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978-1-107-07668-6 - Tennessee Williams and the Theatre of Excess: The Strange, the Crazy, the Queer

Annette J. Saddik

Excerpt

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Introduction: “sicker than necessary”
Tennessee Williams’ theatre of excess

“As some things are too sad and too deep for tears, so some things are too grotesque and too funny for laughter.”

— George du Maurier, *Trilby*, 1894¹

“It is not, on the whole, the *terror* of the grotesque that poses critical problems, it is the *laughter*.”

— Ralf Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God: The Grotesque in Performance*, 2004²

“Lately no one seems to laugh at my jokes on paper, perhaps they’re too black, I don’t know.”

— Tennessee Williams, *Memoirs*, 1975³

On November 8, 1980, a triple bill of one-act plays by Tennessee Williams opened at the Goodman Theater in Chicago under the heading “Tennessee Laughs.” The plays, *Some Problems for the Moose Lodge*, *A Perfect Analysis Given by a Parrot*, and *The Frosted Glass Coffin*, were all examples of the dark humor that tended to dominate Williams’ later plays during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. On April 16, 1982, the final full-length version of *Some Problems for the Moose Lodge*, retitled *A House Not Meant to Stand: A Gothic Comedy*, opened at the Goodman. *A House Not Meant to Stand* was to be Williams’ last complete full-length play to be produced during his lifetime.⁴ *House*, like the majority of Williams’ late plays (generally

¹ George du Maurier, *Trilby* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1894), 23.

² Ralf Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God: The Grotesque in Performance* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2004), 79.

³ Tennessee Williams, *Memoirs* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), 199.

⁴ Another full-length play by Williams, *Gideon’s Point*, premiered at the Williamstown Festival later that year, in August 1982; the script, however, was still a work in progress and several drafts exist from 1978 to 1982, with a draft recorded by Linda Dorff as early as 1970 (in the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts). Several versions of this play, titled *Tent Worms*, *In Masks Outrageous and Austere*, *Gideon’s Point*, and *Masks Outrageous and Austere*, which differ in tone and style, exist in various drafts in the archives at Columbia University and Harvard, and in the New York Public Library. The evolution of the play is controversial, as Williams entrusted the script to Gavin Lambert, who edited and perhaps revised the script, and several others worked on the play as

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considered to cover the period from 1961 until his death in 1983), was a stylistic departure from his most popular earlier work of the 1940s and 1950s. These plays continued to exhibit the kinds of risks that had always made Williams exciting and inspirational, yet by the 1960s he was starting to more blatantly ignore the boundaries of social and dramatic convention, as he boldly embraced excess as a vehicle for artistic expression.

Considering that the celebration of Williams' centennial in 2011 was marked around the world by festivals, publications, conferences, and productions of his plays, a new exploration of his critical position is timely and salient. The serious reevaluation of Williams' reputation during the past twenty years or so – beginning with David Savran's *Communists, Cowboys, and Queens: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*, in 1992, and my study, *The Politics of Reputation: The Critical Reception of Tennessee Williams' Later Plays*, in 1999, as well as excellent work on the late plays by scholars such as Linda Dorff, Allean Hale, and Philip C. Kolin – has created a new respect for his later works, particularly in the past five to ten years.⁵ The relatively recent publication of Williams' formerly unknown plays (both early and late) and world premieres or exciting new productions of his plays from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s in places such as London, Cape Town, New York, New Orleans, Boston, and Provincetown, Massachusetts – along with the publication of his *Notebooks* and letters; new biographies from John S. Bak and John Lahr;⁶ and new editions of his early plays, his essays, and his *Memoirs* – indicate that interest in Williams has been peaking, and there is much left to be said about his work.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, both Williams' published and unpublished post-1961 work was receiving some critical attention from academic circles. The scholarship on the late plays at that time was often insightful but scant. Collections and overviews by scholars such as Stephen Stanton, Felicia Hardison Londré, Jac Tharpe, and C. W. E. Bigsby began to cover

well – Williams' literary assistant John Uecker, the director Peter Bogdanovich, and Gore Vidal. In April 2012, a version of the play titled *In Masks: Outrageous and Austere* was produced off-Broadway at the Culture Project in New York City, opening on April 16 (previews began April 6) and closing on May 13, 2012. This draft was assembled by dramaturg Joe E. Jeffreys and the play's director, David Schweizer. Because of the controversial evolution of this play and questions of authorship, it is *A House Not Meant to Stand* that is generally considered by scholars to be Williams' last complete full-length play.

