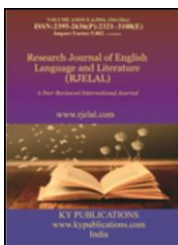




## THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMAN IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' *THE STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* AND LYNN NOTTAGE'S *PROOF!*

Sanaa Mohammed Mahdi (Ph.D)

Instructor, College of Arts  
Al-Mustansiriyah University



### ABSTRACT

Violence practiced against women is of many types; domestic is one of them. This kind of violence often leaves indelible physical and psychological effects on women. This paper discusses the effects of violence against woman in Tennessee Williams' *The Streetcar Named Desire* and Lynn Nottage's *Proof!*. It is divided into three sections followed by a conclusion. Section one, Introduction, illustrates the types of violence and how it is considered a continuous problem. Section two discusses the intimate violence in Tennessee William's *The Streetcar Named Desire* which reveals how the violence leads Blanche, the protagonist to become insane whereas, section three highlights intimate partner violence in Lynn Nottage's *Proof!* which attacks the violence that turns the woman into a killer. The conclusion sums up that any kind of violence against woman must be stopped and ended as since it has disastrous effect not only on woman, but society also.

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### Introduction

It is important to highlight the phenomenon of domestic violence against woman in general regardless of her color and age. Abused and battered woman can be physically and psychologically affected by gender oppression and other factors such as class, sexual allocation and socio-economic status that can complicate the problem in difficult ways. Violence can hinder, stop or prevent victimized woman from achieving a good position in the world.

It is obvious that throughout history, violence against woman is widespread practice. Most women are abused either by their husbands or other men of their family. Man to prove his manhood and be the master of the house used and is still using violence against woman. Thus, woman needs to be protected since the legal system is ineffective in protecting

them that cannot achieve this protection. In most cases, woman becomes victim of violence that causes her destruction physically as well as psychologically. Because of this violence, woman may become insane or murderer.

In 1994, American government identified the most common three types of violence that affect and destroy woman's life. They are rape, domestic violence and pestering. This research paper focuses on domestic violence only as treated by Tennessee Williams' *The Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) in which he discusses the intimate violence of the protagonist's sister and her brother in law which leads to her complete downfall and insanity. Another play is Lynn Nottage's *Proof!* (1993) which concentrates on intimate partner violence that leads to make the wife a killer.

Although Williams and Nottage focus primarily on gender violence within and among the family, they nonetheless present awareness of the destructive violence on woman's life.

#### **Violence against Woman: A Continuous Problem**

Aleks Sierz remarks that "the stage of violence always marking a point of no return as it takes place in real time and real space" (3). In his article, Sudhanva Deshpande considers violence against women as:

a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life (25).

Sometimes violence against woman is considered a hate crime, a type of violence is gender-based, meaning that the acts of violence are committed against woman particularly because she is woman.

Previously the Roman law gave men the right to chastise their wives, even to the point of death, the burning of witches, which was disregarded by both the church and the state (Stedman 3). Moreover, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, English common law allowed man to punish his wife using a stick. This rule for punishment of wives prevailed in England and America until the late of 19<sup>th</sup> century as Stedman remarks (6). In current time, the means of violence developed in the progressed world. We find for example in Mauritania, young girls are forced to be fattened to prepare them for marriage, because obesity is seen as desirable thing for men (Popenoe 13). In many countries around the world, because of poverty the parents oblige their young daughters to marry very old men, or they enforce them to be prostitutes.

Some European countries refer to the widespread problem of violence against woman and recommend taking more efficient ways to deal with this issue. International criticism concentrates on the lack of means to fight violence against woman.

According to The United Nations Declaration about the elimination of violence against woman is that:

violence against women is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations

between men and women and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanism by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men (10).

Violence against woman is a big problem. At least one out of every three women around the world has been beaten, forced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime usually with her family or husband (Prügl 3). Abused women can be physically and psychologically affected by gender oppression and patriarchy in addition to race, class, socio-economic position and other factors that complicate this problem.

