

## **Patriarchy and Female Dependency: Blanche, Stella, and Eunice in A Streetcar Named Desire**

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### **Abstract**

The paper examines how Women's dependency in Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) is depicted as an outcome of the existence of patriarchy in the post-war American society rather than due to individual weaknesses. The paper suggests that the three women of the play (Blanche, Stella Kowalski and Eunice Hubbell) represent three different approaches to the system of male domination—a resistance/destruction approach, a calculated accommodation for survival approach, and an unquestioning complicity approach. However, in order to take account of various important critical views on the play, including that of Kathleen Lant, who reads the play in a misogynistic way, and Anna Vlasopolos's counter-reading of misogyny as critique of patriarchy, as well as the subsequent feminist readings by Ian Todd, Salma Haque and Yasin Sharif and Yan Huang and Ananya Boruah, the analysis shows that critical disagreement over the play is reflected by the range of attitudes towards patriarchy in the play itself. The paper concludes that Blanche, Stella, and Eunice, when read in conjunction, make more fully apparent the mechanics of patriarchy's dependency than does any one character.

**Keywords:** patriarchy; female dependency; Tennessee Williams; A Streetcar Named Desire; feminist criticism; gender roles

### **Introduction**

The role of women in a patriarchy society is not only determined by their own capacity or desire but also by the social, economic and cultural framework that imposes constraints on their choices. Respectability, security, and even psychological stability are all bound up in women's relationships with men and their capacity for conforming to socially acceptable models of femininity in Tennessee Williams' A Streetcar Named Desire (1947). The play is set in New Orleans shortly after World War II, where male power is prevalent in the home and social sphere, and women are continually forced to rely on men for economic support, social affirmation, emotional comfort and survival. Williams does not depict this dependency in a monochromatic way. Rather, in Blanche DuBois, Stella Kowalski and Eunice Hubbell, he portrays a range of female reactions and responses to a social system dominated by men. Perhaps the most obvious and heart-wrenching example of female dependence is that of Blanche DuBois. Blanche is already a vulnerable woman when she enters Stella's house, having lost her family estate Belle Reve and the economic and social security that it provided. She is also becoming more dependent on men's approval due to her loss of status, financial insecurity, history of problems and fear of aging. This is not just a vanity, but a concern of her beauty, youth, appearance and romantic attention. It may also be regarded as a way of maintaining

worth in a society where the poor, unmarried woman has few safe avenues for self-sacrifice. Her desire for Mitch to marry her and provide her with stability shows her dependency on the acceptance of men. As this option is taken away and Stanley eventually ruins her reputation and emotional stability, Blanche's final fate brings to light the harsh consequences for a woman who cannot adapt to the patriarchal notion of 'womanhood'.

Stella Kowalski offers another and more practical answer to the system. Unlike Blanche, Stella has achieved a socially recognized role as Stanley's wife, and then his mother. But this seeming security comes at a high emotional cost. Her reliance on Stanley is not just economic, but physical, emotional and domestic. Despite Stanley's violent behavior, Stella keeps going back to him, indicating that marriage provides some type of stability she is not willing—or perhaps not able—for Stella to give up. Her choice is the most disturbing when Blanche claims that Stanley raped her. Stella needs to either dismiss or ignore her sister's story in order to maintain her marriage and her household. Her survival, then, is not because she is free from patriarchy, but because she lives within it. Williams' situation is especially complicated because more than being a passive act, Stella's submission is a result of the few choices she has as a woman whose emotional, economic, family, and social self have been bound together with marriage.

Eunice Hubbell further elaborates on this theme by demonstrating the potential for the patriarchy of dependency to become a normal way of living. The love and marriage of her own life, where she experienced conflict, aggression, separation and reconciliation, is treated as normal aspects of domestic life. Eunice can see when Stanley is being violent, and even when he's abusing her, but she still takes part in perpetuating the same social system. At the end of the play, when Blanche accuses Stella of making a mistake and her advice is to go on living as if she was right, she shows how "practical common sense" has been realized in the face of male power. Eunice thus sits at a significant juncture between resistance and complicity: she is aware of the harm done by the behavior of the patriarchy, but also contributes to keeping the domestic systems that perpetuate that behavior going. The three sisters, Blanche, Stella and Eunice, represent a continuum of how women react to the power of a man. Blanche's attempts to ignore her vulnerability through illusion, performance, sexuality, and seeking male validation, destroy her psychologically and socially.