⁵ William Prosser, who directed the premiere of Williams' *Will Mr. Merriwether Return from Memphis?* in 1980, was working on a manuscript about Williams' late plays before he died of complications from AIDS in 1991, but his work remained unknown until 2009, when his partner, Eric Stenshoel, had it published posthumously: William Prosser, *The Late Plays of Tennessee Williams* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2009).

⁶ John S. Bak, *Tennessee Williams: A Literary Life* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and John Lahr, *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2014).

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the later plays at some level, and were opening the doors to perceiving them as serious offerings. In 1979, Stanton founded the *Tennessee Williams Newsletter* (fall 1979–spring 1981), which then became *The Tennessee Williams Review* (spring 1981–spring 1983). While these ventures were short lived, they were indicative of the growing interest in Williams studies during the 1980s and led to a series of festivals, conferences, and journals dedicated to his work. In 1986, the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival was launched, and in 1989 Kenneth Holditch founded *The Tennessee Williams Literary Journal*, which remained active until 2008. In 1986, Albert J. Devlin edited a collection of interviews, *Conversations with Tennessee Williams*, that included much information on the late material. For the most part, however, scholars and critics did not know how to relate to the later plays, and the conventional wisdom echoed the narrative that these were odd and incomprehensible offerings by a once great but ultimately failed playwright whose talent had tragically declined by the 1960s, largely due to alcohol and drug abuse.

By the 1990s, the unpublished or unproduced later plays were beginning to receive more serious attention. In 1991, Allean Hale introduced scholars to a previously unpublished play, *The Day on Which a Man Dies*, revealing "The Secret Script of Tennessee Williams" in *Southern Review*. In 1993, Philip C. Kolin published "The Existential Nightmare in Tennessee Williams's *The Chalky White Substance*" in *Notes on Contemporary Literature*, and in 1998 his essay on "*Something Cloudy, Something Clear: Tennessee Williams's Postmodern Memory Play*" appeared in the *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. It was also during the 1990s that scholars, including myself, were increasingly reassessing the Williams canon through a variety of new theoretical lenses, and David Savran, John Clum, Nicholas de Jongh, Robert Vorlicky, and Steven Bruhm were all taking a new look at the politics of sexuality in Williams' oeuvre. In 1995, Linda Dorff organized a panel on the late plays at the San Francisco conference of the ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education), which included David Savran, Robert Vorlicky, Steven Bruhm, Allean Hale, and Lyle Leverich, who had just completed volume one of Williams' official biography, *Tom*. By the mid-to-late 1990s, George Crandell, Robert Martin, and Matthew C. Roudané were producing collections that illuminated Williams' entire oeuvre in complex ways,⁷ and Ruby Cohn's essays,

⁷ George W. Crandell, ed. *The Critical Response to Tennessee Williams* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996); Robert A. Martin, ed. *Critical Essays on Tennessee Williams* (New York: Twayne, 1997); and Matthew C. Roudané, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Tennessee Williams* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

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“Late Tennessee Williams” in Martin’s volume and “Tennessee Williams: the last two decades” in Roudané’s, were making important contributions to the scholarship of the late plays.