Laura O'Toole avers that from ancient ages till our current time, woman suffers and faces various kinds of violence that overwhelms her identity and liberty; depriving her from simplest rights in life. Woman wants love, respect and good position in society (xii).

In United Nations General Assembly reports, the kinds of violence are divided as follows.....

- 1- The violence in the family whether physical or mental aggression, emotional or psychological abuse, crimes committed in the name of honor and forced marriage.
- 2- The violence in the society, such as rape, aggravation at work and exploitation whether sexually or economically.
- 3- Violation of women rights, such as taking them as hostages in armed conflict.

The history of violence against woman especially rape, sexual assault, and domestic violence remains vague because it is not reported due to social standards, taboos, dishonor, and the sensitive nature of the subject (Michau 95). It is very rare to give an obvious image concerning this horrible and illegal act against woman (Watts and etal 14). Therefore, violence against woman is considered one of the important issues in the world since it violates the human rights and keeps woman away from developing her country socially, economically and politically as S.T. Fried points out (2).

As a matter of fact, domestic violence refers to man battering woman which means man always inhabit the position of power and woman is

expected to be powerless and helpless accepting his abuse without complaining. The term domestic violence is not limited to physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual violence and control against woman, it is a determined course of action buttressed by familial, institutional, social, and cultural practices. The most important thing is that oppressed woman used not to tell others about the abuse at home which complicates the matter. Thus, woman's unacceptable silence increases her sufferings and pain at the same time strengthens man's abuse behaviors towards her.

#### **Intimate Violence in *The Streetcar Named Desire***

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) is one of the most highly recognized and creative American dramatists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In most of his plays, he criticizes society and his main concern is the sufferings of human being especially woman. His well-known play, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) was written after the Second World War. The postwar period was a time of change which was so aggressive and fast. Thus, the play shows the conflict between the characters that have the traditional values of the American South with this hostile changing happened in modern America.

Williams sheds light on an important issue that is the violence against woman which marginalizes her in a cruel and insensitive world causing her destruction physically as well as psychologically. Moreover, he focuses on addiction, prostitution, alcoholism, racism and drug in order to show the worst effect of these bad things on the life of woman that makes her a victim in the society. Williams believes that because of the violent treatment of family or society woman resorts to one of these bad and illegal things only to escape from the sufferings.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire* Williams presents two weak women, Blanche Dubois and her sister Stella Kowalski as helpless victims of society that destroys them during their search for their identity and security. Therefore, his main concern is to reveal the domination of man upon woman. Blanche suffers from psychological instability as she cannot live in a society that differs from the one in which she was raised. On contrary, her sister Stella lives under the dominance of her husband Kowalski who

represents the real insight of how man dominates woman. In such man- dominated society, woman has no choices in life; so she is completely destroyed due to the traditions of society as Louis Blackwell remarks (101).

This tragic play concentrates on Blanche, a young woman who invents an artificial world to cover the hideousness of the world she has to live in. After the death of her father, Blanche has lost her family, her young husband whom she loved too much, her fortune, the civil society of her ancestor, her job as a teacher and consequently her reputation and honor as she becomes a fallen woman. After losing her family's wealth, she becomes an isolated woman, a victim of loneliness. Thus, she is lost between her desire and her loneliness. She is aware of her miserable condition as a poor and deprived woman and by marrying she hopes to settle and escape both poverty and loneliness. Calvin Bedient states that Blanche is afraid, "of the future, of the past, of love. of coward, of light, of death and of being deserted " (45) . Despite Blanche is an educated woman and worked as a teacher, she is forced by the beliefs of Southern society that woman must be loving and protected. This means that a traditional woman has limited choices and her only role in the house is to be like a doll. Woman has expected to be skilled in one thing that is to be attractive. Blanche knows that she needs man to protect her, therefore; she does not have the ability to escape or confront man - dominated society.

