



# Emotional And Existential Dependence on Men in Tennessee Williams's Plays *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Edita Bratanović

PhD candidate, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, Serbia

## Abstract

*The Glass Menagerie*, premiered in 1944, and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, premiered in 1947, depict intense family dramas. Both plays draw attention to many issues surrounding the lives of women in 1930s and 1940s. The society in which these women live encourages them to follow traditional patriarchal rules, suggesting that they should find happiness in becoming emotionally and existentially dependent on men. These plays follow the vigorous pursuit of female characters who learn the hard way that finding a man they can depend on is far from easy and that dependence on men does not guarantee happiness.

In this paper I will attempt to analyse the reasons behind women's insistence to become dependent on men. I will look into the positive and negative aspects of emotional and existential dependence and shed light on Williams's inspiration and motivation for writing these plays. Eventually I will try to answer the following question: are the men, women or the society to blame for the downfall of female characters in the plays?

**Keywords:** domestic violence, feminism, stereotypes, tradition

## 1. Introduction

To say that Thomas Lanier Williams III, or better known as Tennessee Williams is one of the best American playwrights of all times would be an understatement. He was inducted into the American Theater Hall of Fame, he received two Pulitzer Prizes, a Tony award, and wrote many memorable plays famous for being controversial and awe-inspiring.

As many other writers, Williams was both personally affected and artistically inspired by the unhappy circumstances that surrounded his childhood. His father was often away from home due to his job commitments. He was also a violent and aggressive alcoholic and he did not appreciate his son's fragility and that he did not resemble him. Because Williams failed military training at university, his father decided he should not be enrolled at it anymore and found him a job at the Shoe Company. Williams hated this job, but it did inspire him to work ferociously on his writing. However, he still found his time spent at the shoe company useless and deeply damaging to his writing ambitions: "Williams would eventually deduct the three years he spent at the International Shoe company from his actual age, as he felt he did not truly live during those years." (Smith Howard, Heintzeman 2005: 6). Because of major discontent and hatred towards the routine he was stuck in, he suffered a nervous breakdown.



After quitting the job, he recovered and went on to finish education. Williams had a very special bond with his sister Rose who was diagnosed with schizophrenia. When he found out that his parents agreed for the prefrontal lobotomy to be performed on his sister, the surgery that doomed her life to a permanent institutionalization, William could never forgive his mother for giving consent and himself for not being there to stop it. After a huge critical and commercial success with his plays and many travels, the death of his family members, including his parents and his partner, took its toll on Williams's life which turned into a long struggle with depression, alcohol and drug abuse and ended fatally.

*The Glass Menagerie*, premiered in 1944, made Williams famous. This powerful play tackles the topics of disillusionment, crushed dreams, destroyed ambitions and major frustrations. *A Streetcar Named Desire*, premiered in 1947, deals with taboo topics of domestic violence, alcohol abuse, gambling, homosexuality, rape, sexual relationship with a student. All of these were extremely shocking for the times when the play was first performed, but they do not cease to amaze audiences around the world to the present moment.

“He saw himself as the archetypical outsider: a poet in a practical world, a homosexual in a heterosexual society. Living in the “Country of Progress,” he preferred candlelight to electricity. A Southerner who lamented the loss of a dignity, elegance, and sense of honor, he was never satisfied with the dreary present and its flat speech.” (Bloom 2007: 46). In his plays he wrote about abuse, violence and aggression – something that he was very well familiar with in his own home. He also wrote about a controversial topic of homosexuality, family, abandonment, and it seems that the impact all these topics have on women was his great inspiration. In order to understand why Williams wrote about his mother and sister, it is of paramount importance to understand his attachment to them. He witnessed his mother being abused by his father and he saw firsthand the far-reaching consequences of emotional and existential dependence on men. The women in his life, as well as the female characters in his plays, always relied on men. These plays are certainly the expression of guilt that Williams feels towards his sister, but perhaps also the subtle way of pleading for the society to create the world where women would not have to be dependent on men in any respect.

## 2. The tragic female characters inspired by women in Williams's life

While Amanda and Laura from *The Glass Menagerie* are clearly based on Williams's mother and sister respectively, Blanche from *A Streetcar Named Desire* seems to incorporate personalities of both of them. Williams was inspired by women in his life who always depended on men and decided to give prominence to those aspects from their lives which he appreciated and which bothered him the most. Many women all around the world reading Williams's works and watching his plays could easily identify themselves with the characters as many of their struggles and issues are universal.