In 1998, the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review* was founded by Robert Bray, and it quickly became an invaluable resource for criticism of Williams’ work, both early and late. Dorff’s essays in the *Review*, “Theatricalist Cartoons: Tennessee Williams’s Late, ‘Outrageous’ Plays” (1999) and “‘All Very [Not!] Pirandello!’ Radical Theatrics in the Evolution of *Vieux Carré*” (2000), as well as Allean Hale’s essays “Confronting the Late Plays of Tennessee Williams” (2003) and “Tennessee Williams’s *Three Plays for the Lyric Theatre*” (2005), were important in expanding the scholarship on his late plays, as were Kolin’s “Williams’s *The Frosted Glass Coffin*” in *The Explicator* (2000), “*The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde*: Tennessee Williams’s Little Shop of Comic Horrors” in the *Tennessee Williams Annual Review* (2001), and “A Play about Terrible Birds: Tennessee Williams’s *The Gnädiges Fraulein* [sic] and Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds*” in *South Atlantic Review* (2001). By the early 2000s, interest in Williams’ late plays was well established, and a 2002 panel of the Scholars’ Conference at the Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival, moderated by Robert Bray and featuring Allean Hale, Thomas Keith, Ruby Cohn, Philip C. Kolin, Brenda Murphy, and myself, was dedicated to “Looking at the Late Plays of Tennessee Williams.” Three seminal volumes of essays that addressed the later work, Robert Gross’ *Tennessee Williams: A Casebook*, Philip C. Kolin’s *The Undiscovered Country: The Later Plays of Tennessee Williams*, and Ralph Voss’ *Magical Muse: Millennial Essays on Tennessee Williams*, also appeared in 2002.

In *The Politics of Reputation*, I explored Williams’ canon in terms of its relationship to dramatic realism, arguing that his late plays, which had been characterized as critical and artistic failures, were in fact conscious departures from the more realistic forms that had established Williams’ early reputation, as he increasingly experimented with anti-realistic styles that had always been part of his artistic philosophy. I compared the reception of his late plays to that of playwrights who were similarly experimenting with the limits of language and the possibilities of anti-realistic presentation – Beckett, Pinter, and Albee, specifically – and demonstrated how critics were still judging Williams’ late plays according to standards of realism, unable or unwilling to accept his development as a playwright as they were limited by their own expectations and assumptions.

Tennessee Williams and the Theatre of Excess: The Strange, the Crazy, the Queer continues my work on Williams’ later plays and explores in detail

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sixteen of these plays between 1961 and 1982 – from *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), which marks the end of his early period, to *A House Not Meant to Stand* (1982)⁸ – in the context of what I call a “theatre of excess,” which seeks liberation through exaggeration, chaos, ambiguity, and laughter. I also discuss several other plays throughout his career in order to highlight the continuum in Williams’ thinking about style, and I augment my discussion of the texts with analyses of several productions that successfully captured the elements that are central to Williams’ late aesthetic – the delicate balance of laughter and horror, as well as a self-conscious, almost ironic manner of acting. Williams often saw himself as the patron saint of “freaks,” and I took the subtitle of this book from one of his poems that he used in slightly altered versions in two plays: *The Mutilated* (first performed in 1966) and a play that was written between 1957 and 1962 called *And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens...*, which premiered in Washington, DC, at the Kennedy Center in 2004 and was first published in 2005.⁹ This book looks at Williams’ late plays through the theoretical lenses of Mikhail Bakhtin, Antonin Artaud, and Julia Kristeva as well as through the sensibilities of the carnivalesque and the grotesque, German Expressionism, and psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theory, in order to contextualize these plays in terms of a subversive politics of excess and laughter that celebrates the irrational. Williams’ later plays often employ highly theatrical or stylized forms, and use exaggeration and distortion of reality, humor, and satire as social commentary, going even beyond theatrical absurdism. Even though Williams said in 1965 that he “could never make a joke out of human existence,”¹⁰ many of these late plays do face life’s tragic elements and laugh at them, a liberating laughter that destabilizes boundaries and breaks through imposed limitations. These highly irreverent plays employ humor for the purpose of social critique and resistance, highlighting the tragicomic elements and absurdities of life’s struggles. In a 1978 letter to Truman Capote, housed in the archives of the New Orleans Historic Collection, Williams identified with what he called Capote’s “period of disequilibrium” during a very difficult personal and professional time, and ended his letter with the advice not to despair, and to “never, never stop laughing.”

