While feather fans rustled the air, while velvet dancing slippers polished the ballroom floor, scarlet-coated house-hands glided in and out among the guests, wine spilling redly on silver trays" (99; sec. 5).

On the other hand, the economic and social division of the Old South is indicated by the fact that the guests of the Cloud Hotel were exclusively the rich who could afford such an extravagant way of life:

> Mulberry parasols held aloft by silk-skirted ladies drifted all summer long over the lawns rolling round the water. . . . In May they came, October went, the guests, taking with them memories, leaving tall stacks of gold. (99)

Moreover, indicative as they are of the prestige of the rich upper class in the Old South, these images also reflect, as has been established in the

"Introduction", the diminished role of the lower class and the comparatively limited one of the middle class. This is clearly suggested by the lack of any reference to these two classes. In this context it can be said that the Cloud Hotel represents the ante-bellum Southern society and provides a clear manifestation of its economic and social scale.

However, the splendour and excellence of the Cloud Hotel had a similar end to those of the Landing--both were doomed to destruction and decay. The connection between these two places on the basis of familial ties and the glories they witnessed has already been established. Yet, not only do the reasons behind the destruction of the Landing and the Cloud Hotel enhance that link, but also they put forth another significant basis for linkage. The deterioration of both places was surrounded with mystery--the Landing was burned down by a mysterious fire; the Cloud Hotel was deserted and left to deteriorate after two tragic incidents had taken place in the Pond: a child, diving into the lake, "crushed his head like a shell between two sunken logs", and a "crooked gambler, in much trouble with the law, swam out and never came back" (99). Rumours, to the effect that the Pond was haunted, spread especially after "a honeymoon couple, out rowing on the lake, claimed that a hand blazing with rubies (the gambler had sported a ruby ring) (sic) reached from the depths to capsize their boat" (99).

The fact that the destruction of the two places was surrounded with mystery leaves the door open for allegorical interpretations of the incidents which caused that destruction, especially of the Cloud Hotel, associating them with the history of the South. Yet, no matter what these interpretations might be, the results of the two incidents were one and the same: the Cloud Hotel and the Landing were destroyed and, more importantly, haunted. The story of the destruction of the Cloud Hotel has the same impact on Joel's mind as that of

the Landing: it "made for Joel a jumbled picture of cracked windows reflecting a garden of ghosts" (100). But in the final analysis, allegorical connection of these incidents and their outcome with the Old South is inevitable, especially through the blacks who are associated with it. This connection is illustrated by the fact that when the fire struck the Landing "there was no man on the place but Jesus Fever" (49). In both cases, the blacks, Jesus Fever and the "scarlet-coated house-hands", were witnesses of the destruction of the symbols of the system which enslaved them. No wonder, then, that it was "colored folks" who gave the "Cloud Lake", the pond which was "a diamond eye spouting crystal cold from subterranean limestone springs", the name "Drownin Pond" (99, 100). Viewed from this perspective, the novel's message is clear: the system which the South cherished most became its drowning pond.

Moreover, the images of the decay of the Cloud Hotel acquire particular significance on various levels. On the one hand, they connect it with the Landing, in the sense that they are identical to those of the latter: after the Cloud hotel was deserted,

> slowly old creek-slime . . . had dyed the water an evil color; . . . the wide veranda caved in; the chimneys sank low in the swampy earth; storm-uprooted trees leaned against the porch; and water-snakes slithering across the strings made night-songs on the ballroom's decaying piano. (100)

The image which the novel presents of the Cloud Hotel is that of "a terrible, strange-looking hotel" (100). It is an image of decay and death--it represents "a sunset world where twisting ivy trickled down broken columns, where arbors of spidersilk shrouded all" (100). Yet, this image is not restricted to the Cloud Hotel--it is shared by the Landing and Noon City. In other words, it is characteristic of all the places that Joel's journey covers.

At this point in the novel images of the decay and deterioration of the modern South culminate, and the general economic and social framework is

completely established. In this context, the recurrence of these images assumes tremendous significance--it presents decay and deterioration as a phenomenon which characterizes all aspects of life in the modern South. This is suggested in clear-cut terms throughout the novel, and is strongly enhanced by the sense of engagement between past and present. The connection with the past is crucial not only for the historical method of this investigation but also for the novel's thematic link with the South. Indeed, it is this engagement which gives the images of the decay of the modern South their significance. Taken in isolation from their historical background, they can be considered merely as scattered images which lack any substance. But associated with the past as they are, these images are strongly integrated in a unified pattern, functioning as signposts which unmistakably refer to the link between the South's past and present.

However, it is necessary to distinguish between two aspects of the historical background of the decay of the modern South and their function in the novel. On the one hand, accounts of the destruction of the Landing and the Cloud Hotel are basically a key to the bleak circumstances of the modern South. On the other, the juxtaposition of the images of the South's gloomy present with those of its splendid past is primarily intended to demonstrate the huge difference between them and, consequently, to aggravate the sense of loss. Capote skillfully achieves this objective--he describes the destruction of the South's glorious past in terms of finality and death: "Was, said the weeds, Gone, said the sky, Dead, said the woods, but the full laments of history were left to the Whippoorwill" (220).

* * *

This has so far been an examination of the novel's depiction of the deterioration of the modern South. Attention has been focussed on the disintegration of the South's economic and social aspects of life and their connection with its past. This clearly demonstrates a great deal of the novel's thematic link with the South--one which is also manifest in other significant forms. Yet, it must be borne in mind that central to this thematic link with the South is the idea that the Old South is dead and that the glorious past is irretrievable. Equally important for this point is the notion of the death of the traditional Southern society. In this context the images of the destruction of the Landing and the Cloud Hotel can be regarded as symbols of the deterioration of all aspects of that society.

The social disintegration of the modern South is one of the most significant issues on which the novel's thematic link with the South is firmly based. Indeed, it is so central to the novel that it is presented in a variety of ways which cover many social aspects. It is, first and foremost, exemplified by the characters who have nothing whatsoever in common except their grotesqueness. They are connected neither by blood ties nor familial links nor close social relationships, which were characteristic of the traditional Southern society, as was exemplified by the Skullys and the Clouds. But this was something of the past--these ties perished with the destruction of the traditional society which is symbolized by the suicide of Mrs Cloud and the death of the older generation of the Skullys.

On the other hand, the fact that no single family features in the novel is a broad indication of the collapse of the family as a social unit which was the basis of the social structure of the Old South. This idea is further suggested by the conflict between Idabel Thompkins and her sister Florabel. At this stage it is necessary to point out that Florabel's role in the novel is overlooked by critics--instead, they focus on Idabel whom they consider important for the

homosexual theme which they regard as the only theme of the novel. In this respect, critics are not mistaken, because Florabel contributes nothing to the theme of homosexuality. Indeed, it is only for the novel's thematic link with the South that Florabel's role acquires any significance. This effect is achieved by juxtaposing her with her sister Idabel with whom she is on a par on almost every single issue.

Not only does the conflict between Florabel and Idabel indicate the disharmony within the family in the modern South which is, in turn, symptomatic of social disintegration on a larger scale--it also represents a conflict between two mentalities and two generations. The latter is suggested by the fact that although the two sisters are twins, Florabel was born "ten minutes first" (34; sec. 1). In her own words: "so I'm elder" (34), and Miz Caulfield enhances this feeling when she refers to her as Idabel's "sweet ol sister" (21). This idea acquires credibility in the light of the great difference in character and behaviour between the two sisters. They are so different that they seem to belong to completely opposite worlds. Florabel's behaviour is characteristic of the traditional code of manners; Idabel's is anti-traditional.

Idabel's character has already been analyzed, but it is through contrast with Florabel that the difference between them is most properly brought into light. Idabel is a "freak" and "tomboy", and also takes "dope" (26). And that is why Miss Roberta refuses to admit Idabel into her shop until she "learn[s] a few ladylike manners" and "put[s] on some decent female clothes" (26-27). Joel's encounters with the two sisters offer an opportunity to examine their characters at close quarters. It is on his way to the Landing on board Jesus Fever's wagon that Joel meets Florabel for the first time. He sees two girls walking: "One walked with easy grace, but the other moved as jerky and quick as a boy, and it was she that Joel recognized" (31). Florabel "had long, long

hair that fell past her hips, and her face, the little he could see of it, smudged as it was in shadow, seemed very friendly, very pretty" (32). Joel's favourable impression of Florabel is immediately reinforced by her polite approach: "isn't it just grand of you to come along this way and want to give us a ride" (32). So, he offers them a ride, and while Idabel declines, Florabel accepts the offer and introduces herself in a polite ladylike manner: "I'm Miss Florabel Thompkins" (32).

Comparison and contrast between the two sisters are made through the eyes of Joel whose role in his encounters with them is that of an observer. He meets them together twice: on the road to the Landing and when he visits them at home. On these two occasions the novel shifts focus from Florabel to Idabel and backwards giving an ample opportunity for an extensive comparison between every single aspect of their characters. Hence, while Idabel wears "a pair of brown shorts and a yellow polo shirt" (20), Florabel, taking her seat beside Joel on the wagon, pulls her dresshem below her knees" (32). Also, in contrast with Idabel's tomboy behaviour, Florabel's approach to Joel is that of a self-conscious, well-mannered lady. Joel notices that she talks "rapidly in a flighty, too birdlike manner, as if mimicking a certain type of old lady" (32). Having compared her with Idabel, Joel is impressed by Florabel's mannerly attitude: "Joel looked from one to the other, and concluded he liked Florabel the best; she was so pretty, at least he imagined her to be, . . . Anyway, her sister was a tomboy, and he'd had a special hatred of tomboys" (33).

Refined as it is, Florabel's behaviour with Joel is also well-balanced. Her words, carefully chosen to suit every occasion, are suggestive not only of her graceful manners but also of her social maturity and experience. For instance, when she gets into the wagon she introduces herself to Joel; when she gets off she invites him to visit them at home: "Our house is over in there, . . . Don't forget . . . come to visit" (38; sec. 1). And when Joel visits them she

receives him cordially: "don't you know I'm just tickled to see you" (101; sec. 5). This occasion shows Florabel's good manners and dignified social experience. She gives Joel the impression that his visit is not unexpected, and that it has long been awaited. She tells him that this morning she said to her sister: "I got the feeling we're going to have company" (101). That is why she urged her sister to prepare for the occasion: "let's wash our hair" (101). Angered by and ashamed of her ill-behaved sister who insults Joel and makes him cut short his visit, Florabel asks him to visit them again: "Come back when *she's* not around" (109; sec. 5).

Florabel's refined behaviour with Joel is most illuminated when it is juxtaposed with her sister's. Amicable and friendly as she is, Florabel is also hospitable--she shows Joel every sign of respect. She regards Joel as a young gentleman and treats him accordingly. She addresses him as "Mister Knox", and when his opinion contradicts hers on an issue, she expresses her dissent in a dignified manner: "Now, Mister Knox, surely you're just teasing" (101). In contrast, Idabel is out of line with Southern traditional social norms. She is a social outcast, and her attitude towards Joel is one of indifference, condescension, and disregard. Joel's visit is of no importance to her. She turns a deaf ear to Florabel's call to wash their hair in preparation for their guest, and when Joel arrives "she's off to the creek" (101). She condescendingly addresses Joel as "boy" (104) and "son" (106). And furthermore, she is even rude to him--when Joel has accidentally stood between her and her sister whom she is chasing, Idabel gets angry with him and insultingly dismisses him: "Go on home and cut paper dolls, sissy-britches" (109).

However, although Florabel is amiable and good-mannered, Joel does not feel altogether at ease with her. He has ambivalent feelings towards her: admiration and fear. She is jealous of her sister and makes no secret about

that--she tells Joel that Idabel has "got a crush on you" (102). Therefore, she tries to win Joel by ingratiating herself to him and dissuading him from Idabel, of whom she says to Joel: "the poor child does have a reputation" (102). Joel carefully asks: "A reputation for what?" (103). At this point, Florabel is quick to criticize him: "Florabel straightened up. 'Please, sir,' she intoned, her old-lady mannerisms frighteningly accurate. 'I thought you were a gentleman of the world'" (103). Nevertheless, Joel does not harbour any hatred for Florabel because she remains polite and well-behaved with him. But he does hate Idabel:

> Joel stood there hating her, wishing she'd fall from the tree and bust her neck. Like every other tomboy, Idabel was mean, just gut-mean: the haircut man in Noon City sure had her number. So did the husky woman with the wart. So did Florabel. (109)

The conflict between the two sisters is basically cultural--one which exemplifies the difference between traditional and modern societies. The juxtaposition of Florabel and Idabel shows the huge gulf which separates the two social patterns, and Idabel's behaviour indicates the direction the modern South is heading. In this context, it is interesting that although they are twins, Florabel dissociates herself completely from Idabel: "We were born twins, . . . but Mama says the Lord always sends something bad with the good" (35). She thinks and acts responsibly, for she is worried that Idabel's reckless and foolish behaviour damages the family's name: "The tough way she acts you'd never suppose she came from a well-to-do family like mine" (34).

On the other hand, Florabel's manners fall in line with the code of behaviour of traditional Southern society. Indeed, she is, by and large, a typical self-conscious Southern belle. Hers is a high self-esteem, and her pride in her family is equally tremendous. She regards herself as a "decent white girl" (102). At the same time, she is concerned about her family's image. For not

only does she dissociate herself from Idabel, but also she absolves her parents from Idabel's behaviour. She tells Joel that "Idabel's a torment to our souls, Mama's and mine", and that "Mama and me are too disgraced" (101, 102). It is noteworthy that Florabel's parents do not feature in the novel. Therefore, it is through her comments and association with them that their image is presented--it is an image of a traditional Southern planter family. It is also most interesting that the dichotomy in Southern tradition between cavalierness and puritanism is found in Florabel's family. Her father is a robust man who "won [a] lovely Chevrolet from a man at a cock-fight" (33); her mother is a typical Southern lady, conscientious and principled: "Mama's as honest as the day is long, and she don't hold with the cock-fights" (33).

Moreover, although Florabel is highly proud of her parents, it is with her mother that she identifies most. Florabel's attitude towards her mother is typically traditional in the sense that there is no apparent contradiction between her self-esteem as a young Southern belle and her respect for her mother. Certainly she is self-assured, yet, not only does she regard her mother as an exemplar to be followed, but also she seems proud in doing so. That is why Florabel is keen to demonstrate the total agreement between her and her mother. For she always supports her views by substantiating her mother's. Nevertheless, although Florabel is not arrogant, her self-regard, which emanates from her pride in her family, is strong enough to stave off any suggestion of humility on her part. For example, having taken a ride with Joel in the wagon, she makes it clear to him that "we don't usually have to hitch rides, and with strangers, too . . . Papa usually drives us to town in our lovely car" (33-34).

Florabel's pride in her family's property is typically Southern. When Joel visits her at home he sees for himself Florabel's future heritage which has all the characteristics of aristocracy:

> the house stood far away in a grove of shade trees; it was a nice house . . . painted a white now turned grey; an open shotgun hall ran front to back . . . A small shed housing a green 1934 Chevrolet was at one side. . . . At the rear was a smoke house, a water-pump windmill, and the first swelling slope of a cottonfield. (102)

On the whole, Florabel is a well-balanced and versatile character. She is polite, calm, and modest. She is jealous and self-righteous, admittedly, but also strongly attached to her family and committed to her traditional up-bringing.

These aspects of Florabel's character, which seem contradictory, are fully harmonized and perfectly reconciled in a way which allows her to act at various levels without any confusion. For this particular point, it is necessary to reiterate the argument of traditionalists, which has been outlined in the "Introduction", that it is only in a traditional society that the individual can reconcile his individualism and his commitment to his family and society. Bearing this in mind, it is possible to conclude that Florabel's stability and inner serenity, which are the product of the harmony between her individualism and her commitment to her family, can be attributed to her traditional up-bringing. In this context, it can be assumed that the novel presents Florabel as an example of the individual in a traditional society.

By the same token, Idabel is a model of the individual in the modern South--she is, to use Allen Tate's term which has been quoted in the "Introduction", a "provincial" character. She is at odds with the world at large, with her family and sister, because, unlike Florabel, she cannot strike a balance between her individualism and her social commitment. Her life is not shaped by any code, nor does she belong to the context of Southern tradition. Freak and social outcast as she is, Idabel behaves without any sense of responsibility to others or even to her family. As such, she is an emblem of the anti-traditional and is a grave indication of the course of the modern South and its

consequences, most prominent of which is social disintegration. This idea is so central to the novel that it is driven home time and again and in a variety of ways. For Idabel, as has been suggested earlier, is not the only character through whom this message is presented--almost all characters fall in her category.

Prominent among these characters is Randolph who shares anti-traditional traits with Idabel. He is a provincial man--he has no respect for anybody, even for the memory of his deceased mother. He uses the "shawl" which she "crocheted" for Amy as a "tablescarf"--an act which Amy calls: "a waste and a shame" (48). Randolph is a fraud and liar, amoral and, above all, self-centred and narcissistic. It is through these characters that the novel drives home one of its most predominant themes: traditional modes of behaviour are no longer in command in the modern South. Significant as it is, the novel's concern with social disintegration in the modern South is a clear manifestation of its thematic link with the South which is also demonstrated in other forms.

The reference to Randolph's mother, Angela Lee, as a Southern "belle" is most significant. For not only was she a "beautiful woman . . . from Memphis", but she was also of an aristocratic descent (47). Her family's name, 'Lee', is particularly associated with the history of the Old South--it is reminiscent of the name of the most prominent Confederate commander in the Civil War, Robert Edward Lee. The fact that she is dead is suggestive of the death of the Southern belle and all she stood for, and of the traditional society which gave her prominence and recognition. The irony is that it is Angela's son, Randolph, who appears to Joel in the window in the guise of a "queer lady" (67; sec. 2). Randolph's behaviour represents a radical departure from the traditional code of manners which his mother, as a Southern belle, embodied.

On the other hand, the fact that "the queer lady" appears to Joel the

moment he discovers the bell is of a significant historical resonance. The bell, as Hassan suggests, is an "ancient symbol of a vanished order" (244). Associated with the slavery system as it is, the bell is also one of the relics of the Old South which fought the Civil War on the pretext of defending the white woman's honour against the blacks. Hence, as much as the bell is connected with the past, the lady is most properly described in the novel as a "character from history" (67). In other words, the belle, the system, and the tradition of the Old South are relegated to history.

Furthermore, having lost the glory and prestige of the Old system, the Southern belle is an anachronism in the modern world--she is out of place, delicate and frail. In this context, the lady is most appropriately associated with a butterfly who is fragile, and self-destructive. For there is synchronization between the lady's appearance and the movement of a butterfly in the garden: "her sudden appearance seemed to throw a trance across the garden: a butterfly, poised on a dahlia stem, ceased winking its wings" (67). With reference to this particular point, there is a connection with Tennessee Williams in his description of Blanche DuBois: "Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light. There is something about her uncertain manner, as well as her white clothes, that suggests a moth".[12]

The novel's reference to the relics of the South's past is indicative of its historical dimension which reinforces its economic and social framework. Joel tells Sam Radclif that his suitcase "belonged to grandfather; that was Major Knox: you've read about him in history books, I guess. He was a prominent figure in the Civil War" (6). On the other hand, the novel's depiction of racism against the blacks is in complete conformity with its thematic patterns and its connection with the South. Randolph's and Amy's attitudes, in particular, towards Jesus Fever and Zoo betray racism which has always been characteristic of Southern mentality. When Joel asks them about the queer

lady, Amy accuses Zoo of persuading him that they are "harboring spirits" at the Landing: "Some of Missouri's chatter, . . . just a hotbed of crazy nigger-notions, that girl" (76; sec. 4). Later she says: "Niggers! Angela Lee warned me time and again, said never trust a nigger: their minds and hair are full of kinks in equal measure" (167; sec. 10).

The fact that Angela warned Amy against the blacks indicates that despite the overwhelming metamorphosis the South underwent, hatred for the blacks remains intact. It is one of the prominent aspects of Southern mentality that is passed from one generation to another, and which prolongs the rift between the white and black communities in the South. Hence, not only does the novel's depiction of Randolph's and Amy's racial attitude towards Jesus Fever and Zoo underline its concern with one of the most important Southern issues--it also reflects Capote's sympathy for the blacks which was the result of his long attachment to Corrie, the black nurse, as has been mentioned in the first chapter. The death of Jesus Fever is described in moving, sorrowful terms, demonstrating the apathy and indifference of Randolph and Amy. He remains in "a cedar chest . . . for two days while Amy, with Randolph's aid, decided the location of his grave" (162; sec. 10). At this critical moment, they deserted Zoo--with the exception of Joel, no one helps Zoo digging the grave for her grandfather. Furthermore, "Transporting the cedar chest was an arduous business; in the end they [Zoo and Joel] hitched a rope to John Brown, the old mule, and he hauled it to the foot of the grave" (162).

Randolph's racism and indifference to the death of Jesus Fever take yet another form: "At the last minute Randolph sent word he could not be present for the funeral" (163). The fact that "for Jesus there were no mourners", and that "nature did not reflect so solemn an event" has a tremendous effect on Joel's sensibility: "It seemed odd to Joel . . . a resident of over a hundred years

in so narrow a world deserved higher homage" (163). Nevertheless, it is by Zoo's attempted murder by her husband, Keg, that Randolph's and Amy's inhumane attitude towards her, in particular, and their racism against the blacks, in general, is most illuminated.

Randolph recalls this incident--he unashamedly admits that when they heard Zoo "screaming", he told Amy: "it's the wind. Of course I knew it wasn't. . . . So I put a roller in the pianola, and it played the Indian Love Call" (79; sec. 4). The passage of time has not made them any less guilty--they remain unrepentant for that inhumane guilt. For when Joel, ten years after the incident, confronts them with the fact that "Keg cut her throat", their response is one of absolute insensitivity and cruelty--they are entranced by the memory of that song. And while Randolph is "languidly pouring another sherry", Amy has no regret that Zoo's throat was cut "from ear to ear"--she is only sad that Zoo's bleeding throat "ruined a roseleaf quilt my great-great aunt in Tennessee lost her eyesight stitching" (80). These episodes demonstrate the novel's concern with racism against the blacks as an abominable relic of the slavery system which characterized traditional Southern culture and mentality, and which, as has been suggested earlier, was associated with the South's past glory as well as with its destruction. And although racism is not vigorously condemned, various aspects of its criminality and injustices are too exposed to require statements of condemnation.

* * *

This has so far been an examination of the novel's thematic link with the South--a link which has been established on a broad and firm basis. The thematic pattern, the socioeconomic framework, the historical dimension and the sense of engagement between the past and present in its association with

slavery and racism are all characteristics of the Southern literary tradition, which has been outlined in the "Introduction". Besides, the novel's rural Southern setting, its sense of place, the strong element of nostalgia for an irrecoverable, enfabled past, and its intense gothic style are all unmistakably Southern. Bearing all this in mind, it is possible to conclude that Other Voices, Other Rooms is typical of Southern fiction both in form and content. At the same time, it pioneers a distinctive pattern in Capote's canon--one which, including The Grass Harp, "A Christmas Memory", and "The Thanksgiving Visitor" as it does, pre-eminently features the South and which, as will be discussed in the next chapter, constitutes a strong basis on which Capote's relationship with the South is established.

On the whole, Capote's commitment to the South is one of inconsistency. Given the diversity in his style and in the literary genres which he adopted, it can be said that commitment is not one of Capote's literary attributes. His were miscellaneous concerns which, to some extent, account for his comparatively little interest in the South as a source of his subject matter. Yet, in the final analysis, Capote's relationship with the South is, as has so far been demonstrated and as will be done throughout the thesis, multi-sided and varying in depth and scope. And if Capote is indebted to the South for its undeniable influence, which he ironically denies, his works about the South, few as they are, represent a sincere effort on his part to pay that debt back. And although his treatment of Southern subject matter is limited in volume, in my opinion, Other Voices, Other Rooms largely compensates for that in depth and range.

Notes to Chapter Two

[1] Richard Gray, The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South (London: Arnold, 1977) 258. Henceforth referred to as Gray.

[2] Ihab Hassan, Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel (Princeton: Princeton UP., 1961) 230. Henceforth referred to as Hassan.

[3] Kenneth T. Reed, Truman Capote, ed. Warren French, Twayne's United States Authors Series 388 (Boston: Twayne, 1981) 121. Henceforth referred to as Reed.

[4] John Malcolm Brinnin, Truman Capote: A Memoir (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1987) 121.

[5] M. Thomas Inge, ed., Truman Capote: Conversations (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1987) 6. Henceforth referred to as Inge.

[6] William L. Nance, The Worlds of Truman Capote (1970; London: Calder and Boyars, 1973) 63. Henceforth referred to as Nance.

[7] Gerald Clarke, Capote: A Biography (1988; London: Cardinal-Sphere, 1989) 79. Henceforth referred to as Clarke.

[8] Helen S. Garson, Truman Capote, gen. ed. Philip Winsor, Modern Literature Series (New York: Ungar, 1980) 2. Henceforth referred to as Garson.

[9] Chester E. Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963) 238. Henceforth referred to as Eisinger.

[10] Truman Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms (1948; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 4. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[11] Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jacobs, "Introduction: Southern Writing and the Changing South," South: Modern Southern Literature in its Cultural Setting, eds. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Robert D. Jacobs (1961; Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1974) 14. Henceforth referred to as Rubin and Jacobs.

[12] Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978) 117; sc. 1.

CHAPTER THREE

The Southernness of T. Williams

Although Tennessee Williams is one of America's, if not the world's, greatest playwrights, he is particularly associated with the South. He is a regionalist whose ideas and themes have also both national and universal applications. Williams' relationship with the South was based on and involved numerous interconnected levels and elements, all of which conspired to produce a relationship unique in its nature and prolific in its manifestations. Williams' familial background was the cornerstone of his personal, emotional, cultural, and literary attachment to the South. He was brought up in a typically Southern family which exemplified the paradoxes of Southern culture, most characteristic of which is the dichotomy between Puritanism and Cavalierness. This background and the unique circumstances of his early childhood were the most crucial factors which shaped his literary imagination and had a tangible bearing on almost every single aspect of his canon.

The first chapter was primarily concerned with the influence of Williams' and Capote's Southern background on the general form of their works; the second chapter dealt with the thematic link of Capote's work with the South. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the extent of that influence on the thematic aspect of Williams' work--his treatment of Southern subject matter, his presentation of the South, as well as his adherence to, or departure from, the continuing characteristics of its literary tradition are to be the main focus of this investigation. At the same time, comparison and contrast with Capote on points which have not been covered in the previous chapter will also be made in the course of this study.

To bring the thematic link of Williams' work with the South to light, I shall examine--as I have already done in the case of Capote-- Williams' concern with "the destruction of a region, the downfall of a class, or the decay of a family".[1] Also, I shall analyze his work in the light of Richard Gray's view, which has already been cited in the first chapter, that Williams' and Capote's works lack the basic characteristics of Southern literature, that is, the "sense of engagement between past and present, the public and private, myth and history".[2] The death of Southern tradition, the decay of the Southern belle, nostalgia, the violence of the South and its treatment of the blacks, are also particularly germane to this chapter. To achieve this, it is necessary to approach his canon, as has been done with Capote's, from a chronological perspective in order to decide the extent of his reliance on the South for his subject matter.

The fact that Williams' literary career was launched with The Glass Menagerie in 1944, and firmly established with the tremendous success of A Streetcar Named Desire in 1947 is particularly interesting in this context. For it was these two major full-length plays that directed attention to Williams not only as a leading American dramatist, but also as a distinctively Southern writer. In his book, Tennessee Williams, Roger Boxill states that "The original Broadway production of A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) established Williams as the leading dramatist of the Southern Literary Renaissance".[3] Williams' association with the South continued unabated and was further consolidated in depth and range through many of his famous plays, for instance, Summer and Smoke (1947), Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955), Baby Doll (1956), Orpheus Descending (1957), and Sweet Bird of Youth (1959). And although Battle of Angels, the direct predecessor of Orpheus Descending, failed on Broadway in 1940, it actually inaugurated the thematic link of Williams' full-length plays, in particular, with the South. This clearly

demonstrates that Williams' association with the South, unlike Capote's, started with his first major work and remained the most distinguishing feature of his career.

The thematic link of Williams' works with the South is manifest in their extensive treatment of a wide range of Southern issues which are at the heart of their concerns. Although the above-mentioned plays are characteristically Southern in almost every aspect, Williams' interest in Southern subject matter is, by no means, limited to them. Whereas Capote's canon includes just a few works about the South, there is hardly a Williams' play in which it does not feature as a central theme or a minor leitmotif, or, at least, in characterization. Indeed, the South received full treatment and a close examination far more thorough and profound than is generally acknowledged by some critics, like Richard Gray, for instance, who--as has been suggested in the first chapter--questions the originality of Williams' presentation of the South and regards his and Capote's writings as characteristic of the danger which Southern literature encountered after the renaissance (258).

This attitude on the part of some critics may well be attributed to the fact that they take Williams' canon piecemeal. Critics generally concentrate on a single aspect of his work or on individual plays. Hence, a complete view of Williams' work is far from being fully achieved. It is, therefore, necessary to approach his plays, particularly those which deal directly with the South, as an integral unit in order to grasp the unique nature of his treatment of Southern subject matter. A close and thorough examination of these plays demonstrates that the South features as an integral world of its own, with historical, social, economic, mythical, and cultural dimensions. From this perspective, the agonies of the Wingfields, Amanda's heroism and foolishness, Tom's yearning for escape, the destruction of Belle Reve, the disintegration of the DuBois, and

the desperation and struggle of Blanche, the dichotomy within Alma, the faded belle, the death of Southern tradition, racial discrimination, and violence can be seen as various components of a grand and an integrated play--that is, Williams' play of the South.

Williams deals with the changing as well as with the permanent aspects of his contemporary South at a crucial period of transition. He grasps its unique experience as it moves in space and time. He probes the effect of the movement of history on the character and image of the South, and analyzes the relationship between the past and the present, establishing, thereby, the very characteristics Gray claims that his canon lacks. In other words, Williams examines the impact of the metamorphosis which the South witnessed on its social and cultural structure, on the family as well as on the individual. He depicts a society and a culture in a deep crisis--the central image is that of disintegration which has penetrated all aspects of life in the South.

In this respect, Williams and Capote have much in common. Although Williams' image of the South, as will be demonstrated later, is different in form from Capote's, which has been discussed in the earlier chapter, in essence, both are one and the same image. On the other hand, crucial to Williams' presentation of the South, as it is to Capote's, is the economic and social framework in which he dramatizes these concerns--a framework which is sometimes reinforced by a historical dimension wherein the characters are depicted as vacillating between history and myth, and between the real world and the world of their own fiction.

The fact that Williams employs all these elements in The Glass Menagerie (GM)--his first major successful play about the South--reflects his profound awareness of the inextricable connections between the collapse of the economic structure of the South in the twentieth century and its social disintegration, and between the deterioration of these socioeconomic

circumstances and the decline of the family and the inevitable frustration of the individual. The socioeconomic framework is so central to the dramatic concerns of the play that not only does Williams describe it in the stage directions, but also the first priority of his narrator, Tom, is to provide what he calls "the social background of the play".[4]

The description of the Wingfield apartment, where the play takes place, provides perhaps one of the most significant socioeconomic images in Williams' canon. The Wingfield tenement 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 centres of lower-middle-class population" (233; sc. 1). Providing the framework in which the play is dramatized, the setting is crucial for understanding the full dimensions of the play. Therefore, I believe, it deserves far greater attention than it is generally paid by critics. Williams' emphasis on the importance of the setting is only too apparent, for it is established with immaculate precision. Here Williams' descriptive power is at its best. The "dark, grim", and opaque setting, which represents the menacing threat of the external world to the fragile defences of the individual, is endowed with the "transparency" of poetic sensibility (233).

On the other hand, the description of the physical setting provides various interrelated images which offer much insight into the concerns of the play and the tribulations of the characters. In other words, not only does the setting enormously partake of the play's social concerns, but also it merges and is interfused with the inner world of the characters, reflecting their agony and frustration: "all of these huge buildings are always burning with the slow and implacable fires of human desperation" (233). The stark image of the squalid surroundings of the Wingfield apartment reflects their socioeconomic circumstances: "This building . . . is flanked on both sides by dark, narrow

alleys which run into murky canyons of tangled clothes-lines, garbage cans, and the sinister lattice-work of neighbouring fire-escapes" (233). The central image is that of "fire-escapes", the key word is "fire", and the corresponding image of both is that of a closed house on fire whose inhabitants are desperate for an escape route. The fire-escape is a physical symbol which Williams uses to indicate the extent of the Wingfields' frustration and desperation. Therefore, he insists that the "fire-escape is included in the set" (233).

Moreover, the significance of the general socioeconomic framework of the play is that it also places the plight of the Wingfields in both national and universal perspectives and, at the same time, establishes the play's historical dimension which is generally overlooked by critics. In this respect, it is most appropriate that the play is set in the thirties which was an eventful decade on the regional, national, and universal levels. The South's conversion to the gospel of industrial progress was well underway, and America was in the grip of the Great Depression. Tom, the narrator, through whose memory the play evolves, defines its fundamental concerns--addressing the audience, he says: "I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you the illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion" (234). As the play develops, it becomes evident that the central theme is the conflict between illusion and reality, or, more specifically, the destruction of illusions and fragile hopes by the crushing reality.

On the face of it, this theme breaks no new ground--it is fairly common and, moreover, this is what critics believe the play is about. Yet, what they fail or, perhaps, refuse to recognize is the crucial implications of the socioeconomic realities on the Wingfields as a synecdochic representation of an entire class or a whole region. Overlooked, too, is the unique historical manifestation not only of the social framework but also of this theme within that framework. In this context, "illusion" and "truth", or reality, are key words

which are particularly significant for the historical dimension of the play's subject, as are some of the other words and images which describe the social background of the play.

