

**Tuesday, March 1, 2011, Margaret Thornton, "Simple, Direct and Terrible."**

MS. MUTI: Good morning. The wonderful thing this morning is there are no formal announcements so we can get started right away. Thank you so much for being here. Because I am the head of school at Ashley Hall and because Margaret Bradham Thornton is an alumna of Ashley Hall, I cannot resist beginning my introductory remarks without a recitation of our school's mission statement. "Ashley Hall produces an educated woman who is independent, ethically responsible, and prepared to meet the challenges of society with confidence."

Margaret Bradham Thornton exemplifies those traits of character and conduct which our mission values. With the publication of her celebrated edition of *Tennessee Williams' Notebooks*, which received, among other awards, the Bronze ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award in the Autobiography/Memoir Category and the C. Hugh Holman Prize for the best volume of southern literary scholarship published in 2006, given by the Society for the Study of Southern Literature, Mrs. Thornton made a vital and lasting contribution to literary scholarship. A project fueled by her own passion, informed by truly remarkable erudition and research, and undertaken as an independent endeavor unmotivated by any academic promotion or career advancement, the *Notebooks* are clearly the work of an educated and independent woman. Ethical responsibility manifests itself both in Margaret Thornton's scrupulous attention to rigorous standards of editorial excellence and in her compassionate, profoundly understanding glimpses of Williams' alternately brilliant and erratic career, as well as his bedeviled personal life. The scope of this undertaking demonstrates not only preparedness but a willingness to take on challenging tasks with confidence in their successful completion.

While I would like to credit Ashley Hall exclusively for preparing Margaret Thornton for her subsequent endeavors, I should at least acknowledge that her undergraduate college, Princeton, no doubt also contributed something to her education. Interestingly, after receiving her bachelor of arts degree with a major in English, Margaret chose the world of high-stakes business over the allures of a bucolic academic career and joined Goldman Sachs, more evidence of her willingness to face the challenges of society with confidence. No doubt, too, the analytical skills required for success on Wall Street aided Margaret in her work on the Williams archives.

In short, I hope you forgive my taking great pride in introducing Margaret Bradham Thornton as an exemplary Ashley Hall alumna, one whose achievements in scholarly research and practical economics reveal a woman who is creative, intelligent, discerning, compassionate, collaborative, and purposeful. Margaret Bradham Thornton is a gifted and dedicated woman who has earned her position as an authority on the life and work of a seminal figure in American theater and who brings to us today the rich benefits of that achievement. Please help me in welcoming Margaret.

MS. THORNTON: Well, thank you very much for that lovely introduction. Thinking about Ashley Hall, you made me think of my teachers who used to always get after me in my Latin translation to take more care, because I wanted to do my schoolwork and go play tennis. Anyway, they used to always say, "Can't you just spend a little more time thinking about poetic words?" And my English teacher, Mrs. Keith, used to always get after me for, you know, taking more care with my writing.

When I was working on Tennessee Williams, I found the man who had his death mask and no one knew it existed, and I had to beg and plead with him to let me have it. He was in New York. And finally, after too many inquiries, he said I could take it and have it photographed, but there were a lot of contingencies. I had to give him everything that was in my purse, promising that I would come back, and I couldn't take a taxi because he was worried that there would be a wreck and the mask would be crushed. So I had to promise to walk down Fifth Avenue. I found a photographer of African masks who was going to photograph it, because it's quite a difficult thing to photograph. And so I had to promise that I'd go from 54th Street to 19th Street, walk down Fifth Avenue, carrying it in my arms carefully. And I just had this moment where I thought of Mrs. Keith and Mrs. Huddow, that they would finally be proud of me for taking care.

Anyway, when I thought about the enduring legacy of Tennessee Williams in relation to the theme of this conference, I thought of three things. Number one, his dedication to hard work, his empathy for humanity as expressed through his characters, and his resilience. And I'd like to discuss those three topics.

Imagine you finished your third year of college and your father makes you drop out because of your mediocre grades. Instead, he makes you take a job in a shoe warehouse where, for the next three years, you type out orders, dust off boxes, and deliver sample cases of shoes. At the end of the day, like Tom in *The Glass Menagerie*, you come home, tank up on coffee and spend most of the night writing short stories that you can't sell.

This is a situation Thomas Lanier Williams found himself in in 1932. After three years of this punishing routine, he collapsed from exhaustion, quit his job at the warehouse, and recuperated at home. While he was getting healthier, his sister, Rose, who was his closest companion, 16 months older than he was, and who would become the model for over 15 characters in his plays, was beginning to deteriorate mentally. Over the next eight years, Williams would spend his time trying to write about his sister. It would culminate in *The Glass Menagerie*, but it was a real struggle.