Stella selects housing arrangements to maintain her marriage and material well-being, while remaining silent, deluding herself, and being loyal to her sister. Eunice suggests an even greater acceptance of dependency as a normal part of life, where the home is run by a man. Their experiences prove that dependence of the female in the play is not the individual moral and psychological weakness that can be explained on this basis. Instead it is a reflection of a society where women's access to economic, social, sexual and physical rights and freedoms are still significantly constrained. The tragedy of Blanche, however, is not enough, nor is the damaged marriage between Stella and Stanley, to make *A Streetcar Named Desire* important; it's also important because of the larger gender system that brings the experiences of all three women together. The play asks questions which are difficult under patriarchy, is it a choice of dependence or just a selection from various types of dependence that they have? It also makes

it hard to explain the distinction between resistance and submission, since every woman tries, in her own unique way, to maintain dignity, security, intimacy or survival in a suffocating society. The destruction of Blanche, the accommodation of Stella, and the pragmatic complicity of Eunice, all depict a progression in the process by which patriarchy is resisted, negotiated, and reproduced.

Blanche DuBois, Stella Kowalski, and Eunice Hubbell do not, therefore, stand for Williams' gender politics in this paper; rather, each of these women is a representative of the same as a group under the category of "patriarchy and female dependency. It places their readings in dialogue with divergent readings of the play by feminist critics, as well as with the debate about whether the play condemns violence in a patriarchy or, at some points, reinforces the ideology of the patriarchy portrayed. By focusing on the intimate dynamics of the characters, their decisions, their silences, the material conditions, and their reactions to male power in their lives, the talk contends that these three women together expose the processes of how patriarchy produces, sustains, and legitimizes female dependence. When read together the three women offer a more complete picture of the ways in which they might defy the power of men, adapt to it in order to survive, or join it for the sake of continuing it when dependence has become normalized in the mundaneness of social life.

### **The Story: A Brief Overview**

A Streetcar Named Desire opens with the arrival of Blanche DuBois in Elysian Fields, New Orleans, where she lives with her younger sister Stella Kowalski and her husband, Stanley Kowalski. Blanche is already physically tired, emotionally traumatized and socially isolated as she steps onto the stage. When she wears her pretty clothes, talks elegantly, and embraces the principles of the former Southern aristocracy, she stands apart from her working-class surroundings as Stella is used to. After losing Belle Reve, the DuBois family estate in Mississippi, Blanche finds herself in Stella. Her arrival is therefore not only a family reunion, but a battle between two social worlds: Blanche's vanishing aristocratic heritage and Stanley's brash masculine, working-class world (Williams 12).

Blanche is very surprised at Stella's humble home and Stanley's bad manners. Meanwhile, she is relying on Stella for shelter and protection as she has nowhere else to turn. In the very first scene Blanche is presented with the central contradiction of her situation: she wants to seem independent, refined and superior, but she is nonetheless dependent on others in her situation. Her reluctance to disclose the entire situation of Belle Reve's death first off makes Stanley even more suspicious. Blanche's high priced clothes, jewellery and sophisticated behavior are all signs that Stanley thinks she may have disinherited Stella to herself. He begins to question Blanche's possessions and documents, which foreshadows his desire to assert his male dominance within the house and over Blanche.

Stanley is even more suspicious because Blanche is not entirely subservient to him. She mocks the way he behaves, doubts Stella's marriage, and constantly portrays him as being uncivilized and crude. Blanche's mere presence, then, poses a threat to Stanley, not just because she inhabits his house but because she would pose a challenge to the dominant power that he draws on when he's at home. As the play progresses, their battle slowly evolves into the main

action of the play. Blanche defends herself by using words, charisma, appearance and illusion, while Stanley relies on his physical strength, investigation, exposure and social power. The confrontation between them then expands from a clash of personalities to an unequal struggle between a woman who is socially disadvantaged and a man who wields authority in her new inner world. Blanche speaks disparagingly of Stanley to Stella, trying to convince her that the brutality and sloppiness of their relationship is not healthy. Her criticism peaks at Stanley's violent act at the poker night. But Stella keeps going back to Stanley, who is aggressive towards her. The sexual and emotional connection between Stella and Stanley is, then, significant to the narrative, and shows the interplay between love and violence, love and dependency. Stella describes how she loved Stanley:

“There are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark—that sort of make everything else seem—unimportant” (Williams 46).