On the other hand, describing the economic realities in the thirties, Tom presents an image of blindness or short-sightedness: "the huge middle class of America . . . were having their fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy" (234). This image is closely related to another image of the social turbulence at that time: "In Spain there was revolution. . . . Here there were disturbances of labour, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities . . ." (234-5). Significant as they are for the social framework of the play, the images of economic collapse and social turbulence both in America and Europe are strongly linked to its main theme of the destruction of illusions by the harsh reality. In this context, the image of blindness is particularly interesting, because it is not only economic blindness that it refers to, but also political short-sightedness. In either case it connotes of illusion which, as has been suggested earlier, is a key word in the play. In 'Scene Five' Tom reiterates "the social background of the play' adding to it an historical and political dimension:

> Adventure and change were imminent in this year. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids. Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella - In Spain there was Guernica! (265)

The words "Berchtesgaden", "Chamberlain", and "Guernica" are of a special historical resonance--they refer to the Spanish Civil War, Franco's bombardment of Guernica, and to Chamberlain's deals with and appeasement of Hitler. In this context, the reference to Chamberlain is most crucial--what the Wingfields, America, the world, and Chamberlain have in common is illusion in various manifestations. In sum, the realities of the thirties were stark

and gloomy: the Depression and the economic collapse, the Civil War in Spain, conflagration was looming, and "All the world was waiting for bombardments" (265). Yet, like the Wingfields, the world refused to face these bleak realities. Instead, it sought refuge in "hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, bars, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows. . . ." (265).

Placed within this framework, the dilemma of the Wingfields acquires a universal dimension. In other words, in their plight, agony, and illusions, the Wingfields are most appropriately viewed as synecdochic of the world at large. This also shows Williams' skill and ability not only to link the domestic troubles of the Wingfields with the social and historical circumstances in the thirties, the private with the public, but also to transform the personal attributes and failures of the individual into more general human qualities. Viewed from this perspective, Amanda's heroism becomes a parable of human valour, and her illusions and confusions are not merely personal characteristics. Rather, they assume universal dimensions.

Interconnected as they are, the various levels and perspectives through which the play could be approached reinforce its tremendous scope and range. Characteristic of some other Williams' plays, this aspect of The Glass Menagerie forges a significant link with Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms. The diversity of perspectives calls for a variety of critical views which are indicative of the distinguished quality of these works. As Normand Berlin remarks, "A great play has within it the potentiality for differing interpretations; indeed, this may be the test of greatness".[5] On the other hand, the combination of the universal dimension of the play with its historical background is particularly interesting. For not only does it draw a line between Williams' and Capote's works, but also it distinguishes The Glass Menagerie

from the rest of Williams' plays. In other words, it establishes the lines of both the convergence and divergence of the social background of both writers' works. As has been demonstrated in the earlier chapter, Capote pays considerable attention to the historical dimension of Other Voices, Other Rooms. So does Williams in this and other plays, as will be shown later. But none of Williams' other plays or Capote's works could combine all these dimensions at one time within a specific historical background in such a unique manner.

However, the social background of The Glass Menagerie, unlike that of Williams' other Southern plays and Capote's Southern works, is not directly related to the South. The social background which Tom describes makes no reference whatsoever to the South. This represents an exception to the general pattern of Williams' Southern plays in which the socioeconomic framework determines the play's link with the South. In A Streetcar Named Desire (SND), for instance, the image of the DuBois' Belle Reve plantation and the house "with white columns"[6] is crucial for establishing its Southern context. Similarly, Big Daddy's "biggest an' finest plantation in the Delta"[7] is also central to the Southern background of Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (CHTR). Nonetheless, the social background of The Glass Menagerie is indirectly linked with the South through its cultural framework.

Crucial for defining and reinforcing the play's thematic connection with the South, the Southern background of The Glass Menagerie is one of its most distinguishing features. In this respect, the semi-autobiographical nature of the play is particularly interesting because it underlines that background. This notion is suggested not only by the fact that Williams lends his name to the narrator, or perhaps that Tom is Williams himself, the struggling young poet, but also by the tremendous similarity between Amanda and Williams' mother, Miss Edwina Williams. In his Memoirs, Williams recalls how Laurette Taylor,

who played the role of Amanda, asked his mother who attended the opening of The Glass Menagerie in Chicago in 1944: "Well, Mrs. Williams, . . . how did you like yourself?".[8]

This reinforces Amanda's key role in establishing the Southern cultural framework of The Glass Menagerie. She is representative of Southern traditional culture, and the only character who makes the play distinctively Southern. Hence, it is not until Amanda is introduced that this quality of the play is defined and clearly identified. For as soon as Amanda appears in Scene One, she starts by demonstrating some aspects of the mannerisms and charm of Southern culture. Calling Tom to join her and Laura for dinner, she says: "We can't say grace until you come to the table" (236). Tom's response is equally traditional and one of refinement which shows an aspect of the etiquette which Amanda has fostered in her family--joining them, Tom "bows slightly" (236). Amanda is gentle, tender, and affectionate--she calls Tom "Honey", and talks with Laura in a humble and ladylike manner in order to boost her daughter's morale: "No, sister, no, sister - you be the lady this time and I'll be the darkey" (236-7).

Amanda's characterization is also crucial for the background of the play. It is a key for Amanda's role not only in establishing that framework, but also as synecdochic of the South. Hence, Williams insists that "Her characterization must be carefully created" (GM 228). The most prominent aspect of her character is that she is a "little woman of great but confused vitality clinging frantically to another time and place" (GM 228). While correlating with one of the central themes of the play and is linked with a more general and unresolved conflictual element in Williams' drama, confusion is the distinguishing feature of Amanda's character. Hence, Williams is keen to highlight it not only by stating it, as he does, but also in the words he uses for

that purpose:

> There is much to admire in Amanda, and as much to love and pity as there is to laugh at. Certainly she has endurance and a kind of heroism, and though her foolishness makes her unwittingly cruel at times, there is tenderness in her slight person. (GM 228)

Here, the combination of opposites in every single sentence is crucial for establishing that image: 'little' and 'great'; 'admire' and 'love', and 'pity' and 'laugh at'; 'endurance' and 'heroism', and 'foolishness'; and 'cruel', and 'tenderness'.

Confusion is also characteristic of Amanda's behaviour which exemplifies the South's disorientation in the twentieth century, which has been referred to in the "Introduction", and its vacillation between the 'now' and 'then', the past and the present. Amanda's nostalgic reminiscence, in the midst of her present entanglement, of her youth and her gentleman callers in "Blue Mountain" is both a clear manifestation of her background and a significant element of the cultural framework which she establishes from the very beginning. In this context, the sequence of the first appearance of Tom and Amanda successively is interesting--the former describes the social background of the play; the latter establishes its Southern cultural framework. For not only does this sequence reflect the importance of the general framework, but also it suggests the confinement of the cultural framework within the social background.

This indirectly reveals a fundamental thematic pattern of the play, that is, the impact of the socioeconomic circumstances and the realities of the twentieth century on traditional culture. In this context, not only are the Wingfields synecdochic of Southern society, but also their economic circumstances represent the deterioration of the region. The image Williams presents of the economy is one of decay and decline--an image which

consistently recurs in almost all his Southern plays. In A Streetcar Named Desire, the Dubois' great Belle Reve plantation is destroyed, reduced to a "bunch of old papers" (140; sc. 2), and Blanche is homeless. And in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Big Daddy's "twenty-eight thousand acres" plantation, and his plans to build a dynasty are in a state of imminent collapse (56; act 2).

However, Williams' image of the South, as has been suggested earlier, is basically not dissimilar to Capote's. Both writers depict the region in bleak economic terms. Yet, certain differences between their presentations of that image are discernible. On the one hand, the image of decay is a recurrent pattern in Williams Southern plays. In his book, A Critical Introduction To Twentieth-Century American Drama, C. W. E. Bigsby states that it is difficult to locate "any plays in which decay was not a central fact and image".[9] By contrast, Capote's Southern works lack such consistency--with the exception of Other Voices, Other Rooms, there is hardly any work of his which presents such an image. This falls in line with the inconsistency of Capote's reliance on the South for his subject matter, which has been referred to earlier.

The details and dimensions of each writer's image of the South's decay are points on which similarity and difference between the two writers can be located. As has already been established, the historical and socioeconomic dimensions are a common characteristic of both writers' images. The difference, however, lies in their intensity and the amount of detail in which they are depicted. In Other Voices, Other Rooms--as has been demonstrated in the earlier chapter--the South is portrayed as being engulfed and overwhelmed by decay and deterioration. The image develops in range and depth, encompassing destruction and assuming Gothic dimensions, and remains the central focus throughout the novel.

By contrast, Williams' version of the South's decay is more concise--it

is encapsulated in a single image in the backdrop or in the setting, as is exemplified by the Wingfield tenement in The Glass Menagerie, and Meighan's crumbling house in Baby Doll. The image could also be in the mind of the character, as in A Streetcar Named Desire where, for instance, Belle Reve--the DuBois' "plantation, [a] great big place with white columns", a symbol of aristocracy--is presented in a single shot, a "picture" which Stella showed to her neighbour Eunice a long time ago (119; sc. 1). Yet, despite the loss of Belle Reve, its image remains in Blanche's mind as a precious symbol of a vanished order and a way of life that are irrecoverably lost. In either case, it is a central image in whose ramifications and framework the thematic concerns of the play are dramatized. The contrast between Williams and Capote on this point may well be attributed to the difference between the novelistic techniques and the theatrical devices--for instance, lighting, music, sound, and costume, that are available to the playwright.

However, of the common techniques used by dramatists and fiction writers, the flashback technique forges a significant link between Williams and Capote in their presentations of the deterioration of their contemporary South. This method is central to Williams' The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire as much as it is to Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms. Images of a splendid, prosperous, and aristocratic South are nostalgically and rather pathetically invoked by characters who are trapped in the present. In this respect, and as far as Williams and Capote, as Southern writers, are concerned, the flashback technique assumes tremendous significance for the thematic implications it unravels and the various levels of connection with the South it establishes. First and foremost, it highlights the nostalgic element which is characteristic not only of Williams' and Capote's works, as will be demonstrated later, but also of Southern literature, as has been established in the "Introduction".

Adopting the flashback technique, Williams and Capote juxtapose the South's past and present, demonstrating, thereby, the extent of its present deterioration. On the socioeconomic level, as well as on other levels, the past functions as a criterion against whose bright image the present is adjudged gloomy. The tendency to use the South's past rather than the American present as a criterion betrays a considerable degree of evasion which is deeply rooted in the Southern mentality most characteristic of which is the profound orientation and commitment to the past. This presumes and rather necessitates the idealization of that past which is characteristic of Williams' and Capote's presentations of it. The nature of the relationship between the South's past and present will be dealt with later.

So, comparison and contrast between the past and the present are methods shared by Williams and Capote for depicting the deterioration of the modern South. Images underlining the sharp contrast between the two worlds are skillfully balanced to produce maximum effect. The prosperity of the past is juxtaposed with the collapse of the economic circumstances in the present; the stability of the individual with frustration; devotion and responsibility with individualism, provincialism and selfishness bordering on narcissism; strong familial ties and sense of community with the collapse and disintegration of traditional social institutions; and, above all, tradition with its antithesis. In this respect, Williams' and Capote's approaches to these issues are almost identical. In Other Voices, Other Rooms, as has been established in the earlier chapter, images of the glorious past of the two wonderful mansions, the Landing and the Cloud Hotel, are sharply contrasted with the horrible and Gothic landscapes of both places at present. At the same time, the social activities and parties of both Miss Angela Lee and Mrs Cloud, which are indicative of the cheerful, carefree, amiable, and harmonious life in the past,

are also a strong reminder of its total contradiction with the drabness and frustration which typify the lives of the present inhabitants who have nothing in common but their absurdity and grotesqueness.

Similarly, in both The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire images of the splendid past are in stark contrast with those of the bleak present. It is most interesting that in The Glass Menagerie, for instance, Scene One is completely devoted to this purpose. Here the characters play a crucial role in underlining and reinforcing the contradiction between the past and the present. Indeed, the characters are so instrumental that they become an integral part of the whole process. Yet, although Laura is a central character in the play, she is marginalized in this scene which Tom and Amanda almost exclusively share as representatives of two entirely different worlds. For while Tom describes the state of affairs in terms of collapse, decay, and looming destruction, Amanda's world, the past, is presented as well-established and highly prosperous.

The scene as a whole is mostly concerned with juxtaposing these two worlds which are encapsulated in two grand pictures which contain numerous interconnected images. On the one side stands one of the grim slums in St Louis; on the other, Blue Mountain whose very name has the quality of poetic resonance and translucency. The outlines of each world are clearly defined and contrasted. The prominent image of Blue Mountain is of the plantation-centered, aristocratic family of Amanda. And while the Wingfields identify with the "largest and fundamentally enslaved section of American society" who all share the "implacable fires of human desperation" (233), the peers of Amanda's family were aristocrats, "the most prominent . . . planters of the Mississippi Delta" (238; sc. 1).

However, an examination of Williams' juxtaposition of the past and the present reveals a significant pattern that is recurrent mainly in The Glass

Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire. The image of the present is definite and comparatively more detailed--the setting, stage directions, and the circumstances of the characters contribute immensely to a detailed and comprehensive view of the present. By contrast, access to the past is mainly gained through a grand and rather concise image the details of which are mostly drawn through imaginative associations and extensions. Each image sets off a chain of associations and interrelated images which comprise a whole picture. Reconstructed in this manner, the past lends itself to flights of the imagination, which are, after all, not untypical of Williams world, as has been suggested in the first chapter. In The Glass Menagerie, for instance, the past is viewed exclusively through the eyes of Amanda who provides a few scattered hints and images through the imaginative association and extension of which a perceptible image of the South can be produced. Thus, since she identifies entirely with the past, the image she presents of it is far from being fully objective. This, in turn, reinforces the imaginative dimension not only of Williams' world, but also of the version of the South's past that he presents, as will be shown later.

It is in A Streetcar Named Desire that this contrast between the images of the present and the past is best illustrated. The play is set in the Kowalskis' flat, in a ramshackle section of New Orleans. The setting is, in many ways, similar to that of The Glass Menagerie, and their social implications are identical. Nevertheless, as far as Blanche is concerned, the Kowalskis' flat is comparatively less significant for the juxtaposition of the past and the present. Rather, it is Blanche's bleak circumstances that are most crucial for that purpose. The play focuses on the last stage of her ordeal and eventual destruction--Blanche, unlike Amanda who lives with her children in their flat, is homeless, seeking refuge in the Kowalskis'. Her world has virtually

crumbled--her young husband committed suicide, the family's plantation is lost, and she has been dismissed from her post as a teacher. A homeless, jobless widow, Blanche has lost everything--all she possesses now is a trunk full of clothes, papers and letters.

Images of the present are numerous, covering every single aspect of her life ever since the suicide of her husband, Allan Grey. By contrast, we are told almost nothing of Blanche's aristocratic past and glamorous youth as a Southern belle. The framework is already established through a single image of the plantation and the mansion with white columns. Within this framework Blanche's past is most appropriately revealed in a way which calls for all sorts of aristocratic associations. Defending her sister against accusations of promiscuity, Stella reveals Blanche's glorious youth in the most succinct of remarks--she tells Stanley: "You didn't know Blanche as a girl" (198; sc. 8). At the same time, stressing their aristocratic background and their superiority to Stanley, she tells him: "you've got to realize that Blanche and I grew up under very different circumstances than you did" (185; sc. 7).

Similarly, Blanche's illumination of her and her sister's background is equally succinct. Dismayed and rather appalled by "this horrible place" (120; sc. 1) and "these conditions" (121; sc. 1) in which Stella lives, and later outraged by Stella's forgiveness of Stanley's brutality on the poker night, she reminds her sister of their past. At one point, Blanche tells her: "you can't have forgotten that much of our bringing up" (163; sc. 4); at another, she says: "I take it for granted that you still have sufficient memory of Belle Reve to find this place and these poker players impossible to live with" (162). In both remarks nothing substantial is revealed about the past. Yet, placed within the aristocratic framework, they acquire tangible dimensions through imaginative associations.

So, contrasted with the glowing image of the past, the present's decay is

inevitably intensified. The underlying gist is that, as Louis D. Rubin, JR. says, "The image of the heroic past renders the distraught present doubly distasteful, just as it is the guilt and falseness of this same heroic past that has caused the present".[10] Rubin's statement touches on the engagement between the past and the present which will be dealt with later. Also, it has so far been established that Williams' presentation of the deterioration of the modern South follows two distinct patterns: directly, through the description of the bleak circumstances of the present; indirectly, through the juxtaposition of the present with the past. And in both ways, Williams' approach is of great similarity to Capote's.

Moreover, characterization is yet another crucial method of Williams' for revealing aspects of the image of the modern South, and one which forges a significant link with Capote. For not only are the main features of each writer's characters congruous with the image he presents of the South, but they also substantially reinforce it. However, tremendous differences between Williams' and Capote's characters are discernible. It has already been established in the earlier chapter that, with the exception of Joel, all the characters in Other Voices, Other Rooms are flat as well as grotesque and freakish, and that these qualities are most appropriate for the image the novel presents of the South. That the characters do not develop in the course of the novel is totally in line with the stagnation which the novel depicts as characterizing the South; their grotesqueness and freakishness correspond with the bleak image of its deterioration.

By contrast, Williams' are well-rounded characters whose development corresponds with the passage of time as well as with the changing circumstances. They act out different roles and assume various positions and guises. Amanda, Tom, Blanche, Alma, and John Buchanan, to name just a few,

are clear examples. Yet, underlining their versatility and shift of identity is a great degree of uncertainty and a profound sense of confusion which are characteristic of the modern South Williams depicts. Amanda's confusion is the distinguishing feature of her character. Tom is not less confused--indeed, confidence is never one of the characteristics of The Glass Menagerie. Bigsby believes that the play "is not narrated by a confident voice. Tom is as lost in the supposed present as he had been in the recalled past" (47-8). Nor is confidence one of Blanche's personal attributes or of those of the world she lives in. The moment Blanche appears in Scene One, our attention is directed to "her uncertain manners" (117). And as early as Scene Three, Blanche expresses her view of the world, and underlines a recurrent theme in Williams, when she says: "There is so much--so much confusion in the world" (155).

* * *

This has so far been an examination of the socioeconomic framework of Williams' Southern plays, and of its manifestations and various implications for the modern South. The basic underlying image is one of decay, deterioration, confusion, and disintegration. It is within this framework that Williams' concerns with "the destruction of a region, the downfall of a class, or the decay of a family" (Garson 13), and his treatment of other Southern subject matter are most appropriately approached and probed. Hence, in the following pages I shall examine the social disintegration and the collapse of the family in the modern South in relation to the deterioration of its economic circumstances.

There is no need to reiterate here the significance of the impact of the industrialization of the South in the twentieth century on its social structure, as it has already been established in the "Introduction". Yet, it is necessary to underline the inexorable link between the economic and social aspects of

society, which is most manifest in the family pattern and social relations. William J. Goode believes that "Wherever the economic system expands through industrialization, family patterns change. Extended kinship ties weaken, lineage patterns dissolve".[11] Goode's view is part of Tom Scanlan's study--in his book, Family, Drama, And American Dreams--of the impact of industrialization on what he calls "the family of security"--a pattern which is characterized by "a stable, ordered family life", and which was typical of the "agrarian" Southern society.[12] In this respect, Scanlan points out that "The factory system and capitalism destroyed the land-value culture, which gave stability and an aura of permanence to family life. Industrialism accelerated the pace and extent of these changes" (19). Crucial as they are, these changes in the family patterns and life have been, as Scanlan suggests, at the heart of the dramatic concerns of twentieth-century-American playwrights, prominent among whom are Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller, and Tennessee Williams (5).

An examination of Williams' drama shows that there is hardly a play in which social and familial issues are not of a primary concern. His canon covers wide-ranging themes and deals with almost all of the forms of change which the family pattern underwent. Yet, in this chapter attention will be focussed on Williams' depiction of these changes specifically in his Southern plays. He presents various images of the state of the Southern family ranging from decay and deterioration to collapse and virtual destruction. Here, similarity between Williams and Capote cannot be greater. As in Other Voices, Other Rooms, the family in The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire is totally destroyed--what remains of it are merely helpless, pathetic, and futureless survivors whose eventual destruction is inevitable.

Being a "memory play" (GM 229; sc. 1), The Glass Menagerie confirms the destruction not only of the Wingfield family but also of the last survivor of

an aristocratic class: Amanda. They have been destroyed long before the play opens. Hence, the play recounts the final stages of that destruction which, set back in its actual time framework, began a long time ago. In this context, Williams drives home one of his strongest points about the destruction not only of the Southern family but also of the region as a whole. The underlying view, which is recurrent in almost all his Southern plays, is that this destruction is caused not only by external forces but also by internal ones. Williams focuses on the corrosive effect of both forces on the realm of the family which is both an emblem of a class and synecdochic of the South at large. The Wingfields, the DuBois, the Pollits, and the Winemillers are all cases in point, the elements of whose destruction will be dealt with in detail.

Although Williams dramatizes the final stages of the destruction of the family, he focuses sharply on its background and the factors which contributed to driving it to that breaking point at which his plays start. With regard to the last notion, it is noteworthy that Williams' plays start at a critical moment in the lives of his characters when they are on the verge of eventual destruction. In his essay, "Tragedy As Habit: A Streetcar Named Desire", Britton J. Harwood states that "A Streetcar Named Desire begins where a tragedy has already ended".[13] This statement applies with equal force to the other plays in question, most particularly The Glass Menagerie. On the face of it, it is the external forces that deliver the direct and fatal blow to the family and to the individual who represents an entire class. On the individual level this is undoubtedly true--Jim O'Connor, Stanley Kowaliski, and John Buchanan are instrumental in the destruction of Laura, Blanche, and Alma respectively.

However, the destruction of the individual cannot be properly viewed in isolation from the collapse of the family or the decay of the class to which he or she belongs. And although Williams is primarily concerned with the plight of the individual, the tribulations of the family receive almost an equal

treatment in his canon. Moreover, it is within the framework of the family or class that Williams places the dilemmas of his characters. Hence, examination of the forces that have destroyed the family is a prerequisite for understanding the full dimensions of the individual's ordeal. As has already been established, the economic circumstances of the modern South had a manifold impact on its social structure. Industrialization contributed immensely to the disintegration of the family and the traditional social ties, and to the establishment of a materialistic, opportunistic society.

In this context, it is noticeable that in Williams' Southern plays the effect of the economic circumstances on society takes two distinct forms: direct and indirect. In The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire the direct link between the collapse of the financial circumstances of the characters and their eventual destruction is given a stark emphasis. Within the economic framework of these plays, the destruction of the characters is inevitable. They are exposed to the menacing threat of the external world whose economic realities are disastrous for them. Bigsby points to what he calls "The conspiracy, biological or economic", which "is a felt presence in most of" Williams' plays (42). The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire offer the clearest endorsement of this idea, particularly of its economic aspect. The financial pressure takes its toll on Amanda--it is so immense that she seeks refuge in the world of her fantasy. And despite her practicality--for she is "a woman of action as well as words" (248; sc. 3)--Amanda is totally overwhelmed by the financial "conspiracy" she faces. Her plans for survival and her efforts to hold the deterioration at bay are all in tatters. Laura drops out of the Business College, incurring a great financial loss upon the family; the gentleman caller, on whom Amanda pins her hopes of survival, turns out to be engaged to another girl; and Tom walks out on his family, driving the final nail

in their coffin.

The financial conspiracy Blanche has to contend with is equally devastating. It is most appropriate that her ordeal is closely, though not exclusively, associated with the loss of Belle Reve which destroyed her sense of security and played havoc with her life. Certainly, the death of her young husband was Blanche's most traumatic experience. Yet, it is the loss of the house and the plantation which sets her on a tragic course. Homeless, destitute, and seeking refuge in her sister's house, Blanche is an outsider at the mercy of Stanley who abuses her, rapes her, and drives her mad. It is by juxtaposing the images of Blanche's past and present that the financial pressure is most illuminated. Brought down from the pinnacle of her glory as an aristocratic Southern belle, Blanche is now homeless, penniless, snatching her cigarettes and drinks from Stanley.

Williams' characters have no illusions about the inexorable link between financial security and survival. Indeed, they believe that economic collapse is tantamount to eventual destruction. Amanda could not have made this connection clearer. Anxious, and rather terrified that Tom's carelessness at work would cost him his job at the warehouse, she challenges him to consider the consequences of his irresponsible behaviour: "What right have you got to jeopardize your job? Jeopardize the security of us all? How do you think we'd manage if you were--"(251; sc. 3). Amanda's unfinished sentence is highly significant--she is so terrified at the consequences of such an event that she dare not utter the word "fired". Even in her fantasies and memories of the glorious past, Amanda is keen to establish the link between her family's plantation and "All the vestige of gracious living" they enjoyed (285; sc. 6). A Southern belle whose gentleman callers were the sons of the most prominent planters, Amanda "assumed that I would be married to one and raise my family on a large piece of land with plenty of servants" (285). Hence, she cannot help

attributing her present "tribulations" to the fact that she "married no planter" (285).

Making this link, Amanda betrays an aspect of her mentality which is in total contrast with her romantic sensibility as a young Southern girl. Infatuated with the handsome appearance of Tom's father, Amanda chose him as a husband, although she was approached by scores of the richest gentleman callers. Having opted for love and romance, Amanda gave no consideration to wealth. It is only under the grinding circumstances of the present that she is awakened to the link between wealth and security. To Jim O'Connor, a product of the present, money is a crucial element of the worshipped trinity of success: "Knowledge--Zzzzzp! Money-- Zzzzzzp!-- Power! That's the cycle democracy is built on" (300; sc. 7).

Directly destructive as they were, the economic circumstances played also an indirect role in bringing about the collapse of the Southern family. For not only were they intertwined with the internal forces--indeed, they unleashed some of those forces which were equally corrosive and paved the way for the family's final collapse. Prominent among these were individualism and irresponsibility whose disastrous effect is best dramatized in The Glass Menagerie. In her essay, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams", Peggy W. Prenshaw states that "Characters of twentieth-century Southern literature yearn for freedom from the past, from suffocating family responsibilities . . . and declare independence from entanglements that would thwart their individualism".[14] In this context, it is most appropriate that when The Glass Menagerie opens, Amanda's husband has long deserted his family.

The husband's individualistic and irresponsible behaviour has caused the family a colossal damage--ever since he left them, they have been struggling for survival in the most difficult circumstances. Having deserted

them, he set his family on the course of destruction. His absence meant the collapse of the centre around which the traditional family is built, and the inevitability of the destruction of the family as a unit. Williams could not have made the dire consequences of the father's desertion of his family clearer. As has been established earlier, Williams is keen to make the exterior and interior of the Wingfield apartment reflect their grim circumstances. In "the living-room", our attention is closely focused on "A blown-up photograph of the father", which "hangs on the wall . . . facing the audience" (234; sc. 1).

The photograph itself assumes paramount significance for the play as a whole. First and foremost, it is a reminder that his desertion of the family is tantamount to the menacing threat of the external world, which is suggested by the setting. The struggling family are victims of his individualism and lust for independence. Ironically, it shows him "gallantly smiling, ineluctably smiling, as if to say 'I will be smiling for ever'" (234). On the other hand, it stimulates Tom's yearning for departure, which at the end of the play seals up the fate of the family. In her book, Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan, Nancy M. Tischler suggests that "Tom's interest in his father's wanderlust . . . prepares us for . . . [his] departure" at the end of the play, for "his father symbolizes to him the romance of escape and adventure".[15] Hence, it is most appropriate that Tom identifies himself with his father: "I'm like my father. The bastard son of a bastard! See how he grins? And he's been absent going on sixteen years" (283; sc. 6). Establishing this aspect of similarity between Tom and his father, Williams underscores the destructive impact of individualism on the family. For the father's behaviour is re-enacted by Tom who sacrifices his family for his adventurous scheme--he is prepared to do "anything that can blow your [Laura's] candles out" (313; sc. 7).

Although the external world poses a tremendous threat to the Wingfields, it is the internal collapse of the family, which is to be brought

about by Tom's imminent departure, that Amanda fears most. She is fully aware that Tom is the key to any chance of survival, and that her urgent task is to restrain him from deserting the family. To do so, Amanda knows only too well that she has to curb his excessive individualism and make him assume his responsibilities towards the family. She spares no effort to do that, following different approaches and tactics which are particularly interesting. She shows him love and care, encourages him, berates him, cajoles him, fights with him, shows him appreciation and gratitude, and pathetically appeals to him. Amanda tries desperately to halt the collapse of her family, and find an answer to the most intricate and bewildering question: "What are we going to do, what is going to become of us, what is the future?" (242; sc. 2).

The play dramatizes Amanda's heroic struggle and strenuous efforts to hold the family together and preserve its integrity as a moral unit. Amanda's underlying message throughout the play is her answer to those questions: "In these trying times we live in, all that we have to cling to is--each other . . ." (258; sc. 2). Yet, Amanda's exhortation for the unity of the family is not only necessitated by their critical circumstances--it is also at the heart of her traditional philosophy and mentality. In other words, her concept of responsibility arises from her traditional view of the family as a unified whole, whose interests transcend any member's. It is a concept which she holds sacred and which has motivated her to "put up a solitary battle all these years" (258). In this context, it is noticeable that Amanda frequently uses plural pronouns--such as "we", "ourselves" (258), "us all" (251)--which are most appropriate for her traditional view of the family.

On the other hand, Amanda's traditional concept of the family and the individual's responsibility toward it is practically reinforced by her exemplary devotion to her family. And although her husband deserted her and her

children, Amanda remains all the more faithful to him--she remembers him with affection and passion. In doing so, Amanda sets a perfect example for Tom to follow, in that attachment and loyalty to one's family should eclipse one's selfishness and transcend individualistic interests. Hence, she urges Tom to "overcome selfishness" and live up to his family's expectations (262; sc. 4). Nevertheless, Amanda's message is lost on Tom, and her efforts have been futile. Though mother and son, Amanda and Tom are worlds apart. And the conflict between them, which is prompted mainly by the importance of the unity of the family, is, in the final analysis, a conflict between two radically different mentalities: the traditional and the modern or the anti-traditional. Williams extensively polarizes these two mentalities, and the triumph of the modern mentality puts an end not only to the traditional one, but also to the family which, as has been established in the "Introduction", was a basic unit of the structure of traditional society.

The stark contrast between Amanda and Tom as representatives of two conflicting mentalities is best illustrated in their attitudes towards Laura's dilemma which is the central concern of the family. On the one hand, Amanda's care and concern for, and devotion to Laura are central to the play, no matter how it is approached or interpreted. The play opens with Amanda fully absorbed in her concerns for Laura's future after her dismal failure in the Business College; and it closes with her dignified act of comforting Laura after her disastrous experience with Jim. The dramatic action of the play is built on Amanda's frantic and desperate efforts to secure Laura's future through marriage. And though worried about the collapse of the family, Amanda is concerned for Laura most--she is prepared to compromise on anything but that. She makes a great concession to Tom, giving him permission to pursue his ambitions of adventure "as soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent. . . . But until that you've got to look

out for your sister" (261; sc. 4). Knowing her daughter's dilemma, Amanda could never have been more practically supportive, and morally encouraging and sympathetic.

By contrast, Tom shows no sympathy for his sister and mother, nor is he concerned about the survival of the family. Williams tells us that Tom's "nature is not remorse, but to escape from a trap he has to act without pity" (GM 228). And so he does--he deserts the family at the most critical moment, sacrificing them for his individualism and wanderlust. The play juxtaposes Tom's soaring ambitions and the deterioration of his family's circumstances. The more the world closes in on them, the stronger his wanderlust becomes, until finally when all hopes of survival are gruesomely dashed by Jim's announcement of his engagement, Tom walks out on them. This juxtaposition shows the enormity of Tom's guilt and the destructiveness of individualism which has prevailed in modern Southern society.

Although the destruction of the family is a recurrent motif in Williams' plays, The Glass Menagerie is the only one which examines the destructive impact of individualism and irresponsibility on the family in such a detailed and profound fashion. In A Streetcar Named Desire, for instance, Williams contrasts the attitudes of the two DuBois sisters, Blanche and Stella, towards their family, revealing, thereby, the contradiction between traditional and anti-traditional mentalities. Having been married to Stanley, Stella left Belle Reve and her family and came to New Orleans to "make . . . [her] own living" (126, sc. 1). By contrast, Blanche remained at the plantation and assumed her responsibilities towards her family until they all died. In a "hysterical outburst" (126), Blanche confronts Stella with this fact:

> You left! I stayed and struggled! You came to New Orleans and looked out for yourself! . . . You are the one that abandoned Belle Reve, not I! I stayed and fought for it, bled for it, almost

> died for it! . . . Where were *you*. In bed with your Polak. (125-6-7; sc. 1)

Certainly, the attitudes of the two sisters cannot be compared. Stella's was one of apathy, as she "just came home in time for the funerals" (126-7), while Blanche "took the blows in . . . [her] face and . . . body! All of those deaths! The long parade to the graveyard" (126-7). Stella's loyalty to Stanley rather than her family is re-affirmed when she decides to go on living with Stanley after he rapes Blanche. Nevertheless, Stella's apathy and selfishness were not responsible for the destruction of the DuBois family. They passed away, and Stella could do nothing for them any more than Blanche could. On the other hand, Blanche is not innocent of the destruction of the family--after all, it was her cruel attitude towards her young husband that drove him to suicide. On the whole, other Williams' plays share The Glass Menagerie's dramatic concerns with the collapse of the family and the forces which are most responsible for its destruction. Yet, the depth and range with which this idea is presented in the play are certainly unparalleled.

On the subject of the destruction of the family in the modern South certain points of similarity and difference between Williams and Capote are discernible. In Other Voices, Other Rooms, as has been mentioned in the earlier chapter, Capote depicts the disintegration of the Skully family and the destruction of the Clouds. This idea is strongly enhanced by the absence of any ordered, well-established family in the novel. And, indeed, the lack of a unified family in Capote's canon as a whole is striking, and particularly in his "dark stories" which are characterized by their subjective orientation and by their Gothic style. For as Irving Malin, in his book, New American Gothic, says: "Because the family is usually considered a stable unit, new American Gothic tries to destroy it--the assumption is that if the family cannot offer security, nothing can. Narcissism causes the destruction".[16] Hence, in "A Tree

of Night", there is no reference to Kay's family; in "Master Misery", Sylvia has left her family; and the same could be said about "Shut a Final Door", and "The Headless Hawk", not to mention Joel's family in Other Voices, Other Rooms. At the same time, many widows and widowers feature in Capote's canon: Mrs. Miller in "Miriam"; Mary O'Meaghan and Mr. Ivor Belli in "Among the Paths to Eden"; Judge Cool in The Grass Harp; and Doc Golightly in Breakfast at Tiffany's who is a widower for the second time, and whose attempt to persuade Holly to go back home with him is futile. Holly likens herself to "a wild thing", and Doc's mistake, in her view, was that he gave his "heart to a wild thing" and, consequently, he "end[ed] up looking at the sky".[17] Moreover, the fact that most of Capote's characters are orphaned children underscores the significance of this point.

