



## Twentieth-Century American Family Drama: An Exploration of the Image of Loss

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the image of loss in modern American drama in the theme of family. The image of loss prevails the post-war era of American drama in three levels of psychological, physical, and moral space. This image is clearly observable in two of the prominent works of the era, Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Moreover, this image of loss is closely connected with the notion of time. The familial breakdown appears as a sustaining motif that plays a central role in the psychologically shattered personality of the major characters, as a result of the profound changes in the American post-war society and family. World War II was a milestone in the society as a whole, and in the family as a smaller society, and correspondingly among the people as entities which the image of loss seemed inseparable from. American post-War drama fully represents the tough conditions of that era particularly in the themes of familial breakdown and the image of loss.

## Keywords

American Post-War Drama, Loss, Family Breakdown, Shattered Personality

## 1. Introduction

After World War II, the American society experienced a great shift in values, especially regarding family structure. These societal value alterations include a shift in roles that each family member plays in it from the father becoming an ineffectual figure, distant or often absent, mother trying to plod on by attempting to keep the family united and the children being highly dissentient. When it comes to this shift, family is an important indicator and a bearer of such a shift and is usually at odds with societal claims which results in tensions and distress.



American modern drama is no exception to this condition of change in societal and family values. As Meserve (1994) states, the old virtues and values are, indeed, challenged by the post-war modern drama which seeks after new values in the changed world and endeavours to discard the obsolete ones. It tries to undermine the illusionary securities, confront the petrified values and dispute the dubious ideals as well as to reject old models. The power of popular myths that are at work in society exerts its authority upon the family to a detrimental effect. The professed myths, ideals or values are hollowed, thus emanating the sense of loss and entropy.

The purpose of the present study is to examine the image of loss in twentieth-century American drama by briefly touching upon some plays which have the image of loss as their central theme, namely Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* and Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*. To this end, first the issue of 'family' in modern, post-war American drama will be explained and then the focus will be on 'image of loss' in the family in modern American drama. Simply put, the goal of this paper is to explore how the image of loss is viewed in twentieth-century American drama and how it is related to family and in what ways. To fulfil this goal, this research will deal with two prominent plays of the twentieth century, namely Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. These plays are concern with the immediate aftermath of the Second World War and its cultural and political implications.

Taking all the above-mentioned details into consideration, in order to carry out the present study, the following research questions are raised: What role has family got in modern American drama? Is the image of loss the main theme of the modern American drama? Do Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* and Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* share the same elements in portraying the image of loss? The present paper seeks to investigate these research questions in order to demonstrate the central themes and motifs of the American post-war drama in general and the mentioned plays in particular.



## 2. The Role of Family in Modern American Drama

The selected plays by Williams and Miller indicate that the family in post-war America was exposed to detrimental effects of the doctrine of success (Nelson, 1970). The characters are in pursuit of the elusive American Dream, where facts and fictions are placed under scrutiny by society in reconciliation of the professed doctrine of inevitable success and the harsh reality that is free of the popular mythology's effect.

It seems that in after-war American drama, family is both a source of security and distress; it is a safe haven as well as battle ground engaging all its members. It is a very strange institution because of its highly contradictory nature – a collective body comprised of loyal individuals. Abbotson (2005) argues that there is “relentless fight going on between the two principles” (p. 46). Rough individualism regularly seems incompatible with being responsible to a higher unit of the family. The institution of family is something that one cannot easily escape. At times it is almost impossible to get away from one's family, the ties, roots, responsibilities because they are always there even if one is no more physically connected to it. Bigsby (2008) believes that Arthur Miller affirms the centrality and importance of the family in drama by asserting the following: “the way I see life there are no public issues; there are all private issues” (p. 8). The public thus becomes mere extension of the private. Personal issues are metonymical of public ones. Microcosm of family serves as a metaphor for macrocosm of whole society. In the same vein, MacIver (1947) asserts that:

every society is held together by a myth system (family) all social relations, the very texture of human society, are myth-born and myth-sustained. Wherever he goes, whatever he encounters, man spins about him his web of myths, as the caterpillar spins its cocoon. Every individual spins his own variant within the greater web of the whole group. (p. 30)

Similarly Van den Berghe (1975) in *Man in Society: a Biosocial View* observes that man and all human societies are based on power struggle. He holds that man as a ‘human animal’ with all the attributes of an animal plus additional features learnt, gained by enculturation and ‘civilization’, is similar to some species of primates and thus dominance ordered. The power ordered societies are formed in a way as to regulate access to scarce resources. He argues that many human groups cultivate a



fiction of consensus. But scratch the myth of consensus and you typically find a power system, even in communities ostensibly dedicated to egalitarianism and the sharing of resources, such as monastic orders.

