

femininity. Likewise, Stella's delight in catching Stanley's meat signifies her sexual infatuation with him. The occurrence of this display so early on in the play emphasises this tension, specifically the sexual tension, between the masculine and feminine presenting characters.

Furthermore, Williams presents the domineering aspects of masculinity to contrast meek femininity, an ultimate cause for significant tension. Stanley symbolises the stereotypical representation of hegemonic masculinity and Williams explores these attitudes and practices among men that perpetuate gender inequality, involving both men's domination over women and the power of some men over other men. The earliest description of Stanley is that he has 'the power and pride of a richly feathered male bird among hens.' His description as a 'male bird' compared to smaller 'hens' has predatory connotations, as if the male species can easily overcome females; not only physically from their strength, but also mentally from the constraints placed on women to be domestic and subservient to their male counterpart. This authoritative illustration of Stanley contrasts with the character of Blanche; Williams uses her character to explore the traditional feminine archetype of delicate, illusive femininity, presenting the post-world war two female dependence on males. Williams uses the stage directions in Scene One to describe Blanche as a 'moth', due to her white clothes. This connotes a feminine vulnerability, and as having a 'delicate beauty' that 'must avoid a strong light'. This alludes to the idea of her Southern 'Belle' grandeur being false and coheres with the symbolism of 'The Paper Lantern', which protects her ageing exterior appearance in order to attract possible male suitors. Both a modern audience and an audience of the 1940s could recognise through Blanche the past and current social pressures forced upon women to stay