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# Ideological Manifestations in Tennessee Williams' Selected Plays

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**Abstract**

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983), the spokesman of the marginalized, devoted part of his oeuvre to unearthing and eradicating social injustice. Taking advantage of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this study draws on textual and contextual clues to address the playwright's critique of unequal social orders. CDA exposes the intricate operations of power and ideology in maintaining hierarchically gendered social orders and institutionalized power asymmetries. The goal of CDA is to lay bare the subtle ways in which gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, maintained or negotiated. By deploying Fairclough's three-dimensional model which explores the interconnection between social practices, discursive practices and its textual manifestation, the present paper aims to delve into implicit ideological effects of language and influence of power relations embedded in the discourse of Williams' selected plays, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1955)* and *The Night of Iguana (1961),* to expose the role of discourse in the maintenance of power.

**Keywords**: Critical Discourse Analysis; Ideology; Discourse; Fairclough; Patriarchy.

## Introduction

Tennessee Williams' oeuvre is replete with the depiction of the sordid realities of modern life, including characters who are "caught in a web of corruption, cruelty, disease and death, doomed by the viciousness of human beings, too weak and indolent to escape from the contamination of their kind" (Atkinson 1953, 1-2). As Williams himself stated in his Memoirs (1975), his goal of writing is "to capture the constantly evanescent quality of existence (192). During Williams' lifetime, transition of the agrarian society to an industrial one led to many catastrophes, the most tragic ones being capitalism, World War I and II, Great Depression, failure of American Dream, the collapse of the South and the erosion of aristocracy. The mid-twentieth century witnessed the destruction of old ideals, values and traditions and left individuals who were misfits. As Williams remarked, his main concern has been "the heed for understanding and tenderness and fortitude among individuals trapped by circumstance" (Barnett 1948, 113-114).

Throughout his oeuvre, Williams critiqued unequal power relations, injustice, commodification, and corruption prevalent in his era. Some of his plays are protests against the patriarchal gender system ruling


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over the South and feature heroines who are victims of the Southern patriarchal society. Some outline those who violate their proscribed sex roles thus end up being sacrificed as a result of their violations, for "they are threats to marriage and Patriarchy" (Clum 1997, 130). Some others depict the deteriorating impact of Capitalism on characters' lives.

To shed light on the link between textual and contextual features of Williams' selected plays, including *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) and *The Night of Iguana* (1961), Critical Discourse Analysis in general and Fairclough's three-dimensional model in particular have been chosen as apt frameworks. CDA conceptualizes discourse as a social practice and is concerned with the dialectical relation between the discursive event and the context in which it has been produced. As Jørgensen and Phillips held CDA-oriented approaches share five common features. First, "The character of social and cultural processes and structures is partly linguistic-discursive", which means texts' production and consumption is crucial in social relations and social identity formation; second, they contended "discourse is both constitutive and constituted", that is there is a bilateral relation between discursive practices and social relations rather than a unilateral one; the third feature is that "language use should be empirically analyzed within its social context"; the fourth is "discourse functions ideologically", which highlights the role of discourse in the maintenance and legitimization of unequal power relations; the last is "critical research" which means that researches take the side of the oppressed groups of society to change their situation (2002, 61-64). By taking advantage of Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the current paper aims to expose" the subtle means by which text and talk manage the mind and manufacture consent, on the one hand, and articulate and sustain resistance and challenge, on the other (Van Dijk, 1993, p132 ).

## Literature Review

Williams' plays have not been investigated from the perspective of CDA so far. CDA analyses have gained popularity over the past two decades. CDA plunges into the dialectical relationship of discourse with social structures, practices and power relations. By employing Fairclough's three-dimensional model, the present study means to expose textual-contextual clues residing in Williams' plays. Critical responses to William's oeuvre vary. Numerous critics believed Williams' greatness lay in his early works and his subsequent works were not as critically successful as his preceding ones. John Simon, Alan Rich and Harold Clurman for instance consented that Williams' constant revision of his literary output left them nothing more than tedious plays containing "recycled character portraits and rehashed themes"( Banach 2010, 10) . John Simon remarked that "a man who would steal and resteal from himself is the saddest of failures. Reprehensible as it may be to steal from others, it is at least enterprising" (Simon 1977, 21). However, Linda Dorff and Annette Saddik, Felicia Londré, Philip C. Kolin, and William Prosser aimed to counter negative reception and misconception of Williams' oeuvre. In *The Politics of Reputation* (1999), Saddik attributed poor reviews of Williams' later works to critics and reviewers' failure to evaluate him not as a realist playwright but an experimental one who wrote for the avant-garde theatre which suits modern audience better. Clive Barnes, on the other hand, in his New York Times

article on In the Bar of a Tokyo Hotel, stated that Williams' later works were too personal. Some other critics rebuked Williams for "giving in to directors too easily" maybe for commercial reasons (Davis 1957, 48). He admitted he had sometimes sacrificed his desires "to reach a mass audience" however, Kazan is not to be blamed (Gelb 1960, 65). Even once he declared: "Perhaps I need someone like Kazan to modify my viewpoint" (Terkel 1961, 88). Since 1962 onward his significance as a popular playwright diminished due to his mental breakdown and he was more concerned with "explor[ing] his own problems" than attracting the audience (Hirsch 1979, 72).

