

**DECONSTRUCTING PESSIMISTIC DISCOURSE IN
THE PLAYS OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS**



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DEGREE OF

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THESIS DECLARATION LETTER

(By the candidate)

I, Irshad Ahmad Tabasum UMT ID 080394001 hereby certify that this thesis, “Deconstructing Pessimistic Discourse in the Plays of Tennessee Williams” is my own work, and that if evidence of plagiarism, as prescribed by Higher Education Commission of Pakistan, is found in my thesis at any stage, the degree may be revoked. The thesis has not been submitted in any previous application for higher degree. And the thesis won't be submitted for obtaining a higher degree either from this or any other university.

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Dedicated to

**My mother, father and elder sister who kept on praying for my success in PhD till
they breathed their last**

ABSTRACT

This study uses deconstructive theoretical underpinning to debate the presence of an optimistic discourse contrary to the pessimistic discourse as stressed by the critics and researchers of Tennessee Williams. It is qualitative in nature and inductive method is employed to carry it out. Pessimistic discourse in the plays of Williams is crafted in such a way that it has to be decoded and deconstructed to make optimistic sense of them. The study explores optimism in the chaotic world portrayed in these plays. It proves that Williams' art focuses on ceaseless struggle to bring order to chaos. Focusing on binary pairs of opposites like conscious/unconscious, fertility/sterility, hope/hopelessness, soul/body, self/other sanity/insanity, regeneration/degeneration, saviors/killers, reality/illusion etc. this study tries to uncover certain contradictions and instabilities in the plays of Williams. By deconstructing the warring forces of signification in these plays it searches optimism in the bleak situation of human life. If the individual is at war with the society, he is also at war with himself. He becomes a hero when he refuses the role of victim and tries to change the course of events with an act of rebellion. In his desire to become his own liberator, he tries to transform his world. The external forces pounce upon him to crush him but they fail before his insatiable desire for existence. In his struggle for a better world Williams' protagonists sometime fail but such a failure becomes a blessing in disguise as it makes them better human beings with great knowledge of things around them. This is what brims the dramatic world of Williams with hope and expectancy. This study highlights the importance of determination in making the best of life in the worst situation. The agony of entrapment in the plays of Williams and self realization through the act of defiance to it, in fact, help us recognize our own humanity and our desire for a better world. Williams unveils the complex and unruly human feelings without ignoring their strength. The study critically evaluates the plays of Williams and claims that he is not a pessimist playwright because the saviors in his plays are more powerful than the killers. It explores how Williams seeks hope in creativity and regeneration in degeneration.

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