ELIA KAZAN'S
PRODUCTION OF
TENNESSEE WILLIAMS'
BOLDEST STORY!

STARRING
KARL MALDEN · CARROLL BAKER · ELI WALLACH

Story and Screen Play by TENNESSEE WILLIAMS
Directed by ELIA KAZAN · A NEWTOWN PRODUCTION

PRESENTED BY WARNER BROS.

Baby Doll *(1956); Warner Bros./Photofest ©Warner Bros.*

In the Williams Museum: Two Recent Cinematic Exhibits

R. Barton Palmer

The Snows of Yesteryear?

At the end of a decidedly lukewarm review of *The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond* (2008), made from an original filmscript that Tennessee Williams penned during the height of his Hollywood and Broadway popularity in the 1950s, Roger Ebert poses a painful question. *Teardrop*, he affirms, is a film that should be seen by all those to whom "Tennessee means anything." And yet, not expecting an answer, he asks: "Does he, to most people, anymore?" More painful, perhaps, is that Williams is not alone in slipping into undeserved cultural neglect, for the same fate, at least according to Ebert, has been suffered by his contemporaries Edward Albee and Arthur Miller. In fact, as Ebert then surveys the scene, the kind of theatre represented by the giants of the postwar Broadway dramatic stage could hardly arouse much interest in the new century: "A non-musical play can hardly open on Broadway these days" (Ebert).

Ebert goes too far here, of course, not anticipating the possibility that theatregoers would support a significant revival of one of the monuments of the early postwar years. Just to take the most obvious example, the eminently successful 2012 Broadway production of Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, starring Philip Seymour Hoffman, proves that the commercial theatre still supports serious, quality dramatic productions. Ebert might also have been surprised that a version of Williams's *Outcry* (a failure in its initial 1975 production) has been recently revived as *The Two-Character Play*, a title favored by the playwright in other versions of the work, which remains an object of scholarship and scholarly editing. Starring Brad Dourif and Amanda Plummer, the production, which opened in June 2013 (see review, page 129), did vigorous box office business and received quite positive reviews, including one from Elyssa Gardner writing in *USA Today*, who observed that this "new production finds vigor and poignancy in the playwright's late, uneven work" (Gardner). More cheering, perhaps, are the rave notices

received by the just-opened Broadway revival of *The Glass Menagerie*, starring Zachary Quinto as part of a cast that, *Variety* opined, has determined to "re-learn to love a classic" ("The Glass Menagerie"). Embracing Williams, warts and all, is very much au courant. One expects, of course, the nation's entertainment industry weekly to give a Broadway revival of *Menagerie* a solid review. But what could be more comfortably middlebrow than a ringing endorsement from America's hometown paper for the revival of *Outcry*, a flawed dramatic text now proclaimed to be rescued by an artful mounting?

And yet, such bright spots of continuing life and cultural relevance aside, we must admit that the postwar dramatic revival that proved so definitive of American serious theatre is long over. The commercial stage is dominated by different forms of entertainment, more theatrical, broadly speaking, than dramatic, as was the case in the 1920s and 1930s, marking the current era as a return to the past. Even so, as Ebert states, it should surely "mean something" that *Teardrop*, in some sense a new Tennessee Williams property, has now reached the screen—even if the playwright himself shelved the project, never working through the several structural problems that the extant script represents and which he might have been moved to correct by collaborators. If *Teardrop* is saddled with an overly complex plot and confusing character arcs, these are precisely the kind of dramaturgical flaws that stage production, with its usually fruitful dialogue between Williams and his directors, would most times ameliorate or eliminate. And so what is one to do when faced with the ontological fact of a property, hitherto unproduced and thus deracinated from its defining cultural moment, that represents the playwright's work at his weakest? A new film from Tennessee Williams should mean something, as Ebert proclaims, and the temptation to make the rejected script come alive on the screen proved irresistible for those who were involved in the project. Their zeal can be measured by *Teardrop*'s overheated marketing campaign, which centered on the theme of improbable resurrection: "Tennessee Williams: An American Legend is Back" was the relevant high concept. Wishes and hopes aside, legends, of course, do not return, but the incongruity points toward the paradox of the film's relevant irrelevancy. The hitherto unrealized past in its inevitable newness finds itself trapped between cultural moments that are separated by titanic shifts of values and interests, inviting meditations about what "meaning" Tennessee Williams should or could have in the here and now. *Teardrop* is present and in no sense a revival or a remake, but it belongs neither to us nor to the field of hallowed but also bittersweet remembrances. The playwright's enduring memorial in the national culture where he was once a dominating presence—in short, his reputation—does not know this late arrival.

