

# A streetcar named desire: overview

[Entertainment](#), [Theatre](#)



A Streetcar Named Desire is one of the most famous and noted plays in American history. The play was written by Tennessee Williams and won him the 1948 Pulitzer Prize for Drama (Spoto, 1997).

The main characters of the story, Blanche DuBois, Stanley Kowalski and Stella Kowalski represent the social and personal conflicts of post-war American society. One of the most interesting elements in the play that contributed to the success of the play is the manner by which each of the character's perspectives and illusions are used to bring insight to the reality.

Naturalism was depicted in the play by incorporating existing social conditions, language and through references to events, personalities and issues. This is evident in the backgrounds and demeanors of characters and in the manner of their interactions. Another factor that represents naturalist elements to the play is the use of developing sciences and issues into the story such as Stella's nervous condition, Stanley's involvement with the growing violence and vice of the city and Blanche's rape and nervous breakdown.

Another use of naturalism in the play is seen in the lack of dramatic role reversals among the characters and instead the characters are portrayed as individuals simply with lives that can go beyond their ability to control (Williams & Miller, 2004).

Another factor that has contributed to the appeal of the play was because of the ease of reference with audience. The main reason for this is the realism of the characters. Blanche's situation of having to leave the South was a common to the era as economics became an issue in the region. Stella

represented common issues regarding rights and independence being raised for women.

Stanley represented the stiff challenges of the city which requires aggressiveness and dominance. Though the characters are representations of social segments, Williams gave them their individual idiosyncrasies and vulnerabilities which made persons to the audience.

## References

Spoto, Donald (1997). *The Kindness of Strangers: The Life of Tennessee Williams*. Chicago: Da Capo Publishing

Williams, Tennessee and Miller, Arthur (2004). *A Streetcar Named Desire*. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation.