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Tennessee Williams Scholars Conference Panel: Teaching Tennessee

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Panelists: *Darrell Bourque, George W. Crandell, Philip C. Kolin, Colby Kullman*

Editor's Note: *The following panel was transcribed from The Tennessee Williams Scholars' Conference, an event held each March in conjunction with The Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival.*

Bray: Good afternoon. I'm Robert Bray, director of the Tennessee Williams Scholars' Conference. We have a distinguished panel of Williams specialists and scholars assembled here today. We're putting on a different hat for the "Teaching Tennessee" panel by shifting gears from scholarship to pedagogy; moving from what we research and write about to what we teach. We are genuinely hoping this will be an interactive session, and we certainly invite questions and observations from the audience. Some of you in the audience may teach Williams at high schools or universities, and we invite your commentary. I would like to begin by very briefly introducing our panelists and their academic affiliations, and then we're going to get started. I'd like to start with Dr. Colby Kullman. Colby is in the English department at the University of Mississippi, where he was voted teacher of the year, and he has taught a variety of Williams courses. Dr. George Crandell of Auburn University teaches courses at the graduate level and undergraduate level as well. Dr. Philip C. Kolin has taught Williams courses for about thirty years at the University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Darrell Bourque of the University of Louisiana-Lafayette has taken some really innovative approaches with his Williams classes. So why don't we begin by talking about what we do in the classroom. As with everyone else at this panel, I try to teach a Williams graduate seminar every time the opportunity opens up. I am also formulating an honors course for my undergraduates, and I have begun teaching a "Tennessee Williams and Film" course for the last couple of years that has been fairly successful. So that's what I do. Colby, would you like to tell us what you teach at Ole Miss?

Kullman: I teach two courses involving Williams. One is called "Drama of the American South," and Tennessee Williams gets about a third of that course. Then, there is the senior/graduate seminar devoted to Tennessee Williams, and I've given you what I pass out to them on the first day of class, a hand-out. It has two purposes. One, it shows them they can expect structure and organization, and two, if they don't want to work, they leave and go somewhere else very quickly. That's kind of nice because I'm not a difficult teacher, but I want to get those people out who don't want to work. The world of Tennessee Williams has become very successful. Now I get students from business and accounting and sometimes sciences who take it as they take our Shakespeare courses, just as an elective. That's a nice compliment. I try to teach one poem, one short story, one essay, and one play a week, so if you multiply that by sixteen weeks they come away from the course having read a lot of Tennessee Williams.

Crandell: I've taught Tennessee Williams in a variety of formats at Auburn, including a part of a Survey of American Literature course where I teach either *A Streetcar Named Desire* or *The Glass Menagerie*. I've also

taught Tennessee Williams at the graduate level in several different formats. For example, we offer a course on major American authors. I've taught a course comparing Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller; I've taught Tennessee Williams by himself, which is my preferred course to teach at that level, and I've also taught another course called American Literature and Culture, where the focus was on the Drama Critics' Circle Prize plays from about 1945 to 1962—about a third of those plays are by Tennessee Williams. Students are surprised, especially at the graduate level, by the number and variety of works that Tennessee Williams has written. They are amazed that there are more than fifty plays. Many of the students, even at the graduate level, have little experience with Williams except for films and major plays like *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. We also look at short stories and some of the poems as they are relevant to the plays. Again, many of the students are not aware of Williams's short fiction and poetry, and so the course serves to introduce them to a wide variety of Williams's various kinds of work. The particular emphasis I take is to look at those plays as reading scripts, as something that can be read, but also as something that can be performed. We don't have a lot of theatrical opportunities in Auburn, Alabama, especially for Tennessee Williams's plays, so largely the focus is on reading the plays, but we also try to at least acknowledge that Williams wrote them with a theatrical audience in mind.