Ebert senses this instability, which becomes the true center of his review. Perhaps wisely, perhaps because he cannot help himself from finding something to admire and like about this Williams adaptation, he decides to "take it for what it is." And yet despite

this determination, he finds himself not dealing with *Teardrop* as itself. He instead immediately confesses to valuing it for the remembering it incites. The critic's thoughts turn back to his memories of "Tennessee's yearnings" as *Teardrop*, however ineptly at times, poignantly evokes characteristic Williams tropes: "the paralyzing stupidity of genteel society. The lure of Europe, and the arts, and escape itself. The drink, the drugs, the decay" (Ebert). *Teardrop* might not be a particularly good film, or so runs the critical consensus, but, following the path laid out by Ebert, we might all agree that its appeal is that it embodies "Williamsness" in an unanticipated but welcome form. Like Proust's madeleine, the film engages our cultural memory, offering not the impossible return of a "legend" (how Tennessee would smile to think that he might be so imagined) but rather a glimpse into a past that lives on. As Ebert's nostalgia exemplifier, *Teardrop* outlines the absence it can never hope to fill, inciting unfavorable comparisons with those Williams works that, because they did see the light of day in postwar America, possess a different, more familiar and comfortable kind of pastness. Their past is connected with the cultural history of a period that witnessed their original productions and screenings, and whose concerns they so often complexly and intriguingly exemplify. *Teardrop*, of course, lacks this aura, and so it must inevitably slip from critical focus, existing as if does "out of time."

Ebert's review illustrates this movement away from the text itself, as a discussion of *Teardrop* is displaced in favor of a digression about Tennessee's brother Dakin, who survived the playwright by more than two decades but is himself now gone. Like the film, Dakin willy-nilly became a kind of madeleine. His survival and public presence engaged the memory about what had been lost and was no longer present, the brother remembered and endlessly anecdotalized as Dakin, since he was called upon to be a fountain of familial reminiscence, revealed an impressive talent for autobiographical storytelling. Dakin's seemingly endless recollections constituted a spellbinding one-man show that was for many years one of the most popular events at the annual Tennessee Williams/ New Orleans Literary Festival, a gathering that has been appropriately conceived of as a kind of living museum to the playwright's talents and achievements. As an aide-mémoire, *Teardrop* takes its place as an exhibit in the living museum of cultural memory. The film is no more and no less than an object salvaged from the disorder of an unfinished writerly past; its principal value is that it functions as yet another metonymy to engage our *nostalgie* and drive us back into the irrecoverable past, of which any glimpse, however distorted, proves irresistible.

This Williams museum has been especially busy in the past decade, absorbing the current, ever-accelerating flow of first-productions of plays found posthumously in manuscript. This is the most publicly visible part of an ongoing project of rescuing from archival oblivion and mind-numbing disorganization the works that never saw the light

of day during the playwright's lifetime. The volume of material is immense. And so over time in the Williams museum there will be many galleries. Some will feature works of considerable merit discovered or redefined by this archaeology; some will promote texts, like *Teardrop*, that are not up to the high standards of artistry Williams set, but have value simply because of their connection to him. A considerable space will have to be accorded as well to those remakes and new productions that testify to the continuing interest in Williams, despite the fact that his popularity is attached irrevocably to a cultural moment now long past. These revivals, in short, run the considerable risk of being hopelessly out of date, depending for their effect on cultural values and themes. Hollywood once valued Williams for his notoriety, but this was an effect dependent absolutely on his films' immediate context of reception—that notoriety, in short, is absolutely resistant to revival.

Thus a remake such as the 2003 Showtime production of *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, starring Helen Mirren and Olivier Martinez, depends for its thematic effect on a past moment that contemporary filmgoers can hardly grasp. Like *Teardrop*, this film can only point backward. Interestingly, this present irrelevance in this case is a reflection of the failure of the original film version (1961) to connect with viewers; the first *Roman Spring* was a film that met with widespread indifference. The remake was designed in part to emend its shortcomings. The Showtime updating, whatever its artistic merits (and these have been only slightly praised), proves more useful because it underlines the essential quality of the 1950s and '60s Williams films in situ, their absolute dependence for their cultural influence on how they engaged with some of the period's most vexing themes, particularly those related to gender and sexuality.