While this approach bears, in general terms, some aspects of resemblance to Williams', the difference between the two writers lies in the depth and range of their examination of the forces which destroyed the family. Both present the image of a decayed family as a significant part of the general picture of the deterioration of the modern South. Within this framework Williams and Capote underline the impact of the collapse of the economic circumstances and of the anti-traditional or modern mentality. Yet, Capote does not examine the corrosive effect of the elements of anti-traditionalism at work within the family in the fashion and depth Williams does. For in Capote's, the destruction of the family is more suggested than dramatized--in Other Voices, Other Rooms, for instance, mysterious fires are said to have been responsible for the destruction of the two aristocratic families: the Clouds and the Skullys. It is also noteworthy that most of Capote's above-mentioned works are not thematically Southern and, therefore, they offer little insight, if any, into his treatment of this theme.

However, in The Grass Harp (GH), one of his most distinguished Southern works, Capote deals with the conflict between the two Talbo sisters, Verena and Dolly, which culminates in Dolly's leaving the house with Catherine, the servant, and Collin, and living in the tree-house. The socioeconomic framework of the novel is crucial for dramatizing this conflict. Both unmarried, Verena and Dolly are also worlds apart. A tough businesswoman, Verena is "the richest person in town".[18] She is fully absorbed in her business, moving in a materialistic circle outside which her concerns are limited. Hers are business-related relationships and although "on diplomatic, political terms with many people, Verena had no close friends at all" (GH 10). At home, her relationship with her sister, Dolly, and the servant Catherine is equally rigid and far from warm. By contrast, Dolly is too shy and timid, and her "presence is a delicate happening" (GH 9). She lives in a world of her own, simple and delicate, detaching herself completely from Verena's.

Focussing on these aspects of contradiction between Dolly and Verena, the novel underlines the damage which the latter's materialistic spirit caused on her relationship with her sister and the members of her household, and exposes the falsity of materialistically-based social relationships. For, on the one hand, it was Verena's pressure on Dolly to give her a formula of her natural "dropsy cure" to market it that prompted her to leave the house, joined by Catherine and Collin, seeking refuge in a huge "double-trunked China tree" (GH 16). On the other hand, Moriss Ritz, with whom Verena planned to market Dolly's dropsy cure--a plan which prompted Dolly's departure--turned out to be a cheat: he "had skipped town after rifling Verena's safe of twelve thousand dollars in negotiable bonds and more than seven hundred dollars in cash: that . . . was not half his loot" (GH 68).

However, the novel's treatment of the collapse of the family contains the elements of its own limitations and self-contradiction. First and foremost,

this idea is not linked to the destruction of a class, and unlike Other Voices, Other Rooms, The Grass Harp lacks the historical dimension and link with the South's past. At the same time, this novel dramatizes a conflict with society and a rebellion against conventionality--an idea which is in principle out of line with Southern tradition. Certainly, Dolly's cause is given great credibility when Judge Cool joins them in the tree-house, for, as Nance suggests, although Capote's

> dreamers may easily be dismissed by society as of no value, the same cannot be said of Dolly's new recruit. In him, society is condemned by someone right out of its highest ranks, a man whose profession gives him a special claim to wisdom.[19]

Nevertheless, Dolly's and Judge Cool's behaviour, which is meant as a condemnation of society and its pressure on the individual for conformity, backfires on them because it is unprecedented and anti-traditional, and, as Mrs County says, "sets a poor example for the town, two sisters quarrelling, one of them sitting in a tree; and Judge Charlie Cool . . .. Leading citizens have to behave themselves; otherwise the entire place goes to pieces" (GH 74-5).

Moreover, although the novel is narrated by Collin who is Dolly's close associate, the novel offers some objective hints and notions which underline the limits of its social scope. After all, Verena is neither harmful nor wicked, and her rigid attitude towards Dolly and Catherine is a product of her frustration with their childishness. Collin admits that "Verena in her heart wanted . . . to come into the kitchen and be part of it; but she was too like a lone man in a house full of women and children" (15-6). At the same time, although Verena was not on good terms with his father, she adopted Collin after the death of his mother. This attitude is indicative of Verena's strong commitment to her family and of her profound sense of responsibility for her relatives. In other words, she cherishes the concept of a close and integrated

family--a concept which is at the heart of Southern tradition. On the other hand, although the novel stresses the oneness of Dolly's group who have found in each other "a person to whom everything can be said" (49) and the sense of family they developed among themselves--in contrast with Verena's business relationship with Moriss Ritz--Dolly's refusal to marry Judge Cool raises an important question about whether the novel places any significance at all on the traditional family.

However, it is in In Cold Blood (CB), a non-fictional novel which is based on a true story of a violent murder, that the destruction of the family receives the most extensive analysis in Capote's canon. The novel is an outstanding piece of journalism which examines violence and crime as a social phenomenon in American life. Hence, although this investigation is concerned with Capote's Southern fiction, this novel's treatment of the destruction of the family is so important that it merits consideration in this context. The murder of the Clutters is set in a broad socioeconomic framework so neatly established that society at large is directly involved. What interests me most here is the image which the novel presents of the Clutters who are brutally murdered, and of the familial background of the two murderers: Richard Hickock and Perry Smith.

The most striking aspect of the Clutter family is that it is prosperous, ordered, beneficent, well-mannered, puritanical, and patriarchal--the very characteristics of a traditional aristocratic Southern family. In her Essay, "A Grave and Reverend Book", Rebecca West says that Capote "represents the victims of the murder as brilliant, powerful, and important in their goodness".[20] Capote focuses sharply on these traits, highlighting the Clutters' merits and bringing to attention their prominent role in society. Mr Clutter was a rich farmer, a Methodist Church leader, educated and highly respected. He was "the

community's most widely known citizen, prominent both there and in Garden City . . . and his name was everywhere respectfully recognized".[21] He was a loving father and a caring husband, and a just and fair employer, though he was a strong-willed man whose "laws were laws" at home and on the farm (CB 6). Mr Clutter "opposed all stimulants, however gentle. He did not smoke, and of course he did not drink; indeed, he never tasted spirits, and was inclined to avoid people who had" (CB 8). And his daughter Nancy was bright and sociable, helpful, beautiful and, most appropriately described as, "a real Southern belle" (CB 5). In sum, the Clutters were respectable, kind, benevolent, and well-mannered, and as a family, they were "exemplary" (Garson 143). Hence, as West says, "when the community lost the Clutters it was as if there had suddenly vanished from the district some natural feature which also served a practical purpose, say a mountain lake which had also provided a water supply" (93).

The murder of the Clutters affected the community in a variety of ways: it created a profound sense of tragic loss and had tremendous social repercussions. The friendly social atmosphere which the community had enjoyed over the years was replaced by fear, suspicion, and distrust--the shots which killed the Clutters "stimulated fires of mistrust in the glare of which many old neighbours viewed each other strangely, and as strangers" (CB 3). The crack in the community assumed a dangerous social dimension, because its boundaries were not clearly defined. The criminals were anonymous, and the murder was motiveless. Hence, the community's fear was compounded not only by sheer pity for the Clutters--it was also the destruction of the ideals and the sense of security which the Clutters represented that horrified the community most. In this context, the Clutters could be seen as victims of the conflict between good and evil in society. Yet, from a broader perspective, both the Clutters and the murderers might well be viewed as representatives of

basically two conflicting aspects of America: the gentle and the violent, the secure and affluent and the poverty-stricken. In this sense, the Clutters are most properly viewed as victims of the tremendous social tensions produced by these conflicting forces.

In this context, Capote is keen to reinforce this notion--he probes the social and familial background of the two murderers, stressing the connection between their poverty and wretched circumstances and their criminal attitudes. The underlying notion is that the Clutters are not the only victims in this conflict. Smith and Hickock are also victims of a complex of circumstances which conspired to take them eventually to the gallows. In this context, the Clutters were caught in the middle--the brutal crime Smith and Hickock committed was a horrendous strike back at those circumstances from which they suffered. The psychiatrist's report on Smith, for instance, suggests that when he murdered Mr Clutter

> it was not entirely a flesh-and-blood man he 'suddenly discovered' himself destroying, but 'a key figure in some past traumatic configuration': his father? the orphanage nuns who had derided and beaten him? the hated army sergeant? . . . One of them, or all of them. (CB 294)

However, while Smith's family was disrupted and shattered by misfortune and, consequently, he had the most miserable childhood, Hickock's "parents were affectionate and agreeable, and he had ample intelligence to work himself up to a good level of living" (West 93). Certainly, the grinding poverty and destitution are significant factors behind their aggressive attitude. Nevertheless, in the light of another crime which the novel considers--that of Lowell Lee Andrews who killed his "his parents and a slightly older sister" (CB 304) in a brutal manner--poverty is not the only motive for crime. For Andrews was born into a rich family and was "a sophomore at the University

of Kansas, an honours student majoring in biology" (CB 304). Yet, it was his strong "desire to inherit" his family's estate that was "ostensibly the motivation behind Lowell Lee's plot to destroy his family. . . . he wanted to wear gangsterish silk shirts and drive sports cars" (304).

So, what these criminals have in common is envy, although in the novel it is associated with Hickock: "Envy was constantly with him; the Enemy was anyone who was someone he wanted to be or who had something he wanted to have" (CB 193-4). Viewed from a Southern perspective, envy is characteristic of the anti-traditional principles which are encouraged by modern social circumstances and which traditionalists, as has been mentioned in the "Introduction", warned against. In his essay, "Aspects of the Southern Philosophy", Richard M. Weaver firmly believes that "the average Southerner of traditional mentality does not envy", in the sense that "it is not in his character to hate another man because that man has a great deal more of the world's goods than he himself has or is ever likely to have".[22]

By contrast, as Weaver says, "modern social doctrine encourages man to question the whole order of society if he does not have as much as somebody else" (22). This idea is strongly endorsed by the attitude of the three murderers who found the nationally-worshipped trinity of money, success, and power terribly attractive. Hence, they were prepared to commit those horrifying crimes for the sake of materialistic gains which they both failed to achieve and also cost them their lives. Rebecca West believes that "society has its blame to carry" (96). And the novel reinforces this notion. For although it focusses on the criminal mentality of the two murderers and their obsession with death, it creates ambivalent feelings towards them, particularly for Smith who, in view of his life which was shrouded in misery, is described as possessing "a quality, the aura of an exiled animal, a creature walking wounded" (CB 333). This, perhaps, is due to Capote's sympathy for and personal identification with

Smith in whose miserable and pathetic childhood Capote saw his own. Hence, Capote gets involved in the long-standing debate about the morality of capital punishment which is described as an act of institutionalized "cold-blooded" revenge (CB 298). On the whole, in its treatment of the murder of the Clutter family and of the Andrews family, the novel describes the family as being destroyed by external and internal forces, both of which are products of modern society. This point forges a significant link with Williams' treatment of the collapse of the family in The Glass Menagerie, although this novel deals with the violent and literal extermination of the family.

The connection between the disintegration of the family and the downfall of the aristocratic class and the destruction of the South and its traditional society forges one of the most significant links between Williams and Capote. The Southern family both writers present is of an aristocratic background which once enjoyed a glorious past and all the prestige of high social position. The social context in which both Williams and Capote place the family and the conclusions they draw are particularly interesting. By juxtaposing the past and the present, a recurrent pattern emerges with clarity. In the past, in a closely-knit society and a well-established class, the family thrived and flourished, and was the corner stone of traditional society as a whole.

By contrast, in the twentieth century traditional Southern society and aristocracy were destroyed and relegated to history. Williams' and Capote's depiction of the final demise of the Old South and its glory could not be more similar--indeed, they are almost identical in depicting the finality of that destruction. Compare, for instance, Capote's view in Other Voices, Other Rooms (OV) with Williams' in The Glass Menagerie. In the former, as has been quoted in the earlier chapter, we are told: "Was, said the weeds, Gone,

said the sky, Dead, said the woods".[23] In The Glass Menagerie, despite her frantic attachment to the past, Amanda has no illusions that the glorious days are "Gone, gone, gone. All vestige of gracious living. Gone completely" (285; sc. 6).

So, the disintegration of Southern traditional society in the twentieth century was disastrous for the family. It was doomed to collapse because of the destruction of the social and economic framework in which it had been established. Approaching this idea from this perspective, Capote and Williams portray the family in a state of collapse. Yet, on this particular point, there is a difference between them. In Capote, the family is either completely destroyed, for instance, the Clouds, or has already disintegrated and despite the coexistence of its members, it lacks any sense of coherence, as exemplified by the Skullys. By contrast, stressing the inevitability of the destruction of the family, Williams depicts it at a unique moment of its life as it desperately struggles for survival. In A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams' account of the destruction of the DuBois family is similar to Capote's description of the Clouds in that in both the family is already dead. Yet, in this play the fate of the DuBois family is re-enacted and experienced by Blanche who is the bearer of their tradition.

More than any other Williams' play, A Streetcar Named Desire dramatizes various manifestations of the collapse of the family in all of which Blanche's role is crucial. She is both a victim and a perpetuator of the family's disintegration. She suffers immensely due to the demise of her parental family. Yet, she herself drove her husband to death, destroying her own family. At the same time, Mitch's rejection of Blanche destroys her last chance of establishing a family and surviving her personal ordeal, while her visit to the Kowalskis causes a tremendous rift between Stella and Stanley after which their relationship may not be as it was. The Kowalski family sustains a big

blow--it is noteworthy that their baby is not given a name, and that Stella may no longer be submissive to Stanley's sexual appeals.

* * *

This has so far been an examination of Williams' and Capote's presentation of the disintegration of the family in association with the destruction of traditional society in the modern South. Both Williams and Capote depict the inevitability of the collapse of the traditional family under the menacing threat of internal and external forces which are products of modern social experience. Within this framework, both writers describe the position of the Southern belle in similar terms--she is as much an anachronism in the modern South as the traditional family is outdated. The Southern belle, as has been suggested in the earlier chapter, is described as moth-like and as fragile as Laura's glass menagerie. Her time has run out--she is as much anachronistic as Amanda's dresses, which she has "resurrected from . . . [her] old trunk", are out of date (GM 276; sc. 6). In this mechanical, materialistic and exploitative world, the Southern belle is a misfit, and her mannerisms are out of place. Tom is outraged by Amanda's pretentious behaviour and posturing; Stanley is antagonized and irritated by Blanche's. Stanley, in a conciliatory moment, tells Stella: "I was common as dirt. You showed me the snapshot of the place with the columns. I pulled you down off them columns" (SND 198-9; sc. 8). To him, Blanche's elegance, poetic speech and romantic attitude are contemptible and absurd (SND 196; sc. 8).

The plight of the belle in the modern South is a central issue which reveals various points of similarity and difference between Williams and Capote. In general terms, both depict the decay of the belle in association with

the decay and decline of the traditional South. In Capote, the Southern belle is either dead like, for instance, Angela Lee, or marginalized and outmanoeuvred as exemplified by Amy and Florabel. The reference to the mysterious lady, who appears to Joel in the window, as being like a "character from history" (OV 67), summarizes Capote's approach in that the relegation of the belle to history is more suggested than enacted. By contrast, dramatizing her dilemma, Williams examines the belle's response to the economic, historical, cultural, and social pressure of the external world. Moreover, unlike Capote, Williams presents the decay of the belle not merely as a single significant issue, but also as one which is central to his treatment of Southern subject matter. It is directly and inexorably intertwined with the destruction of the socioeconomic structure, the collapse of the family, and the decline of tradition in the modern South. The belle is a crucial figure whose agonies and plight, beauty, values, and valour, as well as her flaws, pretentiousness, hypocrisy, and decadence are synecdochic of those of Southern tradition and culture. Hence, there is hardly a Southern play of Williams' in which the belle is not a central figure and a prominent character: Cassandra in Battle of Angels, Amanda in The Glass Menagerie, Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire, Alma in Summer and Smoke, Maggie in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Carol in Orpheus Descending, the Gnadiges Fraulein in The Gnadiges Fraulein, Trinket in The Mutilated, Woman Downtown in The Red Devil Battery Sign, and Dorothea in A Lovely Sunday for Creve Coeur, to name just a few.

Williams dramatizes the dismal failure of the Southern belle to cope with the realities of the modern world. He exposes the belle's foolishness and anachronism as she frantically clings to a dead past, refusing to comprehend the implications of the metamorphosis the region has undergone and to admit what Cassandra, in Battle of Angels, admits when she says that her "licence has been revoked in the civilized world".[24] In The Glass Menagerie, for instance,

resurrecting her clothes from the old trunk, Amanda still believes that "Styles haven't changed so terribly much after all . . ." (276; sc. 6).

Williams presents the destruction of the Southern belle in terms of inevitability. With the collapse of the traditional social and moral structure, the belle's fate is gruesomely sealed. On the social level, the belle is left in the middle of nowhere, in a huge vacuum where her traditional social status is revoked and her prestige no longer recognized. Stanley, for instance, does not hesitate to humiliate the two DuBois sisters and beat Stella up in front of his friends, and, later, to challenge their social position: "What do you two think you're? A pair of queens?" (SND 194; sc. 8). Moreover, Stanley's rape of Blanche drives the last nail in the coffin of the Southern belle, and leads to an absolute disregard for the code of honour and manners even on the part of Stella who is easily persuaded by Eunice to disbelieve Blanche's story and go on living with Stanley.

Although on the social level the Southern belle is relegated to oblivion, she stubbornly refuses to relinquish her estimate of herself as an emblem of honour and moral purity. And it is this ferocious struggle against moral destruction that is at the heart of Williams' Southern plays. As the world closes in on her, the belle faces a morbid moral dilemma and an impossible choice. To survive, she has to surrender her moral position. Yet, ironically, in doing so, her total destruction is rendered inevitable.

In A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams makes a profound analysis of the interaction of the cultural and psychological dimensions of Blanche's moral crisis which was instrumental in her final destruction. The play dramatizes the conflict between Blanche and Stanley, and the destruction she receives at his hands. Critics have examined the cultural, social, personal, domestic, and psychological dimensions and background of that conflict. And they have not

overlooked its ferocity. In his book, The Splintered Stage: The Decline of the American Theatre, R. H. Gardner, for instance, makes an interesting analogy between Stanley's brutal rape of Blanche and the horrible destruction which the carnivorous birds inflict on the hatched sea-turtles in Suddenly Last Summer.[25] And despite their unerring focus on Blanche's plight in the light of the destruction of the South, they concentrate mainly on the aspects of her conflict with Stanley and its finale which Normand Berlin characterizes as being polarized: "Stanley's victory is Blanche's defeat" (101). Consequently, the play is viewed as being based around the conflict between Blanche and Stanley and the forces each represents. Hence, Blanche's destruction is rightly considered as representing the destruction of the old South.

Although the applicability of these various interpretations to the play does not concern me in itself at this stage, the diversity of these lines of thought testify to the greatness of the play and to Williams' skill. However, I believe that it is necessary to bring fully to light a significant aspect of the play which is not duly addressed, or which is overshadowed by the central focus on Stanley's systematic destruction of Blanche. It is crucial to bear in mind that however it is approached, the play derives its dramatic strength from Blanche's personal past and Southern background. In other words, it is not the intensity of the conflict between Blanche and Stanley as much as Blanche's unique position which lends the play such a dramatic density and force. For, viewed in isolation from Blanche's Southern background, even Stanley's rape of her does not acquire such a destructive dimension. And, moreover, given Blanche's recent promiscuity and her admiration--which she consciously or unconsciously expressed--of Stanley's virility, the rape, brutal as it is, is not totally uninvited. Britton J. Harwood suggests that "Blanche is . . . fascinated by Stanley" (108). And John M. Roderick states that "Blanche is as much as Stanley to blame for the rape".[26] Hence, in Scene Ten, before carrying her to

the bed, Stanley tells her: "Drop the bottle top! Drop it! We've had this date with each other from the beginning" (215).

So, Blanche's plight, which is the central concern of A Streetcar Named Desire, does not lie in the savage treatment, rape, and eviction she receives at the hands of Stanley. For this conflict with Stanley is merely the final episode of a long, exhausting, and destructive ordeal that Blanche had gone through before she came to stay with her sister. In this context, Berlin's statement, which has been quoted earlier, that "Stanley's victory is Blanche's defeat", is exaggerative and rather misleading. Stanley cannot claim victory nor can he celebrate one--after all, his conflict with Blanche is not a conflict between equals. With Blanche a broken-hearted, exhausted refugee, Stanley could only callously take an unfair advantage of her vulnerability. Yet, despite these advantages which Stanley enjoys over Blanche, calling her "Tiger - tiger" (215), he acknowledges the spiritual strength with which she has fought throughout her ordeal, and which she, as Williams says, "surrendered . . . to him out of desire".[27]

On the other hand, Williams expresses a strong reservation for the term: 'Blanche's defeat'--he says that Blanche "fights to the end. She's a tiger, extreme tigers are destroyed, not defeated" (Devlin 277). If Blanche is not defeated by Stanley, she is not destroyed by him, either. For despite all his insensitivity and savagery, Stanley could not destroy her estimate of herself as a distinguished Southern belle--even in her final exit to the mad house, Blanche extends her hand to the doctor only after he approaches her as such. Certainly, Stanley's most damaging blow to Blanche is his destruction of her final chance of a legitimate sex life through marriage to Mitch. Yet, it is only in his conflict with Blanche over Stella that Stanley can claim victory--one which he achieves only after Stella abandons her sister in favour of Stanley. Yet, to John

M. Roderick, "even this victory is tainted. The psychic wounds which Stella must surely feel . . . are real. . . . it is significant that Stella remains passive to Stanley's overt sexual gesture" (125).

When A Streetcar Named Desire opens, Blanche is at the end of her tether. Manifold as it is, her plight assumes tragic dimensions--a plight the central fact of which is death and destruction: the suicide of her young husband, the death of her parents and relatives, and the destruction of Belle Reve: "the Grim Reaper had put up his tent on our doorstep! . . . Belle Reve was his headquarters!" (SND 127; sc. 1). In a sense, not only did Blanche witness and suffer the agonies of the death of her husband and the extinction of her family, but also her very survival was in jeopardy. Having lost all means of protection, Blanche--soft, delicate, and defenceless--became an easy target for exploitation. She was vulnerable because, as she tells Stella, "soft people have got to court the favours of hard ones" (169; sc. 5). It was at this point that Blanche's moral crisis, which was the root cause of her inner destruction, started. After all, it is the shattering of her sensibility and the destruction of her inner self that Williams is most keen to dramatize in presenting Blanche as a fading Southern belle.

As has been suggested earlier, Blanche's initial dilemma consists in her sexuality and desire. Benjamin Nelson states that in Williams, "Involvement with the flesh spells ruin".[28] This view is in line with what Arthur Ganz calls Williams' "Desperate Morality"[29], a view which, reflecting Williams' puritanism, applies to almost all of his characters who are involved in sexual transgression. Yet, as far as Blanche, as a Southern belle, is concerned, the consequences of her sexuality are different. For it is not sexuality itself that is destructive of Blanche--rather, it is the cultural and psychological implications of that sexuality that cause her moral crisis.

A close scrutiny of the play shows two aspects of Blanche's sexuality,

as she offers two accounts of her sexual relationships. Blanche's marriage to Allan Grey was a significant fulfilment of her dream as a young, sensitive Southern belle--as Bigsby says: "Blanche opted for what she took to be delicacy and refinement in the form of the poetic Alan Gray" (59). Therefore, Blanche, in Stella's words, "didn't just love him but worshipped the ground he walked on! Adored him and thought him almost too fine to be human" (SND 189-190; sc. 7). Hence, his suicide was immensely tragic for her: "the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since then has there been any light that's stronger than this - kitchen - candle . . ." (SND 184; sc. 6). Having suffered this devastating experience, Blanche sought compensation and panacea in sexuality: "After the death of Allan - intimacies with strangers was all I seemed able to fill my heart with" (SND 205; sc. 9). In other words, Blanche's sexual relationships were a desperate attempt to fill in the vast emotional vacuum which Allan's death created.

In his essay, "Tennessee Williams' South: The Culture and the Power", Jacob Adler believes that "Blanche is both promiscuous and prudish".[30] In this context, it is most significant that Blanche's character embodies two of the most prominent aspects of the paradox of Southern culture: the dichotomy between puritanism and Cavalierness--a paradox which is not only characteristic of Williams" familial background, but which is also one of the most distinguishing features of his canon. Prenshaw believes that Williams'

> characters and themes are built upon paradox. The exciting, sometimes brilliant, characters may oppose one another's values, both of which are arguable and tenable, but they are most affecting when they embody the opposition within themselves. (7)

Seeking sexual satisfaction after the death of her husband, Blanche was

not untrue to herself or her nature. For despite her vehement assertion of her prudery and strong claim to purity, Blanche recognizes the demands of the flesh. She tells Stella that "A man like him [Stanley] is someone to go out with - once - twice - three times when the devil is in you" (162). At the same time, Blanche's "intimacies with strangers" could be seen as a pathetic attempt to alleviate and compensate for her profound sense of guilt for betraying her husband at the crucial moment when he was most in need of her moral support. In neither case does Blanche's sexuality provide a plausible explanation of her moral crisis. For, as has been suggested in the "Introduction", although the Southern belle was regarded as an emblem of purity and chastity, she had a strong subterranean sexual desire. In other words, although the belle's sexuality was not admitted by Southern society, to her, it was part of her own sensibility. In this context, in pursuing sexual gratification after the death of her husband, Blanche betrayed her sensibility less than she did the code she pretends to uphold--a code which would under no circumstances have condoned her behaviour.

However, it is the other aspect of Blanche's sexuality, that is, her sexual relationships after the death of her family and the destruction of Belle Reve, which caused her moral crisis. For not only did she witness and suffer the horrors of the death of many members of her family, but also she was deprived of any means of protection. She tells Stella: "I've run for protection, . . . from under one leaky roof to another leaky roof - because it was storm - all storm and I was caught in the centre" (169; sc. 5). It was too high a price that she paid for survival because, as she tells Stella, "People don't see you - *men* don't - even admit your existence unless they are making love to you. And you've got to have your existence admitted by someone, if you're going to have someone's protection" (169). Blanche was fully aware of the tragic consequences of accepting these terms. Yet, desperate for protection and

survival as she was, Blanche capitulated. And this is where her crisis and moral conflict mainly, if not exclusively, lie. For in doing so, Blanche surrendered her identity and destroyed her integrity in her own eyes.

Blanche's is a complex tragedy of circumstances and awareness. Although her dilemma was multi-dimensional, the executing force was centralized in sexuality. In a sense, the unique quality of the play lies in examining the tremendous internal conflict which the external forces unleash within Blanche. The dichotomy between puritanism and Cavalierness is inherent within Blanche, the Southern belle, and is held in balance. Yet, the external forces tipped the balance and destroyed the tensely-held equilibrium. Blanche knew only too well that in seeking protection at that price, she surrendered to rape. In this context, her rape by Stanley is merely the last episode of what she has long been subjected to and which she has accepted in her desperate pursuit of protection. And although in actual terms Blanche betrayed her moral ideals and the tradition she represents, she is adamant in her refusal to relinquish her estimate of herself as a distinguished Southern belle. She is aware of these contradictions; nevertheless, she can neither reconcile them nor can she relinquish any of them. Hers is a moral crisis which, given the tremendous pressure she has long sustained, is inevitably conducive to madness.

Moreover, as a Southern belle, Blanche is caught in a trap of her own making. She frantically clings to a tradition which has been revoked by historical realities. Hence, not only is she, like the tradition she attaches herself to, an anachronism in the modern world, but also she alienates herself and, consequently, is victimized and destroyed. On the other hand, embodying the paradoxes of Southern tradition, Blanche possesses within herself, as does Alma in Summer and Smoke, the elements not only of self-contradiction, but

also of self-destruction. It is the dichotomy within their characters between prudery and sensuality, or, as it is polarized in Summer and Smoke, between body and soul that brings about their destruction. In other words, both Blanche and Alma are victims of the paradoxes of the tradition they adhere to and the South they represent. It is noteworthy that Belle Reve was lost through the "epic fornications" of Blanche's "improvident grandfathers and father and uncles and brothers" (SND 140; sc. 2). On the whole, the underlying view which is central to Williams' plays is that, as Jacob Adler argues, "The South . . . has experienced the greatest difficulty in bringing into harmony, into integration, its body and its soul" (31).

Williams' presentation of the Southern belle creates ambivalent feelings which correspond with the paradoxical combination within her character, which reflects not only Williams' paradoxes but also those of Southern culture. His admiration of the Southern belle and lamentation for the destruction of the values she stands for are well balanced by his rejection of the "profound deceit which lies behind the veneer of that side of the Southern past" and tradition which she embodies (Bigsby 64). In The Glass Menagerie, for instance, Williams parodies Southern tradition, its artificiality and tendency towards pretentiousness, affectation, and deception; in A Streetcar Named Desire, he exposes the decadence of the Southern belle. Dramatizing her plight in the modern world, Williams strikes a balance between these two attitudes, creating ambivalent feelings towards her. Thomas Porter, as Prenshaw suggests, "finds in her [Blanche's] characterization an admiration of the tradition perfectly balanced by a rejection of it" (13).

The belle is described as being pretentious, puritan, foolish, deceptive, outrageous and, at times, destructive. Yet, at the same time, she is sensitive, romantic, sensual, fragile and pitiful. And despite the destruction Williams visits on her, which is partly self-inflicted, the melancholic, elegiac, and pitiful

note with which the belle makes her final exit from this world reflects Williams' deepest lamentation for her and for the lost values she represents. The scenes where Amanda holds and comforts Laura, where Blanche extends her hand to the doctor and says her famous exit line, and where Alma, bitter and crushed by John's rejection of her, seeks redemption in promiscuity with the young salesman are among the most memorable in Williams' canon. Williams' presentation of the demise of the belle and the decay of the South, which reverberates so tragically, is indicative of his strong personal identification with the South which he declares in no uncertain terms:

> I write out of love for the South. . . . It is out of regret for a South that no longer exists that I write of the forces that have destroyed it. . . . The South once had a way of life that I am just old enough to remember--a culture that had a grace, elegance . . . an inbred culture . . . not a society based on money, as in the North. I write out of regret for that. (Devlin 43)

Moreover, central to the concerns of both Capote and Williams is the sense of engagement between the past and the present. Characteristic of Southern literature and sensibility as it is, nostalgia is also a significant aspect of their works which forges an inexorable link between the past and the present. It is noteworthy that not only does the autobiographical element permeate almost all of the Southern works of both writers, but also nostalgia is a predominant mode in all of them. On the one hand, evolving out of memory, Capote's most prominent works begin with nostalgia and end in an elegiac note. Similarly, as Boxill remarks, "Nearly all of Williams' plays are, like Menagerie, 'memory plays'. They look back with longing to a time that has been sweetened in the remembering" (23).

On the other hand, recurrent in both writers' works as it is, the invocation of the sweet memories of the past is one of the most important escape mechanisms which characters seek in an attempt to find a refuge from

the menacing present. This mechanism offers a momentary relief from the agonies of the present, but, ironically and rather paradoxically, it also prolongs and aggravates their suffering by pushing the very agonies it is meant to deny forcibly on their consciousness. In his essay, "Reflections on Moon Lake: The Presences of the Playwright", Donald Pease confirms this idea when he says that

> for Williams the act of fleeing always becomes the act of re-living the past. Flight forces the presence of the past on his characters as the presence of what they attempt to flee. Flight only intensifies the presence of the past.[31]

Furthermore, not only does the past cast its shadow on the present as a sweet reverie, but also, resurrected in the present, it becomes, as has been suggested earlier, a yardstick against which the present is adjudged distasteful and bleak.

However, the relationship between the past and the present is not wholly single-sided. It is not only the past which renders the present ugly--it is also the bleak present which makes the past incomparably beautiful. In a sense, the gloomy present makes the characters selective about the past, choosing its bright aspect as a solace and forgetting the dreadful aspect which contributed to their present plight. With reference to this particular point, Capote is less than clear--the past is remembered, but not because of the pressure of the present. It is in the present that Capote's characters find release, self-expression, self-realization, and their identity. In The Grass Harp, Collin goes back in memory to the few years he spent with his father's relatives, the Talbo Sisters, after the death of his mother when he was eleven years old. Despite the innocence of childhood and youth which characterized those years, they were far from being happy. Collin remembers how monotonous life became after the death of Dolly Talbo and how restless he was to "go away" and make his own way in life as a "lawyer" (GH 123-4). Nor does he complain about the present, presumably

because he is rich, now that he is an established lawyer and having inherited the vast "Talbo estate" (123).

The past Capote's characters remember is not altogether lovely and enchanting, nor do they express the sense of attachment to and identification with it on the scale Williams' characters do. This could plausibly be attributed to the fact that Capote's protagonists, for instance in his most famous Southern works: Other Voices, Other Rooms, The Grass Harp, and "The Thanksgiving Visitor", are orphaned children who had to be looked after by relatives. They have no claim to aristocracy or social prestige, nor do they, in fact, make any. What they long for in the past is, perhaps, the simplicity of life that is associated with the innocence of childhood which, nonetheless, was not without fears and uncertainties. Hence, it is possible to distinguish between two versions of the past Capote presents: the one is the sad and pitiful personal past of these characters--a past the significance of whose memory is basically confined to the element of nostalgia in Capote's works. For as Nance suggests, "The pastness of the experience is . . . essential; Capote's is a fiction of nostalgia" (79). The other is the glorious aristocratic past the images of which we find in Other Voices, Other Rooms and which have already been dealt with.

By contrast, the past Williams' characters invoke is one of aristocracy and high social prestige because they are the last vestige of an aristocratic South. It is a past which they experienced and enjoyed--one which not only they passionately remember but also which they pathetically cling to and yearn to resurrect. In this context, to Williams' characters the personal past and that of the region are inseparable--they are one and the same past because these characters are fading emblems of an aristocratic order which has already crumbled. Hence, it must be emphasized here that the past Williams' characters seek refuge in is not mainly the enchanting memory of youth and romance, as

critics generally believe. Rather, it is the aristocratic past, in whose socioeconomic structure they enjoyed social prestige, that Williams' Southern characters are frantically attached to, in contrast with Capote's. In other words, it is the past which is associated with the images of the great plantations, white-columned mansions, and servants or, as Amanda suggests, "nigger[s]" (GM 237; sc. 1) that in whose memory they seek solace.