Likewise, family is believed to be subjected to a power system and there is similar dynamism of power distribution inside it like the society itself. According to Van den Berghe (1975) Paternalism is “probably the most widespread model, and justification, of political rule. In societies with a ruler, emperor, dictator – the ruler is to his subjects as a father to his children” (p. 128). He considers the family ‘a benevolent tyranny’ where the two principles are being constantly reconciled. The power struggle and biological heritage are in permanent contest. Van den Berghe also explains violence in terms of the family inner dynamics as:

relations of dominance and submission [that] rest [...] on violence or threat of violence [which] is the ultimate argument in a power contest. The average family is no more exempt of violence and conflict than average state, though our ideology concerning the family makes us reluctant to accept that fact. (1975, p. 119)

As family underwent the above-mentioned changes along with the society, its representation also changes in theatres and plays. At that time of change, American plays uttered reliance upon the English plays and style. Therefore, there was a need for original American plays. This issue drew prominent play writers’ attention and resulted in result in “a new cultural product that spoke not of the abandoned world but of the world in making [as the] old personal and social ties were deserted, nostalgia for the old familiar places and habits were balanced by the necessity of new virtues in the new place.” (Bigsby, 2008, p. 10). Similarly, Edgar Allan Poe, who is coming from theatrical family argued the same. He was quoted by Bigsby (as cited in Wilmeth, 2005) as saying that we must discard all models. The Elizabethan theatre should be abandoned. We need thoughts of our own – principles of dramatic action drawn not from the old dramatists but from the Fountain of Nature that can never grow old.

Correspondingly, Miller (1896) declares that melodramas became successful because after post-war changes pushed people to cities to a different environment



the plays “helped them create a sense of identity [...] troubled with questions of class and authenticity. They promoted middle class values such as virtue, thrift, hard work, domesticity, and patriotism” (p. 235). It served, as well, as a validation of the audiences’ roles as individuals within a society and at the same time offered an escape from the harsher realities of daily life. It thus had a certain therapeutic value and catered to the popular taste of the audience. As Miller claims:

it was not the reality but the myth of America that audience wanted to see in the theatre [as well as the fact that] playwrights aimed for commercial success so it was logical they set their task to please the public, not to offend it. (p. 238)

Therefore, it seems safe to claim that after the World War I., a fresh and liberating counter-current found its voice in the modern drama with playwrights taking rather critical stance. As Abbotson (2005) argues, new, more serious and critical plays that bloomed fully in the late 40s and 50s fought against the nostalgia for the past, the blinding power of tradition and naïve beliefs. They sounded the alarm, as Bigsby claims of Miller, “against the coercive power of myth and the constant temptation to deny responsibility for the world we make.”

### 3. Image of Loss

Bigsby (2008) examined the theme of loss in three levels of psychological, physical, and moral aspects. The mentioned plays (i.e. *Death of a Salesman* and *The Glass Menagerie*) will be analysed in terms of these three levels. However, the image of loss shall be first clarified in this section of the study.

Scholars including Bigsby and Roudané contend that modern American drama is characterized by a sense of loss. Despite their immense differences, Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller share the same idea in their idea of a dominant sense of loss which becomes a significant image on the American stage. Without a doubt, the image of loss is altered and transformed by these playwrights and becomes a metaphor for the decline of the physical, psychological, and moral self. Furthermore, these playwrights also use the image of loss to convey the slow fading of a vision but



in doing so they implicitly make a case for the possibility of change and indeed see in the theatre itself a principal agent of transformation.

