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Taboo Topics in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*
by Tennessee Williams

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Z á s a d y p r o v y p r a c o v á n í :

Práce se zaměří na díla *Cat on a Hot tin Roof* a *A Streetcar Named Desire* od amerického dramatika Tennesseeho Williamse a na artikulaci témat, která nebyla zcela obvyklá pro dramatickou tvorbu daného období. Po zasazení obou her do společensko-kulturního kontextu se zvláštním důrazem na atmosféru poválečných let ve Spojených Státech Amerických a na postoj společnosti k tzv. tabuizovaným tématům se studentka bude touto problematikou zabývat ve výše zmíněných dramatických textech. Na konci práce autorka své závěry přehledně shrne.

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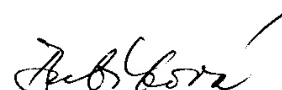
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Chtěla bych tímto poděkovat Mgr. Petře Smažilové, vedoucí mé bakalářské práce, za rady a připomínky, které významně přispěly ke konečné podobě této práce a za čas, který mi věnovala.

ANNOTATION

The work is concerned with the two plays, written by American dramatist Tennessee Williams, titled *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Especially, there are mentioned topics that were not entirely common for the given period.

After setting both the plays into the socio-cultural context with the emphasis on the postwar atmosphere in the United States of America and the stand of society to the topics that were regarded taboo, is the issue further referred to the above-mentioned dramatic texts. There are analyzed the particular taboo topics appearing in the plays in more detail.

KEYWORDS

United States of America; post-Second World War period; American drama; taboo topics; family; censorship

NÁZEV

Tabuizovaná témata v dílech *Kočka na rozpálené plechové střeše* a *Tramvaj do stanice Touha* od Tennesseeho Williamse

SOUHRN

Práce se zabývá dvěma divadelními hrami, napsanými americkým dramatikem Tennessee Williamsem, s názvy *Kočka na rozpálené plechové střeše* a *Tramvaj do stanice touha*. Jsou zde především zmíněna témata, jež nebyla zcela obvyklá pro dané období.

Po zasazení obou těchto her do společensko-kulturního kontextu s důrazem na poválečnou atmosféru ve Spojených státech amerických a na postoj společnosti k tématům, která byla v tehdejší době považována za tabuizovaná, je tato problematika dále odkázána do výše zmíněných dramatických textů. Zde jsou podrobněji rozebrána jednotlivá tabuizovaná témata objevující se v těchto divadelních hrách.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Spojené státy americké; období po druhé světové válce; americké drama; tabuizovaná témata; rodina; cenzura

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Introduction

This bachelor paper deals with the two literary works *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* written by American playwright Tennessee Williams. It is well known that William's plays contain topics that were not so typical for dramatic production of his time and the two above mentioned plays are no exception. Majority of William's production falls into the period after the Second World War, which was a highly conservative period typical by its paranoid and homophobic atmosphere. Not only does the author reflect the post-war atmosphere in his plays but he also mentions the topics that were considered taboo. When we take into account the conservative nature of the postwar period, it is no surprise that the taboo topics were many which also influenced the theatre production because some topics were not allowed to be depicted openly.

The main aim of the paper is to work up the detailed analysis of the two plays *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* with focus on the topics that were not entirely common for the dramatic production of the period and to emphasize the influence of the socio-cultural atmosphere of the postwar period on these plays.

The paper consists of the theoretical and the practical part. The former is further divided into four main chapters dealing with the situation in the United States after the Second World War.

The first chapter deals with the post-Second World War period. The postwar period in America became the age of repression, a time of conformity, insisting that citizens adhere to intensely conservative values. The topic of family after the war became the main focus of concern as the new pattern of family emerged in twentieth century. The importance of marriage increased and the gender roles of a wife and a husband in family became strictly defined. The postwar period was also significant for the enforcement of strict rules of censorship. The most notable censorship effective between 1930s and 1960s was the Motion Picture Production Code. This Code tried to protect morality of contemporary American citizens by regulating content of motion pictures according to strict standards of Christian morality.

In the second chapter, some of the topics that were regarded taboo, such as adultery, seduction, rape, nymphomania, homosexuality, alcoholism, murder, castration, drug addiction, fetishism, even cannibalism are named. There is also mentioned that the

person who first brought some of the topics to the American stage was Tennessee Williams himself. This chapter also reveals that contemporary Americans blamed women for men's sexual transgressions as they believed that women could lead men down the path to communism. One of the ways how women were supposed to achieve this goal was via seduction.

The third chapter deals with the topic of homosexuality. The chapter is divided into two subchapters. In these subchapters, the two important reports, that significantly influenced lives of homosexuals in America, are mentioned. The first subchapter deals with the document called '*Kinsey Report*'. The second subchapter is about the document named the '*Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*'. These two reports led in officially sponsored persecution of homosexuals and dismissals of homosexuals from government. The source of these actions stemmed from belief of many contemporary Americans that homosexuality posed a threat to the nation because homosexuals were regarded as weak men and easy prey for communists.

The fourth chapter deals with the topic of alcoholism where the changing point of view on alcohol consumption is explained. In the first subchapter, the period of 1920s, which is the era when the mixed drinks became popular, is mentioned. This era of mixed drinks is important mainly because it supported the campaign for Repeal of Prohibition and removed male's association to alcohol drinking. In the second subchapter is mentioned how the Repeal of Prohibition changed the point of view on alcohol drinking and then there is also talked about the medicalization of the problem of alcoholism after the Repeal of Prohibition. Although moderate drinking was seen as positive activity because it boosted sociability, alcoholism itself was regarded as unsocial.

In the practical part, the analysis of the two books *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is provided. This part is divided into two chapters where each of the chapters is devoted to one of the plays. The general knowledge of the post-war period provided in the theoretical part serves as the means of the analysis. Each of the chapters is further divided into several subchapters. Each subchapter deals with one of the topics that were considered taboo.

1. Post Second World War Period – Conservatism

First, it is appropriate to characterize the time when the two books, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, were written. Both of them were created in the period after the Second World War. Chopra-Gant in his book *Hollywood Genres and Post-War America* describes the cultural and social mood of the period as “pessimistic, cynical, violent and paranoid” (Chopra-Gant, 3). In 1950s, according to Kolin, America was ruled by a staunchly conservative Republican President General Dwight D. Eisenhower, American’s Big Daddy, and his Vice-President, Richard Nixon. Kolin terms America in the 1950s as “the age of repression, a time of conformity, insisting that citizens adhere to intensely conservative values.” (Kolin, xx) As the consequence of Eisenhower’s conservative efforts, America under his reign became patriotic, heterosexual, and paranoid. (Kolin, xx) Chopra-Gant further names the themes that have been identified by critics as being focal concerns of the late 1940s and early 1950s, such as the family, masculinity and American national identity. (Chopra-Gant, 26)

1.1 Family

As the topic of family in America after the war became the main focus of concern, it seems appropriate to devote at least one of the subchapters of the work to this issue. The theme of family is also relevant for the succeeding chapters. In this subchapter, the new pattern of family that emerged in twentieth century and its origin is discussed. Then the importance of marriage for contemporary Americans is revealed.

While during the nineteenth century the typical model of family was the Victorian nuclear family which functioned as a peaceful haven from the stresses of the public sphere, in twentieth century a new model of family started to predominate. Historians maintain that "the dominant pattern of family life in the United States changed markedly during the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century, and especially after the 1920s." (Rotskoff, 6) The new family ideal reached its highest popularity in the postwar era which was the period when "the memory of the hardships of the Depression began to fade" (Rotskoff, 7) and the poor economy caused by the Second World War was transformed into the thriving consumer economy. According to Rotskoff, the new family system has been ushered in by the rise of a bureaucratic, corporate social order

based on mass production and consumption. These factors enabled Americans to concentrate themselves, both emotionally and financially, on family life. The ascendant domestic ideology revised traditional familial values. The system redefined Americans' expectations of family life and increased the family's importance. The new institution of family became a private place of personal expression and emotional well-being. The modern family was supposed to generate psychic fulfillment and excitement for its members. The new model not only retained elements of the previous Victorian nuclear family, which functioned as refuge, but it also viewed the family as a place where its members could express and achieve their deepest personal longings. As Rotskoff points out, "Americans heightened their psychic demands on domestic life, idealizing the nuclear family as a realm of profound emotional fulfillment as well as a site of social reproduction." (Rotskoff, 7)

Rotskoff further describes that during the postwar period marriage was regarded as the bedrock of the prevailing white, middle-class, domestic ideal and that to be perceived as a normative family in the eyes of the dominant culture required, first and foremost, a marital union between a husband and a wife. (Rotskoff, 12) In 1940 the Census Bureau distinguished three family types and accentuated the tendency that the husband was supposed to be more dominant than his wife:

The first, called the normal family, had a male head living with his wife (with or without other household members or children). Although the other two types recognized the existence of other male-headed families and female-headed households, respectively, this federal bureau echoed strong currents in popular culture that prescribed marriage between a dominant male and a subordinate female as the favored, normal arrangement. (Rotskoff, 12)

The trend of the superordinate husband is also reflected in the belief of most theorists who claimed, according to May, that women married to strong men, who assumed their rightful economic and sexual dominance in the home, would channel their sexual energy into marriage. (May, 93) Marriage also represented sort of verification of maturity and responsibility, which were a typical signs of heterosexuality, as May describes in the excerpt:

According to the common wisdom of the time, "normal" heterosexual behavior culminating in marriage represented "maturity" and "responsibility"; therefore, those who were "deviant" were, by definition, irresponsible, immature, and weak. (May, 91)

As the consequence of these attitudes prevailing in American society in postwar period, those individuals who chose personal paths that did not include marriage and parenthood risked, in May's words, "being perceived as perverted, immoral, unpatriotic, and pathological." (May, 92)

Another important task of family was to serve as a model for children during the process of acquiring their gender identity. Rotskoff explains the approach of the range of experts, including educators, doctors, journalists, and psychiatrists, to sex roles in 1940s and 1950s. The experts argued that "gender-appropriate behavior was not biologically determined; rather, it needed to be learned, just like a role in a high school play." (Rotskoff, 75) Chopra-Gant calls the problematic the "conception of gender as a performance" and he later points out that this conception radically challenged more traditional, essentialist conceptions of masculine identity. (Chopra-Gant, 96) This conception of masculinity as a performance of gender Chopra-Gant explains accordingly:

This understanding of masculinity not as an inflexible, essential identity consequent on biological maleness, but as a construct, a complicated assemblage of exterior signifiers, such as clothing, and acquired behaviours that position the male body not as the source of masculine identity but as the site of its performance [...] (Chopra-Gant, 96)

This excerpt revealed that masculinity was believed to be acquired throughout life, rather than biologically determined.

