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Emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams by
using the examples of A Streetcar Named Desire, The
Rose Tattoo, Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, and The Night of
the Iguana

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Isabella van de Merwe-Lohn

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Preface

Considering that this thesis is the end of a long, painful, exciting, joyful, and arduous journey, I would like to start by thanking those who accompanied me along the way, sharing highs and lows, frustrations and joys, defeats and victories.

To start off, I would like to thank my husband, Dennis van de Merwe, for his unbelievable help and support, which he offered both emotionally and through his actions. His love and encouragement were the reasons why I was able to complete this thesis; he never stopped believing in me.

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Introduction

The topic of “emancipation” currently serves as a catalyst for mixed emotions and heated discussions in modern literary discourse.

Most search engine results for “emancipation in Southern Literature” direct readers to information on the emancipation of slaves during the Civil War, not to the more general meaning of the word. There is obviously a strong connotation between “emancipation” and “slaves” within the context of Southern literature, denoting the end of one of the darkest parts of American history. However, within the context of Southern literature, the term “emancipation” in its broader sense has not been the subject of many scholarly works. The author feels that this dearth of research should be remedied. Hence, one of the aims of this thesis is to describe the meaning of emancipation in Southern literature, using the examples of selected plays by Tennessee Williams, who was one of the most prominent representatives of Southern literature.

The first chapter will be about the playwright himself; it provides key information about his biography as well as the reception of his work. Furthermore, it offers explanations as to why he wrote certain plays and why certain characters in these plays act the way they do.

The second chapter contextualizes Tennessee Williams’ oeuvre with regard to the specific time and location in which it was published. This chapter will be divided into subchapters which analyze the sociocultural characteristics of “The South” at that time, as well as the various types of emancipation in Williams’ work.

The third chapter details the research methodology used in this thesis and then applies it to the plays *A Streetcar Named Desire* (referred to hereinafter as *Streetcar*), *The Rose Tattoo* (hereinafter *Rose*), *The Night of the Iguana* (hereinafter *Iguana*) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (hereinafter *Cat*).

The main purpose of this thesis is to analyze how emancipation is depicted in these plays. This gives rise to the following questions: Can “emancipation” be analyzed? How can one make it visible? How can it be determined? If the answer to the first questions is “yes,” what type(s) of emancipation can be found in the plays of Tennessee Williams? Is it simply the ‘classic’ version of an emancipated woman who escapes male tyranny or are there additional manifestations of emancipation which provide deeper insight into his work?

The author of this thesis will attempt to answer these questions by using various text analysis techniques and applying them in a comparative cross-analysis of the plays' different characters. The final chapter of this thesis will summarize the outcome of this analysis.

Chapter 1: About the Author Tennessee Williams

1.1. Biography

Thomas Lanier “Tennessee” Williams III (1911-1983) is among the most renowned twentieth-century American playwrights. He was born and raised in Columbus, Mississippi as the son of Cornelius Coffin Williams and Edwina Dakin. His siblings were Walter Dakin Williams (1919-2008) and Rose Isabel Williams (1909 – 1996). The familial situation of the Williams family was anything but normal: his father was a disoriented and emotionally absent person, and his mother was a stereotype of a Southern belle from a well-to-do family (Leverich 35). As a result, there was a certain degree of hostility between Williams’ parents, which was passed on to the elder children, Thomas Lanier and Rose Isabelle. Walter was Cornelius’ and Edwina’s favorite child (Leverich¹ 35-37), and the resulting tension caused psychological trauma. This is especially true of Rose Isabel, who spent most of her childhood under medical supervision (Leverich 37). In contrast, Thomas Lanier channeled his emotional suffering by beginning to write at an early age (Williams & Freeman 14). Thomas Lanier was very close to his sister, and he and his mother were worried about her mental illness; therefore, the picture of a fragile person in a brutish world can be found in almost all of his works (Tischler 55).

According to Leverich (37) the family was forced to move to St. Louis, Missouri in 1918 as a result of Cornelius’ work as a travelling shoe salesman. Despite the family’s lack of financial means, Thomas Lanier Williams enrolled at the University of Missouri-Columbia in 1929 to pursue a degree in theater studies. However, he quit studying in 1932. While at university, his fellow students nicknamed him “Tennessee” because of his typical Tennessean drawl. This was no coincidence; his grandparents were living in Memphis at the time, and he visited them on a regular basis. Thomas decided to change his name to Tennessee in 1939 in honor of his grandparents and his commitment to his Southern accent (Leverich 274).

After quitting university, Tennessee Williams worked in his father’s shoe factory to earn a living. Although he detested his work, he worked hard. After having a nervous breakdown in 1935, he gave up his job at the factory and moved to his grandparents’

¹ Tennessee Williams chose Lyle Leverich to be his exclusive official biographer.

home in Memphis. During this time, he wrote plays which were later produced in Memphis and St. Louis.

After his recovery at his grandparents' house, Tennessee Williams went back to university and graduated from the University of Iowa in 1938. He sought to rescue himself from his 'previous' life in New Orleans using his new identity. This new identity was simply more than a new name; it also entailed openly declaring his homosexuality in 1939 (E. Williams 18-50). For Tennessee Williams, this was a completely new situation: a new man, a new home and a promising new career.

The first part of the 1940s was characterized by moving between different cities and different jobs as well as working as a playwright. Tennessee Williams worked for MGM, among others. During this time, he had achieved his breakthrough: *The Glass Menagerie* was produced in 1944 in Chicago and turned out to be a success. It was performed on Broadway in 1945 and won the NY Critics Circle Award². Encouraged by this success, Tennessee Williams continued writing, this time from Mexico. His next play written in this period, initially called *The Poker Night*, would eventually become his masterpiece: *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The success of this play brought him a Pulitzer Prize and a second NY Critics Circle Award.

The 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s were the most productive decennia for Tennessee Williams: In 1950, he produced *The Rose Tattoo*, received his first Tony Award, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* was adapted for film. During this time, he met his life companion, Frank Merlo (Kataria 11). He then wrote *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955) and *Night of the Iguana* (1961). The latter was his last great commercial and artistic success and brought him his second Pulitzer Prize.

After the death of his lover Frank Merlo in 1961, Tennessee Williams suffered from major depression; he abused drugs and worked to the point of physical and mental exhaustion. He had a second nervous breakdown in 1969 and was committed to an institution in St. Louis. He recovered and continued to produce plays until his death (Boxill 16-19). His later plays, however, were not successful, and this also took its toll on him. As a result, Tennessee Williams died on February 23, 1983 in New York by choking to death on the lid of a pill bottle.

² The second oldest award after the Pulitzer Prize. The New York Critics Circle meets twice a year and votes on the best play after every theater season.

1.2. Tennessee Williams' Works

As mentioned in the first chapter, Tennessee Williams began to write in the 1930s; this was mainly during his time as a student at the University of Iowa. Prior to producing his first successful play (*The Glass Menagerie*) in 1944, Tennessee Williams had written several plays. He initially wrote "one-act-plays." His first play was *Beauty is the Word*, which was written in 1930 for a contest at the university's Dramatic Arts Club (Spoto 33). His first play that was published was *Cairo! Shanghai! Bombay!*, written in 1935 while Tennessee Williams was staying at his grandparents' house and first performed on July 12th, 1935. His next play was *The Magic Tower*, which he wrote in April 1936; it won first prize in a one-act-contest and, as a result, positive reviews (Leverich 185). The play which appeared shortly afterwards, *Summer at the Lake*, was written in 1937. It was an autobiography about a vulnerable teenager named Donald Fenway, whose father forced him to give up his college plans and take a menial job at a shoe factory. There were numerous other one-act-plays with varying degrees of success between the end of the 1930s and his death.

After having experimented with a few one-act-plays, but before reaching the peak of his career, Tennessee Williams started to write plays containing several acts. His first full-length play was *Candles in the Sun* (1936), a play about the life of coal miners in Alabama. After that, he wrote a new play almost every year: *Fugitive Kind* (1937), *Spring Storm* (1937), *Me Vaysha* (1937), *Not about Nightingales* (1938), *Battle of Angels* (1940), *I Rise in Flame*, *Cried the Phoenix* (1941) and *Stairs to the Roof* (1941).

Tennessee Williams experienced his breakthrough with the plays *The Glass Menagerie* (1944) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). This fame and success would last from the 1940s until the early 1960s, spawning plays such as *Summer and Smoke* (1948), *The Rose Tattoo* (1951), *Camino Real* (1953), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Orpheus Descending* (1957), *Suddenly, Last Summer* (1958), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959), *Period of Adjustment* (1960), and *The Night of the Iguana* (1961). As mentioned above, 1961 was the year in which Tennessee Williams lost his companion Frank Merlo, but it did not prevent him from being productive; between 1961 and 1983, he continued to produce a play nearly every year. However, the commercial success he was accustomed to did not return³.

³ This will be described later more in detail.

Although Tennessee Williams gained his fame as a playwright, he also wrote novels and poetry. He used poetry as an intertext in works for the stage throughout his career (Adler 64).

1.3. Critical Reception

Williams' biography clearly shows that his works were critically acclaimed during his lifetime, especially in the 1940s and 1950s. Numerous revivals of his most successful plays (*A Streetcar Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie*) every year in theaters around the world attest to this acclaim (Murphy 2). However, this was not always the case.

At the time *Streetcar* was performed, the reception of Tennessee Williams' work was positive. Joseph Wood Krutch wrote, "From the moment the curtain goes up until it descends after the last act, everything is perfectly in key and completely effective. The extent of Mr. Williams's range is still to be demonstrated" (686-87). Richard Watt described Williams as "an oncoming playwright of power, imagination and almost desperately morbid turn of mind and emotion." (67). His later works, such as *Camino Real* and *The Rose Tattoo*, were experiments by Tennessee Williams and differed from the expectations the audience had of him: critics were disappointed (Roudané 257). Other plays, such as *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, received favorable reviews from critics again (Roudané 258). As Brooks Atkinson notes, "one of its great achievements is its honesty and simplicity of the craftsmanship. It seems not to have been written. It is a quintessence of life. It is the basic truth." (Atkinson 28).

The reception of *Orpheus Descending*, *Suddenly Last Summer* and *Sweet Bird of Youth* was negative. The plays were described as "weird, morbid and fascinating" (Roudané 259). With *The Night of the Iguana* (1961), there was a moment of glory for the playwright again; the play earned him the title "the greatest living playwright anywhere" (Roudané 259).

After his critical success during the 1940s and 1950s, Tennessee Williams' plays were met with outright hostility in the 1960s and 1970s. Critics at the time attacked his "drug-crazed-mind." Modern critics (Saddik 11) suggest that the real reason for his lack of success in later years was because contemporary critics were unable to accept that Tennessee Williams was striving for other, antirealist dramatic forms. Perhaps this also explains why critics' reception and assessment of his later

works occurred much later than when they were written and initially performed. The latter part of Williams' career is currently undergoing a major critical reassessment (Murphy 3). In addition to analyzing the reception of Williams' works by critics, this thesis also provides a brief overview of the secondary literature on Tennessee Williams' plays.

In view of his popularity, there are several sources of secondary literature. Since Tennessee Williams became famous with his plays, these sources were mainly critiques and journal articles in the first phase of his career. The very first biography about Tennessee Williams was written by his mother, Edwina Dakin Williams, in 1963: *Remember Me to Tom*. Two years later, Gilbert Maxwell published *Tennessee Williams and Friends*, which is considered to be the earliest "book-length memoir" (Hale & Roudané 246) of his social circle in the first two decades of his career. Another early work in this regard was Mike Steen's *A Look at Tennessee Williams* (1969), which was based on interviews with Tennessee Williams' friends, colleagues, and acquaintances.

In 1979, Tennessee Williams authorized Lyle Leverich to write his biography. *The Unknown Tennessee Williams* ultimately appeared in 1995 and was "long-awaited" (Hale & Roudané 244). It is one of the major works which is an important contribution to research on Tennessee Williams. Leverich mainly analyzed the early journals of Tennessee Williams to sketch a portrait of both the playwright Tennessee Williams and the private person Tom. This work focused mainly on the early phase of Tennessee Williams' career and ends with the success of *The Glass Menagerie* in 1945. Bruce Smith wrote *Tennessee Williams: the last stage* in 1990; the focus of this biography is on the last phase of his life. However, according to Hale & Roudané (244), there was a lack of documentation in this biography. Smith argued that he was a close friend of Tennessee Williams, and this was the impetus behind his writing. Other biographies which appeared in the 1990s (both in 1993) were *Rethinking Literature Biography: A Postmodern Approach* by Nicholas Pagan and Ronald Hayman's *Tennessee Williams: Everyone Else is an Audience*. The most complete and detailed biography, according to Hale & Roudané (245), was written by Donald Spoto: *The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams*. This biography was written in 1985.

Apart from the aforementioned biographies, critical studies of his work were perhaps an even more important source of information for this thesis. The first full-length critical studies on the work of Tennessee Williams were published in the 1960s,

the time which marks the end of his Broadway success (Roudané 251). Examples were *Tennessee Williams: The Man and his Work* by Benjamin Nelson (1960), *Tennessee Williams: Rebellious Puritan* by Nancy M Tischler as well as two works which appeared in 1965: Esther Merle Jackson's *The Broken World of Tennessee Williams* and Gerald Weales' *Tennessee Williams*.

According to Hale & Roudané (248), one of the most important introductory works is *Understanding Tennessee Williams* by Alice Griffin, which appeared in 1992. It devotes entire chapters to each of the nine major plays. Brenda Murphy's *Tennessee Williams and Elia Kazan: A Collaboration in the Theatre* (1992) is the first book-length work about Kazan's collaboration with Tennessee Williams. In the same year, Gulshan Rai Kataria published *The Faces of Eve: A Study of Tennessee Williams's Heroines*. Additionally, works which were devoted to a single play appeared in the 1990s: *The Glass Menagerie: An American Memory* by Delma E. Presley and *A Streetcar Named Desire: The Moth and the Lantern* by Thomas P. Adler. Critical works which concentrated on a character study were published in the late 1980s and the 1990s: *Cats on a Hot Tin Roof: A Study of Alienated Characters in the Major Plays of Tennessee Williams* by Dharanidar Sahu, *Tennessee Williams* by Roger Boxill, and *Tennessee Williams's Plays: Memory, Myth and Symbol* by Judith J. Thompson.

Chapter 2: Southern Literature in Context

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Tennessee Williams had ties to the South, as this was where he was born and had spent most of his life. Unsurprisingly, this had an impact on his work. Robinson & Gray (287) note that no figure dominates the Southern theater more than Tennessee Williams.

Before analyzing the presence of emancipation in his plays, and in order to gain a better understanding of them, this chapter will describe some characteristics of the South in general and Southern literature in particular. After describing their historical background and sociocultural contexts, the second part of this chapter will focus on elements of emancipation which are typical for this kind of literature.

2.1. Social Characteristics of “The South” in the 1940s and 1950s

“The South” is a common expression for the Southern United States. However, it does not match the geographical south exactly – the states Arizona, New Mexico and California are not considered to be part of this culturally distinct region. Hence, there must be a reason why some southern states are considered to be part of the South and others are not. The South⁴ comprises Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, Maryland, Delaware, South Carolina, Kentucky, West Virginia and Virginia. However, “the South” cannot be defined that easily. Historians used the Mason-Dixon-Line to refer to the differences between the North and the South in their critiques of the assumptions which were central to the notion of “Southern Exceptionalism”⁵ (McKnight Nichols & Unger 44). Following the defeat of the South in the Civil War, there was an enormous gap in sociodemographic development: around 1900, 18% of the Southern population lived in cities, while the nationwide average was 40%, and the Southern states’ disposable income per capita was only 25% of the national average (McKnight Nichols & Unger 44).

⁴ This is defined by the U.S. Federal Government as follows: south of the “Mason and Dixon-Line,” the Ohio river and the 36°30’ parallel. Source: https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/mapsdata/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf (18.10.2017).

