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Survivors in Modern American Tragedy

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Index

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Theoretical Approach.....	7
3. Cynic Bastards: A quest for survival.....	16
4. The Almost Heroes.....	34
5. Conclusions.....	39

INTRODUCTION

TYRONE

His anger ebbs into a weary complaint

(...) I wouldn't give a damn if you ever displayed the slightest sign of gratitude. The only thanks is to have you sneer at me for a dirty miser sneer at my profession, sneer at every damn thing in the world—except yourself.

JAMIE

Wryly

That's not true, Papa. You can't hear me talking to myself, that's all. (*Long Day's Journey into Night*, Eugene O'Neill)

“You can't hear me talking to myself” is, at least for me; probably one of the most striking answers to someone who is complaining about other's sneering. Here, Jamie, the cynic and burlesque character, the marry-making and alcoholic older brother that nothing seems to affect him, unfolds his most inner sensibility. Instead of responding to his father with more mockery, he acquires an ironic tone to show sincerity. In spite of responding wryly, his answer reveals that he actually reflects on what he does (in this case the fact of being ungrateful), even though nobody can acknowledge it. Therefore, one can imply that he constantly ruminates about his actions in silence, and that this distress is hidden under his cynical attitude and his alcohol addiction. It is a unique moment in the play, as we have few chances to get through Jamie.

From this quote, the core of this study is pretty much disclosed. This work will be dealing with the concept of “survivors”, which are secondary characters who share traits of tragic heroes but at the same time, some others contrast them. This analysis attempts to determine to what extent these survivors are closer or further to the tragic sphere, and how this phenomena is directly related to Modernity. Survivors are going to be divided into two groups: one couple which is further to the tragic sphere and the other which is closer to it. The first one to analyze consists of Jamie from *Long Day's Journey into Night* and Happy from *Death of a Salesman*. The second one is Edmund and Biff, respectively.

The first couple, the “Cynic Bastards”, are going to be celebrating evasion rites such as cynicism and having a dissipate lifestyle, which is going to have as a consequence a perverse manner and no authenticity. This fact would distance them from the tragic. These

characters suffer; however, they celebrate evasion rites that soothe their grief. These attitudes impede them to fall, remaining them in passiveness but constantly pushing the limits of being “tragic”. In this way, the term survivor is not employed just to analyze those characters who ‘do not die’ but those who ‘survive’ the tragic experience that encompasses the fact of being a tragic hero. Among the dispositions acquired by the first couple of survivors in order to calm their sorrow, as it was mentioned above, being cynic and dissolute are the main ones found. In this way, these characters are going to be constantly masking their desires and feelings under ironic tones and also, by playing the role of the “marry-making” and the promiscuous one. These attitudes find their origin mainly in the generational conflict fostered in the selected plays. In the tragedies analyzed, the figure of a parent who disapproves their kids or demands more things from them is found, as well as a parent who loses his or her authority in the family. Cynic attitudes in sons, for the most part, come to light when arguing with their parents about these issues. Playing the marry-making one or getting to be alcoholics and promiscuous, mostly, are ways in which these characters try to escape from the confrontations. In this manner, sons are going to be constantly trying to “misprision” or “misread” their parents. The very consequence of “misreading” their paternal figures is, on the one hand, to become bastardized sons since their parents are persistently pushing them away, and on the other, because they choose to be part of such process of separation.

These characters might not fall; however, they do graze the boundary line which separates the heroic from the not-heroic. In other words, they survive, therefore, they accumulate more experiences in which they are about to fall. Being in this constant state of suffering hidden under masks, visiting many times the tragic sphere will make these survivors of an ambivalent nature. To portray this idea, it can be said that if heroes fall into a whole tragic experience, survivors may stumble into it and certainly rise afterwards, even if it is through masks and alcohol, that is to say, momentary reliefs. By arguing this, new dramatic interpretations towards the figure of tragic hero and secondary characters in Modern American are made, as well as a new reading of these characters and plays.

The objects of study, say, survivors, are going to find echoes or precedents in works of the past. Filial relationships is main theme present in *King Lear*, therefore, the figure of

the survivor may find a primitive precedent in Shakespeare's Edmund. He would be a survivor, as he embraces the cynic, both the perverse and the natural and is a bastard per se. Additionally, T.S Elliot's Prufrock marks also a precedent even though this figure belongs to a poem, therefore, the type of enunciation that the speaker has differs. In this way, we will see how this poem takes elements from the nature, as well as the "Almost heroes", in order to become authentic.

In this way, by the end of this study, readers or spectators may emancipate the perspectives they originally may have had in regards these specific characters. Usually, these characters are not object of admiration as a consequence of their perverse demeanor. That is why most of us are unable to understand the reasons why they act in such a way. This study, apart from analyzing them in respect to their authenticity, attempts to explore more possibilities of interpretations in regards secondary characters. In this way, this study is carried out not from the common or traditional way, that is to say, considering the main figures of a play. On the contrary, this study is carried out in the light of characters that criticism have not concentrated enough yet.

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Modern American dramatists from ca. 1910 to 1945 (Krasner 142) explored distinct methods for the conception of their plays. But apart from responding or criticizing the ways in which corporate economy affected people's lives, the experimentation with theatre also finds its origin in the nineteenth-century, where theatrical values were "increasingly challenged by modernist ideas, affected by political upheavals around the globe, and scientific theories from Charles Darwin to Carl Jung, which vastly complicated concepts of humanity" (Abbotson 3). These new issues concerned different themes, for example, human and sexual relationships were examined with "ruthless candor", portraying the moral ambivalence that challenged the status quo of the time (Krasner 143). As follows, American playwrights overturned "nineteenth-century formal constraints (sexual prudery and intolerance), Victorian melodramas (cliché'd notions of morality and emphasis on suspense), and outdated styles of performance (vocal bombast and stage gimmickry)" (Krasner 143). In this sense, it is important to consider the fact that experimentation regarding the both the writing and the production of the plays, will foster the apparition of the objects of study of this works, say, survivors.

Along these lines, criticism seems to agree in defining this period as an extremely difficult to portray in one single definition. This is mainly because of the quantity of plays released (more than in any other single decade of the twentieth century), but mainly, because of "the cultural complexities with which playwrights – like most Americans – were grappling during the decade" (Hardison 69). Among these cultural complexities, it can be found the flourishing of monopoly capitalism, that is to say, of corporations that employed the criteria of efficiency and standardized production to pursuit steadily rising sales (Godden 181). By cause of the revolution in economy and the addition of new elements inside the plays, the inclusion of an alienated anti-hero unable to adjust the industrial lifestyle, served as a strategy to represent the alienating condition of Modern times (Walker 240). These cultural complexities, which can be recalled to Modernity, fostered the experimentation with theatre as no other did before (Abbotson 5, Krasner 144). Specifically, "to be a Modern American dramatist was to be an experimenter", who were always examining the features of theatricality and how make them work to convey

emotion (Krasner 144). Some of the main techniques with which dramatists experimented were realism and expressionism, and many times, the mingling of both.

Now it is possible to argue that some of the main features of Modern American theatre found echoes in Shakespearean tragedies. Actually, according to Alvin K. Kernan, Shakespearean scenes as well as scenes from Modern American Theater come to define their ages as they provide “a sharply focused image of man in some crucial action” (12). In this sense, scenes in Modern American Drama, as well as in the Elizabethan one, achieve to figure up man “as he has come to sense himself”, specifically for Modern American drama, “in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—his most fundamental hopes and fears, his understanding of the shape and currents of the world and his intuition of his scene in relation to that world” (12). Consequently, both periods depict both women and men conflicts that widely define themselves and their contexts. Moreover, the manner playwrights from both periods employed for writing their plays seemed to be novel or original in their times.

Accordingly, both can be considered ‘modern’ for this reason. Modern American dramatists and Shakespeare himself took advantage of their social upheavals to create new ways of portraying humanity. In this fashion, during the Renaissance Theatre the “I” gains more relevance, principally with Shakespeare’s works (Bouwsma 187). The importance of the “I” and its consolidation in Elizabethan theatre is reflected on the “vividness of the drawing of (Shakespearean) characters who marvelously combine individuality with a universal and typical quality that makes them appeal to people of all kinds and races” (Neilson 1909). In other words, characters in Shakespearean tragedies were more human-like than were before, resembling human traits and conflicts. According to W. J. Bouwsma, the main conflict society held at that time was an identity crisis, triggered by the uncertainty in their behavior, that is to say, if they should act properly, or whether they should behave according to their wishes of authentic individuals (186). This anxiety was perfectly depicted in Shakespeare’s plays, where the characters’ tragedy is originated due to the conflict that the individual “I” holds in an unpredictable world (Bouwsma 187). In this sense, survivors are going to be analyzed from their “I” or subjectivity, considering principally their authenticity.

First of all, as the main objects of study of this work are the “survivors” of the tragedies, an exhaustive analysis of the concept and in this context is essential. The “Survivors” of a tragedy is a term that I will be using in order to refer to all those secondary characters that surround the plot and the tragic hero. Accordingly, in the Oxford Dictionary, the word ‘survivor’ is defined as “A person who survives, especially a person remaining alive after an event in which others have died”. However, in this context, the term survivor is not employed just to analyze those characters who ‘not die’ but those who survive the tragic experience that encompasses the fact of being a tragic hero. Hence, a summary in regards to the notion of protagonist or tragic hero is necessary in order to portray, by opposition or similarity, why the term “survivor” suits to denominate the secondary characters in the tragedies selected.

