



**Defense Mechanisms and Their Interpretation in Tennessee's**

***Williams's The Glass Menagerie***

**آليات الدفاع النفسي وتأويلها في مسرحية تينيسي ويليامز بيت الحيوانات الزجاجية**

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**A Thesis submitted in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements**

**for Master of English Language and Literature**

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**May, 2015**

## Authorization

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**Date: 7/6/2015**

### Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis has been discussed under its title "**Defense Mechanisms and Their Interpretation in Tennessee's williams's The Glass Menagerie**", and has been approved on 7/6/2015.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank my supervisor Dr.Tawfiq Yousef for his constant support and valuable advices. I am also grateful to my family my uncles Dr. AbdelsalamHammash, ZakaryaHammash, and my brother Darweesh.I am also going to thank my friends Ayat Ali, Haya abusaleek, HaneenAlsarisi, and Raja'aEmad for their moral support. I would like to express my thanks to my aunt Jessica Bader, and my neighbor KhawlaAl-sarfandi for her moral support. I am also gratitude to my students for their moral support. Thanks are also extended to the faculty members of the department of English at Middle East University.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my Mother, Dr.

Hanan Hammash, my grandfather, Ahmed Hammash, My grandmother,  
Khadijeh Alkhandaq, my brother, and my uncle Dr. Abdelsalam Hammash.

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## **Defense Mechanisms and Their Interpretation in Tennessee's**

### **Williams's *The Glass Menagerie***

**By: Shatha Abu El-hommos**

**Supervised By: Prof. Tawfiq Yousef**

### **Abstract**

The current study applies Freud's defense mechanisms to Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie*. Although the play has been discussed by many studies, this study is different in that it concentrates on a subject that has not received due attention in previous studies. This theme is concerned with the use of Freud's defense mechanism in *The Glass Menagerie*. A more in-depth study of this theme would hopefully provide a more comprehensible understanding of the play.

The thesis examines the psychological factors that determine the behaviors of the characters in *The Glass Menagerie*. It focuses on the analysis of the types of personalities (id, ego, and superego), the types of minds (preconscious, conscious, and unconscious) in general and on defense mechanisms in particular.

The study attempts interpretations of the characters' behaviors in light of Freud's defense mechanisms. It shows that all of the characters make use of different sorts of defense mechanisms. Furthermore, the thesis clarifies

the relationship between the play and its author's life. It asserts that the play *The Glass Menagerie* is an autobiographical play. It reflects the life of its author. The thesis psychoanalyzes the character's behaviors, and the author's life.

**Key words:** Defense Mechanisms and Their Interpretation , Tennessee's Williams's The Glass Menagerie

## آليات الدفاع عن النفس وتأويلها في مسرحية تينيسي ويليامز بيت الحيوانات الزجاجية

إعداد: شذا مصطفى أبو الحمص

إشراف الدكتور: توفيق يوسف

### ملخص الدراسة

تقوم هذه الدراسة بتفسير آليات الدفاع الخاصة بفرويد في مسرحية تينيسي ويليامز مجموعة الحيوانات الزجاجية، وبالرغم من أن المسرحية خضعت للعديد من الدراسات ، إلا أن هذه

الدراسة ركزت على ثلاثة مواضيع. هذه المواضيع تزودنا بفهم شامل للمسرحية

تقوم الدراسة بالتحقق من العوامل النفسية التي تحدد سلوكيات الشخصيات في مسرحية مجموعة الحيوانات الزجاجية حيث تركز على سلوكيات الشخصيات بشكل خاص وعلى تحليل أنماط الشخصيات ( الهو، والانا، والانا العليا)، بالإضافة إلى أنواع العقول ( قبل الوعي، والوعي، واللاوعي) بشكل عام.

تحاول الدراسة أن تعطي تفسيرات لسلوكيات الأفراد في ضوء آليات الدفاع النفسية الخاصة بفرويد، وتظهر الدراسة أن جميع الشخصيات في المسرحية تقوم باستخدام أنواع مختلفة من آليات الدفاع النفسية.

وتقوم الدراسة بتوضيح العلاقة بين المسرحية وحياة كاتبها، كما أنها تؤكد حقيقة أن هذه المسرحية هي مسرحية سيرة ذاتية ؛ حيث أن المسرحية تعكس حياة مؤلفها ، بالإضافة إلى أنها تقوم بعملية تحليل نفسي لسلوكيات الشخصيات و حياة المؤلف.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آليات الدفاع عن النفس وتأويلها، مسرحية تينيسي ويليامز بيت الحيوانات الزجاجية

## Chapter one

### 1.1 Introduction

What we write is a reflection of our psyches. It is also a reflection for us. People can see us through our writings. What we write is actually our mirror. It represents us, our thoughts, the way in which we think, and our feelings. In this chapter we are going to explain the aim of this thesis. that we are going to interpret the character's behaviors in the light of psychology and in specific defense mechanisms. Also, we are going to clarify the relationship between the author's life and the play. The methodology which we are going to follow in writing the thesis, and the significance of the study will be shown.

#### **Biographical Background:**

The Playwright Tennessee Williams was born Thomas Lanier Williams on March 26, 1911, in Columbus. He is widely considered the greatest Southern playwright and one of the most important playwrights in the history of American drama. He gave American theatergoers unforgettable characters, an unbelievable vision of life in the South, and a series of powerful portraits of the human condition. He was deeply interested in something he called "poetic realism," namely the use of everyday objects which, seen repeatedly and in the right contexts, become filled with symbolic meaning. He wrote the play *The Glass Menagerie*

which was a reflection of Williams's own life. He reflected his life and his own suffering to people throughout his writings. Williams's grandfather wasted the family's fortune. Tennessee Williams's father was a heavy drinker and a travelling salesman. His mother became the model for the foolish but strong Amanda Wingfield in *The Glass Menagerie*, while his father represented the aggressive, driving Big Daddy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Williams's mother suffered from a hysterical attack, and even his sister Rose ( a model for Laura in *The Glass Menagerie* ) suffered from mental illness , and eventually underwent a prefrontal lobotomy. In other words, the circumstances which were surrounding Williams's life are almost the same circumstances that he portrayed in his play *The Glass Menagerie*.

### **Psychoanalytical Background:**

*The Glass menagerie* is a memory play. Bradford W defined the memory plays as the plays that focuses on the past as narrated by the main character. Usually, the play is a dramatic representation of the playwright's life, or at least loosely based upon the playwright's experiences(p.1). Being narrated by someone( a human), this means the possibility of omission and exaggeration of events because humans forget, and sometimes change the facts. The play's actions are drawn from the memories of the narrator Tom Wingfield (a character in the play). The

play evolved from a short story entitled "Portrait of a Girl in Glass" by Tennessee Williams, which focused more on Laura than the play does. The play had undergone many studies by different critics and researchers. The basic theme which researchers were concerned with in the analysis of *The Glass Menagerie* was psychology. For example, Mahfouz (2001) states that *The Glass Menagerie* reveals itself to be a psychological drama. Psychology is an academic and empirical discipline that involves the scientific study of mental functions and behaviors. Psychology is a science which illuminates our understanding of life and many things including literature. Psychoanalysis is a science which is derived from psychology. Sometimes works which are difficult and apparently confused can be seen more clearly in the light of the psychologist's demonstration of what is actually going on among characters..

In this research, the researcher is going to analyze the characters and the events from a psychoanalytical point of view, and is going to focus on the defense mechanisms and how they are employed in the play.

## **1.2 Questions of the study**

The current study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the psychological factors that determine the behavior of the characters in *The glass menagerie*?

2. How do Freud's defense mechanisms help explain the characters' actions in the play?

3. How does the play *The Glass Menagerie* reflect its own author's life?

### **1.3 Objectives of the study:**

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To give a psychoanalytical interpretation of the behavior of the characters.
2. To show the role of the defense mechanisms in the play.
3. To explain that the play is primarily reflection of its author's life.

### **1.4 Significance of the study:**

The significance of this study is that it concentrates on analyzing Williams play from a specific perspective, namely "Defence Mechanisms". The characters of the play make use of defense mechanisms in an attempt to put an end for their misery, but we will see during the analysis of the play that none of the defense mechanisms works as a final solution for this misery. Although the play has been viewed from a psychoanalytical perspective by several researchers like Mahmood T , defense mechanisms in the play have not been fully covered.

