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***The Glass Menagerie and A Streetcar Named Desire:*
Tennessee Williams and the Confluence of Experiences.**

Informe final de Seminario de Grado para optar al grado de Licenciado en
Lengua y Literatura Inglesas

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Santiago-Chile

2013

Acknowledgements

To my Professor, for our discussions, his support and every suggestion ever made.

To my seminar group, for the encouragement, all the help and all the enjoyable moments

To the memory of my father, and to everyone who has accompanied me on this journey, for enriching my experiences with your presence, wise words and loving suggestions.

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Introduction

Our seminar, ‘The city and the urban subject in British and American Literature’, revolved around the problem of cities and urban subjects, considering the relations they have with the metropolis and the way in which the constant flux of cities affects them. The consolidation of the cities created a space for new subjects, and new genres. But there is one element of these cities that caught my attention, and this is a shared element with the countryside, and a reminiscent idea of the early human communities. This is the house.

Houses are fixed points in cities, but they also are key elements in the dynamic relations between the characters and their surroundings. A house is the place where characters find shelter, where they let their subjectivities flow, and also the point of inflexion between private and public realms. A house changes in accordance to the transformations the owner suffers, and the transformation the dwellers apply to the house. Some houses change their status of residence, of comfort, to become shops or hair salons. Taking this into consideration, it could be argued that houses are the places where stillness and movement meet in both metaphorical and literal way, being both ever-changing and constant elements. However, houses also suffer changes that are not proposed, and imposed, by the dwellers, but by the city. A house has a close relation to the city, and cities have effects in the houses. The present work will consider this relation between house and city, and the exchange of experiences of both spaces.

To develop the relationship of houses and the city I selected the ones portrayed by the American playwright Tennessee Williams in his *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar named Desire*. His portrayal of the American middle class characters is delivered on two grounds, a city shaping the lives of the characters, and a city affecting the houses. Williams creates a space that could be considered both house and city, by means of the confluence of experiences, and this fusion of house and city is a byproduct of modernity.

The role of a house is important to consider for several reasons, chiefly because it is not a foreign concept. Most people live in houses, either house as such or any other type of construction that works as a households. Between those walls we create a community, and develop a constant exchange of subjectivities, always immersed in a city. From our early childhood, the house represents a shelter, and our first platform to deal with others, and other experiences. Private life within the cities should allow the characters the construction of

communities, yet this concept gets lost in urban contexts. Inside the houses there are crippled versions of community, always subjected to crises. These crises become apparent in the plays, and have their roots in the act of dwelling, yet these crises also entail the confluence of experiences, and it is my belief that these same crises propose the fusion of both city and house. Therefore considering houses in an urban setting is relevant because they are the spaces where the natural flow of characters' subjectivities occurs, also because they are these transformed spaces.

The selection of these plays as my primary sources responds to the strong presence, and importance, of the house for the story dynamics, especially when considering that these two particularly renowned houses in William's career come to represent the shattering of the American Dream. This term was viewed by Arthur Miller as "The American Dream is the largely unacknowledged screen in front of which all American writing plays itself out—the screen of the perfectibility of man. Whoever is writing in the United States is using the American Dream as an ironical pole of his story." (115, Bloom) This idea helps explaining why the recurrence of a particular type of theatre in the Modern American Drama. The number of plays that take place in households, and the role these spaces take in the narrative, is quite considerable. Two at the top of my head are Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, or Eugene O'Neill's *Long Day's journey into the Night*, or other plays of Williams such as *The Rose Tattoo*. These plays present the readers similar conditions, locations, and problems, families in moments of crisis, much like William's houses, The Wingfield and The Kowalski's. They become relevant too if we consider that they are still being reenacted. They are significant in current times because they deal with topics and relations that are still part of society.

In the selected plays, Tennessee Williams introduces us to two families in crisis, immersed in cities and framed in houses. His descriptions are full of details about the constructions' physical appearance, and his detailed account of them draws the attention to the backgrounds at the beginning, then Williams reveals more about them by means of the characters and their interactions. These interactions, and the role the constructions have, will be reviewed.

On one hand we have the Wingfield's apartment and on the other Kowalski's one. The first description of the former that we have is the one made by Williams "The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular

living units that flower as warty growths in an overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population (...)” (Williams 3) This description does not address the quality, or physical aspects of the house, but of its surroundings. This type of houses can only exist in an urban setting. This way of living resembles a lot the Kowalski’s household. They too live in a building, therefore share their space, and the first impression we have of it is profoundly related to its surroundings. “The exterior of a two-story corner building on a street in New Orleans which is called Elysian Fields and runs between L&N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm”. (Williams 3) By doing this Williams immediately places the audience in a city landscape, framing every detail in an urban condition. After placing us in the respective cities, the description of the places is done as simple as possible, yet very rich in details. Each house is small, and humble, and this aspect work as catalyst for the actions and relations, for the constant atmosphere of confinement. A shared space obliges the inhabitants to see each other more often, and propose the perfect space for the exchange of subjectivities. The plays introduce the audience to family dynamics inside the house, but they also indulge in a constant communication with the city, especially in the connective space of the stairs, and the relation with other characters, which proposes the fusion of both spaces. For these I deem Williams plays as pertinent objects for my analysis.

As secondary sources, I chose a variety of authors that help defining some of the key concepts. In relation to the house, dwelling, and spaces, I will use the works of Gaston Bachelard’s *Poetics of Space*, Martin Heidegger’s essays “Building Dwelling Thinking” and “Poetically Man Dwells” and Michel de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In spite of their different backgrounds, these authors paint an image of the house that is both useful and appropriate for the analysis. Constructions can be spaces where characters dwell, and by experiencing everyday life, and the accumulation of their own individualities, these spaces can be called houses, they can become their own spaces. Houses are spaces where shelter is mixed with the subjectivities of the dwellers, and at the same time hold a close connection to the city. Any space could be conceived as a house if the one who inhabits it deems so. In the same manner a house can be consider as a mere place, location.

Some of the authors selected for the analysis belong to the readings of our seminar, such as “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” by Walter Benjamin and “The

Metropolis and Mental life” by Simmel due to the relevance of their ideas in relation to the question on how we appreciate and see objects, and in this case a house, in an urban reality. Henri Lefebvre will lend some insight on the city, with his *The Urban Revolution*. In relation to subjectivity, I will be using the theories by Foucault and Leonor Arfuch, for their relevance on the topics of power and the life inside a house respectively. The literary theory that I deemed more appropriate for my analysis is Reader-Response, which will be explained in the theoretical framework. However I would like to address the reasons behind my decision. Although I am working with a binary opposition, house and city, and that concepts of Deconstruction would be very applicable, I chose Reader-Response for two main reasons. These texts are plays, therefore they are intended to be read, received and perceived by an active audience. This audience can be a curious reader, a theatre director or actors, and the reader involvement becomes crucial. Secondly this theory is quite amicable with the concept of subjectivity, thus quite adaptable to my purposes. Subjectivity in this work will be an important aspect on how characters dwell and create spaces, hence helping the final question of the fusion of the two experiences.

The present work has two main objectives, both in relation to my personal inquiries, and the ideas of our seminar. First is to attain a better comprehension of the value houses have within cities and their roles in people, and characters, lives. I intend to answer the question of what do these spaces have that become relevant for literary analysis, given that they are still visited by authors in their works. In addition to that, as a second objective, I would like to consider the nature of the house in these plays, if the confluence of experiences affects and transforms the house and city into one entity, and the role of the crisis in this transformation.

Theoretical Framework

This section will deal and review the main concepts necessary to elaborate a close reading to the selected plays, this will be supported on relevant bibliographical sources, with literary, philosophical, and sociological backgrounds. As pointed out in the previous section, the main concepts are the city, the house and subjectivity, however other terms will be also consider such as places spaces, and non-places.

The first concept to be addressed is the city, because it was the main topic of our seminar, as well as it provides a location for all the other concepts to appear. For the conceptualization of the city I will be working with Henri Lefebvre and his book *The Urban Revolution*. He worked different concepts that helped outlining the city. He proposed the idea that society has been completely urbanized—or was almost completely in the seventies--- in this and this produces an urban society, using it as a conceptual formulation, “a movement of thought toward a certain *concrete*, and perhaps *the concrete*” (Lefebvre 5) He defined the *urban revolution* “the transformations that affect contemporary society, ranging from the period when questions of growth and industrialization predominate (model, plans, programs) to the period when the problematic becomes predominant, when the search for solutions and modalities unique to urban society are foremost.” (5) A term such as revolution can be perceived as violent, and not rational, and to solve this he created an axis that went from zero urbanization to a hundred percent. He explained this axis as “A signifier for this signified--- the *urban* (the urban reality)-- this axis is both spatial and temporal: spatial because the process extends through space, which it modifies; temporal because it develops overtime.”(7). with these concepts, Lefebvre defined his object, the Urban, which I will be employing. He also makes an allusion to another pivotal concept, he calls it *Concrete Space*, “the space of habiting: gestures and paths, bodies and memory, symbols and meanings, the difficult maturation of the immature-premature (of the human being), contradictions and conflicts between desires and needs, and so forth.” (182).The vision of the city that I will use is one that has been completely urbanized, and with an everydayness reduced to the minimal, but this city exists as a reality surrounding the lives of the characters, and affecting the habitation. This city, as well, is open to be experienced by the characters, and to be felt, or perceived, by the senses.

