

The Bitch Archetype

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Patricia M. Spacks in her article, "The World of Hedda Gabler," quotes a review of a contemporary revival of the play which says, ". . . Ibsen was primarily interested in exploring ironically the cold depths of that changeless and most fascinating of all women—the bitch."¹ The bitch has been an important character to dramatists since Greek times. She is seen in the Phaedra of Euripides' *Hippolytus*, in Shakespeare's Kate of *The Taming of the Shrew*, and more recently in Ibsen's Hedda, O'Neill's Abbie of *Desire Under the Elms*, and Williams' Maggie of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. The recurrence of this character-type leads easily to the conclusion that there is something universal in the comprehension of the type by the artist and by his audience. There is something unchanging, something quickly identifiable about the bitch which indicates a further substantiation of C. G. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and its archetypal patterns.

Jung contends that human consciousness is governed by two distinct layers of the unconscious "[which] is undoubtedly personal"² and which Jung labels the personal unconscious. It is the individual's repression of personal experiences which formulates this layer. The second layer of unconscious is the collective unconscious. It is "an unceasing stream or perhaps an ocean of images and figures which drift into consciousness in our dreams or in abnormal states of mind."³ It is not individual, but universal: "it has contents and modes of behavior that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals. It is, in other words, identical in all men and thus constitutes a common psyche substrate of a suprapersonal nature which is present in every one of us."⁴ When applied to literature, this definition is expanded to mean that the individual, or personal, unconscious of the artist will help to govern the presentation of what is involuntarily brought forth from the collective unconscious. In this manner, the

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artist is creative in presenting the archetype. As Maud Bodkin sees it in her *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, it is basically the presentation of archetypes that helps literature become comprehensible to an audience, since the members of the audience have, unconsciously, an inborn knowledge of what the artist is presenting.

With these fundamental ideas in mind, then, it becomes necessary to delineate what the bitch archetype is and how it has been masterfully used by Henrik Ibsen, Eugene O'Neill, and Tennessee Williams. Jung gives us the most salient facts to be used in understanding what goes into making up the bitch archetype. Specifically, in his discussion of the "Principal Archetypes," Jung sets forth the notion that every individual is somehow androgynous; that is, each person has qualities of both sexes which play significant roles in the creation or integration of his personality. Jung calls the set of masculine qualities which assist in creating the personality, the *animus*. The set of female qualities is called the *anima*.⁵ These qualities are definitive forces in producing what he terms the "projections" of the individual, those specific illusions created by the individual about his own being. Jung feels each person has a longing to envision the world in its holistic reality, and the unconscious mind forces the person to compensate for the "risks, struggles, sacrifices which all end in disappointment"⁶ and which frequently fragment the integrated self-image. It becomes the *anima* in man and the *animus* in woman which bring about the compensation; thus they are known as the "projection-making factors" in the personality. Furthermore, projection is an uncontrolled mechanism of the unconscious mind: "In dreams or waking, in individuals or groups, in relation to persons, things, or conditions, it stands wholly outside the conscious will. 'Projection,' says Jung, 'is never made; it happens.'⁷

The archetypal image for the *anima* in the male personality is the mother. As Jung says, man "hopes to be caught, sucked in, enveloped and devoured. He seeks, as it were, the protecting, nourishing circle of the mother."⁸ With the woman, the image for the *animus* is the father: "Woman is compensated by a masculine element and therefore her unconscious has, so to speak, a masculine imprint."⁹

In addition to these ideas, Jung assigns a very definite role to the two projection-making factors. The *anima* he sees as the maternal Eros, the unconscious force which is more emotional than logical and which helps the individual to relate experience within his own mind. The *animus*, the paternal Logos, is the force which aids the individual in discriminating and recognizing experience for what it is.¹⁰ The confrontation with the contrasexual archetype is identified as the second stage in that most important of psychological processes—the individuation process— or the process of creating personality. Jacobi

identifies this encounter as occurring with the "soul-image" which is a "more or less solidly constituted functional complex, and inability to differentiate oneself from it leads to such phenomena as the moody man, dominated by feminine drives, buffeted by emotions, or the *animus*-possessed woman, opinionated and argumentative, the female know-it-all, who reacts in a masculine way and not instinctively."¹¹