Laura is a remarkable and heartfelt tribute to Williams's sister Rose. Rose led a very difficult life fraught with mental disorders which ultimately confined her to a life of permanent institutionalization. Laura, extremely nice and considerate, has a deformity since she has been born, one of her legs is shorter than the other, which is why she needs to wear a brace. Laura's fragile and sensitive nature has made her develop an inferiority complex which resulted in her being anxious and having panic attacks in various life situations. “The unicorn is obviously a symbol for Laura who is also a delicate translucent being, out of place in the



contemporary world.” (Falk 1961: 78). The unicorn figure might also symbolise Laura’s exceptional beauty and fragility, as she is, just like the unicorn, so different from everyone else and takes special people to fall in love with someone so unique. Laura’s characteristics show how highly Williams thought of his sister. However, in the play we never learn what eventually happened with Laura and how her life turned out. We only learn that she was abandoned by her brother who was never able to let go of the guilt he felt for leaving her behind. Tom’s guilt in the play coincides with Williams’s guilt towards Rose, who also, throughout his life, was never able to forgive himself for not being there in decision-making process about Rose’s wellbeing and future.

Amanda Wingfield, in *The Glass Menagerie*, was abandoned by her husband and left to raise two children alone in a difficult financial situation. Williams said about Amanda: “She’s confused, pathetic, even stupid, but everything has got to be all right. She fights to make it that way in the only way she knows how.” (Bigsby 2004: 34). Amanda wants the best for her children and she wants them to escape the fate that she has had to go through. Williams’s mother Edwina was also very often alone in raising her children as her husband travelled for work. Both Amanda and Williams’s mother had to learn to live in new circumstances, which were very different from those they grew up in. They both originate from South and the Southern women are described as: “...strong, articulate, assertive – and yet often tender and vulnerable. They are women who are acutely aware of being watched and heard because they have been reared in a culture with a strict decorum for the accepted behaviour of its women.” (Bloom 2007: 171). They were both brought up to be ladies, always show impeccable manners and believe in the traditional concept of marriage and patriarchal roles of husband and wife. Both of them married “beneath” them, they married men from different social class since they followed their hearts and not unwritten rules of belonging to a certain social class. However, their choices failed them as neither of them ended up in a happy marriage.

Similarly to Edwina and Amanda, Stella from *A Streetcar Named Desire*, comes from the Southern background, but she does not feel any regret about the choices she has made in her life and she is blissfully happy in her marriage with Stanley Kowalski. Even though Stanley lives a life that is in direct opposition to the life Stella enjoyed while growing up, she does not seem to be bothered by Stanley’s clothes and mannerism, or by the lack of servants or the size of their house. However, a major issue in their marriage is domestic violence which Stella does not seem to object to. Although Stanley is repeatedly violent with Stella she tolerates it and keeps going back to him. When Blanche confronts her about it, she simply states that she is aware of how Stanley is, he has been like that since the very beginning of their relationship and she accepts him that way. Williams’s mother experienced the same problem with domestic violence: “As Williams’s brother Dakin points out, their father, Cornelius Coffin Williams, would frequently return home intoxicated and fly into a rage against their mother, Edwina. Once in 1933 Edwina “ran into the bedroom and locked herself in. (Cornelius) broke down the door, and in doing so the door hit her and broke her nose”. During another drunken outburst in 1937 Cornelius brutally beat his wife – an episode witnessed by Williams’s emotionally fragile sister Rose, who became hysterical. Edwina did not leave her husband during those early years of abuse. “I just stood by and took it,” she said.” (Bloom 2009: 50). Just like Stella, Edwina silently and without any rebellion accepted the aggression not being aware that this kind of violence did not only affect her, but her children as well. Very well aware of all the hardships his mother had been through, Williams made sure that the financial dependence on her husband was not an obstacle in Edwina’s



future: "On March 2, 1945, Williams wrote to inform his mother that he was receiving \$1,000 a week in income from the play. He also informed her that his good fortune was also hers: Williams had assigned half of the royalties from *The Glass Menagerie* to her. The play that she had inspired sustained her for the rest of her life and enabled her to realize her dream: independence from her husband, Cornelius." (Smith-Howard, Heintzelman 2005: 10). Unlike Edwina who was able to escape her unhappy marriage, Stella willingly stays in hers, probably being aware that she is not able to find financial independence in her situation.