The mentioned dramatists have been able to employ the theme of loss to “strip the layers and get to the marrow”--in hopes of coming to a better understanding of self (Albee, 1997). WWII and the Great Depression in the USA lead to radical changes in society and economy in the 1940s and, in turn, as Beaurline (1965) states, resulted in a cynicism and unrest that is seen in Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie* and Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*. As interest in Sigmund Freud’s psychology emerged and America faced social, moral and religious crises, Williams and Miller responded to the nation’s growing anxieties and tensions in their works. Tennessee Williams employs innovative dramatic techniques such as screens onstage, music, and creative lighting to blend text and performance, illusion and reality to punctuate the psychological loss suffered by Tom Wingfield as the result of abandoning his mother and beloved sister.

Williams uses these devices to strengthen the emotions presented on stage that might not be fully articulated by language or performance. Presented as a memory play, Williams also makes use of an innovative literary technique by making Tom both narrator and character in the play. Thus, Williams gives Tom poetic license to try to come to terms with the psychological loss that is the driving force of the play.

The theme of loss is spread all over Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman* and Tennessee Williams’s *The Glass Menagerie*. As an example, Beaurline (1965) argues that the character of Willy Loman in Miller’s play clearly shows the loss of physical space, psychological space, and moral space. Although the American dream represents the notion that hard work and setting goals can result in the fulfilment of one’s dreams, Willy Loman equates the American dream only with material success and superficial aspects such as “physical attractiveness” and “making contacts.” Therefore, as Bloom (1991) clearly states, “Willy Loman does not realize that he has placed the highest value on nothing more than a myth and illusion” (p. 221). The myths that have become the real world for Willy become an endless source of frustration and hopelessness for his sons because they are products of illusion. Willy Loman’s blind faith in his superficial vision of the American dream leads to his rapid psychological decline as he is unable to accept the disparity between the mythic



dream and his own life. In the following sections these two works will be thoroughly examined for the image of loss.

## 4. Investigating Two American Post-War Plays

### 4.1. Tennessee Williams's *The Glass Menagerie* (1945)

*The Glass Menagerie* is not simply a story of a tragic series of abandonments that affects the family emotionally and leaves it emotionally bankrupt; nor is it only a story of a family destroyed by its inability to accept reality. In fact, it is a story in which the image of loss is a device by which Williams is able to get to the heart of a universal truth the human condition of an individual's inability to escape a psychological loss of space no matter how much physical distance is attained. Hence, as Bigsby (1988, p. 97) explains, "Tom comes to realize that all his retreat from human relationships has won him is 'solitary free passage.'" Tom's love for his mother and sister is the main reason of his guilt. Thus, memory becomes his eternal prison as he struggles to reconcile his past and present.

Williams uses innovative devices like screens on stage, music, and lighting to blend text and performance, illusion and reality to radicalize the earlier American stage. As Roudané explains, "Williams reinforced his language . . . by refining what he termed his 'plastic theatre': the use of lights, music, sets, and any other forms of nonverbal expression that would complement the textual version of the play" (1997, p. 3).

By looking at the very initial lines of the play, it can safely be claimed that the image of loss is clear. This can especially be felt when Tom Wingfield mentions, "that the time period of the play was the thirties, when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind" (23). Thus, the social significance of the play contributes to the image of loss. To further heighten the atmosphere of loss, Tom refers to his long absent father as "a telephone man who fell in love with long distances"

Tom gives us "truth in the guise of illusion" (*Menagerie* 22). He does this by giving us his recollection of a certain time period in his life. By using poetic license to present truth, Williams can beautifully alternate between illusion and reality. Here, Williams



uses the image of loss to put illusion versus reality to allow each character to create his own individual reality. As a result, truth is made more bearable by the use of illusion and the theme of loss becomes a universal truth. For example, Tom's perceived dilemma of loss of physical space results in his retreat from the relationship that he most treasured and, as a result, is not the freedom that he imagined. When Tom escapes from his physical environment, it results in a psychological loss of space, and, as he states in one of the most poignant scenes in the play:

I didn't go to the moon, I went much further--for time is the longest distance between two places . . . I descended the steps of this fire escape for a last time and followed, from then on, in my father's footsteps, attempting to find in motion what was lost in space . . . I would have stopped, but I was pursued by something . . . Oh, Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but I am more faithful than I intended to be! (*Menagerie* 114-115)

Although Tom physically abandons his mother and sister, he is unable to escape his psychological burden. Tom, Amanda, and Laura are inextricably linked to the past, and are unable to escape the psychological losses each has suffered. Consequently, they are powerless to deal with the harsh realities of a contingent and bewildering present. The loss which Amanda suffered from is both physical and psychological. In the opening scene we are told that she has been abandoned by her husband who "gave up his job with the telephone company and skipped the light fantastic out of town" (*Menagerie*, 23).