In the integrated personality, the woman has the natural characteristic of the *anima*, and the existence of the *animus* in her unconscious is a compensating factor to aid in preventing any imbalance in the personality. When the woman has too strong an attachment or antipathy for the image which creates the *animus* within her—her father, for example—an imbalance occurs in the personality, and the *animus* causes the woman to over-compensate, thereby creating the possibility for neuroses or psychoses. As a consequence, this woman becomes dominated by the masculine element in her unconscious being which, in turn, affects her conscious being. The result is a woman who cannot be secure in her role as a woman, primarily because she is controlled by forces which are basically alien to that role. And this woman is the bitch archetype.

Usually, she is first characterized in literature by an insatiable thirst for material security. In order to achieve this material security, she represses her role as woman and becomes aggressive in a masculine manner. Consequently, she is often portrayed in literature as the manipulating, domineering, scheming woman who will try anything in order to get what she thinks she needs to be secure. Ibsen's *Hedda*, O'Neill's *Abbie*, and Williams' *Maggie* are all governed by a driving force in their personalities aimed at achieving, first and foremost, a firm foundation in material security.

Initially, it is the need for security which prompts Hedda Gabler to marry Jorgen Tesman. This need is clearly witnessed in the discussion she has with Judge Brack, when she says, "I had danced myself tired, my dear judge. My season was over."¹² Hedda realized she was not getting any younger—that she had danced [herself] tired; consequently, she took the nearest alternative route—marriage—that had the slightest assurance of a secure future for her. She definitely made sure prior to marrying Tesman that her future would be secure; for as she reminds him early in the play, they had established an agreement: "The agreement was that we were to maintain a certain position—entertain . . ." (411). But even with the relatively secure position furnished by Tesman, Hedda could not be satisfied. She still wanted more. She could never be happy with the simple womanly role as the wife of Tesman, for that role was basically foreign to her. She is continuously being described by critics, and by Ibsen himself, as General Gabler's daughter and not Tesman's wife. In this fact, we can find the key to Hedda's true nature.

The most revealing portrait we get of Hedda is in these lines: "General Gabler's daughter? Just think of the kind of life she was used to when the General was alive. Do you remember when she rode by with her father? That long black riding habit she wore? And the feather in her hat?" (390).

The *animus* force, it appears, was the only type of personality to which Hedda was exposed in her youth; consequently, she comes to identify her being with that force: the masculine, domineering force of the general. But what happens to someone when the force with which she identifies is gone? As Herbert Blau says in "*Hedda Gabler: the Irony of Decadence*," "because General Gabler is dead, Hedda is impotent, cut off from the natal source; and one of her most affective characteristics is a disturbing sterility that approaches the masculine."¹³ She strives to fulfill the role she had found in her youth; and the attempts to reorient her personality into the role of the "womanly woman" leave her frustrated, bored, and more insecure.

In order to compensate for that insecurity, Hedda must assume the bitch attitude which unconsciously allows the *animus* force in her nature to come to the forefront. She thereby attempts to alleviate her frustration and boredom by becoming active in manipulating the lives and affairs of others— an activity which, conventionally, is the role of the man. And so the bitch in her says, "For once in my life I want to have power over a human destiny" (432).