Her name Blanche, a French name means white wood that refers to her tragic end. Moreover, the title of the play exposes her tragic fate as well as the economic failure of her family (Williams 55) that leads to the loss of their house. The streetcar destined for desire to represent Blanche's decent into disaster. This street is also used by both sisters as understatement for their experience in the violent world.

In a dreary room Blanche comes to live with her sister who married Kowalski Stanley, a rough and violent mechanic man whose attitudes towards her is unmerciful. To conceal her dishonored past, Blanche used to cover things that are dirty with bright things. Drunkenness helps her to escape the

reality of the harsh world finding an asylum in her own imaginative world (Aubrey 215). Through the conversation between the two sisters about brutality, we notice that even the streetcar represented the violence:

*Blanche:* what you are talking about is brutal desire-just – Desire!- the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bangs through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another

*Stella:* Haven't you ever ridden on that street-car?

*Blanche:* It brought me here-Where I'm not wanted and where I'm ashamed to be (112).

This reveals that Blanche's desire and violence in the past increases in the present. Now she suffers from the violent act of her brother-in-law, Stanley. It is obvious that the dramatist concentrates on the concept of violence in order to prove that the cycle of violence combined with passion and desire cannot be broken down. The violence continues and it is very difficult and hard to stop (Bloom 33).

Both Blanche and her sister Stella seek the security of marriage but they choose unsuitable husbands. Blanche married Allan Gray for love but her dreams were shattered by her husband's infidelity with another man. When she discovered that he is a homosexual, he committed suicide. This event affects Blanche greatly as she feels responsible for his suicide. The same for Stella who is married to Stanley, an aggressive man of low social class. Jordan Miller remarks that they are shown as oppressed and victimized women in a violent man-dominant society. Both of them seek love, respect and protection, instead they find a world dominated by men like Stanley. They do not have the ability to escape or defy the standards of such a society (15).

When Blanche sees Stanley for the first time, she is frightened by his rough behavior and violent nature. He dislikes her as she criticizes his bestial nature. Moreover, he considers her not only a threat and a challenge to his authority as a male but also an intruder in his life with Stella. This creates tension between them consequently; he tries to find ways to get rid of her. First, he tells her that a work company named Shaw who used to travel through Laurel, claims to know and see her in a famous hotel

called Flamingo. Blanche denies that but her nervous defense makes him suspect, then he decides to find the truth by himself. After his speech, she begins to talk with herself:

People don't see you-men don't –don't even admit your existence unless they are making love to you. And you've got to have your existence admitted by someone, if you're going to have someone's protection....But I'm scared now-awfully scared. I don't know how much longer I can turn the trick (169).

Secondly his attempt to rape her destroys her as an individual. Though she tries to defend herself, his cruelty is stronger than her (432). Brend A. Murphy avers that this play is "meant to lead the audience into identification with Blanche's perception of this world and of the danger it poses for her in the person of Stanley"(405). Stanley's violent behavior is an expression of the social attitude just as Blanche's adhering frailty represents weakness and failure. His act of violence leads to her madness as she becomes completely insane and is sent to a mental hospital.

Stella after knowing the truth that her sister has many bad affairs with men before her coming tells her husband that if Blanche has changed it is because of the abuse of cruel men like him. The violent acts of men towards her are the main reason of her destruction. Firstly their cruel behavior leads to her downfall at the beginning of her life, then to her complete insanity at the end of the play. Stella feels anguish of what happened to her sister saying "What I have done to my sister? Oh, God, what have I done to my sister? (501). She feels responsible for her sister's insanity as she does not believe her story about Stanley's rape and does not give her any support. She plays a main part in Blanche's downfall as she indirectly helps her husband in his cruel act against her sister.

Stanley plays an important role to destroy Blanche's relation with Mitch who wants to marry her. When Mitch knows her dishonored past, he decides not to marry her; telling that she is not a woman to be trusted and dislikes to be deceived by her lies (212). His speech and violent words cause to increase Blanche's complex psyche. It is obvious that Stanley overwhelmed both Blanche and Stella for

they were raised in a society where women "are treated as ornaments rather than trained for economic independence and face major difficulties when trying to cope with modern times" as Thomas Adler avers (79).

Like other women in her time, Blanche is dependent upon men, although she encourages her sister to leave her offensive husband, believing that she can be happier without him. Blanche admits her weak and dependent nature, a helpless in this harsh world that treats her unkindly. Her attempt to escape into her imaginations especially at the end of the play enables her to protect herself from the harsh disappointments of reality. Thus, imagination has become her main means of self-defense. As a Southern lady, Blanche feels that she is obliged to lie first to herself then to others because society prohibits her from exposing her natural desires directly. She lies in order to be accepted by society and secure a husband. She seems to be a prisoner of her memories. But in her real world and her final struggle against Stanley, she becomes completely insane as she cannot face all the troubles and dilemmas. She is absolutely ruined and defeated. His violence is enough to achieve her final destruction. In the last scene she pretends to be happy despite of the ultimate triumph of reality. She leaves the house without looking back or saying goodbye to anyone. Jordan Miller reveals his sympathetic approach toward Blanche saying that "seeking help, she encounters hostility; seeking love, she encounters scornful rejection, and seeking refuge, she is driven to insanity" (12).

Through this play Williams describes carefully the attitudes of a man who imposes his will on a woman trying to treat her as an inferior creature. This is shown clearly through his interact, talk, and abuse of her. He portrays Blanche and Stella as victims and losers to reveal that woman under the difficult circumstances; mainly the economic, is forced to endure the physical and psychological abuse. Like Stella who prefers to live with her violent husband than facing the poverty and misery of life. Moreover, she is pregnant and this will burden her life. Therefore, staying with this bad husband means that she has to bear his insults, hostility, crudity and violent behaviors. Her friend,

Eunice said that life goes on (154) meaning that Stella becomes a victim of man's dominance. She becomes a completely helpless woman under his physical domination.

Thomas Adler affirms that "young women are treated as ornaments rather than trained for economic independence and face major difficulties when trying to cope with modern times (79). The two women become prisoners of the male-controlled system and traditional notions about women who depend on men economically. In fact, abused woman's life is like hell since the effect of intimate violence is so horrible upon her mentality that makes her incapable of bearing it and finally leads to her complete insanity.

#### **Intimate Partner Violence in *Proof!***

One of the types of domestic violence is intimate partner violence for abused woman is affected physically and psychologically by cruel and violent acts of man. The violence against woman has extended to comprise many aspects that reveal the degree, dynamic and the act of violence performed against her. Violence against woman increases the power of man's domination whereas; woman is helpless and experiencing his cruelty. She even does not think of retaliating.

In 2009, Lynn Nottage (1964) an African American dramatist, was awarded The Pulitzer Prize for her plays that publicly expressed her commitment to end the violence against woman.

In her play *Proof!* (1993), Nottage criticizes American society for not recognizing the aspects of healing and community efforts to end the horrible violence against women who represent half of the world. She calls upon the spiritual world based of justice, protection, kindness and assistance and devoid of any kind of violence not only against black woman but woman in general. For her, American society is responsible for finding suitable and curing ways to protect the abused woman. She wants to awake the unjust world to the miserable and tragic situation of women because of their abusive husbands.

Man used to batter woman physically in many ways such as hitting, slapping and psychologically like feeling hopelessness or losing self-confidence. (Nash 98). Therefore, woman under

the intimate partner violence is considered abused woman, survivor rather than reconsider victim. Tameka Gillum remarks that "Intimate partner violence often caused health problems, sharp stress, and other mental problems as well as make woman face poverty, divorce, unemployment and murder" (57). It is obvious that economic factor is the main reason that leads to domestic violence. Woman from lower class experiences domestic violence more than middle class woman. Susan Miller and Lee Lovanni point out that "Women who are living in poverty face greater risk of violence than other women and have fewer resources to draw on for assistance" (288).

The one-act play *Poof!*, is about a woman taking an attitude against a usual history of domestic violence. The play consists of three characters, Loureen, her husband Samuel, and her best friend Florence. The play reinforces the reality that intimate partner violence is a continuing problem that negatively affects society until current time. The husband is abusive and violent, carried further away into the realm of insanity. When he moves beyond the psychological limit, he becomes a brutal wife-battering murderer.

Nottage chooses the house which is a warm place but in the play is of no value as it becomes an unsafe place for woman. From the house, the dramatist only used one setting that is the kitchen in order to evaluate the woman as the kitchen is the center of the house where women in particular work and communicate with each other. The kitchen is the place where woman feels comfort, be creative and pass long time. Moreover, in this play the kitchen is a place that gives her a kind of strength to defend herself. By concentrating on the house, Nottage discloses that the house is the most violent social setting in our society and the family is perhaps the most violent social group. In fact, the house is considered the main place where woman experiences the sense of horror.

This play reveals the pervasive problem of intimate partner violence in order to change the house from being the most violent place to be a lovely one. The event begins in darkness since Samuel, the husband as usual is irritated and quarrels with his wife, Loureen who in a cruel tone

starts to defend herself as she suffers a lot from his physical abuse:

*Samuel:* when I count to ten  
son'want to see Ya! I don' want to hear. Ya!  
One, two, three, four.....

*Loureen:* also in darkness, damn you to hell  
Samuel (Nottage 93).

Her statement "Damn you to hell Samuel" is as significant since it awards her freedom from this horrible and abusive marriage. In addition, the word 'hell' turns out to be a physical place where Loureen wished him to go. Also when Florence smells the air which is like something burnt, she asks "what the devil" (94). The word 'devil' refers to the fact that Samuel really will go to hell. This incident happens in the darkness to expose the dreadful feeling of a woman whose life is completely dark. After damning him to hell, the kitchen is covered with smoke ashes. Loureen starts to call him but in vain as Samuel is now a pile of ash. By standing over the pile, she realizes the importance of the situation that causes his death. She begins to apologize for not washing his shirt, begging him to come home back. In this critical moment, she yields to her true emotions.

When she realizes that she killed him and he will never come back, she asks the help of her best friend Florence telling her "I think I killed him" (101). Florence tries to convince her that his death is a blessing thing; "But you got a broom and a dust pan, you don't need anything more than that...He was a bastard and nobody will care that he's gone" (102). She decides to call the police to report the accident in order to reveal it instead of hiding it.

Loureen remembers her disappointment from previous meetings with community services that do not offer her any help and sadly replies no. In this concern, Nottage said that "Nearly half the women on death row in the United States were convicted of killing abusive husbands. Spontaneous combustion is not recognized as a capital crime" (91).

Beth Richie remarks that "everyday efforts to survive are not only discounted or invisible, but are increasingly criminalized in contemporary society" (5). In fact, woman and particularly black

woman are considered a criminal rather than victim of crimes. Instead of helping and supporting her as a victimized woman by her partner violence, the society judges her as a criminal who should be put in prison. Richie points out that all the evidences are against Loureen. Samuel is dead, the kitchen is burned and the only remaining things from the ashes are his eyeglasses. Therefore, the defense is so weak because in America, the laws do not protect woman from intimate partner violence. Consequently, Loureen is sentenced to spend her life in prison. Richie adds that "at least half of the women there are battered women, my experience as an activist and advocate in anti-violence programs had me convinced that far more than that have been abused by their partners" (3).