## 1.5 The statement of the problem:

The major problem the present study deals with is the way the playwright Tennessee Williams utilizes a basic concept in Freudian psychology, namely “defense mechanisms” to present his characters on a psychological basis that looks scientific, convincing and appealing. This analytical strategy adds to the other studies which have been applied to Williams play *The Glass Menagerie* on a thorough and comprehensive basis that can account for the behaviors of his characters throughout the play. Besides, the research attempts to show the connection between the play’s characters and events and the life of the author and his own family’s social and psychological background.

According to Freud, defense mechanisms are the processes by which our feelings in the unconscious are kept repressed or hidden so that we can avoid knowing what we don’t want to know. Defenses include the following types (Tyson,18):

- a. selective perception: hearing and seeing only what we believe we can handle.
- b. selective memory: modifying our memories or forgetting them entirely.
- c. denial: believing that a problem or an unpleasant incident did not happen.
- d. avoidance: staying away from any situation that is liable to stir our repressed unconscious feelings.

e. displacement; blaming something on someone or something that is less threatening than the source that actually caused it.

f. projection: ascribing our problem or fear to someone else in an attempt to deny that we did it ourselves.

g. regression: return to either to a pleasant or unpleasant past experience which is not just imagined but relived.

### **1.6 Limitations of the study:**

The research is based primarily on only one of the plays of the playwright. The results, therefore, cannot be generalized or applied to his other plays.

### **1.7 Definition of terms:**

**Psychoanalysis:** it is a method of treating mental illnesses, and a theory which explains human behavior.

**The conscious:** includes everything that we are aware of. This is the aspect of our mental processing that we can think and talk about rationally. A part of this includes our memory, which is not always part of consciousness but can be retrieved easily at any time and brought into our awareness (Joseph, 1992).

**The unconscious:** It is the mind which works as the storehouse of the memories, and the potential experiences. It does not follow any logical

rules or laws because it is not controlled by the rational part of the memory, the conscious (Joseph, 1992).

**The Preconscious:** is the part of the mind that represents ordinary memory. While we are not consciously aware of this information at any given time, we can retrieve it and pull it into consciousness when needed (Joseph, 1992).

**Defense Mechanisms:** Are ways that are used to keep the mind from being destroyed by worries and anxieties or to get rid of our frustration or failure ( Al Khatib, 2011).

**Id:** The type of self which does not think of anything else other than fulfilling its desires and needs (Al Khatib, 2011).

**Ego:** is one of the types of self and it is a balanced-state between id and the superego and its relationship to both of them. It is the conscious self that looks at the external world through the senses and plays as a referee between the id and the superego. It is able to postpone its needs to avoid unpleasant consequences (Al Khatib, 2011).

**The super ego:** is the type of self which pays high attention to moral standards and rules through the contact with parents and society. It is the type of self which tries to achieve desires and wishes but without violating any law or code of ethics or morals (Al Khatib, 2011).

**Declarative memory:** is the system that provides the basis for conscious recollection of facts and events, but this system is not just a

warehouse of information, of veridical memories of actual happenings that can be retrieved at will ( Jacobs, 2009).

## Chapter 2

### Review of related literature

#### 2.1 Theoretical studies:

The dominant atmosphere of the post-modern American play *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee William is psychology. What motivate the characters in the play to behave in a certain way are their psyches. So, psychoanalysis is the guide which will help us to understand the characters and their reactions towards what is happening around them. It is the key which can enable readers and viewers to unlock the unconscious side of the characters.

There are many studies which investigated psychology and psychoanalysis in human life in general and in works of art and literature in particular. Generally speaking, psychology has been defined as the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behavior in a given context. It is also the study of the unconscious from the symbols it projects. psychoanalysis is the study of all the components of a literary work in the light of what we know about psychology.

Skura (1984) sees that Psychoanalysis is a dynamic discipline not a formulaic one. It is a method rather than a body of knowledge, and a way of interpretation rather than a specific product or interpretation. It is an

integral part of our daily life because we always raise the question why a certain person behaves like this, and the answers for this question will be through psychoanalysis. So, psychoanalysis helps us understand human behavior and literary texts which are about human behavior, and indeed to resolve our psychological problems such as neurosis, delusion, hallucination, phobia, anxiety, depression, disappointment and loss.

Psychological problems are discussed in depth in the works of Freud (the founding father of psychoanalysis) who tried to show how the mind works under specific circumstances and how our psyches react to conflicts. Freud's main book, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1920) provides scholars with full understanding of psychoanalysis as a new established science which enables us to see individuals' attitudes toward life through exploring the development and the structure of human personality, and coming up with theories about the workings of the human psyche. He tests the credibility of his theories by applying them to fictional characters like Hamlet, and on real patients in his clinic like Anna O, Dora, in which we see psychoanalysis as a clinical practice.

Dawis RV (1989) states that psychological needs are those needs that have to do with mental well-being, the themes which underlay a cluster of related psychological needs that describe what is of main importance to the person are called values (p.143). Needs are motivating and behavior happens to satisfy needs, when the opportunity arises and the person has

the necessary capabilities. According to Maslow, the hierarchy of needs is as follows: Self-actualization ( achievement and autonomy values), Self-esteem (status values), Love and belonging needs, Safety needs, and Psychological needs (p.147)

Mahmood ( 2014) argues that applying psychological theories on fictional characters raises the question whether it is possible to use psychological theories in understanding the behavior of literary characters because literary characters are not real and , therefore, do not have psyches that can be analyzed. The answer to this question can be found in the definition of literature. Literature is the reflection of real life, and therefore literature is not literature when it cannot portray our lives, represent our feelings, emotions and beliefs about life ( p.4).When we psychoanalyze literary characters, we do not suggest that they are real people, but we suggest that they are representatives of psychological experience of human beings in general. Another point to mention is that fiction is an extension of reality and is a device for perceiving reality and understanding facts. Fiction means a thing that is imagined and reality feeds imagination (A. S. Hornby 492). In order to understand how people think and how they behave in certain situations, Freud divides the mind into the preconscious, the conscious, and the unconscious.

Al Khatib (2011) sees that consciousness refers to the awareness of internal and external stimuli. Freud investigates the conscious mind and

sees that it consists of everything we are aware of. It contains all the experiences which can be directly recalled, and it combines our sad and joyful memories. It is a tool for human beings to judge their reactions to certain situations. However, the conscious mind cannot depict a joyful life for any person because of its limits. As a result, Freud believed that there are some events and desires that are too frightening or painful, and information about these events and desires is locked away in the unconscious mind. All this happens through the process of repression.

Freud defined the unconscious vis-à-vis the conscious in *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913). The term unconscious means without awareness, but psychologically it means that human beings are obsessed by their desires, fears, memories, and conflicts of which they are not aware. It is the storehouse of everything that makes us suffer and afraid, and it does not follow any logical rules or laws because it is not controlled by the rational part of the memory, the conscious. Metaphorically speaking, the unconscious is like a CD ROM in which everything is stored but deleted, and you can go back to it just by turning it on. It is the unconscious which decides why we behave in a certain way, and it gives excuses for our actions and makes them seem more rational. The unconscious is a guide for psychoanalysis in finding out the reasons that control each character's way of thinking and feelings in any literary work in order to face or evade problems and as a result to gain

pleasure. The pleasure principle means that the aim of life is happiness, but conflicts set as obstacles in the face of happiness, which encourage the unconscious to set its defenses.

Hismith (1980) sees that the drive or urge is a dynamic movement that puts pressure upon a person toward some object. Your body and mind are stimulated toward self preservation or toward aggression and death (p.4). It is impossible to fulfill all the commands of our desires, and here comes the role of the defense mechanisms to regulate our needs.

Joseph (1992) defined the defense mechanisms as a protective strategy most often used by the conscious mind and left brain. They serve to prevent conscious recognition of information that is in some manner threatening to the conscious self-image (p.304) Defenses, as mentioned above, are the processes by which the contents of our unconscious are kept in the unconscious (Tyson, p. 17). Defenses work as keys which lock the doors that enable the contents of the unconscious to go out. Defenses include selective perception (hearing or seeing only what we want to hear and see), selective memory (remembering what we want to remember and forgetting things that we cannot handle), denial (neglecting the problem as if it did not exist), avoidance (keeping space between us and the situations that make us anxious), displacement (satisfying an impulse with something less threatening than the thing which caused our fear),

and projection (attributing our dilemmas to another person) (Tyson, p. 18).