## Fairclough's Three-dimensional Model

In his outstanding book *Language and Power* (1989), Fairclough's main focus is on the dialectical relationship between language and power relations. To him language is a social practice rather than an autonomous construct and believed the context of language use is of utmost significance (Wodak 2000). Therefore, he drew attention to language as discourse: "society is no mosaic of individual existences looked in some stratified structure but a dynamic formation of relationships and practices constituted in large measure by struggles for power" (Candlin 1989, vi).

Fairclough's objective is twofold: one theoretical and the other practical. The theoretical one is to highlight the significance of language in the production and perpetuation of power relations and the practical one is to raise consciousness concerning the exploitative nature of social relations and contribution of language to domination over others to motivate transformation and emancipation. As he believed linguists and sociolinguists talked widely about the interrelation of language and power, but they were mainly concerned with giving descriptions of how sociolinguistic conventions contribute to asymmetrical distribution of power. They overlooked the conventions' dual relation to power. The idea that the very conventions or orders of discourse (as Foucault named them) were ideologically determined by power relations and power struggles was not pointed at. Hence, his emphasis is on "'common-sense' assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically, and of which people are generally not consciously aware"(Fairclough 1989, 2). These assumptions are called ideologies which are mechanisms of power, then are crucial in legitimizing the current power relations, for "In class societies, ideologies are additionally a means of maintaining domination" (Fairclough 1995, 115). He also highlighted the significance of discourse. He held "the power of the dominant class and social institutions is sustained, their position perpetuated and their norms naturalized through ideology. Discourse is of utmost importance here for ideological power is enacted through discourse" (33-34).

As Fairclough claimed, language is by nature ideological. The approach he adopted to the study of language is critical in the sense that it uncovers the subtle connection between language, power and ideology. He maintained "language is power" that is the way we communicate is constrained by prescribed rules of social institutions. To lay bare the interconnection of these institutions and our language use three points of reference must be examined: language, social theory and the context (Fairclough 1989, 1). Therefore, a communicative event must include the analysis of the linguistic structure (text level), discourse and genres drawn on in the text (discursive practice level) and examining

if “the discursive practice reproduces or, instead, restructures the existing order of discourse” and its repercussions for the social practice (social practice level) (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, 69).

Fairclough’s approach incorporates both textual and contextual analysis. He held the processes of production and interpretation of texts are socially determined by social conventions, but these dominant conventions might be resisted, contested or reversed, therefore language use can lead to a change in power relations. By conceiving of language as a social construct, we not only analyze texts but also processes of production and interpretation and relationship between text, processes and the social condition. Therefore, the three dimensions of discourse are text, interaction and context. These three dimensions corresponds with the three stages of CDA: Description having to do with formal features of a text, Interpretation related to the process of production and explanation concerning with the relation between interaction and social context. That is how society determines the processes of production and interpretation.

Fairclough drew attention to the way individuals create their “orderly” worlds by practices that they are unaware of, which are shaped by social structures and relations of power hence are politically and ideologically loaded and may shape people as subjects (Fairclough 1992, 72). He contended “While discourses are realized through texts, they are much broader than texts and include the broader social and cultural structures and practices that surround and inform their production and consumption” (72).

**Social Practice Dimension**

In social practice dimension, Fairclough shed light on the dialectical relation between power and ideology with discourse. He thought of discourse as a social practice, that is “discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned” (Wodak 2002, 8). To illustrate the interconnection between the social dimensions and the discursive production in Williams’ plays, delineation of the social milieu in which he composed his works is helpful. In fact, political implication of William’s oeuvre is undeniable. He “lived through crucial historical moments of the twentieth century – World War II, the Cold War, Korea, Vietnam, the civil rights and gay liberation movements – and so” (Hooper 2012, 24). As a committed artist, he deemed himself responsible for the condition of America. Over and over throughout his Memoirs, he characterized himself as a revolutionary and opposed conservatism, corruption, tyranny, capitalism and repudiation of the marginalized and misfits. As Williams, himself declared in his Memoirs and interviews from 1940 onward, he was devoted to radical political change: "I was a socialist from the time I started working for a shoe company” (qtd. In Hooper, 6). The letters he wrote to Donald Windham also indicate his aversion to capitalism and his affinity with communism (Savran 1992). In 1945, when he was asked about human condition he stated their problems are “social and economic”. He pointed out that there will not be "equity in American life until at least 90 percent of our population are living under different circumstances" (Evans 1911, 15). In one of his interviews he maintained: “My interest in social problems is as great as my interest in the theatre and traveling. I try to write all my plays so that they carry some social message along with the story” (Barron 1986, 5).