Fortunately, about this time, Williams began keeping a journal. And in this journal he writes about himself, to himself, and it can be seen not only as an emotional record, but as a creative record. And if you spend time with it and understand what he's talking about, you can basically see not only how he taught himself how to write, but how his manuscripts have evolved.

If you bear with me -- and I hope there are some English majors in the audience -- I would like to use *The Glass Menagerie* as an example and just show you how he created this. I think it's an amazing example of hard work. I talk to my children about it because there's no "American Idol" story here. It's just, as Faulkner said, the agony and the sweat of creation.

Now, back to our college dropout. After Williams recuperated at home, he enrolled at the University of Iowa for his fourth and final year. They just started a theater department, and he was quite interested in that. So he got in and he graduated from college at the age of 27. About this time, he writes about his sister, "Our worst fears about Rose were confirmed. Her trouble has been diagnosed as dementia praecox, a catastrophe worse than death. We have had no deaths in our family, but slowly, by degrees, something was happening much uglier and more terrible than death. I think of you, dear, and wish so much that I could help you."

Shortly after that, he writes in his journal, "Have written a rather nice short story, 'The Four-Leaf Clover,' about a girl going mad. Memories of Rose."

He's writing short stories and he's writing some plays. He finds out about the group theater in New York. There's a play contest. So he sends some of his one-act plays for this contest, for writers under 25. The problem is, he's 28 years old. So what does he do? He lies about his age, changes his name from Thomas Lanier Williams to Tennessee Williams and gives the return address as his grandparents. He doesn't win the contest, but he wins special mention for these one-act plays and thereafter, he was Tennessee Williams. And when he gets the special award, he writes, "My next play will be simple, direct, terrible. A picture of my own heart. There will be no artifice in it. I will speak the truth as I see it. It will be myself without concealment or evasion, and with a fearless, unashamed frontal assault upon life that will leave no room for trepidation."

Such confessional writing would demand the courage Tennessee Williams would soon find. He begins a short-story portrait of a girl in class, and here's his description. "A poet with a job in a warehouse remembers the evening he invited a friend from work to dinner with his mother and terribly shy sister, Laura."

So February of '41 he's basically written *The Glass Menagerie* in short-story form. But again, I talk about this kind of scope that he gives himself creatively. He sort of kept sort of allowing himself huge range. Six months

later he writes, "Just finished new play. Predominantly humorous now. A sort of 'Life with Mother.'"

So he takes a story about his sister, a short story, and it's a rather sad story, and then he tries it as a play with some humor in it which focuses on his mother, and he would use aspects of this humorous play in *The Glass Menagerie*, specifically when the mother is trying to sell magazine subscriptions to her friend. Six months later he writes -- and this is really important -- "Just finished *The Spinning Song*."

Now, there are only a couple of fragments of *The Spinning Song*. But there's a character of Blanche who lives on the plantation Belle Reve, and she has two children and is estranged from her husband. So in this manuscript he has the material for both *The Glass Menagerie* and *Streetcar*. And it's too unwieldy for him and he spends the next year trying to write the story, but he can't handle it. There's too much. It's too unwieldy.

At the beginning of 1943, his sister has a lobotomy, which he did not know about, and he writes his mother, "I did not at all understand the news about Rose. What kind of operation was it, and what was it for?" And he doesn't mention his sister for another seven weeks in his journals. And then he just has one sentence. "Rose, her head cut open, a knife thrust through her brain." And that's all he says for a while.

And this was brutal for him because he always felt guilty. He didn't know anything about this lobotomy. She had a prefrontal lobotomy and she was reduced to a sort of catatonic state. So from that point on, her personality had been completely erased.

But this is a turning point for him because he leaves all that material to the side and focuses now solely on his sister. He takes that short story, "A Portrait of a Girl in Glass," and writes it as a one-act play called *The Gentleman Caller*. About this time he needs money, so his agent gets him a job in Hollywood. And a footnote there, he gets fired about after six weeks because he does nothing and he only works on his own work. But once he gets to Hollywood, he gets seduced by Hollywood and he begins to think of *The Glass Menagerie* or *The Gentleman Caller* in terms of *Gone With the Wind*. And he writes his agent, "I feel that this could be made into a very moving and beautiful screenplay, much better than the stage version could be, only it would have to run unusually long, about as long as *Gone With the Wind*."

