

THE ESTATE OF MENDACITY:
AN INTERPRETATION
OF WILLIAMS'S MOST AMBIGUOUS CHARACTER

by

CREED BOWLEN
B.A. University of Alabama at Birmingham, 2002

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts
in the Department of Theatre
in the College of Arts and Humanities
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2010

© 2008 Daniel Creed Bowlen

ABSTRACT

I performed the role of Brick Pollitt at Lake Mirror Theatre in Lakeland, Florida from April 20- April 30 2006. The role of Brick Pollitt provided me with several acting challenges as well as multiple subjects to research. The most challenging aspects of portraying the character of Brick Pollitt are his alcoholism, issues of sexuality, and tormented familial relationships. Brick Pollitt journeys in the period of one day through major challenges in two key relationships. He moves from dominance in his relationship with Maggie to capitulation and from isolation in his relationship with Big Daddy to mutual understanding. Brick's relationships are further complicated by questions surrounding his recently deceased best friend Skipper and drives (alcoholism) that may be perceived as self destructive. My preliminary work has led me to believe Brick is in search of peace ('the click') in a tormented life (Williams, Cat 2.47). The nature of the torment needs further research for definition.

Some critics argue Brick's sexuality is ambivalent, and he is repressing homosexual drives. Equally possible is arguing the homosexuality was restricted to Skipper. Making a decision about the definition of this relationship is key to making choices within the play because the friendship was so important to Brick's perception of himself. Brick believed his relationship was the "one true and pure thing" in a life filled with "mendacity" (Williams, Cat 2.50). 'Mendacity' is Brick's reference to his disgust with "lyin' an' liars" (Williams, Cat 2.50-51). He is lost without this anchor for his life and it has impacted his

ability to interact with the world around him. Determining Brick's sexuality in my portrayal will be central to my process while I also embrace research into related areas of behavior.

To supplement my research of alcoholism and Brick's sexuality, the following topics:

- A Psycho-Analytical study of the character Brick Pollitt and his "archetypal" relationships with Maggie, Big Daddy, Skipper, Gooper, and his place in society.
- The evolution of the character Brick Pollitt through various scripts and screenplays. From Williams's first script through to dealing with the Hays Code. A study of Tennessee Williams life history and the influence on the play.
- The history of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* from its Morosco Theatre Broadway debut in New York City on March 24, 1955, followed by its film release in 1958 starring Paul Newman, Burl Ives, and Elizabeth Taylor.

Any successful portrayal of Brick Pollitt in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* demands intense focus to individual relationships within the ensemble. The central theme of the play is 'mendacity' (deceit) (Williams, Cat 2.50). Brick uses this word to describe his disgust, but the 'mendacity' of his human relations in the aging and decaying Southern society is what troubles him (Williams, Cat 2.50). Discovering the ties between family, 'mendacity', and society are relevant to the execution of the play (Williams, Cat 2.50).

I believe depiction of Brick Pollitt in this Pulitzer Prize winning American Classic will best present my abilities achieved in the Master of Fine Arts Program

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to take this opportunity to give gratitude in making this thesis a reality.

Thank you, John Shafer, for sparking my interest with the world of Tennessee Williams in your Theatre of Williams, Miller and Inge course. My intrigue in Tennessee Williams's plays grew as the plagued facade of Thomas Lanier Williams emerged.

Thanks for all of your time and training. My appreciation also extends to Dr. Steven Chicurel for your academic guidance. Thanks go to Be Boyd, Christopher Niess, and Kate Ingram for great strides perfecting my technique within the Conservatory. Thank you to my mother and father who have always supported me. Last but not least, thank you to my beautiful son, Zac, who continually drives me to have the best life possible. I could not have done this without you all and I love you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of Purpose	1
General Information.....	1
CHAPTER TWO THOMAS LANIER WILLIAMS.....	3
CHAPTER THREE: “TENNESSEE’S” LITERARY CHRONOLOGY	11
CHAPTER FOUR: REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE JOURNAL.....	16
CHAPTER FIVE: HONORING BRICK’S AMBIGUITY	70
APPENDIX A: CHARACTER ANALYSIS.....	78
A. Approach and Style of the Play.....	79
B. Where	82
C. When - Year and/or Period.....	83
D. Who – Character	90
E. Motivation, Force, Desire, Objective, Intentions	112
APPENDIX B: GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES	114
A. Time Period/Place:.....	115
B. Culture/Society:.....	116
C. Economics:.....	118
D. Religion:.....	119
E. Politics:.....	119

APPENDIX C: PLAY STRUCTURE	121
A. Plot Summary:.....	122
B. Themes:	123
C. Exposition:	125
D. Complications:	126
E. Discoveries (Rising Action):	127
F. Climax:	130
G. Resolution:	130
LIST OF REFERENCES	131

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Statement of Purpose

This monograph document describes my MFA Acting Thesis Role Project, Brick Pollitt, from casting to performance. The document describes the research, process, choices, and discoveries made along my journey as Brick Pollitt. Utilizing my MFA training from the UCF Conservatory Theatre I was able to achieve a decisive performance while honoring Tennessee Williams's most ambiguous character. My desire for this journey is to unmask Brick Pollitt's truth amidst an atmosphere of 'mendacity' (Williams, Cat 2.50).

General Information

My interest in Tennessee Williams was piqued at the University of Central Florida in a Theatre of Williams, Miller and Inge class as well as in a Research Methods course. I chose to develop a thesis role from Williams's body of work as a result of these classes. I sought out and earned a role as Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* with the Pied Piper Players of Lakeland, Florida. The rehearsal period lasted from Monday, March 6, 2006, until Wednesday, April 20, 2006. I was called to rehearse five to six days a week. However, the research process began well before rehearsals with the study of the two existing play scripts and the movie script. The preliminary research was required because of the massive amount of existing written commentary about the play and the unusual existence of no less than three different versions of the script. Wining down my

research, I decided to focus on the direct familial connections from Tennessee Williams's life and family apparent within his plays.

My initial studies showed Williams had immortalized and revealed his family secrets in his work. Analyzing Williams's life and family was, therefore, an integral part of my research because of the frequent references found in his plays. Tennessee Williams makes direct connections to his family in his works. These family revelations made Tennessee Williams one of the most daring, theorized, and celebrated Playwrights of American Theatre to this day. Information about Williams's life guided me to key acting choices regarding Brick Pollitt's ambiguity and Brick's relationships within the world of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. My initial plan of attack was to identify the shadows of Williams's life that draped across the stage illuminating and obscuring the interactions between Brick, Maggie, and Big Daddy. These echoes of Williams's life led me to expand my research to include information on the author's life history. This thesis describes my synthesis of these elements and the discoveries and choices I made while building the emotional reality that supported my portrayal of Brick Pollitt.

CHAPTER TWO THOMAS LANIER WILLIAMS

Tennessee Williams's theatrical journey may be best understood by examining his life. . . . "Thomas Lanier Williams III, destined to be known to the world as 'Tennessee,' was born on 26 March, 1911, in Columbus, a town in the hills of northeast Mississippi not far from the Alabama line" (Holditch and Leavitt 3). "He assumed the name "Tennessee" after college, (sic) when he decided to become a professional writer" (Tischler 1). Tennessee Williams would become a dramatic powerhouse and reflect the personal rebellions that Tom was unable to voice publicly. Tennessee Williams would eventually be acknowledged as one of America's most renowned Playwrights. Williams would lead a revolt against his Puritan rearing and the strict societal mores that he experienced as a child. No longer would he completely suppress his personal truths. He would use his works to attack the sanctimonious conventions of the "Bible Belt" by exposing sexual hypocrisy, obsession, hostility, desperation, and intolerance in the gothic South. The appeal of Tennessee Williams is defined by the indirect psychological dissection of his own life through his work. The celebrated characters that populate the dramatic journeys within the fictional worlds depicted in Williams's plays are direct echoes of the real people in Williams's personal life. The tumultuous trek of Williams's non-fictional past is the indirect subject of his plays. His brilliance in capturing the truthful essence of these living moments is what leads to his social relevance. It is a pity the same forces that created a genius also sowed the seeds of his destruction. Despite Williams's popularity,

the majority of his life was spent searching for the acceptance of people around him; his plays chronicle that journey. A dramatist needs strong characters to write about in his/her plays and Thomas Lanier Williams's family contained many strong characters.

Investigating the Williams clan is imperative to Williams understanding his own life.

Since Williams's journey was a search for personal truths, it is intriguing that one of the major people in his life was another searcher for truth; the Reverend Dakin.

Grandpa Dakin was the only paternal influence in a household of Mississippi women for the first years of Tennessee Williams's life. Tennessee Williams's father was away as a traveling salesman. "The first seven years of Tom's life were spent in several locales- Columbus, Nashville, Tennessee; Canton, Mississippi; and finally Clarksdale, Mississippi, where the Reverend and Mrs. Dakin settled with their expanded family in 1915 when the minister was appointed rector of St. George's..." (Holditch and Leavitt 10-11). Tom's formative years were spent attending his grandfather's church in Clarksdale where he was both inspired by God's love and led to fear His judgment. The terror instilled by his Grandfathers sermons was softened by his unwavering love.

Grandpa Dakin later proved to be the least judgmental of the family members. Reverend Dakin also instilled in Tom a passion for the macabre. "Tennessee (Tom) remembered the old gentleman reciting passages for him from Milton, the *Iliad*, and the melodramas of Shakespeare; he said, "Grandfather was crazy about Poe. He was interested in the macabre" (Leverich 37). The love of the horrid would also be shared with young Tom and scattered throughout in the works of Tennessee Williams, i.e. *Suddenly Last Summer*.

Grandfather Dakin was Tom's endearing positive paternal influence during his formative years until being replaced by the antithetical presence of his father, Cornelius. Tom later immortalized his grandfather in his most positive portrayal as "the oldest living and practicing poet," Nonno, in *Night of the Iguana*. Grandpa Dakin gave Tom a love for God and Tom's father gave him a desire for escape.

Tom saw his father, Cornelius, during his sporadic weekend visits to Mississippi. Even in his absence, Cornelius remained a constant presence. When he was present, he remained a constant menace. Cornelius served as the longed for father of *The Glass Menagerie* and the domineering tyrant of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Tom dreaded his father's company. Historian Michael Paller records the following in his book *Gentlemen Callers*; "Early in Williams's life, his father was first the man whose occasional stops at home were terrifying episodes of harsh language and violent behavior" (138). Living under the same roof in St. Louis created more tension for the family. Cornelius's temper came into direct conflict with Tom's mother's (Edwina) self-righteousness and caused constant upheaval. The members of the household felt trapped by the tension. Cornelius's employment at the St. Louis International Shoe Company provided financial stability but the temperament the household was entirely unstable. "He (Cornelius) was a private drinker, an open gambler, and a covert womanizer" (Spotto 13). The tension of the home caused significant strain for young Tom. Leading Tennessee Williams scholars believe that Tennessee's most famous male characters were derived from Cornelius. "He was the powerful, swaggering bully who became Big Daddy and Stanley Kowalski" (Tischler 2).

Cornelius's fury clearly provided Tennessee Williams with intriguing characters and undermined the health of the Williams household only kindled by Edwina's wrath.

Edwina, Tom's mother, was respected, admired, and honored in her community. In her youth, Edwina was a southern belle who prided herself on her ability to attract gentleman callers. Tom witnessed his mother's confidence deteriorate upon the move to St. Louis. "His mother hated her reduced status as one of the many matrons in the city, no longer the honored daughter of the respected Episcopal Priest" (Tischler 3). Edwina's status morphed from that of pleasant honored daughter to frustrated, domineering mother. Her unhappiness caused her to misrepresent her Episcopal doctrine hypocritically. Williams brother, Dakin, is quoted in *The Kindness of Strangers*, "mother was an extremely difficult and demanding person during those years," he adds, "she was so overly attentive to us, and was clearly the model for Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie*" (Spotto 42). Edwina is the model of Tennessee Williams's duplicitous southern belles. Edwina felt she had lost her stature and masked her loss with a screen of Southern charm. Edwina's longing for the status of her youth collided with Cornelius's claustrophobic sense of entrapment. The frustrated adult Williams often argued – perhaps blaming one another – over the demise of their dreams. Despite the turmoil of the household, the Williams's conceived a third child.

"On February 21, 1919, Edwina gave birth to another son, Walter Dakin Williams, named after his grandfather; to avoid the confusion of two Walters, he was called Dakin"

(Leverich 51). Dakin, the baby of the family, quickly became the center of attention. Dakin grew up with both parents in the same household- an experience not shared by his older brother and sister. Dakin did not experience the South firsthand but accepted the hand me down traditions along with the self-satisfied religious convictions of his mother. St. Louis was home to Dakin as Columbus was home to Tom. The two brothers were very different people. Dakin was the more attractive, favored son, who did well in school. Tom was less attractive, bullied by his father and at school. The brothers competed for parental attention and Dakin seemed the clearly favored son. Tom and Dakin shared a complex relationship. Despite brotherly competition there was also brotherly love. “Dakin admired and looked up to Tom, who liked playing the role of the older and wiser brother” (Leverich 132). Dakin eventually became a successful lawyer. “After law school, Dakin served in World War II, married, adopted two girls, and had a respectable law practice while Tennessee remained single and often penniless” (Tischler 89). Dakin would become a more prominent figure to Tom later in time. Many believe Dakin was the model for Gooper in Tennessee Williams’s *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. “Gooper is a cruel satire on Dakin, the lawyer brother that Tennessee resented and loved much of his life, the son ironically that their own father both loved and celebrated at the expense of Tom/Tennessee”(Tischler 89). Although Dakin was dearly loved, he would not have as profound an effect on Tom as his sister Rose.

“On November 19th, 1909, Edwina gave birth to Rose Isabel Williams” (Leverich 35). Rose is discussed last because her presence remained consistent throughout the entirety

of Tennessee Williams's works. Rose was Edwina and Cornelius's first child. Rose was a lively baby girl and a joy to her parents who regarded her as an achievement. Rose was given a baby brother, playmate, and soulmate for life with the birth of Tom. The two siblings played together in the warmth of the Mississippi sun. Tennessee recollects his childhood, "Before I was eight, my life was completely unshadowed by fear....My sister and I were gloriously happy...{sic} We sailed paper boats in washtubs in water, cut lovely paper dolls out of huge mail order catalogs, kept two white rabbits under the back porch, baked mud pies in the sun under the front walk, climbed up and down the big wood pile, collected from neighborhood alleys and trash piles bits of colored glass that were diamonds and rubies and sapphires and emeralds" (Holditch and Leavitt 21). Tom and Rose were brought up in the apparent peace and tranquility in the Delta. Rose's demeanor changed abruptly upon leaving her grandparents home in Mississippi to live with her father in the cold Midwestern city of St. Louis. "She (Rose) would focus her attention obsessively on food or clothes or boyfriends; she became increasingly withdrawn and peculiar" (Tischler 3). Edwina and Cornelius blamed Rose's new behavior on everything from difficulties acclimating to life in St. Louis to a prolonged transition from childhood. Edwina's desperate reaction to Rose's behavior was trialed in Williams's work. Edwina made a number of unsuccessful efforts at generating dates for Rose. Rose's courting was forced upon by her mother and later captured by Tennessee Williams in *The Glass Menagerie*. The frantic parents also tried sending Rose on long visits with her grandparents to fight - what they thought may be - homesickness. There were many appointments with doctors before an eventual diagnosis of schizophrenia -

leading to her institutionalization. An experimental surgical procedure known as a pre-frontal lobotomy was suggested by doctors as a remedy for Rose's condition. The extreme idea was forged by Cornelius, begrudged by Edwina, and kept secret from Tennessee Williams. The once young and boisterous Rose was left in a state of numb, tranquil secrecy. Her fragile, child-like presence haunted Tennessee Williams and became *the* major tragedy of his life. Tennessee Williams would seek to resurrect her memory in all of his work.

Images of Rose are shadowed throughout Williams's scripts while great light is brought to the obscure duality of Mr. and Mrs. Cornelius Williams. The family atmosphere of the St. Louis household would prove toxic for all. The parents warred. Cornelius imagined a peace and freedom he would have had if not married while Edwina longed for the simpler times of her youth in Mississippi. Their matrimony was a hindrance. Unfortunately, the couple would deal with their frustrations in equally destructive ways. Cornelius abused alcohol, Edwina abused religion, and they both abused their children. Tom would rebel through his works as Tennessee Williams.

Tom's literary revolt was an attack on the sexual and social disharmony of the household. Writing was his only escape. The dysfunction of his family also fueled a need for diversion. Tom would often break away to visit his beloved grandfather in the summers throughout his teenage years. The summer vacations to Mississippi took him away to a warmer atmosphere and a more pleasant way of life. Mississippi was a short

lived refuge from his wretched parent's household. St. Louis, to Tennessee Williams, became the deplorable and destitute homeland of America. Guilt for abandoning his sister was the only reason he would return. For Tennessee Williams, St Louis became the source for the conflicted landscapes of his plays.

CHAPTER THREE: “TENNESSEE’S” LITERARY CHRONOLOGY

In 1931, Williams left St. Louis to start school at the University of Missouri where he entered several writing competitions. The name “Tennessee” was given to Tom from a fellow dorm mate at the university. While at school, he decided to become a dramatist after seeing a production of Ibsen’s *Ghosts*. Tom was asked to join a fraternity which marked the beginning of his partying and drinking. Tom’s social commitments were more satisfying than his military duties and his grades began to suffer.

Williams failed ROTC, at the University of Missouri, and his father said he was not a real man. Tom’s schooling soon ended when his father demanded he leave to take a job at his shoe factory back in St. Louis. During his stint at the factory, he befriended a man named Stanley Kowalski. This character would appear in Tennessee Williams’s most celebrated play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Despite the monotony of the job, Tom would write every night through the next few years and would often escape to the movies. Tom found friendship at the factory in the blue-collar, hard working man and became sympathetic to their character. These references and relationships are important because they recur throughout Williams’s works.

Eventually, Williams resumed his education at Washington University and later at the University of Iowa where he locally produced some of his plays. Williams returned home

from school one Christmas to find his sister Rose in a state of dementia, absent of personality. He was shocked to find his parents had agreed for doctors to perform a prefrontal lobotomy on Rose earlier that year. The result left Rose in an autistic state requiring constant supervision. Tom would forever anguish losing his sister. He would never forgive his parents and would seek to redeem her memory throughout his career. “Rose had been his soul mate from childhood, his best friend and his most imaginative playmate” (Tischler 4). Tennessee Williams would later write of the experimental prefrontal lobotomy in *Suddenly Last Summer*. Tom returned to the place of his happiest memories with Rose and the backdrop that greatly influenced his spirit, and inspiration, the Deep South.

Williams fled to the French Quarter of New Orleans which thrived with culture, art, and sexual liberation. Williams was compelled to write stating, “It was a period of accumulation, I had found the kind of freedom I had always needed, and the shock of it, against the Puritanism of my nature, has given me a subject, a theme, which I have never ceased exploring” (Howard and Heintzelman 364). Tom considered New Orleans his spiritual home. This is the place where he began to define “Tennessee Williams” expressing his sexuality, attending parties, indulging in alcohol, and writing feverishly. “While there, he put a few of his short plays in the mail, sending them to a contest for young writers sponsored by the Group Theatre, pretending that he was only 23 years old (though he was actually 27), and calling himself, for the first time “Tennessee” (Tischler 5). Tennessee Williams won the contest sponsored by the Group Theatre and was soon

given representation by New York literary agent Audrey Wood. Audrey would become a great friend and continue to advise Williams throughout his career.

The time between winning the Group Theatre contest and his first Broadway success was spent moving from Key West, St Louis, New York, Mexico, and New Orleans. Williams passed his time partying and drinking in between familiarizing himself with the works of D.H. Lawrence and continuing to write. As he wrote of his characters he also took time to create Tennessee Williams. He was used to playing two roles. In New Orleans he finally began to admit his sexuality to himself and several friends but had not, yet revealed himself to anyone in his family. Tennessee Williams understood the news of his sexuality would be devastating for his family during those times. His mother and father would never admit Tennessee Williams's homosexuality. Tennessee Williams would not reveal his sexuality to the public until later but would write about it through many screens and disguises. Portraying different roles for different people was not new to Tennessee Williams. Escaping his own identity in the search of acceptance and success was something to which he was accustomed.

