

AQA English Literature A-level

A Streetcar Named Desire: Character Profiles
Stanley Kowalski

This work by [PMT Education](https://www.pmt.education) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)



Stanley Kowalski

HERO TO SOME, VILLAIN TO OTHERS

INTRODUCTION

Stanley Kowalski is a **representation of New America** - an America that was born after World War. Stanley, having fought in the Second World War, as “**a Master Sergeant in the Engineers' Corps**”, is now a part of the **working class** in New Orleans. He represents the **American Dream** of freedom and opportunity for all. An ideal that **transcends** the boundaries of social classes. Characterized as a **domineering** male, Stanley loves gambling, drinking and sex. We know he passionately loves his wife and friends—but harbours **hatred** towards Blanche. Stanley is aware that his wife is of aristocratic descent, but as she is accepting of his dominance in their marriage, he seems unaffected by his class that is until Blanche, the epitome of everything he isn't, finds her way into their household. Williams depicts Stanley as a **misogynistic, hypermasculine specimen** who believes in **male superiority**.



Marlon Brando as Stanley in the 1951 film adaptation

Image source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Portrait_of_Marlon_Brando,_%22Streetcar_Named_Desire%22_LCCN2004662621.jpg

KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- **Working-class man and of immigrant descent**

Stanley Kowalski is a working-class man who **provides** for his wife and unborn child. He owns a small apartment, sufficient for his wife and unborn and has a stable day job. He strongly **asserts** that everything he provides for and owns is **his**. He is offended when Blanche calls him a Polack and states he is Polish. Unlike Stella and Blanche, whose family immigrated and lived on American soil for centuries, Stanley is probably a second or third-generation **immigrant**. Stanley proudly asserts that he is “American” as he is born and raised in America.

- **Violent and crude**

Stanley is often seen using **brute force** to convey his emotions rather than his words. He treats objects around him with **underlying violence** as reflected by Williams' choice of **diction**— and his **objectification** of women leads him to treat women just like objects, **violently**. He is a stark contrast to his wife and sister-in-law who are both well-read. While we see him being violent towards his friends, he is also a wife-beater



and rapes Blanche, his sister-in-law and still manages to stand tall at the end of the play as a “family man”, something Williams did to show the injustice prevalent in society. The stage directions presenting Stanley in the first scene establish his bodily depiction, emphasising his **animal sexuality, his masculinity**. He is expected to be seen as the **alpha male**, “the gaudy seed bearer as Williams states. His **quintessential disrespect and misogyny** toward women can be seen from how he shouts at Stella and Blanche during his poker game in the third scene “You hens cut out that conversation in there!” (more instances are in key quotes.) Of course, he is also violent towards women. His abuse is also **extended** to his friends as well, who are still affectionate and loyal to him. Furthering this idea of him as the alpha male.

- **Straightforward and cunning**

Stanley is also characterised by his **brutal honesty**. His life is open and expresses everything he feels either using his words or his actions.

While Stanley’s faulty speech reveals his **lack of schooling**, he is **cunning**, detecting reasonably quickly that Blanche’s behaviour and drinking are not in line with what is expected of her proclaimed Southern belle status. He also finds a way to get rid of the **threat** she poses to his **dominance**.

- **Hero and villain**

Stanley is initially a **hero**, a man who loves his wife with passion and is loyal to his friends. But as the play unfolds, Williams unpacked the **primitive** nature of Stanley that leads him to be **brutal and destructively violent**.

- **Primitive:**

Williams takes great care in drawing **parallels** between Stanley’s behaviour and primitive man, using dialogue, stage directions and his actions. **“Animal joy in his being is implicit,”** **“Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle!”** (Blanche, **Scene 4**). Additionally, **“jungle sounds”** are instructed to play when Stanley stresses Blanche out, to reinforce the audience’s sense of Stanley’s **animalistic nature**.

“he throws back his head like a baying hound and bellows” are stage directions that reflect his animalistic behaviour, almost like an animal in heat, as he shouts for Stella after he physically abuses her in scene 3.



