A Streetcar Named Desire: Main Characters Analysis

“A Streetcar Named Desire” is a Pulitzer award-winning dramatic work written by a famous writer Tennessee Williams. This play spins around the relationship of Blanche DuBois and her sister Stella’s husband Stanley Kowalski, which represents the social values driven by male dominance and powerless women.

Blanche DuBois is a Southern beauty who sticks to teasing trappings, inclining toward magic and the night as a real world. She plays out a sensitive, honest form of gentility since she accepts that, this makes her generally alluring to men. Blanche's marriage in her childhood has driven her to look for passionate satisfaction through association with men. But men have always exploited her anxious, delicate state. Despite the fact that Blanche’s first marriage was finished tragically, and she considered marriage was the only way to keep her loneliness away. So, Blanche describes herself in terms of men as they are the source of happiness for her. “I have always depended on the kindness of strangers” (Williams, pg. 69). This shows that Blanche depends upon others for her happiness. As Blanche felt lonely after her husband’s suicide. So, in order to keep her loneliness away, she relied on men or sexual encounters, and later in the play, she wanted to marry Mitch, so that she can get rid of her sadness. Moreover, she also faced many other problems in her life, as she used to live in a second-rate hotel named the Flamingo in Laurel, where she was questioned on her reputation and was forced by people to leave that area. She was also forced to leave the school because of an affair with a seventeen years old boy. Furthermore, at the end of the play when she got raped, her sister did not take her side (Williams, pg. 140). Stella sent Blanche to the mental institution, but she does not want her to go there. She did this only because of society and better life with her husband. This all shows that women are powerless. They had to live under the rules of men and society.

On the other hand, Stanley Kowalski is very violent and barbaric. He is connected to the possibility of beast, forceful, animalistic as well as carnal lust. This can also be proved when Blanche talks about Stanley that “He acts like an animal, has an animal habit! Eats like one, moves like one and talks like one!” (Williams, pg. 72). His brute quality is emphasized as often as possible all through and his assets predominance forcefully through violence and his loud actions. He is represented as a sub-human in this play. “Richly feathered male bird among hens” (Williams, pg. 29). His only motto in life is to be comfortable (Williams, pg. 30). Furthermore, He did not respect women and he always shows his male power in front of others. During Poker night, Stanley slapped Stella because she spoke against him and ask his friends to go to their homes. Stanley was drunk and he lay his hand on Stella (Williams, pg. 57). In scene eight, when Stella asks him to help in cleaning the table, then in anger, Stanley throws his cup and saucer on the floor and told Stella “Every man is a king! And I am the king around here, so don’t forget it!” (Williams, pg. 107). These all situations represent that he is very aggressive by nature and does not like to be ordered by women. At the end of the play, he also forces himself upon Blanche. She tried to resist Stanley, but he overpowers her with his physical force (Williams, pg. 128). Thus, all these situations show that Stanley is a bestial and uses women as a source of pleasure.

Both Blanche DuBois and Stanley Kowalski are totally opposite to each other. Stanley is bestial and violent whereas, Blanche is elegant and delicate. In her life, she always used to face

problems as she lost her husband at a very young age, then questions her character and at the last, got raped by her sister's husband. At the place of providing justice, she was sent to the mental hospital. She was totally powerless; whereas, Stanley who always shows his physical strength did not get any punishment after doing wrong to Blanche. Thus, Williams through his play represents the theme of male dominance and powerless women.