Tennessee Williams achieved his initial major stage success with a story about a forlorn family in search of escape, *The Glass Menagerie* (1945). The dramatist went to work on a new piece about a woman stood up by her fiancé soon after *Menagerie's* close producing his Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). The Broadway stage had not seen a stronger male sexual image before Williams's celebrated Stanley Kowalski.

Williams finally found himself with the acclaim he desired, yet it seemed to make him more miserable. Tennessee Williams then realized he spent his life under his own pressure to achieve literary acknowledgement. Tennessee Williams found himself more isolated and began to indulge in alcohol, caffeine, and sleeping pills. These habits caused him great anxiety and paranoia – perhaps increasing his fears of being revealed a homosexual. Public humiliation was his greatest fear while fame and success was his greatest drive.

Williams found his success with Stanley Kowalski and created another strong male sexual image with Brick Pollitt in his second Pulitzer Prize winning play, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955). Although *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was a major success Tennessee Williams felt he lost some of his artistic integrity. The Broadway production excised all uses of the words fairies, sissies, and queers at the request of Director, Elia Kazan. The version also made Maggie a more sympathetic character. The Broadway version focused on her desire to sleep with a husband who neglected her while it portrayed Brick as the prolonged adolescent in love with football. Tennessee Williams's desire for fame conquered his desire to produce the original work. He finally acquired the admiration and acceptance he longed for in exchange for his creative truth. Although he later regretted the changes *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* achieved great success. Tennessee Williams dedicated *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* to his literary agent Audrey Wood. Reflections of Williams's life and times are found throughout his plays. Tennessee Williams's quoted favorite, "I either say to them 'always the latest' or I succumb to my instinct for the truth and say 'I

suppose it must be the published version of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*' (Bloom, Critical 104). It was the aid of the research of the previous chapters that gave me the foundation for my artistic pursuit.

CHAPTER FOUR: REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE JOURNAL

February 15th, 2006

Considering my love for Tennessee Williams, I sought to do my thesis role as Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. My love for Tennessee Williams grew out of studies with John Shafer in an American Contemporary Theatre class. I was astonished at how Tennessee Williams grasped male and female characters. His ability to create such specific nuanced archetypes astounded me. Every character is rich with experience and life. I was able to relate to many of his characters because I grew up in the South, in Alabama. Although many of Tennessee Williams's works are thesis worthy I find Brick Pollitt one of the more mysterious, obscure, and challenging of Tennessee Williams's characters.

Additionally, seeing types, like Big Daddy, Big Mama, Maggie, and Brick on stage reminded me of family members I had lost. This portrayal, in a sense, would be an homage to the shadows of the decaying world in which I was raised. Williams captured the strict conventional ways that echo into governing my life as an adult. Williams was successful in capturing the *old* South - if you will- and the crumbling, post Cold War, society. These character archetypes existed in my childhood and the strict values are still passed down to and held by a few in that area of the country. Although I found Williams's ability at capturing these individuals uncanny, I also believe he had the ability to go beyond their restrictive traits and he was able to introduce us to human, sympathetic, and realistic individuals. In class I learned that Williams wrote only

sympathetic characters. Audiences learn to empathize with the individuals as they reveal themselves. Readers are allowed to see what many people do not. After studying characters from Blanche Dubois in *A Streetcar Named Desire* to Heavenly Finley in *Sweet Bird of Youth*, I find I am moved by each story.

Williams once said, “*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is the most realistic play I’ve done” (Albert 86). I am honored to portray a southern character so true to my heritage that could be Williams’s “most realistic” character (Albert 86). Brick Pollitt was the same age as I and from the South. I find it my destiny to portray this character which I find dear to my soul.

I chose the character I wanted to portray and began the search. South Eastern Theatre Conference was going to be held in Orlando but after attending three times before and receiving a slew of callbacks I wanted a different experience. I wanted to find the play on my own. I also wanted to stay close to Orlando because I have an apartment, rent, a job, and bills to pay. Leaving the area was not financially feasible. I knew it was important to be in a professional production for my thesis project as well. As soon as I made my decision on the role, I looked online and searched audition websites to try my luck. As soon as I got online, I found a theatre auditioning for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. I now had a week to prepare. The theatre was the Lake Mirror Theatre in Lakeland, Florida an hour and twenty minute drive. The show was being done by the Pied Piper Players. Big Daddy and Maggie were already pre-cast. Mr. Hughes was cast as Big Daddy. He was also the artistic Director of the theatre. Ms. Harrell, the actress portraying Maggie, was in school

in New York at the Actors Studio getting her Master of Fine Arts degree. I saw a contact address and a phone number to the theatre. I considered the appropriateness of writing and showing my interest in Brick and, more appropriately, playing Brick. After a minute of thought, I wrote the theatre and told the producers I was a Master of Fine Arts student at UCF and interested in portraying Brick for my thesis. I figured, “hell, why not.”

February 16th, 2006

Two days later, I received a phone call from Mr. Hughes, the Artistic Director of the theatre and the man playing Big Daddy. He seemed genuinely interested in my auditioning for the role and told me the production team was very excited about the play. He told me he always wanted to play Big Daddy but he felt as if he was not old enough. He said this was Pied Piper Theatre’s twentieth anniversary and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was going to be their drama of the year with an all-star cast. Mr. Hughes told me he and Ms. Harrell were both Equity and had performed at the theatre previously. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was to mark their twentieth anniversary return to the Lake Mirror Theatre. Mr. Hughes told me Ms. Harrell had always wanted to play Maggie and she was perfect for the role in stature, age, and southern background. This was Ms. Harrell’s favorite play and I told Mr. Hughes *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was mine. He then told me he was looking forward to the auditions and said, “We might be reading together.”

The Audition February 17th, 2006

The day of the audition I left a full day of classes and immediately hit the road to Lakeland, Florida, in I-4 traffic. The time was five o'clock when I got out of class and I was stuck in traffic trying to make the seven o'clock audition in Lakeland. I was dressed in khakis, a wife beater, and a green long-sleeve shirt. I arrived at the audition at about 6:30 and was one of the first few to sign in. The outside of the theatre was beautiful with Lake Mirror surrounding the building, with blue skies, lots of greenery, and the sunset on this beautiful pre-spring day. The interior of the theatre was not as beautiful, but I have learned in the past, a beautiful theatre is not an indication of the talent that may enter the doors.

In the audition there were several guys close to Brick's age but all different in appearance. I was looking forward to seeing Ms. Harrell. When we walked in we met Director Mark Hartfield, the Stage Manager, and Ms. Harrell, who was a beautiful and seductive looking woman with black hair like Elizabeth Taylor's in the film version of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. We felt she would be a great Maggie based on looks alone. We began cold reading with each other when we were called. When I was called in, I read with Ms. Harrell a bit and could definitely see we both had established ideas about our characters. Ms. Harrell's reading reflected a tormented woman not as bitter as I expected Maggie to be. My reading was quite harsh and I found myself using my consonants to portray my biting anger. I honestly felt I was a little too angry. After we read, the Director took me aside and said he liked my dialect. He asked me not to be so harsh in

the next reading. I tried to find the humor. I think I went too far in the second reading, but they seemed to like it. What I did feel was important in the audition, though, was giving them a completely different reading so they could see my range.

The people who were sitting in on the audition asked me if I could come back in two days to read with Mr. Hughes as Big Daddy.

The Call-Back February 19th, 2006

There were people at the call back not at the initial audition. The men called back from the original audition were the ones I would have called back for Brick. All of us were asked to come into the room to read with Mr. Hughes who was going to play Big Daddy. Several of the guys knew Mr. Hughes. I was intimidated because other characters were pre cast and I felt as though Brick may be as well. My biggest competition was Mr. Jeff Luty who knew Mr. Hughes. Mr. Luty also knew my Movement professor, Chris Neiss. Mr. Luty and Mr. Neiss attended graduate school together at Kent State. I figured Mr. Luty was going to be my competition for Brick considering his credentials.

When we walked in we sat in a group. I was in the middle, however, I was asked to read first. During the reading, I felt Big Daddy already had a great grasp of his character. The Producers seemed as though they had the major cast set except for Brick. I was very confident about my read with Mr. Hughes. I felt he listened, acted, and reacted very well. I tried to do the same. The other actors auditioning for Brick seemed to fall short in their

reading. The call back auditions were not as strong as I expected. I felt Mr. Luty's dialect was too forced. However, I felt he looked the part and made a better match to Maggie in age. Ms. Harrell looked as if she was in her thirties. Mr. Luty's appearance in age matched Ms. Harrell's more than mine. This could be a major advantage for him in his casting since the role of Maggie was definite.

February 21st, 2006

I got a phone call from Mr. Hartfield who said, "I want you to play Brick." Mr. Hartfield then proceeded to tell me about the play and our rehearsal process. He said, "Ms. Harrell is finishing her MFA at Actor's Studio in New York." Ms. Harrell will not be available until March. Mr. Hughes will be in and out due to other rehearsals. There will be space availability issues and we will not have the entire cast together for the majority of rehearsal. Our cast will have everyone together on our production stage in April and rehearsals will be intense. I accepted the role and was looking forward to rehearsals.

February 27th, 2006

The first thing the cast did was introduce ourselves. Mr. Hartfield is our Director. Christina Hartfield is our Stage Manager. Mr. Hughes is Big Daddy. Debi Morgan is Big Mama. Angie Harrell is Maggie. Jeff Luty is Gooper. Sheryl Scott is Mae. Creed Bowlen is Brick Pollitt. After introductions Mr. Hartfield proceeded to tell us facts about *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The play was produced in 1954. *Cat in a Hot Tin Roof* takes place in a Mississippi Delta plantation home. The entire play is set in Jack Straw and Peter

Ochello's bedroom. They were the previous plantation owners and life partners. The play has three acts. The play takes place in a day and the event is Big Daddy's birthday. Everybody comes in and out of the bedroom at different locations. This information was beneficial for the cast in attendance.

Most of the cast and crew attended our first rehearsal except for Ms. Harrell. She was finishing up studies in New York. Mr. Hughes was away performing in *Oklahoma* and Big Mama was directing *Beauty and the Beast*. Since most of our leading actors were missing from our first rehearsal the remaining cast and crew discussed the upcoming project. Mr. Hartfield informed us *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is a drama and Williams intends for as much comedy as possible. He said, "*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* contains realism." This immediately reminded me of Williams's love of Lorca's realism and reading Lorca's plays in Julia's class. Mr. Hartfield said we will be true to the time period and area and will be using a 1950's Mississippi Dialect. He said if we were not familiar with the dialect to take a look at *Mississippi Burning*. Due to the absence of several of our cast members the cast was not going to have rehearsal until Monday the next week. On Monday, March 6th, the cast will be in the theatre and will read the entire play at 7:00 without Big Daddy. This will be a bit difficult for me because the majority of my interactions are with Big Daddy. The cast will then do another read through with Mr. Hughes and Christy who will fill in for the role of Maggie until Ms. Harrell arrives from New York. The Director also told me Mr. Hughes wants me to meet him at his house between Lakeland and Orlando to brush up on rehearsal.

March 1st, 2006

The 1st read through is with Brick, Gooper, and the kids. All of the other characters are gone. Allen, our set designer, is working on set drawing and having a hard time with side entrances and our theatre. Most of the action takes place on the wings. The 1954 Stage Manager wrote in most of the stage directions for the Broadway debut. Throughout *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* there will be scenes going on and then all of the sudden voices will come out of nowhere. Mr. Hartfield says, “Calling cues in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* could be a Stage Managers worst nightmare.” During the read the cast is skipping around because no one is here. I believe the read is good for the parents of the children playing the “no-neck monsters” (Williams, *Cat* 1.9). They are learning what their kids will be doing and what language they are being exposed to in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Most of the language in the play is appropriate for children’s ears with a few line exceptions by Big Daddy. Speaking of Mr. Hughes, he and Mrs. Morgan will be here tomorrow.

Mr. Hartfield, our Director, intends to use every word of the Broadway script. He may cut “no-neck monsters” and talking about fat kids on fat little bodies “because our kids are healthy” (Williams, *Cat* 1.9). I totally disagree with the Director cuts because this is one of Maggie’s most famous lines in the play. The Director wants Mae to have a more debutant dialect. Mr. Hartfield tells Sheryl to avoid a Mae caricature because she is a real person. These people are definite archetypes. I agree with the Director. In Conversations with Tennessee Williams, edited by Albert Devlin, Tennessee Williams states, “*Cat on a*

Hot Tin Roof is the most realistic play I've done" (86). *Cat* is also a drama with comic relief. Mae and Maggie bring hilarity with their cattiness during very serious moments which cut the tension. If Mae appears as a caricature she will take the audience out of the play. She will appear misplaced and a caricature performance may insult the audience. Mr. Hartfield wants the cast needs to find the humanity in our characters. I agree because I believe Tennessee Williams's characters are all sympathetic. Big Daddy and Brick are stubborn and believe their individual ways are right until they sympathize with one another's truth.

Our Director looks for "true work" on stage. He told us he needs to believe what he sees. I will have to agree since this is Williams's "most realistic play" (Albert 86). Mr. Hartfield states, "Critics have said that of all his plays *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* was the most like a film script." The cast will honor the Director and the Playwright in creating a believable performance. Mr. Hartfield tells us, "If I do not believe the work then I am no longer in the play." The cast is going for reality and the "horrible things in Williams's beautiful poetry and prose." I think Mr. Hartfield is referring to the overwhelming sense of dread, depression, tragedy, and the struggle for survival by our characters when he speaks of "horrible things." My character in particular deals with dread, anxiety, and depression. Brick has turned to alcohol to alleviate the stress of everyday life. He has become an alcoholic. Brick's tragedy lies not only in Skipper's death but also in the revelations with his homophobia and sexuality. Mr. Hartfield gave us all interesting things to think about for formulating our characters.

Mr. Hartfield says, "Gooper and Mae should think about how they went about plotting to attain the inheritance." Gooper and Mae need a lot of kids to man the fields. They have anticipated Big Daddy's death for long before today. To me this is smart and disgusting. Brick could care less. The Director will make suggestions of pulling back or moving forward and urges us to put everything out there. Mr. Hartfield says he will give suggestions on things to try. This gives the cast the freedom to dive in 100 percent and be as melodramatic as they can in order to find the appropriate characterization. I have often held back from 100 percent when my characters seem so real. I have a tendency to confuse subtlety with monotone and little action. This can be sedating to an audience because plays are about heightened situations. Don Seay told me at the end of our acting class, "the stage is not film." This is my obstacle, to allow myself to let go and still feel as if I am doing the character justice by being real.

March 2nd, 2006

Our current goal is to feel comfortable with Act II and III by the end of the month. This means that I have a lot of work ahead of me. The interesting thing about getting these two acts down is that Act II is practically a large duet between Brick and Big Daddy. Act III is an ensemble scene. In the past I have had more difficulty remembering ensemble scenes than I have scenes with one other actor. I find the cues frustrating to memorize in ensemble scenes. There are more lines to learn in Act II. Focusing on cues from one actor will make the process easier. There are not as many lines for me in Act III but there are

many other things to focus upon. My relationships and my state of consciousness are the major variables upon which I will need to focus upon in the final act. I will have to do this while confined to “Echo Springs,” the liquor cabinet, in Act III (Williams, Cat 2.25).

We skipped to the end of the play tonight. We were told to highlight all of Tennessee Williams stage directions. He was very elaborate with the stage directions. Williams’s timing of the croquet mallets, crows, and cries were all added to emphasize dramatic effect. The past of Jack Straw and Peter Ochello is said to haunt the room. All of the action in the play happens in their bedroom. The undercurrent of homosexuality surrounds the family and home. The love of two men shaped the plantation. The air of homosexuality reaches a highpoint as the house is given over to Brick upon the acknowledgement of Maggie’s pregnancy. Brick has made love to Maggie all along wishing he were with Skipper. My sympathies go out to both Maggie and Brick.

During the read through, Mr. Hartfield tells us to rehearse at performance level. This play is so emotionally intense that holding back in a reading feels unjust. I noticed myself acting intoxicated. I continue to read that I am going to the liquor cabinet for another drink. The Director noticed me playing the alcohol and stated, “Be sure to not act as if “the click” has occurred until it happens” (Williams, Cat 2.47). Choosing the point at which my toxic peace occurs is paramount to my portrayal. I remember researching other performances of Brick and finding that many actors play the alcohol. When the actors do this the play becomes about alcoholism and not about Brick’s personal distress. I will

have to remind myself that alcoholics can hold their liquor well and drink every day. When I drink, I can hardly handle two. Brick does not become inebriated until he has completely soiled his insides with liquor. Brick began drinking for hours after Skipper's death. Drinking is a result of Brick's depression and not the defining aspect of the character. I am portraying a character who is an alcoholic, but my job is to reveal the other problems lying behind the drive to drink. Right now I do not think Brick understands his problems. I continue to find that he does not solve his problems within the play. Brick has a deep longing for Skipper which cannot be fulfilled, and my job is not to show how the character solves or understands his problems, but how he attempts to deal with them. This is very interesting, because readers like happy endings, and I believe Brick does not have one. Brick is the lonesome hero. The reader feels sympathetic, yet may not understand why Brick will not overcome his issues. Then I am reminded that this play takes place in a single day and problems are not resolved in a day. Not having a happy ending makes this play that much more believable.

Another factor adding to the play's believability is the gossip. Mr. Hartfield wants us to write down every comment about our characters. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is all about hearsay and much of what the audience learns about the characters begins with Maggie's exposition in Act I. Maggie has something to say about all of the characters in the play including the unseen Skipper. Much of what she says informs us of the plot and action. The Director also wants us to write what our characters say about everyone and vice versa. Brick begins the play without much to say. In Act II, he begins to enlighten us on

his opinions of people through Big Daddy's relentless pursuit to 'straighten Brick out' (Williams, Cat 2.48). The Director reminds me that everybody says something about Brick. Obviously, Brick has been under heavy scrutiny from the other characters because they see his behavior as not 'normal' and are threatened by his position as Big Daddy's favored son (Williams, Cat 2.56). I have to establish what truths are said about me. I think every comment probably has some truth. The stories about Brick told by the other characters can be confusing to an audience member and I need to make choices.

Channeling my natural dialect is another element adding to the accuracy of my portrayal. The Director told me himself that he likes my dialect. Of course, having grown up in Alabama my regionalism comes easily to me. The dialect work is presenting a problem to other the other actors because they are from all over the country and we need to find some similarity in our speech. Brick makes love to his alcohol though his speech and creates sensuality through his elongated diphthongs and triphthongs. His elongated, buoyant, vowel sounds are also slightly elevated by his inebriation. I make use of my consonants more when I am angry. In Act II, I will be using the Lessac's y buzz tonal energy to direct my words during Brick's rage. The energy with the y buzz penetrates on stage and directs tone towards others to feel the vibration. I have found this energy is quite powerful and will be excellent in rehearsal.

On Tuesday the 28th, the cast will have our first rehearsal with Maggie. Most of this month is about blocking the play with Christy as her stand in. I am not looking forward

to my first rehearsal with Ms. Harrell because the cast will have to spend a great deal of our time teaching the blocking. Act I is dominated by Maggie's ranting exposition, and Brick listens and chimes in. Learning blocking with another person portraying Maggie is inconvenient for me to say the least.

March 3rd, 2006

Today was our first full read through with Christy subbing for Maggie. The Director says, "We will do a full reading including all harsh language in front of children." This was a warning for the parents. Now they will know what their children will be exposed to. Having the sub read all of Ms. Harrell's lines is frustrating to me. I wish the cast could skip this act today. Maggie sets up what everyone thinks about each other in the play and this may be why we are hearing this. The first act is primarily exposition and rather lengthy. Maggie is the main character speaking. Her speeches are interrupted when different members of the household come into the bedroom unexpectedly. Brick does not seem to care about what his wife has to say. Brick's main concern is getting to his alcohol. Maggie annoys him and creates obstacles to the liquor cabinet. Maggie diverts his inebriation and hopes to get him to the party. After the celebration she wants to get him to go to bed with her. I am thinking about all of these elements during our read through.