RELATIONSHIPS

Stella

Stella is the **subservient** wife of Stanley and he loves her passionately for it. Stella married Stanley, despite him being from a lower class than her, and has a strong relationship with him **driven by sex**.

Williams uses stage directions to portray Stanley's use of sex to as a way he controls Stella. Two such examples are: "**Stanley gives a loud whack of his hand on her thigh**" (he is annoyed with Blanche's presence and the effect it has on Stella) and "**He kneels beside her and his fingers find the opening of her blouse**" (at the end of the play when Stella is crying over Blanche's cruel departure).

While Stanley is physically and verbally abusive towards Stella, she forgives him as he is just as **passionate** in his apologies as he is about his anger. Stella also informs Blanche that she is "**thrilled**" by Stanley's violent actions "**He smashed all the light bulbs with the heel of my slipper!... I was--sort of--thrilled by it.**" While we know any violence towards her person is **unwelcomed** by Stella, the aforementioned comment can be understood as **Stella's denial** of abuse manifesting in her **acceptance** of his generally violent behaviour.

Towards the end of the play, Stella gives **birth** to Stanley's child, and this also **ties** her to him. While Stella can be characterised as more **realistic** than Blanche in her outlook on life, this is **contested** at the end of the play as she chooses to believe that the rape is a figment of Blanche's imagination and remains with Stanley.

Assessment Objectives

AO4 and AO5:

In "Domestic Violence in A Streetcar Named Desire", Author Susan Koprince, discourses Stella's subservience as typical battered housewife behaviour, in a time where "wife-beating" was observed as a private family issue. Stella makes excuses and pardons his behaviour, accepting the love and sex he showers her with after a violent episode.

Mitch

Stanley and Mitch are friends who meet often and play poker together. Mitch reflects the **beta male to Stanley's alpha male**. Stanley is **regarded as loyal** to his friends and has a very close relationship with them. When he uncovers Blanche's past indiscretions, he warns Mitch about it. This stops the budding relationship between Blanche and Mitch— aiding Stanley in his plan to get rid of Blanche who he feels threatened by. So the question remains; does Stanley warn



Mitch out of **concern** for his friend? Or does he warn him out of his **selfish plan** to get rid of Blanche? At the end of the play, we see the once good relationship Mitch and Stanley had has been **severed**. Mitch blames Stanley for everything that happened and breaks down. In his anger, Mitch lashes out at Stanley **projecting** some **Alpha-like qualities**; however, he is **thwarted** by Stanley who calls him a “cry-baby”, restoring Stanley as the more superior alpha male who has control over the situation.

Blanche

Stanley feels threatened by Blanche’s presence from the start, as she represents a class and society he cannot fully comprehend and does not belong to. The threat becomes even larger when he realizes that Stella is easily influenced by her sister and he hears **Blanche’s words from Stella’s mouth when they fight**. Stanley’s **masculinity is his pride**, and Blanche’s influence over what is *his* threatens him. He resents her for living in *his* house, drinking *his* liquor, eating *his* food, fraternizing with *his* friend, and influencing *his* wife—all while belittling him. Stanley raping Blanche can be seen as **his brutal way of finally making her his as well**, it is his only way of overpowering her.

Assessment Objectives

AO4 and AO5:

A **Nietzschean interpretation** of Stanley and Blanche would look at how the **Apollonian Blanche (imagination, reason, purity and order) and Dionysian Stanley (pleasure and chaos)** disintegrate when they operate as extremes. Blanche who thrives on proprietary gets lost in that illusion while Stanley is driven solely on instincts and is destructive as a result of this.

SYMBOLISM

Stanley is a symbol for many things: the rising working class, The American Dream, patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity.

Assessment Objectives:

AO5:

Donald Spotto in his biography of Williams relays the little information we have on the man whose name Williams borrowed. A **friend** of Tennessee Williams, the real Stanley Kowalski was **a strong and confident young factory worker**.