1.2 Morality and Censorship

The main aim of the subchapter is to describe the morality of Americans at the time. The reader is introduced to the censorship effective in the period when the two plays were written and there are also mentioned main reasons why the regulation was imposed.

One contemporary American citizen described the period after the War as "the shutting down of open communication" as "the post-war reaction" (Chopra-Gant, 66). This restriction of open communication naturally led in increased need of censorship. 1930s and 1960s is the time when the Motion Picture Production Code was effective. This Code was mainly used as a kind of censorship of films. The Production Code tried to protect morality of contemporary American citizens and demanded that "[c]orrect

standards of life, subject only to the requirements of drama and entertainment, shall be presented". (Prince, 293) According to the book *Classical Film Violence* by Stephen Prince, the Motion Picture Production Code, also called the Hays Production Code, was formulated in 1930. This Code forbade filmmakers to screen morally objectionable content, which was believed to lower the moral standards of viewers. Its aim was "to censor popular culture according to strict standards of Christian morality" (Prince, 42) by means of "[regulating] screen content in the troublesome areas of sex, religion and crime". (Prince, 37) The organization responsible for these matters was called the Production Code Administration (PCA). In Prince's opinion, the extreme amount of violence displayed in present-day films has made viewers less sensitive to its depiction, which causes that the violence of classical Hollywood films seems almost invisible to many of the viewers. As Prince further clarifies, "this was not true for audiences in earlier decades and, as a result, displays that would strike a modern viewer as containing minimal violence were often sufficient to provoke angry backlashes from offended viewers and extreme fright reactions in children." (Prince, 52). As PCA staff member, and later the organization's chief, Geoffrey Shurlock pointed out, the Code's main aim was not to protect the public from being harmed by filmmakers but the reverse. Shurlock exactly stated: "I have never felt the American public cannot take care of itself. [. . .] I am protecting the industry from being harmed by outraged viewers." (Prince, 38) As the result, the PCA, forced by the unsatisfied viewers, had to take action against the inappropriate content, so that brutality or overtly sexual actions started to be handled through suggestion rather than be shown explicitly or in detail. The PCA pronounced: "Whenever scenes of this nature are indicated, we urge that they be done largely by suggestion, and not in any detail which might prove offensive." (165, Prince) Savran states that this was the very Production Code that finally "banned all representations of homosexuality in films" in 1934. (Savran, 85) The fact that contemporary Americans were so intolerant about sexual and religious matters caused that there were many taboos at that time which led in necessity to set up the self-censorship not only in the motion pictures but also in other spheres such as theatres and the press. Prince also mentions that "[a]fter the war a progressively harder violence began to appear on American screens" (Prince, 164) and he partially attributes this trend to the effects of the war. In his opinion, the expansion of the screen violence weakened

the influence of the PCA, so that in 1950s the PCA power was in decline. Finally, in 1960s the Production Code completely lost its effectiveness because American society had grown more liberal and tolerant about sexual and religious matters.

This chapter revealed that the main role of censorship after the Second World War was to censor the morally unacceptable themes in fields of sex, religion and crime in the film industry. The reason why the censorship was necessary was because Americans in the period were strongly religious, moral and more sensitive to depictions of inappropriate themes than the present day citizens.

2. Adultery, Seduction, Rape, Nymphomania

The goal of the chapter is to name and characterize the topics that were regarded taboo in the period after the Second World War.

In the book *Gay Men in Modern Southern Literature* "depravities" that Tennessee Williams first brought to the American stage are named. These depravities are murder, rape, castration, drug addiction, homosexuality, alcoholism, fetishism, nymphomania, even cannibalism. (Poteet, 15) Prince further classifies adultery as another 1950s taboo subject. (Prince, 144). The historian Elaine Tyler May in her book *Homeward Bound* writes about non-marital sex where the topic of adultery is included. There she mentions that "[n]onmarital sexual behavior in all its forms became a national obsession after the war." (May, 91) It is no surprise that such behavior was condemned because, as has already been mentioned, the institution of family after the war played a very important part in lives of Americans so anything that disrupted this family ideal was regarded unacceptable. May also describes that, in contemporary belief, to achieve strong family "required sexual restraint outside marriage" (May, 95). The previously mentioned Production Code also highlights the necessity of upholding the family ideal by stating that "[t]he sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld." (Prince, 294) Although the topic of adultery was regarded as taboo at the time, the Production Code did not ban dealing the topic in films completely. As Production Code later clarifies, it was only forbidden to treat the theme explicitly in case that the topic was necessary to incorporate into the plot. However, in case the adultery was mentioned in the storyline, it was not allowed to be "justified, or presented attractively". (Prince, 294)

Another inappropriate topic that May writes about is the topic of Seduction. According to Elaine Tyler May, “women were blamed for men’s sexual transgressions that could lead them down the path to communism.” (May, 93) One of the ways how women could mislead men was via seduction. Especially those so called deviants who were considered as “irresponsible, immature, and weak” (May, 91) were regarded as easy targets for the temptresses working for the communists which posed a serious security risk to the nation. According to the Production Code, themes like seduction or rape were not supposed to "be more than suggested, and only when essential for the plot, and even then never shown by explicit method". (Prince, 294) It was also essential that so serious topics were never considered as proper subject for comedies. (Prince, 294)

3. Homosexuality

The next inappropriate topic is sex perversion. Although the term pervert included a wide range of individuals, "from adults who engaged in same-sex consensual relationships to violent criminals who raped and murdered children" (May, 91), the main concern of the chapter is the topic of homosexuality.

The chapter is divided into two subchapters. In the two subchapters, the two important reports that significantly influenced lives of homosexuals in America are mentioned. In the first subchapter dealing with the *‘Kinsey Report’* one important organization called Bachelors Anonymous, that was aimed for homosexuals, is mentioned and the contemporary point of view on homosexuality is described. In the second subchapter concerned with document called the *‘Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government’* is also provided the insight into the practices of the Broadway theatre and its attitude to depicting the topic of homosexuality and also the usual form of handling the homosexual character is revealed.

3.1 Kinsey Reports

According to the book *Gentlemen Callers*, on 3 January 1948 *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, later called the *Kinsey Report*, was first published. This study "[b]ased on over 10,000 face-to-face interviews with American men and women" (¹ Paller, 50) was written by Alfred Kinsey. Kinsey in his study discovered that "male homosexual experiences were far more common than had been thought" (¹ Paller, 50). Paller mentions the most influential findings of the research concerning homosexuality as follows:

Fifty percent of men interviewed reported they had had, at one time or another, an erotic response to another male. Thirty-seven percent said they had had at least one post-adolescent homosexual encounter that resulted in an orgasm; four percent said they had been exclusively homosexual throughout adulthood, while one in eight said that attraction to their own sex predominated in their sex lives for a period of a least three years. (¹ Paller, 50)

Kinsey's findings proved homosexuality was not so rare and not only gay men but also many heterosexuals homosexually experimented. According to Paller, Kinsey wrote that homosexuality occurs in all age groups, in all social layers and in all kinds of occupations or places and he summed up the findings by the idea that there was nothing least abnormal about homosexuality. (¹ Paller, 65)

"Despite— and in some sense, because of— the Kinsey Report, social conditions for gays and lesbians in the late 1940s and early 1950s got worse rather than better." (¹ Paller, 53) For most homosexuals the conclusion of Kinsey's statistics was good news, because as it has already been mentioned, sex at the time was taboo and none didn't ask or talk about sexual matters, so very often homosexuals felt ashamed for their orientation because they thought they were strange and exceptional. The report revealed that "[t]here were many more [homosexuals] than anyone had ever suspected" (¹ Paller, 51). According to Paller, Kinsey had written that "in a more tolerant society, homosexual activity would be even more prevalent than his shocking report suggested" (¹ Paller, 53). As a consequence of this statement and findings of the study the Report started an even greater wave of homophobia. According to May, the antipathy to homosexuals stemmed mainly from the belief of many contemporary Americans that homosexuality posed a threat to the nation. The major conviction was that "the Russians could destroy the United States not only by atomic attack but through internal subversion." (May, 91) Many government officials along with influential individuals in

fields of industry, medicine, science and psychology believed wholeheartedly that "there was a direct connection between communism and sexual depravity." (May, 91) The main idea was that "sexual excesses or degeneracy would make individuals easy prey for communist tactics". This notion is visible in words of Guy Gabrielson, the Republican Party national chairman, who claimed that sexual perverts have infiltrated Government. In Gabrielson's opinion, homosexuals were perhaps as dangerous as the actual Communists. (May, 91) The Americans were convinced that "national strength depended upon the ability of strong, manly men to stand up against communist threats". (May, 91)

Paller also mentions one organization that started to be formed in August 1948, eight months following the premiere of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The organization, called Bachelors Anonymous, was aimed for homosexuals and the author Harry Hay patterned the organization in significant ways after Alcoholics Anonymous. (¹ Paller, 51) Even the founder who himself was gay, "largely viewed homosexuality as a handicap to be overcome". (¹ Paller, 52) The Bachelors Anonymous should have been "a haven for people who struggled with an illness, a force more powerful than its victims, whose first task was to admit they were powerless before it" (¹ Paller, 52). Hay's prospectus for Bachelors Anonymous, according to Paller, stated:

We, the Androgynes of the world, have formed this responsible corporate body to demonstrate by our efforts that our physiological and psychological handicaps need be no deterrent in integrating 10% of the world's population towards the constructive social progress of mankind....