⁸ Both *A House Not Meant to Stand* and *The Traveling Companion and Other Plays*, which includes several of the one-act plays I discuss in this book, were only published relatively recently, by New Directions in 2008.

⁹ *And Tell Sad Stories of the Deaths of Queens...* appears in *Mister Paradise and Other One-Act Plays*, ed. Nicholas Moschovakis and David Rossel (New York: New Directions, 2005).

¹⁰ Tennessee Williams, *Conversations with Tennessee Williams*, ed. Albert J. Devlin (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1986), 118.

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During his later period, Williams often presented an ironic worldview that was simultaneously comic and bleak – rejecting romanticism, blurring high and low culture, and playing indulgently with exaggeration. Several of the later plays explored in this book embrace a grotesque sensibility, simultaneously repressing and exploding with dark, ambivalent humor. In keeping with such humor, they can come across as, simply, “too much.” *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde* (1982), for example, begins with the entrance of a “lasciviously” grinning young man, known as the Boy,¹¹ one of Mme. Le Monde’s sons who is “hung like a dray horse” and “kept on the place for... incestuous relations” with his mother.¹² He opens the play by dragging Mint – “a delicate little man with a childlike face” whose “legs are mysteriously paralyzed”¹³ – behind the curtain and raping him, a “sexual assault”¹⁴ that Mint seems to both dread and enjoy. Mint’s paralysis forces him to swing from hooks implanted on the ceiling of Mme. Le Monde’s attic, the “rectangle with hooks”¹⁵ where he lives as a tenant.¹⁶ When the Boy is finished with Mint, he tells him that their visitor, Hall, is downstairs with Mme. Le Monde and will hook him back up “if he ever hauls himself out of that ole buffalo waterin’ hole of Mom’s,” alerting him that “it takes Mom a long time to come.”¹⁷ Throughout the play, Mint’s desperation is evident and cruelty permeates the atmosphere, as a world of instability and meager resources is marked by the ruthlessness of individuals in their fight for self-preservation.

Upon reading the play several times to try and make sense of the bizarre excesses, it started to become clear that its uncanny power emerges precisely from the fact that it *is* “too much” and therefore deliberately defies strategies that seek to construct and control meaning, to “make sense” in traditional terms. Williams’ excesses serve to highlight the ambiguities and inconsistencies of living in and experiencing the world – the excesses that leak out of closed systems of meaning, that seep through the cracks of the rational, the stable, the complete, and point toward the essence of the real. Williams had always been aware that language, images, all forms of representation are inevitably inadequate and cannot contain emotion, impulse, desire. As early as 1945, he sought what he called “the language

¹¹ Tennessee Williams, *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde*, in *The Traveling Companion and Other Plays*, ed. Annette J. Saddik (New York: New Directions, 2008), 91.

¹² *Ibid.*, 94. ¹³ *Ibid.*, 91. ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 94. ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

¹⁶ We also see this reference to a room that is described as a “rectangle with hooks” in Williams’ novel *Moise and the World of Reason* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1975), 11.

¹⁷ Williams, *Rooming-House*, 91.

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of vision,"¹⁸ which he famously described as a "plastic theatre" in the production notes to *The Glass Menagerie*.¹⁹ In order to illustrate a truth about reality and "release the essential spirit of something," he needed to distort and exaggerate our experiences of that reality.²⁰ His plays honor the grotesque power of chaos, of the irrational and inexpressible, and the truth that it reveals. While this is what his work had been doing since his earliest plays and short stories,²¹ in his late plays Williams was taking us to the brink of unbearable pain and horror, where the only place to go, the only way of dealing with such intense experience, was laughter. As Ralf Remshardt writes in *Staging the Savage God*:

There are probably two distinct ways in which laughter can work in the grotesque, and they are dependent on the distribution of the latent and the manifest element. Simply put, if the horrible aspect is dominant or manifest, laughter will almost always be a mechanism for counteracting the horror. When the comical element is dominant, horror becomes a response to the callousness of one's own laughter. Either way, the grotesque structure must assure that the distribution of the elements is adequate to guarantee that neither impulse takes over too quickly and that there is a responsive interdependence of laughter and horror.²²