In what follows the dominant discourses of 20-century American society included in the literary output of Williams like Capitalism, Great Depression, deterioration of the South and patriarchy will be pointed at to indicate "the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse or domination" (Van Dijk 2001, 96).

## Text Dimension

To explore discoursal manifestation in textual productions, Fairclough borrowed the linguistic tools suggested by Halliday in his Functional Grammar (1985). Since the current paper is dealing with dramatic texts, conversation analysis comes in handy. Conversation analysis is a sociological approach to the study of language and social interaction. It grew out of Ethnomethodology, a branch of sociology, inaugurated by Harold Garfinkel (1964, 1967, 1988). It examines the way social order is produced by social interaction. The linguistic tools that are deployed to unravel discourse's impact on identity formation and social relation are Pragmatics: Grice's Co-operative Principle (1975), Brown and Levinson's model of politeness (1987), Leech's Politeness Principle (1983) and Harvey Sacks, Emanuel Schegloff and Gail Jefferson's Turn-Taking.

Williams' selected plays are shining examples to lay bare the implicit power relations positioned in the social context and their manifestations in the text. In what follows, some excerpts of the plays which are ideologically loaded have been chosen to give new insight to some features of power relations between interactants to reflect their social relations and identities.

## A Streetcar Named Desire

Like Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard (1903)*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* depicts a genteel way of life (the Old South) represented by Blanche which was destructed by a rising lower social order represented by Stanley (The New South) (Londre 1997, 50). From the very beginning of the play, Blanche represents herself other than what she really is. She fools everybody into believing what she is not while toward the end of the play Stanley gains the upper hand, exposes her mendacity and causes her mental collapse. As Dijk held: "Dominance is seldom absolute; it is often gradual, and may be met by more or less resistance or counter-power by dominated groups" (2013, 85). This shift in power and Stanley's final domination over Blanche which represents the defeat and fall of aristocratic Old South by New South is evident in the following extract.

> BLANCHE:
>
> […] This man is a gentleman and he respects me. [Improvising feverishly] What he wants is my companionship. Having great wealth sometimes makes people lonely! A cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding, can enrich a man's life-immeasurably! I have those things to offer, and this doesn't take them away. Physical beauty is passing. A transitory possession. But beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart-and I have all of those things-aren't taken away, but grow! […] I think of myself as a very, very rich womanl But I have been foolish-casting my pearls before swine.

STANLEY:

Swine, huh?

BLANCHE:

Yes, swinel Swinel (Williams 2015, 146)

At the beginning of her turn, Blanche makes up a false story about an imaginary Texas oil millionaire who craves Blanche's. Her flouting the maxim of quality might partly be due to her being on the verge of a mental breakdown thus willing to take refuge in an imaginary world and partly due to saving her positive face before Stanley. She is employing Pollyanna Principle, by glossing over the unpleasant events and fabricating agreeable ones, which is a pragmatic strategy used by persons who tend to look at the bright side of everything and prefer pleasant topics to talk about. The rest of her first turn is dedicated to making assessments about herself and her ex-husband. According to Pomerantz, an assessment is proffered "to accomplish an action or multiple actions" (1984, 63). The assessment is of self-praise kind here with the goal of overestimating herself, followed by a complaint or insult toward Stanley with the purpose of underestimating him. Blanche's initial positive self-assessment and negative other-assessment invite a subsequent agreement on the part of the recipient, since generally a preferred SPP to positive self-assessment must project other party's confirmation rather than disconfirmation, while to the readers' astonishment, it is followed by Stanley's implicit, partial disagreement. It is worth noting that Blanche did not invite Stanley to co-participate in this event, that is she did not request proffering an assessment, however at the first possible completion point, Stanley self-selects to grab the floor by redoing Blanche's negative descriptor in an interrogative form "Swine, huh?(Williams 2015, 146). Stanley reacted to Blanche's self-praise and labelling him a "swine" with an implicit, mitigated repair rather than any evident verbal attack, containing a tinge of ridicule with the inclusion of "huh?" pointing to her evident dishonesty (Williams 2015, 146). Repeating the trouble source "swine" acts as a backdown or reversal here in form of a request for clarification and Blanche tries to effect the trouble but in vain (Williams 2015, 146). Disagreements may come with repair initiators, which is one kind of disagreement, a partial one in this case for it is not an explicit disagreement but is only meant (Liddicoat 2021). Stanley meant to drag her out of the world she created based on mendacity, to disabuse her of her negative other-assessment and inapt positive self-assessment. Repair in this case is a delaying device for dispreferred SPPs are usually delayed (116,122, liddicoat). His humiliating tone acts as a disagreement premonitory. According to preference for agreement, and considering the preference for contiguity, SPPs should not be deferred, then "a break in contiguity is hearable as problematic for agreement" (Liddicoat 2021, 114). By deploying a repair as a device to delay dispreferred SPP, Stanley is preparing to finally disagree with Blanche (in his third turn). As Schegloff also asserted " other - initiated repair sequences can operate as pre – rejections and pre - disagreements — as harbingers of dispreferred base second - pair parts "(Schegloff 2007, 102).