We aim to aid in the dispelling of this myth [that gays are degenerates because of their physiological and psychological deviations] by attempting to regulate the social conduct of our minority in such matters as, for example, exhibitionism, indiscriminate profligacy, violations of public decency; we aim to explore and promote a socially healthy approach to the ethical values of a constructed pairing between Androgynes; we aim to tackle the question of profligacy and Satyriasis as emotional diseases to be treated clinically. (¹ Paller, 52)

This excerpt serves as the evidence of the fact that homosexuality was perceived as handicap and illness. In 1950 Hay founded the Mattachine Society, that was "the first nationwide society of gay men" (¹ Paller, 51), the successor of Bachelors Anonymous

3.2 Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government

As the consequence of the persuasion that homosexuality poses a threat to the nation, the second important report, called the *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*, was issued on 15 December 1950. In the Introduction is mentioned that "sex perverts, like all other persons who by their overt acts violate moral codes and laws and the accepted standards of conduct, must be treated as transgressors". (1 Paller, 55) Homosexuals were also believed to be "generally unsuitable" (1 Paller, 56) for employment by the federal government because their "lack of emotional stability...and the weakness of their moral fiber" (1 Paller, 56) made them serious security risks. Homosexuals were regarded as especially vulnerable to the interrogation skills of foreign agents because they "seldom refuse to talk about themselves". (1 Paller, 56) The document should ensure that "the nation was being kept secure from the threat of homosexuals at work anywhere in the federal government, from its lowest ranks to its highest offices". (1 Paller, 57) The report, according to Paller, warned that homosexuals were so dangerous, that a single homosexual employee of the federal government could undermine and destroy a government office. Exactly the report stated:

These perverts will frequently attempt to entice normal individuals to engage in perverted practices. This is particularly true in the case of young and impressionable people.... One homosexual can pollute a Government office. (1 Paller, 56)

The report finally came to the conclusion that "homosexuals and other sex perverts are not proper persons to be employed in Government." (1 Paller, 56) After the Report was issued, dismissals of civilian homosexual employees of the federal executive branch, which had numbered about five per month between 1947 and April 1950, shot up to 60. (1 Paller, 54) It was also believed that since the investigation was initiated "all known perverts in the legislative agencies have either been removed or the cases are being given active consideration." (1 Paller, 56)

In Paller's words, one of the institutions that also played its part in the demonization of homosexuals was the Broadway theatre. Although, as he further describes, the producers of the plays that featured homosexual characters did not set out to demonize anybody because many of their best friends actually were homosexuals. The plays that had dealt with homosexuality were, in Paller's words, forced to approach the subject either homophobically, as a false accusation, or both (1 Paller, 88) so the

producers had to choose the plays according to "the prevailing notions that homosexuals were dangerous and that to be unfairly accused of homosexuality was a disaster that could have deadly results." (¹ Paller, 58) As Paller further describes, the first gay men were depicted on Broadway in 1950s. The first play containing the gay protagonists, called *Season in the Sun*, was written by the drama critic Wolcott Gibbs. This play opened in late September 1950 and the two gay men that appeared there were variously described by critics as "two men who should have been women" (¹ Paller, 58) However, the first Broadway play of the 1950s that depicted homosexuality as a problem was a 1951 revival of *The Green Bay Tree* by Mordaunt Shairp. (¹ Paller, 58) Though homosexuality is never explicitly mentioned or shown in the play, the message is transparent, according to Paller: "[h]omosexuality is an evil, and a dangerously communicable one". (¹ Paller, 59)

Paller also mentions that the only dramatist who risked creating an openly gay character "[a]t the height of a period unprecedented in its fear, paranoia, and homophobia" was Tennessee Williams. (¹ Paller, 49) The gay character appeared in the play *Camino Real* which was presented as a commercial production on Broadway in 1953. (¹ Paller, 52) Paller further writes about the event:

[O]nly Tennessee Williams, among all his contemporaries, presented on a Broadway stage the image of an unashamed, democratic, and unvarnished gay man, expert in the sorts of sexual habits that seem to make recent critics (even the gay ones) as uncomfortable, even as homophobic, as any 1950s cop, politician, or commentator. (¹ Paller, 49)

But, In Savran's words, even Williams himself was aware of the fact that he could not stage homosexuality directly or candidly during the 1940s and 1950s, because he knew that "there would be no producer for it" given the homophobic program of the Broadway theater of that period. (Savran, 83)

Although to create the openly gay character was quite unusual in 1950s, there were still some cases in which even such an unacceptable topic was still acceptable. Poteet in his book *Gay Men in Modern Southern Literature* justifies presence of such a topic in literature by stating that "[t]he reading public at large could marginally accept gay characters in literature as long as the characters were willing ultimately to punish themselves for their sexual transgressions." (Poteet, 20) Poteet adds that the usual form of gay self-punishment was committing suicide. This kind of dealing with the gay character, according to Poteet, served two purposes:

First, it supplied a severe and graphic reminder to heterosexual readers of the cost of aberrant sexual behavior, reinforcing existing homophobic beliefs and myths. Second, and perhaps more important, it attempted to deny gay readers any pleasure in a homosexual representation. (Poteet, 20)

The next notion was that while homosexuals "tended to congregate in common nightspots, restaurants, and other gathering places, agents of hostile governments could easily recruit and organize them into espionage rings". (¹ Paller, 56) As the consequence of the presumption, the information on local gathering places of gay men and women were collected and the Gay bars started to be frequently raided. According to Paller, these measures finally led so far that some popular places no longer allowed men to stand at the bar if they were unescorted by women. (¹ Paller, 62) For better visualization of the events, Paller provides figures of the people affected by the raids:

In Washington, D.C., arrests soon exceeded 1,000 a year, and in Philadelphia, they averaged 100 per month. New Orleans, Miami, Memphis, Seattle, Dallas, and Wichita were among the cities where gay men and women became routine victims of police violence and harassment. By the middle of the decade, according to a survey of homosexuals done by Kinsey's Institute, 20 percent of respondents had experienced run-ins with the police. (¹ Paller, 55)

Because Americans generally "considered homosexuals to be criminals", (¹ Paller, 25) it is no surprise that gay men and women used to become victims of police violence and harassment in such a measure.

May states that many postwar experts considered family stability to be an antidote to the above mentioned dangers connected to homosexuality as they believed that:

Men in sexually fulfilling marriages would not be tempted by the degenerate seductions of the outside world that came from pornography, prostitution, "loose women," or homosexuals. They would be able to stand up to the communists. They would be able to prevent the destruction of the nation's moral fiber and its inevitable result: communist takeover from inside as well as outside the country. (May, 94)

The fact that family served as the antidote to the dangers leading to communism highlights the importance of functional family for welfare of the whole American post-war society.

4. Alcoholism

The aim of the chapter is to explain the changing point of view on alcohol consumption. In the first subchapter, the period of 1920s, which is the era when the mixed drinks became popular, is mentioned. This era of mixed drinks is important mainly because it supported the campaign for Repeal of Prohibition and removed male's association to alcohol drinking. In the second subchapter is mentioned how the Repeal of Prohibition changed the point of view on alcohol drinking. There is also talked about the medicalization of the problem of alcoholism after the Repeal of Prohibition. In the third subchapter is described how the alcoholism disrupted the family ideal.

4.1 Cocktail Culture – Removal of Liquor's Association to Males

As Rotskoff mentions, even in the era of Prohibition, abstinence was not the only model of alcohol consumption, "the restrained consumption of alcohol in private and semiprivate settings was often acceptable" (Rotskoff, 37), eventhough drinking was commonly viewed as a masculine activity. However, Rotskoff states that during the era of Prohibition, men were not the only consumers of alcohol, because "large numbers of respectable American women did drink, often with anonymous frequency" (Rotskoff, 37) Although the total consumption of alcohol decreased during Prohibition, for persons with access to stockpiled or bootlegged liquor drinking continued but only removed from bar into home. The home in the 1920s became the place where a new American institution, the cocktail party, was set. The reason why the cocktails became popular in the era of Prohibition was that the quality of illicit alcohol was very poor, so it was better to mix, because mixed drinks "helped disguise the fact that the scotch one was drinking had been aged for hours instead of years." (Rotskoff, 38) This kind of softened liquor removed hard liquor's unfavorable association to males, so women could afford to drink cocktails without worries about their reputations. In Rotskoff's opinion, as the era of cocktails domesticated drink, liquor was no more seen as a symbol of women's vulnerability as a sex, as it was during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He clarifies that the increasing numbers of drinking women undermined the gendered assumptions of wet and dry opponents that had structured public debates on alcohol. The image of a fashionable lady drinking with men flagrantly contradicted reformers'

depictions of a dry American womanhood victimized by drink. The female drinkers disproved the temperance belief that liquor was inherently dangerous. (Rotskoff, 39) The growing numbers of middle and upper-class women who accepted moderate drinking also helped fuel the campaign for Repeal.

Rotskoff points out that although the cocktail culture managed to remove the association of men to hard liquor, over the course of United States history Americans have still perceived excessive drinking primarily as a masculine indulgence:

One continuity from the turn of the century through the 1950s rested in the perception that most heavy drinkers, and hence most alcoholics, were men. This assumption influenced the alcoholism paradigm in the 1940s and 1950s, when the term “alcoholic” usually meant “male alcoholic.” Sex-ratio statistics varied slightly, but most authorities agreed that women comprised approximately one-sixth of all alcoholics. (Rotskoff, 4)

This extract revealed that in 1940s and 1950s the term alcoholic usually referred to male alcoholic and women alcoholics were believed to create only the minority of all alcoholics.

4.2 Repeal of Prohibition - Shift in Cultural Values

In Rotskoff’s words “Repeal marked a turning point in U.S. history [...] because it symbolized a major shift in cultural values and behavior.” (Rotskoff, 36) As Rotskoff mentions, after 1933 alcohol manufacturers campaigned to persuade the public that drinking took place in respectable places and that women as well as men could drink with no risk to their reputation. By the late 1940s the manufacturers had succeeded in normalizing of drink as a respectable form of consumption. (Rotskoff, 37) As the evidence of the normalization serves the fact that “[i]n 1934 [...] per capita consumption of wine, beer, and spirits was almost one gallon; by 1946 it had doubled to slightly more than two gallons.” (Rotskoff, 62) Whereas Prohibitionists regarded complete abstinence as standard, repeal advocates accepted alcohol consumption in moderate form as safe, or to be more precise “did not consider alcohol dangerous in and of itself— or at least not dangerous enough to warrant federal prohibition.” (Rotskoff, 40)

Rotskoff later talks about two related models of alcohol consumption, the first model called social drinking and the second model called alcoholism. Rotskoff describes that while normal drinking was believed to facilitated sociability, pathological drinking was regarded as antisocial. Eventhough, alcoholism was generally perceived as

a serious disease, it was generally believed that the illness afflicted only the minority of drinkers because the “social drinking did not necessarily lead to alcoholic drinking” (Rotskoff, 63) Rotskoff also points out that “[a]s social drinking gained acceptance, fewer citizens viewed alcohol as inherently threatening to all drinkers.” (Rotskoff, 40) Rotskoff clarifies that while prohibitionists depicted excess to justify abstinence as a standard, the supporters of repeal relied on the notion of excessive or problem drinkers to legitimate the concept of social drinking. In order to portray moderate drinking of majority as normal, "antiprohibitionists needed a deviant standard against which to measure that normality". (Rotskoff, 63) These notions, according to Rotskoff, reflect a new set of parameters within which most Americans, regardless of their particular attitudes toward drinking, were beginning to understand alcohol consumption and its consequent problems. (Rotskoff, 64)

