Patterns Of Progression: Tennessee Williams's ”sweet Bird Of Youth” From Manuscripts Through Published Text.

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Patterns of progression: Tennessee Williams's "Sweet Bird of Youth" from manuscripts through published text

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PATTERNS OF PROGRESSION: TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'S SWEET BIRD OF YOUTH FROM MANUSCRIPTS THROUGH PUBLISHED TEXT

by

Charles Waidley Smith, Jr.

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ABSTRACT

My dissertation entitled "Patterns of Progression: Tennessee Williams's Sweet Bird of Youth from Manuscipts through Published Text" traces the creative process that produced Sweet Bird of Youth. The Tennessee Williams Collection, located at the University of Texas in Austin, includes 450 pages of manuscripts. The availability of these manuscripts since Williams's death makes it possible to study a particular creative process, the evolution of a work of art. In the case of this particular play, the process began when in separate sketches Williams explored the dramatic possibilities inherent in the character of Boss Finley. Later separate sketches of Phil Beam and Princess Pazmezoglu demonstraated a similar development. Sweet Bird of Youth was further developed in a series of one-act sketches entitled Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time which also demonstrate this revision process and show the play in its tentative, first stages before its final development. Today through these manuscripts we can assess much of the material that shows the play's unfolding dramatic structure. These sources have never before been utilized and provide insight into the creative process and particularly Williams's creative process. These sources include early pieces such as a "sketch for a long play," the "first draft," the numerous revisions of particular scenes and the continued revision of Act I and Act II, the unpublished version of Sweet Bird that was to have appeared in Esquire magazine; the several published versions of the play which represent different stages of later revision. This revision process, so typical of Willilams, allows us to see the act of creativity as something quite different from a spontaneous outpouring of creative energy. In the case of Sweet Bird of Youth, the process of revision spanned more than a decade, from 1948 to 1962. Considering these revisions now allows us to see the complexity of this creative process: characters as originally conceived evolved into complex dramatic stage realities, scenes were rewritten for the purpose of creating dramatic unity, acts revised to place greater emphasis of a particular character or to emphasize a particular thematic element.

Chapter 1 Sweet Bird of Youth: History and Criticism
I. Production History

This introductory section overviews the anticipation of a new Williams production and recounts some the events of weeks of rehearsal prior to the New York production.

Tennessee Williams's Sweet Bird of Youth opened in New York on Thursday, March 10, 1959, at the Martin Beck Theatre. The Martin Beck had been the scene of several previous Williams productions, including The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, and was considered by him an omen of good luck. The Philadelphia and Boston tryouts had gone well, and the cast had returned to New York for the Broadway opening. This production of Sweet Bird of Youth showed all the signs of a major box office success with advanced sales reaching $390,000 and screen rights sold to M-G-M for $400,000 (Falk 161). Not only did Sweet Bird of Youth arrive in New York with the smell of success, but the show also boasted a cast and production values that were indicative of the anticipation that accompanied any Williams production. In addition to this was the assemblage of an exemplary cast and production crew, presented by Cheryl Crawford and directed by Elia Kazan. The cast had already been selected by early February, with Geraldine Page as the aging actress Alexandra del Lago (after she had been seen as an aging model in Separate Tables (Spoto 255), Paul Newman as Chance Wayne, and secondary roles played by Diana Hyland as a waif-like Heavenly, Rip Torn as the sycophantic Tom Junior, and Sidney Blackmer as the tyrannical Boss Finley.

Nevertheless, Williams suffered from pre-opening jitters that were especially

evident during preparations for the Broadway opening. In a letter to his friend Donald Windham, Williams referred to the tension that surrounded the rehearsals of Sweet Bird: "I was in New York, of course, for the rehearsals of Sweet Bird but was under such constant strain and tension that I couldn't see anyone but people involved in the production except Frank (Merlo) and my sister" (Windham 296). In addition, Williams's brother Dakin had become concerned about his brother's spiritual condition and had invited Father Jerry Wilkerson, a Catholic priest, to New York during the time of the rehearsals. On the day of the opening, Dakin had invited his brother to have lunch at the Algonquin Hotel without informing him that the priest would also attend the lunch. Already anxious and upset, Tennessee was not particularly inclined to discuss his spiritual condition with a priest he had not previously met. As Dakin remembers in Tennessee Williams: An Intimate Biography, Father Wilkerson discussed the doctrines of life after death and original sin, topics that were of concern to Tennessee at the time, although on this particular day, just hours away from the ordeal of opening night, one imagines that these were not uppermost in his mind (223).

Likewise, the rehearsals at the Martin Beck had not gone especially well. In Tennessee Williams's Memoirs, he describes his reaction to an initial reading of the play when he rose from his chair and shouted, "Stop it, stop it! It can't go on, it's too awful!" (174) He continues to describe the silent response of the rehearsal stage and Williams's subsequent exit into Times Square, his return to his apartment, and his attempt to subdue his battered nerves with "booze and a pill" (Williams 174).

Later that evening when Molly and Cadg (Elia) Kazan visited him at his

apartment, he felt ashamed because of his outburst but still could not be convinced that the play should go on. And the following day apprehensions persisted. Williams writes:

> But at the next day's rehearsal, Kazan for the first time, does not want me seated directly beside him. Beside him, in fact, is a young writer, and I paranoically suspect that he has been brought in to rewrite my work. I sit gloomily back against the wall: the reading of the script is tedious and lifeless and hardly, to my ears more a presentable script than it had seemed at the previous day's first reading. But I hold my peace. At lunch break I am introduced to the young writer. It seems that he has been dispatched from the Actor's Studio as a listener to the production and I am now reassured that he will not touch my script, awful though it may be, but I am still jealous of his proximity to Cadg. (174)

Later Willliams's anxieties are resolved when the actor's studio writer becomes a less prominent feature in the proceedings and he once again takes his "rightful place next to our great white father, Kazan" (174).

Williams's apprehensions about this production were, no doubt, related to his interest in equalling his previous theatrical achievement. His name was already associated with such plays such as The Battle of Angels (1940), Summer and Smoke (1945), The Glass Menagerie (1945), You Touched Me (1945), A Streetcar Named Desire, (1947), Cat on a Hot Tine Roof, (1955), Orpheus Descending (1957) Suddenly Last Summer (1958), and his playwright status was almost unrivaled in contemporary theatre. Nevertheless, as impressive as this list may seem, not all of these plays had received the laudatory notices given to The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, proving to someone of Williams's temperament the transitory nature of fame. In addition to this concern,

Williams may also have been affected by the fact that the writing of the play had proven particularly difficult for him. In an interview with Newsweek, just after the March 10 opening, Williams, in a "slightly hung over" condition, revealed to the interviewer that "Sweet Bird" is the toughest one I've ever done....It's required a lot of rewriting, addition of fresh material" (75).

II. The Writing Process

> This section will deal with Williams's writing process, a complex and circuitous system that necessitated much drafting and much post-rehearsal revision as performances developed.

In addition, Williams's apprehensions about the opening of Sweet Bird of Youth may also have stemmed from his doubts concerning the undisciplined nature of his own writing process. Williams himself commented that he wrote "three or four drafts when not more than two should be necessary, simply because I did not acquire in my green years the right kind of technical habits" (Gunn 26). In reality, the writing of Sweet Bird of Youth had begun eleven years before its final opening in New York in 1959. The writing that had taken place during this time was sporadic and tentative. Again, Williams began with no more than a general situation and an ensemble of vaguely defined characters that gradually expanded into a fully realized drama. Actually, as early as 1948, while visiting in St. Louis, Williams wrote a sketch he called The Big Time Operators, which was really the basis for the later Sweet Bird of Youth.

Over an eleven-year period, Williams generated 475 pages of material, most of it in some form of revision, in an attempt to discover the elements of Sweet Bird that would

effectively unify character and plot and culminate in an acceptable vehicle for the stage. This material, housed at the University of Texas in Austin, illustrates a revision process that was an essential part of Williams's method and was particularly significant in the writing of Sweet Bird of Youth. Included in the Austin collection are some early sketches of the play entitled Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time. This latter version--The Enemy: Time--is dated the spring of 1956 and is the version given to George Keathley who directed the play in its first production in 1956 at Studio M in Coral Gables, Florida.

In addition to these early pieces are several relatively complete versions of the play in various stages of refinement. There are four completed versions of the play, done in April of 1958. Another of these versions is identified as "galley proofs," twenty-five pages in length. This lost version, labeled "galley proofs," was to be published by Esquire just prior to the play's opening but was withdrawn from publication at the last minute because Williams had made last-minute revision of the play while it was being rehearsed in New York. As a result, the Esquire galley proofs still do not represent the definitive version of the play. In addition to the various completed versions of Sweet Bird of Youth, the Austin collection also allows us to see the particular concerns Williams had regarding the structure of Sweet Bird of Youth. We know from other commentary about the play that Williams was particularly concerned about weaknesses in Acts II and III. Consequently, the Austin collection includes two complete rewrites of Act II and three complete rewrites of Act III. Another of the problems this collection suggests is Willilams's preoccupation with the play's conclusion. Versions of the play dated May

9, 1958, May 26, 1958, and June 1958 include as many as six revised endings. These revised endings are usually 2-3 pages in length, and he included as many as three of these alternative endings at the conclusion of particular completed scripts.

Likewise, selected scenes in Sweet Bird of Youth seemed to present a problem to Williams and were reworked numerous times as a result. In particular, the initial scene between Scudder and Chance Wayne proved especially difficult. This retrospective scene, which suggests Chance's sinister past in St. Cloud, is significant because here the playwright may implicate either Chance or Scudder as the cause of Heavenly's tragic circumstances. Williams, however, seems uncertain about where he wants to place blame and as a result frequently experiments with this scene by rewriting it. This improvisatory approach allows Williams to anticipate future developments in the play and to determine how the Chance-Scudder scene will participate in the play's outcomes. A similar problem arises for Williams in scenes portraying Boss Finley, Heavenly, and Aunt Nonnie. The problem here seems to be one of appropriate characterization. Scenes including Boss Finley are frequently rewritten because Williams himself did not like the villainous Finley and felt his own feelings would detract from the dramatic realization of Boss Finley as a character. In early versions of the play, Heavenly appears more sophisticated and manipulative than she does in final versions in which she appears naive and innocent. Also, in earlier versions, Aunt Nonnie appears more closely allied with Boss Finley and less in sympathy with Chance and Heavenly.

Like Sweet Bird of Youth, other Williams plays, such as A Streetcar Named Desire, for example, were also begun with little more than a simple concept involving

several characters and a simple situation in which an unmarried school teacher visits with her younger sister and brother-in-law and during that visit has an opportunity for marriage (Tharpe 154). As Vivienne Dickson recounts in her article, "A Streetcar Named Desire: Its Development through the Manuscripts," Williams developed no outline dictating scene sequence. Instead, he began with a situation he expanded and developed dramatically in a reshaping process that involved numerous revisions. The various titles--The Moth, The Poker Night, The Primary Colors, and Blanche's Chair in the Moon--are indicative of the revisions that occurred in the writing process. Again, like Sweet Bird of Youth, the revision process of A Streetcar Named Desire also involved textual revision that involved changes in the language of the dialogue and characters' names, the restructuring of scenes, and the alteration of scene sequence.

Typical of this revision process was the development of the 1959 version of Sweet Bird of Youth, which was actually begun eleven years earlier in 1948. Again, Williams began with no more than a general situation, several character types, and a concern with time as a thematic element. These elements were eventually expanded into a larger dramatic context. As early as 1948, while visiting his family in St. Louis, Williams began a sketch he called The Big Time Operators into which he introduced these dramatic elements.

Much later, in April of 1956, George Keathley, founding director of the Studio M Playhouse in Coral Gables, Florida, inquired whether Williams might possibly have a new play for him to produce and direct. Although Williams had returned intermittently to the play, it had not become a final stage reality. Nevertheless, in two weeks Williams created

a 135 page script called The Enemy: Time about a gigolo and a retired silent screen star suggestive of the figures who became more fully realized as Chance Wayne and Alexandra de Lago in the final version of Sweet Bird of Youth (Spoto 204-205). From this script, there developed a preliminary version, which opened on April 16, 1956, at the Studio M Playhouse and starred Margrit Wyler and Allan Mixon in the leading roles (Spoto 229). Williams agreed to continue reworking the script during rehearsals, a tendency that repeated itself throughout the development of this play. The script included Acts One and Three, omitting what would later be Act II, primarily concerned with Chance Wayne's interaction with characters from his past in St. Cloud. The Studio M production completed, Williams put aside the script of The Enemy: Time to work on other projects. During this time, from late 1956 to early 1958, he continued work on Orpheus Descending, Suddenly Last Summer, the first drafts of Period of Adjustment, and a short story that outlined the situations later realized in The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore. Again, in April 1958, Williams resumed work on Sweet Bird. Nearly 475 pages of the manuscript collection at the University of Texas were produced during this period (Gunn 31).

In addition to the constant revision of material, Williams also demonstrated a tendency to recycle previously written material, usually transforming a shorter version of a work into a more fully developed version. In fact, many of the full-length plays evolved from shorter works, most of them resulting from earlier short stories. Williams spoke of this recycling process in an interview he gave to Newsweek just after the opening of Sweet Bird of Youth. Williams commented: "My longer plays emerge out

of earlier one-acters or short stories I may have written years before. I work over them again and again." (75)

A similar process may have occurred while Williams was at work on Sweet Bird of Youth. For example, in Five O'Clock Angel, Maria St. Just refers to the possible linkages between the short story "Two on a Party" and the subsequent Sweet Bird when she refers to "Two on a Party" as the story "...which eventually developed into Sweet Bird of Youth (36). The story does demonstrate some marked similarities to the play. For example, "Two on a Party" portrays the sexual exploits of Billy, a homosexual writer, and Cora, a woman, whose background remains undefined, and who becomes Billy's constant companion. Billy and Cora meet in a gay bar in New York and form an association that takes them to Florida and a series of sexual conquests. While the relationship between Billy and Cora is sexually consummated at one point, their relationship is, for all intents and purposes, platonic. Nevertheless, the story does bear certain similarities to Sweet Bird in that both characters realize that their association is both momentary and tenuous and that their relationship will end when Billy finds substantial work. For Cora, the "party" must go on continuously because the "party"--sexual adventure--is all she knows. Likewise, in Sweet Bird, the relationship between Chance Wayne and the Princess is also a tenuous one, defined by sexual quest and emotional need.

In addition, Chance and the Princess are involved in a relationship that serves the purpose of the moment and is redefined when the Princess is recalled to her former screen status. Once again, the similarities between the characters of "Two on a Party" and Sweet Bird are apparent as both sets of characters display an obsessive concern with their

inability to slow time:

> Time, of course, was the greatest enemy of all, and they knew that each day and each night was cutting down a little on the distance between the two of them running together and that demon pursuer. And knowing it, knowing that nightmarish fact, gave a wild sort of sweetness of despair to their two-ring circus. (Williams 292)

The similarities between these two pieces is apparent. Nevertheless, I remain unconvinced that "Two on a Party" is the basis for what later became Sweet Bird. It seems more likely to me that the story was merely an experimentation with thematic elements already hinted at in a series of sketches such as Big Time Operators (the dramatic work begun in 1948 and considered a preliminary version of Sweet Bird. Since "Two on a Party" was written two years after Williams began work on Big Time Operators, it seems natural to conclude that the story, which includes some of the play's themes, was really an attempt on the part of the author to experiment with the same material in a different literary format. As a result, "Two on a Party" demonstrates Williams's tendency to recycle material in an attempt perhaps to discover its potential in one genre or another.

Similarly, such works as Camino Real, Small Craft Warnings, and Sweet Bird of Youth all began as short plays but were later revised and further developed as stage realities. Likewise, Battle of Angels was revised to later become Orpheus Descending, based on a poem of the same title. The film version of Orpheus Descending was renamed The Fugitive Kind, the title of an unpublished play. The Eccentricities of a Nightingale

was the reworking of Summer and Smoke, itself originally derived from a short story, entitled "The Yellow Bird." Similarly, the screen play of Baby Doll is the result of combining two short stories, "The Unsatisfactory Supper" and "27 Wagons of Cotton." This recombining of materials is further illustrated by the fact that the screen version of Baby Doll was later rewritten for the stage as Tiger Tail (Boxill 5). Donald Spoto corroborates this view of the Williams recycling process in his biography of Williams, The Kindness of Strangers:

> The last six years of Tennessee Williams's life were a restless quadrille into which he drew various professional and personal partners. Scenes from old plays were revised, restructured, updated and shuffled with odd bits of new material written in hotel rooms or on the Concorde....At forty-five, he divided his time between Sweet Bird of Youth and Orpheus Descending, and new stories and poems. (359)

Just as the writing process continued to be a regular part of Williams's daily regimen long after he had succeeded in writing memorable work, the revision of previous work continued to occupy much of his time.

Sweet Bird of Youth, consequently, always remained a work in progress. Revision remained a life-long process for Williams even after a play such as Sweet Bird had been produced. He commented in a letter to Donald Windham dated April 4, 1960, "Right now I have put aside new work to re-write a play already produced and finished on Broadway and limping about the country on tour, Sweet Bird of Youth. It violated an essential rule; the rule of the straight line, the rule of poetic unity of singleness and wholeness...." (299) In fact, the writing process became so integrated into his way of life,

as pointed out in Tennessee Williams' Letters to Donald Windham (1940-1965), that Williams was often conscious of little other than the act of writing:

> The mystery came mainly from his contradictory unawareness and awareness. When playing cards with you, he would suddenly feel hungry, get up, open a can of sardines in oil, and begin to eat them with his fingers as he continued the game. Smoking a cigarette, he would smile into space and knock the ashes vaguely in the direction of your shirt pocket. As for being conscious of other people, he would claim never to have met, much less to have conversed with, the people you and he had spent hours talking to the night before. The only thing he apparently concentrated on was his work, and even his method of writing...exhibited aspects of unawareness. He paid no attention to where the typewritten pages he was tossing from his machine would land--on his table, the floor, the chairs, the bed, or on the piles of dirty clothing around the room. (V-VI).

As Windham's observations indicate, writing for Williams was an experience that made him oblivious to much that was going on around him.

This indifference to his surroundings is further described by Williams himself in Conversations with Tennessee Williams when he describes writing while in Rome with companion Frank Merlo:

> When I write, everything is visual, as brilliantly as if it were on a lit stage. And I talk out the lines as I write. When I was in Rome, my landlady thought I was demented. She told Frank, 'Oh, Mr. Williams has lost his mind! He stalks about the room talking out loud!' Frank said, 'Oh, he's just writing.' She didn't understand that. (Devlin 334)

In another letter to Donald Windham, Williams further comments on the disorganization and chaos that accompanied his writing:

> I have come to the roughest part of a new play, assembling the scattered papers and getting ready to prepare a last draft of it. This is always a nightmare to me, for while I am working I toss papers right and left, at the end of each day I gather them helter-skelter and pile them together. So that the ultimate arrangement is a colossal job, which I do with actual groans and muttered curses, sitting on the floor with papers all about me, gradually going into little separate stacks, some order finally emerging, but not till I have died a thousand deaths. I am sure it is worse than child-birth. Reading through it after the assembly is worse still. In fact I usually don't do it and that is why such odd incongruities and contradictions occur in my scripts. --Writing is not a happy profession. (90)

The Texas manuscripts that demonstrate the development of Sweet Bird of Youth also demonstrate the obsessiveness with which Williams wrote and revised. In these manuscripts, new, revised endings are included either as separate fragments or as fragments attached to a particular text with a handwritten notation indicating "new ending." Frequently, handwritten words are inserted above sections of dialogue with arrows pointing to the area in which these words should be inserted. Quite often, too, words and phrases are crossed out, apparently considered ineffective or inappropriate as spoken by a particular character. Not infrequently handwritten directions indicate "Rewrite of Chance-Scudder sc # 1-1 (Cue into script at bottom of 1-1-6)." In other instances entire sections of dialogue may have been abandoned with either a large X

covering the part of the page to be deleted or a series of X's covering the deleted material. Nearly all of the material was originally completed on Williams's typewriter; sometimes it appears to be the product of several machines. In one instance at least, there is a notation to Irene to retype the April 1958 version. On the other hand, an early sketch, a part of the special collections in Texas and entitled "the drugstore scene," is handwritten. Included with this material are some random handwritten notes scribbled in pen on stationary and inscribed Studio M Playhouse, 208 Bird Road, Coral Gables, Florida, with George Keathley, director, prominently displayed at the top of the page. Here Williams apparently made some abbreviated notes to himself, perhaps notes that indicated the need for revision of particular parts of the script. He succinctly lists his ideas, separating them with vertical slashes. He notes hurriedly and cryptically "with Boss Finley's daughter," "I forgot it was Sunday," "Scudders petulent," "sex capon." In another of these notations Williams makes reference to the particular lighting to be used in "the Scudder scene."

III. Personal History and the Themes of Sweet Bird of Youth

> This section concerns the complex interrelationship between the issues and concerns of Williams's private life and the evolving vision of Sweet Bird as well as the other plays in his canon.

The magnitude of material generated by Tennessee Williams in writing Sweet Bird helps to explain a particular writing process but does not explain the way ideas for plays may have originated in the mind of the playwright. Typically, the germ idea of a Williams play included characters who had a counterpart in Williams's own life. These

characters were then portrayed in a brief scenario from which the larger elements of the play would evolve. In a conversation concerning both Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams illustrated the rather nebulous starting point of these two plays:

> The process by which the idea for a play just seems to materialize, like an apparition it gets clearer and clearer and clearer. It's very vague at first, as in the case of Streetcar, which came after Menagerie. I simply had the vision of a woman in her late youth. She was sitting in a chair all alone by a window with the moonlight streaming in on her desolate face, and she'd been stood up by the man she planned to marry. (Devlin 330)

The situation that he envisioned, the "woman in her late youth," "sitting in a chair all alone," "stood up by the man she planned to marry" is the elemental situation on which Williams expanded and enlarged. In the process, a particular situation was expanded; other characters were introduced; a setting was added; and expressionistic special effects were included to further enhance the audience's understanding of the central character. Williams further comments that the woman "in her late youth" was linked to his memory of his sister. Williams commented:

> I believe I was thinking of my sister because she was madly in love with some young man at the International Shoe Company who paid her court. He was extremely handsome, and she was profoundly in love with him. Whenever the phone would ring, she'd nearly faint.... They saw each other every other night, and then one time he just didn't call anymore. That was when Rose first began to go into a mental decline. From that vision Streetcar evolved. I called it at the time Blanche's Chair in the Moon, which is a very bad title. But it was from that image, you know, of a woman sitting by a window that Streetcar came to me. (Devlin 330)

Williams's early relationship with his sister Rose was one of the most intense and longstanding of his life. He never recovered from the horror of a lobotomy that had left her permanently damaged. As a result of this operation, she was incapable of leading a normal life, and Williams remained responsible for her maintenance throughout her adult life. Rose was in a protected, institutional situation until her death.

Donald Spoto recounts in The Kindness of Strangers the intense brother-sister relationship that later found expression in composite form in Sweet Bird of Youth as well as other plays. In 1916, when Rose was six and Tommy was almost five, neither had known many other companions. The intensity of their relationship made it unnecessary for them to seek other companions. The two of them were referred to as "the couple" because they were seemingly inseparable. In fact, no other girl, or woman, for that matter, would play a more significant a role in Williams's life. Recalling his childhood experiences, Willliams commented that "She was very charming, very beautiful. She had an incredible imagination. We were so close to each other, we had no need of others" (11). When Rose's mental health began to fail, she retreated into a darker inner world, and two confinements in a private sanatorium offered only temporary relief from her increasing bouts with hysteria and frequent evidence of mental aberration.

As the seriousness of Rose's condition became more and more apparent, the Williamses were told that it could result in Rose inflicting physical harm on herself or in inflicting harm on others, perhaps even committing murder. Furthermore, the doctor suggested that a lobotomy was the only cure for such erratic and potentially harmful behavior. They were informed that the procedure was perfectly safe, although Rose

would be one of the first to receive it. As a result of the experimental nature of the operation, Rose would undergo the operative procedure without charge to the Williamses. The procedure, as described to Williams's mother Edwina, would involve her daughter's skull being opened, ..."and the nerve fibers connecting the thalamus to the frontal lobes of the brain would be severed. This would result in an immediate and total calming of the patient, and a cessation of the fits and and hysterics and dreadful fantasies to which she was subject..." (65).

Prior to the operation and prior to her return to the state hospital at Farmington, an incident occurred for which there is no verification other than Rose's account of what was supposed to have occurred. Just before Rose's last hospitalization, she hysterically recounted to Edwina an incident involving her father, Cornelius. According to Rose, her father entered her bedroom in a drunken state and spoke and acted in a lascivious manner, and suggested that they go to bed together. Rose's claim was unspeakable to Edwina, whose rather pristine view of the world did not allow for such improprieties, and therefore Rose's veracity was immediately suspect. Nevertheless, Rose's hysterical state did not subside for two more nights prior to her return to the hospital (66).

Tom, who was not told of the operation, was in college where he was advancing toward his degree and developing his skills as a playwright. He was told of it when he returned home to St. Louis for a production of Fugitive Kind. Williams would subsequently blame Edwina for what had happened:

> She gave permission to have it done while I was away. I think she was frightened most of all by Rose's sexual fantasies. But that's all they were--fantasies.... She is the

> one who approved the lobotomy.... My sister was such a vital person. She could have become quite well by now if they hadn't performed the goddam operation on her; she would have come back up to the surface. My mother panicked because she said my sister had begun using four-letter words. 'Do anything! Don't let her talk like that!'" (66)

Later Edwina would admit that the operation had been a mistake. From this time on, the image of Rose would haunt Williams and would also become a repeated image in his plays. As Donald Spoto points out, "From his earliest one-act plays in 1938 to the end of his life, the name and image of Rose and her beloved roses pursued him" (67). The Rose imagery is particularly evident in The Rose Tattoo; in the character of Aunt Rose and her roses in The Unsatisfactory Supper; reference to the roses "of yesterday, of death and of time" in The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore, Camino Real, The Last of My Solid Gold Watches, and Something Unspoken; the inclusion of wild roses in The Case of the Crushed Petunias; the roses of Picardy Moony's Kid Don't Cry; the ethereal rose in Now the Cats with Jewelled Claws; the smell of roses in The Mutilated; the wild roses of Will Mr Merriwether Return from Memphis? and the use of this imagery in Small Craft Warnings and The Two-Character Play. In addition to these examples, Williams's drama is heavily peopled with characters such as Laura in Glass Menagerie and Heavenly in Sweet Bird of Youth who draw significantly from Williams' recollection of this sister Rose (67). Additionally, in the final scene of Suddenly Last Summer, the subject of lobotomy itself surfaces as a major thematic element as Violet Venable attempts to convince Catharine Holly's mother to have her daughter, Catharine, lobotomized.

The ideas for Williams's plays, while rooted his personal life experience, did not necessarily develop quickly or easily. Like Sweet Bird of Youth, the germ idea of Menagerie was also developed gradually and through an elaborate process of revision:

> The idea for Glass Menagerie came very slowly, much more slowly than Streetcar, for example. I think I worked on Menagerie longer than any other play. I didn't think it'd ever be produced. I wasn't writing it for that purpose. I wrote it first as a short story called "Portrait of a Girl in Glass," which is, I believe, one of my best stories. I guess Menagerie grew out of the intense emotions I felt seeing my sister's mind begin to go. (Devlin 330)

Again, Williams refers to his sister as the inspiration for this play, to his slow, tortuous method of creating written texts, to his tendency to evolve longer works from shorter works, and to his the intense personal emotions that may be transferred to his plays. These qualities would remain a part of Williams's creative process throughout his career. In reading the manuscripts demonstrating the development of Sweet Bird of Youth, these qualities are especially evident.

Sweet Bird of Youth in most ways conforms to Williams's usual technique of composition but gives no indication of the influences that may have been an integral part of its development. In fact, there has been a great deal of speculation concerning the origins of the play and who may have served as a prototype for a number of the characters. At the time of Williams's involvement in Sweet Bird's premiere production at the Studio M, he was deeply concerned about the fate of his sister, Rose, whose history of mental and physical disorder was always of concern to him:

> During rehearsals for Sweet Bird of Youth in March

> Williams joined us every afternoon following his work and swim. He often spoke of his sister Rose--'Once she was violent, but now she's just tranquil.' There was good reason for Rose to be especially in his mind that season. First, the character of the sterilized, abandoned girl in The Enemy: Time was originally named Rose (not Heavenly, as in the final script). Also, he had completed arrangements for her to return to Ossining after she had been living on a small farm, cared for by a Missouri couple, and after an interval at a private sanatorium in St. Louis. (Spoto 206)

It is interesting that Williams's sister's name and that of Rose Finley correspond, at least in the very early versions of the play. In addition, the Texas manuscripts indicate that Williams inadvertently slips back into the habit of referring to the character as Rose even after deciding to rename her Heavenly. Several of these scripts include the interchangeable use of both Rose and Heavenly, suggesting that they are inseparable in the writer's mind. Just as Rose Williams was a victim in real life, having undergone a lobotomy to correct what was considered to be violent schizophrenia, Rose Finley is likewise a victim of premature removal of her reproductive organs in The Enemy: Time. In addition, the passivity that is characteristic of Rose (Heavenly) is also characteristic of Rose Williams following her lobotomy. In final versions of the play, Heavenly was unaware that her own sterilization was to take place and was in general unable to counteract the powerful forces that ruled her life.

In the early sketches and in The Enemy: Time, the Rose Finley character is given the opportunity to express her anger at her victimization through sexual contact with Phil Beam. In fact, these early versions present this recurrent theme in the dialogue involving their past relationship. Rose's disdainful voice is retained in the final version of Sweet Bird but is nevertheless significantly modified as Rose/Heavenly's character becomes

more ethereal, more tranquil. But Rose's original voice of outrage seems to express the outrage that Williams himself must have felt when he first learned that his sister had been lobotomized. Rose's character also seems to express the outrage the tranquilized Rose Williams was incapable of expressing.