Lefebvre commented on another term that I will use, that is *space*, opposed to places and non-places, and the relation with the house. Their differences allowed me to create a solid ground, and guide my perception of the plays in a particular way. The first question that needs to be addressed is if the house is a space, a place, or a location, besides its quality of being a building. The distinction between these concepts is, also, clarified by De Certeau; he opposed space and place considering three parameters, time, location and realization. He defined a place as

“A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (*place*). The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place: the elements taken into consideration are besides one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability.”(124).

This means, in the context of a city, a place is a geographical location, for example an address or one building in a row of buildings. But space is different, it is a place that has been pinpointed in time, obviously in a location, and is being realized by a subject, “In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into space by walkers” (De Certeau 124), or in Lefebvre terms, space is concrete spaces that are inhabited. A place is a stable geographical point, for example a building, but a space is the value given to the place by means of living it, for example by dwelling a set of rooms become a house. The very nature of a space makes it unstable and dependable on the subjectivities of the dweller. De Certeau’s ideas resemble the one presented by Heidegger in his “Building Dwelling Thinking” in relation to location and spaces.

“Man's relation to locations, and through locations to spaces, inheres in his dwelling. The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, strictly thought and spoken.”; “When we think, in the manner just attempted, about the relation between location and space, but also about the relation of man and space, a light falls on the nature of the things that are locations and that we call buildings.” (155)

From this we can understand that dwelling is not passive, but this implies an active relationship with a place, and works in the same way habitation for Lefebvre. This active relationship transforms the place into a space, so spaces are created by people living in them, enjoying them, relating to them. Dwelling is appropriating the space, allowing it to be transformed by us and transforming it. The concept of dwelling marks the difference between a space and a place. Constructions can be considered both spaces, and places, and their value will be dependent on whoever experiences them. Houses are spaces where the shelter is mixed with the subjectivities of the dweller. When characters dwell, and experience everyday life, hence they accumulate their own individualities in a construction, in a space, they are creating a house. Because of this, any space could be conceived as a house if the one who inhabits it deems so. Bachelard's ideas on the house gravitate around this notion, as he points out "For our house is our corner of the world. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the word. If we look at it intimately, the humblest dwelling has beauty."(Bachelard 40) The act of dwelling, then, is the manner in which characters, in this case, create the house.

Heidegger explains in his essays "Poetically Man Dwells" what dwelling is in relation to poetry, to creation, and Bachelard defines the house using this term. "Poetry is what really lets us dwell. But through what do we attain to a dwelling place? Through building. Poetic creation, which lets us dwell, is a kind of building." (Heidegger 213)

"We shall see the imagination build "walls" of impalpable shadows, comfort itself with the illusion of protection- or, just the contrary, tremble behind thick walls, mistrust the staunchest ramparts. In short, in the most interminable of dialectics, the sheltered being gives perceptible limits to his shelter. He experiences the house in its reality and in its virtuality, by means of thought and dreams."; "Through dreams, the various dwelling-places in our lives co-penetrate and retain the treasures of former days." (Bachelard 41)

Humans build by means of poetry, they imagine and create protective walls, men create buildings while experiencing. Houses are closely related to the dwellers, and to some extent they are a reflection of them, of their interiorities and their dreams. It is only logical to ask if houses should be considered by authentic by themselves, or a projection of us, to understand this one

must consider the definition of *authenticity*. Benjamin in his essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” deals with this concept and defines it as

“The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter. And what is really jeopardized when the historical testimony is affected is the authority of the object.”(Benjamin 3)

This idea relates to houses because in the current times buildings are manufactured, they are massively reproduced. Entire neighborhoods are composed of the same house over and over, or the beehive buildings. A house is not particular anymore, unless the dweller chooses to particularize it. Authenticity, then, is long gone and only exists in a mystical space; mass consumption is one of the causes of its disappearance. A keystone question, therefore, is if the perception of the house has changed, affected by mass consumption, and if so, did the aura, the irreproducible aspect of an object according to Benjamin, of the home disappeared. A house, as previously stated, is an intimate space, and the only true author is the owner giving meaning and re-reading it, and is perceived as such. The dweller’s relationship with the house can be questioned, following Simmel’s ideas, is it an intellectual relationship, or emotional? Simmel highlights the difference between the two types in his work “The Metropolis and Mental life”. The economy has strong effect on the way the modern mind perceives things. Approaching to reality from an economic point of view would result in an intellectual relationship and the house would have a value, a number or economic, more or less, fixed value, in the same we divide and measure everything else (people, vendors, markets etc). An emotional relationship derives from the individuality, and in terms of the house this means what is worth for me and what it represents, the intimate relationship. To exemplify this type of relationship with a house one could consider the way in which one house, in a row of identical houses, stands alone for the dwellers to interpret and fill with their own imagination, with their own daydreams. It might be an exact duplicate of the others, but each owner creates its own universe in it, each owner then grant the house with an aura.

In a brief manner I would like to address, as well, to two concepts presented by Marc Augé in his book *Non Places: Introduction to Anthropology to Supermodernity*. These concepts are non places and supermodernity. Augé describes the overabundance of events in the Twentieth Century, which create a sense of lack of meaning and invites subjects to try to give meaning to the world. In his words “Esta necesidad de dar un sentido al presente, sino al pasado, es el rescate de la superabundancia de acontecimientos que corresponde a una situación que podríamos llamar de “*sobremodernidad*” para dar cuenta de su modalidad esencial: el exceso” (Augé 36) This idea of *supermodernity* is presented by Augé as the negative of postmodernity, as the opposite side, or in his words “el anverso de una moneda”(Augé 36) He characterizes supermodernity by two types of excess, excess of time and excess of space. The second concept I would like to consider is the *non place*. Augé argues that a place can be defined as a relational, historical and concerned with identity, but then a place that doesn’t concern itself with the previous ideas will be a non place. For him, supermodernity produces these non places, this spaces that are not anthropological places. Augé does clarify that both places and non places do not exist in a pure form, but they are realized by De Certeau’s acts of doing. (83-85) Non places designate two complementary realities, spaces created in relation to ends and the relation individuals have with these spaces. (98). Non places are relevant for two reasons, they reflect the union between a space and people, and they are the definition of the bridges between the houses and the city, the stairs.

The previous concepts created the ground in which I intend to plant another relevant concept, *subjectivity*. While I was defining house and dwelling, this concept appeared more than once in the form of 'the way people and characters dwell'. In Mansfield’s book *Subjectivity, Theories of the Self* there is a definition of subjectivity that work as a starting point.

‘Subjectivity’ refers, therefore, to an abstract or general principle that defines our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that, or simply helps us to understand why, our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest or as necessary sharers of common experience. In this way, the subject is always linked to something outside of it—an idea or principle or the society of other subjects.’ (3)

Subjectivity has had many different ways of being understood, ranging from psychoanalysis perspectives to Marxists, and passing through queer theories and so on. Because this term provides a wide range of definitions, and would extend this more than is necessary, I will focus in two particular authors, Michel Foucault and Leonor Arfuch.

Leonor Arfuch defines subjectivity by the ways people relate to the others whereas Foucault sees it as a relation of people and power. In his works he considers subject either as the grammatical subject, or as a position individuals occupy as *subjected* to power. These positions can be roles existing within discourse or institutions. Foucault argues that individuals are the result of the effects of controlling powers. 'The modern individual is produced by a power that individualizes precisely in order to better control. A panoptic (all-seeing) power keeps subjects under constant surveillance.' (Norton 1618) This control is done by institutions, and their effort is to normalize individuals. Social institutions carry out their power through routines and trainings. At the same time, this power, *modern power*, classifies catalogues and examines every possible variant of human action in order to master them and administrate, therefore, the individuals. The different disciplines of knowledge create these different categories, much like urbanists create different spaces for the different uses imposed on people. In order to be able to create these catalogs, Foucault considers the union of power and knowledge. He fused these two terms into power/knowledge. To sum up, Foucault views the individuals as the meeting point of external power that analyses them by systems of knowledge, from different disciplines. Individuals do not possess a subjectivity as a natural state, but it is constructed, permanently changing, and subordinates them. This idea of individuals being ruled by power, affecting their everyday lives, resembles the ideas by Lefebvre about the way the Urban affects people and their relations. Foucault sees this power in institutions, and following Lefebvre's ideas, one institution could be the urban society and or urbanization.

On the other hand Arfuch's ideas on subjectivity follow the lines of being a result of my relation with the other. She provides two complementary definitions of subjectivity, one in her essay 'Problemas de la Identidad', and the book *El Espacio Biográfico . Dilemas de la Subjetividad Contemporánea*.