The corrosive effect of the blind rush of time is one of the predominant and recurrent themes in Williams' canon. Boxill believes that "Time seen in its elegiac aspect as a dimension of decay is the great Williams theme" (27). Indeed, his characters are not only sensitive to but also haunted by the ravages of time and the fading away of their youth and beauty. Nevertheless, distinction must be made between the attitude of Williams' Southern belles and that of the other female characters in his Southern works towards this issue. The belles share with the latter their nostalgia for the glorious days of youth. Yet, what distinguishes the nostalgia of the belles from the others' is not merely the unique past they look back to, but also the nature of the pressure they encounter in the present. Alexandra Del-Lago in Sweet Bird of Youth and Mrs Stone in Williams' novella, The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone, for instance, have both been great artists in the theatre. The glamour of their youth and beauty was crucial for the fame they achieved. Yet, having slipped into age, their star has been in decline--they have been suffering the consequences of time's inevitable decay, as their recent performances have been a dismal failure. Having lost their fame and prestige, they are now isolated, lonely, and dependent on the attention of gigolos who are interested in their money. Hence, their nostalgia for the past is merely and exclusively for the glamour of youth and beauty which raised them to the pinnacle of success and fame.

By contrast, although Amanda's and Blanche's memories of love and romance are associated with youth, the high social position and prestige which

they enjoyed as Southern belles were not directly based on their beauty and youth. They were theirs by virtue of their aristocratic descent. And for all her assertion of her personal merits as a young belle, Amanda does not fail to make that link clear. Nor is the dilemma she and Blanche now face in any way associated with the decay of their beauty. For they have come to terms with it, in the sense that they have accepted it. Amanda pleads with Tom to stay home for the sake of his sister: "I don't say me because I'm old and don't matter" (GM 261; sc. 4). Similarly, Blanche tells Stanley that he cannot hurt her because "I'm not young and vulnerable any more" (SND 139; sc. 2).

However, this does in no way mean that they are no longer nostalgic for the glorious days of youth, romance, purity, and innocence. Rather, their nostalgia for youth is overshadowed by their desperate efforts for survival, and is engulfed by a more comprehensive sense of nostalgia for their glorious aristocratic past. The socioeconomic realities of the present are devastating for them, which they are neither prepared for nor can they adjust themselves to. Hence, the more they suffer, the stronger their attachment to that past becomes. Nancy Tischler emphasizes this point when she says that "Awareness of the past is always an element in Williams' plays. His characters live beyond the fleeting moments of the drama - back into a glowing past" (101).

The sense of engagement between the past and the present takes another significant dimension in the works of both Williams and Capote, in that the past has irrecoverable effects on the present. It has already been established that the bleak images of the present socioeconomic circumstances of the region are inexorably related to the destruction of the past. On this particular point there is a total agreement between Williams and Capote. Yet, it is on the individual level that differences between them emerge, particularly in their treatment of the dilemma of the Southern belle in the modern world which has

already been addressed. For, unlike Capote who merely suggests the decay and demise of the belle, Williams dramatizes her fall, focussing on the forces which were responsible for her destruction. The division within her between values and desire, idealism and practicality, and between body and soul is closely related to the past and the anachronistic tradition to which she pathetically tries to adhere. In other words, the past constantly haunts her, entrenching the division and enhancing the conflict which pave the way for her eventual destruction.

On the other hand, the belle is also a victim of the inescapable consequences of the realities of the past. The loss of Belle Reve through the "fornications" of her ancestors was disastrous for Blanche--it destroyed not only her fortunes and sense of security but also every thing that Belle Reve represents and which she holds dear. In this context, the latent corruption of the Old South was one of the significant factors which brought about its collapse and the destruction of its tradition and values. In exposing this corruption, Williams sheds light on an important side of the image of the South which we encounter in his plays.

The image of the South in Williams' plays combines mythical and historical dimensions, and is best described in his imaginary world, Two River County, whose roots, as has been suggested in the first chapter, can be traced back to a Williams' childhood experience--the tragic move of his family from Mississippi to St Louis--which has the resonance of the South's tragic loss of its edenic self. Corresponding with his characters' vacillation between the real world and the world of their imagination, the dichotomy between the mythical and historical dimensions of the South's image in Williams' work is also closely related to the roles he assumes in his plays. For it is possible to distinguish between two distinct personalities of Williams: the one is Williams the artist, the detached outside observer who remains remote enough to achieve

a basic level of objectivity which is a prerequisite for enduring art. The other is Williams the protagonist who takes the role of a fading Southern belle to whom the past is nothing less than edenic. In this context, it is noteworthy that Williams' identification with his heroines, particularly with Blanche and Alma, is of paramount importance because it sheds light on his sensibility as a homosexual and is particularly crucial for his presentation of homosexuality, which will be addressed in the next chapter.

So, conjured in the midst of a bleak present, the past, real or imagined, is not only sweetened in the remembering, but also it is idealized and its mere possibilities are regarded as achievements. This image of the South is in line with that in what Joseph K. Davis calls "the popular imagination", central to which is the "romantic idealization" of the past.[32] Yet, there are fundamental differences between the mythical aspect of Williams' South and the popular Southern myth. On the one hand, although it is not unfamiliar in Williams' plays, the tendency to idealize the past is not the central fact in them--it is merely an aspect of Williams' multi-faceted attitude toward the South's past. It is noteworthy that it is only in The Glass Menagerie that we encounter such an untainted romantic image of the past. By contrast, in A Streetcar Named Desire, as Boxill says, "The past was far from ideal when it was the present", for Blanche's ancestral home, Belle Reve "was lost, not because the Confederacy was defeated in the Civil War, but because the men of her family squandered their fortune on debauchery" (5).

On the other hand, according to the popular myth, as Davis states, the Old South was a "region . . . guided by elegant gentlemen of noble birth and heraldic virtues. . . . a land of nobility and courtly manners" (202). Williams' Southern characters are mainly of a high social, aristocratic background. Yet, Williams is not keen to stress the mythical notion of the nobility of the

aristocratic, planter class. On the contrary, in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, he presents Big Daddy as a great, self-made planter. And this demonstrates that Williams is not wholly supportive of the Southern myth, and that his view of the South's past is, more or less, in line with the historical view which has been established in the "Introduction".

Williams' parody of the pretentiousness of Southern tradition, his condemnation of Southern bigotry, violence and racism, and his dramatization of the decadence of the Southern belle undermine the illusions which are central to the popular myth and reinforce the historical dimension of the Old South he presents. On the whole, Williams believes, as has been suggested earlier, that the South had a unique culture and way of life and a genuine tradition and code of manners and values "which, untainted, should pervade our world" (Nelson 252). And it is out of love and admiration for that culture that he, as he repeatedly states, writes about the forces which were most responsible for its destruction.

By contrast, the image of the South in Capote's work is far less complicated and, unlike Williams', is not incorporated in an imaginary world. The South we encounter in Capote is mediated through the recollections of his young characters who reflect on their childhood experiences and concerns, which echo Capote's. The autobiographical element is so pervasive in most of his Southern works that critical detachment is abandoned. Concentrating more on Capote's memories of life in the rural South where he spent most of his childhood, they lack socioeconomic and historical density, and, consequently, qualify as local color fiction. It is mainly, if not exclusively, in Other Voices, Other Rooms that Capote presents an image of the South which combines mythical and historical dimensions. The past is idealized, and its destruction is lamented, while the South's racism and injustice against the blacks are entirely exposed. The link between the destruction of the past and the deterioration and

collapse of the present is also firmly established. Yet, Capote does not deal with the forces which destroyed the South on the scale and in the fashion Williams does. His penchant for the Gothic style is one reason--the destruction of the Skully's Landing and the Cloud Hotel and the prestigious, aristocratic way of life associated with them is thereby engulfed in mystery.

Capote's weak emotional association and personal identification with the South provide another clue for the little amount of work he devotes to the history of the region. Yet, Other Voices, Other Rooms remains an outstanding piece of work in which he takes the South's concerns much to heart, and which could be considered as a token of gratitude to the region which gave him literary prominence through his association with it. In the final analysis, as Southern writers, both Williams and Capote had similar familial and cultural backgrounds, and both drew on similar Southern subject matter, which explains the various links in their presentations of the South. Yet, dissimilarities and divergences are inevitable because they reflect the tremendous differences between their sensibilities and outlooks as artists. After all, their works are not authentic records of the history of the South. Rather, they are artistic representations of the complexities of the region's history and life which combined the homogeneous and the antithetical and are, therefore, an invaluable contribution to Southern literature.

Notes to Chapter Three

[1] Helen Garson, Truman Capote (New York: Ungar, 1980) 13. Henceforth referred to as Garson.

[2] Richard Gray, The Literature of Memory: Modern Writers of the American South (London: Arnold, 1977) 258. Henceforth referred to as Gray.

[3] Roger Boxill, Tennessee Williams, eds. Bruce King and Adele King. Macmillan Modern Drama (London: Macmillan; Hamburg: Petersen-Macmillan, 1987) 15-6. Henceforth referred to as Boxill.

[4] Tennessee Williams, The Glass Menagerie, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1948; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 235; sc. 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[5] Normand Berlin, "Complementarity in A Streetcar Named Desire," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1977) 97. Henceforth referred to as Berlin.

[6] Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 119; sc. 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[7] Tennessee Williams, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof The Milk Train doesn't Stop Here Anymore The Night of the Iguana, by Williams (1956; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 39; act 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[8] Tennessee Williams, Memoirs (1976; London: Star-Allen, 1977) 85. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[9] Albert J. Devlin, ed., Conversations With Tennessee Williams, Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, gen. ed. Literary Conversation Series (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1986) 99. Henceforth referred to as Devlin.

[10] C. W. E. Bigsby, A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama, Vol. 2. Williams/Miller/ Albee (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 103. 3 Vols. 1982-1985. Henceforth referred to as Bigsby.

[11] Louis D. Rubin, JR., "Southern Literature: The Historical Image," South: Modern Southern Literature in its Cultural Setting, eds. Louis D. Rubin, Jr., and Roberts D. Jacobs (1961; Connecticut: Greenwood, 1974) 42. Henceforth referred to as Rubin.

[12] William J. Goode, World Revolution and Family Patterns (New York: n.p., 1963) 6. qtd. in Tom Scanlan, Family, Drama, and American Dreams (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1978) 3-4.

[13] Tom Scanlan, Family, Drama, and American Dreams (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1978) 27. Henceforth referred to as Scanlan.

[14] Britton J. Harwood, "Tragedy As Habit: A Streetcar Named Desire," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1977) 114. Henceforth referred to as Britton.

[15] Peggy W. Prenshaw, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams", Tennessee Williams: 13 Essays, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1980) 4. Henceforth referred to as Prenshaw.

[16] Nancy M. Tischler, Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan (New York: Citadel, 1961) 96-7. Henceforth referred to as Tischler.

[17] Irving Malin, New American Gothic, gen. ed. Harry T. Moore, Crosscurrents Modern Critiques (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1962) 50. Henceforth referred to as Malin.

[18] Truman Capote, Breakfast at Tiffany's (1958; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982) 69. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[19] Truman Capote, The Grass Harp (1951; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966) 8. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[20] William L. Nance, The Worlds of Truman Capote (1970; London: cadler and Boyars, 1973) 92. Henceforth referred to as Nance.

[21] Rebecca West, "A Grave and Reverend Book," Truman Capote's In Cold Blood: A Critical Handbook, ed. Irving Malin (California: Wadsworth, 1968) 92. Henceforth referred to as West.

[22] Truman Capote, In Cold Blood (1966; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1984) 3-4. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[23] Richard M. Weaver, "Aspects of the Southern Philosophy," Southern Renascence: The Literature of the Modern South, eds. Louis D. Rubin, Jr. and Robert D. Jacobs (Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1953) 22. Henceforth referred to as Weaver.

[24] Truman Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms (1948; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 220. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[25] Tennessee Williams, Battle of Angels, Battle of Angels The Glass Menagerie A Streetcar Named Desire (New York: New Directions, 1971) 45.

[26] R. H. Gardner, The Splintered Stage: The Decline of the American Theater (New York: Macmillan, 1965) 116-7. Henceforth referred to as Gardner.

[27] John M. Roderick, "From 'Tarantula Arms' to 'Delta Robbia Blue': The Tennessee Williams Tragicomic Transit Authority", Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1977) 118. Henceforth referred to as Roderick.

[28] Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams: His Life and Work (London: Owen, 1961) 256. Henceforth referred to as Nelson.

[29] Arthur Ganz, "Tennessee Williams: Desperate Morality," Tennessee Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Stephen S. Stanton. Twentieth Century Views (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Spectrum-Prentice-hall, 1977) 123. Henceforth referred to as Ganz.

[30] Jacob H. Adler, "Tennessee Williams' South: The Culture and the Power," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1977) 49. Henceforth referred to as Adler.

[31] Donald Pease, "Reflections on Moon Lake: The Presences of the Playwright," Tennessee Williams: 13 Essays, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1980) 272. Henceforth referred to as Pease.

[32] Joseph K. Davis, "Landscapes of the Dislocated Mind in Williams' The Glass Menagerie," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1977) 201-2. Henceforth referred to as Davis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Homosexuality Versus Southernness

Williams' and Capote's presentations of sexuality in its various manifestations and associations, intriguing, elusive, and often paradoxical as they are, assume the significance of an ideology. They are consistent yet varying; intricate while sometimes elusively simple, subtle, and straightforward. Nonetheless, sexuality always features as a basic theme, a central leitmotif, or quite often as a correlative of other literary concerns. The significance of this investigation does not arise merely from the presence of sexuality in their works, from their concerns, as individual writers, with sexuality, or from the similarities and differences between their presentations of this theme. Rather, it is the combination of all these important factors together with the strikingly common background which they shared--one to whose multi-faceted aspects sexuality was inextricably linked--that make this investigation of their presentations of sexuality crucial for any attempt at a comparative critical evaluation of their works.

For not only were Williams and Capote contemporary, Southern, and homosexual writers--they also shared almost identical childhood experiences and a common cultural and familial background, the paradoxical, emotional, and sexual implications of which had a lasting impression on their sensibilities, and were later to be one of the most distinguishing features of their personal and literary concerns. Therefore, before addressing myself to this topic, it is necessary to examine their backgrounds in order to decide the most relevant factors which were decisive in shaping their personal and literary outlooks, and most influential on their approach to and treatment of sexuality in their works.

The significance of the common Southern background of Williams and Capote is far greater than that which the mere fact of their belonging to the South suggests. For both of them descended from families which could claim a prominent role in the establishment of the Old South, and which enjoyed the myth in which its history was shrouded. This is particularly interesting because Williams and Capote were brought up in a typically traditional Southern atmosphere which inevitably had a tremendous influence on them. On the one hand, the paradoxical combination of Cavalierness and Puritanism in Williams' family was, as has been suggested in the first chapter, one of the most crucial factors which shaped his character and, as he repeatedly admits, had an unparalleled influence on his art.

Similarly, much of Capote's character and art reveal the influence of those years which he spent as a child in the South. And despite his ostensible refusal to be associated with the South, and the variety of the literary genres and styles that he adopted, the South was one of the most prominent landmarks of his mental, emotional, and literary geography. The fact that the South and, particularly, his childhood experience there are passionately immortalized in some of his most enduring literary works shows stronger ties with the South than is publicly admitted.

The typical Southern atmosphere in which Capote and Williams were brought up was enriched by the tremendous influence of "One of the best-known and beloved Southern institutions . . . the black 'mammy'", a "nurse" who helped "raise the children".[1] This is particularly interesting because as has been established in the "Introduction", the blacks, who were notorious for their romanticism and humour, had a far-reaching influence on the mentality and sensibility of the white Southerner. As has also been suggested in the first chapter, having lived in the South with his mother's relatives, the Faulks, Capote had "the privilege of the companionship of a

black" nurse (Rudisill and Simmons 164), Corrie, the Faulks' "black house servant" whose influence on Capote was of paramount importance (Rudisill and Simmons 136). For Capote was, like all members of the Faulk household, with the exception of Sook, attracted to Corrie because she was, as Rudisill and Simmons say, their "magic carpet into the wonderful world of black heritage that was closed to most white children. The ordinary became wondrous when perceived through her rich imagination" (159).

However, the peculiar character of Sook, Capote's most favourite companion, made the combination of her and Corrie's influence on him rather unusual. For, dwelling on "the least attractive side of the South's history", Sook was "full of hatred for blacks and Yankees, carrying within her all the resentment her father felt after the defeat" (Rudisill and Simmons 111). As a little child, Capote was the only one who was interested in Sook's bizarre stories about the atrocities committed against the blacks: "beatings, lynchings, castrations, and rapes" (Rudisill and Simmons 112). Corrie was both offended by and resentful of Sook's behaviour not only because of her overt prejudice and racism, but also because of the negative and unhealthy impact it would have on Capote's mentality. And her objections were always certain to be met by Sook's furious outrage, which Capote was always against because he was also attracted to Corrie and sympathetic to her (Rudisill and Simmons 113). In other words, Capote was profoundly influenced by all aspects of the traditional, rural, Southern culture and had a first-hand knowledge of its extreme, fascinating and horrifying contradictions and paradoxes.

Similarly, Williams had "the privilege of the companionship" of Ozzie, a black girl who, as Benjamin Nelson says, "had taken care of him and Rose throughout their early childhood".[2] In his Memoirs (M), Williams attributes the happiness and innocence of the first eight years of his childhood to his Dakin

grandparents and to "the wild and sweet half-imaginary world in which my sister and our beautiful black nurse Ozzie existed".[3] Although Williams does not elaborate on Ozzie's influence on him, this statement underlines it by putting it on a par with his grandparents', which was tremendous. He points out that it was their "devotion" to Ozzie which made him and his sister "fond of the blacks" (256). Yet, as has been mentioned in the first chapter, his sense of guilt for Ozzie's departure had a lasting impression on his sensibility as an individual and artist, and, as Nelson says, "evolved over the years into a definite abhorrence of racial discrimination" (18).

Viewed from a wider historical perspective, Capote's and Williams' "abhorrence" of racism, which reflects the influence of their long attachment to black nurses, had significant historical and cultural implications which were inextricably linked with their personal and literary concerns. For Williams and Capote were brought up in a traditional Southern atmosphere in which historical consciousness of the past--which included black involvement at every turn--was a primary element. They certainly witnessed various forms of racial discrimination against the blacks, and Williams, as has been mentioned in the first chapter, unwittingly and rather unconsciously committed one which cost him the companionship of his black nurse. Hence, Capote's and Williams' abhorrence of racial discrimination was also a rebellion against all aspects of Southern history, culture and tradition which had been related to the abominable institution of slavery: prejudice, violence, corruption and moral disintegration. And in this context, even their homosexuality could be seen as linked to that rebellion.

Indeed, rebellion is a key word which best describes Williams' and Capote's reaction to the circumstances of their childhood. The notion that they grew up in the rural South and had the privilege of being cared for by a black nurse gives the impression that they had a happy childhood. Yet, Capote's

repeated statement that "my family has been what I consider just my friends"[4], and Blanche's--Williams' spokeswoman's--most memorable line: "I've always depended on the kindness of strangers"[5] reflect their deep sense of alienation and estrangement. For an examination of their familial circumstances and the shattering impact of their parental conflicts shows that their childhoods were commonly characterized by pain, agony, and alienation.

On the one hand, tension and uneasiness were characteristic of the relationship between Williams' parents who were completely dissimilar in almost every thing. His father was "a blunt, stocky man with a quick and violent temper . . . A proud and hard man, he liked drink and rough humour" (Nelson 15). By contrast, his mother was "a small, bird-like, beautiful young woman, composed and proper to the point of puritanism" (Nelson 16). These dissimilarities created a gulf between Edwina and Cornelius Williams--one which grew wider and had a shattering impact on their children who lived in a divided family. Unhappy with his wife and being a travelling salesman, Williams' father found it more convenient to spend most of his time on the road, much to the relief of his son who did not feel at ease in his father's presence.

Obviously, the sense of alienation which characterized both Williams' life and art started at an early stage of his life. He thinks of himself as being "the victim of a particularly troubled adolescence", which he attributes to the problems which were deeply "rooted in childhood" (M 11). Yet, distinction must be made between two phases through which his childhood passed and both of which were marked by incidents which were particularly formative of his character and influential on his art. The first phase covers his first eight years in Mississippi when the care of his grandparents and the companionship of his sister, Rose, and the black nurse, Ozzie, made "them the most joyously

innocent" years of his life (M 11). However, the happiness of Williams' early childhood was short-lived--a series of incidents had a drastic and devastating impact on him and created in him the "obsession that to desire a thing or to love a thing intensely is to place yourself in a vulnerable position, to be a possible, if not a probable loser of what you most want".[6]

Benjamin Nelson points out that the first phase of Williams' childhood was "marked by two particular incidents": the departure of the black nurse and "a serious case of diphtheria which left him partially paralysed and with a kidney ailment" (18). Long and severe as it was, the illness was also one of the crucial incidents which affected almost every single aspect of his life. In retrospect, Williams says that it "was nearly fatal, and changed my nature as drastically as it did my physical health" (M 11). Yet, it was the change in his character which proved most permanent and influential on him. First and foremost, prior to his illness, Williams "had been a little boy with a robust, aggressive, almost bullying nature" (M 11). In a sense, he had the strong characteristics of his father--but these were tremendously softened during his long confinement to bed: "my mother's overly solicitous attention planted in me the makings of a sissy, much to my father's discontent. I was becoming a decided hybrid, different from the family line of frontiersmen-heroes of east Tennessee" (M 12). This was to become, as we shall see later, a crucial turning point in his life.

The second phase of Williams' childhood began with what he calls, in his book, Where I Live: Selected Essays (SE), the "tragic move"[7] of his family to St Louis--a move which, as Roger Boxill says, "seemed like an expulsion from Eden".[8] The new atmosphere was both unpleasant and hostile to the young Williams--he was persecuted not only by the neighbourhood children, but also by his cruel father who called him "Miss Nancy" (For. SBY 10). Life in St Louis was dominated by the presence of his father whose repugnant

attitude towards his son made home "not a very pleasant refuge" (SE 59). Nelson believes that Williams' hard father "terrified his young son who saw him as the personification and culmination of the crudity and insensitivity into which he, his sister and his mother had fallen" (20-1).

However, although his mother was tender, caring, and loving, and of highly genteel manners, her unwittingly strict, sexually-fastidious, puritanical attitude had an equally damaging effect on her children. In this context, Williams' plight was inseparable from his sister's. For Rose was his ideal, tender, and imaginative playmate who shared with him his fanciful and imaginary world, and whose company compensated for all the agonies he suffered at home and outside. Hence, her sudden withdrawal from his world at her puberty was shocking and shattering to him. In his short story, "The Resemblance between a Violin Case and a Coffin" (RVC), Williams writes about that traumatic experience in the most wistful terms, describing the "wound" which turned him "inward".[9] For it was his puritanical mother and grandmother who created this barrier between him and Rose and conspired to "increase it", although Rose "might have fled back into the more familiar country of childhood if she had been allowed to" (RVC 272). At this stage Williams' alienation from the world was firmly established and his withdrawal into his own private world completed. In other words, he started writing: "At the age of fourteen I discovered writing as an escape from a world of reality in which I felt acutely uncomfortable" (For. SBY 9).

Moreover, Williams' mother's puritanical attitude and narrow-minded interference in his and Rose's relationships had an irrecoverable damage on the courses of their lives. In his Memoirs, Williams recalls his "closest childhood friendship" with Hazel Kramer which "ripened into a romantic attachment" (15). Hazel occupied a special place in Williams' life, and her name strikes a

passionate and elegiac chord in his memories. He speaks of "dear Hazel" and his "great love for Hazel" (16). For not only was she "a loving girl-friend" (29), but also "the great extrafamilial love of my life" (15). Yet, from the beginning Williams' mother "did not approve of" his "attachment to Hazel", nor did she want him "to have any friends. The boys were too rough for her delicate son, Tom, and the girls were, of course, too common" (15). Williams' romance with Hazel lasted for many years during which time they were "high-school sweethearts who had planned to go away to College together before C. C. [Williams' father], disapproving of the match, prevented them" (Boxill 11).

The significance of Williams' romance with Hazel, which was a prominent landmark in his emotional life, is that it sheds an illuminating light on his sexual sensibility and orientation. First and foremost, it was the longest, warmest, and most serious love affair among Williams' few relationships with girls. For although his father thwarted their plans to go to college together, Williams was so infatuated with Hazel that when she was "at the University of Wisconsin", he wrote to her "proposing marriage", but was utterly disappointed by her negative response (M 25).

Given the fact that homosexuality was one of the most distinguishing features of Williams' personal and literary concerns, it is not only the romance itself, but also its depth, manifestations, and implications for Williams that are particularly crucial for this investigation. For this romance was Williams' first blooming heterosexual relationship. In retrospect, he admits that "despite the homosexual loves which began years later", Hazel maintained her special status in his heart as "the great extrafamilial love of [his] life" (M 15). Hence, his statement that his love for Hazel was what "the Victorians would describe as pure" (M 29), cannot eclipse the significance of this romance for his sexual sensibility. Williams' sexual desire for Hazel was never wanting: "I believe it was at puberty that I first knew that I had sexual desire for Hazel" (M 18). He

describes how once his mere consciousness of "her bare shoulders" made him feel "a genital stirring" (18), and at another how putting his "arm around those delicious shoulders", he "'came' in" his "white flannels" (18).

Williams profound love and desire for Hazel were confirmed by the devastating impact of Hazel's "unexpected marriage" on him: "I felt as though the sky had fallen on me" (M 38). It was a shocking experience which contributed immensely to the "cardiovascular condition . . . which has remained with me ever since, in greatly varying degrees" (M 38). This incident cannot be viewed in isolation from the narrow-minded interference of his parents in his and Rose's "friendships and little romances"--his mother's puritanical attitude towards Rose's romances had even "more tragic consequences" (M 15). For Rose was "a very normal--but highly sexed--girl who was tearing herself apart mentally and physically by those repressions imposed upon her by Miss Edwina's monolithic Puritanism" (M 119). Hence, given Williams' strong attachment to his sister, it is a particularly damaging coincidence for him that when he "returned home" from the hospital after the heart attack he suffered, Rose "had her first mental disturbance of an obvious nature" (M 39). Later, during Williams' absence, Rose was subjected to a lobotomy operation the news of which came to him "as a shock from which he never fully recovered" (Boxill 12). The depth of Williams' and Rose's plights and anguish was reflected by Rose's most painful and memorable words: "wandering into" Williams' "small room" after he returned from the hospital, she said: "let's all die together" (M 39).

Williams' traumatic and devastating childhood experience had an immense impact on the course of his life. Given this and bearing in mind that Williams' homosexual affairs began years after his intimate romance with Hazel, one is bound to entertain the idea that Williams was initially

heterosexual and that his homosexuality was, to a great extent, a product of his circumstances. This idea is supported by Tom Buckley who believes that it was "the sum total of influence on him [that] led Tennessee to become homosexual".[10] In a sense, Williams' homosexuality represented and entailed a radical shift in his sexual preference, sensibility, and orientation. And, to some extent, this shift was an unconscious reaction to and an act of rebellion against the harsh world which alienated him and the "sum total" of those cruel circumstances, prominent among which was the familial atmosphere in which he was brought up. For his parents' relationship, which was characterized by mutual hostility and animosity, was a bleak parody of heterosexuality. At the same time, his parents' conventional beliefs and their insular and cruel attitude towards Williams and Rose destroyed any chance of his reconciliation with the world they represented. For, as Albert J Devlin says, "In part at least, Williams' homosexuality was the signature of the outsider"[11], a signature which he carried throughout his life because of what Gore Vidal describes as the relentless persecution he suffered as a writer at the hands of literary critics because of his homosexuality[12], and which, as we shall see later, characterizes his homosexual characters.

Most pertinent to this idea is the very fact of Williams' writing. For it was the relentless pressure he sustained at home and outside that triggered in him the urge to withdraw into his own imaginative world. And in doing so, he established himself as an outsider, whose art was "not only an escape but a vital attempt to strike out against reality, to meet and deal with it with all the tools and anger at his command" (Nelson 26). Hence the inextricable link between his personal and literary concerns. For as much as his homosexuality was an act of rebellion, so was his writing.

If Williams' art reflects his sensibility and bears the marks of his traumatized inner psyche, the same can be said, even more emphatically, about

Capote's. For although their pitiful familial and childhood experiences were similar in almost every aspect and could be described in analogously agonizing terms, Capote's suffering was far greater. Like Williams, Capote was the victim of mismatched parents whose marriage had, from its inception, the seeds of its destruction. Arch Persons and Lilie Mae were interested in each other: "Arch in Lillie Mae for her good looks, and Lillie Mae in Arch for the money and social prestige that his name represented" (Rudisill and Simmons 73). Hence, she did not "worry about his lack of looks. Money and class always meant a great deal to her" (Rudisill and Simmons 75).

This having been the basis for Lillie Mae's attraction to Arch, her interest in him was quickly on the wane after they spent all the money he got from his family for his marriage in a few months on the expensive way of life that they led. In other words, as his money ran out, so did her interest in him. And being a social climber, Lillie Mae was soon "unhappy with what she had, and convinced that life would be better elsewhere or with a different man" (Rudisill and Simmons 87). Her unhappiness with Arch turned into a deep-seated hatred after it turned out that she was pregnant with their only son, Truman. And if she had had sufficient money, she would have had an abortion because she did not "want his baby" (Rudisill and Simmons 88). The fact that even before he was born, Truman was unwanted by his mother was an ominous indication of what awaited him in this world.

Unlike Williams whose troubles started at a relatively later stage in his childhood, not only was Capote unwanted before he was born, but also when he "finally did arrive", his mother looked upon him as a "terrible nuisance and an unacceptable obstacle that threatened her carefully constructed plans for moving into the Social Register" (Rudisill and Simmons 90). And unlike Edwina Williams who, despite her narrow-mindedness, was a passionately

dedicated mother, Capote's mother's self-indulgence and egocentricism obliterated in her the sense of motherhood: "she intensely disliked the interruption in her life that motherhood involved" (Rudisill and Simmons 90).

Moreover, unlike Williams' puritanical mother, Capote's was a highly-sexed, deeply-passionate, and self-indulgent woman: "the sight of an attractive, well-dressed man, still put goose bumps up and down the inside of Lillie Mae' thigh" (Rudisill and Simmons 208). This is particularly significant because Lillie Mae's sexual desire and social ambitions contributed immensely to her separation from Arch and to the misery of her only son. For since she and Arch "were mismatched sexually", and since Arch was overwhelmed by the intensity of his wife's sexual passion and simply could not cope with it", she pursued gratification of her desire undeterred (Rudisill and Simmons 87). She "acted as though she were not married and certainly not the mother of a small child" (Rudisill and Simmons 206).

Although Capote's father was not hard and cruel as Williams' was, he was not a devoted father. His was an extremely intricate and untenable position, as he tried hard to achieve a financial breakthrough and win back the heart of his disenchanted wife, both of which agonizingly eluded him. At the same time, Arch was not ignorant of her affairs--he knew that she was "cheating on him" (Rudisill and Simmons 213), and as Gerald Clarke says, "in the seven years they were man and wife, Arch claimed to have counted twenty-nine such affairs".[13] Yet, he remained quiet because, as Rudisill and Simmons believe, "he never had the courage to confront her directly on the matter" (213). While this reason reflects his weak position with Lillie Mae, it does not fully account for his silence and, rather, indifference to her affairs all those years. A more plausible reason is presented by Clarke who suggests that Arch was an immoral conman who "was not above using them [his wife's lovers] to help him turn a dollar. When they first married, for example, he persuaded her to

cash bad checks for him, employing her good looks as a come-on" (13). If Arch was too degenerate and weak to challenge his wife for her love affairs, she was too self-indulgent, sensual, and disappointed in her marriage to be ashamed of them, either. As time passed on, their relationship grew tenuous. By the time Truman was six, frustrated and restless, Lillie Mae was on her way to New York seeking a new life and leaving her only son with her relatives in the South where he spent about five years before she would take him to live with her.

So, it was in this familial atmosphere, which was heavily fraught with frustration and hatred, that Capote, the unwanted boy, spent the most sensitive and formative years of his childhood. He was born into a family which had already been too fractured to accommodate him with the combined parental care he needed. Unhappy and frustrated with each other, his parents were too preoccupied with their own affairs to look after him. Even "When he was with them, they would sometimes lock him in their hotel room at night, instructing the staff not to let him out even if he screamed . . . until they came back (Clarke 14). In doing so, Capote's parents reinforced his "greatest anxiety" as a child--a term coined by psychologists as "the original fear"--that is of being "deserted by his parents" (Clarke 14). Capote's loneliness was also compounded by the fact that he, unlike Williams whose sister, Rose, was a wonderful companion and an ideal playmate, was without a brother or a sister.

Capote's intense loneliness, the cruelty of his parents, his devastating sense of being unwanted, as well as his long attachment to Sook and the other women in the Faulk household all had a permanent impact on his character and behaviour. Like Williams, he was, as Clarke says, "regarded as a sissy" (22) not only because "with his white-blond hair and sky-blue eyes, he was pretty enough to be a girl" (22), but also because of his "effeminate, girlish

behaviour" (42). Capote had to pay heavily for the circumstances from which he had already suffered a great deal. And like Williams, he was persecuted by and alienated from the outside world, and, ironically, relentlessly antagonized by his mother who considered his effeminate behaviour "embarrassing and intolerable" (Clarke 42). Simultaneously, his mother's sisters "refused even to let their children play with him because of his 'sissyish traits'" (Clarke 42). Therefore, his isolation was tremendously intensified, and his psyche deeply wounded, and as "the years passed, the differences between him and other boys became even more pronounced" (Clarke 42).

On the other hand, Capote's mother was greatly concerned about and dismayed by her son's effeminacy: "the elfin Truman--small, thin, and pretty--hardly satisfied her requirements of what a 'real son' ought to look like" (Rudisill and Simmons 236). Hence, she spared no effort to find a remedy, taking him to "psychiatrists in hopes of finding a cure, a drug or therapy that would turn him into a real boy" (Clarke 43). His bleak childhood experience had its toll on him and, like Williams, he found himself totally uncomfortable in the harsh world of tough boys. On the one hand, "perhaps as an anodyne for parental rejection, he retreated into an inner world of fantasy and dreams. A precocious child, he began his writing career at the age of eight" (Inge 112).

