Multiple Endings for *The Rose Tattoo* (1951)

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I

The Rose Tattoo is more complicated than critics sometimes realize. It is generally interpreted as a rare example of Williams's unequivocal belief in "eros triumphant," and its unusual optimism is explained by reference to his delight in southern Italy under the aegis of his Sicilian lover Frank Merlo. Thus, the *New York Times'* headline for its review of Circle-in-the-Square's revival of the play in 1995 was "Upbeat Williams, for a Change"; and in her influential study *Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan* (1961) Nancy Tischler cites Williams's own comment,

> What I am getting at in the play is the warmth and sweetness of the Italian people. . . . If this is a warmer and happier play than anything I have written it is because of that experience. . . .

to conclude that

> his intent in *The Rose Tattoo* is clear—to sound a paen to natural love, to sunlight and children and gaiety, to Mediterranean warmth and expressiveness. The idyll is light, gay, gaudy, bawdy, and funny.[1]

The published text certainly supports such a reading. It is dedicated "to FRANK / in return for Sicily"; the surname of the play's lover, "Mangiacavallo" (literally "eat a horse") is a sly play on "Little Horse," which was Tennessee's nickname for Frank; and in some of the earlier drafts Frank's actual surname, "Merlo" (glossed as "blackbird") is used for the Alvaro character. The text too is manifestly "upbeat." Serafina della Rosa, the passionate widow who is the play's protagonist, overcomes small-town prejudice, puritan religiosity, and her own misplaced idealization of her dead husband by accepting renewed sexual passion with the oafish but beautiful and good-natured Alvaro Mangiacavallo. This enables her to reverse her earlier opposition to her fifteen-year old daughter's love for a young sailor, and, climactically, to proclaim that a rose stigmata has appeared on her breast to show that once more she is pregnant—"two lives again in the body!"

A ridiculously inadequate period has elapsed for this, of course, since she made love with Mangiacavallo for the first time only the night before, but Williams insisted that the rose symbolism and Serafina's intense religious feeling must be so firmly established by this point in the play that audiences can accept her belief in pregnancy imaginatively even if, empirically, they realize that it is premature:

> It should be felt by the audience that Pepina [an earlier name for the widow] may be right, that she actually has received a sign that she has conceived by Alvaro. The danger is that they might just think she was crazy! We would have to obviate that danger by establishing the fact of the previous stigmatas—and Pepina's profound innate mysticism.[2]

Hence (probably) the mad proliferation of rose symbolism in the final text, which was much less emphasized in earlier drafts and predictably gave rise to adverse criticism; later productions rightly toned this down.

In an essay titled "The Meaning of *The Rose Tattoo*"—written at his producer, Cheryl Crawford's request in April 1950 but not published until a year later[3]—Williams is even more explicit about his intentions:

> *The Rose Tattoo* is the Dionysian element in human life, its mystery, its beauty, its significance. . . . It is the dissatisfaction with empiric evidence that makes the poet and mystic, for it is the lyric as well as the Bacchantic impulse, and although the goat is one of its most immemorial symbols, it must not be confused with mere sexuality. The element is higher and more distilled than that. Its purest form is probably manifested by children and birds in their rhapsodic moments of flight and play.[4]

This illuminates the significance of the play's romping chorus of children (who fly a red kite in earlier drafts) and of Alvaro's reiterated cry of "happy swallow"—*Rondinella felice*!

Nancy Tischler also notes, however, that *The Rose Tattoo* is complicated by potentially tragic elements:

> Although the story is comic, it certainly has the components of tragedy—the violence of Serafina's emotion, the death of her idol, the destruction of her ideal. . . . The story is one of Williams' weakest largely because his feeling for comedy is in conflict with his stronger sense of tragedy.[5]

This is perceptive, because, when one studies *Tattoo*'s development through the multiple drafts so characteristic of Williams's method of composition, it becomes clear that his original vision was not dionysian at all but romantically tragic, and he had the greatest difficulty in revising it to be more positive. It was Elia Kazan, in fact, who persuaded him to turn it into a celebration of irresistible sexual energy, but Williams found it so tricky to conclude the play with an appropriate balance of tones that there are some thirty rewritings of the end, extending even beyond the play's Broadway opening in February 1951.

