**Cat on a Hot Tin Roof**

This material is **heavily** GPT-4 based. If you felt uncomfortable then press command/ctrl Q.

Hopefully its is very easy to identify what I write and what GPT-4 write.

**Key Quotes**

“No-neck monsters” “hit” by “hot hunted biscuit” “totally children and therefore totally useless”

**Margaret**

More importantly, she is attacked by the child, “hit” with a “hot buttered biscuit”, symbolizing her dignity as a woman under assault because of her barrenness. Maggie describes herself as “totally childless and therefore totally useless”, the explicitly equating having children to female worth, an outward statement of self-sabotage. She calls Mae the “monster of fertility”, juxtaposing the most deformed morbidity with reproductive strength. Williams shows that Maggie’s failure to be a fertile female causes hatred and jealousy both directed to Mae and herself. Maggie’s destructive anxiety about childbearing reflects gender roles of 1950s America, when an average woman bore five children and were only considered as fulfilling a wife’s social role if she gave birth. Maggie’s abhorrence of children and simultaneous crippling desire for them to assert her status is a product of internalized oppressive gender expectations.

“Laws of silence don’t work” “shutting a door… house on fire”

**Love, Communication**

**Metaphor**

Margaret exclaimed “Laws of silence don’t work” when Brick denies to talk about Skipper. The “silence” symbolize the strict rule of mendacity that stands righteous in the heart of the characters in the play, the lies people tell in the Southern society to secure their power. Margaret admits that Brick’s possible homosexuality and his real homophobia opposes the southern aristocratic code of honor, violating the “laws” as if the societal repression of homosexuality is immutable. However, she refuses to engage in the lying or feigned ignorance. She desires Brick to admit and consider his actual relationship with Skipper, in order to bring him out of nostalgia and face the reality. The repetition emphasized her perseverance to attempt to engage him in conversation, especially as regards their broken marriage. The metaphor of “Shutting a door” for a “house on fire” vividly depicts her determination. Williams compares the “house” to reality, perhaps also Brick’s repression of the homosexual tension, that is completely ignored while causing troubles to not only himself but also to everyone in the family. The “house” connotes the family, while the allegro verb “shutting” put focus on the intensity of the rejection of truth, illustrating Margaret’s frustration on the difficulty of communication nonetheless trying her best to connect with Brick.

“Cat on a hot tin roof”

**Extended Metaphor, Imagery**

Pugnacious, territorial, intelligent feline that is anxious and unsettled at all times.

“I’m a rich man”

**Death, Wealth**

**Diacope**

“The sky is open!”

**Diacope, metaphor, Imagery**

“returned from the other side of the moon”

**Metaphor**

*Metaphor: Big Daddy's experience with the threat of death is described metaphorically through the phrase "the other side of the moon." This metaphor emphasizes the challenging and isolating nature of facing one's own mortality and underscores the emotional journey Big Daddy has undergone.*

*Hyperbole: The mention of "the other side of the moon death's country" is an example of hyperbole, which is used to stress the enormity of Big Daddy's experience with his near-death encounter. This exaggeration serves to accentuate the transformative impact of this experience on his outlook on life and his attitude towards shocking or taboo subjects.*

*Imagery: The vivid imagery of "the other side of the moon" conveys the isolation and loneliness associated with the process of facing death. This metaphorical description captures the emotional turmoil Big Daddy has experienced while grappling with the possibility of his own demise, as well as the relief of discovering that he does not have cancer.*

*Character development: This quote provides insight into Big Daddy's character and his evolving perspective following his experience with the fear of death. The relief of knowing he does not have cancer has given him the courage to face uncomfortable truths and engage in candid conversations with Brick and other family members. The mention of the "other side of the moon" also highlights Big Daddy's awareness of the isolating nature of death, further deepening his character.*

The repetition of “I’m a rich man” portrays the supremacy of wealth and prestige of Big Daddy, the summit of the patriarchal plantation society. Yet the repetition also demonstrates a sense of insecurity, the hidden fear of death, because immortality is the only thing that he could not buy.

The threat of death is compared to a difficult space mission, that knowing that he himself has no cancer means the end of the continuous threat and worrying. Perhaps, the other side of the moon connotes the isolation and loneness of the process of death itself. That death takes away his assurance, strength, and power therefore no placement of him in the Southern Aristocratic code of honor.

Big Daddy has true fear of death, because immortality is the only subject that cannot be obtained by his wealth. When he die, all the honor he has fades instantly. The strong sense of insecurity in portrayed.

“a look which is like a playing passing a ball to another player, third down and goal to go”

**Stage Directions, Metaphor**

“You told me. I told you”

**Chiasmus**

“Lived or died or was dying or cared”

**Polysydeton**

“You have to fool them, they have to fool *themselves*.”

**Italicized phrases, Chiasmus**

“Why don’t you ask if he makes me happy in bed?”

**Chiasmus**

“life has got to be allowed to continue even after the *dream* of life is - all - over”

**Dash, ryhme**

“I had a friendship with Skipper. - You are naming it dirty!”