The Hedonistic Animalistic, Alpha Male

The idea of an Alpha Male in the study of **social animals** is characterized as the **highest-ranking** specimen in an established **dominance hierarchy**. In this context, Stanley is presented as an **“Alpha male”** by Williams using **animal imagery**. To understand Stanley as an Alpha, we must observe how he is treated by Mitch, Pablo and Steve, the subsequent **“beta males”**. Despite his violence and aggression, they remain loyal to him.

“Stanley is forced, pinioned by the two men, into the bedroom. He nearly throws them off.” — showcasing his **superior strength**.

Additionally, Mitch feels anger towards Stanley at the end of the play but cannot assert his anger and breaks down in light of Stanley’s recurring **condescension**. He stands out as he is the **loudest**, and most **aggressive** in behaviour. He establishes his power through his aggressive actions toward Stella and Blanche as well. “Hurls”, “jerks”, “shoves”, “throws”, “snatches”, “rips”, “seizes”, “spears”, “slams”— Williams using such diction to accentuate the **brutish force** with which treats the world around him.

Additionally, he has an **unapologetic male gaze** and uses his **sexuality and strength** to propel his dominance. **“He sizes women up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them.”** and **“BLANCHE [drawing involuntarily back from his stare]”** are examples of this. “Sizing up” creates an animal effect of **assessing prey**.

The **rape** of Blanche is an event that exemplifies his use of sex to **assert** his **dominance**, while “Stanley gives a loud whack of his hand on her thigh” (Stella’s) portrays Stanley’s need to **physically and sexually respond to the threat** he feels. Stanley also uses **sex to apologize** rather than his words, after he physically **abuses** Stella, he uses sex to **appease** her and never once utters an apology. Furthermore, **“He kneels beside her and his fingers find the opening of her blouse”** when Stella is weeping over Blanche.

During the rape scene, **“night is filled with inhuman voices like cries in a jungle flame”** and Stanley **“springs”** at Blanche shouting **“tiger”** — furthering this **primitive, animalistic characterisation** of Stanley.

Assessment Objectives

AO1 and AO2:

You will reach these objectives by understanding how Williams uses Blanche's trunk and its objects to shape her true story juxtaposed to the delusions. Stanley's relationship with the trunk is of great significance as well as he represents the crude reality.



AO4 and AO5:

Stanley's character was developed from his relationship with boxer Pancho Rodriguez y Gonzalez. John Lahr in Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh discusses how Stella telling Blanche about how Stanley passionately smashed all the bulbs in the house on their wedding night was based on a real-life incident where Pancho smashed the bulbs in the house because Williams did not open the front door for him, after an argument, and instead stayed in bed reading listening to Pancho calling out to him. Despite the violence, it discourses that Williams remained in the relationship to develop "Stanley". Pancho displayed resentment towards this stating **"used me as an inspiration for his work, to put me in positions where he wanted to see how I would react to certain situations, and out of these situations, write his version of it"**.

The drinking and poker games

The **motif** of poker games establishes Stanley's position as an **Alpha male** and reveals him to be the **antithesis** of Blanche. A specimen with friends, love and power. While his excessive drinking aggravates his **innate** violence, it is socially acceptable for him to be **inebriated** as he is a **man**, something Blanche has to do in private as it's her coping mechanism.

"BLANCHE: Poker is so fascinating. Could I kibitz?"

STANLEY: You could not. Why don't you women go up and sit with Eunice?"

Stanley's **misogyny** is exhibited on occasions surrounding the poker games. Williams also uses the games to assert Stanley's dominance over the other males, particularly Mitch who leaves the game to nurse his sick mother or is visibly upset when Blanche is being forcefully removed.

"His poker night!" as Blanche put it, shows Stanley's role as host adding to his status. In his world, he is **"King"** as he puts it. His only threat, as we see, ironically, is a sensitive woman who dares to showcase masculine traits.

The poker games are also symbolic; poker connotes space that excludes women.

Assessment Objectives

AO4 and AO5:

Cornelius Coffin "C.C." Williams, the father of Tennessee Williams also played a vital role in the development of Stanley. Leverich, Lyle in 'TOM: The Unknown Tennessee Williams' marks C.C, a domineering, working-class man, as known to be a part of all-night poker games and copious amounts of alcohol which had resulted in violence



occasionally. Much like Stella and Stanley, Edwina Williams argued with C.C over said matters.