Mr. Hughes has come in really late and is making lots of noise. He also did this at the audition. The cast is sitting at a table in an intense read though and he has interrupted

everyone. If this is any insight to his personality then I think I will be repulsed by Big Daddy. Sometimes things like this help me out on stage. Through the read through I find myself very impressed with Mrs. Morgan who is playing Big Mama. Her dialect and likeability are already there. She is an experienced actor and Director and has done many shows with the Pied Piper Players. When I first met her I thought she was too young and attractive for the role of Big Mama but her read through was excellent. Big Mama is going to be great and makes a nice match for Big Daddy.

Speaking of Big Daddy, Mr. Hughes presence is intimidating. He is a large man and during the read I found myself cowering a bit and letting him rule and guide the dialogue. Immediately, Mr. Hartfield caught this and noted that I have to be his match. Mr. Hartfield states, “even though Big Daddy intimidates everyone else in the play your character is not phased by his presence.” I think my reading had a bit of myself in there. I am naturally intimidated by Big Daddy types that I have come in contact with in life. Dealing with large, abrasive, and brash types is not my strong suit. Standing my own against the abominable Big Daddy will be a challenge for me in presence and vocal capacity. Mr. Hughes has a booming voice that rings off of the walls. My projection has often been a problem for me. Be Boyd worked on this with me in class by telling me she could not hear me in scene work. To compete with Mr. Hughes projection I will have to practice and prepare during rehearsal. Big Daddy and Brick compete vocally with no one else in the room.

Big Daddy's birthday party is going to be held in the bedroom because my ankle is broken. Everyone has to cater to Brick and come to him in his time of distress. Some critics have described Brick as someone who never had to fight for anything. Brick has been described as rich, beautiful and loved. He is someone who was always been taken care of. Brick's emotional battle in dealing with Skipper's death is the most difficult thing he has had to face. Brick's inner turmoil over Skipper's death has driven him to breaking his ankle, alcoholism, and having a failed marriage. Big Daddy's gifts are being presented in the former bedroom of Jack Straw and Peter Ochello due to Brick's broken ankle.

March 4th, 2006

During the play I will have a crutch under my arm, a drink in one hand, and a cast on my leg. I am still an athlete and determined regardless of what prevents me from getting to "the click" (Williams, Cat 2.47). My Director states, "I want you to be very matter of fact when talking to Maggie in the first act." I do not know what he means. Act I is difficult for me because Maggie is speaking for the entirety of the act with the exception of my short interjections. My character finds Maggie annoying but allows her to keep speaking. I am having some trouble deciding if I am listening to her or not. I do not know. The Director asked me to try different choice besides anger. I agree. I should try to not be so bitter and find the humor. All I can think, as the actor, is how my friend has died due to Maggie. Then I am reminded Brick has lived with this fact for a while. I need to try different approaches. I have to find other outlets beside anger. Portraying an angry drunk

would come from a novice reading of Brick. This is not what I believe Tennessee Williams wanted to expose. I believe Tennessee Williams wanted to go a step further and reveal one man's inner struggle with lost love and the grief, guilt, and self induced insanity that comes from suppression. This intensity has consumed Brick and he has attempted to divert his problems with alcohol.

As the cast reads the play I learn I am not without a drink for the entire three acts except when Big Daddy snatches my drink away from me. I am apprehensive about being on a crutch and having a drink in my other hand and still able to reach 'the click' (Williams, Cat 2.47). This character portrayal will be a three act dance with props and handicaps. Portraying Brick in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* will be somewhat of a musical considering all of the choreography. Williams compares Brick's handicaps to the his inner ailment, homosexuality. These handicaps - alcohol, crutch, and cast - (just like homosexuality) are things he can not get away from, or neglect. Brick's crutch, cast, and alcohol remain with him throughout the entire life of the play. His crutch is taken away much like Skipper is taken away. Brick gets the crutch back due to his broken ankle. Brick can not run away from his problems. Williams compares homosexuality to a physical ailment. He has his alcohol taken away, yet he goes to bed with Maggie to get his liquor back. Brick's homosexuality is compared to a disease and addiction that he will go to great lengths to get. Brick is a fighter and will persevere in getting his crutch and alcohol. He is relentless like an addict. Inevitably, I believe Williams is saying there is no cure for Brick's ailment. As much as Brick tries to run away from his sexuality, he returns despite his

drive to fight against his internal disgust. Williams is brilliant and now I need to study alcoholism.

Mr. Hartfield reminds me, “In order for an alcoholic to get to that place he has to drink a lot.” There needs to be clarity in what I’m saying and do not begin to slur my words or show any signs of the alcohols effect because I am use to talking and fighting with Maggie while intoxicated. As far as vocal quality goes Mr. Hartfield wants me to play with range and to not push for the appropriate portrayal of Brick. He tells me that I am plenty baritone for Brick. Mr. Hartfield encourages me to question my relationship with Skipper. I questioned his relationship with Skipper before as a reader before. Mr. Hartfield wants me to explore the possibilities of just Skipper being gay, both of us being gay, having a sexual relationship, and not having a sexual relationship. These are all possibilities because there is no evidence of the relationship in the play being anything more than just a friendship. What if Skipper was gay? Maybe he had come to terms with his sexuality and I knew. Maybe I appreciated and protected our friendship. Maybe Skipper was gay and Brick was not. Maybe Skipper came on to me before but I forgot. Maybe I wanted to have a sexual relationship but refused the idea. Whatever the case may be Skippers confession in front of Maggie was too much for Brick to handle. Unfortunately, the confession resulted in Skipper’s death. Now Brick needs his father to understand his side of the story.

Brick's interjections with Big Daddy are going to be difficult for me. The reason is because the responses are from fury. They come from revulsion to what Big Daddy is saying. They are going to require a lot of energy, timing, and awareness. My interactions with Big Mama will be quite the opposite. Big Mama refers to her son shying away from too much attention. I agree but also feel as if Brick needs some recognition. I feel he achieved the athletic and football accolades in order to divert from being noticed or thought of as a homosexual. Being defined a homosexual was his ultimate fear growing up and the thing he hated most. He wanted attention that proved his masculinity but not the adoration from women coming as a result of his prowess. Too much attention makes Brick angry.

Mr. Hartfield does not want me to go for anger. I really have in these first couple of weeks. I have no idea why I continue this choice. This honestly makes me think of making positive choices in order to establish a character the audience sympathizes for as opposed to one who may be one dimensional and written off. I think I am going for angry because I have not developed my characterization. I need to find what I sympathize with and where I stand with the relationships I have with my family members. This will all come with time for me and I am excited to explore this character. I can not wait to work with Mr. Hughes.

March 8th, 2006

Next week the cast will work on Act II. There are a lot of people coming in and out of Act II. Most of the dialogue, however, is between Brick and Big Daddy. Act II will build in the end and continue to Act III with Brick revealing Big Daddy's death sentence. Big Daddy confronts his family regarding the secret of his ailment in Act III. Mr. Hartfield says, "there will be a lot of peaks and valleys in the final acts." The whole play builds to Maggie finally sleeping with Brick. Big Mama has a lot of ups and downs. Her character journeys from feeling defeated to empowering herself with the words of Big Daddy. Brick and Maggie are observers in Big Mama's breakdown and are helpless in her situation. I think Brick sympathizes with his mother because they both have wanted and desired Big Daddy's love and have not received. Mr. Hartfield says, "It was a great read through." I felt the same. The talent here is incredible and the production will be excellent. I can not wait to take this journey with everyone included.

March 9th, 2006

Mr. Hartfield says he does not want Big Daddy to scare me. He also wants me to think about Brick and Skippers relationship. Mr. Hartfield also talks about how Brick is the most bisexual character ever written. Mr. Hughes believes, "no matter what Brick is he is very sexual because it is just what he is." Mr. Hughes also discusses with the cast how Big Daddy has no problem being gay but with sneaking and lying. Mr. Hartfield commented, "We need someone that looked like Brick and you do." Mr. Hartfield and Mr. Hughes were discussing how they need Maggie to have certain sexuality. Our

Director says, “Brick is a larger than life character and is very sexual.” Mr. Hartfield states, “There is something very sexual about an athlete in repose.” Brick is archetypal, yet grounded in reality. Although he is the “Man’s Man Style” his wants, needs, and desires are very real. Brick is human and bold. I enjoy hearing everyone’s views of Brick.

March 10th, 2006

Today I thought Big Daddy is Zues (the father). Zues is ruler and father of all Gods. Big Daddy is the owner of the plantation and father of all of the children. Brick is Hermes (the messenger). If Brick is a guide to the deceased souls of the underworld then maybe he is guiding Skipper and possibly Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. He is resurrecting their truths and fighting for their love and being. Maggie is Aphrodite (Goddess of Love) she acts as the goddess of beauty and fertility (Maggie the Cat). Maggie is the very essence of female sexuality and acts as the epitome of the female sexual presence onstage. She is hot like a cat on a hot tin roof howling in the night calling for a man to impregnate her. Like Aphrodite, Maggie, is offering Brick the opportunity to make love to the most beautiful woman around. This pronounces questions outlining his questionable sexuality. Big Daddy is the Tragic Hero. I suppose his tragic fall would be the lack of love for his family. His lack of love could lead to the possible downfall of his plantation and his entire life’s work. The biggest hit to Big Daddy would come with losing his plantation to Gooper.

March 11th, 2006

I need to work on being big. This is going to be difficult. I will continue to try different tactics until I can define my portrayal and the level of volume I will have. This is an area where I need to incorporate the eclosion technique from our movement class. Mr. Hughes has a very loud and boisterous voice which projects and reverberates off all the walls. His voice is incredible. In Act II I have to top his volume at points. I have no fear of Big Daddy whatsoever. It is very important that I, unlike every other member of the household, show no fear in his presence. I stand up to him and for that he sees me as a friend and may even love me. Mr. Hughes voice can overpower mine with ease. Big Mama's voice has the same quality. I was very vocally sore after a read through of Act II. There is so much bitterness in the script and gut driven anger that I continue to push and my throat is clenching. This is an old habit. I think ecloding at the correct percentage. I need to go through the script and decide when the ecloding moments are.

March 12th, 2006

When Brick and Big Daddy are in the same room Brick must not be intimidated. Brick probably would be if he cared for Big Daddy. Brick lives almost as if Big Daddy no longer exists. Brick seems to have made this choice at childhood with the lack of his fathers' physical affection. I believe Brick began to feel as if his father did not care about him. He decided, at some age, he needed his father's guidance as opposed to his father's appearance at ball games. With his father owning a plantation and being very wealthy, Big Daddy appeared to be as much of a trophy dad as Brick was his trophy son. Big

Daddy was there for looks and bragging on his son's accomplishments. Brick is Big Daddy's one and only son and the best son a man could have. I am sure Big Daddy's believes Brick is the best son. Big Daddy believes he has and will have the best farm, family, cotton, suits, trips, house, games, and the best life. Brick will have the life his father never dreamed of. Brick is given the life Big Daddy never had as a child. I believe Big Daddy was running away from his father's reality. Big Daddy set out to give his son everything he never had as a child. He forgot to show his son love and that is what's most important. Brick appears to have the best life. Big Daddy affords Brick a life of showmanship. Brick has the trophy life, however, a life without paternal love.

I believe Big Daddy loves Brick. I believe this is predominantly because Brick is the survival of Big Daddy's legacy. Brick is the picture perfect creation of Big Daddy. Brick is viewed as Big Daddy's property just as much as the house and plantation. Brick is his most prized creation. Brick is everything Big Daddy never was and everything he never will be once he leaves the Earth. With knowledge of Big Daddy's illness the urgency lies with Brick not upsetting that legacy and ending the Pollitt name. Brick must have a child.

In Act III there is more of an understanding and respect between Big Daddy and Brick. They are the only two characters in the entire play who have not lied to each other. Big Daddy loves Brick in his very own way. Big Daddy consistently attempts to reach out to his son. Brick refuses to acknowledge the attempts. Brick has led his life without male affection from his father. He finally received male love from Skipper. Brick knows what

kind of affection he received but what is important is he shared an honest friendship with Skipper. The honesty of their friendship is what Brick appreciated the most.

March 14th, 2006

My goal for today was to define my characters personality type. Linda Edelstein's, The Writer's Guide to Character Traits, defines twenty personality types and I have matched Brick with the ""Man's Man Style" Style" (32). This style "appears one-dimensional because only certain qualities are allowed to emerge" (Edelstein 32). The first characteristic of the type involves overstated masculine behavior. I have established that Brick epitomizes the male image. He is strong, athletic, masculine, and very heterosexual in appearance. He exudes sexuality and the male form which is attractive to those who love men. Maggie finds Brick sexually attractive, Skipper finds Brick sexually attractive as well, and Big Daddy is reminded of his physical best when he sees his son.

The second quality refers to coarseness. Brick is coarse. He is straight to the point and aggressive with his feelings. He is brash in his interactions with Big Daddy and Maggie. Brick avoids life with his coarseness. Brick wishes to repel others with his crudeness, however, the temperament attracts people. When characters are expending energy to repel the receivers often become more attracted and expound their energy. As Brick is repelled Maggie is attracted to Brick. Brick uses his coarseness and tries to appear unaffected with Big Daddy. This attracts Big Daddy because he can not break Brick's

stubborn exterior. Brick is repelled by Big Daddy and Big Daddy is therefore attracted to Brick.

I am making sense of attraction, repulsion, fusion with Brick's relationships in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Brick tries to keep his distance from Big Mama. Much of her energy is kept for Big Daddy's health and juggling the family and guests. There is a fusion in Brick and Big Mama's relationship. Both have acknowledged and accepted their distance.

Eventually there is more of a fusion in the relationship. Brick is staying out of the way as Big Mama is trying to keep everyone out of a possible argument. Brick is not coarse with his mother. Brick sees how his father is towards his mother and feels sympathetic for her. Brick's coarseness is effective through the play until Big Daddy's persistence breaks his belligerence in Act II. However, I believe Brick's breakthrough does not reveal weakness.

The third trait of the "Man's Man Style" character type is "fears weakness" (Edelstein 32). Brick has always been an athletic and strong leader. The name "Brick" even signifies the most important piece of framework needed to build and hold a house together much like Big Daddy wants to see his plantation upheld by his son. Brick's family now needs to pull together and be the strength and mortar as his pro football team once did. Brick is the one who did not go mad in the infamous Brick and Skipper duo. Everyone fears Brick is heading in the same direction. Brick's teammate was Skipper. Now Maggie is his wide receiver in the game to win the plantation. Brick fears his weakness and masks his

problems with alcohol. He uses his coarseness to fight and distract his offense. He fears weakness until 'the click' happens and all fighting and defending cease to exist (Williams, Cat 2.47). Brick masks his weakness with alcohol.

The fourth trait in Linda Edelstein's, The Writer's Guide to Character Traits, involves hiding powerlessness and impotence (32). Brick Pollitt has always been a very powerful name. His father, Big Daddy, was successful in maintaining a very wealthy cotton plantation. Everyone in the Delta knows of the Pollitt name. Brick, the prized son of Big Daddy Pollitt, is the image of the all American successful son. Brick is athletic, attractive, and well liked by the community. Brick never had a problem getting female attention. The Pollitt name granted Brick popularity surrounding his family's fortune. Brick made a name for himself, despite the reputation of his family's fortune, as a High school football star. He was also known for creating the professional football team "the Dixie Stars" with his best friend Skipper (Williams 2.57). Brick always understood his name and power because he was reminded by the community. Brick probably took advantage of his own name growing up but later learned what he longed for. He longed for love. Brick's companionship with Skipper was 'a pure and true thing' between two people (Williams, Cat 2.57). A 'friendship' a 'real, deep, deep friendship' with Skipper was lost and Brick realized what he had always been looking for (Williams, Cat 2.56). Brick became powerless with the loss.

Powerlessness is something Brick has never had to come face to face with. He no longer has the will to continue living. His successful football career is over, his lover and companion is dead. All he is left with is a memory. Just as much as he was held up in the public eye he is now being brought down. He is now being rejected as he once was held high. Brick is bombarded by consternation and he retreats to his peaceful place known as 'the click' to get away from life (Williams, Cat 2.47). Brick does not know how to deal with his problems and has turned to alcohol. He is a drinker and drinks in front of everyone but he has not told anyone why he drinks. Big Daddy later asks, "Why do you drink?" (Williams, Cat 2.50).

The fifth trait from the Writer's Guide to Character Traits involves adventure and aggression (Edelstein 32). Brick was once a successful football star and one may assume he was aggressive. In the play he lashes out toward Maggie by chasing her with a crutch and swinging at her. Brick is very athletic and I am sure defending himself is nothing new to him. In Act II, Brick once again becomes aggressive with Big Daddy. Brick lunges for a punch when Big Daddy will not hand him back his crutch. Brick seems to be aggressive only when he is pushed. Brick seems to be less interested in drama, fighting, and name calling. Brick's dream was to lead an adventurous life with Skipper. They created the professional football team "the Dixie Stars" to continue playing football together (Williams, Cat 57). Starting a professional football team could not be a simple task. Having a sexual relationship with Skipper during a time of cultural adversity would be deemed adventurous as well.

The sixth characteristic in The Writer's Guide to Character Trait's is that a "Man's Man Style" is worldly and sexually experienced (Edelstein 32). As previously stated, Brick may have traveled the world with his parents as they were wealthy plantation owners. Brick therefore may have been exposed to other cultures and ways of life than your typical Delta plantation citizen. This life must have been highly attractive to those there that had probably lived there for generations. Everyone in the community wanted a piece of the Pollitt experience and a piece of Big Daddy's will and estate. Big Daddy is full of stories in Act II. I can see why many must have wanted to be around his entertaining presence.

Brick was also very sexually experienced. Women have always flocked around him. Big Mama states, "Brick never liked being kissed or made a fuss ovah, I guess because he's always had too much of it-"(Williams, Cat 2.32). Women were always after Brick. The tall, handsome, athletic, wealthy, and popular athlete was an attraction to all. Even "Maggie the Cat" was no stranger to Brick Pollitt (Williams, Cat 1.28). He attracted Maggie as well. The looks, the name, and the money were no stopping "Maggie the Cat" (Williams, Cat 1.28). Brick could pick and choose from whomever he wanted to be with. Except, perhaps, being with a man. Brick grew up with the knowledge of his father's background and the fact that he was taken in by two homosexual men who ran the plantation, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. Brick knew when one of the gentlemen died the others life was short lived. Brick knew he would not have had what he did if it were not

for the two men willing over the plantation to Brick's father. Despite having been raised with the knowledge of their relationship, Brick was also raised with the malice society felt for homosexuals.

Homosexuality was thought of as a disease and homosexuals were to be shamed by society during the fifties. These people were thought of as sexual deviants and put into the same category with pedophiles, and those who committed incest. Sodomy was known throughout much of the Bible belt as the unforgivable sin. However, Brick knew he owed his good fortune to two homosexuals, Jack Star and Peter Ochello. Brick also knew never to speak of Straw and Ochello in public. Brick may have been exposed to other lifestyles in his travels with family like Big Daddy was exposed to families hustling their children overseas.

Being with a man may have been Brick's desired lifestyle. If Brick's longing was to be with men then this desire had to be suppressed throughout his life. He had to hold back his desire because he did not want to be referred to as any of the following; "duckin' sissies, 'queers, 'fairies" (Williams, Cat 2.55). (Jack Straw and Peter Ochello) These men all had "dirty" relationships and were not accepted in society (Williams, Cat 2.55). A homosexual relationship was death in society and death to the Pollitt name.

Brick may have been sexually experienced with males. He did have a very best friend, Skipper, and many assumed they shared a homosexual relationship. Everyone knew

Skipper went downhill and died once Maggie entered the picture. The community may have thought Skipper and Brick had a relationship while traveling the country playing Pro football. Brick and Skipper were always together until Maggie intervened. Skipper then killed himself. Skipper may have intervened and threatened Maggie's sexual relationship with Brick.