A violent act of removal characterizes both lobotomy and sterilization; both procedures are clinical and truncate some aspect of the individual. Rose Williams's lobotomy prevented her further emotional development, causing her to become disoriented, tranquil, and passive. Interestingly, while Rose Finley's character becomes a mouthpiece for Rose Williams, expressing her anger at the sinister forces that produced such dire consequences, she also seems an expression of Rose Williams's later passivity. In addition, both the lobotomy and the sterilization seem to render Rose Williams and Rose Finley incapable of living as a part of the outside world, the real-life person escaping to a sanatorium and her fictional counterpart to a convent.

While the creative link between Rose and Heavenly is immediately discernible, the link between the character of the Princess and her possible real-life counterparts has produced even more speculation. The Princess's character, as conceived in early sketches, was really of secondary importance. Nevertheless, later versions, both in 1956 and 1959, see her as a fully developed character, taking on central importance in the play's outcome. It seems that over that time period Williams began to realize the potential in further developing her character. In fact, several critics have called Princess Kosmonopolis one of the great character parts of contemporary theatre. The first audiences to see the Coral Gables production in 1956 speculated as to her origin:

> The first version of Sweet Bird of Youth set a number of people on edge, with its story of a middle aged woman who fills up empty hours with young lovers, vodka and a variety of drugs....Proudest among Williams' coterie of women friends was the unshy Lilla van Saher, who claimed after opening night, 'Curtain rises, and I am there, in bed with my trade! Is very clear a play about me!' Lilla's fantasy life was far more active than her rather conventional morals, in fact, but her vivid imagination endeared her all the more to Williams. (Spoto 206-207)

In reality, it is more likely that the character of the Princess was based, at least in part, on Williams's friend and acquaintance Tallulah Bankhead. This seems a more likely possibility since Williams had originally written Myra in Battle of Angels and Blanche in A Streetcar Named Desire for Bankhead (Spoto 225-226). Assessing Tallulah in Memoirs, Williams observes:

> ....Tallulah always impressed me by her honesty and her gallantry and her lack of shame. It is a quality I have discovered in Southern ladies who could be called tramps, if you want to use abusive language toward ladies. I suppose you could say Tallulah was a tramp, in an elegant sense. (77)

Donald Spoto concludes that later revisions of Sweet Bird, in February and March of 1956, demonstrated that Williams had become more aware of Bankhead's lifestyle, probably from talking with Bankhead herself, from interviewing her servants, and from the press coverage of Bankhead's well-publicized antics:

> In 1951, for example, Bankhead had charged her former secretary Evyleen R. Cronyn (58) with stealing more than four thousand dollars from her by forging checks. Cronyn claimed that on the contrary she was ordered to buy drugs, liquor and male prostitutes for Bankhead, but that the actress was in such a drunken condition that she could not sign her own checks and in all innocence Cronyn did. 'Of

> course I drink,' countered Bankhead, 'but nobody has to forge my checks to buy liquor. And if I had been getting dope, do you think I'd pay for it by check? And God knows I never had to buy sex!" (230)

It seems likely that the Princess character evolved, at least in part, from Williams's personal knowledge of Bankhead's private life and her flamboyant public image. That image seemed to include alcohol, pills, and the intimation of sexual improprieties, all of which are substantiated in posthumous biographies of Bankhead. Of course these elements--alcohol, pills, and sexual improprieties--are also a part of the character of the Princess Kosmonopolis. In addition, it is interesting to note Williams's recollection of Tallulah as a "tramp with elegance." Certainly, this description of Tallulah is not unlike our conception of the Princess.

In fact, Tallulah Bankhead's public persona and the aberrations of her private life may well have provided Williams with the character link that allowed for the further evolution of the character of the Princess. Artemis, Phil's homosexual agent, served as the basis for this character who later evolved into his female counter-part, the Princess. In addition, Bankhead's own bisexuality and her androgynous persona also provided Williams with a perfect springboard to the Princess character.

During the 1950s Tallulah Bankhead's career had become linked with a stage persona that suggested self-caricature. In a series of television appearances, she had become so identified with this outrageous image that she was at times accused of self-parody and as a result serious stage appearances were frequently undermined by the "Tallulah image." Her interpretation of Blanche in Streetcar, for example, met with

mixed reactions because her private image superceded her stage presentation of this familiar Williams figure. The image that Bankhead cultivated was of a mannish woman whose appearance suggested a drag queen. Her self-deprecating humor and sardonic wit resulted from a worldly-wise attitude combining both sophistication and decadence. Her theatrical self-presentation (as when she drank champagne from her slipper) only enhanced her outrageousness and endeared her to her "dahlings," in an audience that had become increasingly homosexual.

Williams's apt description of her as a "tramp with elegance" not only suggests her dual nature but also seems linked with the later characterization of the Princess whose glamorous on-screen image is contrasted with her tawdry private life. These same trademark qualities that endeared Bankhead to her audiences, made the Princess both a strong stage presence and a character the audience could view with some degree of empathy. In her decadence, she seems, after all, the victim of her own fame and the aging process itself. She is, nevertheless, admirable because she goes on to survive the consequences of her fame and the aging process itself.

Another of the suggested influences that may have helped to shape the character of the Princess is that of the Norma Desmond character associated with Billy Wilder's 1950 film Sunset Boulevard. Norma Desmond, the aging silent film star, emerges as a grotesque figure who would prefer to stop time in order to preserve the glories of her past youth. Like the Princess of Enemy, and later Sweet Bird, Norma Desmond's film career has been disrupted by the appearance of talkies. In addition, the Princess, like Norma Desmond, is intent on a comeback that will restore her legendary screen status and the

accomplishments of years gone by.

Sunset Boulevard appeared in 1950, several years before Williams made a concerted effort to develop Sweet Bird into a full-length drama. Indeed, in 1950, Williams did attend a preview screening of Sunset Boulevard and later enigmatically commented to friends that he found it "....shattering and wonderfully awful" (Spoto 231). Much of the film Sunset Boulevard concerns Norma Desond's attempt to stop time and to maintain her former screen image. Not only is she the central figure in maintaining this deception but those around her--her butler, formerly her husband, and her younger lover--participate in the deception. Sequestered in her Gothic Hollywood mansion, Norma Desmond maintains a young lover, and anticipates her triumphant comeback as an actress. These elements--Norma's obsession with stopping time, the escape from reality, the young lover, associated with sexual diversion, and the hope of a comeback--clearly link Norma Desmond with Sweet Bird's Princess. At the conclusions of both Sunset Boulevard and Sweet Bird, the lover figures meet tragic ends that can be linked to their sexual roles. In Sunset Boulevard, Norma Desmond shoots her lover who threatens to leave her, and, when photographers arrive to record the event, Norma mistakes their intentions and descends the grand staircase soliloquizing on her star status and her intention to make a comeback. The Princess in Sweet Bird of Youth also leaves Chance Wayne to be tortured by the Boss's henchmen while she herself departs St. Cloud, anticipating her motion picture comeback.

In categorizing Sweet Bird of Youth as a play of the latter period of Williams's dramatic development, some critics have noted, like other plays of this period, its self-

confessional elements. While the external influences of actual persons such as Tallulah Bankhead, Rose Williams, and a fictional character such as Norma Desmond may have played a part in the play's development, it is obvious, too, that many of the thematic elements of Sweet Bird--drugs, alcohol, sexual obsession, and the futile attempts to stop time and the aging process--were essentially extensions of Williams's own personality and lifestyle. Williams was well aware of the fact that his plays were in many ways projections of his own personality:

> ....From Japan, Williams wrote a sad letter to Brook Atkinson, admitting that both The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone and Sweet Bird of Youth dealt with his own artistic and moral dilemmas. He said his low creative energies during the last several years were due to a screaming cry for love and forgiveness, and that, far from being helped by either doctors or success, he was more deeply troubled than he had been when he wrote A Streetcar Named Desire. As he was writing, however, he was risking an international scandal by carrying with him illicit drugs, which, he wrongly hoped, would help him through the period of deep trouble. 'I am,' he said that year, 'poisoned by success.' (Spoto 264)

The obsessiveness of Williams's writing and his involvement in new theatrical productions often compromised his own mental stability. From the late 1940's until mid-1957, Williams's mental state declined, but he continued to function professionally, despite the excesses of his life.

If Sweet Bird of Youth is self-confessional, it is because Williams underwent psychoanalysis during the late 1950's at the time he was revising the final versions of the play prior to its openings in Boston and Philadelphia. In fact, one critic, Nancy M.

Fischler in her book Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan, states that Sweet Bird of Youth is a "product of mid-term psychoanalysis" (Fischler 263). In June of 1957, Williams could no longer deny the desperateness of his mental and physical condition and he was finally forced to seek professional psychological help. Consequently, he visited Dr. Lawrence S. Kubie whose Freudian leanings caused him to attempt to reconstruct Williams's fragmented life. Dr. Kubie's suggestion that Williams seek a respite by putting his writing aside and that he end his relationship with Frank Merlo and assume a heterosexual lifestyle caused Williams to reject Kubie's counsel and to seek help elsewhere. Nevertheless, psychoanalysis became a permanent part of his weekly and daily agenda for the remainder of his life, although other analysts were consulted.

At the point in the late 1950's, when he finally sought psychological help, Williams suffered from bouts with paranoia, hypochondria, and obsessive fears of death and growing older, and an increased dependency on drugs, alcohol, and a psychological need for anonymous sexual contacts to satisfy not only an intense sexual appetite but also to counteract his sense of aloneness. Donald Spoto describes the emotional outbursts that frequently occurred during this period from the late 1940's to the late 1950's as Williams visited, along with his lover-companion Frank Merlo, the great cultural centers of Europe:

> The emotional scenes with Merlo and with his friends, set in splendid spas and great cities, the confession of soap opera sentiments, the dramatized illnesses and the attacks of palpitations, the periodic fabrication of domestic vendettas more typical of nineteenth-century melodrama--all these characterized Tennessee Williams's life from the late 1940's. Some of this is easy enough to understand: the dramatist who draws directly from his personal history must first keep his responses sharp, his controls clear; and

> nothing ensures that so well as casting his companions in the roles of characters in a real-life pre-Broadway tryout. (Spoto 173)

Self-dramatization had therefore become as much a part of Williams's creative technique as it had become integrated into his real-life antics. By creating drama in his everyday interactions with others and by capitalizing on his physical and mental ailments, he transposed these everyday dramas into an art form for the legitimate stage.

By 1981, recognizing the confessional nature of his drama, Williams was in New York where he discussed this tendency as it surfaced in a third memory play called Something Cloudy Something Clear. In commenting on the writing of the play, he indicated its close association with his own life:

> One of the most personal plays I've ever written--it released for me some sort of emotional content of my life during the pivotal summer when I took a sort of crash course in growing up....It's wrecked my nerves, but I felt I had to complete certain things because I felt time was limited....I'm very conscious of my decline in popularity, but I don't permit it to stop me because I have the strength of so many playwrights before me. I know the dreadful notices Ibsen got. And O'Neill-- he had to die to make A Moon for the Misbegotten successful. And to me it has been providential to an artist, a great act of providence that I was able to turn my psychosis into creativity--my sister Rose did not manage this. So I keep on writing. (Spoto 394)

The act of creating drama was for Williams a therapy, a way of working out his own life and resolving personal dilemmas that seemed to have no definite answers. While he recognized, in 1981, two years before his death in 1983, the reality of his artistic decline,

he also continued to write because his emotions and his personal struggles were incomprehensible without the act of writing. It is interesting, too, that in the above quote, he again makes reference to his sister Rose. Here, he associates himself with her but also notes a major difference between them--the fact that she did not have, as he had had, a creative outlet for her psychosis.

During the 1960s, while still seeing an analyst, Williams had already established his hypochondriacal proclivities. The imagined illnesses to which he subscribed included cardiac arrhythmia, chronic indigestion, headaches, and numerous muscular, eye, and joint ailments. For many years he had sought treatments from specialists all over the world. Unfortunately, the medications prescribed to cure these ailments interacted adversely with one another and should have been taken under more controlled conditions. Williams, however, used these medications sometimes indiscriminately because he felt he could not write effectively if he were disabled by physical and mental illnesses. "I have a sort of witch doctor, a very benign one. How I manage to stay alive I don't know....It's not very comfortable to be hypochondriac" (Spoto 292). In the late forties, about the time Williams had begun work on Sweet Bird, he had returned to New York after a visit to Genoa. While in New York, he spent a great deal of time with his friends Tony and Jane Smith, who recall Williams's rather annoying complaints of heart disease. In order to assuage his fears of imminent death, he was taken to a cardiac specialist. The doctor, apparently seeing through Williams's theatrics, was able to advise Williams's friends of his need to derive benefit from his supposed illness: "I think it would be better if you didn't disabuse Mr. Williams of this illusion about a serious illness-- it would make him

very unhappy to think he was in perfect health, and it might even bring about a heart attack!" (Spoto 165). Williams's hypochondria and drug dependence remained with him long after the period from 1948 to 1959 when he completed much of the principal writing of Sweet Bird of Youth. In fact, these conditions remained with him throughout his life.

Nevertheless, by assessing these conditions some years later, after further psychological evaluation had been completed, it is perhaps easier to see their cumulative effect and, most importantly, their effect on his artistic production during the time he was writing Sweet Bird. In Williams's biography, Donald Spoto draws a number of conclusions concerning the nature of Williams's hypochondria and his subsequent drug dependency:

> It was this unfortunate but fairly common trait that made him easy prey to the more dangerous results of drugs that added psychological to physical dependency. He never pursued the shabby-chic ritual of drug-taking as a bogus mysticism. For him, hypochondria, an obsession for constant work and his essentially Dionysian personality made alcohol and drugs perhaps inevitable. It was the ultimate phase of a frenzied pursuit both to celebrate and to deaden the senses. (292)

By September of 1964, Williams had engaged a new analyst whom he visited seven days a week. In a letter to his friend Paul Bowles, he alludes to the magic effect of little yellow pills he took to cure depression; in addition to these pills were added self-administered injections. Although he stopped smoking after Frank Merlo's death from lung cancer, he nevertheless continued the daily ritual of his chemical dependency:

> I rely mainly on drink and pills. My intake of liquor is

> about a fifth a day--half Bourbon, half vodka....To pep up, I take half a Dexamyl, and when I find it's necessary to smooth things over I take one and half seconals. And when I suffer from acute insomnia, which is also often, I take up to four sleeping pills. (Spoto 292)

It seems very likely that Williams's initiation into psychoanalysis amd his increased drug use may have produced dramatic creations that were more personal and, as critics conclude, self-confessional.

The two plays that are said to be products of the playwright's psychotherapy are Suddenly Last Summer and Sweet Bird of Youth. Actress Ann Meacham has commented in reference to Suddenly Last Summer that "Tennessee was absolutely terrified of this play. The play was so close to him that he wouldn't allow Audrey (Wood) to be at the casting rehearsals, and he took a long time before he could show her the play" (Spoto 245). Likewise, Sweet Bird of Youth includes numerous elements that were autobiographical. The drug and alcohol dependency and the hypochondria that plagued Williams were also elements that proved the nemesis of both Chance Wayne and the Princess. Sweet Bird's inclusion of "Moroccan hashish," references to "the stuff," Chance's use of "goofballs" and hundred-proof vodka in the lounge of the Royal Palms Hotel all have correspondences in Williams's life.

As was the case with Williams, the Princess's hypochondria allowed her moments of self-dramatization, requiring that her traveling companion focus his entire attention on her alone during the seeming life-or-death situations that demanded he act to save her. In these rather desperate moments when her life depended on Chance's ability to apply the oxygen mask before time ran out, the Princess seemed vulnerable and helpless,

contrasting her with her usually invincible persona. The Princess's ubiquitous oxygen pump and oxygen mask symbolize hypochondria, as does the incident involving the breaking of the Princess's glasses. These episodes involving the Princess's hypochondria also required that Chance reverse his usual role to become her rescuer from impending doom. Imagined illness for both Williams and the Princess seemed to serve the purpose of eliciting sympathy from others and also served the purpose of making them the center of attention.

Another part of Williams's life that finds prominent expression in Sweet Bird is sexual obsession, which figures as one of the central themes of the play. Letters written to Donald Windham and excerpts from Memoirs suggest Williams's intense interest in sexual gratification, particularly during the 1940s and the 1950s. This took the form of casually arranged liaisons and trysts in bars and cruising the streets of New York and the cities of Europe. Even though his relationship with Frank Merlo offered Williams the only stability and security he had ever known, Williams was faithful to the relationship for only a short period of time. In a letter to Donald Windham, dated November 25, 1949, he discusses the availability of sailors in Key West and the need to remain discreet in light of his relationship with Frank Merlo:

> Sailors seem more approachable than I remembered. But we are still on our honeymoon and do not take advantage. I am taking down addresses for reference when Frank goes home for Xmas. I am not sure what my Xmas plans are. (245-46)

Throughout Windham's collection of letters, Williams makes frequent reference to his

sexual exploits. He generally offers his assessment of the cruising areas wherever he happens to be visiting and then recounts rather discreetly his sexual arrangements during his visit there. In Italy and Mexico he found boys available at reasonable prices. While visiting Rome, he writes of the availability of trade:

> ....and there is nothing I can add to the statements of Michelangelo except a corroboration in modern times. I have not been to bed with his David but with any number of his more delicate creations, in fact the abundance and accessibility is downright embarrassing. You can't walk a block without being accosted by someone you would spend a whole evening trying vainly to make in the New York bars. Of course it usually costs you a thousand lire but that is only two bucks (less if you patronize the black market) and there is never any unpleasantness about it even though one does not know a word they are saying! (207)

According to numerous other letters in the Windham collection, similar sexual liaisons were arranged in Provincetown, New Orleans, and New York.

The need for an anonymous sexual outlet was explained by his friend Paul Bigelow following William's breakup with Frank Merlo who had put up with Williams's promiscuity during their years together:

> But there was another element in this, and it had to do with Williams's increasing distrust of others, and his essential inability to accept the fact that he was the object of someone's commitment. Friendship he could accept; but sex he distrusted, in spite of all the celebration of it in his plays--perhaps because he ordinarily disconnected it from affection in his own life. He never accepted that he was sexually loved--it wasn't that he didn't accept love itself. Physical intimacy he tended to distrust even as he needed it constantly. (Spoto 270)

The qualities that defined Williams's casual sexual encounters are also the qualities that define the relationship between Chance Wayne and the Princess in Sweet Bird. Their relationship, like Williams's, is based on momentary convenience, on monetary pre-arrangement, and on a purely sexual attraction that necessitates Chance's ability to provide that necessary "distraction." Just as Williams refers to "trade" to mean his sexual partners, the term "trade" is also used by the Princess in Sweet Bird to refer to her numerous anonymous partners.

Williams's promiscuous sexual activities continued even while he was involved in a relationship with Frank Merlo. In fact, his infidelites continued just after he and Merlo began living together, suggesting that Williams's obsessive sexual appetite served needs other than mere sexual gratification. As with Chance Wayne, Williams's sexuality seemed to become a means of proving his self-worth and a way of proving his youthfulness. If Windham is correct in his observation that Williams believed that he could not be loved sexually, perhaps the frenetic, obsessive nature of his sexual life was an attempt on his part to realize what he could not realize with Merlo alone. For Chance Wayne, sexual activity also provided escape, a distraction from the real world that provided the illusion that time had stopped.

In Sweet Bird, casual sex is a ritualized activity that becomes as addictive as the hashish and the pink pills that Chance takes. Similarly, with Williams, sexual activity became ritualized and addictive. Interestingly, in Sweet Bird Williams contrasts Chance's cynical relationship with the Princess with his previous experience with Heavenly. These first encounters with Heavenly are linked with romantic longings that glorify the sexual

act. It is of course to this kind of sexual experience that Chance wishes to return and, by returning to its purity, to rediscover his previous uncorrupted nature. Nevertheless, in the case of Williams, his relationship with Merlo could have provided him with the opportunity for this kind of relationship, but he still sought contacts outside. It is possible in both Williams's and Wayne's cases that it was impossible to end their addiction and return to youthful innocence.

An early sketch of the play was entitled The Enemy: Time, which indicated the thematic significance of the passage of time and the destructive consequences to those who wish their lives to be preserved. Judging from this first, preliminary title, it is obvious that Williams considered this thematic element early on. The dread of the aging process is especially evident in the characters of Chance and the Princess. Chance is constantly reminded that he is twenty-nine and that success has escaped him as the age of thirty seems to approach ominously. His gigolo status and his companionship with the Princess are the product of his good looks and his relative youth. On the other hand, the Princess is equally concerned with the effects of the aging process; her fame and fortune as silent screen legend had been based almost entirely on her ability to project a youthful, glamorous image to her public. Even minor characters such as Heavenly and her father Boss Finley are altered by the aging process.

Significantly, Williams himself was concerned from an early point in his life with the importance of age. In the late thirties, Williams learned that Group Theatre was to sponsor a play contest, and he sent them four one-act dramas. One stipulation, however, was that the entrants be under twenty-five. Since Group Theatre was a prestigious

organization and winning could be especially important to Williams's career as a beginning playwright, he lied about his age to gain entrance into the contest. He therefore listed his birth date as 1914 instead of 1911, making his age twenty-four instead of twenty-seven (Spoto 78). While this early incident does not necessarily suggest that Williams was so much concerned about the process of growing older, it does demonstrate what would become a life-long trait. Donald Windham in his introduction to Tennessee Williams' Letters to Donald Windham 1940-1965 makes note of Williams's concern with aging and his tendency to lie about his age:

> ....I did not, for instance, know until after his success that he lied about his age. I still do not know which of the various explanations he has given for doing this is true. Or why, revealing so much to me, he included me in this deception. But as I grew familiar with him and his stories and plays that first year of our acquaintance, one thing from among the contradictions and mysteries became increasingly clear: his art sprang from his repressed self-knowledge and the resulting ingenuity his sense of self-preservation used in presenting these too-upsetting-to-face revelations to him in an acceptable way. This was corroborated as I gradually discovered that the emotions of the various characters he portrayed were always his own emotions. The completeness with which the characters retained their identities under the burden of the feelings he poured from himself into them only proved the skill of his transference and the individuality of his observations. There isn't a single character in Tennessee's work in the first ten years I knew him that is a simple self-portrait or symbol of himself, but each of them is a crucible in which he releases a part of his concealed self-knowledge. (Windham vii)

Williams's tendency to lie about this actual age continued as a characteristic trait even in later stages of his life. Williams's misrepresentation of his age is no doubt related to

his sexual lifestyle, which placed him in a world in which youth and physical beauty were directly related to sexual conquest.

IV. Williams and Elia Kazan

> This section of the dissertation will demonstrate how Williams and his collabortor, Elia Kazan, combined personal and aesthetic forces to shape Williams's creativity during the creative process.

As the opening date of the play approached, rehearsals were especially strained, and Williams was increasingly anxious about the play. Again, Williams was to collaborate with Elia Kazan who had been involved in previous Williams productions such as Camino Real, Cat on a Hot Tine Roof, and A Streetcar Named Desire. The collaboration of Williams and Kazan had proven successful in the past, since Williams relied on Kazan's opinions as the play underwent last-minute revision during the final stages of rehearsal. Geraldine Page noted that "Kazan was a wonderful influence on Williams. He worked so hard for him" (Spoto 256). And Joseph L. Mankiewicz recalled the successful relationship of the two men:

> The relationship between Kazan and Williams was a rare symbiotic relationship in the theatre. Williams's drafts were so rough as submitted, they had to be turned into workable, playable dreams for the stage. They had to be adjusted to specific dramatic requirements. Kazan did this. Tennessee gave him the softness, the malleable material of the work, and Kazan, like a truffle-dog, sniffed out the violence and brought it into the open. He peppered the work--sometimes, I think, over Tennessee's objections. (Spoto 255)

Previously, while Williams and Kazan worked on Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Kazan was said to be responsible for much of the final outcome. Nevertheless, Williams in an interview, reproduced in Albert J. Devlin's Conversations with Tennessee Williams, flatly denied Kazan's authorship, although he admitted that one of several endings had been suggested by Kazan. Williams declared, "I wrote them, not Kazan" (66). And when questioned about Kazan's collaboration in Sweet Bird of Youth, Williams again defended Kazan:

> Kazan has also been blamed for the poor second act of Sweet Bird of Youth. The truth is, the second act of that play is just not well written. I was in a terrible state of depression at the time, and couldn't function, except on just a craftsmanship level. Kazan wanted a great second act, and I couldn't give it to him. I'm re-writing the act now, for the published version; I'm going to stick with my two main characters, whom I should never have left in the first place. The act is weak because I couldn't really identify with Boss Finley. (Devlin 66)

Even though Williams denies Kazan's involvement in the actual writing process, one suspects that Williams was more than open to Kazan's suggestions for revision of the play while the play was in rehearsal. He was, after all, quite nervous about the play's opening and, according to later commentary, had misgivings about the play's structure and about the development of certain of the characters. It is likely therefore that Sweet Bird of Youth is the result of a give-and-take working arrangement between the two men.

If Kazan's collaboration was an essential step in the final realization of the completed Sweet Bird of Youth, then it is also part of the final phase of a writing process that is at times complex, disorganized, and undisciplined. Kazan's own observations

about one previous working relationship with Williams are especially enlightening because they demonstrate the degree of creative control Kazan had in one of their projects. In 1955, Williams and Kazan collaborated on the film Baby Doll. It is interesting that at the time Williams was communicating with Kazan about the film, he was also writing Sweet Bird of Youth:

> Then I began working on the movie, a little bit here and a little bit there, and I kept facing the problem of structure....I threw out (the other one-act plays), but I used The Unsatisfactory Supper (along with 27 Wagons)....Here again I was working as a writer in disguise, behind the scenes; when I showed the thing to Williams, he liked it. I said, 'You must work on it, though, you're really a great writer, and I'm just a constructionist--or trying to be.' And he said he would but he never did much. He was writing another play at time (Sweet Bird of Youth), and he would suddenly write a few scenes and send them to me with a note, 'Insert somewhere.' Some I used and some I didn't; he didn't seem to care. Finally, I was desperate, because I had no ending to it. I had got Warner Brothers to finance it, everything was set up, and I said: 'Tennessee, we have no ending!' He said: 'Well, I promise you I'll work on it.' So I said: 'Well, I haven't got much time now, you'll have to come South with us (for the filming in Benoit, Mississippi.' (Spoto 225)

Of course, Kazan's commentary here concerns another production altogether. Nevertheless, it appears that a working relationship had been established prior to the Sweet Bird collaboration and that the relationship already allowed Kazan a great deal of artistic control. Kazan defines his role as that of "constructionist" and Williams as that of "writer." It is not likely that this working relationship would have been completely altered during rehearsals for Sweet Bird. Williams's high regard for Kazan, both

personally and professionally, must have allowed Kazan a great deal of creative control in this production. It is known, by Williams's own admission, that he was not in the best physical or mental condition at the time Sweet Bird was in rehearsal. Considering all of these factors, one concludes that Kazan was no doubt given considerable say in the production of Sweet Bird and that each of the men, recognizing each other's talents, were able to cooperate for the good of the production.

After lunch at the Algonquin, the dinner party, including Tennessee and Dakin Williams and Father Jerry Witherson, returned to the Martin Beck and the final rehearsal before that night's opening. Rehearsals, in general, had proven difficult. Nevertheless, they continued, despite the playwright's outbursts, and Kazan later on indicated that problems revolved around the play's structural flaws: Sweet Bird of Youth was a script with a fault, a serious fault: its interest was split between two characters. "The central character in act one, the old actress, disappears in act two, and I thought that play needed some sort of directorial 'holding up.' So I had an enormous television screen and I projected things on it. I did some stunts with that play, because I thought it needed it" (D. Williams 220-221). Also, both Williams and Kazan must have been aware that the play was flawed because of its bifurcated structure. Certainly, Williams later commented on this problem. And his brother Dakin also addressed this problem in his Tennessee Williams: An Intimate Biography:

> Any first-class director, like Kazan has to be, is to an extent, a play doctor. Kazan must have recognized that Sweet Bird has another diagnostic problem. It is almost two plays, the romantic (in this case closer to antiromantic) relationship between Chance, and his employer, the Princess. This play, set in the bedroom, is in acts one and

> two. The other play is the political play, against the racism of Boss Finley. Kazan was concerned with helping Tennessee stitch these two together, as firmly as possible. (221)

Walter Kerr later credited Kazan with cleaning up the play by de-emphasizing "an incest motif that had appeared in the original text..." (221). Earlier versions had suggested an incestuous relationship between Boss Finley and his daughter Heavenly.

In addition to these problems, Geraldine Page was encountering difficulty portraying the aging actress and consequently consulted with Willliams, concluding that "Kazan had given up" on her (D. Williams 221). He didn't know what to tell me." Apparently, the problem was in the third act. Dakin recalls the incident in which Tennessee Williams tried to help Page overcome the difficulty she was having:

> Kazan and Tennessee called her aside. She said: 'the atmosphere was so kind of strained. Finally Tennessee started talking to me. He used such wonderful direction. He really ought to direct sometime. He has fantastic directorial gifts, but he's so polite that maybe he has trouble forcing his opinions on people....He was telling me that that big speech in the third act has to top in dramatic intensity the second-act curtain, which is a logical thing to say. But the second-act curtain was so powerful! I told him nothing short of an atomic bomb would top his second-act curtain. And with his southern charm, he said, 'Oh, yes, honey, you can do it. You can do it.'....And he was saying that language, particularly in that speech, was heightened language, and that unless it had a vast emotional current underneath to carry it, it would sound pretentious. (221)

The second-act curtain to which Page refers is to the riveting speech she delivers near the conclusion of Act II. The "Lament" is heard in the air and the Princess, speaking to

Chance, delivers her after-failure-comes-flight speech. And the speech in Act III that Williams suggested she deliver with even more intensity must certainly have been the one near the end of the play in which she recognizes the "monster" in both her character, the Princess, and in Chance. In addition to Page's difficulties with this speech, Dakin Williams recalls in Tennessee Willliams: An Intimate Biography that Elia Kazan was in the process of giving the cast its last-minute instructions before the play's opening later that evening. Paul Newman, who was more accustomed to a close-up than the stage, was the most nervous of the cast members. Kazan was patiently reviewing his lines with him (223).