However, Capote's withdrawal into his own world was, unlike Williams', drastic and had crucial formative effects on his character. Clarke, his main biographer, suggests that "for much of his childhood, until he was nine or so, he found being a boy so demanding and burdensome that he actually wanted to be a girl" (43)--a wish which was later to be at the centre of his short story "Dazzle". This was indicative of his sensibility which, combined with the impact of his later circumstances, had a far-reaching influence on his sexual orientation. For when he was ten years old, his mother took him to New York to live with her and her new husband Joe Capote, whose name Truman

adopted. Yet, although Truman was happy to be reunited with his mother, his journey to New York did not realize his dreams and expectations. Like Williams' move to St Louis, it was fraught with disappointment, frustration, and intricate problems which intensified his sense of emotional neglect and loneliness. Although the urban atmosphere posed some difficulties for the young Capote, it was his mother's attitude towards him which disappointed him most. For not only was she so devoted to her new husband that "there was little room in her life for Truman", but also she "regarded him with ambivalence: she loved him and she did not love him; . . . she was proud to be his mother and she was ashamed of him" (Clarke 40, 41).

Arising, most plausibly, from the fact that Truman was Arch's unwanted son, and from her overriding concern and anxiety about his effeminacy, the ambivalence of Truman's mother--who adopted a new name, Nina--was shattering for him. She treated him in a deliberately cruel manner: "She nagged him, bullied him, and belittled him" (Clarke 43). Hence, Truman's frustration and sense of loneliness were complete. And Nina's relentless pressure on him only aggravated his suffering and pushed him further in the direction which she desperately and feverishly wanted him to change. Moreover, Capote's experience in the Trinity School which he attended in New York had a crucial influence on the development of his sexual orientation. One of the teachers used to take him to a movie theatre, on their way home, and "while the teacher fondled him, Truman would masturbate the teacher" (Clarke 44). Clarke refrains from elaborating on the effect of what he calls "that tawdry little scene" on a boy like Truman, and says that it "was, at the very least, a sorry initiation into the mysteries of sex" (44). Perhaps the full dimensions and implications of that episode were vague to Capote, but it was certainly an initiation into homosexuality. His mother was not aware of that, yet, she was

worried that although Truman spent three years in that school, he "was not becoming the ordinary, masculine boy she wanted him to be" (Clarke 44). Therefore, she decided to send him to a military school which, she believed, would transform him into a tough, masculine boy.

However, Nina's scheme turned out to be a dismal failure--as Clarke says,

> If Nina had deliberately wanted to encourage his manifest homosexual tendencies, she could not, in fact, have chosen a better place than a military school. . . . The smallest and prettiest boy in his class, Truman was looked upon as sexual prey by several cadets . . . and when the light went out he was occasionally forced into some stronger boy's bed. (45)

Obviously, Capote's experience at the military school inevitably had a lasting influence on his homosexual orientation. It was decisive and final in the sense that it was the culmination of his harsh familial, personal, emotional, and social circumstances which had conditioned his character and influenced his sensibility and sexual orientation. Having "had a softness in him, a sort of dependency" (Rudisill and Simmons 21), and been chronically denied love by those who were closest to him, Capote desperately needed the love and "kindness of strangers". Once he found love, he was too elated by the sense of relief and release that it created in him to question its nature. Hence the irrationality of love which he portrays, particularly in Other Voices, Other Rooms, and hence his motto: "Our lives . . . are meant to be nothing but a series of love affairs . . . nothing more" (Rudisill and Simmons 21).

Capote's homosexuality started at a relatively early age: "I began going to bed with men very early. Without fear and without shame. I felt whole and healthy for the first time. I made them happy, and made myself happy" (Rudisill and Simmons 20-1). This statement manifests not only the self-expression and self-realization which Capote discovered in his homosexuality,

but also the straightforward manner in which he viewed it. He was fully aware of his homosexual orientation--Clarke says that by "his mid-teens Truman knew who he was; indeed, he probably had known, unconsciously at least, since he was a child", and that he repeatedly admitted that he "always had a marked homosexual preference" (62). In this context, the difference between Capote and Williams lies not only in Capote's comparatively early homosexual preference and practice, but also in the fact that, unlike Williams', Capote's love affairs were exclusively homosexual.

It is noteworthy that the only girl Capote constantly accompanied during his childhood years in Monroeville was Harper Lee, or Nelle, a tomboy, next-door neighbour. Despite the stark difference between their characters, they remained close because they were both alienated and lonely (Clarke 22). Yet, their friendship did not develop, as Williams' and Hazel's did, into a love affair. In other words, unlike Williams, Capote neither harboured heterosexual feelings nor did he have any heterosexual experience. However, his aunt Marie Rudisill suggests that he once told her: "I thought of the permanence of marriage and perhaps having a child, the joy of that" (20). Yet, by that time the influence of the circumstances which he had undergone was final on his character, and his parents' marriage, which symbolized to him the cruelty of heterosexuality, was too negative an example for him to follow: "I detest men who marry and have their little affairs on the side. . . . The marriage of a virile woman and an effeminate man only causes the strength of one to be sucked out by the other. It is not worth it" (20).

On the whole, although the circumstances of Capote's childhood had a tremendous formative influence on his character and sexual inclinations, his homosexuality was not an unconscious reaction to those circumstances. This forges a significant link with Williams in the sense that their homosexuality was, to a great extent, a rebellion against all the circumstances they suffered

from. For Capote, like Williams, knew only too well that being a homosexual was a tremendous defiance of the prevalent moral, cultural, and social conventions. His aunt once warned him that he was against the tide: "you can't buck and defy society, Truman"--nonetheless, he declared his position clearly and unambiguously: "I want my place in society--mine, not theirs" (Rudisill and Simmons 19). In other words, Capote's homosexuality represented not only his sexual preference but also his protest against society which had long alienated him. Linked with this was his writing which was also, like Williams', both a refuge from loneliness and a protest against alienation and estrangement. Capote could not have made this connection between his writing and homosexuality more clearly and emphatically--at the age of sixteen, he once told his aunt: "I will be a brilliant, delicate, sissy, queer, homo--or shall I be formal, darling, and say 'homosexual'" (Rudisill and Simmons 21). Here he was not so much prophetic about his homosexuality and writing, or the link between them as merely declaring his position as an outsider whose homosexuality and art were, like Williams', manifestations of his alienation.

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This has so far been an examination of the major aspects of Williams' and Capote's backgrounds which had a great influence on their sexual orientation as well as their presentations of sexuality in their literary works. It is clear by now that despite some inevitable differences between their familial, social, and personal circumstances, their childhood and boyhood experiences were characterized by parental cruelty and rejection, emotional deprivation, and a deep sense of loneliness and alienation. They both were caught in the midst of parental conflicts of which sexuality was a crucial element.

Consequently, they were both victims of the failure of their parents' marriages which were a ludicrous parody of conjugality and heterosexuality. At the same time, rejected at home for being delicate, Williams and Capote were also ostracized by society for being "sissy" and because their soft characters were in sharp contrast with the conventional notions of masculinity. In other words, they were outsiders who belonged nowhere, or, in a key Williams' word, they were "fugitives" whose homosexuality was the symbol of their alienation.

So, not only was Williams' and Capote's homosexuality characterized by contradiction--it was also in sharp contrast with the conservativeness inherent in their Southern background. And it is this combination of contradictions which most plausibly accounts for the conflictual elements in their canons. In the previous chapters, it has been demonstrated that each writer's styles, moods, characters, treatment of Southern subject matter are marked by division, dichotomy, and conflict. Hence, in this chapter I shall be exploring the extent and the manner in which that conflict features in their presentations of homosexuality.

In her book, New American Dramatists: 1960-1980, Ruby Cohn says that "The first anthology of gay plays, published only in 1979, classifies as gay any play whose central figure or figures are homosexual or one in which homosexuality is a main theme".[14] According to this criterion, Williams' and Capote's canons include many works which fall under that category. For although Cohn refers to drama only, the criterion applies to fiction. This is important because Williams, like Capote, wrote narrative prose and, although Williams' fiction was excluded in the previous chapters, it will be referred to in this investigation.

Although Capote and Williams started writing at an early age, it was not until after the Second World War that they established themselves not only as great writers of the American South, but also as homosexual artists. In his

book, Gay Fictions: Wilde to Stonewall: Studies in a Male Homosexual Literary Tradition, Claude J. Summers says:

> The milestone year 1948 saw not only the germination of the Mattachine Society and the publication of the Kinsey Report and The City and the Pillar, but also the appearance of Truman Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms and Tennessee Williams's One Arm and Other Stories.[15]

This coincidence was of paramount importance because Capote's and Williams' most famous homosexual works appeared at a transitional stage in the history of homosexuality not only as a social phenomenon, but also as a literary theme. This period spanned the late 1940's and late 1960's which witnessed "New York's Stonewall riots of 1969--which ushered in the contemporary gay liberation movement" (Summers 12). For although "discourse about homosexuality has until recently been fraught with all kinds of peril" (Summers 12), during this period there was some degree of tolerance of homosexuality compared with the intense hostility and criminality with which it had been regarded. This slight shift in the general attitude towards homosexuality had a substantial impact on its presentation in literature.

In her book, Truman Capote, Helen S. Garson says that as a literary topic, homosexuality was "considered taboo in American work prior to the advent of contemporary fiction. When the subject did appear in the past, it was carefully masked".[16] This underlines the tremendous bearing of the social atmosphere on the manner, style, and mode in which homosexuality is presented, and on the mood of the writer in which he conveys his theme as well. In the past he had a perilous and agonizing experience--he was torn between the overpowering artistic urge to express his feelings and the overriding concern to conceal them. In his book, Homosexuality and Literature 1890-1930, Jeffrey Meyers says that "The clandestine predilections

of homosexual novelists are both an obstacle and a stimulus to art, and lead to a creative tension between repression and expression".[17] In a sense, it is this "tension" which distinguishes the experience of the homosexual writer in the past from his contemporary counterpart's, and which accounts for the sharp contrast between their styles. For it forces the former to "find a language of reticence and evasion, obliqueness and indirection, to convey . . . [his] theme" (Meyers 1).

By contrast, the freedom which homosexuals achieved in the 1970's has had dramatic impact on their literature: "The emancipation of the homosexual has led, paradoxically, to the decline of his art" (Meyers 3). For the artistic qualities which had always been associated with it, and the imaginative and emotional link between the artist, the characters, and the reader have been abandoned in favour of articulate, overt, and vivid depiction of homosexual acts. In other words, the covert, allusive, and subtle expression of the repressed, pent-up homosexual feelings and emotions has given way to a rather factual presentation of the various forms of homosexuality which, as Meyers suggests, "appeal to sensation rather than to imagination" (3).

Although throughout their literary careers Williams and Capote witnessed both stages and were conditioned, to some extent, by the corresponding moods and circumstances, the chronological order of their works does not show strict adherence to the modes and styles which distinguished each stage. Certainly, there is a sharp contrast, as will be demonstrated later, between Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms and Answered Prayers, as well as between Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, on the one hand, and Suddenly Last Summer, Small Craft Warnings, and Vieux Carrè, on the other. Yet, when Other Voices, Other Rooms appeared, it was received with hostility not only because it was, as Garson suggests, "out of the main stream" American literature in the forties

which was "dominated by social consciousness" (13), but also, according to the moral standards of that time, it was dismissed as a decadent homosexual novel. Similarly, presenting homosexuality in terms of corruption, destruction, and cannibalism, Williams' Suddenly Last Summer represented a sharp deviation from the prevalent mode of his dramatic pattern.

In his essay, "Surviving with Grace: Tennessee Williams Today", W. Kenneth Holditch addresses the decline which characterized Williams' literary career in the late sixties and early seventies--a decline which assumes the significance of a phenomenon. For it synchronized with that in the careers of two of his most prominent contemporaries: Capote and Gore Vidal, who, with Williams, were a trio who "most immediately, for one reason or another, associate themselves in the reading public's minds".[18] Holditch considers various reasons for that decline, the most plausible of which is what he calls "the problem . . . of freedom", which is clearly related to their homosexuality: "Perhaps they produced better works when they had less freedom (or is the word *licence*), when they had to skirt certain issues rather than be blatant in their portrayals" (755). He refers to Eudora Welty's remarks "in an essay on E. M. Forster that his worst writing is that in which he deals directly with homosexuality" (755). Holditch believes that Williams, Capote, and Vidal

> seem often to be writing, in the way that Faulkner warned against, not of the heart but of the glands. Certainly Capote is guilty of this in Answered Prayers. . . . Williams too has fallen prey to the temptation to this excess in several recent works--Small Craft Warnings, for example, in which there is an indirect inordinate amount of dialogue devoted to the physical endowments of the young male lead and to his sexual talents. (756)

Significant as they are, Holditch's views are, nonetheless, only partly applicable, particularly as far as Williams is concerned. Capote's presentation of homosexuality could be easily said to have undergone a radical

change--Answered Prayers and Other Voices, Other Rooms are so different in every aspect that, viewed in isolation from the rest of Capote's works, they seem to belong to two different writers. In his "Preface" to Other Voices, Other Rooms Capote admits that having read it, he "was startled by its symbolic subterfuges. . . . it was as if I were reading the fresh-minted manuscript of a total stranger".[19] With the exception of the homosexual theme which both deal with, the two novels have little, if anything, in common. The oblique, symbolic, and metaphorical manner, through which Other Voices, Other Rooms lends itself to various levels of interpretations, stands in sharp contrast with the direct, factual presentation which characterizes Answered Prayers.

On the other hand, while in Other Voices, Other Rooms images, dreams and symbols are skillfully contrived to mask the theme of homosexuality, in Answered Prayers Capote burst the restrictive barriers and abandoned the reticent manner of his former novel. In his "Preface" to Music For Chameleons, Capote says that "Answered Prayers is not intended as an ordinary roman à clef, a form where facts are disguised as fiction. My intentions are the reverse: to remove disguises, not manufacture them".[20] The disguises which Capote removed are related not only to the manner in which homosexuality is presented, but also to the entire thematic structure and narrative of the novel. The result is a factual description and documentary accounts of actual stories of sexual indulgence concerning prominent figures on the national and international scenes. And apart from the change in the names and the identifying details of some of the real people around whom the stories within the novel are built, Answered Prayers is not different from In Cold Blood and other non-fictional works. This is confirmed by Capote himself who states in clear-cut terms that

> For four years, roughly from 1968 through 1972, I spent most of

> my time reading and selecting, rewriting and indexing my own letters, other people's letters, my diaries and journals (which contain detailed accounts of hundreds of scenes and conversations) for the years 1943 through 1965. I intended to use much of this material in a book I had long been planning: a variation on the nonfiction novel. (Pre. Music XIII)

However, unlike In Cold Blood which raised Capote to the pinnacle of success and fame, Answered Prayers "brought unexpected repercussions for him. His social standing changed, and he also became involved in some legal actions" (Garson 166-7). And as his editor, Joseph M. Fox states, in his "Editor's Note" on Answered Prayers, the publication of "La Côte Basque", one of the chapters in the novel, "produced an explosion which rocked that small society which Truman had set out to describe. Virtually every friend he had in this world ostracized him . . . and many of them never spoke to him again".[21] The furious public reaction to the three chapters which comprise the novel was, in Fox's opinion, "one of the reasons why he apparently stopped working . . . on Answered Prayers", which was supposed to contain more than seven chapters (XV). On the whole, not only do the undisguised factual stories of the novel, unceremonious treatment of the people involved and the naked revelation of episodes of their lives and their sexual indulgence, which could have otherwise remained a secret, explain some aspects of the decline which Holditch refers to--they also established the divorce between Capote, both as an individual and an artist, and the rest of the society. At another level, given the fact that only a few works in his canon deal directly with homosexuality, Answered Prayers, as will be demonstrated later, represents a sharp contrast and a sudden departure from the previous pattern--a departure which the "freedom", Holditch refers to, most plausibly accounts for.

By contrast, as has been suggested earlier, Holditch's remarks apply only partly to Williams' presentation of homosexuality. For while the image of the homosexual develops gradually throughout his canon, the chronological

order of his works does not fully explain the inconsistency and the contradiction of the manner in which homosexuality features in them. While the explicitness of Small Craft Warnings and, later, of Vieux Carré could be seen as reflecting the liberalism of the late sixties onwards, the same cannot be said of Suddenly Last Summer which was produced in 1958. For the horrifying terms in which homosexuality is presented in this play were too liberal for that time. Nor does the chronological order explain the overt and straightforward manner of "One Arm" and the masochism of "Desire and the Black Masseur", both of which appeared in 1948. Yet, in this context, distinction must be made between Williams' dramatic and fictional works which clearly follow two different strategies. For in his plays, perhaps due to the demands of the commercial theatre, Williams treats homosexuality with subtlety and demonstrates more reticence than he does in his fiction--Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a case in point. Nonetheless, both modes--the restraint and the lack of it--are manifestations of the homosexual's sensibility, for they reflect the inner stresses and strains which always threaten to break the outward facades of normality.

Manifest as it is in varying degrees in Williams' and Capote's works, this inner conflict underlines the inexorable relationship between their personal sensibilities and literary creativity. Bigsby believes that "Williams' homosexuality is clearly a key to his personal and dramatic concerns".[22] Bigsby concerns himself with Williams' drama only--nevertheless, his remark applies not only to Williams' fiction, but also to Capote's. For, as has been suggested earlier, Capote made that connection even before his literary career was properly established. In this context, the autobiographical element in Williams' and Capote's works is particularly significant. For not only does it reflect the link between their personal and literary concerns, but also the

manner in which it features in their works is strongly related to their presentations of homosexuality. In this respect, there is a tremendous difference between the two writers. On the one hand, Williams' experience as an individual had a far-reaching influence on his art, which reflects his sensibility and circumstances. And he believes that "All creative work is autobiographical" (Devlin 116), in the sense that it is an echo of the writer's sensibility which is greatly conditioned by personal experience and circumstances.

However, The Glass Menagerie and Vieux Carré stand out as an exception among Williams' drama because they are both memory plays which are clearly and most directly autobiographical. The similarity between Tom Wingfield and Williams, the young struggling poet, are only too apparent. Benjamin Nelson believes that "The Glass Menagerie is the most consciously biographical of all Williams' dramas" (94). Of course, Nelson does not refer to Vieux Carré because it was produced more than a decade after his book had appeared. Yet, Vieux Carré (VC) is equally, if not even more clearly autobiographical. The play is set in the "period between winter 1938 and spring 1939"[23], when Williams was struggling to establish his literary career. It is based on Williams' memory of the time he spent in New Orleans. In his description of the setting, Williams says: "I will describe the building as it was when I rented an attic room in the late thirties" (4), and refers to the Writer, who is homosexual, as "myself those many years ago" (4).

Both autobiographical as they are, The Glass Menagerie and Vieux Carré are also episodically linked. For while The Glass Menagerie represents Tom Wingfield's attempts to escape from the strangling web of his family and his mother, Vieux Carré is an episodic representation of Tom's itinerary life after his final exit in The Glass Menagerie. In other words, the Writer in Vieux Carré is Tom Wingfield after he walks out on his mother and sister. For when

the lonely and disturbed landlady, Mrs Wire, tells the Writer--who is about to leave for the West Coast in Sky's company--that she regards him as a son and pleads with him to stay with her, he refuses, saying: "I didn't escape from one mother to look for another" (77; sc. 8).

However, although The Glass Menagerie and Vieux Carré are clearly similar in many aspects, there is a fundamental difference between them, particularly as far as Tom Wingfield and the Writer are concerned. In his essay, "Sexual Roles in the Works of Tennessee Williams", Robert Emmet Jones emphasizes this point when he says: "Only in his first major play, The Glass Menagerie, is the sexual proclivity of the main characters muted".[24] Jones' remarks are particularly true with regards to Tom to whose sexual orientation and concerns there is no reference. Yet, this is not the case with Laura whose character is based on that of Williams' sister Rose who, as has been quoted earlier, was "highly sexed" (M 119). For Laura's "Inferiority Complex" (GM 298; sc. 7) is rooted in her sexual frustration, and her crippling and her glass collection are symbols of her emotional fragility and emotional arrest which Jim O'Connor clearly exposes. And although this play does not deal with sexuality in the overt manner Williams' other plays emphatically do, it underlines the therapeutic effect of love and of the prospect of sexual adjustment, which is at the heart of Williams' canon. As a gentleman caller, Jim is a healer in whose "warmth" "Laura's shyness is dissolving" (GM 295; sc. 7), and whose "charm . . . lights her inwardly with altar candles" (297; sc. 7). Jim's role as a healer is so crucial for Laura's emergence from the world of her glass animals that his sudden withdrawal and his announcement of his engagement to another girl destroy any chance of Laura's survival in the real world: "The holy candles in Laura's face have been snuffed out" (307; sc. 7).

By contrast, sexuality in its various manifestations and associations is,

as will be discussed later, central to Vieux Carré which, autobiographical as it is, offers much insight not only into Williams' homosexuality, but also into his presentation of this theme in his canon. In this context, Vieux Carré can be singled out as the only play which features Williams, the homosexual, as it does Williams, the writer. For although many of his works deal with homosexuality and reflect his sensibility, none of them features Williams, the homosexual, in the manner Vieux Carré does. Undoubtedly, the majority, if not all, of his homosexual characters are either artists or endowed with artistic sensibility. Hence, the biographical element could be seen as being confined to their sensibilities and psychological entities. That is why it is not clearly defined nor could it be easily detected--it requires not only deep textual analysis, but also a constant shift of focus between character and author. For Williams' homosexual works lack the direct and conscious biographical focus, and this gives them not only the timeless quality which characterizes enduring art, but also a special kind of mystery which encourages various interpretations. At the same time, the autobiographical element is both elusive and ambiguous because Williams' sensibility as a homosexual is expressed not only through his homosexual characters, but also, as will be discussed later, through his female characters. Bigsby believes that "in so much . . . of Williams' work his own concerns are expressed through the sensibility of a woman" (122). Williams confirms this point when he says: "In my work, I've had a great affinity with the female psyche. Her personality, her emotions, what she suffers and feels" (Devlin 344). Indeed, most of his prominent characters are females with whom he closely identifies and sympathizes, and whose qualities he passionately admires. And not only is this ambivalence a manifestation of the conflictual element in his canon, but also it gives his presentation of homosexuality an elusive subtlety and variety, and makes it an invaluable contribution to homosexual literature.

By contrast, Capote's gay works demonstrate, in varying degrees, a direct and conscious biographical focus. Other Voices, Other Rooms and Answered Prayers are, in particular, cases in point--the similarities between Joel Knox and the young Capote, as well as between P. B. Jones and the aging author are only too apparent. Yet, the two novels are as different in their biographical aspect as they are in style. And not only is the biographical aspect of each novel closely interconnected with the stylistic aspect--it also reflects the extent of Capote's personal involvement in the narrative, as well as his approach to the theme of homosexuality. In this context, the difference between the two novels is that in Other Voices, Other Rooms the autobiographical element is mostly related to Capote's inner self and subterranean world, to his imagination, dreams and nightmares, that is, to his psychological entity; in Answered Prayers it is linked to his social activities, self-indulgence, and sexual life and adventures.

Multi-faceted as it is, the similarity between Joel Knox and Truman Capote cannot be greater. In his book, Truman Capote, Kenneth T. Reed says: "That Other Voices, Other Rooms is heavily autobiographical is perhaps clear enough to preclude any precise documentation".[25] Hence, describing Joel's physical appearance, Capote could be describing himself when he was Joel's age. Like the young Capote whose picture has been outlined earlier, Joel, we are told, is "too pretty, too delicate and fair-skinned; . . . and a girlish tenderness softened his eyes".[26] Even the reaction of Sam Radclif, who "had his notions of what a real boy should look like" and who is "somehow offended" (OV 4) by Joel's girlish features, is reminiscent of the repulsive attitude towards his effeminate character of Capote's mother and her relatives. Gerald Clarke draws an analogy between some of the characters in the novel and the real people in Capote's life (152). However, the crux of the

autobiographical element lies in a deeper level from which the significance of the novel arises. Hence, as Clarke suggests, "On that subterranean level Truman has written, in symbol and allegory, the story of his boyhood. Joel is his alter ego, his emotional and spiritual *Doppelgänger*" (152).

That the autobiographical element in Other Voices, Other Rooms involves the outer and inner worlds of the characters, especially Joel, is particularly important. For not only is it inexorably linked with the stylistic aspect of the novel and closely related to Capote's presentation of homosexuality--it is also clearly one of the basic features which distinguish this novel from Answered Prayers. The symbolic and allegorical structure of Other Voices, Other Rooms is the vehicle through which Capote invests his emotional, spiritual and psychological sensibility in his protagonist. Joel's desperate need for love and his search for the father he does not know and for his own identity reflect Capote's personal concerns. For as Reed says:

> Involving, as it does, a young man's search for a home, a father, and a sense of identity, the book is created out of the patterns that prevailed in Capote's early personal history, although not necessarily to the letter. (81)

Hence, Joel's journey, which is fraught with tribulations, disappointment, fear and loneliness, and in which he discovers and accepts his own identity as a homosexual, has all the marks of Capote's childhood experience and his final acceptance of his homosexuality. Thus, in his "Preface" to Other Voices, Other Rooms, Capote describes the novel as "an attempt to exorcise demons", and to ease "the anxieties that then had control of my emotions and imagination" (IX).

Central to Capote's "attempt" is self-revelation and the release of his pent-up emotions. For when "he convoys Joel from the glare of Noon City through the dark backroads to Skully's Landing, Truman is entering his own subconscious" (Clarke 153). The stylistic aspect of the novel underlines this

shift from the conscious to the subconscious, from the real world to the world of dreams and imagination. Noon City is the borderline between the two worlds. Hence, Joel's journey to Noon City is described in an objective or "daylight" style; intensely subjective or "nocturnal"[27] style--to borrow Ihab Hassan's terms--characterizes his journey from Noon City to the Landing. Taking place at night, Joel's movement to his final destination represents a descent to his inner self. For as he sets out on board Jesus Fever's wagon, the novel becomes heavily invested with suggestions of dreams and hallucinations. Hence, Joel's is a "psychological journey from day into night, from the active, aboveground world into the underground world of dreams" (Clarke 153)--a journey through which he "exorcised" his demons by coming to terms with himself as much as Capote did.

However, although the genuineness of Joel's final acceptance of his homosexuality is somewhat questionable and this, in turn, is linked to Capote's presentation of homosexuality in Other Voices, Other Rooms (OV), which will be discussed later, the last few pages of the novel leave no doubt as to what Capote apparently wants us to believe. After the visit he makes with Randolph to Little Sunshine in the Cloud Hotel, "a crazy elation caught hold of Joel, he ran, he zigzagged, he sang, he was in love" (226; sec. 12). Joel's trance-like sense of elation is a manifestation of the profound transformation he undergoes after that visit. He comes to terms with himself; consequently, the fears which have long haunted him are dissipated and vanquished, for "he knew who he was, he knew he was strong" (228; sec. 12). Joel's self-confidence and strength arise from his reconciliation with himself: "he hugged himself, alive and glad, and socked the air, butted like a goat . . . : 'Look, Randolph', he said . . . 'look, who am I?" (226). The uncertainty and disorientation which characterized his behaviour have disappeared--the answer is stated in strong and clear terms: "I am me . . . I am Joel, we are the same people" (227). This is a crucial turning-

point in Joel's life. Having accepted himself, Joel feels whole and happy, and it is only then that he emerges outside his own narrow circle: "he looked about for a tree to climb: he would go right to the very top, and there, midway to heaven, he would spread his arms and claim the world" (227).

In this context, the novel makes certain inter-connected points which constitute the premise of its final message and conclusion. One's strength arises from one's liberation which, in turn, is the result of reconciliation with oneself. Simultaneously, self-acceptance and love are a prerequisite not only for strength and liberation and the happiness that is associated with them, but also for the ability to love others. And vice versa--loving others lightens the dark side of the inner self which, in Capote's canon, is defined as the prison in which those who refuse to accept others are permanently confined. Joel learns, through a long "series of lessons and ordeals, to accept wholeheartedly--that is, to love"[28], for "love vanquishes the Snow Queen" (OV 196; sec. 11). Hence, he earns his freedom from the tight grip of fears by accepting and loving himself: "he caught a little tree-toad because he loved it and because he loved it he set it free, watched it bounce, bound like the immense leaping of his heart" (OV 226). Whole and free, Joel is a completely different person--he is able to recognize others' need for love and is ready to respond to them: "Joel realized then the truth; he saw how helpless Randolph was" (227). And when the latter "beckoned to him" in the guise of the lady in the window, Joel "knew he must go: unafraid, not hesitating" (231; sec. 12), announcing, thereby, the birth of a new man, as he "looked back at . . . the boy he had left behind" (231).

The implication of Joel's unhesitant response to Randolph's call represents the crucial conclusion which the novel is carefully contrived to reach. For as Summers says, "By following Randolph's summons, he accepts his place in the mysterious world of Skully's Landing and symbolically accepts

his own homosexuality", inasmuch as "the most extreme manifestation of homosexuality" is "epitomized in the person of Cousin Randolph" (132). Similarly, this is the final destination of Joel's "psychological journey" which is, to a great extent, Capote's, since Joel, as has been suggested earlier, is his "Doppelganger". This is particularly interesting as far as the biographical focus of the novel is concerned. For it is mainly revealed through Joel's emotional and psychological sensibility. The novel explores in depth Joel's inner world and probes its response to the influence of the external world.

Joel starts his journey with a background closely similar to Capote's, the emotional burden of which is suggested in physical terms: "A kind of tired, imploring expression masked his thin face, and there was an unyouthful sag about his shoulders" (OV 4-5; sec. 1). Moreover, his "pretty" and ""delicate" features are also indicative of his effeminate character which, like Capote's, is to be later proven unfit for the traditional masculine role in his failure to kill the snake and his encounter with Idabel who beats him. At the age of thirteen, Joel is at the threshold of a new experience, and at the beginning of a new journey into the unknown realm of the future. Driven by his acute loneliness and grinding deprivation of love, which are suggested by the death--literal or symbolic--of his parents, Joel is desperate for love and affection: "God, let me be loved" (74; sec. 3). Mr Sansom's letter, which prompted joel's journey, is, to a great extent, an inner call for love. The "paternal duties, forsaken, lo, these many years" (7; sec. 1), which Mr Sansom is now prepared to assume, are the love and affection which Joel, like Capote, has been long deprived of. It is particularly interesting that Mr Sansom's alleged letter was actually written by Randolph, the homosexual, whom Joel is later to embrace and unhesitantly accept. In this context, Randolph could be seen as Joel's alter ego as much as the latter is Capote's Doppelganger. For Randolph is both a homosexual and an "artist" (OV 136; sec. 8), and is, therefore, endowed with both aspects of

Capote's sensibility. This point forges a significant link between Capote and Williams in that their personal concerns as homosexuals are expressed through the sensibilities of their characters. Yet, the fundamental difference is that, unlike Williams' gay works, with the exception of Vieux Carré, Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms is clearly, consciously autobiographical.

Answered Prayers--Capote's last novel--establishes both a significant link and a fundamental difference between Capote and Williams, and is, at the same time, in total contrast with Other Voices, Other Rooms. On the one hand, like Williams' Vieux Carré, Answered Prayers is closely autobiographical, and in these two works, Williams and Capote treat homosexuality overtly. Yet, the difference--as will be discussed later--lies in the degree of the self-indulgence of the characters with whom the two writers identify and through whose behaviour they express their personal and literary concerns, in the associations of the sexuality of these characters, as well as in the stylistic aspects of both works. Self-indulgent and sensual as he is, P. B. Jones is the central character in Answered Prayers (AP) with whom Capote identifies so closely and unmistakeably that he gives him some of his most prominent identifying details. Helen Garson discusses many aspects of this similarity between Capote and Jones. Yet, it is necessary to underline the most important of them. P. B. Jones, like Capote, is both a homosexual and a writer whose unfinished novel is titled "Answered Prayers".[29] And like Capote's novel, Jones' is also "A report. An account" (AP 50). Moreover, Jones refers to two important points which underline Capote's identification with him. On the one hand, he tells us that he was praised by his friend Denham Fouts for his "portrait" of "Cecil Beaton" (AP 31)--which is, in fact, one of Capote's popular portraits. On the other, he refers to his "photograph . . . Beaton had taken for Boaty's magazine and which I had used on the jacket of my book" (AP 31). On this particular

point Garson comments: "What else could Capote be speaking of than his famous picture on the cover of Other Voices, Other Rooms?" (181).

Capote's strong and unmistakable identification with P. B. Jones assumes paramount significance for this investigation. For as Garson says, "For the critic, the most interesting aspects of 'Unspoiled Monsters' are those in which Capote uses autobiographical information in describing the character Jones" (180). Garson refers specifically to "Unspoiled Monsters" because the three stories which comprise the novel were published separately, and her book appeared about six years before the novel was published in its present form. Nevertheless, Garson's remarks apply to the whole novel in which Jones is the most prominent character. Lacking a unifying and central plot, Answered Prayers is loosely-constructed. The narrative jumps about in time and space, providing accounts of stories within stories and intermingled episodes of events experienced by Jones, overheard conversations, and gossip. The thematic structure is diverse and coloured with the innumerable stories within the novel. Yet, obsessive and excessive sexual indulgence, perversion, and abuse, the moral corruption and decadence of the rich are the predominant motifs which are bound together by the underlying theme suggested by the novel's epigraph: "More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones."

Seen as a portrayal of the status quo of contemporary society, the novel has significant social implications. Yet, as Garson suggests,

> Implicitly, Capote intends the moral behind the saying to relate to the desires of his characters. Inasmuch as the stories focus exclusively on sexual experiences, the moral applies to them: the fulfilment of sexual prayers brings only sorrow or disappointment. (168)

This point forges a significant link between Capote and Williams. For as Glenn Embrey says in his essay, "The Subterranean World of The Night of the Iguana, "Most of Tennessee Williams' characters eventually discover

there is no fate worse than sex; desire maims and kills, often in the most violent fashion".[30]

However, the idea that sexual gratification is perilous and fraught with disappointment--which both Williams and Capote share--is an essential part of the paradox which characterizes their view of sexuality, and is part of a wider conflict in their works. For this idea contradicts their long-established personal and literary commitment to passion and sexual fulfilment. It is noteworthy that both writers were influenced by D. H. Lawrence, "whose role in history" is, as Boxill suggests, "a sexual rebel" (154), and who, as Frieda tells Bertha, "In all his works he celebrates the body".[31] Lawrence's influence on Williams was only too deep and apparent--as early as 1939, as Nelson says, "Williams journeyed to Taos, New Mexico, to interview Frieda Lawrence" (82). After that he wrote his early One-Act play--I RISE in Flame, Cried the Phoenix--in 1941, which he "had worked on . . . as early as 1934", and which is a "dramatic statement about the man who had been his idol for a number of years" (Nelson 82). And while there are abundant references to Williams' influence by Lawrence, there is little, if any, to Capote's. Yet, Rudisill and Simmons mention that when his mother died in 1954, Capote was in Italy where he "had spent the previous month in D. H. Lawrence's house in Palermo, Sicily" (12). Though fleeting, this reference is particularly interesting because Capote's visit to Lawrence's house has the significance of a pilgrimage in which he paid homage to the man who contributed immensely to the literature of compassion, and the essence of whose ideas Capote echoed years earlier when he said--as has been mentioned earlier--"Our lives . . . are meant to be nothing but a series of love affairs" (Rudisill and Simmons 21).

On the other hand, given the endless and confusing circle in which the narrative of Answered Prayers moves, Capote's autobiographical details

function as signposts and focal points around which the loose ends of the stories are tied up. And in the light of what Capote says in his "Preface" to Music For Chameleons that "the plot--or rather plots--was true, and all the characters were real" (XIII), Capote's identification with Jones removes all disguises and defines the social circle that is involved in the narrative. Furthermore, it reflects Capote's view not only of his circle but also of himself both as a writer and a homosexual, and is closely linked to his sensibility and presentation of homosexuality in the last phase of his career which are in total contrast with those in the earlier phases.

As has been suggested earlier, one of the basic differences between Answered Prayers and Other Voices, Other Rooms is that while in the one homosexuality is expressed in unrestrained and overt sexual terms, in Other Voices, Other Rooms it is related more to the emotions and feelings of the characters than to their senses. In this context, although Other Voices, Other Rooms is Capote's first work in which he directly treats homosexuality, it is strongly related to his earlier "dark stories" which are characterized by undiluted gothicism, nocturnal style and nightmarish mode. Reed even suggests that Other Voices, Other Rooms, The Grass Harp, and Breakfast at Tiffany's are "an outgrowth of his short fiction in both style and content. . . . it can hardly be questioned that in the short stories lie the literary grist out of which the longer pieces were conceived and written" (71).

However, since Other Voices, Other Rooms is distinctly different, thematically and stylistically, from the other two works and is closer to the "dark stories" in both aspects, it could be seen, in the light of Reed's statement, as an "outgrowth of the "dark stories". In this respect, there is a connection with Williams, who, as Boxill points out, "constantly recycled his material. . . . [and] that most of the full-length plays are expansions of short works, at least half of them short stories" (21-2). William L. Nance entertains a view similar

to Reed's--he believes that

> deep below the surface they [the dark stories] are really one story, and they have one protagonist. The story will be continued, and its hero will achieve a peculiar liberation in Capote's first novel, Other Voices, Other Rooms. (16)

The Gothic framework in which Other Voices, Other Rooms and the "dark stories" are shrouded reinforce what Nance calls the "psychic . . . orientation (16) which characterizes them. For as Chester E. Eisinger, in his book, Fiction of the Forties, suggests, "the gothic becomes, in Capote's hands, a variation on the pervasive theme of fiction in the forties: the inward-turning search for the dimensions of the self".[32]

Central to the prominent thematic pattern of these works is the grotesque characters the protagonist encounters, who "are most properly viewed as projections of inner personae" (Nance 16). Basically, as Nance suggests, "in Other Voices, Other Rooms, as in the stories that preceded it, the world the hero is asked to accept is "a world whose norm is abnormality" (41). Wholehearted acceptance and unconditional love are a prerequisite for release and liberation from the dark world in which the protagonist is permanently entrapped.

A recurrent theme in Capote's canon as it is, the link between love and freedom is particularly significant because it raises important points of similarity and difference between Capote and Williams. For like Capote, Williams believes that freedom can be achieved only through love and acceptance of others, through readiness to help them, and through full understanding of their problems. In The Night of The Iguana (NI), Hannah Jelkes is free from the "spooks" which haunt Shannon because she "discovered something to believe in", that is, "Broken gates between people so they can reach each other, even if it is for one night only. . . . Communication between

them . . . a little understanding exchanged between them, a wanting to help each other".[33] Hannah helps Shannon fight his "spooks" and, as Peggy W. Prenshaw says,

> accepts responsibility for her grandfather, though doing so is a costly sacrifice of independence. . . . Her unsparing demands on herself--her self-denial--produce in her a boundless capacity for tenderness and compassion toward others. A not quite emancipated Puritan, she understands and lives by the paradox that to win her freedom she must give up the self.[34]

However, there are many differences between Williams and Capote on this point, most prominent of which is that while in Capote, love is unconditional, in Williams, there are limitations and conditions. Capote calls for uncritical love and acceptance of others, of the mysterious and dark side of the self, and even of "the Devil", as Miss Bobbit, in "Children on their Birthdays", comes to believe.[35] By contrast, Williams believes that, as Hannah Jelkes says, "Nothing human disgusts me unless it's unkind, violent" (NI 308; act 3). The corollary of this difference is that Capote's fiction offers no resistance to the dark forces in the world or within the self--the recurrent motif in his canon is that "love vanquishes the Snow Queen" (OV 196; sec. 11). Williams, by contrast, stresses the need to fight those dark forces. For he believes that the evil side of man is destructive of the self and of humanity. So, where Capote wishes to close the gap between the sides of human nature conventionally believed to be good, on the one hand, and evil, on the other, Williams believes that they should be kept apart and that the evil should be rooted out.

In the context of Capote's view, the only difference between Other Voices, Other Rooms and the "dark stories" lies in the fact that Joel finally accepts his world, his inner self and emerges whole and free, while his predecessors fail and, consequently, sink further into fear and captivity.

However, this difference is particularly important as far as Capote's presentation of homosexuality is concerned. For not only is Other Voices, Other Rooms the only Capote work in which his protagonist manages to achieve his liberation from the dark inner world--it also defines and illuminates a crucial dimension of those stories which is totally overlooked by critics. The pervasive pattern in those works is that "In each story the protagonist is given an opportunity to accept someone and something strange and disturbing. . . . Not until Joel works his way through Other Voices, Other Rooms does one of them manage to do so" (Nance 17). And bearing in mind that the people the protagonist is asked to accept are, as has been suggested earlier, "projections of inner personae", these people represent the "mysterious and frightening elements within the self" (Nance 16).

However, it is only in Other Voices, Other Rooms that the nature of these "mysterious elements" is unveiled and clearly defined: "when he goes to join the queer lady in the window, Joel accepts his destiny, which is to be homosexual, to always hear other voices and live in other rooms" (Clarke 152-3). In other words, the mysterious element within Joel, which he finally accepts, is his homosexuality. Hence, although the sexual identity of the protagonists of the "dark stories" is understated and overlooked by critics, it is a crucial element of their subterranean structure and a key to full understanding of their concerns.

"A Tree of Night", "Shut a Final Door", "The Headless Hawk", and "Master Misery" are cases in point. Critics tend to concentrate on a narrow angle of these stories, overlooking the significant theme of sexuality which they deeply explore. Nance, for instance, believes that in "A Tree of Night" Kay "lives in fear because of a refusal to accept" (18). Hence, the sense of captivity, childhood fears, and the fear of death, and the refusal to love and

accept become an endless circle in which the stories move--often without a clear direction or a reasonable connection between these elements. And the result is as mysterious as the inner elements and ghosts the protagonist is asked to accept and love.

To resolve these mysteries, it must be born in mind that these stories are "psychic in orientation" (Nance 16), that they represent a descent into the subconscious, and that love is what is asked of the protagonist. Hence, the critics' approach to these stories, which excludes the emotional and sexual aspects of the individual's life, which are among the most important elements of the psychological entity, is unconvincing and offers little insight into their meaning. In this context, Kay is an interesting example the emotional aspect of whose character is totally overlooked by critics. Nance, for example, comes to the conclusion that "she is like a child living fearfully in the dark because, shutting her eyes against ghosts, she has shut out love and life" (19). Nevertheless, the images of death which haunt Kay are not unlike those which horrify Joel Knox. Therefore, Kay's fears could be seen as being related to her sexuality as much as Joel's are. Indeed, the story is not short of images which strongly substantiate this interpretation.

"A Tree of Night" (TN) opens with a description of the atmosphere which surrounds Kay: "IT WAS WINTER. A string of naked light bulbs, from which it seemed all warmth had been drained, illuminated the little depot's cold, windy platform".[36] The natural elements are not only a reflection of Kay's inner sensibility, but also an extension of her emotional geography. The atmosphere is gloomy and bleak, and the barrenness of nature could most properly be seen as reflecting Kay's emotional frigidity and frustration. Kay, a "young and rather tall, . . . [and] attractive" (3) girl, is waiting for the train. Here certain images are introduced which are quite significant for mapping out her sensibility. The "green Western guitar" she "carried conspicuously" is

particularly interesting (3). For not only is it associated with sensitivity and artistic sensibility--it is also a phallic symbol. Having "been at the funeral of an uncle", who "had left her nothing in his will but the green guitar", Kay is on her way "back to college" (4). In a sense, she is on a journey. The platform is a temporary stage--one which represents her dreary and bleak present situation. The "platform was deserted" (3), and Kay is alone, surrounded by horrifying images.

Of Kay's background and past we know nothing--the lack of any reference to her family and friends is indicative of her isolation and emotional deprivation. In a sense, Kay's journey is similar to Joel's. And while Mr Sansom's letter, which represents a call for love, directs Joel's journey, the phallic guitar is the most valuable of Kay's possessions in this journey. Both Joel and Kay use means of transport to reach their destinations, and both encounter freakish and disturbing people. Their destinations are both unpleasant, for although Kay's is college, the freakish woman is cynical about it: "what 'll you ever learn in a place like that?" (5). And while Joel seeks a charm from Little Sunshine, Kay is offered a "love charm" by the man she meets on the train. Yet, Kay refuses to buy it. Her decision is apparently related to her emotional and sexual frustration. For she knows from her own experience that "Charms always bring me bad luck" (13).

On the other hand, although the man, "deaf and dumb" (3), is grotesque, Kay is attracted by his eyes which, "like a pair of clouded milky-blue marbles, were thickly lashed and oddly beautiful" (6). For as Eisinger says,

> In Capote's fiction the abnormal person or the freak always exercises an ambivalent pressure upon others. He frightens them off as, perversely and against their will, he attracts them, an attraction sometimes associated with sexual excitement. (241)

Yet, she is appalled and horrified by what he is renowned for, that is, enacting

the role of Lazarus, "THE MAN WHO IS BURIED ALIVE" (TN 10)--an act which symbolizes sexual intercourse. For burial is an insertion in the womb of the earth--an image which is not without a sexual correlative. In this context, it is most interesting that the burial is preceded by what the woman calls "the lure" (11). This is particularly significant, for when he "opened his eyelids wide and began to squeeze and caress" the peach "seed in an undefinably obscene manner" (12), he tried only to lure Kay. Caressing the peach seed is called "obscene" most plausibly because of a sexual symbolism--the shape of the peach seed symbolizes the female's sexual part. Hence, Kay "frowned", asking "what does he want?" (12). She is frightened, and so, the woman tries to ease her anxiety, saying: "He ain't gonna hurt you" (13).

Earlier, as Kay joins the man and the woman in the corner they occupy on the train, the man shows clear interest in her: he "studies Kay intently from the corners of his eyes" (6). At this stage, Kay's emotional frigidity and arrest are suggested by the "icy winter moon" which "rolled above the train across the night sky" (7). While she was "idly strumming the guitar" (7), the man makes his first move: he "reached out and gently stroked Kay's cheek" (7). Kay is "too startled" by "such a bold gesture . . . to know what to make of it" (7). She has mixed feelings which underline her innocence: "Suddenly, from some spring of compassion, she felt for him a keen sense of pity; but also . . . an overpowering disgust" (7).

After the peach seed episode, Kay is frightened, leaves her seat and moves to "the front of the observation platform" (13), where, afraid, she says loudly: "We're in Alabama now, I think, and tomorrow we'll be in Atlanta and I'm nineteen and I'll be twenty in August and I'm a sophomore" (14). In this soliloquy, which is closely related to that sudden challenge to her sexuality, Kay tries to assure herself of her maturity. Hence, "suddenly she felt an eerie

compulsion to kneel down and touch the lantern" (14). This represents a crucial transformation in her. For while earlier she was like the "light bulbs, from which it seemed all warmth had been drained" (3), now the lantern's "graceful glass funnel was warm, and the red glow seeped through her hands, making them luminous. The heat thawed her fingers and tingled along her arms" (14). Kay is now "so preoccupied", and when she looks back behind, "He was standing there with a mute detachment, his head tilted, his arms dangling at his side" (14). The crucial question which arises here is: who is "He"? It is noteworthy that Kay's companions are mostly referred to throughout the story as "the woman" and "the man". Later, after Kay reflects on her fears, we are told: "the man nodded and waved his hand toward the door" (15). This is a moment of revelation for Kay--it is only now that she "knew of what she was afraid: it was a memory, a childish memory of terrors. . . . Aunts, cooks, strangers--each eager to spin a tale or teach a rhyme of spooks and death, omens, and spirits, demons" (14-5). Yet, the crucial point is that it is the man's sexual advance to Kay that is the catalyst for all her fears and the images of death and burial. In this story, as in the other stories in question as well as in Other Voices, Other Rooms, sexuality is associated with death. This particular point forges a significant link with Williams. For this association is clearly pronounced in "Desire and the Black Masseur" and most memorably expressed in A Streetcar Named Desire (SND) where Blanche says: "Death . . . The opposite is desire" (206; sc. 9).

On the other hand, the similarity between this story and Other Voices, Other Rooms is established also on other levels. The queer lady beckons to Joel, and the man nods to Kay; Joel unhesitantly joins the lady, and Kay "took a deep breath and stepped forward. Together they went inside" (15). In doing so, Kay agrees to buy the love charm. Hence, "the man's face seemed to change form and recede before her like a moon shaped rock sliding downward

under a surface of water" (15-6). Now "A warm laziness relaxed her. She was dimly conscious of it when the woman took away her purse, and when she gently pulled the raincoat like a shroud above her head" (16). This scene is clearly suggestive of sexual consummation and trance, as Kay undergoes a "warm laziness", "relaxation", and "dim consciousness", a trance which is similar to that of Joel who, upon seeing the lady in the window, was completely "dumb" (OV 231; sec. 12). And in this respect, Kay's loss of her purse--which will never be retrieved--to the woman who took it away could be regarded as a metaphor of Kay's loss of her virginity once and for all.

Presented in a symbolic and metaphorical framework as it is, sexuality is tinged with ambivalence which also arises from the sexual ambivalence of the characters. For although Kay is presented as a girl, we are not sure if she actually is a female. There is nothing in the story to clear this ambiguity which also surrounds the man whose beautiful eyes and "hairless face" (6) are at odds with the conventional notions of a male's complexion. This man also takes a passive role in his relationship with his companion, the woman. She directs the carnival show which they perform in Southern towns. On the train, she is clearly the one who is in command--she admonishes him for his silly behaviour and tells him to behave. The man's and the woman's freakishness is a manifestation of sexual ambivalence which, characterizing the other stories as well as Other Voices, Other Rooms, is central to Capote's presentation of homosexuality at the early stage of his career, as much as it is to Williams', as will be discussed later.

The descent into the subconscious, which is crucial for the theme of the doppelganger, is a recurrent pattern through which Capote explores the theme of homosexuality. Shrouded in ambiguity as it is, homosexuality in these stories is suggested through innuendo and connection between various images.

"Shut a Final Door" (SFD) is a case in point--the story probes Walter Ranny's deep-seated fears which have "become his constant companion" (Garson 33-4), because of his failure to know himself. For although he believes that "An eye, the earth, the rings of a tree, everything is a circle and all circles . . . have a center"[37], his life is an endless closed circle without a centre, meaning, or coherence. In a sense, he is unable to recognize the center of his being, and, therefore, his life is characterized by fear and captivity. He establishes numerous relationships and love affairs, nevertheless, they all follow a recurrent pattern of failure, betrayal, hatred, and rejection which he brings upon himself.

Selfish and narcissistic in his relationships, Walter is also self-destructive. Anna truthfully tells him that "what had happened was his own doing" (59), yet, he dismisses her opinion and prefers to blame his "circumstances" which are "beyond his control" and his parents and sister Cecile (59). However, Walter's dilemma lies within himself: "his own feelings were so indecisive, ambiguous. He was never certain whether he liked X or not. He needed X's love, but was incapable of loving" (TN 64). Walter's emotional ambiguity is manifest in his character and behaviour which Anna understands only too well. In this respect, since the story probes Walter's fears and captivity, Anna assumes a crucial role in revealing the real dimensions of his ordeal. In a sense, she seems to represent his alter ego or his conscience, for she is the only one among the numerous people he has met and known who has a clear insight into his character and behaviour, and who pinpoints the root cause of his present dilemma.

Anna was a close friend of Walter's, whose sincerity he cannot deny despite his malicious attitude towards her: "if Anna was not a friend, then who was?" (58). And later she is referred to as "a kind of confessor" to him (66). Hence, it is most appropriate that this story, which "begins at the end" (Garson

33), where Walter reflects on his dilemma, should open with her remarks: "'WALTER, listen to me: if everyone dislikes you, works against you, don't believe they do so arbitrarily; you create these situations for yourself'" (58). Walter is confident of her sincerity when she tells him that because "his healthier side told him she intended nothing malicious" (58). Having underlined his self-destructiveness, Anna, later in the story, puts her finger on what could be regarded as the crucial element in his character which explains his ordeal--she tells him that he is "an adolescent female. 'You 're a man in only one respect, sweetie'" (65). This is an indication, or at least an innuendo, that he is homosexual.

Bearing this in mind, Walter's crisis could be regarded as arising most plausibly from his indecisiveness, "arrogance" (Garson 35), and failure to recognize and accept his homosexuality. In this respect, Garson raises significant questions concerning Walter's crisis, but fails to provide a crucial answer:

> What there is about his other self that causes Walter's disintegration is not as obvious as the story might suggest, although guilt is a major factor in it. What brings about the guilt? There are clues in the story that tell us it results from something more complicated than Walter's boorish behaviour to people who befriended him in New York (37).

Here Garson poses more questions than she finds answers. Walter's "boorish behaviour" is merely a manifestation of the dichotomy within himself. The answer she provides, that "Walter is a man who does not seem to know himself" (37) is rather vague. The nearest she comes to identifying the problem is when she says that "Walter's insincerity usually turns to cruelty in relationships, particularly if there is a sexual element" (37). Yet, she falls short of pronouncing the real cause, although at the end of her book she makes an extensive analogy between Walter and P. B. Jones of Answered Prayers (181-

3).

Central to Walter's disintegration, fear, and captivity is not the question of his homosexuality, which is apparent--rather, it is his failure to accept it. It is noteworthy that Irving, who is, as Garson says, "obviously homosexual" (37), is "the first person to befriend Walter in New York" (Garson 34). Irving is "a sweet little Jewish boy . . . he had silky hair, and pink baby cheeks" (SFD 60). He introduces Walter to his "more or less . . . girlfriend Margaret" (60), with whom Walter has a sexual affair. This is particularly interesting because it demonstrates the sexual duality of both Irving and Walter, whose homosexuality is unmistakable. Walter's relationship with Margaret cannot conceal his latent homosexuality. For although Kurt Kuhnhardt is "a curious man with a curious reputation" (SFD 62)--"an innuendo that suggests he is homosexual" (Garson 182)--Walter is eager to work for him, and during "his second week at the K. K. A., Walter received a memorandum from Mr. Kuhnhardt asking him to lunch, and this, of course, excited him unspeakably" (62). Obviously, Walter is aware of his homosexuality. Yet, not only does he not accept it, but also he goes on betraying his true nature in heterosexual relationships which all collapse and fail. The chaos and disintegration of his life are a manifestation of the havoc which his refusal to accept his other self has played with his life. Hence, the person who haunts him through the telephone calls and whose voice he recognizes is his other self which he fails to accept.

The failure of the Capote protagonist to accept his or her other self and the resultant fear are a recurrent pattern in these stories. Eisinger believes that "it is the failure to know the parts of the self and to integrate them that leads to destruction" (241). However, it is less the failure of self-knowledge than love and acceptance of the other self which leads to the captivity and fear which

haunt Capote's characters. It is not Walter's ignorance about himself but rather his "arrogance [which] leads to a critical miscalculation" (Garson 35). For although Anna confronts him with the truth about himself, he refuses to accept it and, moreover, despises Anna for that and goes "around telling everybody how much he despised Anna, what a bitch she was" (SFD 58). This idea applies also to Vincent of "The Headless Hawk" (HH), who at some stage in the story recognizes his other self: "Vincent recognizes Vincent".[38] Yet, he refuses to accept it, although he "knows there is to be no freedom" (49).

Vincent's other self which he, like Walter, fails to love and accept is his homosexuality. In this context, it is particularly important that Vincent's doppelganger which he recognizes is homosexual: "Before him is an old man rocking in a rocking chair, an old man with yellow-dyed hair, powdered cheeks, kewpie-doll lips: Vincent recognizes Vincent" (48). A transvestite as he is, the old man in this story is reminiscent of Cousin Randolph whom Joel eventually embraces in Other Voices, Other Rooms. On the whole, despite the slight difference between these stories, it is clear that sexuality, or rather homosexuality, is a pervasive thematic pattern which is recurrent in almost all of them. What distinguishes Capote's presentation of this theme at the early stage of his career is an ambiguity which, despite the dark and gothic style which characterizes these stories, endows it with subtlety and elusiveness--the very qualities which will be forsaken partially in Other Voices, Other Rooms and completely in Answered Prayers.

Capote's tremendous interest in what Eisinger calls "the phenomenon of the divided self" (241) is central to his presentation of homosexuality at that early stage. This point is particularly significant because it involves a wide range of issues which are crucial for exploring the areas of difference and agreement between Capote and Williams--areas which include the ambiguity and subtlety of presentation, the divided self, and the nature of love. First and

foremost, Williams' presentation of homosexuality at the early stage of his career is characterized by both ambiguity and subtlety as well as by lucidity. In this respect, as has been suggested earlier, distinction must be made between Williams' dramatic and fictional works, for they deal with homosexuality from totally different perspectives.

Unlike his fiction, Williams' drama features homosexuality in a reticent, gradual and relatively covert manner. In A Streetcar Named Desire, the homosexual figure had already died a long time before the play opens, and is referred to only midway through the play when Blanche reflects on the background of her present ordeal. In Summer and Smoke he appears in the person of Roger Doremus, an effeminate character whose role in the thematic structure of the play is, at most, marginal. However, in Camino Real the homosexual character makes his debute in Williams' drama, and paves the way for others in the plays that followed. For although it has little thematic influence on the course of the play, the appearance of the Baron de Charlus has significant implications. The Baron is, as Robert Emmet Jones suggests, "an avowed homosexual" (555). Hence, his appearance is a step forward in Williams' presentation of the homosexual--a step in which he fully recognizes the homosexual character in his dramatic world. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof marks a new and final stage in which Williams deals directly with homosexuality which is to become a recurrent pervasive theme in many succeeding plays.

However, Williams' treatment of homosexuality can be traced back to A Streetcar Named Desire. For although the homosexual character does not appear in the play, he exerts a tremendous influence on its development as well as on various levels of its interpretation. In its present form, the play owes a great deal of its dramatic strength and coherence, and the emotional ambivalence and balance it creates to the death of Allan Grey. The

"Varsouviana", to which Blanche and Allan danced the night he committed suicide, filters through the play at the most critical moments of Blanche's present ordeal, reinforcing the influence of Allan's absence. And in many ways Allan's death is the cause of Blanche's destruction, for it is one of the most crucial elements of the play's as well as of Blanche's personal, cultural and social background. A close scrutiny of the play shows that Blanche was doomed to destruction the moment she told her husband: "You disgust me" (184; sc. 6). For his death was, then, as much inevitable as, later, her debacle was inescapable, and it is this inextricable link which endows the play with a tragic depth and broad dimensions. In this context, Allan was not merely a husband to Blanche, nor is her tragedy merely that of a widow.

To grasp the full meaning of Allan's death, it is necessary to examine its consequences for Blanche, which were tragic not only because of what she is and represents, but also because of what he was and what he represented to her. During the course of the play Blanche makes three long speeches which are an essential key to understanding the depth and dimensions of her tragedy. In Scene One, she describes the destruction of Belle Reve, the family's plantation, and the death of the DuBois family. In Scene Six, she describes the death of her young husband and its consequences. In Scene Nine, the image of Allan's death is still vivid and thrusts itself into her mind--while she is engaged in an important conversation with Mitch about their relationship, Blanche hears the "polka tune", interrupts the conversation, and wonders: "That - music again . . . The 'Varsouviana'? The polka tune they were playing when Allan - Wait" (201). Allan's death is re-enacted in her mind--at this moment the stage directions suggest: "A distant revolver shot is heard" (202; sc. 9). Later in this scene, she attributes her "intimacies with strangers", which earned her ill-reputation, to the "panic" which had overtaken her after the death of her husband (205; sc. 9). Then she slips into a soliloquy in which she vividly

describes the death of her family and relatives and her affairs with the young soldiers (206).

The "Varsouviana", which is associated in Blanche's mind with the suicide of her husband, assumes paramount importance. Repeatedly played, this tune is a constant reminder of where Blanche's tragedy had started. In this respect, it is also noteworthy that while in Scene One the "Varsouviana" is muted when Blanche describes the destruction of Belle Reve and the death of her family, it is played in Scene Nine when her sexual affairs are attributed to Allan's death as well as to the demise of the Dubois and the destruction of their fortunes and traditional prestige as aristocrats. For Blanche remembers asking her dying mother: "couldn't we get a coloured girl" to change the "blood-stained pillow-slips" (206), and the answer reveals the extent of their debacle: "No, we couldn't of course. Everything gone" (206). In a sense, not only is the "Varsouviana" the most significant theatrical device for depicting Blanche from within--it also strongly links Allan's death with the destruction of Belle Reve as being responsible for Blanche's disintegration and collapse.

This link is particularly crucial for illuminating Williams' profound, elusive, and subtle treatment of homosexuality in this unmistakably Southern play. First and foremost, unconventional as it is, homosexuality is out of line with Southern traditional morality and code of ethics which, as has been outlined in the "Introduction", attached tremendous significance to the central role and virility of the man and to the innocence and purity of the belle. Nevertheless, embodied in the person of Allan Grey, homosexuality is not only rendered normal, but also endowed with aesthetic qualities. Allan "wasn't the least bit effeminate-looking" (183; sc. 6). Rather, he "wrote poetry. . . . He was extremely good-looking" (189; sc. 7). In this context, viewed from various perspectives, the theme of homosexuality in A Streetcar Named Desire is more

crucial to that play than most critics recognize. Although the references to it are fleeting, it has a subterranean presence throughout, which combines almost all the motifs which he addresses individually in his dramatic and fictional works. For it demonstrates Williams' consummate skill in describing the homosexual figure in elaborate, refined, and sympathetic terms, in presenting homosexuality in a subtle, elusive, and profound manner, and in linking homosexuality with the Southern issue. At the same time, in this play Williams demonstrates the estrangement of the homosexual and the extent of the social pressure on him. And, moreover, it contains Williams' strongest paradoxical views on sexuality and almost all his methods of presenting homosexuality, and offers an ample opportunity for comparison and contrast with Capote.

First and foremost, among Williams' canon, A Streetcar Named Desire is matchless in depicting the homosexual figure. In "One Arm", for instance, Williams focuses on the beauty of Oliver's body, which "had the nobility of some broken Apollo that no one was likely to carve so purely again".[39] In Small Craft Warnings (SCW), he underlines the spiritual values of the sensibility and artistic creativity of Leona's homosexual brother Haley, who "had that gift of making people's emotions uplifted, superior to them".[40] In A Streetcar Named Desire, the homosexual possesses all these attributes--he is endowed with physical beauty and artistic sensibility and sensitivity. Allan Grey was a "beautiful and talented young man" (190; sc 7). The significance of the spiritual qualities which are associated with the homosexual arises from the extent of the transformation he produces within those he encounters, and the profound crisis his death creates. Allan's love for Blanche marked a new dawn in her life and had a far-reaching spiritual influence on her--she was re-born:

> When I was sixteen, I made the discovery - love. All at once and much, much too completely. It was like you suddenly turned a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow". (182; sc. 6)

Blanche's depiction of Allan's love as a light which illuminated her life is of paramount significance. Recurrent as it is in the play, this image is reinforced by the inexorable link between art and light, and suggests the subtlety and refinement of Williams' depiction of the homosexual. For at one point, Blanche says: "such things as art - as poetry and music - such kinds of new light have come into the world since then" (164; sc. 4). And describing the catastrophic impact of Allan's death on her, she says: "And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has been any light that's stronger than this - kitchen - candle" (184; sc. 6). Defining the real dimension of Blanche's tragedy, this statement also offers deep insight into the nature of the relationship between Blanche and Allan not only as individuals, but also as figures who represent the contradiction of conventional behaviour.

To illuminate this idea, certain key points, which are overlooked by critics, have to be carefully scrutinized. Prominent among them is the fact that Allan's death precipitated Blanche's moral and spiritual destruction. And this cannot be explained by the mere fact that she lost the husband that she loved. The play offers little insight, if any, into Blanche's dilemma as a widow, nor does it reflect on any conventional aspect of her marriage; by contrast, it focuses sharply on Stanley's and Stella's. Strong emphasis is placed on the sheer physicality which characterizes the latter's relationship, and which owes a great deal to Stanley's sexual athleticism and virility which Williams is keen to underline: "Animal joy in his being is implicit in all his movements and attitudes. Since earliest manhood the centre of his life has been pleasure with women, the giving and taking of it" (128; sc. 1). At the same time, the spiritual, romantic and aesthetic terms in which Blanche's and Allan's relationship is described stand in total contrast with the undiluted, unrefined sexuality which

attracted Stanley and Stella towards each other. Reminding Stella of their first meeting, Stanley says: "You showed me the snapshot of the place with the columns. I pulled you down off them columns and how you loved it, having them coloured lights going (199; sc. 8).

By contrast, physicality was never a part of Blanche's relationship with Allan it. Unlike Stanley, Allan was not a bread winner, nor was Blanche, a high-school teacher, dependent on him for living. Rather, Allan was her "searchlight" (184; sc. 6), whom she "didn't just love . . . but worshipped the ground he walked on. Adored him and thought him almost too fine to be human" (189-190; sc. 7). This image of the homosexual is recurrent in Small Craft Warnings where Leona says that her brother "was too beautiful to live and so he died" (205; act 1). And in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (CHTR), Brick idealizes his friendship with Skipper which was tinged with homosexual attraction: "Not love with you, Maggie, but friendship with Skipper was the one great true thing", which, as Maggie suggests, "had to be kept on ice, yes, incorruptible, yes! -- and death was the only icebox where you could keep it".[41]

However, viewed from a Southern perspective, Blanche's attitude toward her husband reflects, in many ways, her Southern background. On the one hand, Blanche's idealizing and, rather, idolizing of her husband are not untypical of the Southern mentality which, as has been suggested in the "Introduction", regarded sacred every thing that was Southern--the South's firm belief in the infallibility of its political, economic, social, and moral systems was a clear manifestation. On the other hand, not only do Blanche's love and respect for her husband reflect her Southern romanticism, but also they are typical of the behaviour of the Southern woman who--as has been suggested in the "Introduction"--showed great support and loyalty to her husband. Yet, from another perspective, Blanche's idealizing of Allan can also be explained by the

fact that he represented her inner self. For they were identical in almost every thing--they were both young, and while Allan was a talented poet, Blanche possesses poetic sensibility. Stella describes Blanche as being "sensitive" (185; sc. 7). And later, Blanche boasts of her high personal attributes: the "treasures" which are "locked" in her "heart" (211; sc. 10). And she emphatically tells Stanley that she is a "cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding", and that she has the "beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart" (211). In doing so, Blanche draws a demarcation line between herself and what she calls the "swine"--Stanley and Mitch--who showed no appreciation for her attributes (212; sc. 10). Here, Blanche indirectly identifies with Allan who did not only appreciate her qualities but also embodied them--Allan had "a softness and tenderness" (182; sc. 6), which Blanche also boasts of possessing.

So Allan represented Blanche's inner self, her doppelganger, or, rather, her soul. This is crucial for understanding both Blanche's tragedy and Williams' presentation of homosexuality. For Blanche's love for Allan illuminated the darkness of her life. Yet, Blanche's harmony with Allan was harmony with herself, her soul, her ideals and the tradition which nurtured them all. And her disgust with Allan was a clear sign of the dichotomy within herself, because it was disgust with and rejection of the values which were associated with him. Hence, the consequences were multi-faceted and catastrophic. For Allan's death precipitated her moral and spiritual destruction, for it the separation between her body and soul, or, in Jacob Adler's words, the "culture" and "power"[42] of the South she represents. As the "searchlight . . . was turned off again" (184; sc. 6), Blanche is sentenced to live in the "dark" (164; sc. 4) among the "apes" (163)--Stanley and his friends--in Stanley's "cave" (163; sc. 4) where the law of the caveman is enforced.

Blanche's rejection of her husband is an act of self-destruction which,

viewed from a Southern historical perspective, is inevitable. This point raises a crucial question about the nature of the aspect of Allan's character which disgusted Blanche. In this respect, distinction must be made between Allan's sensibility and his sexuality--a distinction which the play clearly underscores because it is central to Williams' presentation of homosexuality in connection with the Southern issue. As a sensitive Southern belle, Blanche was enamoured and infatuated with Allan's romantic spirit, poetic sensibility, refinement and sensitivity--the very qualities which were, as has been established in the "Introduction", among the significant aspects of the Southerner's mentality. Bigsby suggests that "Blanche opted for what she took to be delicacy and refinement in the form of the poetic Allan Gray. But that had merely turned out to be the cover for homosexuality" (59). It is noteworthy that in this play as well as in Williams' other works, sensitivity and romantic spirit, often associated with artistic sensibility, are the distinguishing features of the lonely, exiled homosexual.