One of the most important and complex defenses is regression (going back to a former psychological state, which is not only imagined but relived. This return is not restricted only to a pleasant experience, but also painful experiences may exist. In literature, this defense could be achieved through the narration technique of flashback, which means going back in time. All these defenses isolate the individual from reality.

Freud sees that reality is perceived by three sorts of personality: the id, the ego, and the superego. These are not physical areas within the brain, but rather hypothetical conceptualization of vital mental tasks. Freud believes that each sort reacts in a different way to reality since the unconscious mind of each personality controls its behavior. According to Freud in *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1949), the id contains two kinds of biological instincts (or drives) which Freud called Eros and Thanatos. Eros, or life instinct, helps individuals to survive; it steers the necessities of life like food and sex (Freud, 1925). Thanatos or death instinct is viewed as a set of devastating forces that exist in all human beings (Freud, 1920). Freud believed that Eros is stronger than Thanatos because people tend to survive rather than to destroy themselves. The id is the type of character that thinks of itself only, regardless of the painful sequences. It is a selfish character because its goal (gaining pleasure) is to

fulfill its needs in any way. No boundaries (social or religious boundary) can restrict the id because there is no value to the conscious. The end for this type of character is pernicious.

The ego tries to strike a balance between our needs and what is required from us or what surrounds us. It tries to control our impulses and needs, and at the same time to fulfill them in a way that is acceptable by the society we live in. The ego acts after thinking of the consequences of its actions. The ego works as a savior for the id, but the id does not think of the ego as a savior but rather as an oppressor of desires since the ego reminds the id of the consequences of its actions.

Ellman (1998) sees the super ego as the internalization of the critical voice of parents. The super ego respects and strictly follows moral standards and rules which are imposed by the society, parents, and religion. The morals and rules are at the top which means that nothing can violate them. The super ego character is a self-controlled character.

We cannot deny the importance of dreams and dream symbols in psychoanalysis, because they play a main role in investigating the characters. When we sleep the unconscious is able to express itself freely, the same thing happens in our dreams. Two processes are responsible for controlling the latent content (what the dream actually mean) in our dreams: displacement and condensation.

Dream displacement occurs when we make use of more comfortable person, object, or event to represent a more frightening person, object, or event. For example, a woman might dream that she is afraid of a cat, but in actual life she is afraid of her husband.

Parker(2008) sees that Condensation is a psychological process. What happens in this process is a kind of merging multiple wishes into fewer, less threatening, and more acceptable wishes (p.118). For example my dream that I am frightened by a very dangerous monster may mean that in fact I have problems and conflicts both with my family and my friends. These two processes are referred to as primary revision.

The interpretation of dreams means that we try to provide an explanation for the latent content of the dream, but we have to keep in mind that we might forget certain parts of the dream, or remember some parts in a different way from what actually they occur. And this is what we call a secondary revision.

## **2.2 Empirical studies:**

*The Glass Menagerie* is a predominantly expressionistic play that tries to give not the external reality or the surface appearance but the inner reality; life as felt rather than as seen. It is a memory play worked out in one's mental processes rather than a realistic representation of life.

In his Online article "Representing Repression: A Psychological Reading of *The Glass Menagerie*" (n.d.) Shih Ching-liang focuses on the

repressed state of each character in the Wingfield family, and sheds light on their inner psychology by applying psychoanalytic analysis. He further argues that the play introduces itself as a “memory play”; hence it is concerned with the mental processes inside the characters’ minds rather than being a realistic presentation. Instead of external reality, the inner vision becomes the primary concern of the play.

Triplett(1988) says that Tennessee Williams defines southern genteel lady as a woman who represents the conflict between repressive ideals of the Puritan tradition. She is a highly tensional woman unable to harmonize the world of her dreams with reality. Laura and Amanda Wingfield are southern genteel ladies. Amanda fluctuates between reality and legendary past world of gentlemen callers and Southern belles. Her daughter Laura remains in a world which is as fragile as the glass animals and phonograph records that she possesses (p.11)

O’Niell(1995) deals with the interpretation of the play in performance. She takes in consideration designing and staging. She sees that *The Glass Menagerie* is an autobiographical play, and accurate to the imaginative reality of his experience, Williams reflects on an unhappy time in his life, in 1918, when his family was forced to move from better circumstances to small apartment in St.Louis(p.13). She describes Tom as a rebellious son, and Laura as an excruciatingly shy daughter(p.14).

P.Polettee (1995) sees that *The Glass Menagerie* is narrated from Tom Wingfield's unbalanced reimagining of memory. Tom recreates a tragic fiction of family from which he flees, or he must runaway: thus enmeshed, Tom sees life only in terms of either/ or and dooms himself to repeat the mistake of the past (p.1).

Mahfouz (2001) states that *The Glass Menagerie* reveals itself to be a psychological drama. Jim plays the role of a psychiatrist who tries, through psychoanalysis, to heal Laura. Laura plays the role of the psychopath who suffers from severe emotional derangement and an inferiority complex that renders her anti-social, and makes her retreat into an illusory feeble world of tiny glass animals.

Jacobs(2009) asserts that *The Glass Menagerie* is a brilliant, profound study of declarative memory and its psychological uses. Williams could have chosen any first name for his protagonist. He chose his own to emphasize the loosening of boundaries between fact and fiction. It is as though he is telling us that autobiography—which is, after all, organized declarative memory—is an elaborate fiction based on facts. And that fiction (the creative use of memory) is at its heart emotional autobiography (p.4).

Polly Teal(2010) states that *The Glass Menagerie* is the most autobiographical of all Williams' plays. Tom, the central character, is given Tennessee's real name. The events are taken from Williams' own

life and experience creation. The writer tells us the story. In *The Glass Menagerie* we are taken inside the author's mind as he conjures up characters and places; as he returns to his past in order to face the guilt he feels about abandoning his family for another life(p.9).

Ossa (2011) sees that the ego defense mechanisms clearly appear in *The Glass Menagerie*. Amanda highly uses denial (one of the defense mechanisms) when she refuses to let go of the past, and she keeps talking about her seventeen gentlemen callers. She also denies Laura's limping problem, Tom's lack of maturity, and even her role as a mother in the family. Instead, she passes her duties to Tom. Tom and Laura show suppression, and projection: They suppress the stress they live in by redirecting their fears on something else. Tom does it by going to the cinema, drinking, and escaping from the house whenever he can. Laura does it by projecting her feelings onto her glass menagerie.

Mahmoud (2004) observes that the main reason for the conflict in the play is because of the father's abandonment of his family at the time when they need him. The characters suffer from such abandonment and try to change reality, but they fail. The result is that they use different defense mechanisms to put up with suppression till the time for fulfilling their desires comes. Mahmoud (2014) also points out that the characters in the memory play suffer because of their failure to establish a family or

enjoy healthy family relationships. Such losses have created profound psychological wounds like disillusionment, despair, neurosis, depression and hysteria.

Herman (2008) believes that *The Glass Menagerie*, written in 1945, portrays the disabled family dynamic years before the social sciences began to accept that the entire family experiences the effects of disability. It is an autobiographical. The playwright had firsthand experience with the disabled family dynamic, which allowed him to give accurate representation to the disabled family.

Moore (2013) sees that in the play *The Glass Menagerie* each of the Wingfields has his own method by which they attempt to avoid living in the present. Amanda, the mother, always talks about the superiority of her Southern girlhood. She goes back to a time when she received seventeen gentleman callers, as compared to her present life in the North where her husband has left her with her two adult children, Laura and Tom.

## Chapter Three

### 3.1 Methodology:

The methodology that will be used in the current study will be both descriptive and analytic. It seeks to explore the reasons behind the behavior of the characters. Also, reading and discussing the play against the background of psychoanalytical theory will be utilized as a major method in this study. Selected parts from Freud's works on psychology will be used in analyzing and interpreting the characters' behaviors and actions.

It is obvious That *The Glass Menagerie* is a predominantly expressionistic play that is imbued with an emotional and spiritual vision of the world. Life in this play is felt more than seen. That is why an adequate interpretation of the play should be concerned with a predominantly psychoanalytical approach. Thus, the methodology that will be used in the current study will center on a psychoanalytical reading and against the background of psychoanalytical theory. Selected parts from Freud's works on psychology will be used in analyzing and interpreting the characters' behaviors and actions, particularly his theory of defense mechanisms.