II

In its original version *The Rose Tattoo* ends with Serafina (called at this stage "Pepina Quarino") wholly repudiating Mangiacavallo after their night together, losing her angrily scornful daughter who runs away to join the sailor lover, and reverently gathering up her husband's spilt ashes with the aid of her friend, the wise old herb-woman Assunta, or, in earlier drafts, with the rival for his affections, the blackjack dealer Estelle Hohengarten (sometimes called merely "The Texan Woman"), while—the stage directions tell us—"the stage dims and above the tin roof we see again the faint apparition of the rose between cupped hands," a non realistic symbol with which the play began. This ending is developed alongside other drafts in which, after Rose has stormed angrily away, Pepina merely crawls to pray before the Madonna as the "Curtain Falls"—or where she is comforted by Assunta with the assurance "It's over. It's finished. Don't cry. It was necessary. It's finished now, it's over"—or where, after burying the ashes under a rose bush, Assunta grotesquely joins Pepina in song as the latter sews herself a new dress in order "to look like a lady."[6]

The fullest version of a romantically tragic conclusion can be seen in one of Williams's earliest complete drafts that he called the "Kitchen sink" version because he had thrown everything into it.[7] In this version, after Rose has stormed contemptuously out (with no business about her forgotten wrist watch), the script continues as follows:

Parrot

(suddenly) Pe-*peen*-a! Pe-*peen*-a!

(PEPINA rouses with a gasp, noticing the black cover over the Madonna's statue. She snatches it off, moaning softly, and lights the candle in the ruby glass cup. Then she gasps again, remembering the urn. She wheels about dizzily. Rushes to the corner where the urn was thrown. Falls back with a terrified gesture. . . .)

Pepina

Ashes . . .

(A wind makes a dry clicking sound in the palm leaves and bangs the shutters)
(The guitar becomes faintly audible)
(ESTELLE HOHENGARTEN appears at stage left. A tall, skinny blonde woman in black. She enters by hesitant

stages, looking about her with the quickly, jerkily apprehensive motions of a chicken entering an unfamiliar yard.)
(Rooster crows way off)
(The WOMAN coughs dryly and changes her purse from under one arm to the other, quite without reason. / Coughs again, clears and touches her long, skinny throat, vessel of much wasted passion. / A dry wind rattles the shutters of the small house. / Inside PEPINA moans to herself. / Outside the frightened WOMAN moans to herself. / PEPINA crouches beside the broken urn and spilt ashes. / She kneels clumsily down. / The WOMAN climbs hesitantly to the porch - - touches the spindling pillar for a few moments. / Barely audible guitar. / WOMAN enters. / PEPINA pauses in gathering the ashes with one hand cupped before her, turning her face to the door)

Woman

I am Estelle Hohengarten. I didn't sleep. I thought that I ought to tell you, your husband quit me. He quit me the night that he died, and all that I ever had was—a rose tattoo. . . .

(She turns, about to leave, when all at once PEPINA leans forward on her knees and clutches the hem of the woman's black skirt.)

Pepina

(Gently) The urn is broken. Help me gather his ashes, spilt on the floor!

(Quietly and gravely as two children gathering flowers, the WOMEN kneel together to collect the scattered ashes of Rosario and return them to the broken urn. As they do so, the stage dims and above the tin roof we see again the faint apparition of the rose between two curved hands. / The SINGER with the guitar. / BOY wanders sadly out: holds up the red kite smashed through the grotesquely distorted face of Cothurnas.[8])

DIM OUT

CURTAIN

Other drafts at this stage have Estelle Hohengarten saying, "All that I had was a rose tattooed on my chest. But you—you had the *rose*!" or "Rosario loved *you*—not me, not much—I'm a whore . . . But you he did love as his wife—and his Rosa's mother . . ." and in one draft the two women recite together the "Hail, Mary!" prayer for Rosario's "Perpetual Novena"—a version about which Williams cautioned himself with a pencil note "careful—corn."