As Rotskoff explains, soon after the repeal of Prohibition, the public discourse on excessive drinking was no longer structured as a wet-versus-dry debate over legal proscription but the debate was moved between evangelical reformers and various social groups created by scientific, medical, and self-credentialed authorities. As the result, the subject of alcoholism was moved out of the realm of morals into the more appropriate sphere of medicine. The new approach to inebriety stemmed from the concerns of doctors, psychiatrists, social workers, and lay therapists. The experts replaced the typical view of overindulgence as a sin with a modern, therapeutic conception of excessive drinking as a sickness or pathology. (Rotskoff, 2) To cite Rotskoff:

Between the 1930s and 1960s, however, a new consensus took shape as “traditional moralistic interpretations . . . were abandoned in favor of a ‘scientific’ or medical view according to which the chronic drunkard is [treated as] the victim of a physiological or psychological aberration.” (Rotskoff, 2)

According to Rotskoff, during the mid-twentieth century, experts increasingly defined alcoholism as a medical and psychological problem that rendered certain people subjects for scientific scrutiny, diagnosis, and therapy. Alcoholism no longer constituted a moral problem, instead a drunkard started to be seen as a sick man, a matter of scientific concern. As the source of addiction started to be regarded the body and mind of the drunkard, not alcohol as such. It also meant a shift in the types of institutions and individuals who aimed to solve alcohol-related problems. "[T]he new authorities were

physicians, psychiatrists, social workers, and lay therapists— medical and mental health experts who brought new concerns and therapeutic techniques". (Rotskoff, 65) Rotskoff also mentions that this medicalized view of chronic drunkenness later led in forming an "alcoholism movement," these authorities aimed to treat people with drinking problems and to heighten public awareness about problem drinking. (Rotskoff, 2)

In drawing the line between moderation and alcoholism, some medical experts, in Rotskoff's words, emphasized the lonely descent of the alcoholic who drank his way down the ladder in the social scheme of things:

According to experts of various stripes, excessive drinking prevented meaningful social interaction with others; indeed, the tendency to drink alone was a telling sign that drinking had progressed to the alcoholic stage. Jellinek expressed this view as follows: "A drinking behavior which has always and everywhere been regarded as the gravest form of inebriety is 'solitary drinking' . . . [which] proves that the drinker is using the beverage for a purpose for which it is culturally not intended. . . . Sooner or later nearly every alcoholic becomes a solitary drinker." [...] "Whether they are drinking with a friend, with 100 acquaintances, or alone, makes no difference," Bacon wrote. "There is no social purpose here; there is the complete opposite— individual in purpose, asocial in motive and antisocial in result." (Rotskoff, 73-74)

The excerpt shows that while moderate drinking was regarded as positive activity because it served as means of social interaction, the excessive drinking was perceived as something negative. Later Rotskoff also reveals the opinions of some medical experts on the personality of alcoholic:

E. M. Jellinek and Howard Haggard asserted that there was no single "inebriate personality" but, rather, a variety of traits represented by habitual drinkers.³⁴ Yet certain features appeared to be common among alcoholics. First, alcoholic men were loners, incapable of forging sound friendships or community ties. [...] Psychiatrist Edward Strecker claimed that "at least ninety percent of all abnormal drinkers are predominantly of the introverted type." Yale sociologist Selden Bacon sketched a portrait of the alcoholic as an "unsocial dreamer," a far cry from someone who used liquor felicitously as a social lubricant. (Rotskoff, 73)

This quotation revealed that majority of alcoholics was regarded as loners and introverts. It is also important to point out that the term "alcoholism" was quite a new term. Rotskoff mentions that by 1915 a few American psychiatrists had used the term "alcoholism," but it did not appear in lay publications until the 1930s. Finally, the word "alcoholic" first appeared in the *New York Times* in September 1943. (Rotskoff, 70)

4.3 Family and Alcohol

As Rotskoff describes, the dominant ideal of the white, middle-class, suburban, nuclear family was based on strictly divided gender roles where “a husband was supposed to provide for his wife and children through his status as breadwinner while a wife worked primarily as a homemaker, consumer, and family caretaker”. (Rotskoff, 7) However, according to Rotskoff, many individuals who tried to conform to the dominant ideals failed to meet the standards which caused that an undercurrent of anxiety and unhappiness ran through domestic culture. Which caused that the family in 1950s was fraught with problems. One of the obstacles in achieving the idealized model of family was alcohol because alcohol so often signified the family’s failure to meet cultural standards of nurturance which was the central function of the modern American family. (Rotskoff, 8).

5. A Streetcar Named Desire

However, Poteet states that *A Streetcar Named Desire* is considered by many to be one of the greatest works of American drama (Poteet, 17), Kolin mentions that censorship hounded the play both on stage and in film. (Kolin, 69) Kolin later adds that problems that the play raised, such as homosexuality and Blanche's sexual behavior were in Tischler "far beyond the boundaries of acceptability in the 1940s". (Kollin, 69)

As has already been mentioned, the importance of family after the war increased significantly. In the play, the normative family is represented by the married couple of Stella and Stanley Kowalski, where Stella represents the role of homemaker and Stanley's role is the role of breadwinner. Stanley is the typical example of economically and sexually dominant husband. Because Stella is married to a strong man, her sexual energy is channeled into marriage in a healthy way. On contrary, Blanche, whose husband is dead, is not enabled to channel her sexual energy into marriage which causes her deviation.

Kolin states that in Sievers's view, Stella is "a healthy housewife adjusted to reality, expecting a child, and serenely happy....With unconscious jealousy, Blanche tries to split them apart". (Kolin, 61) After Blanche arrives, this family ideal starts to be disrupted by her negative influence as Blanche is portrayed by some critics as "an intruder infecting and destroying the health and sanity of Stanley's home." (Kolin, 57)

Kleb maintains that it is by removing the insane, unhealthy Blanche to the madhouse that Stanley and Stella protect their home and ensure the re-establishment of society. (Kolin, 58)

The following subchapters deal with the taboo topics contained in the play, such as seduction, rape, homosexuality, alcoholism and adultery.

5.1 Seduction and Rape

As has already been mentioned in the theoretical part, women were blamed for seducing men to evil and communism. Under these conditions Blanche's playing with men might be perceived by general public in a very negative way. The topic of seduction appears in the play more times but it is the most significant in the scene five where is described how Blanche tries to seduce a young man who collects money for the paper called The Evening Star. First, she is joking about the name of the paper, then she offers him a drink and after he refuses, she tells him she has no money to pay the paper. He answers that it is no problem that he can drop by later, so she asks him whether he could light her a cigarette, but when it still does not work she asks what the time is and afterwards talks how rainy day it is and again asks the boy whether he did not get wet in the rain and then she compliments him that he looks like a young Prince. Finally, she kisses him and lets him leave. (Williams, 93-95)

Another Blanche's attempt to seduce is depicted in scene two where she is flirting with Stanley during their conversation about the loss of the plantation. "[*She sprays herself with her atomizer; then playfully sprays him with it. He seizes the atomizer and slams it down on the dresser. She throws back her head and laughs.*]" (¹ Williams, 42-43) It seems that Stanley himself notices this Blanche's attempt and he points out: "If I didn't know that you was my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you." (¹ Williams, 43) When Blanche in the same scene further talks with Stella, Blanche herself admits that she flirted with Stanley: "I called him a little boy and laughed and flirted. Yes, I was flirting with your husband!" (¹ Williams, 47) Contemporary people could attribute this Stanley's resistance against Blanche's seducing to his strength as he was a manly man that lived in sexually fulfilling marriage.

With the topic of seduction can also be connected the topic of rape. The act of rape itself might be considered by contemporary Americans as a kind of punishment for

Blanche's inappropriate behaviour. At the end of scene nine is intimated Mitch's rape attempt on Blanche and at the end of scene ten is described the match between Stanley and Blanche where Blanche is trying to defend herself from rape but unsuccessfully:

[He springs toward her, overturning the table. She cries out and strikes at him with the bottle top but he catches her wrist. [...] She moans. The bottle-top falls. She sinks to her knees. He picks up her inert figure and carries her to the bed. The hot trumpet and drums from the Four Deuces sound loudly.] (¹ Williams, 151)

By Kolin, Tischler claims, that "Blanche may be asking Stanley to rape her [to] expiate her sins against Allan [...] turn[ing] sexual violence into a ritual act. Williams knew that combining sex and religion was anathema to American audiences" (Kolin, 69) In this way, Blanche is reversed from the victim of sexual assault to the person who requests for it.

5.2 Homosexuality

The chapter deals with the topic of homosexuality. The topic of homosexuality appears in the play although it was far beyond the boundaries of acceptability. The chapter also specifies the technique of dealing with the topic so that it was still acceptable and names the main protagonists concerned with the topic.

Although no unambiguously homosexual character appears in the play, at least not on stage, the whole storyline is intertwined by homosexuality. The theme of homosexuality is reconstructed via memories of the main female protagonists Blanche and Stella. This technique of revealing the inappropriate theme via memories of protagonists appearing on stage Poteet calls "the theater of memory". (Poteet, 19) According to Poteet, it is Blanche that especially functions as "the source of the theater of memory". (Poteet, 19) In the book *Gay Men in Modern Southern Literature*, the reason for using the technique of recreating the gay character from memory is clarified accordingly:

As Dean Shackelford points out when contextualizing Williams with the historical period of his greatest success, the late 1940s through the early 1960s "no American writer who wished to establish a reputation with a widespread audience could come out in public without facing censure or even rejection as an artist..."⁹ If Williams had written his gay characters actually to appear on stage, he would have, in essence, "come out," especially if they were represented in any type of positive or normal manner. Therefore, Williams devised a method, either consciously or unconsciously, of incorporating gay characters into his major works of the period; he has on stage characters reconstruct the absent gay men

from memory, and they become intrinsically important to the dramatic action of the plays. (Poteet, 16)

In Poteet's words this technique also enables some scenes concerning homosexuality to be "ritualistically repeated and reinforced". (Poteet, 19) Throughout the play, the audience is supplied with "theatrical markers to signal when the theater of memory is about to begin" (Poteet, 19). The chief markers are "consistent images and sounds from the past" (Poteet, 19). The first of the markers, the tunes of polka music, comes in the scene one when Stanley asks Blanche about her marriage: "You were married once, weren't you? [*The music of the polka rises up, faint in the distance.*]" (¹ Williams, 31) According to Poteet, This music, later identified as the Varsouviana polka, will introduce and accompany Blanche's memory of Allan's tragic death throughout the play. In Thompson's words, the Varsouviana polka functions in the play also as an aural symbol of Blanche's guilt of her husband's death. (Poteet, 19)

