

# A streetcar named desire essay



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“ I am not a Polack. People from Poland are Poles, not Polacks. But what I am is a one hundred per cent American, born and raised in the greatest country on earth and proud as hell of it, so don't ever call me a Polack. ” - Stanley Kowalski In “ A Streetcar Named Desire” the clash of cultures between Stanley Kowalski and the two DuBois sisters, Stella and Blanche, becomes very noticeable in certain parts of the play.

There is an evident contrast between the “ Old” and the “ New” America. Stanley is Polish and is part of the growing working class in 1950s USA, whereas Stella and Blanche have a history in the United States and belong to a more sophisticated class where most of what they own is inherited. Stanley Kowalski struggles to cope with Stella's background as she seems to appear somehow “ superior” to him because of her past and where she comes from. He believes he has finally managed to bring Stella into his world when Blanche storms into their lives and tries to win Stella over. This initiates a tug of war between Stanley and Blanche. The animosity between the two is evident from the beginning of the play. In the first scene we can immediately spot the first sign of a clash between the Dubois and the Kowalskis as Stanley points out, “ I'm afraid I'll strike you as being the unrefined type”.

He is described as “ primitive” and “ ape-like” in various ways, and it comes as no surprise that the one to make those remarks was Blanche herself. “ There's even something - sub-human - something not quite to the stage of humanity yet! ” says Blanche as she's trying to talk some sense into Stella after she had gone back to Stanley following his abuse. Blanche seems eager to point out Stanley's faults to her sister whenever the opportunity arises. When Stella supposes that perhaps, Stanley is “ common”, Blanche proceeds

to protest about Stella's choice of words and her behaviour: " Suppose! You can't have forgotten that much of our bringing up, Stella, that you just suppose that any part of a gentleman's in his nature! " The Dubois sisters have had a different upbringing with a proper education and an elegant lifestyle. Belle Reve is a prime example of the contrast between Stanley's background and the Dubois'.

Although we are not told, we can assume that Stanley did not grow up in a " great big place with white columns". Despite the fact that Stella frequently stands by her husband and is usually prepared to defend him, she won't allow him to insult Blanche. This is where it becomes clear that Stanley too, has noticed the differences between him and his own wife and at this point he begins to feel insulted.

" Pig – Polack – disgusting – vulgar – greasy! – them kind of words have been on your tongue and your sister's too much around here! " Stanley erupts, after which he asks them if they consider themselves " A pair of queens". After analyzing the evidence of the various features which compose the clash of cultures between the Kowalskis and the Dubois, one can see that it is in fact a dominant theme in the play itself. Despite the fact that Stella has moved away from her old lifestyle, she still belongs to the " Old America", and some characteristics of her behaviour which clash with Stanley's are merely part of her upbringing. Blanche on the other hand, does not know any better and it is therefore very difficult for her to adapt to such a different lifestyle during her stay in New Orleans.