¶4 **Kolin:** Thank you, George. I've been teaching Tennessee Williams for thirty years, and, as I told my fiancée yesterday, when I was a graduate student and undergraduate I had never taken a class in which Tennessee Williams was taught. Things are far different today. I teach Williams under two different classes. One is a survey of American drama that goes from Royall Tyler all the way to David Mamet, and I shamelessly devote the last third of the course to Williams, as I try to do four or five of his plays. The other class I teach about every other year is a seminar on Williams. I always try to have a different topic. One of the topics that has been successful for me is politics and Tennessee Williams, particularly Williams as a political author, something that really needs to be discussed at some length. I also teach graduate classes in Shakespeare, and I try to intermingle Shakespearean things with Tennessee Williams things. One way that I jump start graduate students in a seminar is to have them read "The Vengeance of Nitocris," which is one of the earliest stories Williams published in *Weird Tales* in 1928 or '29. I try to link that with some things in *Titus Andronicus*. Most people register for Tennessee Williams, and they say, "Oh, wow, this is salacious material," or "This is grotesque material." I don't disappoint them the first couple of weeks. Thereafter, like Colby, I try to integrate the fiction and nonfiction and the poetry with individual plays. I have found that teaching two or three short stories up front really helps students. The darker stories, "Vengeance of Nitocris," "Big Black: A Mississippi Idyll," and "Desire and the Black Masseur," help students confront issues in a very direct way. These issues are confronted far differently, perhaps more subversively in the plays, but not as openly. Most of my students are encouraged in the graduate classes to do publishable papers, so I seem to focus on that a bit. It's always a battle in a Williams or drama class to decide how many films to show. Students would like to have seven or eight films, but you can't use up that much class time, so that seems to be one of the pedagogical problems I've encountered.

¶5 **Bourque:** I've mostly taught Tennessee Williams in graduate courses in Southern Literature courses and twentieth-century American drama courses, and then about two years ago, I was able to design a Tennessee Williams course around a major writers graduate seminar, which is a requirement of the graduate school. In that

particular course, I did the standard plays and, in many ways, it was pioneering work. I was trying to figure out what I wanted to do with Williams and how I wanted to present his work. One of the interesting things that I certainly couldn't have predicted at the time was that this course turned into the course I'm teaching this semester, and it is the area I have always wanted to teach. It's cross-listed as an upper-level undergraduate course, an interdisciplinary humanities course and English course, both on the 300 level. On the graduate level I taught twelve of the major Williams plays. *Small Craft Warnings* and *Camino Real* got into that course, but most of the other plays were the standard Williams plays. When I taught the graduate course, each student, at the beginning of the study, brought to class a question that they thought the play was asking—not a question that they had about material in the play, but the question that they thought the play was asking. Because I think Williams was such a brilliant formalist and paid so much attention to form, the other question had to deal with form in the Williams play. That aspect or that requirement of the course I kept for the undergraduate course. I'll talk a little bit more about that, but just to sort of summarily describe what happened in that course, we study, rather than twelve or thirteen plays, six to seven selected plays with every one of the plays where there is a movie production or more than one film made of the play. We show clips of that, the various filming with a particular play. One of the things that was really exciting for me this semester was that I gave three weeks of study to *A Streetcar Named Desire*. We saw clips from the opera, and we ended the study by looking at all of Pedro Almodòvar's *All About My Mother* as a way of folding back into Tennessee Williams. In addition, when Tennessee Williams says, "I want this set to look like El Greco," we take out time, and we look at twenty five or thirty slides from the mannerist movement. We talk about mannerism and its relationship to expressionism and so forth. What I'm trying to get them to see is a huge kind of cultural tapestry that Williams works in his plays. When Blanche refers to one of her dresses, one of her jackets in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, as Della Robbia blue, we go to the Hospital of the Innocents medallions of Della Robbia in Florence and look at fifteen or twenty of those and ask ourselves, "What is Williams doing? Where is he trying to take us?" This is a flash, and this is a moment in the play. In what way does that little flash, that little allusion set up larger echoes and set up themes that we can talk about in the play?

¶16 **Bray:** Of course, one of the difficulties in establishing a course is that you don't know what students have read and what they haven't read. I'm just wondering because there is always the problem of what to include or exclude in making up your syllabus. I'm interested in what rationale you use in establishing works that will be studied during a semester.

¶17 **Kullman:** One of the things I try to do is show the relationship between short stories, sometimes poems, one-act plays, and full-length plays and, then at times, the plays themselves, such as *Orpheus Descending*, *Battle of Angels*, and the film *The Fugitive Kind*, and the interrelationship of all those works to one another. In terms of my syllabus, I think you can see I chose a lot of works I think fit together, and I think that helps students figure out how certain kinds of short stories find their way into another form. I've actually had students who were very good at writing fiction who, after doing this exercise, have tried to turn their fiction into a play on their own, outside of class, and I think Williams is a master teacher on how this can be done.