The term hero or heroine is defined in “A Handbook to Literature” as “the central character (masculine or feminine) in a work of fiction or drama” and is “applied to the characters who are the focal points of the readers’ or spectators’ interest” (211). It is used also as “a technical term for describing a work of fiction, hero (or heroine), in this case, would refer to a relationship of character to action” (211). Protagonists are defined in the same handbook as “the leading figure in terms of importance in the play and in terms of his or her ability to enlist our interest and sympathy, whether the cause is heroic or ignoble” (355). Both definitions account for the hero or protagonist as central in terms of importance, whether it is for sympathy or technically speaking. Nevertheless, secondary characters, do not find any definition in this handbook. That being so, if the tragic hero is the focus of attention for spectators or readers, the secondary characters may be less significant for them in terms of their relationship with the plot. Additionally, a survivor unlike the tragic hero may not to take ‘action’, say, may not do something to get beyond their situation. Along these lines, it is possible to argue that these survivors do not inspire precisely sympathy in spectators; but pity, indifference or even anger. This terms finds opposition in the stoic grandeur of the heroes, as the sorrow is occasioned by an “unmerited grief”. Therefore, their griefs are ‘undeserved’ as they are not a consequence of a heroic stunt. In this sense, for instance, Willy Loman portrays the image of tragic hero as he is able to overcome his crisis by committing suicide. He dismisses himself from the world in order to make a statement against society. On the other hand, his son Happy, for

example, is a survivor, as he may reflect on the hypocritical society he lives in, however, he does not make anything to fight against it, even though he thinks his ideals are being constantly lowered as a consequence of it. Viewers or readers might find this sad, but this feeling is not compared with the one experienced with Loman's death.

The critic Oscar Mandel in his book "A Definition of Tragedy" accounts for a more current definition of the latter that may be useful to keep differentiating hero from survivor. This definition also puts emphasis on "taking action", however, diverges with the classic view of the plot being more important than the hero. In spite of this, I will serve from both perspectives in order to give a more complete account for the term survivor, one that can suit for both Elizabethan and Modern Theatre. This definition starts by naming a work of art as 'tragic' if this contains: "A protagonist who commands our earnest good will is impelled in a given world by a purpose, or undertakes an action, of a certain seriousness and magnitude; and by that very purpose or action, subject to that same given world, necessarily and inevitable meets with grave spiritual or physical suffering" (20). On that account, a *survivor*, then, apart from not being the protagonist of the play, might not be compelled with a specific purpose in the plot and does not take action in it. Besides, they do not experience physical suffering or death always. However, they do grave spiritually, as this analysis will prove afterwards. In this sense, Mandel assures that "the most striking characteristic of the tragic hero as a personality is just his possession of a purpose—a drive or an ideal which insists on being gratified" (103). Hence the *survivor* may not have clear his specific purpose in the play, and both their ideals and nature are in the same way ambiguous, not as clarified as the ones of a hero.

A more classic view of the protagonist of a tragedy, will account for certain characteristics such being renowned and prosperous, so his change of fortune can be from good to bad. This change of fortune or catastrophe is going to be "marking the tragic failure, usually the death, of the hero (and often of his opponents as well)" (Holman 143). This tragic end marks a natural outcome of the action and comforts the spectator, not only by the feeling of sympathy for the hero, but also by being satisfied by a logically final presentation of the nobility of the succumbing hero (Holman 143). In other words, when the tragic hero dies, spectators might not feel sympathy for the figure itself, but for being

relieved that the tragedy came to a unity by its correct ending. Additionally, a "glimpse of restored order" often follows the catastrophe, especially in Shakespearean tragedy, for example, when Hamlet gives his dying vote to Fortinbras as the new king (Holman 143). Consequently, from this, the emphasis that Aristotle puts in *Poetics* on the plot over the hero is revealed. Along these lines, a survivor might not be necessary prosperous and renowned and certainly, would make the spectators feel satisfied by his or her death, but as a consequence of being less important than. In this sense, the feel of "restored order" does not occur when a secondary character dies, if that might happen. However, the survivors analyzed in this work are not going to die, yet they are going to be a difficulty for restoration to take place. Additionally, on the contrary of heroes, they mark a continuum and not redemption. Therefore, one can argue that the death of survivor is in vain or even can go unnoticed. The image of a secondary character dying may resemble the one of a common man or woman passing away, as millions of people die every day.

Arthur Miller's "Tragedy and the Common Man", an essay that comes from a primary source of information, as the author is one of the representatives per excellence of Modern American Drama. In this essay, Miller accounts for a hero that perfectly can be a common man, who is "apt for tragedy in its highest sense as kings were" (Miller 3). As well as Shakespearean heroes did, Miller accounts for this new class of hero as someone who can die for only one thing: his sense of personal dignity. For Miller, this hero attempts to gain his "rightful" position in his society, as well as Shakespearean or even Greek heroes did (3). Along these lines, Miller states that the tragic flaw or "crack" in the hero is no more than the "unwillingness to remain passive in the face of what he conceives to be a challenge of his dignity" (4). This change in regards the tragic hero is nothing but, generally speaking, a consequence of modernity and broadly, of the passing of time. As follows, a change regarding the conception of secondary characters might have happen as well.

Survivors, will be, therefore, subjects in the city or their homes, doing their usual activities in habitual places: "Only those who accept their lot without active retaliation, are "flawless". Most of us are in that category" (4). Along these lines, it is important to highlight the fact that survivors are not being compared with tragic heroes, however, this analysis attempts to demonstrate to what extent survivors visit the tragic sphere. In this sense, the importance of the masses that De Certau discusses in the essay "The Practice of

Everyday life' will figure as a central concept for the discussion. Here, De Certeau describes the figure of the 'everyman' which will be strongly associated with the figure of the survivor. De Certeau puts emphasis on the description of the masses: "It is a flexible and continuous mass, woven tight like a fabric with neither rips nor darned patches, a multitude of quantified heroes who lose names and faces as they become the ciphered river of the streets (...) (v)". In this way, survivors would be considered a metonymic part of such river; nonetheless, we will realize that these are not properly heroes, but the fact of survive gives them a chance to be related to a tragic sphere.

In this sense, rites of evasion prevent them to fall. These attitudes are responses to a generational conflict in which parents have lost their authoritative place. All of them, except from James Tyrone, are tragic heroes. They demand things from their children, for example Tyrone claims for gratitude while Loman for success. Mary, on the other hand, has lost any mother-son bond. The parallel, therefore, with *King Lear* seems inevitable. The consequence of this separation is the apparition of the figure of bastardized children. Survivors, therefore, are going to be provoking intentionally the misprision; however, they will be pushed away by their own parents too. To portray this situation, I would like to refer to *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Here both James and Mary regularly insult and curse Jamie and he responds almost always in a wryly and cynical way. The parallel to *King Lear* this time is also foreseeable. This situation finds a precedent in the character of Edmund who is a bastard literally, but who also fosters a comparison to these bastardized survivors. The figure of the bastard has been largely considered as immoral and as a threat to society order. In this manner, Shakespeare's Edmund would serve as a precedent to the figure of survivors, who are also going to be a threat to a pre-established order.

From this conflict, sons will attempt to separate from their parent's tragic atmosphere. They will respond with cynicism to their parents' demands and to the conflict that is taking place in their lives, as well with a dissolute behavior which is not accepted by their progenitors. I will serve from Bloom's terms "misreading or misprision" employed for a "poetic misreading or misprision" or a "clinamen", to refer to the separation that the sons are trying to achieve. Bloom took the word from the Latin and it means literally a "swerve" of the atoms "so as to change possible in the universe" (Bloom 15). I will use this

terminology as it cannot be more accurate for this discussion. Bloom explains: “A poet swerves away from his precursor, by so reading his precursor's poem as to execute a *clinamen* relation to it” (Bloom 15). In the same way, survivors might try to misprision the tragic figure by analyzing them and then struggling against their crisis so as to make their own “story”. Bloom continues: “This appears as a corrective movement in his own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves” (Bloom 15). In misreading or making a swerve from their parents, these survivors create a new dramatic space or discourse, that is, the possibilities of interpreting the figure of the tragic hero and the survivor from a different perspective. In this way, the misprision not only happens to occur in terms of distance from the conflict, but also in terms of ideals and perspectives from which they are going to confront life, which are going to be different from the ones of their parents.

In this fashion, as it was stated before, the rites of evasion performed by the survivors are cynicism and dissoluteness. This word finds its origins in ancient Greek philosophy school called the Cynics, defined in “The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy” as someone who “rejected all conventions, whether of religion, manners, housing, dress, or decency, instead advocating the pursuit of virtue in accordance with a simple and idealistic way of life”. In this manner, therefore, a cynic might be considered someone who mistrusts of the entire society. More specifically, Vice defines a cynic as someone who threatens the moral constructions of a society. In this sense, the figure of being cynic is connected with the one of the bastard:

Cynicism is i) a stance of disengagement, and ii) of distrust, contempt and/or scepticism (to differing degrees) adopted towards humans, their institutions and values; and iii) adopted as a response to a belief that humans are motivated only by self-interest, or more generally, that human beings are of little worth. I take i–iii) to be necessary conditions for cynicism: A character will not count as cynical unless it is disengaged and distrustful or contemptuous, and unless those attitudes are responses to a belief about human nature or motivation (172).