Blanche is the character who, despite her changed living circumstances, refuses to leave behind her Southern manners. She is insistent on presenting herself as a lady, with her flamboyant gestures, elegant clothes, flashy jewellery and displaying Southern manners which appear to be unimportant in modern society. "Another comic motif that turns tragic is Blanche's insistence on behaving like a southern lady in an environment ignorant of and even hostile to any such elegant manners." (Bloom 2007: 115). While Blanche's Southern background, just like Stella's, has been inspired by Edwina's upbringing, her ending was definitely motivated by Rose's life. Blanche's closest family members decide that she should be admitted into a mental institution, while the audience are left with the impression that this should not be the case. Perhaps Williams used this scene to send an artistic message that he did not approve of his sister having been subjected to a surgery and institutionalization. "Ironically, however, her excess of speech, her incessant storytelling, her insistence on holding the center of attention, underline her forced silence at the end of the play." (Bloom 2007: 12). Blanche's fall coincides with Rose's fall. And in both cases Williams blames the family and believes this should not have happened.

### 3. Women's emotional and existential dependence on men

Women's dependence on men, in both emotional and existential terms, seems to be the reason for women's downfall in both plays. However, Williams does not blame the female characters for their unfortunate circumstances. He does not present himself as the voice of reason or moral guide, he lets the audience and readers make their own conclusions.

Female characters in these two plays are preoccupied with the idea of finding a husband, both for financial security and their need for love, kindness and protection. All women are emotionally scarred since an important man in their life abandoned them, which created a strong need inside of them to find a man who can protect them and stay with them. Amanda Wingfield knows that the husband figure is important in a woman's life and she is aware that she has not made the best choice of husband which is why she is left alone with two children and financial struggles. That is the reason why she is so insistent on finding a husband for Laura. Even while Amanda was growing up all her wishes for the future were based on finding a good husband and she never tried to advance herself and become an independent individual: "Well, in the South we had so many servants. Gone, gone, gone. All vestige of gracious living! Gone completely! I wasn't prepared for what the future brought me. All of my gentlemen callers were sons of planters and so of course I assumed that I would be married to one and raise my family on a large piece of land with plenty of servants." (6) It is understandable that because of everything she has been through, Amanda wants a different life for her children, especially for her fragile daughter. However, after a failed attempt at the business college, Amanda's first solution should not be to find a husband for Laura. Her job as a mother should be to aid her daughter in increasing her self-confidence in order for Laura to be able to either pursue education or find a job so she can be



independent regardless of a man. Laura suffers from inferiority complex and low self-esteem and Amanda fails to realize that helping her daughter overcome her shortcomings could not only help her become independent on her own, but perhaps also find a suitable husband.

It seems that both Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie* and Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* see their only solution in a man. Amanda and Laura are dependent on Tom until Laura gets married so they could become dependent on another man: "I mean that as soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent – why, then you'll be free to go wherever you please, on land, on sea, whichever way the wind blows you! But until that time you've got to look out for your sister." (4) For Amanda, being independent means being dependent on a husband. "What Amanda needs more than anything else, both for herself and her daughter, is, arguably precisely security." (Roudané 1997: 32).

After losing her family home, her husband and her job, Blanche becomes dependent on a man, her brother-in-law, and she is aware that her only way out of that situation is to find a husband. Blanche is trying to seduce Mitch hoping he would marry her and provide for her. "I want to rest! I want to breathe quietly again! Yes – I want Mitch...very badly! Just think! If it happens, I can leave here and not be anyone's problem..." (5) Blanche is hypocritical in pursuing what she wants, she lies about her age, conceals her past actions and gives a false impression of her personality. While her sexual history seems quite liberal, she barely even allows Mitch to kiss her as she wants to present herself as a lady adherent to moral standards. Mitch and Blanche's relationship, having been founded on so many lies, was doomed to fail. From the beginning the audience gets the impression that it was based on a mutual necessity and their wish to overcome the traumas of the past rather than love. But since the world has been so hard on her, Blanche needs protection and kindness in addition to financial security. However, after Mitch finds out about Blanche's past and all the lies she has told him, he decides to leave her, as he finds her morally unfit to be his wife.