Note:

Use the writer's name (Williams/ Tennessee Williams) in your answers to show that you are commenting on his use of devices. (A01 and A02)

The Light

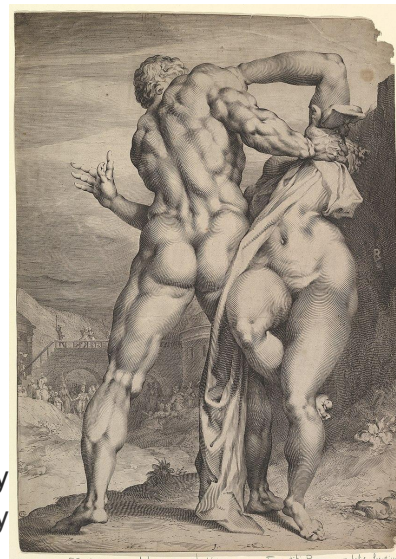
Stanley **contrasts** the idea of Blanche's affinity to darkness. "He [Stanley] holds the bottle to the light to observe its depletion" - Stanley's first instinct to check to see how much alcohol is missing, using the light, **foreshadows** how he eventually will bring to light everything Blanche is hiding.

"get the coloured lights going with nobody's sister behind the curtains to hear us!" also establishes Stanley misses have the colourful lights that are missing now that Blanche lives with them.

His final action towards Blanche is "tearing it off the light bulb" (the paper lantern), which is symbolic of him revealing the **truth**. He brings back the light, which **signifies** the truth, into their lives. However, Stanley's affiliation with the truth and light is not a positive one, his violent actions, depicted by Williams, are more a reflection of how **crude reality** is.

The Rape

The scene begins with establishing Blanche as **delusional** and Stanley as the **realist**. An emotional **battle precedes** the rape, Stanley verbally destroys all of Blanche's delusions, this **foreshadows** his words turning physical. As Stanley represents the **rising** New America and Blanche represents the **deteriorating** Old South; the rape can be construed as **symbolic** for the **defeat** of the Old South. Stanley raping Blanche is an embodiment and assertion of his words "King around here".



Adriaen de Vries, 'The Rape of the Sabine Women'

Image source:
<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/374033>



"inhuman voices like cries in a jungle" are stage directions that accompany the rape scene, this illustrates not only the **trauma** of the actions but also the primitive and **animalistic dominance** over the carefully constructed ideals that Blanche fights for. The happenings on the street that accompany the scene add to the **tension and theatricality** of the scene. The rape is an event where Blanche finally breaks down and crosses over to almost **completely delusional**. As for Stanley, at this point, Stanley can be considered from the feminist lens as **irredeemably evil** as he goes on to show no **remorse** for his actions.

Analysing Stanley's choice of words, **"We've had this date with each other from the beginning!"** suggests that Stanley is not looking only for revenge but is attracted to her in some sense, **"If I didn't know that you were my wife's sister I'd get ideas about you!"**, suggests the same. Plus, Blanche does flirt with him to appease him initially in the play which adds to this argument. At the moment, Stanley isn't looking to mentally destroy her but believes he is **entitled** to sex with Blanche.

Stanley **rapes** his sister-in-law **while his wife gives birth** to their child in the hospital furthering him as the **selfish villain**.

Assessment Objectives

AO4 and AO5:

In Julie Adam's Versions of Heroism in Modern American Drama, she discusses how Elias Kazan directed the play to portray Stanley and Blanche as "the moral victor and the physical victor, the hunted and the hunter, refinement and barbarism, decadence and robustness, death and life, old and new, feminine and masculine..." Adams also dehumanizes Blanche by suggesting that the rape is how Blanche "atones" for her actions towards Allan.



CHARACTER IN CONTEXT

Note:

Understanding the various contexts within which a text operates and comparing, connecting and contrasting these contexts will help you achieve AO4 and AO5—as it shows awareness of interpretation as a dynamic process.