⁵ Many scholars view Southern Exceptionalism (the idea that the South has an exceptional status) as a myth; this is because the general consensus is that Southern history is part of national history and cannot be defined independently of the rest of the country.

The image of the South (which still persists) is one of backwardness and ignorance (McKnight Nichols & Unger 44). Unlike the development of the North after the Civil War, which is called the “Gilded Age” or “Progressive Era,” development in the South is referred to as the “New South.” The historian C. Vann Woodward was the first to introduce this term in his work *Origins of the New South* (1951). Historians however still question whether the South was resistant to the developments which occurred in the North, claiming that traits which were associated with the South were in fact national traits. Furthermore, Northerners had their own histories of racism and violence (McKnight Nichols & Unger 44). Although most historians disagree with the notion of Southern Exceptionalism, “the South” still retains its grip in the minds of the people who actually believed in it and responded to it in a political, cultural and ideological way, thus shaping the country’s social reality (Prince 2014). With regard to the common perception of the “New South,” civic leaders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century endeavored to aid the South: they wanted it to rise from the ashes of the Civil War and reduce its reliance on plantation culture so that it could develop it into a modern, industrialized economy (McKnight Nichols & Unger 45). At that time, there was a general perception that the South could even surpass the North in terms of development (Woodward 1951).

According to Woodward (1951) and others, unlike the antebellum South, the South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was characterized by foreign capital inflows from the North, with investments mainly in infrastructure, such as railways, and new industries. African Americans left the plantations and sought employment in these new industries, and poor white families also tried their luck in these industries (Woodward 1951). While manufacturing increased and a new mercantile class arose, the South continued to remain agricultural and impoverished (McKnight Nichols & Unger 46). Members of the elite, such as plantation owners, adopted the same outlook as the new industrial bourgeoisie and maximized their crop yields with modern techniques, turning their farms into modern enterprises funded by banks and apportioned into shares⁶. The Southern economy was increasing at the same rate as the one of the North but was not able to close the gap which the Civil War had created (Wright 1986).

⁶ This can be observed in the case of Big Daddy, the wealthy plantation owner in *Cat*.

After World War I, the South continued to resist change (Biles 1). Southerners clung to the “Lost Cause”⁷ and romanticized the idea of the “Old South.” They were forced to accept their defeat in the Civil War and fell behind in the Reconstruction phase; they sought to preserve the Southern way of life. At the time, Southern society was characterized by white supremacy, one-party politics, racial segregation and fundamentalist religion (Biles 2).

The Great Depression in the 1930s had a significant impact on the South. Compared to the poverty of previous years, the situation for farmers worsened even more (Biles 16). The Mississippi floods in 1927, the Crash in 1929 and the severe drought at the beginning of the 1930s had a particularly adverse effect on farming, especially for sharecroppers⁸. In contrast to agricultural corporations at the time, other corporations, such as Coca-Cola, and the tobacco industry reported strong profits which gave rise to a certain sense of optimism as well. Nevertheless, unemployment rates in Southern communities were increasing, with 25% - 30% of the population classified as unemployed; in some black neighborhoods, these rates were sometimes as high as 70% - 75% (Biles 19). In addition, cotton sales dropped dramatically from \$1.5 billion to \$45 million (Biles 18).

The arrival of President Franklyn D. Roosevelt and his “New Deal”⁹ resulted in strong government intervention in the form of aid relief for the South; the South received nearly \$2 billion in funding for development programs (Biles 58). In the first four decades following the end of World War I, there was a transition from a strong agricultural sector to a newer industrial sector where, at that stage, most of the jobs and turnover were.

This region is characterized by its own culture, cuisine, and history; it has developed differently than the rest of the United States of America. Furthermore, the South is known for its heterogeneous ethnic influences. Historically, it was a rural area; however, after the end of World War II, it attracted many migrants from Europe and the Northern United States. These people who moved to the South from the North were “the Northerners” (Egnal 170); this also included a large Hispanic population (Mark & Vaughan 147). Due to rapid population growth, the transition from a rural area to an

⁷ A movement which viewed the Civil War as an honorable struggle for the “Southern way of life,” despite the South’s defeat.

⁸ A form of farming in which the landlord makes a piece of land available for the farmer and receives a share of the harvest.

⁹ A series of federal programs to improve the public and financial situation of The South after the Great Depression.

industrialized urban area had begun. This also meant that many new cultures and values which were not originally rooted in the culture of the indigenous southern population exerted their influence on society, weakening the distinction between the South and the North, but strengthening the difference between the “new” South and the South as it had been earlier. On the other hand, the 20th century was also the time of the “Great Migration”: as a result of weak harvests between 1910 and 1970, 6.5 million African-Americans who were usually employed in the cotton industry emigrated to the urban North.

As mentioned above, the South underwent a serious transition during the wars (Civil War, World War I, and World War II) and developed differently than the North. Huge plantations which belonged to wealthy whites contrasted with the tin-roof ghettos lacking electricity and water inhabited by black slaves. Furthermore, major corporations exerted pressure on the traditional rural society in their bid to foster economic development (Mark & Vaughan 147). Tennessee Williams himself said the following about the South:

[T]he South once had a way of life I am just old enough to remember – a culture that had grace, elegance... an inbred culture... not a society based on money, as in the North. I write out of regret of that.¹⁰

Thus, Tennessee Williams referred to the South with a focus on its past, and it remained a myth in his plays (Robinson & Gray 288). Why did he cherish Southern culture and society so much? Robinson & Gray (290) might have the answer: “Northerners hide their eccentrics in the cellar, but Southerners put them on the front porch.” For the Southerners, it was important to maintain their “Southern way of life” to distinguish themselves from the North; the author argues that this was their reaction to (and emancipation from) the Lost Cause, described above. Furthermore, the social characteristics of the South were changing at that time; they had already changed during Tennessee Williams’ lifetime: there was a lack of dealing honestly with heartfelt pain and tortuous losses (Robinson & Gray 292).

¹⁰ Tennessee Williams quoted in Leverich (54).

2.2. Characteristics of Southern Literature & Theater

Before detailing the characteristics of the Southern literature, one could ask what qualifies literature or a particular writer as “Southern.” Robinson & Gray (280) applied the following criteria in their classification of Southern writers: The major factors are the authors’ place of birth and where they spent most of their childhood. They argue that this has a major impact on their works; authors keep the South alive in their plays and stories. According to Robinson and Gray (281), the roots of American theater are in the South and date back to 1665, when three Virginians were brought before a judge for performing a play called *The Bear and the Cub*. The first permanent theater in the United States was finished in 1716 in Williamsburg, Virginia. This city also hosted performances by professional actors in 1752. Southern theater remained vibrant until the Civil War (281). By 1790, Charleston, South Carolina had become a significant theatrical center: groups of actors originally from the area performed their plays on boats. These boats were renovated to include stages for performances which entertained audiences from Louisiana to Kentucky as they crossed the Mississippi River. New Orleans also earned its fame as a theatrical center during this time (281).

During the early nineteenth century, two types of characters appeared frequently in American literature and theater: the “noble savage” and the “Yankee” (Robinson & Gray 281). In addition, popular characters in the South were the “happy Darkie”¹¹ and the “tragic mulatto”¹². The happy Darkie was a popular character that embodied the loyalty of African-American servants and their entertainment value for white owners¹³. This is obviously embedded in racial and racist stereotypes, because African-Americans were depicted as “foolish, childlike, in need of protection” (281). The “tragic mulatto”¹⁴ is also a typical Southern character. This figure was seen as “tragic” because being biracial prevented a person with African-American ancestry from being fully accepted by white society. It completely disregarded the possibility that a black female ancestor was raped by a white man. This character symbolizes the suppression of African-American and female voices (Robinson & Gray 282).

¹¹ “Darkie” was a common description for African-Americans at the time.

¹² A dated term for a biracial person born to a parent of white European descent and a parent of black African descent.

¹³ Characters who conform to the “happy Darky” stereotype also appear in Tennessee Williams’ plays: the “negro entertainers” in *Streetcar* and Big Daddy’s black servants in *Cat*.

¹⁴For a typical example of this figure, see *The Octoroon* by Dion Boucicault (1859).

The South's African-American communities have a long and rich theatrical tradition. Many of their playwrights experienced racial prejudice first-hand. Consequently, their works often have the following themes: lynching, miscegenation, the barbarism of slavery, social and economic repression, and segregation (282). Some of these playwrights fled to the North; others stayed in the South, despite the difficult situation for them. However, they tried to improve their station in life. Examples of Southern African-American playwrights are Georgia Douglas Johnson (1877 – 1966), Zora Neale Hurston (1891 – 1960), and Alice Childress (1929 – 1994). African-American playwrights were not the only ones who wrote about these themes. Works by the white playwright Paul Green, who was from North Carolina, often included figures such as the Negro¹⁵, the poor white, and the aristocrat (Watson 103).

Southern literature and theater not only addressed issues surrounding African-Americans and slavery; it also captured various aspects of 'white society.' Lillian Florence Hellmann (1905 - 1984), for example, was born in New Orleans and both her parents were Southerners. She wrote about greed and dysfunction in Southern families, with reference to the "New South": the antebellum period was characterized by what was seen as the disappearance of honor, integrity, and lofty ideals (Robinson & Gray 286). This "new attitude" in the South was also criticized by Tennessee Williams himself in his quote above. Hellmann captured the new Southern code of courtesy: charming exteriors and perfect families masked ugly and unpleasant emotions. The New South was about exploiting plantations to maximize the harvest, generating high revenue from cheap labor. It was a society driven by money and power, similar to that of the "Yankees" in the North. Playwrights at the time were critical of this development, and it was a popular theme in plays and literature¹⁶. Just like Tennessee Williams, Lillian Hellmann became the conscience of the South (287).

The Southerner's strong sense of place is grounded in the geographical reorientation which took place in the 1920s and 1930s. Before this time, Southerners positioned themselves against the Yankees, their industrialism, and urbanism by being Southern belles, gentlemen, farmers and promoting the image of themselves as people who enjoy leisure (Brinkmeyer 5). After this time, however, the North-South orientation was transformed into an East-West dichotomy. Southerners began to designate

¹⁵ This is the term used in the literature; the author is aware of its dated and racist connotations in modern contexts.

¹⁶ Examples of Lillian Hellmann's plays which address this theme include *Little Foxes* (1939) and *Another Part of the Forest* (1946).

themselves as being from the East, which was a contrast to the Westerners, with their rapid expansion.

Traditionally, Southern literature is grounded in a strong sense of place and history: the South itself (Brinkmeyer 3). However, this does not mean that all the Southern plays are set in the South itself; instead, Southern playwrights use its unique dynamic and transform it into an experience which is appreciated by an international audience (Robinson & Gray 281). Furthermore, Brinkmeyer (4) writes that classical American literature celebrates the hero who breaks free of a restrictive community, moving into a world of unlimited freedom. In contrast, Southern literature celebrates individuals who become part of a community instead of leaving it, maintaining their dignity and individuality all the while. In fact, Southern literature tends to describe a person who breaks away not as a “hero,” but rather a “psychopath,” isolated and cut off from the bonds of family and community (4).

2.3. Characteristics of Emancipation

The previous paragraphs demonstrate that Southern literature promotes values that differ from those found in classic American literature. Consequently, the image of ‘breaking away’ – or emancipation - needs to be considered differently with reference to Southern literature. Before examining this issue, the author will focus on the characteristics of emancipation to illustrate and clarify what it is and what characterizes it.

Emancipation¹⁷ is a word which is used very frequently nowadays, but it has many aspects. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as follows: “The fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions; liberation.”

This definition illustrates the various aspects of the term. Modern connotations frequently associate it with “female emancipation”; however, this is only one of its potential meanings. Emancipation also has far-reaching implications in historical contexts. Instead of ‘being forced’ to focus on the emancipation of women or slaves, the author has tried to ‘emancipate emancipation’ from this classically strict definition paradigm and to analyze it by using a broader sociological scope.

¹⁷ Emancipation is an old term and dates back to the Roman era. It is derived from “*emancipatio*,” which describes the liberation of a person from paternal authority.

In *Sociology of Emancipation*, Collins (1965) wrote about the more general meaning of the word *emancipation* on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the “Emancipation Proclamation”¹⁸. Collins (148) pointed out that the “turn of events” which was initiated by this act in the past, was still “unresolved in the present” (148). For Collins, the “real thunder of emancipation [...] [was] the unintended consequences of the public claim to change the social structure” (148) rather than their intended aim to emancipate. He also notes that this can take place in every society and is therefore a “social process”. This can be observed the most by people and groups which are generally considered to be “inferior”.

Collins (148) uses the term “emancipatory actions” to refer to the idea that in “modern complex societies”, it is taken for granted that individuals can be released from subservience and subordination. This is not only true of slaves and women. In fact, Collins mentions “candidacy for emancipatory actions” with reference to minority, subordinate, deviant, and exceptional people who are socially restricted by customs and laws (149). “Deviant and exceptional people” are particularly interesting for an analysis of emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams. Robinson & Gray (290) also confirm that “Williams famously champions the region’s disenfranchised and outcasts: women, poets, artists and the sexually marginalized”. Therefore, this is arguably a good starting point when analyzing the way emancipation is expressed in Tennessee Williams’s plays.

2.4. Emancipation in Southern Literature

In order to examine emancipation in Southern literature and, in particular, in the plays of Tennessee Williams, it must be remembered that the notion of emancipation in Southern literature contrasts with how it is manifested in Northern literature. Southern literature has some very specific elements – social, cultural, political and economic - of emancipation which will be described in this chapter prior to applying them to specific features of “Southern emancipation” which occur in Williams’ plays.

The connection between gender and emancipation in literary studies was not explored until the mid-1990s, which is arguably quite late (Ownby & Bercaw 88). After

¹⁸ Presidential Proclamation and Executive Order which was signed by President Abraham Lincoln, on January 1 1863, changing the federal legal status of 3 million enslaved people in designated areas in the South from slaves to free.

the Civil War and the Reconstruction Period, Southern society implemented measures to secure its citizens' freedom, even if they were not necessarily embraced by the entire population. Most historical literature is dedicated to the emancipation of African-Americans and slaves, rather than "emancipation" in a broader sense. Again, one of the aims of this thesis is to remedy the dearth of information on emancipation in American literature.

While reviewing Southern literature in the early 1930s, the influential Communist journalist E.A. Schachner noticed that 3 out of 4 important novels which appeared in 1934 were written by female writers: Fielding Burke, Grace Lumpkin and Myra Page. For him it was a paradox that this "manly bid to a place in the cultural sun" (58) was made by 3 women. He tried to explain this in the following way:

Who but the most sensitive, the most cultured and the most progressive Southerners were in a position to write the novels that demanded to be written about Gastonia¹⁹? And who, in the South, are more progressive, more sensitive to oppression and more equipped with the necessary culture than those Southern nonproletarian [sic] women, who are themselves enslaved by bourgeois man-made codes and who see a promise of their own emancipation in the Southern working class's fight for freedom? (58)

This demonstrates that white women played an important role in the literary protest against the "man-made" 'codes' in the South. They attacked traditional notions of the "woman's place" and also described heterosexual women's desires. In literature written by Southern women, there were more and more female protagonists rather than proletarian heroes. This was also in line with the societal developments that took place at the time: there was an ongoing transition from rural life to industrial life. Industrialization in the South enabled women to fight for their emancipation due to changing job requirements: instead of being forced to work in the fields and support their husbands or fathers, they were also working in factories earning their own money. As a result, this literature was no longer about romantic rural life; it focused on the harsh realities of life in the city instead. Manning (199) states that women in towns not only experienced the drudgery of childbearing, they also experienced the "second shift" of supporting their husbands in earning money for the family and doing a disproportionate amount of unpaid domestic work in addition to their paid jobs. For women in the South, it was difficult to express solidarity with African-Americans in their

¹⁹ Gastonia is a city in North Carolina in which a major strike took place.

struggle for equality because of the problems associated with surmounting the barriers of class and race (Manning 198). Women were bound to social conventions deeply rooted in tradition, such as marriage, staying at home, bearing children, and taking care of their husbands, among other things. However, literature written by women at the time bore witness to the idea that women could break free and leave their families in a quest for personal fulfillment.