“I am naming is clean”

**Juxtaposition**

“But Brick?! - *Skipper is dead! I’m alive!* Maggie the cat is - alive!”

**Juxtaposition, exclamation, broken syntax**

“bought, bought, bought” “cellar”

**Epizeuxis, juxtaposition**

“drop his eyes to my boobs and lick his old chops”

**Metaphor**

“hit” “kill” with the crutch

**Symbolism**

Brick want his crutch, “like sudden lighting”

**Simile**

“When marriage gets on the rocks, the rocks are there, right there.”

**Allusion, foreshadowing**

“That’s not fair!”

**Epizeuxis, Exclamation**

“Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer!”

**Wealth, Security**

**Parallelism**

She describe herself as “Born poor, raised poor, expected to die poor”.

The parallelism depicts Margaret’s willingness to obtain the heritage of the plantation. The juxtaposition of “born” and “die” illustrates that poverty may accompany Margaret for her whole life, if she take no actions to change the reality. Wealth is the prestige, that represents social status in the Southern society. Yet a women, who cannot access the homosocial world of white male brotherhood directly, could only obtain power by fostering children to seize inheritance.

Margaret’s “announcement” “Brick and I are going to, have a child!”

**Lie**

**Italics, exclamation**

Margaret reveals the final lie of the play. The italics and exclamation mark emphasized the sense of determination. She spoke “suddenly and quietly but forcefully”, she resolve internal struggle and make the “announcement”, when she realize that the conventional moral patterns are falsehood - the code of honor does not relay on the goodness and inner harmony innate to true honor; it is the fragile façade of society that brings the social status of people, and she is driven to change her circumstances using her sexuality and femininity - to born babies.

Margaret is determined to change her circumstances, regardless of these ideals’ impossibility and her inability to embody them. She has fully accepted the necessity of presenting an outward appearance that is contradictory to inner truth. She manipulate truth, sexuality, and felinity as tools to gain social power that cannot access the homosocial world of the patriarchal plantation. Margaret is perseverated to fix her “reality”, to live not in poverty.

“Wouldn't it be funny if that was true…”

**Love, Lie, Communication**

**Foreshadowing**

Big Mama’s love is rejected by Big Daddy, as Big Daddy suspected the true intention behind the superficial love - whether Big Mama is attempting to take over his heritage and social power. His fear of death, and willingness to secure his power stops him from understanding possibilities of true love, where love is not only about sexual desire. This foreshadows the ending of the play, where Margaret forced Brick to sleep with her on the bed, Brick again doubted “Wouldn't it be funny if that was true…”, rejecting the love from Margaret. Similarly, Brick distrusts Margaret of her true intentions - whether the love in real.

Brick’s alcoholism acts as a a barrier between him and the others, removing himself from the family’s conversation. Margaret realized that alcohol make Brick weak, and she and extort his love for her physically. The power can turn her lie into truth.

“Get dressed, Brick” “[He drops his crutch]”

**General Useful Quotes**

“We talk, you talk, in—circles! We get nowhere, nowhere! It's always the same, you say you want to talk to me and don't have a ruttin' thing to say to me!”

“Why is it so damn hard for people to talk?”

“Maybe it's being alive that makes them lie, and being almost *not* alive makes me sort of accidentally truthful…”

“Brick, I used to think that you were stronger than me and I didn’t want to be overpowered by you. But now, since you’ve taken to liquor—you know what? –I guess it’s bad, but now I’m stronger than you and I can love you more truly!”

**Key Ideas**

**Brick’s Crutch**

The crutch symbolize Brick’s nostalgia. Brick acquired his injury while he is “jumping hurdles” on a highschool track field. Brick attempted to do what he used to do in highschool, which he was no longer to. He have a strong desire to ignore that reality and live in the past, and his crutch is the embodies the good memories, the time where he is professional athlete playing for the Dixie Stars together with Skipper.

The happiest moments in the play exist in the past, and Brick prefers to recall their prior existence, where he is still “young and believing”, hopeful and energetic - the past is perfect, and he have a strong sense of bitterness of losing the last - meanwhile, finding the reality to be “disgusting”. Perhaps he stands on the top of the Southern aristocratic code of honor that values power and prestige. Brick used to be stable, unmovable, and hardened on the pinnacle of the patriarchal society. However, his possible homosexuality stands in the opposite of the system that brings him honor, therefore he denials his emotions and consider the homosexuality to be an “inadmissible thing”. The predicament displayed by this juxtaposition placed Brick into a position that completely reject the reality that he live in, and live in his nostalgia with alcohol to paralyze his thoughts.

The crutch represents Brick’s isolation. Brick declines Skipper’s death, showed by the interrupted dialogue between Big Daddy and Brick. “Why are you so anxious to shut me up?”They talk around each other, while Brick finds this process too painful instead to remain silent. The rhetorical question and the aggressive verb “shut” portrays how Brick distrusts communication, and desires to to push people around him away. He isolates himself in the rule of “mendacity”, rejecting communication with anyone else in the family. Because he was able to adopt his society’s prevalent morality without discomfort, Brick assumes everyone should; everyone can and should strive for ultimate honor. Brick lives in the incongruence between inner beliefs and his homosexual tension. Therefore, he has this natural suspicion of others that may despise him of his possible homosexuality, leading him to deny connection with Big Daddy and Margaret.