Freud stated that the ego employs a range of defense mechanisms so that it can deal with the overwhelming pressures on it coming from the

outside world. Defense mechanisms operate at an unconscious level and help ward off unpleasant feelings or make good things feel better for the individual. This process is part of the ego's attempts to resist succumbing to any threatening press or any feeling of anxiety. The forces that try to keep the undesirable memories hidden in the unconscious from coming out causing trouble are called defense mechanisms. These mechanisms are manifested in various forms in *The Glass Menagerie*. The following mechanisms employed in this play will be identified, explained and discussed with examples and illustrations from the play:

1. Repression: This mechanism will be explained through citing instances of the characters' ego to keep disturbing feelings in the unconscious from coming out into the open and creating a feeling of anxiety.
2. Denial: this appears in some of the characters' attempts to ignore or deny any external phenomenon that sounds for them too much to handle
3. Displacement: The attempts of character to substitute an aggressive act with an easier act that may cause less trouble.
4. Repression; The desire to reject any painful ideas, feelings or impulses hidden in the unconscious so that they may not trouble the conscious.
5. Projection: Attributing one's destructive feelings, thoughts or ideas to another person so that one would be free of any feeling of guilt or regret.
6. Regression: A return to a type of behavior in the past in order to get rid of a difficult situation in the present.

7. Rationalization: Distortion of the facts in order to justify a certain behavior or action. Usually, it comes in the form of making excuses for wrong deeds.

7. Sublimation: Satisfying an undesirable impulse or action with a more positive and a more acceptable one.

As part of the discussion, these mechanisms will be dealt with not only in the instances, forms or situations in which they occur in the play but also in their manifestations in the characters' behavior afterwards. This method will reveal how and why the characters suffer as a result of their psychologically-motivated acts. Obviously, some of these defenses will prove to be unsuccessful or fragile in the long run. So, a tracing of such phenomena throughout the play will be utilized in the analysis.

### **Sample of the study:**

The sample of the study will be one of Tennessee Williams plays *The Glass Menagerie*. It will be investigated from the perspective of psychology.

### **Procedures of the study:**

- Reading the biography of Tennessee Williams.
- Making a comparison between the biography and the play.
- Reading previous studies related to the main topic of the play.

- Analyzing the behavior of the characters and the events.
- Discussing the findings.
- Writing references according to the APA style.

## Chapter Four

### Discussion

Drama is the most favorable genre which presents the psyches of characters to the audiences who watch and listen to them. The dialogues and situations on the stage can help the audience learn from these characters what psychological problems people suffer from in actual life and what are the causes of such disorders (Mahmood,2014,p .119).

*The Glass Menagerie* is a memory play which consists of seven scenes, and its events have been taken from the memories of the narrator, Tom Wingfield. It is also an autobiographical play. It's a reflection of its author's life. Most of the characters in the play are representative characters (they represent characters from Williams's real life. For example, Laura represents William's sister. All of the characters in the play escape from reality ( from their real life), and even Jim ( the most rational character in the play, the character who seems to us for a while that he accepts his real life as it is) forgets his real life for a few times.

Defense mechanisms have their main position in the actions of all the characters in the play *The Glass Menagerie*. With reference to the main character(Amanda) and the character who is responsible for the other character's action because she is their mother, we see that she shows different defense mechanisms. The main discussion of defense

mechanisms was laid down by Freud in his early studies of the psych. Freud identified different strategies of defense mechanisms.

Amanda was an abandoned wife. Her husband left her after making an acquaintance with another woman. Amanda was a woman of glamorous beauty. She received many proposals from wealthy and gentlemen callers. She was also a girl surrounded by servants, but her wrong choice (her husband) made her life miserable:

Amanda: One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain, your mother received seventeen Gentlemen callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all. We had to send the nigger over to bring in folding chair from the parish house.

(Scene I,p.4)

The problem actually is not only in having a miserable life, because if someone recognizes his problems, he can do his best to solve them, but the real problem with Amanda is that she denies her actual life. She does not do anything to change her miserable life to a better one, but rather she keeps regressing to her past. She does not live her life, but she has a high amount of nostalgia to her youth, which makes her not aware of her current role as a mother and an old woman. She selects certain moments of her memory, and forgets what she wants to forget. Also, she sees and hears what she wants to see and hear, and neglects other facts. Sometimes, she projects her mistakes to another characters. These five

defense mechanisms(denial , regression, projection, selective memory and selective perception) are the most obvious mechanisms, which Amanda shows throughout the play.

Humans are possessed with all kinds of desires and needs. They have a need to eat, to be loved, to walk, to breathe, and to gain their high position in society These needs might be good or bad ( self -destructive). Drives or urges put pressure upon a person toward some object. If the person fails in satisfying these drives or urges, he/she will generate feelings of anger or depression as well as considerable tensions ( Joseph,1992,p.304).After that, he/she will start employing different defense mechanisms to provide solutions for the problems. These defenses work as protective strategies most often used by the conscious mind and the left side of the brain.

Researchers like Mahmood (2004) have stated that the conflict in the play lies in the father's abandonment of his family, and that the family suffered from such abandonment (Mahmood,p. 16), but this is not the first and the major problem which faces Amanda. Before being abandoned by her husband, Amanda constantly denies that she is a wife and a mother. She cannot forget her girlhood, and her life as a young girl surrounded by gentlemen callers. So, rejecting her actual life is one of Amanda's major problems, and this speech shows that Amanda denies her present and still dreams about her past:

Amanda: My callers were gentlemen-all! Among my callers were some of the most prominent young planters of the Mississippi Delta-planters and sons of planters!

(Scene I,p. 5)

Amanda employs denial ( believing that the problem does not exist or the unpleasant incident never happened( Tyson,1999,p. 18) as a defense mechanism to face this problem. This is clear in the way she dresses and laughs. She behaves in a way which makes her feel that still she is a young girl. For example when she met Jim, he and her son Tom were shocked by her appearance, because it does not fit a woman in her age. This is the description of the act as it happened on the stage:

Tom is distinctly shocked at her appearance. Even Jim blinks a little. He is making his first contact with girlish southern vivacity and in spite of the night-school course in public speaking is somewhat thrown off the beam by the unexpected outly of social charm . ( VI,p. 39)

Also, Amanda denies her wrong choice for her husband claiming that she is unlike the girls in the Blue Mountain; she chose a man for his soul and appearance not for his money. She did not care about the financial problem that she might face with her husband, and she puts the blame on the innocent look of her husband, but not on her wrong choice. This is clear when Tom asked her why she commit such a mistake:

Tom: Then how did you happen to make such a tragic mistake?

Amanda: That innocent look of your father had everyone fooled!

He smiled-The world was enchanted! No girl can do worse than put herself at the mercy of a handsome appearance

(Scene V, p.28)

This kind of behavior can be considered as projecting a major strategy of defense mechanism used by Amanda. In psychology, projection means blaming others for one's mistakes, unacceptable desires, or bad conduct (Joseph,p.310). In this situation we can see that Amanda is putting the blame on her husband's appearance, but not on her wrong choice. This wrong choice results in bad consequences. In Amanda's case the bad conduct is her failed marriage.

Amanda's denial of her current life leads her to regress to her past. She prefers to live in her past rather than living in her present. She talks about her youth and how she is famous, pretty, and surrounded by gentlemen callers. She tries to relive her carefree girlhood (O'Neil,1995,p. 14).

As (freeman ,2006,p.67 )observes: We all try to escape from pain, of both body and mind. We also try to escape psychic pain, which presents no less a threat psychologically. Amanda finds that the past is the only escapement from her current complex reality ( her husband's infidelity to her despite her true love to him, and his desertion of his family by leaving

them alone). She searches for self-esteem which she could not find with her husband, so she always talks about her past as a young girl with unbelievable beauty, and a girl who understands the art of conversation. Moreover, she tries to convince herself and others that her seventeen gentlemen callers were of high positions, very rich, and well known:

Tom: How did you entertain those gentlemen callers?

Amanda: I understood the art of conversation!

( Scene I,p.4)

Another way of denial which Amanda resorts to is her denial of her son's need for achievement (the need to accomplish something hard and challenging) which he could not find in his job in a shoe warehouse. She also denies his need for aggressive and and strongly motivated behavior such as (the need to fight, attack, injure, or overcome others) (Dawis,1989,p.144):

Tom: Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse

Amanda: Man is by instinct! Don't quote instinct to me! Instinct is something that people have got away from ! It belongs to animals!