Southern literature also thematizes emancipation in the context of the “Old South” and the “New South.” “New Southerners” differed from “Old Southerners” in terms of values and attitudes. It was no longer honor, honesty and integrity that were seen as important; New Southern values changed to keeping up appearances instead of dealing with pain honestly. The following chapter will show how this can be observed in Blanche in *Streetcar* and Margaret in *Cat*.

Another type of emancipation in Southern literature addressed in this thesis is ‘emancipation from location.’ A story or play does not necessarily have to be staged in the South to capture Southern values, as noted above. Although Tennessee Williams is considered to be one of the most important advocates of Southern literature and old Southern ideals, the play *The Night of the Iguana* was set in Mexico. A reason for this may be the idea of relocating to a ‘purer’ environment ‘south of the South,’ farther away from the South as Tennessee Williams experienced it. Perhaps Williams felt that the jungle was an ideal place of refuge where it was possible to escape from the artificial money-driven and deceptive society of the New South.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Emancipation in the Dramas of Tennessee Williams

The previous chapters described emancipation in general as well as emancipation in a literary context. It was also shown that the South has a unique history and its own notion of emancipation in literature. Do Tennessee Williams' dramas align with this Southern notion of emancipation, and if so, to what extent? This chapter provides a brief summary of the plays' plots and the elements of emancipation which can be observed in his work. Two questions underpin the analysis: How are these elements of emancipation described? How can they be made visible?

3.1. Research Methodology

In the study of literature, there are several techniques used to analyze literary texts and reveal their hidden elements and motifs. This thesis will be a qualitative analysis of four dramas by Tennessee Williams. These four dramas have been selected carefully by the author based on a single common theme: they all have a character with Southern roots struggling to cope with emotional boundaries and attempting to transcend these boundaries through some form of emancipation. In order to highlight this 'element of emancipation,' the author will use the following techniques initially formulated by Leech & Onwuegbuzie (2008) and adapted by Leech, Onwuegbuzie & Collins (2012):

- Keywords-in-content;
- Theme analysis;
- Discourse analysis;
- Manifest content analysis;
- Qualitative comparative analysis;

Since the subject of this thesis is dramas performed on stage, the type of text to be analyzed is spoken text; the author will focus on types of qualitative techniques for this information source ("speech"), as described by Leech et al. (11). In line with the recommendation that literature reviewers use "multiple data analysis techniques so that they can get more out of their research syntheses" (Leech et al. 24), a combination

of various techniques be used to determine the elements of emancipation in the aforementioned dramas. The following paragraphs explain why these particular techniques were chosen for the analysis.

Keywords-in-Context

Leech et al. (12) define keywords-in-context as “[i]dentifying keywords and utilizing the surrounding words to understand the underlying meaning of the keyword in a source or across sources.” Keywords which refer to emancipation in the context of Southern literature will be taken into consideration. Examples include “free,” (this would be the result of emancipation) “weak,” (this would be the starting point of emancipation from something “stronger”) and “woman,” (because the previous chapter concluded that societal change brought about new opportunities and new struggles for women in their quest for emancipation) among others²⁰. It can be argued that looking for words which appear in the dictionary definition of emancipation is not particularly conducive to conducting the analysis, as the characters in the dramas will not define the term themselves. They do not talk about emancipation per se. On the contrary, it is expressed in their actions. Is there a more solid linguistic basis in terms of finding keywords which refer to emancipation? The author maintains that synonyms may be useful. According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the following terms are synonyms for emancipation: freeing, liberation, setting free, release, releasing, letting loose, letting out, setting loose, discharge.

The author obviously does not expect to find all these words in these exact forms in the plays. Two points must be considered: These synonyms might occur in a derived form (e.g. “free” instead of “freeing”, “unlock” instead of “letting out”). Furthermore, emancipation also has to be analyzed from several perspectives, not just purely linguistic and lexical ones. For this reason, other techniques have also been selected by the author.

The author uses keywords-in-context to uncover the underlying meaning of the words in the plays and, as described above, that of the surrounding words as well. This is accomplished by looking closely at the words which are used. Because the characters in each drama have very different personalities, and each drama is characterized by different kinds of emancipation, the keywords will differ in each

²⁰ See Chapter 2 for more information on why these words are particularly relevant.

drama. For this reason, the author will focus on keywords which are typical signal words for “emancipation” in the specific drama.

Theme Analysis

When analyzing the dramas, the notion of emancipation also has to be put into a cultural context. This includes the time and location in which the play is set. Additionally, this includes understanding the playwright’s background. When these factors are contextualized, it is possible to analyze various examples of symbolism and themes which occur in Tennessee Williams’ dramas. Leech et al. (12) define theme analysis as “[...] a search for relationships among domains as well as a search for how these relationships are linked to the overall cultural context.”

Theme analysis was initially developed as part of Spradley’s (1979) ethnographic analysis. This analysis was developed to “uncover the systems of cultural meanings that people use” (Spradley 94) and “go beyond such inventory [of domains] to discover the conceptual themes that members of a society use to connect these domains” (Spradley 185). “Uncovering” and “discovering” is exactly what the author is intending to do in this thesis: uncover and discover examples of emancipation in the dramas of Tennessee Williams. This is the reason why the author began this thesis by providing a short overview of Tennessee Williams’ biography as well as some cultural context in the form of information on the history and literature of the South. Hence, the author hopes to enhance her analysis by demonstrating how the time the dramas were written, the locations in which they were set, the characters’ spoken text, their problems, their development, their reaction to social norms and their interactions with each other are interrelated.

Discourse Analysis

Discourse analysis is defined as “selecting representative or unique segments of language use [...] and then examining the selected lines in detail for rhetorical organization, variability, accountability and positioning” (Leech, et al. 12). According to Leech & Onwuegbuzie (591), this form of qualitative analysis is based on three fundamental assumptions:

- Antirealism (accounts cannot be treated as true or false descriptions of reality)
- Constructionism (i.e. how participants / constructions are undermined)
- Reflexivity

Discourse analysis depends on analysts' sensitivity of language use and how they "treat language as being situated in action" (591). This falls under the category of "rhetorical organization." Furthermore, if people (or, in this case, "characters") use language, they perform different social actions, such as questioning and blaming, and these actions can be linked to emancipation. The concept of "accountability" is used in this analysis to refer to the words characters use to describe their experiences in order to address a specific topic or interact with another character. Finally, "positioning" refers to the place and role of a speaker: older people with a great deal of experience will, for instance, be more confident about narratives than younger people who are still learning and insecure about their actions.

Manifest content analysis

Like the previously mentioned technique, this technique is also suitable for text analyses because it uses an objective, systematic, and empirical method to describe aspects of communication observed (i.e. manifest) in texts. Leech & Onwuegbuzie (598) state that this analysis technique describes the "surface" of an action (in this analysis, of a character), i.e. the "easily observable." This is the most important difference as compared to the other analysis techniques described above, focusing less on underlying motives, while focusing more on the motives of emancipation on the surface. The author hopes to gain additional insight as a result of using this analysis technique.

Qualitative comparative analysis

According to Leech et al. (11), a qualitative comparative analysis is not suitable for analyzing spoken text. However, this technique can be applied to draw conclusions

about the findings derived from other techniques. Therefore, it will be applied in the last chapter of this thesis, describing the cross-source findings from the aforementioned techniques by describing and analyzing the characters in the different dramas. The goal is to have a comprehensive overview of the role of emancipation in the dramas of Tennessee Williams.

The following sections detail how these techniques will be applied to the four dramas selected for the analysis and how the plays express various manifestations of emancipation. These sections also include a brief summary of the plays.

3.2. A Streetcar Named Desire

One of Tennessee Williams' most famous plays is *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). In this drama, there are several examples of elements which refer to emancipation.

The play tells the history of Blanche Dubois, an aging Southern belle. She is currently going through a difficult situation in which her family is falling apart and they are losing their estate "Belle Reve." After also losing her job as a teacher due to sexual escapades and alcohol abuse, she decides to visit her sister Stella, who lives in New Orleans with her husband Stanley Kowalski. Blanche disapproves of her sister's marriage, as she feels that Stanley is socially inferior and her sister Stella seems sexually dependent on him. In order to maintain contact with her sister, Blanche attempts to make the best of the situation. However, because of her finical attitude and the stress she experiences from constantly cultivating an aristocratic image, her relationship with Stanley does not improve. In fact, there are increasing and escalating tensions between the two during the entire play.

3.2.1 Keywords-in-Context

In the very first spoken line in the drama, Stella's position becomes clear after her husband Stanley is bellowing at her: "Hey, there! Stella, baby!" (*Streetcar* 244).

His use of the word "baby" and his intonation indicate that he has a specific authority and is oppressive toward her. Although this upsets her, she does not really talk back to him, since she seems to have accepted Stanley the way he is (Thomieres 378). He hands her a package of meat he brought from the butcher, talking to her abruptly with the phrases "Catch!" and "Meat!" (*Streetcar* 244). Stanley then decides to go bowling

with his friend Mitch. This rough behavior is reminiscent of a troglodyte bringing food home after hunting and continuing to hunt. Blanche later describes Stanley in the following way: “You’re simple, straightforward and honest, a little bit on the primitive side I should think [...]” (*Streetcar* 279).

These phrases are arguably the fundament for emancipation in the play. On the one hand there is Stella, who obviously left a high-society life in Belle Reve, Mississippi; on the other hand, there is her sister Blanche, who constantly reminds her of what she left behind and what her current circumstances are like:

Well Stella - you’re going to reproach me, I know that you are bound to reproach me – but before you do – take into consideration – you left! I stayed and struggled! You came to New Orleans and looked out for yourself! I stayed at Belle Reve and tried to hold it together. I’m not meaning this in any reproachful way, but all the burden descended on my shoulders. (*Streetcar* 260)

Blanche’s statements show that Stella emancipated herself and left her family’s estate in Belle Reve to start a new life, breaking with a restrictive environment. Her life with Stanley in New Orleans is defined by looking for new opportunities. The pattern of a Southern hero can be observed with Blanche: she was confronted with the death of family members, funerals, high costs, and her low salary. She stayed in her restrictive environment, she struggled, she tried to keep everything together, she fought and bled, but she tried to keep her dignity by wearing nice clothes and keeping up appearances, while in reality she did not really adhere to rigid moral norms. Acting like a Southern hero was a burden she had to bear, and she was close to a nervous breakdown, which led to a “leave of absence” (*Streetcar* 254). Hence, Blanche eventually left her hometown and her home environment.

During her visit with her sister Stella in New Orleans, she notices that Stella emancipated herself by leaving her home in Belle Reve. However, she ended up in another restrictive environment. Blanche cannot understand why Stella lives with a man who does not give her enough space, prevents her from paying the bills, oppresses her, shouts at her, and even beats her. Blanche asks Stella why: “But you’ve given in. And that isn’t right, you’re not old! You can get out” (*Streetcar* 314).

Using the word “out” makes it clear that Blanche thinks Stella is in a restrictive environment which makes her unhappy; she wants her to cast off her chains and flee in search of freedom (“I have to plan for us both, to get us both – out!”) (*Streetcar* 320). Ultimately, Blanche wants Stella to emancipate herself from Stanley’s oppressiveness.

Stella however, does not feel she is oppressed and is not unhappy at all: "I am not in anything I want to get out of" (*Streetcar* 314). So why does Stella stay with Stanley? Why does she not intend to leave him and emancipate herself from another hostile environment? The explanation for this is given by Stella herself: "But there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark – that sort of make everything else seem – unimportant" (*Streetcar* 321).

Based on this, it becomes obvious that Stella is a slave to Stanley and their relationship is based on sexual attraction. For Blanche this is just primitive behavior and she calls it "just desire" (*Streetcar* 321).

Unlike Stella, Blanche's depth as a character is described much more complicatedly. Despite Blanche's criticism of Stella because of her inability to emancipate herself, her spoken lines, especially during her night out with Mitch, are full of words that attest to her own inability to emancipate herself: "obeying," (*Streetcar* 341) "must," (*Streetcar* 341) "felt obliged," (*Streetcar* 342) "has got to keep a firm hold on her emotions," (*Streetcar* 343) "depended on kindness of strangers" (*Streetcar* 418). While Stella refuses to emancipate herself from the man she loves, Blanche is forced to unsuccessfully strive for emancipation after losing the love of her life. This unsuccessful attempt to walk away from all her troubles and (self-)deception eventually lead her to commit herself to a mental hospital.

By identifying "baby," "primitive" and "out" as keywords-in-context, the author attempted to demonstrate the underlying meaning of Stella's 'rank' in her relationship with her primitive husband Stanley: both are obviously driven by their sexuality, and Stella is unwilling to emancipate herself from Stanley. Like Stella, who left her hometown, Blanche also strived for emancipation, but failed. The keywords-in-context as described above (obeying, obliged, must, depending) attest to her eloquence as well as her inability to emancipate herself from her past.

3.2.2 Theme Analysis

After analyzing some keywords which reflect aspects of emancipation in *Streetcar*, the play will be put in a cultural context to highlight the importance of these words and extract some themes which occur in the play. *Streetcar* is considered to be a social drama. Different scholars have different interpretations of social drama. Some of them classify *Streetcar* as a "social-historical drama", such as Boxill (79). Based on this, the

interaction between Stanley and Blanche is not human against human, but species against species (Bak 4). This theme alludes to Darwin's survival of the fittest, which is obviously won by Stanley. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that Stanley is called primitive and jungle sounds are played during the play, but also the "struggle for the bathroom" (McCarthy 358) which Blanche occupied most of the time.

Another school of thought considers Blanche and Stanley not as types, but as unique human beings, fighting their own individual war. Bak (4) distinguished between 3 studies: Lawrentian blood knowledge, of hero versus antihero, and of villain versus victim. There are several examples of these elements in the drama: Blanche vs. Stanley (hero vs. antihero from the perspective of classic American literature), Blanche vs. Stella (hero vs. antihero from the point of view of Southern literature) and Stanley vs. Stella (villain versus victim).

In addition to the themes "war" and "conflict," there is also another theme in the drama which is very strong and very typical for a melting pot like New Orleans: *the richness of different cultures*. By combining these two themes, the author hopes to demonstrate how emancipation is manifested in the play: the richness of cultures and how it relates to conflict and war, ultimately leading to emancipation.

The richness of different cultures is omnipresent. It starts with a variation of different colors: a white building, a tender blue, almost turquoise sky, the brown river, the blue piano, and two women with different skin colors. This description of the scenery appears on the very first page of the play. The characters' different ethnicities are also described: a white and a black woman, "Negro entertainers" in the bar, "Southern belles with French ancestors" like Blanche and Stella, a Polish man like Stanley and his friend Pablo from Mexico. Although Tennessee Williams describes this as an "easy intermingling of races" (Streetcar 243), the intermingling between Blanche and Stanley is far from easy. It is true that the omnipresence of cultures (as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter) itself does not lead to this conflict between Stanley and Blanche. The fact that Stanley is from Poland is apparently a problem for Blanche, as she was acting condescendingly toward him, using the pejorative term 'Polack':

- Oh yes, they are something like Irish, aren't they? (*Streetcar* 256)
- Polacks? (*Streetcar* 257)
- [...] You healthy Polack, without a nerve in your body, of course you don't know what anxiety feels like. (*Streetcar* 374)

So why does Blanche emphasize his nationality so often? What kind of problem does she have with “Polacks?” One potential explanation could be that as a Polish immigrant, Stanley represents the working class, and Blanche perceives the working class to be inferior. Ironically, Blanche describes her last memory with her beloved husband Alan Grey as follows: “We danced the Varsouviana! Suddenly, in the middle of the dance the boy I had married broke away from me and ran out of the casino. A few moments later – a shot!” (*Streetcar* 355).

The Varsouviana is a Polish dance, a polka. It was in the middle of a Polish song that Blanche lost her husband after accusing him of being gay: “I saw! I know! You disgust me...” (*Streetcar* 355). After that, he ran out and committed suicide, leaving Blanche alone with a broken heart and a bad conscience; she was unable to stop herself from confronting him with her observations. The author hypothesizes that Blanche linked the Polish Varsouviana with her inability to solve this issue in a way which could have prevented her beloved husband from dying. Based on this, Blanche has a natural antipathy for anyone who is Polish, which includes the husband of her only remaining loved one, Stella. This opinion is based on the fact that the Varsouviana is played during the play in scenes after Stanley’s ‘triumphs’, namely after he confronts Blanche with her past for the first time (*Streetcar* 268), after the breakup with Mitch - initiated by Stanley (*Streetcar* 381) and during Blanche’s departure to a mental hospital - after being raped by Stanley (*Streetcar* 414).

Ironically enough, Blanche’s attempt to emancipate herself by fleeing from her terrible past in Laurel – which basically started in the middle of a Polish dance - leads right into the strong arms of Stanley, a Pole who rapes her at the climax of the drama. This gives rise to the following question: Does the fact that Stanley is Polish have a deeper meaning as a theme? In fact, the ‘Polish theme’ reoccurs frequently in the play. Kolin’s research (2011) focuses on the Polish elements which appear in *Streetcar*. He begins his analysis with the name “Stanley” (8). Stanley was a very popular name in the 1940s, and is derived from “Stanislaw,” which means “someone who is famous due to his estate. Stanley might not be as wealthy as Big Daddy in *Cat*, but he certainly claims to be the “king” of his small Elysian Fields apartment (*Streetcar* 371). Also, his surname “Kowalski” is derived from “Kowal,” which means “blacksmith.” (Kolin 8) This is somehow fitting, as a blacksmith works with fire and requires physical strength; Stanley is characterized by his physical strength and hotheadedness, being rude and

always smashing things (*Streetcar* 312). Furthermore, as mentioned before, there is also the “Varsouviana.” Translated this means “female citizen of Warsaw” (Kolin 10). Although there is no direct connection between the Francophile Blanche and the Polish capital city, Blanche is living as a fugitive in her Polish brother-in-law’s home, a metaphor for Warsaw (Kolin 9). Therefore, the Varsouviana song is linked to Blanche. The song is stuck in her head (*Streetcar* 381). The song symbolizes Blanche’s failed emancipation from Stanley and her losing the struggle for freedom in his apartment (Kolin 10).

By applying the theme analysis, the author attempted to highlight the relationships between the domains as well as the play’s cultural context. Although the drama is set in the ‘melting pot’ of New Orleans, referred to by the playwright as a place with an “easy intermingling of races,” the domain differed from the cultural context: there was a genuine ‘war’ and ‘conflict’ between Blanche and Stanley. The fact that Stanley was Polish and the Varsouviana, which accompanied Blanche throughout her life, also showed a connection between the two domains. By having this conflict, on the one hand, and the connection described above, on the other hand, there is an ongoing tension during the entire play.

3.2.3 Discourse Analysis

Looking closely at the spoken text, how the words and sentences are organized, the intonation and gestures which are used, the author’s goal is to provide deeper insight into how emancipation is expressed in the play by means of the characters’ perspective and behavior.

Stanley’s intonation and gestures are very stereotypically masculine: he is “bellowing” (*Streetcar* 244, 301), “restraining” (*Streetcar* 263), “ominous” (*Streetcar* 270), he “stalks” (*Streetcar* 273), “booming” (*Streetcar* 280), “impatient” (*Streetcar* 288), “yelling” (*Streetcar* 296), “violent” (*Streetcar* 307) and “bawling” (*Streetcar* 335, 375).

In contrast, Stella seems much more sensitive and tender, i.e. stereotypically feminine: she speaks “mildly” (*Streetcar* 244), she calls out “joyfully” (*Streetcar* 250), she is “noticing” (*Streetcar* 251), she acts “carefully” (*Streetcar* 252), “sincerely” (*Streetcar* 253), “dryly” (*Streetcar* 253), “laughingly” (*Streetcar* 294).

The character of Blanche is much more sophisticated than the characters of Stanley and Stella. She displays a variety of emotions and passion. She is described by the playwright as having a “*faintly hysterical humor*” (Streetcar 246), she speaks “*faintly to herself*” (Streetcar 250), “*vaguely*” (Streetcar 253), “*laughs sharply*” (Streetcar 255), “*laughs uncomfortably*” (Streetcar 256), “*dubiously*” (Streetcar 256), is in an “*uneasy rush*” (Streetcar 259), “*springing up*” (Streetcar 261), then “*speaking faintly*” again (Streetcar 266); “*airily*” (Streetcar 276), “*softly*” (Streetcar 296), “*wildly*” (Streetcar 302), “*shrilly*” (Streetcar 303), “*incredulously*” (Streetcar 314), “*hysterically*” (Streetcar 333), “*doubtfully*” (Streetcar 335), “*laughing grimly*” (Streetcar 340) and “*singing*” (Streetcar 367).

Furthermore, Stanley’s strong personality is also made apparent by the fact that in his presence, the lines spoken by Blanche and Stella are clearly shorter than if they were talking to each other alone. It seems like his presence intimidates them, and they feel they cannot speak openly when he is around. There are two possible explanations for this: the traditional social paradigm governing the behavior of men and women at the time or the idea that people speak more openly when no one else is around. The author maintains that Stanley’s strong and intimidating personality is the reason, because Blanche is able to talk to Mitch more openly.

By applying the discourse analysis, the author tried to select unique segments of language use for each character. The stark contrasts between the characters of Stanley, Stella and Blanche became clear through their language use: Stella’s stereotypically tender, feminine language contrasts with Stanley’s primitive bellowing and Blanche’s sophisticated language. They were the basis of the drama and, ultimately, the types of emancipation which could be observed by applying this analysis technique, namely emancipation men versus women and emancipation from the past. The ‘primitive bellowing’ (i.e. a symbol of confidence) obviously ‘intimidated the feminine language’ (i.e. a symbol of tenderness) and ‘conquered the sophisticated language’ (i.e. a symbol of intellect). It is possible that this was also a hidden political message on the playwright’s part. The author argues that these unique segments of language use reveal the restrictive, new environment that Blanche finds herself in and which she is unable to emancipate herself from.

3.2.4 Manifest content analysis

The focus of the manifest content analysis is to describe what has been observed in the play. *Streetcar* is characterized by several reoccurring paradoxes, and this influences how emancipation, liberation and apparent changes are manifested in the play. One of the best examples is Blanche's "bathing ritual"; she is almost obsessed with it. By describing these scenes, the author noticed these paradoxes. One of the first lines Blanche says to Stella after seeing her beloved sister is about bathing: "Now, then, let me look at you. But don't you look at me, Stella, no, no, no, not till later, not till I've bathed and rested" (*Streetcar* 251).

Bathing can be considered to be a symbol of Blanche's desire to be clean, not only physically, but also mentally. She had a terrible past and was confronted with bad experiences, which is why she is unconsciously trying to "wash away" her sins. This however is not possible, and Blanche also notices that it is a struggle for her: "It's hard to stay looking fresh" (*Streetcar* 261).

There are times, however, where she actually feels clean: "Here I am, freshly bathed and scented, and feeling like a brand new human being!" (*Streetcar* 276).

The struggle ultimately reappears: "One that's been picked a few days" (*Streetcar* 289).

Another paradox is identified by Thomieres (375). He states that Blanche, due to her past, is a personification of sex and alcohol (as the audience learns later in the play) for the other characters, despite the fact that she acts like a well-raised princess on the outside. It can be admitted that the other characters, especially Stanley, also like sex and alcohol, but the main difference between Blanche and the others is that Blanche indulges in these passions secretly. Stanley, who has the reputation of a drunkard and a womanizer, does so much more openly. For him these aspects belong to "integration" in American society (375) Thomieres further states that "Desire" and "Cemeteries," the two streetcars Blanche took to get to Stanley and Stella's apartment in Elysian Fields are symbols of "sex" and "death" respectively, "the two biggest mysteries in the life of a human being" and that "naked desire and death must remain outside" (375). The author questions whether they are really "mysteries", but argues that Thomieres was referring to the taboos surrounding sex and death.

Blanche has no desire to have her own apartment, marry Mitch, and have children; she wants "pure desire" (Thomieres 379). This is symbolized by the two

streetcars mentioned above. According to him, desire inevitably leads to death, which is also an interesting paradox (379).

As mentioned before, Blanche is the most sophisticated character in the play. Her character evolves throughout the play, and her “desire” (‘desire for desire’) seems to fade. Thomieres (379) divides this evolution into 4 phases: The first is the “garden” (symbolically “The Garden of Eden”) as well as the “plantation” and the family estate “Belle Reve”²¹. The second phase begins when Blanche had to “run away” from Belle Reve, or “escape from the Garden” as Thomieres (380) calls it. She met Allen during this stage. Running away from Belle Reve could also be interpreted as Blanche running away from reality: although the “dream” initially was a beautiful one, it turned out to be a nightmare for Blanche later on in life. But also in this “second Garden of Eden” she was far away from the “real reality” of a “safe harbor” and “being in love.” The dream of this second Garden of Eden ended rapidly at the time she found out that Allen had homosexual feelings. This is the beginning of the third stage of her character development. According to Thomieres (381), the third stage is marked by exile: the exile from Laurel, Mississippi after her scandalous life there, trying to “create a new garden for herself” (381). Obviously, Blanche does not succeed in doing so, as the audience is able to see in stage 4: the confrontation with Stanley, which eventually leads to her “death drive” (382).

As mentioned above, manifest content analysis describes what is easily observed. Unlike the previous sections, in which techniques for underlying meanings were applied, the author attempted to provide examples of emancipation by referring to the obvious, to the surface. Perhaps the most obvious example of emancipation is the reoccurring scene in which Blanche is bathing: she desperately attempts to wash away her sins from the past and hence emancipate herself from her past. By locking Stanley out of the bathroom and having a small room for herself, at least when taking a bath, she attempts to emancipate herself from Stanley by ‘fleeing his kingdom’ and trying to establish her own enclave, which Stanley cannot enter.

²¹ In French, “belle rêve” means “beautiful dream”; however, dream is masculine in French, so the correct adjective should be “beau.” Thomieres insists that “there was something wrong from the beginning” (379).

3.3. The Rose Tattoo

The next play analyzed in this thesis is from 1951: *The Rose Tattoo*. As mentioned in Chapter 2, it is not as famous as *Streetcar*, but was well received nevertheless: Tennessee Williams won the Tony Award in the category “Best Play” for *Rose* in 1951.

In order to better understand the play, it is necessary to provide information on its cultural and historical context. The play features a group of Sicilian immigrants living on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. This dynamic migration makes it possible to interpret the play in a global context (Rae 141). This was done by Peacock (7), who described the “grounded globalism of Tennessee Williams’ Gulf Coast”. From a global perspective, the differences between North and South become smaller: “no longer the elements or dualistic division, but some elements among many within a much wider horizon” (Peacock 7). Peacock does not see the North and the South as distinct national regions. He argues that this “global perspective” can emancipate on various levels, not only mentally, the way one thinks and views the world, but also in more embodied modes such as in one’s sense of place, how space is experienced and how that experience is embodied (7).

Rae (141) concludes that the South is reorienting away from the North toward a more global scale in *Rose*, hence the South in this play becomes the “*crossroads of the world*”. This shows that both the characters and the space and time of the play itself can be emancipated, as will be described later in detail more.

The hypothesis of reorientation from the North toward a more global scale (i.e. “emancipation”) is also supported by the conclusions of Tennessee Williams scholars, who argue that the play’s characters are inconsistent with its setting. If *The Rose Tattoo* has to do with the South, it must be by contrast to the South in the conventional meaning, for its characters are in the South only by chance, and – except for the tropical atmosphere, which could be achieved in many other places – the story it tells has almost no Southern connections (J. Adler 365).

The “tropical atmosphere” can be observed throughout the play: Rosario delle Rose transports bananas, a fruit which only grows in tropical climate zones, on his

truck. In fact, the Sicilian immigrants²² benefited from a growing economy based on globalization in the Gulf South (Rae 142). This is where the play begins.

The play describes the story of the main character Serafina delle Rose. She lives with her husband Rosario delle Rose and their daughter Rosa in a small modest house. Rosario does not appear in the play; his character is only portrayed by the stories other characters tell about him. He does not seem to have been entirely honest with his family, because Serafina thought he was working as a truck driver who sold fruit. In fact, Rosario was dealing drugs and was shot by the police while doing this. The entire village knew about the incident, and Serafina and Rosa seemed to be the only ones who did not know what really happened. All she was told was that her husband had a terrible car accident and his body was burned.

Serafina cannot come to terms with the death of her beloved husband and locks herself in her house, worshipping the ashes of her late husband and terrorizing her daughter, who is in love for the first time. She makes her money by working as a seamstress. Serafina has completely lost control over her life and does not leave her house for three years. After three years, her daughter graduates. Since Serafina is sewing the dresses for all the daughters in the village, she is under pressure to finalize them and give them to the paying customers. Because she never leaves the house, her behavior becomes very erratic. She even locks away the dresses and refuses to return them.

Serafina is still unable to leave the house, even though her daughter has graduated. During her graduation, Rosa fell in love with a young man: Jack Hunter. They creep into Serafina's house, which they assume is empty, because it is dark. Serafina, however, is at home and catches both lovebirds. She is not properly dressed and looks bedraggled. Rosa is very ashamed that her boyfriend meets her mother in this condition. Both young adults try to cheer Serafina up and tell her that Rosa received an award during the graduation.

While both children go away again to have a picnic, Father de Leo visits Serafina and tells her it is a shame that she is worshipping the urn of her late husband, instead of praying to God and going out and socializing. Not long after, a salesman comes by and offers a "contraption." Right after that, a truck driver with bananas confronts the

²² According to Rae (142), Tennessee Williams experimented with immigrant characters in his plays *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Summer and Smoke*. The immigrant characters in *The Rose Tattoo* reached a certain level of sophistication.

salesman about his reckless driving style. After being attacked by the salesman, the other truck driver flees, ending up in Serafina's house. His name is Alvaro, and he tells her his entire story. Both are clearly enamored with each other. Alvaro helps Serafina cope with the death of her husband. They eventually become a couple, and Serafina gets pregnant again.

Just like *Streetcar*, *Rose* has a female hero: Serafina delle Rose. This is typical of Tennessee Williams' work. The play is set in a Sicilian community near New Orleans, in his beloved South. This is not a coincidence, as his partner Frank Merlo also had Sicilian heritage, and they spent a great deal of time in Italy in the years before the play was released. Another autobiographical theme in the play is the name of Serafina's 15-year old daughter: Rosa. This is a direct reference to Williams' sister Rose and her mental problems in her youth, which are commonly known to have been caused by their parents. Williams never made a secret of the fact that his work was autobiographical. In an interview in 1981 he said: "My work is emotionally autobiographical. It has no relationship to the actual events of my life, but it reflects the emotional currents of my life."²³ Apart from many autobiographical themes in the play, there are some key words in the play which refer to emancipation. They will be described in the next chapter.

3.3.1 Keywords-in-Context

Just like *Streetcar*, this play begins with a description of several colors that refer to Serafina delle Rose: a great bowl of roses, black hair with a rose in it, pale rose silk, a yellow paper fan on which a rose is painted (*Rose* 274). It becomes clear to the audience that the roses are omnipresent in the play. This is also reflected in the characters' names: "Rosa delle Rose" and "Rosario delle Rose."

It also becomes clear that "rose" is meant as a positive keyword, and the delle Rose family seems to be a perfect and wealthy family at first sight. This is evidenced by words which emphasize 'shininess': hair *glitters* like black wet coal, the hairpins are *glittering*, the slippers contain *glittering* buckles, jewels *gleam* on their fingers, expectancy *shines* in her eyes and the wine is put in a *silver* ice-bucket. Later in the play, it becomes clear that these appearances are just first impressions, are wrong, and will be used as a contrast to the situation later in the play.