Elia Kazan responded to the "Kitchen sink" draft by an undated letter (Tex. 12) in which, besides urging Williams (very helpfully) to cut early scenes featuring the husband, Rosario, because they damaged the focus of the play, he condemned the romantic tragedy of the ending as follows:

> [The play] is a kind of a comic-grotesque Mass said in praise of the Male Force. I do not think the material is organized properly. . . . In fact I thought that *you* had turned, or at least squirmed around somewhere about ¾ of the way thru [sic] in your *own* conception. At least I was very surprised by the ending. Its main spirit up till then seemed to be in praise of life, and its sensual, undying sensual base. Then comes the two women kneeling and gathering the ashes. That beat hell out of me. [After advising that the Rosario scenes be omitted so that the play can focus on the explosion of repressed sexuality between Serafina and Alvaro, he continues:] It would be a comic Mass then between what man and woman are, and what they have made of themselves. And they sure as hell wouldn't be gathering ashes at the end. . . . There is something COMIC (in the biggest sense of that word: optimistic and healthy and uncontrollable) about the setting, the characters, the appurtinences [sic] (I don't know how to spell that word) and the effects, the bits . . . I thought that she was at one point going to tear off the dress of the Texan woman.

Williams's undated reply is very interesting.[9] It begins with an important description of his method of composition:

> I have this terrific creative will in me tearing and fighting to get out and from its own fury creating its own block and so I work more or less blindly: the good values are from the subconscious, so often when I'm finished I have no idea what I have done, what is good or bad in it.[10]

He goes on to agree that the Rosario scenes should be cut, but is much more reluctant to reduce the end to Kazan's level of "mere sexuality":

> Perhaps if [Pepina] alone collects the ashes it will be enough but I must confess that I was enormously intrigued by the dramatic-pictorial value of the two women doing it and I still don't see how that was incongruous to the praise of male force.—The important thing is that your letter has clarified things and helped me immensely.

In effect, however, Williams found it terribly difficult to move away from his romantic ending to the more sensual kind of celebration advocated by Kazan. The more than twenty drafts in which he struggled with this problem are too complex to record individually, particularly as, in his usual way, he often reverted to earlier material (and even warns on one draft, "Note: Author reserves the right to remove this ending and revert to the former if it does not appear suitable to him"[11]). However, the drift of his rewriting can be sketched by following three main aspects that he gradually revised to make a more positive conclusion. These are: the nature of Rose's parting from her mother; Pepina/Serafina's discovery of a rose stigmata on her breast and consequent belief that she is pregnant again; and the very gradual (and reluctant) reintroduction of Alvaro for a reconciliation.

III

In the "kitchen sink" version, Rose is contemptuous of her mother when she realizes she has had sex with Alvaro (and has also flushed Rose's goldfish down the toilet after her beating of Alvaro broke their bowl—a detail dropped from the final version). Having smashed a piggy bank to get five dollars, she leaves angrily to join her lover:

Pepina

(Brokenly) Why, why are you looking at me like that?

(Crying out) Don't look at me with the eyes of your father like that?

Rosa

(Turning abruptly and coldly away) I need five dollars. I'll take it out of this. (She smashes the piggy bank and sweeps coins into her purse) I'm going now and don't you dare open your mouth to ask me where or what for. It's none of your business. (Running to the door) The only worse thing than a liar, is a liar that's also a hypocrite.

(She runs out, door left open. She tosses her dark hair as she runs down the steps and offstage.)

There is no business about Rose's forgotten wristwatch in this draft. In an early copy of "Third Draft" (Tex. 14), Rose is even more scathing in her comments:

> I understand you, now. You didn't want me to have what you wanted yourself. [...] Yes, I am looking at you with the eyes of my father! I see you the way he saw you—messy—sloppy—fat!

She compares her mother to the piggy bank she smashes and rushes off "with a burst of savage laughter":

> (THE WORDS STRIKE PEPINA A SAVAGE BLOW IN THE FACE. SHE CROUCHES AND COVERS HER FACE).

In a subsequent copy of "Third Draft" (DEL. 2), however, there is added:

Serafina

(In the parlour, brokenly)—I don't say don't go, I say go!

Rose

(Running off, wildly) *Vengo, vengo, Amore.*

Serafina

Go to the boy, go to him. . . .

This draft is dated "April, 1950," the same date as Williams's essay "The Meaning of *The Rose Tattoo*" in which he says that Serafina had to learn that "the blood of the wild young daughter was better, as a memorial, than ashes kept in a crematory urn." In other words, the affirmation of physical passion at this stage of composition was to have been through Rose, not through Serafina herself.

