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Ph.D. Dissertation Theses

*Interface Semiotics in the Dramaturgy of
Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee*

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A. Objectives and Structure

The topic of the present dissertation is the dramaturgy of two modern American playwrights, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. The aim is to map the common features of their works in the context of semiotic textual exchange between the two oeuvres and of the biographical background of the playwrights in the context of a dramatic interface of the two authors.

The scope of the Albee-Williams dramatic interface is to explain both oeuvres through an internal patterning of events and characters by deriving concepts of the one (Williams) into the other (Albee). The study of both oeuvres provides the visualization of the enigmas, of the invisible patterns that work to build the intertextual Williams-Albee bind. The invisible in one play is a trope of representation in another play within the same oeuvre. One play is or might well be the other discourse of the other play both in the case of the same author and in case of two different authors. This trans-substantiation is present in the form of the dramatic intertext or, to be more precise - due to the biographical implication - of the dramatic interface. The influence of Williams on Albee's works had been expressed by many literary critics, as well as by Albee himself. The dramatic interface of the two authors is mapped with the theoretical help of semiotics, psychoanalysis, theories of myth, symbols and gender approaches.

The dissertation is structured in six main parts. After the first, introductory presentation of the topic, aim, structure and methods of the present dissertation, the second and the third chapters focus on the dramatic world of Tennessee Williams. The third and the fourth chapter aim the plays of Edward Albee. The last chapter is a summary of the previous introspection into the oeuvres of the two playwrights and views a comparative analysis of the two authors.

The introspection into the works of Tennessee Williams starts in Chapter 2, and which is entitled "Tennessee Williams and *A Streetcar Named Desire*" with an analysis of Williams's most representative drama, *A Streetcar Named Desire* as the master-drama of the playwright. The focus of the subchapter 2.1. "Tennessee Williams. The name of the Playwright. Desire as the Emblem of the Author" is centered on the issue of the name of the author (playwright) - as it was described by Michel Foucault - and on the implications of the name of the author on its most representative dramatic topic. In the case of Williams's play the key concept is the

word of desire. This concept emblemizes the name of the playwright. The process of emblemization is mapped afterwards in a semiotic analysis of the play, which is carried out through a study of the dramas' plot, setting, the used tropes and through dramatic characters. The subchapter 2.2. "Dramatic Primal Scene. Repetition, Setting, Names and Tropes" introduces the concept of the dramatic primal scene and its repetitions throughout the drama. Sigmund Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and Peter Brooks' *Reading for the Plot* provide the main theoretical background for the exploration of the issue. The subchapter 2.3. "The Cast. The Emblematic Character and the Enigma" focuses on the cast of the play and points out the enigmatic point in the drama, which is labeled as the dramatic blindspot. The dramatic blindspot of *A Streetcar Named Desire* is Allan Grey, on whom the play's analysis focuses.

Chapter 3. entitled "The Implied Tennessee Williams Primal Scene, Dramatic Primal Scenes, Repetitions, Settings, and the Cast of Six Tennessee Williams Plays" targets six other Williams dramas. The studied dramas are the following: *Sweet Bird of Youth*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Milkrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *Suddenly Last Summer*. The choice of the dramas was conditioned by the similitude they presented, and by the fact that these are the dramas that best represent the name of the author. Chapter 3. is divided into two subchapters. The subchapter 3.1. "The Implied Tennessee Williams Primal Scene. Dramatic Primal Scenes, Repetitions and Settings" discusses the concept of the implied primal scene, which is a biographical implication of the playwright into the world and the construction of all his plays, a personal touch that structures, as a textual unconscious, the primal scenes of the dramas of Williams. The Implied Tennessee Williams primal scene is analyzed through the playwright's *Memoir* and one late memory play entitled *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*. The implied primal scene of Williams sheds light on the obscured figure of his enigmatic characters. The subchapter 3.2. "The Cast of Tennessee Williams Plays. The Emblems and the Enigma" views *the dramatis personae* of the above-mentioned plays and maps the blindspots (enigmas) by visualizing it in each play through the mediation of two characters, which are the emblematic characters, which can be considered master-characters. The blindspot stands at the root of the dramas' primal scenes and is the key concept in the construction of Williams's plot of desire.

The Chapter 4. "Edward Albee and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*" envisages Edward Albee's master-drama, as one of the main representatives for the name of the author (playwright). The chapter is divided into three subchapters. The subchapter 4.1. "Edward Albee. The Name of the Playwright. Lack as the Emblem of the Author" discusses the

Foucauldian concept of the name of the author in the context of Edward Albee. While for Williams, the keyword is desire, the Albee dramatic world is ruled by the concept of lack, as a form of desire. The subchapter 4.2. "Dramatic Primal Scene, Repetition, Setting and Tropes" focuses on the dramatic primal scene of Albee's master-drama and its reiterative function within the play. The semiotic implication of the tropes (and setting) further stresses the position of the blindspot within the plot construction. The subchapter 4.3. "The Cast. The Emblematic Character and the Enigma" points out the relationships and the codes that are established between the *dramatis personae* and the figure of the blindspot, who is the fictive son/George.

The fifth chapter entitled "The Implied Edward Albee Primal Scene, Dramatic Primal Scenes, Repetitions, Settings and the Cast of Six Edward Albee Plays". The dramas of Edward Albee that have been the subject of my study are the following: *The Zoo Story*, *A Delicate Balance*, *The American Dream*, *Marriage Play*, *Counting the Ways* and *Finding the Sun*. The subchapter 5.1. "The Implied Primal Scene. Dramatic Primal Scenes, Repetitions and Settings" explains the notion of the implied primal scene for the name of Edward Albee and inserts biographical data relevant for the discussion of the plays' topic(s) and as well as for the dramatic keyword of lack (as a form of desire). The implied Edward Albee primal scene is explained in the context of the author's most recent bibliography by Mel Gussow, and by the two memory plays of the playwright, *The Sandbox* and *Three Tall Women*. In the following the subchapter discusses the dramatic primal scenes in six plays of Albee and maps the repetitive places of the primal scene within the text of the dramas in order to unveil the workings of the dramatic blindspot. The subchapter 5.2. "The Cast of Edward Albee's Plays. The Emblem and the Enigma" presents these six representative plays in the light of the relationships that are established between the characters and the enigmatic figure of the dramatic blindspot in each drama.

The sixth chapter is a summary of the textual investigations on the work of the two playwrights. The figure of the blindspot proves to have similar features in the case of both playwrights via the charts that compare the tropes, characters and blindspots. The employment of tropes is also similar in the case of the two playwrights. These tropes have common denotation (and connotation) in the case of both authors, and hence were called master-tropes. The similarity of the tropes that hide the blindspot, which had directly or indirectly been the subject of the investigation, is listed on separate charts that first compare the two master-dramas of the two playwrights, then the dramas within the same oeuvre. The master-tropes of one author seem to embody the same figure as the master-tropes of the other via the characters they embody and via the plots they act/play. The comparison of the enigmas is made also at the

level of the plots. The similarities are enlisted in the charts containing the two master-dramas, the works within the same oeuvre. The results show a striking similarity between the Williams blindspot and the Albee blindspot, which is in both cases, as the final results show, a physical construct (a character) that derives directly from the implied primal scene and embodies the figure of the narcissistic person/playwright.

B. Sources, Criticism, Methods

The primary sources are the plays of Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee. I have considered *A Streetcar Named Desire* as the master-drama of Williams and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolf?* as the master-drama of Albee. The other remaining twelve dramas (six sample plays for each author) are discussed in each oeuvre the light of the master-dramas and of the memory plays of the two playwrights. For Tennessee Williams the two memory plays are *The Glass Menagerie* and *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*; for Albee they are *The Sandbox* and *Three Tall Women*. As secondary sources for the playwrights behind the texts I have - in case of Tennessee Williams - extensively relied upon the playwright's *Memoirs* (1975), the correspondence of Williams with Maria St. Just (1990), the playwright's biographies by E. M. Jackson (1965), D. Williams and Mead S. (1983), Signi L. Falk (1961), D. Spoto (1990) and on the essays and collection of essays by R. Cohn (1971), A. S. Downer (1967), M. Magid (1964), T. E. Porter (1969), W. Meserve (1966), D. Parker (1987), and Matthew C. Roudané's collection of essays (1999). In case of Edward Albee the biographies by M. Gussow (1999) and the interview with J. N. Wasserman (1983) provided valuable philological background for the discussed plays of the author. The essays and the collection of essays of the following authors represent the material I have used for critical insights on Edward Albee: R.E. Amacher (1969), H. Bloom (1987), R. Cohn (1969), F. Hirsch (1978), R. Hayman (1981), T. Driver (1967), L. Baxandall (1967), A. Paolucci (1973), D. Parker (1987), A. M. Stenz (1978) and G. Weales (1987).