Living in the 1930s and 1940s, women had a very straightforward understanding of the concept of marriage and patriarchal roles of husband and wife. In Kowalski household, these roles are very clearly divided, Stanley being the provider and Stella being the housewife. Stanley takes a lot of pride in being the macho man and likes showing dominance over his wife and making sure that everybody knows he is the man of the family. He is used to women being compliant and listening to him, and Blanche challenges that and his image of being the patriarch of the family. He feels intimidated by Blanche because unlike the submissive Stella, Blanche is a strong woman who is not afraid to speak her mind. He sees her as a threat to his marriage and family life. The power struggle between them occurred because both of them are such strong personalities and they both fight for Stella's attention. "Stanley senses in this woman a challenge to his authority and to his family. He must be rid of this meddlesome woman but finally realizes that he can be rid of her only by destroying her himself. Their fearful symmetry is at the core of the drama." (Voss 2002: 51). Stanley and Stella's marriage dynamics has changed since Blanche arrived. Stella now notices and occasionally reprimands her husband's behaviour and she even orders him around. At one point Stanley gets infuriated: "Don't ever talk that way to me! "Pig – Polack – disgusting – vulgar – greasy!" – them kind of words have been on your tongue and your sister's too much around here! What do you two think you are? A pair of queens? Remember when Huey Long said – "Every man is a King!" And I am the king around here, so don't forget it!" (8) Blanche threatened Stanley's masculinity and he fights back the only way he knows how, through violence. Despite all the differences between Stella and Stanley, violence, aggression,



Stanley's insistence on being in control of everything and different social backgrounds, we do not doubt at any moment that Stella and Stanley are madly in love with each other. Notwithstanding, Stanley does not respect his wife. He abuses her, both physically and emotionally, he cheated on her and raped her sister.

After realizing that Mitch would not marry her and Stanley will not tolerate her much longer, Blanche seeks for another man who will take care of her. "Although Blanche regards Stella's husband as a brutal predator, her first impulse is to turn to another man as saviour. There is a subtle irony in her reflexive reversion to the Southern belle's habit of thought – that is, emotional dependence on a patriarchal system of male protection for the helpless female." (Roudané 1997: 56). Perhaps the reason why Stella chooses Stanley over Blanche is because she is aware how difficult her life would be without a man in her life. She and Blanche are both unemployed, and if she were to leave Stanley, Stella would end up a single mother with no financial means relying on a promise made by her sister that they might be offered help from another man. Stella knows that Blanche lives in an illusion and that her plan to get away with Shep will not happen.

Blanche's mental decline is evident in excessive alcoholism, her lies and fabrications of truth being exposed, her illusions about her future. Men destroy Blanche, both the men who seemed to love her and those who did not. She is traumatized by the experience she had in her marriage, her former husband's hidden homosexuality and her exposing it and judging him for it, after which he committed suicide. Her feelings of guilt and loneliness account for many of the mistakes she has made. Because of her ex-husband, she already lost everything that mattered to her at the point when she visited her sister. She lost her husband, family, money, job, all optimistic prospects for her future, so it is only natural that she was in mental disarray. "Even if Blanche were not up against the age's hostility to seduction, she is hopelessly fragile, afraid of being deserted, afraid of the future, afraid of the past, afraid to love, afraid of crowds, afraid of light, afraid of death. Afraid and guilty. She is, as well, the victim of male pride and paranoia." (Bloom 2009: 46).

Because Blanche concealed and embellished so many details of her life story, no one believes her when she says that Stanley raped her: "Although the audience/reader knows that this time Blanche does not lie, the conscience of the community, represented by Stella and Eunice, judges this story to be a falsehood. When the conscience of the community makes its verdict, then the confinement can take place without delay." (Bloom 2007: 13). Stella chooses a man over a woman, her husband over her sister. "I couldn't believe her story and go on living with Stanley." (11) The choice of Stella's words at the end of the play tells us that she does not think that Blanche lied to her, but that she simply cannot accept her words for the benefit of her marriage and the future of herself and her child.

Female characters go to great lengths in their attempts to get what they want. Both Amanda and Blanche resort to lying, covering up their flaws and failures, and using all available resources to attract a man's attention and interest. Amanda obviously believes that keeping up appearances is what matters the most when searching for a husband. Instead of thinking that marriage should be based on two people loving each other and wishing to spend the rest of their lives together, Amanda believes that her house has to be perfect, she thinks about the dresses she and Laura are going to wear, spends money on unnecessary things to embellish their apartment. In a similar manner, Blanche hides her age, uses fancy clothes, pretends to be old-fashioned, all in order to impress a man.