From this point in her life, Hedda has committed herself to playing the role of the bitch. She so manipulates Eilert Lovborg to the point of willfully helping him to commit suicide. But even in that Hedda is frustrated. She wished for him to perform the act beautifully with "vine leaves in his hair." Instead, the suicide is ugly; Hedda is left only more frustrated with her husband and Thea Elvsted. She asks, "Isn't there anything you two can use me for?" (457). But they do not need her, and she is left with only Judge Brack to keep her company. From earlier experience, Hedda has discovered Brack cannot be manipulated and that he wants only for her to play the role of woman with him. Such a situation is, of course, absolutely intolerable for Hedda—as is the fact that she is pregnant which places her far too near the role she is desperately repressing. Hedda becomes trapped and has no alternative but to do the thing that "one just doesn't do . . ." (458). In her final act, Hedda shows the determination and courage that are characteristic of the *animus* force. And, as Spacks says, "She attempts, as much as she can, 'masculine' solutions for her problems."¹⁴

It may seem strange that Abbie from *Desire Under the Elms* is chosen as an example of O'Neill's use of the bitch archetype in light of such characters as Lavinia in *Mourning Becomes Electra* and Nina in *Strange Interlude*. But in Abbie, O'Neill portrays a somewhat unique delineation of the bitch; that is, he shows us what happens to the bitch when she starts out in life dominated by the

animus force and in mid-life finds herself faced with the complex problem of having the *anima* assert itself thereby forcing her to assume the foreign role of a love-stricken and pregnant woman.

It is in the stage directions of the play that O'Neill provides us with the most revealing commentary on his characters. At the onset, O'Neill warns that the female principle is significant in this drama: the elms "*appear to protect and at the same time subdue. There is a sinister maternity in their aspect, a crushing, jealous absorption. . . . They are like exhausted women resting their sagging breasts and hands and hair on its roof, and when it rains their tears trickle down monotonously and rot on the shingles.*"¹⁵ The description prepares us for observing how the female principle operates in a pathological and traumatic manner in the lives of these characters, rather than in the healthy, normal manner. In "*Desire Under the Elms: Characters by Jung*," Patrick J. Nolan delineates how relevant the archetypes of *anima/animus* are to this play: "The elms and the rock walls establish, at the subliminal level, the polar contents of the *anima* and the *animus*. . . .At the level of image alone, we are aware that the conflicting energies of these archetypes, by the end of the play, will either be harmonized or be mutually destructive."¹⁶

Even in O'Neill's description of Abbie we are prepared for the conflicting female/male principles within her personality. She is "*thirty-five, buxom, full of vitality. Her round face is pretty but marred by its rather gross sensuality. There is strength and obstinacy in her jaw, a hard determination in her eyes*" (237). Abbie's "round, sensual" essentially feminine physical appearance is juxtaposed with the description of her typically "strong, obstinate, determined" reactions to the world about her.

Just as Ibsen made Hedda's need for material security a dominant part of his drama, so does O'Neill make Abbie thirst for security in *Desire Under the Elms*. As Edgar F. Racey, Jr., says in "Myth as Tragic Structure in *Desire Under the Elms*," "desire for the farm prompted Abbie's marriage to Ephraim, and her affair with Eben was initially motivated by her desire to secure that position with Ephraim."¹⁷ With the first words she speaks, we become aware of her masculine drive for material possession. Indeed, the foundation of the action of this drama rests on the question of ownership of the practically infertile, rock-laden farm on which the Cabots live. Ephraim Cabot, when first arriving with his bride, welcomes her with "*a queer, strangled emotion in his dry cracking voice,*" saying, "Har we be t'hum, Abbie." O'Neill has Abbie respond "*(with lust for the word) Hum! (Her eyes gloating on the house without seeming to see the two stiff figures at the gate) It's purty—purty! I can't b'lieve it's r'ally mine*" (238). The exchange involving Abbie and Ephraim at this point hinges on the underlying, symbolic conflict between the *anima* and the *animus*:

CABOT (sharply) *Yewr' n? Mine!* (He stares at her penetratingly, she stares back. He adds relentingly) *Our'n—mebbe! . . . A hum's got t' hev a woman.*

ABBIE (her voice taking possession) *A woman's got t' hev a hum!. . . (with the conqueror's conscious superiority) I'll go in an' looks at my house. (She goes slowly around to porch).*

PETER (calls after her) *Ye'll find Eben inside. Ye better not tell him it's yewr house.*