The seventh trait Linda Edelstein describes in the "Man's Man Style" is demanding and hard (32). Brick is very difficult with Maggie in the first act. He demands her to keep doors open, hand him his crutch, get off of him, take herself a lover, and to be quiet. He demands her to be quiet when speaking of Skipper during Big Daddy's party. When the arguing escalates he threatens her stating, "Maggie, you want me to hit you with this crutch?" "Don't you know I could kill you with this crutch?" (Williams, Cat 1.27). In Act II, Brick also demands Big Daddy to hand him his crutch so he can get up.

Brick is very demanding with Maggie. Brick could care less if Maggie is with him or not Maggie is has to deal with his commands in order to achieve her dreams of inheriting the Pollitt plantation. Big Daddy and Maggie eventually discover what ails Brick. Talk of his relationship with Skipper is the only thing causes him to become vulnerable. Brick stays hard and remains that way through the play (hence the name Brick). The "Brick," if you will, is not cracked until speaking of Skipper. This idea alone leads me to believe that he is homosexual. This was the one "true thing" in his life, as described by Brick (Williams, Cat 2.56). I do not believe Brick's fear of his own public reputation would lead him to

crack. Brick's own discovery of how much he loved Skipper makes him crumble. Brick is forced to confess his love of Skipper to himself. Acknowledging his love for Skipper to himself is his journey Brick's discovery lies in his realization that he was in love with a man. Brick's breakthrough is bittersweet because Skipper is no longer alive to continue the relationship. Therefore, Skipper's death forgives the shock of Brick's ailment. Society can empathize with Brick because now the man he once loved is dead and the unfathomable relationship can no longer exist. I believe this is what saves Maggie's and Big Daddy's conscious. This may save Brick's conscious as well.

The eighth commonly held characteristic is that the "Man's Man Style" must win (Edelstein 32). Brick is a star athlete. He led his football team in high school to the state championships. He also started a professional football team called "the Dixie Stars" (Williams, Cat 2.57). Big Daddy was ambitious and Brick inherited the behavior from his father.

Maggie is Brick's crutch. Brick's ailment is homosexuality. Brick uses Maggie to ward off the accusers of his homosexual relations with Skipper. Big Daddy's need to "straighten' out" his son progresses with Brick's alcoholism and his own health deterioration (Williams, Cat 2.48). Brick has leaned on Maggie just like his crutch. If Brick is homosexual then he masks that with alcohol and with his marriage to Maggie. Maggie is his crutch in distracting the world of his true sexual attraction. Speaking of crutch, Big Daddy snatches the Brick's crutch from him in Act II signifying the rearing of

the truth. Brick is vulnerable and has nothing to lean on or to protect him from falling. Maggie, Brick, and Skipper's relationships with one another have to be dealt with. Brick becomes vulnerable when Big Daddy removes his crutch. Big Daddy has always speculated about Brick and Skipper's relationship but now he has chosen to deal with the issue. Big Daddy has had to face his mortality. Big Daddy wants his legacy willed to Brick and all obligations carried through before his death. Big Daddy's need is to "straighten' out" his son before his death (Williams, Cat 2.48). Big Daddy's persistence is reflected by the legacy of his plantation. Brick breaks under pressure. The weakness he has always feared unveils. Brick keeps his own sense of integrity by revealing his father's death sentence in the end.

March 14th, 2006

Today the cast had our first blocking rehearsal with no Maggie or Big Daddy. The cast is having a stand in for Maggie until April. Big Daddy is doing several shows at once and is not here today because he is opening *Oklahoma*. Today the cast worked on blocking Act III. Act III begins in the same position as Act II ends. Mr. Hartfield, our Director is thinking about only having a five minute intermission between Act II and III. Big Daddy ends Act II and Act III with the same line "LIARS LIARS!" (Williams, Cat 2 and 3.60-61).

Act III is completely chaotic with everyone in the house entering and exiting. Everyone is snaking the way through the bedroom furniture. This resembles obstacles getting in the

way of Brick and Maggie's love life. The stage is deep and sightlines are definitely a problem so the blocking is tricky. If you are left of Brick's chair then you are in the house but if you are right of the chair then you are immediately outside. This has been difficult because even the slightest step means I am outside. There are so many people in the house at one time and I naturally want to move out of the way.

In Act III, the family has decided to confront Big Mama and tell her the truth about Big Daddy. They are talking to her about Big Daddy's will. Big Mama does not know of Big Daddy's true fate and everyone is here for the news of the will. Reverend, Doc Baugh, Mae, Gooper, 5 "no-neck monsters," Maggie, and Brick are all there when Big Mama is told of the news of Big Daddy's cancer (Williams, *Cat* 1.9). Brick is there but does not want to see Big Mama and tries to stay on the gallery outside of the bedroom. Brick continues to wash his problems away with alcohol. He sings *By the Light of the Silvery Moon*, perhaps, reminiscing on his romance with Skipper. He compliments the moon saying "I envy you- you cool son of a bitch!" (Williams, *Cat* 3.64). Even though Brick is intoxicated I believe he may sing the song when he is sober.

The problem I have is always forgetting this guy is drunk and has heard "the click." He is not a stumbling, staggering drunk (Williams, *Cat* 2.47). I always connect drunkenness with poor balance. I think Brick may also have poor balance with his broken ankle. I am reminded; however, Brick is a professional drinker, an alcoholic, and an athlete. These types are more in control of their alcohol. Alcoholics can hold their alcohol. Once

alcoholics are drunk they are much more in control than the average person getting drunk. I am also working with this broken ankle. I have not experienced a broken ankle. I recently fractured my tail bone and have had a horrible time with the pain and stress of a fracture. I am athletic and constantly doing something physical. I hated having to be down for long periods of time. I was up and moving as soon as possible. Brick is the same. He is athletic. He is an athlete and his need to inebriate himself and get out of the room gets him up on his feet.

March 16th 2006

The cast continued to work on Act III tonight without Big Mama and we blocked through to Big Daddy's entrance. Mr. Hughes was not in attendance again. The cast has still not had everyone at our rehearsals and we expect the same thing for 2 more weeks at least. Act III is completely chaotic. Every cast member intermittently enters the stage. Brick has kept close but he can not stand how the family is attacking Big Mama. Brick feels very sympathetic towards his mother. All she does is care for a husband that mistreats her. I believe Brick sympathizes with his mom. Big Mama calls for Brick and he comes to her everytime. Mr. Hartfield, our Director, even has me placing my hand on her to console her. Big Mama is being pounced upon by the entire family. My character has more respect for her feelings and does not care for inheriting the house. Brick knows the family is restless in their pursuit of the plantation. He cannot stop the fight over the plantation. Brick deals with the situation by intoxicating himself. Brick is blocked from getting to the liquor cabinet by the family in the bedroom. In Act III, Big Mama refers to

him as her only son. I believe she says this because Brick cares for his parents and is not after their wealth. She also does this as a last resort to get Gooper and Mae away from her. Brick may be her only child with Big Daddy. He is the one she is openly proud of. Gooper may be out of wedlock. I also believe Brick respected Big Mama while Gooper ignored her and focused on pleasing Big Daddy. Brick has a relationship with his mother. Big Mama cared for him and showed him love, yet he lacked paternal love from his father. Brick stands by Big Mama although he “can’t witness that thing in there” (Williams, Cat 3). Act III is the showdown and must be high in energy, discovery, and in the moment. Even though Brick is struggling with his need for ‘the click’ he is also struggling with getting past his family to the liquor cabinet (Williams 2.47). He is also dodging his presence in the bedroom as the family tells Big Mama the real news about Big Daddy.

March 20th, 2006

The cast had an intense rehearsal today. The day was spent blocking Act II. The Director blocked Brick and Big Daddy without the other actors present. Mr. Hughes and I began from Big Daddy’s line and Maggie’s exit with, “Why did you do that,” (Williams, Cat 2.39).

My crutch was provided for the first time in rehearsal. The crutch is need for much of the blocking in Act II. There are times when Big Daddy snatches the crutch from underneath me and I fall. Big Daddy then uses the crutch to gesture. Big Daddy uses my crutch as a

tool to get to his objective of straightening me out. Big Daddy knows I need help standing up to get to my alcohol. This is my characters first day following the accident with my ankle. I am in intense pain throughout the day. I am athletic, yet I am just now learning how to use and walk with the crutch. This injury and my immobility are forcing me to stay in rooms I would usually leave. I am forced to have conversations I would not normally have. I am forced to have face to face confrontation with family on subjects I know I will eventually have to tackle.

Maggie worked hard to confront me with issues regarding alcohol, relations with Skipper, and the rules governing our relationship. Maggie would either have gotten Brick to fess up or her persistence would have gotten her hurt in Act I. Other characters entered the room and interrupted the fight between Brick and Maggie. Big Daddy, on the other hand, runs the house and is more persistent in his goal of getting his favorite son to fess up in the following act. Big Daddy was faced with death and now, thinking he is well, he sees the need to straighten Brick out. During the second act, Big Daddy begins the conversation with Brick by noticing Brick wiping away Maggie's kiss. Brick was unaware Big Daddy was watching the incident. This action gives Big Daddy a platform to achieve his goal to straighten Brick out. Brick tries to avoid Big Daddy's conversation and attempts to bring up the relationship. Brick blames Maggie for the demise of their marriage and the loss of Skipper. He also tries to convince Big Daddy she is driven by money. Brick in a sense tries to use Maggie as a crutch in many ways. He uses her as his trophy wife to please Big Daddy and the family. He also uses Maggie as a crutch. She is

the explanation behind all of his problems and he does not admit he has his own. Big Daddy does not understand why Maggie has not had kids. Big Daddy does not understand why Brick will not sleep with her. Big Daddy asks Brick if he was having sex the night before on the athletic field. Maggie mentions she thinks Big Daddy has a desire for her. During Act II, Big Daddy claims he is going to sleep with more women stating, "I gotta few left in me" (Williams, Cat 2.47). Big Daddy even asks how Maggie is in bed and Brick quickly changes the subject. Big Daddy sees women as sex objects and Brick does not. Brick ignores all comments on sex and tries to ignore them. There are several reasons for speculating Brick's sexuality; Big Daddy wants to will the farm to him, Maggie is childless, he started drinking when Skipper committed suicide, and Gooper and Mae hear his continuous sex refusals with Maggie. Brick is now having to confront his problems and is left without a crutch or way to escape. Big Daddy is cornering Brick at his most vulnerable. Brick has no drink, crutch, mobility, and no one interrupting the conversation. He has no distraction and feels he has nothing to live for. Brick's depression commands most of the emotion of my portrayal.

March 21st, 2006

I was not aware of the extent of the physical demands for the show. The Director, "I want you to be able to hold your own over Big Daddy." Mr. Hughes has an incredible booming voice. I plan on using class warm ups for keeping my voice prepared throughout the day. Often the warm ups work through the day. I warm up in the car as well. Brick becomes irate and out of control at the idea of Mae and Gooper suggesting his relationship with

Skipper was unnatural. Brick's vocal quality goes from an included hopelessness to an eclosed and athletic rage. Brick hops toward Big Daddy for his crutch. Big Daddy removes his crutch and commands Brick to speak. This area of the play takes a lot of endurance and breath.

For the breath work I am referring by to my ribs, diaphragm, and abdomen (RDA) work in Kate's class. I will use this exercise in my warm up. I have to prevent myself from taking shallow breaths. I do not want to shock or charge my vocal folds. I have to keep from making glottal attacks during moments of extreme shock. I need to do yawns and fully stretch my mouth and throat in order to not harm my voice for the run. I need to have an open airway and need to strengthen my ribs with the RDA breathing. I have been revisiting the RDA work for my Musical Theatre Class. I need to work on strengthening my intercostals, relaxing my throat, and not flexing my scalene's in strain. I have worked on this by tying a string around my ribs in order to feel the expansion in my breath. I need to remember there is a slight sustain in the breath on the inhale and then in-between the breaths. I worked a little with changing pitch to refrain from harming my throat. Mr. Hartfield told me, however, does not want me to heighten my pitch.

Tuesday March 28th, 2006

Ms. Harrell, the actress portraying Maggie, is here. Our first rehearsal together was spent only with the Director. I thought there was going to be a rehearsal but Ms. Harrell, Mr. Hartfield, and I talked about everything. She was just in from New York having

completed her work with the Actor's Studio. She was exhausted. The Director allowed her to have a break and we talked. I learned Maggie use to perform at the Lake Mirror Theatre along with the Director. Mr. Hughes, Mrs. Morgan, and Mr. Luty all direct at the theatre. They are all heavily involved in the community and with the theatre. Everyone seems to have been pre-cast except for Brick. Mr. Hartfield told me the theatre was worried about finding a Brick to pair with their Maggie. Maggie, played by Ms. Harrell, is forty but does not look her age. Initially, the production staff thought I appeared too young but realized Maggie's age was not spoken of in the play.

March 29th, 2006

Last night the cast worked on Act I blocking. Maggie (Ms. Harrell) was finally here. The Director and I spent most of the night talking to Ms. Harrell and introducing her to our rehearsal process. Our rehearsal process has completely changed. Mr. Hartfield's rehearsal changes from blocked to free form. The Director gives free range to Mr. Hughes and Ms. Harrell. I believe this is because they practically have solos in Act I and II. Act I is basically Maggie's monologue and Act II is Big Daddy's. This is particularly difficult because I have a lot of listening to do and am not the best listener. I worked heavily with listening to my scene partners in Be's class. I often appeared as though I was not listening to my fellow actor in my scene work. My tendency is to drive the scene. I never knew this until I entered Be Boyd's class. Ensemble acting can be difficult for me because of timing and cues. I often fear distracting my scene partner when I have to listen for long periods. My issues lie with what to do and what not to do. Act I consists of short

quipped responses during Maggie's ranting exposition. During Act II, there is more of a purging from Brick and the character is bringing new information. I have more to say in Act II, however, in both of the acts I am more the listener.

Act I and Act II are virtually duets between the major characters and Brick. Brick may not be speaking but his silent existence amplifies his crisis. Brick's presence on stage is constant and so is the alcoholic screen covering his truth. A large amount of the play is devoted to confronting Brick. The characters are searching for the reason behind his alcoholism, his unwillingness to have a child, and the truth about his relations with Skipper. Brick's reactions to Maggie's gossiping rants reveal his opinions of others in the house. I am intimidated and excited about all of the listening. I did a scene with Kevin Blackwelder in my first semester in Be's class. I did not drive the scene. I was predominantly listening. Kevin and I performed a Samuel Sheppard scene and I was directed to be in Mr. Blackwelder's face. Brick is the opposite of the Sam Sheppard character. Brick is in retreat. He is constantly bombarded by the bombastic speeches of Maggie and Big Daddy. Brick has learned to turn them off like a switch. Mr. Hartfield wants me have a more of a "matter of fact" attitude with her.

I find myself reacting as an audience member would to Maggie's statements. I have to remember Brick hears Maggie ranting about everyone all of the time. He is unaffected by Maggie and in retreat. He is described as cool and defeated. Brick eventually becomes agitated with Maggie and encourages her to find another man. He even threatens her with

a crutch. Brick listens to Maggie through all of her attempts to gain his attention. Maggie is desperate for Brick's attention and does anything to get his attention. Maggie continues to make sexual advances toward Brick. Brick shrugs her off and dodges all advances.

Brick is in repulsion with Maggie and her sexual advances. The largest occurrence of attraction between the two characters comes when she speaks of Skipper. Brick chases her with his crutch threatening to hit her. Brick is in attraction with Maggie when she provokes him by discussing his relationship with Skipper. My need is to shut her up. My character withdraws and vanishes. He becomes a tyrant threatening to hit his wife in exchange for silence. The repulsion and attraction tables turn when Maggie speaks of Skipper. Brick aggressively soars after Maggie and she repels around the room. Brick is thrown off equilibrium when other characters speak of Skipper. Skipper equals death in many ways. The following are dead to Brick; his heart, will to live, desire for sports, security, sex drive, hunger, career, lover, best friend, partner, reputation, world, happiness, "the Dixie stars," marriage, hopes, heritage, success, legacy, companionship, and his pride (Williams, Cat 2.57). Maggie, on the other hand represents life. The following are alive to Brick; Maggie, alcoholism, shame, hurt, depression, need for retreat, love for Skipper, longing, desire, shame, disgust, and 'mendacity' (Williams, Cat 2.50).

Wednesday March 30th, 2006

Tonight the cast did a very rough blocking of Act II. The review was a mess. This was only the second time the cast had been through the act. This is the first run through after having blocked the second act. I thought I was off book upon entering the stage but our rehearsal revealed the opposite. The show is much more physically demanding than I had anticipated. I am on a crutch throughout the show and the soreness under my arm has begun. The crutch slips often. I have found new ways of distributing my weight on the crutch. I have begun to use the crutch as a second leg by putting my arms on the top. Brick constantly wants more alcohol to get to ‘the click’ where everything becomes peaceful (Williams, Cat 2.47). I am constantly going from the chaise to the liquor cabinet in need of a drink. I am trying to drown out the frustrations of dealing with my family.

In Act II, I pretend like I am listening to Big Daddy. The long speeches and rants make me anxious. Big Daddy fumes about his sexual frustrations with Big Mama and his desire to fornicate with other women. Big Daddy’s desire has spawned from near death and his disgust with Big Mama. He thinks the doctor reports are fine. Big Daddy’s near death experience revives his desire’s to have sex, will over his land, and for Brick to have a son. Big Daddy’s experience with death revitalizes his life. Brick’s experience with Skipper’s death has the opposite effect. Big Daddy reveals he hates Gooper and Mae, being disgusted by Big Mama, and preachers. The experience also makes him want to “straighten’ out” his son (Williams, Cat 2.48).

Brick reveals his desire for alcohol to Big Daddy. Brick describes 'the click' as "a mechanical thing" like "a switch turning the hot light off and the cool light" on and all the sudden there's peace (Williams, Cat 2.47). 'The click' is Brick's equilibrium and he is in constant search for the peace (Williams, Cat 2.47). He does not achieve this until the end of the play in Act III. Alcohol presents a constant need, attraction, and drive to the liquor cabinet. Brick's obsession with alcohol can be compared to his obsession with Skipper. Brick feels as if life is better with both. He can not survive without either. Alcohol has replaced Skipper. Absolutely nothing shall get in the way of the liquor cabinet and nothing can get in the way of reaching Skipper.

"Echo Springs," the liquor cabinet, is almost a character in the play (Williams, Cat 2.25). Brick is in constant attraction to the liquor cabinet and repulsion from Big Daddy and Maggie. Brick realizes behind the alcohol lies peace. Peace is the most important thing in his life. He is tormented and patronized everywhere. Brick sees himself as a fallen football hero. Brick is in repulsion from Big Daddy and Maggie. Brick is in attraction to the liquor cabinet. Drinking leads to 'the click' which leads to peace (Williams, Cat 2.47). The cool and peaceful serenity of 'the click' provides solace for Brick. Here he can coexist with Skipper in his idealistic world. The current world is without his best friend and companion - a world without Skipper. Skipper was his soulmate. Skipper and Brick's relationship may have not been sexual. Perhaps Skipper fulfilled his companionship and Maggie satisfied his sexual relationship. What is obvious is Brick does not care for Maggie and may never have. The audience does not know why.

Friday April 1st, 2006

Big Daddy says, “why, boy, you’re alcoholic,” Brick responds, “That’s the truth, Big Daddy. I’m alcoholic” (Williams, Cat 2.47). In rehearsal I have been delivering the line with sarcasm. I know characters in discovery onstage are more interesting. The next time I will deliver the line in the moment as if I have discovered the thought. I am describing ‘the click’ in frustration because Big Daddy will not get out of the way of the liquor cabinet (Williams, Cat 2.47). I tell Big Daddy ‘the click’ only happens when I am alone in silence (Williams, Cat 2.47). I believe Brick may come home late to Maggie and later leave to drink. I did break my ankle all by myself on the high school athletic field. This affirms the extent Brick will drive to achieve his inner peace. Defining what exists in this peace will be by next hurdle.