The loss of psychological space is the human dilemma that Williams captures in *Menagerie*. Tom's refusal to deal with reality makes him abandon his family; however, his inability to escape the guilt he feels at abandoning his family is the universal truth that he can never reconcile in his tortured mind.

As Tom acts as both narrator and a character in the play, we can feel the inner turmoil as painful memories resurface and are presented on stage in an attempt to come to terms with an overwhelming sense of guilt – of abandoning his beloved family. Thus, since "memory is seated predominantly in the heart" (21) it is appropriate that the audience sees on stage a reflection of the guilt-ridden heart of the narrator.



Therefore, the three loss levels mentioned before can be clearly seen in this play –i.e. loss of psychological space, loss of physical space, and loss of moral space. These aspects of loss are finely embedded and illustrated in this work. Similarly, *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller elucidates this image of loss, roughly in the same manner. The following section is devoted to examining the image of loss in Miller's play which was created 5 years later.

#### 4.2. Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* (1949)

*Death of a Salesman* was an attempt to deploy past and present concurrently, with neither one ever coming to a stop. Neither past nor present, however, is secure and wholly knowable. Bloom (1991) writes: "When Willy Loman walks through the walls of his house, when the apartment houses that surround him dissolve, when his family transmutes before our eyes, what we see is not the past but what use the present makes of the past" (p. 220). It is the theatre that Willy makes of his life neurotically restaging it in an attempt to discover the moment of lost authenticity.

When it comes to considering the notion of time, although *Menagerie* looks back at time, *Salesman* looks into the future. Willy looks forward, makes plans, and lives for what is coming. For Laura future means unwanted struggle and pain. For Willy future is sacred. For her it represents menace, for him it is promise of realized possibilities unfeasible at present. This lead Willy to ever more back into the past of his own imagining, before the city encroached on his freedom, before the wire recorder cut across a simple act of human communication, before the automobile threatened his life and the world became such a mystery to him.

Nelson argues that "in creating *Death of a Salesman* Miller deliberately reached for a style that would accommodate his sense of the concurrence of experience, that would express his conviction that while past and present are causally connected" (1970, p. 33). This could be interpreted as a narrative logic which also implies moral coherence; these features are also co-existent realities informing and deforming one another.

Willy Loman is the embodiment of the loss of physical space, psychological space and moral space. He feels a strong urge to achieve security at any cost. Willy tries to



reach some level of comfortable security for himself and his family by providing the necessary – both materially and spiritually. Bigsby (2008) points out that “The loss of dignity and self-assurance which Miller saw as one legacy of the Crash clearly left its mark on Willy Loman as it did on Amanda Wingfield” (p. 242).

Compared to other plays of this kind, loss is more obvious in the title itself. The loss of physical space can be evidently seen and felt by the word ‘death’. As Choudhuri (1991) observes, “Dreams of a better future slowly take the shape of wishful fantasies, so much so that the sharpness of the conflict between illusion and reality, between Loman’s little dreams and the impersonal forces of society, seem to be apparently lost in comprehensive images of extraordinary poetic force” (p. 70). It is this feeling that makes Willy Loman to surrender to the effects of loss that results in a downward spiral that is played out in the last twenty-four hours of his life, resulting in the ultimate destruction of mind, body, and spirit.

In this play, Willy never cherishes candid values such as love, affection, family relations. He instead replaces them with superficial ones such as “making connections” and “appearances are everything.” Therefore, his sons are also encouraged to believe the same myths as their father. Hence, the myths that have become the real world for Willy become an endless source of frustration and hopelessness for his sons because they are products of illusion. Undeniably, Willy Loman’s blind faith in his superficial vision of the American dream leads to his rapid psychological decline as he is unable to accept the disparity between the mythic dream and his own life.