Authorial Context

Tennessee Williams's Stanley is an amalgamation of three real people who affected his life: the real Stanley Kowalski who was working-class and friend to Williams; Cornelius Coffin Williams, the father Williams who was a domineering, working class man and also a violent drunk; and finally, a boxer Pancho Rodriguez y Gonzalez who Williams dated for a while and had an abusive relationship with.



Tennessee Williams

Image source:

<https://www.thisismysouth.com/tennessee-williams-house/>



Note:**Author's Context vs Reader's Context**

The setting in which the writer creates their work is the author context. While the reader's setting when they consume said work, is the reader's context. In your essay, reflecting on the author's context and comparing it to yours as a reader will count for personal engagement with the text.
(A04 and A05)

Social-Historical Context

As a southerner, Tennessee writes about **the socio-economic effects of the lost Civil War** (1861 - 1865) on the South, despite the World War that has just come to an end when he writes this play. America was **peaking with economic change, industries, capitalism; and the working class was on the rise** when Williams wrote. The great old families that relied on slavery and plantations were now replaced as powerhouses based on capitalism and the powerful working classes. In this light, Stanley is juxtaposed to Blanche: the Old South and the New South. New Orleans as the setting is a contrast to Blanche's Old South as it is rich with diversity, yet Williams paints a picture of destruction and prejudice, particularly to women in this "new and free" America.

Stanley signifies the American Dream where all men are equal by birth and can prosper, as a fresh out of war, working-class man. He also reflects the then societal norms of male superiority and the fundamental cultural misogyny. The "Napoleonic code" is an example of this. This law, a by-product of the french colonization, gave man control over all his wife's assets, which in turn restricted the freedom, agency and rights of women.

Philosophical and Literary Context

Williams uses Blanche in this **southern gothic tragedy** to look into the **notions of Masculinity and Femininity**. We see that Blanche struggles with the ideal traits of femininity that were embraced by the Old South. He also juxtaposes Blanche and Stanley in this light. **Stanley manages to get away with his indiscretions, alcoholism and abusive behaviour because he is a man; while Blanche suffers for them because she is a woman.**

Looking at the play through **a feminist lens** would see how gender and identity are construed, particularly issues of misogyny, hegemonic masculinity and male superiority and are reflected along with notions of patriarchy. The play is set in the American 1940s, where **men played**



traditional bread-winner roles, and patriarchal values were very prominent. Patriarchy is defined by male dominance over women and women's dependence on men. Williams shows Stanley in the opening scene as throwing a meat package at Stella establishing him as the **provider**.

In the context of the play, Williams successfully portrays the patriarchy and its effects. In the Kowalski household, we see the perfect patriarchal mechanisms as Stanley dominates Stella to an extent where he uses **domestic violence** to **assert his role and subjugate Stella**. However, when Blanche arrives, we see Stanley feels threatened by her presence. Blanche reminds him that the sisters are more cultured than him and come from the aristocracy.

The rape of Blanche is the event where Stanley **asserts his power over Blanche, using sexual violence**. Stanley uses Blanche's past against her, a past that is unacceptable because she is a woman. This event, in feminist discourse, portrays women as victims of the oppressive patriarchy. The patriarchy **constantly chipped at Blanche's sanity** as she felt she needed to find a husband to be accepted by society.

Blanche's birthday dinner is a very good example of Stanley feeling threatened by Blanche—mainly because of the sisters' heritage—and he reminds them that “**Every Man is King**” and he is the king in the house. There was also a group of critics that looked at the play from a **primitive Darwinian Natural Selection lens**—believing that Stanley and Blanche were two types of animals **striving for the survival of their kind** with Stella as the final accolade. This is backed by the recurring jungle sounds and animalistic motifs and symbols in the play.

Through a **Marxist lens**, the play depicts the socioeconomic and class struggles in 1940s America. A Marxist understanding might read the play as a power struggle between the rising working-class depicted by Stanley and the deteriorating bourgeois depicted by Blanche and Stella. Stella's submissive attitude to Stanley is seen as **her acceptance** of the new working class while the Stanley-Blanche disaster-prone conflict depicts the **power struggle between classes**.