The crutch represents Brick’s vulnerability. Physically, Brick relies on the crutch to walk. He relied heavily on alcohol and the Brick to repress his unconscious mind against the nostalgia and regret. Brick prevent himself from recalling past memories by using alcohol to paralyze his awareness, attempting to find the “click”, perhaps representing the moment where his is withdrawn from the moment of pain, the mental support needed for him to displace his agony.

The crutch also symbolize support and security. Brick claimed to “hit” and “kill” Margaret with the crutch, using his crutch as a weapon. The aggressive verb portrays the displacement of Brick’s agony through the aggression on Margaret. The impulse he display is in the contrary of his weak physical status, being alcoholic and walk with a crutch. Brick ensures power by the support of his crutch. Brick “Drop [his] crutch” intentionally when he acquires for help from Margaret, wanting Margaret to deviate the topic that is about Skipper, wanting “my crutch”. The use of pronoun illustrates a sense of belonging the crutch, covering up his impotence. He rages “like sudden lighting”, with no warning and destructively, which perhaps reveals the exert of displacement of nostalgia when he feels insecure. The loud noice projects his internal turbulence and disorder (inner turmoil and stagnation). The crutch, together with alcohol, provide Brick a false sense of security as it act as a median to reject himself from the society and reality.

**The Bed**

The setting of the play, in Brick and Maggie’s room with “a big double bed” that stays on the stage for the whole time, referenced in notes for the designer, serves as a constant reminder of Maggie’s sexual tension with Brick. “when marriage goes on rocks, the rocks are [on the bed]” Margaret sleep on the bed alone at night, whereas Brick avoids the area and stays of the couch. The “rocks” connotes the hardship and difficulties during the marriage. Namely, the barrenness in the marriage. The lack of progeny opposes the the southern aristocratic code of honor, perhaps to an extend of being shameful of having no children. The tension is symbolized through the presence of the bed on the stage.

The presence of the bed also hints the homosexual tensions that Brick tries to avoid. The bedroom is owned by previous plantation owners, Jack Straw and Peter Ochello, the “ole pair of sisters” that lives in this room. The use of the noun “sisters” for a gay couple portrays Brick’s homophobia by disregarding them as male. Brick believe that homosexuality is the betrayal of the South Aristocratic code of honor, in which being a wealthy white man alone have a natural sense of supremacy. Although the Southern ethnical code dictates that “all white men are brothers”, Brick believe that homosexuality withdraws this honor. Brick’s homophobia becomes a tenet of the honor code that Brick has adopted.

At the end of the play, Margaret forced Brick to sleep with her on the bed. “I do love you Brick, I *do*!.” The italics illustrate the despair of Margaret to obtain love, and perhaps secure her social status by having babies. The bed is presented as a territory for Margaret, in which she have control and power over.

**The Console/Alcohol**

“a very complete and compact little shrine virtually all the comforts and illusions behind which we hide from such things as the characters in the play are faced with…” The Notes for the Designer points out that the console represents the “compacted comfort” for all the characters in the play. Specifically, for Brick, the alcohol in the console represents another sort of crutch, symbolizing the denial of the ugliness of the situation around him.

**The Balustrades**

The “White balustrades” in the Notes for the Designer hints that the play is filled with dims of light - the positive and negative in-between the balustrades perhaps connotes the explicit and the implied story. The balustrades gives a vague view of the other side, connoting the hope, the potential future that is outside of the cage of the house. The balustrades blocks the people in the house from seeing the outside: it illustrates a sense of mystery of, perhaps, the past and the future.

**The Cellar/Victorian**

All the items Big Mama brought during the Europe trip is placed in the “cellar”, untouched. The house still have its Victorian furnitures. The items hidden in the cellar is leftover, connotes past memories, which leaves no trace and only nostalgia. The memory is repressed, where they still uses the Victorian furnitures without any replacement, perhaps symbolizing a sense of regret, of not using the furnitures when they are new. When time passes and the furnitures became old, the replacement would be unnecessary. Just like how Big Daddy regrets not pursuing more sexual pleasure with more partners in his youth and Brick denying the call from Skipper become he suicides. (Maybe also how Big Daddy is scared of dying because if dead that all hidden wealth is hidden forever, portraying a sense of insecurity?) - This worries is contained, and not to be exposed.

**Key Context**

**Cold War**

"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is a play written by Tennessee Williams in 1955, during the height of the Cold War. This conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which lasted from the late 1940s until the early 1990s, was marked by political, economic, and ideological tensions. It is important to understand the context of the Cold War when discussing the themes in the play, as it offers a lens through which we can better understand the characters and their motivations.

*Fear and Paranoia:*

*The Cold War was characterized by fear and paranoia on both sides, as each nation attempted to protect itself from perceived threats. This pervasive atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust can be seen in the relationships between the characters in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." Brick and Maggie's marriage is fraught with tension, stemming from Brick's mistrust of Maggie and her intentions, as well as his own guilt and self-doubt. Similarly, Big Daddy's relationships with his children are marked by suspicion, as he tries to determine their true motivations and whether they are primarily interested in his wealth.*

*The Struggle for Power:*

*The Cold War was a constant struggle for power and influence, with both the United States and the Soviet Union seeking to assert their dominance on the global stage. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," power dynamics are a central theme, as the characters vie for control over the family estate and each other's lives. Big Daddy's looming death creates a power vacuum, and the family members compete to assert their own authority and secure their financial futures. This struggle for power is evident in the conflicts between Brick and Maggie, Gooper and Mae, and the siblings' attempts to win Big Daddy's favor.*

*The Importance of Appearances:*

*During the Cold War, both the United States and the Soviet Union were highly concerned with maintaining appearances and projecting an image of strength and stability. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the characters are similarly preoccupied with appearances, often prioritizing the façade of a happy, successful family over addressing the underlying issues that plague their relationships. Maggie, in particular, is determined to present a united front with Brick, even as their marriage crumbles behind closed doors. This theme highlights the destructive nature of prioritizing appearances over truth and authenticity.*

*The Impact of Secrecy and Lies:*

*The Cold War was marked by a culture of secrecy, as both nations engaged in covert operations and espionage to gain an advantage over their adversaries. This theme of secrecy is also present in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," as the characters keep secrets and tell lies in an effort to manipulate and control one another. Brick hides the true nature of his relationship with Skipper, Maggie lies about her pregnancy, and the family conceals the severity of Big Daddy's illness. These secrets and lies exacerbate the existing tensions within the family and contribute to the characters' sense of isolation and mistrust.*

*By examining the historical context of the Cold War, we can better understand the themes of fear and paranoia, power struggles, the importance of appearances, and the impact of secrecy and lies that are central to "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." These themes reflect the wider societal concerns of the time and provide insight into the complex and often destructive nature of human relationships.*

Links to Cat:

Secrets / lies

The decline of the old social order (Big Daddy’s illness) and the succession of the new generation of ‘no necked monsters’ that don’t really give the audience much hope for tomorrow

Mirrors the fears amongst many at the time about what the future would hold (threat of mutually assured destruction)

**McCarthyism**

Senator Joseph R. McCarthy was a little-known junior senator from Wisconsin until February 1950 when he claimed to possess a list of 205 card-carrying Communists employed in the U.S. Department of State.

From that moment Senator McCarthy became a tireless crusader against Communism in the early 1950s, a period that has been commonly referred to as the "Red Scare."

As chairman of the Senate Permanent Investigation Subcommittee, Senator McCarthy conducted hearings on communist subversion in America and investigated alleged communist infiltration of the Armed Forces.

His subsequent exile from politics coincided with a conversion of his name into a modern English noun "McCarthyism," or adjective, "McCarthy tactics," when describing similar witch hunts in recent American history.

*"Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" is a play written by Tennessee Williams in 1955, during the height of McCarthyism, a political and cultural phenomenon in the United States that took place in the early years of the Cold War. McCarthyism was named after Senator Joseph McCarthy, who led a campaign against alleged communists and Soviet sympathizers within the U.S. government, entertainment industry, and other sectors of society. This period, often referred to as the "Red Scare," was characterized by fear, suspicion, and the suppression of dissenting voices. McCarthy served as the chairman of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, using his position to launch inquiries and hearings that led to blacklisting and ruined careers for many individuals. By understanding the nuances of McCarthyism and its specific events, we can better appreciate the major themes in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and the ways in which they mirror the broader historical context.*

*Fear and Paranoia:*

*The atmosphere of fear and paranoia that pervaded American society during McCarthyism is mirrored in the relationships between the characters in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." Just as McCarthy's relentless pursuit of alleged communists created a climate of mistrust, the characters in the play are deeply suspicious of one another's intentions and struggle to trust each other.*

*Conformity and Repression:*

*McCarthyism promoted a culture of conformity, where individuals were pressured to adhere to certain norms and values or face accusations of disloyalty. The Hollywood Blacklist, which targeted actors, writers, and directors suspected of communist sympathies, is one example of the consequences of nonconformity during this time. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the characters are similarly constrained by societal expectations and the pressure to maintain appearances. Brick, for example, represses his true feelings and desires in order to conform to the expectations of his family and society, resulting in emotional turmoil and the disintegration of his marriage to Maggie.*

*The Silencing of Dissenting Voices:*

*During the McCarthy era, individuals who were accused of being communists or sympathizers often faced blacklisting and were unable to find work in their chosen professions. This silencing of dissenting voices can be seen in the play through the suppression of truth and the unwillingness of the characters to openly discuss their feelings and concerns. The characters hide their true selves and emotions, creating a suffocating environment where honest communication is nearly impossible.*

*The Destructive Nature of Secrets and Lies:*

*McCarthyism thrived on secrecy and deception, with people being encouraged to inform on friends, family members, and colleagues suspected of disloyalty. The Senate hearings led by McCarthy often involved the use of anonymous informants and coerced confessions. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the characters are similarly entangled in a web of secrets and lies that ultimately proves destructive to their relationships. Brick's hidden emotions, Maggie's dishonesty, and the concealment of Big Daddy's illness all contribute to the emotional turmoil and dysfunction that plague the family.*

*In summary, while "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" does not explicitly address McCarthyism, the play can be seen as a reflection of the broader social and political climate of the time. By examining the themes of fear and paranoia, conformity and repression, the silencing of dissenting voices, and the destructive nature of secrets and lies within the context of McCarthyism and specific events like the Red Scare and Senate hearings, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that drive the characters and their relationships.*

**Lavender Scare**  
The "lavender scare" was a moral panic about homosexual people in the United States government which led to their mass dismissal from government service during the mid-20th century.

It contributed to and paralleled the anti-communist campaign which is known as McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare.

Gay men and lesbians were said to be national security risks and communist sympathizers, which led to the call to remove them from state employment.

It was thought that gay people were more susceptible to being manipulated, which could pose a threat to the country.

Lesbians were at less risk of persecution than gay men, but some lesbians were interrogated or lost their jobs.

The Lavender Scare normalized persecution of homosexuals through bureaucratic institutionalization of homophobia.

If the influx of people into Washington, D.C., during the New Deal created the urban and professional environments that allowed a gay and lesbian subculture to flourish, then World War II accelerated the process: for many lesbians and gay men, the war was a national coming out experience.

Mobilization for World War II and the war experience gave birth to a new addition to the American social urban landscape – the lesbian and gay community.

To many Americans, this visible homosexual subculture seemed to prove their suspicions that the war had loosened puritanical moral codes, broadened sexual mores and certainly represented a viable threat to ideals of puritanical gender roles, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family.

After the war, as families were united and as Americans struggled to put their lives back together, a national narrative rigorously promoted and propagated idealized versions of the nuclear family, heterosexuality, and traditional gender roles in the home and the workplace.

Both homosexuals and Communist Party members were seen as subversive elements in American society who all shared the same ideals of antitheism, rejection of bourgeois culture and middle-class morality, and lack of conformity.

They were also seen as scheming and manipulative and, most importantly, would put their own agendas above others in the eyes of the general population. McCarthy also associated homosexuality and communism as "threats to the 'American way of life’."

*The Lavender Scare was a moral panic in the United States during the mid-20th century that led to the mass dismissal of homosexual people from government service. It paralleled the anti-communist campaign known as McCarthyism and the Second Red Scare. Gay men and lesbians were considered national security risks and communist sympathizers, resulting in calls for their removal from state employment. The Lavender Scare was fueled by the belief that homosexuals were more susceptible to manipulation, which could pose a threat to the country. This period also saw the institutionalization of homophobia through bureaucratic means. By understanding the nuances of the Lavender Scare and its specific events, we can better appreciate the major themes in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and the ways in which they mirror the broader historical context.*

*Repression and Self-Denial:*

*The Lavender Scare forced many homosexuals to hide their true identities and suppress their desires to avoid persecution. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," Brick's struggle with his own sexuality and his ambiguous relationship with his friend Skipper can be seen as a reflection of the repression experienced by homosexuals during this time. Brick's inability to confront his feelings leads to emotional turmoil, alcoholism, and the disintegration of his marriage to Maggie.*

*Fear and Paranoia:*

*Similar to the atmosphere of fear and paranoia created by the Red Scare, the Lavender Scare also led to suspicion and mistrust within society. The visible homosexual subculture, which emerged during World War II and post-war America, was perceived as a threat to traditional gender roles, heterosexuality, and the nuclear family. In the play, the characters' relationships are marked by tension and suspicion, with Brick's sexuality being a source of unease for both himself and those around him. This sense of fear and paranoia reflects the broader societal anxieties of the era.*

*Conformity and Societal Pressure:*

*The Lavender Scare perpetuated a culture of conformity, where homosexuals were pressured to adhere to heteronormative expectations or face discrimination and persecution. The post-war promotion of idealized versions of the nuclear family, heterosexuality, and traditional gender roles further intensified this pressure. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the characters grapple with societal expectations and the pressure to maintain appearances. Brick's relationship with Maggie exemplifies this struggle, as they both strive to present the facade of a happy, heterosexual marriage, despite the underlying issues that plague their relationship.*

*The Destructive Nature of Secrets and Lies:*

*The Lavender Scare thrived on secrecy and deception, as homosexuals were forced to hide their true selves to avoid persecution. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the characters are entangled in a web of secrets and lies that ultimately proves destructive to their relationships. Brick's denial of his feelings for Skipper and Maggie's desperate attempts to save their marriage through dishonesty contribute to the emotional turmoil and dysfunction that plague the family.*

*In summary, while "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" does not explicitly address the Lavender Scare, the play can be seen as a reflection of the broader social and political climate of the time. By examining the themes of repression and self-denial, fear and paranoia, conformity and societal pressure, and the destructive nature of secrets and lies within the context of the Lavender Scare, we can gain a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics that drive the characters and their relationships.*

**1950s Gender Roles**  
Embedded in the propaganda of the time was the idea that the nuclear family was what made Americans superior to the Communists. American propaganda showed the horrors of Communism in the lives of Russian women. They were shown dressed in gunnysacks, as they toiled in drab factories while their children were placed in cold, anonymous day care centers. In contrast to the "evils" of Communism, an image was promoted of American women, with their feminine hairdos and delicate dresses, tending to the hearth and home as they enjoyed the fruits of capitalism, democracy, and freedom.