The idea of Maggie interrupting my peace fuels me for Act I. I constantly attempt to avoid Maggie. I have to listen to everyone because I am down with a broken ankle. The following are reasons I have to listen; today is Big Daddy’s birthday, Maggie’s drive is to succeed in sleeping with me, Big Daddy’s drive is to straighten me out, they may give me more alcohol, I can not drive, I am inebriated, and not listening would make a bad impression on everyone at the party. I have to listen and not get rattled. Listening is no problem until they speak of Skipper. When anyone speaks of Skipper I become my most vulnerable and aggressive. This is leading me to believe I may have loved Skipper. Big Daddy brings up Skipper in Act II and I become defensive, outraged, and aggressive. I

retaliate. This is where I need to match Big Daddy in volume, mass and intensity. All of Brick's energy throughout the act has been included until this point. When Big Daddy states, "you started drinkin' when your friend Skipper died," the accusation busts me into eclosion (Williams, Cat 2.54). I watch Big Daddy while in eclosion. Here I am completely knocked off equilibrium and shocked but I am still on a crutch. Up until this point, my movement has been very controlled, calculated, and included and now is ecloded and spastic. I received notes from the Director afterwards.

April 2nd, 2006

The Director needs to see me really inhabit the lines. I agree because I am not off book and I need to work on the imagery in my monologue. I need to remember the audience has never heard of the Skipper story. Mr. Hartfield says, "When you say 'yes sir' it is not submissive but respectful." I chose to play submissive with the line in order to get Big Daddy off my back. Finding more highlights throughout my monologue is something else I need to work on. I may choose to be thrilled when I speak of my friendship with Skipper, and those "long high, high passes" (Williams, Cat 2.57). Mr. Hartfield says, "Watch for having a too strident and high pitch." I have been exploring my higher register when I am ecloding. I am somewhat worried about vocal strain. Mr. Hartfield stated, "Brick is not a wimpy drunk." I agree. I am still very strong, athletic and active.

April 3rd, 2006

I broke a chair! Tonight our scenes were highly physical and intense. I actually broke a chair when Big Daddy threw me. Mr. Hughes made me break the chair. He is the one who threw me down. Mr. Hughes and I are feeling more comfortable with inhabiting the lines and were too physically charged. Mr. Hughes and I are both very physical. This dynamic makes the second act exciting for us both. Breaking the chair was our physical climax today. Maybe this experience is foreshadowing a powerful performance. Hopefully we will not break chairs in performance.

Tuesday April 4th, 2006

Tonight the cast worked on Act III. The cast has not worked on the act in a week. The cast is still pushing through the blocking and making sure everyone knows where to go. Act III occurs after Brick has reached a catharsis in Act II. The catharsis involves Brick acknowledging Skipper's death. Brick reveals his version of the story of Skipper's death to Big Daddy. Brick refers to his version of the story as "real" and "true" (Williams, Cat 2.57). He refers to his version of what really happened and admits responsibility in Skipper's death. "He made a drunken confession to me an' on which I hung up. Last time the cast spoke to each other in our lives" (Williams, Cat 2.58).

Brick's cathartic revelation allows a difference in my portrayal in Act III. I will now reveal my character as someone tranquilly defeated and at peace. Brick's news to Big Daddy of his cancer diagnosis was another revelation. There is a sense of peace and humility to Brick in Act III. Brick wants to be put in "Silver Hill," a retirement home

(Williams, Cat 2.62). I have decided to play relief instead of playing the alcohol. Many actors often choose to play into the effects of the alcohol in Act III, but I have decided to emphasize Brick's relief. I want to portray a more human, vulnerable, and endearing Brick in the final act. For example: Brick does not want to see his mother hurting, therefore, I am going to map moments to physically console her in Act III. I am leaning closer and closer to Brick having a very special love for his mother. My character respects his mother and realizes all she has done for the Pollitt family. Brick mother has not received the appropriate level of love and respect from her family. Brick sympathizes with Big Mama's fear of losing her love and being alone. Big Mama will lose Big Daddy as Brick has lost Skipper. Brick regrets not being able to vow his love to Skipper and now Big Daddy is leaving his companion behind and making the same mistake. Brick and Big Mama are both devastated by their loss. Brick and Big Daddy are equally stubborn and unaware of the failure to acknowledge the love they have for their partners. They live recklessly doubting the effortlessness of their survival via their companion. Brick and Big Daddy abuse the selflessness of their significant other. Both Big Daddy and Big Mama share traits with their son.

Big Mama was Big Daddy's teammate in running the plantation much like Skipper was Brick's teammate in football. There is never one without the other. Brick does not see any reason to live without Skipper. Big Mama has not established a strong enough existence without her lover. When Big Daddy is down Big Mama is there to take up the slack much like Brick and Skipper's relationship on and off the field. Brick and Big

Daddy sharing the more masculine role as the provider and Big Mama and Skipper assume the role of the nurturer. Big Daddy degrades Big Mama's looks and his lack of attraction toward her. Brick denies Skipper's sexual attraction. Big Mamma still loves Big Daddy like Skipper continued to love Brick. Both stories end tragically in love's lost.

Monday April 10th, 2006

The cast is not off book and according to the Director, "everyone is underplaying their parts." Mr. Hughes is completely exhausted. He just came from *Oklahoma* to *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and he is vocally exhausted. I need to work on my volume as well. I need to be aware of listening to Big Daddy regardless of my choice to actively disengage with him. Mr. Hartfield says, "Try to find the humor in talking jag." He means find the comedy when Big Daddy and I are talking about women. This is a good idea. This will encourage my choice "to throw" Big Daddy regarding my ambiguity. Mr. Hartfield seems to be in agreement with many of my choices so far. I hope he is pleased with the outcome.

The Director wants us to have a heightened quality to our language. I think Mr. Hartfield wants the cast to remember we are reciting Williams and the Pollitt's are upper class compared to the rest of the citizens of the Delta. The Pollitt's are a wealthy plantation owning family. Mr. Hartfield compares our play to a Greek Tragedy set in 1953 Mississippi. He wants the performances to be heightened and for us to be articulate. He is

having a bit of a problem with everyone not being off book, listening, and responding. I agree with him.

Tuesday April 11th, 2006

Act I tonight was missing energy. I feel as if I appeared anxious tonight. Mr. Hartfield wants me to not be still for 30 seconds or a minute. I guess this is because Brick is highly uncomfortable. Mr. Hartfield wants me to lay back on the furniture more and not just look at Maggie while she is talking. Mr. Hartfield wants me to reflect on specific things I hear when Maggie speaks. The first act was going slow today and the cast needs to push through all of this exposition. I need to cringe when she wraps around me. Act I needs work.

Act II was better. I feel as if I have more to do and I am more comfortable. Mr. Hartfield still wants me to be very matter of fact. I need to wait for Maggie to leave before I wipe her kiss. I need to be bigger and brash. Mr. Hartfield wants me to deliver the speech on 'the click' downstage to audience because this is the first time everyone knows what my character is experiencing through alcohol (Williams 2.47).

April 17th, 2006

I felt better about Act II tonight. I need to be louder and I can always work on my volume. I need to drink a lot more because I am trying to escape Big Daddy. I received the note, "Do not adlib." Tonight the cast performed well. I think Big Daddy and I added

a couple of curses. Mr. Hughes and I need to have a fight call every night because we often get carried away in the fights. No more breaking chairs or getting hurt. Mr. Hartfield wants me to take a beat before 'mendacity' for dramatic effect (Williams 2.50). I need to be serious when telling Big Daddy my reasons to drink. Mr. Hartfield wants me to take more time with my monologue and I was concerned I was too slow. He wants me to keep the intensity of our fight but not to flail. I did this a bit as a character choice. I felt Brick may be a bit out of control but according to Mr. Hartfield, "his alcoholism is under his constant control." This note has clarified any inconsistency with my characters alcoholism. I am ready for our next rehearsal.

Last night was our first run nonstop run through with everybody there. I am coming back from sickness. I missed rehearsal yesterday. This was the first time I have ever missed a tech rehearsal. I was exhausted and very sick. I got a lot of rest yesterday and caught up on work. Today I was coming off of sickness and not back to 100 percent. Tonight the cast had our first dress. The dress rehearsal was great.

April 18th, 2006

I need to be aware of my weight on the cast. I was relaxing into the crutch tonight because of exhaustion. My volume was not as strong in the first act. I am recovering from food poisoning and my energy is low.

April 19th, 2006

The cast had better energy in the beginning this evening. Mrs. Harrell and I were both focusing on listening and energy. Tonight I gave ‘disgust’ upstage and I need to give the line to the audience (Williams 2.50). Big Daddy wants me to wait till he turns on ‘drunken whelp’ (Williams 2.49). My energy went down in Act II tonight. I think I was more focused on Act I. I feel as if I am losing connection in my monologue. I need to prepare nightly with the appropriate imagery before performance. Tonight I had a physical and drunken lean when I told Big Daddy I stopped believing in myself. The movement felt so real and natural that Mr. Hartfield requested for me to keep the motion. Honestly, I was trying to find my balance. Discovery in accidents is a new concept.

April 20th, 2006

Tonight was opening night! Half of our theatre was filled. The cast was very excited. Act I felt a bit slow. I need to have more energy in my interaction with Maggie. Mr. Hartfield said, “Tonight’s Act II was the best it has been.” The cast was connected tonight and I took time on my monologue. Act III flew by. Mae’s beads broke onstage and she called Big Daddy ‘Dig Baddy.’ The cast received a standing ovation in the end and an audience member said I reminded her of Josh Lucas! Sweet!

April 21st, 2006

The downpour delayed my arrival to the theatre. There were no parking places. I was there late and had to rush to get ready. Luckily, I warmed up my voice on the drive. I felt

I had to run onstage. My energy was not there during the first act. I needed more time to do my y buzz warm up. The Director thought my voice was great. I have to honor the compliment to Earl Weaver for my prior musical theatre warm up. The appropriate warm up adds to my confidence onstage.

The most frightening thing about tonight was Maggie freezing after “well sooner or later it’s bound to soften you up” (Williams 1.13). I actually thought I went up. Maggie skipped about six pages of dialogue and I cued in Big Mama to recover. The act continued roughly as I tried to reassure my partner and worked to pick up the energy. Ms. Harrell apologized and said, “I went up.” I tried to calm her to keep the energy going. Tonight I banged the crutch handle. The grip almost went off stage. I caught the handle and used it to point and laugh at Maggie at the same time she is being ridiculed by the little girl. The foul up was the energy rush the cast needed.

Everything was going great until I almost pummeled Big Daddy instead of grabbing my crutch. When I delivered the line, “How about these birthday congratulations, these many, many happy returns of th’ day when ev’rybody but you knows there won’t be any,” the line caught me off guard and I became emotional (Williams, Cat 2.59). After the line came a guttural reaction to what I had just done. I made a weak and high “awe” sound. I went with the emotion because the feeling was on the breath. The moment was deeply emotional and sad. I went offstage and everyone backstage was crying.

Act III went well and after the show I felt emotionally drained. I scooted away from Big Daddy on the bed and Mr. Hartfield liked that moment. It was as though the repulsion of

being close to another man consumes me. The guilt, the shame, and my own self disgust repels me from contact with any man. I loved Act II tonight. I felt very connected with Mr. Hughes. Mr. Hughes and I listened well. There were new things happening in the moment tonight and the cast was committed like never before. I felt as if we had just played a championship game.

Mr. Hartfield wants no new physical business with the crutch and I can not blame him. The crutch almost flying offstage scared us all. Mr. Hartfield stated, "If you get emotional you need to take a beat to swallow tears and go on." I agree Brick would do that. Something very interesting tonight happened. The Director says, "I know Maggie doesn't give you as much as Big Daddy." This took me off guard because I have never had a Director say this to me. I told him Ms. Harrell and I will work on this act and we will be better tomorrow. The Stage Manager even said, "Maggie consistently goes up on that page," and told me to be aware. I took the comments with stride and only tried to better my performance.

April 22st, 2006

The show got better with every performance as more connections were made with my character and his tormented creator.

Brick was both the creation of what Tom was and what his father, Cornelius, wanted his son to be. Brick was a star athlete plagued by a secret and Tom became a celebrated playwright tormented for *his* secret. Brick's took to the bottle to deal with guilt and his

inner disgust. Tom, later known as Tennessee, did the same. Tennessee Williams abused drugs, sex, and alcohol to deal with *his* guilt and critical disgust. Brick lost the love of his life, Skipper, without confiding his mutual love. Tennessee lost the love of his life, Frank Merlo, by continually cheating and rejecting his mutual love. Both Brick and Tennessee were devastated and forever altered by the loss of their companions. Brick was adored by the community then forgotten as an alcoholic and conquered football star. Tennessee Williams was revered by Broadway as America's greatest playwright then forgotten as an alcoholic and Broadway dud. Tom's father, Cornelius Williams, wanted his son to be the prized football player he could brag upon at poker night. Big Daddy wanted his son to be the proud successor of his prized plantation. Both Tom and Brick lacked paternal love, but Big Daddy eventually doted upon his son for revealing his truth. Tom took aspects of his father (Cornelius) and created the father he always wanted (Big Daddy). Unfortunately, Cornelius never gave his son - the genius known to the rest of the world as Tennessee Williams - the love he always needed.

Some of these connections existed before Tom wrote *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Other connections became the haunting and tragic irony of Tennessee Williams besieged life.

CHAPTER FIVE: HONORING BRICK'S AMBIGUITY

Considering all the historical and social significance that made *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* a staple of the American Theatre it was a genuine pleasure to celebrate my Master of Fine Arts in acting thesis by portraying the role of Brick Pollitt. The gift of Williams's most ambiguous character is that you have so many choices in the depiction. Regardless of all the adulation, academic writing, and critical commentary this ambiguity can present major challenges for the actor. Many actors fall into the trap of portraying Brick as the bitter alcoholic, the sloppy drunk, or even the bewildered loner. These performances generally are forgotten and receive bad reviews because they fall into the trap of playing a stereotype and lack the specificity of real life. Having noted the previous my duty was to embark on a human portrayal of Brick Pollitt. My Brick would breathe. As an ambiguous character in search of truth, my Brick Pollitt would be the rich multidimensional character worthy of Williams's true literary intent: Brick's humanity would outshine his addiction to alcohol and sexual identity. My research prior to rehearsal clarified many key elements of the play and defined my most significant acting challenge: how does an actor play 'ambiguous?' My training at UCF convinced me that specific choices and clear actions were the best approach to any role. Therefore, I made the choice to play the decisively ambiguous Brick Pollitt as a man in active avoidance of the people, hard truths, and doubts that surround him. Avoidance became my flesh and blood understanding and active passport to the central ambiguity of the literary character.

My characters need for active avoidance begins before my initial entrance onstage. My best friend, Skipper, committed suicide. I have turned to alcohol blaming my wife, Maggie, for his death. The local news chronicled breaking my ankle, the night before, in a drunken fall. My father, Big Daddy, is being given a birthday celebration of another year of life amidst my knowledge of his near death. All my character wants to do is to avoid chaos. Normally I would flee but my cast and broken ankle prevent my leaving. My means of escape is through my daily intoxication ritual. My character drinks to reach the peace he calls, 'the click' (Williams, Cat 2.47). Alcohol is what I need and my wife and father are hurdles to my inebriation. Maggie wants a child, Big Daddy wants to "straighten" me out, and I want to retreat (Williams, Cat 2.48). Their desire for attention is met with my need to run.

Brick's need for active avoidance is paramount in achieving his toxic peace. As the play opens, Maggie is getting ready to attend Big Daddy's last birthday party and I am drinking to avoid the stress. My initial choice was "to vanish." This works in the beginning as I ignore Maggie's ranting exposition. I vanish by drinking until Maggie's remarks, "living alone with someone you love can be lonelier- than living entirely alone- if the one that y' love doesn't love you" (Williams, Cat 1.12). This demand for my attention changed my acting tactic to "to repulse" with the line "take a lover" (Williams, Cat 1.18). This works until Maggie refuses my repugnance and attempts to initiate physical contact. Maggie offers a cologne rub and her shoulder to lean on upon dropping my crutch. Refusing her I play "to thrust" by demanding my crutch and pushing her away

from the liquor cabinet. Momentarily delaying her physical advances, she then demands I sign Big Daddy's birthday card and refuses to leave me alone during his birthday celebration. I then play "to punish" with, "you forget the conditions on which I agreed to stay on living with you" (Williams, Cat 1.16). This works then Maggie attempts to make me jealous claiming other men stare at her. Maggie's tactic fails and as last resort she confronts my former relationship with Skipper in an attempt to regain my attention. This outrages me as I play "to blame" by scolding her for naming my relationship "dirty" responding, "Not love Maggie but friendship with Skipper, and you are naming it dirty" (Williams, Cat 1.27). My dodging works until Maggie begins chasing me screaming, "I'm namin' it so damn clean that' 'death was the only icebox where you could keep it" (Williams, Cat 1.27). My approach then changes in order to silence her. I play "to shock" by raising my crutch and threatening, "Do you want me to hit you with this crutch? You know I could kill you with this crutch" (Williams, Cat 1.27). I swing my crutch at her, miss, and fall. This action amplifies my characters need for avoidance and ends Act I.

Act II begins with the entrance of Big Daddy's birthday party celebration. Avoidance of everyone has been successful until party is brought into my room. My need to flee is amplified by the presence of my family especially my father. I play "to evade" by going outside and indulging in alcohol to escape. Leaving works until Big Daddy demands Maggie to bring me in to talk. Speaking with Big Daddy requires facing the reason for my drunkenness. Facing Big Daddy, my approach changes "to relate" by gossiping with him about the family. I do this in order to distract him from my intoxication. Big Daddy

is diverted by the conversation until he blocks my way to the liquor cabinet asking, “Why do you drink?” (Williams, Cat 2.50). I have chosen the moment my character defines his inebriated peace, ‘the click,’ is the moment he discovers he is an alcoholic (Williams, Cat 2.47). I play “to withdraw” upon this self discovery in order to gain empathy from Big Daddy and to get another drink. The empathy tactic works as I succeed making my way back to the liquor cabinet. Big Daddy is not satisfied with my response and persists for another answer by cornering me and taking my crutch. I then play “to crawl” to avoid the investigation. This tactic is successful until Big Daddy takes my alcohol demanding, “Why do you drink?” (Williams, Cat 1.50). I play “to blame” claiming, “Disgust with mendacity,” focusing my blame on Maggie diverting discussion of Skipper (Williams, Cat 2.50). My choice changes abruptly when Big Daddy claims, “You started drinking when your friend Skipper died” (Williams, Cat 2.54). My acting tactic changes immediately. I play to erupt with, “How bout these birthday congratulations, these many happy returns when everybody but you knows there won’t be any!”(Williams, Cat 2.59). The explosion propels Big Daddy’s focus. Big Daddy diverts from harassing his truth telling son to blaming his lying family. Mutual truths are revealed in the exchange furthermore Brick and Big Daddy remain the only characters who have not lied to each other. However, my character is disgusted with himself to the extent of revealing his father’s death sentence. This explosion results in Brick’s active avoidance of being called a ‘fairy’. The outburst marks my major discovery with Brick Pollitt’s internal homophobia.

The discovery of my characters homophobia allowed me to determine several choices regarding my relationships and identified my need for active avoidance through inebriation. I screen my homophobia with alcohol. My major hurdle in the play is coming to terms with my sexual identity. The ‘mendacity’ I harbor is with my self and I drink to deny that truth (Williams, Cat 2.50). My character drinks to escape. Previously, I had a relationship with Maggie, Skipper was alive, and I was sober. I have chosen my alcoholism did not begin when Maggie forced Skipper to admit his love for me. My alcoholism began when Skipper killed himself. I have chosen I feel guilt in my inability to face the truth of my relationship with Skipper and I feel accountable for his death. I drink to screen the guilt of killing my friend upon rejecting his phone confession. I also drink to achieve ‘the click’ (Williams, Cat 2.47). This is the only place I have defined where I feel a sense of relief which led to my next discovery.