The opening itself was hardly anticlimactic. The audience was mesmerized by the dramatic proceedings on stage, cheering enthusiastically so that at the conclusion of the evening's festivities, there were numerous curtain calls. Even Williams himself made a brief appearance on stage in recognition of the play's obvious success (Spoto 258). Dakin Williams recalls that Geraldine Page was incredibly effective as the Princess, exhibiting what Tynan later called "knock-down flamboyance and drag-out authority (D. Williams 223). At one point in the evening, Page received a standing ovation, the audience cheering wildly, possibly a response to her delivery of the speech at the conclusion of Act II. Paul Newman's opening-night fears were not warranted, since he executed his role with a verve and professionalism that equalled that of Page. Dakin remembers that the audience response almost reached pandemonium. John Gassner in Theatre at the Crossroads: Plays and Playwrights of Mid-Century American Stage describes the effect of the play on its opening night audience:

> The public was unable to resist the combined onslaught of Williams and Kazan. Whatever resistance there had been was quickly extinguished by the power of Paul Newman's performance. There was theatrical excitement in his taut flamboyance in the role of a lost and excitable misfit. A flamboyance almost equally, though different in age and character, from Sidney Blackmer's portrayal of the political Boss Finley. High praise was also due Geraldine Page's remarkable attunement to the aging actress reduced to drugs in her effort to defeat time and anxiety. She made this monstrous character exciting both as an imperious movie queen and as a pathetically insecure woman and artist...Tennessee Williams has rarely created a character so distinctly in the round, so mercurial yet so well defined, and so monstrous yet so appealing... (229)

But Williams was not as elated as his appearance at the opening-night curtain call might have suggested. His obligatory appearance at the conclusion of the show apparently masked his actual feelings which were still dominated by doubts. Later that evening, Williams was depressed and anxious. Kazan recalled that "He was wretchedly nervous and much changed, and after the opening he wouldn't let John Steinbeck or me into his house. Despite the wonderful performances and some important good notices, he felt he and the play were a failure, and so he went into hiding--he didn't want any social intercourse. He wouldn't see Steinbeck, who had been a real admirer for many years and wanted to let Tennessee know that (Spoto 258).

V. Criticism of Sweet Bird--Then and Now

> This section overviews Sweet Bird's opening criticism as well as the criticism that has tended over the years to place this play in a secondary critical position in the Williams canon.

After the opening-night performance, a group that included Dakin, Father

Wilkerson, Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward, Lee Strasberg and his daughter Susan, and many others, went to the Renfields to await news of the reviews. As Dakin recalled, "good news began to come in by telephone and finally galley proofs of the reviews. They were good. Tennessee and Kazan, as both artists and entrepreneurs, were delighted" (D. Williams 224). Actually, Williams had already anticipated the good reviews for Sweet Bird of Youth. Since critics had been rather scathing in their response to Tokyo Hotel, he reasoned that they would compensate him by being extraordinarily kind to the next one (Devlin 136). In a sense Tennessee calculated correctly in that "....the seven major Broadway critics were all in Mr. Williams' corner on this play, with evaluations ranging from 'the best thing he has done to date' (John McClain the New York Journal-American) to 'a magnificently theatrical storm of passion, bigotry and intolerance' (Frank Aston in the New York World-Telegram and Sun). Richard Watts, Jr. in the New York Post had a few reservations but gave the play his critical approval. 'Mr. Williams has lost none of his force as a poet of evil'" (Donahue 119).

In addition, Brooks Atkinson's response in the New York Times on the following day favorably commented that "....Tennessee Williams has written another vivid play. Sweet Bird of Youth he calls it with ironic pity. Under Elia Kazan's direction it is brilliantly acted at the Martin Beck, where it opened last evening." Atkinson further comments that "Mr. Williams daintily peels off layer after layer of the skin, body and spirit of his characters and leaves their nature exposed in the hideous humor and pathos of the truth. As a writer of prose drama, Mr. Williams has the genius of a poet." The Times reviewer also had plaudits for Elia Kazan's direction and singled out Geraldine

Page's performance, commenting that "Geraldine Page gives a fabulous performance as the decaying movie queen. Loose-jointed, gangling, raucous of voice, crumpled, shrewd, abandoned yet sensitive about some things that live in the heart. Miss Page is at the peak of form in this raffish characterization." Atkinson also applauds Newman's performance as a "perfect companion piece" to Geraldine Page's performance (39). Likewise, Newsweek echoed the praises of the dailies:

> The performance, as directed by Elia Kazan, belongs in the upper reaches of distinguished theater. Sidney Blackmer is persuasive as a rabble-rousing politician who avenges his daughter's disgrace; so are Diana Hyland as the girl and Rip Torn as her blustering brother. Paul Newman, fresh from the movies, is the very picture of a lost young man aged in inequity, and Geraldine Page gives the performance of her life as the vanishing beauty who still has the courage to look into her mirror. (75)

A Time magazine article that appeared a week after the opening of the play assessed the critical response to Williams's new effort, noting an impressive advanced ticket sale and a generally favorable critical response:

> A long Broadway run was assured when the seven critics of the Manhattan dailies, seemingly under sway of collective hypnosis, unanimously hailed the Williams drama. Said the Herald Tribune's Walter Kerr: 'Enormously exciting.' The Time's Brooks Atkinson called it 'one of Mr. Williams' finest dramas.' The most startling display of devotion came from the Post's Richard Watts, who said the play had a 'haunting fascination' but poked three logical holes in script, then concluded: 'It must be a tribute to the play that such queries did not disturb me.' (58)

Nevertheless, the Time magazine review itself was negative in its judgment of the play

but praised the production:

> Sweet Bird of Youth by Tennessee Williams is very close parody, but the wonder is that Williams should be so inept at imitating himself. The sex, violence, the perfumed decay, the hacking domestic quarrels, the dirge of fear and self-pity, the characters who dangle in neurotic limbo--all are present--but only like so many dramatic dead cats on a cold tin roof. (58)

The Time writer had high praise for Elia Kazan's direction, Jo Mielziner's sets, and Bowles's music. But, he concludes, ".... the only unfailing source of power and passion in the play is the bravura performance of Geraldine Page" (58).

In fact, it seemed a general trend that reviews, appearing some time after the hoopla of the March 10 premiere, were less enamored of the play in general than those reviews that had appeared immediately after the play's opening. It might be suggested that first-night reviewers were responding to Williams's theatricality, to the strong production values, to the fine performances rather than to the inherent critical values of the play itself. For example, Harold Clurman, writing in The Nation, more than two weeks after the opening, registers his reservations: "....What we suspect in Sweet Bird of Youth is that Williams has become immobilized in his ideology; that it has not been refreshed either by any new experience or by mature thought. He has only become much bolder...." (282). John Gassner commented on the play in the Educational Theatre Journal in May, more than a month after the March 10 opening:

> ...Welcomed by some as less formidable than several of his earlier pieces...it would appear that the only mature point of view to bring to these characters is that of comedy with

> comedy's detachment and mockery--a mockery these 'monsters' richly deserve, as does the world of cheap values--the charlatanry, cheap success, vainglory, dog-eat-dog motivation, and alternating hypocrisy and cynicism variously exemplified in their conduct and confessions. (122)

Again, even later during the summer of 1959, Robert Brustein commented in the Hudson Review, once again demonstrating the general attrition of critical support:

> In Sweet Bird of Youth, Tennessee Williams seems less concerned with dramatic verisimilitude than with communicating some hazy notions about such disparate items as Sex, Youth, Time, Corruption, Purity, Castration, Politics, and the South.... Cavorting through the forest of his own unconscious, Williams has taken to playing hide-and-go-seek with reality in a manner which he does not always control. Sweet Bird of Youth...frequently looks less like art than like some kind of confession and apology.... (255)

Here the criticism responds to the confessional nature of much of the material in Sweet Bird, since its themes often revolve around the playwright's own life. Brustein goes on to comment on Chance Wayne's character and his assumed universality in the context of the play. Brustein concludes that "Since Chance has had about as much universality as a character in an animated cartoon, to regard his experience as an illuminating reflection of the human condition is a notion which borders on the grotesque" (255).

Controversy has continued to surround Sweet Bird, partly because of the range of critical response to it. While immediate responses to the play were generally positive, the critical community over the past thirty years has not been especially kind to it, placing it just below plays of second ranking in the Williams repertoire. In a recent article

entitled "Williams Shocked American Theatre," Richard Gilman considered the probable critical evaluation of Williams's theatrical legacy:

> The consensus is nearly absolute as to what his best works are: The Glass Menagerie (1945) and A Streetcar Named Desire (1947). After that, opinion tends to splinter. In my own case I see a little below those two plays another quite admirable pair: Suddenly Last Summer (1958) and The Eccentricities of a Nightingale (1964), Williams's rewriting of and improvement on Summer and Smoke. And below them, managing to hang on to some minor territory of theatrical permanence, or semi-permanence, Orpheus Descending, The Rose Tatoo and Cat, with Sweet Bird of Youth and Night of the Iguana asking us to look as kindly as we can on their severe frailties, and Camino Real remaining visible as a noble experiment. (Gilman 32)

The critical evaluation of Williams's drama has become somewhat standard over the years and differs little with the above classifications.

Placing Sweet Bird in a somewhat penultimate position in a grouping of Williams's dramatic offerings comes as no surprise, since the work has certain recognizable flaws that were immediately apparent even to Williams himself. Commenting on the play's limitations and his need to rewrite it, Williams demonstrates his tendency to re-evaluate his work and to reconsider it critically:

> Right now I have put aside new work to re-write a play already produced and finished on Broadway and limping about the country on tour, Sweet Bird of Youth. It violated an essential rule: the rule of the straight line, the rule of poetic unity of singleness and wholeness...Now I am cutting it down to size; keeping it on the two protagonists with, in Act Two, only one or two suitable elements beside the joined deaths of the male and female heroes so that instead of being an over length play it will be under length

> (conventionally) and the first act and third act will not be disastrously interrupted by so many non-integrated, barely even peripheral, concerns with a social background already made clearly implicit, not needing to be explicit. (Windham 299-300)

Williams's comment concerning the violation of the rule of the "straight line" indicates what critics have frequently referred to as the split construction of Sweet Bird. In addition to the split construction, Williams was also critical of the play's second act which he described at one point as poorly written:

> Sweet Bird was in the works too long. The whole second act was particularly hard for me. I was deeply interested in the two main characters, but the other characters did not have the same interest for me, and it was awfully hard for me to write the second act, which was largely about the social background of the story. Sometimes I wish I had made it a shorter play and not tried to deal with so much. I was already tired when I came to the rehearsals and I was in no condition to do all the rewriting I had to do, and I was inundated with notes suggesting changes--from somebody other than the director. I felt castrated. Any other point of view except the director's and author's together should be left alone. Otherwise it creates chaos. They demoralize the writer, sap what is left of his confidence. (Devlin 60)

The problem of the play's split construction primarily involves Act Two in which the play seems to digress from its original premise as established by the events of Act One. In Act One, the relationship between the Princess and Chance is fully established with the audience. The dominant image is that of a bedroom of an old-fashioned, yet still fashionable, hotel called the Royal Palms on the Gulf Coast in the town of St. Cloud. According to a painting of the stage setting by Jo Mielziner, the "great bed," placed

strategically at stage right and at an angle to the audience, not only dominates the room visually, but further underscores the relationship between the two major characters. Subsequently, Chance Wayne's gigolo status and the indomitable Princess of the silent screen with her reliance on pills, vodka, her indispensable oxygen mask as well as her habitual need for "that distraction," are both effectively delineated within moments of the opening curtain. Act I, then, primarily functions to introduce and define the precise relationship between Chance and the Princess. Nevertheless, a problem appears in Act II when the play's narrative digresses from its original concern--that of further defining the relationship between Chance and the Princess--and instead introduces a narrative only tangentially related to Chance and the Princess as they are portrayed in Act I. Benjamin Nelson comments somewhat extensively on the split construction of Sweet Bird in his book Tennessee Williams: the Man and His Work:

> The first and most apparent criticism of the play is against its blatant lack of unity. Act One has almost nothing to do with Act Two, and as a result the final act seems perched in a dramatic limbo--rootless, wingless and helpless....In the second act, Williams abandons Alexandra and in so doing abandons the entire story of the first act. Here we are introduced to three of the most superficial and implausible characters Williams has ever created: Boss Finley, his son Tom Finley, and Heavenly Finley, his daughter. And with their presence, an almost entirely new plot is evolved. (266)

Of course with the introduction of these characters, the plot concerning Chance and the Princess is discontinued, and instead a plot concerning the elements of racism, venereal disease, and castration is introduced. In Act II, Chance's past in St. Cloud is elaborated. Chance incurred the disapproval of the Finleys, a powerful political family in St Cloud,

by his association with Heavenly, Boss Finley's daughter. Because their previous sexual involvement has led to her contracting venereal disease, Heavenly has subsequently undergone a hysterectomy, leaving her incapable of bearing children. The past dominates the proceedings of Act II by intensifying the hatred of Boss Finley and his henchmen toward Chance and making it nearly impossible for him to contact Heavenly, either directly or through intermediaries such as Aunt Nonnie. With the introduction of this new set of characters, Williams left the Princess behind in Act I, seemingly without function in Act II. Nevertheless, she does manage to make one obligatory appearance near the end of Act II when she seeks Chance's comfort and, desiring not to be left alone, delivers the speech in which she recognizes the monsters in both herself and in her counterpart, Chance Wayne. Nevertheless, Benjamin Nelson claims that "The third act brings back Alexandra...more as an escape mechanism for Chance Wayne than as a character in her own right. Williams has lost her in the strident melodrama of the middle act and he is unable to return to her with any surety of conviction (268).

It should also be noted that both Williams and Kazan were well aware of the play's split construction and admitted that the play could be seen as two separate works: the Florida production provided acts one and three concerning Chance and the aging actress with the insertion of the Chance Wayne background material later in the play's development (Spoto 257). Responding to this perceived flaw in the construction of the play, Williams made extensive cuts during rehearsals in New York in an attempt to simplify the character of Chance. In a conversation during rehearsals for Sweet Bird, Williams expressed concern about the effectiveness of the bridge passages he had

substituted and the minor characters he had introduced in Act II (Devlin 60). Nevertheless, it should be noted that, while Act II may seem to interfere with the preliminary events as established in Act I, it is an attempt on the part of Williams to provide the audience with background information. Of course, such an explanation of background is necessary, but perhaps its inclusion in Act II becomes excessive, since the play's original premise gets lost in the process. Perhaps, then, Williams is guilty of overloading the play with scenes that serve no purpose other than to link the past with the present. But what were Williams's alternatives? Could he have provided his audience with the same information by maintaining the hotel suite as the play's only center? Or, perhaps, if locating the action of the play solely in the hotel suite were not a possibility dramatically, then perhaps past events could have been revealed through the combining of the suite and the hotel lounge as the centers of the play's action. If either of these alternatives were possible, then the play's focus on the relationship between Chance Wayne and the Princess in Act I would not be lost to the retrospective exposition of Act II. In Act II, Williams attempts to clarify Chance's past experiences with the Finleys in St. Cloud, but he loses the Princess in the process.

In addition to contributing to the play's split construction, critics have also implicated Act II in a second offense, that of being poorly written. By poorly written, critics usually refer to the inclusion of melodramatic elements, a preponderance of cardboard characters, and the ineffective staging of the rally scene. Williams himself referred to "his cornpone melodramas," and in Sweet Bird, particularly in the Act II, situations that portray Heavenly's corrupted innocence, her family's attempt to revenge

her, the events surrounding the death of Finley's wife, Finley's impotence and his undisclosed relationship with Miss Lucy, Scudder's and Chance's attempt to win Heavenly, and Finley's excessively paternalistic relationship with his daughter represent elements of melodrama to which critics allude.

Also, perhaps in his attempt to provide his audience with quick explanations, Williams creates characters in Act II that are cardboard figures. Benjamin Nelson comments with regard to Boss Finley's characterization:

> There is also a definite feeling that the playwright is over-motivating and embellishing the situation by making Boss Finley into the stereotyped context and character of a Southern politician. Once Boss Finley is presented as a bigoted demagogue in the most cardboard Huey Long tradition, who feels that he is God's instrument to protect the South in general and the purity of Southern white women in particular, the second act of Sweet Bird of Youth begins to resemble a Marquis de Sade version of All the King's Men. (267)

In addition to Boss Finley, his children, Heavenly and Tom Junior, have also been viewed as one-dimensional.

Additionally, the rally scene in Act II has generated some negative comment by critics: "The political-rally rings false, recalling as Robert Brunstein remarks...the Big Effects of the old Federal Theatre days (Fischler 273). Benjamin Nelson again comments on the ineffectiveness of Act II when he refers to "such garish stage innovations as a monstrous television screen superimposed on the cyclorama; it vacillates uncertainly between realism and expressionism with the dissolving set and long asides directed to the audience adding nothing to the drama but pretension (Nelson 269). And commenting on

the general effect of the political scene, Nelson says, "The political tone, despite the hysteria of the climactic rally is hackneyed and extremely naive. Boss Finley almost struts through the act with a sign reading 'demagogue' on his back" (268). As the act concludes, Boss Finley's henchmen beat down a heckler as Finley proclaims his mission of keeping the South pure, causing critic Benjamin Nelson to conclude that "Almost nothing rings true in the act" (267)

The conclusion of Sweet Bird has also received frequent critical comment. Chance Wayne's plea for the audience's acceptance of him suggests that he has become elevated to the status of universal figure, a status critics agree he does not deserve. Chance, positioning himself on the forestage, says, "I don't ask for your pity, but just for your understanding--not even that--no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all" (124). Imploring the audience's recognition of his common humanity, Chance is, of course, aware that events are to unfold that will result in his castration. This action will occur off-stage, but the audience is nevertheless aware of the imminence of this final event. The question, then, becomes whether Williams succeeds in causing Chance Wayne to transcend his gigolo status and become a martyr; if he does become a martyr, does he also possess the qualities that make him a universal figure?

The inclusion of this controversial speech at the conclusion of Sweet Bird became a feature of the play in its final stages of development. The conclusion of Sweet Bird had typically presented a problem to Williams and this ending was added as the production was prepared for its Broadway opening. The frequent use of the monologue in Sweet Bird made these concluding remarks by Chance appropriate stylistically since Williams

had used the monologue so successfully in previous scenes, particularly with the Princess. The previous inclusion of the monolouge had allowed Williams the opportunity to reveal his characters to the audience and to provide the audience with a riveting dramatic moment.

This concluding speech has been criticized because it seems to suggest Chance's status as universal character. Nevertheless, Chance's final speech does not ask the audience to identify themselves with him as an equal. This speech simply asks that the audience recognize his "humanity," and his failure in coping with the human "enemy, time." It is probably true that audiences may have been uncomfortable with the shocking activities of Chance and the Princess, but their essential humanity, however flawed, cannot be denied.

In particular, Chance is viewed unsympathetically by critics who see him as completely culpable for the circumstances that ruined his life. Yet the play includes material that would suggest otherwise. For example, Heavenly's dialogue with Boss Finley recalled Chance Wayne before he left St. Cloud and portrays him as the victim of Boss's self-serving manipulation:

> Heavenly: Don't give me your Voice of God speech. Papa, there was a time when you could have saved me, by letting me marry a boy that was still young and clean, but instead you drove him away, drove him out of St. Cloud. And when he came back, you took me out of St. Cloud and tried to force me to marry a fifty-year-old money bag that you wanted something out of--

Boss: Now, honey--

Heavenly: --and then another, another, all of them ones that you wanted someting out of. I'd gone, so Chance went away. Tried to compete, make himself big as these big shoes you wanted to use me for a bond with. He went. He tried. The right doors wouldn't open and so he went in the wrong ones, and-- Papa, you married for love, why wouldn't you let me do it, while I was alive, inside, and the boy still clean, still decent? (68)

Later Aunt Nonnie affectionately recalls Chance's former life in St. Cloud and his involvement in a national drama contest. Recalling Chance, Aunt Nonnie remarks, "People that loved you expected just one thing of you--sweetness and honesty...." (80)

But Aunt Nonnie also recognizes the change that has taken place in Chance. She attributes this change to his pursuit of "wild dreams." Chance's pursuit of the dream of fame has fallen short of his original expectations. His discharge from the Navy, his second-place in a drama contest, his second-rate performance in show business were all disappointments that resulted in disillusionment and in his assuming the role of gigolo at the age of twenty-nine. Nevertheless, in Sweet Bird, Chance continues to pursue his original dream by entering a contest so that he and Heavenly can still be reunited and achieve fame together. Given what is known today about the rise of numerous Hollywood personalities, Chance's gigolo status in Sweet Bird may not seem so questionable to audiences as it may have seemed thirty years ago. Chance's failure to achieve his fortune and realize his destiny is the kind of failure that has been portrayed in numerous American plays, such as Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. Such plays

suggest that individual failure is part of a larger failure, the superficiality of the values that constitute the American Dream. Chance's status as antihero underscores his redeeming qualities, parts of his personality and potential that could not develop.

The question concerning the appropriateness of the concluding lines of Sweet Bird is one that has persisted through the years. It is interesting that, as Williams continued to rewrite this play, he revised the ending so that the final speech was eliminated; in final versions, Chance escapes the henchmen by leaving St. Cloud with the Princess, making the final speech unnecessary. The problem with Chance's concluding speech is that it needs to be expanded into a monologue similar to the preceeding monologues in the play. By expanding this monologue, Williams could have emphasized Chance's "time is the enemy in us all" motif and he could have reemphasized Chance's antihero status by recounting his original dreams of success, the original purity of his love for Heavenly. Coincidentally, earlier versions of the play included a series of monologues by various main characters rather than the more focused ending of the final version. One of these is an expanded monologue by Chance included later in this disseratation on pages 135-137. At this point in the play's development, Williams was uncertain as to how he would end the play and as a result, each character uttered his final words to the audience, suggesting an open-ended conclusion. Nevertheless, by expanding Chance's monologue, Williams could have more precisely defined Chance as an antihero and could have underscored his humanness within the context of the play.

Donald Spoto, in referring to these concluding lines, comments that "This is surely the single most jarring interruption in Williams's work. As a rather presumptuous coda...it

suggests that in fact Williams may well have had in mind Billy Wilder's classic story of Hollywood madness, Sunset Boulevard. Sweet Bird has astonishing parallels with that motion picture" (Spoto 257). It will be remembered at the conclusion of that motion picture that Norma Desmond soliloquizes her stature as screen legend whose humanity also deserves recognition. Allan Lewis in American Plays and Playwrights of the Contemporary Theatre finds Williams's conclusion improbable: "Understanding is not difficult to give, but the effort to render the play universal by making Chance a symbol of man's evil is skirting the ridiculous" (56). Again, Benjamin Nelson found Chance wanting in his ability to provide appropriate symbolic significance:

> It is somehow ironic that this individual who asks for recognition is the one person in Williams' work with whom it is most difficult to share any kinship....A lot of rant about the beauty of making love versus the hatred of love-making does not serve to conceal the simple fact that Chance Wayne is little more than a stud who copulates once too often with the wrong girl and is gelded for his troubles. (274-275)

In addition to the criticism of these elements--split construction and the problems with Act II, as well as Chance Wayne's soliloquy at the play's conclusion--Sweet Bird has been additionally cited by critics for its confusion and lack of unity and failure in its use of expressionist stage devices. (269). Nancy M. Fischler recognizes, on the other hand, that the play succeeds in communicating effectively its central themes:

> The play, in spite of some melodramatic confusion in its second act, is surprisingly potent drama. It conforms to the classical unities of time, place, and action, to provide

> Aristotelian catharsis. The first scene neatly balances with the last, which expands and illuminates its ideas. The futility of Chance's hopes, the degradation of his ideals, and the loss of his manhood were all expressed in those moments. At the end the fading youth stands helplessly by while his fate overtakes him. The play carries us from delusion to truth. (271)

Fischler, nevertheless, criticizes the play for its "poverty of minor parts,' its "melodramatic violence," its "purple writing," its ineffectual political rally, and its inclusion of "enough plots for three plays" (273).

The history of Sweet Bird of Youth is a curious one, first of all, because the critical community has varied so much in its opinion of its value. This seems a testament to the fact that Sweet Bird, despite its flaws, is a powerful theatrical piece and translates well to the stage. Its theatricality was, no doubt, the appeal to opening-night audiences and critics alike, contrasting with later scholarship which tended to devalue it, considering Sweet Bird a literary vehicle only and looking at it as a creature of the page rather than as a creature of the stage. As a result, split construction and character type become issues of literary analysis, but they are not issues to the audiences that sees the play performed on stage.

It is also true that Sweet Bird of Youth has been frequently revived and has, as a result, become a Williams staple. A new staging of the play was presented in 1975 at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. and starred Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. This successful production of Sweet Bird was a part of a Bicentennial season of American drama and was later taken to New York for a limited run at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (Londre 141). A Paris production of Sweet Bird starring classically

trained actress Edwige Feuillere was attended by Williams himself, who was impressed by Feuillere's controlled performance as the Princess, which he described in Memoirs as "...totally convincing ...one of the great performances I've seen' (Londre 141). Another revival of Sweet Bird was the 1985 London production, which was directed by Harold Pinter and starred Lauren Bacall and Michael Beck in the leading roles. Martin Cropper's review in the London Times gives high praise to the cast, to Pinter, and to Williams: "It is a great strength of Tennessee Williams's play that for once the castration fear is overt and physical instead of being subsumed in various forms of debility... (7). Later Cropper concludes with tribute to both Pinter and Williams, "But the evening belongs to Mr. Pinter--a great playwright directing a very good one" (7). This production was followed more recently by the televised version of Sweet Bird starring Elizabeth Taylor and Mark Harmon.

This Williams "evergreen" finds new life with succeeding generations because its themes continue to be relevant, perhaps even more relevant than when the play first appeared in 1959. American society, increasingly aware of the issues Sweet Bird presents--the use of drugs and alcohol, sexual promiscuity, sexually-transmitted disease, an obsession with physical attractiveness and perpetual youthfulness, and fascination with celebrity publicity--finds the play to be representative rather than merely shocking. For example, the play's suggestion that physical beauty and attrractiveness are assets that may have intrinsic value in and of themselves is hardly irrelevant in a society that has become increasingly narcissistic. Although the Princess would like to think that she is not a "phoney" and that she is capable of genuine concern for Chance, it is his good looks, his

physical condition, and relative youth that are the basis for their relationship. Likewise, the issue of sexually transmitted disease in Sweet Bird is especially significant to today's audience with an awareness of the AIDS epidemic.

The notion, for example, that Chance Wayne falls short of being a symbol is perhaps outmoded. It is more appropriate to conclude that Chance Wayne is in many ways representative of the plasticity of our age and therefore a more appropriate symbol than we thought. It is ironic perhaps that in an era that has produced such real-life cultural symbols as Judy Garland, James Dean, and Marilyn Monroe, the character of Chance Wayne falls short of ideal symbolic stature. The stars who have achieved adulation are figures recognized as icons of pop culture. Yet they represent what it is the Princess has achieved and what Chance Wayne aspires to--an elusive fame based largely on a combination of physical appearance and artistry. In addition, these figures found that their personal lives were compromised as a result of artistic aspirations and their celebrity status. While Chance Wayne fails to achieve the recognizable trappings of success, his aspirations are nevertheless linked with the American dream--not unlike the show business hopefuls portrayed in the musical A Chorus Line. Upon his return to St. Cloud, he projects the appearance of success by driving the Princess's car, by wearing clothes that signify success, and by assuming a celebrity status through his association with the Princess. In reality, Chance's only successes--second place in a drama contest, honorable discharge from the Navy, and his picture prominently displayed in a photo in Life magazine as a member of the chorus line in a Broadway production of Oklahoma--are inconsequential.

Williams was more sympathetic to Chance Wayne than critics have tended to be. Williams commented: "Chance Wayne? He is some kind of stud. But that's not what he wanted to be. It was not his choice. He went too far into his corruption" (Devlin 211). Perhaps Williams realized that Wayne is also a victim of pursuing the American dream, a dream that is empty and meaningless. Benjamin Nelson suggests this when he comments on the character of Chance Wayne and his literary counterparts:

> In this context Chance Wayne, the young man, is almost a tragic figure and his corruption is a tragic corruption, the corruption of a Jay Gatsby or Willy Loman who also paid the price for living too long with the wrong dream. Like Fitzgerald's gallantly garish hero, Chance Wayne continually looks to the green light at the end of the pier, the light which symbolizes the attainment that will always be just out of reach, and finally comes to realize that the race he has been running has been in vain, that his dream of success has been tinsel and that 'you've gone past something you couldn't afford to go past; your time, your youth, you've passed it, it's all you had and you've had it!' (261)

Ultimately, however, Nelson concludes that while these elements are present in the play Sweet Bird of Youth, they are not as fully realized as they might have been. Nelson comments further:

> Unfortunately, the play I have been discussing is not Sweet Bird of Youth, but only a theme running through it and endowing it with whatever value it possesses. It is a theme which, if handled wisely and well, would have made the play, in my opinion, as good a drama as any Williams has written. That he has not realized the potential in his play is soon obvious to anyone who has carefully read or seen Sweet Bird of Youth. (265-66)

Benjamin Nelson is correct in his conclusion that Williams had "not realized the potential in his play." Williams himself continued to rewrite the play in hope of finding that magic combination of elements that would make Sweet Bird the work of art he envisioned. In particular, he recognized the problems with Act II and with the play's conclusion. He also announced his intention of rewriting with the notion of concentrating only on the play's central relationship as portrayed in Act I, but he never succeeded in accomplishing that.

Drewey Wayne Gunn, unlike others who suggest the problems of Sweet Bird are to be found in Act II or Act III, suggests that the problem with the play is Act I:

> Williams has returned to old scripts eighteen, thirty-four years after they were first written. Therefore, we may not yet have seen the final version of Sweet Bird. But each time Williams has rewritten this play, he has turned his attention primarily to the second and third acts. Neither he, nor the critics, nor directors have seen what I think is the real problem with Sweet Bird from its inception in 1956. Quite simply, it is the first act. In the Princess, Williams created one of his supreme characters and she promptly took over the play. As a result, she unbalanced it fatally. Sweet Bird, no matter which of the four drafts one studies, is Chance's play, and he must occupy stage center. The Princess's conflict is all offstage. Therefore, the first act must clearly introduce him as the protagonist. Then the play must cut to the milieu which produced him, if we are to understand Chance's failure and to realize that it is part of America's too. (34)

Gunn's remarks appear in an article entitled "The Troubled Flight of Tennessee Williams's 'Sweet Bird': From Manuscript through Published Texts" and was included in the March 1981 edition of Modern Drama. His proposal offers another point of view

which may indeed have some validity, although he seems to suggest that the Princess be eliminated or her part cut down in the play. This would seem a regrettable loss. Nevertheless, perhaps she could have more than filled another play while giving over Sweet Bird to Chance.