Critics who stand behind this Marxist approach to the play, look at **Stanley as a hero** defending his life wife and unborn child from the bourgeois threat. Such criticism is often also further defended by the Darwinian 'survival of the fittest'— Stanley, **the gaudy seed bearer** as Williams calls him emerges the survivor at the end ready to **pass his way of life down** to his unborn child as he defeats the final remnants of the **Bourgeois threat to his life**.

Albert Wertheim, professor and author considers the baby as a **representation of a Kowalski future** and not a DuBois one; Blanche is removed from the picture while Stanley stays back—his final win.



Critical Context

The play when first performed received mixed responses. Some were **repulsed by the bold portrayal** of desire and sexuality while it was also very popular amongst some audiences who felt the **crude realism was refreshing**. Robert J. Leeney the editorial writer of the *Register*, called Williams an “**ultra-realist**” who was **blunt in his ideas** and did not overlook basic human needs behaviour. Many critics constantly compared his play to his *The Glass Menagerie*, but **unlike Laura Blanche’s tragedy was deemed far graver**.

Some critics and audiences looked at **Stanley as a victim** of Blanche’s madness and attack against his masculinity, class and heritage. The rape scene in this approach is **justified as an event initiated by Blanche through her flirting and exhibitionism**. It was reported that some audiences actively cheered during Blanche’s rape.

Performance is also given much importance in criticism, Susan Spector, in her “Alternative Visions of Blanche DuBois” discusses how Blanche under **Kazan’s direction** was an image of a redundant dying culture and left audiences **accepting Stanley’s aggressions** while **Clurman’s** Blanche left Blanche as a victim of **Stanley’s vicious patriarchy**. Spector believed that **the script was compliant** and left actors and directors with the power to construct and **influence interpretation**.

In “Most Famous of Streetcar” Siever uses the Freudian understanding of the subconscious to translate the characteristics of Stanley and Blanche. Stanley is the **Id**, working on the animalistic **pleasure principle** which drives all his actions while Blanche is the **superego** that struggles to stand on **Morality**. In this understanding, Stella can be the **ego**, operating on the **Reality principle**.

KEY QUOTES

Note:

Textual analysis is imperative to uncover implicit meanings in a text.
Deconstructing important dialogues is vital for characterization.



Scene 4:

“He acts like **an animal**, has an animal's habits! Eats like one, moves like one talks like one! There's even something **-sub-human** -something not quite to the stage of humanity yet! Yes, something **-ape-like** about him, like one of those pictures I've seen in - anthropological studies! Thousands and thousands of years have passed him right by, and there he is - Stanley Kowalski - a survivor of the **Stone Age!** Bearing the raw meat home from the kill in the jungle! And you - you here - waiting for him! Maybe he'll strike you or maybe **grunt** and kiss you! That is if kisses have been discovered yet! **Night falls and the other apes gather!** There in the front of the **cave**, all **grunting** like him, and swilling and gnawing and hulking! **His poker night!** - you call it - this party of **apes!** Somebody **growls** - some **creature** snatches at something - the fight is on! God! Maybe we are a long way from being made in God's image, but Stella - my sister - there has been some progress since then! Such things as art - as poetry and music - such kinds of new light have come into the world since then! In some kinds of people, some tenderer feelings have had some little beginning! That we have got to make grow! And cling to, and hold as **our flag!** In this dark march towards what-ever it is we're approaching . . . Don't - don't hang back with the **brutes!**”

- This quote though delivered by Blanche is a strong reflection on what Williams' would like to portray Stanley as—the repetition of words like ape, creature, animal, stone age, grunt, etc create the **animalistic and primitive imagery** in the minds of the audience which later is **triggered** when the “jungle noises” play during the rape.
- The “grunting” and “gnawing” are words that also reflect the behaviour of Stanley throughout the play as provided by stage directions. Williams' is trying to **reinforce** this idea of Stanley as primitive and animalistic through this dialogue.
- This scene is also vital because Stanley, **unseen, overhears** everything Blanche is saying and when Stella later calls him an animal, he realizes that Stella is **easily influenced** by Blanche, deeming Blanche as a **threat**. If Stanley had not overheard this, his hatred toward Blanche may not have been so strong and he may not have concocted his plan to completely remove her from their lives.