I have chosen that Skipper exists in ‘the click’ (Williams, Cat 2.47). I have chosen this because I reveal to Big Daddy that I let go of all my disgust and frustration when I reach my intoxicated peace and everything is peaceful. I have chosen Skipper exists in this inebriated haze because of several moments in the play. I tell Big Daddy the only thing I have left to live for is alcohol. I even reveal my relationship as being the one “true” thing in my life. I have no desire to sleep with Maggie or to play ball any longer. I reveal I have to drink until I achieve ‘the click’ (Williams, Cat 2.47). This goal of peace and need to deny my homophobia is so strong that I stop at nothing to achieve it. Therefore I have chosen that my character idealistically accesses Skipper through ‘the click’ (Williams,

Cat 2.47). Skipper's absence remains a constant presence due to my characters continual inebriated resurrection of his memory. This alcohol induced faux reality is the peaceful realm where I can be with Skipper far from the self abusive homophobic existence. I escape my inner battle with homophobia, guilt over Skippers death, and resurrect his memory. Skipper and I are finally together when I reach 'the click' (Williams, Cat 2.47). These moments led me to decide I was in love with Skipper and not ready to face that reality. Defining my love for Skipper was the key in defining my interactions with Maggie and Big Daddy.

Reaching Skipper through my alcoholic peace identifies my need to actively disengage in conversations with Maggie and Big Daddy. Skipper, my love, is in 'the click' and Maggie and Big Daddy are hurdles to my peaceful dream (Williams, Cat 2.47). Maggie and Big Daddy make me want to escape. I cannot leave the room due to my broken ankle but I flee through actively disengaging with alcohol. Maggie and Big Daddy are brash and loud as they rant with their stories and gossip. I respond in short interjections and tell Big Daddy I like "solid quiet" so I have no problems getting to my toxic peace (Williams, Cat 2.44). My homophobia facilitates a fear having my daily goal of peace intercepted. I attempt to dodge conversations, possible accusations, and having to attend Big Daddy's birthday celebration with alcohol. My ritualistic need for escape defines my reason for active disengagement. The further I am from my inner chaos the closer I am to peace. I have chosen my world with Maggie equals chaos and being with Skipper is peace. Like the thriving plantation honors Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, 'the click' honors my legacy

with Skipper (Williams, Cat 2.47). I actively disengage daily into my ritualistic escape from the realistic to the idealistic. The need to actively disengage determined my final choice of the play.

I go to bed with Maggie to get to my alcohol. I have chosen this because all I want to do is disengage into my intoxicated peace to be with Skipper. Maggie, consequently, fulfills her lie about being pregnant. My character has always been in control and has not been powerless until now. My dominance over Maggie is replaced by capitulation in the final act. I have chosen this because my character no longer shares any harsh words with Maggie. My character appears defeated in his awareness of his truth. I have chosen that Maggie and I become a team in the final act. I have found a new teammate in Maggie to replace Skipper. I finally acknowledge Skipper is dead and Maggie is alive. My guilt has been alleviated in my revelation to Big Daddy and to myself. My job is not to show how my character solves or understands his problems but how he attempts to deal with them. I deal with my problems by staying with my new teammate found in Maggie and revive the memory of Skipper by disengaging with my alcoholic resurrection. Maggie and I go to bed with one another with a mutual knowledge of my love for Skipper and my need to reach him through alcohol. Maggie and I both get what we want as we sleep together.

Brick Pollitt is arguably the most ambiguous character in American Theatre. I was determined to honor Williams's true intent with my portrayal and my major struggle involved defining how to play ambiguous. Articulating choices to support the writer's

intention was my goal. The defining breakthrough moment I had with Brick comes in his explosion with Big Daddy when he reveals his internal homophobic truth. My characters internal homophobia defined my drive for alcohol. Outlining Skippers existence in ‘the click’ allowed me to resolve I was in love with him (Williams, Cat 2.47). My characters major journey is confronting his love for Skipper amidst his self disgust. The need to escape my self torment explained my drive for alcohol and explained my choice to actively disengage in conversations with Maggie and Big Daddy. My daily ritualistic need to inebriate defines my choice in going to bed with Maggie. I go to bed with Maggie to get my alcohol to be with Skipper. My love for Skipper amidst my internal homophobia was the key to sustaining my portrayal of Brick Pollitt as an ambiguous character in search of truth.

Finally, my decision to honor the writer’s intent is defined by this statement from Tennessee Williams: “The bird that I hope to catch in the net of this play is not the solution of one man’s psychological problem. I’m trying to catch the true quality of experience-fiercely charged!-interplay of live human beings in the thundercloud of a common crisis. Some mystery should be left in the revelation of a character in a play, just as a great deal of mystery is always left in the revelation of a character in life, even in one’s own character to himself” (Waters 37).

I will take this statement along with me to my next journey. Thanks Tennessee Williams.

APPENDIX A: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

A. Approach and Style of the Play

Question 1:

1. What is the genre of the play?

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a Contemporary American Tragedy. Although the play is plot and character driven there are aspects of realism. The genre is tragic but Cat on a Hot Tin Roof has many comedic moments. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof addresses serious themes and social issues. The plot line is more complex and textural than a comedy

Question 2:

2. What is the basic or central meaning of the play?

The play revolves around the theme of ‘mendacity’ (Williams, Cat 2.50). Brick says to Big Daddy “mendacity is the system that we live in” (Williams, Cat 2.59). This quote refers to the moors that must keep truth from being revealed to society. The two primary facts that must be hidden are Brick’s homosexual desire and Big Daddy’s imminent death.

Question 3:

3. How does your character contribute to the basic meaning or central idea of the play?

The play revolves around ‘mendacity’ and Brick’s lie has been to himself (Williams, Cat 2.50). Brick and Big Daddy are the only characters in the play that have never lied to each other. They also have to face their own truths that cannot be denied. Brick’s truth must be repressed at all costs due to his self disgust. Skipper is dead and Brick’s solace in

alcohol may soon kill him. His alcoholism also threatens his inheritance of the plantation. Everyone's fate rests in the hands of Brick facing his truth.

Question 4:

4. Is your character honestly drawn or has he/she been distorted to affect the central idea of the play?

Brick is honestly drawn. Brick represents every human in their personal search for truth. Even though Brick has been revered in his football glory to an iconic status he questions his being like every other man.

Question 5:

5. Indicate any selected illustrations of action and/or dialogue of your character that help to reveal the central idea of the play.

Truth is the central idea of the play. Act II has many selections that help reveal the central idea of the play. When Big Daddy tells Brick his alcohol problem is not living but dodging away from life, Brick responds with, "I want to dodge away from it (Williams, Cat 2.52). Brick wants to escape his truth and live in an idealistic. This world of artificial peace is achieved by his realistic alcoholic destruction. Another line revealing the central meaning of the play is "have you ever heard the word mendacity?" (Williams, Cat 2.50). This line refers to what Brick calls "lyin' and liars" (Williams, Cat 2.51). Brick's disgust

is with his self denial and the societal moors that have initiated that self disgust. The central meaning is revealed by Big Daddy, “This disgust of mendacity is disgust with yourself! You dug the grave of your friend an’ kicked him in it!-before you’d face the truth with him!” (Williams, Cat 2.58). Brick then reveals Big Daddy’s cancer in an uproar, “How about these birthday congratulations, these many returns when everybody but you knows there won’t be any!” (Williams, Cat 2.59). Brick become’s society’s victim as he has become homophobic to the point of giving his father his death sentence. When Big Daddy asks if they have been lying about his cancer report Brick replies, “Mendacity is a system that we live in” (Williams, Cat 2.59).

When Brick apologizes about giving his father the bad news he accuses the alcohol but refers to the truth in this analogy, “Maybe it’s bein’ alive that makes people lie, an’ bein’ almost not alive makes me sort of accidentally truthful” (Williams, Cat 2.59). Here Brick tells us that to exist is to lie and in the consequence of dodging life he finds truth. He then refers true friendship and trust, “I don’t know, but anyway, we’ve been friends-an’ being friends is telling each other th’ truth. You told me! I told you!” (Williams, Cat 2.60).

Question 6:

6. Does your character fit into the genre chosen by the Playwright? Why?

Yes, Brick is the tragic hero. The lesson and growth that Brick must endure in the show is facing the truth. Brick struggles with both internal and external forces, and is made to face the challenge. Brick must face his fear of being branded a “sissy” and fight to win over the estate and his life back. Brick represents the ultra male archetype. Brick appears one-dimensional because of his hardened exterior. Despite allowing only certain qualities to emerge he has been made more realistic when forced to face his human quandary.

B. Where

Question 1:

1. Place and surroundings - location

a. Country/State, etc.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof takes place in the United States Mississippi Delta on “the richest land this side of the Valley Nile” (Williams, Cat 2.42).

b. City/Town/Village, etc.

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is set in a town called Glorious Hill. Glorious Hill is a community significant enough to have their activities written about in the Clarksdale Register. The play deals with a fight to win over a large 28, 000 acre plantation. The setting is set in a small farming town. When people are not working on the farms or out in the fields they are attending church, local football games, and enjoy their favorite past time, gossip.

c. Building/Structure/Room

The entire play takes place in the bedroom of Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. This room was shared by the former lovers and ran the plantation. “This room shared by the two lovers for 30 years, ‘It is gently and poetically haunted by a relationship that must have involved a tenderness which was uncommon’” (Adler 152). Their presence is said to haunt the room. The bedroom is large enough to fit the entire family in when they all enter. The room is also surrounded by the gallery which the family and visitors use to eavesdrop. There are many entrances and exits with three sections leading unto the gallery, one into the hallway, and another to the bathroom.

Question 2:

2. Immediate past location

My immediate past location is the bathroom where I was showering and doctoring myself from an injury received the previous night on the high school athletic field.

C. When - Year and/or Period

Question 1:

1. Are there any historical or sociological factors pertinent to the play, scene, and character?

No

a. Period - Clothing Styles (affect movement, gestures, etc.)

Brick is dressed in a pair of pajamas which allows him freedom with movement and fight scenes. My obstacle with the costume is the large cast. I cannot put weight on my right foot and must use a crutch through the play.

b. Period-Caste Systems, Social Structures, Customs, Beliefs, etc.

Something interesting about the family structure to note, however, is the father's favoritism toward his younger son over the older. The reader sees Big Daddy's partiality with Brick as he states, "I hate Gooper and those five screamin' monkeys like parrots in a jungle an' that bitch Mae! Why should I turn over 28,000 acres of the richest land this side of the Valley Nile to not my kind? But why in the hell, on the other hand, Brick, should I subsidize a dam' fool on the bottle? Liked, or not liked, maybe even-loved!" (Williams, Cat 2.52). Big Daddy claims his affection for the second son Brick and hopes he will have a child to take over the plantation.

The family does not speak of religion except for the fact that church bores Big Daddy when he listens to Reverend Tooker. The family gossips about Brick's sexuality but Maggie states, "I respect it. I think it was noble" (Williams, Cat 1.26). Big Daddy even

tells Brick he can understand anything. Society's moors have led Brick to hiding his love for Skipper in shame.

c. Period - Political Factors

The political factors would be those of Mississippi in the mid 1950's. The characters live in a free, seemingly democratic society. The play takes place during the mid 1950's. Football heroes and self made millionaires were giving in to a more corporate, educated America.

d. Period - Economic Factors

The economic factors present in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* deal with Big Daddy's 28,000 acre plantation inheritance. Big Daddy worked the majority of his life to turn Jack Straw and Peter Ochello's plantation into "the richest land this side of the Valley Nile" (Williams, *Cat* 2.42). Everyone is out to get a piece of the plantation with the exception of Brick. Gooper and his wife Mae have had five children with another on the way in hopes of proving to Big Daddy there will be enough help to take over for generations.

Maggie is after the money and plantation because she has been so "goddamn disgustingly poor all her life" (Williams, *Cat* 1.25). She seeks to live a prosperous life because "you can be young without money but you can't be old without it" (Williams, *Cat* 1.25).

Maggie understands that Big Daddy wants a grandson. Maggie will do what she has to in order to win over the plantation even lying about a child to come.

e. Period - Philosophical Factors

Maggie, Big Daddy, Brick and Big Mama each have a distinct philosophy on life.

During their monologues and rants the reader understands their philosophies. While Big Daddy, Brick, and Big Mama seem to have a deeper philosophy on life, Maggie seems to be ruled by money. She continues to live a life with her husband even though she suspects he is a homosexual. She does this in hopes of changing her destiny to one filled with wealth. She fights for her dream with a husband who recourses to the bottle. He does this over his depression with the death of Skipper. Maggie understands that their marriage was not as pure as they both wanted but will continue to fight for her dreams of a prosperous life. The reader learns of her shameless intentions. Maggie is shameless in her desperation to win over the estate. The reader understands her philosophy with, “You can be young and without money but you can’t be old without it” (Williams, Cat 1.25).

Big Daddy has been faced with death and believes he has been cleared of the cancer diagnosis. His escape from death has allowed him to focus on life. He has stepped back into life with a drive to “straighten’ out” his son and shares his philosophies with hopes of changing his son (Williams, Cat 2.48). Big Daddy is fearful that his son will soon die

like Skipper. There is also another revelation with Big Daddy. Even though he has spent his life building the plantation for future Pollitt generations he has discovered that wealth is not as precious as life itself. Big Daddy's philosophy represents the reverse of Maggie's. Maggie is a young woman who thinks life cannot be lived without wealth. Big Daddy was similar to Maggie in his young age doing what he had to do in order to attain wealth. Now at the end of his life Big Daddy sees his wealth as worthless in terms of the experience of life. "In the persons of Maggie and Big Daddy Tennessee Williams created two of the most powerful and original characters in American drama-one seemingly on the edge of death, and the other on the edge of life" (Bloom, *American* 284).

Big Mama is both faced with the death of her husband of forty years and her money hungry children. She is grieving her husband's passing and appalled at the urgency of her children who disregard their dying father. The children are after money and signing the will before Big Daddy passes. This sends Big Mama into an outrage and later a breakdown where she reveals her philosophy on life. "Oh, you know we just got to love each other, an' stay together all of us just as close as we can, specially now that such a black thing has come and moved into this place without invitation." (Williams, *Cat* 3.75). Big Mama becomes the foundation of love in the home in her hopes of keeping her family together.

Brick's philosophy is bleak due to his depression over Skipper's death. Brick has found solace in drink and continues to intoxicate himself daily until he achieves peace. Brick tells Big Daddy that he drinks out of "disgust" and what he calls "mendacity" (Williams, Cat 2.50). He says "Mendacity is the system that we live in" (Williams, Cat 2.59). The audience understands his state of mind when he asks Big Daddy, "Why can't exceptional friendship, real, real, deep, deep friendship between two men be respected as something clean and decent without being thought of as-fairies!" (Williams, Cat 2.56). Big Daddy believes there can be. Brick denies his feelings to the point of being a victim of his own homophobia. He drinks to find solace with his existence on a more peaceful plane away from his own disgust.

f. At war? At peace? Post war?

The play takes place in the fifties which was during the American Cold War. This was a time where commercial images of smiling faces were juxtaposed with nuclear attack preparatory films. The smiling images were used to create the illusion of a peaceful world. This illusion occurs in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. All of the family members have created the illusion that Big Daddy is in great health. Also there is an illusion created by Brick and Skipper of their true feelings for one another. Brick maintains the illusion, yet the guilt has led him to alcoholism. The war in the house deals with the inheritance of the

estate. They all are at war for the estate. The fate of the plantation lies in Brick's acceptance of the truth and refusing the illusion he created.

Question 2:

1. What is the season of the year - fall, spring, summer, winter?

The play takes place in the early evening in summer. The Mississippi Delta is amidst heavy vegetation, swamp-like, and alongside the Mississippi River. The heat and humidity give in to the seduction of Maggie the Cat. Heat is amidst the household and Maggie is pressured to sleep with Brick. Brick is hassled to face the truth of his sexuality. Big Daddy is pressured to face his imminent death. Brick and Maggie open the play dressed as lightly as possible due to the heat. Maggie and Brick reveal much of their bodies and are very comfortable with their appearance. The lightly dressed bodies add to the element of heat, lust, desire, and sexual attraction.

Question 3:

2. Weather conditions - raining, snowing, sunny, etc.

The weather conditions are hot and humid. There are crows cawing, croquet games are being played, and Big Daddy's birthday party are all going on outside. The storm arises in the third act the same time Gooper demands "a square deal an' by God, I expect to get one" (Williams, *Cat* 3.72). The storm then arises in the third act and everyone must come

inside as the family begins to accept Big Daddy's passing and all secrets have been revealed.

Question 4:

1. Time of day or night?

The play begins in the early evening and then ends into the night as characters dress for bed. In the beginning of the evening Maggie is getting ready for Big Daddy's birthday party. By the end of the act the party is about to begin. By the opening of the second act the party is then moved upstairs to Brick and Maggie's bedroom due to his injured ankle. By the end of the act the party is over and they are shooting off fireworks in the backyard. The third act travels deeper into the night as the characters dress for bed.

D. Who – Character

Question 1:

1. Background

a. Who are/were your parents? What do/did they do for a living? How do they feel about that? Are/were they happy?

My father, Mr. Pollitt, is known as Big Daddy. Big Daddy was raised by his father until age ten when his father passed away. When his father died he began to work for Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. He quit school at ten years old and became the overseer for the plantation. He worked his entire life to provide for his family with anything they needed

except for love. Big Daddy was driven to be the best at everything he did. I became very distant from my father. When Big Daddy tries to reconcile a relationship with me I reveal that our conversation goes nowhere. Big Daddy's awareness of the lack of his relationship with me happened when he was first threatened with death. He sees a strong need to help his me with my alcohol abuse. When he attempts to talk to me I refuse. Big Daddy is not really interested in me. Big Daddy and I both eventually acknowledge our distance but recognize that we have not lied to each other. This kind of respect for one another proves to be true for us. Skipper and I were not entirely true to one another.

My mother, Big Mama, raised the kids and stood by Big Daddy's side. Even after her husband accuses her of taking over in his death she remains by his side. After being ridiculed by her husband she claims she loves him. Big Daddy continues through the play talking about other women. Big Daddy shouts from the top of his lungs without any regards to Big Mama hearing the conversation. Big Daddy even wants Big Mama to leave him alone because she makes him sick.

Big Mama and I get along well. I do not like the way my father treats mother. I feel sorry for her. I am the only one who empathizes with mother in her grief much like Big Mama empathizes with me in Skipper's death. Gooper and Doc Baugh suggest a prescription for my alcoholism. Big Mama tells them I do not need anything. She tells them I am upset

over Skippers death. There is connection with mourning the loss of our companions. Big Mama calls me her only son out of this mutual respect and understanding.

b. Where/when were you born? What is your nationality?

I am a citizen of the United States of America. I am now twenty seven and now is the mid 1950's. I was born around the late 1920's in Mississippi. I am a true American.

c. Where do/did you live? How do you feel about it?

I live in the Mississippi Delta. I was raised on a plantation with acres and acres of land. I was raised by my mother and field hands. I had anything I wanted growing up. My father was wealthy despite his lack of attention. I enjoyed where I grew up and even went on to attend Ole Miss. I became a professional football player on my own professional team with my best friend Skipper. All the players were so proud of where we were from that we called ourselves "the Dixie Stars" (Williams, Cat 2.57).

The town I live in is very small and claustrophobic. Everyone talks about each other and thinks they know me. They all talk about my friendship with Skipper and I am disgusted with all the dirty lies and liars. I love this town and the memories but I don't think I can bear living here. I care nothing about inheriting the plantation. I just want my friend back.

e. Do you have any brothers or sisters? How do you feel about that?

I have a brother Gooper eight years older than me. He was the brains of the family and always tried to impress my father who never paid him any attention. I felt sorry for him once but am a bit disgusted by the extent of his behavior. He continues to strive for my father's attention with having many kids, becoming a lawyer, and helping over see some legal documentation with the plantation. I honestly, can't stand to be in the same room with him.

f. When you were growing up, did you have many friends? Were you popular? Why? How do you feel? What were you like as a child?

I was a popular kid because my daddy had money. I never had a problem finding friends or a date. I met Skipper when I was a kid and we started playing football together. We ended up playing every year together and perfected our "long, long, high, high passes that couldn't be intercepted except by time" (Williams, Cat 2.57). Skipper was the one person I could trust. Skipper and I had a friendship. I never understood why "exceptional friendship, real, real, deep, deep, friendship between two men be respected as somethin' clean an' decent without bein' thought of as-fairies" (Williams, Cat 2.56).

g. Did/do you go to school? How long? Did/do you like it? Why?

School has its good and bad points. I did not like school but I loved sports. I played football and track and field. Those were my favorites. I did not like everything else in school. Class was a bore. I think a few of my teachers let me pass because my family had money. I got a football scholarship to Ole Miss and graduated for years later. Football got me through school. The sport was my love, motivation, and respect.

h. Were/are you a good student? Why? How do you feel?