The differing points of view concerning the problem of structure in Sweet Bird of Youth all suggest the need for central focus, either on Chance or the Princess, separately, or on Chance and Princess, together. It is possible that the restructuring of Act II would eliminate much of the problem, since its attempt to package past events in a neat bundle causes the events of Act I to be lost. Condensing these events by portraying them in the more limited setting of the hotel room and hotel lounge would allow the play's focus to remain on the Princess and on Chance, while at the same time allowing the audience to know the general outline of Chance's past with the Finleys. In fact, the scenes with Scudder and Chance in the hotel room serve the purpose of providing the audience with the necessary background information while moving the current action of the play along at the same time. Also, it seems that, since much of what Williams wishes to communicate in Act II is in the realm of memory, it would be possible to portray much of this, as he did in Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire, through the revelations of a character's perceptions of the past. This approach may work, but Drewey Wayne Gunn's suggestion that the problem is with the play's first act--the undue emphasis on the Princess--presents a point of view worth considering. If by redefining the nature of Act I the focus is placed squarely on the shoulders of Chance Wayne, rather than on those of the Princess, the remainder of the play could be altered

in accordance with the new premise.

VI. The Developing Dramatic Structure

> This section of the dissertation details the changes Sweet Bird underwent as it progressed through many drafts and productions.

In the remaining chapters of this dissertation, I will demonstrate how the final dramatic structure of Sweet Bird developed from a series of what were called "one-act sketches." In reality these "one-act sketches" were so brief that they could scarcely be considered even scenes. By juxtaposing these early scenic pieces with later completed versions, we can see the developing dramatic structure and evolving characterization. Even while the play was in the final stages of rehearsal, Williams continued to revise, adding scenes in order to enhance character, to underscore thematic elements, and to ensure dramatic unity and coherence.

Characters originally conceived in rather rudimentary profiles evolve into more complex and dramatic stage realities. In fact, early sketches, such as The Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time, concern themselves with little more than the creation of character. Comparing earlier sketches of the Princess, Chance, Heavenly, and Boss Finley with their more familiar final identities demonstrates the sometimes chaotic revision that results in characters who are incomplete on stage. Not only do characters undergo name changes, but they also undergo alterations in appearance, dress, and behavior. The Princess's character evolves from a character of incidental importance to one central to the meaning of the play.

The thematic concerns of Sweet Bird--innocence, corruption, redemption, disease, revenge, the omnipresence of the past, the evanescence of youth, isolation, sexual dependency--are also highlighted by Williams's revisions. Early versions of Sweet Bird only hint at these themes and motifs, which later expand with the growth of the characters.

In addition, the claustrophobic setting of Sweet Bird plays a significant role in communicating the psychological imprisonment of the characters, especially of Chance and the Princess. My dissertation will show how the setting and the stage directions, at first of minor importance, were developed to complement the plight of the characters and to underscore thematic concerns. For example, the sound effect called the "lamentation" and the Easter-morning chanting in the background are effects added to increase the mood of helplessness, foreboding, and despair that Chance and the Princess share. My dissertation will demonstrate that Williams's revision process shows increasing concern with developing interactions and the syntheses of theme, character, and setting.

Chapter 2 The Creative Process Reflected in Tennessee Williams's Manuscripts

I. The First Stage: The Big Time Operators

Tennessee Williams began Sweet Bird of Youth in 1948 just after the opening of Summer and Smoke. While Williams was disappointed with Margo Jones's direction of the play, he was undergoing some major changes in his personal life (the addition of two people to the Williams coterie) that competed for his attention. One of these people was Carson McCullers, to whom he was attracted partly because McCullers's fragility matched Williams's own. At one point, Williams considered removing Rose from the hospital and living with her and McCullers:

> This was, of course, an impossible (if poignant) fantasy. For a time, however, Carson and Williams spoke as if it were no more unlikely than a winter picnic. Privately, however, she told friends that she was nervous about Williams's nerves; and privately he told friends that he was nervous about her nerves. They were both, on the other hand, romantically attracted to the other's fragility. (Spoto 167)

It was also at this point that Frank Merlo moved into Williams's apartment shortly after their first meeting. After this, the playwright made a short visit to the family home in St. Louis, where in all probability he began the writing of Sweet Bird. As Donald Spoto notes, "Several afternoons in St. Louis, Williams worked on a tentative first draft--not more than very rough scenes in fact--for a play called The Big Time Operators; it would form, after much time and development, the thematic and narrative basis for Sweet Bird of Youth" (Spoto 169).

From this period in 1948 to April 1956, Williams worked sometimes sporadically, sometimes intensively, on the development of the script that finally resulted in the first theatrical production of the play at the Studio M Playhouse in Coral Gables, Florida. During this eight-year period, Williams worked in several formats: first, the experimental and rather fragmented format that produced The Big Time Operators; second, a format that presented brief character and scenic sketches; and third, the eventual script that developed into the first theatrical production called The Enemy: Time.

It is difficult to determine conclusively whether the sketches preceded the playlet, The Big Time Operators or vice versa. One would assume that sketches would precede the playlet; however, I believe that, in this case, the opposite is true. From this manuscript of The Big Time Operators, it is evident that it is a very fragmentary piece with no unifying elements at all. In addition, it is significant that the first version of the play included a transitional character named Maximus Pazmezoglu, who was Phil Beam's mentor and theatrical agent. Paz's homosexuality and his subsequent interest in Phil made it necesary that his character be eliminated from later drafts of the play. Nevertheless, Paz's inclusion in The Big Time Operators gives some clue as to its proper order in the development of Sweet Bird. Because it is known that Paz is included in the first stages of the play's development but was eliminated at an early stage, we assume that Operators is the original source of what would become Sweet Bird. Also, Operators does not demonstrate the evolution of Paz's character into the character of the Princess, who is an outgrowth of her predecessors Paz, and later, Artemis and Irving. This transformation occurs at a slightly later period in the play's development, and, since the

sketches show this change in the character, it seems logical to assume that the sketches were developed to allow Williams to explore characters he had first introduced in Operators.

Included with the set of manuscripts entitled The Big Time Operators is a page of typed notes called "Tentative Outline Big Time Operators." The outline includes a list of fourteen points that show the play's narrative progression; the characters include the Boss; Candy, his mistress and prototype of Miss Lucy; and Pere, a political personality, who rises to prominence through the Boss's political machine:

TENTATIVE OUTLINE BIG TIME OPERATORS

1. Pere and the Boss and arrival of Candy.
2. A lyric scene between Pere and Candy.
3. Candy's morning departure. P: I have had a rude shock. Do you know what a rude shock is? It's when somebody knocks the props out from under you. But now I have made up my mind. There's fifty-two cards in a deck and either I deal them out myself or else I don't play at all. Where did you say you was going? Candy: Miami. Pere: Why Miami? Candy: A girl in Miami can make hundred a night. Pere: Ha ha. The Miami whores are big time operators. But there's bigger whores and bigger time operators than the ones at Miami. Candy goes. The mirror scene. The blowing up of the cat-walk.
4. Pere's retreat. The Boss and Pere and Pere's wife, ending with his triumph and decison to return on his own terms.
5. PART TWO. Pere Vs. The Big Time Operators. Oil corporation?
6. Impeachment procedings.
7. Procedings collapse: Pere compromises?
8. Candy. Strained relations. Radio scene. Tenor.
9. Candy alone. The party.
10. Pere's return.
11. Candy's pregnancy and abortion.
12. Candy's bleeding: removal to hospital.
13. Pere's disgrace: the smash-up.
14. The flight of the Big Time Operators: the catwalk is blown up again. (Operators 17)

Other than the Boss, there is no mention in Williams's outline of the characters usually associated with Sweet Bird. In fact, the action, as suggested by the outline, revolves around the political fortunes of the Boss and Pere and the circumstances of Candy's arrival and departure. In the outline above, number 3 also includes one bit of dialogue involving Pere, Phil, and Candy that suggests Williams's original intentions. The remainder of the outline suggests the rise and fall of Pere's political fortunes and Candy's pregnancy and eventual removal to the hospital.

Although the outine of The Big Time Operators does include a short scene with the Boss and Pere, Candy does not appear in the final version of Operators, although she is a central figure in the outline. In fact, the final version demonstrates none of the elements suggested in the tentative outline. Even the content of the scene that includes the Boss and Pere is not related to the outline. The Big Time Operators is a manuscript made up of scenes of approximately a page for the most part arranged in a haphazard fashion without narrative links to demonstrate narrative progression. In fact, these scenes seem isolated and unrelated. In addition to the scene between the Boss and Pere, there is a scene that includes Phil and his mentor Paz (Artemis or Irving, elsewhere), and a doctor named George (later George Scudder). But the larger portion of Operators is devoted to dialogue between Phil and Rose which attempts to define their past and present relationship.

The Big Time Operators consists of nine sketches that serve the purpose of defining character in scenic units that clarify past and present circumstances in the lives

of these characters. Operators includes immediately recognizable characters and situations that find their way into final versions of Sweet Bird practically unaltered, situations and characters that have no relationship to the final version, and situations and characters that find their way into the final version of the play, but in altered form.

For example, one scene includes the Boss and Pere as they put up lights, apparently for a political rally at which Pere will probably speak. The dialogue reveals that Pere is the youngest Governor in the United States. In this scene the two men discuss the Boss's management of the political machine and the nature of political survival:

Boss: What are you doing up there?
Pere: Putting up lights. What are you doing down there?
Boss: Watching you. Wondering if you know what you are doing.
Pere: Hand me that box of tacks. - I know what I'm doing.
Boss: What?
Pere: Putting up lights.
Boss: Well, just so you know what you're doing. (LADDER SHAKES)
Boss: Careful. That ladder ain't steady.
Pere: I can balance it. If I'm left alone.
Boss: You say that because you're young.
Pere: You say that because you're old.
Boss: You're the youngest Governor in the United States.
Pere: You're one of the oldest shits in America. Hand me a cigarette. Today the Romano brothers. Tomorrow - Boss: Tomorrow?
Pere: - Maybe you...
Boss: Ha ha.
Pere: That laugh has a hollow sound to it.
Boss: A dog never bites the hand that feeds it.
Pere: Depends on how the dog likes the food.
Boss: You like your position way up there on the ladder.
Pere: I got up here by myself.

Boss: Like hell you did. The organization put them steps in the ladder.

Pere: That's an idea of yours and the organization's. The next time I run for office you're going to fight me and I'm going to beat your fuggin ass off. Here. Put this out, I'm through with it. (HANDS DOWN CIGARETTE) (Operators 12)

Although the character of Pere is completely eliminated in final versions of Sweet Bird, the character of the Boss and the subject of political power remain significant elements in the fully evolved play. This scene allows us to see the Boss's character, even in its early stages, as an extension of the concept of realpolitik. With the elimination of Pere in final versions of the play, the Boss later becomes not only the force behind the political machine of St. Cloud but also the evil force that oppresses his family.

In another handwritten scene, Williams again presents the Boss, this time with Doc. Williams also wrote the word "notebook" in parentheses at the top of this scene, perhaps an indication that he had written the scene and later saw its possibilities as an idea for the Operators draft. The scene experiments with the possibility of the Boss's illness which Williams later developed as a theme in other sketches about the Boss. In this scene in Operators, the Boss questions the validity of Doc's report from the clinic that concludes that he is sick:

Boss: Sometimes I feel like some old rotting carcass that carrion birds are perched on and pecking away at. I look at you two sitting there and I say to myself, which one of them two is the liar. One of them two is a liar. Which one is it, my old friend, the Doc, or the baby-faced college professor with the big eyes, and the big words and big ideas!

Doc: Ha ha!

Boss: What are you laughing at? You have not been - exonerated. And not by a long shot.
Doc: Exonerated of what?
Boss: Suspicion!
Doc: Suspicion of what? Of what am I suspected?
Boss: Lying! Lying at best - at worst - of treachery - deliberate - planned, treachery.
Doc: ------- Paranoia. Paranoidal suspicions.
Boss: I do not believe that report from the clinic.

Boss: I have got to start being a serious person.
Doc: Haven't you been a serious person?
Boss: (Stares negatively at him)
Doc: What have you been, if not a serious person?
Boss: A politican.

Doc: What was that, Boss?
Boss: I said I did not believe the report from the clinic.
Doc: Annnh -
Boss: What does "annnh" mean?
Doc: So you don't believe no report from the clinic?
Boss: None. Not as it was reported to me.
Doc: What do you think is wrong with it? What do you think is wrong with the - report from the clinic?
Boss: I just think the whole thing is a goddam-- lie-- prevarication!
Doc: Then, what, in your opinion, is the true report.
Boss: Why, I --
Doc: Huh? -- Huh?
Boss: Why, I think I know -- what's the matter with me. I am ---------dying! --------- of cancer! Sweeps bottle and classes (sic) off table.
Doc: ---------- Right. You are.

(The Boss stares at him for a long count -- finally turns around and shuffles out of the place.) Wind: surf: lighthouse beam. (Operators 18-20)

Williams continued to toy with the dramatic possibilities of the Boss's health in sketches

that were produced later, approaching the topic of the Boss's terminal illness in various dramatic settings. Nevertheless, this element is not included in later versions of the play. In fact, the Boss alludes to his health only once: "I'm not about to start sparing myself. Oh, I know, I'll have me a coronary and go like that. But not because Chance Wayne had the unbelievable gall to come back to St. Cloud" (Sweet Bird 57). Here the mention of "coronary" is more a reflection of the Boss's view of himself as martyr rather than an actual issue of health.

In another sketch of this early version of Sweet Bird, Maximo Pazmezoglu accompanies Phil to the town that eventually becomes Meridian and then St. Cloud. In one of the opening scenes, a character called the Girl, later Rose, is told, that Paz, as he is nicknamed, is Phil's agent. The Girl responds, "What a funny name. Excuse me. We don't have many people with names like that in this part of the country but I guess they have a lot of them in New York and Hollywood and places like that. Phil tells me your (sic) his agent" (Operators 4). Paz's homosexuality is merely implied in this preliminary version of the play, and no mention is made of his attraction to Phil as was the case in later sketches. The problem of Paz's homosexuality is eliminated by the later transformation of Maximo Pazmezoglu into Princess Pazmezoglu, an alteration that would make final versions of Sweet Bird more palatable to Williams's audience.

In several other scenes Willliams attempts to introduce the characters of Phil/Chance and Rose/Heavenly. Of the characters included in The Big Time Operators, these characters receive the playwright's greatest attention. Williams devotes approximately six pages to

the two former lovers in a manuscript that numbers only eighteen pages. In the first of these scenes, Phil explains to Maximo that "She picked me up in a bar on the Gulf Coast high- way and drove me down to their place in a flashy convertible. I thought I was havin' -- Ha ha! -- some kind of a -- dream..." (Operators 5) The scene suddenly changes so that a dream-like sequence recreates Phil and Rose's first romantic encounter. As Phil says, "She took me into the bedroom...," music is heard and "the stage revolves against the night sky: bringing into view the other interior of the pink bedroom and eclipsing the hotel set" (Operators 5). In this scene Phil and Rose discuss Rose's background and the significance of the pink room and various objects in the room:

(THE PINK BEDROOM IS VACANT AT FIRST: MUSIC DIES OUT.)
(BEDROOM OPENS AND ROSE ENTERS FOLLOWED BY PHIL)

Rose: This is my bedroom.
Phil: Ha ha.
Rose: What are you laughing at, Jonesey?
Phil: It's all pink.
Rose: - Yes...
Phil: You must like pink.
Rose: Not anymore. I am beginning to hate it.
Phil: Then why's it all pink?
Rose: He likes pink.
Phil: Who is - he?
Rose: The Boss.
Phil: The Boss?
Rose: ------ This stuff is driftwood. All a this stuff over her is driftwood. Imagine. It's no telling how many years this - roots - was - drifting..in the ocean - before it got - washed up on a - beach - somewhere...

(DURING THE PAUSES OF HER SPEECH SHE IS

LOOKING AT HIM AND THE WORDS HAVING NO CONNECTION WITH WHAT SHE IS THINKING.)

Phil: (FALLING INTO THE SAME VOLUPTUOUS ABSTRACTION) - Uh...
Rose: And these here - are - shells.
Phil: - Conch - shells. (Operators 5)

This romantic interlude which introduces these characters is interrupted by a tragic reversal:

(CLOSE UP OF HER FACE WET WITH TEARS)

Rose: My suitcase is checked at the depot.
Phil: Rose!

(HE SEIZES HER ARM AGAIN. THEY ARE ON A STREETCORNER. SHE CRIES OUT TO A POLICEMAN.)

Rose: Officer, make this man let me go, this man is following me, make this man let me go!

(THE OFFICER GRABS HOLD OF PHIL. THEY STRUGGLE. THE CAMERA FOLLOWS THE GIRL'S RUNNING FIGURE.)

Rose: (Screaming back at him) Don't follow me! If you do my brother will kill you!

AS SHE CROSSES THE STREET THE WIND BLOWS DUST ABOUT HER AND HER FORM DISAPPEARS IN THE DUST CLOUD.

DISSOLVE TO PHIL. (Operators 6)

Of course, this scene, without being sexually explicit, suggests that a sexual encounter has occurred. The episode finds later expansion in Sweet Bird when Heavenly becomes

Chance's willing sexual partner and subsequently contracts venereal disease. While the idea of venereal disease only develops later, the idea of physical involvement between the two lovers and the consequences of this involvement for Phil are already evident. There is also evidence of hostility toward Phil in a previous scene when George Scudder visits Phil after Phil's arrival in town. In this very short scene, it is evident George doesn't want Phil there. Phil explains that he and Maximo Pazmezoglu are driving through on their way back to the Coast to begin a new picture. George responds, "Good. When are you going to leave, Phil?" (Operators 3).

In a second scene between Phil and Rose, she explains that her husband has died and that she is now under the influence of her father, the Boss. As Rose and Phil talk, she is aware that her father's speech has been finished because she hears the crowd cheering:

Rose: Dad must've finished his speech. The crowd is cheering. It won't take him moret (sic) than half an hour to drive back to town so you had better get going. You might as well, anyhow. Sitting there with your head in your hands.

Phil: I feel like I have butted my head up against a brick wall.

Rose: That's what you are doing.

Phil: The brick wall is your heart.

Rose: The brick wall is my sincere grief for my dead husband. If there is any brick wall, that's what the brick wall is.

Phil: Your sincere shit.

Rose: I am not going to tolerate any more of this. If you are not out of here soon Dad will be back and find you here and then you will be very sorry.

Phil: I am not afraid of your Dad anymore.

Rose: You'd better be. If I tell him you are back in town he'll have you hauled out in the woods and thrashed. Of course I don't

have to tell him. Somebody else will tell him and probably this evening somebody has - already...

Phil: (Jumping up) Oh, Rose,. Rose, Rose. Can't you even remember how things were? If you could even just remember how things were? If you could even just remember how things were between you and me, those wild, free nights when we drove over to New Orleans.

Rose: Yes. In a borrowed car. That belonged to the sissy photographer you -

Phil: Finish that sentence.

Rose: What sentence?

Phil: You were about to say something.

Rose: Was I? What?

Phil: Something about Roy Kenilworth.

Rose: Kenilworth isn't his name. His name is phoney like everything else about him.

Phil: That's what's been at the back of your mind all the time, that stuff about Kenilworth. Hasn't it? (Operators 9)

As Williams continued to rework Sweet Bird, he decided that he would not include an actual meeting between these two charcters. Had such a meeting taken place, one speculates whether the character of Heavenly Finley would have been as harsh as she appears in the following section of dialogue which is a continuation of the previously quoted conversation:

Rose

> Try to understand that it doesn't matter. It's all a part of some other world that I lived in which doesn't exist anymore. I fooled away a lot of my young life believing in your lies, in you, in your phoney soap- bubble which has now burst. Your glamor! Your great plans for the future. The talk you've spilled here tonight is like a record played back of talk you spilled here five or six years ago. Only this time you're more elaborate about it and for the first time I see how childish and stupid it is, because you have not gotten anywhere in the world of glamor and you are not going to get anywhere. You are really washed up. You

> can't break into world of glamor and now it's too late for you to become a normal, ordinary person which you should have been satisfied to be in the first place. No, it's too late now. You're too spoiled. You're ruined, you're finished, your hair's falling out. Why, in a year or two more even your looks will be gone and even people like Kenilworth will have no more use for you. He'll say, Phil Beam? Who was he, I don't quite remember the name. Oh, yes. Yes, I do, now. I used to know him, a very god-like young - social misfit with - blond hair that fell out - Where is he now, I wonder? In the scrap-heap? That's right. In the scrap-heap! (Operators 9-10)

This scene is interesting in that it demonstrates Williams's original conception of Rose. Rose's character undergoes numerous transformations, and this short selection portrays a character who is more assertive than Heavenly's final stage reality. In this particular scene she meets with Phil and confronts him with unpleasant realities about himself--his professional and personal failures. Had such a meeting been portrayed in final versions of the play, Heavenly would never have been so uncompromising in her evaluation of her former lover. Of course this particular meeting between these two principal figures never occurs in later versions of Sweet Bird, which is a point some critics view as a weakness of the play. Nevertheless, it is apparent from these early sketches that Williams originally intended that such a meeting would take place and that in this paraticular dramatization of that meeting Rose serves as an assertive dramaatic force. In final versions of Sweet Bird the Princess, rather than the Rose/ Heavenly character, serves as character foil to Chance's character, reading a litany of Chance's professional and personal failures, establishing his.

II. The Second Stage of Development: The Sketches

From the outset, Williams's concept of Sweet Bird of Youth was fragmentary at best. He did not begin writing this play with an outline that overviewed the play's development; its various sections had not been blocked off into possible acts and scenes. Even The Big Time Operators, while blocked into scenes, is so loosely contructed that the scenes are at times incomplete and are not related contextually. The earliest sketches demonstrate Williams's attempts to experiment with vaguely defined character types, themes, and plot situations. The Tennessee Williams Collection of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin includes a series of fragmentary sketches that mark the beginning stages of Williams' writing process. These sketches are significant in that they allow us to understand the play's original conception, the elements of character, setting, and theme, and the expressionist devices that were included in rudimentary form in these early sketches and later developed. For the sake of convenience, these sketches can be divided into three groups that are each concerned with the development of particular characters: 1) sketches that portray Boss Finley, 2) sketches that portray Phil Beam (later Chance Wayne), and 3) sketches that portray the Princess. Williams's sketches are scenic in that they most often place one of these characters in a scene in which his/her character is revealed through a past involvement in the events of town life. Often, such sketches do not clarify the actual nature of what has occurred in an undefined past. Instead, the sketches portray various characters reacting to circumstances that allow the playwright to discover the dramatic value of his characters.

In discussing the development of Sweet Bird in "The Troubled Flight of

Tennessee Willliams's Sweet Bird From Manuscript through Published Texts," Drewey Wayne Gunn identifies three separate groups of sketches that contain distinct characters and themes. This particular series of sketches contributes little to Sweet Bird's final dramatic reality other than giving the prototypes for Chance Wayne, the Princess, and the Boss.

The first group of sketches centers around the figure of Boss Finley, a tyrannical southern politician who reflects the prejudice of the Old South. One set of sketches portrays the Boss's loss of control over his henchmen with whom he had been involved in unspecified illegal traffic. In yet another sketch of this series, he suffers from cancer of the larynx which hemorrhages while he delivers a campaign speech. Another set explores the effect of Boss Finley's political career on his daughter, whose character was also the subject of much exploration on the part of Williams. In fact, her name is frequently changed at this point of the play's development, but she most frequently is called Rose. Williams was also uncertain of her character- ization, since she is variously portrayed as innocent and undefiled and as corrupt and manipulative as her father. Another set of sketches explores the Boss's difficulties with his mistress. She is also sometimes called Rose but at other times Candy. Eventually Williams settled on the more familiar Miss Lucy whose character finally evolved from this earlier prototype. In one of these scenic sketches Miss Lucy is celebrating New Year's Eve alone while the Boss attends an important political function in the company of his wife. The sketch is a monologue in which the Miss Lucy laments her dubious position on New Year's Eve while her monologue is interrupted by the Boss's radio speech. Frequently, these sketches

of the mistress portray her attraction to Phil Beam. Phil Beam is a character whose background varies from sketch to sketch but is most often said to be a boxer. Several of these playlets conclude with a confrontation between the Boss and Phil Beam outside a cheap motel; the confrontation is reported in the newspsapers and threatens the ruin of the Boss (Gunn 27).

A second series of sketches largely concerns the introduction of Phil Beam, a failed actor who has returned to his hometown to see his former girlfriend. Phil Beam is sophisticated, charming, good looking, but jaded by his experiences as a gigolo. His good looks are quickly fading, and he is concerned with his receding hairline. His girlfriend, alternately named Rose, Rosemary, Rose Margaret, Mary Louise, Delphine, and Valerie Finley, is delicate and terribly vulnerable. Always dressed in black, she is overcome with grief because of the death of her fiance and of the loss of her innocence. Her previous relationship with Phil Beam had resulted in her contracting gonorreha and subsequently undergoing a hysterectomy. Following the death of her fiance, a navy pilot, she wanted to enter a nunnery as a way of putting the past behind her. In other versions, George Scudder, her doctor, intervened to assist her. Most often these early drafts end in violence to Phil Beam who is at times knocked out by her brother, killed by a policeman, or dismembered by Mrs. Finley in retaliation for her daughter's operation. While Phil Beam most often becomes the victim in these situations, in one version he does pull out a revolver and force Rose to return to the same cheap motel where she had first contracted venereal disease as a result of her sexual contact with him (Gunn 28).

The third set of sketches involves the character of the Princess whose textual

history is more varied than any of the characters. In one of these sketches, she is Mrs. Pazmezoglu, whose wealth is derived from oil and who is picked up by Phil Beam. Nevertheless, her most early incarnation is as a man named Artemis Pazmezoglu and sometimes alternately referred to as Irving and of course as Maximus Pazmezoglu in The Big Time Operators. He is a somewhat overweight man frequently referred to as "Plump Mister," who has Hollywood connections. Various drafts portray him as seeking anonymity in a remote, small-town setting where Phil seeks him out for advice regarding his unsuccessful acting career. But in the most revealing draft, Artemis has picked up Phil in Miami and has fallen in love with him even though he says that it is a nonphysical attraction (Gunn 28-29).

Likewise, Vivienne Dickson's "A Streetcar Named Desire: Its Development through the Manuscripts" suggests Williams's use of sketches as a means of generating the dramatic elements for his drama. Dickson describes the tentative beginning stages of the the writing of A Streetcar Named Desire:

> The play that was to become Streetcar was not written from a solid outline that needed only to be fleshed out and revised to take its final form. The earliest drafts show the Williams started with little more than a basic situation in mind: an unmarried teacher visitng her younger sister and borther-in-law meets a prospective husband. The teacher is more refined and delicate than her sister, but her looks are fading, and she and her family are conscious that she has one last chance of avoiding a lonely future as a single woman. From this initial situation, Williams explored the possible complications, making false starts and rejecting many resolutions, but always returning to the original idea with something salvaged from the discarded material--an image, a few lines of dialogue, or a refinement of character or plot. (Dickson 154-55)

Similarly, these first sketches of Sweet Bird demonstrate the elemental dramatic situations and character types as Williams origially conceived them. In these sketches, the characters seem separate entities that have not yet been subsumed into an integrated construction that explains their dramatic relationships.

In one of the earliest of these sketches entitled the "Drug-store Scene," Phil has just returned to the town of Meridian on the Gulf Coast with another man referred to as Irving. Over a cup of coffee, Phil explains to his companion his apprehensions concerning his return to Meridian and the danger the previous night when Phil drove to the town in a drunken state. In the following dialogue, Phil explains to Irving his anxiety about his propensity toward suicide:

> Because I was just not drunk. I was piss-eyed drunk (pissed to the ears) and not only that but I didn't give a good god whether I stayed on the road or not. I didn't even try to. Cause I knew that what I was doing was suicide. Coming back here was suicide. (1)

Phil's past relationship with the people in the town of Meridian causes him to believe that his return to the town may have dire consequences for him personally. In the following dialogue Williams attempts to suggest the reasons for Phil's apprehension about his return to Meridian and links with past and present:

> I had a reason. Some unfinished business here. Her name is Rose and her father is Boss around here. Now I have told you a lot. But I'll tell you one thing more. Get the rut out of here because when I come the place is not for me and anyone with me. (1-2)

In this sketch can be seen the introduction of the circumstances that link Phil with Rose and the Boss. Of course, the precise circumstances that link these characters are merely suggested here. Although Phil tells Irving that he has confided a great deal to him, he has in reality told him very little. He says that unfinished business has brought him back to Meridian, but the exact nature of his return remains nebulous and undefined.

Another strand included in this sketch tells of Phil's exploits with a girl ,on the previous night, and it is revealed that men have been subsequently looking for Phil as a result of these events. Interestingly, the previous night's exploits are sexual in nature, but the exact circumstances surrounding the events are more implied than real. In the following dialogue character names are not specifically designated, but it is obvious that the dialogue is spoken by Phil and Irving:

> ---Where you been, Phil?
> ---I took my girl out to the country.
> ---She wanted to go in the country?
> ---No I don't think she did. But she went anyhow.
> ---What method of persuasion did you use?
> ---This.
> ---Oh. I guess that explains the call.
> ---Call?
> ---Yes. Some men have been looking for you, Phil.
> ---So.
> ---They said they were going to wait downstairs in the lobby.
> ---You didn't see them?
> ---No.
> ---It was only, I'd say, then minutes ago, the last time they dropped in. (6)

Phil's method of persuasion, referred to in the above quote, is the bottle he is holding. Although it is not made entirely clear in the sketch itself, it is clear from later versions

of the play that the girl is in all probability Boss Finley's daughter Heavenly even though the girl is alternately referred to here as Mary Louise and Rose. Also, judging from Sweet Bird's later development, the men who have come searching for Phil are the Boss's henchmen, although this, too, is only implicit. It is also implied rather than stated that they have come to Phil's hotel room to castrate him for his sexual liaison with the girl the night before.