This is part of the reason Blanche can't not see the difference between Stella and Stanley. Though Stella sees something in Stanley's violence, she is still emotionally, sexually, domestically and more and more in the pocket of Stanley. The sense of connection is heightened by her pregnancy as it would mean that she would be leaving not only her husband but her family unit that seems to be the foundation for her life and her child's. Haque and Sharif additionally cite Stella's pragmatic worry of survival as one of the reasons behind her enduring devotion to her husband (31). As Blanche and Stanley's relationship grows more fierce, Blanche sees Harold “Mitch” Mitchell, one of Stanley's friends. In a way, it may seem that Mitch is providing Blanche with a chance to get out of her mess. He is initially being tender and respectful towards Blanche, unlike Stanley, and Blanche starts to believe that Mitch may be able to give her her social respectability and material security back when she gets married. Thus, her attraction to him is linked not only to the romantic aspect, but also to the necessity for a stable future. She hides her age, stays out of the light, and paints herself as an idealized version of herself because she feels she is only of value to Mitch if she is young, innocent and feminine and seems to be a respectable, if not pure, person. One of the most important statements made in the play is the attitude Blanche has toward reality:

I don't want realism, I want magic! (Williams 47).

She herself does not have the habit of deception; this is her preference for “magic”. It speaks to her desire—for survival in a world where the truth of her old age, of her destitute living conditions, of her sexual history, of her emotional instability, could ruin what little she has left in terms of opportunities. As Blanche is performance of femininity, she recognizes the value attached to young female beauty in a patriarchal society, and her performance of femininity is a survival tactic in Williams' eyes (3). Her reliance on illusion is thus intertwined with her reliance on male validation. But Stanley intentionally ruins Blanche's chance at a romance with Mitch. He researches her history in Laurel, Miss., and finds out she was fired from her teaching job, had had sex with many men and had a reputation at the Hotel Flamingo. However, Stanley does not consider this information to be merely personal, but rather a tool for his use. He tells Mitch about Blanche's past, and he knows that this will make Mitch's picture of Blanche change forever and will make it impossible for him to marry her. Blanche's

history, therefore, becomes Stanley's weapon to assert his dominance in his household. Mitch then confronts Blanche and tells her that he will no longer make her his wife. The failure of this relationship is especially important in that Blanche had invested in Mitch the hope of social and emotional rescue. After that, her troubled state of mind gets worse. Her reliance on the approval and protection of men is made precariously volatile when her security is only as long as a man will approve and protect. Blanche's reliance is summarized by the line that's most synonymous with her character:

“Always I have relied on the kindness of strangers” (Williams 107).

The words hold new meaning when considered in the context of her past. All of the economic protection that Blanche once had at Belle Reve has been taken away, she has no stable profession, no home of her own, and she has found her emotional and material security repeatedly through relationships with men. Her tragedy is thus a combination of personal tragedy and a social structure that leaves women with no property, money, family protection, or a marriage which is respectable, leaving them very vulnerable. Boruah suggests that in the end, Blanche's silence and powerlessness are related to the lack of space available to "women who seek to say something about violence they endure" (Williams 206). The most violent form of the battle between Stanley and Blanche is when Stella goes to the hospital to give birth. With Stella out, Blanche and Stanley are left to themselves in the apartment. Blanche is by now without Mitch, has lost her social standing, and has suffered a great deal in emotional terms. The rape of Blanche in Stanley's case is the extreme culmination of Stanley's attempts to control Blanche. This isn't just a single sexual assault but an ultimate display of physical control over a woman who has continually defied him. The attack weakens the last psychological barriers that have helped Blanche to survive.

Stella comes back; Blanche tells her that Stanley raped her. But Stella cannot take the accusation seriously, since, not to believe Blanche would make it nearly impossible to continue living with Stanley. Stella's reaction, therefore, is at the heart of the theme of the dependency of women. She is not only facing a choice between two competing stories, she's facing a choice about two forms of loyalty and survival. To believe Blanche's story would mean to admit her husband as being capable of savaging her, or even killing her, and would jeopardize her marriage, her home, her finances, her sexual life, and her family structure, which has just been formed with the birth of her child. But at this instant, Eunice is crucial because she encourages Stella to stay in the marriage. Eunice has been critical of the violence of men in the past, and she has suffered from violence herself in her marriage to Steve, but she ultimately tells Stella that she should go on with her life without taking Blanche's accusation on board. Her closedness is encapsulated in the nuts and bolts declaration:

“Life has got to go on” (Williams 133).