Blanche gradually reveals the memories of the young boy she married and who later died. We learn that the boy's name was Allan Gray and she fell in love with him when she was sixteen. In the scene six, Blanche talks about her dead husband. Blanche in her monologue mentions that "[t]here was something different about the boy, a nervousness, a softness and tenderness which wasn't like a man's, although he wasn't the least bit effeminate looking—still—that thing was there...." (¹ Williams, 108) According to Paller, the adjectives that Williams uses to describe Allan in this excerpt have been criticized for enforcing a stereotype of a gay man. Paller further clarifies that this way of indication of presence of a gay man was as direct as possible at the time, by stating:

But given the mores of 1948, which applied to Broadway producers perhaps even more than they did to the general public, such stereotypes were necessary shortcuts to create an image Williams could not state directly. Blanche characterizes Allan in terms as explicit as they could be in 1948[.] (² Paller, 147)

Unfortunately, after Blanche married Allan she revealed that the boy was homosexual. She caught him in the sex act with a man, the situation she describes accordingly:

Then I found out. In the worst of all possible ways. By coming suddenly into a room that I thought was empty—which wasn't empty, but had two people in it ... the boy I had married and an older man who had been his friend for years ... (¹ Williams, 109)

As the consequence of the event, Allan commits suicide because Blanche says him on the dance floor of Moon Lake Casino he disgusts her. Poteet further describes that Blanche DuBois's constant anguish over her gay husband's death and her role in it

speak to a common tradition in twentieth-century American literature. (Poteet, 20) According to Poteet, Leonard Berkman claims that Blanche's most fundamental regret is not that she happened to marry a homosexual but her concern is more directly that, when made aware of her husband's homosexuality, she brought on the boy's suicide by her unqualified expression of disgust. (Poteet, 20)

Poteet also clarifies that the death of homosexual especially in form of suicide appeared very often in literary works till 1960s:

Until the advent of the gay rights movement in the late 1960s, there existed a type of tacit literary approval of depictions of fictional gay characters, with one important caveat: The character must die by the end of the text, preferably by his or her own hand. (Poteet, 20)

As the result of the tradition, Allan Grey, although being a major figure in the play, is not only offstage but also dead.

As was already mentioned, Blanche is not the only character to reconstruct the dead Allan from memory. Stella also remembers the Blanche's gay husband, although in a very different way. Poteet states that while Blanche "tries to separate homosexuality ("that thing") from Allan in her memory theater, Stella names it and attaches it firmly by referring to him as a degenerate". (Poteet, 31) In scene seven, shortly after Blanche has told the story of her marriage to Mitch and Stanley has discovered the details of Blanche's promiscuous past, Stella tells Stanley about Blanche's dead gay husband:

But when she was young, very young, she married a boy who wrote poetry... He was extremely good-looking. I think Blanche didn't just love him but worshipped the ground he walked on! Adored him and thought him almost too fine to be human! But then she found out— [...] This beautiful and talented young man was a degenerate. (Williams, 117)

According to Poteet, this excerpt is richly intertwined by Williams' linguistic signals for gay presence: "a boy who wrote poetry", "extremely good-looking", "beautiful and talented". (Poteet, 31)

In Poteet's words, Allan and Stanley represent the two contrasting "models of male sexuality". While homosexual Allan must be depicted as "effete, degenerate—and dead", heterosexual Stanley is epitomized as "brutal, hyper masculine—and cruel". This contrasting masculine model of Stanley and his masculine friends enables the author to revive the Blanche's memory of her dead gay husband throughout the play. (Poteet, 33) Poteet states that, "Williams juxtaposes Blanche's recall of the gay sex scene with her viewing of the hypermasculine and homosocial interaction of Stanley and his macho

poker-playing friends." (18, Poteet) He later supports this statement by the fact that both scenes, Allan's sex act and its consequences and Stanley's poker games, occur twice in the play. (Poteet, 18)

The next person who might be considered by contemporary citizens as degenerate is Harold Mitchell who is both unmarried and immature; what is more, he is apparently very dependent on his overprotective mother. For example, in the scene three Mitch says to his friends during their poker session that he should go home soon because of his ill mother:

[MITCH: ... I oughta go home pretty soon.

STANLEY: Shut up.

MITCH: I gotta sick mother. She don't go to sleep until I come in at night.

STANLEY: Then why don't you stay home with her?

MITCH: She says to go out, so I go, but I don't enjoy it. All the while I keep wondering how she is.] (¹Williams, 49)

In the excerpt Mitch seems quite immature when he still lives with his mother and does what she tells him.

5.3 Alcoholism

The next taboo topic that appears in the play is alcoholism. Throughout the storyline is gradually revealed Blanche's weakness for alcohol. The first scene with alcohol appears in the act one where Blanche is waiting in her sister's home till her sister comes from the bowling alley. The situation is described as follows:

After a while the blind look goes out of her eyes and she begins to look slowly around. [...] Suddenly she notices something in a half opened closet. She springs up and crosses to it, and removes a whiskey bottle. She pours a half tumbler of whiskey and tosses it down. She carefully replaces the bottle and washes out the tumbler at the sink. Then she resumes her seat in front of the table.]

BLANCHE [*faintly to herself*]: I've got to keep hold of myself! (¹ Williams, 15)

Later after Stella comes, Blanche is again attracted to alcohol and she pretends that she doesn't know where the alcohol is. In the scene one Blanche says to Stella:

Well, now you talk. Open your pretty mouth and talk while I look around for some liquor! I know you must have some liquor on the place! Where could it be, I wonder? Oh, I spy, I spy! [She rushes to the closet and removes the bottle; she is shaking all over and panting for breath as she tries to laugh. The bottle nearly slips from her grasp.] (¹ Williams, 16)

The following excerpt shows the habit of mixing hard drinks with soft drinks such as coke:

STELLA [noticing]: Blanche, you sit down and let me pour the drinks. I don't know what we've got to mix with. Maybe a coke's in the icebox. look'n see, honey, while I'm— (1 Williams, 16)

BLANCHE: No coke, honey, not with my nerves tonight! [...]

STELLA: [...]—found some soda! [...]

BLANCHE: Just water, baby, to chase it! Now don't get worried, your sister hasn't turned into a drunkard, she's just all shaken up and hot and tired and dirty! [...] (Williams, 16-17)

Although in the excerpt above Blanche denies her alcoholism, throughout the storyline is provided the evidence that she is drunkard as her hands are shaking very often, which is visible in the scene one: “[Blanche] *looking down at her glass, which shakes in her hand*”. (1 Williams, 18) Again in the scene five is described how “[Blanche] *grabs the glass, but her hand shakes so it almost slips from her grasp*” (1 Williams, 90) and also in the scene four she is unable to dial a phone number and she utters: “I can't dial, I'm too— “ (1 Williams, 75) where could probably be added drunk. Even Stanley in the scene one reveals Blanches weakness for alcohol:

STANLEY: [...] Liquor goes fast in hot weather. [*He holds the bottle to the light to observe its depletion.*] Have a shot?

BLANCHE: No, I—rarely touch it.

STANLEY: Some people rarely touch it, but it touches them often. (1 Williams, 29)

In the chapter is not only depicted the taboo topic of alcoholism but the fact that it is presented by the female protagonist is particularly unusual, because, as has already been mentioned in the theoretical part, in the 1940s and 1950s “the term “alcoholic” usually meant “male alcoholic.”” and the female alcoholics were supposed to comprise only “approximately one-sixth of all alcoholics” (Rotskoff, 4)

5.4 Adultery

The next subchapter is concerned with the topic of adultery. In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the topic of adultery is portrayed in the form of several love triangles, the first triangle occurs between Blanche DuBois, her husband Allan Grey and his old friend, the second triangle takes place between Blanche DuBois, the millionaire Shep Huntleigh and his wife, the third triangle can be seen between Stella Kowalski (DuBois), her husband Stanley Kowalski and her sister Blanche DuBois.

The first love triangle between Blanche DuBois, her husband Allan Grey and his old friend is one of the central themes of the play because the situation when Blanche learns of the affair between her husband Allan and his friend later results in Blanche's rejection of Allan on the dance floor leading to Allan committing suicide.

The second love triangle between Blanche DuBois, the millionaire Shep Huntleigh and his wife is well visible in the scene four where Blanche talks to Stella about Shep and she mentions his wife:

He could do it with half what his wife throws away at the races.

STELLA: He's married?

BLANCHE: Honey, would I be here if the man weren't married? (1 Williams, 75)

The extract above reveals that Shep was married at the time they met and in the scene five Blanche even wants to send Shep a threatening letter. The act proves there was something more between Blanche and Shep because in other way she would not have sent him the threatening letter. In this letter Blanche writes:

Darling Shep. I am spending the summer on the wing, making flying visits here and there. And who knows, perhaps I shall take a sudden notion to *swoop* down on *Dallas*! How would you feel about that? Ha-ha! [...] Forewarned is forearmed, as they say!" (1 Williams, 83)

The third love triangle between Stella Kowalski (DuBois), her husband Stanley Kowalski and her sister Blanche DuBois is not a typical love triangle because Blanche becomes the participant not voluntarily but after she is raped by her sister's husband.

5.5 Nymphomania

It seems strange that one person may be perceived so diversely in different socio-cultural background. For instance, the present-day reader might consider Blanche as a poor lady that suffered several strokes of fate. The first stroke of fate she probably suffered after she caught her loving husband in the homosexual act with his old friend and the second one after the young homosexual husband committed suicide when she told him he disgusts her. Blanche's subsequent promiscuous behavior might be considered as a natural consequence of these unfavorable conditions. After she discovered the husband's infidelity, Blanche could start to feel unattractive, so she wanted to prove herself that she is attractive by seducing other men, especially those young and manly, such as students and soldiers.

