Quotation Analysis Sample

Based on dialogue spoken by Blanche in Scene 5 of *A Streetcar Named Desire.*

1. “I never was hard or self-sufficient enough. When people are soft—soft people have to shimmer and glow—they’ve got to put on soft colors, the colors of the butterfly wings, and put a – paper lantern over the light…It isn’t enough to be soft. You’ve got to be soft *and attractive.* And I—I’m fading now! I don’t know how much longer I can turn the trick” (Williams 92).

These words spoken by Blanche to Stella exemplify one of the first times that Blanche is honest about her own dishonesty. She acknowledges that one of her main conflicts is that she is not self-sufficient and has mostly relied on inherited money and her good looks to survive. When she says that metaphorically “soft’ people have to “shimmer and glow,” she compares this façade to the wings of a butterfly—essentially acknowledging that her ability to maintain this lifestyle is fragile and transient. The paper lantern that she references having put “over the light” has emerged as a symbol of her attempts to disguise her true age and avoid facing other difficult truths as well. The more her looks “fade,” the more she longs for the light to fade as well.