Rose's reconciliation with Serafina is developed gradually through successive revisions. In the "Fourth Draft," dated October 1950 (Tex. 15), she says "Mama" and a stage direction informs us that she looks "as if she might be about to apologize"; and Serafina, "like a peasant in the presence of a young princess," responds:

> How *beautiful*—is my daughter!—*Go to the boy*!
>
> (Rose stares at her mother a moment longer; a train whistle blows; she suddenly catches her breath and runs out of the house)
>
> (Suddenly, as the girl leaves)—Rosa, Rosa, the wrist watch.

As in the printed text, Serafina finds that the wrist watch has stopped and gives a startled laugh, relating this to her earlier comment that true love destroys all sense of time. The train whistle is dropped from the final version, however.

In a later copy of the same draft (DEL. 3), the line "He didn't touch me—all he said was 'Che bella!'" is pencilled in for Rose, and this is incorporated into the typescript of COL. 5, a Performance Copy belonging to Paul Bigelow, a friend of Williams who was assistant to the producer, where it is cued, rather clumsily, by Serafina's reminder that her husband was a Sicilian baron:

SERAFINA

(Humbly yet strongly) I am a pig. I got no right to say nothing. But if you go to the boy—Remember, Rosa, your father was a *Baron!*

(SHE lifts her head with a sudden resurgence of her former pride. ROSA is touched.)

ROSA

Mama, I'm going to tell the boy goodbye.—I'm going to wait for him with his *ring* on my finger. . . .

(Train whistle blows)

And, Mama? The man that was here didn't touch me!— He just said, "Che Bella!"

(Whistle blows again and she flies out the door)

SERAFINA

Rosa, Rosa, your wrist watch [etc.]

Williams then removed both Serafina's appeal to gentility and Rosa's promise to return engaged, so that the "May, 1951" script belonging to the stage manager, Ralph Delauney, (DEL. 18) finally coincides with the printed version.

IV

The most important change to make *Tattoo*'s conclusion more upbeat was Serafina's discovery of a rose stigmata on her breast, but it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when this development occurred to Williams. In his letter to Cheryl Crawford

of 14 July 1950, already quoted (see note 2), he explains the concept and the qualified use he proposes to make of it, in detail:

> I am still working hard on "*Tattoo.*" . . . it now starts with the graduate morning [i.e. no Rosario scenes] and I have worked into the story a new element which changes the ending. It is now established in the story that Pepina received a supernatural sign when she conceived the two children, Rose and the son who died at birth the night of her husband's death. On the occasion of each conception she felt a burning pain in her left breast and saw, *or imagined she saw*, a stigmata, the rose tattoo of her husband appearing on it. Now in the end of the play, when she is kneeling to gather the ashes from the broken urn, the stigmata returns. She cries out. The ancient woman (La Fattuchiere) and others rush into the yard in response to her wild cries. She kneels with her breast exposed as the old woman enters the house, crying out: "The tattoo, the tattoo has come back! It means in my body another rose is growing!" The old woman, *to comfort her*, tells her, Yes, I see it, I see it clearly, Pepina!—and envelopes her in the grey shawl of pity as the curtain comes down. [italics added].

However, Ralph Delauney (DEL. 18, item 1) has the stigmata appearing in a draft that he dates as early as "after Easter 1950" (though the names and the correctly spelled "Fuori" suggest to me a later date):

SERAFINA

(Lighting the Madonna's candle) Assunta, the marble urn broke. The ashes are spilt on the floor and I can't touch them.

ASSUNTA

(Kneeling)—There are no ashes.

SERAFINA

Come strano! Where have the ashes gone?

ASSUNTA

The wind has blown them away.

SERAFINA

A man when he burns is only a handful of ashes—No woman can hold him. The wind must blow him away.

(SHE CROSSES TO THE DOOR)

ASSUNTA

Dove vai, Serafina?

SERAFINA

Fuori! Fuori!

(ON THE PORCH SHE UTTERS A LOW CRY, CLOSING HER EYES AND CLASPING A HAND TO HER BREASTS. ASSUNTA COMES OUT WITH THE FRAGMENTS OF URN)

ASSUNTA

Che fa!

SERAFINA

I feel it again, the burning of the tattoo. I know what it means. It means that I have conceived. Two lives again in the body, two lives again, two lives!