Christian adults don't want it.

(scene IV,p.21)

By claiming that there is nothing which is called instinct, it is Obvious that Amanda is trying to deny the significant role of the instinctive or

libidinal motivation, otherwise known as sexual energy in one's psyche Amanda's world fluctuates between illusion and reality. When convenient for her she simply closes her eyes to the merciless reality in which she has been deserted by her husband and left alone with her daughter ( Triplett,12). She looks at certain moments in the past that make her happy.

Regression is a reversion to immature patterns of behavior. When adults are anxious about their self-worth, some of them respond with childish boasting and bragging (Alkhatib,2011,p.201). It is a temporary return to a former psychological state, which is not imagined but also relived (Tyson,1999,p.18), and this is actually what Amanda does throughout the play. She needs affiliation which is a type of psychological needs, which means that a person needs to be close and loyal to a friend(Dawis,144). Loyalty is a missing principal in Amanda's life, and she cannot fill her need of affiliation in the past, so she uses regression as a defense mechanism (solution for her current problem). We can see this clearly in many of Amanda's speeches to her children:

Amanda: One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain your mother received-seventeen gentlemen callers! Sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all and we have to send the nigger over to bring in folding chairs from the parish house.

( Scene I,p.4)

This kind of behavior can be attributed to the selective memory another strategy of defense mechanism. Selective memory means that we can modify our memories by adding, deleting, or even forgetting them entirely (Tyson,1999,p.18). We can notice that Amanda selects only her memories in *The Blue Mountain*. She tries to avoid talking about her memories with her husband or other memory she does not like.

Amanda also makes use of the defense mechanism called selective perception. Selective perception means that a person selects only what he/she wants to hear. He/she tries to avoid things that bother him/her. Sincero (2013) sees that selective perception is a process in which a person only perceives what he desires and sets aside or ignores other perceptions or viewpoints. Amanda hears only what she wants to hear. If someone says something bothering her, she replies that she does not want to hear that either now or at any other time in the future:

Laura: I'm crippled!

Amanda: Nonsense ! Laura, I've told you never, never to use that word. Why, you're not crippled, you just have a little defect-hardly noticeable, even!

(SceneII,p.11)

Amanda also refuses to hear the truth because it bothers or annoys her. This kind of behavior can be considered as repression. Repression is a defense mechanism which means forcing the unwanted information out

of our awareness. It acts to keep information out of the conscious. Amanda tries to keep the fact that her daughter is unlike other girls away from her consciousness, as well as from her daughter's consciousness.

Regression, projection, selective memory, and denial are not the only defense mechanisms which Amanda employs. She also uses rationalization as a defense mechanism. Rationalization means changing the facts and destroying them in order to find excuses for certain behaviors or actions. Amanda started making excuses for her temporary escapement from her real life, from her role as a mother, and from her constant intervention in her daughter's and son's personal matters, and her excessive fear of being left alone without money in more than one way. First, she pretended that her devotion is what made her hateful to her children:

Amanda: My devotion has made me a witch and so I made myself hateful to my children.

(scene IV,p.19)

Amanda makes excuses for her constant intervention in her children's personal matters by saying that this is because of her love for them. It is also a kind of denial. She denies the basic cause of her bad relationship with her children which is actually her way of treating them, and the way she passes judgments without contributing in anything which may change their life for the better or provide a reasonable solution to their problem.

In Freud's structural model of the psyche, there are three basic components of personality: the id, the ego, and the superego. According to Freud, the id consists of two sorts of drives which he called Eros and Thanatos. Eros helps individual to survive while Thanatos is a set of devastating forces. The id leads a person to put his/her needs in the first place of one's priorities. It makes the individual pay too much of attention to their demands, and how to fulfill them. The id is fully unconscious; it works according to the pleasure principle (gaining pleasure). If the needs of the id are not satisfied immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension. For example, an increase in anger should produce an immediate attempt to hit someone or create a problem (AlKhatib,2011,p.19).

The ego mediates between the id and the ethics of the surrounding society. It seeks to delay gratification of the id's urges until appropriate outlets and situations can be found. It works as a savior for the id by trying to control our impulses and needs. It works according to the reality principal. It acts after thinking of the consequences of its actions. On the other hand, the superego is the type of self which gives attention to moral standards and rules of social and religious discipline. It is concerned with morality, ethics, and higher standards of the self.

Freud divides the mind into the preconscious, the conscious, and the unconscious. As Cherry (2015) states The preconscious is the part of

mind that represents the ordinary memory. These memories are not conscious, but we can retrieve them to conscious awareness at any time. It is a sort of gatekeeper between the conscious and unconscious parts information to pass through and enter conscious awareness. For example, if you were asked what did you study in English class yesterday, you would be pulling that information out of your preconscious ( p . 1).

Consciousness refers to the awareness of internal and external stimuli (to be aware of your actions and way of thinking). This is the aspect of our mental processing that we can think of and talk about in a rational way. Things that the conscious mind wants to hide from awareness are repressed into the unconscious mind, but still the unconscious has its impact on behavior. It is the storehouse of everything that makes us suffer and afraid (the storehouse of everything which is hidden).

In terms of the components of the psyche (the id, the ego, and the super ego), and the types of the mind (the preconscious, the conscious, and the unconscious), we see that Amanda is not totally absent from her real life. According to the definition of the conscious (everything we are aware of), we see that in certain moments Amanda knows that there is something wrong with her family. She knows that her daughter Laura must have a company, so she started trying to find a gentleman for her. She also knows that Laura must establish a social relationship, and must have a role in society, so she asked her to attend the business college.

Amanda also feels that her son is not satisfied with his job, so she tried to direct him. However, she did that in a wrong way. She was actually putting much pressure on him so that he attempted to escape for a while. In other words, Amanda is often conscious about the terrible future of her children:

Amanda: So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and watch the parades go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him? We won't have a business career- we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion!... (sceneII,p.10)

On the other hand, Amanda is unconscious in many aspects. She did not realize that if she wants to fix the problem with her son, she must start with herself. For example, she asked Tom to continue working, but she was unconscious that she is not doing anything except talking, and she must work and be responsible. Another example, is that Amanda did not realize that her daughter is different from the other girls (Laura is crippled, and does not have a job) therefore, by constantly asking her to find a husband, she is hurting her.

Tom: Mother, you mustn't expect too much of Laura.

Amanda: what do you mean?

Tom: Laura seems all those things to you and me because she's ours and we love her. We don't even notice she's crippled any more.

Amanda: do not say crippled! You know that I never allow that word to be used!

Tom: but face facts, mother. She is and- that's not all.  
(sceneV,p.29)

Whenever there is a lack of balance, problems will arise, which will dominate the ego, id, or superego. By referring to these components of the psyche, and according to the definition of the id (the type of self which does not think of anything else other than fulfilling its desires and needs), we find that Amanda is not a bad woman. In her inner self she realizes that there are mistakes in her family. This realization leads her to employ the ego defense mechanisms of denial, regression, and rationalization, among others, in order to strike a balance in her psyche. When Amanda tries to make excuses for her behavior, it means that she knows there is a problem, which means that it is not the id which dominates, but it is the ego which dominates.

While Amanda is obsessed with the idea of having a gentleman caller for her daughter, and gaining money to avoid the pain of asking people for charity, Tom who is not only a character in the play but also a narrator, obsessed with the idea of being famous, rich, and a man of

power. Tom is Amanda's son and consequently bears responsibility towards his family. He is supposed to be the man of the family, and he is responsible for playing the role of the absent father:

Tom: I am the narrator of the play, and also a character in it.

(scene I,p.5)

He is responsible for gaining money to his family, and for taking care of his sister Laura. He is not a distinguished man ; he doesn't have an attractive personality, or a unique job. He leads a normal life, and like anyone, he dreams about having wealth and a high position in society. However, Like his mother, Tom resorts to several defense mechanisms to explain his failures. These defense mechanisms are: displacement, denial, projection, and rationalization.