Blanche's final words: "Whoever you are – I have always depended on the kindness of strangers." (11) illustrate the reason why she is in the position that she is in life, she has



always depended on men. All the female characters in both plays – Amanda, Laura, Blanche, Stella – are destroyed by men. They all end up unhappy because they empower men with their dependence on them.

#### 4. The criticism of society with regards to women

As a writer, Williams is very brave in addressing the burning issues of the times he lived in. His plays serve as a critique of everything that he believed was wrong in the society. Writing about 1930s and 1940s, he criticises the treatment of homosexuals, treatment of women and the issues of domestic violence.

“In creating characters who persist, despite great difficulty, in proclaiming “true stories of our time and the world we live in,” Williams demonstrates his conviction that American society seeks to silence those who shock or outrage with stories of the unmentionable. By establishing these narratives as intrinsic parts of the action, by hanging the fate of the characters on the telling of these tales, the playwright creates situations in which those who bear witness to the atrocities of human action find their sanity questioned, their words muted.” (Bloom 2007: 25). Williams addresses taboo topics such as rape, mental sanity and homosexuality and challenges the traditional roles and responsibilities of men and women, topics which are usually avoided and not spoken about, even today. Williams considered these issues to be of great importance, especially because most of them were part of his personal experience.

His characters are flawed people. Williams based most of his characters in these plays on his family members and himself, thus enabling the audience to relate to them. “Tennessee Williams was always ambivalent about his monsters. They are rarely clearly good or evil. Stanley was never intended to be a stereotypical villain.” (Voss 2002: 62). All his characters have redeeming features, and practically none of them can be clearly described as either good or bad, which is exactly what makes them human. This is the reason why the audience and readers are unable to immediately side with either Blanche or Stanley. Both of them display positive and negative characteristics, both of them do things which are unforgivable and both of them deserve compassion and empathy. “Both Blanche and Stanley are tragicomic figures, and *Streetcar* is richly ambiguous: it presents a sensitive, tormented woman cast out from her final refuge, deprived of her last hope for happiness, and brutally destroyed by her crude brother-in-law and/or down-to-earth working man defending his home and his masculinity from a neurotic, snobbish intruder who would destroy both and indeed almost succeeds.” (Bloom 2007: 112). At the beginning of the play, Stanley is the one who has more supporters, but as the play progresses and he demonstrates his violent traits, the audience sides more with Blanche even though she herself is not perfect.

Since Williams was a homosexual at a time when this was illegal and morally unacceptable, he addresses some of the issues which many homosexual people had to deal with. Perhaps Tom, in *The Glass Menagerie*, is meeting with his partner during the evenings when he disappears. Blanche, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, seems to be a collateral damage of a homosexual man pressured into fulfilling a traditional role of being a husband. The revelation that her husband is a homosexual and his subsequent suicide made Blanche insecure and emotionally scarred.

Williams also addresses the very important issue in the United States, and that is the status and the treatment of immigrant families. While there is definitely a dose of discrimination towards immigrants, many of them feel ashamed of their origin. Blanche



constantly makes inappropriate discriminatory comments about Stanley, associating his bad manners and lower social status to the country his ancestors emigrated from. Stanley also condemns Blanche for everything that she represents, him originating from an immigrant family and her coming from a Southern aristocratic family. He tells her: "I am not a Polack. People from Poland are Poles, not Polack. But what I am is a one hundred percent American, born and raised in the greatest country in earth and proud as hell of it, so don't ever call me a Polack." (8) He feels embarrassed by his background and highlights that he is purely American. The fact that her remarks made him so upset only proves that he is ashamed of his origins. As Bloom notices: "Stanley reacts strongly to the character insults because he senses their truth." (Bloom 2007: 13).