¶18 **Crandell:** As I said before, some of the selections are governed by the theme of the course. For example, in selecting the Drama Critics' Prize plays, that limits the number of Williams plays you can use. In the longer

graduate course, I try to strike a balance and include early works, some of which have just recently been published, as well as some of the late plays, along with the major plays many of the students are familiar with at least in title or by film. Usually by the end of the term, there is a great deal of weariness that sets in, so the late plays are more difficult to teach I think, because the students are worn out by the end of the semester. They're unfamiliar works. Some of them, like *The Two Character Play*, are more difficult for the students to understand. The early plays, on the other hand, are new. Students are excited about the idea of studying something not many scholars have looked at yet. There is the potential for paper topics there, so we try to touch a little bit of everything in terms of the early, the late works, and the major works for which Williams is best known.

¶9 **Kolin:** I think there are three words that I tell students repeatedly in my class: contextualize, contextualize, contextualize. What I've done over the years is try to establish with them that if you teach one Tennessee Williams play, you teach many plays. Williams, in that sense, is a little bit like John Milton. His whole career, like Milton's, was to write the great work. With Williams, of course, it was to be on Broadway, but like Milton, there is a progression from earlier to later works. Students can discover certain ways to contextualize each of the works, each of the plays, poems, or short stories. When it's time to write a paper, I strongly discourage students, even undergraduates, from writing a paper on a single play. It often turns out being not very inventive, not very creative. Some of the things I like to do and have done over the last couple of years, is introduce the early works juxtaposed with the later works. It seems to me that one of the things that works against Williams here is his own chronology. I see all kinds of links between *Not About Nightingales*, *Spring Storm*, and *Stairs to the Roof* and some of the later plays, whether it's *Slapstick Tragedy* or *Milk Train*, or whether it's *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*. So I like students to see that the bridges built among the works are opportunities for them to write strong essays that could be publishable articles.

¶10 **Bourque:** I often find myself building the courses around major themes that I feel comfortable talking about and that I think are important in the Tennessee Williams canon. One of the themes I like to work with is "escape as essential." We start with *The Glass Menagerie*. We talk about the varieties of escape and the necessity of escape. We are able to talk about things such as if Laura had to choose between the Rubicam Business College or the glass menagerie, which is the better of the two to escape into? I also like to play with an idea that I think is so prevalent in Williams's plays, "thwarted ascendancy." This notion that I think he is working at, this notion of creating a new model for the psyche and it having nothing to do with that old lie of resurrection and everything being okay tomorrow. So I go there with some of the plays. In terms of the idea of "thwarted ascendancy," *Summer and Smoke* works well for me. So in choosing the plays, I look at themes to develop ideas that I know I can talk about and that I think are important ideas in the Williams plays. One of the other themes I find myself drawn to is the "sacred wound," and *Suddenly Last Summer* works so well for that. Also, "depression as value" in *Orpheus Descending* and *The Night of the Iguana*. I teach my favorite plays. They're the plays I can get excited about and that I think I can talk about with enthusiasm and conviction.

¶11 **Bray:** I suppose it's a cliché to mention this, but one of the delightful things about being a teacher is that you're always a learner. I remembered as Darrell was talking about the escape motif that while I was teaching an honors seminar last semester, we, of course, talked about Tom's escape of going to the movies, Amanda's escape by going back into the past, Laura's escape through her glass figurines. Then we started talking about

Jim, and one of the students said, “It’s interesting the way he escapes this situation. I wonder if he really had a girlfriend or fiancée named Betty.” I had never thought of that before because he is so adroit at getting out the door that I think we tend to buy his story. But the question was raised that nobody at the warehouse knew about his engagement. He certainly hasn’t told Tom, his best friend. The wonderful thing about these plays is that they keep revealing things that you haven’t thought about.

Philip talked about the explosion of publishing Williams’s apprentice works, such as *Not About Nightingales*, *Spring Storm*, *Stairs to the Roof*, and *Fugitive Kind*. We have to pick and choose plays, and most of us who teach Williams like to choose one which represents the apprentice period. I’m just wondering if you have any ideas about which is most representative in covering that early period of his writing.

