Editor's Note

This issue of the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review* is the first produced under the aegis of an expanded remit, a change that warrants some explanation and comment. As the number of theoretical tools available to scholars multiplies, Williams's relevance and influence become more visible and require the journal to keep pace. Readers will note that the expanded remit specifies:

> In addition to work that focuses primarily on Williams, the journal is interested in studies of his contemporaries—of playwrights and other creative professionals as well—and of relevant issues (e.g., the queer history of the period). Especially welcome is scholarship that draws on archival sources and helps illuminate the material history of Williams's literary output, as well as the culture his work and public persona both reflected and shaped.

The new remit also calls attention to topics that have always been within the journal's scope but that have become increasingly productive: namely, the history of the reception of Williams's work and the effects of his work on the cinema.

A glance at the table of contents will make it clear that by no means abandoned is the journal's long-established focus on Williams's authorship and biography. The contours of a full and complex life are still emerging, as is evident in this issue's welcome biographical contribution from John S. Bak: this in-depth account of a hitherto little-understood episode in

Williams's late career includes a wealth of important detail and gleans from the prurient gossip insight into the playwright's creative process. Like a fair amount of the criticism that has appeared in *TWAR*, Alicia Andrzejewski's intriguing study of *The Glass Menagerie* uses the lenses of queer theory and identity politics more generally to make a much-studied text new again: her close reading of the text's treatment of disability and difference reveals subtle forms of agency and desire in the play. We are pleased to be publishing this fine essay, which joins an ever-growing body of evidence that well-scrutinized major texts of the Williams oeuvre continue to offer new questions and challenges to scholars of postwar literature and culture in the United States and beyond.

The current bull market of interest in Williams shows no sign of turning bearish, even though it is now more than three decades since his sudden passing. Sadly, the playwright did not live long enough to see the remarkable upsurge in a reputation that had been unjustly harmed by negative reactions to his turn away from poetic realism to more modernist, and less easily accessible, forms of dramatic art. However, it is safe to say that his well-deserved reputation as a playwright, poet, and fictionalist of uncommon talent is now once again on the rise. Academic criticism devoted to Williams, including *TWAR*'s nearly twenty-year contribution to the ongoing discussion, has played a significant role in this process of artistic recuperation. The voluminous Williams papers, available for study in various archives, will keep scholars busy for many years to come. *TWAR* will continue to be an important outlet for this research and for the first publication of shorter texts, as knowledge of the nature and range of Williams's writings continues to expand.

The steady flow of new properties feeds the welcome trend of new productions: the increase in premieres and in revivals of the well-known dramatic properties attests to the important connection between academic labor and the perpetual vitality of Williams's works onstage. *TWAR* remains committed to providing reviews of interesting productions, such as Bess Rowen's piece in this issue, which discusses a recent staging of the rarely performed *Kirche, Küche, Kinder (An Outrage for the Stage)*. The journal will also track and review relevant book publications and editions of Williams's texts.

The journal's emphasis in the past has been largely literary, focusing on the context in which Williams worked and in which his plays were produced and received. Williams's contributions, however, are larger and more varied: he is, among other things, the source author for some of the most important and influential Hollywood films of the 1950s and '60s. Previous issues have featured studies of Williams's contemporaries and collaborators in the film industry—including such luminaries as Elia Kazan, Edward Albee, and William Inge—but as our new remit details, we feel that Williams's cinematic impact requires additional scholarly inquiry. Breaking new ground for *TWAR* is Tiffany Gilbert's study of Anna Magnani's performances in *The Rose Tattoo* and *The Fugitive Kind*, which marks out a fresh way of considering the Williams films. Gilbert's approach could usefully be extended to other performers, notably Paul Newman, Elizabeth Taylor, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Vivien Leigh.

The contribution of Williams and his texts to the development and history of performance style in the era is much in need of further assessment and recognition. A larger concern ripe for investigation is his connection with production writ large, an area of study that falls more within the scope of theatrical, rather than dramatic, history and that incorporates broader cultural and economic contexts.

To take an obvious example: New York in the 1950s was an amazingly varied center of theater, in the broad sense of the term, including especially the live and filmed drama produced for television. Shows such as *Playhouse 90* and the *Philco-Goodyear Television Playhouse* offered original productions of works by playwrights such as Paddy Chayefsky and Rod Serling, as well as repertory productions of previously produced plays and adaptations of the fiction of noted United States authors such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. These productions drew on New York's base of acting talent, including many (like Paul Newman and Karl Malden) who also appeared on the traditional stage and in Hollywood films. Television networks sponsored productions of Williams's properties as well. The multilevel connections between Broadway and the fledgling TV industry invite examination.

Broadway theater and the place that Williams occupied in its production system are also subjects not yet sufficiently explored. Scholars might

ask more insistently why the particular kind of drama Williams wrote proved attractive to Broadway producers and audiences and to what degree his plays resonated with trends that others exploited in hit productions, such as F. Hugh Herbert's *The Moon Is Blue* and Robert Anderson's *Tea and Sympathy*. Or, to take another tack, what effects, if any, did Williams and other serious dramatists suffer as a result of the financial crisis that hit Broadway in the 1960s, provoked by the ticket-scamming system called "ice" (in which box office personnel sold tickets at inflated prices to scalpers, who passed along the charge to the public)? What were the factors that created first the off- and then the off-off-Broadway circuits, which were so important to Williams's later work and whose cultural position surely affected the kind of plays he wrote in that period? These subjects are just a few of those to be explored in future issues of *TWAR*.

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