How the society sees domestic violence is a major theme in Williams's play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Even though Stanley is abusive towards both Stella and Blanche, Stella justifies his actions: "I know how it must have seemed to you and I'm awful sorry it had to happen, but it wasn't anything as serious as you seem to take it. In the first place, when men are drinking and playing poker anything can happen. It's always a powder-keg. He didn't know what he was doing...he was as good as a lamb when I came back and he's really very, very ashamed of himself." (4) Men, women, and the society as a whole should be blamed for these instances of domestic violence and for people's attitudes towards it. While Blanche insists that her sister should do something about her husband's aggression, it seems that all of them are indifferent when they hear their upstairs neighbours fighting and Steve abusing Eunice. They do not find that strange, they do not even think about doing something about it, they consider it perfectly normal. Stanley's constant demeaning attitude and lack of respect for women is especially noticeable in the way he talks to Blanche. "Blanche: Please don't get up. Stanley: Nobody's going to get up, so don't be worried." (3); "Blanche: Poker is so fascinating. Could I kibitz? Stanley: You could not. Why don't you women go up and sit with Eunice?" (3) He is insistent on showing that he is the man of the house and that women need to know their place. We also never see him apologizing to Blanche, even though his going through her personal belongings without her consent, throwing the radio that she was listening to out of the house, disrespectful conversations, not to mention rape, are deserving of much more than a simple apology.

It seems that Williams also blames the society because of the way the women are treated and because of the traditional notions they feel obliged to fulfil. Even when men and women show the same patterns of morally unacceptable behaviour, the women are those who are judged and whose reputation is destroyed. Blanche is criticised for her promiscuity and excessive drinking. Even though her actions stemmed from many problems and life difficulties she had gone through, no one shows understanding or compassion towards her. On the other hand, men would never be treated the same, as promiscuity, drinking problems, abuse, violence and even rape seem to be forgivable for them. What the society expects from women in terms of their characteristics and traditional roles they are expected to fulfil and how men behave towards women is in direct opposition. Even women such as Stella and Amanda who are doing their best to fulfil the patriarchal expectations and be the best wives and mothers, are let down by men. I believe that Williams also used the depiction of women who failed because they were dependent on men throughout their lives as a message to women all around the world, to witness the mistakes other women have made and learn from them.



### 5. Conclusion

Williams's personal life, at the same time incredibly interesting and terribly painful, inspired some of his best works. "Turning his own family drama into a theatrical experience for public consumption was an incredibly painful experience for Williams. He would describe it as one of the most painful experiences of his life, but the members of the audience could certainly relate, not only to the familial tensions evident in the play, but also to the grander economic and cultural tensions and certainly, to the personal struggles – issues which continue to engage audiences today." (Bloom 2007: 16).

When Williams found out about the lobotomy that was performed on his sister without his knowledge, he wrote in his journal:

"A chord breaking.  
1000 miles away.  
Rose. Her head cut open.  
A knife thrust in her brain.  
Me. Here. Smoking.  
My father, mean as a  
devil, snoring – 1000 miles  
away." (Voss 2002: 72).

He was obviously deeply touched over what happened and his plays are the most personal and touching tribute to his sister, representing his feelings of guilt and sadness that she was dependent on her parents to make that decision for her. We have every reason to believe that Tom's feelings at the end of *The Glass Menagerie* coincide with Williams's feelings. We remain without knowledge whether Tom found happiness and success or not, but he is still haunted by his actions and the memory of Laura. In the same manner, the thoughts of his sister overshadowed all Williams's accomplishments and happy moments.

The women in his life were a great source of inspiration for Williams. He incorporated their struggles into his plays. Both plays suggest women's beliefs that they can only be happy with a man by their side. And all women illustrate by personal example that that is not the case. Both plays depict delusional women unable to accept reality and self-centred men who want to have things their own way regardless of the damage they may cause. In both plays there is also a decent man who seems to be the only chance at a normal life but this never succeeds.

Williams seems to criticise the society as a whole. He does not put blame on anyone in particular, but perhaps wants to suggest these issues surrounding women's lives can only be solved by joint effort. The plays also send a message to women, that they should work on becoming independent so that they can build healthy relationships with men.

These plays might seem dated to many people, but we have to ask ourselves – are they? They still seem to attract people's attention, not only in the form of stage performances, but also as classic pieces of literature. Homosexual men still sometimes marry women in order to fit in. They are still very often condemned and judged for their lifestyles. Women still seek protection and financial security in men. Women still stay married to men who abuse them. Women who are promiscuous are still thought of as immoral and unfit for marriage. Immigrants still very often face discrimination. So much time has passed and yet so little has changed. The issues that Williams considered so significant that he included them in his plays still colour the lives of so many people around the world and the history seems to



have taught us so little. This is exactly why Williams's plays are so important and valuable. Due to their beauty and truthfulness, they defy the passage of time and still fascinate and inspire people all worldwide. And who knows, perhaps one day they will also encourage the society to start implementing changes and fixing what is wrong.

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