²³ Tennessee Williams, *The Art of Theater* No.5, *The Paris Review*, Fall 1981, No. 81

In the first scene of the first act, Serafina delle Rose's nickname ("*Baronessa*") (Rose 276) creates the impression that the family is a wealthy family. If Serafina is referred to as a *baronessa*, the audience might think that her husband is a baron. However, Assunta trivializes its meaning: "[...] In Sicily, they called his uncle a baron, but in Sicily everybody's a baron that owns a piece of the land and a separate house for the goats" (Rose 278).

Immediately after, it becomes clear that Rosario is a drug dealer: "On top of the truck is bananas! But underneath – something else! (...) And money, he gets so much it spills from his pockets! Soon I don't have to make dresses!" (Rose 279).

Serafina justifies this by telling herself that he did it for the last time that night, he will pay off the truck, he will work for himself and the family will be able to "live with dignity in America" (Rose 279). Back in the 1940s and 1950s, Sicilians had the reputation of being gangsters, mobsters, and criminals.

This confirms Brinkmeyer's hypothesis that the Southern hero becomes part of society (see Section 2.2) and doing so is typical for Southern emancipation. Rae concludes that this wish is "destabilizing the coherent structure of the ethnicity" (142). In other words, Serafina emancipates herself from the coherent structure of her ethnicity.

The goal of becoming part of American society disappears abruptly at the time Rosario is killed: Serafina's mental and moral deterioration begins during this part of the play. In the first scene of the first act, Serafina is full of love and life, appreciates dignity, keeps up appearances and promotes Southern values, even if they are far away from reality. In the next scene, she is informed about Rosario's death and refuses to believe it, refuses to accept reality and yells "Don't speak!" (Rose 288) to the people who want to inform her about the loss. This is the start of her emancipation by an initial deterioration: not by going away, not by changing her life, but giving up all the values she cherishes as a result of the loss of her husband and the loss of the baby she is carrying inside. At the same time, she also loses her dignity and 'shiny appearance.'

The author will now illustrate this argument using keywords. There is a conspicuous use of the word "lock":

- Serafina *locked* away the clothes of Rosa in order to prevent her from going out the house to her boyfriend (Rose 294, 298).
- Serafina *locked* herself up with a bottle of ashes (Rose 298).

- Serafina *locked* away the graduation dresses she made for her customers' daughters (Rose 303).

Furthermore, if something was not locked, it was closed:

- [...] Then Serafina come and she grab-a the girl by the hair and she pull her away from the window and she slam the shutters right in my face! (Rose 294).
- [...] the casket is closed; the body cannot be seen (Rose 291).
- Miss Yorke firmly closes the door upon the women (Rose 297).

The author argues that this symbolizes the fact that Serafina 'locked herself up emotionally' (as well as literally locking up her daughter and the dresses) after Rosario's death. Her former aim of emancipation, in the sense of becoming part of society, becomes redundant. It becomes clear to the reader that Serafina now needs a new kind of emancipation to escape from her emotional duress.

An example of emancipation after Rosario's death is the fact that Serafina emancipates herself from Catholicism. On the one hand, she still attaches importance to being Catholic and worships her statue of the Virgin Mary, but at the same time, she also worships the "blessed ashes" (Rose 308) of her husband, which can be considered to be 'heathen behavior' and hence 'anti-Catholic.' The village priest, Father de Leo, also has problem with this: "the body of Rosario must not be burned", because "it's an abomination in the sight of God" (Rose 289). But Serafina does this anyway. The doctor tries to explain this to Father de Leo: "Father de Leo, you love your people but you don't understand them. They find God in each other. And when they lose each other, they lose God and they're lost. And it's hard to help them" (Rose 290).

It is true that Serafina is completely lost. In the play this becomes clear by the fact that the house she lives in is no longer bright: "The interior of the house is in complete darkness except for the vigil light. With the shutters closed, the interior is so dark that we do not know Serafina is present" (Rose 317).

Therefore, the relevance of the keyword "dark" also becomes more obvious, since it underlines Serafina's deteriorating situation, which is the basis for her emancipation. It is particularly noticeable with the color of the *black goat* which appears in two scenes with impending disaster or life changes: "Outside there is the sound of the goat bleating and the jingle of its harness" (Rose 283). This is the first time in the

play that the black goat is loose, and it is during the scene in which Serafina meets Estelle Hohengarten for the first time (the night both Rosario and Serafina's unborn child died), without knowing that she is the woman with whom Rosario betrays her. Unlike Serafina, who is a plump lady with dark hair, Estelle is a thin blonde lady. She wants Serafina to make a shirt out of rose-colored silk for "a man" because he is "wild like a Gypsy" (Rose 283).

The second time the black goat appears is when Serafina meets another truck driver: Alvaro Mangiacavallo. At the time, Serafina "touches his ear, a very slight touch, betraying too much of her heart" (Rose 369), and Salvatore, one of the neighbor's children, calls to her from outside to say that the black goat is in her yard. Alvaro and Bruno, another child from the neighborhood, are able to catch the goat.

According to Parker, Williams associates himself with this black goat, since it appeared after "breaking some "barriers" and "crash[s] into an area which a bell-harness and rope would forbid him"²⁴.

The author argues that the goat in the garden is an interesting signal for emancipation:

- The first appearance of the goat coincided with the beginning of Serafina's emancipation from her 'old life' with Rosario and the picture she had of him before he died and before she learned that he had betrayed her;
- The second appearance of the goat was the end of Serafina's three-year crisis following Rosario's death. She was able to escape, go outside, put on clothes, let her daughter go, and fall in love again.

The keywords-in-context analysis shows that the keyword "rose" was the most omnipresent: it was in the name of all the characters, the tattoo, the fan, and also in the house. It symbolizes love and the connections of the delle Rose family. Therefore, because the family falls apart, emancipation is possible: Rosario dies and Rosa grows up. This was succeeded by the keyword "lock" during the 'transition phase to emancipation: Serafina locks herself out and also tries to lock out Rosa. This transition phase was also marked by darkness ("black"). The author argues that the keyword

²⁴ Source: URL: <http://www.tennesseewilliamsstudies.org/journal/work.php?ID=52> (6.11.2016)

“goat” is directly linked to emancipation, since it marks Rosa’s emancipation from her old life via the transition phase towards her new life.

3.3.2 Theme Analysis

The socio-cultural context of the play’s characters is essential for the analysis. As mentioned above, the play is set in a village near New Orleans which has a Sicilian community. The reason for this can be found in Tennessee Williams’ personal life: his lover, Frank Merlo, was a former truck driver from Sicily, and his nickname was “Little Horse.” This nickname inspired the name “Alvaro Mangiacavallo” (Colins 90).

The Sicilian characters in the play are characterized by several emotions and their temperament: talking loudly, experiencing passionate love but also passionate hate. These emotions and temperament also lead to Serafina’s mental breakdown, which forms the basis for two types of emancipation: Serafina’s emancipation from her mental crisis and her overcoming the loss of Rosario, but also Rosa’s emancipation from her mother, who overreacted by locking her up inside the house.

For the first type of emancipation to take place, Rea (144) concludes that the premise of the play is cultural, since Serafina must “overcome her grief and return to overcome to the fold of community” to “reconsider the way Sicilian custom informs her traditional stance on sexual intimacy.” He eventually states that the character of Serafina develops along a “transnational arc”: away from Sicilian customs to embracing the “sexual mores of the US culture” (Rea 144). Serafina eventually arrives at her moment of “self-discovery” and recovery. Rea (144) describes two processes which led to it: the help of her daughter Rosa through a generational conflict (144) and the renewal of romantic interest (148).

The first process is marked by Rosa’s adolescence and the awakening of her sexual desire. It is not just a “generational clash”, as Rea (144) writes; it is also a cultural clash, as described by Adler (364), because the new “environment made Rosa not Sicilian, not Southern, but American.” Rosa’s transition takes place on several levels: from youth to maturity, from Sicilian to American, and from uneducated to educated (even winning an award). As a single parent, Serafina has full responsibility of her daughter, in accordance with Sicilian customs, and her virginity in particular, as this is of particular importance in Sicilian culture. She even makes Jack Hunter kneel

before the statue of the Virgin Mary; perhaps this is a symbol for Serafina's refusal to give up her Southern roots, and she makes America symbolically kneel before them.

The conflict with Rosa prepares Serafina for the second stage of her recovery (Rea 148): the renewal of her own romantic interest. Ironically, her second lover Alvaro is also a truck driver, and Serafina immediately notices resemblances between Alvaro and her late husband, Rosario. Alvaro understands Serafina's concerns as a single parent, but feels she should be aware of the facts: "Poor little worried lady! But got to face facts. Sooner or later the innocence of your daughter cannot be respected" (Rose 379).

This means that Alvaro is well aware of the intricacies of American culture, and he also knows about desire, being a bachelor who admits to viewing sexually stimulating images in magazines. This desire also contrasts with Serafina's Catholic, Sicilian customs and is a challenge for her. With her new love for Alvaro, Serafina is finally able to recover from her grief and emancipate herself from her restrictive Sicilian customs to more liberal American ones, following her sexual desire.

By applying the theme-analysis technique, the author demonstrates the presence of the domain 'culture' and the cultural context of Sicilian society in the South. This creates a basis for Serafina's emancipation, because she was tied to her Sicilian roots and customs, which prevented her from emancipating herself from her past. With the support of her new lover, Alvaro, Serafina 'loosens' her strong ties to Sicilian culture. This was obviously the only way that Serafina could emancipate herself and successfully begin a new life while maintaining a relationship with her daughter Rosa; she also gave Rosa the space she needed for her emancipation.

3.3.3 Discourse Analysis

After providing information on the play's themes, the following discourse analysis will focus on its spoken text and how the words and sentences are organized, as well as the intonation and gestures of the characters in the play.

The playwright describes the poses and gestures of Serafina and Rosa in a detailed way. At the start of the play, Serafina is described with a certain dignity: "She sits very erect, in an attitude of forced composure, her ankles daintily crossed and her plump little hands holding a yellow paper fan on which is painted a rose" (Rose 274).

Rosa is also described in a detailed way: “She is pretty and vivacious, and has about her a particular intensity in every gesture” (*Rose* 274).

By applying discourse analysis, the author identified some unique segments of language use which revealed and contributed to each character’s emancipation. Serafina does not speak English that well; she uses several Italian words and her grammar was often incorrect. Unlike her mother, Rosa has always been bound to the American culture in which she grew up. This discourse analysis clearly demonstrates her attachment to American culture, because Rosa speaks perfect English without an Italian accent. This already underlines the difference between mother and daughter and the first basis for emancipation: from a juvenile to an adult, because Rosa grew up with American customs which are more liberal than the Sicilian customs of her mother. The second type of emancipation is the emancipation of Serafina. Her language use shows a strong tie to her Sicilian culture and customs, which are, as mentioned above, holding her back from her emancipation. By letting go of them and having a new relationship with a man who also has Sicilian roots, but is more integrated into American society, Serafina is ultimately able to emancipate herself from her past.

The manifest content analysis was not applied to this play, because the author concluded that the three analyses mentioned above had already provided an ideal number of examples of emancipation.

3.4. The Night of the Iguana

Based on a short story written in 1948, *The Night of the Iguana* premiered on Broadway in 1961. It is considered to be Tennessee Williams’ last critical and commercial success (Bray 3). The playwright, however, makes it clear that the play itself is not set in the same year as it was performed. It is set in 1940, at the start of the Second World War. The war itself is not the subject of the play. The only reference to the war is the bizarre actions of the German guest family Fahrenkopf. The setting of the play is the veranda of the small hotel “Costa Verde” in the Mexican jungle near the “morning beach” of Puerto Barrio. Back in 1940, the west coast of Mexico was not touristic, with pristine jungles and native Mexican Indian villages. Williams needed to provide this information to the audience, because the unexplored nature in this part of Mexico at the time made guided tours necessary.

The play starts when the Reverend Dr. T. Lawrence Shannon (hereinafter “Shannon”), a self-proclaimed American gentleman, arrives at the hotel owned by his friend Maxine Faulk (hereinafter “Maxine”) to conduct a guided tour. Shannon is a reverend who has been defrocked and now travels the world and gives tours around foreign and distant countries to paying tourists. Maxine is a widow who manages the Costa Verde hotel. She is a tough and emancipated woman in her prime.

The Costa Verde hotel is not an official destination on Shannon’s tour. In fact, the tour – consisting of a group of women from Texas (schoolteachers from a Baptist female college) – was supposed to have a stop at the Mexican city of Acapulco. The reason Shannon stops at the Costa Verde with his group is that he is in trouble. He is on probation with his current employer (Blake Tours), and he has sexual intercourse with an underage girl (Charlotte Goodall) in Mexico City while she is on the tour.

Shannon takes the keys out of the bus and leaves the group alone on the path to Costa Verde, forcing them to stay there. In the meantime, the other ladies find out about the relationship between Shannon and the young girl, and they fiercely condemn it. Judith Fellowes, the self-appointed spokeswoman of the group, asks Shannon to hand over the keys so they can continue their tour to Acapulco. Shannon refuses and tells them to stay in the Costa Verde hotel, telling them that they will continue the tour when he is ready. Judith Fellowes does not pursue the discussion further and asks Maxine about the telephone. She makes some phone calls (to the judge in Texas and to Blake Tours) to make sure that Shannon can no longer be employed at any travel agency in the United States and that he will be arrested upon his return.

Shannon then has a nervous breakdown, and he spends several hours refusing to hand over the bus keys, not even to Hank, the bus driver. After a struggle with Jake Latta, the colleague who takes over Shannon’s tour, Hank takes the keys out of Shannon’s pocket. They are able to continue the tour. Shannon is now completely out of his mind and urinates on the women’s suitcases before they continue the tour.

During Shannon’s stay at Costa Verde, a young lady named Hannah Jelkes arrives with her grandfather, Jonathan Coffin (known as “Nonno”). Both are unable to pay for their stay and normally finance their stays in hotels by selling Hannah’s paintings and Nonno’s poems. At the age of 97, Nonno is the “world’s oldest living poet” and is Shannon’s spiritual guide (Brown 163). Nonno is modeled after Tennessee Williams’ late grandfather, Dr. Walter Edwin Dakin, who lived to be 98 (Leavitt 18).

Maxine does not like the presence of the odd couple for two reasons: they do not have any money, and she feels the sexual tension between Hannah and Shannon. She does not want Hannah to come between her and Shannon, and Maxine allows them to stay under the condition that Hannah will not pursue Shannon. Hannah remains true to her word. The role of Nonno is amusing because he speaks incoherently, forgets his own poems all the time and, as of late, he is unable to finish a poem. At the very end of the play, he has a moment of clarity and remembers an entire poem, asking Hannah to write it down. Ironically, Nonno dies right after, which is also the end of the play.

3.4.1 Keywords-in-Context

Iguana also thematizes emancipation in several ways. The following keywords show which kinds of emancipation can be observed in the play. The most apparent form of emancipation can be observed in the proprietor of Costa Verde, Maxine. After the death of her husband Fred, she is responsible for running the hotel all alone. She has an assertive and bossy attitude, ordering her young male employees Pedro and Pancho around. She also uses Pedro for her own sexual gratification, i.e. “night swimming,” which is used as a metaphor for sex. Maxine is obviously comfortable with her sexuality, and this makes other characters feel uncomfortable: “I told you to bottom your shirt. Are you so proud of your boobs that you won’t bottom your shirt up? [...]” (*Iguana* 266). She also speaks openly about it: “Fred was an old man, baby. Ten years older’n me. We hadn’t had sex together in...” (*Iguana* 257)

By applying the keywords-in-context analysis, the author was able to identify some keywords that either demonstrate emancipation or serve as a basis for it. The keywords were mostly related to the emancipation and strong personality of Maxine and the “tie” (in the context of the iguana and the hammock). In order to avoid redundancies, the author decided to conduct a more extensive theme analysis.