ABBIE (mouthing the name) *Eben. (Then quietly) I'll tell Eben (238).*

The unconscious conflict raging in Abbie between the *anima* and the *animus* also becomes a focus in the initial meeting with Eben. O'Neill says, "*Her eyes take him in penetratingly with a calculating appraisal of his strength as against hers. But under this her desire is dimly awakened by his youth and good looks*" (240). The entangling web of confusion begins at this point, with Abbie's masculine attempt to appraise her enemy's strength overshadowed by the feminine reaction to his appearance. Using "*her most seductive tones,*" she says, "*Be you—Eben? I'm Abbie—(She laughs) I mean, I'm yer new Maw*" (240). Eben, of course, rejects her; but she remains undaunting:

I don't want t' pretend playin' Maw t' ye, Eben. (Admiringly) Ye're too big an' too strong fur that. I want t' be frens with ye. Mebbe with me fur a fren ye'd find ye'd like livin' here better. I kin make it easy fur ye with him, mebbe. (With a scornful sense of power) I calc'late I kin git him t' do most anythin' fur me (240).

We shall see that Abbie does possess other characteristics which are archetypal of the bitch. There is no General Gabler in her background to make identification with the *animus* force a prime part of her personality. Instead, circumstance has elicited the dominant projection of the *animus* force, for Abbie is an orphan. As she says:

My Maw died afore I'd growed. I don't remember her none. But ye won't hate me long, Eben. I'm not the wust in the world—an' yew an' me've got a lot in common. I kin tell that by lookin' at ye. Waal— I've had a hard life, too—oceans o' trouble an' nuthin' but

wuk fur others in other folks' hums. Then I married an' he turned out a drunken spreer an' so he had to wuk fur others an' me too agen in other folks' hums, an' the baby died, an' my husband got sick an' died too, an' I was glad sayin' now I'm free fur once, on'y I diskivered right away all I was free fur was t' wuk agen in other folks' hums, doin' other folks' wuk till I'd most give up ope o' ever doin' my own wuk in my own hum, an' then your Paw come. . . (240).

These facts make it obvious that at least two factors were relevant in allowing the *animus* force to over-compensate and dominate her personality. In order to provide for the lack of parental guidance and support, Abbie was forced to become strong enough to make her own way in the world. The *animus* force enabled her to undergo that compensation, as well as provided her the strength to work in "other folks' hums." As a female worker, Abbie was no doubt made subject to authoritarian pressures conventionally associated with masculine individuals which provides further evidence of her encounters with the *animus*. The result of such encounters is a woman who forced herself to become masculine in her strength and determination—a bitch of the first order.

O'Neill portrays Eben as "*fighting against his growing attraction and sympathy*" while harshly declaring verbally that Abbie is no more than a prostitute, "An' the price [Ephraim's] payin' ye—this farm—was my Maw's, damn ye!—an' mine now!" (241). but Eben is no match for Abbie; she responds "*(with a cool laugh of confidence)* Yewr'n? We'll see 'bout that! *(Then strongly)* Waal—what if I did need a hum? What else'd marry an old man like him fur?" (241). And finally, in defiance, she cries out, "This be my farm—this be my hum—this be my kitchen!—" (241).

The strength and determination are diminished, however, as O'Neill opens Part Two of the play by moving the action to two months later. Eben is preparing to venture into town in "*his store suit, spruced up, his face shines from soap and water*" (242). Abbie is seen sitting on the porch:

ABBIE Ye look all slicked up like a prize bull!