And then he describes her. He has the opening shots, and he says, "Flat fields, dark cypress breaks, the river and the levee, the bluffs. Sharecropper cabins, an immense Greek revival mansion."

He's describing *Gone With the Wind*. And *The Glass Menagerie* was set in a tenement building, and the way they got up to it was a fire escape. So a month later he's still thinking about *Gone With the Wind*, and he says, "One film treatment ends with Laura sitting on the front porch with almost a regiment of young soldiers approaching." So all of the gentleman callers are moving in. And he says, "Perhaps at the very end, the first or second one," meaning Tom or his father, the traveling salesman, "returns from his travels. At any rate, Amanda has finally found security and rest." You know, the Hollywood happy ending.

So you know, he goes that far with that. He then isn't happy with it. He returns to the short story that he had started. He thinks it's a bloody mess. He still kind of believes in Hollywood everything has happy endings, so he takes this play, *The Gentleman Caller*, and writes it as a one-act comedy called *The Pretty Trap*, and at the end, Laura and the gentleman caller kiss and walk off into the sunset and everything is, you know, perfect. And the mother says, "Girls are a pretty trap. That's what they have always been and always will be, even when dreams plus action take over the world."

Interesting he would use "the pretty trap," some of that language in *The Glass Menagerie*.

But by fall of 1943, reality sets in and he writes in his journals, "Just read over the one fairly long thing I have done out here, the one-act version of *The Gentleman Caller*. It is appalling. Something has gone definitely wrong." And he said, "I returned to the original version of *The Gentleman Caller*. It won't be a total loss after

all. But it is very, very sentimental. Ah, well. I am not Strindberg. I must work within my limits."

So he spends the complete next year working on *The Glass Menagerie*. He changes the title from *The Gentleman Caller* to *The Glass Menagerie*. A year later he writes to his agent, "I am having *The Glass Menagerie*, formerly *The Gentleman Caller*, typed up. All in all, I'm not displeased with the outcome. That is when I consider the terrible compulsive struggle it was to do, and what a frightful sentimental mess it might have well been and was at some stages. It needs a good deal of pruning, condensing, possible rearranging. Even in this version, I think it contains my sister. And that was the object."

So when you take a step back, he took the story of the sister, it was a short story, then a play, then he went way out to Hollywood with *Gone With the Wind*, and a film, he comes back to a short story, tries it on as a one-act comedy before writing *The Glass Menagerie* -- and I don't think one can focus on this enough -- because he didn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. He did not know where he was going, but it was that compulsive struggle to get it right. And when you read *The Glass Menagerie*, I think it's one of his most perfect plays. It seems seamless. The structure seems perfect and you feel as if he wrote it, you know, just sitting down one afternoon without stopping.

Williams would replicate his creative process basically in the creation of all of his plays. He would take an idea and he would write it as a short story or a one-act play, and then he might swap it into a one-act play or short story, depending on which he began with, and then he would let it rest for a while. And I did this study of all of his plays and the genesis from the beginning of the idea or the short story or one-act play to the full-length play. The time spent could be anywhere from two to 17 years, the average being about eight years. And what I find intriguing about that is, I think it relates to the empathy that he had for his characters because once he created them, they were with him. They never went away. They lived with him.

And when you think about his character list, just taking his three great plays, *The Glass Menagerie*, Tom, Amanda, Laura, *Streetcar*, Blanche, Stella, Stanley, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Maggie, Brick, Big Daddy, if they walked into this room, I think we would all know who they were. And I don't think there is any other playwright with the exception of Shakespeare who's created so many iconic characters. But his characters were more alive to him than the people around him.

And as I did with *The Glass Menagerie*, taking a play and sort of explaining how he created it, I'd like to focus on two of his characters and just to kind of reveal how he thought about his characters. One of the characters that I have always been intrigued by is Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, because I didn't know where he came from. For a lot of Williams' characters, he used his sister or his mother as models for them, and he even used himself as the musician or the poet, such as *Sweet Bird of Youth* and *The Glass Menagerie*, But Brick was a wealthy athlete and he was married. So I was always curious where he came from. And when I was doing research on this book, I think I found his genesis, and that was in the neighboring state of Georgia.

Williams spent the summer of '42 in Macon, Georgia, at the home of his good friend Jordan Massey. And Jordan Massey's family was prominent in Macon. In fact, his father was the model for Big Daddy in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and, in fact, Burl Ives looked just like Jordan Massey's father.