3.4.2 Theme Analysis

The author feels that one of the themes of *Iguana* is emancipation itself. It is not only the most obvious type of emancipation observed in Maxine: she is bossy, talks openly about sex and lust, only has male “servants,” and is far away from home yet still able

to defend Shannon from the cruel outside world. Emancipation can also be observed in Shannon. As a character, Shannon has sophisticated features. According to Brown (165), Nonno's presence provides Shannon with artistic and spiritual impulses, which eventually lead to a certain redemption. While reciting his poem, Nonno oversees the spiritual rebirth of Shannon, symbolically freeing Shannon from his guilty obsession in the past by unleashing the iguana that had been tied under the porch of the hotel (165).

After Hannah points out the parallel between the tied up iguana and Nonno's inability to finalize his final poem, Shannon promises to release the animal. In point of fact, right after Shannon has released the reptile by cutting it loose with a machete, Nonno calls excitedly for Hanna, because he is finally able to finalize and recall his entire poem. Therefore, the act of "cutting a creature of God loose" also leads to a certain kind of emancipation for Nonno, who has struggled with this final poem for years due to memory loss. This emancipation by means of "cutting lose" also shows the connection between Nonno and Shannon, as pointed out by Brown, because both Nonno and Shannon emancipate themselves at the very end of the play: Nonno emancipates himself from mental feebleness, with his ability to cite a long and complex poem at an old age. Shannon emancipates himself from his past and nervous breakdown while his spiritual guide Nonno dies. He finds a new calling in life: to help Maxine manage the Costa Verde hotel and look after the male guests' wives.

The theme of being "tied up" can not only be observed in the example of the iguana, Hannah also ties Shannon to his hammock, which he initially refuses to leave, in order to prevent him from doing something stupid (*Iguana* 343):

SHANNON: Untie me.

HANNAH: Not yet.

SHANNON: I can't stand being tied up.

HANNAH: You'll have to stand it a while.

SHANNON: It makes me panicky.

HANNAH: I know.

SHANNON: A man can die of panic.

HANNAH: Not if he enjoys it as much as you, Mr. Shannon.

According to Rezaei Hezaveh, Low Bt Abdullah & Yaapar (329), being tied up in his hammock can be interpreted as the rebirth of Shannon, and this hammock symbolizes the female womb (328). Hannah (*Iguana* 344) points out that the experience is enjoyable for Shannon: "Who wouldn't like to suffer and atone for the sins of himself

and the world if it could be done in a hammock with rope instead of nails, on a hill that's so much lovelier than Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, Mr. Shannon?"

Here Hannah makes a reference to both his past and his actual occupation as a priest by using a biblical reference to the place where Jesus was crucified. According to Shannon, women could enjoy tying men up (*Iguana* 345). The Costa Verde, in contrast, is a place where "people are untied to any commitment as faith or church or job" (Hezaveh et al. 328). Hence, being tied up in a place where people are "untied" might have been conducive to Shannon's emancipation because he is 'untied from his job' and 'untied from his past.' This may also be the reason why he visited the Costa Verde again: to 'get untied' again.

Another theme which is prevalent in *Iguana* is the human dependence on sexual pleasures; this theme can be observed in several plays by Tennessee Williams. Maxine, for example, never makes a secret of her need for sexual gratification, which her late husband was unable to satisfy. She seeks it from the young Mexican boys who are working for her. On the one hand, she is driven by her 'physical needs' on the other hand, this leads to her emancipation, away from her husband and toward younger men she can also order around. Just like Maxine, Shannon also surrenders to his sexual pleasures. However, unlike Maxine, this does not lead to his emancipation; but it is the main cause of his problems. As a young boy, his mother caught him masturbating and forced him to go to church and study theology. Instead of leading to his redemption, this caused even more problems, because he was having affairs with women. His behavior eventually cost him his job as a priest. The climax of his mental and social descent was the sexual encounter with a minor while he was working as a tour guide. His group ultimately refused to listen to him and wanted to put him on trial.

Eventually, after releasing the iguana and starting a relationship with Maxine, who is "half leading half supporting him" (*Iguana* 374), Shannon is able to emancipate himself from his past and his nervous breakdown. The author argues that the poem by Emily Dickinson at the beginning of the play (Williams Volume 4 245) refers to Maxine and Shannon's relationship:

And so, as kinsmen met a night,
We talked between the rooms,
Until the moss had reached our lips,
And covered up our names.

Maxine and Shannon are “kinsmen” due to their sexuality, but do not have a romantic relationship (“talked between the rooms”). They eventually come together (“until the moss had reached our lips” – which makes the border between the lips disappear) and forget their past (“and covered up our names”).

The author used the theme analysis to make the connection between the different domains and their cultural context more apparent. One of the domains was the “jungle,” and the other one was “Texas.” The jungle’s scenery was described in great detail, with the jungle symbolizing a place far away from civilization and hence making a different type of emancipation possible, as compared to the other dramas. The discrepancy between the jungle, with a woman who is half-naked, shouting, swearing and bossy, on the one hand, and a group of conservative, religious and prudish schoolteachers from a Baptist college in Texas, on the other hand, was related to Shannon; it highlighted his need for emancipation, because Texas was the domain which caused Shannon’s problems and he had to emancipate himself from it.

3.4.3 Discourse Analysis

Observing the spoken text and how words and sentences are organized, one of the things which is most evident is Maxine’s bossy attitude and how she shouts at her Mexican workers, using the imperative to give them instructions any time she talks to them: “Anda hombre, anda!” (*Iguana* 255), “Vete!” (*Iguana* 257), “Pedro! Pancho! Muchachos! Trae las maletas al anejo! Pronto!” (*Iguana* 270), “Vete!” (*Iguana* 308). They are clearly her subordinates and she is using them for menial labor (working in the jungle, carrying the guests’ suitcases, catching the iguana, looking after the female guests as well as for her own sexual gratification). Her attitude can be interpreted as being very masculine and dominant. She even tells Hannah “to lay off” Shannon (*Iguana* 321), as if she owned him.

Although her conversations with Shannon are not of a domineering nature and she wants to manage the Costa Verde with him, she still exercises a certain degree of dominance over him at the very end. Just like the Mexican boys being “overattentive to the lady guests” (*Iguana* 270), she wants Shannon to look after the lady guests at the Costa Verde (*Iguana* 374). Shannon “chuckles happily” (*Iguana* 374) in response, which is more of a female than a male reaction.

Maxine's use of language is not only bossy and dominant, it is also masculine, simple, direct and crude: "No wonder your ass is draggin', hah!" (*Iguana* 255), "Hell, I'm dressed. I never dress in September. Don't you know I never dress in September?" (*Iguana* 256), "*That's what I said. Fred is dead*" (*Iguana* 257), "*Hah!*" (her favourite word on many occasions), "I got to go back down there and collect their goddam [sic] bill before they ...[...]" (*Iguana* 339), "Yeah, I see. Put it out. Nobody cooks here but the Chinaman in the kitchen" (*Iguana* 349), she *shrugs* and she *shouts*. This is a dominant attitude similar to that of Stanley in *Streetcar* and Big Daddy in *Cat*. She is nothing like *Blanche*, a Southern belle. Maxine's language is so simple that there are barely descriptions of the tone the actress should use to deliver her lines.

Not only are Maxine's language and attitude stereotypically masculine, her actions were also masculine. She is not the kind of woman who looks after a man carefully or would sophisticatedly "paint" him to find a way for his mental recovery, which is what Hannah would do. She only offers a "rum-coco" on several occasions (for Maxine, this seems to be the solution for everything), a bath, "night-swimming" or a bed. Furthermore, she "lops off" the end of a coconut with a machete herself to make a rum-coco (*Iguana* 256) and helps the Mexican boys with "catching" an iguana (*Iguana* 307).

The added value of the discourse analysis used in this thesis stems from the identification of unique segments of language use by the characters: emancipation occurred on several occasions. In particular, Maxine's rough language, characterized by excessive use of the imperative, contrasts with that of the sophisticated and tender character of Hannah.

3.4.4 Manifest content analysis

It became clear during the play that Shannon is looking for help and is looking for it from both Maxine and Hannah. He also finds it, but in completely different ways, because both women have completely different characters. Maxine is more like a clumsy but good-natured friend looking after his primary needs (sleep, food, drink, shelter, sex), while Hannah is complex, mysterious and talented. She tries to help Shannon in a more sophisticated way, by tying him to his hammock so he will be reunified with himself, for example. Rezaei et al. (329) state that Maxine, Hannah and Shannon can be seen as a trinity: Maxine is the body (with its primary needs), Hannah

is the spirit (in need of sophistication), and Shannon is the tormented embodiment of both.

While Maxine tries to do her best to satisfy Shannon's primary needs, Hannah is more concerned with his psychological needs. She draws a symbolic sketch of Shannon and shows it to him; this compels him to question his understanding of himself. Although she is not a trained psychologist, Hannah is a talented artist and sees people for who they really are. She starts to draw Shannon from the moment that he is accused of statutory rape. She makes him confess his sins during the time he was a priest. The more Shannon confesses, the quicker and more detailed she is able to draw him. She then shows the result to Shannon. It enables him to see himself from a perspective he did not consider before (Hezaveh et al. 330). In the manifest content analysis, the focus was on the obvious actions of the characters. The actions of both Hannah and Maxine immediately lead to the emancipation of Shannon: the emancipation from his past results in a new perspective on life.

3.5. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

The last play which is analyzed in this thesis is *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, written in 1954 and performed for the first time on March 24th, 1955. Just like the other plays analyzed in this thesis, this play is also characterized by strained relationships between men and women, husbands and wives, and siblings. It is set in a Southern plantation home in the Mississippi Delta. Three families are in the house at the time of the play, celebrating Big Daddy's last birthday party. Big Daddy became a wealthy man with his plantation and has a wife named "Big Mama." Their youngest son "Brick" is there with his wife "Margaret" (also called "Maggie") along with Big Mama's and Big Daddy's oldest son "Gooper" and his wife "Mae." It turns out that Big Daddy is dying of cancer, and the family is desperate because Big Daddy has a strong personality and is the family patriarch. Big Daddy's concern is who will take over his cotton plantation after he dies.

Gooper's wife Mae pressures him to try and control Big Daddy's fortune. Brick does not seem to care too much. Both sons are completely different: Gooper is an accomplished lawyer with a steady income, a wife, and several children. Brick is an alcoholic who had to give up his career as a professional football player after an injury. Nevertheless, Brick is Big Daddy's favorite son. While Gooper and Mae are fertile and

have six children, Brick and Maggie do not have any. Maggie never attempts to conceal the fact that she would desperately like to have children.

Gooper and Mae try to 'rat Brick out' by telling Big Daddy that the reason he and Maggie do not have any children is because Brick, who is mourning the loss of his best friend Skipper, is actually homosexual and impotent because of alcohol. Still, Big Daddy is not willing to bequeath the cotton plantation to Gooper and Mae, because they are "not his kind," as he says. He is anxious about bequeathing it to an alcoholic as well, so he tries to help Brick by finding the reason for Brick's alcoholism and talking to him about Skipper. Although Brick remains composed during the entire play, talking about Skipper distresses him.

Maggie is also keen on inheriting Big Daddy's fortune and lies to Big Daddy that she and Brick are expecting a baby. This was always Big Daddy's dream. It was not Maggie's intention to lie in order to inherit the fortune; she actually wanted Brick to impregnate her later that night. At the end of the play, the inheritor of Big Daddy's cotton plantation remains unknown.

3.5.1 Keywords-in-Context

Once again, the author will attempt to reveal evidence of emancipation based on keywords. In the other plays, it was obvious that some keywords clearly referred to emancipation. The author will apply the same keywords which were found in the plays analyzed before and investigate whether they appear in *Cat* as well.

Looking for the key word "weak," the first reference appears in relation to Big Daddy, who is "moving carefully, not to betray his own weakness" (*Cat* 63). It is also mentioned at the very end of the play by Maggie, referring to the "weak people" in Brick's family (*Cat* 215). These are the only two references to "weak." In the next section, the author will say more about the theme which is related to this.

When it comes to the keyword "lock," there are several references. The author has to admit that they are not directly related to emancipation, but they do outline some themes which refer to emancipation indirectly: There is a remarkable number of references to "locked doors" (*Cat* 31, 40 (2x), 41, 42 (2x), 50) but not only the doors are locked, Maggie also locks away Brick's liquor (*Cat* 164) and Mae also asks Maggie to lock away the archery set (*Cat* 36).

There are also more subtle references to the keyword "lock." The playwright uses the word "cage" on multiple occasions in the play as well.

- I am not living with you. We occupy the same cage. (Cat 35)
- [General conversation has resumed; everybody is chatting so that the stage sounds like a big bird-cage.] (Cat 134)
- Young married couple took Junior out to th' zoo one Sunday, inspected all of God's creatures in their cages, with satisfaction. (Cat 205)
- Y'see, in th' cage adjoinin' they was a young female elephant in heat! (Cat 205)
- What's the matter, preacher's gone, ain't he? All right. That female elephant in the next cage was per-meatin' the atmosphere about her with a powerful and excitin' odor of female fertility! (Cat 205)
- So this ole bull elephant still had a couple of fornications left in him. He reared back his trunk an' got a whiff of that elephant lady next door!--began to paw at the dirt in his cage an' butt his head against the separatin' partition and, first thing y'know, there was a conspicuous change in his profile--very conspicuous! Ain't I tellin' this story in decent language, Brick? (Cat 206)

The playwright makes it clear that everybody in the play is actually locked in a cage (by coveting Big Daddy's legacy, sexual desire, etc.). The cage in this case is the house, surrounded by precious lands which everyone is keen on inheriting from Big Daddy. However, the fact is that everyone is 'enslaved' by this desire, plotting against each other instead of celebrating Big Daddy's last birthday without ulterior motives. By applying the "keywords-in-context" analysis, it became obvious that there is a basis for emancipation for the characters: the omnipresent use of the word "lock." All the characters in the play are somehow 'locked away' from something which will ultimately have a direct impact on their respective emancipations.

3.5.2 Theme Analysis

As mentioned before, the relationship between men and women is one of the most important themes in Tennessee Williams' plays. However, in this particular play, the central theme is the opposition between fertility and barrenness (Panda 50). This theme becomes obvious when observing the difference between the characters Big Mama and Mae, who have several children, and Maggie, who is childless. Maggie is filled with bitterness and desperate to have her own children with Brick. In the

meantime, she refers to her sister-in-law's children as "no-neck monsters" (Cat 17). The theme of fertility is also underlined by the fact that Mae has a pair of twins among her children and is also currently pregnant. Maggie refers to her as a "monster of fertility" (Cat 22) and Big Daddy says she is a "good breeder" (Cat 80).

On the other hand, Maggie's expressions challenge the notion of fertility: the term "no-neck" casts doubt on the children's health, and "monsters" indicates the quality of reproduction (Panda 51). Panda refers to this as a "deliberate rhetoricization." Apparently, there is room for this rhetoricization within the hierarchy of the play, with Big Daddy having the highest rank as a patriarch. Maggie and Brick contrast with Mae and Gooper, who symbolize contemporary middle-class society. Although Maggie does not have children, and Brick is a drunkard, an unaccomplished sportsman with homosexual tendencies, Big Daddy still seems to prefer the idea of them inheriting the plantation, rather than his other arguably more accomplished son:

[...] Should I or should I not, if the jig was up, give you this place when I go – since I hate Gooper an' Mae an' know they hate me, and since all five same monkeys are little Mae's and Goopers. - And I thought, No! – Then I thought, Yes! – I couldn't make up my mind. I hate Gooper and his five same monkeys and that bitch Mae! Why should I turn over twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land of this side of the valley Nile not to my kind? – But why the hell, on the other hand, Brick – should I subsidize a goddam fool on the bottle? - Liked or not liked, well, maybe even – loved! – why should I do that? [...] (Cat 110)

Williams makes use of several contrasts: Big Daddy, who loves women and enjoys life to the fullest is ironically dying of cancer. His son Brick is not even willing to sleep with his wife and is depressed. Big Mama fits perfectly into the patriarchal structure surrounding Big Daddy: she is a tolerant and patient wife and a caring mother. She is clearly Big Daddy's subordinate and just accompanying him through life. In the meantime, Big Daddy tells Brick that he wants to break free from the puritanical idea of sexual morality:

[...] Well, I got a few left in me, a few, and I'm going to pick me a good one to spend 'em on! I'm going to pick me a choice one, I don't care how much she costs, I'll smother her in – minks! Ha ha! I'll strip her naked and smother her in minks and choke her with diamonds! [...]" (Cat 96).

"[...] I realize now that I never had me enough. I let many chances slip by because of scruples about it, scruples, convention – crap... All that stuff is bull, bull, bull! – It took the shadow of death to make me see it. Now that shadow's

lifted, I'm going to cut loose and have, what it is they call it, have me a – ball!" (Cat 93).

This is very interesting because this shows that not only a weak character or a character that is oppressed or restrained needs to be emancipated. Even a strong wealthy white man, who obviously decides everything and commands his entire family, is subject to the scruples and torn between his physical drive and societal conventions. For Big Daddy, facing death makes it clear that wealth is not all he wants from life: he wants to fulfill his sexual urges. Big Mama is unable to satisfy his lustfulness and societal conventions prevent him from doing so. Now that he sees that his life is coming to an end, he does not want to hold back anymore and wants to break free from restrictive societal conventions he no longer cares about. It seems that he is no longer a respectable family father, but driven by his own lust.

Other critics interpret Big Daddy's "heterosexual utterances" as "overcompensation" in an attempt to mask his secret: his fear of his own potential homosexuality (Arrell 66). This can be demonstrated by several observations: several critics (Arrell 66) link bowel cancer to homosexuality in Tennessee Williams plays.

At the same time, this gives rise to another kind of emancipation. While the patriarch Big Daddy is driven by his own lust and seems to die in the end, none of his relatives are able to handle the situation; it is Maggie who seems to take charge at the end of the play:

Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you – gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of – and I can! I'm determined to do it – and nothing is more determined than a cat on a hot tin roof – is there? Is there, baby (Cat 215)

The author feels that the audience would have had a different opinion of her had she acted this way at the beginning of the play. In Maggie's words: "What is the victory of a cat on a hot tin roof? - I wish I knew....Just staying on it, I guess, as long as she can..."(Cat 31).

The audience would have had the impression that Maggie was like Blanche DuBois, a Southern belle who stayed in her restrictive environment and ultimately broke free. However, she is not. The fact is she is trying to hold her marriage to Brick together, despite being very passionate and wanting to have a baby desperately, and

Brick does not even want to sleep with her. Unlike Big Daddy, who bemoans the opportunities he has failed to seize, Maggie seems to be confident about the opportunities her attractiveness, even to her father-in-law, could provide: "Way he drops his eyes down my body when I'm talking to him, drops his eyes to my boobs an' licks his old chops! Ha ha!" (Cat 23).

It turns out Maggie is stronger than Big Daddy because she is not driven by her own lust. Although she is strong and confident, she still feels that her marriage to Brick is like a cage: "I am not living with you. We occupy the same cage" (Cat 35).

This, however, does not lead to her mental breakdown, as is the case with Blanche Dubois; instead, the situation makes Maggie even more determined and eventually leads to the ultimate form of emancipation: to change the family tradition by shifting a patriarchal focus to a more feminine one: to lead the "weak people" and give them their lives back. In the play it does not become clear how exactly Maggie wants to lead these "weak people."

Another important theme is Brick's homosexuality. Maggie and Brick both feel caged, but in different ways: although Brick also feels trapped in his marriage, he is also constrained by his feelings for Skipper, his dominant father, and his 'perfect' brother. Although the theme of homosexuality is obvious and has been described extensively in critiques and secondary literature, the interrelationship between emancipation and homosexuality requires additional examination. Bak (229) analyzes it as follows:

Freely choosing abstinence, silence and alcohol as active means to counter the gross attempts of his anxious wife, his prying father, and his pragmatic brother to package him materially as the wayward stud, the prodigal son, or the effete drunkard – all indirect epithets of his homosexuality – Brick becomes the archetypal existentialist hero.

Brick is faced by the omnipresent contrast between homosexuality and heterosexuality, which is characteristic of Cold War masculinity; he successfully resists social conformity in any social category (Arres 61). He refuses to confirm whether he is heterosexual or homosexual, not even when Big Daddy asks him. By refusing to do so, he also rejects stereotypical thinking and gains a certain kind of freedom as a result. From this perspective, it can be seen as emancipation which is important for him, since his family is sneaking around and spying on him to find out about his "real sexual orientation." Bak (247) goes one step further: for him, the play's audience is "too guilty

of determining a man's sexual nature based solely on our reading of his social identity, and thus forever marginalizing him socially, sexually and politically in the process."

From another perspective, it could be argued that Brick's alcohol consumption can be considered to be "free" (Arress 62), with his actions serving as proof of a rebellion against the social patterns at that time. Moreover, his alcohol consumption can also be interpreted as an act of a man refusing to face the truth, rather than emancipation. This hypothesis is based on his passive attitude during the entire play.

The theme analysis, as described above, reveals several controversial themes ("domains") which could be linked to emancipation: fertility versus barrenness, man versus woman, life (i.e. lust) versus death, heterosexuality versus homosexuality. These contrasts create a basis for emancipation, the emancipation from one domain into another; they also demonstrate how different domains interact with each other. These domains were also placed in a specific cultural context: that of the middle-class South. More specifically, there is a patriarch, and his family is characterized by internal conflicts and plots to secure an inheritance. These internal conflicts and plots also have a direct impact on the characters' emancipations: although Maggie is under pressure because Big Daddy's favorite son, Brick, has not given her any children, which would definitely secure her and Brick's inheritance of Big Daddy's plantation, she still seems confident enough to lead the "weak people" out of this patriarchal domain.

3.5.3 Discourse Analysis

The start of the play is characterized by a long 'near-monologue' by Maggie, who complains about Gooper and Mae's loud children, their lives and their families, among other things. Brick sometimes responds and comments on what she is saying. However, it is clear that his lines are only very short and her lines are very long. Hence, it can be concluded that their talk is more like a monologue than a discussion. Holder (90) states that Brick's lines are no longer than 13 words until Maggie mentions Skipper; Brick's answers are also dismissive with reference to him. Brick is not really listening to Maggie's monologue, and he answers "*absently*" and "*coolly*" (Cat 26), "*indifferently*" (Cat 29), "*wryly*" (Cat 22, 29), "*without interest*" (Cat 19), "*dreamily*" (Cat 26), "*faintly*" and "*vaguely*" (Cat 52). In contrast, Maggie's utterances are passionate and the playwright describes them by using the terms "*intensively*," "*fearfully*" and

“gaily” (Cat 27). It becomes clear to the audience that her character is depicted more vividly than Brick’s or that she is more extroverted.

On top of that, Maggie is more temperamental than Brick. She is constantly moving, driven by passion: *“she moves”* (Cat 25), *“she rushes”* (Cat 25, 40), *“she slams the door”* (Cat 40), *“she seizes Brick’s shoulder”* (Cat 41), *“kicks the door shut”* (Cat 42), *“she slams the dresser drawer”* (Cat 51), *“she sobs, then controls herself”* (Cat 57); this all takes place in the first act. The audience senses how energetic her character is. In contrast, Brick consistently refrains from showing too much emotion and affection; this is also due to his crutches, which he is using after a sports injury (broken ankle). He only walks to the bar. Because of this, it becomes clear that there is tension between Maggie and Brick. Despite the tension, she is attracted to him. Although the character of Big Daddy seems to be strong, he does not say much in the first part of the play. He basically just yells *“Quiet!”* (Cat 71 x3, 73 x2) and *“Shut up!”* (Cat 82). Neither his birthday party nor his presents seem to be of particular interest to him: *“Crap...”* (Cat 63), *“Open it you’self! I want to ask Brick something!”* (Cat 70), *“I told you to stop it, now stop it, quit this ---!”* (Cat 75).

In fact, Big Daddy is only interested in talking to his son Brick and finding out why he was injured. This dialogue between Big Daddy and Brick is characterized by short lines and very few descriptions. It becomes clear that the men are talking calmly with suppressed emotions, as if the two understand each other well. Brick’s reactions are characterized by emotions that are not particularly intense: he is *“smiling vaguely over his drink”* (Cat 86) and *“his eyes light up for a moment”* (Cat 86). Expressions and descriptions only reappear again when this dialogue is interrupted: first by Margaret (Cat 78), then by Mae (Cat 82), and finally by Big Mama (Cat 94). The dialogue between Big Daddy and Brick is calm, but it is interrupted many times, because the other characters are nervous; they are nervous because they are not taking part in the conversation: *“nervous as a couple of cats on a hot tin roof”* (Cat 79).

By applying the discourse-analysis technique, the author was able to identify and select segments of unique language use which were typical for the characters and served as either a basis for or a sign of emancipation. On the one hand, there is the simple yet coarse language of Big Daddy. His powerful position seems undisputed, because he does not have to do or say much to be respected and obeyed. Despite his ‘power,’ he still feels that he is bound by the social conventions he would like to break

free of. However, he is unable to do so in the end, and cancer ultimately ends his struggle for emancipation.

At the same time, the strong personality of Big Daddy is also the basis of Maggie's emancipation. Her language and actions are always very intense, dynamic and passionate. This somehow seems to help her cope with the pressure she is under: the pressure to have children. Big Daddy likes Maggie, perhaps because she is an unconventional woman at that time (unlike the child-bearing Mae).

3.5.4 Manifest content analysis

Several lies are apparent in the play. Holder (80) sums them up as follows: the relationship between Skipper and Brick, Big Daddy's illness, and Maggie's pregnancy. The motion of the play is based on these lies. Still, Brick is the only one who seems unwilling to perpetuate these lies and participate more actively in the story of the play. The melancholy which is typical of his character serves as a magnet for love from Maggie, Big Mama, and Big Daddy (Holder 81). Elliot (83) provides a more detailed description: "a prototypical Williams protagonist: a damaged victim whose cherished idealism has been shattered and who has consequently given up on life."

Although his life and career fell apart as a result of his leg injury and alcoholism, most of the other characters and the audience still seem to love Brick. Holder (81) further states that Brick was unable to 'perform the truth' in all three of the relationships central to the play: he hung up on Skipper when he confessed his love for him, he refused to talk to Big Daddy about his sexuality; instead, he told Big Daddy that he was dying of cancer. Finally, he also refuses to sleep with Maggie and show her any form of affection.

When analyzing the play, it becomes clear that Maggie is the "most performative character" and "most self-aware performer"; her performance is driven by the goals of inheriting the plantation from Big Daddy as well as re-establishing her marriage with Brick (Holder 89). At the same time, Brick's goal is to stay away from the woman who, in his eyes, "consciously and maliciously" poisoned the mind of his friend Skipper, which eventually led to his death (89). This is the main source of tension between the couple.

The manifest content analysis, as applied above, focuses on the surface of the words and actions of the characters in the drama. Here, the tension between the 'weakest performer' (Brick) and the 'strongest performer' (Maggie) becomes obvious.

The passive and unaccomplished actions of Brick versus the energy of Maggie are the basis which allows Maggie to emancipate herself from the pressure she is under and even look after the 'weak people' after Big Daddy's death.

3.6. Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Characters

In order to enhance the analysis on emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams, the author feels that a direct cross-comparison of the characters in each play is necessary. This will help the author to answer the question as to the extent to which emancipation is observable in Williams' work, which was addressed in Chapter 1.

The author selected character combinations are based on the similarity of their descriptions in the previous chapters and their level of emancipation. The author will use the metaphor of being tied up which Hannah applied to Shannon in *Iguana*, since this is an ideal example which demonstrates that all characters described below are tied to something which they have to break free of, and, as a consequence, have to emancipate themselves from.

3.6.1 Big Daddy and Stanley

Both Big Daddy and Stanley are very strong and masculine characters. They seem to have everything under control. Although they have everything under control, they still experience some form of emancipation, even if it is not in the classically cliché sense of the term.

Big Daddy wants to break free from the "boundaries" which are held in place by society's traditional notions of monogamy. Now that the end of his life is approaching, he regrets not acting on opportunities he had to sleep with other women. He was happy with Big Mama, but she did not seem to satisfy his sexual needs. In short, Big Daddy was constrained by his sexual needs on the one hand and societal conventions on the other hand.

Stanley is tied to his Polish roots: he is living in a small apartment in a neighborhood together with other immigrants. Just like many other immigrants with Polish roots, he embodies the stereotype of an Eastern European worker in the United States at the time. Still, it seems as if he has broken free of his Polish roots: he does not speak his language anymore, does not have any Polish friends, never mentions

his family in Poland, and he also 'acts like an American': engaging in typically American activities with his friends (playing cards, going bowling).

Both Big Daddy and Stanley seem to have much in common: they have dominant personalities, they are direct, uncomplicated and sexually driven; they are manifestations of male stereotypes. Unlike Big Daddy, Stanley is a poor worker, and he does not own a large estate and does not have legacy hunters. Unlike Big Daddy and Big Mama, Stanley is unable to go on distant journeys with Stella. All they have is a small apartment, yet they still seem to be content. They are not striving for more in life, like Big Daddy is. Stanley does not even seem excited about his baby. He does not want to give up his life and his friends. He is the boss of his entourage, including Stella, and that is the most important thing to him.

3.6.2 Blanche and Serafina

Both Blanche and Serafina are complicated and sophisticated characters. They have luck in life in the beginning, but then something happens which traumatizes them. Because of these traumas, they remain tied to the past. Blanche had a privileged life, growing up on the family estate, Belle Reve, with Stella; their wealthy family sheltered them from the harsh realities of life. Their luck ended when their parents pass away, slowly but surely, and they eventually lost Belle Reve (it was, metaphorically speaking, her dream as well). She was not able to keep it with her teacher's salary. She tries to cope with this new situation and fight for her right to keep the estate, being forced to do certain things (related to sex and alcohol) which damage her reputation. As a result, she is forced to undergo her 'first Southern emancipation' by staying behind, making sacrifices and suffering, looking for her new emancipation in New Orleans, seeking a new environment to break through the cage of her past.

Serafina's emancipation is similar: she also had a happy life before her personal crisis. She was living with her beloved husband Rosario and their daughter Rosa. Her life changed abruptly the day Rosario died. Serafina is tied to her past, because she refuses to let go of Rosario and locks herself in her house. This immediately leads to Rosa's emancipation: she can no longer stand seeing her mother stuck in their house and let herself go by forgetting about her dignity. It becomes clear that just like Blanche, Serafina also needs to break away from her past and free herself from the Sicilian sexual morality.

Unlike Blanche, Serafina does not have to leave her old environment, but she has to let go of her religion and culture. She has to accept that they are not living in Sicily anymore and that she has to adhere to American customs to a certain extent, or else she loses the last remaining part of Rosario, Rosa, entirely. The other difference between Serafina and Blanche is that Serafina finds happiness again: she manages to keep Rosa in her life, has a new partner (Alvaro is also from Sicily, so she does not have to give up her culture entirely), and becomes pregnant again.

In contrast, Blanche ends up in a mental hospital. It would be interesting to know why, despite their similarities in their efforts to break free from their past, Serafina finds happiness and Blanche does not. The author hypothesizes that it has something to do with the presence of Stanley, a very dominant man and the only dominant male in her environment. Stanley is completely different from Blanche's former husband, who turned out to be gay. The only similarity between the two men is the *Varsouviana*, the last dance Allan and Blanche had as a couple before he commits suicide. It was an omen, because later she meets Stanley, who dominates her. She also becomes a citizen of 'his Warsaw,' metaphorically speaking, and the *Varsouviana* is the reoccurring element that shapes her life, before her emancipation and after. Serafina also has a similar element in her life before and after emancipation: the rose tattoo. The rose is a symbol of love, and perhaps this is the reason why Serafina is happy in the end. She is on the path toward love, while Blanche is on the path toward Warsaw, a (metaphorical) destination which ultimately drags her down.