EBEN: *(with a sneer)* Waal—ye hain't so purty yerself, be ye? *(They stare into each other's eyes, his held by hers in spite of himself, hers glowing possessively. Their physical attraction becomes a palpable force quivering in the hot air.)*

ABBIE: *(softly)* Ye don't mean that. It's agin nature, Eben. Ye been fightin' yer nature ever since the day I come—tryin' t' tell

yerself I hain't purty t' ye. (*She laughs a low humid laugh without taking her eyes from his. A pause—her body squirms desirously—she murmurs languorously*) Hain't the sun strong an' hot? Ye kin feel it burnin' into the earth—Nature—makin' thin's grow—bigger 'n' bigger—burnin' inside ye—makin' ye want t' grow—into somethin' else—till ye're jined with it—an' it's your'n—but it owns ye, too—an' makes ye grow bigger—like a tree—like them elums—(*She laughs again softly, holding his eyes. He takes a step toward her, compelled against his will*) Nature'll beat ye, Eben . . . (242).

Eben, to counteract Abbie's attack on his "nature," resorts to his only weapon: "She [Min, the village harlot] don't go sneakin' an' stealin'—what's mine (243). This thrust forces Abbie to marshal her forces; she retaliates in typical bitch fashion with "Ye'll never live t' see the day when even a stinkin' weed on it'll belong t' ye! (*Then in a scream*) Git out o' my sight! Go on t' yer slut—disgracin' yer Paw 'n' me! I'll git yer Paw t' horsewhip ye off the place if I want t'! Ye're only livin' here cause I tolerate ye! Git along! I hate the sight o' ye!" (243). The fact that Abbie resorts to a "scream" in this passage is indicative of the intrusion of her *anima* nature in the midst of an *animus* projection. Such instances serve to indicate that Abbie is subject to the *animus* which has primarily worked to create her manipulating, domineering personality. Up to this point in her life, Abbie is essentially portrayed as the same type of bitch as Hedda. But O'Neill does something quite unique and peculiar with this bitch. She turns from being almost completely masculine in her method of manipulation to almost completely feminine.

She begins to use her femaleness to aid in manipulating others' lives. Ultimately, she resorts to the primary female role of motherhood to provide a definite means of securing her material possessions. She tells Ephraim, "I want a son now" then asks him, "Would ye will the farm t' me then—t' me an' it . . .?" (246). He complies with her wishes and begins to pray that she becomes pregnant—"he bows his head, mumbling. She pretends to do likewise but gives him a side glance of scorn and triumph" (247). Intentionally begun as a compensating factor to help her get her way and utilized in a masculine forceful fashion, the role of woman backfires on Abbie.

O'Neill suggests that it is this unconscious confusion of the *anima* and the *animus* forces within Abbie that brings about her tragic downfall. She allows Eben to desire her sexually, and she plays on this desire to help secure her position. In the very dramatic scene where Abbie informs Eben that she is going to open up the drawing room, O'Neill describes her with: "*her eyes are fixed on his so burningly that his will seems to wither before hers*" (p. 240). Here Abbie

is seen on the verge of playing the complete female role, and the situation frightens her. When she is about to confront Eben in the drawing room, O'Neill tells us that "A change has come over the woman. She looks awed and frightened now, ready to run away" (p. 241). Very shortly after this point, she falls the victim of her own desire and is changed from the manipulating, domineering bitch to the helpless, desperate bitch. Even in the midst of this confusion, her determination and sheer strength—provided her by the projections of the *animus*—still come through. She murders her child in order to regain the love of Eben. When she faces Ephraim after the murder, the masculine strength is quite apparent:

Don't ye dare tech me! What right hev ye t' question me 'bout him?
He wa'n't yewr son! Think I'd have a son by yew? I'd die furst! I
hate the sight o' ye an' allus did! It's yew I should've murdered, if
I'd had good sense! I hate ye! I love Eben. I did from the fust. An'
he was Eben's son—mine an' Eben's—not your'n! (p. 264).

Abbie's strength remains with her to the end. She tries to stop Eben from sharing the blame for the murder: "Eben! I won't let ye! I can't let ye!" (267). He retorts, "Ye can't he'p yerself. I got ye beat fur once!" (267). But he knows better, and the bitch comes through in her when she finally ends with "I hain't beat—s'long's I got ye!" (267).