In this way, cynics are skeptic of society and their values, as we will see in the case of Happy. But most importantly, Jamie’s cynicism acquires brutal tones that will lead him and Happy to have a perverse demeanor. Perversity is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as

“strange and not what most people would expect or enjoy” or “having the effect of being, or intended to be, the opposite of what is usually expected or considered reasonable”. This trait will be revealed in their speeches while they are drunk, or as in the case of Happy, in his inexplicable behavior. Being perverse, which does mean no be evil or wicked, will be conflicting these survivors authenticity.

As the main purpose of this work is to recognize authenticity in survivors of two Modern American drama plays in order to determine to what extent these visit the tragic, this notion needs to be defined clearly. In this sense, authenticity will be considered from the point of view of three authors. The first and principal in this analysis is Walter Benjamin from “La Obra de Arte en suReproductibilidadTécnica”. He argues that “even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: the presence in time and space, its unique existence at a place where it happens to be” (220). In this sense, “the presence of the original is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” (220). When a work of art, therefore, is reproduced, this is not authentic and lacks the auratic element: “one might subsume the eliminated element in the term “aura” and go on to say: that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art” (221). For the purposes of work, however, this notion of authenticity will be applied to characters and their traits, which are as well, creations. Additionally, in terms of originality as a prerequisite to be authentic, Virginia Woolf’s essay “On not Knowing Greek” provides a useful insight to be able to apply this concept to a character of a drama. She poses that the Greeks were the “original human being[s]” (19), and therefore, their emotions were still original: “Here we meet them before their emotions have been worn into uniformity” (19). In this sense, the survivors do not meet original emotions as the ones of the Greeks, as a consequence of the rites of evasion that are indeed non-auratic. Finally, Adorno’s term called ‘jargon’, is going to be employed in order to determine that the speeches of certain survivors are going to be non-auratic, therefore, not authentic to themselves: “words that are sacred without sacred content, as frozen emanations; the terms of the jargon of authenticity are products of the disintegration of the aura” (Adorno 9-10). Therefore, when performing a perverse discourse, the survivor will not be authentic, speaking a ‘jargon’.

Finally, a dissolute person or way of life that overindulges in sensual pleasure. This word finds its origins in the Latin ‘dissolutus’ meaning ‘disconnected or loose’. In this way, the survivors analyzed will be cynic and dissolute, acquiring these attitudes as marry-making masks that are going to be preventing them to fall, and fostering a perverse discourse. In spite of this, some the rites might get survivors closer to be tragic. In this sense, when drinking alcohol, Edmund encounters the authentic.

Reader Response theory fits accurately into the analysis to be carried out in this final dissertation, as in the plays studied “is only the spectator who can furnish the real causes and true explanations (Cerf 329). This is because “the standard generic battle over the play[s] produces numerous puzzles and opportunities for interpretative response”(Barker 35). Mandel also assures that is in the spectator the task of intrpreting a play: “The whole argument reduces itself to this: if tragedy is to be defined even in part, by a response in the reader or the spectator—a response, that is, of the kind which changes (...) from person to person, from nation to nation, within one person even from period to period (64)”.

Along these lines, Jacques Rancière’s “The emancipated spectator”, an essay where the audience’s role, specifically the one who participates in theatrical representations, is widely questioned. Rancière puts the spectator’s role up for debate by arguing that the audience needs to be emancipated from “a state of ignorance about the process of production of this appearance (theatrical) and about the reality it conceals” (2). This state of ignorance is accompanied by a passive attitude where “the spectator remains immobile in her seat” (2). Rancière poses that this position the audience holds (and many times playwrights promote) should be emancipated by challenging the “opposition between viewing and acting” and by understanding “that the self-evident fact that structure the relations by saying, seeing and doing themselves belong to the structure of domination and subjection” (13). In simply words, Rancière’s argument aims for the audience or the spectator to get completely immersed into the play by actively participating in it, that is to say, by giving personal and new, therefore, valuable meanings. Consequently, the spectator will not be subjugated by any significance previously given or by the playwright’s intentions in the play.

In this sense, “(...) the object of critical attention is the structure of the reader's experience, not any 'objective' structure to be found in the work itself” (Eagleton 74). For Reading Response critics the meaning of a text is found “in the text its grammar, meanings, formal units - is a product of interpretation, in no sense 'factually' given” (74). In this way, through the examination of the survivors, readers are going to realize that their ambiguity will not foster a definite meaning, and also, that I am not able to provide a final one. In this sense according to Iser, “the determinate features of the "text" invites the reader to participate in a game of imagination upon which it imposes certain constraints. The text's "unwritten part (...) stimulates the reader's creative participation" by suggesting certain "outlines" that the reader can "shade in" and "animate" (276)”. In other words, the meaning is “The product of the "convergence" of reader and text” (275). Therefore, every interpretation that I am about to analyze in regards survivors is not a definite one, and is based on my personal experience not only as reader, but also as a part of the masses. Furthermore, the aim of this work is to try to emancipate the reader's or spectator's perspectives about these characters. In other words, through the analysis of survivor's authenticity, I am attempting to make the readers empathize with these figures, as they usually do with tragic heroes.

Cynic Bastards: A quest for survival.

The witnesses of the heroes' fall will be performing conscious evasion rites — dissipation and cynicism— as a way of attempting to misprision from the tragic atmosphere taking place in the plays. This couple will be said to be further from the tragic space, yet sharing some tragic traits as well. The evasion rites performed by the survivors are leading Jamie and Happy to acquire a perverse demeanor which will finally result in a complex experience regarding their authenticity as characters. In this way, they are going to be further to the tragic.

In *Long Day's Journey into Night*, the sons seem to be entirely compelled into their heroine mother's tragic sphere. Mary Tyrone's addiction to morphine has drawn Jamie and Edmund into a quest of survival, which consists —not precisely in trying to live— but in attempting to misprision from her tragic influence. The generational conflict originated in the play between sons and parents would foster the conscious endeavor of misprisioning or misreading not only her figure, but also Tyrone's. Misreading their parents, especially Mary's tragic sphere, will be a difficult struggle, as for accomplish it, Jamie will perform conscious evasion rites consisting in adopting both cynic and dissolute dispositions. Quite similarly, in *Death of a Salesman* we can find two brothers who are constantly orbiting around their father's tragedy. Willy Loman's insanity and his desperately desire to be "well liked", have drawn his family into his tragic sphere. Biff and Happy witness their father's way to fall, however, they constantly try to evade it.

Along these lines, Jamie, O'Neill's older brother dramatic alter ego called the same way; is the survivor *par excellence*, as he embraces all the characteristics with which survivors have been identified: cynic – dissolute, perverse – no authentic and finally bastard. The same traits could be found, probably in a less marked way, in Happy from *Death of a salesman*. Both characters are going to be performing evasion rites, which will lead them to unfold a perverse manner, and as a consequence of this, they will distance from being authentic or tragic.

According to the ideas exposed in the theoretical approach, to be perverse, is to be "strange and not what most people would expect or enjoy" or "having the effect of being,

or intended to be, the opposite of what is usually expected or considered reasonable”. Thus perverse, is a suitable term to classify both Jamie’s and Happy’s responses to the conflicts taking place in their family circles, because these are not the expected ones or are not considered the norm nor by their families neither by the spectators or readers. Their behavior, therefore, will be somehow twisted or uncommon, many times challenging society rules and their relatives emotions.

In this sense, it is possible to make a connection with Virginia Woolf’s considerations about Greek tragedies in the essay “On not knowing Greek”, where the heroes from the classics are considered “the original human being[s]” (19), defining them “by heroism itself, by fidelity itself” (19). For Woolf, Greek tragedies embraced both the stable and the permanent, consequently; the way in which tragic heroes acted, is the way “we should behave (...) the way everybody has always behaved” (19). This is why, according to Woolf, we “understand them [Greek heroes] more easily” (19). Greek heroes’ emotions, says Woolf, are met before being worn into uniformity (19), meaning that these Greek character’s emotions are primitive in the sense they are original. Unlikely Jamie and Happy, tragic heroes are “decided, ruthless, direct” (19). Under this light, nor Jamie neither Happy are considered original, as their behavior is associated with the *perverse*, consequently, not with the way “we should behave”.

Considering these ideas, it is possible to connect the concept of ‘the originals’ in Woolf, with the one of ‘authenticity’ in Walter Benjamin’s essay “*La Obra de Arte en la Época de su Reproducibilidad Técnica*”, where the idea of the ‘original’ is related with the one of authenticity. For Benjamin, “the presence of the original [in a work of art] is the prerequisite to the concept of authenticity” (220). In this sense, according Benjamin, a reproduction of a work of art, even the most perfect reproduction, is lacking the unique existence at the place where it happens to be (220). In that specific time and place, a work of art has the auratic element which makes it authentic (222). Along these lines, Benjamin states that “the unique value of the authentic work of art has its basis on the ritual, the location of its original use value” (224). Thus if these concepts —authenticity and aura— are applied to recognize these characters’ innermost and original seal, we could realize that these characters are not authentic, as they do not present the original emotions, as Woolf

states; these were already imbued into uniformity. In consequence, emotions in these survivors become uniform in the sense lead them to reproducible evasion rites,—which are indeed not auratic, for them do not conduct these survivors experience authenticity. In other words, these emotions become reproducible because they do not lead these survivors to find a place in the plays to be authentic: they do not lead survivors to be entirely tragic.

