

A streetcar named desired

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Blanche, Stella's is by far the most complex character of the play. An intelligent and sensitive woman who values literature and the creativity of the human imagination, she is also emotionally traumatised and repressed. This gives license for her own imagination to become a haven for her pain. One senses that Blanches own view of her real self as opposed to her ideal self has been increasingly blurred over the years until it is sometimes difficult for her to tell the difference.

It is a challenge to find the key to Blanche's melancholy but perhaps the roots of her trauma lie in her early marriage. She was haunted by her inability to help or understand her young, troubled husband and that she has tortured herself for it ever since. Her drive to lose herself in the " kindness of strangers" might also be understood from this period in that her sense of confidence in her own feminine attraction was shaken by the knowledge of her husband's homosexuality and she is driven to use her sexual charms to attract men over and over. Yet, beneath all this, there is a desire to find a companion, to find fulfilment in love.

She is not successful because of her refusal or inability to face reality, in her circumstances and in herself. Blanche has a hard time confronting her mixed desires and therefore is never able to sort them out and deal with them. She wants a cultured man but is often subconsciously attracted to strong, basic male characters, perhaps a response to her marriage with a cultured, sensitive man which ended in disaster. So although Blanche dislikes Stanley as a person, she is drawn to him as a type of man who is resoundingly heterosexual and who is strong enough to protect her from an increasingly harsh world.

This seems to be the reason for her brief relationship with Mitch, but it becomes clear to Blanche that Stanley is the dominant male here and she begins to acknowledge that fact. When Blanche tells the operator in Scene Ten that she is caught in a trap, part of her realises she has set herself up via her desires. Stanley is the embodiment of what she needs, yet detests, and, because of her sister, can never have. After Stanley has stripped her of her self-respect in this scene, she becomes desperate, unable to retreat to her fantasies and so this deeper layer of her desires is revealed.

Yet, Blanche does not know how to face these feelings and she senses to give into them could be disastrous for her. As Stanley advances towards her, she tells him, " I warn you, don't, I'm in danger! " but Stanley has made sure that this time there is no where for her to hide. In her final act, she silently acknowledges that her own desires have also led to this date. It is interesting that neither Blanche nor Stanley seriously seem to consider Stella as Scene Ten reaches a climax. They both recognise that somehow they are drawn together and also repelled by forces that are directly between them and that have little to do with Stella.

Things come to a head so quickly that it is as if tensions have been bubbling emotionally and mentally crippled than before. Yet, Stanley and by extension Stella, are not clear victors. Like Blanche, Stanley is also revealed to be capable of deceit, he does not admit the truth of what happened between him and Blanche to his friends, to Stella, and maybe not even to himself. Stella makes a conscious decision to believe Stanley instead of her sister because to do otherwise would be both emotionally and

economically difficult with a new baby so she, too, is engaging in a measure of self-deception.

Stanley survives because of sheer physical presence, not because of any innate superiority. Blanche suffers overall on many fronts in her new environment, but in conclusion although one does feel pity for Blanche she has to a large extent with her own weaknesses brought her own downfall. Blanche can not compete in the new household she is placed in Stella has already claimed her territory and ultimately will choose her marriage over her sister.

Blanches past erupts into the present and without at the forefront is the contradiction to the facade Blanche has put up over her sexual needs and desires. So confused is Blanche over sex the one weapon she has to gain a husband her sexuality she can no longer use. In the end Blanche is living in a era which was smashed a hundred years before this moment of time in the play. This era Blanche lameness in is the gentile society of Southern America with wealthy European colonials engaging politely in society.