

Journal:

While at the grocery store you bump into an oddly familiar face--it's your evil twin! The evil twin follows you home and tries to convince your family (or friends) that she's you. How did you prove to your loved ones that you are the real you and the twin is an imposter?

(ten minutes)

DOL:

^O Our class will be involved, ^I I think, in doing a project sometime on the Civil War; however, it is ~~to~~ late to begin this Semester.

^{too}

"^F for you to finish on time, you're going to have to work hard, ~~and meet the scheduled~~ ~~deadline~~" ^F father ^B ~~Bonsan~~ Stated.

Which aspects of *The Glass Menagerie* are realistic? Which aspects are the most nonrealistic? What function do the nonrealistic elements serve?

In the Production Notes to *The Glass Menagerie*, Williams writes disparagingly of the “straight realistic play with its genuine Frigidaire and authentic ice cubes.” Generally, Williams found realism to be a flat, outdated, and insufficient way of approaching emotional experience. As a consequence, *The Glass Menagerie* is fundamentally a nonrealistic play. Distortion, illusion, dream, symbol, and myth are the tools by means of which the action onstage is endowed with beauty and meaning. A screen displays words and images relevant to the action; music intrudes with melodramatic timing; the lights rise or dim according to the mood onstage, not the time of day; symbols like the glass menagerie are hammered home in the dialogue without any attempt at subtlety. The play’s style may best be described as expressionistic—underlying meaning is emphasized at the expense of realism. The play’s lack of stylistic realism is further explained by the fact that the story is told from Tom’s memory. As Tom puts it, the fact that what we are seeing is a memory play means that “it is dimly lighted, it is sentimental, it is not realistic. In memory everything seems to happen to music.”

Though the style of the play is overwhelmingly nonrealistic, its content is a different matter. Williams also claimed that inventive stylistic devices like those he favored must never lead a play to “escape its responsibility of dealing with reality.” Emotions like Tom’s boredom, Amanda’s nostalgia, and Laura’s terror are conveyed with all the vividness of reality. So are the sorrowful hostility between Tom and Amanda and the quiet love between Tom and Laura. Similarly, the bleak lower-middle-class life of the Wingfield family is portrayed with a great deal of fidelity to historical and social realities. In fact, it often seems as if the main effect of the play’s nonrealistic style is to increase the sense of reality surrounding its content. The play, as Tom says, is committed to giving its audience “truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion.”