So far Blanche dominates Stanley by taking the longer turns. Irrespective of Stanley's interruptions, she retains the floor and continues by fabricating another story about Mr. Mitchell who came to see her for reconciliation but was refused, which is another instance of flouting the maxim of

quality: "I said to him, "Thank you, "but it was foolish of me to think that we could ever adapt ourselves to each other. Our ways of life are too different. […] So farewell, my friend I and let there be no hard feelings... " (Williams 2015, 146). This time Blanche was interrupted by Stanley's question: "Did you, huh?" which is again a taunting repair, a face-threatening act of criticism pointing indirectly to Blanche's mendacity or illusion (Williams 2015, 146). He conveys the criticism in an implicature "off-record" strategy (Brown and Levinson 1987, 2). Stanley flouts the maxim of manner by being vague and indirect in his statements, but it is not because he tries to save Blanche's face by indirection or mitigation. He just lets her prate, while getting more and more induced by Blanche's fabrication till he attacks both her positive and negative face, going on record by laying bare her lies without any mitigations, redress or repairs. The enraging Stanley self-selects, dominates Blanche, holds the floor and takes all the turns which are followed just by shocked Blanche's "oh": "As a matter of fact there wasn't no wire at all I", "There isn't no millionaire I And Mitch didn't come back with roses' cause I know where he is-", "There isn't a goddam thing but imagination", "And lies and conceit and tricks I" (Williams 2015, 147). Blanche gives in and lets all her turns lapse for she is neither herself to be able to reply nor is allocated the opportunity by Stanley who is exerting control by holding his turn. Besides, she is thrown out of her imagination and is faced by pure fact right before her eyes. The particle "oh" is "a change of state token" indicating the producer's awareness (Heritage 1984, 299). Blanche is shocked by the awareness that Stanley knows it all about her secrets. The reversal of power is also observable from the length of turns. At the beginning Blanche's turn sizes are long and Stanley's are short while toward the end it is the other way round. Stanley's domination is also noticeable by his repeated interruptions and his deploying rush-throughs, a device to retain the floor which happens when "a speaker, approaching a possible completion of a turn-constructional unit, speeds up the pace of the talk, withholds a dropping pitch or the intake of breath, and phrases the talk to bridge what might otherwise be the juncture at the end of a unit (Schegloff 1982, 76).

**Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**

In *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the same clash and final power reversal exists between Margaret and her husband Brick. From the very beginning of the play Brick's domination and Margaret's subordination is evident by Maggi's insistence upon sleeping with her husband and getting pregnant and Brick's balking at being ensnared. While toward the end Maggi gets the upper hand and dominates Brick by convincing him to sleep with her and giving birth to an heir. As Williams remarked, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof outlines "a vital, strong woman dominating a weak man and achieving her will" (Lahr 2014, 302). The chosen extract has implicit proposition of male/female relationship during 1950s which has ideological representations.

> MARGARET: Oh, Brick! How long does it have t' go on? This punishment? Haven't I done
> time enough, haven't I served my term, can't I apply for a--pardon?
> BRICK: Maggie, you're spoiling my liquor. Lately your voice always sounds like you'd been
> running upstairs to warn somebody that the house was on fire!

MARGARET: Well, no wonder, no wonder. Y'know what I feel like, Brick? …
I feel all the time like a cat on a hot tin roof!
BRICK: Then jump off the roof, jump off it, cats can jump off roofs and land on their four feet
uninjured! (Williams 2004, 18)

The extract starts with Maggie's self-denigration which flouts maxim of quality that constrains us from being too modest or too tactful (Leech 2016). Maggie has not committed a crime to deserve punishment or pardon. In fact, she has been overlooked by her husband and deprived of conjugal relationships. Her deploying modesty maxim displays her subordinate position and her attempt to get closer to her husband. As Brown and Levinson mentioned "Positive-politeness utterances are used as a kind of metaphorical extension of intimacy" (Brown & Levinson 1987, 103). On the other hand, Brick's conversational behavior is shocking, given that they are a couple, much more polite behavior and attraction were expected. Maggie's plea for Brick's forgiveness and her final declaration of love despite Brick's aloofness is indicative of their unequal power relation. Brick attacks Maggie's positive face without any mitigation by making clear he has no emotion for her and wishes her to "take a lover" to get rid of her. (Williams 2004, 18). His face threatening acts are on-record without any redress (all of his turns) which indicate his superior position. Brick's face threatening act of criticism is done by a negative impoliteness strategy called "name-calling" without any mitigation or politeness markers. He attacks Maggie's positive face by calling her a "fool" which shows his superior position while Maggie's negative self-assessment indicates her subordinate one (Williams 2004, 18). Furthermore, Brick flouts maxim of quality by calling Maggie a "fool" for there is no evidence that she is one (Williams 2004, 18).