Loureen becomes more contented and less unsteady by freeing herself, "I should be mourning or praying, I should be thinking of the burial, but all that keeps popping into my mind is what will I wear on television when I share my horrible and wonderful story with a studio audience (98). Loureen's mixed emotions reveals that she loves her husband but his ill-treatment pushes her to kill him. He is not only orally abusive but physically as well. During all the years they lived together, he used to hurt her. Thus, she decides to free herself emotionally, psychologically, physically and mentally from him.

Loureen comes to understand the power of her voice and how to use it as a weapon against her husband's violent behavior. Therefore, she begins to narrate everything happened in the morning:

*Loureen:* (Whimpers): I killed him! I killed Samuel !

*Florence:* Come again? ... He's dead dead ?

*Loureen:* wrings her hands and nods her head twice, mouthing "dead dead". Florence backs away .

No, stop it, I don't have time for this. I'm going back upstairs. You know how Samuel hates to find me here when he gets home. You're not going to get me (94).

Her speech exposes that even after his death she still feels frightened from him. His violent act affects her greatly that she dislikes to talk loudly saying that "Samuel always said if I raised my

voice something horrible would happen" (97). This foreshadows something horrible happened that he was killed.

Florence encourages and tells Loureen that the most important is that she is free as she gets rid of him completely. Now she can live a respectable life devoid of any kind of violence. Nothing can compensate the sense of freedom:

*Florence:* Did that muthafucka hit you again?

*Loureen:* No...he exploded. Boom! Right in front of me. He was shouting like he does, being all colored, then he raised up that big crusty hand to hit me, and poof, he was gone... I barely got the words out and I'm looking down at a pile of ash (96).

This conversation exemplifies the reality that even when he is dying, he insists on hurting her as if violence was in his blood. Then Loureen adds:

Women from across the country will make pilgrimage to me, laying pies and pot roast at my feet and asking the good saint to make their husbands turn to dust. How often does a man like Samuel get dammed to hell, and go? (97)

Hence, this moment is considered a crucial one as she decides to expel him from her life emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

Loureen sees her liberty from an abusive marriage as an opportunity to help and support other women in gaining freedom as well. She begins to share her story with other women to awake them for their miserable situation under the oppression of intimate partner. Her case will be considered a healing for other women to demand their rights and not endure such violent husbands. Although, there is no hope in her case that she must be imprisoned (109), the most important thing is that she wants others to know and realize that healing is a route each one must walk in.

Loureen understands that no woman can imagine how her husband's violence increases against her, but it happens eventually. Woman should refuse to stay with abusive husband, avoid using any excuses or pretext that dehumanizes her. Woman must acknowledge her self-worth and leave unhealthy relationship that destroys her psychologically before

physically. Partner violence can result in more abusive behaviors.

In *Proof!*, Loureen uses the word 'battered' once only for a movement toward personal empowerment saying:

He's not coming back. Oh no, how could he? It would be a miracle! Two in one day...I could be canonized. Worst yet, could be... All that needs to happen now is for my palms to bleed and I'll be eternally remembered as Saint Loureen, the patron of battered wives (97).

This shows that her current situation is not as bad as her life and marriage with Samuel. She recognizes that she spent most of her life meaninglessly, with a man who does not deserve her sacrifice. Nonetheless, her words of rejecting the violence completely are a powerful assertion of achieving her identity and starting a new life devoid of violence.

Andrea Smith criticizes the social system for not ending the partner violence stating that:

Reliance on the criminal justice system to address gender violence would make sense if the threat was posed by just a few crazed men whom we can lock up. But the prison system is not equipped to address a violent culture in which an overwhelming number of people batter their partners, unless we are prepared to imprison tens of millions of people. (419)

In *Proof!*, Nottage presents African American woman to criticize and attack the society for its passive role in defending the oppressed woman and not taking severe procedures to end intimate partner violence. She highlights woman's abusive marriage who lives in unbearable pain and has been beaten as there are no laws that protect a woman from her husband and punish him (76). Abused woman needs a supportive community in order to start a new life and mix with other people after such horrible experience, like Loureen. This means psychological healing is a catalyst for complete wellness.