Similar to the absent father in *Menagerie*, Willy epitomizes physical, psychological and moral loss. Although Willy is able to understand that Charley has always been a friend, the disparity between the genuine and superficial is too great for any change or accommodation to take place. The image of loss pervades *Death of a Salesman* in a manner that has elicited critical debates from scholars, critics, and theatregoers since its 1949 premiere. As Bloom (1988) observes, “The crucial question might be: what sent Loman into his internalized exile? The form of that exile is unappeasable yearning, since no success and no popularity could gratify so ceaseless a need. Poor Loman essentially wants to sell himself, and so nothing could suffice for him to buy himself back” (p. 3).



There is a need in Willy Loman to be admired, loved and respected by his son Biff. This issue is clearly seen in much of the action of *Death of a Salesman*. As psychological and moral loss pervades the Loman household, Willy's deterioration can be observed in his inability to make a genuine connection with Biff because he himself is so disconnected with reality. To be sure, Biff and Happy love their father, but are unable to satisfy his need for "success in business." So they are reduced to lying, exaggerating, and womanizing because as Biff tells his mother, Linda, "I just can't take hold, Mom, I can't take hold of some kind of life" (*Salesman* 54). As this theme of loss permeates the Loman household and ends with the ultimate loss, the loss of life. However, it is Willy's twenty-four hour journey that captures the past and present, illusion and reality, dream and distorted myth that seizes the hearts and minds of the audience as Willy has to face his eventual, most challenging enemy, which is himself.

## 5. Common Features

*The Glass Menagerie* and *Death of a Salesman* include a great number of congruities in common and share a great deal of features. These features range from entailing the concept of family and viewing it from a shared point of view. Another common feature is addressing the image of loss based on the theme of family being introduced. These two common features will be compared in both plays here.

When it comes to the setting, Parker (1985) states: "The Glass Menagerie is set in the flat of the Wingfield family" (p. 90). Describing the features of this flat, it is a cramped place, resembling so much like a prison cell. It is one of many such flats in the neighbourhood. In the Wingfield family, none of the members want to live there. Poverty traps them in their humble residence. The escape from this lifestyle, this flat and these relationships is a significant theme all over the play. These escapes may be related to the fire escape, the dance hall, the absent Mr Wingfield and Tom's inevitable departure.

In this playwright, the description of the Wingfield family is stated as: "It is early dusk of a spring evening. Supper has just been finished in the Wingfield apartment. Amanda and Laura, in light-coloured dresses, are removing dishes from the table in



the dining room, which is shadowy, their movements formalized almost as a dance or ritual, their moving forms as pale and silent as moths” (178).

In *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams traces this passage from spirit to flesh in a special way, by taking each force within him and assigning it to specific family members (Parker, 1985). For this reason, the characters are not as internally divided, though they obviously are if the family is seen as a single unit. There is another, stronger reason why the family might be seen as constituting a single character. In virtually all Williams' major narratives, he uses characters to depict his own early passage from spiritual innocence to carnal self-awareness.

Similarly, *Death of a Salesman* illustrates the loneliness and life of Willy Loman, in addition to a number of memories from the past, and some melancholy thoughts which make the future. Therefore, Willy's character and the way he thinks is a very good example of how American Dream has failed in this American family. Willy Loman, who is blinded by propagandas and promises, follows an idealistic view towards life, which is advertised through tens of years by the idea of American Dream to warrant a prosperous life (Dillingham, 1960). He cannot comprehend the real situation of his family, refuses to face the reality of his life, and continues with the dream part of that idea. This misinterpretation eventually ends in total failure.

To wrap up, *The Glass Menagerie* and *Death of a Salesman* share similar features. In both, we can find dysfunctional families. Both families are crumbling as a result of the outside pressure and inside differences, while family members are attempting to be true to their roles but repeatedly fail because of number of reasons. The failure inside is mirrored on the outside and vice versa. The relentless effort of the characters on the individual level leads to no results; rather, it turns into frustration and despondency and influences the immediate environment, being their family. That is why the most pronounced topic of these plays is the profound feeling of loss. This feeling is most painfully connected to loss of space, when the physical world seems to be shrinking fast and the physical space diminished by urban development encroaching upon an individual, resulting in the feeling of entrapment.