Large Families  
Not only did most married women walk down the aisle by age 19; they also tended to start families right away. A majority of brides were pregnant within seven months of their wedding, and they didn't just stop at one child. Large families were typical. From 1940 to 1960, the number of families with three children doubled and the number of families having a fourth child quadrupled.

*Stay-at-Home Moms*  
*This was also the era of the "happy homemaker." For young mothers in the 1950s, domesticity was idealized in the media, and women were encouraged to stay at home if the family could afford it. Women who chose to work when they didn't need the paycheck were often considered selfish, putting themselves before the needs of their family.*

*Decades of Childbearing*  
*But even for happy homemakers, pressures were mounting. In a departure from previous generations, it was no longer acceptable for a wife to shut her husband out of the bedroom. Starting in the 1950s sex was viewed as a key component of a healthy and loving marriage. Without an effective female-controlled contraceptive, young wives faced three decades of childbearing before they reached menopause.*

*Though the 1950s was in many ways a period of conformity with traditional gender roles, it was also a decade of change, when discontent with the status quo was emerging.*

*Popular culture and the mass media reinforced messages about traditional gender roles, consumer culture, and the Cold War ideal of domesticity, but the reality of women’s lives did not always reflect these ideals.*

*The Lavender Scare, with its focus on persecuting and purging homosexuals from government service and broader society, created an environment of fear, repression, and conformity. Brick, one of the main characters in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," serves as a representation of the struggles faced by homosexual individuals during this tumultuous period. By examining Brick's character in more detail, we can better understand the impact of the Lavender Scare on the lives of people like him.*

*Brick's Struggle with Identity:*

*Brick's ambiguous relationship with his deceased friend Skipper suggests an unresolved sexual tension between the two. Living in an era when homosexuality was heavily stigmatized and seen as a threat to national security, Brick is unable to openly acknowledge or accept his feelings for Skipper. This internal conflict contributes to his emotional turmoil, alcoholism, and his inability to connect with his wife, Maggie.*

*Brick's Conformity and Societal Pressure:*

*As a result of the societal pressure and conformity perpetuated by the Lavender Scare, Brick feels compelled to maintain the facade of a heterosexual marriage with Maggie. He is caught in a constant struggle between his true desires and the expectations of the society he lives in. This pressure to conform exacerbates the tension in his relationship with Maggie and leads to further emotional distance between them.*

*Brick's Fear of Persecution:*

*The Lavender Scare created an atmosphere of fear and suspicion, making it dangerous for homosexuals to be open about their sexuality. Brick's reluctance to confront his feelings for Skipper can be seen as a manifestation of this fear. He is afraid of the consequences of revealing his true self, which could potentially lead to social ostracism or even worse repercussions.*

*Brick's Repression and Self-Denial:*

*In an attempt to cope with his fear and the societal pressure to conform, Brick resorts to repression and self-denial. He drowns his sorrows in alcohol, avoiding any honest conversation about his feelings for Skipper or his own sexuality. This self-destructive behavior takes a toll on his mental and emotional well-being, as well as his relationships with his family members.*

*In conclusion, Brick's character in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" serves as a representation of the struggles faced by homosexual individuals during the Lavender Scare. His struggle with identity, conformity and societal pressure, fear of persecution, and repression and self-denial all reflect the broader social and political climate of the time. By understanding the impact of the Lavender Scare on Brick's character, we can gain a deeper insight into the ways in which this historical context shaped the lives of those who lived through it.*

*Maggie:*

*Maggie's character embodies the societal expectations placed upon women during this time, especially regarding marriage, motherhood, and social status. Desperate to maintain her position in the family and secure financial stability, Maggie is determined to conceive a child with Brick, despite their loveless marriage. Her relentless pursuit of a nuclear family and her focus on material wealth are a reflection of the societal pressure placed upon women to prioritize marriage and family life above all else. Additionally, Maggie's background of poverty highlights the importance of marriage as a means of securing a better life, further emphasizing the significance of the "M.R.S." degree concept during this era.*

*Big Mama:*

*Big Mama represents the traditional role of a wife and mother in the mid-20th century. As a devoted stay-at-home mom, she has dedicated her life to raising her children and supporting her husband, Big Daddy. Her primary focus is on maintaining family harmony and ensuring the happiness of her loved ones, even in the face of their various struggles and conflicts. Big Mama's character highlights the societal expectations placed on women to prioritize caregiving and domestic responsibilities over personal ambitions and desires.*