In fact, the arrival of the men is preceded by a visit from the girl, and it is she who suggests the real reason for their coming to Phil's room. The stage directions indicate that there is a knock at the door. Again, the dialogue with undesignated speakers involves Phil, Irving, the girl, one of the henchmen, and a nurse:

---Phil.
---The girl!
---Oh, she was here, too.
---Phil.
---Open the door for the girl, will you, Irving?
---I--
---Go on! Open it up!
(He does. She enters folowed by the doctor and three men and a nurse)
---Hello, Mary Louise.
---I told them you'd come back to the hotel.
---Well, you were right about that.
---They thought you'd run away but I had a hunch that you wouldn't.
---Your hunch was right. I'm here.
---You know what's up, don't you, Phil?
---(Nods)
---No objection?
---(Shakes his head.)
---I just thought I'd ask as a matter of form. We can use this table, Miss Fenton. Phil, you want to get into this.
(Phil-Irving sketch 4-5)

In this early version, the girl is asked to remain to witness the castration, although she declines and chooses to remain instead in the hall with Irving. The sketch fails to completely explicate Phil's past relationship with the girl because Williams himself was no doubt unsure of his intentions as a playwright. Perhaps the most interesting element of this early sketch is the inclusion of the character of Irving/Artimis whose homosexuality is intended to be a major plot element. Irving is frequently referred to as the "Plump Mister" and intends to remain with Phil because he has become attracted to him. It is also revealed that Phil, as the previous night's trade, was probably responsible for rolling Irving for fifty bucks and a wrist watch. Irving intends to remain with Phil until he recovers the lost items but also, as the following dialogue indicates, because he cares for Phil:

> --- ....I have become attracted to you.
> --- Look. The trade turns people to detachment.
> --- Oh, no, it doesn't. Just one person without any encouragement whatsoever can form an a attachment strong enough and endure a lifetime. I have fallen in love with you, Phil. Don't misunderstand me. My love is sentimental and even romantic, but not fleshly, not carnal. I am past all that. But you, my dear young man, have touched my heart, and I'm not going to desert you.... (Phil-Irving sketch 2-3)

The nature of Irving's attachment for Phil is an element that appears in other early manuscripts in which the Irving character is renamed Artemis. Williams apparently realized early on that such a relationship, essentially unconventional, would limit the play's commercial value. The discovery that the Princess was originally a man and that some of his characteristics are later included in Irving's/Art's female counterpart should

refuel the critical stance that contends that no homosexual writer can depict a real woman. In another brief sketch of one page which remains unnamed, Phil returns to town and meets with his former girlfriend, who is at this point named Mary Louise. Mary Louise stands behind a screen door during this scene and refuses to allow Phil entrance. When she continues to find reasons not to have contact with him, Phil finally asks why. Mary Louise asks, "You mean you don't know why?" and Phil responds, "No. I don't understand why everyone in this town treats me like a leper now" (unnamed Phil Beam sketch 1). This brief scene which demonstrates the antipathy between Phil and Mary Louise anticipates the conflict that becomes a part of the dramatic tension of the final Sweet Bird. Here the surrounding circumstances remain undefined and do not even suggest the sexual nature of their past relationship. The scene concludes with the situation still unresolved:

> ---Why did you come back?
> ---To see you again. But not through a screen door.
> ---You should not have come back.
> ---I had to see you again.
> ---This time was once too often. (Phil sketch 1)

The final version of Sweet Bird has often been criticized because it does not include a scene that portrays the actual reunion of Chance Wayne and Heavenly Finley, but a close analysis of the manuscripts demonstrates that such a meeting was part of Williams's original plan for the play.

In yet another set of sketches, Willliams explores the character of the Boss, linking him with another political figure named Pere. In several of these sketches, Pere

seems the more dominant character, since he has already attained political prominence, and the Boss, who runs the political machine, appears to protect Pere's political interests. As the idea for the play evolves, the character of Pere is of course eliminated, but it is obvious from the Williams manuscripts that Pere was originally intended as a major figure in the drama. It also appears that, as Williams continued to experiment with these characters, the political theme took a secondary position to themes associated with Phil/Chance, Rose/Heavenly, and the Princess. As a result, it seems that Williams represented political issues through the character of the Boss and the henchmen. In reading these early sketches in which Pere appears, it seems more than likely that Pere's character may have been incorporated into the Boss's character so that the Boss's character may actually have been a composite representation of varying political attitudes. In one of these unnamed sketches, dialogue between Pere and Gladys Millbank, now Mrs. Polk, reveals their previous marriage. The scene apparently takes place while Pere is in bed with Gladys, and, according to stage directions, she "turns down the course blanket and puts her hands on his bare shoulders" (Pere sketch 1).

Gladys: Pere-- your skin is so smooth...
Pere: --Huh?
Gladys: ---And such a--muscular--torso...
(SHE PULLS DOWN THE BLANKET DOWN FURTHER WITH HER CARESSING FINGERS.)
Pere: --Huh...
Gladys: Pere, I've changed. I'm a mature woman now. I feel differently toward you.
Pere: On our wedding night you kicked me in the nuts and you nearly scratched out my eyeballs.
Gladys: But you made love to me, Pere.
Pere: I raped you, and all of them other five times I slept with you was the same then, legal rape.

Gladys: It could be different now.
Pere: Now is too late. Gladys, I don't have any desire for you now. So put your gloves back on.
Gladys: I know. You prefer the company of colored harlots.
Pere: I prefer the company of women.
Gladys: (Sighing gently) And your attitude toward our son. I don't suppose that can change either. --You told me you didn't want to see him again as long as he had his curls and the little velvet trousers. Well, Pere-- (Pere sketch 1-2)

The dialogue between Pere and his wife suggests a relationship that functions in no meaningful way. Later, as the play develops and situations align more closely with the play's final version, the relationship between Boss Finley and his dying wife shows remarkable similarities to the relationship portrayed in this sketch. Just as there is the suggestion of other women in this sketch, there is also the presence of Miss Lucy in final versions of Sweet Bird to underscore the Boss's infidelity while retaining the facade of small-town respectability. Although Pere was completely eliminated in final versions of Sweet Bird, in retrospect he is interesting because he demonstrates Williams's preliminary writing method, both exploratory and improvisational in nature. William creates sketches that are like the individual pieces in a puzzle that must be placed in a coherent dramatic configuration. Likewise, if a character such as Pere is eliminated from final versions, he may then reappear in composite form in another character, in this case the Boss. In another sketch using the same principal figures of Pere and Gladys, the Boss makes a brief, obligatory appearance. This scene is interesting not only because of Pere's callousness but also because of his attitude toward his son. Pere's attitude must surely have had its origins in Williams's own childhood experience in which he was considered

effeminate and was subsequently ostracized by neighborhood children who regarded him as a "sissy":

> Pere: Oh, is that my wife? You mean the woman that shares the executive mansion with me?
> Gladys: (Rising) Pere...
> (SHE CROSSES AND SITS DOWN A BIT GINGERLY ON THE EDGE OF THE COT.)
> (BOSS FINLEY GOES OUTSIDE.)
> Pere: How is the kid?
> Gladys: Your son misses you, Pere.
> Pere: That's unlikely.
> Gladys: In your mind you have branded him as sissy, and that's what's come between you.
> Pere: Does he still have all those velvet knee britches?
> Gladys: He's an adorable little fellow. You musn't hold that against him. But you do. You resent the fact that he--resembles his mother... (Pere sketch 2)

While this exact situation does not find its way into the final versions of Sweet Bird, the relationship between the Boss and Tom Junior also reflects tensions between father and son. Although Tom Junior is not criticized for being effeminate, the Boss has little regard for his son, whom he blames for his own political setbacks. Notice the similarities between the sketch which reflects Pere's attitude, and the attitude depicted in the following scene from the completed Sweet Bird. Of course, in this scene the Boss denigrates Tom Junior because of what he considers lack of political savvy and also condemns Aunt Nonnie for favoring Chance Wayne:

> Boss: ....It's a curious thing, a mighty peculiar thing, how often a man that rises to high public office is drug back down by every soul he harbors under his roof. He harbors

them under this own roof, and they pull the roof down on him. Every last living one of them.
Tom Junior: Does that include me, Papa?
Boss: If the shoe fits, put it on you.
Tom Junior: How does that shoe fit me?
Boss: If it pinches your foot, just slit it down the sides a little--it'll feel comfortable on you.
Tom Junior: Papa, you are UNJUST.
Boss: What do you want credit for?
Tom Junior: I have devoted the past year to organizin' the 'Youth for Tom Finley' clubs.
Boss: I'm carryin' Tom Finley Junior on my ticket.
Tom Junior: You're lucky to have me on it.
Boss: How do you figure I'm lucky to have you on it?
Tom Junior: I got more newspaper coverage in the last six months than...
Boss: Once for drunk drivin, once for a stag party you thrown in Capitol City that cost me five thousand dollars to hush it up!
Tom Junior: You are so unjust, it...
Boss: And everyone knows you had to be drove through school like a blazeface mule puttin' a plow uphill: flunked out of college with grades that only a moron would have an excuse for. (SB 63-64)

This scene seems an outgrowth of the scene in which Pere discusses his young son with equal contempt.

In another sketch, dialogue involves both the Boss and a man named Otto, who has always admired Pere and thinks that his involvement with the Boss's political machine has compromised Pere's true potential. Here Otto and the Boss demonstrate the power struggle for control of Pere and the aggressive qualities of the Boss:

Otto: I want to help Pere. I think I want to save him and I think that I can. He's

been a hero of mine since I was a kid and he spoke to the town I was born in. I thought he had a greatness about him, then. And then I was disillusioned. And then I began to think I saw it again, the greatness he used to have before you - got holt of him. (Boss and Otto sketch 1)

The Boss is obviously concerned that he will lose control of his political machine by allowing Pere his independence. He insists that he be allowed to read the speech that Otto has written for Pere, but Otto refuses, indicating that Pere always has the first opportunity to read what he has written:

Otto: Sorry, but I'm showing it, first, to Pere.
Boss: You're showing it first to me. I read all Pere's speeches before he speaks'em.
Otto: My understanding with him was otherwise.
Boss: Rut that! Show me the speech!
Otto: Sorry.
Boss: Don't 'sorry' me, Jew Boy!
Otto: I don't happen to belong to the minority you mention.
Boss: You're a little Jew carpet-bagger with red ideas you want to put in Pere's mouth. I know what you're up to. I'm on to you. Don't give me no crap. Break out the speech, I'm going to check it over.
Otto: You will check over nothing I've written for Pere. (Boss and Otto sketch 1)

The power struggle between the Boss and Otto leave strong impressions of both men, although it is the Boss who will become the more significant character in the final version of Sweet Bird. Oddly, when looking at this scene in its entirety, the Boss plays a role that is insignificant when compared with the role given Otto and Pere. Nevertheless, sketches

such as this one offer us our first glimpses of Boss Finley, as a ruthless, bigoted man who already understands the use of power.

III. The Third Stage of Development: The Enemy: Time

In March of 1959, Williams agreed to the publication of a piece entitled The Enemy: Time which was said to be "the one- act play that became Sweet Bird of Youth." This rather short version of the play appeared in the Theatre and seems to contrast with other manuscripts of the play produced in the same time period.

In fact, the manuscript version is dated the spring of 1956, indicating that it was indeed written several years prior to its 1959 publication. Many of the other pieces produced during this time were much longer and characters had begun to exhibit characteristics similar to the final version of Sweet Bird. In this one-act version called The Enemy: Time, Williams portrays a meeting between Rose/Heavenly and PhilBeam/Chance Wayne. The dialogue between them demonstrates, as do the previous sketches, that they had known each other previously. The meeting dramatized here reveals a past sexual relationship that has resulted in Rose's contracting venereal disease and subsequently undergoing an operation in which she was sterilized, although these short sketches do not reveal the exact nature of their previous relationship. In a conversation between the two former lovers, Rose reveals to Phil the consequences of their past sexual involvement:

> Rose: Well, I'm not talking about your struggle.
> I am talking about the last time you came
> home and we resumed our relations. Well,

when you left I was--
Phil: What?
Rose: Sick.
Phil: You mean you--?
Rose: I mean I was sick! Sick! S-I-C-K! Sick!
(She faces him fiercely through the screen door.) Now go away! I've told you! If you somehow didn't know it before, you know now!
Phil: Rose? Rose, darling? Rose?
Rose: (In a fierce whisper.) I didn't know what it was, I'd never heard of it till I got it from you, you rotten phoney.
Phil: What, Rose? What, for God's sake, what, what!?
Rose: A social disease: that's called by a 4 letter word. (ET 16)

This confrontation that brings past and present into clearer focus never occurs in final versions of the play. In fact, Sweet Bird's failure to supply such a scene is considered by some to be a serious flaw. In Enemy this confrontation becomes the central focus of this brief version of the play.

In this version of Enemy, Princess Pazmezoglu (later renamed Princess Kosmonopolis) is a legendary silent screen star better known as Delores Del La Costa (later renamed Alexandra del Lago). Although she is mentioned in dialogue throughout the first half of this one-act play, she remains an offstage presence until she finally makes an appearance during the last several minutes of the play. According to the character description Williams provides, Princess Pazmezoglu would certainly have been an arresting figure:

(A large heavy figure appears: She is best described as a very rich old Gypsy whose dress is a bizarre compromise between the Orient, or Levantine, and the West.

(Gems glitter wherever they can. Her eye- lids are painted blue. Despite the hot night, she wears a silver mink stole and her black slippers have big rhinestone buckles.) (ET 17)

Her appearance at this point in the play is of little consequence, since the purpose of her arrival is to inquire as to Phil's whereabouts. The appearance of the Princess only confirms in Rose's mind the reality of what Phil has become. In other words, as portrayed in this early version, the Princess Pazmezoglu is merely ornamental and in reality serves little purpose; her appearance is not really necessary in this version and seems to intrude on the dramatic sensibilities of the play itself. As anyone who is familiar with the development of the play would readily acknowledge, the role of the Princess is significantly expanded in final versions of the play.

While the Princess does not reach her full potential in this early version, a portion of the dialogue near the conclusion of Enemy does illustrate the beginning of the Phil-Princess relationship. Here the Princess is speaking to Rose:

Rose: You're Princess Pazmezoglu and you used to be a silent film star. You quit movies when the talkies came in.
Woman (Princess): I'm going to sit down. Yes. I did retire. Because of my accent, but not until after I'd made a couple of million that's well invested. I found Phil Beam on a beach in Florida. He was was rubbing oil in the bodies of fat millionaires. I was one of the bodies that he rubbed oil into. (laughs sadly) He did this well, I employed him. He'll have a future with me as long as he toes the line, but he's got to toe it. I don't put up with nonsense. I know the power of money. I have that power... (ET 17)

While there are minor differences in narrative detail between this early version and later

versions of Sweet Bird, the basis of the characters of the Phil and the Princess has begun to be formulated early in the writing process. The imperious Princess and Phil's gigolo status are evident in the early sketches in which the Princess had been portrayed as a man. The themes of decadence and narcissism as seen in the characters of Phil and the Princess are more graphically drawn as the play develops.

In this early version of Sweet Bird, Williams included the lamentation, an expressionistic device calculated to complement the dramatic tone of purposelessness. Williams indicates in his stage directions the use of this device: "The play begins with a sound: a sort of wordless lamentation that drifts across the summer night air and dies" (ET 140). This use of the lamentation is also included in later versions of the play, as well as in the early Enemy version.

In addition, the theme of time surfaces in both the early Enemy as well as the later Sweet Bird. Although handled a bit differently in later versions, stage directions for Enemy indicate the presence of "a big grandfather clock with a smiling moon-face dial on the stair landing" that is "lighted." The following quote from Enemy illustrates an obsession with the insidiousness of time:

> Phil: You know, the big enemy's time? Time's
> the big enemy, Rose...
> (Turns from clock: but stays on landing
> in soft light.)
> Not any foreign power, just time. The
> one big enemy of everything that exists!
> --the source of corruption...
> Rose: Yes.
> Phil: And yet they make enormous clocks for houses,
> clocks as tall as a man or half a head taller
> and put them on a stair-landing so they look

down over the livingroom of the house and say,
"tick-tick, you're dying...' Not shouting,
not raising a rumpus, just saying, 'tick-
tick, you're dying yes, in a whisper, like
some bitchy, gossipy old lady, 'tick, tick,
tick, tick, tick, tick,' just tick, one syllable
for one second that won't come again, and
that's more important than anything anyone human
can say or think of. Slow dynamite! A gradual
explosion!--blasting the whole universe
to--rotten--pieces... (ET 16)

The element of time seems ominous to Phil, who depends on preserving youth from the effect of time. The New Directions version of Sweet Bird published in 1959 includes time as a dominant image as it is reflected in the lives of both Chance and the Princess whose very existences seem to depend on their ability to slow time . One scene in Act III of Sweet Bird parallels the previously quoted scene between Phil and Rose and demonstrates how a thematic element such as this can be adapted and transposed for purposes other than the one originally intended. In the previous quote, the dialogue reflects Phil's thoughts about the effects of time while Rose remains virtually silent. But in the later version of Sweet Bird, the dialogue takes place between Chance and the Princess, whose interest in the topic is as intense as Chance's. As a result, the Princess plays an interactive role rather than the passive role Rose played in the previous version:

Chance: Princess, the age of some people
can only be calculated by the
level of--level of--rot in them.
And by that measure I'm ancient.

Later the conversation resumes.

Chance: No, listen. I didn't know there was

a clock in this room.
Princess: I guess there's a clock in every
room people live in...
Chance: It goes tick-tick, it's quieter than
your heartbeat, but it's slow dynamite,
a gradual explosion, blasting the world
we lived in to burnt-out pieces...
Time--who could beat it, who could defeat
it ever? Maybe some saints and heroes,
but not Chance Wayne. I lived on some-
thing, that--time?
Princess: Yes, time.
Chance: ....Gnaws away, like a rat gnaws off its
own foot caught in a trap, and then, with
its foot gnawed off and the rat set free,
couldn't run, couldn't go, bled and died...
(The clock ticking fades away.) (SB 122-123)

Here the theme of time is expressionistically portrayed by the inclusion of sound effects that illustrate the presence of time in the lives of Chance and the Princess. As stage directions indicate, circumambient time is expressed as "The sound of a clock ticking is heard, louder and louder" (SB 123). As a result, there is no mention of an actual clock in the stage directions of the New Directions version of Sweet Bird.

Similarly, neither the stage directions, set diagrams, nor the prop listings in the Dramatists Play Service version of Sweet Bird published in 1962 make mention of the physical presence of a clock in this scene. In later versions of Sweet Bird, the thematic concern with time has become more intimately connected with character development and is therefore more effectively presented through expressionistic devices rather than through the actual inclusion of an onstage clock as in The Enemy: Time.

Another of the similarities between this early version of Enemy and subsequent versions of Sweet Bird is the revenge which is directed at the character of Phil/Chance.

The revenge sequence occurs at the conclusion of both versions. In Enemy, Chris, later renamed Tom Junior, appears to rectify the damage done to his sister Rose. Phil willingly submits to his fate, which is to go with Chris to the basement where he is beaten up. Onstage a muffled cry is heard to indicate this the act of revenge is being carried out. Both early and later versions of Sweet Bird portray the Phil/Chance character as undergoing physical abuse. Enemy portrays Phil rising "up to his feet, his face, bloody" (ET 7). Because the Princess describes the nature of the offstage violence, the audience and the town alike are made aware of Phil's humiliation. The Princess says: "Phil? Phil! There's people on porches up and down the block looking at you, you know. I am going to drive back to the hotel in my car..." (ET 17) This concluding scene of physical abuse and public humiliation is less severe than the conclusion of final versions in which Chance awaits the approach of the Boss's henchmen who intend to castrate him. Again, the action is performed offstage and takes on a more symbolic meaning than the mere fight between Phil and Chris. Another element that appears both in Enemy and later in final versions of Sweet Bird concerns Phil/Chance's failure to achieve the success he has sought. Rose echoes these sentiments to Phil in Enemy:

> Rose: A couple of times, I guess, you almost made the grade but somehow you always just missed, just barely did miss. Even in our shcool plays you'd know every line word perfect, and yet on the opening night you'd dry up and have to have the lines hissed at you so loud the audience laughed. But everyone liked you, then. And you deserved it, you were so warm to people, you had that wonderful natural sweetness and warmth toward everyone.

> Phil, they all loved you. And took it
> for granted that you would accomplish
> great things. What happened to you?
> What is it, Phil? What made you fall
> out of the sky, such a long way down.
> (ET 15)

Once again, Williams reproduces similar dialogue in the final Sweet Bird as Chance assesses this same quality in himself:

> Chance: I'm not as positive as I once was.
> I've had more chances than I could
> count on my fingers, and made the
> grade almost, but not quite, every
> time. Something always blocks me...
> Princess: What? What? Do you know?
> (He rises. "The Lamentation" is heard
> very faintly.) Fear?
> Chance: No not fear, but terror... otherwise
> would I be your goddam caretaker,
> hauling you across the country?
> Picking you up when you fall?
> Well, would I? Except for that block,
> not anything less than a star? (SB 39-40)

Both Phil of Enemy and Chance of Sweet Bird have a vicarious association with success, enhancing their images by an association with the legendary figure of the Princess, and both characters enhance their images by driving a Cadillac, maintaining at least the trappings of social and material success.

IV. The Fourth Stage: The Studio M Production at Coral Gables

As Donald Spoto indicates in The Kindesss of Strangers, George Keathley, the founding director of the Studio M Playhouse in Coral Gables, Florida, asked Williams if

he had a new play for him to produce. Williams gave Keathley a short one-act play entitled The Enemy: Time to present at this local theatre (Spoto 227). Although Williams gave Keathley this material in 1956, Drewey Wayne Gunn states that it was actually written years earlier, perhaps as early as 1952, and that it was the result of the numerous sketches that preceded this version.

This would be the first theatrical production of what would later become Sweet Bird of Youth. In fact, the manuscript of The Enemy: Time from the Tennessee Williams's Collection suggests, in Williams's handwritten notation, the purpose of this script. Williams notes on the coversheet that it is spring of 1956 and further rewrites "for George Keathley," thus acknowledging Keathley's association with the production. Although the play was evolving from sketch form to playlet form, Williams had typed under the title The Enemy: Time, in parentheses, "3 sketches," which he later crossed out. Even though Williams later referred to Enemy as a sketch, one senses it represents Williams's first attempt to integrate seemingly disparate parts into a unified dramatic whole. Also, acknowledging Enemy's part in the development of the completed Sweet Bird of Youth, Williams additionally noted, "sketch which developed into Sweet Bird of Youth."

As previously mentioned, this 1956 production starred Alan Mixon as Phil and Margrit Wyler as the Princess. The program notes for the Studio M Production offer some evidence of how this incomplete version may have been presented. From the following "Synopsis of Scenes," it can be readily seen that at this point in development it was presented in two acts, rather than the three acts that would eventually evolve in the

completed form:

Part I
- Scene 1 A suite in the Hotel Belvedere
- Scene 2 The same--a few minutes later
- Scene 3 The same--a short while later

Part II
- Scene 1 A Roman Catholic Church
- Scene 2 The Clinic of Thomas J. Finley Hospital
- Scene 3 Breakfast room of Boss Finley's house
- Scene 4 The bar of hotel Belvedere
- Scene 5 The porch of Boss Finley's house
- Scene 6 A speaker's platform
- Scene 7 The suite of the Hotel Belvedere
- Scene 8 The porch

(Leavitt 114)

This scenario is interesting for a number of reasons. The play as outlined in the above notes does not remain faithful to the script that was given to Keathley but rather includes a number of scenes apparently added during the rehearsals. Typically, Williams continued the writing process as the play was being rehearsed, for he was better able to see the play as a stage reality. One of the later versions of the play may more accurately represent what was actually presented on stage at the Studio M Playhouse. For example, a fifty-eight page manuscript entitled Sweet Bird of Youth is essentially a sketch for a long play, incluing many of the elements listed above in the "Synopsis of Scenes." These elements appear in the text as given to Keathley prior to the Studio M production. It is possible that this synopsis, with handwritten directions and crossed-out sections, could be the result of the rewriting process that occurred during the production.

One of the most significant alterations in the stage version of Enemy is in Part

I. In Part I, the action takes place entirely in a suite in the Hotel Belvedere, which suggests that Phil and the Princess are presented in introductory scenes which would have explained their sexual and business arrangements, that is assuming that this dialogue approximates the dialogue of versions that immediately follow this 1956 production.

Also, supporting this contention is Lilla van Saher's misguided conclusion that the Princess's bedroom activities mirrored her own, leading Saher to erroneously conclude that she was indeed the prototype for the character of the Princess. From this evidence, it seems safe to assume that both Part I and Part II of the Studio M production significantly expanded the part of the Princess, making her character and her relationship with Phil a much more prominent part of the production.

In addition, Part II, scene 1, makes mention of "a Roman Catholic Church" as setting for this scene. In this scene, which was no doubt included in this stage interpretation, Rose has a hysterical conversion experience in which she becomes convinced that, while attending chruch, her hysterectomy has been reversed and that she is now pregnant. The scene was later deleted, perhaps because it served little thematic purpose, since the theme of Sweet Bird is more closely analogous to castration and barrenness than to regeneration.

Likewise, Part II, Scene 6, indicates "a speaker's platform" as the setting, suggesting that the rally scene that appears in final versions of Sweet Bird may have had its introduction in the Studio M Playhouse production. Although the Boss had been one of the characters who appeared early in the series of sketches, Williams was often ambivalent about his function as the play developed from the sketch format to the play

format. Williams's intense dislike for the character of the Boss made him apprehensive about the depiction. In fact, Williams agreed with critics who disparaged the character of the Boss and suggested that his character failed to rise above a simple stereotype. Nevertheless, the character of the Boss became fully integrated into the play's structure following its presentation in Florida and was later maintained as a staple in the final version of Sweet Bird.

Williams's involvement in the Coral Gables production was noted by Donald Spoto in his biography of Williams, The Kindness of Strangers. During rehearsals, he worked with George Keathley who later recalled Williams's intensive schedule:

> I found Tennessee Williams in good form in February, Keathley recalled years later. He was very shy, and he seemed to be drinking too much, but he was full of brilliant ideas and charm. We cast the play and set an opening date without any trouble. He took a room at a hotel in Miami, and he came to the house in Key West, where he continued to work before rehearsals were scheduled. (Spoto 228)

Three years later, when Sweet Bird was in rehearsal for its opening at the Martin Beck, Williams's collaboration with director Elia Kazan would demonstrate once again how crucial direct involvement was to Williams's writing process.

The playbill of the Coral Gables production also included commentary by Williams in which he aptly describes the process of writing that has led him to this stage in the development of Sweet Bird:

> The stages in the making of a play are long and devious, as a rule, but on this occasion they have short-cut much more than a little. By grace of unusual circumstances at least a

> year's work has been condensed into the space of a few weeks. What you are seeing tonight is the production of the first draft of a play, something that ordinarily I would only dare to show to my literary agent, and even then with grave trepidations; it is a work in progress. If it is now in a state that's fit to be exposed to the public, that fact is credible to the stimulating faith and daring, to the quick imagination and insight, of its director and to his players' gifts, including their patience. All the while this work has been in rehearsal, it has also been undergoing continual changes in dialogue and structure, even in basic theme and interpretation of character. At times Studio M has looked more like a printing press than a theatre, with its actors looking like a group of dazed proof-readers. I doubt that they will get the script out of their hands more than a day or two before dress-rehearsals. All of this has been very hard on them: it has been of enormous value to me. I hope it is a precedent, not just one adventure. This description of unique circumstances is not an attempt to disarm criticism. You will naturally judge this play as a completed work, and give it no special indulgence because it has been described to you as a work in progress. At the same time, you may feel a sense of collabor- ation with us in the first making of something which is still being made.
>
> Gratefully,
>
> Tennessee Williams
>
> Miami, April, 1956
>
> (Leavitt 114)

Perhaps, with the exception of Lilla van Saher, who identified herself with the Princess, this first stage production of Sweet Bird was unnerving to a number of people in the audience who were shocked at a play about an aging actress who fills her empty hours with a young lover, alcohol, and a variety of drugs somewhat jarring (Spoto 230). Nevertheless, as Williams's indicates in the "Author's Note," his involvement in the

Florida production allowed him the opportunity to re-evaluate the written material and to make alterations during rehearsals. For Williams, this was a necessary step in the creative process as well as a necessary part in his writing process.

Chapter 3 The Tennessee Williams Manuscripts Reflect Williams's Revision Process and the Later Development of Sweet Bird of Youth

Continued study of the Williams writing process traces the character and thematic links in these early sketches with dramatically realized final version of the play Sweet Bird.

I. The Relationship Between Early Sketches and Later Manuscripts

While Williams's writing process involved a continual reworking of material, it is also clear from the manuscripts that many of the ideas for Sweet Bird were included in the very early versions of the play. However rudimentary the early sketches of Sweet Bird may seem to those who have read the later versions of the play, it is obvious, upon reviewing the early manuscripts, that many of the dramatic elements that appear in the final version were actually present in these early sketches. Although these elements are scattered and removed from a unified dramatic structure, they are nevertheless present in some isolated form in the earliest stages of the play's development. Included in these early sketches are two central dramatic elements essential to Sweet Bird in all phases of its development. For example, the political maneuverings of Pere, Otto, and the Boss in the earliest sketches foreshadow the political involvements of Boss Finley in the completed Sweet Bird. In addition, the first sketches of the play include the central figures of Phil/Chance and Rose/Heavenly whose past romantic involvement remains unresolved even upon Phil's return to St. Cloud. These early sketches present the two characters in an experimental format that involves innumerable accounts of their past relationship. Because the early accounts of these characters are so removed from the

accounts included in the final versions of Sweet Bird, they seem sometimes barely recognizable.

In addition to the figures of the Boss, Phil, and Rose, early sketches of the play include the figure of Paz/Artimus as the Hollywood agent who has returned with Phil to a small town as his mentor and agent. Later of course his character is altered and the Hollywood agent becomes Princess Kosmonopolis, the aging film star. Nevertheless, the situation concerning a Hollywood figure and Phil's own aspirations to become a recognized Hollywood figure are included in these early sketches.