Near the end of this extract Brick interrupts Maggie's statement by his imperative command "accept that condition" which is an FTA, threatening her negative face and displays his power over her as well (Williams 2004, 19). On the other hand, despite Brick's impoliteness, Maggie remains polite by deploying approbation maxim, supporting Brick's positive face: "I can't see a man but you! Even with my eyes closed, I just see you! Why don't you get ugly, Brick, why don't you please get fat or ugly or something so I could stand it?" (Williams 2004, 18). Unlike Brick, her responses are preferred or structurally unmarked.

Brick's impoliteness and Maggie's politeness are attributable to their characters and goals. Maggie's acting out the subordinate role of a wife is a short-termed goal to bring about her ultimate benefit, which is getting pregnant by her husband thus taking possession of Big Daddy's estate. Therefore, employing politeness strategies expedites her purpose. Then Maggie cannot be deemed a docile wife but an assertive and determined one as she proves toward the end when role reversal happens and Maggie totally dominates her husband. On the other hand, Brick's reason for being impolite is traceable to his drunkenness, hatred of Maggie or retaliation for what she did to his best friend, Skipper. The following extract portrays Maggie's domination over Brick and the accomplishment of her goal which is sleeping with Brick to give birth to an heir.

> Margaret: …. Echo Spring has gone dry, and no one but me could drive you to town for more.
> BRICK: Lacey will get me--
> MARGARET: Lacey's been told not to!
> BRICK: I could drive--
> MARGARET: And you lost your driver's licence! I'd phone ahead and have you stopped on the highway before you got halfway to Ruby Lightfoot's gin mill. I told a lie to Big Daddy, but we can make that lie come true. And then I'll bring you liquor, and we'll get drunk together, here, tonight, in this place that death has come into! What do you say? What do you say, baby?
> BRICK [X to L side bed]: I admire you, Maggie.
> [...] MARGARET: Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you--gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of--and I can! I'm determined to do it--and nothing's more determined than a cat on a tin roof--is there? Is there, baby? (Williams 2004, 117)

The play ends with Maggie's rise to domination. At last, her constant attempt to sleep with her husband paid. Maggie's superiority can be deduced from her conversational behavior. According to Sacks et al. turn-taking choices manifest power relations: "relative distribution of turns (or some similar measure) is an index of, or medium for, power, status" (1978, 53). When there are more than two speakers in a conversation, number of turns between interlocutors is supposed to be equal, but in an unequal power binary this would not happen (Short 1996, 195-215). As it is clear Maggie holds the floor, takes more and longer turns and interrupts Brick twice (in her second and third turns) and attacks his negative face by declaring that only she can give him a ride. She also attacked his positive face by calling him "weak" redressed by "beautiful" and in need of affection (Williams 2004, 117). She also uses sympathy maxim which is a politeness strategy. The analysis of this excerpt shows though Maggie overpowered Brick, she gained her power through policy, mitigating her FTAs through redressive action and employing hedged performatives which is the avoidance of direct speech. While unlike the first excerpt in which Maggie got overpowered and humiliated many times by Brick, here he supports her positive face by using approbation maxim: "I admire you, Maggie" (Williams 2004, 117).

### The Night of iguana

The chosen ideologically loaded extract, is the conversation between Shannon, the tour leader, and one of the passengers Miss Fellowes, who got infuriated because of Shannon's incompetency as a tour guide, means to report his irresponsibility. Shannon tries to calm her down and dissuade her from making a complaint which would probably lead to his being fired from the job. Their dialogue illuminates the contrasting power relations between interactants, originating from their different social status. Great Depression, the worst economic disaster Americans have ever seen, engendered unemployment, job insecurity, low income and dissatisfaction among workers. Shannon deviated from doing his duty because

of the low income he received, while at the same time he had the tension of losing his job because of his dissatisfied passenger. Therefore, when confronted with infuriated Miss Fellowes' complaint, he tried to gain her favor out of fear.

> (1) SHANNON [sitting up in the hammock]: Excuse me, Miss Fellowes, for not getting out of this hammock, but I... Miss Fellowes? Please sit down a minute. I want to confess something to you.
> (2) MISS FELLOWES: That ought to be int'restin'! What?
> (3) SHANNON: Just that - well, like everyone else, at some point or other in life, my life has cracked up on me.
> (4) MISS FELLOWES: How does that compensate us?
> (5) SHANNON: I don't think I know what you mean by compensate, Miss Fellowes. [...] I mean I've just confessed to you that I'm at the end of my rope, and you say, 'How does that compensate us?' Please, Miss Fellowes. Don't make me feel that any adult human being puts personal compensation before the dreadful, bare fact of a man at the end of his rope who still has to try to go on, to continue, as if he'd never been better or stronger in his whole existence. No, don't do that; it would...
> (6) MISS FELLOWES: It would what?
> (7) SHANNON: Shake if not shatter everything left of my faith in essential--human... goodness!
> (8) MISS FELLOWES: Can you sit there, I mean lie there - yeah, I mean lie there... and talk to me about--
> MISS FELLOWES: 'Essential human goodness?' Why, just plain human decency is beyond your imagination, Shannon, so lie there, lie there and lie there, we're going!
> (9) SHANNON [rising from the hammock]: Miss Fellowes, I thought that I was conducting this party, not you.
> (10) MISS FELLOWES: You? You just now admitted you're incompetent, as well as... (Williams 2009, 15-16)

According to Short turn-taking patterns or divergence from turn-taking norms is quite crucial and meaningful in interpreting characters' behavior (1996, 205). He asserted the number and length of turns, who initiates, who interrupts and who uses respectful address terms can interpret interactants' power relations. As Short held "patterns of turn-taking have clear general connections with conversational power", accordingly Shannon's inferior status and Miss Fellows' superior one are understandable through their conversational behavior (1996, 206).

Generally, the more powerful interactant is expected to talk more but in specific contextual circumstances the less powerful talks more to prove something or exonerate him/herself from something. For the same reason, Shannon's turns are of more length, though the numbers are equal, for he is determined to secure his job by winning the lady's sympathy and persuading her not to report his irresponsibility. He employs politeness strategies to the same end as well. In his first turn, he uses

politeness markers such as "please" and "excuse me" (Williams 2009, 15). He also uses social deictic terms to address the woman: the title "Miss Fellows" (Williams 2009, 15). Ellipsis is also visible in turns 1 and 7 which is indicative of his inferior position. Hesitation tokens are also seen in turns 2: "well", 5: "I mean" (Williams 2009, 16). Shannon also deployed hedged performatives to mitigate his utterances: Turn 5 "I don't think I know" is a tactful variant of I don't know (Williams 2009, 16). Later on he also added: "I thought that I was conducting this party, not you" which is a hedged performative as well (Williams 2009, 16). While Miss Fellows' utterances are bald-on records: turn 11: "just plain human decency is beyond your imagination" and later on she declared "the tour is a cheat!" (Williams 2009, 16).

Short believed "Turn-taking patterns and deviations from relevant turn-taking norms can easily become meaningful in texts" (Short 1996, 205). In many turns Shannon got interrupted by Miss Fellows like turns 5 and 9. As Leech held these metalinguistic strategies like interruptions have "impolite implications" (Leech 1983, 139). Short believes, in conversations the one who controls the topic of conversation and allocates the turns is usually expected to be more important (1996, 206-207). In this instance the more powerful Miss Fellows allocates turns by asking Shannon questions in turns 2, 4 and 6. Miss Fellows also attacks Shannon's positive and negative face through bald-on records which shows her superiority and lack of concern toward her inferior: in turn 10, when she called him "incompetent" and when she called him a fraud she attacked his positive face without any redressive terms or actions (Williams 2009, 16). She attacked his negative face by threatening him: "I'm putting wheels in motion - I don't care what it costs me--I'm..." (Williams 2009, 17).

**Discursive practice dimension**

Discursive practice dimension concerns the interpretation of the relation between a discursive practice with the process of its production, distribution and consumption (Fairclough 1992, 78). Discursive practices "contribute to the constitution of the social world including social identities and social relations" (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, 61). The process, that proceeds unconsciously and automatically "which is an important factor in determining their ideological effectiveness", differs for differing discourses considering various socio-cognitive factors (Jørgensen & Phillips 2002, 80). Since this study concerns dramatic texts, the performances are the key interests to be explored to see how they were received and interpreted by the contemporary audience, how they reacted to them and if they were accepted or rejected as well as the reasons behind. The publication process and if the publishers were dependent on any specific party must also be examined. Critics and reviewer's opinions about a particular dramatic text should also be accommodated to see what discourses appealed to them and why (which was mentioned in literature review part).

Williams was "the poet of the heart" who gave voice to people's concerns like fallen genteel way of life, failure of American Dream, the suffering caused by Great Depression, capitalism, etc. (Roudane 1997, 1). Socio-political thrust of his oeuvre and mingling his art with his life contributed to the enhancement of his world-wide reputation. Williams had "A deep awareness of social inequities" (Terkel 1961, 81). He was a rebel, a nonconformist who regarded conformity "wrong" and dramatized the marginalized with whom audiences empathized. (Terkel 1961, 94). He writes about "Human nature"

(Davis 1957, 45). He introduced himself as a moralist: “the moral contribution of my plays is that they expose what I consider to be untrue” (Ross 1957, 40).