*Mae:*

*Mae, Brick's sister-in-law, also reflects the role of women during this era. As the mother of a large family, Mae conforms to the societal expectation of bearing multiple children and devoting her life to their care. Her eagerness to see her own husband, Gooper, inherit Big Daddy's estate is driven by her desire to secure a comfortable life for her family, further emphasizing the importance of marriage and motherhood in defining a woman's worth and success during this time.*

*Female characters and sexual dynamics:*

*The sexual dynamics between the female characters and their male counterparts in the play also reflect the role of women during this era. Maggie's attempts to seduce Brick in order to conceive a child highlight the pressure placed on women to fulfill their duties as wives and mothers, even when faced with an unresponsive partner. Similarly, Big Mama's unwavering support for Big Daddy, despite his infidelity and emotional distance, demonstrates the expectation for women to maintain family unity and harmony at all costs.*

**The Changing South**

In the 1950’s, the Deep South was undergoing some major changes, with African Americans moving out of the South to urban centers in the North in drastic numbers (6 million people moved between 1910-1940 and 1940-1970).

The South was beginning to experience more tension between its black and white inhabitants with the early beginnings of the Civil Rights movement, and in farming, cotton dominance was declining as more farmers turned towards soybeans and corn.

*In other words, many of the things that are taken for granted in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, like the wealth and security of the cotton plantation and the easy relations between the Pollitt family and their black help would likely not have fit into the real Mississippi Delta scene of the 1950s.*

*The play doesn’t explicitly reference any of this, but it’s possible to take Big Daddy’s dying of cancer as a symbol of the Old South’s decline as well.*

*Economic Shifts and Class Dynamics:*

*Big Daddy's wealth and the Pollitt plantation serve as symbols of the fading Southern aristocracy, while also reflecting the changing economic landscape. The characters' relationships and tensions revolve around the inheritance of the plantation, as Gooper and his wife Mae seek to secure their financial future, while Brick, who struggles with his own demons, remains indifferent to the family's wealth. This dynamic represents the different attitudes towards the South's economic shifts.*

*Racial Tensions and Civil Rights Movement:*

*Though not explicitly discussed in the play, the racial tensions and the Civil Rights Movement in the South are part of the backdrop that shapes the characters' lives. The Mississippi plantation setting reminds readers of the region's history of slavery and racial inequality, and the characters' silence on these issues suggests an underlying tension or unease with the changing social and political landscape.*

*Gender Roles and Family Dynamics:*

*The changing South saw evolving gender roles and family dynamics, which are evident in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." Maggie's ambition and desire for social mobility reflect the new opportunities for women during this period. She challenges traditional gender roles by asserting her independence and determination to secure a stable future for herself and Brick. Big Mama's subservience to Big Daddy and her role as a mediator between family members demonstrate the traditional expectations placed on women in the Old South.*

*Conflict Between Old and New Values:*

*The changing South is characterized by a tension between the Old South, with its traditional values and way of life, and the New South, which embraced progress and modernity. This conflict is evident in the generational divide between characters like Big Daddy and Big Mama, who represent the Old South's values, and characters like Brick and Maggie, who are caught in the midst of these changes. The characters' struggles to navigate the tensions between old and new values contribute to the emotional turmoil and family conflicts throughout the play.*

**The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor**

*The Southern aristocratic code of honor values progeny, power, and prestige. To obtain this, the system is perpetuated by mendacity of self deception in order to maintain patriarchal in the white supremacist plantation system.*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor, while sharing similarities with other societies that value progeny, power, and prestige, possesses unique characteristics rooted in the historical, social, and cultural contexts of the American South. Some of the key elements that differentiate the Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor include:*

*Chivalry and Courtesy:*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor places a strong emphasis on chivalry and courtesy, which is deeply rooted in the region's plantation society and the influence of European aristocracy. The manners and etiquette associated with this code involve a high degree of politeness, respect for others, and a strict adherence to social conventions. This emphasis on chivalry and courtesy distinguishes the Southern Code of Honor from other societies that may prioritize power and prestige without the same regard for refined manners and etiquette.*

*Racial Hierarchy and the Legacy of Slavery:*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor is inextricably tied to the region's history of slavery and the racial hierarchy it established. The code was primarily applied among the white, landowning aristocracy, and it helped to reinforce the social distinctions between the elite and the enslaved, as well as between the white and Black populations more broadly. This racial component sets the Southern Code of Honor apart from other societies that may share similar values but do not have the same historical context of racial inequality and subjugation.*

*Deeply Rooted Sense of Place and Tradition:*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor is closely associated with a strong sense of place and tradition, reflecting the region's distinct history and cultural identity. The American South has long been characterized by a strong attachment to its land, history, and customs, and this attachment is evident in the way the Code of Honor has been preserved and perpetuated over generations. This deeply rooted sense of place and tradition distinguishes the Southern Code of Honor from other societies that may value power and prestige without the same connection to a specific regional identity.*