Tom shows denial when he keeps spending his money in buying cigarettes and going to movies, and forgetting at the same time that he has a family waiting for him and for his money. He denies his main role as a man of the family by constant shouting at his mother and sister. He hides his failure behind drinking alcohol, going to the movies, smoking, and reading romantic novels which talk about passionate love and sexual relationships with the opposite sex which he misses. When Amanda directs his attention to those bad behaviors, he starts shouting and escaping from the house. This is clear in his speech to his mother:

Amanda: Oh, you smoke too much. A pack a day at fifteen cents a pack. How much would be that in a month! Thirty times fifteen is how much, Tom? Figure it out and you will be astounded at what you could save. Enough to give you a night-school course in accounting at the Washington U.! Just think a wonderful thing that would be for you, son!

Tom: I'd rather smoke

(Scene V,p.24)

Amanda blames Tom constantly because of his behavior, but she doesn't recognize that smoking, reading novels, going to movies, and drinking alcohol are Tom's shelter from his harsh real life. She does not allow her son to read books about romantic relationships. These books arouse the unconscious desires in Amanda ( to have a partner who provides her with love). These books work as reminders for her about her unfortunate marriage. Tom thinks that his mother wants him to obey her in everything, and controlling his life, but actually his mother does not want anything which reminds her of her unfortunate marriage. Also, she wants him to focus only on his job not on these romantic relationships:

Tom: Yesterday, you have confiscated my books! You had the nerve to--.

Amanda: I did. I took that horrible novel book to the library----- that awful book by that insane, Mr, Lawrance. I cannot control the output of a

diseased mind or people who cater to them---- but I won't allow such filth into my house.No, no,no,no!

( scene III, p.39)

The second defense mechanism which Tom shows is displacement. Displacement means taking it out on someone or something less threatening than the original source of fear, hurt, frustration, or anger. Displacement occurs whenever we use a less threatening person, event, or object as a stand-in to represent a more threatening person, even, or object. Displacement is a substitution tool (Tyson,1999,p. 20)

When Amanda blames Tom for a certain behavior, he starts smoking, in order to hide his feeling of anger because of the way of his life, and his mother's constant blame of his behavior. In effect, He uses cigarettes or smoking as a substitution tool to vent his anger and frustration:

Amanda: Temperament like a Metropolitan star! You are not excused from the table.

Tom: I'm getting a cigarette ( Scene I,p. 4).

Tom hides his inner feelings of anger from his mother, and his feeling that he is not free because of his responsibility toward his sister by smashing the glass menagerie instead of hitting his mother or his sister. He uses the glass menagerie as a substitutional object for his mother and his sister.

Smoking and hitting the glass menagerie are not only the substitutional objects which Tom uses. These also includes his going to movies, reading passionate novels, and drinking alcohol which can be considered as substitutional objects. They provide good example of displacement as a defense mechanism. Tom does not find love whether from his family because of his father who left his family , and his mother who is not able to express her love in a right way. Also, he does not have an outside love, so he uses “the novels of Mr.Lawrance” as a substitutional tool to provide him with the love he misses. When Tom reads these novels, he starts imagining that he is the hero of a love story which he cannot live in his real life.

Like any young man, Tom dreams about having a life which is full of adventure and a life where he can find self-esteem and the feeling of love and belonging. These needs motivate him. His behaviors (drinking alcohol and going to movies) come to satisfy these needs. Outside his house, Tom lives an imaginative life which he cannot find in his house. In his speech to his mother, Tom shows the life which he dreams about:

Tom: I am going to opium dens! Yes, opium dens, dens of vice and criminals' hang-outs, Mother. I've joined the Hogan gang, I'm a hired assassin, I carry a tommy-gun in a violin case! I run a string of cat-houses in the Vally! They call me killer, Killer Wingfield, I'm leading a double life, a simple, honest warehouse worker by

day, by night a dynamic of the underworld, Mother.

(Scene III,p.15)

The third defense mechanism which Tom shows is rationalization. Rationalization means creating wrong but plausible excuses to justify unacceptable behavior( Al Khatib,201). When they commit a mistake, he/she may start creating excuses for their mistake( a process of rationalization). This is exactly what happened with Tom.

When Amanda asks Tom about the reasons behind why he goes to the movies, and why he comes late to the house, he tells her that his love of adventure leads him to go too much to the movies. He uses love as an excuse for his wrong behavior. He does not put the blame on his weakness, but rather on his needs:

Amanda: but,why\_ why, Tom-am you always so restless? Where do you go to nights?

Tom: I – go to the movies.

Amanda: Why do you go to the movies so much, Tom?

Tom: I go to the movies because- I like adventure

Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies.

(scene IV,p.20)

Another way which reveals Tom's rationalization is his taking instincts as excuses for his behavior at specific points, so whenever

Amanda asks him why he hates his job, he replies that” man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter”, and none of these instincts he can find in his job at the warehouse:

Amanda: The world is full of young men employed in warehouses and offices and factories.

Tom: Do all of them find adventure in their careers?

Amanda: They do or they do without it! Not everybody has a craze for adventure.

Tom: Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse!

(scene IV,p.21)

Another way of making excuses for Tom is putting the blame on his father. This way of behaving also may be called projection which is one of the defense mechanisms employed in this play. Projection means to ascribe our problems to others in order to deny our responsibility toward our own problems. Tom claims that he is what he is because of his father. He projects his failure in acting his role as a man of the family toward his father. He ascribes his unhappiness to his job and his way of life instead of saying that he fails in establishing other successful relationships. He says that sons are like their father, so he does not do anything which is unusual for his family. He is rationalizing his intention to leave his family, so if he will do that, his father did it before him, and he is only

doing what his father had done, so Tom is laying(projecting) the blame on his father to free himself of any liability for his wrong actions:

Tom: I'm like my father. The bastard son of a bastard! Did you notice how he's grinning in his picture in there? And he's been absent going on sixteen years.

(scene VI,p.80)

If we want to analyze Tom's character in terms of id, ego, and super ego, we can say that although the id dominates his actions most of the time, we notice him behaving within the realm of a responsible behavior where he tries to adhere to traditional morals, and to exercise a sense of ethics on his actions. For instance, especially when he shouts at his mother's face, he feels guilty about any wrong he has done, and immediately make a clear apology to her. clearly, the act of apology is a responsible action that reflects a human behavior that is ethical, moral, and responsible:

Tom: Mother.!-I apologize, Mother. I'm sorry for what said, for everything that I said; I did not mean it.

(scene IV,p.19)

Also, Tom reveals a sense of responsibility toward his sister when he decided to get a gentleman caller for her. When he brought Jim, a fellow worker in the shoe factory, as a last attempt from him, so that he will be able to leave his sister without being worried about her, Jim was actually

showing a clear sense of responsibility towards his sister in particular and his family in general.

Although Tom's id ultimately won the conflict, and he finally left his family, his superego (his sense of responsibility toward his sister and his family) prevented him from staying out, and forced him to go back to the house, perhaps with the intention of staying with the family so as to shoulder his responsibility:

Tom: Oh, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be!

(Scene VII, p.63)

Tom leaves, but when he is far away, he finds that he is unable to leave behind the guilty memories of Laura.

The third character whose behavior reflects using defense mechanism is Laura. Laura is physically and emotionally crippled, but at the same time she is the only character who does nothing to hurt anyone else. She does not even complain about her problems, nor does she ask her mother why her father left them. It is her difficult state which makes Tom feel pity and sympathy for her. Although she has the fewest lines in the play, she is the center of all of all conflicts in the play, and most of the prominent symbols in the play (blue roses, the glass unicorn, and the glass menagerie) represent her. She is pure, fragile and transparent as her glass collection. It is easy for anyone to analyze her character from the

first time he sees her. like her glass menagerie, she is vulnerable and easily affected by her surrounding and circumstances (Triplett,1988,p.13).Laura is a shy and sensitive girl. She cannot attend the business college because of her shyness. Like the other characters in the play, Laura shows different defense mechanisms of denial, displacement, avoidance, and rationalization.

The first defense mechanism which Laura reveals is denial. Laura denies that she cannot face her problems. Instead, she magnifies the slight crippling in her leg as if she is unable to walk at all. She pretends that when she goes out she does a lot of things. However, when she is out, she does nothing expect roaming in the streets, and gazing at the glass menagerie.

Laura suffers from an inferiority complex that prevents her from leading a normal life and doing something useful in the society. When her mother discovered that she dropped out from the business colleague, Laura said the truth for one time that she does not hve the power to appear to the society while she is crippled:

Amanda: Walking?Walking? In winter? Deliberately courting pneumonia in that light coat? Where did you walk to, Laura?

Laura: All sorts of places-mostly in the park.

Amanda: Even after you started catching that cold?