In the scene seven, Stanley reveals to Stella all Blanche's secrets. First, Stanley provides Stella with the information about the soldiers: "Yes, did you know there was an army camp near Laurel and your sister's was one of the places called "Out-of-Bounds"?" (1 Williams, 115) Second, Stanley talks about Blanche's weakness for the young boys: "They kicked her out of that high school before the spring term ended—and I hate to tell you the reason that step was taken! A seventeen-year-old boy—she'd gotten mixed up with!" (1 Williams, 115)

Not only did Blanche want to prove herself that she is still attractive for men but she might also seek refuge in men's arms. In scene nine Blanche reveals the source of her actions: "I think it was panic, just panic, that drove me from one to another, hunting for some protection [...]" (1 Williams, 136) However, in the scene seven, Stella admits that "[Blanche] was always—flighty!" (1 Williams, 117) but immediately afterwards she adds:

But when she was young, very young, she married a boy who wrote poetry... He was extremely good-looking. I think Blanche didn't just love him but worshipped the ground he walked on! Adored him and thought him almost too fine to be human! But then she found out—[...] This beautiful and talented young man was a degenerate. (1 Williams, 117)

In this excerpt Stella justifies Blanche's flightiness by referring to the event when Blanche caught her husband with another man. In contrast to this perception of Blanche as the victim of the unfavorable conditions, Kolin points out that Blanche has frequently been condemned by contemporary critics as a nymphomaniac, a beguiling witch, or even a sexual deviant. (Kolin, 57) Falk further confirms Blanche's inappropriate

behavior by stating that "Blanche wears white, like all of Williams's sexual deviates" and he also adds that many reviewers brand her as "a common tart" because of her "red satin wrap". (Kolin, 57) This red garment is mentioned in scene two, where there is stated that "*Blanche comes out of the bathroom in a red satin robe.*" (¹ Williams, 38)

As mentioned above, Stella in scene seven admitted that "[Blanche] was always—flighty!". (¹ Williams, 17) This undesirable sexual behavior is probably the only family heritage that ancestors of DuBois family left after their death. In scene two, Blanche gives Stanley evidence of the fact that the plantation that their family owned is lost. In the following excerpt Blanche puts the blame on the ancestors by stating:

There are thousands of papers, stretching back over hundreds of years, affecting Belle Reve as, piece by piece, our improvident grandfathers and father and uncles and brothers exchanged the land for their epic fornications [...] The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation [...] (Williams, 45)

By the Macmillan dictionary the word "fornicate" is an "*old-fashioned*" word meaning "to have sex with someone you are not married to" which refers either to premarital or extramarital sexual intercourse. This word per se "shows you think this is morally wrong." (Macmillan, 557) Although in the excerpt is clearly mentioned the main cause of the loss of the plantation some contemporary critics refused to accept this Blanche's clarification as trustworthy sequence of events by stating that "Once the girls had a fine house but it has slipped from Blanche's hands—just how is never made clear, for Blanche is not one for facts" (² Paller, 148)

6. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

According to Poteet's book *Gay Men in Modern Southern Literature*, the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* has been first performed in 1955 and it is arguably Williams' most commercially successful play. In Poteet's words, the play represents "one day in 1954 in the life of the Pollitts, one of the Mississippi Delta's wealthiest cotton-growing families". (Poteet, 35)

6.1 Homosexuality

According to Poteet, in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the same means of displaying the taboo topic of homosexuality as in *A Streetcar Named Desire* is applied. Williams again uses the technique of theater of memory. In Poteet's words, this technique proved to be dramatically effective, so Williams repeated it in the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. However, the dead gay characters that are mentioned in the play are not reconstructed from the memory only by female characters, as in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, but also by male characters. (Poteet, 17) The protagonists who reveal the gay men via their memories are Brick, Big Daddy, Maggie and Big Mama.

The next technique of displaying the topic is via set descriptions and stage directions. As Paller points out, the crucial thing about set descriptions and stage directions is that they are both present and invisible, because they are unknown to an audience at a performance while available to actors and others who read the published text. Although, they are a part of the play, they are not a part of it in the sense that "if they were deleted, nothing in a production of the play would change". (¹ Paller, 123)

Throughout the storyline, several homosexual characters are mentioned. We learn that the name of Brick Pollitt's gay friend is Skipper and that, the same as in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the gay protagonist is dead. In Poteet's words, death was the typical means of dealing with the homosexual in contemporary literary works (Poteet, 20). However, in comparison to Allan Gray's death in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which was caused by his own hand, Skipper's death was caused accidentally by someone else. In the scene three, Big Mama describes to Gooper the cause of Skipper's death:

You know how poor Skipper died. They gave him a big, big dose of that sodium amytal stuff at his home an' then they called the ambulance an' give him another big, big dose of it at th' hospital an' that an' all the alcohol in his system fo' months an' months just proved too much for his heart an' his heart quit beatin'. (² Williams, 141)

This passage exposes that Skipper died after the application of some drug but the second cause of his death was his long lasting alcohol consumption that weakened his heart. The same as Skipper, Brick also drinks heavily and there is possibility that he might drink himself to death.

Moreover, there are more gay characters that are revealed by means of Big Daddy's memory. The persons are the previous owners of the plantation, the homosexual couple, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. The difference between the first couple, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, and the second couple, Brick Pollitt and Skipper, in Paller's opinion, lies in the fact that while Jack and Peter were "open about their lives and did not suffer for their candor" (¹ Paller, 122), Brick and Skipper are not able to confess the real nature of their relationship to surrounding and maybe even to themselves. (¹ Paller, 122)

Savran also points to the connection between Big Daddy's slightly queer patrimony and his intestinal cancer by stating that the two properties so often accompany each other in Williams writing. (Savran, 91) This deadly intestinal disease might be regarded as a kind of punishment for the ambiguous (probably homosexual) relation between Big Daddy and the two homosexual. Savran himself expresses the notion as he says that "[f]or Big Daddy, bowel cancer seems to be the wages of sodomy (or, at least, of "knocking around")." (Savran, 101) Not only do the two gay characters Peter Ochello and Jack Straw are dead and Skipper as well, but also Big Daddy and Brick are slowly dying.

Although, Brick's sex orientation remains still unclear, in the act two, there is displayed Brick's concern about what people would think of their homosexual relationship: "—Don't you know how people *feel* about things like that? How, how *disgusted* they are by things like that?" (² Williams, 121) Brick is probably right about this reaction of contemporary Americans. In the scene two Brick reveals the details of Skipper's call, where Skipper probably confessed that he was gay:

BRICK: Yes!—I left out a long-distance call which I had from Skipper, in which he made a drunken confession to me and on which I hung up!—last time we spoke to each other in our lives.... [...]

BIG DADDY: You hung up?

BRICK: Hung up. Jesus! Well—

BIG DADDY: Anyhow now!—we have tracked down the lie with which you're disgusted and which you are drinking to kill your disgust with, Brick. You been

passing the buck. This disgust with mendacity is disgust with yourself. You!—dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it!—before you'd face truth with him!

BRICK: His truth, not mine!

BIG DADDY: His truth, okay! But you wouldn't face it with him!

BRICK: Who can face truth? Can you? (² Williams, 126-127)

By hanging the telephone up Brick expressed his disgust to Skipper's homosexuality; the same like Blanche DuBois did, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, by telling Allan that he disgusts her.

By the act of hanging the phone up Brick also sacrificed the clear relationship that was between him and Skipper. In the second act Brick describes how Maggie treated Skipper:

Poured in his mind the dirty, false idea that what we were, him and me, was a frustrated case of that ole pair of sisters that lived in this room, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello!—He, poor Skipper, went to bed with Maggie to prove it wasn't true, and when it didn't work out, he thought it was true! (² Williams, 125)

This Brick's claim is full of homophobia that Brick gained from the homophobic society that he was surrounded with. The society was trying to persuade him that the homosexual relationship is something disgusting. Actually, somewhere inside, Brick still thought that the relationship between him and Skipper was clear because it was not just about sexual attraction like in the case of Brick and Maggie. In the second act during the conversation with Big Daddy, Brick admits:

Y'know, I think that Maggie had always felt sort of left out because she and me never got any closer together than two people just get in bed, which is not much closer than two cats on a--fence humping.... (² Williams, 125)

This statement may serve as the evidence that Brick considers the relationship between him and Skipper as something superior to that with Maggie.

In Paller's opinion, when Maggie tells Skipper, "STOP LOVIN' MY HUSBAND OR TELL HIM HE'S GOT TO LET YOU ADMIT IT TO HIM!" (² Williams, 60) she tries to make Skipper and probably also Brick face the truth about their relationship. Unfortunately, as Paller points out, Brick cannot admit the truth about his relationship with Skipper, because "doing so requires facing the world's disapproval." (¹ Paller, 99) As the consequence of the Maggie's insistence on the truth, Skipper slides into alcohol and suicide and "Brick is seized by a paralyzing guilt". (¹ Paller, 94) Paller also clarifies that Brick's guilt over dead of Skipper probably stems from the reluctance to admit his

homosexuality to the world, because “the world in 1954 was so quick to punish the admission”. (¹ Paller, 96)

In the speech, where Maggie describes Brick and Skipper’s relationship during their college days at Ole Miss, Williams reveals how the homosexual orientation had to be hidden:

Why I remember when we double-dated at college, Gladys Fitzgerald and I and you and Skipper, it was more like a date between you and Skipper. Gladys and I were just sort of tagging along as if it was necessary to chaperone you!—to make a good public impression— (² Williams, 59)

This kind of camouflage, when women accompanied their homosexual friends, was probably practiced also after the *Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government* was issued, which caused that many bars were raided. As the consequence of the events, some popular places no longer allowed men to stand at the bar if they were unescorted by women. Another similarity, between the play and the real historical events that followed issuing the previously mentioned document, is the persecution of homosexuals by the policemen. Throughout the play, especially during Brick’s conversation with Big Daddy, is provided the information of Gooper’s and Mae’s eavesdropping. In the second act, Big Daddy expresses his disgust by these practices by saying: “I hate eavesdroppers, I don't like any kind of sneakin' an' spyin'.” (² Williams, 84) Later, Big Daddy accuses Mae of the activity and afterwards he talks to her:

I'm going to move you and Gooper out of that room next to this! It's none of your goddam business what goes on in here at night between Brick an' Maggie. You listen at night like a couple of ruten peekhole spies and go and give a report on what you hear to Big Mama an' she comes to me and says they say such and such and so and so about what they heard goin' on between Brick an' Maggie, and Jesus, it makes me sick. I'm goin' to move you an' Gooper out of that room, I can't stand sneakin' an' spyin', it makes me puke.... (² Williams, 84-85)

In the abstract, the paranoid atmosphere that was typical for the postwar period is reflected.

6.2 Alcoholism

In comparison to the previously mentioned play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where the person depicted as an alcoholic is the female protagonist Blanche DuBois, here in the play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the figure that represents alcoholic is the male character Brick Pollitt. While in *A Streetcar Named Desire* Blanche's alcoholism is never directly revealed, in the *Cat on A Hot Tin Roof* Brick's addiction is avowed, when Big Daddy during the conversation with Brick proclaims: "I didn't know it had gotten that bad with you. Why, boy, you're—alcoholic!" and Brick nods: "That's the truth, Big Daddy. I'm alcoholic." (2 Williams, 101). Brick's tendency to drink alone is another sign that his drinking had progressed to the alcoholic stage. In the play, Brick is depicted as the typical solitary drinker who drank his way down the ladder in the social scheme of things. In the act two, during Brick's conversation with Big Daddy, the real reason why Brick lost his job is revealed:

BIG DADDY: Son, you know you got a real liquor problem?

BRICK: Yes, sir, yes, I know.

BIG DADDY: Is that why you quit sports-announcing, because of this liquor problem?

