

A streetcar named desire symbols



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.. rds used by Williams. In the first scene Blanche is described as " daintily dressed" and mentions that she is " incongruous to her setting" (Williams 96). Blanche cannot adapt to her surroundings, but instead tries to change them. Later in the story she says " You saw it before I came. Well, look at it now! This room is almost-dainty!" (Williams 176).

By using the word dainty in both places Williams shows us how Blanche tries to change her surrounding to match her, instead of adapting to them. This will not work with Stanley. Blanche deceives everyone for a good portion of the play. However, Stanley is continually trying to find her true history. Blanche says " I dont want realism. I want magic! Yes, yes, Magic! I try to give that to people.

I misrepresent things to them. I dont tell the truth, I tell what ought to be the truth." (Williams 177). Stanley does not enjoy " magic", he says that " Some men are took in by this Hollywood glamour stuff and some men are not" (Williams 114). Stanley never believes Stellas act (i. e. her " Hollywood glamour") he only likes the truth.

This difference of philosophy creates much tension between the two. The climax of the tension between them is in the seventh scene. While Stanley is revealing to Stella Blanches promiscuous life, Blanche is singing the following song: " Say its only a paper moon. Sailing over the cardboard sea- But it wouldnt be make-believe if you believed in me! Its a Barnum and Bailey world. Just as phony as it could be-But it wouldnt be make-believe if you believed in me!" (Corrigan 53) The louder Stanley gets on insisting on the undeniable facts about Blanche, the louder Blanche sings (Corrigan 53).

This is a symbolic collision of their two philosophies. Stella, the link between the two, must listen to the facts given to her by Stanley, and the virtues of idealism given to her by Blanche. Light plays a crucial part in the struggle between Blanche and Stanley. From the beginning Blanche insists " I cannot stand a naked light bulb, any more than I can a rude remark" (Corrigan 54). She then puts an artificial lantern on the light bulb.

Light represents truth, and Blanche wants to cloak the truth by covering it up. Later in the play Stanley " brings to light" the true facts of Blanches life (Corrigan 54). When Mitch, Blanches boyfriend, is " enlightened" by Stanley about her history he proceeds to rip off the paper lantern from the light bulb, and demands to take a good look at her face (Corrigan 54). The scene when Stanley rapes Blanche is the beginning of the end for Blanche. Sex is her most obvious weakness. That is the reason why she ran to New Orleans in the first place.

Since she had come to New Orleans she had tried to avoid it. But, once again, Stanley is in direct contrast to this. Williams describes him: " Since earliest manhood the center of his life has been pleasure with women, . . . He sizes them up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them." (Corrigan 57) It is only fitting that he destroys her with sex because sex " has always been her Achilles heel.

It has always been his sword and shield" (Corrigan 57). After he has sex with her, she is taken to another asylum, a psychiatric hospital (Quirino 63). The cycle is started again. " Desire" has once again sent her off to " Cemeteries".

Throughout the book it is possible to describe the confrontation between Blanche and Stanley as a poker game. The importance of the poker game in the play is proven by the fact that Tennessee Williams was thinking of calling the play "The Poker Night".

In the first four scenes of the play, Blanche plays a good bluff. She tricks everyone into believing that she is a woman of country-girl manners and high moral integrity (Quirino 62). Stanley asks her to "lay her cards on the table", but she continues her bluff (Adler 54). However, Stanley then goes on a quest for the truth. He then discovers and reveals Blanches true past.

Once he knows her true "cards" he then has the upper hand. Stanley caps his win by raping her. It is interesting to note that in the last scene of the play, when Blanche is being taken away, Stanley is winning every hand in a poker game he is playing with friends. This symbolizes his victory over Blanche. The card game can be viewed as fate, in which skillful players can manipulate his cards to his advantage (Quirino 62).

The music in the background, plays a key part in the play, in describing Blanches emotions. In fact at one point it says of Blanche that "The music is in her mind" (Corrigan 52). The Blue Piano represents Blanches need to find a home. She is always extremely lonely and needs companionship. This music is apparent during scene one when she is recounting the deaths of her family at Belle Reeve, and when she kisses the newsboy in scene five.

The music is the loudest during the scene when Blanche is being taken away to the asylum. The Varsouviana Polka represents death, and to Blanche immanent disaster. This music is heard as she explains the suicide of her

husband in scene six. It is also in the background when Stanley gives her a Greyhound ticket to go home (i. e. back to cemeteries) in scene eight.

It also fades in and out of the scene where Mitch confronts Blanche about her true past (Corrigan 52). In studying the main character of A Streetcar Named Desire, Blanche DuBois, it is necessary to use both a literal translation of the text as well as interspersed symbolism to have a complete understanding of her. Tennessee Williams the author of the play wrote it this way on purpose. In fact he once said that " Art is made out of symbols the way the body is made out of vital tissue" (Quirino 61). This is a wonderful quotation to show just how necessary it is to incorporate symbolism in an interpretation of a story.