3.6.3 Stella and Maggie

The similarity between Stella and Maggie is based on their sexual attraction to their husbands. Both Stella and Maggie seem to desire their husbands' sexual affection. Instead of leading to their emancipation, their sexual desires keep them tied to men who do not treat them well: Maggie seems to be stuck with a man who completely ignores her and is unapologetic about participating in her "performance" of her energetic appearance on stage. He does not want to sleep with her and have a baby with her, although she desperately wants a baby.

Stella is tied to a man, who also does not treat her very well, but unlike Maggie, she does not really seem to care about this, because – also unlike Maggie – he gives her what she desires: sexual affection. By satisfying her desires, he can basically do whatever he wants: boss her around, use foul language, be rude to her sister, go out

with his friends, drink too much alcohol, and eventually even rape Blanche while Stella was pregnant. Stella only emancipates herself once by walking away from the restrictive environment of Belle Reve to live with Stanley in New Orleans. She has already achieved her goal and she does not feel that it is necessary for her to emancipate herself any further or in a different way.

Maggie's emancipation takes on two different forms: Southern emancipation, by acting like a cat on a hot tin roof, i.e. staying with an unaffectionate husband in difficult circumstances, while Gooper and Mae have six children and plot to inherit Big Daddy's legacy. The second form of emancipation that characterizes Maggie is the will she has to take on Big Daddy's role after he dies: by looking after Brick and Big Mama and hence becoming the matriarch of the family.

3.6.4 Maxine and Serafina

Maxine and Serafina are both sophisticated characters and exhibit dominant traits during both plays. Both women have recently lost their husbands, which is normally the start of some kind of emancipation: Maxine has lost Fred and Serafina has lost Rosario. Both Rosario and Fred are only mentioned in the play; they do not actually appear as characters. This is the only similarity between the two. While Serafina locks herself up in her room and suffers from a nervous breakdown following her husband's death, Maxine is very cold: "Fred is dead." She amuses herself in the jungle with young Mexican boys and drinks rum-coco. Serafina is lady-like, paying a great deal of attention to her looks and waiting for her husband to come home. Maxine, however, walks around half naked, uses coarse language, and shouts at the Mexican boys. Serafina does not speak English very well, because she comes from Sicily and is strongly attached to her culture; she still mostly speaks Italian. Maxine obviously integrated more, because she speaks fluent Spanish with the boys.

Serafina's emancipation is apparent: she fades like a rose after Rosario's death and flourishes again after her emancipation from the past. Considering how much these characters differ from one another, it might not be a surprise that Maxine's emancipation is very different. Maxine's emancipation is stereotypical. As her husband Fred was a fisherman, he was away from home for long periods of time. Maxine has been forced to run the hotel in the jungle and because of this, she does not act like a typical woman in the 1940s; her masculine behavior is characterized by coarse

language, shouting and walking around half naked, drinking frequently, cutting coconuts with a machete and not showing her feelings. She is not a woman like Serafina, who waits for her husband to come home and have supper with her. She is running the Costa Verde herself and lets the “Chinaman” do the cooking. The difference between Maxine and the typical woman of her time becomes clear when she meets Mrs. Fellowes, who belongs to a church group. Mrs. Fellowes is prudish, picky and small-minded. Maxine, far away in the Mexican jungle, far away from American customs, is able to emancipate herself from this undesirable conventional behavior.

3.6.5 Shannon and Brick

It seems that both Shannon and Brick are “prototypical Williams’ protagonists”: damaged victims whose cherished idealism has been shattered and who have consequently given up on life. Shannon had to give up his career as a reverend because of “atheism” and “statutory rape”; Brick had to give up his career because of his injury and alcoholism. Shannon is helped by his “spirit” Hannah, who paints him from a symbolic point of view, ties him to his hammock, making him confess his sins, and making his rebirth a reality. Brick does not have such a “spirit.” However, he has three people who are willing to help him. What would Hannah have done with Brick? Presumably she would have tied him to his crutches and make him confess his sins and sorrows: his alcoholism, his doubts about his sexuality, his relationship with Skipper, and his marriage to Maggie. Just like Shannon, Brick would have also had a breakdown and begins his emancipatory journey: either by emancipating himself from his past and getting over the loss of Skipper while rekindling his marriage to Maggie, or by emancipating himself from Maggie by leaving her and living a life in line with his presumed sexual orientation. Since there was no Hannah to draw him, the most likely scenario is that he stays with Maggie, considering his weak and broken personality. He probably lets Maggie take charge, like Shannon lets Maxine take charge of him.

The main difference between the two is their sexuality. While Brick turns out to be passive in terms of his sexuality, Shannon is the exact opposite. Brick is passive because during the play, the nature of his relationship with Skipper remains unclear. Furthermore, he accuses Maggie of poisoning Skipper’s mind, which lead to his death,

and consequently refrains from expressing love and affection toward her. Shannon's sexuality is immediately clear and obvious in the play: he explored his sexual needs as a teenager and was caught by his mother. She forced him to go to church, and he ended up studying theology. Later on, he became emancipated as a result of his "forbidden sexuality." This is expressed through his affairs with different women. Shannon's initial emancipation leads to his breakdown, which requires a new kind of emancipation: an emancipation from his past which results in a new sustainable life with a strong woman.

Conclusion

Prior to analyzing emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams, the author had expected to find instances of emancipation in which a woman would emancipate herself from male dominance and eventually live in newly found and self-created freedom. Because it was assumed that this would be the only form of emancipation found in Williams' oeuvre, the author selected works in which the main characters were all women. This assumption turned out to be wrong: in fact, after analyzing the works using the four different methods described in Section 3.1, it turned out that emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams is manifested in a variety of ways. This is true of each of the four plays selected for the analysis. Furthermore, some of the characters emancipate themselves from their respective situations in more than one way. Different kinds of emancipation have different impetuses: some characters are driven by integration (Rosa), others by love (Serafina), looking for help (Shannon), desire (Blanche), or loss (Blanche, Shannon, Serafina). These occurrences of emancipation ultimately stem from the fact that Tennessee Williams felt an affinity with the 'social outsiders' of his generation: women (Blanche, Serafina), poets (Nonno), artists (Hannah, Serafina), and the sexually marginalized (Brick, Shannon).

In short, the author found the following types of emancipation as a result of the analyses:

- Emancipation men versus women
- Emancipation from the past
- Emancipation from one's culture
- Emancipation from one's ethnicity
- Emancipation from mental limitations
- Emancipation from sexual and physical limitations
- Emancipation from time and location
- Southern emancipation

The author had initially thought that a woman's emancipation from a man or a male environment was the classic form of emancipation in the most common sense of the

word. She had expected to find more of these examples in Tennessee Williams' plays: after all, the plays were written in the U.S. at a time in which it was still uncommon for women to be less dependent on men and live their lives on their own terms. The author was very surprised that she only found one example of 'classic emancipation': Maxine in *Iguana*. As mentioned above, before Maxine's husband Fred passed away, he was away from home most of the time, and she had to do the man's work in running the hotel. Hence, her emancipation fulfills the criteria of 'classic emancipation': She has to manage the Costa Verde alone, and the success of the hotel depends entirely on her. Consequently, there is a great deal of pressure on her shoulders, but she manages to succeed and seems to have everything under control. Her behavior is manlier (much manlier than Shannon's) than expected for a woman in the 1940s, but her jungle surroundings seem to 'forgive' her for her behavior.

Emancipation from one's past could be observed in the plays *Streetcar*, *Rose*, and *Iguana* with the characters Blanche, Shannon and Serafina. It is interesting to observe that the three most sophisticated characters in the plays selected for analysis emancipated, or at least attempted to emancipate themselves from their pasts. All three characters went through life-changing and difficult situations: Blanche lost her husband Allan, the Belle Reve estate and her reputation in her hometown. Shannon lost his job as a tour guide and was defrocked, and Serafina lost her husband Rosario. In order to emancipate themselves from the past, all three characters needed to emancipate themselves on an additional level: Blanche and Shannon needed to experience emancipation from an oppressive location and Serafina needed to emancipate herself from her culture. When this happened, all three characters embarked on a new path in their lives: in some cases, the outcome was positive and in others it was negative. They were all eventually able to emancipate themselves from the past; in Blanche's case, the past came back to haunt her. This is why the author argues that Blanche ultimately failed to emancipate herself from her past.

Both of Serafina's emancipatory transitions were successful. Although it takes her years to cope with her husband's death, she does manage to emancipate herself from her past. As for her cultural emancipation, she has to loosen her ties to her Sicilian culture to avoid losing the last remaining part of her late husband Rosario: her beloved daughter Rosa. Her Sicilian identity, religion, language and customs cause problems with her daughter Rosa, who grew up in America and is fully integrated. Rosa speaks English very well, is a good student, and has American friends. When she falls in love

for the first time, she is able to sneak out of the house and go out with Jack. She does not care about Sicilian attitudes toward dating because she identifies as an American. Rosa is a step ahead of Serafina in terms of emancipating herself from her culture; she focuses on integrating and becomes happy, while Serafina is still tied to her house, religion, Rosario and Sicilian society. After Serafina meets Alvaro, she is also eventually able to emancipate herself from her culture and past without giving up her culture entirely.

Emancipation from one's ethnicity could be observed with Stanley in *Streetcar*. The author was surprised to see that some form of emancipation took place even among strong, dominant characters. Although Stanley was a poor Polish laborer, he was able to gather an entourage around him. He was integrated in New Orleans, and apart from his name, there was nothing which connected him to his home country.

Emancipation from mental limitations could be observed in the case of Nonno in *Iguana*. Due to his old age and senility, it takes Nonno several years to overcome his mental limitations and finalize his last poem. It might be amusing for the audience to watch this old man constantly repeat himself, forget what he wanted to say and speak incoherently; for him, it must have been torture: he is a passionate poet unable to fulfill his destiny. Despite his senility, Nonno is still Shannon's spiritual guide. While Nonno oversees Shannon's emancipation, freeing the iguana, and helping Shannon redeem himself because of his sinful past, he finally remembers the entire poem and has Hannah write it down. This is his personal redemption. As a result, his destiny is fulfilled and he achieved his ultimate goal in life; he finally is able to rest in peace.

To a certain extent, Brick in *Cat* is also bound by his mental limitations and feelings. The nature of his relationship with Skipper remains unclear during the entire play. It is obvious that this situation distresses him, and because of this, he is unable to reveal any of his emotions and show affection to the other characters, especially not to Maggie. He is unable to emancipate himself from his mental limitations, and nobody seems capable of helping him, even though they want to help him. Another example of a character that has to overcome mental limitations is *Serafina* in *Rose*. After Rosario dies, she locks herself inside the house and does not come out. As mentioned above, it takes her a long time to emancipate herself from the confines of emotional duress; however, she is ultimately successful.

As for emancipation from one's sexual and physical limitations, one of the most obvious examples is Big Daddy in *Cat*. Big Daddy openly admits to Brick that Big Mama

is unable to satisfy his sexual needs, and he regrets passing up opportunities to sleep with other women. He does not seem to be tied to his marriage and his marriage vow; instead, he is dragged down by societal conventions. He does not emancipate himself from his sexual and physical limitations because he dies before he it is able to do so. Unlike Big Daddy, Maxine in *Iguana* was able to emancipate herself from repressive sexual conventions. She tells Shannon that her husband Fred was unable to satisfy her sexual needs, so she tries to remedy the situation by going “night swimming” with young Mexican boys.

Emancipation from time and location is also interesting, because instead of occurring in the plays’ characters, it was observed, for the most part, in the plays’ settings. For example, *Iguana* is set in a time which is twenty years before the time it was initially performed. It is set in the 1940s; this is relevant in terms of the plot, because at the time, Mexico’s infrastructure was poor and the country was full of harsh jungles. These two factors are important for Maxine’s development as a character. Her emancipation is possible because she has to survive in the jungle; if she had stayed in America and lived a carefree life, it would probably have been impossible for her to emancipate herself the way she did. Big Daddy’s house is also an example of emancipation from location. Although the play is set in the Mississippi Delta, the setting is described as “Victorian with a touch of the Far East”. Even though *Rose* is set in the South, the Sicilian characters in the play are not typical of this location. The play gives audiences the impression that they are in Sicily, rather than the South. Hence, the playwright was also able to emancipate the play itself from the restrictions of a geographical location.

Contrary to the author’s expectations, Southern emancipation, as described by Brinkmeyer, could be observed in the plays. It created an interesting perspective on the plays and characters of Tennessee Williams. The best example of Southern emancipation might be the character of Blanche DuBois. Unlike Stella, who gives up her wealthy life to lead an ordinary life with the worker Stanley, Blanche stays in her restrictive environment as long as she can, trying to maintain her bond with her sister, Stella. She tries to retain her dignity and keep up appearances in order to hide her true feelings and her financial situation. Another aspect of Southern emancipation could also be observed with Blanche: emancipation from the “Old South” to the “New South.” Belle Reve, which was built by her ancestors, was characterized by honor and dignity and was a source of pride for Blanche. On the other hand, the transition to the “New

South,” characterized by keeping up appearances, took its toll on Blanche: she mourned the ‘lost dreams’ of her past. In addition to Blanche, Maggie’s emancipation can also be classified as Southern emancipation. She also stayed in her depressing environment, bearing it like a “cat on a hot tin roof” while maintaining her dignity, knowing that one day she would break free.

In conclusion, the author hopes this thesis provides a systematic overview of the various types of emancipation found in the plays of Tennessee Williams. It was interesting to see how many different forms of emancipation could be observed. Another phenomenon which was particularly fascinating was to see how the characters exerted a certain mutual influence on each other’s individual forms of emancipation. Almost all characters in the selected plays were eventually either successful in their emancipation or living the life they wanted – except for Blanche in *Streetcar*. To put it in the words of Tennessee Williams:

“To be free is to have achieved your life.”

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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Appendix

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Diese Diplomarbeit untersucht die Arten von Emanzipation in den Theaterstücken von Tennessee Williams *Endstation Sehnsucht* (*A Streetcar named Desire*), *Die Katze auf dem heißen Blechdach* (*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*), *Die Nacht des Leguan* (*Night of the Iguana*) und *Die tätowierte Rose* (*The Rose Tattoo*). Im Anschluss an eine kurze Einführung in das Leben und die Werke des Dramatikers, werden die typischen Merkmale der Südstaatenliteratur und Emanzipation im Allgemeinen präsentiert und die oben genannten Werke durch die Analysetechniken der Redeanalyse, Schlüsselwörter-im-Zusammenhang- Analyse, der manifesten Inhaltsanalyse, der Themenanalyse und der qualitativ vergleichende Analyse ausgewertet. Auf diese Weise konnten verschiedene Arten der Emanzipation gefunden und beschrieben werden: die Emanzipation von der Vergangenheit, die Emanzipation im Vergleich von Männern und Frauen, die Emanzipation der Südstaaten, die Emanzipation von jemandes Kultur, die Emanzipation von jemandes ethnischer Herkunft, die Emanzipation von jemandes geistigen Einschränkungen, die Emanzipation von sexuellen und körperlichen Einschränkungen und die Emanzipation von Zeit und Ort. Daraus folgend beweisen die Ergebnisse dieser Diplomarbeit, dass Emanzipation in den ausgewählten Stücken für verschiedene Charaktere in verschiedenen Stufen stattfinden und miteinander in Verbindung stehen.

English abstract

This diploma thesis examines the types of emancipation in the plays of Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar named Desire*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Night of the Iguana* and *The Rose Tattoo*. After a short introduction to the playwright's life and works, the typical characteristics of Southern Literature and emancipation in general are presented and followed by an analysis of the plays named above by using the analysis techniques discourse analysis, keywords-in-context, manifest content analysis, theme analysis and qualitative comparative analysis. In that manner, different types of emancipation could be identified and described: emancipation from the past, emancipation men versus women, Southern emancipation, emancipation from one's culture, emancipation from one's ethnicity, emancipation from one's mental limitations,

emancipation from sexual and physical limitation and emancipation from time and location. Hence, the findings of this diploma thesis prove that emancipation in the selected plays takes place for different characters in different stages and are in relation to each other.

