Michael S. D. Hooper reverses the trend of regarding Tennessee Williams as fundamentally a social writer following the publication of plays from both ends of his career – the ‘proletarian’ apprentice years of Candles to the Sun and Not About Nightingales and the once overlooked final period of, amongst many other plays, The Red Devil Battery Sign. Hooper contends that recent criticism has exaggerated the political engagement and egalitarian credentials of a writer whose characters and situations revert to a reactionary politics of the individual dominated by the negotiation of sexual power. Directly, or more often indirectly, Williams’s writing expresses social disaffection before glamorizing the outcast and shelving thoughts of political change. Through detailed analysis of canonical and recently discovered texts, the book sheds new light on Williams’s work, as well as on the cultural and social life of mid-twentieth-century America.

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SEXUAL POLITICS IN THE WORK OF TENNESSEE WILLIAMS

Desire Over Protest

MICHAEL S. D. HOOPER
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1 Right to left: Daniel Stewart (as Krause); James Black (as Butch O'Fallon); Alex Giannini (as Joe) in *Not About Nightingales*, directed by Trevor Nunn at the Cottesloe, National Theatre, London, UK, 5 March 1998. Photograph Nobby Clark/ArenaPAL.

2 Right to left: Edward Hughes as Candy and Matt Ryan as Karl in the 2007 Trafalgar Studios production of *And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens* …, directed by Anna Ledwich. Photograph Marilyn Kingwill/ArenaPAL.

3 Thomas Beaudoin as Val Xavier in the 2010 production of *Orpheus Descending* at the Tennessee Williams Festival in Provincetown; directed by Nick Potenzieri. Photograph George Causil.

4 Thomas Beaudoin as Val Xavier and Irene Glezos as Lady Torrance in the 2010 production of *Orpheus Descending* at the Tennessee Williams Festival in Provincetown; directed by Nick Potenzieri. Photograph George Causil.

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