(SMALL BOY RACES TO THE FRONT OF THE STAGE WITH HIS SCARLET KITE. HE FLOURISHES IT BEFORE THE AUDIENCE WITH RIGID, ECSTATIC GESTURES AS)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

Another draft which Delauney dates "Summer 1950" (*ibid*, item 2) is closer to the description in the Crawford letter (except that the widow is called "Serafina") but ends with the two women "alternately crying out in breathless voices, both of them cupping the ashes in their palms. / The cries are wordless, as though their reason was not in reach of language." In the next Delauney draft, which he dates "24 Nov. 50," Assunta answers truthfully "Niente" (nothing) when Serafina asks what she sees on her breast, and after she has gone outside (with the early misspelling "Foro"), the play concludes:

(Sound of wind. Mandolin under softly.

Clinging to a pillar SERAFINA releases the ashes to the wind, holding out her palm as if it held a bird that she was releasing.)

Serafina

(just audibly.) I have conceived again! I have conceived! I have conceived! Two! *Two* lives in one body! *Two*, *two* lives again—*two*. . . .)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

But in another draft also dated "24 Nov. 50," a stage direction instructs that "A WOMAN or TWO appear silently at the side of the stage" as Serafina leaves the house, and she comes down to "the very front of the stage in a shaft of clear light" to deliver her "I have conceived" speech. In COL. 3, draft 3 of Act 3, scene 3, when Serafina asks Assunta if she believes her, the old woman replies: "It is impossible to tell me anything I don't believe. Serafina, drink this wine, and remember—Time doesn't pass when the clock in the heart says: 'Love!'"; and as she drinks, we hear Alvaro shouting "Rondinella felice!" from the distance. And in COL. 5, draft 3 of the ending, after Alvaro's shout Assunta says bluntly "Drink that wine, and before the glass is empty, he will be in your arms," though this comment has been subsequently crossed out.

V

In all these drafts Alvaro is either completely absent or, at most, a distant shout which sometimes gets closer. But in other drafts he is brought onto the stage, though at first only to emphasize his exclusion. In the last version of the "Third draft," dated "Europe Sept. 1950" (DEL. 2), when Serafina feels her breast burning the stage direction instructs:

(. . . Too weak to rise, she crawls to the mirror, seizes the lower frame of it and pulls it down from the wall: leans over it to peer at the image of her naked breast.)

(ASSUNTA runs into the house. Others begin to gather in the yard, including, finally, ALVARO who stands timidly, uncertainly at the edge of the excitedly whispering group of black shawled women.)

But, after Assunta has pretended to see the stigmata and in italics Serafina has proclaimed "*In my body another rose is growing!*" the draft ends:

(The OLD WOMAN returns to Serafina and draws her tenderly into her arms. She envelopes her sobbing face in the grey shawl of pity. The WOMEN disperse from the yard as the song that began the play is resumed. Only ALVARO remains. At last he sits down on the steps of the porch.)

ALVARO

(Slowly and sadly) I am the grandson of the village idiot of Ribera!

THE CURTAIN FALLS.[12]

In other drafts, after Serafina has wondered "where have the ashes gone?" the stage direction instructs:

> (AS THOUGH IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION, ALVARO APPEARS IN THE CANEBRAKE, APPROACHING CAUTIOUSLY WITH THE UTENSIL THROWN AT HIM [EARLIER].)

ALVARO

(Timidly) . . . Baronessa?

ASSUNTA

Someone is calling you.

ALVARO

I am the grandson of the village idiot of Ribera.

> (THE CHILDREN RUSH LIKE BIRDS ABOUT THE HOUSE. THEY CRY OUT EXULTANTLY AS THE RED KITE APPEARS ABOVE THE TIN ROOF AND HANGS FLAMING OVER IT. SERAFINA RAISES A HAND TO HER BREAST WITH A LOW CRY.)

ASSUNTA

Che fa!

SERAFINA

(Ecstatically) I know why the urn was empty! I feel the burning again of the rose tattoo. Assunta, *I have conceived*!

ALVARO

(Close to the porch) *Rondinella felice*!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

According to Ralph Delauney, this was the version played on the opening night of the Chicago try-out 29 December, 1950 (DEL. 13, item 4).