A careful understanding of this world in which Jordan Massey lived. There was a small group of young men who were gay, and they lived this very secretive life from everyone in this conservative town. And Williams was very close to these young men. A number of them went on to marry, and their marriages were not successful. So I believe that Williams got to know these young men very well and watched what happened in their lives, because he met them in 1942, and *Cat* was produced in 1955. So sort of watching people and how their lives turned out he was always sort of intrigued by.

And if you read some of what he said about Brick, he writes in his journal of Kazan who's the producer of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, "Got a five-page letter from Kazan elucidating -- not too lucidly -- his remaining objection to

the play. I do get his point, but I'm afraid he doesn't quite get mine. Things are not always explained. Situations are not always resolved. Characters don't always progress."

Later on he writes, "The poetic mystery of *Brick* is a poem of the play -- not its story, but the poem of the story -- and must not be dispelled by any dishonest conclusions about him." And this is an important bit. "I don't know him any better than I know my closest relative or dearest friend, which isn't well at all. The only people we think we know well are those who mean little to us."

Now, I have never seen in literature anyone write about their characters in this way. About Maggie he says, "I'm always rewriting a lot of act one, putting in a tighter, straighter line." And here you see the sort of constant striving for perfection, for making it better. "Concentrating on the character of Margaret with emphasis on those things about her which make her human, understandable, and likeable, someone who's always crouched at the feet of the rich and lucky, with a smile of the beggar and the claws of cat, expecting a kick but begging for something better and willing to give it for plenty. A normal, though desperate, person; a fighter, after all. Maggie, the cat, has to give Brick some instruction in how to hold your position on a hot tin roof, which is human existence, which you have got to accept on any terms."

Williams was fascinated by the sense of mystery between two people, and he understood that sometimes it could not be resolved. In *Summer and Smoke*, John confesses to Alma, "There have only been three or four times that we've come face-to-face, and each of those times we seem to be trying to find something in each other without knowing what it was that we wanted to find."

Now, that line was written 65 years ago, in 1946, but it's incredibly modern and I think it will remain modern. And I think the reason that Williams continues to kind of grow stronger and stronger is because he really writes about the mysteries of the human heart, which I don't think will ever go out of style, and what Faulkner referred to in his Nobel Prize speech as the human heart in conflict with itself, that that's what makes good literature.

Over the next 20 years, from 1959 to 1979, Williams kept working and he really sort of had gone out of favor. Pinter and Albee were sort of the new playwrights. But during that time he wrote 15 new plays. He was a compulsive creator. He revised and expanded three earlier plays, he published a novel, a book of short stories, and a volume of poetry. Only one work in this period, *The Night of the Iguana*, a play based loosely on the short story of the same title that he wrote in 1946, received positive reviews. But even the play, which Williams described as how to live beyond despair and still live, was mixed. And from that point onward, his plays had decreasing runs on Broadway. Soon he couldn't get a play on Broadway. He was lucky if he could get it off-Broadway. At the very end, you know, I think one of his plays ran for three days at a community theater. So he really saw a huge decline, not only in some of his work, but also the critical reaction was totally brutal. He kept offering a piece of his heart, and the critics were saying things such as -- one critic suggested he should change his name to Missouri. Another said the kindest thing to assume is that Williams died shortly after completing *Sweet Bird of Youth*, and that his subsequent ever-more-dismal plays are the work of a lover who has learned to impersonate him perfectly in daily life but only very crudely in playwrighting.

There was one gratuitously mean-spirited clever comment about him after another. And where I greatly admire him is that he still kept writing. He didn't let that stop him. He still kept offering something of his soul, some vulnerability to the public, because that's what he loved doing. In 1979, he looked back over the past decades and wondered, "Did I die by my own hand? Or was I destroyed slowly and brutally by a conspiratorial group? Perhaps I was never meant to exist at all. But if I hadn't, a number of my creative beings would have been denied their passionate existence. The best I can say for myself is that I work like hell."

By the end of his journals in 1979, a few years before his death, Williams, who had made a positive religion out of the simple act of endurance, wrote, "Where do I go from here?" Very few individuals could have withstood the sustained and at times mean-spirited critical reaction that he faced. In his acceptance speech for his Nobel Prize, Faulkner said, "I believe that man will not merely endure. He will prevail. He is immortal because he

has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. No one exemplifies these three qualities of compassion and sacrifice and endurance more than Williams."

I'd be happy to take some questions, but before I do, I'd like to leave you with one of my favorite passages from the journals, which I think exemplifies his spirit. He wrote, "Openings come quickly sometimes. Like a blue space in running clouds, a complete overcast, then a blaze of light, and there is heaven again and I am in it."

So I'm happy to take any questions, if anyone has questions.

MR. GALBRAITH: If you have a question, please state your name and everything, because it goes on the record.

I'm Bruce Galbraith, executive director. I'd love to hear about how you did what you did. We talk to our students and encourage them and so on, teaching them that this is both an art but a craft, and the work you put into it. What was your process and how long was the process and what were your days like?

MS. THORNTON: Let's see. I was meant to finish in three years, and it took ten years. I'll start at the beginning. I was asked to read the journals, to see what I thought of them, by a friend who was executor of his estate. We were talking earlier about loving to read, and I love to read. At Ashley Hall, I read all the time. And I don't quite remember what was assigned, but I never stopped reading. And I kept that throughout my life.

So the executor knew I kept a hand in literature and wrote book reviews, so he said to me, "Do me a favor. Read these and let me know what you think."

We were living in London at the time, and this box arrived, with these really badly copied pages of journals. And it was about 14 inches thick, so it was rather delicious to me. It was fun to see what it was. So I read them. They were really out of order. A lot of them weren't dated or they were partially dated. So to really even figure out what it was -- and they were all handwritten. So I just spent nine months typing them out and trying to get them in some order. And when I did, I didn't have them quite correct, but I realized that they were this emotional record of a writer, and I loved it because he didn't write for any audience. It was really talking to himself. And so it was this rare record of hearing a voice change over time. Because, say, unlike a biography where someone's telling you about the person, or letters where the writer assumes the voice of his recipient or a memoir where you look back over your life and remember it differently, it was happening in real time.

So I told the executor what I thought should happen. I thought they should be published, and I didn't think there was any sort of moral issue about, should this be published, because there weren't any dark secrets. There wasn't anything that he should be embarrassed about.

Later on, I found a letter that he wrote in which he said, "Someday these should be published, with footnote by their author," so I was rather thrilled by that.

Then we went to Yale with a proposal and the executor wanted them to be in an academic press that would remain in print, and they accepted the proposal and then they just let me do what I -- they just let me. I had a wonderful editor at Yale. I missed the three-year mark and no one called, so that was kind of great, because I was very far away. And I missed the six-year mark. So around year seven I got a call from my editor, to whom I had not even spoken, really, and sort of, "How are things going? Maybe we should meet."

I explained to him what I was trying to do, because they're rather elliptical. If you're writing to yourself, you're not going to say, "I was working on *The Glass Menagerie* or *The Gentleman Caller*, which is the first version of *The Glass Menagerie*." So I had to try and figure out not only what these manuscripts were -- and there are over 2000 unpublished manuscripts -- because he had a very inefficient way of writing, and he kept everything, which was great, and he didn't have a word processor.

But he was wonderful in that he didn't, unlike, say, Truman Capote, get seduced by fame. So his friends were not famous people. But that made it really difficult to figure out who they were. So I spent a lot of time trying to figure out all that. And I wanted to see what they looked like, because no one knew who they were. Or when he's writing about an unpublished manuscript, I wanted to read it. So that's why I'd put excerpts in the journal, so people could get a flavor for where he was.

Anyway, that's what I did. And I showed it to my editor in year nine, and he said he liked it, and that was sort of the story of it. And he really supported me in putting the footnotes on the left-hand side of the page, just sort of gloss. So that's what happened.

SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: Juggling this position at Goldman Sachs and this world of scholarship is still a little bit of a question in my mind, and I'm kind of wondering how to reconcile it. And other than drive and survive in that world, and then to be able to persist in your scholarship work on Tennessee Williams, could you --

MS. THORNTON: I understand why you asked that. Growing up in Charleston with my father, who was a heart surgeon, and there was really no business around, I went to Princeton, and Wall Street was like the Wild West, and I was just curious. I was intrigued. And they were tough jobs to get, so I thought it would be fun to try.

But Wall Street was different back then, too, because it was more entrepreneurial. When I arrived at Goldman, I worked with someone who was a Rhodes Scholar, someone who had studied medieval literature, had a graduate degree in that, so it was this eclectic group of people. And so it was finding out about a world that I didn't understand. I worked with a lot of smart people and did projects, and I was just constantly learning about things.

So curiosity, I think, is the thing that has always kind of set me off in different directions. I love to write and I love to read, and even at Goldman I kept my hand in literature and wrote book reviews. I stopped working when I had children, so I continued to write critical pieces and things.