Laura: it was the lesser of two evils, Mother.

( sceneII,p.9)

Amanda's constant talking about her youth and glamorous beauty makes Laura think that she is inferior to her mother. Laura is not as beautiful as her mom, and she doesn't have her mother's attractive personality. This situation causes her an inferiority complex which prevents her not only from going out and taking an active part in her society, but also from trying to talk to the man who attracted her attention. When she sees a dressed girl talking to that man, she prefers to surrender in order to avoid failure:

Laura: I- wanted to ask you to-autograph my programme.

Jim: Why didn't you ask me to?

Laura: You were always surrounded by your friends so much that I never had a chance to.

Jim: you should have just\_\_\_\_\_

( Scene Vii,p.49)

Laura denies that she has a psychological problem more than a physical one. This psychological problem (inferiority complex) makes her think that all the people around her notice that she is crippled. Laura's need for self-esteem makes her hide from people. Her low self-esteem makes her uneager to do anything in order to prove that she is a normal girl. This leads her to magnify her unseen crippling:

Laura: Yes, it was so hard for me, getting upstairs. I had that brace on my leg- it clumped so loud I

Jim: I never heard any clumping

Laura: To me it sounded like a thunder!

(Scene VII, p.47)

On the level of symbols, we can say that the unicorn in *The Glass Menagerie* represents Laura. Laura denies her need to have a company, and when Jim told her that the unicorn feels bad because he is alone as a sign for Laura's loneliness, she replies that even if he is sad he does not complain. It is clear here that the unicorn represents Laura ( the lonely girl).like the unicorn, Laura does not complain even if she feels sad and dissatisfied. Despite all her problems, Laura prefers silence. This silence can be considered as a kind of displacement:

Jim: poor little fellow, he must feel sort of lonesome.

Laura: Well, if he does he doesn't complain about it.

(scene VII,p.53)

The second defense mechanism which Laura shows is displacement. When Laura dropped out from the business college, she started going to the park, museum, and street instead of facing society. At the same time, she was thinking that she was doing something useful in this kind of behavior (to escape from one's duties to something else) is called displacement:

Laura: I went in the art museum and the bird-houses at the zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I've been spending most of my afternoons in the jewel-box, that big glass-house where they raise the tropical flowers. (sceneII,p.9)

Going to such place would allow not facing society directly. Instead of facing her social duties, she escapes to the safety of such places.

Another way of showing the displacement which Laura employs is her playing with the glass menagerie. Laura's need of affiliation and avoidance at the same time ( the need to avoid humiliation or embarrassment ) directs her to take the glass menagerie as a substitution for people, because the glass menagerie, unlike people, cannot hurt her or make her feel embarrassed. Thus, Laura talks to her glass collection as if it resembles real people( Dawis,p.144):

Jim: What are you doing now?

Laura: I don't do anything much. Oh, please don't think I sit around doing nothing! My glass collection takes up a good deal of time. Glass is something you have to take care of.

(scene VII,50)

Talking to the glass menagerie can be considered as a kind of avoidance. Laura avoids talking to people and prefers talking to her animal pieces because she thinks that people will notice that she is

crippled and so they will not accept her. Her mother's constant repetition of the story of the seventeen gentlemen callers and her constant talking about her experience with her husband makes Laura afraid of talking to people in order to avoid such a tragic end. When Tom introduced her to Jim, she could not even stand and talk to him. All of a sudden she became ill, and started to move in an unsteady manner. Even more, her eyes and lips, and all her facial features were seriously affected. This is actually not a physical illness, but rather a psychological one(Mahmood,2004).

Laura does not use rationalization. She does not even complain about her difficulties or problems. She shows a sort of rationalization only in two situations. The first one is when her mother asked her about why she dropped out of the business college. Laura replied that she cannot face people while she is crippled. The second one, is when Jim asked about why she did not make friends. Her answer was that she was shy with people and could not face them directly. She also said that she could not change her behavior, while the fact is that she did not even try to do anything. In other words, she did not give herself the chance to change the situation:

Jim: You were shy with people!

Laura: I tried not to be but never could

Jim: Overcome it?

Laura: No, in ever could!

(Scene Vii,p.48)

If we want to shed light on Laura's character in terms of id, ego, and superego, we can see that the dominance is for the superego. Despite Laura's need for affiliation and gaining respect from her society, she does nothing which might hurt anyone. She does not even complain about her problem. She also remains on a good terms with all the members of her family. When she says something which might hurt her mother, she apologizes as soon as possible. She sees her mother as instructor rather than as a burden as Tom sees her. Laura recognizes her problems, and she tries to do her best to solve them on her own and in her own way. She needs someone to give the opportunity for the super ego to play its role. It is in society that the best point of Laura's character can be seen. Laura's personality is the only thing which unites her family. When Tom decided to leave the family, he came back only because of Laura's goodness. Thus, Laura becomes a unifying factor in her family and her role alerts the family to their real problems.

The fourth character in the play who plays the role of psychiatrist for the Wingfield family is Jim. Jim reveals the suppressed feelings of the family and makes the unconscious feelings come to the conscious. He displays what is hidden and lets the family, especially Laura, face the facts. He has an attractive personality that appeals to every one of the Wingfield family:

Tom: The other characters are my mother, Amanda, my sister, Laura, and a gentleman caller who appears in the final scenes. He is the most realistic character in the play, being an emissary from world of reality that we were somehow set apart from. But since I have a poet's weakness for symbols, I am using this character also as a symbol: he is the long delayed but always expected something that we live for. ( Scene I,p. 1&2)

The above account by Tom(the narrator) reveals that Jim has the characteristics which make anyone dream about. He is the most rational character in the play. He thinks logically, and understands the way things go in the world, the main point is that no one lives without problems in his life and all people suffer in one way or another. He tries to make Laura understand this concept and act upon it, and he succeeded in that:

Jim: Everybody has problems, not just you practically everybody has problems. You think of yourself as being the only one who is disappointed. But just look around you and what do you see-a lot of people just disappointed as you are. (Scene VII,p.94)

Finally, Jim raises a sense of self-confidence in Laura. He tells her that she is magnifying her physical defect, though it is hardly noticeable. He makes her understand that what she suffers from is only an inferiority complex, and that she must be self-confident because, in the final

analysis, she does not have a real problem. Laura, like her glass menagerie, does not look fine unless someone focuses on. This is exactly what Jim has tried to do. He gives her the attention which she needs. He told her that she should give herself the opportunity to establish relationship with people, and take a more active role in life:

Jim: You know what I judge to be the trouble with you?

Inferiority complex I know what that is? That's what they call it when someone low-rates himself! I understand it because I had it, too. Although my caw was not so aggravated as yours seems to be. I had it until I took up public speaking, developed my voice, and learned that I had an aptitude for science. Before that time I never thought of myself as being outstanding in any way whatsoever I

(scene VII,p. 51)

Here it is clear that Jim plays the role of a psychotherapist. The first step in psychotherapy is that the person must recognize his problem, and Laura knows what is her problem. After that, she must start getting rid of the problem, and this is what Jim did when he broke the horn of the unicorn which symbolizes Amanda's fear. When Jim did that he did not expect that Laura will accept what happened, but Laura did not care. She said that this might happen with all classes, which means that Jim succeeded in making her understand that she suffers from nothing. Her behavior when she continued dancing after the breaking of her unicorn's

horn means that she understands that what she suffers from is something normal:

Jim: Aw aw aw- Is it broken?

Laura: Now it is just like all other horses.

Jim: It's lost its-

Laura: Horn! It does not matter. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.

(Scene Vii,p.54)

Despite all these traits in Jim and the fact that he tries to appear in the best way to people, he still shows different defense mechanisms. These mechanisms include: denial and rationalization. When Jim kissed Laura during the time he was engaged, he ignored the fact that he has another girl in his life for a while as a sort of denial, so that he would be able to enjoy the moment with Laura. After that, he recognized that he did something wrong, and said that he did that because Laura needs someone to build her confidence up. He denies that he was attracted to her while he is engaged, and he started making excuses as a form of rationalization:

Jim: somebody needs to build your confidence up and make you proud instead of shy and turning away and-blushing- somebody ought to kiss you Laura..... I should not have done that -----  
way off the beam you don't smoke, do you? ( Scene VII,p.56)

Jim shows rationalization when he started telling Laura excuses. He wants to justify why he kissed her, and why he is not going to arrange a date with her. He told her that he is not in the situation to do the right thing, because he is engaged:

Jim: ... The only trouble is that in my case- I'm not in a situation to-do the right thing....