The line exposes the normalcy of the housing of women in the social world of the play. Eunice does not have to lie to herself that there is violence, but she has to lie to herself that women must keep certain truths to herself if they are going to survive at home. She is significant in this respect for the ways in which a patriarchal system can be maintained by the women who have been taught to believe that it is necessary for their survival and who have learned to live



as if it were. By the end of the play, Blanche is mentally unable to protect herself. Stella is stunned and saddened when a doctor and a matron come to take her to a mental hospital. Blanche's disappearance is the final step in her transition from social insecurity to complete institutionalization. She was coming to Elysian Fields for a sanctuary from the failure of her former life, but when she makes it there she has no possessions, no family, no husband, no social standing, and no destiny. Stanley continues to stay in the household and Stella continues to be his wife, Eunice helps to maintain the practicality of domestic life. The conclusion thus goes beyond the personal tragedy of Blanche. It sets the role of the three women in the patriarchy. Blanche tries to defy Stanley and build other means of protection, but she ends up being annihilated and expelled. Stella's life is tenuous, because she has to stay in marriage and keep a secret that would prevent it from ever being possible to continue. Eunice embodies the norm of this compromise, willing to accept harsh realities if need be so that household life can go on. When read together their experiences change the course of the story from one psychologically disturbed woman to a more wider picture of how the patriarchal systems create and reproduce the dependency of women.

Williams thus ties together the social respectability of the domestic sphere, the psychological survival of the characters, sexuality, domestic violence, marriage, and economic vulnerability in the narrative movement of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Stella's compromise and Eunice's pragmatic agreement to the social order is inseparable from Blanche's downfall. The different positions occupied by each woman in the same gender system, and the final moments of the play show that dependence can mean different things in order to be able to survive. This narrative base is crucial to the later feminist readings of Blanche, Stella, Eunice, and the broader issue of Blanche's status as an avatar of patriarchy or its critical examination of social mechanisms that continue to perpetuate it (Boruah 203).

### **Blanche DuBois: Dependency Through Illusion and Male Validation**

Blanche's helplessness is most apparent and most sanctioned in the play. Now without Belle Reve and without her way of making a living, she ends up at her sister's apartment where, as she tells herself, she lives "on the kindness of strangers" (Williams 107). But there is no unanimous opinion amongst critics about the way they want Williams to be judged for his dependency. In his survey of feminist responses to the play, Ian Todd mentions that Kathleen Lant in her essay, "A Streetcar Named Misogyny," reads Blanche as being something for which Williams victimizes her, as the rape of Blanche is not really a violent act, but a "crime of passion" (qtd. in Todd 1). This interpretation of the reading places the ultimate fate of Blanche, her institutionalization in an asylum, in a new light, and suggests that the fate of the text is a tragedy not at all. This is in contrast to the play's director's stage directions that Blanche is terrified and refuses to participate in the rape, meaning, says Anna Vlasopolos, that the playwright exonerates Blanche of any responsibility for her rape (qtd. in Todd 3).

Todd says:

"Blanche is also astute in discerning how highly the patriarchy prizes female youth and beauty" (3).

Read in this light, Blanche's need for male approval, her flirtations, her careful cover-up of her age, her expectation that Mitch will "marry" her and give her financial and social security, is not a character fault but the only way for an unmarried, aging, penniless woman to live in this world.

Boruah says:

"Blanche has no way left other than being silent towards the matter as the crime was committed by her sister's husband" (206)

By focusing on the fact that Blanche never has a clear language with which to speak about her past and that she eventually resorts to fantasy, it's a sign that women are not given a clear language with which to speak about what is done to them (Boruah 206). In both readings, Blanche's downward spiral from genteel poverty to faux respectability to institutionalization is a reflection of the fact that women's sense of security in this world is so contingent on men's affirmation of their value, and can be lost so cruelly when they are no longer affirmed.