¶12 **Kolin:** I would have to say *Not About Nightingales* and *Spring Storm*. *Not About Nightingales*, as Allean Hale had pointed out, is based on an actual event, a prison riot, but it has many of the trappings found in *Battle of Angels*, which did get produced two years later. It’s got Canary Jim, the rebel. With the secretary, you have the young woman who loves somebody and loses him. You’ve got the pernicious father figure in Boss Whalen. Most important of all, *Not About Nightingales* focuses on a theme that would move throughout the Williams canon, and that is the apocalypse. I don’t know if you know about a brilliant article done by Linda Dorff, who has since gone to her heavenly reward, but this was published last year in Yale’s *Theatre*. She selects some late plays focusing on the apocalyptic, especially *The Red Devil Battery Sign* and *Chalky White Substance*. Yet if you look at *Not About Nightingales*, it is like *The Crucible*. When I teach it, I’m reminded of Bertolt Brecht because it’s epic theatre. *Spring Storm* is almost the domestic side of the apocalyptic. It introduces a character at the end who is known as the “front porch girl,” the woman who is rejected and left behind. In so many of Williams’s plays, even the very sophisticated ones like *A Streetcar Named Desire*, you always have the woman who has somehow not had her dance card signed, so these are the two early plays I focus on.

¶13 **Crandell:** I agree with Philip that *Not About Nightingales* and *Spring Storm* are the two plays that foreshadow for students many of the themes that come late, *Spring Storm* especially. You have groups of romantic dreamers. You have conflicts of flesh and spirit. You also have in *Summer and Smoke* the woman who can’t find a mate like Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*. There are a number of religious themes that run through that play that reappear in Williams’s later works. You have a mother/daughter relationship, just as you do in *Menagerie*. There are issues of social class in the front porch girl as Philip mentioned. It also contains comic and serious elements which are always present even in Williams’s most serious dramas. And also there is the idea of a kind of fear of intimacy that many of Williams’s characters have which is evidenced in *Spring Storm*.

¶14 **Kullman:** To that I might add *Battle of Angels* because it is very easy to trace its development through the three plays. Again, four plays show the same ideas Williams was feeling through four decades of his life: *Battle of Angels*, *Orpheus Descending*, *Fugitive Kind*, and then one final rewrite that was produced.

¶15 **Bray:** Right, and sometimes we need to recall that he was working on *Battle of Angels* at the same time he worked on these apprentice plays. On another subject, we talked about film, and making choices is where the real difficulty comes in. First of all, in terms of class time, how do you show the films that you want to and still get the lectures in and discussion as well? It’s a perennial problem and one not easily solved. Even choosing the

film of a particular work gets to be a subjective exercise. For example, there are two films of *Suddenly Last Summer*: the Elizabeth Taylor version, with the screenplay written by Gore Vidal, and then a more recent version that is really quite good starring Rob Lowe, of all people, playing Dr. Sugar. So which of these choices? One assumes that everyone has seen the Brando-Leigh *Streetcar*, but that is not necessarily the case. With *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*, you have the classic '58 Richard Brooks version with Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor. Of course, there are also subsequent versions with, among others, Tommy Lee Jones and Jessica Lang. The problem becomes what film to use because all of these, besides being celluloid entertainment pieces, are cultural artifacts in a way. As Barton Palmer points out, the films say as much about the times as they do about the adaptation of Williams's work. I'm wondering if there are any easy solutions that I don't know about in terms of choosing films.

¶16 **Crandell:** So far I've chosen not to show any one Tennessee Williams film in its entirety. With the widespread availability of video cassettes, I can depend on students to look at an entire film if they want to. The strategy that I've adopted for my classes is to bring in one or more versions of a particular film to show a scene from a different version and allow students to see how different directors and producers have interpreted the original play text. Once they've read the text, they look at the film version and look at another identical scene, and that usually prompts discussion of the differences. I also usually look at the film version of *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof* to illustrate how Williams has revised a text, as the film version is different from earlier versions and the text version for the play.

¶17 **Kolin:** Unlike George, I have shown entire films in class, but I stay away from showing the 1951 *Streetcar* in favor of using a film version the students may not have seen, e.g. the John Erman teleplay, or the Previn opera. But, like George, I have also shown two or three versions of the same scene—the famous spoiled dinner in *Glass Menagerie* with interpretations by Katherine Hepburn and Jo Ann Woodward.

¶18 **Kullman:** One of the things I like to do is show the three Big Daddies. You get to see Burl Ives as Big Daddy, Rip Torn as Big Daddy, and Lawrence Olivier as Big Daddy, which is a great failure for one of the Twentieth Century's greatest actors. Then, I ask them why one actor is definitive. Of course, no one can play Big Daddy as Burl Ives did, but they try and try and try again. You could do the same thing with Ann Margaret and Vivien Leigh as Blanche Dubois.

