Many authors choose to focus on the roles that gender plays in society. Which is exactly what Tennessee Williams decided to do in his play *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Williams wrote a play that focuses on relationship and what they are perceived to be versus how they actually are in reality. He is able to simultaneously present a relationship that seems to be perfect, but in fact, show the true flaws of a relationship. In this play, Williams portrays this through the characters of Stella and Stanley. Although, their name may sound nice together their relationship entails many flaws, which are caused by the standards that society had put on each of them. In this play, Williams is able to focus on gender roles in relationship to show that women want to be in a relationship more than a man.

Stanley and Stella’s relationship seems to be perfect at first glance but as the play progresses their real relationship prevails. They are like any couple in the 1950’s they believe that they are in love but in fact, they are only together to hold up their position in society. During a game of poker with his friends, Stanley gets mad and hits Stella. Moments, after they were split apart Stella, runs back to Stanley, who is calling her. The next day when Blanche confronts her about the night before her response was, “You’re making much too much fuss about this… but it wasn’t anything as serious as you seem to take it (A Streetcar Named Desire Scene 4). Stella seems to play Stanley abuse off as a meaningless act. This also makes Stella look like the vulnerable one in the relationship because just after Stanley had hit her to show that
he is superior she is content with going back to him. During this conversation, there is a great
difference in Stella and Blanche’s tone. Because of the stage directions presented which has
Blanche on Stella’s feet weeping, Williams presents Blanche’s tone to be dramatized and
concerned while Stella’s tone is calm and passive. This difference in tone implies that this type
of behavior from Stanley is normal and happens often, or maybe this type of behavior is normal
in all relationships in this time period. While Blanche an outsider notices the flaws in this type
of relationship. Ultimately, Stella was the one to give into this relationship by going back to
Stanley after what he had done to her. Which shows that women are more likely to give in, in
order to maintain the image of a perfect relationship. This can also be seen another way because
Stanley is the one who called Stella to his room so although he did not go to Stella he did call
her.

This same dilemma is noticed with Eunice and Steve. At the begging of scene five
Eunice threatens Steve by saying, “You hit me! I’m gonna call the police” (A Streetcar Named
Desire Scene 5). Even after this threat, Steve proceeded to hit her, which reveals something
about Steve’s character. Either he knew that Eunice would not call the police because she was
afraid to ruin the perfect image of a relationship or this was the same threat he had heard before.
Steve was not the only one who knew what would happen next, Stanley and Stella also have this
same approach, while they can hear them fighting both of them continue talking and decide not
to help Eunice. They even go on to comment that Eunice getting a drink was more practical than
her calling the police, which implies that this type of behavior from Steve and Eunice was
normal. Again this just emphasizes the fact that women are the ones that want to keep this image
of a perfect relationship. During this Blanche, again is taken off guard by this situation, she is
not used to this type of abuse from men. This shows that women are more likely to keep this
image of a perfect relationship because from most of the women that lived during this time period only had their relationship to show for it.

Although it may seem like women are the ones who want to keep a relationship, it actually is both men and women that want this. In the example with Stella and Stanley, Stella is the one who went to Stanley’s room but, he was the one who called her there. Stanley also feared losing her. This same event happened with Eunice and Steve, after Eunice leaves the house, Steve runs after her. Which means that even though Eunice did not call the police to save her relationship, Steve also cares because he ran after her. Williams is trying to portray that both women and men want to keep a relationship not only for themselves but for the public eye.
Works Cited


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