BRICK: Yes, sir, yes, sir, I guess so. (2 Williams, 85-86)

In the act is again admitted that Brick is alcoholic and that this liquor problem is the main reason why Brick left the position of sports announcer.

Later in the play is revealed that Brick started to drink, after his close friend Skipper died. In the second act, during the conversation between Brick and Big Daddy, the exact reason of Brick's drinking is revealed:

BRICK: Why do I drink?

BIG DADDY: Yeah! Why? [...]

BRICK: I'll tell you in one word.

BIG DADDY: What word?

BRICK: DISGUST! [...]

BIG DADDY: What are you disgusted with? [...]

BRICK: I told you, I said to kill my disgust!

BIG DADDY: DISGUST WITH WHAT! [...]

BRICK: [...] Have you ever heard the word "mendacity"? [...]

BRICK: You know what it means?

BIG DADDY: Don't it mean lying and liars?

BRICK: Yes, sir, lying and liars. [...]

BIG DADDY: Then who's been lying to you, and what about?

BRICK: No one single person and no one lie. ...

BIG DADDY: Then what, what then, for Christ's sake?

BRICK: —The whole, the whole—thing.... (2 Williams, 108-109)

Brick in this excerpt reveals he drinks to kill his disgust with mendacity. In the play the author himself claims that at the heart of the mendacity, because of which Brick drinks to kill his disgust with, may be hidden the fact that if the homosexual relationship between Brick and Skipper existed, “it had to be disavowed to ‘keep face’ in the world they lived in”. (2 Williams, 116) He also names this mendacity as the source of Brick’s collapse. (2 Williams, 116)

The alcoholic beverage also functions as the means of escape from real life and from all the lies. In the scene two, during the conversation with Big Daddy, Brick reveals that he drinks because he wants to dodge away from life:

BIG DADDY: I've lived with mendacity!—Why can't you live with it? Hell, you got to live with it, there's nothing else to live with except mendacity, is there?

BRICK: Yes, sir. Yes, sir, there is something else that you can live with!

BIG DADDY: What?

BRICK [lifting his glass]: This!—Liquor...

BIG DADDY: That's not living, that's dodging away from life.

BRICK: I want to dodge away from it.

BIG DADDY: Then why don't you kill yourself, man?

BRICK: I like to drink.... (2, Williams, 111)

This excerpt proved that Brick uses drink as a sort of escape from life instead of committing suicide. The same as other characters that were somehow connected to homosexuality, such as Skipper, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello who are dead or Big Daddy who is slowly dying, also Brick’s drinking may be considered as slow death.

6.3 Adultery

This chapter presents the topic of adultery. While in *A Streetcar Named Desire* the topic has been represented in form of several love triangles, in the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* the theme is first revealed by means of Big Daddy’s plan to have pleasure with women. The second mention of the topic is provided via Skipper’s attempt to make love with Maggie to prove that he is not gay. Finally, the topic appears when Brick pushes Maggie to find a lover.

The Big Daddy’s plan to have pleasure with women is revealed in the second act during the conversation with Brick:

BIG DADDY: Ha ha!—Pleasure!—pleasure with women! [Brick's smile fades a little but lingers.] I still have desire for women and this is my sixty-fifth birthday. [...] I realize now that I never had me enough. I let many chances slip by because of scruples about it, scruples, convention—crap.... All that stuff is bull, bull,

bull!—It took the shadow of death to make me see it. Now that shadow's lifted, I'm going to cut loose and have, what is it they call it, have me a—ball! [...] I'm going to pick me a good one to spend 'em on! I'm going to pick me a choice one, I don't care how much she costs, I'll smother her in--minks! Ha ha! I'll strip her naked and smother her in minks and choke her with diamonds! Ha ha! I'll strip her naked and choke her with diamonds and smother her with minks and hump her from hell to breakfast. Ha ha ha ha ha! (² Williams, 95-99)

The excerpt deals with the topic of sex which was generally considered quite an unusual topic to talk about. Here Big Daddy openly reveals his sexual desires during the speech with Brick. In the speech is revealed Big Daddy's plan for an extramarital relationship. What is more, Big Daddy openly admits that he is going to buy the mistress by means of buying her expensive presents.

Conclusion

This bachelor paper is concerned with the two plays by American playwright Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on the Hot Tin Roof*. Both these plays were created in the period after the Second World War. The main aim of the paper was to work up the detailed analysis of the two plays *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* with focus on the topics that were not entirely common for the dramatic production of the period and to emphasize the influence of the socio-cultural atmosphere of the postwar period on these plays.

The thesis begins by the introduction into the topic and by the description of the content. Further, the thesis is imaginarily divided into two main parts, the theoretical part and the practical part. The theoretical part serves as means for the reader to create the idea about life in the postwar America, about the contemporary ideals and about topics that were not entirely common in the period after the Second World War. The theoretical part includes four main chapters. The first of them is named '*Post Second World War Period – Conservatism*' and deals with the topics, such as family, morality and censorship. The second chapter with headline '*Adultery, Seduction, Rape, Nymphomania*' names the topics that were regarded taboo and the third and the fourth part of the theoretical part, analyses two of the main taboo themes in greater detail. Hence the third chapter, subtitled '*Homosexuality*', is mainly concerned with two documents that significantly influenced the historical events related to homosexuality. These documents are the '*Kinsey Reports*' and the '*Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government*'. The last, fourth chapter in the theoretical part, called '*Alcoholism*' presents the events leading to Repeal of Prohibition and further, the chapter deals with the negative influence of the alcohol consumption on the frequently discussed ideal of family.

The practical part is divided into two chapters. Each of the chapters is concerned with one of the plays by Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire* and the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

The first chapter, which is concerned with the work *A Streetcar Named Desire*, is divided into several subchapters. Each of the subchapters is engaged in the particular taboo topic, such as seduction, rape, homosexuality, alcoholism, adultery and nymphomania.

The first subchapter deals with the topics, such as seduction and rape. The role of the temptress is represented by Blanche DuBois. Not only does she try to seduce the young boy collecting money for newspapers but she also tries to seduce her sister's husband. With the topic of seduction is also connected the topic of rape, because there was a notion that Blanche asked Stanley to rape her by flirting with him. By the act she was supposed to expiate sins that she committed to her homosexual husband Allan Gray.

In the second subchapter, the topic of homosexuality is analyzed. In the play, Tennessee Williams applied the technique enabling him that the homosexually oriented characters did not appear directly on stage. These characters are mentioned only in memories of the main female protagonists. The main homosexual character that is introduced by means of the above mentioned technique is Allan Gray, Blanche's dead husband that committed suicide after Blanche told him, that he disgusts her after she caught him in sex act with his old friend. There is also revealed that death was the usual means of dealing with the character in literary works. Especially, the suicide was regarded as the suitable form of death of homosexual. As the opposition to Allan's homosexuality serves the depiction of Stanley and his friends as the representatives of typically homosexual characters.

The third subchapter is concerned with the topic of alcoholism. In the subchapter, the character that throughout the play consumes alcohol is presented. The person's name is Blanche DuBois and she refuses to admit that she is alcoholic. The fact that the alcoholic is a female protagonist seems particularly unusual when we take into account that in 1940s and 1950s the term "alcoholic" usually meant "male alcoholic".

In the fourth subchapter, the topic of adultery is analyzed. Throughout the play, the theme of adultery is portrayed in form of several love triangles. The first triangle occurs between Blanche, her husband Allan and his old friend where Blanche catches them during sex act, the second triangle takes place between Blanche, the millionaire Shep Huntleigh and his wife and the third triangle can be seen in the situation when Blanche is raped by her sister's husband Stanley.

The fifth subchapter deals with the theme of nymphomania. The topic is depicted by means of Blanche DuBois that was called by contemporary critics a nympho. Blanche is characteristic especially by her weakness for young boys. This promiscuous behavior

presented itself the most since she caught her husband during the sex act with the man. Although, her sister Stella avows that Blanche had been always flighty. This flightiness probably also stems from the fact that Blanche inherited this behavior from her ancestors.

The second chapter of the practical part that is concerned with the work *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is also divided into several subchapters that deal with particular taboo topics, such as homosexuality, alcoholism and adultery.

The first subchapter deals with homosexuality. Tennessee Williams again repeated the technique of displaying the homosexual characters offstage as in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The next technique of displaying the topic is via set descriptions and stage directions. The crucial thing about set descriptions and stage directions is that they are unknown to an audience at a performance while available to actors and others who read the published text. Then there are introduced the main homosexually oriented protagonists, such as Brick's dead friend Skipper and the homosexual couple Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. The same as in the previous play, all homosexually oriented protagonists are dead and those who are somehow linked to homosexuality suffer either by deadly disease, like Big Daddy or they drink themselves to death, like Brick Pollitt. Although, Brick's sexual orientation remains unclear, his fear of being perceived as gay is apparent. From Brick's means of expression, the homophobia that was typical for the postwar period is visible. Then there is also reflected the postwar paranoid atmosphere by means of Big Daddy's accusations of eavesdropping.

In the second subchapter, the theme of alcoholism is analyzed. Compared to the preceding play *A Streetcar Named Desire*, where it was the female protagonist Blanche that was presented as alcoholic, in the *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, the role of alcoholic is introduced by the male character Brick Pollitt. In the play, alcohol serves as the tools for escape from reality and from all the lies.

The third subchapter is engaged in the theme of adultery. In the play, the theme of adultery is presented in many ways. First, Big Daddy plans to have pleasure with women. In the second case the theme appears when Brick suggests Maggie to find a lover and in the third situation the topic of adultery can be seen in Skipper's attempt to prove that he is not gay, when he tried to have sex with Maggie.

To conclude, the postwar period was a very conservative period typical by its homophobia, paranoia and fear. In these two plays all homosexually oriented protagonists are not only offstage but also dead and those who are somehow linked to homosexuality suffer either from deadly disease or they drink themselves to death which reflects the homophobia. The paranoia is dominantly visible in Big Daddy's accusations of eavesdropping and the fear can mainly be seen in Brick's fear of being perceived as gay.

Resumé

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá dvěma konkrétními díly Amerického dramatika Tennesseeho Williamse s názvy *A Streetcar Named Desire* (*Tramvaj do stanice touha*) a *Cat on the Hot Tin Roof* (*Kočka na rozpálené plechové střeše*), jež obě vznikla v období po druhé světové válce. Williams je znám tím, že jeho divadelní hry obsahují témata, jež nebyla zcela obvyklá pro dramatickou tvorbu tehdejší doby. Většina Williamsovy tvorby spadá do období po druhé světové válce, což byla vysoce konzervativní doba vyznačující se paranoidní a homofobní atmosférou. Nejenom že tento autor zachycuje tuto poválečnou atmosféru ve svých divadelních hrách, ale také zmiňuje témata, jež byla považována za tabuizovaná.