I have started the quest for the Williams-Albee textual interface in a textual analysis of seven plays by each playwright. The concept of the name of the author was provided by Michel Foucault's *What is an Author?* The analysis of the plays focuses on the semiotics of the dramatic text, thus the method employed was one of the semiotic investigation with the help of the theories of semiotics, psychoanalysis, myth (symbols), and gender approaches. The genre-background is provided by the works of Aristotle (*Poetics*), N. Frye (*Anatomy of Criticism*), F.

Fergusson (*The Tragic Rhythm of Action*), and also by the works of R.P. Draper (1983), P. Egri (1983), and E. Bentley (1964). The semiotic material (symbols, typology, myth, signs) was provided by the works of R. Barthes (1977), J. Culler (1975), Plato (1996), J. Kristeva (1980,1984), J. Lacan (1977), K. Silverman (1983), P. Brunel (1992), J. Campbell (1978), J. E. Cirlot (1983), J. Frazer (1990), M. Eliade (1993), K. Kerényi (1984).

Valuable background for the semiotics of the dramatic text were provided by W. Nöth's *Handbook on Semiotics* (1994), T. A. Sebeok's *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics* (1994) and K. Elam's *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (1983). During the semiotic introspection on the concept of the dramatic blindspot I mostly relied on the works of Sigmund Freud, especially on "Beyond the Pleasure Principle", "The Unconscious", "The Uncanny", "Mourning and Melancholia", "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood", "Repression", "Family Romances", "The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex", "The Ego and the Id", "Instincts and Their Vicissitudes", "On Dreams", "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety". As post-Freudian reference, Jacques Lacan's *Écrits* and *Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* provided the substratum for the psychoanalytic approach in interpreting the concept of the 'other' and that of desire and lack for the plot of desire in Williams's plays and for the plot of lack in Albee's dramaturgy. The versions of the modern American plays discussed here rely on the Lacanian 'other' from "The Insistence of the Letter in the Unconscious" and F. Zsélyi's *A másik szöveg (The Other Discourse)*. Other psychoanalytical perspectives are D. Winnicott's transitional object and phenomena and M. Klein's term of the "good enough mother" that have enhanced the interpretation for the hate-love relations between and among the dramatic characters, as well as S. Ferenczi's thalassal regression, as a drive towards the quiescence, towards the end (of the plot of desire and lack). The methods of my investigation have employed the use of semiotics starting from Plato's *Timaeus*, K. Silverman's *The Subject of Semiotics* and J. Kristeva's *Desire in Language, Revolution in Poetic Language, Powers of Horror* and *Tales of Love*. The contours of the dramatic plot rely on S. Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, on P. Brooks's *Reading for the Plot and Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*.

The introspection of the dramatic characters of Williams and Albee, which is here achieved via the semiotics of the human body, is founded on the works of L. Bersani's body concept from *The Freudian Body*, by the analogy paradigms of T. Laqueur's view of the human body in *Making Sex. Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud*, by P. Brooks' *Body Work. Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* and by Judith Butler's *Bodies that Matter* that gave resourceful representations of the body for the semiotic reading of Williams and Albee

otherness. It is him through whom all characters relate and it is him via whom the events run in the course of the plot. The blindspot in the drama shows a complex semblance with the narcissistic figure of the playwright, which can be found in the implied Tennessee Williams primal scene. Blanche DuBois is the protagonist in the drama of desire that is haunted by these unchecked desires. Her longing for companionship ends in a double ended-construction. First, it is the symbolic burial at sea she fantasizes as an end of her quest and identification with Allan. This sublimated wish foretells the actual ending of the drama. Secondly, the last event of the play is her removal to a mental asylum, which at the symbolic level of the drama, equals with her death in this saga of solipsism. The fulfillment of desire, central to Williams's work is, at Blanche-Thomas/Tennessee (Lanier) Williams level, nothing more than a complex bind of two different desires of the implied playwright as/in the dramatic character.

The implied primal scene of *A Streetcar Named Desire* is strikingly similar to Tennessee Williams's traumatic love, which he confesses in his *Memoirs*. Therefore we can state that the subject of the *Memoirs* provides his work with the implied dramatic primal scene. Chapter four of the book of *Memoirs* testifies about the "pivotal love" of the author's life, the first great male love", in which gay love is "transfigured the act into something beyond", into the fictional realm of the dramas. This love will be later explicitly written by Williams in 1980 in the play entitled *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*. There Tennessee is August, the writer and where his true and first love has the same name as the real person, Kip, who is the blindspot of the implied primal scene of the playwright's oeuvre. The traumatic kernel of *A Streetcar Named Desire* provides the origin of the Williams plot of desire. The primal scene of Williams's rhetoric of desire contains a specific system of representation. This encodes the/a personal trauma (the implied primal scene), a repression that seems to subplot the world of the written dramatic text. This underlying structure conveys something about the other representation(s) within the same text while these, to a certain extent, metonymize the primal scene. The repetitive features of the Williams plot of desire work as medieval manuscripts, as the palimpsest of the former into the latter, both at the inter-textual "same-but-different" level. The repressed unsaid, the lost object of love becomes distanced via the plot time in the disguise of the dramatic primal scene. The structuring element of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, which motivates the events and the detours on the route of Blanche's life, is what I call *the dramatic primal scene* of the play. This scene is similar in its function to the Freudian *primal scene*, which is a conscious memory of a mistake. The primal scene contains the enigma of the play and is the root of all actions in the drama. It is also the link that establishes the reason and meaning for all the other events of the play. The primal scene is the most archaic event-form

that codes and marks the origins of the drama and is the product of past actions and is at the same time the present causal link between a character and his actions. Since it is a primal pattern, the scene is to be later repeated, that is, it becomes ritualized throughout the play. The reader finds the repetitions of the dramatic scene, which will metonymically substitute the original trauma in the course of the plot. This trauma (mistake or the tragic flaw) appears in *A Streetcar Named Desire* when Blanche fails to help Allan. The primal scene of the play is the ball scene, when Blanche discovers Allan's homosexual inclination but refuses to accept it and hence he shoots himself dead. The primal story contains *the primary story of the play*, the story of the unsaid, or the blindspot of the drama, which is told otherwise - in variant forms of the secondary stories - by most of the characters. In a referential mimesis the reference begins with its origin, that is, with the implied primal scene; it is here that the supplements, appendixes and repetitions gain an even greater importance. The repeated narcissistic reference of the blindspot in the dramas refers indirectly to the (name of the) author. The implied playwright identifies with Allan's companion, and, accordingly, with Allan. Since Blanche is also the embodiment of the implied playwright, she identifies with Allan, and therefore the threefold equation pinpoints a strong narcissistic standpoint.

The primal scenes of the next six dramas are presented in the context of the pleasure principle and repetition compulsion, in the quest to reach the first object of love. This object of love is in most cases the blindspot, which is made present via the primal scenes, through specific tropes and via the characters. In *Sweet Bird of Youth* the blindspot is Heavenly, in *The Glass Menagerie* it is the Wingfield father, in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is Skipper, in *The Milkcrain Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* it is Alex Romanov, in *The Night of the Iguana* it is Fred and in *Suddenly Last Summer* it is Sebastian Venable. With the exception of Heavenly Finley all are *male* characters and all are depicted by a *dual* construct of characters. The Williams blindspot is either a poet or a creator of art. This means that the Williams blindspot unveils the desire to create. Similar to the master-tropes in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, the tropes used in the six plays of Williams converge towards the figure of the poet or the art creator, which is the figure of the implied author. The master-tropes of Williams entail, directly or indirectly, the figure of the literary, artistic creation (poems, diary, sketch, photo, movies), that of creative, fictive persons (the child) and that of the implied playwright ("blue").

The blindspot in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is the enigmatic figure of the fictional son of George and Martha. The son is finally made visibly identical with George, who is the enigmatic character among the other three characters of the play. The

the master-drama of Williams and Albee provide a possible model of reading the second (the next) text with the (cultural) background of the first.

The interface of the two implied primal scenes shows similitude at the level of the narcissistic figure of the implied playwright either as a projection of his object of love as himself (in case of Williams) or as the figure of the playwright as himself (in case of Albee). Williams blindspots the desire for the lost object of love, Albee blindspots the lack of the object of love. The implied primal scene is similar to what Freud call the day-dreams of the creative writers, it is a projection of the personal fantasies, which in the context of the blindspots proves similar in the case of Williams and Albee. The implied primal scene as referential authorial coherence has its (literary) world-creating role, where the elements can identify with other similar ones. The implied primal scene has this world-creating role as well as the role in implementing the concept of the name of the playwright within his/her oeuvre. Besides, it provides its referent with a possible interface with other writers/authors/playwrights in a trans-subjective move. The dramatic interface at the level of implied primal scenes between the world of desire in Williams's plays and that of the lack (as component of desire) in Albee's dramas is part of a more general construct. Peter Brooks emphasizes this drive of the humans (and writers) towards trans-subjective or intertextual forms because as he writes in *Psychoanalysis and Storytelling*, "human desire is from the outset always engaged in a struggle with trans-subjective forms and laws by which it is governed".

The most eloquent example of the trans-subjective form is Blanche DuBois from *A Streetcar Named Desire*. All her episodic dream-works and day-dreams (with the help of which she manages to survive) the protagonist encounters in dealing with reality have the same basis as the fictional child (and the games) Martha and George play in Edward Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* Recalling O'Neill's *Hairy Ape* both in structure and meaning (the incarcerated instinctual world of humans in society) *The Zoo Story* by Edward Albee deals with the possibility and impossibility of human relations within the real world and the fictional one (the zoo). The attitude towards fiction and reality from *The Zoo Story* is similar to that of Williams's *The Glass Menagerie*, where the poet, Tom and his sister Laura cannot cope with reality, with the real world. They need a substitute for it in the guise of movies, books and the glass objects as Jerry in *The Zoo Story* needed the imagery of the zoo and finally, Peter's help.

The real world and the world of illusions are bound in the recognition of the dramatic characters of both playwrights. When *The Zoo Story* was written, Albee confessed that the creation of this fiction coincided with a "click" in his mind. "There was a click", he said. This "click" keeps coming back in his works. Martha in *Virginia Woolf* hears a "snap" when she

decides to mention the (fictional) son to the guests. The fictional “snap” or the “click” appears when Teddy from *A Delicate Balance* and the adopted twin brother from *The American Dream* die. In *Marriage Play*, the “click” appears to Jack in the office and to Gillian when she washes the dishes, and it is called the “change”. In *Counting the Ways*, the “click” switches on the action of the characters when She first utters her trivial question of “Do you love me?”, while in *Finding the Sun*, the “snap” occurs when the old Henden tells the young Fergus about the impossibility of his young age. This “click” of Albee reminds of the similar “click” that Brick from Williams’s *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was waiting for. Tennessee Williams used the proto-device of the dramas’ anagnorisis in different forms. In *Sweet Bird of Youth* the recognition comes via the mirror in which Chance catches sight of both himself and the aging Princess. In *The Glass Menagerie*, it is the silent picture of the father that ignites the son’s recognition. In *The Milktrain Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore*, Chris and Mrs. Goforth wait for the final “boom”, while in *The Night of the Iguana* it is the “spook” and the “blue devil” that make characters recognize the games of illusion and reality. In *Suddenly Last Summer*, the final is brought by the cries of the street urchins that resemble the “shot” and the music of Varsouviana from Blanche’s head in *A Streetcar*.

Besides the similarities of the above-mentioned anagnoritic points in their dramas, both playwrights have each two memory plays, or plays that entail the direct personal involvement. *The Glass Menagerie* and *Something Cloudy, Something Clear* are the two memory plays of Williams; *The Sandbox* and *Three Tall Women* are the memory dramas of Albee. The influence of Williams on Albee’s works is stated by the later, who admitted, besides other factors and works, the influence of William’s *Suddenly Last Summer* upon *The Zoo Story* and that of *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone* when writing the intriguing prose of “Excelsior”. Williams had also influenced Albee’s most representative drama. *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* is the play that “feeds all” other Albee dramas.

Both playwrights are concerned with the subtle issue of the presence and absence of the mother as essence of all their dramatic actions. Anne Paolucci claims that the “unique and unmistakably” American feature in the works of Albee is “the matriarchal complex”. Indeed, the pertinent presence of the phallic, adoptive mother - Frances Albee - and the lack of the biological mother (whom he never knew) plots Albee’s dramas and inaugurates the gallery of feminine characters mostly in term of ‘mothers’ (Mommy, Agnes, A., Edmee) or ‘not mothers’ (Martha, Honey, Gillian, She). Tennessee Williams copes in his dramaturgy with the omnipresence of his strong-willed mother, (Miss) Edwina Williams, who has influenced his life and his desires - narcissistic choice of love objects -. As N. Frye writes in *The Stubborn*

Structure, there must always be an identifiable content, “unlike design” which “demands some knowledge of the cultural background” of the works. The maternal figure (of the implied playwright’s) and her projections as powerful feminine characters in the works of Williams and Albee provide another possible basis for this interface “content” that stands at the root of the exceptionally viable character-figures in both oeuvres. Albee’s characters (with the exception of *The Zoo Story*) have the mediation of women characters, and if Williams is “sickly concerned” with women characters, than Albee is not less concerned about them. These plays speak of an implied author behind the works, which is in many cases a Proustian construct in which the male character is veiled by the female character(s) in order to unveil the female counterpart under the body of the male character. This process of substitution or gender shift is similar to the concept of the “woman’s soul enclosed in a man’s body”, as it was described by Kaja Silverman in *The Male Subjectivity at the Margins*. It envisages the versions and permutations desire takes within the transgressive body of the subject (the implied author) in the realm of unconscious (desire and/or lack).

The plots of Albee that provide in the end for the plot of lack a fictional creation - as the previous one for Williams, which provide an artistic creation for the end of the plot of desire - show a proairetic coherence at the level of the end-tropes they produce. This proairetic coherence imposes a strict temporal ordering and underlying action structure within the play (which had been imposed at its turn by the logic of the guiding pleasure principle). This proairetic coherence is encoded in the figure of the blindspot. The blindspot, which is described by the master-tropes covers the figure of the implied playwright, which both in the case of Williams and in the case of Albee show a narcissistic person with the same attributes: the narcissistic male figure, whose personality is encoded by the color blue, and which provides the plot of desire with the object of love as the art object/poem - in case of Williams - or as its metonymy, the fictional creation in case of Albee -

If desire brings into the end of Tennessee Williams’s play the poet and the poem, then the lack as the variant of desire, provides the end of Albee’s plot of lack with the poet’s and the poem’s creative substitution. The logic of Williams plays and those of Albee’s dramas have as a visible interface the discursive coherence. The discursive coherence is a condition of the name of the author that implies the “followability” directed towards a ‘clear’ topic of discourse or to an overall theme used in a play or in a group of plays. The choice of topics and the mastery of elaboration in both oeuvres show a distinctive similitude, which is due to the personal implication of the ‘hand of the author’. Williams’s world of narcissistic desire coincides with that of Albee not only in the specter of their biographies but also in the

specter of their blindspots, plots and dramas. The 'clear' topic - or the overarching theme of the specific blindspot - in the dramas of Williams and Albee is closely connected not only with the name of the author as an abstract construct but it is also, as the present analysis had shown, inextricably linked with the person and (the physical body) of the playwright, with the 'writing hand' of the author as the implied primal figure of his dramas.

The locus of desire is a remarkably heterogeneous set of positions, and as such, of critical enterprises. It bears the trademark name for literary activity. Desire concatenates the polyphony of texts and binds names within versions of telling/writing in a common space of textual exchange. The *literary interface* of the works of Williams and Albee is such a polyphonic space of *semiotic exchange*, where meaning is generated, located, and relocated (disseminated). The Tennessee Williams - Edward Albee interface constitutes a specific *dramatic syntax* that is encoded in the use of their dramatic blindspot, which entails the characteristics of the literary creation and of the name of the author.

The scope of the Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee dramatic interface of desire was to explain both oeuvres through an internal patterning of events and characters by deriving concepts of the one into the other, of the invisible into the visible. The process is similar to the construction of the images through the optic nerve in the point of the chiasmus, where half of the information coming from one perceptual point (*id est*, from one text) traverse those coming from the other (text) in a common ground of vision. The interface covers not only the similitude of the tropes used but also the patterns of literary influence between the two dramatic works. The interface is made visible at the expense of the blindspots from the text, which, in its turn, hides the implied playwright: Williams and Albee, respectively. The invisible in one play within one oeuvre may as well be a trope of representation in another play within the same oeuvre. However, the Williams-Albee interface had shown that the invisible from a play in one oeuvre might be the trope of representation in another play from another authorial oeuvre. In other words, one play may actually be the other discourse of the other play.

Publications pertaining to the dissertation

Articles:

"Named Desire...". In *Főnix*. Edited by Beáta Tencz. Szeged: Chiron, 1995/I, pp. 3-19.

"One: Plato's *Symposium*, Mozart's *Requiem*, and P.P. Pasolini's *Theorem*". In *Proceedings of the First TEMPUS-JEN Mini Conference*. Edited by István Rácz. Debrecen: Lajos Kossuth University, 1996/III, pp.199-216.

"The Fantastic Object or Bodies in Mirrors". In *Proceedings of the Second TEMPUS-JEN Mini Conference*. Edited by István Rácz. Debrecen: Lajos Kossuth University, 1996/XII, pp. 94-109.

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Translation:

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