The problem of how to reintroduce Alvaro without damaging the feeling of spiritual transcendence that Williams wanted at the conclusion (see note 12) was only solved, however, when he had the brainwave of replacing the lyrical effect of the children's red kite by using the rose-coloured shirt that Serafina originally sewed for Estelle Hohengarten (who intended it for Rosario) then gave to Mangiacavallo to replace the shirt torn in his scuffle with the travelling salesman. Eli Wallach, who created the role of Alvaro, explains that

> ... in *Rose Tattoo* for weeks we tried to find an ending. We couldn't find an ending! Tennessee finally came in one day and said, "I want Mangiacavallo to leave his shirt in the room when he runs up the hill. Then Serafina passes a bloodstained shirt up the hill." You see, Tennessee is able to pick out touching and poetic things which could be real and couldn't be real [sic].[13]

Delauney records a draft (DEL. 13, item 6) used on January 16, 1951, in which Assunta tells Serafina that there is a "man on the road without a shirt"; then, after Serafina has unpacked the rose coloured shirt but, on feeling the stigmata, has been diverted into proclaiming her new pregnancy, a stage direction instructs:

> (APPLYING TO THIS MIRACLE A PRACTICAL INTERPRETATION, ASSUNTA PICKS UP THE SILK SHIRT AND GOES OUTSIDE WITH IT. SHE RAISES IT LIKE A BANNER, CALLING OUT—)
>
> ASSUNTA
>
> Avanti, Signor! The Baronessa is waiting!
>
> THE CURTAIN FALLS

Usually, however, the announcement of a man without a shirt is made by a chorus of Village Women headed by "Pepina," though at first, when Serafina feels the stigmata and drops the rose coloured shirt, they are left uncomprehending outside the door (COL. 3, second draft of act 3, scene 3):

> (ASSUNTA DRAWS HER INTO HER ARMS. AT THE OUTCRY THE WOMEN HAD FALLEN SILENT, LISTENING CLOSE TO THE PORCH. NOW ONE SPEAKS UP IN A WHISPER)
>
> ONE
>
> Something is going on in the house!

TWO

Pepina, you go to the door!

PEPINA

(Vigorously mounting the steps) Yes, I will go to the door! Now I am nervous.

ALVARRO [sic]

(Far away and lyrical) *Rondinella felice*!

(PEPINA HAMMERS AND CALLS AS)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

It is not until the third draft included in Paul Bigelow's Performance Script (COL. 5) and an insert into Ralph Delauney's "May 1951" script (DEL. 18) that we get versions where other women besides Pepina are named, where they "snatch the shirt and rush back up the embankment" bellowing "Ecco la camicia," "Avanti, avanti, signor," "Corragio, corragio", and where, in ms. revisions, the play ends with Assunta's "Dove vai" (accompanied by a "Harp glissando") being answered by Serafina's "vengo, vengo, amore!" which is followed by "(Harp very full)" and a "*Fast Curtain.*" The exit line, "Vengo, vengo, amore" that was earlier given to Rosa is now spoken by Serafina.[14] —Even so, there are many small differences still between these late drafts and the play as published, reflecting probably both refinements introduced in performance and Williams's own polishing of the text for publication.

VI

This sketch of revisions to the end of *The Rose Tattoo*—complicated as they may seem—is a radical simplification of the welter of permutations among the thirty-odd drafts so far recovered.[15] But what should be sufficiently evident is the enormous difficulty Williams found in adapting his original romantic conclusion to a dionysian celebration of sexuality and what Kazan called "the male force" without totally surrendering that sense of passionate transcendence which for Tennessee Williams remained the essence of *The Rose Tattoo*[16]: love's power of "snatching the eternal out of the desperately fleeting," as he puts it in the essay which he wrote as a preface to the first published version of the play.[17] And it is surely very significant that he chose *this* essay as his preface to the printed text, not the earlier "The Meaning of *The Rose Tattoo*" which most critics use as their guide to the meaning of the play.

Notes

[1] 1965 paperback ed., pp. 167, 174.

[2] Letter to Cheryl Crawford, dated 14 July 1950 (New York Public Library, T-MSS 1973-004, Box 2 Folder 39). A consequence is that the play should not be presented too realistically, as was the tendency when it first appeared, but with an obvious element of folk symbolism—as in the very successful Circle-in-the-Square revival of 1995.