“Identidad sería entonces no un conjunto de cualidades predeterminadas--raza, color, sexo, clase, cultura, nacionalidad, etc.-- sino una construcción nunca acabada, abierta a la temporalidad, la contingencia, una posicionalidad relacional sólo temporariamente fijada en el juego de las diferencias” (‘Problemas de la Subjetividad’ 21)

“(…) sujeto no esencial, constitutivamente incompleto y por lo tanto, abierto a identificaciones múltiples, en tensión hacia lo otro, lo diferente, a través de posicionamiento a contingentes que es llamado a ocupar-- en este ‘ser llamado’ opera tanto el deseo como las determinaciones de lo social--, sujeto susceptible sin embargo de autocreación.” (*El Espacio Biográfico. Dilemas de la Subjetividad* 65)

Much like Foucault, Arfuch proposes a subject that is not given, naturally occurring, but it is the result of some kind of interaction, and that subjectivity is open to changes. Both authors have subjects that have a tendency to mark themselves as different; in Foucault’s power tries to normalize all individuals. Identification is another relevant concept in her works, and that will be very useful in the next section. “La identificación lo es siempre *en virtud de cierta mirada en el Otro*, por lo cual, frente a cada imitación de una imagen modélica, cabría formularse la pregunta del *para quién* se está actuando ese rol, que mirada es considerada cuando el sujeto se idéntica el mismo con una imagen.” (Arfuch 64) This type of identification brings us back to Foucault and the idea of power, considering that an image in the world, or in others, has the effect of produce identification. The first identifications we have are with those with power over us, parents or even teachers, so creating our own subjectivity from others is a “natural” act. Along with the ideas of subjectivity, Arfuch deals with the concept of intimacy, one connected with the appropriation of spaces, and the creation of the house as “our corner in the world”. The private life is the asylum of intimacy, is the shelter of it. So if the intimacy creates private life, which at the same time helps the creation of the house, the house relates to intimacy as a by-product. Private life, however, needs a shelter to flourish, therefore this two terms, house and intimacy, are in a symbiotic state. I will develop this point in the analysis, using selected passages.

The final part of this section will be concerned mainly with reader-response theory based on the works of Stanley Fish and Wolfgang Iser. As was mentioned in the previous section, this

particular type of literary criticism has certain favoritisms to subjectivity, and, in my opinion, to the close reading of plays for their dual nature, they are to be read, but also to be re-enacted, which implies and requires complicity with whoever the audience, readers or director or actors, is. This particular type of criticism is characterized for two things, it highlights the importance of the reader, when it comes to interpreting texts; and as Selden puts it, has “no single predominant philosophical starting point” (59).

Fish believes that readers respond to the sequence of words in sentences, regardless of the origin, either literary or not, and it is because of this I chose his ideas. In his essay ‘Interpreting Variorum’, Fish proposes two ideas that I deem important, one is the responsibility of creating judgments, of interpreting, and the interpretative communities. He shifted the responsibility from the text, in more conventional criticism, to which he rebelled against, and place it in the reader and his experience. Unlike formalists, in his analysis, Fish considers literary language in the same status than any other kind, and both literary and non literary language share the strategies applied by the reader to understand texts. The object of his analysis then becomes the reader, and his experiences. ‘In other words, it is the structure of the reader’s experience rather than any structures available on the page that should be the object of description.’ (Fish 2076) From this idea he ventures to propose that meaning lies in the experiences of the reader, he uses as an example the process to give meaning to one word in a poem is part of the meaning. However adamant he might about the reader’s role in interpreting, Fish placed him in a particular sphere. Fish uses the concept of reader, as someone who has a linguistic competence, that is to say is able to use linguistics to unfold experiences in the texts, in order to create meanings. He also describes, and brands, his reader with one more concept. He employs the idea of informed reader, he who is aware of literary conventions. His reader forms part of a bigger concept, a pivotal and new concept in his work, Interpretive Communities.

“Interpretive communities are made up of those who share interpretive strategies not for reading (in the conventional sense) but for writing texts, for constituting their properties and assigning their intentions. In other words, these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way around.” (Fish 2087)

This idea, of interpretive communities, works, in his model, as an earthly bound to an otherwise ideal concept, they ground his ideal reader. These communities are the ones that teach the interpretive strategies, since they do not occur naturally, and strategies are particular to each community. Interpretation for Fish is constructed from my strategies, which are part of an interpretive community. On a final note about Fish works, I would like to quote him on his description of his model, which allowed me to form a connection between the authors I selected.

“In my model, however, meanings are not extracted but made' and made not by encoded forms but by interpretive strategies that call forms into being. It follows then that what utterers do is give hearers and readers the opportunity to make meanings (and texts) by inviting them to put into execution a set of strategies.” (Fish 2088)

The Reader-Response theory takes care of the idea of making meanings, and Wolfgang Iser employs, for this purpose, the idea of the blanks or gaps in the text. He describes blanks as a pivotal aspect of the relationship between the reader and the text, because they encourage the active role of the reader, making the unsaid—the blank--- into meaning. “(...)the gaps, the fundamental asymmetry between text and reader; that give rise to communication in the reading process; the lack of a common. Situation and a common frame of reference' corresponds to the "no-thing" which brings about the interaction, between persons.” (Iser 1676) These blanks, that allow the interaction, go hand in hand with the ideas presented by Fish, and allow a better realization of them. The blanks imply the creation of the relation between text and reader. Iser divides the literary text in two poles “(...) we might call the artistic and the aesthetic: the artistic pole is the author's text, and the aesthetic is the realization accomplished by the reader.”(Iser 1674) and the aesthetic pole is revised by both Iser and Fish.

According to Iser, the blanks in the texts serve as the starting point of referential fields, which are filled by the theme and background structures of the text in accordance to the decisions the readers make. Blanks impulse the reader as the regulator of the text, and they introduce attention shifts to one or other aspect of the text, and the usage of one or other referential field. “(...)the shifting blank maps out the path along which the wandering viewpoint is to travel, guided by the self-regulatory sequence in which the structural qualities of the blank interlock.”(Iser 1681). Iser uses the idea of the experience of reading and describes the meeting

point of reader and text by means of contact, which is done by filling the blanks in the text “Contact therefore depends upon our continually filling in a central gap in our experience”. (Iser 1675).

Much like urbanists affect the way individuals experience the city, and the spaces, in Lefebvre’s work; Arfuch and Foucault bond the subjectivity with others, either as the ones who form the individuality or the power effected on it; and Heidegger and Bachelard bond the house to dweller’s subjectivities, relationships seems to be the key word. Interpretation of texts, interpretations of the city, of the spaces and houses, and interpretation of subjectivities all come together to this point with the idea of experiencing much like a reader experiences texts.

Analysis

American Dream and Modern American Drama, in relation to the Houses

An idea that has been embodied in the American culture is the American Dream, which has been present in literature quite often. The Dream can be traced to the Promised Land for the puritans, but it was shaped and defined by James Truslow Adams as

“American Dream of a better, richer, and happier life for all our citizens of every rank, which is the greatest contribution we have made to the thought and welfare of the world that dream or hope has been present from the start. Ever since we became an independent nation, each generation has seen an uprising of ordinary Americans to save that dream from the forces which appeared to be overwhelming it”. (Cullen 4)

This idea of perfectibility, of the reward at the end of the paths given by the people's effort served as an ethos to the United States, this idea became a unifying force for the construction of the nation, as we can see in the constitution's idea that all men are created equal. The importance given to the work and the dream has been closely associated to social mobility, and most importantly of prosperity. Everything can be achieved by means of hard work, which can grant happiness. The Modern American Drama uses this idea in the plays, for example Arthur Miller presents the pursuit of the Dream in his *Death of a Salesman*. This tradition made apparent a situation that rose in the Post-War era, the pursuit. The realization of this pursuit was done by revealing the truth behind it, it was a fruitless act. Mobility was no more possible than happy endings, and one of the best examples of this broken promise is the house.

Houses received the meaning of settling down, and the Dream consolidated the idea of the house as this meeting point between hard work and happiness. Therefore, the ownership of a house became pivotal for the American Dream. However, in the post-war era, it became apparent that this was not true. Hard work did not ensure a house, and neither did it help to maintain it. This is the aspect that Modern American Drama exploited; hard work was not enough and this perfectibility did not took in.

The American Dream is still used as a concept; however many take it as an unattainable reality, but one Americans feel unable to abandon, and immigrants appropriate. The Dream helped shaping the nation, and the different literary traditions, and it works as a connecting

thread between the expectations and reality for Americans. However unattainable it might be, the Dream works as a shadow enriching the relations Americans have with objects and their own identity.

Houses and their Construction: building house experiences

As a starting point in this analysis I will consider the houses as buildings, as constructions, in order to do this I will work with the descriptions given by Williams in the form of stage directions and some descriptions, or comments, said by the characters. This will consider the physical appearance and the inferences the descriptions entail for readers. Williams is characterized for his rich and detailed directions. It is this level of details that allows a reader, or a director, to construct the image of the houses, but considering the previous section, this amount of details provides the background story for readers. Williams' stage directions not only play the role of physically describing a place, but frame the reader inside the atmosphere of a broken American Dream scenario, which allows the actions to take a particular path, one of crisis.