The quotes below reinforce the idea that Stanley is primitive, uncivilized and animalistic :



Scene 1: Introduction to Stanley

Stanley [bellowing]: Hey, there! Stella, Baby!

Stanley: Catch!

Stella: What

Stanley: Meat!

“Animal joy in his being is implicit in all his movements and attitudes...Since earliest manhood... pleasure with women.... Power and pride...Richly feathered bird... heartiness... rough humour... love of good drink and food and games... his car, his radio... gaudy seed bearer...”

“**BLANCHE:** Poker is so fascinating. Could I kibitz?

STANLEY: You could not. Why don't you women go up and sit with Eunice?”

- Stanley refuses to let Blanche into a space that is reserved for men, an instance of his **misogyny and sexism**.

The quotes below reinforce the idea:

Scene 1 “He sizes women up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them.”

Scene 3 “You hens cut out that conversation in there!”

Scene 6 “**QUIET IN THERE!**--We've got a noisy woman on the place.-”

Scene 2:

STANLEY: I never met a dame that didn't know she was good looking or not without being told, and some of them give themselves credit for more than they've got.

- This quote establishes Stanley's brutal honesty and disdain for women.

Scene 7:

Stanley: You're goddamn right I told him! I'd have that on my conscience the rest of my life if I knew all that stuff and let my best friend get caught!



- This event is very significant as it denotes Stanley as a **man of honour** who could not let his friend be **deceived** by Blanche. This would paint Stanley as a hero who loves and cares for his “best friend”. However, the **contradictory connotation** of this event depicts Stanley as **selfish**, wanting Blanche out of his life as he despises her, and willing to ensure she loses her hope for a better life in the process—Mitch.
- The **tone** also shows anger and not regret. Which shows plainly that he has no empathy for Blanche despite knowing her troubled past.

Scene 8:

“ Who do you two think you are? A pair of queens? Remember what Huey Long said – ‘Every Man is a King!’ And I am a king around here, so don’t forget it!”

- Stanley feels the need to re-establish his power and role as the patriarch, as he feels jealous and threatened by the power Blanche has over Stella.

“STANLEY: Ticket! Back to Laurel! On the Greyhound! Tuesday!”

- Stanley knows that Blanche cannot return to Laurel, yet he gets her this ticket out of spite as he wants her gone and enjoys her pain on account of his deep-seated hatred for her.

“STANLEY: When we first met, you thought I was common. How right you were, baby. I was common as dirt. You showed me a snapshot of the place with the columns. I pulled you down off them columns and how you loved it...”

- Stanley in his plight to establish control over Stella reminds her that it was his “common” status that was endearing to her at times.

Scene 10:

I've been on to you from the start! Not once did you pull any wool over this boy's eyes! You come in here and sprinkle the place with powder and spray perfume and cover the light bulb with a paper lantern, and lo and behold the place has turned into Egypt and you are the Queen of the Nile! Sitting on your throne and swilling down my liquor! I say--Ha!--Ha! Do you hear me? Ha-- ha--ha!



- Stanley despite his lack of education and refinement, is not stupid. He is very **clever** and ensures Blanche knows that he **wasn't fooled** by her theatrics even for a minute. He uses a **condescending tone** as he addresses her delusions. He alludes to the motif of the **paper lantern** turning the room into Egypt—this **hyperbolic metaphor** insinuates that he knows that she is using the lantern to cover the truth and furthering her **falsely constructed image**. He laughs in her face and asserts at the end that she is still drinking his liquor which means that she is still **using his money** to further her fantasy. Reminding her that she is **dependent** on **his mercy**.

Scene 11:

“Stanley: [voluptuously, soothingly]: Now, honey. Now, love..”