No I was not a good student. I was a good football player. I was always compared to Gooper. Gooper was the brains in the family and I was the athlete. Skipper and I had the same teachers and coaches. The teachers liked him more and the coaches liked me.

i. Are you smart, clever, wise, cunning, intelligent, learned, etc.? How do you feel about it?

I am clever, smart and wise. I can be cunning in getting what I want or need. I can get my way with my father, mother, and Maggie by using a barrage of tactics. I never thought I was too smart but I never really cared. Gooper is the smart one in the family and we see where that's taken him. I was the good looking athlete. Everyone knows my name and a small few know Gooper. I could care less. I use to love my popularity and live for the fame. Now I live for alcohol. Life is painful. I want to dodge life. I have learned a lot

about fame and people within my life. The very people who built me up to fame have brought me down in their disgust to someone else's truth and slander.

j. Who have/had the greatest influences on you? In what way? How do you feel about that?

Skipper has had the greatest influence on me. Whenever I needed a friend he was always by my side. He is the one who actually saw past my image and got to know me for who I am. Skipper asked questions about how I felt as opposed to how I was. He took time to get to know me. He understood me. This was the only person in my life who saw past the money and fame. Skipper and I had an honest friendship and a real respect for one another. He was also a great player on the field and always encouraged me to work harder. He taught me that if I want something I've never had I had to do something I've never done. Skipper and I then started "the Dixie Stars" (Williams, Cat 2.57).

Question 2:

2. Present

a. What do you do in life? (job, title, etc.)

I was a sports announcer. I can't bear to go back to it. Why would you think I would want to go back? Go back to "sittin' in a glass box watchin' games I can't play. Describin' what I can't do while other players do it? Sweatin' out their disgust and confusion in

contests I'm not fit for? Drinkin' a coke, half bourbon, so I can stand it? That's no dam' good any more-time just outran me" (Williams, Cat 2.53). I use to be a pro football player for "the Dixie Stars" (Williams, Cat 2.57).

b. What is your philosophical/religious background and preference? Do you practice a religion?

Yea I was raised going to church every Sunday. I use to love the games Skipper and I would play in the playground after church. Skipper and I went to church together too. Skipper and I went to a Southern Baptist church. My family has been going to First Baptist for years. Maggie and I go when we have to.

c. Do you believe in God or gods? Spirit? Force?

I believe in God. If you don't then you better get out of town. The Pollitts do not interact with people who do not believe in God. God loves everybody though. No matter how messed up people are God loves us all and teaches us to love. I think God loves me. I hope he does. I hope the Devil doesn't get me. I have been pretty careless.

I wish I knew more about spirits to say I believed. I have sometimes felt a presence in the house I grew up in. Particularly in the room that Maggie and I sleep in. That room was

the room of Straw and Ochello, who I think are sissies. Well I sometimes look into the moon and talk to the man in it. He is a crazy, cool fella I know too well.

d. Do you believe in life after death, heaven, hell, etc.?

I believe in heaven. Yes. That is a crazy question. That is all there is to believe in. I know sodomites don't go to heaven. I think I'll see everybody I have ever known one day.

e. Do you have any special fears, hang-ups, etc.? If yes, what?

I don't have any special fears but I despise liars. I think that people are all here to love and find true friendship. I feel sorry for those who cannot find it.

f. Do you have any special likes, dislikes, prejudices? If so, what?

I am disgusted by all liars. I hate how everyone lies about me. People think they know me and they know Skipper but they have no idea. I hate people who think they know everything and then lie about it.

g. Do you consider yourself to be moral, immoral or amoral? Why?

I am moral. I play it fair. I think that everyone should be treated with respect. All people don't think the same as I do. Being patronized or looked down upon is disgusting. Too many people judge each other when they need to look at themselves.

h. How would you describe yourself?

Strong, I am strong and I get stronger by the day. But I'm tired. "Time just outran me, got there first" (Williams, Cat 2.53). I deserve respect.

i. What is your societal level? Are you high class, low class, aristocracy, royal, middle class?

Class should not matter. I feel like class is more important than anything else.

Appearances drive me to the bottle. I cannot stand fakeness. I cannot seem to escape pretenses. I once was able to. I get back to stillness with 'the click' (Williams, Cat 2.47).

There I have peace with myself without judgment. People in town would say that the Pollitt's are high class. Just because my dad has money does not mean my family is high class. Behind closed doors people have bad habits and do things they would not like others to see.

j. How old are you now? Are you mature or immature for your age?

I am twenty seven. I think I am mature but I now realize that my age has caught up with me. I am not as young and athletic as I use to be. I miss it. I tried jumping hurdles the night before and I couldn't get past a couple. I broke my ankle because I had a drink or two.

k. How is your health? How do you feel about this?

Well I am fine as far as health is concerned. I am getting out of shape. Drinking has not helped my body or my ability to hold onto my job. I can hardly bare daily life anymore and drinking helps me get to a place more peaceful. When I am there I can no longer be bothered. Getting to that peace has been more and more difficult.

Question 3:

3. What is your marital status? Married, single, divorced, widowed? How do you feel about this?

I am married to “Maggie the Cat” (Williams, Cat 1.28). My marriage to her is falling apart. Maggie is forgetting our living conditions that we agreed upon as a couple. Getting her to leave me would be great. I tell her to find another man. She won’t leave. She wants my daddy’s money. She does not love me.

m. Do you have any children?

Kids are for Gooper and Mae not me. Maggie would not be a good mother or I a father. She wants a kid but as I told her “How in the hell on Earth do you expect to have a child by a man that can’t stand you!” (Williams, Cat 1.29).

Question 4:

4. Physical Characteristics

a. Height - short, medium, tall, etc.

I am about 6 foot.

b. Weight - thin, lean, gaunt, fat, obese, muscular, etc.

I have an athletic build but I am getting softer. I am not in as good of shape as I use to be. I blame it on the alcohol.

c. Temperament

I am self-absorbed, passionate, relaxed, stressed, scared, alone, lonely, unhappy, melancholy, troubled, loving, longing, restless, relentless, stubborn, and sick.

d. Movement

According to the Leban energy-shape theory, Brick would be classified as a glide/punch. My movements are light, direct and sustained. I am intoxicated and relaxed. I have given up and my withdrawal flows through my movement. To scare and threaten those that have crossed me I go into punch to order them away from me. This sudden strong, direct, and quick movement pattern catches everyone off guard just like it did in football.

e. Neat, sloppy, etc.

I am well groomed. I care about my appearance and always have. I am self conscious about my muscle loss. I feel myself getting old. I don't have anyone to impress though. Except for myself, I suppose.

f. Straight, erect, stooped, etc.

I am relaxed but stand up straight. I tend to hunch at the end of the day because of the heat. The temperature is so hot down here. By the end of the day you are exhausted.

Because of my ankle I am hunched over the crutch right now. I am an athlete, strong and stand tall but I am relaxed and have a buzz.

g. Handsome, average, plain, ugly, beautiful, cute, sexy, etc.

I have always been told that I was handsome. Like Big mama likes to tell everybody, “Brick never liked bein’ kissed on or made a fuss ovah, I guess because he always had too much of it-“(Williams, Cat 2.32). I do hate the attention. When people say they like me I never could tell if it was because my family had money or if they liked me. Dating always felt superficial. I never had a problem getting laid. The women I was with never really understood me. Skipper was the only person to know me.

h. Complexion and coloring

I have pale skin that burns in the sun with red curls that I have had since I was a kid. That is why they named me Brick. When I was born my hair was red like a Brick. I have always had pink cheeks as well.

i. Any physical defects scars, etc? If so, how do you feel about them?

If I had physical defects I would not be a pro athlete. The only defect I have now is my ankle and my mind. Last night I broke my ankle jumping high hurdles because I seem to have lost my mind.

j. What are you wearing? Any character externals? (glasses, cane, etc.) I wear pajamas mostly. I want them to think I need to rest due to my ankle so I won't have to go to that damn birthday party. I have to get around on a crutch now because of my injury. I am getting use to it. I have had to use one for other football injuries before.

Question 5:

5. Business and Movement

a. How does the style and/or period of the play affect (influence) your movement in the play?

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is a Contemporary American play. Cat has aspects of realism. My movement will reflect how people carry themselves today. There will be no grandiose gesturing

as there would be in a caricature of Brick.

b. How do such factors as the character's age, social status, education and health suggest the type of movement to be used in the play?

Brick is now twenty seven years old and he says to Maggie that he is getting softer. Even though Brick sees himself as old and outrun by time he still remains athletic in his maneuvering with the crutch and broken ankle. His social status has always been of high standing due to the Pollitt name he beholds. His family has money and is well respected throughout the community. Brick has always stood erect and proud of his name. Now

Brick is in repose due to his depression. Life is something that Brick wants to remove himself from. He dodges family gatherings and tries to go unnoticed. His posture is not as erect as when Skipper was alive. He is now in hiding and slumped over not appearing as proud and upstanding.

c. How do such factors as physical environment, climate, and familiarity with the surroundings suggest the movement to be used in certain scenes or the play as a whole? The characters of the play are in Mississippi during the summer. Brick is wearing the lightest possible clothing due to the heat. My character is exhausted from staying up late into the evening before jumping those hurdles. The heat effects our movement. This time period was before central heat and air so they are probably very relaxed in their movements. The heat effects my movement as I slowly move my limbs in a direct rhythm. Movements are made as effortlessly as possible in order to not induce extra heat and friction. The movements are also direct and gestures are limited. Lots of movement causes lots of extra body heat. The humidity of the Mississippi Delta is enough to break a sweat without movement. My character is built like an athlete. My body is very well built. I have chosen to add a slight androgynous sexuality with my movement. The glide effort shape best presents this sensual style of movement. This graceful masculinity adds to the sexuality and threatens the 1950's male sensibility. On the other hand his masculinity threatens his androgyny. This balance of masculine shape and androgynous movement adds to the mystery and attraction from people of both sexes. My movement

shape changes to punch when the subject of Skipper is brought up. This abrupt physical effort shape change reminds Maggie and Big Daddy that my character is a masculine threatening presence. This incorporated balance of glide and punch adds dimension to my characters sexuality. An athlete in repose is the ideal image of Brick for my Director. Mr. Hartfield believes Brick exudes sexuality. My character is familiar with the room and the obstacles. I have to maneuver around furniture and other characters to get to the liquor cabinet.

d. How does the mood of the play affect the type of movement to be used?

The mood of the play changes drastically from Act I to Act II. In Act I, the mood is apprehensive and evasive; the movement is fluid until charged by other energies invading the space. The tension of Maggie entering the room causes Brick to repulse. The entrance of family in the room also repulses Brick. Maggie is attracted to the visitors as she tries to hide her husband's inebriated state in hopes of making good impressions. During Act II, Brick is in constant repulsion from all of the family until Big Daddy takes his crutch and drink away. The mood of the second act revolves around anxiety as the audience awaits Brick's fate. The father and son play a game of hide and seek. Brick constantly hides from Big Daddy's advances. Big Daddy thinks Brick is dodging away from life. The attempts to escape reveal the universal qualities of the element air. Brick's movement is buoyant with slow speed and the rhythm is altered changes in his surroundings. Once Big Daddy tries to contain Brick he floats away. My character is finally controlled once Big Daddy takes my crutch and alcohol. The pressure builds as Brick releases information

like pinholes in a balloon. Brick's body trembles and tries to adjust to the space. My characters gesturing goes into a full 100 percent and retracts at the same rate as the pressure of being withheld escapes. My character erupts from reactions to Big Daddy's accusations. I explode with, "How bout these birthday congratulations? These many happy returns of the day when everybody but you knows there won't be any!" (Williams, Cat 2.59). At this point the gesturing goes into a direct 100 percent and then back to the weightless air-like quality when I release my shame.

e. How do the demands of dress (costume) affect the movement?

Costuming facilitates freedom of movement. The pajamas allow a full range of motion for all fight choreography and falling to the floor. The right pajama leg is cut to compensate for the large cast. There is an amount of awareness that the actor must have with the cast. My characters ankle hurts but at the same rate my need for alcohol propels me to the liquor cabinet. Also my characters injury has just occurred and he may go into full action forgetting he has an injury. This allows the actor to find moments where Brick underestimates his ankle pain. The cast never touches the floor but if it does the pain can then be revealed.

f. Does the Playwright indicate any necessary movement or business which must be incorporated into the character? If so, what does it suggest to you about playing the role?

The Playwright indicates a lot of movement for Brick. Williams indicates Brick hopping on one foot, crossing to the bar, hobbling across the room, chasing Maggie, etc. In the fight scene with Maggie when she confronts him about Skipper he chases after her with specific choreography. Williams's stage directions for Brick are to strike the bed with his crutch and charge at Maggie with his crutch directed at her. Any other movement choices for Brick are to be made based on the actor, Director and specific production's interpretation.

g. Are there any critical pieces of furniture or props which will affect (influence) movement and business? If so, what and how?

My crutch influences my movement the most. I was given the crutch two weeks into the production. The difficult thing was doing an entire three acts on a crutch night after night but remembering that Brick has just had the injury. The play takes place over one evening. Earlier that morning Brick got the injury. I wanted to be able to use the crutch well but not be a professional. Through the rehearsal process the crutch began to wear into my shoulder so I had to compensate the weight distribution. The crutch remained under my right arm and my drink in the other. Brick is onstage the whole time so he has to maneuver with the crutch and glass the entire duration. If Brick is not on the crutch then it is beside him. His glass is always being filled as well. Big Daddy is the only one who actually takes both away from him. When he does Brick is left helpless. He has only one good leg and a cast on the other.

Question 5:

5. Dialogue and Language

a. Are there any differences in language from one character to another which tend to clarify characterization?

Yes, there are a few differences distinguishing the characters from one another. Brick speaks in short, straightforward sentences. Maggie and Big Daddy speak in large monologues. These two characters are trying to get their messages across to Brick. They are also using tactics to warm him into conversations regarding Skipper. Brick speaks in short fragments until Skipper is brought up. Brick's short responses halt into ranting commands from his reaction. Maggie speaks mainly in exposition. She rants in gossip about the entire family. Brick sits and listens. Big Daddy speaks about the meaning of life because his life was threatened and he thinks is now given back to him. Brick once again sits and listens. Brick does not want to listen to either of them. He is made to listen due to his injury and having to be in the same room with his alcohol.

b. Is your character's dialogue similar to that of the other characters? What does it reveal about your particular character?

My characters dialogue is different from all of the characters. My character is a constant presence but speaks the least when onstage. Every character has a lot to say and does so. Brick sits with everything going on around him. This dynamic of every character ranting

around a silent character amplifies Brick's distance. Brick's silence is the antithesis of every character on stage acting out their own incessant demands. Brick's lack of interest in speaking about the family commotion and interest in alcohol makes his issues that much more apparent.

c. Does your character speak with any dialect or use a particular regionalism in his/her speech? Explain.

Yes. Brick and his family are from the Deep South. He makes use of elongated diphthongs and triphthongs. Much of the dialect has been written in by Williams. An example of Brick's dialect is written in the line "Because I use to jump them, an' people like t' do what they use t' do, even after they've stopped bein' able t' do it" (Williams, Cat 1.29). Many of their words are connected into the next. People describe the dialect as being muddy. The muddiness refers to the buoyancy of the elongated vowels, the musicality of the line, and the light use of consonants. The rhythm of the speech coincides with Brick's Leban shape of glide. When Brick is barraged about Skipper his speech changes. When confronted Brick has more of a tonal energy and makes clear distinction with his consonants. This tonal and radiant energy with his speech goes perfectly with the Leban shape punch. These abrupt changes in Brick give us a more round character breaking out of the obvious archetype allowing him to appear more human.

d. Are there any long speeches or passages which need to be planned or Ascored@ for performance?

In Act II, when Brick begins to reveal himself to Big Daddy there are several speeches that need to be scored for performance. The speeches in the second act are Brick's chance to rant over his bottled in rage and self torment. Brick explodes with anger and pain. These speeches result from frustration however; they are also the product of years of silence and calculated thought. The speeches are a mix of eruption, release, and forward thinking.

When Brick explodes into his speech I find myself making use of Lessac's tonal and radiant energy. The tonal energy targets my speech and the radiant energy with the consonants emphasizes my bitterness, disgust, and shock. The use of the fricatives b, d, t, and k along with the alliteration repetition create a rhythm and change of pace with Brick. Brick's voice changes from the more buoyant quality. This dynamic adds to my characters reveal. The audience is seeing a different level to Brick's character with this choice. This creates a verbal vulnerability with the character.

Another speech that will be planned is the one answering Big Daddy's question regarding Skipper cracking up in Williams Cat on a Hot Tin Roof:

All right you're asking for it, Big Daddy. We're finally goin' to have that real, true talk you wanted. It's too late to stop it now, we got to carry it through an' cover ev'ry subject. Maggie declares that Skipper an' I went into pro football after we left Ole Miss

because we were scared to grow up, wanted to keep tossin; those long, long, high, high passes that couldn't be intercepted except by time, th' aerial attack that made us famous! AN' so we did, we did, we kept it up for one season, that aerial attack we held it high! Yeah, but-that summer Maggie, she laid down the law to me-said now or never, and so I married Maggie. (2.57)

In practicing the speech I have found that Brick's disgust with Maggie is best presented by holding onto the sustainable m in Maggie and hitting the tympani drumbeat g. The Lessac number 6 vowel sound after the sustainable m sounds like a scream of terror. Every time Brick says or speaks of Maggie he gives more weight on the m sound in order to put blame on her for Skipper's death. When Brick speaks of Skipper there is a more buoyant, air-like quality as if he is speaking about an angel. This imagery of Maggie as the murderer and Skipper the angel gives the speech more dynamics. This also reveals the truth of Brick's feelings for Skipper. During the line "long, long, high, high passes" I buoyantly lift the assonance of the vowels as I visualize the image of a football ascending into heaven (Williams, Cat 2.57). The image of heaven is brought back down to Earth with the alliteration in "Maggie laid down the law" , Cat 2.57). This adds to the image of Heaven and Earth. Brick longs to be in heaven with his angel. This imagery sets up the rest of the speech.

e. Are there any factors in the character's age, social status, education, or health that will require a change from your normal speaking voice?

There are no factors that call for a change in my normal speaking voice. I am from Alabama and I naturally speak with a dialect. When I do not need the dialect I am able to turn it off. Brick's dialect comes easy to me as I was raised less than 250 miles from the Mississippi Delta where the play takes place. There are a few specifics with dropping some of the ng sounds to n. Using these specifics help me portray the character Williams wanted.

E. Motivation, Force, Desire, Objective, Intentions

Question 1:

1. What is the motivating force/desire of your character? (What drives your character throughout the play?)

a. What do you want?

Brick wants his friend Skipper back. The fact that he wants his friend back who is now dead leaves him with unbearable pain. The pain is also ascended by family and the public as everyone speculates about the relationship between the two men. This pain can not be avoided except with the help of alcohol. Brick drinks to dodge life and the pain associated with living. Since Skipper's death Brick has built a tolerance to the alcohol and has to continue to drink until he achieves his final destination which he calls 'the

click' (Williams, Cat 2.47). Brick is at peace when 'the click' is achieved (Williams, Cat 2.47). Brick calls his peace "a mechanical thing' ...Like a switch turnin' the hot light on an' the cool light on, an' all of a sudden there's peace" (Williams, Cat 2.47). Achieving peace in a life of internal torment is Brick's daily struggle.

b. What will you, or do you, do to get it?

To get to 'the click' Brick will do anything (Williams, Cat 2.47). He refuses to go to the birthday party, threatens Maggie "I could kill you with this crutch," and attempts to knock out Big Daddy to get his alcohol back (Williams, Cat 1.27). Brick is relentless with getting back his alcohol. This is the only thing that he lives for. He is even disregards his broken ankle telling Big Daddy "I can hop on one foot and if I fall I can crawl" (Williams, Cat 2.48). When Big Daddy confronts Brick about his disgust with, "You've got to live with it, there's nothin' else to live with except mendacity, is there?" (Williams, Cat 2.52). Brick thinks alcohol is another reason to live. Alcohol drives Brick through the entire play and he will do anything to get his drink.