However, it was the physical aspect of Allan's homosexuality that repelled and shocked Blanche: "I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room that I thought was empty--which wasn't empty, but had two people in it" (183; sc. 6). For while Blanche was elated by Allan's emotions and sensitivity, from her personal, cultural, and moral standpoints, the physicality of his homosexuality was abominable. It is noteworthy that there is no reference to the sexual aspect of Allan's relationship with Blanche. Hence, his physical involvement with another man was an act of transgression which, to Blanche, was not only out of line with the Southern code of ethics, but also undermined the spirituality and romanticism of their relationship. Nevertheless, Williams puts Allan's homosexuality on a par with Blanche's sexuality in the sense that both are subversive and

destructive. For, on the one hand, they involve desire which, in Williams' canon in general and this play in particular, is synonymous with death. This point is reinforced by juxtaposing the romantic aspect of their love and the destruction that their desires have brought upon them--as Robert Jones Emmet says, in Williams "Love creates; desire destroys" (547). At the same time, their desire represents "involvement with the flesh" which, as Nelson says, "spells ruin" (256). On the other hand, Blanche is as much guilty as Allan of violating the traditional Southern code of manners according to which she adjudged him immoral and degenerate. For, as Bigsby suggests, "The role offered [the woman] by the Old South was social and symbolic and not personal and physical. The woman was essentially a passive creature, alternately a chaste symbol, a social icon" (63).

Although A Streetcar Named Desire lends itself to various interpretations, it derives great significance from the inexorable link between Blanche's destruction and the death of her husband which holds the key to the emotional, moral, and thematic balance of the play. Viewed in isolation from her crime against her husband, Blanche's destruction borders on the sentimental and invites complete sympathy for her, and Stanley's rape of her becomes an act of sheer brutality against a pathetic, broken and maimed human spirit. Yet, given her destruction of her husband, her fate could be seen, as Arthur Ganz suggests in his essay, "Tennessee Williams: A Desperate Morality", as a retribution, a "punishment . . . for her act of rejection, her sin in terms of Williams' morality".[43] Nevertheless, viewed from a Southern perspective, both Allan and Blanche are victims of the crude world of reality. Allan's suicide, like Skipper's in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, is indicative not only of the homosexual's sensitivity, fragility, and vulnerability, but also of the extent of the relentless pressure visited on him by the rigid traditional codes of sexual behaviour. For the irony is that their deaths were precipitated by those

with whom they were in love and who adjudged them corrupt and perverted according to the codes and tradition which they know "have vanished" (Nelson 130). Yet, the only difference is that while Blanche "clings with desperate tenacity" to those codes (Nelson 130), Brick is deeply disgusted with the "mendacity" (75; act 2) of the "conventional mores" (79; act 2) which he internalized when he passed his judgment on his friend and drove him to death.

Similarly, Blanche is a victim of the anachronistic tradition to which she tenaciously clings. For when she taunted her husband with his homosexuality, she acted as a representative of that tradition--an act which cost her not only her husband, but also all the ideals he represented to her. The "Varsouviana" suggests that the various ordeals that Blanche has undergone are physical manifestations of the shattering sense of guilt and loss which have relentlessly torn her apart emotionally, spiritually, and even mentally. It is noteworthy that even before Stanley rapes her, Mitch recognizes her mental instability which the "Varsouviana" exposes. So, he asks her: "Are you boxed out of your mind?" (202; sc. 9). Hence, what Stanley actually rapes is a body that has long lost its soul, and the significance of the rape is that it underlines Blanche's sense of loss and her decline to the "sub-human" level where Stanley is in command (163; sc. 4).

Multi-dimensional as it is, Blanche's ordeal is crucial for any examination of Williams' extensive and paradoxical treatment of sexuality--in its social, spiritual, and religious manifestations--which is one of the most pervasive thematic patterns and literary concerns in his canon. The death of Blanche's husband--which implicitly shapes the play, haunted as it is by the Varsouviana--is dramatized in such a way that it is central to any approach to the play. Hence, the depth of her tragedy inevitably underscores the paramount importance of the homosexual figure whose death assumes the significance of

martyrdom. Indeed, Williams' presentation of sexuality is often heavily invested with religious imagery and allusions. In "One Arm" (OA), for instance, "Oliver had for these correspondents the curtained and abstract quality of the priest who listens without being visible to the confessions of guilt" (OA 179). To others "he became the archetype of the Savior Upon The Cross who had taken upon himself the sins of their world to be washed and purified in his blood and passion" (OA 179). And "Desire and the Black Masseur" draws closely on some of the fundamental Christian doctrines such as the imperfection of man, original sin and the principle of sacrificial redemption. The relationship between sexuality and religion is also particularly manifest in Williams' drama: Battle of Angels, Orpheus Descending, The Rose Tattoo, Sweet Bird of Youth, Small Craft Warnings, and Kingdom of Earth, to name just a few.

Moreover, in Williams, sexuality is so elevated that it is tantamount to religion--indeed, as Prenshaw says, in some of his works Williams "takes the tack of D. H. Lawrence and makes a religion of sex" (18). In The Rose Tattoo, for instance, Serafina describes the pure relationship she had with her husband Rosario--she tells the priest Father De Leo: "I give him the glory. To me the big bed was beautiful like a religion".[44] And in Small Craft Warnings, when Leona sees Violet extend her hand under the table to reach Monk's genitals, she says that Violet is "worshipping her idea of God Almighty in her personal church" (233; act 2). Similarly, Blanche's relationship with Allan is not without religious allusions--the image of light and darkness in which Blanche describes her discovery of love in the person of Allan is resonant of what we read in Genesis: Chapter 1, verses 3 and 4: "And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from darkness ".[45] No wonder. For in Kingdom of Earth, the biblical image is literally stated. After Chicken has sexual intercourse with Myrtle, the stage

directions suggest that "The kitchen scrim rises as Chicken lights the lamp on the table". At this moment, fastening "the clasp of his belt", Chicken says: "Let there be light. That's what they say that God said on the first day of creation".[46]

On the other hand, the great similarity between Blanche and Allan, the emotional, spiritual, and cultural levels on which she identifies with him, and the notion that Allan could be seen as her doppelganger, suggests a different perspective for approaching Williams' presentation of homosexuality. The idea of the doppelganger forges an important link with Capote whose presentation of homosexuality in the works which have already been considered, relies almost entirely on this approach. Regarding Blanche exclusively as a female restricts the significance of the link with Capote whose characters are, with the exception of Kay, mainly males. However, Blanche's characterization and role in the play are tinged with ambivalence which broadens the prospects of that connection. On the one hand, although in her relationship with her husband Blanche was the victimizer, in her conflict with Stanley her husband's role as a victim is transferred to her--a role which only reinforces her identification with her husband as a tormented, lonely spirit: a recurrent image of the homosexual in Williams' canon. As Arthur Ganz says: "Kowaliski, though an avenger, is as guilty of destroying Blanche as she is of destroying her husband. For Blanche . . . is an exile like the homosexual" (128).

This association between Blanche and Allan is particularly interesting because it is one of the various indirect and subtle methods Williams uses in his treatment of homosexuality, central to which is the ambiguity and ambivalence which characterize the sexual roles of his characters. Robert Emmet Jones refers to these points when he says that "elements of homosexuality and bisexuality" are recurrent in Williams' canon, that "many of his major dramatis personae are basically sexually ambivalent and could . . .

easily have been portrayed as members of the opposite sex", and that "Williams was a precursor . . . in the depiction of what today is known as the unisexual character" (554). The reversal of the "conventional role of the male as aggressor" (Jones 548) and of the female's passive role in a sexual relationship is one of the most pervasive patterns in Williams' canon, which is also typified in his most characteristically Southern plays: A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. Like Alma and Maggie, Blanche assumes the aggressor's role in her sexual relationships--she tells Mitch: "I stayed at a hotel called The Tarantula Arms! ... Yes, a big spider! That's where I brought my victims. . . . I had many intimacies with strangers" (204-5; sc. 9).

In her essay, "Tennessee Williams and the Predicament of Women", Louise Blackwell argues that Williams'

> drama derives from the characters' recognition of certain needs within themselves and their consequent demands for the right mate. Frustration is the surface evidence of the predicament of his female characters".[47]

Blackwell's statement clearly suggests that the dilemmas of Williams' female characters are sexually-related. Hence, their sexual aggressiveness is a manifestation of their deep-seated frustration. In Williams' Southern plays, this point is particularly interesting because it links his presentation of the predicament of the Southern belle with his treatment of homosexuality. For aggressiveness suggests a reversal of the conventional role of the female which, in turn, is indicative of sexual ambivalence. Hence, Jones suggests that many of Williams' female characters "could have been portrayed as frustrated homosexuals" (550). In this respect, Jones also believes that "the best example of sexual ambivalence in Williams' works are to be found in A Streetcar Named Desire, and Summer and Smoke" (553).

However, behind Williams' allusive and reticent treatment of homosexuality in his drama lie social pressure and the need to comply with the demands of the commercial theatre. For as Jones says: "in a more recent time , he might also have made them [Blanche and Alma] homosexual men. Nothing important would have been needed to change their characterization" (554). Similarly, the sharp contrast between Capote's presentation of homosexuality in Answered Prayers and in the "dark stories" reflects the social pressure behind the reticent, covert, and allusive manner of his early works. In this respect, the fact that gothicism characterizes Capote's early fiction, including Other Voices, Other Rooms in which he deals with homosexuality, is particularly significant. For it symbolizes not only the pressure on and the fear of the characters, but also the restrictive atmosphere in which the artist operates. Eisinger confirms this point when he says that the "gothic has a symbolic content . . .. Even if it begins in the unconscious, a symbolic representation of reality may rise to the level of art" (236). He also believes that

> the rage for the gothic in the forties was the product of a preference for art over life. The truths of life that men could see in their daily experience were too harsh to assimilate, to have to confront face to face and to live with". (236)

Therefore, the artist, as Eisinger suggests, "decided it is better to filter these truths through an art form" (236). In other words, the gothic is a mask or "a wall that shuts us off from the real horror" (236), but which also symbolizes the extent of the horror behind it. At the same time, Eisinger suggests that in Capote, "The gothic vision is a symbol of his conviction that both society and man frustrate the quest for the self" (237).

In its treatment of homosexuality Other Voices, Other Rooms stands midway between the early stories and Answered Prayers. For although

homoerotic love, particularly on the part of Randolph, is thinly disguised, if at all, Joel's acceptance of his homosexuality is presented through metaphors, symbols, dreams and images. Indeed, Other Voices, Other Rooms is so crucial for understanding Capote's treatment of homosexuality that it merits more than a fleeting glance. For critics almost unanimously regard homosexuality as its predominant theme. Garson, for instance, says that "the major theme of the novel is homosexuality" (14). And Summers suggests that the novel "chronicles the movement toward acceptance of his homosexual nature by Joel Harrison Knox" (132). Joel's girlish features, his failure to function as a male in his pathetic encounter with Idabel and in the scene where--afraid and paralyzed--he fails to kill the snake, are mainly contrived to reveal his incipient homosexuality which he eventually accepts by "following Randolph's summons" (Summers 132).

Moreover, the novel also presents certain significant ideas which are the essence of the philosophical commitment behind Capote's personal and artistic concerns in homosexuality. Prominent among them is that homosexuality is, as Summers suggests, "a manifestation of love's essential irrationality" (130)--an idea which Randolph, Capote's spokesman, states clearly:

> The brain may take advice, but not the heart, and love, having no geography, knows no boundaries . . . any love is natural and beautiful that lies within a person's nature; only hypocrites would hold a man responsible for what he loves. (147)

Summers believes that not only do Williams and Capote share this basic conviction, but also "the animating theme" of their early fiction is "the universal human need for love, a theme explored most deeply by their fellow Southerner Carson McCullers, whose influence on them is palpable" (130-1), particularly that of her novel The Ballad of the Sad Cafe.

On the other hand, central to the novel's message is, as Nance suggests,

the "two lessons" that

> Joel learnt . . . on the hectic night when he tried to escape . . . that the one important thing is love, which alone can vanquish the Snow queen. . . . that the nature of the parts makes no difference so long as they join in a harmonious whole. . . . Earlier, seeing the two negroes embracing in the woods, he had learnt that the essence of love was withness". (62)

These ideas which are at the heart of Other Voices, Other Rooms are undeniably positive. So is its central theme of, as Eisinger suggests, "the inward-turning search for the dimensions of the self" (237), which culminates in Joel's recognition and acceptance of his homosexuality. In general, thematically and stylistically, the novel is Capote's most elaborate homosexual work and offers--besides the points which have already been mentioned--various dimensions for comparison with Williams in terms of subtlety, allusiveness, sexual ambivalence, and the link between homosexuality and death. However, the novel suffers from serious flaws not only in, as Summers suggests, "its stereotypically negative depiction of homosexuality" (132)--which is certainly critical--but also in the heart of its method through which it conveys its message, and the conclusion it arrives at: Joel's recognition and acceptance of his homosexuality. In other words, what is at stake here is the credibility of that conclusion. For the crucial question which arises is: despite his pretty, delicate, and girlish features--which are underlined in order to prepare the reader to accept the idea of Joel's latent homosexuality--is he effeminate? Does he harbour any gay feelings? And does he genuinely and wholeheartedly accept Randolph?

A careful scrutiny of the novel shows that the narrative contradicts these apparent conclusions which are not fully realized or substantiated as believable parts of his development. Joel is not effeminate, and the association between his delicate complexion and the alleged notion of his latent homosexuality is

one of the negative aspects of Capote's presentation of homosexuality in this novel. For although, as in Williams, it suggests sexual ambivalence, Joel's characterization is part of a whole pattern of grotesqueness which permeates the novel. As Summers remarks, "Capote presents homosexuality as simply one among many grotesqueries" (132). Nor does Joel's behaviour suggest that he is effeminate--with Sam Radclif he behaves like a young gentleman, speaks with confidence, and shows pride in his ancestry: he is the grandson of "Major Knox . . . a prominent figure in the Civil War" (60; sec. 2). At Miss Roberta's in Noon City, he orders "A cold beer", but the grotesque Miss Roberta refuses: "Can't serve no beer to minors, babylove" (23; sec. 1). At the same time, Joel does not harbour gay feelings--he is attracted to the female characters: to the Thompkin sisters, Florabel and Idabel, to Zoo, and to Miss Wisteria.

Moreover, although Joel's encounter with Idabel where he is beaten by her is contrived to suggest his lack of masculinity and, consequently, his latent homosexuality, his heterosexual orientation and desire are unmistakable. The Thompkin sisters have strong appeal for him and, at some stage, his heart is torn between them. And although Idabel is tough, impolite and indifferent with him, he harbours love for her and is more attached to her. For she is an outgoing girl who offers him a chance to escape from the Landing. The incident when she beats him for kissing her does not show his latent homosexuality--rather, it demonstrates Idabel's tomboyish character and her lack of interest in heterosexuality. When he suggests that they go to California where twelve year old girls can get married, she admonishes him and tells him to behave like a brother (174; sec. 10). Earlier, she tells him: "Son . . . what you've got in your britches is no news to me, and no concern of mine" (132; sec. 7). Yet, Joel is undeterred by this clear warning, and his desire for her is strong. He kisses her, and when she starts beating him up, he feels that this "was the real betrayal" (135; sec. 7). Later, when they saw the two negroes

embracing in the woods, Joel was aroused: "for watching them it had been as if his heart were beating all over his body" (188; sec. 11).

The significance of this incident is that it was a heterosexual encounter that aroused him, and his desire was unmistakably heterosexual: "He wanted to walk with Idabel's hand in his, but she had them doubled like knots, and when he spoke to her she looked at him mean and angry and scared" (188). Idabel thwarted his attempts to establish a heterosexual relationship with her, and her physical strength was the only deterrent against his repeated attempts. Hence, this is not enough to conclude that he is homosexual, or that his heterosexuality is destroyed. For such an assumption is also one of the negative aspects of the novel's presentation of homosexuality--as Summers suggests, "In the novel, homosexuality is a negation of masculinity" (132).

Similarly, the novel's depiction of Joel's alleged wholehearted acceptance of Randolph is misleading and unconvincing; the situation into which he is forced calls for pity rather than happiness and celebration. Summers believes that "this acceptance is disturbing rather than liberating, for the homosexuality that Joel finally embraces in Other Voices, Other Rooms is distinctly unappetizing and utterly unconvincing" (132). Yet, it is not only that the negative depiction of homosexuality is "unconvincing"--but also that the mere suggestion of Joel's acceptance of Randolph contradicts the narrative. Conclusions are assumed more than dramatized. Nance says that Randolph functions "not primarily as a sexual deviate but as a generalized symbol of all humanity in its need for love" (59). Yet if Joel, at some stage, feels pity for Randolph, this does not mean that he loves him and becomes his disciple. For there are more reasons for Joel to reject than to accept him, and as a little boy--orphaned and deprived of parental love--Joel is the one who desperately needs love, care, and attention: "God, let me be loved" (74; sec. 3).

Having received his father's call for reunion, Joel immediately leaves for the Landing seeking the love he had long been deprived of. And although it was Randolph who wrote the letter and who wanted him to come, he shows indifference to the boy, who feels from the beginning that he is cheated and caught in a trap. He is not at ease with Randolph and is repelled by his appearance and behaviour: "A curious quality about Randolph's voice had worried Joel" (77; sec. 4). Also Randolph is indifferent to Joel's pathetic appeals to see his father. On the other hand, Joel is clearly attached to Zoo who shows him care and sympathy. Therefore, he is repelled and antagonized by Randolph's and Amy's racial attitude towards her and the callousness they showed when her husband attempted to kill her. The novel demonstrates Joel's restlessness and his sense of confinement, particularly after he realized that his father is an invalid. He is desperate to escape--he proposes to leave with Zoo after the death of Jesus Fever, and even runs away with Idabel, leaving his father. He writes to Aunt Ellen complaining about his life in the Landing, the primitive conditions of which are attributed to Randolph who "is opposed to contrivances" like "modern plumbing facilities" (45; sec. 2).

In the Landing Joel is so desperate that "he wished he were dead" (119; sec. 6). When he runs away with Idabel, "The road was like a river to float upon, and it was as if a roman-candle, ignited by the sudden breath of freedom, had zoomed him away in a wake of star-sparks. 'Run', he cried, reaching Idabel" (186; sec. 11). Nevertheless, his attempts at escape are doomed to failure: Idabel betrays him and runs away with Miss Wisteria; Zoo refuses to take him with her to Washington; and his letters to Ellen have gone unanswered, and even when she decides to come, Randolph takes him to the Cloud Hotel. His schemes for escape are exhausted, his hopes are dashed, and he is virtually trapped in a situation where every thing is part of a huge conspiracy against him. He knows that Randolph is, at least, part of that

conspiracy, and he does not show any sign of love for him. In his dreams, after the failed escape with Idabel, "a Prince Albert poster . . . frightened him more than had the sight of Randolph: he would never rid himself of either" (197; sec. 11).

The novel presents incident after incident where Joel is repelled and angered by Randolph and where his feelings for him range between hatred and resentment. Yet, in the last part, the novel suddenly starts to suggest Joel's admiration and love for Randolph. When the latter recounts the incident in which he shot Joel's father, we are told that Joel is more concerned about the fate of Dolores and Pepe than his father: "most important of all, where was the ending? What happened to Dolores and old awful Pepe Alvarez? That is what he wanted to know, and that is what he asked" (153; sec. 8). It is unreasonable to suggest that Joel shows more sympathy for the perverts who caused his father's paralysis than his father who is the only one left for him in this world. Moreover, when later Joel shows Randolph the postcard which Idabel sent him, Randolph "passed it to the fire" (210; sec. 12). At this instance, we are told that "as Idabel and her cottonpickers crinkled, he would have lost his hands to retrieve them" (210-11). But Joel stops short of doing that because Randolph starts reading Macbeth for him. This time Joel "fell asleep and woke up with a holler, for he had climbed up the chimney after Idabel" (211).

Although Idabel betrayed Joel, this incident shows that his heart is still attached to her. And while Randolph prevents him from retrieving her photograph, he follows her in his dreams. Here, instead of showing Joel's resentment for what Randolph has done, the novel suggest that when Randolph wakes him up, Joel "was glad for Randolph, calm in the center of his mercy. So sometimes he came near to speaking out his love for him" (211). Yet, he refrains, first because it is "unsafe ever to let anyone guess the extent of your

feelings or knowledge" (211). On the other hand, Randolph is not worth his feelings: "And even if he spoke to Randolph, to whom would he be confessing love? Faceted as a fly's eye, being neither man nor woman, and one whose every identity cancelled the other, a grab-bag of disguises" (211). The phrase, "being neither man nor woman", is particularly interesting here, because it demonstrates Joel's unease and his resentment of Randolph's effeminancy and transvestism. And from the beginning, Joel feels that "Holding hands with Randolph was obscurely disagreeable, and Joel's fingers tensed with an impulse to dig his nails into the hot dry palm" (85; sec. 4).

Moreover, Joel does not trust Randolph. For when the latter tells him that they are invited by Little Sunshine, Joel "could not altogether believe" the "Urgency" and "enthusiasm" which "underscored his [Randolph's] voice" (212; sec. 12). For Joel "sensed the plan was motivated by private, no doubt unpleasant reasons, and these, whatever they were, opposed Randolph's actual desire" (212). Joel's plea to stay at the Landing "was rejected" and, therefore, "old galling grindful thoughts about Randolph came back. He felt grumpy enough to quarrel" (212). Yet, after the visit to the Cloud Hotel which is associated with horrible images of death, we are told of Joel's complete transformation: he loves Randolph and, therefore, he feels whole and free, although he later realizes that the visit was planned because Randolph had known that Ellen would come to see Joel. Hence, it is unreasonable and rather absurd to suggest that Joel loves and accepts Randolph wholeheartedly. For Randolph has done nothing to win Joel's heart. He has not offered him the love, care, and attention he came to the Landing for. And instead of assuaging Joel's fears and loneliness, Randolph aggravates them and pushes Joel to the brink of despair where he is prepared to do every thing he can in order to escape. Hence, the crucial question is: had Joel managed to escape, would he have stayed at the Landing and accepted Randolph? The answer is

emphatically negative; consequently, it is endurance, resignation, and surrender, not love and acceptance, that best describe Joel's decision to stay at the Landing.

On the whole, homosexuality in Other Voice, Other Rooms is strongly associated with negative qualities: loneliness, isolation and passive resignation, effeminacy, transvestism and negation of masculinity, and with victimization and death, decadence and corruption. And instead of underscoring the normality and ordinariness of the homosexual, it confirms the "stereotypical notion of homosexuality as a wounding experience" (Summers 133). Here, there is a significant connection with Williams in Vieux Carré which is a distillation of his life-long experience and in which he finally managed to speak out fully--in his drama--what he had long agonizingly expressed piecemeal and often in a covert, elusive, and indirect manner. Vieux Carré does not explore a new territory, though--the central motifs have long been repeatedly expressed throughout his huge canon. Loneliness, sex, thwarted passion, the connection between sex and art, time's corrosive passage, the wanderer and the faded belle, and the pressure of conventional morality, are among the most recurrent themes in his work.

However, the significance of Vieux Carré arises not only from the total combination of all these motifs, but also from the inexorable link between them which forms a broad framework in which Williams' presentation of homosexuality takes a new turn. For although loneliness, for instance, is a recurrent theme in Williams' cannon, in this play it is dramatized in an unprecedented manner in which language partakes a great deal of the significance of the dramatization. Mrs Wire, who--in her own words--is "a solitary ole woman cared for by no one" (65; sc. 7), makes a statement which is among the key memorable lines in Williams' entire canon--she tells the Writer:

"there's so much loneliness in this house that you can hear it. Set still and you can hear it: a sort of awful-soft-groaning in all the walls" (65). Bigsby believes that this is "an understatement, for the play presses a familiar Williams theme to the point of parody" (122). Yet, although in Orpheus Descending Val makes a similar statement when he tells Lady: "We're all of us sentenced to solitary confinement inside our own skins, for life" (283; act 2, sc. 1), it is overstated and, comparatively, lacks the genuineness and credibility of Mrs Wire's comment. Far more than any other Williams' play, Vieux Carré dramatizes loneliness as the common plight of all the characters.

Moreover, the significance of this theme in Vieux Carré is that it is strongly associated with sexuality and is, therefore, particularly crucial for Williams' presentation of homosexuality as "a wounding experience". And although the homosexual is always portrayed in Williams' canon as an exile, in this play the emotional destitution of the homosexual assumes a profound emotional dimension. In Scene Two, the stage directions suggest that from the Writer's cubicle we hear "a sound of dry and desperate sobbing which sounds as though nothing in the world could appease the wound from which it comes: loneliness, inborn and inbred to the bone" (16). The Writer says that he was crying because he remembered his diseased grandmother. Yet, his conversation with Nightingale--a tubercular painter and an avowed homosexual--gives much insight into his agony and despair. Like Williams, the Writer loves his grandmother. Nonetheless, his loneliness--which he calls an "affliction" (20; sc. 2)--and which stirs his bouts of "desperate sobbing" is deeply rooted in his emotional distress whose cause he cannot define clearly because of his strict conventional upbringing and background.

What distinguishes Vieux Carré from the rest of Williams' drama is that it explores the emotional and psychological entity of the individual at the most crucial stage of establishing his sexual identity. For while a number of plays

refer to a homosexual character whose death occurred before the time in which the play is set, and others--like Small Craft Warnings, for instance--recount a homosexual experience, Vieux Carré dramatizes the most critical moment for a character, the Writer, who is in the process of discovering, admitting, and accepting his homosexual identity. The Writer is distressed--he is twenty-eight and has a tremendous capacity for love and compassion. Yet, his sexual identity is still rather undecided, and his desire and passion are unfulfilled because of too much repression. For even though he was sobbing in despair, he is embarrassed by the fact that Nightingale is aware of that. And when the latter tells him that "crying is a release for man or woman", the Writer says: "I was taught not to cry because it's . . . humiliating" (18; sc. 2). Nightingale's comment that "You're a victim of conventional teaching, which you'd better forget" (18), is particularly significant, for it pinpoints the root cause of the Writer's agony. In other words, the Writer is a prisoner of his own emotions and passion which are repressed by the conventional mores.

Nightingale assumes a crucial role in the play. An avowed homosexual, he awakens the Writer to sexual life, and his admittedly "blunt approach" (21; sc. 2) is a catalyst which releases the Writer from the bondage of conventional sexual morality. Hearing the Writer's "desperate sobbing", he comes into his cubicle, offering his moral support by identifying himself with the Writer as a fellow artist. At the same time, he indirectly reveals his homosexual identity, and reminds the Writer, who is not at ease and who suggests the he wants to sleep, of his situation: "You need some company first. I know the sound of loneliness, heard it through the partition" (18). And when he sits on the Writer's cot, the stage directions suggest that "The Writer huddles away to the wall, acutely embarrassed" (18). The Writer's repeated embarrassment at Nightingale's gestures and comments demonstrates the extent of the sense of

captivity which his background has created in him and which requires Nightingale's persistence and intimate, though blunt, approach to break. Having understood the Writer's problem, Nightingale does not lack the stimulus and the courage to help him emerge from his confinement. He drives home his message again and again, reminding the Writer that "a single man needs visitors at night. Necessary as bread, as blood in the body" (20; sc. 2). He tries gradually, yet persistently, to achieve a break-through with the Writer and establish an intimate relationship with him, and offers his "advice and . . . company in this sad ole house" (21; sc. 2).

Having received no proper response from the Writer who is embarrassed and who lacks "experience" (21), Nightingale adopts a "blunt approach" (21), asking him indirectly if he is gay. The Writer says: "Oh . . . I'm not sure I know . . . I . . ." (21). In other words, the Writer is not sure about his sexual identity, although he had "one" homosexual "experience" (21) with a "paratrooper" (22; sc. 2). The Writer's encounter with the paratrooper is a crucial key to his present despair. For although he had no experience before that, he was so overwhelmed by the emotional impact the intercourse had on him that even the paratrooper "was shocked by my reaction" (24; sc. 2). He told the paratrooper that he "loved . . . him", and although the latter asked him to "Forget it" (25; sc. 2), the Writer cannot, and is sad that "I don't even have his address and I've forgotten his name" (25). At this moment, Nightingale takes the opportunity to make an advance: "His hand is sliding down the sheet" which covers the Writer's body, and asks him: "How about this?" (25). Yet, "with gathering panic", the Writer tells him: "I think I'd better get some sleep now" (25). The Writer is dismissive and his reply shows that he lacks courage. Hence, Nightingale reminds him: "You are alone in the world, and I am, too" (25), and tells him: "Lie back and imagine the paratrooper" (26; sc. 2). After this encounter, the apparition of the Writer's grandmother appears to him, and

he wonders "if she'd witnessed the encounter between the painter and me and what her attitude was toward such--perversions?" (26).

However, it is in his depiction of Nightingale's dilemma that Williams best portrays homosexuality as a "wounding experience". For although Williams presents the Writer as one who discovers and accepts his homosexual identity, Nightingale is the one whose agony and suffering may well best describe Williams' view of homosexuality. Nightingale is dying of tuberculosis, a fatal disease which, in Williams' canon, is a symbol of moral corruption. This is not surprising, given Williams' paradoxical view about sexuality. For, as has been mentioned earlier, the Writer wonders about his grandmother's attitude toward his encounter with Nightingale which he calls "such--perversions". At the same time, although the Writer still relishes the memory of his homosexual experience with the paratrooper and wishes to recapture the thrill of that encounter, Nightingale's distress and despair, isolation and acute sense of loneliness offer an entirely negative and sad image of the fate of the homosexual. His remarks to the writer about loneliness have tremendous credibility because they are uttered by one who knows exactly how it feels to be lonely. His persistence and pleading with the Writer demonstrate his desperate need for contact. And his happiness, that after his encounter with the Writer he has found a friend is short lived. For his advances and pleas are ignored by the Writer who--particularly after inviting Tye into his cubicle and later meeting Sky with whom he prepares to leave for the West Coast--shows less interest in him. The Writer's refusal to satisfy Nightingale's burning desire drives him to the brink of despair particularly when he tells the Writer, in agony: "lack of appreciation is something I've come to expect and almost to accept as if God-the alleged-had stamped on me a sign at birth--'This man will offer himself and not be accepted, not by anyone ever" (49; sc. 5).

The link between Williams and Capote regarding their presentation of homosexuality as a "wounding experience" is also enhanced by some aspects of similarity between Randolph and Nightingale. Both characters are homosexual painters and both are afflicted with severe illness: Randolph suffers from Asthma; Nightingale from tuberculosis which he sometimes calls asthma. Yet, the most striking similarity between them is their acute sense of loneliness and the deep scars it has on their psyche. However, the major difference between them is that while Randolph has resigned from life and has a death-in-life existence, Nightingale leads an active life despite his fatal illness. On the other hand, both Vieux Carré and Other Voices, Other Rooms present a similar theme: the discovery and acceptance of one's homosexual identity. Yet, while Vieux Carré treats this theme in overt sexual terms which resemble the manner of Capote's Answered Prayer, Other Voices, Other Rooms deals with it from an emotional and psychological perspective.

On the whole, despite the negative terms in which Other Voices, Other Rooms presents homosexuality, in its profound analysis of the nature, meaning, and essence of love, this novel offers a significant contribution to homosexual literature. So does the rest of Capote's canon which presents homosexuality in various forms and from different perspectives. Yet, it is generally overlooked by critics. Summers, for instance, dedicates a whole chapter to homosexuality in "The Early Fiction of Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams"--nevertheless, while he extensively explores Williams' fiction, he only briefly discusses Other Voices, Other Rooms. The early fiction is completely ignored and not even mentioned from the perspective of the theme of homosexuality--the "dark stories", "The Diamond Guitar", "Dazzle", Breakfast At Tiffany's, In Cold Blood, and even Answered Prayers are unceremoniously forgotten.

Similarly, many important aspects of Williams' presentation of

homosexuality, particularly in his drama, are overlooked by critics, who focus mostly on his fiction. Yet, by comparison, Williams' canon has received more attention than Capote's. Undoubtedly, Williams' canon is more various--dramatic and fictional-- and more colourful; moreover, more than in Capote's work, sexuality is correlative for social, political, and religious concerns. However, both writers take these issues seriously and engage them with depth and passion and make, in the final analysis, invaluable contributions to the literature of compassion.

Notes to Chapter Four

[1] Marie Rudisill and James C. Simmons, Truman Capote (New York: Marrow, 1983) 135. Henceforth referred to as Rudisill and Simmons.

[2] Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams: His Life and Work (London: Owen, 1961) 18. Henceforth referred to as Nelson.

[3] Tennessee Williams, Memoirs (1976; London: Star-Allen, 1977) 11. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[4] M. Thomas Inge, ed., Truman Capote: Conversations (Jackson: Mississippi University Press, 1987) 184. Henceforth referred to as Inge.

[5] Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Brownne (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 225; sc. 11. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[6] Tennessee Williams, Foreword, Sweet Bird of Youth, by Williams, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1959; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 10. Henceforth referred to as For. SBY.

[7] Tennessee Williams, Where I Live: Selected Essays, eds. Christine R. Day and Bob Woods (New York: New Directions, 1978) 59. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[8] Roger Boxill, Tennesseee Williams, eds. Bruce King and Adele King, Macmillan Modern Drama (London: Macmillan; Hamburg: Petersen-Macmillan, 1987) 8. Henceforth referred to as Boxill.

[9] Tennessee Williams, "The Resemblance between a Violin Case and a Coffin," The Collected Stories of Tennessee Williams, by Williams (1986; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 272. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[10] Albert J. Devlin, ed., Conversations with Tennessee Williams, gen. ed. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1986) 169. Henceforth referred to as Devlin.

[11] Albert J. Devlin, Introduction, Conversations with Tennessee Williams, ed. Devlin; gen. ed. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: Mississippi UP, 1986) X.

[12] Gore Vidal, Introduction, The Collected Stories of Tennessee Williams, by Tennessee Williams (1986; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) XXIII.

[13] Gerald Clarke, Capote: A Biography (1988; London: Cardinal-Sphere, 1989) 11-2. Henceforth referred to as Clarke.

[14] Ruby Cohn, New American Dramatists: 1960-1980, eds. Bruce King and Adele King, Macmillan Modern Dramatists (London: Macmillan, 1982)

116.

[15] Claude J. Summers, Gay Fictions: Wilde to Stonewall: Studies in a Male Homosexual Literary Tradition (New York: Ungar-Continuum, 1990) 130. Henceforth referred to as Summers.

[16] Helen S. Garson, Truman Capote, gen. ed. Philip Winsor, Modern Literature Series (New York: Ungar, 1980) 14. henceforth referred to as Garson.

[17] Jeffrey Meyers, Homosexuality and Literature: 1890-1930 (London: University of London The Athlone Press, 1977) 1. Henceforth referred to as Meyers.

[18] W. Kenneth Holditch, "Surviving with Grace: Tennessee Williams Today," Southern Review 15 (1979): 755. Henceforth referred to as Holditch.

[19] Truman Capote, Preface, Other Voices, Other Rooms by Capote (1948; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) XVIII.

[20] Truman Capote, Preface, Music for Chameleons by Capote (London: Hamilton; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) XIV.

[21] Joseph M. Fox, Editor's Note, Answered Prayers by Truman Capote (1986; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) XIV.

[22] C. W. E. Bigsby, A Crtical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama, Vol. 2. Williams/Miller/Albee (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984) 85. 3 Vols. 1982-1985. Henceforth referred to as Bigsby.

[23] Tennessee Williams, Vieux Carre' (New York: New Directions, 1979) 4. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[24] Robert Emmet Jones, "Sexual Roles in the Works of Tennessee Williams," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jack Tharpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977) 547. Henceforth referred to as Jones.

[25] Kenneth T. Reed, Truman Capote, ed. Warren French, Twayne's United States Authors Series 388 (Boston: Twayne, 1981) 81. Henceforth referred to as Reed.

[26] Truman Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms (1948; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 4; sec. 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[27] Ihab Hassan, Radical Innocence: Studies in the Contemporary American Novel (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1961) 233. Henceforth referred to as Hassan.

[28] William L. Nance, The Worlds of Truman Capote (1970; London: Calder and Boyars, 1973) 41. Henceforth referred to as Nance.

[29] Truman Capote, Answered Prayers (1986; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) 50. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the

text.

[30] Glenn Embrey, "The Subterranean World of The Night of the Iguana," Tennessee Williams: 13 Essays, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1980) 65. Henceforth referred to as Embrey.

[31] Tennessee Williams, I Rise in Flame, Cried the Phoenix, Dragon Country (New York: New Directions, 1970) 69.

[32] Chester E. Eisinger, Fiction of the Forties (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963) 237. Henceforth referred to as Eisinger.

[33] Tennessee Williams, The Night of the Iguana, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore The Night of the Iguana, by Williams (1963; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 308-9; act 3. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[34] Peggy W. Prenshaw, "The Paradoxical Southern World of Tennessee Williams," Tennessee Williams: 13 Essays, ed. Jac Tharpe (Jackson: University Press Of Mississippi, 1980) 17. Henceforth referred to as Prenshaw.

[35] Truman Capote, "Children on Their Birthdays," Selected Writings, by Capote (London: Hamilton, 1963) 85.

[36] Truman Capote, "A Tree of Night," Selected Writings, by Capote (London: Hamilton, 1963) 3. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[37] Truman Capote, "Shut a Final Door," Selected Writings, by Capote (London: Hamilton, 1963) 59. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[38] Truman Capote, "The Headless Hawk," Selected Writings, by Capote (London: Hamilton, 1963) 48. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[39] Tennessee Williams, "One Arm," The Collected Stories of Tennessee Williams, by Williams (1986; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 188. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[40] Tennessee Williams, Small Craft Warnings, Period of Adjustment Summer and Smoke Small Craft Warnings, by Williams (1973; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982) 204; act 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[41] Tennessee Williams, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore The Night of the Iguana, by Williams (1956; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 43; act 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[42] Jacob H. Adler, "Tennessee Williams' South: The Culture and the Power," Tennessee Williams: A Tribute, ed. Jack Tharpe (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1977) 39.

[43] Arthur Ganz, "Tennessee Williams: A Desperate Morality,"

Tennessee Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Stephen S. Stanton, Twentieth Century Views (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Spectrum-Prentice-Hall, 1977) 127.

[44] Tennessee Williams, The Rose Tattoo, The Rose Tattoo Camino Real Orpheus Descending, by Williams (1954; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976) 64; act 2.

[45] The Holy Bible: New International Version (1978; Lutterworth, Eng.: The Gideons International, 1981) 1.

[46] Tennessee Williams, Kingdom of Earth (The Seven Descents of Myrtle), The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore Kingdom of Earth (The Seven Descents of Myrtle) Small Craft Warnings The Two-Character Play (New York: New Directions, 1976) 203; act 2, sc. 3. Vol. 5 of The Theatre of Tennessee Williams. 8 vols. 1971-1992. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[47] Louise Blackwell, "Tennessee Williams and the Predicament of Women," Tennessee Williams: A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Stephen S. Stanton (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1977) 101. Henceforth referred to as Blackwell.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has been a comparative and contrastive examination of the works of Tennessee Williams and Truman Capote, and has been constructed around discussions of their Southernness and homosexuality which are among the most distinguishing features of their personal and literary concerns. The significance of this perspective is that the concerns of these two writers are illuminated in ways which cannot be realized when they are approached separately. And within this context all aspects of their relationship with the South and their presentations of homosexuality have been thoroughly analyzed in relation with the Southern literary tradition and culture and in the light of their typically Southern background, their familial circumstances, as well as their childhood experiences.

It has been demonstrated throughout this thesis that Williams' and Capote's relationship with the South is multi-faceted, and that there are similarities and differences between them in the extent and degree of their commitment to and departure from the permanent characteristics of Southern culture and literature, as well as in their presentations of homosexuality. However, the most significant point which both writers share is the conflictual element which strongly characterizes their presentations of the South and of homosexuality. It is an element which is closely related to the uneasy combination of their Southernness and homosexuality and which is deeply rooted in every aspect of their backgrounds.

Placing these two issues in an historical perspective, they were contentious and contradictory. For homosexuality is in sharp contrast with all aspects of traditional social culture and moral values which Southern society

most cherished and held dear. It was regarded as an anti-conservative force subversive of the family--which was the basic unit of traditional society--and of the individual's commitment to his family and of his sense of community which characterized the mentality of its members. Hence, the South, in particular, was most hostile to homosexuality both as a private concern and as a literary theme--one which was also considered taboo and out of line with mainstream American literature.

The hostility toward homosexuality had far-reaching influence on Williams and Capote. Not only did it affect their presentations of homosexuality, but also it contributed immensely to and reinforced the contradiction between their senses of identity as homosexual and Southern writers. Hence, although their canons betray a strong and multi-dimensional link with the South, their allegiance to the region was inevitably restrained, to some extent, by the fact that they were homosexuals. For there was a conflict between their private needs and their commitment to the South whose tradition and culture were intrinsically hostile to them. Simultaneously, their personal experiences and their homosexuality intensified their sense of insecurity and feeling of society as a threat and as an obstacle to their self-realization both as individuals and as artists. For as Bigsby says,

> A homosexual and an artist, who was brought up in a part of the country whose myths were more sustaining than its realities, he [Williams] scarcely needed economic and political theory to justify his sense of exclusion and even persecution. The psychic space allowed him in an America whose animating myths found little room for homosexuality, and whose emphasis was on the strenuous virtues of the frontiersman turned go-getting businessman, was small indeed.[1]

Given the striking similarity between the circumstances of both writers, Bigsby's statement applies equally to Capote who was also fully aware of the tremendous pressure on homosexuals and who, nonetheless, was resolute in

making his way both as a homosexual and a writer.

Moreover, not only did the familial circumstances, the childhood experiences, and the Southern background of the two writers, in which heterosexuality and sexual morality were involved at almost every turn, ironically contribute to their homosexual orientation which was partly a reaction to and a rebellion against those circumstances--they were also characterized by conflict and contradiction, and contributed immensely to the paradox which was to characterize their literary outlooks. For while Williams' family represented a significant aspect of the paradox of Southern culture, that is, the dichotomy between Puritanism and Cavalierness, the conflict between the parents of the two writers and the collapse of their families were a stark parody of heterosexuality and of conservatism, and tantamount to what homosexuality is ironically accused of, that is, being an anti-conservative force subversive of the family.

On the other hand, Williams and Capote started their careers at a crucial stage in the history of the South when it embraced the gospel of industrial progress and slackened its commitment to its inherited traditional culture and values, and when its social institutions were undermined by industrialization and urbanization. New socioeconomic realities appeared and new forces emerged and were inevitably in conflict with the traditional forces which were fighting a losing battle for survival. The atmosphere was heavily charged with tension, conflict, and disorientation. For the metamorphosis of the South was not limited to the economic aspect--social, cultural, and moral aspects also underwent total change. The individual's sense of commitment to his family and community became something of the past--family ties were broken and the pillars of traditional society crumbled. The materialistic spirit penetrated the South and traditional values were no longer in command.

So, almost every aspect of Williams' and Capote's backgrounds and

circumstances contained elements of conflict, dichotomy, and contradiction--their families, their childhood experiences, their Southern background, and even the regional socioeconomic and cultural circumstances at the time when they started their careers, were all characterized by contradiction and division. Inevitably, then, Williams and Capote were deeply influenced by these circumstances which, combined with their awareness of the antagonism between their homosexuality and Southern background, created and perpetuated the dichotomy, the tension, and the ambivalence which not only characterized their personal concerns, but which also account for the conflictual element, the confusion, and the paradox which are at the heart of their canons.

Although there is a varying degree of similarity and difference between Williams and Capote on almost every point that has been considered throughout this thesis, paradox is, perhaps, the single point which is not only shared by the two writers, but also on which there is little difference, if any, between them. And although in their long careers, both writers passed through different stages in which their literary concerns changed considerably, paradox remained one of the most distinguishing features of their works throughout their careers. Moreover, conflict is so deeply-ingrained in Williams' and Capote's canons that it is manifest in every single aspect of their works. It is evident in the variety of their styles, in the sharp contrast between their settings, in the antagonism between their characters, and in the stresses and strains within those characters which constantly pull them apart. It is also central to their imagery, symbols, and modes, and is characteristic of the thematic aspect of their canons, particularly in their treatment of Southern issues and in their presentations of homosexuality. Simultaneously, it is a crucial factor behind the difference between them and the renaissance writers.

Although Capote and Williams adopted various techniques, the stylistic aspect of their works can be defined in terms of dichotomy which is symptomatic of the latent conflict within their canons. On the one hand, Capote's canon is distinctively divided by his contradictory styles and modes: dark/bright, daylight/nocturnal, and gothic/romantic. And not only is this division closely related to the settings and to the thematic aspect of those works, it also reflects the sharp contrast between the urban way of life and that in the rural South. Similarly, Williams' drama is characterized by gothic/romantic and violent/non-violent modes and contains tragic and comic elements at the same time. Yet, it cannot be divided on that basis in the manner Capote's fiction is. For although some of his plays are non-violent and comic, they represent minor excursions, compared with his huge canon which is mostly concerned with destruction, death, fear, suffering, and agony.

However, the poignancy of Williams' drama lies in the combination of contradictions--one which is clearly manifest in his style. For while Capote's dark style is associated with his New York stories and the bright, romantic mood is typical of those which are set in the South, in Williams' drama, both the romantic and the violent modes are characteristic of Southern culture. And not only does the combination of the romantic and violent modes in Williams' drama represent the paradox of Southern culture--it also reflects the intense conflict in his contemporary South between romanticism and its antithesis: "I write about the South because I think the war between romanticism and the hostility to it is very sharp there".[2]

Similarly, Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms and In Cold Blood combine both the bright and the dark modes, though most of his works are distinctively characterized by one mode or the other. The bright mood is prevalent in the first part of Other Voices, Other Rooms, which depicts Joel's journey from Paradise Chapel to Noon City, while the latter part of the novel

combines both modes. Even In Cold Blood (CB), which reeks of murder and destruction in the most violent fashion, is sandwiched between two of the most touching, romantic, and elegiac paragraphs in Capote's canon. The opening paragraph is a fine specimen of Capote's descriptive power and romantic touch--it describes the natural beauty and poetic serenity and tranquillity of Western Kansas where the "hard blue skies and desert-clear air" embrace its "high wheat plains".[3] The concluding paragraph describes the encounter between Alvin Dewey, the KBI's agent who supervised the investigation of the murder of the Clutter family, and Susan Kidwell, Nancy Clutter's school mate and friend, at the graves of the Clutters which "lie in a far corner of the cemetery - beyond the trees, out in the sun, almost at the wheat field's bright edge" (CB 335).

Standing, along with the opening one, in sharp contrast with the whole of the novel, this paragraph in particular epitomizes and embodies the unresolved conflict and the contradiction which not only characterize Capote's canon, but also reflect the stresses and strains within his disturbed psyche. For behind the subtlety of the language and the smooth flow of the narrative lies a cluster of contradictory images and associations: life versus death, youth versus age, male versus female, innocence versus experience, hope versus fear, past versus present, sweet memories versus tragic reminiscences, aboveground versus underground, boom versus gloom, serenity versus chaos, there and then versus here and now, what might have been versus what is, the heat of the sun and the warmth of life versus the chilling reality of death, fact versus fiction, and fantasy versus journalism.

Although Alvin Dewey and Susan Kidwell are united in their sorrow for the Clutters, they are different in every way--he is in his fifties; Susan Kidwell is a teen-ager, "a willowy girl with white-gloved hands, a smooth cap of dark-

honey hair, and long, elegant legs" (CB 335). He is a man hardened by a long career as the KBI's chief agent in Kansas whose experience has given him deep insight into the perplexities and agonies of life; a young girl, Susan represents untainted innocence--she is full of hope for a future brightened with achievements and sweetened with dreams and romance. This contrast extends even to those whom they are visiting, the Clutters--two males and two females who are lying under the ground--who are no longer engaged in the endless paradoxes of life and whose contradictions were long levelled by death.

Moreover, although the encounter between Dewey and Susan is brief, it stirs deep-seated conflicting emotions and feelings of hope and frustration, past memories of a sweet would-be future which was aborted and whose immense potential was not allowed to be realized. Dewey does not recognize Susan at first because he "hadn't seen her since the trial; she had been a child then" (CB 335). So, she reminds him of herself and tells him that she is studying in the University of Kansas. Memories of Nancy Clutter are conjured--Nancy is resurrected through the imagination, as Susan remembers how "Nancy and I planned to go to college together. We were going to be room-mates. I think about it sometimes. Suddenly, when I'm very happy, I think of all the plans we made" (CB 335).

Susan also tells him that Bobby Rupp "married a beautiful girl" (CB 335)--a piece of news which underlines one of the most tragic ironies of fate in the novel. For Bobb and Nancy were so infatuated with each other that Mr Clutter had to preempt, on religious grounds, any possible plans on their part for marriage. And, ironically, it was on the night of their murder, after Bobb had given her a lift home from a party they attended together, and before she went to bed that her father "secured from her a promise to begin a gradual breaking off with Bobby" (CB 6). The memories invigorate the narrative and sustain the conversation. Yet, they become so disturbing that neither the

narrative nor the characters can carry their enormous weight any longer. And the result is escape--the narrative has to be terminated, and the meeting has to come to an abrupt end, as the characters leave, nursing the deep scars inflicted by life's perplexities, agonies, and contradictions: "Do you have the time? Oh,' she cried, when he told her it was past four, 'I've got to run! But it was nice to have seen you, Mr Dewey'" (CB 336).

To Dewey, perhaps, Nancy is not dead, is not far away--he can see her through her friend, Susan, who "disappeared down the path, a pretty girl in a hurry, her smooth hair swinging, shining - just such a young woman as Nancy might have been" (CB 336). Yet, as life goes on, Nancy lies dead in her grave, and although nothing could stop her dreams which were as vast and high as the blue sky over Holcomb, a "single grey stone" can. The grave's stone is there as a disturbing reminder of the unresolved conflict of the very fact of being alive and of the conflict between life and death and all the contradictions they encompass--a conflict which Capote's canon represents and which the novel's last sentence, elegiac, wistful, and romantic as it is, suggests Capote's failure to resolve: "starting home, he [Dewey] walked towards the trees, and under them, leaving behind him the big sky, the whisper of wind voices in the wind-bent wheat" (CB 336).

The concluding sentence of this novel is particularly significant, because its romantic resonance and rhythm are in sharp contrast with the graphic, horrific terms in which the brutal murder of the Clutters is described. At the same time, it is reminiscent of the romantic touch of The Grass Harp (GH)--"the whisper of wind voices in the wind-bent wheat" of Holcomb is reminiscent of the "harp of voices" of the "high Indian grass" when "the autumn winds strum on its dry leaves".[4] Moreover, the description of Dewey's departure in which he leaves "behind him the big sky" is also reminiscent of

the concluding sentence of Other Voices, Other Rooms (OV) which describes Joel as looking "back at the bottomless, descending blue, at the boy he had left behind".[5] Dewey leaves the cemetery baffled by the mysteries of life--for although as a detective, he unravelled a few of its enigmas, neither he nor Capote could resolve the intriguing contradictions of life.

On the other hand, not only is In Cold Blood stylistically self-contradictory, it is also in total contrast with all Capote's previous works and, consequently, represents an aspect of the conflict in his canon. For its documentary style and journalistic perspective are entirely alien to the world of fantasy and imagination in which Capote dwelled for more than two decades. The contrast goes beyond the mere shift of style--it involves a dramatic change of the manner in which his work is created. In his fiction, the characters lived in his imagination; in this novel as well as in some of the documentary and non-fictional works that followed, such as The Muses are Heard and Handcarved Coffins, Capote depended more on his visual observation than on his inner stimulation and imagination, and lived in the imagination of the characters and the people from whom he extracted the material of his works.

Similarly, Williams' canon is characterized by a combination of contradictory techniques and modes of presentation: realistic and non-realistic or expressionistic, as a substantial body of his drama is concerned with the conflict between the real world and the world of illusions and imagination. The Glass Menagerie (GM) is typical of Williams' drama--in his "Production Notes" he says that "Being a 'memory play', The Glass Menagerie can be presented with unusual freedom from conventions".[6] In this context, as Boxill says, "Nearly all of Williams's plays are, like Menagerie, 'memory plays'. They look back with longing to a time that has been sweetened in the remembering".[7] Trapped in the present which they cannot cope with, Williams' characters tend to escape to a past real or imagined. Yet, not only does the

expressionism of his plays correspond with his characters' flight into their imaginary worlds, it is also crucial for revealing their inner worlds, and projecting their fears, agonies and frustrations. In A Streetcar Named Desire (SND), for instance, the "Varsouviana" constantly filters throughout the play, exposing Blanche's inner world. And at the end of the play when Blanche is to be taken to the mad house, the "cries and noises of the jungle"[8] are projections of her mental disorder and collapse.

However, central to A Streetcar Named Desire as well as to many other Williams' plays is the combination of expressionism and realism--indeed, they vacillate between these two modes. Nelson believes that "Williams is not a realist or a naturalist, but his best works represent a tenuous but taut alliance between harsh realism and a poetic - even lyric - expressionism".[9] And not only does this alliance create tension and suspense, but it also underlines the contrast between the settings of Williams' plays and the conflict between and within his characters. In The Glass Menagerie, not only is the grim and squalid condition of the alleys outside the Wingfield's apartment in stark contrast with the "poetic" "interior" (234; Sc. 1), as are the circumstances in St Louis during the depression with Amanda's romantic world of Blue Mountain, but also it represents the menacing threat of the harsh real world to the poetic and fragile world of Laura's glass collections. By the same token, the Kowalskis' flat in the slums of New Orleans is sharply contrasted with the DuBois' plantation of Belle Reve and their white-pillared mansion. The same can also be said about the contrast in Orpheus Descending between Jabe Torrance's mercantile store and the confectionery which Lady built in an attempt to resurrect her father's wine garden which was burnt down by the Mystic Crew.

Similarly, the contrast between the settings of Capote's works is so stark that his canon can be distinctively divided on the basis of settings. It is

also crucial because it generates and is closely related to other aspects of contradiction within his canon. For it is not limited to the sharp difference between New York and the South--it is essentially a contrast between two intrinsically conflicting worlds: the dark and the bright, the fearful and the peaceful, the gothic and the romantic, the subterranean and the above-ground, the rural and the urban, all of which correspond with the dichotomy between Capote's objective and subjective modes of writing. And while the dichotomy between the settings of the New York Stories and the Southern ones is related to the difference between two categories of Capote's works, Other Voices, Other Rooms features both sides of the contradiction. For it focuses on the glorious past of the Skully's Landing and the Cloud Hotel as much as it describes their present gothic conditions. And The Muses are Heard describes Russia and sets a broad framework for contrast between two worlds that are entirely different socially, politically, economically, and culturally: the Orient and the Occident.

Closely associated with the difference between the settings in Williams' and Capote's canons is the contrast between their characters who represent the conflict within each writer's worlds. Both writers pay considerable attention to the significance of characterization as a crucial aspect of their works. Hence, Other Voices, Other Rooms juxtaposes the flat, grotesque characters with the fully-rounded ones, Florabel with Idabel, Joel and most of the other characters; The Grass Harp underlines the disharmony which develops into antagonism between the two Talbo sisters, Dolly and Verena, and also between the inhabitants of the tree-house and the rest of society; and In Cold Blood is another case in point whose ramifications are too extensive to be discussed here.

In Williams' drama, characterization assumes paramount importance because the "interest is not in the plot so much as it is in character, mood and

condition" (Boxill 22). The conflict in his drama is dramatized through these elements, therefore, the conflict between the characters is even sharper, sometimes violent, and most often has tragic proportions. For not only are his characters normal individuals, but also they represent and embody various conflicting aspects of his dramatic world: reality/illusion, gentility/brutality, light/darkness, life/death, flesh/spirit, body/soul, devotion and commitment/egocentricism, and romanticism/materialism. Hence, every play features conflicting characters: Tom/Amanda, Laura/Jim, Stanley/Blanche, Blanche/Stella, Alma/John, Big Daddy/Big Mama, Brick/Gooper, Val/Jabe Torrance, Chicken/Lot, Trinket/Celeste, and the list grows on and on.

Moreover, it is particularly interesting that the characters of both writers embody conflicting elements. The poignancy, the pathos, and the dramatic intensity and vigour of Williams' best-known plays--such as The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Summer and Smoke, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Night of the Iguana, to name just a few--derive essentially from the self-contradiction of and the stresses and strains within their characters. Tom Wingfield cannot shake the memory of his sister off his mind, although he did all he could to blow out her candles (313; sc. 7)--it persists in his mind and forces its way out in the play he narrates. Boxill believes that "The climax is not Laura's disappointment with her only gentleman caller but the recognition by Tom that for all the miles he has travelled he has never really broken the tender ties with his mother and sister" (22).

Blanche's dilemma lies in the division within her between contradictory forces which pull her apart--she is torn between her commitment to a dead tradition and her awareness that it is anachronistic, between the demands of the flesh and her sense of herself as a Southern belle, between

reality and illusion, and between desire and death. Blanche's failure to reconcile these paradoxical elements within herself paves the way for her final destruction. Similarly, Alma is a victim of the conflict between her spiritual ideals and her love and desire for John. Brick's physical crippling is a symbol of his spiritual crippling--his disgust with mendacity is a disgust with himself. For although he is disgusted with the social mores, he had internalized them when he denied his friend Skipper--who was most in need for Brick's sympathy and understanding--adjudged him corrupt, and drove him to death. And Shannon is torn between his sexual desire and his fear of God's punishment.

Many of Capote's stories, mostly the dark ones, deal with the sense of fear and captivity which relentlessly haunt his characters because they fail to love and accept other people. Yet, these people whom they fear and whom they are asked to love are projections of themselves. Hence, the conflict between these characters and those frightening and mysterious people represents the conflict within themselves between the dark side and the bright one, between the good and evil sides. However, both Williams and Capote fail to resolve the conflict within their characters. Capote's characters live in fear because they cannot love and accept the mysterious and dark elements within themselves. Even Joel's whole-hearted acceptance of Randolph is less than convincing. Williams' protagonists also fail to reconcile the conflicting elements within themselves--Alma turns to promiscuity; Maggie's scheme to save Brick will only help her inherit Big Daddy's plantation and does not address his sense of guilt; Shannon's dilemma is far from being completely over.

Unresolved conflict is also characteristic of the thematic aspect of Williams' and Capote's canons, particularly in their treatments of Southern subject matter and their presentations of homosexuality. It is most interesting that not only are these two issues conflicting, but also each one of them has a

tremendous influence on the presentation of the other. For Williams' and Capote's treatments of Southern issues are immensely influenced by their homosexuality as much as their homosexuality and their presentations--Williams' in particular--of this theme are affected by their Southern background to such an extent that Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms, and Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat on a Hot Tin Roof deal with the South and with homosexuality at the same time.

So, besides the fact that Williams and Capote witnessed different circumstances from the renaissance writers', it is the influence of their homosexuality on their treatment of Southern subject matter--an influence which is manifest in the paradox which characterizes that treatment--which most plausibly accounts for the difference between them and those writers. Yet, this important fact seems to be unduly overlooked by almost all critics when dealing with the Southern quality of their works. For the difference between the traditionalists and these two writers lies mostly in the contradiction which characterizes the latter's presentation of the South and which reflects the persisting unresolved tension between their private and public worlds. For apart from the similarities and differences between them on every single point, which have been thoroughly addressed throughout the thesis, the South is a familiar landscape in a substantial body of their canons, and their styles are, in the most part, distinctively native to that region.

Moreover, Williams and Capote share the traditionalist appreciation and admiration of the enduring and intrinsic values of Southern culture and mentality. Southern romanticism, grace, and love of the beautiful, hospitality, closeness to nature, manners, the sense of family and community, sympathy, and nostalgia--which both writers most relish--are the very "amenities of life" which "Southern Agrarians", in their manifesto, "I'll Take my Stand", regarded

as particularly Southern and warned that they would "suffer under the curse of a strictly-business or industrial civilization".[10] For in The Glass Menagerie, it is Amanda's gentleness, devotion to her family, and her heroic struggle for its survival that earn her dignity, despite her foolishness; in A Streetcar Named Desire, Blanche's elegance, eloquence, and romantic attitude make her final exit a lamentable destruction of a sensitive, gentle, and broken spirit; and in Baby Doll, as Williams says, "Aunt Rose Comfort had a grace and a poetry about her . . . and a dignity" (Devlin 45).

Similarly, in Capote's work, the South is associated with all those "amenities of life", which are contrasted with the sense of fear, victimization, and spiritual exploitation which characterize urban life as epitomized in the New York stories. In this context, it is noteworthy that "A Christmas Memory", "The Thanksgiving Visitor", "Hospitality", and The Grass Harp recapture the innocence of the childhood experience of an orphaned character who was adopted and looked after by his parents' relatives. Recurrent and autobiographical in origin as it is, this motif demonstrates not only the Southerners' hospitality and sense of family, but also Capote's admiration and appreciation of this aspect of Southern culture and way of life. At the same time, not only are these stories nostalgic and elegiac--they also invite the reader to become emotionally involved in those experiences and capture the innocence and the beauty of the characters' spiritual and romantic attachment to nature: to the grove of pecan trees, the woods, the flowers, and the herbs, the Indian grass and the China tree, the fields, the creeks, the chickens, and the dogs.

In their presentations of the South, both Williams and Capote underline the sense of engagement between the South's past and present and the interaction between them--a motif which is characteristic of the literature of the Southern renaissance. Yet, they do not fully explore the South's past or

examine the moral and ethical foundations of its tradition and culture, as the earlier generation did, nor do they dwell much on the region's history, or have a viable form of a traditional society to recover, as the renaissance writers did. And there is little reference, if any, to the Civil War as a landmark in the history of the region, as in the works of their predecessors. Perhaps they did not need to make such references, because the battle for the traditional South had already been lost to the modernists and anti-traditionalists, and the South they witnessed had already embraced the gospel of progress and industrialization.

However, the South's past was not alien to Capote and Williams--they were fully aware of it, as it was interwoven with the background of their families who prided themselves on the prominent role of their ancestors in the region's history and whose decline mirrored the South's fall. And by virtue of their upbringing in the rural South and the traditional social and familial atmosphere in which they lived, they had an ample opportunity to be acquainted with the most prominent features of the region's history, that is, its glorious past and its tragic destruction. At the same time, Williams' childhood experience of loss, in particular, echoes the South's loss of its edenic self. Hence, the destruction of the region, the fall of the aristocratic class, and the collapse of the family are potent images in Williams' drama and in Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms, in particular.

Although the past is neither fully examined by Capote and Williams nor thrust into the forefront of their works, it is a crucial element of the background of the dramatic action and the narrative. Nevertheless, it is frequently juxtaposed with the present. Hence, the past is idealized and its myth is accepted as a fact, functioning, thereby, as a criterion against which the present is inevitably adjudged doubly gloomy and distasteful. For the image which both Williams and Capote present of their contemporary South is one of decay

and disintegration in every aspect of life, particularly the socioeconomic. And although both writers link the deterioration in the present to the destruction of the region's glorious past, they do not examine the historical realities behind that destruction fully and directly. In Capote's Other Voices, Other Rooms, for instance, the destruction of Skully's Landing and the Cloud Hotel is shrouded in mystery, although the reference to the Yankee bandit, and the presence of both Jesus Fever and Little Sunshine who are a living witness of the slavery system, are particularly significant references to the Civil War which are inextricably linked to the South's destruction.

In Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire, the destruction of Belle Reve is a central image which is synecdochic of the South's devastation. But Blanche's "ancestral home was lost, not because the Confederacy was defeated in the Civil War, but because the men of her family squandered their fortune on debauchery" (Boxill 5). Yet, although the Civil War is not considered among the factors which brought about the destruction of the South, Williams is interested in the forces which destroyed it internally. Hence, the reference to the profligacy of Blanche's ancestors and the dramatization of the dichotomy within her are a potent statement on the South's moral corruption. This, combined with its political corruption and bigotry as dramatized in Sweet Bird of Youth and its violence, racial discrimination, and its materialistic spirit, were most destructive of its intrinsic traditional values which distinguished the South from the North. Williams believes that "the South once had a way of life that I am just old enough to remember--a culture that had grace, elegance . . . an inbred culture . . . not a society based on money, as in the North" (Devlin 43). Hence, he repeatedly insists: "It is out of regret for a South that no longer exists that I write of the forces that have destroyed it" (Devlin 43).

However, Williams' and Capote's presentations of the South are also characterized by ambivalence and paradox. Admiration for traditional Southern

values is counterbalanced by stark parody, and their works combine conflicting elements of regionalism and provincialism. The values to which the belle desperately clings are outdated. Her destruction is depicted in terms of finality, and the passing of her ideals is inevitable. Simultaneously, their works feature conflicting characters: traditional versus provincial, those who live in and are committed to the past versus those who are deracinated and who live entirely in the present. And the conflict between them is a conflict between conservatism and modernism, romanticism and materialism, traditionalism and individualism, and between the status quo and change. Yet, although Williams and Capote identify with both sides of the conflict, the main difference between the two writers is that Capote cannot bring the elements of conflict to a conflicting area--they are kept separate and the conflict is somehow mostly avoided. And in his dark stories, as well as in most of his canon, Capote calls for uncritical acceptance and love even of the dark, mysterious, and frightening side of man. In Williams, however, the contradictory forces are engaged in a relentless conflict, causing this complex of stresses and strains which account for the poignancy of his work.

Moreover, Williams' and Capote's presentations of homosexuality are also characterized by paradox and ambivalence which suggest an element of self-doubt. For although they were both avowed homosexuals, they failed to present homosexuality in positive, likeable, and appetizing terms. Stylistically, their presentations of homosexuality are also contradictory and the conflict features in the combination of contrasting modes: covert and overt, straightforward and elusive, allegorical and autobiographical. However, it is in their ambiguous treatment of homosexuality through their identification with their female characters that their presentations of homosexuality is, ironically, most exciting and interesting. For their personal attachment to and

relationships with women gave them deep insight into the female psyche, which explains the fact that their most admirable characters are females.

However, the fundamental question is: to what extent did Williams and Capote succeed in creating worlds in which their characters can find the love they both were denied? Their works were an attempt to push ahead the frontier of love and broaden the area of sympathy within man. They believe, as Joel did, that love can "vanquish the Snow Queen" (OV 196; sec. 11), and that they, like Blanche, can depend on the "kindness of strangers" (SND 225; sc.11). Yet, their characters find out that love and kindness are elusive and unattainable--the final verdict is that the world is, as Dolly Talbot has found out, "a bad place" (GH 61). And their characters are haunted by fear, the closing down of possibilities, loneliness, the ravages of time, and by death. They are--Williams' in particular--romantics in an unromantic and harsh world. They are also restless and, like Holly Golightly who cannot give her cat a name because she has not found her proper place, have no identity and no address--in a key Williams' word, they are fugitives. And the plights and agonies of the characters echo that of their authors. For the lives of both writers turned a full circle--they began with loneliness and ended in isolation which their arts were a serious effort to break.

On the whole, perplexed and baffled with the contradictions of life, both writers try to distil its essence and meaning. They deeply explore the confusion in the world and the bewilderment of living. Hence, not only are confusion, paradox, and conflict characteristic of every aspect of their canons, but also they are central to their presentations of the South and their treatment of homosexuality. And in dealing with these two central issues, they have their differences and share great similarities--they have shortcomings, but they certainly demonstrated sincere devotion to their arts and an unmistakable touch of genius, and their canons are an invaluable contribution to literature. In the

final analysis, Williams and Capote were human and mortal and were relentlessly haunted by the fear of death, but their works are still alive and will be an inexhaustible source of inspiration for many generations to come.

Notes to Conclusion

[1] C. W. E. Bigsby, A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama, Vol. 2. Williams/Miller/ Albee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 33. 3 vols. 1982-1985.

[2] Albert J. Devlin, ed., Conversations with Tennessee Williams, gen. ed. Peggy Whitman Prenshaw, Literary Conversations Series (Jackson: Mississippi UP., 1986) 45. Henceforth referred to as Devlin.

[3] Truman Capote, In Cold Blood (1966; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981) 1. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[4] Truman Capote, The Grass Harp (1951; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966) 7. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[5] Truman Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms (1948; London: Picador Classics-Pan, 1988) 231. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[6] Tennessee Williams, The Glass Menagerie, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1948; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 229. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[7] Roger Boxill, Tennessee Williams, eds. Bruce King and Adele King. Macmillan Modern Drama (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan; Hamburg: Petersen-Macmillan, 1987) 27. Henceforth referred to as Boxill.

[8] Tennessee Williams, A Streetcar Named Desire, Sweet Bird of Youth A Streetcar Named Desire The Glass Menagerie, by Williams, ed. E. Martin Browne (1947; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962) 222; Sc. 11. All further references are to this edition and will be included in the text.

[9] Benjamin Nelson, Tennessee Williams: His Life and Work (London: Owen, 1961) 254.

[10] Southern Agrarians, Introduction--A Statement of Principles, I'll Take My Stand, The Twentieth Century, Vol 4. of American Literature Survey, 4 vols. 3rd ed., eds. Milton R. Stern and Seymour L. Gross, The Viking Portable Library (1962; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977) 336.

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