A house stands by itself; however, the households in the plays are apartments and that means they stand inside a building. This holds a close relation to the modern aspects of the cities. The overpopulation forces construction to maximize the capacity in minimal locations; where one house with one family stood, now many houses and families stand. The buildings are portrayed in the following manner "The Wingfield apartment is in the rear of the building, one of those vast hive-like conglomerations of cellular living units that flower as warty growths in an overcrowded urban centers of lower middle-class population (...)" (3) in *The Glass Menagerie*. This particular home reveals a high level of urbanization and in Lefebvre's axis, as explained in the previous section, would be near a hundred percent, if not a complete urbanization, where the concrete space is subjugated by the building. The pressing force of the Urban, in this building, has a direct effect in the relation two of the characters had with the home. Laura views her house inside the building as her own island, whereas Tom views this as a constraining power limiting his life. Amanda is torn between the memories of her old house, a proper one, and this location. She stands in a middle point between her offspring. The house is both her corner of the world and an alienated space, especially when compared to her previous life. On the other hand, we

have the building presented on *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The main difference is the level of urbanization and the amount of concrete space the characters have. Williams described this building with milder words, projecting a less suffocating atmosphere. “The exterior of a two-story corner building on a street in New Orleans which is called Elysian Fields and runs between L&N tracks and the river. The section is poor but, unlike corresponding sections in other American cities, it has a raffish charm. (...)This building contains two flats, upstairs and down. Faded white stairs ascend to the entrances of both” (3). This building is affected by urbanization, yet it is a minor form compared to the one that holds the Wingfield’s apartment, providing the Kowalski’s a different approach to the force of the Urban, and the possible fusion between this sphere and the city’s. They view their apartment in a similar manner as Laura, yet Blanche acknowledges the house as something foreign for her, and rather uncomfortable, much like Tom, and to some extent to Amanda. Another aspect worth considering is the way in which the stage directions are constructed. Williams not only grants details, but he uses literary figures in them. This seemingly unimportant act contributes two things to the plays: new textures are introduced as part of the life in the house and connects the house with the urban landscape outside it. The connection is done by simply hinting what is surrounding the house, ‘a poor section with raffish charm’, which at the same time introduces the silhouettes of the city to the house. A poor section will filter through the walls, will leak, and enter the house, resulting in a poor house, but both sustain a raffish charm.

The spatial distribution of the houses, as their physical appearance, follows the one of the buildings. The description of Stella’s house is done with an emphasis on the physical appearance using simple and clear language; most of the particularities of the house are revealed or produced by the characters and not by Williams’ directions. “Two rooms can be seen, not too clearly defined. The one first entered is primarily a kitchen but contains a folding bed to be used by Blanche. The room beyond this is a bedroom. Off this room is a narrow door to a bathroom” (8). This simplicity enables readers to approach to it in a different way than, for example, the building in *The Glass Menagerie*, where the details guided the eyes towards an overcrowded space. The description of the Wingfield’s flat resembles the straightforward description, at first. “Nearest the audience is the living room, which also serves as a sleeping room for Laura, the sofa unfolds to make her bed. Just beyond, separated from the living room by a wide arch or second proscenium with transparent poitiers (or a second curtains), is the dining room.”(3-4).

However, the house, as the physical location, is then described in full at the beginning of the second scene. Williams reveals the interior of the apartment, including decorations and of course, the glass menagerie. These extra details, these objects introduce the readers to the quotidian life of the characters, and they play a role in terms of dwelling. Williams introduces the reader into their life by means of the objects described, and guides the readers to, once again, through a house that implies limited space, a suffocating house. Quotidian experiences in the house relate to either the interaction with other characters or interaction with objects. Williams hints these interactions with objects by filling the spaces with different elements.

The houses are described as the mere locations; however the characters transform these mere buildings according to their experiences. This is where the differentiation of places and spaces becomes relevant.

Houses: Places or Spaces?

Houses should be reconsidered, this time not as buildings or locations, but in terms of places or spaces, according to the way they are experienced by the characters. The distinction becomes relevant because it grants the emotional relation between the house and the characters.

The first section chosen for this purpose is said by Amanda to Laura about women who lack a home, which incidentally describe Blanche's situation.

What is there left but dependency all our lives? I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South—barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife!—stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room—encouraged by one in-law to visit another—little birdlike women without any nest—eating the crusts of humility all their life! (Scene 2)

Here Amanda reveals her own perception of a house, as something a place one must own in order to call it house, which takes us back to the idea of the American Dream. But this statement could seem as misleading, for the purpose of this section. How can ownership affect the status of a place or space, considering the distinction relates to the experiences lived inside

them? Amanda gives the key to answer, as well as Blanche gives the answer in her cohabitation with Stella. They live and experience places, they transform them into spaces, but not homes. They have no home, yet they accumulate spaces. They project their interior life into any “mousetrap” available, as a substitute of a house, or in Blanche’s case a bed in a kitchen or a hotel room, or a bathroom. Spaces, in urban settings, become safe havens and provide protection and contentment, but not in the same manner a house does. This idea conceals the true situation of Blanche, she is an example of destitution, and she embodies the destitute qualities, also shared by Tom.

Another example where the plays allow us to differentiate places from spaces is the situation of Tom, in *The Glass Menagerie*. He pays for a house that is a mere location to rest his head. In Scene three, Tom and Amanda fight and Williams exposes, without phrasing it, that he cannot call that apartment his space, his house. Tom relates to the house in an economic manner. This house represents for Tom a fixed value every month, the amount of money he needs to earn to maintain it. This rules his life, and serves as the trigger for his escape. Tom is unable to share the emotional connection Amanda and especially Laura feel with the house, hence viewing it as a place not a space. If we consider Tom’s inability to express himself within the construction of this household, powered by the image of his controlling mother, and his economic approach to the place, we can fully understand his restlessness, and why non places become his real home and spaces relevant for him. His need for adventure, his way of living that echoes the one of a ‘Flaneur’, transforms the space inside the house into a mere place; however his experience of the city, of the adventure, is more plastic. It is prefabricated by the cinema, transforming this place, the cinema, into his more real dwelling area. Both Tom and Blanche, then, are living in ‘mousetraps’, destituted of their own spaces. I use the word destitution to qualify their situation for a reason. Destitution can be seen as abandonment, the condition of lacking everything, but in the origin of the word there was also the reading of betrayal and desertion. ‘Destitutio’ and ‘Destituo’, noun and verb respectively, relate to the idea of desert. Both Tom and Blanche are in a barren situation, Tom actually deserts his family, and Blanche was deserted by hers. Both are destituted, with no place to consider home, but taking the city as the space they need. Beyond characters there are other elements that can be destituted, neighborhoods. Urban quarters, within cities, can be in the same situation as Blanche and Tom, deserted by the cities in which they are immersed. The urban context applies its power over people and its different sections, this

pressure produces marginalized spaces. Cities have a fluid quality to them; they are ever growing, ever moving, ever flowing entities, which can be affected by the different shapes the Urban, as a force, applies to them. Modern cities take the form urbanization inflicts them, according to Lefebvre, and this implies leaving behind certain portions that cannot fit into the idea of downtown, the core of the cities. These quarters left behind, destituted of their power in the city exists due to this; modern cities can have more than one urban center, yet being outside them means staying behind. The plays do not make clear references to the idea of downtown, or urban centers, but they occur in these destitute quarters, mirroring the character's lives. Williams proposes cities that have liquid characteristics, which allow, and entail, the relations subjacent to spaces and characters. These cities described by Williams can take many forms, either the ones the Urban imposes, or the ones the house proposes.

Stanley and Stella view their building as a space, much like Amanda and Laura, but for different reasons. The Kowalskis own this place, and they are building a life, regardless of the problems they may or may not have. They have an emotional relation with the space, yet this is a byproduct of their own relation, and Stanley has an economic relation with it as well. Stanley is quite aware of ownership, and he admittedly viewed Belle Reve as his own as well. When he names himself as the King of the House, he reveals his perception as the only owner and his power over the women living with him. “‘Every man is a King!’ And I am the King around here, so don't forget it!”(Scene 8). Stella, on the other hand, acknowledges the house as her own space by virtue of the image Belle Reve has over her. She ran away from that place to find security in this space. We can see her appreciation of the house every time she defends it, granted that her defense also applies to her husband. This space provided her the perfect atmosphere to express her sexuality with Stanley, and her relationship with him serves as the final goal of the house. This place becomes Stella's space due to her experiences with Stanley.

The plays present these dual locations, spaces for some characters, and places to others, thus making it crucial to further define them in terms of houses. A house is a place of dwelling, a space that cultivates memories and subjectivities. The houses Williams creates belong in this description, thus making the apartments dual entities. Homes are experienced on two spheres, according to Bachelard, their reality and their virtuality. The reality Williams proposes can be attained by means of thought and practical matters,

economic values, the possession or destitution, locations and so on. The virtuality is done by means of imaginations, the relations the houses shelter and the relations with the house, by the way Williams filled the spaces and used them and by the way characters relate to the house, the virtual realization of the house is done by dwelling with a space in a loving manner with the space. Bachelard proposes the virtual realization as the connection we have, that intimate connection, much like the one of the first house of our childhood. A house can be experienced by thought and by dreams, and the plays offer houses that are experienced in both ways.

The Act of Dwelling in Houses

In order to experience a house dwelling becomes a key concept, but dwelling not as habitation but as filling spaces and living the spaces, by realizing the home in both its virtuality and reality. But then how can we consider these dual locations presented in the plays?