This "interdependence of laughter and horror" – what Frances K. Barasch has called "ludicrous-horror"²³ – is key to understanding much of Williams' late work. Somehow, in all its perverse ugliness, *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde* is a very funny play. It was written by the man, rumor has it, who would sit in the back of the theatre during performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and laugh hysterically at the final scene, when Blanche is taken away to an insane asylum. Laughter is often unsettling when we don't know why someone is laughing, especially when it appears to be inappropriate, contradictory to the situation that inspired it.²⁴ In his *Memoirs*, Williams explained this sort of

¹⁸ Tennessee Williams, *The Purification*, in *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams*, Vol. VI (New York: New Directions, 1981), 44.

¹⁹ Tennessee Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*, in *The Theatre of Tennessee Williams*, Vol. I (New York: New Directions, 1971), 131.

²⁰ Williams, *New Selected Essays*, 24.

²¹ In Williams' first published short story, "The Vengeance of Nitocris" (1928), for example, the Egyptian Queen Nitocris takes revenge on her enemies by inviting them to a banquet and, in the midst of the excesses of celebration, opening a secret wall that allowed the waters of the Nile to rush in and drown them – "a room of orgy and feasting suddenly converted into a room of terror and horror" ("The Vengeance of Nitocris," in *Collected Stories* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1985), 8).

²² Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God*, 85.

²³ Frances K. Barasch, "The Grotesque as a Comic Genre," *Modern Language Studies* 15:1 (1985), 5.

²⁴ See, for example, the scene in the 1959 film of *Suddenly Last Summer*, where Catherine (played by Elizabeth Taylor) accidentally wanders into the "drum" of the asylum – the recreation area for

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excessive, “inappropriate” laughter as his inevitable “substitute for weeping”: “Laughter has always been my substitute for lamentation and I laugh as loudly as I would lament if I hadn’t discovered a useful substitute for weeping. Usually I laugh longer than I should, as well as more loudly than I should.”²⁵ For Williams, the comic and the tragic were inseparable.

No doubt due, in part, to both its obscurity and the extreme content that made it a risk to stage, *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde* was not performed until September 2009, by Boston’s Beau Jest Moving Theatre, directed by Davis Robinson for its premiere at the Charlestown Working Theater in Massachusetts and moving later that month to the Provincetown Tennessee Williams Festival. When I went to see this production, I was prepared for the worst. This was not an easy play. Even if the director, the cast, and the staging did manage to translate Williams’ vision truthfully, there was always a risk in terms of how audiences would react to that vision. Black humor, which requires a precarious balance between the extremes of the comic and the cruel, is often difficult to pull off, and I had no idea how audiences, or I, would react. In order for the play to work on the stage, its ambivalent, grotesque humor – a sort of gallows humor that laughs in the face of horror – must come through. Otherwise, the play is too painful, too ugly, to tolerate. Yet, as soon as I heard the audience laughing at the play’s opening outrage, I knew it was going to work. It was not exactly an uncomfortable laughter, but a strange laughter of both disbelief and relief. Remshardt points out that

The key is perhaps that grotesque laughter is not the laughter of humor; it is always inappropriate laughter, and therefore it both does and does not belong to the grotesque. One is, in other words, simultaneously in sympathy and out of sympathy with the grotesque; this is an essential part of its aesthetic definition. The grotesque... is literally “sick” humor, humor too diseased to allow for easy reconciliation.²⁶

The production’s atmosphere of exaggeration and comic-book caricature was able to get across a sense of heightened, absurd cruelty that filled the space until it had no place to go and had no choice but to burst into laughter, a laughter of absurdity and exaggeration that my students, who generally respond very well to this play, have simply called “too crazy.”

female patients – and the women begin to laugh manically. The close-up of their distorted expressions in contrast to her fear is a perfect example of a menacing, grotesque sort of laughter.