Both Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time, early versions of Sweet Bird, also include elements easily recognized in the final versions of the play. These elements include the Cadillac convertible, Phil's loss of hair, the emasculation of a black man, the clock and the theme of the passage of time, the return of a small town, the sexual pasts of Phil and Rose, the theme of corruption and rot, the use of interior monolouge as a method of drramatic presentation, Rose's illness and sexual exploitation, the Miss Lucy figure, the reference to Paz/ Artemis and later to the Princess as Plump Mister/ Plump Lady, and the theme of castration.

The manuscripts that reflect Williams's writing process in the final stages of Sweet Bird's development include both manuscripts from the Tennessee Williams Collection at the University of Texas at Austin and later published versions of the play. Most significant to the play's development were the versions that resulted from the Coral Gables production of Sweet Bird. These of course include the Sweet Bird of Youth (a sketch for a long play) which illustrates the play's latter stage of development, beyond

the script given to director George Keathley. More significantly, the script marked "first draft" and dated May 1956 includes all of the scenes present in the stage production at Coral Gables. This "first draft" represents the play's most significant advancement and demonstrates the greatest number of similarities to the play's final dramatic realization.

Later work on Sweet Bird is represented by two manuscripts dated April of 1958 that include further technical refinements prior to the rehearsals of the play for its Broadway opening. These versions include emendations that demonstrate the revision of particular acts and scenes that presented problems for the play's dramatic structure. In order to compare and contrast these preliminary versions with the final production script of Sweet Bird, it is necessary to refer to the New Directions edition of the play published in 1959. This version is either the script as it was actually presented at the Martin Beck or very close to that script. Interestingly, the Lincoln Center Library for the Dramatic Arts houses the actual scripts used in various Broadway productions. These scripts typically include handwritten indications concerning alterations in the original script. In the case of Sweet Bird, the Lincoln Center Library does not include a rehearsal script in its collection. Instead, the library has a typed script marked Two Rivers Enterprises (1959), the same script published in 1959 by New Directions. In addition to the New Directions version of Sweet Bird, other versions of the play that also demonstrate its later development are the Esquire version, which was never published, and the Dramatists Play Service version published in 1961 for touring companies.

II. Sweet Bird as a "sketch for a long play"

The following section details the evolution of the early Sweet Bird draft called "sketch for a long play" and illustrates how this early version contributed to the play's dramatic evolution.

The Coral Gables production the Sweet Bird of Youth produced an incomplete fifty-six page "sketch for a long play" and the play's "first draft." The "sketch" was incomplete in that a number of crucial scenes in final versions of the play were not yet included. The "first draft," on the other hand, includes all of the scenes outlined in the playbill for this early production and is dated May 1956. The original script of The Enemy: Time was probably given to director George Keathley in January 1956 while rehearsals for the play began in March, and the actual opening of the play was on April 16, 1956 (Spoto 227-229). The manuscript annotated "first draft" and dated May 1956 is in all probability a reworking of the script used for the production presented at the Studio M. The "first draft" version of the play includes several typewritten annotations that indicate the typist is to "follow Studio M script here." Of course the implication is that parts of the Studio M script were retained in the "first draft" version and that the Studio M script and the "first draft" are not the same document.

Additionally, both the "first draft" version and the "sketch for a long play" include for the first time the epigraph Williams continues to include in subsequent versions of Sweet Bird. The epigraph for Sweet Bird is the last two lines of a poem by Hart Crane entitled "Legend":

> As silent as a mirror is believed Realities plunge in silence
> by ... I am not ready for repentance; Nor to match regrets.
> For the moth Bends no more than the still Imploring flame.
> And tremorous In the white falling flakes Kisses are,-- The

> only worth all granting. It is to be learned -- This cleaving and this burning, But only by the one who Spends out himself again. Twice and twice (Again the smoking souvenir, Bleeding eidolon!) and yet again. Until the bright logic is won Unwhispering as a mirror Is believed. Then, drop by caustic drop, a perfect cry Shall string some constant harmony, -- Relentless caper for all those who step The legend of their youth into the noon. (Modern Verse... 427)

This poem from which Williams exerpted the epigraph for Sweet Bird suggests the passage of youth and the speaker's reluctance to submit to that reality. This denial of reality persists despite what the mirror records, and the speaker continues pursue his youth, "twice and twice" until he recognizes that youth is now past. This poem appropriately reflects the central theme of Sweet Bird.

Unlike The Enemy: Time that precedes it, the "sketch for a long play" focuses on the bedroom of a hotel suite on the Mississippi Gulfcoast, later revealed as the Belvedere Bayshore Hotel in the town of Belvedere. As in later versions of Sweet Bird, the emphasis of the play's opening, set in a hotel suite that reflects Victorian architecture with Oriental or Moorish influence and a bizarre sitting-alcove of Turkish influence, is now centered on Phil's relationship with traveling companion Princess Pazmezoglu. Also in this scene Phil's past is revealed through dialogue with a hotel service employee designated as "Negro," later named Fly, and dialogue between Phil and George Scudder.

The "sketch for a long play" is not divided into acts but rather is divided into six scenes that demonstrate the play's narrative progression:

Scene 1 Opening scene in the hotel suite in which Phil is revealed in dialoguewith a Negro hotel employee and laterwith George Scudder.
Scene 2 A continuation of the previous scene,but with emphasis on the relation-ship between Phil and the Princess.
Scene 3 A breakfast table in a well-to-do house where Rose/ Rosemary and the Boss are introduced.
Scene 4 The cocktail lounge of the Belvedere Bayshore Hotel. In this scene Phil isrevealed through the dialouge thattakes place with an old acquaintanceand brother of Rose, Freddie.
Scene 5 Aunt Nonnie on the Porch. This scene involves dialouge with Aunt Nonnie and Rose and reveals Rose's impression of Phil based on their past experiences together.
Scene 6 Last scene between Phil and Rose, Phil and Princess, and Phil in a scene alone addressing the audience.

The "sketch" manuscript demonstrates the tentative, experimental nature of the play's contents. X-marks, inserted words and phrases, marginal annotations, and inconsistencies regarding the names of several characters are indications that the sketch was nothing more than a preliminary attempt on Williams's part to develop dramatic elements that lay beneath the surface of the outline.

The "sketch for a long play" is an intermediary manuscript, linking The Enemy: Time and first draft of Sweet Bird. As such, it is unfinished and unpolished, a rough approximation of what it would become. Various sections of the manuscript alternately refer to Rose and Rosemary as the same character, Williams apparently uncertain about the final name designation. In one section the Princess undergoes an interesting transformation and is once again referred to as Artemis, her male counterpart. She is alternately referred to as the Princess or as Artemis, depending on the which page one happens to be reading. This alternating use of the Artemis and Princess character in this

early version of The Enemy: Time is an indication that Williams was just initiating the gender transformation of this character. He was beginning to realize the dramatic potential in creating a female character whose persona could be linked with Artemis but not be restricted by his maleness. The "sketch" fails to develop the dramatic significance of the Princess or Rosemary/ Rose, for that matter. In the case of the Princess, the concluding scene has her make an obligatory entrance and exit in which she tells Phil that he is in danger and must flee immediately:

(THE PRINCESS DRIVES UP BEFORE HOUSE IN A CAB AND COMES URGENTLY DOWN THE AISLE, PANTING FOR BREATH AND CRYING OUT TO HIM.)

I've been all over town for you in a cab. Finally saw my car in front of this house. Come away quick, I've been warned you're in danger. I know what I am, fat, ugly, but we can comfort each other, we can exchange small comforts between us, Phil, dear. Of course we'll be lonely together: but not alone...

Oh!

(A CAR IS HEARD ARRIVING AND THE OMINOUS VOICES OF MEN INTENT ON VIOLENCE.)

(GEORGE SCUDDER COMES ON FIRST, AND SEIZES PHIL'S ARM. THEN ROSE'S BROTHER, AND FINALLY BOSS FINLEY, FLANKED BY TWO HENCHMEN WITH PISTOLS HELD CLOSE TO THEIR SIDES.)

FOLLOW SCRIPT. WHEN ALL GO OFF: ADD THIS. THE PRINCESS ALONE IN A SPOT OF LIGHT ON THE FORESTAGE.)

PRINCESS

The sweet bird of youth has given his nest to a buzzard!

What is it? What's happened? I feel sick and confused... PHIL! PHIL!

(IN RESPONSE IS A CRY OF ANGUISH)

- I can't catch my breath! Oh, oh, my God, the cab's gone off, I can't drive, I didn't bring oxygen with me! Oh, oh, oh, my God! Sit down! In the bone-white chair and look and pray to the stars... - What is it? Tell me, tell me, what is it! Please, please! I'm praying!

SLOW CURTAIN AS SHE HOLDS HER SHORT FAT HAND TO HER PANTING BOSOM, STARING UP AT THE SKY.

(Sweet Bird sketch 52-53)

This final scene fails to establish the purpose of the character of the Princess. Her concluding monologue is dramatic, to say the least, but fails to link her character with that of Phil's, showing them to be kindred spirits. As a result, the Princess's character ends up as in the first scene, desperate, lonely, and in need of an oxygen mask, without having contributed in any significant way to the play's resolution.

In fact, the "sketch of a long play" seems to conclude with four separate endings--endings including a separate section for the Princess, Rosemary/ Rose and Phil, Phil alone addressing the audience, and finally the arrival of the henchmen who have come to get Phil. None of these endings seem integrated into the fabric of the drama itself and as a result seem to dangle at the end of the sketch without a dramatic function. For example, the long-awaited scene between Phil and Rose is essentially anticlimactic, failing to add any substance to the play. In this scene Phil has brought Rose three dozen roses as an expression of his undying love:

PHIL

No, Rose. I've brought you three dozen roses. Just open the door and take them and put them in water and if you still want me to go away, then I'll go, Rose.

ROSE

I don't want anything from you.

PHIL

Just take the three dozen roses, and I'll go, Rose.

ROSE

No, Phil. Go now. Don't stay on the porch. Don't you know?

PHIL

Don't I know what? What, love?

ROSE

- That I'm dead, really....

PHIL

I heard that you'd been sick, Rose. And the news of it broke my heart.

ROSE

That's almost funny enough to make me laugh, ha ha ha!--How can you break anything that doesn't exist? never did?

PHIL

Are you close enough to the screen door so you can hear what I've got to say quietly?

ROSE

No, you can't. Go now!

PHIL

How could I possibly go without having seen you or touched you?

ROSE

Go.

PHIL
Go where? Go where and for what?

ROSE
Wherever you go, wherever you've always gone, to others and others! - each lover!

(Sweet Bird sketch 48-49)

Other versions of the this scene between Phil and Rose tended to specify the nature of their past romantic involvement and their characters were more fully developed, but here the scene falls flat and fails to bring the play to an adequate conclusion.

Likewise, Phil's final monologue fails to produce an adequate closure:

--Yes, they make these enormous clocks to put in houses, clocks as tall as a man or half ahead taller and they, they, they! --put them on stair-landings? -- yes, look down on the living-room of the house, and say, 'tick, tick, you're dying! You, down there, in the living room of the house, you're dying, tick tick!' in the living-room of the house...

(HE TURNS FROM THE HOUSE AND GOES OUT UPON THE STAGEAPRON: TO AUDIENCE WITH A PASSIONATE SINCERITY.)

- They don't even shout any warning or ring
like a fire-bell, but just keep whispering tick to all things living, tick, tick, tick, you're dying!

(ALMOST INAUDIBLE DRIFT OF LAMENTATION)

- There's no answer to give them, there's no argument with them, no contradiction to the to the tick, tick, tick, you're dying!

(THROWS HIS HEAD BACK, ARMS HALF RAISED

AND THROWN OUT FROM HIS RIGID BODY)

Stars, you knew when I drove underneath you to Belvedere last night that I was returning to the place of my ruin! And when I drove out tonight in the Cadillac of the fake dying Princess, you knew that where I was going was to my doom.

(ADVANCES FURTHER ON FORESTAGE)

Stars you gave me your cooly pitying look, it fell on my face like snow but not able to cool me. But tonight I didn't lie, did I? Not even to her, my lost love? I didn't say Phil Beam was saved, I just said, 'Open the door and let me hold you again!'

(GAZES UP HIGHER, THE MUSCLES OF HIS NECK TENSING)

Stars, I hear you tick, too. I hear you saying the same thing that the clock says, tick, tick, tick, you're dying! and maybe I'm ready to do it. - If they cut me I won't let them bandage the wound, if they do I will tear off the bandage and bleed out of life! - I couldn't go past my youth, and yet I've gone past it... - What was the craving, the need, that made me give in to corruption? - To prove a thing to somebody? To my love, Rose? That I was not a weak person? - Instead I planted death and rot in her body to ruin her, too. Well, I guess they can see me, standing out here in the lamp-light, and they'll come soon, I won't go. - I'll stay here and wait till they come, and when they come, I won't struggle, I'll - accept!

(Sweet Bird sketch 52-53)

Of course none of these monologues are retained in the final version of Sweet Bird because the fates of the various characters needed to be integrated into the play's narrative purpose. Nevertheless, these four, separate scenes are presented without narrative integration and as a result the conclusion of the "sketch" seems tentative and

unresolved. It is likely that these concluding monologues are indicative of Williams's own ambivalence about how the play was to end. In fact, rewrites suggest that the conclusion of Sweet Bird remained elusive as Williams provided a number of possible endings in later versions.

III. Sweet Bird as a first draft

The following section illustrates how revisions of the first draft of Sweet Bird functioned as a step in the writing process of the final play.

The manuscript designated as the "first draft" of Sweet Bird demonstrates the play's continued dramatic development. Although this version is a revision of the script used in the Coral Gables production, it includes all of the scenes that were included in the 1956 production. For example, it includes three separate scenes at the Hotel Belvedere in which Phil's past is revealed and his relationship with the Princess is defined; a scene in the Roman Catholic Church where Rose/ Valerie experiences a miracle of sexual regeneration; a scene in which she visits the Thomas J. Finley Hospital to confirm the miracle; a scene in the breakfast room of Boss Finley's house in which the Boss and Aunt Nonnie are introduced; two scenes at Boss Finley's house when Phil visits Rose/ Valerie; a scene that portrays Boss Finley's speech; a final scene between Phil and the Princess at the Hotel Belvedere. A number of the above scenes were not included in the "sketch for a long play" and no doubt were added while the play was being rehearsed for the Studio M production.

Interestingly, the "first draft" version of Sweet Bird was originally designated as a "sketch for a long play," but this description was crossed out and "first draft" was

written in its place. This version, originally written in May 1956 following the Studio M production, includes numerous signs of revision and rewriting. Textual evidence of the revision process is especially evident in the manuscript which includes coded annotations such as "see # G," "see A," "insert I," and "see # in script (bottom page # 5 then insert # D (follow Studio M script here.)" This specialized coding is typical of all Williams's Sweet Bird manuscripts and is indicative of his complex revision process. Nevertheless, Williams's directive to "follow the Studio M script..."is of special interest because it suggests that the "first draft" was not the actual script used for the Studio M production but rather a revision of that script.

The "first draft" is notable also because it supplies additional evidence of a play in yet another stage of transition. Like the "sketch for a long play," the "first draft" is not divided into larger dramatic units so that acts have not yet been designated. Instead, the play is simply a succession of acts that demonstrate a chronological narrative development. Also included in this "first draft" collection are numerous versions of particular scenes, rewritten for dramatic effect. For example, the scene with Valerie, the Boss, George Scudder, and Aunt Nonnie at the Finley house appears several times, each rewrite presenting the scene from a somewhat different perspective. In addition, the cocktail-lounge scene is rewritten numerous times. Some of these scenes are included within the text of the play itself and others are appended to the end of the text of the play. Once again, Williams experiments with character names, Rose/ Rosemary becoming Valerie, Ariadne Del Lago becoming Ariadne del Mar, Freddie becoming Boss Jr. and then Tom Jr. At the conclusion of the "first draft" manuscript, Williams indicates to his

typist that the name Phil Beam should be changed to Chance Wayne and that Valerie should be changed to Heavenly.

In this first draft of Sweet Bird, Williams expands plot and character elements that appeared without development in previous versions. For instance, the relationship between the Boss and Valerie is explored in this version and includes several sections of dialogue between them, further revealing them as characters. The scene is also notable because it introduces for the first time the character of Miss Lucy, the clip given to the Boss's dying wife, and Valerie/Heavenly's required attendance at the rally: None of these elements appeared in previous versions of Sweet Bird:

> BOSS
> Honey, your Papa looks tired from the hectic business of controlling and keepin' control of the hugest political machine in the south. What you look tired from I sure in hell can't imagine because you do nothin' but sit in the front room or on the front porch or upstairs in you bedroom and for a long time, on your face, I've just observed two expressions. One is a vacant expression. The other is more unpleasant. And if it was not for the fact that I got to break this wall of silence between us in order to try and discover what thoughts, if any, are occupying your mind, I tell you, I'd move that damn bowl of lilies back where it was so I could avoid the distressing experience of lookin' at such a change as I see in your face.
>
> VALERIE
> Will you excuse me from the table, now, Papa?
>
> BOSS
> I sure in hell won't. Keep you seat. Don't you realize, Sugar, that since your angel-Mama was took away from me, you and your brother Freddie are all I got in this world to give my love to? Huh?

VALERIE
That doesn't speak well for Miss Lucy. (UTTERS A SLIGHT, TIRED LAUGH) That certainly doesn't speak very well for Miss Lucy..... BOSS Who is Miss Lucy?

VALERIE
Huh!

BOSS
I repeat, who is Miss Lucy?

VALERIE
You never heard of Miss Lucy?

BOSS
No, I never!

VALERIE Never heard of the woman you keep in a suite of 3 rooms costin' fifty dollars a day at the Hotel Bayshore?

BOSS
What are you talkin' about?

VALERIE
That rides down the Gulf-stream highway with a motor-cycle escort blowin' their sirens like the Queen of Sheba was going into New Awleuns fo' the day? Papa. This house has one air-conditioned room, the one you sleep in. Aunt Nonnie works like a nigger. And you say who is Miss Lucey (sic)? And tell me that Freddie and me are all you got in the world to give love to? Papa? Keep you love. And just give me ten percent of the fortune you spend on this woman you never heard of. Now surely you don't object if I leave this table.

BOSS
(SPRINGS UP AND SEIZES HER WRIST)

VALERIE
She don't even talk good of you. No, she don'tPapa. She says you're too old for a lover.

BOSS

A goddam lie! Who says Miss Lucey (sic) says that?!

VALERIE

Why, she presides every night in the Belvedere cocktail lounge. She keeps no secrets about the relations she has with Boss Finley. She even wrote with lipstick on the powder room mirror.

BOSS

What?

VALERIE

That Boss Finley is too old to cut the mustard.

BOSS

Christ Almighty. You hypocritical bitch. Sit there and criticize me for my private life, do you?

VALERIE

Papa, I'm standing, not sitting, and if you'll let go of me, Papa, I'd like to go upstairs, Papa.

BOSS

I got a tight grip on you arm and I don't in tend to release it until you identify to me the nameof whoever it was that you claim said I was - good in bed with - Miss Lucy.

(SHE MOVES RAPIDLY FORWARD ONTO THE FORESTAGE. HE MOVES RAPIDLY WITH HER. TIMPANI RISE TO CRESCENDO: SHE THROWS BACK HER MOCK SPIRITUAL FACE AND BURSTS INTO WILD LAUGHTER, SO WILD THAT THE BOSS IS FRIGHTENED.)

Stop that, stop that, have you gone insane again?

VALERIE

Ha!!

(SHE SUDDENLY STOPS LAUGHING AND TWISTS HER ARM VIOLENTLY FREE)

(FREDDIE AND AUNT NONNIE APPEAR FROM OPPOSITE WINGS WITH SHOCKED EXPRESSIONS. THE BOSS DISMISSES THEM FURIOUSLY WITH A SINGLE IMPERIOUS

WAVE.)

BOSS

Now who! I want the name of him! Dared to claim such a slander! That I was not good in bed with Miss Lucy! HUM! WHO!

VALERIE

---There is something too painful about that talk t'be funny.....

(WITH THIS LINE SHE BRINGS THE PLAY BACK TO A MORE SERIOUS LEVEL)

(THEY FACE EACH OTHER, PANTING LIKE FIGHTERS, ON FORESTAGE)

Papa? There was a time when you could have saved me by letting me marry a boy that was still young and clean. Instead you took me away and tried to force me to marry a fifty- year-old money bags that was head of a big oil company, and then another Washington Big Shot you wanted something out of, and then another, and then another, another! And meanwhile the boy went away to try to compete with these V.I.P.'s you wanted to have a bond with..... the right doors wouldn't open so he went in the wrong ones! Picked up the filth inside and brought it back to me.....Didn't you marry for love? Why wouldn't you let me do it? While I still could, while the boy was still decent?

BOSS

Are you reproachin' <u>me</u> for <u>my</u> moral standards?!

VALERIE

Papa, I know, and everyone knows, that Miss Lucy was your mistress long before Mama died and Mama was just a front for you.

(SINKS EXHAUSTED ONTO THE STEPS TO THE FORESTAGE. PAUSE. THE BOSS COUGHS)

BOSS

What a terrible thing for my baby t'say.....

VALERIE

----excuse me, papa.....

(IN THE DIM AREA BEHIND THEM AUNT NONNIE

ENTERS FEARFULLY, STARES OUT AT THEM, WIDE EYED AND THEN REMOVES COFFEE URN, CROUCHING SLIGHTLY AS IF SHE WERE STEALING IT FROM THE HOUSE)

BOSS

Terrible, terrible, thing for someone so loved to say to me. Baby? Baby? Here's what I want you t' do tomorrow morning. I'm going to send you in town with a motor-cycle escort, straight to the Maison Blanche. When you arrive at the store, I want you to go directly up to the office of Mr. Harvey C. Petrie. Tell him you Boss Finley's daughter, if he don't know, and tell him to give you unlimited credit there. Then go down and out fit you'self as if you was! -buyin' a trousseau t' marry the prince of -Monaco...purchase a full wardrobe including good furs! - Keep 'em in storage till winter! -Gowns? Three, four, five, the most - lavish! Slippers? Hell, pairs and pairs of 'em. - not one hat but a - dozen! Look, I made me a pile of dough on a deal involvin' the sale of rights to oil under water! (THIS HE LOWERS HIS VOICE FOR: AND WINKS AT AUDIENCE) - here lately, and - Baby? I want you to buy you a piece of jewelry, too. Now about that. You better tell Harvey to call me. Or better still, maybe Miss Lucy had better help you select it. She's wise as a backhouse rat when it comes to a stone! - that's for sure...

(ROSE GIGGLES CONVULSIVELY: HER BODY SHAKING IN SILENT SPASMS OF LAUGHTER, CROUCHED ON FORESTAGE STEPS)

BOSS

Now where'd I buy that clip that I give you Mama? D'you remember the clip I bought you Mama? Last thing I give your Mama befo' she died....

(MORE SERIOUS LEVEL AGAIN)

- I knowed she was dyin' when I bought her that clip and I bought that clip for fifteen thousand dollars mainly to make her think she was going to get well....

(VALERIE STOPS LAUGHING: LOOKS STRAIGHT OUT INTO HOUSE, HER MOUTH TWISTED INTO A SOMEWHAT IRONICAL SMILE)

BOSS
(WITH BARELY AUDIBLE MUSIC BACKGROUND) - When I pinned it on her on the nightgown she was wearing, that poor thing started crying. She said, for God's sake, Boss! What does a dying woman want with such a big diamond? I said to her Honey, look at the price tag on it! What does that price-tag say? See them five figures, that one and that five and them three zeros on there? Now, honey, make sense, I told her. If you was dying, if there was any chance of it, would I invest fifteen grand in a diamond clip to pin on the neck of a shroud? Hahaha ha! That made the old lady laugh: ha ha ha ha! And she sat up as bright as a little bird in that bed with the diamond clip on receiving callers all day and laughing and chatting with them with that diamond clip on her nightgown, and that night she died, she started bleeding inside and she died before midnight, with that diamond clip on her and not till the very last minute did she believe that the diamonds wasn't a proof that she wasn't dying!

VALERIE
Did you bury her with it?

BOSS
Bury her with it? Hell, no!

VALERIE
Then what happened to it, where is it?

BOSS
I took it back to the jewelry store in the morning?
(Sweet Bird first draft 48-52)

Although later versions of this scene are restructured and the dialogue is somewhat altered, the essential elements that include the Boss's political machine, the story of Miss Lucy, the Boss's earlier disapproval of Chance, Chance's relationship with Valerie/Heavenly, the department-store episode, and the history of the clip are all elements that are retained in later verisons of ths scene. The scene is designed to portray

the Boss as an evil force in the play and elements are included that effectively reinforce this dramatic purpose.

Frequently, the Boss's own dialogue turns on him to reveal his treachery. For example, we first see him described as in "control of the highest political machine in the South," an accomplishment he hypocritically invests with noble purpose. His denial of involvement with Miss Lucy, and the presentation of the clip to his dying wife illustrate the Boss's manipulative, deceitful nature. Williams further underscores the Boss's villainous qualities by demonstrating his use of power and force. For example, he refuses to allow Valerie/Heavenly to leave the discussion, forcing her to remain by grasping her arm. In addition, his attempt to placate Valerie/Heavenly suggests that approval can be bought.

The New Directions version of the Boss's conversation with Valerie/ Heavenly is shortened from ten typewritten pages in the "first draft' to seven pages in the New Directions version. The major difference in the later version is that it eliminates material concerning the return of Phil Beam/ Chance Wayne and also material concerning Miss Lucy. Some of dialogue concerning Miss Lucy is now delivered by Tom Jr's character, not by Heavenly.

The "first draft" also adds the two scenes concerning Valerie/ Heavenly's miraculous healing and subsequent visit to the Thomas J. Finley Hospital to confirm her impressions. These scenes are of interest because they do not appear in the Studio M production, nor do they appear in final versions of Sweet Bird. When Williams continued work on Sweet Bird in 1958, two versions of the play were produced in April that already

reduced the "miracle experience" to an off-stage occurrence and an occasional reference to the "miracle pictures." In the New Directions version the principal concern with these pictures is with the political embarrassment Valerie/ Heavenly's visit to the hospital may have caused the Boss. The pictures in the final version that might cause embarrassment are not the "miracle pictures" but instead the pictures Chance Wayne has taken of Heavenly in the nude.

It is possible that Williams concluded that this material portraying a miraculous occurrence and the subsequent visit to the hospital was in the end extraneous. By presenting this material in onstage scenes, the play is extended in a dramatically awkward direction. Heavenly's delicate character is just as effectively presented in scenes that suggest her reaction to her sterilization. Scenes extending this process may have appeared superfluous to Williams. In addition, the theme of sexual regeneration counteracts the theme of castration and as a result adds a discordant element to the play's thematic structure. In the end, Williams decided the play was better served by the complete elimination of the miracle material.

Nevertheless, the miracle and hospital scenes are of interest because they demonstrate the experimental nature of Williams's writing process. The miracle scene takes place in a church setting that includes a Gothic stained glass window. In the scene, Valerie/Heavenly "...gasps and bends foreward: then staggers to her feet and rushes out on the forestage, breathing rapidly...." (SB first draft 33). The scene continues with the priest intoning the benediction in Latin while the audience becomes aware that something extraordinary concerning Valerie/Heavenly has occurred.

In the hospital scene that followed we still hear the "Halleluja" chorus in the background as Valerie/Heavenly enters the hospital where she insists that she be seen by Dr. Scudder even though the hospital is closed on Sundays. She tells the nurse of her miracle and makes a scene while insisting that she be examined immediately. Following an examination with an electroscope, she it told by Scudder that "There's nothing to see except a well-performed operation...(SB first draft 38).

The elimination of these two scenes served to strengthen Sweet Bird's dramatic structure and to coordinate it thematic elements by emphasizing the play's degenerative sexual element rather than regeneration. It is nevertheless typical of Williams to create extraneous material in this way and later eliminate, revise, or transform its dramatic purpose.

When scenes were not completely eliminated as in the case of the "miracle material," they were often rewritten so that the most effective method of presentation would ultimately be discovered. At this stage of Sweet Bird's development, Williams was most concerned with the revision of scenes that failed to fully realize their dramatic purpose. For instance, scenes involving a meeting between Phil Beam and Aunt Nonnie, the political-rally scene, the final scene between Phil and the Princess, and a final scene between Phil and Valerie/Heavenly undergo numerous revisions. Several of these scenes--especially the scenes involving Phil's final meetings with Valerie/Heavenly and the Princess--were to be represented at the play's conclusion. At this point, and in later versions of Sweet Bird, Williams remained unsure of how the play would end, and as a result the "first draft" version provides several possible endings. Consequently, in reading

the Sweet Bird manuscripts, it is unclear which ending was to be the actual ending. Of course, the final scene with Phil/ Chance and Valerie/ Heavenly is finally eliminated as are all other meetings between these two characters. Nevertheless, in these preliminary versions of Sweet Bird, the ending which portrays the final meeting between Phil and the Princess dominated the play's conclusion.

Likewise, Williams seemed equally ambivalent concerning the Aunt Nonnie's dramatic function in the play. Earlier versions of Sweet Bird indicated this uncertainty concerning Aunt Nonnie. In one of the very early sketches Aunt Nonnie was portrayed as hostile to Phil Beam and in alignment with the Finley family's position concerning him. Aunt Nonnie's character is not included in either Big Time Operators or in The Enemy: Time; she makes her first appearance in the "sketch for a long play." When she first meets with Phil, she is reluctant to have contact with him and hesitates to explain to him the negative attitudes he encounters upon returning to Belvedere. Likewise, the "first draft" includes a version of this scene in which she appears to meet Phil with some degree of skepticism:

AUNT NONNIE
Then you did know what happened to Valerie after your last visit here?

PHIL
No, no, believe in me, no!

AUNT NONNIE
I don't think you ever lied to me, Phil, but - what were you ashamed of?

PHIL
Of me, of me, of myself!

AUNT NONNIE
You were ashamed of yourself?

PHIL
Yes!

AUNT NONNIE
Ashamed of what in yourself?