I don't know if that's answering your question. But it wasn't about business, per se. It was just about learning about another part of the world.

MR. GALBRAITH: "I just heard a speaker, and she told me all about Tennessee Williams and she learned that" -- what did you discover about him that nobody ever knew before?

MS. THORNTON: Well, I learned a couple of things. One, I don't know if no one knew it before, but the biographers about Tennessee Williams talked about how he was always bordering on the brink of insanity, because there was a lot of instability in his family, his father was an alcoholic, his sister was a paranoid schizophrenic, but I didn't know how you create it. I don't know if any of you have written creative pieces, but you know, it's hard work and requires a lot of discipline. And that didn't match with the body of work that he produced.

As soon as I got the project, I went around to see as many people as I could who were still alive, because there weren't many people left. And I went to see Paul Bowles in Morocco, who was at the very end of his life and I said, "Mr. Bowles, you knew Tennessee Williams in the '40s. Everyone talks about how he was sort of always bordering on the brink of insanity, that was the term," and he said, "He was the sanest person I knew. Look how hard he worked. Look how he created. You can't do that as a sort of fragile person. Now, he was incredibly sensitive. And I think that's reflected in his work."

But the lesson for me -- someone asked me -- I never met him -- "If you met him, what would you say to him?"

And I think I would say how much I admired him, not for his creative genius which he definitely had, but just his hard work. He was an incredibly humble person, because it was always about the work. And I greatly admire that. We have children from age 19 to seven, and I just keep trying to impress on them that you don't always know where you're going, and in this world in which they live, where everything is so instant, from the Internet to these television shows and reality TV shows, "American Idol," where people become famous for nothing, they don't know. You know, they think it's all so easy.

So just that sheer hard work. It worries me because I just don't see that many examples of it in our culture that children can identify with.

MR. CLARKSON: Good morning. I'm Bill Clarkson, and your love and passion for this project is quite obvious. So my question is, are you on to something new next? What will you do next to exercise this creative ability?

MS. THORNTON: Well, I spent ten years on this, and I read so much Tennessee Williams, I sort of overdosed on Tennessee Williams. So now, only four years later, am I sort of doing some more things on it? And this is something I may never discuss again, but I have written some short stories and published those in places like Plowshare. But I have just finished a novel, and I don't know if it's any good or not, but I really enjoyed it. Working on Tennessee Williams, I had written some short stories but I had to stop writing creatively, because it's just a very different process. And it's hard for me, with my life, to enter into the creative world for any length of time just because of four children and stuff. And especially with Tennessee Williams, I couldn't do it.

But in working through this book, I saw how he taught himself how to write, and he first taught himself. So that was kind of a nice way to be taught how to write, because the first way he started, first of all, he read like crazy and he read a lot of Faulkner because he was really fascinated with the violence in Faulkner. And we forget, when you look at Tennessee Williams, he was really on the cutting edge of things. He wrote about abortion and incest and castration. *Baby Doll* was banned by the Catholic Church. So we don't think of him as radical, but he was.

He read a lot of Hemingway. He read every play that won the Pulitzer Prize in the '30s. He then would take work like William Saroyan, *Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze*, and try and write his own version of that story, and it was never very good, and it was sort of warmed-over, but that's how he sort of taught himself how to write.

So really what's fascinating to me is, he loved writing, started when he was in his teenage years, but it took him a long time. *The Glass Menagerie* was produced when he was 33 years old, so there was a long apprenticeship. And if you look at what he's writing for a number of years, there's craft but he doesn't have his own voice and he doesn't have his own subject. So this belief in himself. And I think he just had to write. I think it was a way of dealing with the emotion that was so turbulent in him, of dealing with the tragedy of his sister and of his family, because there's a lot of unhappiness.

So only when he really decided he was going to have to write about something that was sort of terrible did he really begin to write with his own voice. But had you been his writing teacher in college, no one would have looked at his work and said, "Oh, you're going to be famous."

And again, I think that's a lesson for students, because there's so much more hard work than they think there is. And just because you don't get success in the first couple of years or the first five or six years, if it's your passion and something you love doing, you should keep doing it.

MS. MUTI: Margaret, thank you so very much. It's a pleasure to have you here amongst us. It's the second time that I have gotten to hear you speak about this, and it means so much more each time. Thank you.

MR. GALBRAITH: Ladies and gentlemen, we are going to amend the schedule. John is going to begin speaking right now. I know some of you have travel issues, but neither of these people are to be missed. Besides, the break isn't even ready yet.