²⁵ Tennessee Williams, *Memoirs* (New York: Bantam Books, 1975), ix.

²⁶ Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God*, 81–82.

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Figure 1 Jordan Harrison and Larry Coen in *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde*, directed by Davis Robinson. Boston, Massachusetts (2009).
Photo by Justin Knight.

Williams' work had never been tame – rife with forbidden desire, madness, castration, rape, cannibalism, all forms of emotional and physical violence – yet the relative innocence and outright censorship of the 1940s and 1950s was able to keep these themes just barely under control. The playfully dark humor of Williams' late plays was therefore a logical and mature continuation of his earlier work, employing what he called “freer” forms that engaged the “madness” of political and social chaos during the late twentieth century.²⁷ Yet with plays such as *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde*, *A Cavalier for Milady* (c. 1976), and *Kirche, Küche, Kinder (An Outrage for the Stage)* (1979), for example, Williams succeeded in pushing the boundaries of good taste to the extreme, challenging conventional notions of what can be shown onstage and thereby revealing a more primitive, primary side of human nature. Making the rape in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the homosexual subtext in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), and even the cannibalism in *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), the dismemberment in *Orpheus Descending* (1957), and the castration in

²⁷ Williams, *Conversations*, 218.

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Sweet Bird of Youth (1959) appear subtle and almost quaint, *The Remarkable Rooming-House of Mme. Le Monde* went still beyond what the public had come to expect of Tennessee Williams in terms of shock value and violent imagery.

Extreme, excessive, grotesque, carnivalesque, tragicomic, campy, cartoonish, pop art, burlesque, slapstick, Grand Guignol – these are just some terms that begin to describe the sensibility of Williams' late work. His late plays reflect the freedom to finally be “too much,” to laugh at the absurdity of life and its inevitable suffering with a laughter that surpasses tears. In “Theatricalist Cartoons: Tennessee Williams's Late, ‘Outrageous’ Plays,” Linda Dorff discusses several of what she calls Williams' “outrageous” plays in terms of a shift toward “grotesque parody,” and cites his 1965 preface to *Slapstick Tragedy* (1966), where he describes the plays as “vaudeville, burlesque, and slapstick, with a dash of pop art thrown in.”²⁸ In his 1996 essay “The War against the Kitchen Sink,” John Guare mentions Williams' double bill of *The Gnädiges Fräulein* (1966) and *The Mutilated* that was performed under the title *Slapstick Tragedy*, pointing out that Williams “showed one way to that part of our brain or our souls. The part of theater that's vaudeville.”²⁹

Indeed, Williams' late plays often embrace the spirit of vaudeville, as well as the liberating transgressions of what Mikhail Bakhtin termed the *carnavalesque* – the spirit of carnival as social resistance, which includes comic violence, bawdy language, exaggeration, inversion, and an irreverent mockery of what is held by society to be sacrosanct.³⁰ Remshardt argues that “the true grotesque, that which creates and sustains horror and ridicule in equal measure, must simultaneously bring into play higher and lower orders until they become nearly indistinguishable.”³¹ And Geoffrey Harpham sees the grotesque as, similarly, generating a “destruction of order,” “provid[ing] an alternative center,” which arises in “the clash between the ‘virtuous’ limitations of form and a rebellious content that refuses to be constrained,” bulging and bursting through the seams of the rational and the stable. It brings together the margin and the center, embodying “a confusion of type” and breaking through the limitations

²⁸ Linda Dorff, “Theatricalist Cartoons: Tennessee Williams's Late, ‘Outrageous’ Plays,” *Tennessee Williams Annual Review* 2 (1999), 14.

²⁹ John Guare, “The War against the Kitchen Sink,” in *John Guare: The War against the Kitchen Sink* (New York: Smith and Kraus, 1996), x.

³⁰ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984). Bakhtin began his study of Rabelais in 1934 and submitted it as his thesis in 1940. It was not published, however, until 1965 (in Russian) and 1968 (in English).

³¹ Remshardt, *Staging the Savage God*, 121.