PHIL
Of my failure.

AUNT NONNIE
There's nothing shameful in failure, not when you've been honest and -

PHIL
Oh, Aunt Nonnie, have you forgotten what was expected of me? After the brilliant beginning I made in life? Why, at eighteen, I put on, directed, and played the leading role in the one-act play that won the state drama contest, Valerie played in it with me and have you forgotten? You went with us, as Valerie's chaperone, as chapaerone for the girls, to the National contest held in...
(Sweet Bird first draft 92)

As Williams continued to rewrite the play, he began to expand the significance of Aunt Nonnie's character. Instead of representing her as an extension of the Finley household, she became instead a moderating influence at the household. In addition, Aunt Nonnie became a liaison between the Finleys and Phil Beam, delivering messages to Phil in order to protect his safety. Dramatically, Aunt Nonnie's character also provided a means by which other characters could be further revealed. For instance, as Phil's confidante, she is effectively employed in scenes that reveal Phil's past experiences in Belvedere and

especially his past relationship with Valerie:

PHIL
It was on the way home in the train that she and I -

AUNT NONNIE
I know, I -!

PHIL
- I bribed the pullman conductor to let us use for an hour a vacant compartment.

AUNT NONNIE
I know, I!

PHIL
Gave him five dollars, but that wasn't enough and so I gave him my wristwatch and my collar- pin and my tie clip and signet ring and my - suit that I'd bought on credit to go to the contest, first suit I'd ever put on that cost more than thirty-five dollars.

AUNT NONNIE
Don't go back over that!

PHIL
- To buy the first hour of love that we had together! When she undressed, I saw that he body was just, then, barely beginning to be a woman's and...

AUNT NONNIE
Stop, Phil!

PHIL
I said, Oh, Valerie, no, but she said, yes, and we did, and I cried in her arms that night and didn't know that what I was crying for was- youth and that would go..

AUNT NONNIE
I think I knew what had happened: when I wasn't able to find you: that she was comforting you for the loss of the contest: wasn't it, partly, the loss of the contest you cried

for? Not just youth that would go? -From that time on, you - changed....

(Sweet Bird first draft 91)

In the New Directions version of Sweet Bird, Williams collapses elements from four separate scenes with Aunt Nonnie into one scene in which he relates to her information that further defines his character. In this scene with Aunt Nonnie, Phil confides to her his past romantic involvement with Valerie/ Heavenly, the contest he hopes to enter with Valerie/ Heavenly, and his business relationship with the Princess. Although the structure of the scenes with Aunt Nonnie is altered, the information related in the dialogue of the first draft remains unchanged and serves the purpose of further revealing Phil's character.

In addition to serving as a liaison character who links Chance with the Finley household as well as Chance and Heavenly, Aunt Nonnie serves as the only moderating influcence in the entire play. She frequently reminds the Finleys that their planned actions against Chance are rooted in unnecessary violence and warns Chance to leave St. Cloud before it is too late. In addition, Aunt Nonnie is the one character both Chance and Heavenly can trust with disclosures of their past together. The dialogue between Aunt Nonnie and Chance as well as Aunt Nonnie and Heavenly not only serves the purpose of further exploring the characters of Chance and Heavenly but Aunt Nonnie's separate meetings with Chance and Heavenly provide information about their feelings for one another. Although an actual meeting between Chance and Heavenly never takes place in Sweet Bird, the separate meetings with Aunt Nonnie as liaison provide a form of implied communication between the two lovers. Because Sweet Bird provides such

a dark view of human nature, Aunt Nonnie's success as a moderating figure can be evaluated partially in terms of her ability to stop the negative forces at work in the play. With her more moderate point of view, she provides a contrasting element to the dominant darker forces. With her belief in Chance, she also provides a link to his innocent past before corruption tainted him.

Of equal interest are Williams's proposed conclusions to Sweet Bird. The "first draft" conclusions are of special interest because they directly contrast the traditional conclusion, the one finally adopted in the stage version, involoving the final fates of Phil and the Princess. Unlike the final version, the "first draft" includes three versions of a final scene between Phil and Valerie. The idea of a final scene between these two characters was first introduced in the earliest sketches of Sweet Bird and in Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time. The various versions of this scene either involve Valerie's renunciation of Phil or Phil's final acceptance of retribution at the hands of Rose/ Valerie's brother or at the hands of the Boss's henchmen or, as in this case, at the hands of George Scudder:

> PHIL
> - It's the big enemy of us, the enemy and the destroyer is time, only time - that's the big enemy, not any foreign power, but time, just time. The clock.
>
> - They both have a pendulum's motion. Swing back and forth with - precision....
>
> - Each pumping something with the force of a fountain! Heart: bold - clock! time....
>
> - Fountain of blood, rushing, fountain of time rushing! -

Where?

- If only some living voice spoke! - to give us orders, directions!

- But all I hear is Tick, Tick!!

- So cool and calm, being sure of its victory, always!

- Whoever defeated it? Maybe some saints and heros! - But not Phil Beam...
- I lived on something that life gnawed away like a rat gnaws off its own foot that's caught in a trap!

And then with it's foot gnawed off and the rat set free - couldn't run, couldn't go, Bled and died.

I don't beg for your pity. I ask for your understanding. (HE HAS TURNED BLINDLY TOAUDIENCE) And not even that....just for yourrecognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all.....
(BRING UP CLOCK TICK AS LOUD AS A GIANT METRONOME) Tick-Tick! Tick-tick! It's slow dynamite, a gradual explosion that's blasting the whole universe to -burnt-out pieces.....

Then what? Then will the mystery, God, step down out of the clock like someone that had - theatrical ambition! - removes his costume and make-up after a failure?

(LAUGHS: THE LOUD TICK DIES OUT. SOUND: APPROACHING MOTORS)

I believe they're coming. Valerie called them for me and they're coming to take me.....

Why don't I run, and go? I'm standing still for some reason that I don't know. And I know what they're going to do to me. They're going to purify me....with a knife....

I could still run, still go! They haven't caught sight of me, yet! Why am I still waiting?
(LAMENT IN AIR)

I had great longings; they turned to rot in my body. All right, I'll stay for the knife to purify me, and when it cuts me, I'll only cry once - then accept -.

If they bandage the wound, I will tear off thebandage and bleed out of life; no struggle; I couldn't go past my youth but I've gone past it.....

(GEORGE SCUDDER COMES RAPIDLY DOWN ONE AISLE TOWARD STAGE WITH HIS SURGICAL KIT. BOSS FINLEY COMES DOWN THE OTHER. THEY ARE FOLLOWED BY FREDDIE AND ANOTHER ARMED GUARD)
(PHIL ADVANCES A FEW STEPS AS THE APPROACHING PARTY PAUSES AT EITHER SIDE OF THE FORESTAGE)

Here I am! Take me with you!

(THE MEN MOUNT FORESTAGE AND PHIL IS SEIZED BY EITHER ARM AND LED UP ONE OF THE AISLES AS THE PORCH SET IS REMOVED IN DIM OUT)
(WE HEAR THE FOLLOWING LINES SPOKEN)

Where?

Basement?

No. Beach....

Will there be light enough?

Plenty.....

VALERIE
(PASSSIONATELY, TERRIBLY, TO THE SKY)(RUSHING OUT ON PORCH - FALLS TO HER KNEES) No! No! No! No! No!

(PHIL'S CRY OFF STAGE STOPS VAL'S)

(TABOURET AND PHONE ARE PLACED ON STAGE AND LIGHT IS BROUGHT UP ON THE PRINCESS)

PRINCESS
That sound again, now.....

- The lament .....

(AN OUT-CRY, MUTED BY DISTANCE)

Oh! What is it? ..... the phone.....

(SHE CROSSES TO IT AND LIFTS IT FROM CRADLE)

Hello? Hello? Hello? I had a call just now.... it was interrupted. Operator? I don't know who it was from! I think it was very important. Somebody called me just now, a long distance call, very urgent....

(LIGHT DIMS ON HER - HALFWAY. SHE REMAINS VISIBLE AT PHONE AS VALERIE SPEAKS TO THE SKY)

VALERIE
O Lady, wrap me in your starry blue robe!

(LAMENTATION - THE PRINCESS HEARS IT - SLIGHTLY LOWERS PHONE AND LIFTS HER FREE HAND AS IF ASKING FOR SILENCE...)

VALERIE
Make my heart your perpetual novena!

(ALL AREAS DIMMED OUT. SLOW CURTAIN)

THE END

(Sweet Bird first draft 112-114)

This scene is an attempt on Williams's part to bring closure to the play's unresolved narrative elements. In this scene he attempts to assemble Phil, Valerie, and the Princess on stage, providing the audience with one last impression of these principal characters. The focus is first placed on Phil who addresses the audience in a soliloquy, and then

Valerie and the Princess who are presented in vignettes that portray their final moment on stage. All three characters are portrayed in a moment of desperation, the Princess and Valerie presented in overlapping vignettes. Dramatically, their brief appearances provide a dramatic coda to the previous part of the scene in which Phil's castration occurs. This ending also includes Phil's request that the audience view him with sympathy and recognize his common human element. Of course this part of the scene will later become the conclusion to Sweet Bird: "I dont's ask for your pity, but just for your understanding--not even that--no. Just for you recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all" (124).

In addition to this ending, Williams included another in which Phil visits Valerie and attempts to convince her that he once loved her:

> PHIL
> If I suffer what you did: Will you believe that I loved you?
>
> VALERIE
> You want to be dead as I am? As dead as this clockon the landing?
>
> PHIL
> If I can't be with you I want to be what you are.I'm turning away from you, now, not running away, just turning. I hear the dead clock, speaking - our sentence of death!
> (Sweet Bird first draft 111)

In yet another concluding scene, Phil begs Valerie to go away with him so that they can realize their ambition to become stars:

PHIL

Valerie? Don't you know when I started? With our first separation! When Boss Finley ook you to Washington with him and you wrote etters about the important people that you were going out with!? That's when I knew that I had to rise up high in the world to - compete! Y'know what I dreamed of? That no matter how it was done, we'd rise to be stars together! - on stage and on screen! - One of those co-starring couples, inspiring other young people, by setting the highest example of - Standing for the -! Symbolizing the- highest standards of-! You! Me! Us! Together! Inspiring the youth of the nation! Inspiring the youth of the world with---

VALERIE

Phil, go away, please. We did have love once. Someday I'll remember just that.

PHIL

Oh, Valerie, open this door between us!
(HE STARTS WRENCHING LATCHED SCREEN VIOLENTLY)

VALERIE

(RISING FROM ROCKER) What're you doing?
(Sweet Bird first draft 116)

Ironically, none of these proposed scenes involving Phil and Valerie appeared in final version of Sweet Bird, but a study of the Tennessee Williams manuscripts demonstrates that such a scene was a central part of the first versions of the play.

IV. Final Touches

> In this next section, Williams's attempts to polish Sweet Bird are examined along with the results of later stage editing and the continued existence of unresolved elements.

From 1956 to 1958, Williams suspended work on Sweet Bird of Youth and devoted himself to other projects such as Orpheus Descending, Suddenly Last Summer,

the early drafts of Period of Adjustment, and a short story that anticipated The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore. The revision of Sweet Bird, completed after two weeks of intense writing during the Coral Gables production, represented a turning point the play's development. Having completed the "first draft" of Sweet Bird, Williams turned his attention to other projects, perhaps aware that he had not yet realized the play's potential. In fact, at one point, Williams had described Sweet Bird as "the toughest one I've ever done" (Devlin 60), and it was perhaps this realization that led him to lay it aside for nearly two years. In an interview included in Conversations with Tennessee Williams, the playwright comments on the frustration he experienced in writing Sweet Bird:

> Sweet Bird was in the works too long. The whole second act was particularly hard for me. I was deeply interested in the two main characters, but the other characters did not have the same interest for me, and it was awfully hard for me to write the second act, which was largely about the social background of the story. Sometimes I wish I had made it a shorter and not tried to deal with so much...(60)

At this stage of the play's development, the second act did present a particular problem to Williams, but the manuscripts also indicate that the third act required additional rewriting. On the one hand, Act II was continually revised for balance, character definition, the sequencing of events, and the editing of dialogue. On the other hand, Act III was revised primarily for the purpose of discovering an appropriate conclusion and for the purpose of integrating the political rally into the the context of the play. Apparently, Williams sensed that at some point he had lost control of the play and therefore attempted

to retrace his creative footsteps to discover where in the writing process this had occurred:

> In writing a play, I can get started on the wrong tangent, go off somewhere and then have to make great deletions and begin over, not all the way over, but just back to where I went off on that particular tangent. (Devlin 334)

This attempt to find where he had "started on the wrong tangent" led Williams to continuously revise with the hope of discovering the right combination of dramatic elements that would result in a finished product.

When Williams returned to Sweet Bird in April of 1958, he produced two manuscripts in which he attempted to eliminate the structural problems of the "first draft" of 1956. These versions represent Sweet Bird's development just prior to its final development for the stage presentation and for later publication. Revision of the 1958 manuscripts resulted in new character names for Phil Beam, now Chance Wayne and for Valerie, now Heavenly. Also, for the first time the play has been divided into acts and these acts then subdivided into scenes. Act II is now divided into a three-scene dramatic structure that includes 1) the scene at the Finley house, 2) a scene portraying a telephone conversation between Chance and Heavenly, and 3) the scene at the cocktail lounge. Absent from this version are the miracle scene at the church and the subsequent scene at the hospital. All of this information is now related through dialogue that explains these events as occurring offstage.

Because it never appears in final versions of Sweet Bird, the telephone

conversation between Chance and Heavenly is of particular interest. In this scene Chance calls Heavenly from a downtown phone booth. Heavenly is not alone and must return his call when she can speak more freely. While Chance waits for the return call, he is described as shaking and sweating and in the process of filling a drug prescription. When the phone rings, the dialogue continues as Heavenly recounts her tragic trip to California where, when Chance failed to meet her, she was attacked and she was subsequently left alone at a party where drugs were available. Later, after Heavenly tells Chance of her miracle experience and the reality of the subsequent X-rays, she insists that Chance leave St. Cloud while he explains that he cannot leave until he sees her.

At this point in the play's development, Williams continued to believe that a conversation or an actual meeting between Chance and Heavenly was central to the play's meaning. After all, the earliest sketches of Sweet Bird include numerous versions of this scene. Nevertheless, Williams seemed uncertain where in the play this scene should be placed. Previously, it had been placed in the cocktail lounge scene or at the conclusion of Act III or at the Finley house. In this version, completed in 1958, Heavenly speaks with Chance on the phone following the scene at the Finleys and has no additional contact with him following this brief telephone scene.

The cocktail lounge scene is an essential element in Sweet Bird because it is the only scene that attempts to unify the play's divergent story lines involving the Princess on the one hand and the Finleys on the other. As a part of Act II, the cocktail lounge scene was frequently rewritten. Typically, in these revisions, Williams experimented with rearranging the sequence of events, perhaps thinking that the reordering of events would

produce a more effective dramatic structure. The content of the scene revolved around Chance's visit to the cocktail lounge and dialogue that resulted from Chance's conversation with old acquaintances, Miss Lucy, Aunt Nonnie, the Princess, and Tom Jr. Of course, Chance Wayne is the central figure in this scene, since he can be linked in one way or another with all of the characters who appear in this pivotal scene. Williams once commented that the purpose of the scene was to establish the play's "social background," but the scene is also significant because it provides the play with narrative unity by linking the Princess with the Finleys. While these two elements do not further explicate the play's dramatic narrative, these disparate elements are linked visually as the scene presents an ensemble of various characters who are associated with Chance.

In this 1958 version of the cocktail lounge scene, Williams placed the dialogue with Aunt Nonnie at the opening of the scene rather than at its conclusion. With the exception of some minor changes, the scene presents the same information about Chance's recollections of Heavenly and Aunt Nonnie's current knowledge of her as presented in the "first draft" version. Typically, revision of this scene involved the resequencing of the various elements within the scene itself or the inclusion or deletion of the Valerie/ Heavenly or as later, in the New Directions version, the inclusion of both the Heckler and the political rally itself.

While finishing revision on Sweet Bird for the stage production, Williams repositioned the rally scene so that it now became a part of the cocktail lounge scene. The 1958 version of the play, on the other hand, had placed the political rally at the beginning of Act III. The placement of the scene seems counter-productive dramatically.

Introducing Act III with this rather clamorous scene and then presenting the concluding dialogue between Chance and the Princess undermines effective transition and counteracts the dramatic focus of the scene. By placing the rally scene at the conclusion of Act II, Williams effectively concluded this rather expansive act with a climactic scene and also provided an excellent breakpoint for intermission and then the play's conclusion in Act III.

The placement of the rally scene presented a problem to Williams for quite some time, since in previous manuscripts he had placed it in no particular dramatic context. In a number of cases, a page entitled "rally scene" was randomly inserted in the script without being fully integrated into the play. These versions provided no dramatic hooks either at the beginning or at the end of the scene to link it with the preceding or latter part of the scene. The scene, as it is presented in this 1958 version, is introduced by the Heckler whose intention of disrupting the rally is already known to the audience. By introducing the scene with the Heckler, Williams provides a dramatic setup for what is to follow. By using this scenic arrangement, William splits the rally scene structurally, positioning the Heckler at the opening of the cocktail lounge scene so that his presence anticipates the political rally that is to conclude the

scene. Williams's effective manipulation of the Heckler provides the cocktail lounge scene with greater dramatic unity by linking the scene's opening with its conclusion and thereby effectively integrating the political rally within the cocktail lounge scene.

In addition to his dissatisfaction with Act II and Act III, Williams concluded that he had failed to create an effective character in Boss Finley:

> I have to understand the characters in my play....If I just hate them I can't write about them. That's why Boss Finley wasn't right....because I just didn't like the guy, and I just had to make a tour de force of his part in the play. (Hirsch 61)

It is perhaps for this reason that Williams had difficulty with the rally scene and may suggest the reason for his frequent revision of this particular scene. Typically critics have viewed the Boss as a stereotype of the Southern demagogue. Williams was, no doubt, aware of the excesses of this character as he created the scenes that included him. To this end, Williams needed to make some artistic value judgments. To what extent could he portray the Boss's demagoguery, his vindictiveness without undermining his credibility? In the 1958 manuscript, the Boss is portrayed in the rally scene as actually striking the Heckler. In later versions of the play, Williams deleted this particular action and revised much of the scene so that the Boss's character was somewhat softened. The following dialogue from the rally scene renders the Boss as particularly tyrannical and vengeful:

> HECKLER
> HEY, BOSS FINLEY! HOW ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER'S OPERATION? (Hush Falls)
>
> HOW ABOUT THAT OPERATION YOUR DAUGHTER HAD DONE ON HER AT THE THOMAS J. FINLEY HOSPITAL HERE IN SAINT CLOUD? DID SHE PUT ON BLACKIN MOURNING FOR HER APPENDIX?
> (He has entered the ballroom, the doors swinging shut behind him)
>
> (Hush inside)
>
> BOSS

(Shouting clearly)
REPEAT THAT QUESTION, I WANTA SEE WHERE IT COME FROM!

HECKLER
It come from me! God never spoke to you, but I am speakin to you and I have asked you a question three times which you won't answer!

(HEAVENLY'S voice screaming)

BOSS
I SEE HIM, I GOT HIM SPOTTED! HAND ME MY CANE!

(Light on him dims fast. The rest is nearly all action; my description of it will be subject to a director's interpretation)

(As a great shouting breaks out, THE HECKLER is hurled through the doors, followed immediately by ARMED GUARDS. BOSS FINLEY bursts out, after them, with his cane lifted, and followed by TOM JUNIOR with a drawn pistol. THE BOSS, lowers his pistol. THE BOSS rushes down into the lounge, shouting -)

HOLD HIM UP SO I CAN ANSWER HIS QUESTION!
(He strikes, low, at the man)

MISS LUCY
(As THE MAN doubles up with hoarse cry)
QUIT! DON'T DO THAT AGIN!
(She has caught hold of the cane lifted for another low blow)

- You want me to go in there and tell where you hit this man and why that's where you hit him ? You mad, rotten stinker!

(Sweet Bird 1958 124-25)

This scene, not included in its entirety here, was considerably shortened in later versions.

In particular, the Boss's speech was later shortened, perhaps to tighten the scene's structure. It then becomes a part of the cocktail lounge scene in the New Directions version. This kind of cutting, used in many other Williams revisions, helps streamline the play's dramatic structure and facilitate narrative progression. In addition, the purpose of the political rally scene is to implement Sweet Bird's narrative development rather than to underscore the Boss's tyrannical temperament, since his tyrannical nature was adequately established in a previous scene in the Finley household.

This revision of the 1958 manuscripts did not solve Williams's difficulty with the play's conclusion. The conclusion used in the 1958 manuscripts is virtually the same as the one used in the 1956 "first draft." It is rather awkward including four separate scenes, all part of the play's multi-layered summation. The scene as written involves separate final meetings between Chance and the Princess, Chance and Heavenly, in addition to separate soliloquies by Chance and the Princess. Later, of course, the New Directions version will simplify the concluding scene so that its main focus becomes the final meeting between Chance and the Princess.

Williams, still dissatisfied with Act II and Act III, continued to revise these two acts according to manuscripts dated May and June of 1958. These manuscripts include three suggested conclusions for Sweet Bird. These alternative endings completely eliminate the appearance of Heavenly and concentrate on the final fates of Chance and the Princess. In addition, all of these proposed alternative endings indicate that Chance leaves St. Cloud with the Princess in this last scene. The first of these alternative endings is of particular interest because it includes a number of elements recognizable because

they are included in final versions of Sweet Bird. On the other hand, this version is also of interest because it includes bits of dialogue cut for one reason or another from the final version. In this conclusion, Williams includes the ominous presence of Hatcher, Bud, and Scotty, the Boss's henchmen, who have come for Chance, and the familiar telephone call to Hollywood columnist Sally Powers. In the following portion of dialogue, Chance attempts to call Sally Powers, and while this takes place, the Princess interjects her own commentary on the proceedings:

> PRINCESS
> (As if in a dream)
> Beverly Hills, California. The number's Coldwater - five-nine thousand.
>
> (THE PRINCESS moves out onto forestage: surrounding areas dim till nothing is clear behind her but the palm garden)
>
> PRINCESS
> Why are you doing this, Chance?
>
> CHANCE
> Haven't you heard that whores can have hearts, and so forth?
>
> PRINCESS
> Often but not with much faith.
>
> CHANCE
> Things heard often have usually got some truth inthem. Not a lot but a little, enough to be measured.
>
> PRINCESS
> - Why did I give him the number? Well, why not,after all, I'd have to know sooner or later, so why not now, after all...
>
> I started to several times, picked the phone up, put it down. Well, let him do it for me. Some- thing's

happened. I'm breathing freely and deeply as if the panic was over. Maybe it's over. He's doing the dreadful thing for me, asking the answer for me. He doesn't exist for me now except as somebody making this awful call for me, asking the answer for me. The light's on me. He's almost invisible now. What does that mean? Does it mean that I still wasn't ready to be washed out like an algebra problem, unfinished, is washed off a blackboard by a wet sponge when the - closing - bell rings?

(Sound: Phone ringing in distance)

He said a whore. He means I made a whore of him. That doesn't exist for me now, nothing exists for me, now, but the call he's making for his own crazy purpose. Poor boy! I pity him: do I? - Maybe...

- But one thing's sure. It's only the call I care for. I seem to be standing in light with everything else dimmed out. He's in the dimmed out background as if he'd never left the obscurity he was born in. I've taken the light again as a crown on my head to which I am suited by something in the cells of my blood and my body from the time of my birth. It's mine, I was born to own it, as he was born to make this phone-call for me, to Sally Power, dear Sally Powers, dear faithful custodian of my ---- outlived legend. This legend that I've out-lived...

- Monsters don't die early : they hang on long. Awfully long. Their vanity's infinite: almost as infinite as their disgust with themselves..

(Sweet Bird revision Act II and Act III 6-7)

Later in the scene the Princess comments on Chance's hope of achieving stardom as she has done. Also, according to hand- written notations in the manuscripts, the Princess undergoes a final name change becoming Alexandra Del Lago rather than Ariadne Del Lago. This name change was first noted in the following scene but interestingly was not indicated anywhere else in the manuscript. The Princess sounds much like Norma

Desmond of Sunset Boulevard here:

CHANCE

- Who in Hell's talking? Look in the mirror! What do you see in the mirror?

PRINCESS

I see me! Alexandra! - Artist and star! Now it'syour turn, you look! What do you see?

CHANCE

I see - !

PRINCESS

(Fiercely)

- You see?! - What?! A face that tomorrow's sun will touch without mercy. Of course you were crowned with laurel in the beginning. Your gold head was wreathed with laurel, but laurel withers, it's withered! The laurel crown's withered on you, the early gold light has dimmed on you! Face it! - Pitiful monster...

(She touches the crown of his head)

- Of course I know I'm one, too. But one with a difference. Do you know the difference? No, you don't know? I'll tell you. We are two monsters but with this difference between us. Out of the passion and torment of my existence, I have created a thing that I can unveil, a sculpture, almost heroic, that I can unveil, which is true! But you? You fouled your nest and came back to your fouled nest, to a girl that won't see you in this town you were born in with - car, clothes, money extorted from a sick woman that paid you to - HAH!

(Jerks her head with a savage grimace and spits on the floor between them)

I SPIT! I spit at the dirty bargain we struck between us!

(Turns from him, breath spent, snatches up her handbag)

- I thought I'd forgotten that little trick I picked up as a child in the slums of -

(Scrapes pearls and pill-boxes off table stop into handbag)

Trastevere....

(Sweet Bird revision of Act II and Act III 11)

This dialogue, although similar to final versions of Sweet Bird, has been altered later to include dialogue that portrays the Princess as less caustic, less condemning of Chance in this their final scene together. In final versions, she is less condemning of the "bargain" she has struck with Chance and instead is more critical of his failed relationship with Heavenly Finley. Perhaps Williams felt that it was inappropriate for the Princess to be so negative about Chance, since they have previously recognized their mutual monstrousness. In the final dialogue between these two characters, they make final arrangements for Chance and discusss whether or not he will remain in St. Cloud or continue to travel with the Princess to the next town:

PRINCESS
- I am going, now, on my way.

(HE nods slightly and turns toward the bed, lighting a cigarette, removing his jacket, loosening his tie. Her eyes stay on him)

- Well, are you leaving or staying?
CHANCE
Staying.
(He gives her a quick, detached glance: sits on the bed, leaning back against pillows)

PRINCESS
You can't stay here. I'll take you to the next town.

CHANCE
I'm not goin' to leave Saint Cloud.
(His voice has turned gentle and Southern. In his cupped palm he has the remaining capsules: deposits them on his tongue and washes them down with vodka: casually as if he were eating peanuts)

PRINCESS
How many of those have you taken?

CHANCE
I didn't count.

PRINCESS
Get up and come down with me whie you still can. I'll drive you to a hospital in the next town.
(Advances toward bed)
Come on, come on! My name is connected with you, we're registered here together, whatever happens to you my name would be dragged in with it!

CHANCE
- Whatever happens to me has already happened,Princess, so you go on.
(His voice has already thickened a bit)
- Go on along the old Spanish Trail of the Conquistadors. See those lines at the box-office in L.A. ---
(Chuckles sadly)
---- they say there's a long, long line at the tomb of Stalin and Lenin in Moscow ev'ry day, too. Ha! --- no connection....
(Slides down on the bed)
- I'm all right. They'll find the patient unconscious...feeling no pain...

(Phone rings: at same time the silver trumpets on the El Dorado are blown at the hotel entrance)

PRINCESS
(Snatching up phone)
---- All right, all right, I'm coming!

CHANCE
-- When you get in the car, get in the front seat with him if the driver is young, if he's young an' good looking, sit in the front seat with him and tell them to pile your luggage in the back. But if he's not young, or your type, sit in the back seat, Princess, and just say,"West!"
(Throws an arm over his eyes as if to shield them from light)
Say "West"...

PRINCESS
-- I'll send someone up for my luggage. You come down with him if you decide to go on.
(She exits down corridor. He sits up, swinging his legs off the bed)

CHANCE
(Toward audience)
Go on to where? I couldn't go past my youth, but I've gone past it.

(Fade in clock tick, slowly louder)

- I didn't know that there was a clock in this room but I guess there's a clock in every room people live in. Tick-tock. It's quieter than my heart beats. But it's slow dynamite, it's a gradual explosion, it's blastin' the world I lived in to rotten pieces, to burnt-out, rotten pieces...

- Who could ever best it, who could defeat it, ever? Maybe some saints and heroes, but not Chance Wayne. - I lived on something that time gnawed away like a rat gnaws off its own foot caught in a trap. A rat will do that, he'll gnaw his own foot that's in a trap, and then--
(Leans back against pillows)
- With his foot gnawed off and the rat set free, can't run, can't go, bleeds and dies.

(FLY appears in corridor)

(As he opens the door, CHANCE involuntarily springs up, dizzily, and crouches, a hand flying down to his groin with a gasp. He straightens to face Fly with a startled sound between a laugh and a sob. It makes the awful admission of a physical fear stronger than anything else)

FLY
(Gently)
The lady's waiting outside for you, Mr. Chance.

CHANCE
I can't go out the front way.

FLY

> I'll help you out the side way, Mr. Chance, an'come back up for the luggage.
>
> (CHANCE submits to the colored man's support as FLY draws him gently toward the gallery exit, with soft little chuckles and murmurs of encouragement and warning: it's a long, grotesque exit: the entrance, of CHANCE, to a time that shouldn't come after. Just before they arrive at the gallery door, CHANCE staggers back hard against a shutter, but FLY holds him up and gets him out, as the car-horns of the Princess sound below, impatient, imperious, and sad) (Sweet Bird revision of Act II and Act III 12-15)

Later alterations of this scene during rehearsals for the stage production resulted in its being shortened. In addition, extended monologues were either shortened or broken up into dialogue in which there are exchanges between the Princess and Chance. Chance's reference to the Princess as a "whore" with a heart is eliminated as is the Princess's monologue referring to herself as one "crowned with laurels." This version of the ending is also notable because Williams portrays Chance not only as taking a drug overdose but also of leaving St. Cloud with the Princess. Unlike the first sketches that consistently protrayed Phil/ Chance as a victim of the Finley's revenge, this ending allows Chance to leave St. Cloud so that the castration does not occur and Chance would escape punishment. Of course, as suggested here, if Chance suffers or dies from a drug overdose, he would not escape punishment entirely. Nevertheless, in this version, Williams avoids the controversial later ending that suggests Chance's "everyman" status when he utters the controversial lines, "I don't ask for your pity, but just for your understanding--not even that--no. Just for your recognition of me in you, and the enemy, time, in us all" (Sweet Bird 124). The ending used in this revision would later be used

in the unpublished Esquire version as well as in the Dramatists Play Service version of Sweet Bird.