Williams’ defiance of heteronormative with his covert representation of sexuality was found startling for theatregoers. Since he was writing prior to gay liberation, he had to disguise open discussion of homosexuality to meet censorship demands and reach a mass audience. That is why homosexuals like Skipper in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and Allan in *A Streetcar Named Desire* had been dead and therefore not shown on stage when the play started. In fact, Williams’ puritanical upbringing may be responsible for embodying sexually perverse characters getting punished as a result of their sexual transgressions. Blanche went mad. Alan and Skipper committed suicide. Shannon got fired and so on.

When *Streetcar* was released theatregoers had not been fully recovered from the devastating effects the World War I, Great Depression and the introduction of nuclear weapons had left upon them. Therefore, the standardised structure and the reasonable denouement of the “well-made play” could not please them. That is why *Streetcar*’s complex characterization, obscurity and the depiction of postwar era were found appealing (Londre 1997, 48). The play deals with the disintegration of the Old South and obliteration of a genteel way of life by industrial civilization. Post WWII era witnessed a huge social and economic change as a result of urbanization and the ensuing industrial capitalism. Williams affected by such calamities also influenced by Anton Chekhov’s work, depicted his lament and nostalgia for the deterioration of the South and transformation of a graceful culture into a one based on commodification.: “The South once had a way of life that I am just old enough to remember—a culture that had grace, elegance . . . and inbred culture . . . not a society based on money, as in the North. I write out of a regret for that (Davis 1957, 43). In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche exemplifies Southern gentility which is ravaged by Stanley who stands for the New South. Rigid patriarchal values of the Old South like rejection of homosexuality, female docility and chastity and male superiority contributed to Blanche’s downfall. Blanche’s urgent need for a savior also stems from the tradition of Old South in which protection "must be through another person” as Elia Kazen remarked (qtd. in Roudane 1997). Manifestation of assertive women was also unexpectable. *Streetcar* concerns ”an upperclass female's scorn for the sweaty proletarian she compares to an ape”( Hale 1997, 14). The audience also found *Streetcar* startling for its egregious representation of sexuality and its eroticism. In fact, Williams’ highlighting the significance of sex drives is attributable to his opposition to Genteel tradition and his puritan upbringing for sex is considered a “liberating force” (Debusscher 1997, 168).

William’s frank treatment of sexuality is evident in all the three plays under discussion. To Savran Williams’ representation of homosexuality “might imply a political subversion of society’s attempts to repress it (certainly up to the sixties), Williams’s transgressive desires are diminished as political choices for not acknowledging the social advancement that has, in part, sought to legitimize them (Savran 1992, 9). Savran also pointed out the “normative constructions of gender” in Williams’ literary output (Savran 1992, 80). He held: “Williams's destabilization of mid-century notions of masculinity and femininity is accomplished, in part, by his ability both to expose the often murderous violence that accompanies the exercise of male authority and to valorize female power and female sexual desire” (Savran 1992, 80-81).

*Cat on a Tin Hot Roof* dramatizes subversion of patriarchy by an astute female. The inclusion of assertive women, those who wrest power from men and exercise it on them, like Margaret who overturned patriarchal values and succeeded in accomplishing her goal and explicit treatment of homosexuals like Skipper and Allan, indicate Williams' undoing of hegemonic conception of gender and sexuality. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* emanated from the short story "Three Players of a Summer Game" (1952) which concerns "the ascendence of one transgressor over another. Margaret has publicly rejected the heteronormative role of the Southern Belle and the submissive wife, and she is able to display her newfound power openly in the town" (Murphy 2014, 109). The derived play identically shares the same thematic concerns. Williams' director and producer, Elia Kazan did not approve of the play for he thought the ending was too bleak for the audience's taste, therefore he requested that it undergo major alterations in order to be a critical and commercial success, what Williams considered "A deep psychic violation" for Kazan and financial issues interfered with William's aesthetic desire (qtd. In Murphy, 117). Kazan also demanded that Williams make Maggie more sympathetic rather than domineering. Consequentially, two versions of the play were published: script version and Broadway Version with major changes done in Act three, including Making Margaret more sympathetic, making Big Daddy present and Brick's character alteration after Big Daddy illuminated the truth for him. The major difference between the two versions is Brick and Maggie's relationship. In the earlier version when Maggie declares her love, Brick takes it with a tinge of ridicule: "Wouldn't it be funny if that was true!" (Williams 2004, 91). While in the Broadway version Brick declares his admiration for Maggie: "I admire you, Maggie" and is more affectionate toward his wife, for instance when Maggie is preparing the bed, he "watches her with growing admiration" (Williams 2004, 117). So this version "lessens Brick's tragedy, as he chooses Maggie and their marriage rather than merely surrendering to her" (Heintzelman & Howard 2014, 61). As Kazan anticipated, the Broadway version was a huge success, running for 694 performances. But Williams still preferred the original version for "it was harder and purer: a blacker play but one that cut closer to the bone of the truth I believe", though he knew it couldn't be as triumphant as the Broadway version for the latter suited the audience's taste better (qtd in Barnett, 117).