According to Barker, in the traditional language of philosophy, authenticity, “would be identical with subjectivity (...) [and] is determined by the arbitrariness of the subject, which is authentic to itself” (37). For this reason, both Jamie and Happy face difficulties experiencing authenticity, as they do not are genuine to themselves. Strictly speaking, the perverse, consequence of dissipation and cynicism, would foster the ambiguity and fluidity in these characters, who are going to be constantly encountering contradictions within their actions and words. Along these lines, Adorno assures that when speaking “words that are sacred without sacred content, as frozen emanations” are “are products of the disintegration of the aura” (10). He considers these words as jargon that distance one from the aura proper of the authentic.

Along these lines, these survivors’ authenticity will be disturbing the dramatic process in both plays, as both Jamie and Happy’s ambivalence and fluidity would foster more conflicts within them. In this way, their conflicting nature would not contribute to the tragedy’s dénouement. In other words, as a result of their perverse discourse and non-authentic manner, the conflicts in the plays will take different nuances. As a result of this, readers or spectators might not feel empathy for these survivors, and furthermore, the fact of not being able to understand their behavior and actions may lead them to the misunderstanding of their motives and the causes of their perverse manner. In consequence, through the analysis of these survivors’ authenticity, readers and spectators would realize that the complexity of these characters is nothing more than a consequence of the process of modernization which is reflected in the plays. Also, that the decay of the aura as a consequence of modernization, and as follows, as a result of the evasion rites they perform, if not getting these survivors closer to the tragic, is at least providing a background to emancipate both viewers and readers perspectives of the figure of the survivors in the plays. In this ways, these concepts are going to be employed in order to identify whether these

survivors reach some level of authenticity, and if they not, the causes of this distance.

As it follows, Jamie is the survivor *par excellence*, embraces cynicism, the conscious rite of evasion that separates him from authenticity. He is described in the stage directions as lacking Tyrone's "graceful carriage" and "vitality" having "signs of premature disintegration". He is not as handsome as his father, even though he resembles him more than his mother. His face shows signs of dissipation and his hair is growing thinner. Jamie's face has a habitual expression of cynicism, which gives him "a Mephistophelian cast". In rare occasions, Jamie smiles without sneering, and when he does, unfolds a romantic and humorous personality, proper of the Irish charm, with a "strain of the sentimentally poetic". Jamie, in sum, is the loser, the son who lives in the shadow of his father, the one who is unable to express his inner "sentimentality", as he constantly acquires masks or dispositions, acting cynical, consuming alcohol excessively and being promiscuous.

The cynic disposition with which Jamie confronts the everyday life at the Tyrone's house acquires, many times, darker tones. Occasionally, this cynicism takes the form of sneering or contemptuous arguments, while others, we can see through Jamie's cynicism his mistrust and disengagement towards his family. If cynicism is defined as "a stance of disengagement and of distrust adopted towards humans or institutions and values" (Vice 172), therefore, without a doubt, we are in presence of an absolute cynic. In this sense, the "Mephistophelian cast" with which is described in the stage directions quite fits this character's personality as it is directly related with his cynic disposition. The playwright relates the figure of Jamie with the one of a mythic demon, however, not precisely an entire evil one. O'Neill's analogy accounts for Marlow's Mephistopheles (Abboston 105), who is an ambiguous and sympathetic demon at the service of Lucifer in Doctor Faustus. Essentially, the story accounts for Faustus making a pact with Lucifer and then taking Mephistopheles as a servant. Mephistopheles, many times warns Faustus about the torments of hell, however, still leading Faustus to misery. Mephistopheles speaks freely about the horrors of the underworld, stating that he is conscious that hell is not the best place to be and acknowledging the benefits of heaven:

MEPHIST. Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:
Think'st thou that I, that saw the face of God,

And tasted the eternal joys of heaven,
 Am not tormented with ten thousand hells,
 In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss? (1.3.75-78)

In sense, the figure of Mephistopheles can be correlated with the one of Jamie, as both are to different extents, cynics. On the one hand, Mephistopheles is skeptic about his stance in hell, which makes him completely honest when talking about it. On the other hand, Jamie is equally aware of the conflict at the Tyrones' house, which makes him skeptic and distrustful as he is unable to adjust the circumstances. However, in the case of Jamie, honesty takes darker tones, being in this way brutally honest, or cynic, as we will see, both states seem to fuse. Similar to Mephistopheles, Jamie not only acknowledges his misery but he is also unable to escape. He knows very well the world he lives in and he has a terribly realistic view of it. In this way, the world for Jamie has become a living hell, same as the Mephistophelean one:

JAMIE: That's what we thought the other times. [*He leans over the table to give his brother's arm an affectionate grasp.*] Listen, Kid, I know you think I'm a cynical bastard, but remember I've seen a lot more of this game than you have. You never knew what was really wrong until you were in prep-school. Papa and I kept it from you. But I was wise ten years or more before we had to tell you. I know the game backwards and I've been thinking all morning of the way she acted last night when she thought we were asleep. I haven't been able to think of anything else. And now you tell me she got you to leave her alone upstairs all morning.
 EDMUND: She didn't! You're crazy! (II. 57)

In this excerpt we can tell how Jamie resembles Mephistopheles cynicism for he knows very well the situation they all are in; he already foresees Mary's relapse. As Mephistopheles warns Faustus, Jamie warns Edmund about a reality he knows perfectly: "I've seen a lot more of this game than you have". Jamie's cynicism also acquires the skeptic tones mentioned before, as he is the only one who doubts about Mary being completely sober, or at least, the only one who accepts this. In this way, Jamie will be a truth revealer that challenges the other's spaces, in the way he knows he affects his relative's feelings when responding with such cynicism:

MARY: No. I know you can't help thinking it's a home. [*She adds quickly with a detached contrition*] I'm sorry, dear. I don't mean to be bitter. It's not

your fault. *[She turns and disappears through the back parlor. The three in the room remain silent. It is as if they were waiting until she got upstairs before speaking.]*

JAMIE: *[cynically brutal]* Another shot in the arm!

EDMUND: *[angrily]* Cut out that kind of talk!

TYRONE: Yes! Hold your foul tongue and your rotten Broadway loafer's lingo! Have you no pity or decency? *[losing his temper]* You ought to be kicked out in the gutter! But if I did it, you know damned well who'd weep and plead for you, and excuse you and complain till I let you come back. (II.75-76).

In this extract, Jamie performs a “cynically brutal” commentary in regards to his mother’s addiction. She just had said that the home they are currently living in is not a “real home”. However, she feels immediately guilty about this statement, and because of that, she might have another morphine doze. In spite of this, Jamie adds “another shot in the arm”, cynically brutal, trying to normalize a situation which he knows is not right. The rest, Edmund and Tyrone, tell him off. Tyrone’s scold goes far more violent than Edmund’s, reproaching his son’s pitiless answer and threatens with beating him. Jamie, in turn, with “a spasm of pain in his face” justifies his response by saying that his “lingo” was meant to put the situation bluntly, to say without any restraints what everyone in that room already knows:

JAMIE: *[a spasm of pain crosses his face]* Christ, don't I know that? No pity? I have all the pity in the world for her. I understand what a hard game to beat she's up against—which is more than you ever have! My lingo didn't mean I had no feeling. I was merely putting bluntly what we all know, and have to live with now, again, *[bitterly]* The cures are no damned good except for a while. The truth is there is no cure and we've been saps to hope—*[cynically]* They never come back! (II.75).

Here we are in presence of a cynicism which overcomes the sneering proper of the cynics. He actually says that he knows way too much better than the others what Mary’s is going through: “I understand what a hard game to beat she's up against—which is more than you ever have!”. In spite of this, Jamie has lost faith in his mother’s rehabilitation; he knows that she will not be better, that she will not be cured: “The truth is there is no cure and we've

been saps to hope”. He unfolds his tremendous skepticism in this dialogue, letting us know how miserable he feels about Mary, yet unable to channel his attitudes towards the situation in no other way than cynically. In this way, Jamie unfolds his cynicism in a brutally honest way, challenging the others’ reactions by shattering every possible illusion they might have about Mary being sober. It is a truth that hurts, a truth that his family does not want to confront at that moment. Because of revealing a truth in such brutally cynical way, Jamie unfolds a cynicism that turns into perversity. However, we are able to see (or read) that in Jamie’s face is “a spasm of pain”, which gets us closer to Jamie’s actual misery. The truth is, he actually suffers for Mary’s addiction and that the cynically brutal manner he assumed is nothing more than his intolerance to pain. He assures that he probably he understand what she is going through more than the rest, and this could be truth as both are united by the same self-hatred feeling. In other words, just like Mary abuses of morphine to avoid a reality that she cannot handle (the fact of living in a place which is nor a proper home), Jamie wears the cynic mask that, in the same way, distances him from having those “spasms of pain”. Strictly speaking, by being no authentic, Jamie evades the reality that makes him deeply unhappy.

Along these lines, Black refers to these conflicts as “alliances” that that place among the family members (63). Around the most trivial conversation, the Tyrones “create an atmosphere of theatrical or judicial objectivity, acting as if they expect to defend every phrase, every word” (60). These alliances make the Tyrones anxious “for any alliance carries the potential for some to conspire against another” (63). Jamie waits for these conspiracies to affect the other with a brutal truth, unfolding a perverseresponse, as if it was a kind of competition where “each of them digs up the past to torture the others and free himself of guilt, and to accuse himself and free the others of guilt” (Cerf 329). Jamie does this with a repeatedly cynical and perversediscourse; he digs up deep enough to exhaust all the love and care that his family may still have for him. It can be argued, therefore, that from the alliances or conflicts arising in the family, Jamie uncoversperverse discourses or a perversemanner, which upsets everyone in the family.