The tragedy that encompasses Abbie, the bitch, is that of the individual being caught between irreconcilable forces—between the feminine quality of love and the relentless masculine drive for possession. As Patrick Nolan indicates:

The original stamp, however, that O'Neill imposes on the polarities is his equating of the feminine archetype to the quality of love, and of the masculine archetype to man's greed for possessions. Even as Jung insists that the archetypes must be harmonized, O'Neill insists that the unregulated passion for possession must be brought under control by other human needs—in this case, love. Everyone must' love; yet, everyone must possess some goods. Both must be fulfilled if human needs are to be happily satisfied. The elimination of one (love) by the other (possessiveness) marks the failure of man to attain psychic wholeness as well as, for O'Neill, spiritual unity.¹⁸

Unlike Ibsen and O'Neill, Tennessee Williams is very helpful in explicitly stating that his Maggie in *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* is a bitch. Very early in the play, he says about her, "It is constant rejection that makes her humor 'bitchy.'"¹⁹

Again, it is primarily the character's lack of material security that causes her to allow the compensating, unconscious *animus* to dominate her personality. In a desperate effort to explain to Brick, her husband, the material situation in which they find themselves, Maggie refers to the family's "constant little remarks and innuendos about the fact that you and I have not produced any children, are totally childless and therefore totally useless!—Of course it's comical but it's also disgusting since it's so obvious what they're up to! . . . They're up to cutting you out of your father's estate" (16-17). Such a situation would be intolerable for Maggie, and she projects the determination and strength to prevent it.

She insists that her husband quit drinking, because his alcoholism makes him "a candidate for Rainbow Hill, Baby, and that's where they aim to ship you—over my dead body! Yep, over my dead body. . . . Then Brother Man could get a-hold of the purse strings and dole out remittances to us, maybe get power-of-attorney and sign checks for us and cut off our credit wherever, whenever he wanted" (18). The fact that Maggie sincerely vows to lose only "over her dead body" indicates how powerful her strength has become in light of threats to her material well-being.

But it is not only the lack of material things that makes Maggie insecure. She wants very desperately to be the complete female, but she is thwarted in this desire by what can only be described as a frigid husband. Complicated threats to her security and her self-image are created by the *animus* force in her unconscious.

Her stunning, vitriolic attack on Mae, her sister-in-law, provides evidence of the underlying conflict between the *anima* and the *animus*. The attack is based on Mae's ability to bear children and is a projection of Maggie's disillusionment at not having children:

And [Big Daddy] can't stand Brother Man and Brother Man's wife, that monster of fertility, Mae; she's downright odious to him! Know how I know? By little expressions that flicker over his face when that woman is holding fo'th on one of her choice topics such as—how she refused twilight sleep!—when the twins were delivered! Because she feels motherhood's an experience that a woman ought to experience fully! —in order to fully appreciate the wonder and beauty of it! HAH! (19).

A similar situation occurs in her description of Mae as the cotton carnival queen. She is desperately trying to diminish any female quality Mae possesses:

. . . as for Mae having been a cotton carnival queen, as they remind us so often, lest we forget, well, that's one honor that I don't envy her for!—Sit on a brass throne on a tacky float an' ride down Main Street, smilin' bowin', and blowin' kisses to all the trash on the street—. . . Why, year before last, when Susan McPheeters was singled out fo' that honor, y'know what happened to her? . . . some old drunk leaned out of a window in the Hotel Gayoso and yelled, 'Hey, Queen, hey, hey, there, Queenie!' Poor Susie looked up and flashed him a radiant smile and he shot out a squirt of tobacco juice right in poor Susie's face" (21).

In order to help maintain her self-image, Maggie thinks she has to sacrifice feminine characteristics and assume the role of a strong, determined and aggressive individual. She—more than anyone—is aware of what she has become. She says, Don't you think I know that. . . . That I've gone through this—*hideous!—transformation*, become *hard! Frantic!* . . . That's what you've been observing in me lately. How could y' help but observe it? That's all right. I'm not thin-skinned anymore" (22). As she explains it, Maggie says, "*WHY!—Am I so catty?—Cause I'm consumed with envy an' eaten up with longing? . . . I feel all the time like a cat on a hot tin roof!*" (30-31). The consequence of her inner turmoil is the creation of a highly competitive, highly aggressive "cat" who is quite willing to do anything to win. Her *animus* "transformation" to the masculine attitude and strength does not permit her to lose: "the only thing I don't have is the charm of the defeated, my hat is still in the ring, and I am determined to win" (25).