Blanche is dependent through illusion, Stella is dependent through calculation – albeit a deplorable calculation. Stella has even decided to make the move from the fading Belle Reve to the comfort of marriage with Stanley, not only for economic stability and physical comfort, but for the tangible aspects. During scene III, this calculation is confirmed by Stella herself as the violence of Stanley is no longer painful and the reconciliation is made; Stella says: "But there are things that happen between a man and a woman in the dark – that sort of make everything else seem – unimportant" (Williams 46). Stella's femininity, as the LitCharts thematic analysis of the play mentions, is grounded in reality, not illusions and tricks as Blanche's is, and her pregnancy is a declaration of her wife and mother status with no pretenses ("Femininity and Dependence"). Haque and Sharif say:

"The practical Stella never thinks of leaving her husband for survival issue" (31)

Haque and Sharif 31 are not naïve when they say the dependence on Stanley is the better bet for survival, especially after a child has been conceived, as it is a considered decision on Stella's part. This calculation is most horrifically illustrated when Stella decides to believe Stanley's lies rather than Blanche's rape charge and thus gives up her sister's trust in order to keep her own husband and home at the end of the play. It is not a matter of betrayal, as Yan Huang states in the case of Williams' knowledge of feminist issues, but it is a matter of a choice, a choice between two modes of dependency, a sister who cannot make material security available, a husband who can but at a price of violence. In other words, Stella's survival is at the expense of her sister's sanity and her own self-deception, and the play makes a near-inevitable deal of it, one which is devastating to all it's touched by its social logic.

Eunice Hubbell, the upstairs neighbor/landlady of the Kowalski's, is not as well developed a character as Blanche or Stella is, but she is the most completely naturalized of the three, and thus the most important to the play's statement on the dependency of patriarchal women. Eunice's marriage with Steve is also a marriage of quarrel and reconciliation, and this is normal, not a crisis, as is the case of the Kowalskis. Interestingly, Eunice is the only character to actually confront Stanley's violence as it is happening. Eunice says:

"You can't beat a woman an' then call 'er back! She won't come! And her goin' t' have a baby! ... You stinker! You Whelp of a Polack, you!" (qtd. in Boruah 206).

But in the final scene of the play, it is Eunice who informs Stella that she must not believe the story of the rape since "life's got to go on" (Williams 133) no matter what occurs between a husband and a wife. At present, Eunice's "practical reliance on men" is demonstrated because she is the one to actively sign Stella off onto the right choice of staying with Stanley, instead of buying into Blanche's tale ("Femininity and Dependence"). An example given by Boruah is if Eunice had not been as compliant as she is now, when the stability of the household is threatened, she would not have been raped, but she was resisting, as Stella is resisting, the violence earlier on (207). Blanche is punished for not choosing to abide by the rules of patriarchy, and precariously, Stella is rewarded for choosing to do so, but Eunice shows what it would look like if it were not a choice, if it was common sense: she cannot see the choice of Stella, or Blanche's silence, as choice, because she cannot see her own dependency as choice. In this way Eunice is the play's silent cautionary tale on the extent to which a patriarchy can be reproduced by women who inhabit it.

Blanche DuBois, Stella Kowalski, and Eunice Hubbell are not merely three separate female characters in Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*; when considered together, they constitute a three-part portrait of female dependency within the patriarchal social order of mid-twentieth-century America. Each woman occupies a different position within the same system of masculine authority and demonstrates a different method of responding to social, economic, sexual, and emotional dependence. Blanche struggles against the system but remains dependent upon the very forms of male approval from which she seeks protection; Stella consciously accommodates herself to patriarchal marriage in order to preserve domestic and material security; and Eunice represents the stage at which such accommodation has become so normalized that dependency is no longer recognized as oppression. Their contrasting experiences therefore make visible the different ways in which patriarchy can shape women's choices without necessarily appearing as direct coercion in every situation. Blanche's tragedy is especially significant because she is never provided with a genuinely independent position from which she can resist patriarchal authority. The loss of Belle Reve deprives her of property, family status, and economic security, while her dismissal from teaching further removes the possibility of stable employment. As a result, she repeatedly turns toward men as potential sources of emotional recognition and material protection. Her attraction to Mitch is closely connected with her hope that marriage can restore respectability and provide a secure future. Her concern with youth, beauty, appearance, and sexual attractiveness similarly reflects a social environment in which a woman's value is strongly connected with her desirability to men. Todd's observation that Blanche recognizes how greatly patriarchy values female youth and beauty helps explain why her performance of femininity operates as a strategy of survival rather than simply as vanity (Todd 3).

Todd's survey is a reminder of what feminist criticism of *A Streetcar Named Desire* has never been monolithic, as he shows. Some critics, however, like Lant, consider the play to be misogynistic and Blanche is "a crude tool", as Todd puts it (Todd 1), for the devaluation of



women. Others, like Vlasopolos, argue that the play is a criticism on coldness, as it portrays; the audience must be shocked at the lack of sympathy that Stanley, Stella and Eunice have for the suffering Blanche. A third interpretation (also offered by Todd) is that Blanche is neither a victim nor a villain, but rather is “a strong, self-aware, audacious woman [who] plays the game according to the rules laid down by the patriarchy, using youth, beauty, female charm, in order to survive in a system that she dare not openly defy” (Todd 3). The difference between these perspectives mirror the difference between the three women in the play: Blanche wants to resist but is destroyed; Stella accommodates but she endures the situation, and Eunice is no longer able to accommodate. These are critical perspectives that together indicate that, rather than offering any one lesson on the life of a dependent woman, Williams performs the whole unclosable continuum of possibilities for patriarchy to ingest, for compliance to be rewarded, for patriarchy to reproduce itself, generation after generation, household after household.

### **Conclusion**

Blanche's ultimate destruction also shows the fears that can plague a woman who doesn't succeed in her survival plan. They all systematically expose her past, destroy her relationship with Mitch, destroy her trust, and finally sexually assault her. Blanche's social status and material strength are gone after the rape, and she has none now to make her story work. Even her own sister cannot or doesn't believe the truth of what has gone on. Boruah's emphasis on Blanche's silence highlights the challenge women face when trying to report an experience of violence when the aggressor holds power in the family (206). The institutionalization of Blanche is thus not merely a psychological breakdown but also the last step in Blanche's deprivation of her social agency. She starts the play relying on family and potential male guardians, and leaves it entirely relying on an institution that secludes her from the social world. Williams exposes that Stella's survival has a great price to pay, but she still lives. Stella has a house, a husband, and some sexual love, unlike Blanche. Under these circumstances, she finds a sort of security which Blanche does not have, but she is also bound to Stanley. It is then an emotional and practical dependence. She knows that Stanley can be violent but still comes back to him because the marriage has given her a structure, a framework by which her material, sexual and domestic life has been organized. Haque and Sharif contend that Stella's choice to stay with Stanley is pragmatic, and not a mere lack of knowledge about his actions (Williams 31). Her supposed safety rests on being a part of the male authority. Stella's accommodation is the most painful coming after Blanche accuses Stanley of rape.

Believing in Blanche would imply that the man she lives with, sleeps with, raises a child with and depends on financially, has committed an act of extreme violence against her sister. It is therefore not only a psychological defense, but also an accommodation to patriarchy that Stella refuses to accept Blanche's account. Stella's refusal of Blanche's account, therefore, is both a psychological defense and an act of patriarchy accommodation. She holds her marriage together by denying a truth that would otherwise make her marriage morally and emotionally unliveable. There is therefore silence and self-deception required for her life. At the end, Stella doesn't just appear weak or heartless; she is a woman whose sense of security is tied to compromising another woman's sense of security and sense of truth.

Eunice goes further into this process of accommodation. It is in part because she is not as tragic and not as conflicted as either Blanche or Stella. She has a marriage which also has something of conflict and aggression but treats it as a normal part of everyday life. When Stan is violent, she can contribute to his condemnation, but when Blanche accuses Stella's house of being haunted, Eunice urges Stella to go on with her life. She is saying "life has got to go on" is the logic of practicality that leads to the perpetuation of patriarchal dependency (Williams 133). Violence can be acknowledged, condemned, and prevented, but ultimately marriage and family security must be maintained. The self-sustaining nature of patriarchy is thus illustrated in the way that Eunice's values are absorbed into the ordinary social pattern. She doesn't have to be told by Stanley or Steve that something should remain the same in the household: continuity is to be preserved. The practice of her role indicates that the maintenance of patriarchy is not limited to the obvious manifestations of male power, but also involves a number of habits, compromises, expectations, and modes of practical reasoning that women can be party to. In this respect the author of this paper is essential to the argument of the paper, for she represents the first and most normal form of female dependence, the one that is taken for granted as the way things are in life.

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