A Notorious Artistry

In the 1950s and '60s, films based on the works of Tennessee Williams were among the hottest properties Hollywood had on offer. Such box office smashes as *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1958), and *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962) transformed a serious dramatist into the nation's best known literary celebrity. At the time, Ernest Hemingway was the only possible rival for that distinction, with successful film adaptations of such works as *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* (1952). But no films made from Hemingway sources received the critical acclaim accorded to the three Williams films. None did as much business with the filmgoing public. And, unlike the Williams films, none became a cultural phenomenon, concretizing the era's concerns with sexual passion, gender styles, and destructive social rules.

To be sure, the works of other serious playwrights of the period, such as Arthur Miller, William Inge, and Lillian Hellman, were also sought out by Hollywood. But

among this distinguished group, only Williams was truly "bankable," as those in the industry would say, and the extraordinary fees he received for film rights testified to that judgment. These payments (such as the $350,000 paid for *Streetcar*) were among the highest any original author demanded and got.[1] The explanation is simple. His participation in a project, particularly as the author of the original property, quickly revealed itself as a reliable guarantor of extraordinary box office receipts; and film producers were not shy to take credit as well for mounting the works of an acknowledged theatrical genius. No adaptation of any other literary (as opposed to middlebrow) property in the period equaled the critical success and popular notoriety of the Williams films—not all of which, strictly speaking, were adaptations, a fact that further underlines the sui generis nature of the contributions the playwright made to Hollywood.

The case in point, of course, is *Baby Doll* (1956), a film whose production and reception histories—the first lengthy and troubled and the second marked by national scandal—are unique in the history of American commercial filmmaking. After the critical and popular success of *Streetcar*, director Elia Kazan, who was also a very canny producer, recognized the appeal of not only the Williams name but also the fictional world his works called into being. Kazan was eager to mount a sequel in which that world, presented by him with such impact in *Streetcar*, would come alive once again on celluloid. But this time he determined to cut out producer Charles K. Feldman, thinking that a second Williams adaptation would be an ideal project for his newly founded company, Newtown Productions. With no Broadway smash on the model of *Streetcar* available for screen versioning, Kazan picked through the growing portfolio of the playwright's one-acts in order to locate material from which a screenplay might be fashioned that would bring to life the dramatic conflicts and racy themes that had made *Streetcar* such a success with filmgoers. After considering more than six one-acts, he eventually selected two: *27 Wagon Full of Cotton* and the *Unsatisfactory Supper*. Because it would not be "presold" in the same manner as *Streetcar*, which had a Pulitzer Prize and a long Broadway run to its credit, the rights would be cheaper to purchase, because he alone would bid on it, as it were. In fact, only Kazan and Williams would have any idea how exactly the project was proceeding. The executives at Warner Brothers, the studio that once again would be called upon to provide some financing and distribution, were kept largely in the dark. Williams himself, as the fascinating exchanges between playwright and director (available for study in various archives) make amusingly clear, was preoccupied with other projects; he could only be coaxed into making sporadic contributions to a screenplay that Kazan, deeply interested in the potential profits for his production company, was largely responsible for authoring. What must be seen as an incredibly artful pastiche of Williams themes and Kazan dramaturgy was released as *Baby Doll* in 1956, several years after Kazan acquired rights to the title.

The film's "presoldness" was the somewhat slippery "fact" of Williams's authorship, but it was marketed to the public, as is well known, by a notoriously provocative marketing campaign designed and financed by Kazan. Among the rich portfolio of Williams adaptations, no film makes a stronger case for the unique appeal of the playwright. Kazan as writer helped confect, with the playwright's often indifferent cooperation, a screenplay that perfectly recaptured the "Williamsness" of *Streetcar*, with a pervasive aura of Southern decadence energized by sexual hijinks, marital discord, and the constant threat, if not the fact, of retributive violence. *Baby Doll* proved sensational enough to yield the era's most provocative billboard (and afterward publicity poster), for whose design Kazan was, at least initially, proudly responsible.[2]

Until perhaps Edward Albee with *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (stage production 1962–63; film version 1966, both directed by Mike Nichols), no other playwright of the era had anything approaching such power to shock and titillate. It is not possible to imagine any other filmed play of the period yielding an image comparable to that used so effectively by Kazan, who hoped to draw in customers who were largely indifferent to or ignorant of Williams's reputation as a preeminent dramatist. Only in the cover art of the notorious drugstore novels of the period, such as Mickey Spillane's *I, the Jury* (1947), can images similarly provocative be found. And there is no scene from even *Who's Afraid* (the film whose successful release prompted the abandonment of the Production Code) that might rival the teasing transgressiveness of Baby Doll in her crib, sucking her thumb and playfully seeking out the eye of the viewer. The film version of Albee's play was instead marketed on the basis of its intense drama, as a fictional versioning, or so many saw it, of the stormy but intensely romantic relationship between stars Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor. *Baby Doll* offered not the promise of engaging agon, but the apparently underage and uninhibited title character as the principal attraction. This was a film that promised spectacle of the most unusual, perhaps transgressive kind.