Williams captures Maggie's competitiveness in two interesting stage directions:

[Brick] breaks away from her and seizes the small boudoir chair and raises it like a lion-tamer facing a big circus cat. [Count five] She stares at him with her fist pressed to her mouth, then bursts into shrill, almost hysterical laughter. He remains grave for a moment, then grins and puts the chair down (32).

The symbolic irony involved in Brick's use of a traditionally female object to attack his wife and her reaction to the threat indicate Williams' perhaps unconscious awareness of the archetypes at work. The other direction reads:

[Margaret is alone, completely alone, and she feels it. She draws in, hunches her shoulders, raises her arms with fists clenched, shuts her

eyes tight as a child about to be stabbed with a vaccination needle. When she opens her eyes again, what she sees is the long oval mirror and she rushes straight to it, stares into it with a grimace and says: Who are you?—Then she crouches a little and answers herself in a different voice which is high, thin, mocking: 'I am Maggie the Cat!'] (37).

Again, we see the need for Maggie to foster projections of her inner strength in order to assure her security in a threatening environment. Obviously, the projections center around the image of the cunning, strong, and dangerous "cat" who must defend her position and will rely on aggression to do so.

One of the defenses Maggie has maintained in her fight against material/feminine lack is her physical beauty. She uses her beauty as a safeguard against defeat by the lack of sexual satisfaction. She realizes that the problem in her marriage is not hers; that their "sex life didn't just peter out in the usual way, it was cut off short, long before the natural time for it to, and it's going to revive again, just as sudden as that. I'm confident of it. That's what I'm keeping myself attractive for. For the time when [Brick will] see [her] again like other men see [her] . . ." (38). When Brick insists she should take a lover, she responds:

I'm taking no chances. No, I'd rather stay on this hot tin roof.

BRICK: A hot tin roof's 'n uncomfo'table place t' stay on. . . .

MARGARET: Yah, but I can stay on it just as long as I have to (39).

Maggie's strength becomes extremely evident when she insists that something must be done to ensure their future security. As she says, "It takes money to take care of a drinker and that's the office that I've been elected to lately. . . . Mae an' Gooper are plannin' to freeze us out of Big Daddy's estate, because you drink and I am childless. But we can defeat that plan. We're *going* to defeat that plan!" (41). It is at this point that we see the motivation which causes her to compensate through the unconscious *animus* and the consequent determination to succeed. She says:

Always had to suck up to people I couldn't stand because they had money and I was poor as Job's turkey. You don't know what that's like . . . and have to suck up to relatives that you hated because they had money and all you had was a bunch of hand-me-down clothes and

a few old moldy three per cent government bonds. . . . When I came out, the year that I made my debut, I had just two evening dresses! One Mother made me from a pattern in *Vogue*, the other a hand-me-down from a snotty rich cousin I hated!— The dress that I married you in was my grandmother's weddin' gown. . . . So that's why I'm like a cat on a hot tin roof!" (41-42).

Once Maggie has determined to follow her course of success in achieving material security, she changes her focus of attack to her marriage. The strength she projects in dealing with the need to "defeat the plan" to squeeze them out of the estate is subsequently transferred to re-establish some marital link between her and Brick. She persistently pursues the cause of the destruction of their sex-life with masculine ruthlessness. She says, "I've thought a whole lot about it and now I know when I made my mistake. Yes, I made my mistake when I told you the truth about that thing with Skipper" (42). When Brick tries to avoid the issue, she is relentless: "you asked too goddam much of people that loved you, you—superior creature!—you godlike being!—And so we made love to each other to dream it was you, both of us! Yes, yes, yes! Truth, truth! What's so awful about it? I like it . . ." (43). Again, Brick runs away from the truth by calling out to his niece, but Maggie persists:

We drank together that night all night in the bar of the Blackstone and when cold day was comin' up over the Lake an' we were comin' out drunk to take a dizzy look at it, I said, 'SKIPPER! STOP LOVIN' MY HUSBAND OR TELL HIM HE'S GOT TO LET YOU ADMIT IT TO HIM'!—one way or another. . . .From then on Skipper was nothin' at all but a receptacle for liquor and drugs. . . . [Brick strikes at her, misses] Missed me!—Sorry,—I'm not tryin' to whitewash my behavior, Christ, no! Brick, I'm not good. The rich or the well-to-do can afford to respect moral patterns, conventional moral patterns, but I could never afford to, yeah, but—I'm honest! Give me credit for just that, will you *please*?—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! But, Brick?!—*Skipper is dead! I'm alive! Maggie the cat is—alive!*" (45).

In the midst of an entire family that is involved in mendacity, Maggie's strength is in her honesty. It is ironic that her final exhibition of strength rests in a "lie" she tells about being pregnant. But she gains the support of Big Daddy who

recognizes the "powerful odor of mendacity" and insists that there is "life" in Maggie.

Williams does not alter Maggie's situation throughout the course of the play. At the end of Act I, she is relegated to a background character—the focus being transferred to Brick and Big Daddy. Maggie remains frustrated and continually becomes stronger and stronger in her determination, until the end of the play when she shines forth in the splendor of her bitchiness:

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 (122).

Maggie *is* stronger than Brick. Actually, she is much stronger than either of the examples of the bitch being dealt with in this study.

Hedda and Abbie try to manipulate lives; they end in defeat. Maggie, finally, is the bitch who ends in triumph. She succeeds admirably in manipulating her husband: "Oh, you weak, beautiful people who give up with such grace. What you need is someone to take hold of you—gently, with love, and hand your life back to you, like something gold you let go of—and I can! I'm determined to do it—and nothing's more determined than a cat on a tin roof—is there? Is there, Baby?" (158).

It has not exactly been for purposes of comparison that this study has been written; instead, it has been to present in a somewhat concrete form an analysis utilizing Jungian psychological theory as applied to literature. Fundamentally, this theory holds that when we can identify—either sympathetically or antipathetically—with a character in a literary work, we already have somewhere deep in our unconsciousness a vague image of that character. Thus, we gain a more complex and comprehensive appreciation for the motivating structures and psychic operations of archetypal patterns in aesthetic experiences from which we can derive a more thorough understanding of all human nature.

Notes

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3. 642.

4. 642.
5. C. G. Jung, "The Principal Archetypes," in *The Modern Tradition*, eds. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, Jr. (New York: Oxford UP, 1965) 644.
6. 654.
7. Jolande Jacobi, *The Psychology of C. G. Jung* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1971) 92-93.
8. Jung, "Principal," 654.
9. 654.
10. 656.
11. Jacobi 114-115.
12. Henrik Ibsen, "Hedda Gabler," in *Modern Drama*, ed. Otto Reinert (Boston: Little, Brown, 1964) 414. All further references to the play are from this same text.
13. Herbert Blau, "Hedda Gabler: the Irony of Decadence," *ETJ*, 5 (1953) 113.
14. Spacks 164.
15. Eugene O'Neill, "Desire Under the Elms," in *Modern Drama*, ed. Anthony Caputi (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1966) 224. All further references to the play are from this same text.
16. Patrick J. Nolan, "Desire Under the Elms: Characters by Jung," *Eugene O'Neill Newsletter*, 5.2 (1981) 6.
17. Edgar F. Racey, "Myth as Tragic Structure in *Desire Under the Elms*," *MD*, 5 (1962/63) 46.
18. Nolan 6.
19. Tennessee Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (New York: Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1985)
20. All further references to the play are from this same text.

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