I do achieve my objective in the end of the play. My reasons for drinking were to dodge life in hopes of achieving peace. At the end of the play I achieve my objective having after having faced my truth. I do not get Skipper back but I am relieved of the guilt that I harbored over Skipper's death.

APPENDIX B: GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES

A. Time Period/Place:

Time Period:

For one to understand the mentality of the characters in Tennessee Williams “most realistic” play one must understand the illusory decade of the fifties (Albert 86). The fifties are known as an age of convention and precision. The decade was without great tragedy. Contradiction would be a better term in description of the fifties than an era of traditionalism. Families were preoccupied with war survival strategies juxtaposed with the growth of suburbs, shopping centers, and interstate highways. Older racial and class distinctions, however, remained in place. Blacks were excluded from suburban communities. Segregation and unequal rights kept many African Americans impoverished. The civil rights movement emerged from the south beginning with the Montgomery Bus Boycott. This interrupted the deceptive perception of the decade’s smiling face billboards and commercial advertisement. These images reflect ‘mendacity’ in America (Williams 2.50). The United States citizens were screened from truth. False images of White Anglo-Saxon Protestants with 2.5 children were forced upon U.S. citizens and titled as the American Dream.

Place:

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof takes place in the bedroom of former plantation owners Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. The spirit of the past proprietors is said to haunt the room. The bed, shared by the couple for more than thirty years, is now occupied by Brick and Maggie.

The grandiose size of the bed and phallic bed posts represents the initial overseers whose passion remains the foundation of the plantation. The bed is centrally located creating an obstacle for the characters. The bed cannot be avoided much like Brick's truth.

Williams's central placement of the lover's bed serves as a constant reminder of the plantation's beginnings. Jack Straw and Peter Ochello's legacy is essential to the play and opposes the compromised relationships of the household. In the Notes for the Set Designer, The décor of the room is described by Williams as "Victorian with a touch of Far East" (Williams, Cat 1.5). The Victorian era was known for prim morals and the Far East was often associated with debauchery and sensuality. The two opposing moods in terms of the set reflect the rigid morals and conflicting attitudes of an earlier time.

Williams highlights the mansion décor as he explains in the set notes, the room evokes their (Jack Straw and Peter Ochello) ghosts, "gently and poetically haunted by a relationship that must have involved a tenderness which was uncommon" (Williams, Cat 1.5). Williams's objective was to reflect a certain respect, dignity, and sexuality to his subject. The dream like ambiance adds an element of timelessness.

B. Culture/Society:

Culture:

The Mississippi Delta is the background of the play. The Delta's flat backdrop is renowned for an unusual mixture of contrast and influence. Williams gained much of the inspiration and material for his plays from the Delta including the steamy sexuality.

Williams set *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *Battle of Angels*, *Orpheus Descending*, and *Kingdom of Earth* in the Delta region of Mississippi. The area is often the backdrop of plays, movies, and novels. The people, known as Deltans, are intuitively aware of their land and culture. The fertile land runs from the bottom of Tennessee to central Mississippi alongside the Mississippi river. Big Daddy boasts that his 28,000 acres of the Delta is “the richest land this side of the Valley Nile” (Williams, *Cat* 2.42).

The population diversity of the Delta ranges from descendants of British settlers, Pre-Civil War slaves, Lebanese, Chinese, Greeks, and Italians. The rich blend of cultures shaped the food, music, and life. Williams’s makes use of the Delta’s music, heat, customs, history, and conventions in his plays.

Society:

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof reflects the contradictory ideologies of the 50’s. The strict conventions of the Bible Belt are juxtaposed with the “sins” of homosexuality. The room of deceased lovers Jack Straw and Peter Ochello now confines a man restrained from the cruel conventions of the outside world. The bedroom is the protective closet that Brick fears to escape. Brick represents the homosexual cast from society. Homosexuals and many other Americans were not given equal rights despite America’s foundations in equality. Segregation separated Blacks and many other minorities experienced severance from American society. This era reflected an image where everything was “ok” when everyone was not. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* mirrors the decade’s dishonesty with the

character's fraudulent and deceitful schemes to inherit the Pollitt plantation. Big Daddy's poor health, Brick's alcoholism, and the family feud over Big Daddy's will are antithetical to the Pollitt's perfect reputation. Williams captures society's unsuitability of the 50's in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. "The disease which Big Daddy suffers from is Uremia, defined as a poisoning of the whole system due to the failure of the body to eliminate poisons." "The disease from which his society suffers is essentially the same" (Bloom, *American* 284).

C. Economics:

Williams's characters are captured interacting in inescapable socioeconomic situations in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Big Daddy serves as the patriarch of the Pollitt family and his life has been devoted to the "twenty-eight thousand acres of the richest land this side of the Valley Nile" (Williams, *Cat* 2.42). Many characters throughout *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* are motivated by greed. They desire control over Big Daddy's estate upon his passing. Big Daddy's disgust lies with his family fighting over his fortune but his frustration deals with his favorite sons lack of interest in inheriting his estate. Brick's lack of interest in the property also frustrates his wife Maggie who has always been destitute. Along with greed, Williams also continues to signify the American South's social morals. Constant references are made to public opinion and social standings. Gender role expectations are also heavily stressed. Maggie and Mae are expected to birth heirs to the plantation. Brick

and Gooper are expected to father the children. The Pollitt plantation is expected to be taken over by a male.

D. Religion:

The presence of religion in the Pollitt household is in the form of Reverend Tooker who impedes on scenes when he is not welcomed. The Reverend appears out of nowhere when Brick shouts at Big Daddy “you call me your son and a queer! (Williams, Cat 2.54). Big Daddy quickly shoves the Reverend away as if thrust religion out of his life. Big Daddy also tells the Reverend in the beginning of the act that he better not hear “more talk of memorial stained glass windows” insinuating that the church is also after Big Daddy’s money (Williams, Cat 3.35). Big Daddy later speaks of how church bores him and how he sits and listens to that “dam’ fool preacher!” (Williams, Cat 2.52). Big Daddy’s refers to church as something the family did to uphold appearances. Christianity is antithetical to the haunting presence of Jack Straw, Peter Ochello, and the mysticism of the Far East. Williams attacks the strict religious conventions of the Bible Belt with his suggestions that homosexuality is ‘true’ and ‘normal’.

E. Politics:

Politics are never mentioned in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. *Knowing Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* takes place in the Mississippi Delta during the fifties during the Cold War and the Civil Rights movement. The Cold War began as a geopolitical, ideological, and economic

struggle between the Soviet Union and the United States. During the Cold War, American above-ground nuclear test explosions occurred more than any other decade. Fear plagued the country as preparations were made for a possible invasion. Another political war was going on in the United States between the North and the South. The Civil Rights movement arose primarily throughout the still segregated South. The Montgomery Bus Boycott started in Montgomery, Alabama with Rosa Parks's unwillingness to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. Student stand ins occurred throughout Southern University campuses in protest to Blacks being allowed equal education. George Wallace, Governor of Alabama, refused entrance to Black students at the University of Alabama.

The Arms Race, the Space Race, McCarthyism, and the Korean War also resulted in the rising tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union. There was a Red Scare in the United States which resulted in the McCarthy Hearings. The McCarthy hearings, Civil Rights Movement, and the nuclear arms race made many Americans question the meaning of their existence just as Big Daddy does. Big Daddy questions the meaning of all of his earnings realizing that he cannot take them in death. Although this is a threatening time, United States citizens continue to live their lives in hope with contradicting images of smiling faces, a smiling Ike Eisenhower, and hopes of achieving the American Dream.

APPENDIX C: PLAY STRUCTURE

A. Plot Summary:

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof begins with a homosexual couple by the names of Jack Straw and Peter Ochello in the Mississippi Delta. The couple took in a young homeless boy named Pollitt to help them run their plantation. Time went by as the plantation grew and Pollitt became the chief operator along with Ochello in Straw's passing. When Ochello passed away Pollitt inherited the plantation. Pollitt later married at twenty five to Ida Pollitt who bore him two children. The first of his children, Gooper, he hated and the second he liked, Brick. Once the children left the household the Pollitt plantation expanded over 28,000 acres of the richest land of the Mississippi Delta.

The entire play takes place in a day in the former bedroom of Jack Straw and Peter Ochello. Today is the sixty-fifth birthday of Big Daddy Pollitt. Today he is exuberant over his recent surgical results. He has been told that his cancer fears were just a scare but the truth is that he will soon die. The news has also been kept from his wife; however, the rest of the family is aware of Big Daddy's fate. The family hides the news from their parents as a fight ensues over Big Daddy's last will and testament. Gooper is out to take over the plantation with his wife, Mae. They have had five "no neck-monsters" with another in the oven to take over the plantation (Williams, *Cat* 1.9). The only rivalries they have to face are Big Daddy's favored son, Brick, and his wife, Maggie. Maggie has been poor all of her life and always dreamt of a better life. She is willing to do anything to win over the plantation even sleeping with her uninterested husband. The plantation will be inherited by Maggie if she provides a son for favored son Brick. The rush to become pregnant ensues as Maggie is faced with Brick's nightly refusal. Brick remains in an

inebriated depression over the suicide of his best friend, Skipper. Despite Maggie's yearning for wealth she also desires to make amends with Brick over Skipper's untimely death. She also faces a family that despises her and her husband's favored status. By the plays end, the distanced father and son share their mutual respect with one another as they reveal their status as the only people who have not lied to each other. Brick goes to bed with Maggie as she succeeds with her pregnancy and he is exonerated from his self destruction.

B. Themes:

1. Homophobia

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof focuses on homosexuality and homophobia. The favored son deals with an internal homophobia that must be reserved. Brick is distraught over his best friend's unfortunate death. Brick epitomizes masculinity with his indifference towards Maggie and her sexual advances. The coldness he possesses regards his internal homophobia. Brick is consumed with depression over the death of his best friend and the extent of the loss of a possible love. Brick existence revolves around screening his fear with the daily search for an inebriated peace he refers to as 'the click' (Williams, *Cat* 2.47). The loss of his best friend and teammate devastating for Brick and is masked with a screen of alcohol. The past relationship shared was the most real and true thing in Brick's life. Maggie claims to understand and respect the relationship. Big Daddy claims to understand the companionship as well as he hopes to relieve his son from his depression. Finally, Brick reveals his self disgust and takes blame over not facing the

truth with his friend. Brick's disgust of being identified a "sissy" focuses upon a possible truth.

2. *Time:*

The idea of time passing by is a major theme of the play. Big Mama reminisces over Brick's youth, Brick feels he is too old to play professional sports, and Big Daddy desires more life to live. Brick at age twenty seven feels as if his age holds him back with, "Time just outran me, Big Daddy-got there first" (Williams, *Cat* 2.53). The idea of time prevails over the household as they rush to gain control of the estate before Big Daddy's imminent death. Big Daddy desires for more time and Brick appears ready to move on. The race with time ensues all of *Cat's* characters. Big Mama defines the passage of time in facing her husband's death. "Time goes by so fast,' she says, Nothin' can outrun it. Death commences too early—almost before you're half-acquainted with life—you meet the other" (Williams, *Cat* 3.75). Her husband focuses upon his ideas of death with, "The human animal is a beast that dies" (Williams, *Cat* 2.43). In the face of death Big Daddy reveals his ideology with time, "a rich man keeps spending his money on material goods because somehow, in the back of his mind he has the crazy hope that one of his purchases will be life everlasting!—which it can never be" (Williams, *Cat* 2.43). Juxtaposed with characters facing their mortality, you have the life-affirming character in the play, Maggie. Maggie's hunger for life is revealed to Brick, "Life has got to be allowed to continue even after the dream of life is—all—over" (Williams, *Cat* 2.42).

C. Exposition:

The exposition of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is mainly delivered by Brick's wife Maggie. The play opens with Maggie as she discusses the plans for the birthday celebration for Big Daddy. She has come back to the bedroom to change clothes after one of Gooper's and Mae's children have ruined her dress. Maggie's husband, Brick, has been drinking and enters the stage with drink in hand. The first act of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* provides the exposition almost entirely from Maggie. Maggie introduces us to the conflict between her and Gooper and Mae over Big Daddy's will. In order to inherit the plantation she needs to provide a son for Big Daddy's favored son, Brick. Maggie informs Brick of Big Daddy's sickness and of her desire to have a child. She also complains about Gooper and Mae's audacious children that she refers to as the "no-neck monsters" (Williams, *Cat* 1.9). Throughout the first act she goes from being upset over Gooper and Mae's children to seducing Brick. Brick ignores Maggie and continues to drink. All he wants is for Maggie to be quiet. Brick confronts Maggie's advances stating they violate conditions that they agreed upon. These conditions indicate a truth to be revealed.

Maggie tells us Brick "always had that detached quality" and "charm of the defeated" and she envies his "coolness" and his "indifference is wonderful" (Williams, *Cat* 1.13) Mae enters and complains to Maggie that she shouldn't be so cruel to her children. Once Mae leaves, Maggie asks, "Why have I become so catty? I must be consumed with envy" (Williams, *Cat* 1.18).

Maggie talks of an affair with another man but suggests the affair was unnatural. Maggie insinuates that the relationship was between Brick and his deceased college football friend Skipper. Maggie claims that double dating with Skipper was more like the boys going out. Finally, Brick is affected by this comment. Maggie taunts him by calling his unease a “crack in the wall of composure” (Williams, Cat 1.20) Brick is enraged by Maggie’s accusation. Brick is disgusted by how she has described his pure, good, clean friendship with Skipper. Maggie is determined to discuss the relationship with Skipper but Brick avoids the conversation. Brick is desperate to dodge truths that may be revealed regarding his relationship with Skipper. He calls the birthday celebration to the room to avoid Maggie. Maggie tries to seduce Brick and begs for a child. Brick responds, “How in the hell on earth do you imagine that you are going to have a child by a man that can’t stand you” (Williams, Cat 1.29). The act ends with Maggie’s remark “that is a problem that I am going to have to resolve” (Williams, Cat 1.29). The exposition provides us with what needs to happen. Brick must change by giving up alcohol, and siring an heir to the plantation.

D. Complications:

The privacy of Brick and Maggie is constantly invaded. The interactions of Maggie and Brick in Act I and Big Daddy and Brick in Act II are constantly interrupted by Big Mama, Mae, Gooper, the “no-neck” monsters, Doc Baugh, and the Reverend (Williams, Cat 1.9). The interruptions have been strategically placed by Williams during the most intimate moments. The intrusions include opera, a Beethoven Symphony, kids singing,

firing pistols, children shouting, “Bang, bang, bang!” and Big Daddy’s off-stage wail (Williams, Cat 1.28). The entire household is after the inheritance of Big Daddy’s estate. Mae and Gooper parade their children in hopes of showing Big Daddy his plantation will be taken care of. The problem Maggie faces is her childlessness. She desires to become pregnant in order to succeed the plantation and she is married to a husband that will not sleep with her. Mae and Gooper are aware of the “nightly pleadin’ and nightly refusal” as they listen through the bedroom walls (Williams, Cat 1.79). Brick is Big Daddy’s favored son; however, Brick is disinterested in anything except his alcohol. Brick remains unconcerned with the complications of the will, Big Daddy’s death sentence, and Maggie’s pleading for love. Big Daddy, Big Mama, and Maggie want Brick to continue the Pollitt legacy and name. This will not happen until there is an intervention with Brick.

E. Discoveries (Rising Action):

Discoveries in Act I:

- Gooper and Mae are competing with Maggie and I over Big Daddy’s estate
- Big Daddy is dying of cancer and he thinks he only suffers from a spastic colon
- Big Daddy dotes on me and hates Gooper and Mae
- Today is Big Daddy’s Birthday
- Big Daddy’s birthday party is today
- Other men are seeing Maggie as attractive
- Maggie refuses to leave me
- Big Mama does not know the truth of Big Daddy’s cancer

- Big Daddy never made a will
- Maggie and I may not be in the will due to my drunkenness and our childlessness
- Maggie wants to have a child to win over the estate
- People like to do what they use to even after they've stopped being able to

Discoveries in Act II:

- Gooper and Mae listen to my arguments with Maggie and report to Big Daddy
- Big Daddy is worth ten million in cash and blue chip stocks
- Big Daddy has evaluated life and sees his existence in a different light
- I like to hear solid quiet
- Talk between me and Big Daddy never materializes
- Big Daddy wants to sleep with other women
- Big Daddy never liked Big Mama
- Big Mama makes Big Daddy sick
- I drink to achieve peace
- I'm an alcoholic
- Talking to Big Daddy is painful
- I drink out of disgust
- I drink to kill my disgust
- My disgust is with lying and liars
- Big Daddy pretends he likes Big Mama, church, clubs, Masons and rotary
- Big Daddy says he has affection and respect for me
- Big Daddy has lived with 'mendacity' (Williams, Cat 2.50)

- I want to dodge away from life
- Big Daddy thought of me when he was dying
- Big Daddy hates Gooper, Mae, and his children
- Big Daddy thinks leaving his land to me would be subsidizing a fool on the bottle
- I never lied to Big Daddy
- Big Daddy has never lied to me
- Big Daddy and I never talk to each other
- There doesn't seem to be much to talk about with Big Daddy
- Time has outran me, got there first
- Gooper and Mae are suggesting that my relations with Skipper were not normal
- Big Daddy slept around in his time
- Big Daddy slept in hobo jungles
- When Jack Straw died Peter Ochello quit eating
- The relationship between me and Skipper was "too rare to be normal" (Williams, Cat 2.56)
- My disgust with 'mendacity' is disgust with myself (Williams, Cat 2.50)
- I am drinking to kill my disgust because I would not face the truth with Skipper
- Being alive makes people lie
- "Being almost not alive makes me sort of accidentally truthful"

Discoveries in Act III:

- I did not lie to anyone but myself
- I think I ought to be put in a home for crazy people

- Big Mama knows and sympathizes that I am broken up about Skipper's death
- Gooper always resented Big Daddy's affection toward me
- Maggie is relentless to the extent of lying to the family about being pregnant
- I admire Maggie's will and perseverance

F. Climax:

The climax occurs upon the discovery of Brick's personal truth. Brick has been drinking to kill his disgust with himself over Skipper's death and not facing the truth with him. Big Daddy intervenes with Brick's intoxication and claims Brick "dug the grave of his friend an' kicked him in it" by refusing to face the lie with him (Williams 2.58). The accusation from Big Daddy is too much for Brick to handle. Brick rebounds from the accusation with, "How bout these birthday congratulations? These many happy returns of the day where everybody but you knows there won't be any!" (Williams, Cat 2.59). The two characters reveal their truths to each other.

G. Resolution:

The prognosis of Big Daddy's death overlaps with Margaret's pregnancy. The Jack Straw and Peter Ochello plantation is awarded to Brick and Maggie. The formation and loss of the plantation is linked to homosexuality.

LIST OF REFERENCES

- Adler, Thomas. American Drama 1940-1960. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994.
- Bloom, Harold. Modern American Drama. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2005.
- Modern Critical Interpretations of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 2002.
- , ed. Tennessee Williams. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1987.
- Edelstein, Linda N. The Writer's Guide to Character Traits. Cincinnati: F & W Publications, Inc., 1999.
- Holditch, Kenneth and Richard Freeman Leavitt. Tennessee Williams and the South. Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002.
- Howard, Alycia Smith and Greta Heintzelman. Critical Companion to Tennessee Williams. New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2005.
- Leverich, Lyle. TOM The Unknown Tennessee Williams. New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1995.
- Paller, Michael. Gentlemen Callers. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- Spotto, Donald. The Kindness of Strangers. New York: Da Capo Press, 1985.

Tischler, Nance M. Student Companion to Tennessee Williams. Westport, Connecticut:
Greenwood Press, 2000.

Voss, Ralph. F, ed. Magical Muse Millennial Essays on Tennessee Williams. Tuscaloosa,
Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 2002.

Williams, Tennessee. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. New York: Dramatists Play Services, Inc.,
1954.

--- Memoirs. New York: New Directions Books, 2006.

Waters, Arthur. Conversations with Tennessee Williams. Jackson, Mississippi:
University Press of Mississippi, 1986.