They are both spaces and places, depending on the character who views them, which character realizes these experiences. To solve this question I considered the following, dwelling in houses as the exchange of experiences, and subjectivities, regardless of the relationship with the location. This is done under the idea that a character can dwell in a house or in the city, and that these dwelling experiences help to fuse both, therefore dwelling is not limited to spaces only, but includes places, non places and liminal spaces. Every character in the plays, therefore, dwells in the apartments and I would like to consider here what is to dwell in these apartments in the plays. To characterize the houses, Williams gives very clear stage directions, but he fills these houses with the characters and scenes of familiarity. Some of the interactions in the house reveal the exchange of experiences and a domestic life. Domestic life will be considered as the experiences that occur in relation to the house, the ones which imply the realization of the house, scenes of familiarity and common activities that can only be experienced at home. One example of an image of domestic life is one that links house and city, the need of food and going to buy something. In both plays Williams presents the reader with this highly domestic routine, yet this very way of dwelling, by means of food, forces a connection with the city. How can the need of food be part of the dwelling process? Food brings people together, proposes sitting and having dinner, or breakfast, therefore the city manages to leak into the domestic routine. This is an

example of dwelling a house in connection to the city, but before this relation of house and city, there is a relation between characters and the house that I would like to review.

First I want to consider, as a moment that reveals the act of dwelling, the first scene in *The Glass Menagerie*, when the family is having dinner because it is a very intimate moment, and intimacy creates a house. During this simple scene, each character reveals, without saying it, how they experience the house. A reader could understand the reality of the family by considering the descriptions and the way they interact. The interaction takes place inside the house, therefore the house works as a canvas for their subjectivities, for their experiences, and their selves, built on the shoulders of the other members of the house. Along these lines, we, as readers, can perceive from the beginning that Amanda sees herself in a position of power inside the family; she controls the life of her children and the space. This can be clearly seen in the following intervention.

AMANDA [to her son]: Honey, don't push with your fingers. If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew! Chew! Animals have sections in their stomachs which enable them to digest food without mastication, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavours that have to be held in the mouth for appreciation. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function! (Scene 1)

From this speech Williams presents to the reader her role in the house, Amanda dictates rules, from how to eat to how to live, yet she is the one who does the things in the house, especially considering that she encourages Laura to stay at the table. The whole scene revolves around the way she makes up her self, on one hand is the way she relates to her children, and the other is by using the past, her memories, as the token that sets her aside. She takes a position of remembering the past, bringing to the present house her previous one. This collision between houses, or better phrased between experiences of houses, let the readers see the unsettled spirit with the present situation, although this very thing should be regarded as her particular way of dwelling, of experiencing her house. She builds her subjectivity framed by these two constraints: her power over her children and her power over the house, becoming the ruler of her space, nevertheless she is ruled by her memories. Contrary to this power built subjectivity, there is

Laura's. Her way of dwelling is also present in the scene, yet a reader should pay close attention to her interventions to fully grasp her role in the house, during the dinner she has an apologetic manner, that seems to work as the glue between a stranded son and an over possessive mother. Her final intervention, and the end of this scene, exemplifies partially her dwelling of the house.

LAURA: It isn't a flood, it's not a tornado, Mother. I'm just not popular like you were in Blue Mountain. ... [Tom utters another groan. LAURA glances at him with a faint, apologetic smile. Her voice catching a little.] Mother's afraid I'm going to be an old maid. (Scene 1)

Laura is constrained to her present house, and the one in the memories of her mother, between her own experience in the house, as this shelter she much needs, and the expectations of the world. She builds her self, her subjectivity, by inhabiting every single space in the house, and by actively avoiding the city. It is true that she enjoyed strolls through the city, while pretending to be in college, yet these never held the same importance as the house for her, because she gives them up with no sign of protest. She constructed her subjectivity inside the walls of her shelter, and the experiences of the city, the contact with other, frighten her, as Amanda puts it to Tom

AMANDA: (...) I say for your sister because she's young and dependent. I put her in business college - a dismal failure ! Frightened her so it made her sick at the stomach. I took her over to the Young Peoples League at the church. Another fiasco. She spoke to nobody, nobody spoke to her. Now all she does is fool with those pieces of glass and play those worn-out records. What kind of a life is that for a girl to lead? (Scene 4)

Laura inhabits the house like no other character in these plays, she finds solace and a space to express her whole self, and she manages to do this without the help of others. Unlike Stella, for example, Laura is able enjoy a close relation with the house on her own terms, whereas Stella dwells her house and experiences her house by relating to Stanley. Despite this difference, both Stella and Laura have a fair amount of similarities in the way they approach their houses. Stella is the connecting element between the other characters in her house, and she projects her own feelings into the house. One example of this is the morning after the fight with

Stanley. Stella starts cleaning the house and putting things in order, to match her serene disposition. The storm of the previous night is long gone; therefore she makes her house comfortable again. Williams does this trick to allow readers to understand better the characters. The Wingfield apartment mimics Laura emotional state with the lights and Stella's house order resembles her own impressions of her relationship and life. In this particular scene, Stella listens to Blanche's plans to leave the current house with a calm skepticism, yet she ignores her sister's proposals. Stella and Laura dwell happily in their corners of the world, but Stella does not reject the city's experiences altogether.

Another scene that is quite symbolic of the acts of dwelling is the bathroom situation in the Kowalski's apartment. These instances not only reveal the dynamics inside the house between characters, but they too open a window into the quotidian life in houses on crisis. A crisis that is present in the city as well. The urban quarter where the apartment is located has to deal with the same issues. The crisis in this particular household is exemplified in the lack of room, but it reveals other problems as well. This household has one bathroom only, with a door, but it is in the center of the already small house. Williams, then, invites the readers to fill the lack of room with the collisions of different personalities, or subjectivities. He also proposes this limited location as something that entails lack of privacy, a defining characteristic of the house. This house does not have enough room to secure privacy and intimacy, forcing the characters to either clash, as in the bathroom situation or find other areas where to dwell, inviting the characters to create a house outside the house, aiding the fusion of both spaces. Once again Williams invites the readers to connect this house with the outside world, the city outside the house has to deal with the same problem, lack of room. This problem, however is realized in the city by the need of bee-hive buildings, aiding the increased of urbanization levels. The tension for the lack of area in the city filters to the Kowalski's residence. The city does not have enough room, neither has the apartment, thus presenting this problem. The bathroom situation also symbolizes an interesting experience of the house for one two of the characters in *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Stanley, the king of the house, is stripped of his kingdom when a crucial area of the house is taken away by an outsider, Blanche, who appropriates the space of the bathroom.

BLANCHE: Why don't you bathe, too, soon as I get out?

STANLEY [calling from the kitchen]: How soon is that going to be?

BLANCHE: Not so terribly long! Posses your soul in patience!

STANLEY: It's not my soul, it's my kidneys I'm worried about. (Scene 7)

STANLEY: Hey, canary bird! Toots! Get OUT of the BATHROOM! (Scene 7)

The bathroom is taken away from Stanley, who must use his power to regain control over his house. This power is demonstrated by his shouting, to urge Blanche out of it, as well as the sarcastic tone evident in his interventions. This sarcasm allows him to reinforce his image, his condition of owner and most important dweller. Stanley experiences the residence by means of control the one he has over the house itself, he can come and go whenever he likes, organize poker nights till late, trash the place to make a point, and the control he has over Stella. His house means for him a place where to build his life with his baby, Stella, as well as the economic value. He owns this place, it is his kingdom, and therefore Blanche's image threatens the equilibrium in the house. Blanche exploits the bathroom space as the only canvas, inside the house, for her intimacy. She sings, she soaks in there for hours before returning to her dispossessed reality. Blanche has no space of her own, as previously said, only a place to rest her head, forcing her dwelling parameters outside the house, merging the city and the house as one. The need for spaces of the city mirrors the ones in the house, and helps the fusion of the two entities. The overabundance of spaces in the city, in spite of the lack of room, compels the characters to unify them.

As well as Blanche, Tom lives in a house where he cannot connect with anything. He is ordered around by his mother, Amanda, who actively takes away every inch of intimate space he might have had, she took the books and the writings. This continuous dictation on how to dwell finally pushes Tom to find shelter outside the house, thus prompting the confluence of experiences of intimacy outside the household. Tom is the narrator of the play; he is showing the readers this house of his memories, which is a fundamental aspect of his way of dwelling. A house is a place of memories, and the fact that this house from his memories is presented to the readers implies he did have a connection with it, however small. His way of dwelling in the Wingfield's apartment is by means of memories, but these same memories are attached to one image, Laura. Tom escapes the apartment as such, but he remains dwelling there by means of memories and his connection to his sister. "Oh Laura, Laura, I tried to leave you behind me, but

I am more faithful than I intended to be!”(Scene 7) Tom dwells in the city, however he always has with him his house.

Williams is careful to only propose the way in which the characters dwell, and by doing so is far more engaging the understanding process of the crisis in these residences. The crisis in the houses is developed by the act of dwelling, and at the same time these crises propose the confluence with the city, and the eventual fusion of experiences.

Confluence of Experiences: the flow and merging of house and city.

Williams describes the city, in the plays, as this omnipresent entity, a city that surrounds the characters and affects their lives, but he also includes the way in which the city penetrates the house. Unlike other relations, with clearer boundaries, the city intrudes into the house experience by the subtle manner of sounds and lights, and characters that embody city life. These intrusions propose to the readers the idea of a city outside the house, but they also are a reminder that it is not only that, but everywhere. Williams uses this completely urbanized space, post war cities, where habitation is not relegated to the house only.