Concerning intimate partner violence against woman, Nottage shows that there is no tolerance method as Samuel abuses his wife and prior to his death demonstrates no desire to stop or end. In this play, Nottage wants African American society to end violence against black woman; particularly black community must be the first which

defends the rights of black woman. It is obvious that man who abuses woman is a destructive threat to the entire society. Modern world must refuse any kind of violence against woman in general. For Loureen, this is a world where violence, cunning and deceit are virtues whereas patience, gentleness and innocence are weaknesses.

Clifton Marsh remarks that "Women in the entire world not only American women have no faith in the criminal justice system to protect their rights as citizens" (149). No protection means that there are more women being violated and the ill-treated. Thus, the need for more suitable methods of supporting women in the healing process is essential and important. It is obvious that the social change, coordinating, well-being and shared wealth for all the people regardless of the identity, origin, color or social address are the best ways to end all forms of oppression and dehumanization. Therefore, we must establish a society devoid of any kinds of violence against all the women. Thus, the community must involve in ending the violence against woman.

Nottage in her play intends to speak out for an abused woman, notably black one in order to break the silence and attract the attention of the world about this dreadful phenomenon. She speaks on behalf of those women who do not have or know the means to express their sufferings. She refuses to describe woman as 'victims' or treated her as such. Her aim is to show the beauty of the woman who is surviving the intimate partner violence and not wrapped in anything that hinders her way to healing. Because of her strong defense of the rights of abused woman, her play *Proof!* becomes well known in America and attracts the attention of the United Nations.

#### Conclusion

Many dramatists such as Suzan Lori Parks, Caryl Phillips, Lynn Nottage, Pearl Cleage Blends, Thomas Middleton, George Wilkins, Tennessee Williams, Shirley Graham, Zora Neale Hurston, Angelina Grimké, and others write and discuss the issue of violence against women especially rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence. All of them believe that through their plays they can illuminate the darkness and speak the truth to people. They consider drama as a



substance of healing that provokes the people to think more critically about this important issue. They should fight and stand against any kind of assault notably the domestic violence in order to end it. For them, drama is a resistance tool through which, they can advocate the rights of woman.

Both, Tennessee Williams and Lynn Nottage focus on a fundamental problem that is the violence against woman which remains an aspect of concern for many dramatists as it violates the rights of woman who represents half of the world. In fact, it is not only a problem but a phenomenon that spreads in the entire world. They present a realistic view of abused and oppressed woman in modern world to reveal that violence against woman affects her greatly. It results either in her insanity or imprisonment.

Through *The Streetcar Named Desire*, Williams expresses his own struggles with depression, violence, mental illness, alcohol and drugs that cost him his life. His intention to present both women as victims is to show that modern society empowers man and victimizes woman. He wants to awake the world to this horrible issue in order to stop and end the violent acts against woman and give her the right to achieve her identity and independence.

In *Proof*, Nottage focuses on battered woman who should overcome the culture of silence about abuse in order to challenge incompetent and insufficient normal facilities and find another ways to speak out and about the intimate partner violence. Abusive man is a horrible and damaging threat not only to the woman but to the world. She severely criticizes the society for witnessing the escalation of violence against woman in the absence of deterrent law.

Though, both Williams and Nottage reinforce the reality that violence against woman is a continuous issue that damages society till now, they instead of being pessimists, incite people and society to be civilized and not return to inhumanity. They emphasize the importance of breaking the silence around such a horrible dilemma for woman might be a mother, sister or wife, so she deserves whatever good in life; better education, treatment and admiration. Their main concern is that woman

should not only recognize her personal worth, but should demand man to treat her with gratitude and respect.

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