The psychological aspect of this loss results in a feeling so much close to claustrophobia, both within and outside the family, and inevitably leads to the perception of time, space included, as limiting. Time becomes an enemy they tacitly



wage war against. The spatial and temporal contraction implies loss of meaning, security and the feeling of temporariness by many of the major characters. The feeling of space diminishing, which occurs mainly in urban areas, is accompanied by reduced opportunities; characters are presented as pressed for time in process of achieving something meaningful.

There is a sense of meaning's loss in each individual's endeavours as well as an acute sensation of its profound futility. The characters become restless, confused and lost in a world they increasingly tend to be at odds with. The elusive ideal of hard work, pursuit of happiness and frugality rewarded prescribed by society - strikingly different from the post-war realities - has most disastrous consequences and generally amounts to a failure. This is inevitably translated into the sense of personal failure.

The pressure to succeed arising from within an individual as well as from the outside, the society, becomes painfully urgent in all daily activities, and changes in time into something close to an obsession and paranoia. The problem lies in many features of the post-war period. The anxiety arising from lessening possibilities, closure of the Frontier, challenged masculinity of breadwinners, the narrow definition of success only in terms of acquirement of material things - these are just some of them.

The other common feature, namely 'the image of loss' is developed and modified by these playwrights and becomes a metaphor for the loss of the physical, psychological, and moral self. These playwrights also use the image of loss to transfer the idea of, as C. W. E. Bigsby argues, "the slow fading of a vision but in doing so they implicitly make a case for the possibility of change and indeed see in the theatre itself a principal agent of transformation" (Critical Introduction 2, 14).

All characters find a different solution. In *The Glass Menagerie* for instance, Tom finds a way out by leaving his job and family behind - most of all he desires to retain his sanity. Willy finds the meaning and justification in escaping his painful life into death. He seems to have lost his sanity and now this is the ultimate and only possible solution should he preserve his dignity. Laura, Tom's sister, chooses living in the harmless poetic world of her menagerie, escaping the harsh outside world, opting for the inner, idealized life.



Likewise, Happy, in *Death of a Salesman*, remains devoted to the business milieu. But he also feels unsatisfied, and escapes into a world of material and sensual pleasures. Biff, his brother, with growing feeling of refusal the commerce rat-race, tries to escape into a country life but is well aware of the futility of it. Mothers are the opposites. Amanda and Linda cling to their role of a mother - supporting, soothing, encouraging. Linda, especially, tries to fulfil the ideal of a good homemaker, sacrificing herself for the family well-being, thus constantly reinstating the current status quo and reinforcing Willy's spuriousness.

Similar to the absent father in *The Glass Menagerie*, Willy epitomizes physical, psychological and moral loss. Although Willy is able to understand that Charley has always been a friend, the disparity between the genuine and superficial is too great for any change or accommodation to take place. Charley has become successful by working hard; however, he values and measures success in a different manner than Willy.

Certainly both men desire success for their sons; however, Charley is able to set a positive example by establishing his own business and showing compassion to his neighbours, whereas Willy's superficial definition of success - being well-liked, personally attractive, and being recognized in many places, sets himself and his sons up for failure.

## 6. Conclusion

Time is the notion which connects both Williams's and Miller's plays in the first place. The physical loss of space influences the perception of time and it brings urgency with it. Like space, time seems to shrink. It surfaces in the perceived lack of it, the narrowing space limiting the time given to achieve. It becomes yet another dimension to the loss of space. The plays deal with the rush or lack of time, the past, present and future. There is the pressure of now, the exigency to act to "get ahead of the next fella" as well as the undeniable influence and product of the past and of what happened. The past, especially, plays very important role in both pieces.

Time influences everybody in a different ways. There is seemingly less time to achieve success, to prepare, to think, to act. Even the escape of some characters is



triggered by time pressure. Time itself is a grave matter in the capitalistic society. It is considered precious as the monetary worth is assigned to it. Time thus becomes a commodity that is valued dearly.

And Abbotson (2005) believes that “(time) is recognized and respected by almost all characters except Biff in *Salesman* and Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*” (p. 60). They refuse to be limited by the time-is-money doctrine; so does Laura in the same play. She has chosen to ignore the implied value of present time and decides on escaping into a timeless place, somewhere the impact of the outside prosaic world and the effect of clicking clock are minimized almost absolutely. The escape thus has rather temporal extent than spatial.



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