The first type of intrusion I selected is the noise of the city meddling in the house, which is represented in the plays in three different ways, a churches bell, the sound of the trains and streetcars, and the music from neighboring bars. The *concrete space* is created by means of experiences, and this particular word shares the meaning of feeling. Noises are one of the ways characters can feel the city, and frame it as such. The noise of a church bell is something that is plausible in the countryside; however Williams proposes a scenario that could only exist in the space of the city, a night of heavy drinking whilst in a show in the city. Williams, then, mixes the sound of the bell with the adventure Tom looks for in the city, and this loud sound works both as beginning of the day, and the culmination of his temporary escape.

[The interior is dark. Faint light in the alley. A deep-voiced bell in a church is tolling the hour of five as the scene commences.];[Tom appears at the top of the alley. After each solemn boom of the bell in the tower, he shakes a little noise-maker or rattle as if to express the tiny spasm of man in contrast to the sustained power and dignity of the

Almighty. This and the unsteadiness of his advance make it evident that he has been drinking.](26)

[Immediately following: The church bell is heard striking six. At the sixth stroke the alarm clock goes off in AMANDA's room, and after a few moments we hear her calling "Rise and Shine! Rise and Shine! Laura, go tell your brother to rise and shine!](28)

Tom, after the fight with Amanda, goes to the city to experience adventure and returns home with this intrusive sound. The church bell becomes a token of the city for the outside world and inside the house, with a controlling power over the characters. Amanda follows this bell with her alarm and "Rise and Shine" letting the experience of the city dictate the routine. Williams hints the effect of this sound inside the house by using, precisely, the effects it has on Tom on the outside. The bell becomes part of the timely division of the days, and the rhythm of the life for Tom, a slow pace pushing him through his monotonous life. The bell becomes a regulating entity, which Williams uses to reveal the state of Tom's life, and Amanda's as well, proving that the city has a defining role for these characters.

This sound, that reminds the characters of the city, resembles the one present in *A Streetcar named Desire*, one that provides the play with its name. The city becomes apparent inside the Kowalski's household by means of the trains, or streetcars. This sound reverberates through the house and the memories of the characters, ruling the timings. Much like the church bell, streetcars have a time schedule, one the characters are familiar with to the point they know when to introduce a pause to let the noise happen. Streetcars represent the movement and vitality of the city, and the name of their particular streetcar, gives a clue on their own way of living. The play is named after a particular streetcar, Desire, and Williams uses two ideas combined to narrate part of the life represented. An ever moving element in the play, desire, connects characters and takes the readers into this world, a streetcar. Stanley and Stella live in the Elysian Fields, and this is no coincidence. The Elysian Fields, as described by Virgil, is the place where the souls of the heroes and righteous go to rest, which is a contradicting idea if we consider the inhabitants of the play's Elysian Fields. This particular place is also depicted as an active place, and idyllic, relating somewhat to New Orleans. Nonetheless, the path of desire, marked by the streetcar, does not end in the blessed island the name would suggest, but it ends in a broken promise. Much like the American Dream, the Elysian Fields represents an unfeasible aspiration,

which proves to be part of Blanche's downward spiral. The streetcar becomes then a double symbol; it is an image of desire and relates to the aspirations of the characters, as well as a token of the city, its movement and presence. Williams uses this intruding sound, and the idea of the streetcars, to guide the readers into a life filled with desire, the founding stone of Stella's relationship with Stanley, and with routines. Every character allusion to the streetcar portrays them as a city-like element, an exterior force, but every usage of the sound, by Williams directions, serves as link between both worlds and to affect the ways in which they cohabitate. Authors employ the senses as a way to convey urban images, landscapes and urban experiences. Humans experience the world by means of the senses, so authors use them to introduce different realities without doing it explicitly. Williams does not need to include the whole city, by just using images created by the senses, he introduces the city to the readers mind.

To exemplify the streetcar as a foreign element of the city, by the characters, we have the following intervention "BLANCHE What are you talking about is brutal Desire— just— Desire!— the name of that rattle-trap street-car that bags through the Quarter, up one old narrow street and down another..." (Scene 4) The streetcar is portrayed as an active member of this supermodernity present in the cities. The streetcar is the connective tissue between locations in the city, and there are so many of them, that every space can be a potential dwelling area. The streetcar serves, for the characters, as this never-ending movement of the city, however Williams employs them as the intruders in the house.

[Outside, a train approaches. They are silent till the noise subsides. They are both in the bedroom. Under cover of the train's noise Stanley enters from outside...] (82)

[Another train passes outside. Stanley hesitates,(...) When the train has passed he calls through the closed front door.](83)

This particular section is interesting considering the scene in which Williams inserts it. The sisters are discussing the present situation; more to the point Blanche is criticizing Stanley. This is done in the intimate space of the bedroom, Stanley and Stella's bedroom. The tension Williams builds is directly affected by the noise of the trains, and by Stanley's actions. The trains serve as a shelter for Stanley, who is able to use the noise, to control it, and the effects the city noise has in his life. Unlike Tom and Amanda, where the church serves as this ruling entity,

Stanley takes advantage of the streetcar's sound. Williams grants this control to Stanley, who is able to listen to the conversation and to assess the situation. He uses the city noise to deal with an intimate situation, and gains control over this external force, and the situation. The train is once again used while Blanche is having an important conversation, but this time it serves a different purpose. This time Blanche is talking to Mitch about her past, about the story of her late husband. Williams uses the city sound, and light, to trigger stress in Blanche, one that resembles to the one in her past. [A locomotive is heard approaching outside. She claps her hands to her ears and crouches over. The headlight of the locomotive glares into the room as it thunders past. As the noise recedes she straightens slowly and continues speaking.](114) Blanche feels the power, and the intrusion of the city in this intimate moment. Williams uses this direction, and a reader can grasp the tension it produces. It is relevant to consider that the noise of the train relates directly to the one of the gun. Williams uses these external sounds and joins them to the ones in her memories. "In memory everything seems to happen to music." This is one of the first things Tom says to the audience, to the readers, and is quite accurate. Sounds can bring memories back, and this is the method Williams chooses to employ. Blanche's memories happen to music, the *Varsouviana*, and her memories are triggered by sounds. Music filters this particular scene, it maintains the rhythm of Blanche's narration, and accompanies the action. Williams is not clear if this particular Polka originates in the city, like it happens in other sections, or in Blanche's memories, however the song fuses the past and the present in a single event. This Polka mirrors the effects sounds have in the relationship of the house and the city, the sounds fuse them together. Sounds help creating a fused space, neither a home nor a city, much like this song creates an event that is neither past nor present. The way sounds aid the connection, and fusion, between spaces or memories, resembles the way the streetcar works in the city. The streetcar is a symbol of mass transportation, taking people from one quarter of the city to another, but it is also a technological device. The streetcar is more efficient than walking; the movement inside the city and between quarters became more efficient and fluid. However this also serves as a token of the era in which the plays were written, it serves as context-giving item. This particular way of transportation was common in the early twentieth century, a key element for the industrialized cities to operate. Williams uses this in the play as the symbol of this industrialized city, as well as this linking thread between quarters, and the token of the city leaking inside the house.

Another instance where the experience of the city, symbolized by sounds, becomes clear is the way music filters from the colliding bars. Williams uses this particular element to guide the readers in two ways, either guide the action taking place or to remind readers of the proximity, and vitality, of the city. Nevertheless the reader must consider that the sounds floating into the houses are not of the whole city, but a particular section, their own neighborhood. Williams describes the Kowalski's quarter as one with raffish charm, but he describes the Wingfield's quarter only in relation to different elements present in it. Both quarters have the presence of bars, in order to distract the inhabitants of their lives, and some minor shops. The noises, therefore, belong to these bars, and the sounds are primarily music. The latter becomes a pivotal aspect, in this analysis, if we consider the instances where music fills blanks in the text, but creates new ones, like the previous case considered with the Polka. This instrument, the music from the outside world, then serves the purpose of connecting both worlds, and like the other sounds affects the way the characters dwell in the house. One of the clearest cases is an intervention made by Tom, as the narrator. He breaks the fourth wall by talking directly to the audience, and from this it is possible to appreciate his restlessness and the role music plays. It is also interesting to consider that Williams uses lights as well, as a symbol of the city, but not the dim lights of candles, but bright ones.

TOM [to the audience]: Across the alley from us was the Paradise Dance Hall. On evenings in spring the windows and doors were open and the music came outdoors. Sometimes the lights were turned out except for a large glass sphere that hung from the ceiling. It would turn slowly about and filter the dusk with delicate rainbow colors. Then the orchestra played a waltz or a tango, something that had a slow and sensuous rhythm. Couples would come outside, to the relative privacy of the alley. You could see them kissing behind ash-pits and telegraph poles. This was the compensation for lives that passed like mine, without any change or adventure. Adventure and change were imminent in this year. They were waiting around the corner for all these kids. Suspended in the mist over Berchtesgaden, caught in the folds of Chamberlain's umbrella. In Spain there was Guernica! But here there was only hot swing music and liquor, dance halls, ban, and movies, and sex that hung in the gloom like a chandelier and flooded the world with brief, deceptive rainbows....All the world was waiting for bombardments ! (Scene 5)

Sounds, and lights, sensual stimuli, are presented as the only door to adventure in an otherwise monotonous life, like the one of the church bell. The colliding buildings, the city outside, does creep in from time to time, serving as the reminder Tom needs of the other possible life. The sounds of the city disrupt the peace of the house for Tom and invite him to the outside world, to dwell where the supermodernity allows him a space. This speech is particularly important because Williams presents an image of the modern history, of his present. This image reveals how the city fails to fulfill the expectations of the common individual, how the American Dream gets broken. The overabundance of events, and of time, took away the adventure and replaced it with a series of meaningless activities, which flow like liquor at the bars described by Tom. The perpetual flow of moments described by Tom helps depicting this liquid state of the city.

Sounds become, then, a linking point between the city and with this in mind, the following episode seems important to consider, because it involves both sound and a character. This is the case of the Mexican woman. Blanche and Mitch are having a discussion, and the doom of their relationship is quite apparent, yet not evident yet. Williams, then, introduces these sounds of the city as an image of death approaching. The sounds are the ones of a vendor, who sells flowers for the dead.

[A vendor comes around the corner. She is a blind Mexican woman in a dark shawl, carrying bunches of those gaudy tin flowers that lower class Mexicans display at funerals and other festive occasions. She is calling barely audibly. Her figure is only faintly visible outside the building] (147)

Mexican Woman: Flores. Flores para los muertos. Flores. Flores.(Scene 9)

This disruption of the house happens in the form of sound, but this sound belongs to a person. This particular type of person, a street peddler, is not invited, but manages to enter the house. Williams does not write her inside the house, but her presence is felt and it triggers a response by Blanche. The Mexican Woman becomes, then, a character that works as a token of the city, making irrelevant the idea of invitation. The city finds its way, through this vendor, to the house by force. The city subjects the Blanche's life to its power.

Williams, however, proposes a different set of characters to introduce the city to the house. Mitch and Jim come to validate the most needed characters, Blanche and Laura respectively, and grant them importance for a while. This is a common aspect within Williams plays, where one character presents itself as the salvation, but this salvation is not everlasting, quite the contrary. These characters provide a helping hand that lasts only a while, ensuring the final demise. But these characters play another role, one altogether different; they become tokens of the city, symbols of this modern world outside the house. These characters are figures that bring both experiences together, house and city, and they might propose their fusion. These characters either make the readers pay attention to the blurry lines between city life and house life, by using liminal spaces, or they directly introduce the city into the house, by their mannerisms and interests. Mitch will be considered because he highlights the blurry lines, whereas Jim introduces the city to the house.

The image of the gentlemen caller is explicitly inviting the outside world to the house, and it is embodied by Jim. He was an old classmate of Laura, and he was the hero in her school, by the time the events take place in the plays, he is a coworker of Tom. Both characters work in the warehouse of a Shoe Company, and whereas Tom feels the constraining force of this life, Jim enjoys it and cultivates a series of dreams and hobbies. He studies public speaking and radio engineering, and uses the job as a means to an end. Jim is interested in television, and this is interesting because this is the ultimate way in which the city enters into the house, bringing images, sounds and stories of the outside to the comfort of the home. Jim is the embodiment of the gentleman caller, but also of the American Dream. He is introduced as this possibility of happiness, but both for readers and Laura, his image is not everlasting. An interesting section to review is the conversation about public speaking between Tom and Jim, because it highlights his image of the city man he is.

JIM: In every ! Ask yourself what is the difference between you an' me and men in the office down front? Brains? No! - Ability? - No ! Then what? Just one little thing

TOM: What is that one little thing?

JIM Primarily it amounts to - social poise! Being able to square up to people and hold your own on any social level! (Scene 6)

Tom and Jim aren't too different, but their difference relies in the type of life they are looking for. Tom seeks for adventure as an escape, whereas Jim seeks for stability and consolidation. He wants a future and he introduces this willingness to act upon ones desires to Laura. Williams does not say so, but the readers can interpret the following intervention as his way of bringing the city to Laura, and his interest of introducing her to the city life.

JIM: (...)I wish that you were my sister. I'd teach you to have some confidence in yourself. The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people are not such wonderful people. They're one hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're common as - weeds, -but - you - well, you're - Blue Roses!
(Scene 7)

For Jim, the only way to control the city and to dwell in it is by means of confidence, and with this Williams offers an explanation why the city is such a foreign place for Laura. She lacks the confidence, and has a “inferiority complex” preventing her from the city. Jim could be the figure who finally breaks this wall between Laura and the city, but he leaves her as well. This particular situation leaves the readers with two options to consider for Laura. She either takes Jim's advice, she takes the city as part of her life, or she does not and remains in her shelter subjugated to the mother. It is my belief that for Laura there is no way to control the city, much like she has no means to control her mother. The only option for her would be to consider the fusion of these two worlds, and use this as an escape, but the plays ends before we can understand this.

Jim makes the reader aware of the experience of the city disrupting the house, but Mitch makes the readers aware of the blurry lines between the two experiences. This awareness has two roots, readers regard Mitch as a house-man, Williams describes his life relating it closely to the house experience, and nevertheless his interactions with Blanche occur in the city. This dual aspect of the character allows the two kinds of experience to relate, yet more importantly he uses the connective space between house and city, the stairs. Mitch relationship with Blanche is characterized for its duality, but also for the power games she plays. Blanche looks to be in control, limiting the information Mitch receives, much like the regulating entities in Foucault's

work. Blanche exploits his special attention to home-like people, thus she projects in the city an experience of the house. Although this seems confusing, it can be summed up in her speech about magic. “I don’t want realism. I want magic![...] Yes, yes, magic! I try to give that to people. I misrepresent things to them. I don’t tell the truth, I tell what *ought* to be truth.(...)”(Scene 9) She actively avoids telling the truth, thus manipulating the information and Mitch, as well as she projects an unrealistic version of herself. In the house these kinds of fictions are welcomed, the home fosters the daydreams and creative transformations, and the fact that Blanche uses these home devices, home experiences, in the city highlight the blurry lines. More than creating these lines, Mitch received the effects of them, thus making readers aware of their presence. The unclear boundaries between experiences in their relationship rely heavily on the ongoing fusion of these two experiences. Williams uses this character to mark the fusion, to reconsider the limits between spaces and experiences, much like he uses sounds and Jim, to clarify this image of not one space, but a stream of experiences going from one to the other. The city is able to filter into the house and transform the interactions and subjectivities.

This same process happens the other way around, where the house leaks into the city; this is done under the form of the appropriation of non places as well as the usage of the stairs connecting both spheres. This confluence of experiences is possible for the permeability of these two spaces, house and city, and the shapeless form experiences have. Much like water, experiences are fluid; they flow from one container to other, but without changing their essence. This same process occurs in the plays, boundaries have been erased so the experiences can occur where the characters take them, thus receiving a new shape, or better phrased new location, but still belong to one category. Two examples of this relocation of experiences are making the cinema the shelter, for Tom, and reconciling in the stairs, for both Stella and Stanley.

Williams proposes the dislocation of home experiences to a non place, no other, in a different way he did with it with the intrusions of the city into the household. For this particular situation he repeats several times by the hand of Tom, the one who lives through the cinema. Rather than hinting this with subtle stimuli, or hide it in the actions of a character, Williams lets Tom to give his reasoning.

TOM: I - go to the movies.

AMANDA: Why do you go to the movies so much, Tom?

TOM: I go to the movies because - I like adventure

Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies.

AMANDA: But, Tom, you go to the movies entirely too much!

TOM: I like a lot of adventure. (Scene 4)

This particular dialogue exemplifies two aspects of the dislocation of house experiences, it shows Tom's experience of dwelling in the city and Amanda's inability to grasp that shelter and life can be found outside the protecting walls of the apartment. Tom links the movies with a space to express his subjectivity, where his aspiration—adventure—is protected from the oppressing image of his mother. Augé determined that one of the traits of the supermodernity was the overabundance of spaces, so in the event of not having a space within a house, or not feeling the home as such, people, and characters, could use these non places as a surrogate. The transformation of the non places to surrogates for the household is something Amanda is unable to do, nor understand. She feels the comfort the house provides, founding this in her memories of her old house, in Blue Mountain, and the American Dream. She clearly proposes to her son to be content with his life, to work hard and try to find happiness, or at least stability. By doing this, Amanda imposes her own perception of the house, her own experience onto her son, who incidentally is incapable of following this advice. Tom has already placed his house, or better phrased shelter, out in the city, in the non places. This is a revolutionary change, one that happened to many others in his time; a change Williams introduces at the very begging of the play. Tom, in his initial speech describes the situation of people like him, of cities like his, revealing the social background.

TOM: (...)To begin with, I turn back time. I reverse it to that quaint period, the thirties, when the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind. Their eyes had failed them or they had failed their eyes, and so they were having their fingers pressed forcibly down on the fiery Braille alphabet of a dissolving economy. In Spain there was revolution. Here there was only shouting and confusion. In Spain there was Guernica. Here there were disturbances of labour, sometimes pretty violent, in otherwise peaceful cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Saint Louis. . . This is the social background of the play. (Scene 1)

Williams uses these cities as a model for the city in the play, thus imprinting the plays with several images taken from real landscapes, for example Chicago. Williams also phrases this speech revealing a revolution, a transformation, of the American people, people just like Tom. The transformations cities suffer affect people, and the way the experiences flow. Williams described part of the urban revolution Lefebvre referred to, and revealed another revolution, the confluence of experiences, and ongoing fusion of these two spheres, house and city.

In addition to the displacement of the experiences, Williams uses another device in his plays to express the union households and cities have, the liminal space of the stairs. A pivotal scene revealing the importance stairs, as both connecting spaces and symbols of the lack of boundaries is the reconciliation in scene three.