¶19 **Bourque:** In my selection of clips, one of the things that I have found helpful to my students is to look at introductions and endings. This way we can see what the writer is trying to set up in comparison to the film's text.

¶20 **Bray:** I would like to move on now to secondary texts. I'm referring to indispensable books, some of which were written by people at this table. One book I think we all recommend to our students is *Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams*. It's a shame that volume two of that will now be so slow in coming with the death of Lyle Leverich, the author of volume one. However, we do have some wonderful ancillary materials. We have the first volume of the collected letters of Tennessee Williams. Soon we will have the journals, edited by Margaret Thornton. George, of course, has done the bibliography, and Philip has edited very useful and informative case books and reference works and has provided a history of *Streetcar* on the world stage. I think these will

probably become required texts in most Williams courses. I'm wondering what materials you require and commend to students as you set up your course of study.

¶21 **Kullman:** Robert Bray's journal is very useful. It has fine articles on many plays. George's bibliography is a good place to start. Philip's *Tennessee Williams in Performance* contains a whole series of play performances around the country. The Cambridge Companion is another solid choice. One of my favorite books is by Judith Thompson called *Tennessee Williams: Memory, Myth, and Symbol*. Though she goes a little far sometimes in her interpretation, what she does is epic and dynamic.

¶22 **Kolin:** Matthew Roudané's *Companion* is an outstanding introduction. Robert's journal is an indispensable research tool. On a bibliographic scale, I usually begin with my *Guide to Performances*. I want students to be aware of different kinds of Tennessee Williams texts. I try to remind students that we don't always have the definitive edition. There are always multiple texts.

¶23 **Crandell:** One other thing I might mention are biographical films to help students understand the critical responses to Tennessee Williams. I try to point out misconceptions evidenced in these pieces. Pointing out their shortcomings may stimulate discussion.

Kolin: There was a film on PBS called *Orpheus of the American Stage*. The musical scores are also a wonderful tool for contextualization.

¶24 **Bray:** I guess you've noticed if you watch television at all, there are a number of films recently produced on writers. There was an A&E series called *Wounded Geniuses*, that probably should have been subtitled "boozers and losers." One of the authors focused upon was Fitzgerald and, of course, Williams. Harry Rasky's film about Tennessee Williams is also useful as an introduction, as well as *Tennessee Williams: Orpheus of the American Stage*. I think one of the best thematic treatments is Fraser Macnaught's new film called *Blue Devils*.

¶25 **Kolin:** Allean Hale recently appeared on E! Mysteries, and that was enormously interesting.

Bray: At this point I would like to ask you, in terms of different critical approaches to Williams, excluding the obvious biographical approach, what are some of the methods you use?

¶26 **Kullman:** Recently, I discovered that I saw my favorite novel in the work of Tennessee Williams though I have no reason to believe he ever read *Catch-22*. The idea of an individual existing in a world of irrational, chaotic behavior echoes many of Williams works. Another of my favorite novels, *1984*, is also echoed in Williams. I start the course with *Red Devil Battery Sign* and link it to these novels because they are all coming out of the same period of time, within fifteen to twenty years. There are all kinds of echoes and parallel themes within the works. It's easy to use the novels as a spring-board.

¶27 **Kolin:** I frequently use feminism, but I've also taught focusing on ethnicity. The outsider, foreigner, stranger affords students a real aperture into Williams's politics and poetics. Black characters in Williams, though not as many or as central as in Faulkner, often carry enormous symbolic weight. Similarly, a figure like Vacarro in

Baby Doll, who is cinematically and politically aligned with Black characters in *Baby Doll*, shows students how aware Williams was of the civil rights movement and how in sympathy he was with it.

¶28 **Crandell:** Philip is right. Ethnicity is a successful way to approach Williams. Some of you may be familiar with an article I wrote on ethnicity in *Streetcar*. The working title of the piece was “Was Stanley Black?” Another effective method is to take a cinematic approach and look at the film techniques Williams used.

¶29 **Bourque:** In my class, we spend a lot of time on formal considerations, as I indicated earlier. We discuss things like the agonistically driven play as opposed to the serial or cinematically driven play. Another approach is to look at Williams’s use of Christian archetypes and pre-Christian or extra-Christian archetypes. This is a kind of psychological archetypal approach.