*The Night of the Iguana*, Williams' last Broadway hit, was not as well-received as his previous plays and was attacked by several detractors one of whom was Robert Coleman who called it "second-rate Williams" (Coleman 1961, 28). Like most of his plays, this one also underwent revisions. Under his director's advice, Frank Corsaro, Williams made alterations to the overt representation of homosexuality for they thought "the time was not yet ripe to put that version's open homosexuality on stage" (Parker 2004, 61). In 1960 it was produced as a full-length play directed by Corsaro at the Cocoanut Grove Theatre in Miami. As Parker concluded the characters in this play are "captives: rope-enders" (Parker 2004, 83). All are entangled in an existential struggle to survive in a hostile universe. Shannon himself confirmed his plight: "I'm at the end of my rope" (Williams 2009, 16). Overwhelmed by the fear of losing his job, Shannon was about to breaking into a mental collapse. He told Maxine that he "can't go on" (Williams 2009, 5) and that he was "on the verge of hysteria" (Williams 2009, 19). Williams talked of Shannon as a man with "a true and deep social conscience"; He admired his "deep awareness of social inequities, the starvation and the misery . . . of the places he's conducted tours through" (qtd in Murphy,

144). He remarked: “The Night of the Iguana is a play whose theme, as closely as I can put it, is how to live beyond despair and still live" (Funke and Booth 1986, 104). Williams’ opposition to Capitalism and injustice is evident throughout this play. It features proletarian life, their exploitation by the system and other authoritarian people and their everyday struggle to survive the ordeal. Williams opposed the dehumanizing power of capitalism and who left many destitute like Shannon, Hannah and her grandfather. Shannon, overwhelmed by the fear of getting fired, begs Miss Fellowes not to jeopardize his job by reporting his irresponsibility toward the tour members to which she doesn’t pay attention. He “represents the machinery of capitalism as something vague that wrenches the human soul out of any recognizable shape and brilliantly creates an atmosphere of menace and futility “ (Hooper 2012, 42). *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* concerns the same theme. Arthur Miller depicted Brick as a non-conformist, provoked by inequity," who is fighting against a depraved and materialistic society embodied by Big Daddy” the epitome of power and authority (Savran 1992, 99). In *A Streetcar Named Desire* as well, Blanche lost her position as a result of exposition of her affair with her teenage student and also got penniless owing to the decline of the Old South and aristocracy.

## Conclusion

Discourse is both constitutive and constituted. As Wodak held, discourse “constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people” (2002, 8). Drawing upon the interdisciplinary field of critical discourse analysis, Furlough's three-dimensional model in particular, for it is the most linguistically-oriented approach from among those of other practitioners, the present paper conducted a textual-contextual analysis to shed light on the implicit ideologies in the dramatic language of Tennessee Williams, on how power, discourse and social relations are intertwined and on the firm relation between social structures and dramatic texts which is evident by analyzing discourses and conversational behaviors characters use. Stylistic analysis of the dramatic texts along with Critical Discourse Analysis illuminates the power relations between different characters and how they employ linguistic strategies to further their aims.

# دراسة في تجلي السلطة والأيديولوجيا في أعمال تينيسي ويليامز

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**الملخص**

كرّس تينيسي وليامز (1911-1983)، المتحدث باسم المهمّشين، جزءًا من أعماله للكشف والقضاء على الظلم الاجتماعي. باستخدام تحليل الخطاب النقدي(CDA) ، تستعمل هذا الدراسة العلامات النصيّة والسياقيّة للتعامل مع نقد الكاتب للنظام الاجتماعي غير المتكافئ. ويكشف تحليل الخطاب النقدي العمليات المعقدة للقوة والأيديولوجيا في الحفاظ على الترتيب الاجتماعي المتفاوت من حيث الجنس وتفاوت القوى المؤسسة. ويهدف تحليل الخطاب النقدي إلى الكشف عن الطرق الدقيقة التي تُنتَجُ فيها الافتراضات المحضة بالجنس وعلاقات القوة الهيمنيّة بصورة خطابيّة، سواء بالحفاظ عليها أو التفاوض بها. من خلال استخدام نموذج فيركلاو الثلاثي الأبعاد الذي يتناول ترابط الممارسات الاجتماعيّة والممارسات الخطابيّة وتجلياتها النصيّة، ويهدف البحث الحالي إلى التعمق في التأثيرات الأيديولوجيّة الضمنيّة للغة وتأثير علاقات القوة المتجذرة في خطاب مسرحيات ويليامز المختارة، بما في ذلك مسرحية "شارع تقطعه الرغبة" (1947) و"القط على سطح ساخن" (1955) و "ليلة الإغوانا" (1961)، لكشف دور الخطاب في الحفاظ على السلطة .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** تحليل الخطاب النقدي؛ الأيديولوجيا؛ الخطاب؛ فيركلاو؛ الأبوية.

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