[3] Cheryl Crawford, *One Naked Individual: My Fifty Years in the Theatre* (1977), p. 186

[4] This essay, which was first published in *Vogue* 117 (15 March 1951) p. 96, and is reprinted in Christine R. Day and Bob Woods, eds. *Where I Live: Selected Essays by Tennessee Williams* (1978), pp. 55-7, is preserved in a typescript dated "Key West, April, 1950" in the Cheryl Crawford papers at NYPL with a copy also attached to the DEL. 4 script of the play at the University of Delaware. (Please note: for the sake of concision, Williams's mss. will be identified by my key for them in "A Provisional Stemma for Drafts, Alternatives, and Revisions of *The Rose Tattoo*," *Modern Drama* 40 (1997), 288-93.)

[5] Tischler, 173; cf. Philip Kolin, "'Sentiment and humor in equal measure': Comic Form in *The Rose Tattoo*," in Jac Tharpe, ed. *Tennessee Williams: A Tribute* (1977), pp. 214-31, which argues that the play's various comic effects are contained within a tragicomic framework.

[6] These variants can found in Tex. 4, Tex. 5 (1st draft), and Tex. 2 (3rd draft). (Note: DEL. 13 has ten distinct drafts of the end collected by the stage manager Ralph Delauney, and COL. 3 has seven.)

[7] Drafts of this version are Tex. 9, 10, and 11. Actually, this was Williams's *second* full draft because it was preceded by one called "First Complete Draft" and dated "1950, January (Key West)" (See Tex. 6 and Texas 7). However, Williams named the draft that followed the "Kitchen sink" version (which was actually a *third* draft) as his "Second Draft" (see Tex. 13 and Tex. 14) and then the drafts following that one as "Third" and "Fourth." To avoid confusion, I shall follow his designations despite their inaccuracy.

[8] Williams seems to have been under the misapprehension that "Cothurnas" was the Greek god of comedy; actually, of course, it means the buskins worn by actors in Greek tragedy.

[9] Texas, Williams, T., Correspondence.

[10] This agrees with the conclusion of his essay on "The Meaning of *The Rose Tattoo*," which argues for "Dionysian" form in the text itself: "I prefer a play to be not a noose but a net with fairly wide meshes. So many of its instants of revelation are wayward flashes, not part of the plan of an author but struck accidentally off, and perhaps these are closest to being a true celebration of the inebriate god." —Note: the play was specifically set during the wine harvest in some early drafts.

[11] COL. 3: third draft of act 3, scene 3.

[12] This dismissal of Alvaro agrees with the deleted ending of an essay called *Dynamics of Play* (Tex. 17), written in New York, but apparently left unfinished, which emphasizes that the "mystic sign . . . means that the beauty and power were in life itself, not in the single man. . . ." There is a similar note in Tex. 5: "The meaning of this sign is the transcendence of life over the instruments it uses, their meanness or grandeur; that life, itself, is the hero."

[13] In Mike Steen, ed. *A Look at Tennessee Williams* (1969), p. 292. The scuffle with Serafina would hardly be enough to make the shirt "bloodstained", but Williams was probably thinking in terms of Dionysus and the "ram's skin painted red" of his epigraph from St. John Perse. The effect was lost in the movie, not only because it was in black and white, but also because Alvaro was merely clinging to the top of a mast instead of standing dominantly on a high bank.

[14] In his rehearsal notes (COL. 2) Williams says: "Serafina's 'vengo amore' should be shouted triumphantly, and the curtain should not begin to fall until after the line is spoken. Take a few more beats on the curtain, and Serafina can give a little more impact to the line."

[15] Because of Williams's habit of turning back in his tracks to rework earlier drafts, I am particularly unsure of the exact sequence of many of these revisions—though their general drift is clear. For example, Delauney has a draft dated "19 Jan. [1951]" which cuts abruptly from "Rosa, the wrist watch!" to a single short speech in which Serafina proclaims her stigmata and pregnancy, then immediately the final curtain falls (DEL. 13, item 7). Logically, one would assume this was an early draft, but the intervening later material is still there, marked for deletion.

[16] Serafina's "Fuori" (outside) as she finally leaves the house is the acronym of the Gay Liberation movement in Italy (Fronte Unitario Omessuale Rivoluzionare Italiano). There is no way Williams could have known this—indeed, with his habitual ignorance of foreign languages, he misspelled it "Foro" till quite late in the process of revision—but it is a coincidence he would certainly have relished.

[17] "The Timeless World of a Play," *The Rose Tattoo* (New Directions, 1951).