To such a degree, “his bitterness is exacerbated by the loss of the guiding hand of his mother to drugs and has resulted in a life of dissipation, filled with alcohol and

prostitutes” (Abboston 105). Accordingly, the perverse manner or ‘bitterness’, as Abboston defines Jamie’s negativity, might be also fostered by his life immersed in dissipation, which is a consequence of his mother’s abandonment. As we will see, Jamie’s perversity increases while he is drunk. However, as it was stated before, the dissipate life Jamie lives could be also seen a result of his eagerness to escape from his mother’s tragic sphere. As a matter of fact, all in the Tyrones’ house suffer from some degree of substance abuse, the men, “all three drink too much to calm their individual sense of failure (104)”. All alcoholics that drink to forget, but it seems this does not work for Jamie (105). Because of his brutal cynicism he “remains the most aware of reality; he is the first to accept Mary’s return to drug use, Edmund’s illness, and his own uselessness” (105). It seems that the desire of escaping is something common among the Tyrones, because their ‘reality bites’. Alcohol, in this sense, would help as a ‘lubricant’ (Koob 176) for facing what it seems impossible for the Tyrones, that is to say, the confrontation of Mary’s addiction. But furthermore, for Jamie, specifically, it serves as a distractor; as a way of misprisioning not only from his mother’s tragedy but also his own. Alcohol contributes to make Jamie’s existence livable and his quest of survival demands such kinds of distractors. In this way, Jamie’s alcoholism work as an evasion rite, yet this rite would take different nuances as his doses increases, principally, making his discourse more perverse. One of the most striking dialogues in the play text that depicts in an excelling way the perverse as a result of Jamie’s drunkenness, occurs while he reveals his feelings towards his younger brother; feelings of envy and hate:

JAMIE: Nix, Kid! You listen! Did it on purpose to make a bum of you. Or part of me did. A big part. That part that’s been dead so long. That hates life. My putting you wise so you’d learn from my mistakes. Believed that myself at times, but it’s a fake. Made my mistakes look good. Made getting drunk romantic. Made whores fascinating vampires instead of poor, stupid, diseased slobs they really are. Made fun of work as sucker’s game. Never wanted you to succeed and make me look even worse by comparison. Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama’s baby, Papa’s pet! [*He stares at EDMUND with increasing enmity.*] And it was your being born that started Mama on dope. I know that’s not your fault, but all the same, God damn you, I can’t help hating your guts—! (4.165)

The apparent theme of the perverse confession to his brother seems to be envy: “Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you”. This hatred it is unjustified, as it was mentioned before,

Jamie has already lost Mary's guidance (Abboston 105), therefore, he sees "his father and brother as intruders who obstruct the idyllic relation he might otherwise have with Mary" (105) and he bitterly resents any favor shown by either parent toward Edmund: "Mama's baby, Papa's Pet!" (Black 65). The only bond that Jamie might still have with his mother is "in their despair and self-loathing" (64). The fact that the bond that Jamie holds with his mother is indeed idyllic, we come to realize of how much Jamie yearns for it, in spite of trying to misprision her tragic sphere. This ambiguity speaks for this dissolute lifestyle and "his desperation—for love, direction, and happiness—all of which are precluded by such lifestyle" (Abboston 105). In this way, we can conclude that deep down Jamie's perversity is the figure of Marydrugged, an image that Jamie will not be able to overcome. This confession or revelation is determining for analyzing the character of Jamie, as it provides not only with all the elements previously analyzed and for how these mingle so as to form a solid image of the survivor --cynicism, perversity and dissipation--, but additionally, it provides with insights so as to argue that Jamie is an *actor* within this play. Metadramatically speaking, apart from acquiring the cynic masks, Jamie acknowledges in this speech that he has been acting his entire life. This is something that will problematize the notion of authenticity: "My putting you wise so you'd learn from my mistakes. Believed that myself at times, but it's a fake. Made getting drunk romantic. Made whores fascinating vampires instead of poor, stupid, diseased slobes they really are". The shocking nature this confession impresses whether readers or spectators, as we face someone who has made his life a complete lie: it seems Jamie has done a life a failure just to witness his brother fail. Nevertheless, one can also imply that everything that Jamie is saying comes from his cynic mask, just to bother his brother in the best way he knows:

EDMUND: [*almost frightenedly*] Jamie! Cut it out! You're crazy!

JAMIE: But don't get wrong idea, Kid. I love you more than I hate you. My saying what I'm telling you now proves it. I run the risk you'll hate me— and you're all I've got left. But I didn't mean to tell you that last stuff—go that far back. Don't know what made me. What I wanted to say is, I'd like to see you become the greatest success in the world. But you'd better be on your guard. Because I'll do my damndest to make you fail. Can't help it. I hate myself. Got to take revenge. On everyone else. Especially you. Oscar Wilde's "Reading Gaol" has the dope twisted. The man was dead and so he had to

kill the thing he loved. That's what it ought to be. The dead part of me hopes you won't get well. Maybe he's even glad the game has got Mama again! He wants company, he doesn't want to be the only corpse around the house! [*He gives a hard, tortured laugh.*]

The ambiguity in Jamie's confession, probably as a result of the alcohol he drank, or probably because his brutal cynic manner, reveals the character's fluidity. This incongruous nature leads Jamie to pass from being hateful to be tremendously caring; from being serious to be strangely sneering. Jamie is, as a result of the cynic disposition and his dissipated lifestyle, a survivor with an indefinite manner. In this sense, we can recognize Jamie's *perversity*, for he in this speech turns off the course of what we would expect him to say to his younger brother, considering Jamie has been worried about Edmund's illness during the whole play. Additionally, we can tell of the inner crisis that he holds: "The dead part of me hopes you won't get well. Maybe *he's* even glad the game has got Mama again! He wants company, he doesn't want to be the only corpse around the house!". Here, Jamie unveils that his self is divided; he is recognizing a part of him that might be speaking the truth, a part of him that is "dead". He also makes reference to Wilde's poem "Reading Goal", where a man is condemned to death for killing his lover, however, he insists in that it should be the other way around: "The man was dead and so he had to kill the thing he loved". The reference to death, therefore, might be connected to negativity, which would finally unfold the perverse in Jamie, converting him in "an empty shell of a man, a lost soul with no sense of selfhood" (Abboston 105). In this way, the dead part of Jamie, the one rotten, the one that agrees he is a failure in life, the one that "has never recovered— possibly even believing his mother's accusation that he killed his brother [Eugene] out of jealousy (105)", is the part of himself that drives him to evasion rites to evade his mother's tragedy, which unfolds the perverse.

Similarly, Happy unfolds the perverse through dissipation and cynicism. Happy, just as Jamie, is unscrupulous and amoral; he has not singleness in a purpose (Hadomi 18). He "dedicates to cuckolding his superiors at work and to the pursuit of women in general, activities that make up the only field in which he excels, as Linda recognizes when she sums him up as a "philandering bum" (18). Likewise Jamie, some of his characteristics resemble to his father, such as "his bluster and nursing of injured pride, his insecurity

about making good, as well as his philandering” (18). Even though Happy seems “perfunctory and unfeeling” (18), we are able to see, just as with Jamie, how this survivor employ evasion rites that are leading him to be a complex character in regards his authenticity.

For instance, Happy’s cynicism, although different from the one of Jamie, is still considered cynic, for he is skeptic about the way he is living his life. His skepticism however, does not cross the boundaries of Jamie’s sneering, and all what Happy thinks about, stays in stand by:

HAPPY (*moving about with energy, expressiveness*): All I can do now is wait for the merchandise manager to die. And suppose I get to be merchandise manager? He’s a good friend of mine, and he just built a terrific estate on Long Island. And he lived there about two months and sold it, and now he’s building another one. He can’t enjoy it once it’s finished. And I know that’s just what I would do. I don’t know what the hell I’m workin’ for. Sometimes I sit in my apartment — all alone. And I think of the rent I’m paying. And it’s crazy. But then, it’s what I always wanted. My own apartment, a car, and plenty of women. And still, goddammit, I’m lonely. (I.18)

Unlike Jamie, Happy does not acquire a cynic mask. His cynicism has to do with skepticism towards the American Dream ideals. Happy’s reflection on what he have been doing with his life lead him to the conclusion that he is entirely lonely. In this sense, Happy’s cynicism or skepticism does not foster directly the perverse, however, is the cause of his dissipate lifestyle:

HAPPY: I get that any time I want, Biff. Whenever I feel disgusted. The only trouble is, it gets like bowling or something. I just keep knockin’ them over and it doesn’t mean anything. You still run around a lot? (I.9)

Hap’s promiscuity is a way from escaping from the tremendous hollow inside him. This hollow have been originated as a consequence of his father’s influence in terms of ideals. In other words, Willy’s ideals about what is success and its influence on Hap have left the latter without his own. As a result, Happy, same as Jamie, fills his lack of merit with

women and alcohol. The dissipate lifestyle with which Happy confronts “whenever he feels disgusted” leads Happy to the perverse. He acknowledges the reproducible condition of this ritual of evasion: “The only trouble is it gets like bowling or something. I just keep knockin’ them over and it doesn’t mean anything”. The perverse is reflected on the way he treats women, and in how this treatment seems to be inexplicable even for him:

HAPPY: Sure, the guy’s in line for the vice-presidency of the store. I don’t know what gets into me, maybe I just have an overdeveloped sense of competition or something, but I went and ruined her, and furthermore I can’t get rid of her. And he’s the third executive I’ve done that to. Isn’t that a crummy characteristic? And to top it all, I go to their weddings! (*Indignantly, but laughing.*) Like I’m not supposed to take bribes. Manufacturers offer me a hundred-dollar bill now and then to throw an order their way. You know how honest I am, but it’s like this girl, see. I hate myself for it. Because I don’t want the girl, and still, I take it and — I love it! (I.9)

He acknowledges this behavior as “crummy”, and assures he loves the girl; however, he does not actually want her, just want to “ruin her”. Happy means that the only thing he can take from this girl is sex, however, this is something that for him, finds an explanation under the light of “competition”. This is how Happy’s authenticity is disrupted by the lack of aura through his acts and words. In other words, he is not authentic because he is not faithful to himself, not to his own words neither with his actions. As Happy, enthralled, assures to Biff:

HAPPY (enthralled): That’s what I dream about, Biff. Sometimes I want to just rip my clothes off in the middle of the store and outbox that goddam merchandise manager. I mean I can outbox, outrun, and outlift anybody in that store, and I have to take orders from those common, petty sons-of-bitches till I can’t stand it any more. (I.20)

Similar to Mephistopheles, he knows quite well the nature of his environment and is able to identify it as a negative one. He is sure, his ideals are being lowered because of the fake people around him, and however, Happy does not try to change any of his already lowered ideals:

HAPPY (*enthused*): See, Biff, everybody around me is so false that I’m constantly lowering my ideals...

BIFF: Baby, together we'd stand up for one another, we'd have someone to trust

(...)

HAPPY: The only thing is — what can you make out there?

BIFF: But look at your friend. Builds an estate and then hasn't the peace of mind to live in it.

HAPPY: Yeah, but when he walks into the store the waves part in front of him. That's fifty-two thousand dollars a year coming through the revolving door, and I got more in my pinky finger than he's got in his head.

BIFF: Yeah, but you just said...

HAPPY: I gotta show some of those pompous, self-important executives over there that Hap Loman can make the grade. I want to walk into the store the way he walks in. Then I'll go with you, Biff. We'll be together yet, I swear. But take those two we had tonight. Now weren't they gorgeous creatures? (I. 21)

Being offered by his older brother a possibility to change his state, Happy ignores what Biff says. In spite of the enthusiasm that Biff shows: “Baby, together we'd stand up for one another, we'd have someone to trust”, Happy figures out excuses in order to keep in his comfort zone: “The only thing is — what can you make out there?.” Here we can see how Happy unfolds his disrupted authenticity, by putting ahead the “pompous” and “self-importance” of the executives when walking in; he is denying his own ideals for the ones of Willy. He prefers to “make the grade”, even though he knows he is tremendously, ironically, unhappy. There will be time for Happy to be actually “happy”.

In this fashion, it is possible to make a meaningful relation between these two characters and T.S Elliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", where the figure of the survivor finds a precedent in poetry. The evasion rites with which survivors face their reality, as well as their incapacity to take action over what difficult their existence echo in this modernist character. Prufrock, the speaker, as well as Happy, postpones his decisions staying at a comfort zone, where he just questions his surrounding: “And time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a hundred visions and revisions...” or “And indeed there will be time / To wonder, “Do I dare?” and, “Do I dare?”. These lines depict not only Prufrock's indecision but furthermore, just as Happy, his lack of commitment with his own ideals, even though for Prufrock are quite trivial”. Unlikely the survivors analyzed until now, Prufrock is able to find a place of enunciation in order to unfold his indecisions and

his reflections about them. However, this relationship is constructive as it shows to what extent, all the fluidity and contradictions of the survivors analyzed, together with their lack of heroism, find an echo in this previous figure. It seems that all the fragments of Prufrock: the streets, the night and dissipation: “Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels”; his indecisions and inaction: “and his lack of heroism “No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be”; are mirrored in these survivors, however, they are even more fragmented. These fragmented pieces have no chance of getting together. This is reflected on the survivor’s incapacity to unfold their own authenticity. In other words, Prufrock, at least, is able to manage language to reveal his authenticity, and this fact is auratic. His language is not perverse, neither a jargon:

(...)
 Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
 But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
 Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter,
 I am no prophet — and here’s no great matter;
 I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
 And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
 And in short, I was afraid.

Unlike Happy and Jamie, Prufrock acknowledges his fear at the moment of deciding. Jamie is not able to do this as he acquires his cynicism mask, and Happy, simply evades the subject when it leads him to overthink his condition. This relationship is also convenient, because it enables to connect survivor’s evasion rites and the uniformity of his emotions as a consequence of this, to a bigger picture phenomenon, which Prufrock remains as a precedent:

And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
 When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
 Then how should I begin
 To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
 And how should I presume?

The image of Prufrock feeling like a pinned insect fits to describe the way in which these survivors are considered in this analysis. Same as Prufrock feeling “formulated” and “sprawling on a pin (...) / pinned and wriggling on the wall”, these survivors are analyzed as if they were taken from a group with similar, if not equal, members. This group is “a

flexible and continuous mass, woven tight like a fabric with neither rips nor darned patches, a multitude of quantified heroes who lose names and faces as they become the ciphered river of the streets (...) (De Certeau v). Furthermore, if we take one of these members and “pin it on a wall”, or look at him with zoom lenses, we will realize that how the “metonymic details-parts taken for the whole” (De Certeau v), resemble to the survivor’s characteristics. Survivors, as it was stated in the Theoretical Approach, are the metonymic figure of the masses.

In De Certeau words, these metonymic parts are called, among other names, the “Everyman” and also “anti-hero” (2), however, called *survivor* in this analysis, is also “the narrator, when it is he who defines the (common) place of discourse and the (anonymous) space of its development” (5). Along these lines, both Jamie and Happy would speak about the masses’ discourses, thus, revealing the crisis of the aura in modern society. In relation to this issue, Benjamin states“(...) it makes it easy to comprehend the social basis of the cotemporary decay of aura [as] it rests on two circumstances, both of which are related to the increasing significance of the masses in the contemporary life” (223). In such a way, reproducible rites of evasion such as dissipation and cynicism would lead not only to disrupt Jamie and Happy authenticity, but also, reveal a bigger crisis that determines their formulations as survivors and their nature as modern characters. Along these lines, Russell, when discussing cynicism as a phenomenon proper of youthful in the 20s, assures: “but the modern man, when misfortune assails him, is conscious of himself as a unit in a statistical total; the past and the future stretch before him in a dreary procession of trivial defeats” (3). In this sense, Jamie and Happy, when facing their parent’s tragedy, act in the way the masses demand, in other words, triviality invades their everyday and they appear passive towards conflicts. Russell continues, quoting from *King Lear*: “Unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal,” (quote), however, this idea “drives him to madness because it is unfamiliar. But to the modern man the idea is familiar and drives him only to triviality (3). In this manner, being cynic, therefore, skeptic and realistic towards their own deceitful nature, would lead Happy and Jamie not to great defeats but to triviality, “as a somewhat ridiculous strutting animal, shouting and fussing during a brief interlude between infinite silences” (3).

Jamie and Happy represent the ones who are not the exception, the whole mass that uniformity has invaded completely. Along these lines, according to Arthur Miller, they would be the passive, a category in which most of all are in: “only those who accept their lot without active retaliation, are flawless” (1). As follows, Jamie and Happy would represent that category, the passive mass that does not fall as tragic heroes do. Both Jamie and Happy might be way too much far from falling than his brothers, “by making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence” (Benjamin 221). Particularly, reproducible evasion rites that lead them to be *not* authentic, to not having a unique existence.

These characters, Happy and Jamie, also found a quite ancient echo in a Shakespearean character from *King Lear*, Edmund. This character presents traces of the characteristics that are proper from the ones of the survivors just analyzed. For example, traces of promiscuity are found in this character when seducing both Goneril and Regan. This attitude reveals his immoral condition as bastard, the typical view from which these characters where look at in not only literature, but also society. In this sense, a more meaningful connection can be made in relation to his illegitimate status. Edmund ‘seems’ to be evil, yet his nature is ambivalent: “Some good I mean to do, despite of my own nature,” he declares after trying to save Lear and Cordelia (5.3.12). In this way, we cannot find in Edmund as in *Iago* “any spontaneous or purposeless wickedness” (Hudson 404). Similar to Mephistopheles, who tries to warn Faustus about the horrors of hell but at the same time disgrace him, for Edmund, “adventures in crime are not at all his pastime; they are his means, not his end; his instruments, not his element” (404). Similarly, therefore, we find Jamie and his love-hate relationship with his brother.