[Finally, Stanley stumbles half-dressed out to the porch and down the wooden steps to the pavement before the building. There he throws back his head like a baying hound and bellows his wife's name: 'Stella! Stella, sweetheart! Stella'](66)

[...] Stella slips down the rickety stairs in her robe. Her eyes are glistening with tears and her hair loose about her throat and shoulders. They stare at each other. Then they come together with low, animal moans. He falls to his knees on the steps and presses his face to her belly, curving a little with maternity. Her eyes go blind with tenderness as she catches his head and raises him level with her. He snatches the screen door open and lifts her off her feet and bears her into the dark flat.](67)

Here Williams uses the liminal place—neither part of the household, nor part of the city—as the scenario for their reconciliation. A reader could venture to consider the reconciliation as a house experience, especially considering the idea that they dwell and experience their house by means of their relationship, but it happens in the boundaries. Williams captures the whole essence of the confluence of experiences in this moment, both city and house are present here, sheltering and challenging their relationship. This particular moment comes after the breaking of the house, the fight, and places the reconciliation outside it, revealing the displacement of experiences. This convergence of experiences not only aids the development of the plays, but becomes an active aspect of them.

Conclusion

My initial considerations on the plays, and the idea of the house and the city, were done under an entirely different perspective. I began this work considering the ways in which the house and the city communicate, and how this was reflected on the plays. I considered their interaction as a mere exchange of tokens, but the plays guided me in a different path. While revising the plays it became apparent to me that the connection between house and city was not a mere coded exchange, like communication entails, but it was something different. Communication, as a process, entails some aspects worth revising to discard or embrace it as the connecting element between house and city. For communication to arise there is a need of a sender, a receiver, a message, through a channel, and a shared code, in general terms. The city would work both as a context, the urban context, and the house would work as something like a 'domestic' context, however how can these entities send a coded message? The code would imply a set of rules, and a means to decode it, but who would do this decoding, characters or the house and city respectively? The messages that house and city share were vague and blurry, with no clear shape and purpose. If the message is unclear, and has no code, there is no process of decoding, and thus it cannot be understood nor interpreted. Moreover, communication entails two other aspects that were neither present nor even possible in the exchanges. There is no preparation for the messages, quite the contrary, the exchanges happen by chance, in a spontaneous way. However I was certain that there was an exchange between house and city, and this was done on a variety of channels. From these questions, and the plays, I started searching for a new term, which could encompass the relationship beyond communicative terms.

The plays presented an interesting idea, one that echoes Iser's ideas about literary texts. The house and the city were not supposed to be viewed as separate entities, but they were supposed to be understood by the realization the characters gave to both. I based my analysis in this idea, how the experiences of both were lived by the characters, and how these experiences related to one another. Iser proposes to look for structures that enable the description of the interaction between reader and text, and I did a similar thing in this project. I considered the moments where the characters' experiences of house and city collided, and this exercise brought me to an interesting conclusion. The experiences of the house and the city are merging in the modern era, and the plays propose a reading of the two experiences fused as one. This is the reason behind the usage of the term confluence, which entails the liquid aspect of the experiences and the possibility of convergence. The creation of this new space, of the fusion is done,

according to me, in three ways in these plays. The experience of the house is disrupted by the city in the form of sensual stimuli and characters, and by disrupting the city with the experiences of the house, making a house outside the house. I want to take two examples from the plays to clarify this idea of fused experiences, the poker game in the Kowalski's house, and the blackout in the Wingfield house.

Williams skillfully introduced the idea of the Urban in the Wingfield's apartment by taking away something, light. Tom did not pay the bill, and used the money as the getting-away ticket, so the Urban imposed its power onto the house, darkness in the house and light outside worked as the negation of this space. Williams wrote this as the final invitation to leave the house and get into the city life, as well as, using this darkness as the perfect scenario for the intimate moments between the city's emissary, Jim, and the house recipient, Laura. This is not an urban landscape or a house, but the fusion of both, the house cannot exist outside the parameters imposed by the city, but it does exist in its own terms and is affected by the city. The modern era, represented by the commodities such as light, link both spaces as one. Sensual stimuli, such as sounds or lights, then guide the readers' eyes to this unified space. On the other hand, another type of link Williams used is the characters that intrude into the house. I wanted to comment on the poker night, being one of the most apparent examples. The house is the shelter, but Williams introduces harming forces to the house. These forces are welcomed by the characters, they are characters. Poker is an activity that implies betting money, and taking risks, which resembles more to something done in an urban context. Williams uses this urban activity in the house, and proposes it as something common at the time. The different characters playing become beacons of the city, and this activity breaks the peace of the house. The game catalyzes a fight between Staley and Stella, and the city beacons become aiders of the house, protecting Stella. The transformation of the roles presented here, the city as the shelter, and the house as the endangering place, reveal how the two spaces become one.

Williams, as mention earlier, also managed to introduce the house into the city, by using one particular element, which worked as connecting tissue. This is the idea of the stairs of the apartments. The stairs are the symbol of the blurry lines that affect the way characters experience both house and city. These are outside the house, thus they belong to the city, but Williams does not describe them, nor uses them, as part of the city. The stairs become this

liminal space which symbolized the unclear boundaries of the different spaces. These liminal areas should be studied in depth in both Williams' work as well as others, in order to clarify their role in the confluence of the experiences. I acknowledge their value as connecting tissue, and the way they create a clear image of the boundary issues in the completely urbanized city. Williams use intruding forces to link the experiences, as well as real locations with an unclear nature, and the uncertainty behind these areas transforms the way they are experienced, prompting the fusion of city and house.

I feel is relevant to consider why is this fusion important, and if possible why it happens. While reading the plays, and other plays of this period, it became apparent that this fusion either occurs because of a crisis, or aids crises to happen. Modern American Drama revolves around the houses and the city, but it is my belief that they use this particular setting because it has an important role in the interactions happening in the plays. The Urban grants a variety of settings to work on, however playwrights still visit the house. This has to do with this dual nature, or the fused nature I am referring to. The Urban does not exist outside the house anymore, but inside as well, and this is a result of the modern configuration of the city. Lefebvre proposed a completely urbanized space, and this included the house. The house became an active part of the city, much like the non places proposed by Augé. Houses and non places, as part of the urban scheme, portrait excellent scenarios for the overabundance of events, and they also answer the need for spaces for these to happen. The fusion of experiences and the resulting new space then respond to this need of space to let the events happen. I believe this is the reason behind the continuous usage of the house. As this new space, that is neither house nor city, writers had the freedom to fill them with conflicts, and use this confluence to construct conflict.

Williams describes a city that can be experienced in every section of the plays, respectively, and uses it to support the conflict and the narrations of the plays. Readers can identify this city inside the house, and use this to have a better comprehension of the plays. Williams, and the Modern American Drama, used the lives of common people, and depicted the broken promise of the American Dream. This broken promise is a result of the fusion between house and city. This new space negates the idea of standing out, by work or merit, and proposes uniformity, which resulted in the inability to achieve the dream. Supermodernity proposed the fusion of these two experiences, and this entailed the creation of breaking points, which authors

used. As the quote used in the introduction, Miller believed that every author, any person writing, was using the American Dream “as an ironical pole for his story” (Bloom 115).

This new space found in the plays proposes an interesting way to approach to the urban condition and the house in the modern era. Both experiences are realized by the characters, or people, nevertheless I believe the confluence does not occur by their doing. While reading the plays I arrived to the conclusion that this happens because of the shapeless aspect of experiences and the natural flow between spaces. The characters subjectivities can be realized in any space, and they bring their experiences to every point in the city. The Streetcar opens the doors to the whole city, much like the merchant navy opened the doors to adventures. The constants movement, while carrying this baggage, predisposes the confluence of experiences, especially if the lines separating them are not clear. The overabundance of spaces and events helps the merging process of spaces, and this produces the confluence of experiences. If there is no clear boundary for the house, where it begins and ends, then house experiences can be taken outside, and the same with city experiences. This merged reality is depicted in the plays, in the form of the fused spaces.

So far I haven't been quite clear with the characteristics of this new space, born of the fusion of experiences, nor have I given it a name. This is because I feel I have not been able to grasp it completely. In order to name this new fused experience is necessary to have a clearer image of its characteristics than the one I have. I was able to identify this new space, and envision some of its characteristics but only in general terms. The fusion of the city and the house, in a modern urban context, as a result of the experiences is an idea I wasn't able to find in other studies, but I was able to locate this idea in other plays. Therefore it would be an interesting way to reproach other literary works, and other genres. If this fused new space is present only in drama, it would be indispensable to consider the reasons and this might affect the characteristics of this space. Nonetheless, I feel this new space is present in other genres, but its characteristics need further development.

These new spaces open a window for analyzing other works considering the house and the city as a single unit, one that complements narration in terms of the conflict. The confluence of experiences could develop in a new type of subjectivity to consider when approaching works

framed in completely urbanized environments, framed in a depiction of supermodernity. This can be regarded as a new way of experiencing the urban landscape, and it could answer the question on why these places are still being revisited. The new space created from both the city and the house could open a new way of understanding why the plays I selected, *The Glass Menagerie* and *A Streetcar Named Desire*, are so relevant for the current times where we dwell in this new fused space, and experience this fusion.

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