¶30 **Bray:** We can’t neglect Williams’s fiction. Gore Vidal said Williams’s true genius lies in the short stories. There are also two rather neglected novels. I feel that this is because people misunderstand them or were influenced by early critics who panned them. I always include at least three or four days of class for discussion of the short stories.

I would like to ask one more question of the panel before opening up to audience discussion. Although the description is limiting, Tennessee Williams is often regarded as a Southern playwright. The South permeates his early work. In the late works, he almost seems to turn his back on the South. Do you think he did this consciously?

¶31 **Kolin:** Williams wrote what he knew best. He knew St. Louis, as well as New Orleans. The late plays show that Tennessee Williams is more than a Southern playwright. He sets *Small Craft Warnings* in California and *The Remarkable Rooming House of Mme. Le Monde* in London.

¶32 **Bourque:** For me, one of the best places to start in considerations of geography and Southern identity is with Moon Lake as both a piece of geography, and also as more than geography. If you look at the way it occurs in various places, it makes much more sense as a kind of trope. I think Moon Lake has as much to do with psychological presence as geographical presence in the plays where it occurs. It is a psychological space that represents the libidinous, the unconstrained, the primitive, the interior, and even sometimes an underworld or the unconscious. I stress this issue to show students that Williams’s places are also about larger metaphoric representation.

¶33 **Crandell:** Williams is more than a Southern playwright; he’s an international playwright. He traveled all over the world. Frank Merlo introduced him to Sicily. He traveled to Japan, becoming acquainted with Yukio Mishima. In his younger days, when he was without cash, he traveled by bicycle with Jim Parrott.

¶34 **Bray:** I served as the technical adviser for a production of *The Rose Tattoo* while on a Fulbright in Rio de Janeiro. My chief contribution to that production was that I explained to them that there were no mountains on the coast of Mississippi. They had to disassemble that part of the set. We will now open up the process to audience questions.

Audience: What plays have you had the most or least success with?

Kullman: *Streetcar* always sells, even to high school students.

Crandell: I agree that *Streetcar* works best because the characters are the most complex and there are so many interesting themes. In terms of least successful, I would say the *The Two Character Play* is one of the most difficult plays I've taught.

¶36 **Bray:** *Camino Real* is difficult. *The Glass Menagerie* is the most successful in my experience simply because most students identify with some measure of family strife. Almost everyone gets yelled at by their mother at some point. I think one of the interesting questions to ask of that play is whether or not Tom was morally correct in leaving. That provokes interesting responses from a class because you get a huge range of reactions ranging from students contending that Tom is a lousy, irresponsible drunk to the other half of the class thinking he did the right thing by leaving.

¶37 **Audience:** Why not *Camino Real*?

Bray: I think for the same reason it didn't work in the theatre. It's different from what students are accustomed to, not that that is necessarily undesirable. It just doesn't seem to hold together in class discussions—maybe it's my failing. Have any of you tried *Camino Real*?

Kolin: Yes, I teach *Camino Real* rather frequently. I get my students into it by asking: how many of you have seen *Casablanca*? I ask for parallels between the film and the play. I also juxtapose it with *Waiting for Godot*, premiering the same year, and the McCarthy hearings.

¶38 **Audience:** Do you teach both endings to *Cat On a Hot Tin Roof*?

Bray: Yes, I think you have to do that. It's also useful to bring in the Richard Brooks film and show how he ends the situation. Having read the two other versions and then seeing the Brooks film, it's almost a farce in that it's a big love fest at the end. Considering the way everyone is drawn back into the family circle, the film is a comedy, at least by Northrup Frye's standards. The Brooks film also underscores the pressures Williams was under working with Kazan and the changes that were suggested to make the play more successful.

Crandell: I teach both endings of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* as a way to illustrate how writing drama is really a collaborative activity. It helps students to recognize that all editions of a play are not necessarily the same.

¶39 **Audience:** If you wanted to pick a play from the canon to really illustrate rewriting, fixing, and editorial influence, what would you choose?

Crandell: *Summer and Smoke* / *Eccentricities of a Nightingale* and *Battle of Angels* / *Orpheus Descending* are good examples.

Bray: We need to close now. I'd like to thank the panelists for their participation and the attentive audience for your questions.