Apart from sharing the ambivalence proper of survivors, the fact of being a bastard, brings the figure of Shakespeare’s Edmund even closer to both Jamie and Happy. On the one hand, Happy is the child who demands constantly attention. In spite of being the one who actually ends up following his father’s ideals, we can hear Happy’s echoes within Willy’s digressions in which his main preoccupation is Biff: “I’m losing weight, you notice, Pop?.” Also, in that same memory, Biff recognizes he stole a ball, and Happy assumes Willy is going to tell him off: “I told you he wouldn’t like it”. Instead of doing

that, Willy stops the incipient argument and says to Happy: “Sure, he’s gotta practice with a regulation ball, doesn’t he?” On the other hand, Jamie is the displaced son, the one who, according to Mary, killed baby Eugene on purpose, and furthermore, accuses him to try to make Edmund leave on purpose out of jealousy: “I know why he wants you sent to a sanatorium. To take you from me! He's always tried to do that. He's been jealous of every one of my babies! He kept finding ways to make me leave them. That's what caused Eugene's death. He's been jealous of you most of all. He knew I loved you most because—”. When Mary says “all of my babies”, she is immediately displacing Jamie and taking away from him his category as a son. Additionally, for Tyrone, even the solely presence of Jamie bothers him “That loafer! I hope to God he misses the last car and has to stay uptown!” and then, *scowling*, “That loafer! He caught the last car, bad luck to it”. Jamie, as Shakespeare’s Edmund, acknowledges this condition and, as we have seen, both have a plan to harm their brothers who are the favourite, in one way or another (CITA *idem*). In this regard, Edmund would also unfold a perversediscourse in the context of *King Lear*, as attempting to destroy the established order by trying to kill his brother might be something quite morbid at that time:

Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
 Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
 As to the legitimate: fine word,--legitimate!
 Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
 And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
 Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:
 Now, gods, stand up for bastards! (--) (II.I.17-22)

In this fashion, it is important to consider the fact that bastards figured largely in sixteenth- and seventeenth century literature, mostly as villains associated with treachery, promiscuity, atheism, disintegration of community, and death (Zunshine 18). The bastard figure had as central function to “threaten the patrilineal transmission of status” (Schmidgen 133). As a bastard, therefore, Edmund not only threatens to dissolve the community, but additionally, we come to realize he is skeptic about the order pre-established: “(...)The curiosity of nations to deprive me, / For that I am some twelve or fourteen moon-shines / Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?”. By Elizabethan times, “cynicism was a fashionable attitude in that society of struggling parvenus, of

ancient faiths decaying or betrayed” (Speaight 97). In this sense, Edmund might have been a primitive version of a cynic, as well, as we will see, of a survivor.

Thusly, similarly, Jamie’s cynicism may be considered a threat as well. The cynic manner may be granted as “itself immoral (...) disrespectful and destructive to morality” (Vice 182). Accordingly, cynicism might be destructive to an order that constructs itself by certain ideals belonging to American society, for instance, Willy’s conviction of being “well linked”. This is why survivors –specially Jamie– disrupts, not only their relative’s illusions through his cynic mask, but also, their skepticism towards what have been imposed by their parents, might threat the ideologies in the context of the plays’ production. In this sense, spectators would clearly understand the criticism imbued in the plays. In spite of this, both Happy and Jamie, if threatening to destruct the established order, they would not take action in order to accomplish it.

The Almost Heroes

Along these lines, it is possible to identify the survivors who are going to be closer to the tragic sphere; therefore, closer to accomplish taking action in regards their own ideals. In other words, they would be closer to be authentic to themselves. Edmund from Long Day's Journey into Night and Biff from Death of a Salesman are the survivors who, instead of embracing the perverse, are going to embrace the nature element in their speeches. In this fashion, beforehand, it is possible to make a connection with Shakespeare's Edmund as well, as he: "sets himself outside the reach of customary law and of human morality. He is, by virtue of his birth and of his sworn allegiance, a force of Nature" (Hudson 404): "Thou, Nature, art my goddess, to thy law / My services are bound," (I.ii.1-2). By means of his introductory speech, Edmund is placed outside the domain of human morality where heroes and villains exist, and instead challenges us to accept him and the Nature he represents as a part of the order of the world (Capet). In this way, Edmund sets himself outside the patrilineal tradition; he acknowledges as an outsider, and recognizing himself, not belonging to the order established, which is, purely constructed by society, but as belonging to nature.

In a similar way, these characters also find an precedent in T.S Elliot's Prufrock:

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
 Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.
 I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
 Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
 When the wind blows the water white and black.
 We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
 By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
 Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (123-131)

In this excerpt of the poem, we are able to realize the speaker's eagerness to be part of nature, instead of what he is part right now –we as readers should infer as the city–: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws", as if nature, specially the sea, would have been a better place "till human voices wake him". In this way, the sea, as a metonymic part of nature, is juxtaposed to the "human voices" which are the metonymic part of masses. Accordingly, Survivor's voices would be the ones that can be heard; the ones that are

distinguishable and they are not completely subjected to the pre-established order, or specifically, the figure of their parents. Along these lines, Miller, in trying to identify modern tragic heroes, also sheds light upon a trait that authentic survivors share with tragic heroes:

“But there are among us today, as there always have been, those who act against the scheme of things that degrades them, and in the process of action everything we have accepted out of fear or insensitivity or ignorance is shaken before us and examined, and from this total onslaught by an individual against the seemingly stable cosmos surrounding us--from this total examination of the "unchangeable"(1)”.

In this sense, O’Neill’s Edmund along with Biff would act against the scheme that degrades them. Edmund and Biff are able to “examine” what they have accepted, and through this process they would distance from the masses, getting themselves closer to *nature*.

Accordingly, being drunk, Edmund confesses to his father:

EDMUND: (...) The fog was where I wanted to be. Halfway down the path you can't see this house. You'd never know it was here. Or any of the other places down the avenue. I couldn't see but a few feet ahead. I didn't meet a soul. Everything looked and sounded unreal. Nothing was what it is. That's what I wanted—to be alone with myself I another world where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself. Out beyond the harbor, where the road runs along the beach, I even lost the feeling of being on land. The fog and the sea seemed part of each other. It was like walking on the bottom of the sea. As if I had drowned long ago. As if I was a ghost belonging to the fog, and the fog was the ghost of the sea. It felt damned peaceful to be nothing more than a ghost within a ghost. (IV.1. 131)

This passage is crucial in order to identify how Edmund unfolds a discourse which is essentially natural. Not only because of the natural elements listed in it, but because through it, he is able to reach authenticity ---unlike his brother Jamie who unfolds the perverse, consequently being no authentic. In this way, Edmund get himself closer to authenticity: “That's what I wanted—to be alone with myself I another world where truth is untrue and life can hide from itself”. Nature, represented metonymically again through the figure of the sea, would work as an instance in which he can know himself. Accordingly, as it was mentioned before, if authenticity consists of the subject being authentic to himself,

then Edmund, in being able to recognize himself as an individual, unfolds his authenticity. Unlike Jamie, Edmund does not embrace cynicism, even though in an effort to copy his brother, he tries. In spite of this, Edmund's authenticity would always be revealing through the play. Nature, therefore, and that specific moment in which Edmund feels part of it, is an auratic moment, because it is original and genuine. In other words, Edmund's self-identification with the sea and the fog would be a unique moment, which is not even repeated throughout the play, again, unlike Jamie's cynicism. Furthermore, this passage reflects literally the way in which Edmund and Happy would differentiate from the masses: if Jamie and Happy were a metonymic part of the masses, then Edmund and Biff would be the ones who distance from it. In this way, nature will be juxtaposed to masses.

Furthermore, Edmund's confession discloses the crisis of authenticity or the decay of the aura consequence of the significance of masses (Benjamin 223) proper of modernity: "Who wants to see life as it is, if they can help it? It's the three Gorgons in one. You look in their faces and turn to stone. Or it's Pan. You see him and you die—that is, inside you—and have to go on living as a ghost". Unlikely Jamie who needs reproducible rites of evasion to be able to endure the conflicts around him and his own, Edmund is able to face the reality that degrades him, "everything we have accepted out of fear or insensitivity or ignorance" (Miller 1). In this sense, Edmund would recognize reality as the "three Gorgons" or as a "Pan", Greek mythology evils; and the fact of being able to evade it speaks about the evasion rites with which Jamie and Happy continue. However, face them, putting his life at risk, speaks of something purely heroic, if not tragic. In this sense, Edmund would be closer to the tragic sphere, unfolding traits proper of tragic heroes. In spite of this, as it was mentioned, Edmund is not a tragic hero but a survivor. When we get to realize that we are facing a survivor and not a hero, is by the time Edmund confesses to his father he tried to commit suicide: "Yes, particularly the time I tried to commit suicide at Jimmie the Priest's, and almost did". Tyrone answers back by saying that Edmund was not "in his right mind". Edmund replies: "I was stone cold sober. That was the trouble. I'd stopped to think too long". This answer may imply that if Edmund would have been drunk, he would have killed himself. In this sense, if dissipation was a reproducible ritual of evasion for Jamie and Happy, for Edmund would get him closer to authenticity. The above passage exemplifies this well, because the confession was said while Edmund was drunk.

Consequently, as survivors remain flawless, Edmund would not fall, and therefore, not commit suicide. However, his attempt gets him even closer to the tragic sphere. The fact of being closer to it and not being able to accomplish it remains him impotent.