*In summary, while the Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor shares certain values with other societies that emphasize progeny, power, and prestige, it is distinguished by its unique emphasis on chivalry and courtesy, the tradition of dueling, the racial hierarchy and legacy of slavery, and the deeply rooted sense of place and tradition. These distinguishing factors contribute to the uniqueness of the Southern Code of Honor and the specific ways it has shaped the social, cultural, and historical context of the American South.*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor is an important historical context that shapes the characters and themes in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof." This code of honor, rooted in the South's antebellum society, emphasizes the importance of reputation, family name, and personal dignity. The code of honor plays a significant role in the character dynamics and conflicts in the play, affecting how characters perceive and interact with each other.*

*Reputation and Family Name:*

*The Southern Code of Honor places a high importance on preserving one's reputation and family name. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the Pollitt family, especially Big Daddy, strives to uphold their social standing and maintain the appearance of respectability. The family's concern for their image becomes evident when they attempt to hide Big Daddy's terminal illness from him and deny the true nature of Brick's relationship with his late friend, Skipper. These efforts to protect the family's reputation lead to a web of lies and deceit that fuels much of the play's tension.*

*Personal Dignity and Masculinity:*

*The Southern Code of Honor also emphasizes personal dignity and the preservation of one's honor. In the play, Brick's struggle with his masculinity and his relationship with Skipper is central to his character arc. Brick's refusal to confront his feelings and the potential implications of his friendship with Skipper represents his attempt to maintain his personal dignity within the context of the Code of Honor. Similarly, Big Daddy's display of authority and dominance in the family is an embodiment of the traditional Southern male archetype that the Code of Honor perpetuates.*

*Loyalty and Family Obligations:*

*The Southern Code of Honor stresses the importance of loyalty and fulfilling one's family obligations. In "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the family members' interactions are often driven by their expectations of loyalty and duty. For instance, Maggie's determination to save her marriage to Brick, despite his emotional distance, reflects her commitment to her marital obligations. In contrast, Gooper and Mae's attempts to secure the family inheritance demonstrate their prioritization of personal gain over family loyalty, which challenges the traditional values embodied by the Code of Honor.*

*Conflict Between Traditional Values and Changing Society:*

*The Southern Aristocratic Code of Honor represents the traditional values and expectations that the characters in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" grapple with, as they navigate the changing social and cultural landscape of the mid-20th century South. The tension between these traditional values and the evolving social norms creates internal and interpersonal conflicts for the characters, contributing to the play's dramatic tension and thematic depth.*

**Key Techniques**

**Diacope**

To persuade, to convey a heightened emotion

**Epizeuxis**

To communicate despair and weariness, to emphasize, to rally and audience

**Parallelism**

To compare and contrast, to illustrate a relationship

**Epistrophe**

Same as anaphora

**Asyndeton**

Exhaustive or infinite feeling

Create a comparison

tone: excitement, rush, solemnity, power

Tension

**Polysyndeton**

Intensity, urgency

**Imagery - Metaphor/Simile**

**Rhyme**

**Settings**

**Notes for the Designer**

**Monologue**

**Rhetorical Question**

**Foreshadowing**

**Metonymy**

**Stage Directions**

**Key Characters**

**Brick**

**Brick has loyalty to true honor.** Brick confronted with the mendacity of the world he lives in, struggle to recognize that manipulation of truth is inherent to the society he cherishes. He refuses to recognize how he himself has repressed truth for his own purposes.

Skipper’s death jars I’m into a confrontation with the unreality of this ideal that cause his inner turmoil and stagnation. Brick’s crisis is rooted in an inability to accept that the system honor that rules the Southern aristocratic system is not true honor but a more complex and contradictory form of honor. Brick used to be stable, unmovable, and hardened on the pinnacle of the patriarchal society. He is white, a star athlete, and from money.

Brick’s homophobia becomes a tenet of the honor code that Brick has adopted. Because he was able to adopt his society’s prevalent morality without discomfort, Brick assumes everyone should; everyone can and should strive for ultimate honor. Brick lives in the incongruence between inner beliefs and his homosexual tension. The predicament placed Brick into a position that completely reject the reality that he live in, and live in his nostalgia with alcohol to paralyze his thoughts.

Brick is unwilling to reconcile how Skipper’s confession might complicate his relationship with himself, as the possibility of being attached, let alone attracted to Skipper in some way, may rupture his own view of himself in relation to his society. The mere possibility that he might be considered adjacent to homosexuality threatens his view of himself as strictly adherent to his right and accepted moral code.

When Skipper reveal his truth to brick, Brick is fearful not of Skipper’s sexuality or even the potential complication of his own so much as the social implication of being associated to homosexuality - he no longer has his spotless reputation.

**Margaret**

**Margaret is desperate to secure power for herself within the flawed family system.** Margaret believes conventional moral patterns are falsehood. If conventional morality is equivalent to “true honor”, then Maggie is explicitly recognizing that the code of honor that truly rules the Southern world is not reliant on the goodness and inner harmony innate to true honor.

Margaret is determined to change her circumstances, regardless of these ideals’ impossibility and her inability to embody them. She has fully accepted the necessity of presenting an outward appearance that is contradictory to inner truth. She manipulate truth, sexuality, and felinity as tools to gain social power that cannot access the homosocial world of the patriarchal plantation. Margaret is perseverated to fix her “reality”, to live not in poverty.