Hlavním cílem této práce bylo vypracovat detailní analýzu těchto dvou výše zmíněných her se zaměřením na témata, jež nebyla zcela obvyklá pro dramatickou tvorbu tehdejší doby a zdůraznit vliv tehdejšího společensko-kulturního kontextu poválečného období na povahu těchto děl.

Práce začíná úvodem do tématu a stručným popisem jejího obsahu. Dále je pomyslně rozdělena do dvou hlavních částí, a to části teoretické a části praktické. Teoretická část slouží k tomu, aby si čtenář vytvořil představu o životě v poválečné Americe, o tehdejších ideálech a o tom, jaká témata nebyla zcela obvyklá pro tehdejší dobu. Do teoretické části jsou zahrnuty čtyři hlavní kapitoly, první z nich je nazvána 'Post Second World War Period – Conservatism' (Období po druhé světové válce – Konzervatismus) a zabývá se tématy jako je rodina, morálka a cenzura. Toto poválečné období v Americe se stalo obdobím represe, přizpůsobování se a trvání na tom, aby obyvatelé přilnuli ke konzervativním hodnotám. Po válce se téma rodiny dostalo do centra zájmu, jelikož se ve dvacátém století vytvořil nový model rodiny a vzrostl význam manželského svazku. Role ženy a muže v rodině z hlediska pohlaví byly striktně rozděleny, zatímco úkolem dominantního manžela bylo především zabezpečit rodinu, submisivní manželka zastávala úlohu ženy v domácnosti. Toto jasné rozdělení ženských a mužských rolí také sloužilo jako vzor pro děti během procesu osvojování jejich genderové identity. Poválečné období se také vyznačovalo uplatňováním přísných pravidel cenzury. Nejvýznamnějším předpisem, který určoval pravidla cenzury v americké filmové produkci v letech 1930 a 1960, se stal Produkční kodex, neboli

Haysův kodex. Tento kodex se pokoušel ochraňovat morálnítu tehdejších obyvatel prostřednictvím usměrňování filmů dle přísných pravidel křesťanské morálky.

Druhá kapitola jmenuje jednotlivá témata, jako například svádění, znásilnění, mimomanželský sex, k němuž je také přiřčeno téma cizoložství. Třetí a čtvrtá kapitola podrobněji rozebírá další dvě tabuizovaná témata, jimiž jsou homosexualita a alkoholismus. Tudiž třetí kapitola, s názvem 'Homosexuality' (Homosexualita) je rozdělena do dvou podkapitol. V těchto podkapitolách se hovoří o dvou důležitých dokumentech, které významně ovlivnily sled událostí týkajících se homosexuality. Těmito dokumenty jsou 'Kinsey Reports' (Kinseyovy zprávy) a 'Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government' (Zaměstnávání homosexuálů a dalších zvrhlíků ve vládě). Ve druhé podkapitole je také zmíněna jedna významná organizace, nazývaná Bachelors Anonymous (Anonymní svobodní mládenci), která byla určena pro homosexuály. Je vhodné také podotknout, že homosexualita byla v této době považována za nemoc.

Poslední čtvrtá kapitola v teoretické části 'Alcoholism' (Alkoholismus) rozebírá události vedoucí k opětovnému povolení konzumace alkoholu a dále tato kapitola řeší negativní vliv alkoholu na tehdejší hojně diskutovaný ideál rodiny.

Praktická část je rozdělena do dvou kapitol, z nichž každá zvlášť analyzuje jednu z her Tennesseeho Williamse *A Streetcar Named Desire* a *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

První kapitola zabývající se dílem *A Streetcar Named Desire*, je rozdělena do několika podkapitol, jež řeší jednotlivá tabuizovaná témata, která se zde objevují, jako je například svádění, znásilnění, homosexualita, alkoholismus, cizoložství a nymfomanie.

První podkapitola pojednává o tématech svádění a znásilnění. V roli svůdnice zde vystupuje Blanche DuBois, která se pokouší svést nejen mladého chlapce vybírajícího peníze na noviny ale i manžela své sestry Stanleyho Kowalskiho. S tématem svádění je spojeno i téma znásilnění, jelikož zde panovala domněnka, že tím jak Blanche flirtovala se Stanleyem, si vlastně říkala o to, aby ji znásilnil, čímž chtěla odčinit své hříchy, kterých se dopustila na svém zesnulém homosexuálním manželovi Allanovi Grayovi.

V druhé podkapitole je rozebráno téma homosexuality. Tennessee Williams v této hře zvolil techniku, která mu umožnila, aby se postavy homosexuálně orientované neobjevovaly přímo na podiu. Tyto postavy jsou zmiňovány pouze ve vzpomínkách

hlavních protagonistů, v tomto případě pouze žen. Hlavními homosexuálním charakterem, který je představen pomocí této výše zmíněné techniky je Allan Gray, manžel Blanche DuBois, který spáchal sebevraždu, když mu Blanche v opilosti řekla, že se jí hnusí poté, co ho přistihla v posteli s jeho dlouholetým kamarádem. Je zde také odhaleno, že smrt byla běžným prostředkem jak se vypořádat s homosexuálním charakterem v literárních dílech v tehdejší době. Sebevražda byla považována za obzvláště vhodnou formu smrti homosexuála. Jako kontrast k Allanově homosexualitě slouží ztvárnění Stanleyho a jeho kamarádů jako představitelů typicky homosexuálních protagonistů.

Třetí podkapitola řeší téma alkoholismu. V této podkapitole je představena postava, která v průběhu celé hry konzumuje alkohol, ale odmítá skutečnost, že by byla alkoholik, touto postavou je Blanche BuBois. Skutečnost, že postava alkoholika je v této hře ztvárněna prostřednictvím ženy, se zdá býti obzvláště nezvyklým tématem, jelikož v letech 1940 a 1950 termín „alkoholik“ obvykle znamenal „mužského alkoholika“

Ve čtvrté podkapitole je rozebráno téma cizoložství. V této hře je téma cizoložství prezentováno prostřednictvím několika milostných trojúhelníků. První se odehrává mezi Blanche jejím mužem Allanem a jeho dlouholetým přítelem, kdy je Blanche přistihne přímo při aktu. Další milostný trojúhelník lze nalézt mezi Blanche, milionářem Shephem Huntleighem a jeho manželkou. Třetí milostný trojúhelník je možno spatřovat v situaci kdy je Blanche znásilněna manželem své sestry Stanleyem Kowalskim.

Pátá podkapitola pojednává o tématu nymfomanie. Toto téma je ztvárněno prostřednictvím Blanche, která byla tehdejšími kritiky nazývána nymfomankou. Tato protagonistka se vyznačuje slabostí především pro mladé chlapce. Toto promiskuitní chování se nejvíce projevilo poté, co svého manžela Allana přistihla v posteli s mužem, následkem čehož Allan spáchal sebevraždu. Ačkoliv její sestra Stella přiznává že Blanche byla vždy přelétavá. Tato přelétavost pravděpodobně pramení ze skutečnosti, že Blanche toto chování zdělila po svých předcích. Údajně podle Blanchiny výpovědi, rodina DuBois přišla o všechnen majetek a o plantáž právě díky sexuálním pokleskům předků. Ačkoliv tato Blanchina výpověď byla tehdejšími kritiky zpochybňována, Blanche byla dle těchto kritiků považována za nedůvěryhodnou osobu kvůli svému deviantnímu chování.

Druhá kapitola, která se zabývá dílem *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, je také rozdělena do několika podkapitol, jež se zabývají jednotlivými tabuizovanými tématy, jako je například homosexualita, alkoholismus a cizoložství.

První podkapitola pojednává o tématu homosexuality. Tennessee Williams v této hře zvolil stejnou techniku zobrazování homosexuálních charakterů, jako v předchozí hře. Tyto postavy jsou opět zmiňovány pouze prostřednictvím vzpomínek, avšak oproti předchozí hře jsou postavy, které si ve vzpomínkách vybavují tyto homosexuály, nejenom ženského pohlaví ale i mužského. Dále je zde zmíněna další technika zobrazování nevhodných témat prostřednictvím popisů zasazení hry a režie. Ačkoliv tyto popisky jsou přístupné hercům a dalším, kteří čtou publikovaný text, jsou zároveň také neviditelné pro diváky, kteří jdou shlédnout představení, z čehož vyplývá, že pokud by došlo k cenzuře těchto částí, nic v produkci hry by se nezměnilo. Poté jsou zde také představeny hlavní homosexuálně orientované postavy, kterými je například Brickův zesnulý kamarád Skipper a homosexuální pár Jack Straw a Peter Ochello. Stejně jako v předchozí hře i zde jsou všichni homosexuálně orientovaní protagonisté mrtví a ti, kteří jsou nějakým způsobem propojeni s homosexualitou, trpí buďto smrtelnou nemocí, jako například Big Daddy, který umírá na rakovinou střev, nebo se jako v případě Bricka Pollitta upíjejí k smrti. Ačkoliv je Brickova sexuální orientace nejasná, je zde patrné, že má obavu z toho, jak by na něj společnost pohlížela, pokud by se dověděli, že je homosexuál. Také je z jeho vyjadřování patrná homofobie, která byla typická pro tehdejší dobu. V neposlední řadě je zde také zachycena paranoidní atmosféra, která, jak již bylo popsáno v teoretické části, byla typická v této poválečné době, kdy homosexuálové byli pronásledováni a špehováni policisty, propouštěni z práce a často také docházelo k policejním raziím na bary. Tyto policejní praktiky jsou v této hře provozovány především Gooperem a Mae, kteří donášejí Big Mamma informace o tom co se děje v ložnici Bricka a Maggie.

V druhé podkapitole je rozebráno téma alkoholismu. Oproti předchozí hře *A Streetcar Named Desire*, kde jsme se setkali s alkoholičkou Blanche, v *Cat on the Hot Tin Roof* v roli alkoholika vystupuje Brick Pollitt. V této hře alkohol slouží jako nástroj k úniku z reálného života a od lží. Brick se tímto způsobem pomalu upíjí k smrti, což se dá považovat za způsob sebevraždy.

Třetí podkapitola se zabývá tématem cizoložství. V této hře je téma cizoložství představeno mnoha způsoby. Zaprvé, Big Daddy má v plánu pořídit si milenku. V druhém případě se toto téma objevuje když Brick navrhuje Maggie, že by si měla pořídit milence a zatřetí lze cizoložství spatřovat ve Skipperově pokusu dokázat že není gay tím, že se pokusil o to mít sex s Maggie.

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