- We see Stanley at the end, once again **using his sexuality** to **lure** Stella back to him. While she sobs over Blanche's cruel exit, he tries to comfort her by **caressing her and groping her**. In this last scene, we see Stanley **indifferent** to what happens to Blanche, **happy** to have got rid of the threat she posed to him. Caring only for himself and **his hedonistic needs**, he reaches into her blouse with a clear lack of **consent**. His tone is coaxing, using “honey” and “love” to bring her back to him, empathetically **denying her** right to mourn.

GLOSSARY

- **Anti-hero:** An antihero or antiheroine is a protagonist who does not showcase any “heroic” qualities like honesty, courage, virtue, etc.
- **Foreshadowing:** A literary technique where a writer drops hints or warnings about what is to come in the plot.
- **Motif:** A recurring idea in artistic work and literature.
- **Nietzschean:** Nietzsche philosophy believes that humanity cannot rely on absolutes. There is no absolute truth but only many interpretations. Nietzsche proposed two forces that operate, the Apollonian and the Dionysian: the former characterized by purity, order, logic and a dreaming state of illusions while the latter is a celebration of chaos and instinctual pleasures.



- **Authorial context:** Also called biographical context. The life of an author can influence their works. Considering the author's past life-events and circumstances under which a work was created makes for the authorial context.
- **Socio-historical context:** Literary works tend to reflect the times and society in which they were created. Thinking about how a work criticizes society, and which social or political events are alluded to or recreated. The historical period in which a work was created and the societal norms at the point are a starting point for this context.
- **Philosophical context:** Most modern authors consciously or subconsciously tackle the recurring questions of ethics or existence. A work creates or represents reality in some form, questioning the nature of the works' universe can help understand the philosophical standpoint. For example: How are humanity and morality represented? How are God and death addressed? How is free-will presented juxtapose to fate?
- **Literary context:** While literary works reflect many aspects of life, they also respond and influence other literary works and fit into larger categories of literature. Understanding if a work fits into realism or modernism, or has aspects of both is looking at its literary context. What other works or authors influence it? Did the author create other works based on this work? Such questions look at a works' literary context.
- **Critical context:** All works that are published, if noticed are critiqued. From rating it generically to looking and reflecting on a work's deeper meaning, critics will judge work and talk about what they like and don't. Time plays a crucial role in a critical context, time reveals greater works as they survive other inferior works.

REFERENCES

Spoto, Donald. *The Kindness of Strangers : the Life of Tennessee Williams*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1985. Print

Lahr, John. *Tennessee Williams: Mad Pilgrimage of the Flesh*. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014.

Saporito, J., n.d. In "A Streetcar Named Desire," What are the Thematic Connections Between Sexual Desire and Death? | Read | The Take. [online] In "A Streetcar Named Desire," What are the Thematic Connections Between Sexual Desire and Death? | Read | The Take. Available at: <<https://the-take.com/read/in-aa-streetcar-named-desirea-what-are-the-thematic-connections-between-sexual-desire-and-death>> [Accessed 13 February 2021].



PAGLIA, C., n.d. A New Literary History of America | Tennessee Williams by Camille Paglia. [online] Newliteraryhistory.com. Available at: <<http://www.newliteraryhistory.com/tennesseewilliams.html>> [Accessed 15 February 2021].

Kolin, P., n.d. *The First Critical Assessments of A Streetcar Named Desire: The Streetcar Tryouts and the Reviewers*. [online] Journals.ku.edu. Available at: <<https://journals.ku.edu/jdtc/article/download/1818/1781>> [Accessed 22 February 2021].

S. BAK, J., n.d. *CRITICISM ON A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*. [online] Cercles.com. Available at: <<http://cercles.com/n10/bak.pdf>> [Accessed 22 February 2021].

Tishler, Nancy. M. ““Tiger-Tiger!”: Blanche’s Rape on Screen,” in *Magical Muse: Millennial Essays on Tennessee Williams*. Ed. Ralph F. Voss, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 2002

O’Connor, Jacqueline. “Babbling Lunatics: Language and Madness,” in *Bloom’s Modern Critical Views*. Ed. Harold Bloom, New York, 2007

Leverich, Lyle. *TOM: The Unknown Tennessee Williams*. New York: Crown Publishers, INC., 1995. Print.