The Williams films, perhaps *Baby Doll* most of all, meant something very special in their time, as Elia Kazan perhaps better than anyone in the industry understood, appreciated, and profited from. The last exhibition run for *Baby Doll* was not as an arthouse double bill paired with some French New Wave production, but as the lead feature in a drive-in program. With producer Kazan making the deal, *Baby Doll* found itself the opening act for a very forgettable sexploitation film named *Shanty Tramp*; viewers, one expects, were meant to draw a thematic and pleasurable connection between the two featured heroines, with a principal difference being that Carroll Baker as the Williams character never goes around improbably barebreasted. And the advertising copy, undoubtedly supervised by Kazan, contains the deceptive promise that the film will deal with some character identified as a "Big Black Buck." *Baby Doll* was not a stage production renamed *Tiger Tail* until after the fact, as Williams confected this theatrical

version using the filmscript as source. The film's special appeal had nothing to do with the adulation Williams received from highbrow critics or Broadway playgoers. Arthur Miller praised the effect that *Streetcar* had on Williams's fellow playwrights, who were finally thereby provided the "license to speak at full throat," not worrying excessively about entrenched opinion or the cultural status quo (Miller 182). In a memo from Kazan to Jack Warner, probably written around 1951, he observed of his film version that its box office success was the result of two things: "1/It is about the three F's. 2/ It has class" (Wesleyan University Cinema Archives, n.d.). The director's vulgar pronouncement about sensationalism and art would not have been contested at the time by many in the industry, who would certainly have noticed the film's extraordinary appeal to both the literary set and those Kazan often referred to as the "wet-seat crowd." With *Baby Doll*, Kazan pushed Williams even further in terms of what we now call "sexual themes."

The interest that filmmakers shared in Williams during the playwright's heyday was dependent then on two qualities, one of which was more volatile than the other. The judgment that he was one of the nation's most important dramatic writers, well established by the end of his first decade or so of public notice, has stood the test of time. But his cultural relevance, so dependent on the "outlaw" image he established with *Streetcar*, disappeared as early as 1961, the year of *The Roman Spring* of *Mrs. Stone.* By this time Williams had established himself as the purveyor of a moralism that does not disengage from the destructive energies of desire and narcissism. But these themes were rapidly passing out of fashion, as demonstrated by the nearly complete indifference of critics and audience alike to the release of *Roman Spring*. The film was based on the novella that Williams penned in 1948, on the same visit to Italy that also yielded *The Rose Tattoo*. Published in 1950, the book had met with a largely hostile reception from critics. Orville Prescott, writing in the *New York Times*, suggested that the tale had none of the dramatic power evident in Williams's stage work and was "only an erotic and depressing study of the crack-up of a brittle and shallow character." Moreover, *Roman Spring* was offensive: "its subject is distasteful; its atmosphere is drenched from beginning to end in sexual decadence." Though "a specialist in the unhappiness of psychopathic ladies," Williams had in this prose work failed to achieve much more than a portrait of "decadence lacking significance." Was it "a healthy thing for the art of literature," Prescott wondered rhetorically, for the young playwright to "write with such relish about vicious and psychopathic characters?" (Prescott 25).

Roman Spring would give American filmgoers a Blanche who did not endure a saving madness. Karen Stone is permitted no escape from the grisly, shameful consequences of a sexual desire that violates both convention and reason. A film version of the novella would surely have proven sensational in the early 1950s, but, for various reasons,

Williams turned down several offers from producers eager to purchase the screen rights at that time before selling them to old Hollywood hand Louis de Rochemont. Critic Gene Phillips reports that the producer "wondered if Williams's story, with its assortment of aging homosexuals, aristocratic procuresses, and other decadent types, was too hot to handle for the cinema of the Sixties" (Phillips 254). Actually, it seems that this material, especially when developed, as it was, with the playwright's characteristic moralism, proved too tame for the era.

José Quintero's version of *Roman Spring* follows the novella closely, treating the slow slide into decadence of an aging actress, Karen Stone (played superbly by Vivien Leigh). Fearful that her stage career is at an end as a result of her disastrous decision to play Juliet in early middle age, Karen also suffers the death of a loving husband and the onset of menopause. Clearly, the streetcar she is riding is headed straight for Cemeteries. In full crisis mode, she flees to Rome, where she makes contact with, among others, the Contessa (Lotte Lenya), who indulges in a lucrative sideline finding young male companions for older women. Resisting at first, Karen eventually allows herself to make contact with one of the Contessa's most popular and attractive "associates," Paolo (Warren Beatty). Karen finds much pleasure in this new relationship, which seems to be developing as a May–December romance, but soon finds herself a prisoner of Paolo's childish whims and tantrums. All this time, moreover, Karen is shadowed by a more desperate hustler, dirty and unkempt but eager to earn her favor or perhaps even slit her throat for her money and jewels. When Paolo deserts her for a more attractive rival, Karen loses all self-respect and, eager for more of the sexual pleasure she had been receiving, invites Paolo's desperate double up to her hotel room, paying no attention (or perhaps eager to expose herself) to the evident danger. The 2003 Showtime remake follows the same outline, adding only—somewhat unfortunately—a version of the author in the text: a journalist named Christopher, played by Roger Allam with some old-fashioned campy mannerisms that hardly do justice to their real-life model. Like the original, the remake attempts but fails to arouse controversy, its featuring of a mature Helen Mirren in a nude scene turning out to be more tasteful than provocative.

Interestingly, the screenplay for the original film version passed easily through the Hollywood Production Code Administration office, not raising the eyebrows of the industry censors, even though the focus was on the relationship between an older woman and her eager "escort." Though it deals with, to use some phrases familiar from the PCA lexicon of the 1950s, "carnality" and "matters of gross sex," the production was greenlighted without a murmur—surely an ominous sign that the producers might have heeded. When the final print was reviewed, only a few problems were noted by PCA executive Jack Vizzard, most notably that "[t]here is a love scene between Warren Beatty and Vivien Leigh in which he kisses her breasts and other parts of her body, and then

forces her down on a couch where he ends the scene with an outrageous open-mouth kiss" (Vizzard, Oct. 2, 1961).Williams agreed to the deletion of this and two other short scenes, but the film's depiction of sexual trafficking remained essentially intact, its meaning clear enough even to adolescent filmgoers. Nervous about such a bold treatment of degradation, Vizzard suggested that more could have been done to make the film conform more precisely to the Code, but he confessed that at this late stage, it would not have been practical to make any further recommendations for changes. Vizzard's remark may be little more than a face-saving gesture, a preemptive strike in case the film's release proved controversial.[3] Such caution proved unnecessary. In yet another surprise decision, the Legion of Decency assigned *Roman Spring* an A-3 rating, which was roughly similar to the former "B" category to which *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* had been assigned two years earlier; there would be no condemnation to boost ticket sales.

Like the box-office sensation *Psycho*, released the previous year, *Roman Spring* violates one of the cardinal rules of classic Hollywood filmmaking: It fails to provide sympathetic characters. As *Variety* correctly predicted, "The Warner Bros release seems in for some tough sledding, principally because of the unhappy, unsavory characters dealt with . . . characters with whom an audience will have enormous difficulties establishing compassion, let alone identification" ("Roman Spring"). Bosley Crowther, writing in the *New York Times*, agreed: "All in all, there is very little substance of likelihood or feeling in this film, which bumps along from quarrel to quarrel between the lovers until it flops into a quite preposterous end." Despite the clear superiority of Mirren's performance as Karen, much the same must be said of the remake. A cold depiction of Karen's descent into the self-destructiveness of a sexual underworld hitherto barely glimpsed on the screen (a description that, mutatis mutandis, might fit *Psycho*'s first half as well), the film nonetheless offers no compensatory and earth-shattering surprises in the manner of Hitchcock's film. There is no sudden stabbing death in the shower at the hands of a barely glimpsed monstrous presence, no meditation on the horrifyingly still finality of a violent death, no creepy anatomizing of the discontents of voyeurism, no insoluble enigmas of gender and sexual desire, no failure of the therapeutic and legal establishments to explain away psychopathic motive and energy. What is remarkable about popular reaction to the film is that, unlike the novel, it was not met with outrage at its undisguised dramatization of, in Orville Prescott's phrase, "sexual decadence" (Prescott 25). In 1961 critics and filmgoers (who mostly stayed away, as the film quickly sank out of sight) were not shocked at the story of an older, respectable woman who purchases the services of a gigolo, with a member of Rome's upper class serving as a procuress. And the viewer was surprised when, desperate for further sexual attention as the fickle young man deserts her, she surrenders her dignity and, likely, her life itself by hiring a more disreputable and disagreeable substitute literally off the streets.

As innovative as it may have been in 1950 with its portrait of female sexual discontent, which precipitates a rapid fall from respectability, this Tennessee Williams property no longer struck the American public in 1961 as provocative in the least. *Roman Spring* was considered outrageous in only one quarter—by the Italian government, who thought that the film's portrait of Rome as rife with prostitution and decadent aristocrats might hurt the city's tourist business. The Italians were smarting in the wake of the release of Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1959), which achieved worldwide notoriety, but they had nothing to fear from the Williams film, which never caused a ripple. Quintero's film was thoroughly Anglo-Saxon in its deadly serious handling of morality and sexual misconduct; it lacked the wit of Fellini's multi-leveled anatomizing of a self-destructive, self-indulgent modernity not yet divorced from traditional values. *Roman Spring* offers nothing along the lines of Fellini's provocative, even insolent amoralism (a famous shot in *Vita* captures a helicopter hauling a statue of Christ over the city). The pairing of Leigh and Beatty might have been intellectually interesting in its exploration of the persistence of erotic urges past middle age, but the May–December romance simply did not play well on the screen, especially after director and playwright agreed to the cutting of their only steamy love scene. The intrigue in which these characters became embroiled was simply too unengaging and old-fashioned, little more than a sketch of moods, as Bosley Crowther opined, that were "based upon a supposition of weak confusions and trashy desires" (Crowther 11). The pairing of Mirren and Martinez works better dramatically, and director Robert Allan Ackerman does a fine job of staging their love scenes. The location shooting in Rome interestingly evokes the travelogue films of the '50s (*Rome Adventure* [1953] and *Three Coins in a Fountain* [1954] for example), adding color and texture to a story that remains both thin and hopelessly out of date, culturally speaking, its once-shocking depiction of female desire and male prostitution still incapable after more than five decades of raising any eyebrows. The film is, instead, a museum piece, as Howard Rosenberg, writing in the *Los Angeles Times* affirms, "the kind of classy work that might have been found regularly on PBS when it was still PBS." If Tennessee Williams is now suitable for *Masterpiece Theatre* treatment, then what he might "mean" for contemporary America recalls little of the outré dramatic poet he once was. Williams's most affecting and culturally significant work was equally suitable for the decorous Broadway stage and, transferred to the screen, for the drive-in theatre crowd, eager for the unabashed, sophisticated, provocative portrayal of desire in its many forms. And this doubleness will remain forever out of touch.

Notes

[1] This essay features material from several archives, including The Margaret Herrick Library, The American Film Institute, The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The Wesleyan University Cinema Archives, The Warner Bros./University of Southern California archives, The

Charles K. Feldman Collection, The Production Code Administration Files, and The Historic New Orleans Collection. For more information on the production history of these films and studio correspondence, see R. Barton Palmer and William Robert Bray, *Hollywood's Tennessee: The Williams Films and Postwar America* (Austin: U of Texas P, 2009).

[2] Kazan subsequently became loath to take credit for the design, resulting in the unfortunate omission of this episode from a recent hagiographic biography. For further details, see *Hollywood's Tennessee*, pp. 123–49. The biography in question is Richard Schickel, *Elia Kazan: A Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 2006), from which what we might call the "business side" of Kazan's personality (he once referred to himself as a P. T. Barnum) has been hygienically excised, claiming him exclusively for "high art."

[3] Vizzard's comments in the above memo reveal a certain weariness with the difficulties of enforcing the Code, further evidence of its growing irrelevance to the conduct of the industry: "There are some other items which we would have liked to have removed from the picture, such as a quite legitimate use of the word 'pimp,' but we felt we were not in a position to enforce any further requests beyond the three outlined above, since Mr. Jack Warner personally pleaded that it would put him in an impossible position to make further changes. His difficulty is complicated by the fact that Tennessee Williams has a contractural [sic] right to approve or disapprove any changes. He has approved the three outlined above, but it would be grossly embarrassing to go to him regarding further alterations, which he would probably refuse to permit. Furthermore, the film would have to be sent back to England for further changes, which would be costly and complicated. In view of these circumstances we abandoned any further efforts to get changes."

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