Laura: You-Won't- call again?

Jim: No, Laura, I can't. .... I go out all of the time with a girl named Betty. (Scene VII,p.57)

The last and fifth character that doesn't have any speech in the play, is the one who appears only in the portrait which is hanged on the wall. He is the father who deserted the family a long time ago. According to what the other characters said about him, he is an attractive man. He doesn't show any sense of responsibility toward his family, because he left them a long time ago without calling or asking what will happen with them. We can infer from his behavior that he is cruel because he cheated the woman who loved him before:

Tom: There is a fifth character in the play who doesn't appear except in this larger than-life-size photograph over the mantel. This is our father who left us along time ago. He was a telephone man who fell in love with long distances; he gave up his job with the

telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town...(sceneI,p.3)

Tom is like his father: both of them wanted to escape so that they will avoid the feeling of being unworthy in the eyes of their family. Perhaps the father felt that he was inferior to his wife so he chose to escape.

Although the father doesn't have any speech in the play, he is still the main cause of the character's problems. His abandonment of his family was the main cause behind all of the psychological problems which the family faced. Amanda's denial of her actual life and her constant regression to the past is because of her husband's infidelity to her. Her constant nagging that Laura should have a husband is because of her fear that her experience with her husband might happen again with Laura. The picture of the father hanging on the wall horrifies Tom and encourages him to abandon his family. This abandonment in an indirect way horrifies Laura from the society, and makes her afraid of marriage. She wants to avoid the experience which happened with her mother. Here Tom tells the audience about his father :

Tom: The last we heard of him was a picture postcard from Mazatlan, on the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words Hello\_\_Good\_\_ by ! and no address ( scene I,p.3)

It is clear that the father shows different kinds of defense mechanisms which are: denial, avoidance, and displacement. He shows denial when he denies the needs of his family, and his responsibility toward them. He reveals avoidance when he chose to avoid facing reality, and that he is not able to fulfill his family's demands. He reveals displacement when he chose the love of far distance instead of his family.

If we want to analyze his character in terms of id, ego, and superego, we can see that the id is the element which dominates his psyche. The father's behavior is directed to his interests, desires and feelings without caring about the future of his family. He doesn't even think how to solve his own mistakes. He sent a picture postcard from the Pacific coast of Mexico, containing a message of two words\_\_\_\_\_” Hello\_\_ Good bye!” which means that he does not even think about coming back to his family.

As mentioned before, what we write is a mere reflection for us and our psyche. Literature is our mirror in life. The unconscious mind of the author reflects in the author's works his fantasies, desires, wishes, fears, and experience. “At the age of fourteen, Tennessee Williams wrote in the foreword *To sweet bird of youth*, I discovered writing as an escape from a world of reality in which I felt acutely uncomfortable. For Freud, the artist uses literature to fulfill his suppressed desires by resorting to fiction where he can create his own world (Mahmood,2004,p.46).

*The Glass Menagerie* mirrors many aspects of Tennessee Williams's young life, and emphasizes the need for escape. *The Glass Menagerie* is an autobiographical play about Tennessee Williams own life and the struggles that he encountered with his family, and himself. Tennessee Williams's entire life was about escape, and he chose "escapement" as a major theme in his play. Tennessee Williams met his long term partner Frank Merlo in the summer of 1948 and separated in 1961. His father Cornelius Williams, a travelling salesman who denigrated his sensitive son who was homosexual also left his family. Separation and abandonment were two major themes in Tennessee Williams' life, and consequently his works.

Amanda Wingfield is a representative character for William's real mother Edwina Dakin. She was imperious, manipulative hysterical woman who flourished on the memories of a better time, much like Amanda Wingfield does. Edwina was living in a comfortable, luxurious, wealthy southern life style. When she removed with her children to ST Louis, they fell in poverty. Amanda became over protecting of her children after the neglect from their father because she saw them as very fragile(Pearce,2013,p.1).

Laura Wingfield is a representative character for Rose Williams. Tennessee Williams was close to his sister Rose who was diagnosed with schizophrenia like Laura who was crippled. Rose spent most of her life in

mental institutions, and her brother Tennessee was feeling sympathy towards her like Tom Wingfield who was feeling sympathy towards his sister Laura. These circumstances of Williams's own life are the setting which influences his masterpiece *The Glass Menagerie*.(Hopwood,1990,p. 4)

Despite his considerable charm, Williams turned out to be a heavy drinker, gambler, and womanizer after the absence of his father, like Tom Wingfield who was drunkard. Another point of similarity between Tom Wingfield and Tennessee Williams is that both of them were working in a shoe factory. As Jacobs (2009) asserts, Tennessee Williams chose his own name to emphasize the loosening of boundaries between fact and fiction.

In other words, Tennessee Williams's life resembles in many aspects the life of his own characters. Amanda's character and life is like Edwina's character and life. Laura's character and life is like Rose's character and life. Tom Wingfield's character and life is like Thomas Williams's character and life.

## Chapter five

### Recommendations and conclusions

*The Glass Menagerie* is a predominantly expressionistic play and a literary work that tries to give not the external reality or the surface appearance but the inner reality. It is also an autobiographical play in which the life of the characters reflects the author's own life. The play consists of seven scenes in which the characters try to face the obstacles they encountered after the disappearance of the father, who is also Amanda's lover and husband.

In an attempt to overcome their problems, all the characters employ different types of psychological defense mechanisms. After analyzing the play *The Glass Menagerie* it is clear that the dominant atmosphere of the play is psychology, and that what motivates the characters and urge them to show a certain manner which is their unconscious feelings and desires. So, psychoanalysis is perhaps the best way to understand the character's motivations, and thus understanding the motivations. As Skura(1984) and Mahmood(2014) assert psychoanalysis helps in understanding human behavior and literary texts which are about human behavior, and literature is not literature when it fails in portraying our lives and representing our feelings, emotions and beliefs about life.

Also the analysis of the play reveals that the characters are not aware of the internal and external stimuli. To a great extent, they are not aware of the motivations behind their actions. This means that the dominant force in their lives is for the unconscious. The study also shows that the characters in the play pay high importance to the pleasure principle which means that all of the characters seek their happiness through employing different defense mechanisms.

The study also reveals that the characters' need for happiness in addition to the fulfillment of their desires put pressure toward each other. That is why in certain situations they show symptoms of neurosis because it is impossible to cope with all their problems and desires.

The play employs different defense mechanisms which are: selective perception, selective memory repression, regression, denial, avoidance, rationalization, projection, and displacement. Such employment of the unconscious comes to prevent the contents of the unconscious from going out. The characters suffer from repression, and each of them represents different methods of solution. These repressions weave a picture of discordant nature and foreshadow the ensuing battle and conflict within the household. Defense mechanisms come to prevent conscious recognition of information, so that the characters can avoid such repressions, and thus avoid threatening the conscious self image.

The results also indicate that the characters differ in the kinds of personality which they show. Some of them give dominance to the id, while others give dominance to the ego and superego. This difference occurs because of the difference in the degree of paying attention to the desires; so, the more a character pays attention to his/her desires, the more the id will dominate, and vice versa. Amanda shows more dominance to ego, she employs ego defense mechanisms. Tom shows more dominance to his id, but sometimes he makes use of ego defense mechanisms and feels regret. Laura doesn't try to fulfill her desires; rather, she tends to show dominance of super ego.

The results also show that what writers write is a mere reflection of their psyches. What we write is our mirror. Thus, *The Glass Menagerie* is a reflection of Tennessee Williams's life. Its characters represent Williams's family, and its actions have been taken from Williams's life. Williams reflects his feeling towards his family members in his writings. Amanda represents Williams's mother Edwina. Laura represents Williams's sister Rose. Tom represents Tennessee Williams himself.

The study recommends that more attention should be paid to the defense mechanisms in the psychological analysis of literary works, because these defenses are the most obvious techniques which provide us with clear interpretations for not only the behavior of the characters in literature, but also for our interpretations of our own behaviors. In this

way, literature is our own reflection, and a representation of the writer's behaviors and thoughts.

The study also recommends that before analyzing any literary work, we should look at the social, economical, and religious background of its author's life. After looking at these sides of the author's life, it will be easy to guess why such a character behaves in a certain way.

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