Similarly, Biff's speeches are closer to nature, therefore, to authenticity. In a more literal way, readers or spectators will find the contrast of ideals that will be fostering the crisis of the aura mentioned before: "This farm I work on, it's spring there now, see? And they've got about fifteen new colts. There's nothing more inspiring or — beautiful than the sight of a mare and a new colt. And it's cool there now, see? Texas is cool now, and it's spring". However satisfied with the natural environment he has chosen, Biff acknowledges that many times, especially by spring, he doubts about his decision: "I suddenly get the feeling, my God, I'm not gettin' anywhere! What the hell am I doing, playing around with horses, twenty-eight dollars a week! I'm thirty-four years old, I oughta be makin' my future. That's when I come running home". In this sense, Biff "is torn between rural nostalgia and his need for solid achievement, and is tormented by the knowledge of personal failure" (Hadomi 18): "I've always made a point of not wasting my life, and everytime I come back here I know that all I've done is to waste my life". The fact of being divided between his personal ideals and the ones inherited from his father makes this survivor more complex than the ones previously analyzed.

The crisis that Biff confronts in regards his authenticity is inherited from his father's "extremely fragile sense of self-worth dependent on the perceptions of others" (Ribkoff 122). But in the process of authenticity, Biff is able to find himself and separate his sense of identity from that of his father. Biff will be "rejecting the constraints imposed by the middle-class routines of holding down a job and making a living, and in his preference for the life of a drifter out West, working as a hired farmhand outdoors" (Hadomi 18). Therefore, as it was mentioned before, by misprisioning from his father's ideals that would represent a metonymy of the social order imposed, he is remaining faithful to his own or authentic. In this sense, Biff also unfolds his authenticity as a consequence of his conflicted filial relationship. Similarly, Edmund appears as a traveler, a sensitive poet that is haunted by "ghosts of ghosts, shades generated by the Post-Romantic anti-heroes, Baudelaire, Swinburn and Nietzsche" (Meaney 58). Tyrone, his father, "the ghostly double of the

Shakespearean heroes he once played” (58), would represent the scheme of tradition from which Edmund would be trying to misprision, because “Shakespeare measured the excellence of an age by style in poetry, but this mode of measurement [for modern man] is out of date” (Russell 2). Edmund's greatest need in his relation with his father is not, like Jamie's, to separate his own self-image, “rather he seeks to develop an identity of his own based on his identification with his father” (Black 67). In this way, both characters present the qualities to be tragic, that is to say, they are a kind of ‘raw material’ that would foster tragic, and therefore, a tragic hero. Both characters, unlikely their brothers, seek to find a place not only within their plays, but also, a place within their own to be authentic; yet this is not enough to consider them entirely tragic. They fight against their own contradictions in order to be able to be real with their own identities. Their ambivalence as well, will be fostering new tragic spaces for them to exist, not only within the plays in which they exist, but also, a new tragic space that is able to exist in Modern tragedy.

Even though the filial conflict looked from this point of view may be overlooked, the spectator or reader may infer that both O'Neill and Miller, wisely, have put these figures in order to depict how tragedy have changed or evolved. Furthermore, the figures of the almost heroes, are as well a metonymic representation of the masses. As it was stated before, there will be always someone who goes against the current; yet these survivors also mingle among the masses.

CONCLUSIONS

This study has thrown light upon the nature of secondary characters, say, survivors as a figure that is constantly fowling in the plays. Their ambivalent nature, on the one hand, perverse and cynic of Jamie and Happy, and on the other, natural and tragic of Biff and Edmund, speaks about Modern American Tragedy as a theatre that was constantly experimenting. In this sense, the tragedies that have been analyzed are an instance in which readers may examine them as an example of the identity crisis of the 20th century. Survivors in these plays were no more than metonymic parts of a universe that was in crisis; of a society that seemed not to be open to integrate such kinds of human variations. Precisely, their emotions are just allowed into a system which is reproducible and therefore, no auratic. In this way they imbue their subjectivities into dissipation, and hide them behind masks of cynicism. As a result, echoes of their authentic selves might be overheard; however, they remain passive in order to survive in a hostile environment. They need to celebrate evasions rites as they prevent their subjectivities to arise, by doing so; they are being no authentic to themselves and to their family circles. Emotions are subjected to reproducible rites of evasions, as the ones of “one stand nights”, which does not lead him to a full comprehension of their environment. On the contrary, cynicism and dissipate lifestyle just help them to evade the association with it, leaving them passive but skeptic. In other words, they might feel miserable with their reality and can question whether if it is what they want it; yet they remain passive. They are about to cross the line that separates them from being entirely tragic, however, evasion rites keep them passive; many times impotent¹. Living from illusions and momentary reliefs can make them look pathetic; nevertheless, the solely act of keeping on living and trying makes their lives to have heroic nuances as well, as the chapter was titled: a quest for survival.

Additionally, it is important to highlight the fact that these survivors also encounter tragic spheres, especially Biff and Edmund. These characters are said to be more complex in terms of authenticity. It is a fact that these survivors are authentic to themselves, and at

¹ It is important to highlight that the figure of the cynic dissolute is also finds a precedent in 20th century literature in the same country of production. Among them are found works such as “*The Great Gatsby*” and “*The Sun Also Rises*”.

the end, find out how to stick to their own ideals. However, this fact is not as important as to consider these survivors as quite special object of study. The fact of being closer to the tragic and not encounter the total experience, lead us to consider masses in a different way. In other words, as they form part of the masses, they generate instances to accumulate tragic experiences or auratic moments, shading with different nuances something that it was said to be equal and uniform.

Along these lines, as both couples are witnesses of their parents' fall, they become a continuum. Strictly speaking, if tragic heroes have the chance to fall and redemption, these characters will be constantly threatening what is supposed to be taken for granted. It is a fact that tragic heroes are not the norm, and the fact of not remaining passive makes them heroic; however, the function of the survivor overcomes the heroism of a specific moment in time. They are going to still living; threatening with their cynicism and immorality a pre-established social order. This is why the figure of Shakespearean Edmund marks a precedent for these survivors, as he is a threat to the patrilineal order of Elizabethan times. Additionally, the contexts of both productions were made at a moment of crisis, where it seems that all human beings get more complex. Strictly speaking, the continuum they mark is closely associated with the fact that they will be subverting the masses continually, as they are not falling like their parents did.

The emancipated view of these survivors, or the response of readers or spectators towards the survivors analyzed, will account for a different perspective from which these characters have been look at. We will realize that the fact of being cynic, perverse, dissolute and bastard is not related with the one of being evil. These characters do not unfold malice even though they may seem wicked. This is why the relationship with Mephistopheles and Shakespeare's Edmund may serve so as to describe the ambivalence in the Cynic Bastards. On the one hand, Mephistopheles acknowledges the grace of heavens and warns Faustus about the horrors of hell, and on the other, Edmund just wants to be recognized as a human being and demands the love of his father. In this sense, both seem to have noble causes; however they are disguised of cynicism and perversity. In a similar way, survivors have a noble cause as well, and in this sense they visit the tragic. Survivors will be evading everything, yet this is only an attempt to bear their own existence.

Moreover, through the juxtaposition of perverse manner and natural discourses, we are able to distinguish how both playwrights contrast nature with modernity. On the one hand, nature will be related to authenticity, to be faithful with one's ideals. In a way, being authentic in these plays will be connected with the idea of being imbued in nature. On the other hand, the perverse will be related to what is not nature; to what contradicts what it is natural. In this sense, it is possible to make a relation between the perverse and modernity. The Cynic Bastards will be unfolding the perverse, a twisted behavior as a result of their lack of authenticity, and as it was in the analysis the crisis of authenticity is directly related to the decay of the aura. In other words, survivors who are able to overcome that fact of turning their behavior perverse are going to be able to be authentic, in this way, they are going to be closer to natural elements within their discourse. It can be implied, therefore, that being authentic is related to being natural; to be closer to our inner sensibilities without putting masks or hiding from them.

Along these lines, it is important to highlight that this study not only sheds light upon survivors, but also, provides for a background in order to evaluate tragic heroes in a different way. In other words, the fact of carrying out this study in a non-traditional way, just taking into account secondary characters, may contribute to take new considerations in regards the tragic figures in the plays. For instance, survivors are entire ambiguous, yet we also come to realize that some of them share tragic heroes traits such as authenticity. In this sense, this study contributes to look at Modern American as a theater that allows for ambiguity and characters that do not only belong to one category, say, tragic hero and 'the rest'. Strictly speaking, this study contributes to take into consideration new ways of exploring plays entirely, as we realize that secondary characters might also provide a great insight to determine the dramatic process of a tragedy, which is not entirely dependent on one character.

Along these lines, we realize that the subjects in a moment of crisis react in quite different ways, regardless they are tragic heroes or survivors. By the analysis of the survivors we come to discover a whole new field in regards dramatis personae in Modern American Drama, where characters are going to be constantly flowing, which fosters in us as readers or spectators huge possibilities of interpretations and meanings.

In this manner, the opposition between Modernity and nature might be perceived as a critique to the process of automation proper of the first one. Spectators and readers, through the examination of survivors, may encounter these figures that represent not only a society in crisis, but also a crisis that is shared by all of us that are trying to survive. A further consideration in regards the view of the reader and spectator, might imply that they tend to not sympathize with these figures so largely ignored and disliked as they represent their own voices of contradiction, looked with a magnifying glass, being brutally depicted in the paper or in the stage. It is never easy, as O'Neill's Edmund assures to face reality as it is. In a way, this study not only highlights the fact of survivors being ambiguous, but also, I think it might reveal in the reader or spectators of these plays something hidden, 'that dead part' of them, as Jamie calls it. The part that most of us has forgotten as a result of a reality which we cannot face, or a society that restrict us. When he actually face it is when we are being authentic, but that precisely in that moment is when we are even closer to fall.

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