V. Final Drafts

This section will enumerate the editing work Williams did on final drafts that would be evaluated with special emphasis on continuing problems in the play's structure.

In 1958, Williams negotiated with Esquire magazine to publish the script of Sweet Bird in April of 1959 following its opening on Broadway in March of that year. Of course, Esquire assumed that the version of the play Williams gave them would remain unaltered. But Williams's proclivity for revision resulted in the alteration of the Esquire script and as a result this version was later considered unpublishable. The editor of Esquire commented that "Our problem was how to keep pace with Tennessee Williams and still go to press on time. For no sooner did we get the script into type than an early scene was revised, the last act rewritten" (Gunn 32). Esquire was probably unaware that the revision process was typical of Williams and that this process had been an ongoing one since 1948 when Williams first produced Big Time Operators. Nevertheless, Esquire, thinking it had obtained the rights to publish the final version of Sweet Bird, set up the galleys and prepared for an April publication. Forty-nine pages of proof are included in the manuscript collection at the University of Texas at Austin.

Over the past thirty years, criticism of Sweet Bird of Youth has tended to focus on the play's bifurcated structure, on the failure of the play to include a scene portrying the meeting of Chance and Heavenly, and on Chance's unconvincing final lines. Because of these criticisms, Sweet Bird has failed to achieve the critical status of plays such as The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire. Nevertheless, the second draft of Sweet Bird intended for publication by Esquire succeeds in eliminating or reducing these

flawed elements in the play. Additionally, Drewey Wayne Gunn has noted that "This second draft represents the culmination of Williams's vision....the play has now a unified drama, an interesting inversion of many of the character- izations and themes..." (32). Unfortunately, Williams never considered this version of the play in his subsequent rewrites of Sweet Bird and as a result it remains unrecognized and unpublished, assigned to a position of literary anonymity as a part of this vast manuscript collection.

The earliest sketches of Sweet Bird made it clear that Williams's intention was to make Chance Wayne the central figure in the play. Both the Paz and Princess characters figured as incidental in these versions. The Princess, making her first appearance at the conclusion of The Enemy: Time, is a colorful presence who had little effect on the play's proceedings. In this version, she has arrived at the play's conclusion to rescue Phil/ Chance from his cruel fate at the hands of the Finleys and seems more ornamental than dramatically significant. Nevertheless, by the time the play had progressed to first-draft stage in 1956, the Princess's character had become nearly as significant as Chance's character. Williams admitted that he enjoyed writing the material about the Princess and Chance, but the increased significance of the Princess's character contributed to a fatal imbalance in the play. Commenting on this imbalance in Sweet Bird, Drewey Wayne Gunn concludes that the problem with the play is in the first act in which Chance needs to be introduced as the play's only protagonist:

> In the Princess, Williams created one of his supreme characters, and she promptly took over the play. As a result, she unbalanced it fatally. Sweet Bird, no matter which of the four drafts one studies, is Chance's play, and

> he must occupy stage center. The Princess's conflict is all offstage; only Chance's provides the dramatic tension onstage. Therefore, the first act must clearly introduce him as the protagonist. Then the play must cut to the milieu which produced him, if we are to understand the nature of Chance's failure
> and to realize that it is part of America's too. (34)

The unpublished 1958 version of the play, although maintaining the Princess as a major dramatic presence, also succeeds in allowing Chance Wayne a more central position in the play than does the later New Directions version. This version of the play includes a scene at the Finley house in which the fact of Chance Wayne's return to St. Cloud remains a central concern. In fact, the scene as it appears in this version opens with dialogue in which Aunt Nonnie tells Heavenly of Chance's return. By placing this comment at the beginning of the scene, Williams was able to reintroduce this subject throughout the scene. In addition, the inclusion of Heavenly at the beginning of the scene allows Chance by association to remain a a significant off-stage presence. Also, Williams includes in this version of Sweet Bird a cocktail lounge scene which effectively portrays Chance as the central figure. Unlike the later New Directions version that concludes with the political rally, the 1958 version concludes with Chance as he speculates on his relationship with Heavenly:

> CHANCE
> ...I'm alone, now, nobody's hands on me, now.When I was the barman in the Belvedere lounge, I used to come down in this garden and have--wild dreams. I did seem to me like something wonderful was in store for me, then. Of course every night something was. When the bar closed,

> my girl would be waiting for me, out here in the palm garden....We didn't even say anything to each other, she'd start the car before I got in it, sometimes! And sometimes she'd reach out for me before I would reach out for her. Oh. her body! her sweet, sweet, young, sweet body....At the Bayshore Motel....Where's it gone to? How did it go away? If only some living voice spoke to give us--directions, instructions! But all I hear is the sound that drifts through the air of this place, the lament, she said, that drifts through the air of this place....I'm outside, now. If I was a navigator, I'd look for the Southern Cross, I'd look for the Pole Star to guide me, but--(He shakes his head with a wild, soft laugh.) Even then I'd turn the wrong way! (A band strikes up a fast and dissonant march tune as CHANCE is dimmed out...)
> (Esquire Sweet Bird 41)

This monologue, not included in the New Directions version of Sweet Bird, effectively maintains Chance as the focus of the scene rather than allowing the Princess or the Boss take center stage at the scene's conclusion. In addition to making Chance more central, the 1958 version of the play also provided the missing scene between Chance and Heavenly. Williams included a previous version of this scene in which the two former lovers talked via telephone. In this dialogue, Heavenly tells Chance of her terrifying experience when she attempted to visit him in California and also tells him to leave St. Cloud. The inclusion of this scene fills a narrative gap that many critics have noted is a weakness in the New Directions version. By including this much-needed scene, Williams also placed the focus of the play on Chance's character and his attempt to reestablish his contact with Heavenly.

Likewise Williams's elimination of Chance's final plea to the audience also eliminated a melodramatic ending that erroneously assumed the universality of the

morally ambiguous Chance. In this version Chance leaves St. Cloud with the Princess rather than await his tragic fate at the hands of Boss Finley's henchmen. Nevertheless, these alterations--the increased emphasis on Chance's character, the inclusion of the dialogue between Chance and Heavenly, and the improved conclusion--strengthen the play's dramatic structure and eliminate many of the features that have detracted from the play's standing in the Williams canon.

While this unpublished version of Sweet Bird does make Chance more central to the dramatic proceedings, he nevertheless remains a morally ambiguous character. In this version, however, Williams includes a number of narrative elements that make him more credible as a character and make him less flawed than in the later New Directions version. For example, in this version Chance is not made responsible for having infected Heavenly with venereal disease. Heavenly's infection is the result of her experience at the party, an experience for which Chance was not totally responsible. In the later New Directions version, Chance is not only portrayed as responsible for her infection but is also remiss in not informing her of the infection. In addition, Chance's character is enhanced in the unpublished version of the play because he demonstrates substantially more grief as a result of his mother's death than the later version allows.

The 1958 script of Sweet Bird was much more the product of Williams's own imaginative efforts than the stage version of the play. When the play began production for its Broadway opening, it underwent alterations that were the result of Williams's collaboration with others, particularly Elia Kazan. While Williams would admit to taking suggestions from many people, it is likely that Kazan had the greatest influence on the

Williams during the rehearsals in New York. There is no absolute proof of Kazan's involvement in the revision process, but the two had worked previously on Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and as a result Cat was significantly altered. Likewise, Sweet Bird obviously underwent numerous alterations as seen in the comparison to the later New Directions version. Under the influence of Kazan, the play's dramatic structure was weakened and there was an increased emphasis on the flamboyant elements of the play. For example, in the New Directions version, the role of the Princess was slightly augmented, a large television screen was included to present the events of the rally scene, and the extended dramatic monologues were included to contribute to the drama's theatrical effect. Perhaps these elements diverted the audience's attention from the play's underlying weaknesses that the unpublished version of Sweet Bird had been more successful in overcoming.

In the early sixties, when Williams rewrote Sweet Bird for the Dramatists Play Service, it is likely that he had lost sight of his original dramatic vision. After all, the rather circuitous process that produced this play had perhaps come to seem a rather haphazard one. The tedious process of changing the order of particular scenes, eliminating scenes, altering the internal structure of scenes, and increasing or reducing the importance of characters are all elements of a writing process that would become confusing and bewildering, not unlike the constant re-assembling of a giant jigsaw puzzle. It is likely that Williams had come to think of the revision of this play as a juggling process in which the juggling of the various elements of the play would produce certain theatrical effects. In order to induce Margaret Leighton to play the part of the Princess, Willliams at one point promised that he would rewrite the second act for her:

"Maggie turned down Sweet Bird of Youth, y'know. She didn't think it was for her. But Bird has never been done in England. Maggie could do it there. I told her I'd rewrite the second act for her so that the action remained at the hotel. That way she'd dominate the play even more completely" (Devlin 165). This incident certainly demonstrates the fact that Williams at this point saw the play as an adjustable, adaptable mechanism that could be altered to suit the preferences of a particular actress.

In 1962, Williams produced a significantly altered version of Sweet Bird for the Dramatists Play Service. Although the script is largely ignored, it is significant in demonstrating Williams's revision process. A "note about the present version" of the play indicates that this version was intended for amateur actors: "This version was revised by the author for the use of nonprofessional companies. Producers will note that it differs substantially in some respects from the play as produced on Broadway" (2). Although the first act of the 1962 version remains unchanged, the second act is altered so that it is barely recognizable. In this act, the crucial scene at Boss Finley's house is completely eliminated; there is no explanation for Miss Lucy's character or for the Heckler for that matter; Heavenly's operation is reduced in significance; the roles of the Boss, Tom Jr., and Scudder have become inconsequential; and Aunt Nonnie was simply eliminated, as is the lament. It is also interesting to note that in this version the Princess is called Alexandra in Acts I and III and is called Ariadne in Act II. In addition, these alterations make the relationship between Chance and the Princess the dominating element of the play, much of the dialogue involving these two characters alone.

While these alterations seem to undermine the play's dramatic integrity, it should

also be said that this version provided a scene portraying the meeting between Chance and Heavenly and eliminated Chance's concluding comment in which he seeks their sympathy. The play's conclusion apparently remained a problem for Williams who provided this version of the play with two possible endings, both portraying Chance being escorted to the Princess's car by Fly.

The Tennessee Williams Collection at the University of Texas in Austen, provides us with a rather complete record of Williams's creative process. While the manuscripts considered in this paper concern Sweet Bird of Youth only, the patterns of dramatic and creative development are also similar to the patterns seen in the development of other Williams dramas. These patterns of dramatic development include Williams's tendency to transform originally conceived visual images into later stage realities that are merely suggestive, the tendency to transform various early characters into a later composite character, and the tendency to retain material from early sketches for later use in altered form. These patterns of development are accompanied by other patterns that also repeat themselves in Williams's writing process, including Williams's reworking of ideas previously developed in short stories, the continual revision of material, the tendency to revise material while collaborating with the play's director, continued experimentation with situations and characters by writing alternative versions of the same material, beginning a dramatic work with a simple situation that becomes the basis of the play's later dramatic development, and the use of real-life people as the basis of fictional characterization.

The manuscripts from the Tennessee Williams Collection have demonstrated how

the final dramatic structure of Sweet Bird developed from a series of what were called "one-act sketches" that were in reality so brief that they could scarcely be considered even as scenes. By justaposing these early scenic pieces with later completed versions, the manuscripts demonstrate the play's developing dramatic structure and evolving characterization. Even while the play was in the final stages of rehearsal, Williams continued to revise, adding scenes in order to enhance character, to underscore thematic elements, and to ensure dramatic unity and coherence.

From these manuscripts we see characters originally conceived in rather rudimentary profiles evolve into more complex and dramatic stage realities. In fact, early sketches such as Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time concern themselves with little more than the creation of character. Comparing earlier sketches of the Princess, Chance, Heavenly, and Boss Finley to their more familiar final identities demonstrates the effective revision that resulted in characters who are complete on stage. Not only do characters undergo name changes, but they also undergo changes in appearance, dress, and behavior. The Princess, for example, evolved from a character of incidental importance to one of central significance. The availability of these manuscripts since Williams's death makes it possible to study a particular revision process and, in doing so, the evolution of a work of art.

VI. Method, Multitudinousness, and Patterns of Progression

This section of the dissertation overviews the patterns that characterize the Williams writing process, with emphasis on these patterns in the development of Sweet Bird of Youth.

In "A Streetcar Named Desire: Its Development through the Manuscripts," Vivienne Dickson notes that there are at least four recurring patterns in the writing process that produced Streetcar. Similarly, these patterns are also a part of the process that produced Sweet Bird that have recurred over and over as Williams's writing process has been described in this paper:

1) Retain, Emphasize or Deemphasize. As Dickson indicates, Williams seldom eliminated material but rather found other ways in which that material could be used in a play's later stages of development. In the case of Sweet Bird, it has already been noted that many of the ideas present in the very earliest sketches of the play found their way into final versions of the play. Dickson points out that "Images (particularly visual ones) and dialogue (its matter, not the exact words) which appeared in the very early drafts were often retained, though in changed form, in final drafts. They either decreased or increased in importance, but seldom disappeared completely" (Dickson 165). For example, the lamentation, which first appears in The Enemy: Time, becomes increasingly significant as the play develops and its themes become defined. On the coversheet of this early draft, Willliams notes that "The play begins with a sound: a sort of wordless lamentation that drifts across the summer night air and dies" (Enemy 1). This expressionistic device is again invoked at the conclusion of Enemy. In these instances,

the dramatic device called the lamentation is merely suggested and has not been completely incorporated into the context of the play itself. In these early versions of the play, the desperation of the main characters has not been so clearly defined so that the use of the lamentation does not always seem to be a reflection of what is occurring in the text. In addition, Williams's definition of the lamentation becomes more precise as the writing process continues. This device as described in Enemy is simply wordless, while it is described in the New Directions version of Sweet Bird as a blending of thematic music that will seem to emanate from the sound of the wind.

Likewise, Williams's original inclusion of an actual clock undergoes a transformation so that in the end the presence of an actual clock is diminished to only the sound of a clock. This sound suggests the omnipresence of the aging process and the subsequent passage of time. The first mention of a clock is in Big Time Operators when Phil, talking to Delphine, an antecedent of Heavenly, refers to the presence of a clock: (When you stop talking (sic) in here you can hear the clock tick" (7). In The Enemy: Time, the clock takes on a physical presence as Williams indicates: "a big grandfather clock with a smiling moon-face dial on a stair landing is lighted and the lamentation fades into the magnified tick of the clock" (1). Later in a scene that involves Phil and Rose, the physical presence of the clock is once again made evident when "the sound of the clock is brought up." He turns to the grinding moon-face on the dial of the grandfather clock" (7). In the following dialogue from Enemy, Phil refers to the clock as a physical presence:

> And yet they make these enormous clocks for houses, clocks as tall as a man or half a head taller and put them on the stair-landing so they look down over the living-room of the house and say, 'tick-tick, you're dying..." (7)

In the case of the clock, an original idea was retained but altered, becoming less of a visual presence on stage. On the other hand, it becomes a more integral part of the play as it becomes increasingly an extension of character.

2) Major Statement to Suggestive Statement. It was also typical of Williams to introduce a dramatic concept with the intention that it would make an explicit statement, and then reduce it to the level of the suggestive, the allusive (Dickson 165). For example, The Enemy: Time includes the subject of Rose's mourning as one of the central themes of this early version of Sweet Bird. In the opening scene Mrs. Ebbs, a neighbor of the Finleys, suggests that Rose may now discontinue her mourning now that Phil has returned. Indicating to Rose that she and Mrs. Pitts will not monopolize Phil's time, Mrs. Ebbs says, "We're not going to hold him long, Rose--maybe she'll take off that mourning now that you're back in town, Phil" (3). In this initial scene, Rose's mourning is said to be the result of the death of her fiance who had been shot down in the Pacific. Later, as the reunion between Phil and Rose continues, Rose reveals the real reason for her mourning: "I don't know what's happened to me. I guess I've had everything, and I don't like it anymore. I've had it all, all of it, and now I know I don't like it. I'm not even sure I'm wearing mourning for him...." (7). As it is later explained, Rose's mourning , while originally the result of the death of her fiance, is also the result of her contracting a sexually transmitted disease and her subsequent sterilization.

The inclusion of "mourning' in later versions of Sweet Bird is incidental and suggestive and therefore not central to the important narrative elements of the play. In the New Directions version of Sweet Bird, the Heckler alludes to Heavenly's mourning and in the following quotation, the Boss tells Heavenly of the Heckler's comment:

> Last week in New Bethesda, when I was speaking on the threat of desegregation to white women's chastity in the South, some heckler in the crowd shouted out, 'Hey, Boss Finley, how about your daughter? How about that operation you had done on your daughter at the Thomas J. Finely hospital in St. Cloud? Did she put on black in mourning for her appendix?' Same heckler, same question when I spoke in the Coliseum at the state capital. (Sweet Bird 71)

Later in the play during the political rally the Heckler refers to Heavenly's mourning once again. Again, while there is no formal explanation, it is suggested that Heavenly's mourning is the result of the operation. The reduction of Heavenly's mourning from explicit statement to merely suggestive statement is a process that also occurs rather frequently in Williams's writing. Once again it occurs when in the final version of Sweet Bird George Scudder arrives at the Finley's with medical pictures demonstrating the effectiveness of the operation. In this later version, the pictures are a routine matter, but in earlier versions of the play the pictures are the result of a dramatized hospital scene that results from Heavenly's mistaken belief that she has been miraculously cured. As a result, the significance of the pictures has become suggestive and is no longer a major narrative element in the play.

3) Transformation to Other Purposes, Other Voices. Often ideas retained from original sources were used later for completely different purposes or were voiced by a completely different character (Dickson 166). Likewise, Pere has no representation as a character in the later Sweet Bird. For example, Williams seems to have discovered a method of pulling Pere and Candy foreward and including them both in the final version of the play. For example, Pere was originally portrayed as a political aspirant who had succeeded politically through his association with the political machine run by Otto and the Boss. In this early version, Pere and the Boss are two separate entities who are later expressed in the figure of the Boss, a composite. In later versions of Sweet Bird, the Boss not only runs the political machine but also is represented as a political figure who aspires to national office and who communicates his concern for traditional Southern values. In this way the later figure of the Boss takes on the the earlier qualities of Pere and therefore becomes a composite figure.

In addition, Candy is represented in final versions of Sweet Bird in the character of Miss Lucy, the Boss's mistress. Her character, unlike the final figure of the Boss, is not a composite but was apparently brought foreward into later versions of Sweet Bird as a character who had to be redefined in terms of her character name and in terms of her relationship to the play's other characters.

In addition to the creation of the Boss, the original sketches that included dialogue between Phil and Rose were intended to communicate their past experiences together:

ROSE
(OPENING SCREEN DOOR FOR HIM) You see? No

> one is deceived, no one is impressed, no one is even interested anymore, and yet you do it each time, it's a sort of compulsion with you. It's sad because you did have talent and charm and used t be wonderful looking and a nice boy--once.... A couple of times, I guess, you almost made the grade but somehow you always just missed, just barely did miss. Even in our school plays you'd know every line word perfect, and yet on the opening night you'd dry up and have to have the lines hissed at you so loud the audience laughed. But everyone liked you, then. And you deserved it you were warm to people, you had that wonderful natural sweetness and warmth toward everyone, Phil, they all loved you. And took it for granted that you would accomplish great things. What happened to you? What was it, Phil? What made you fall out of the sky, such a long way down? (Enemy 4)

Since these meetings between Phil and Rose never occurred in the later versions of Sweet Bird, Williams found other means of relating this material. In the final version of the play, Phil rather than Rose, relates this information to the Princess in Act I, scene 1. Similarly, in The Enemy: Time, Rose tells Phil of her illness and later operation, but this information is related to Phil/Chance by George Scudder in later versions of the play.

Another technique employed by Williams to portray Phil and Rose's past relationship was through their conversations with Aunt Nonnie. Since Aunt Nonnie did not appear in the earliest versions of Sweet Bird, there was no intermediary character to serve as a link between Phil and Rose. In the early sketches, especially in Enemy, the two former lovers refer frequently to their past physical relationship. Much later, in the final version of Sweet Bird, this material is related to Aunt Nonnie through Phil who recalls the first time Rose/Heavenly and he made love.

Williams found a method to convey information about the past experiences of Chance and Heavenly even though the scene portraying their recollections had been eliminated from the final play. In this case, Aunt Nonnie substitutes for Heavenly and responds to Chance's story of the first time he and Heavenly made love. Although the actual dialogue between Chance and Heavenly has been eliminated, the same sentiments are related in this scene that now includes Aunt Nonnie instead of Heavenly. Williams achieves a similar effect in scenes between Heavenly and the Boss. In this case, Heavenly recalls for her father her past association with Chance. This dramatic device allows Williams to convey to his audience the past experiences of these two lovers without ever having them actually meet and relate the information directly to one another.

4) Visual Image Transformed into Symbol. As noted by Vivienne Dickson in her study of Streetcar, Williams frequently transformed visual images in early drafts into images that took on symbolic significance as the play evolved into its final dramatic format (Dickson 167). Often these visual images were associated with a particular character and later took on symbolic meaning as the character became more clearly defined. For example, in the earliest sketches of Sweet Bird, Phil/Chance is associated with glamor as Rose/Heavenly indicates in one of her first meetings with him in Big Time Operators:

ROSE
Try to understand that it doesn't matter. It's all a part of some other world that I lived in which doesn't exist anymore. I fooled away a lot of my young life believing in

> your lies, in you, in your phoney soap- bubble which has now burst. Your glamor! Your great plans for the future. The talk you've spilled here tonight is like a record played back of talk you spillled here five or six years ago. Only this time you're more elaborate about it and for the first time I see how childish and stupid it is, because you have not gotten anywhere in the world of glamor and you are not going to get anywhere. You are really washed up. You can't break into the world of glamor and now it's too late for you to become a normal, ordinary person which you should have been satisfied to be in the first place. No, it's too late now. You're too spoiled. You're ruined, you're finished, your hair's falling out. Why, in a year or two more even (sic) your looks will be gone and even people like Kenilworth will have no more use for you. Will (sic) say, Phil Beam? Who was he, I don't quite remember the name. Oh, yes. yes, I do now. I used to know him, a very god-like young -social misfit with - blond hair that fell out -Where is he now, I wonder? In the scrap-heap? That's right. In the scrap-heap! (Operators 9-10)

In the above speech, Rose makes mention of Phil's "blond hair that fell out." This image and others are frequently mentioned in Sweet Bird to demonstrate the transitory nature of the glamorous lifestyle Phil has pursued. In addition, Williams frequently refers in Sweet Bird to the Princess's Cadillac, the clothing purchased by the Princess for Phil, even the fashionable drug hashish, so that these images take on symbolic significance as the play evolves and glamor is seen as increasingly empty and meaningless. No other visual image is more identified with Phil/ Chance and his pursuit of Hollywood glamor than the Cadillac which signifies success and prestige. In the New Directions edition of Sweet Bird, Chance explains to the Princess his reason for wanting to borrow her car:

CHANCE

And I want to borrow your Cadillac for a while....

PRINCESS

What for, Chance?

CHANCE

(posturing) I'm pretentious. I want to be seen in your car on the streets of St. Cloud. Drive all around town in it, blowing those long silver trumpets and dressed in the fine clothes you bought me.... Can I?

PRINCESS

Chance, you're a lost little boy that I really would like to help find himself.

CHANCE

I passed the screen test!

PRINCESS

Come here, kiss me, I love you. (She faces the audience.) Did I say that? Did I mean it? (then to CHANCE with arms outstretched.) What a child you are.... come here....(He ducks under her arms, and escapes to the chair.)

CHANCE

I want this big display. But phony display in your Cadillac around town. And a wad a dough to flash in their faces and the fine clothes you've bought me, on me.

PRINCESS

Did I buy you fine clothes?

CHANCE

(picking up his jacket from the chair) The finest. When you stopped being lonely because of my compan at that Palm Beach hotel, you bought me the finest. That's the deal for tonight, to toot those silver horns and drive slowly around in the Cadillac convertible so everybody that thought I was washed up will see me. And I have taken my false or true contract to flash in the faces of various people that called me washed up. All right that's the deal. Tomorrow you'll get the car back and what's left of your money. Tonight's all that counts.

(Sweet Bird53-54)

Of the visual images that Williams uses to illustrate the emptiness of glamor, the Cadillac takes on the strongest symbolic significance and becomes representative of the trappings of success. The continued reference to the Cadillac as the play develops reinforces its symbolic stature, making it more than just a visual image.

As the play evolves from sketch to completed drama, the image of the knife also takes on a symbolic role. Although the knife is later eliminated at a physical presence in the play, the early versions of the play include the physical presence of a knife and a revolver. In the "sketch for a long play," Williams presents antagonists George Scudder and Phil Beam in an introductory scene in which a verbal confrontation leads to the display of Phil's revolver and George Scudder's surgical knife. Williams establishes the animosity between these two characters and strongly underscores the theme of violence in making these weapons a prominent part of the play's first scene. In dialogue that was later cut from the opening scene, Phil Beam reinforces the visual image of the knife while further associating the knife image with George Scudder:

> PHIL
> (Still smiles but his lips twist as he sucks in breath) You said this revolver figures for me: that goddam knife figures for you, you sexless capon. You seersucker - Galahad bastard! Very high character! Superior! Clean! Scientific! - I bet you never touched a woman outside your office or on a table with knives! Sure, it figures, that thing you got in your hand. All you sexless Galahad bastards want to castrate the men whose girls you can't have. You can't have Rose. If you did, what would you do? Love her

with that thing there, on a goddam sterilized- Sweet Bird sketch 7)

In dialogue between Phil and George, the knife metaphor is continued, and he introduces here the phrase "sex envy" which later appears in altered form in the cocktail lounge scene, but in this version the idea of sex envy in linked to the knife imagery:

> PHIL
> I know what's wrong with you, George, it's something I've met with before, something that's been an obstacle I've run into time and again: sex envy. Uh-huh, sex envy is eating your heart out, George. You threaten to make me sexless with a knife because you were made sexless without one, must by nature, just by the meanness of nature, the lack of generosity nature has shown you. Um-mum. That's my analysis of this sickness in you that makes you look famished for something like a, likea a - convict excaped (sic) from a concentration camp lately, and not yet fed... Y'know what I'm willin' t' bed (sic) bout you, George? I bet you've never put hands on a woman's bare body except with rubber gloves on a cold white table in your clinic, or entered a girl's sweet flesh except with sterilized metal, except with a knife....
>
> (Sweet Bird sketch 8)

In this early version of the first scene of Sweet Bird, Williams has reiterated the significance of the knife both as a visual image and as an image he has reinforced textually. Nevertheless, the physical knife disappears in final versions of the play to become an image that appears several times in the dialogue and is subsequently evoked with the play's frequent reference to words such as "castration," 'operation," and "removal." As a result, the knife in final versions of Sweet Bird no longer remains a

physical presence but instead plays a symbolic role. The sinister presence of the knife in Sweet Bird reinforces the darker sexual themes in the play. The omnipresence of the knife underscores the theme of possible violence between Chance and Scudder but also suggests the element of penis envy or sex envy on the part of Scudder. The knife-penis becomes in Sweet Bird an implement that suggests the dangers of penetration (through actual stabbing and even Heavenly's disease) and at other times the act of removal (through sterilization or castration). The negative overtones associated with knife link the characters of Sweet Bird--Chance and Scudder, Chance and Heavenly, and Chance and the Princess--in a perverse sexual framework that redefines their ordinary relationships. The symbolic significance of the knife further links the sexual elements of the play with violence and aggression--that of Chance with Heavenly and Scudder with Chance--and substantiates the darker view of sexuality the play presents that no character is free from.

The Tennessee Williams Collection at the University of Texas in Austin, provides us with a complete record of Williams's creative process. While the manuscripts considered in this paper concern Sweet Bird of Youth only, the patterns of dramatic and creative development are also similar to the patterns seen in the development of other Williams dramas. These patterns of dramatic development include Williams's tendency to transform originally conceived visual images into later stage realities that are merely suggestive, the tendency to transform various earlier characters into a later composite character, and the tendency to retain material from early sketches for later use in altered form. These patterns of development are accompanied by other patterns that also repeat

themselves in Williams's writing process, including Williams's reworking of ideas previously developed in short stories, the continual revision of material, the tendency to revise material while collaborating with the play's director, the continued experimentation with situations and characters by writing alternative versions of the same material, beginning a dramatic work with a simple situation that becomes the basis of the play's later dramatic development, and the use of real-life people as the basis of fictional characterization.

The manuscripts from the Tennessee Williams Collection have demonstrated how the final dramatic structure of Sweet Bird developed from a series of what were called "one-act sketches" that were in reality so brief that they could scarcely be considered even as scenes. By juxtaposing these early scenic pieces with later completed versions, the manuscripts demonstrate the play's developing dramatic structure and evolving characterization. Even while the play was in the final stages of rehearsal, Williams continued to revise, adding scenes in order to enhance character, to underscore thematic elements, and to ensure dramatic unity and coherence.

From these manuscripts we see characters, originally conceived in rather rudimentary profiles, evolve into more complex and dramatic stage realities. In fact, early sketches such as Big Time Operators and The Enemy: Time concern themselves with little more than the creation of character. Comparing earlier sketches of the Princess, Chance, Heavenly, and Boss Finley to their more familiar final identities demonstrates the effective revision that resulted in characters who are complete on stage. Not only do characters undergo name changes, but they also undergo changes in appearance, dress,

and behavior. The Princess, for example, evolved from a character of incidental importance to one of central significance. The availability of these manuscripts since Williams's death makes it possible to study a particular revision process and, in doing so, the evolution of a work of art.

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