

A wife and strikes
her” (koprince 46).



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Streetcar Named Desire by Tennessee Williams is a classic of American theater. Thomas P. Adler said that " it was the finest play ever written for the American stage" (Kolin 1). Exactly this play determined the author's themes, thoughts and ideals. According to Harold Klerman, it is the only play that describes the personality, society and depicts realistically the reality of that time. The setting of the play took place in contemporary times.

It is a story of a decline of a Southern lady Blanche DuBois. In this play, Williams disclose a wide range of themes. Among them are the themes of domestic violence, relationships of men and women, the fantasy and its confrontation with reality.

One of the most important themes of the play turns around the relationships of the main characters, Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski. These are two characters that are put in opposition. The climax of their opposition is the Stanley's rape of Blanche.

On one hand, this episode depicts a cruel attitude and immoral behavior, " Stanley is wrong and Blanche is right, the moralists agree" (Fleche 500). On the other hand, Blanche's rape was inevitable (Fleche 500). And through the characterization of Blanche and Stanley's relationship, I will argue that Blanche was raped. Blanche DuBois comes to New Orleans to her sister Stella married to rude and down-to-earth man Stanley Kowalski. Blanche and Stanley did not like each other from the very first second they met each other.

Blanche saw Stanley beat his wife and behaved as an animal, " the primary example of physical abuse against Stella occurs in Scene Three, when drunk

and angry, Stanley first tosses the radio out the window and then charges after his pregnant wife and strikes her" (Koprince 46). Stanley is showed as a brutish person without moral qualities. However, Blanche is also not " an angel". Her previous life is not perfect and all the manners and tenderness is just a mask to hide her " dark" past and alcoholism. The only person who suspects her and wants to show her real face to everybody, " and yet it seems " natural" to read *A Streetcar Named Desire* as an allegorical journey toward Blanche's apocalyptic destruction at the hands of her " executioner," Stanley" (Fleche 504).

As it has already been mentioned, these two characters are put in opposition, however we cannot say that this is an opposition of good and evil. Thus, Blanche appears as a young, beautiful, and unhappy woman who survived the suicide of her husband and wants to start all over again. For the first time, we see her elegant and tender.

The first impression is absolutely positive. She is so light and smart, she knows French and music. However, we do not know much about her past and it is also suspiciously. We guess that she lies and Stanley helps us understand it. The author is sympathetic to his heroine. He does not idealize her, on the contrary, he is quite objective: he shows her live to whiskey and relations with men after her husband's death. " Blanche who has never spoken an honest word in her life is allowed, indeed encouraged, to present her life to the audience as a vocational decision..." (Toles 119).

The " impurity" of Blanche's past suggests the final of the play and it is a quite logical completion of the story. The truth cannot be hide and

everybody should pay for his/her actions. Blanche planned to marry Mitchell, but sooner or later, he would find out about her " sins", " she cannot escape the status of victim, on many fronts, nor avert the plans which have led to her committal" (Toles 117). She could not expect other attitude to herself, especially in that social layer with its principles and relations between men and women. Thus, the character of Blanche can be interpreted as positive and negative at the same time, on the one hand " she has been enshrined as a hallowed representative of the Old South, a secular saint.

On the other, negatively, she has been branded a nymphomaniac, a liar, an infectious source of destructive feminine desire" (Kolin 3). With this " image" of a liar and nymphomaniac Stanley fought. Stanley appears as a person with animal nature.

He drinks beer all the time, " copulates, play games, smashes light bulbs, paws through Blanche's wardrobe, throws plates on the floor, even commits rape" (Cardullo 29). Stanley is a representative of a dark reality. He embodies the " prototypical batterer". According to Susan Koprince, he has all signs of such person. " He is hypermasculine, believes in male's superiority and has dual personality" (50).

Those traits make him hate Blanche. First of all, he hates her aristocratic past and he is outraged by her attempts to fool him showing that she is better than he and his friends. This is contradictory to his image of a woman. It makes him look for " dark spots" in her past and he finds them. Stanley does everything to ruin life of this woman. It seems to be cruel and basely.

However, he is the only person who supported the truth and “ justice” and reality.

Stanley is a dark version of the salesman, selling the idealistic Blanche a harsh reality on the specious grounds that it is somehow good for her and willing to use force, if necessary, to make the sale.” (Cardullo 30). The result of the confrontation of Stanley and Blanche was the rape. However, it cannot be considered as a cruel violation. Neither the context, nor the scene manifests it. In her article, Anna Fleche says, “ she is the erring woman who gets what she “ asks” for (her realistic antecedents are clear)” (507). This is the way other men treated her, this is what she expected, this is how a logical flow of things should be like.

All the situation and Blanche herself “ suggests” rape to Stanley. If other men did it, why he cannot? Moreover, she does not resist but sinks on her knees and remains “ inert”, “ She is not only silent but crumpled, immobile, while he takes over control and agency” (Fleche 508). Thus, the scene of the rape denies any emotions, it is a conflict that arises between two characters. In addition.

With this action Stanley returned Blanche to reality. As George Toles mentions, “ Stanley’s casually violent gesture recalls the rape and, less malevolently, repeats the realist’s inalterable lesson: those who live entirely in dreams will perish” (130). Thus, Blanche and Stanley are two characters put in opposition. Neither of them is perfect. Blanche lives with her dream and she constantly lies to hide a cruel reality and her real past. Stanley is a representative of this cruel reality which opens Blanche’s eyes through the

violent action. However, both, with context, main characters' traits of character and actions, especially in the scene of a rape, the author covers the meaning of the rape. Now, it is not just the act of violence, but the conflict that shows who is who in the play.

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