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DIGNITY AS SEEN IN TENNESSEE WILLIAMS' A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE

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ABSTRACT

This research is carried out to trace dignity in A Streetcar Named Desire. The dignity is focused on Blanche as a Southern woman, who has a different characterization from her sister Stella. This research is qualitative research since the data are in the form of words and quotations. The data are collected from the drama itself, A Streetcar Named Desire, and other books or references to support the analysis. In analyzing the data, the writer used a mimetic approach. The approach views literature as the imitation and combination of the reality and imagination of the playwright or the result of his imagination that comes from reality. The result shows the existence of the dignity of Blanche as a Southern Woman who lives on wealth and has a plantation in Belle Reve. Blanche's region and its society have unique values in their social status. It is gentility that includes the manner of treating the caller. Blanche shows that her dignity comes from her cultural and social background as a Southern woman. Blanche serves to symbolize what she felt about the Southern aristocracy as she tries to escape poverty and her reputation although her ancestry is dead. Blanche's struggle with dignity and fantasy serves as one of the main causes of her character's downfall. Although she puts on a veneer of social snobbery and has a manner that is dainty and frail, in reality, Blanche lies because she refuses to accept the hand fate has dealt her. In the Old South, women depended on men for comfort and status. She is taken away from her dignity. She also desperately clings to and is dragged into a new world of reality and a New South.

Keywords: Dignity, Aristocracy, Dementia, Of Mice of Men

1. INTRODUCTION

Williams's native of Mississippi is one of America's best and most dedicated playwrights (Baym Nina 1819). He began writing in high school. During his college years, he wrote and rewrote more than twenty full-length dramas, many of them autobiographical (Van Spanchere, 97). He reached his peak in his career with one of his one-act plays. The Glass Menagerie (1945) and A Streetcar Named Desire won a publisher prize in 1947. This play reflects the dignity of Blanche. Dignity is an honorable rank or position (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). Dignity is self-esteem, which depends largely on how a person maintains and acts on ethical standards (John Vogel 396). In this case, the ethical standard refers to the Southern women).

In the play, A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams wants to describe a Southern woman who lived in the New South but still possesses the customs of the Old South as prestige. Williams emphasizes the reality of the dignity of the Southern woman as custom and aristocratic values that still exist in some American societies nowadays although the era has changed and those values are not all relevant to the truth. It is proved by the character of Blanche who lives in the memory of her Southern youth and draws on the idealized past of her aristocratic values.

As a matter of fact, A Streetcar Named Desire is a story of the life of Blanche's dignity as a Southern woman who still holds the customs of the Old South. In A Streetcar Named Desire, the attitude of Blanche shows that her dignity comes from her cultural and social background as a Southern woman. Blanche as a Southern woman used to live in elegance and pleasure with beauty and charm. The memory of the Old South is reflected through her attitude that contains Southern dignity. The dignity of Southerners involved gentility. Dignity is synonymous with pride. Pride is a sense of one's own proper values or dignity or self-respect (College Dictionary, 933). It is an honor for Old South to master gentility since it reflects their dignity.

After the civil war, Americans in the South faced the task of rebuilding their society. The South lagged behind the rest of the nation economically. The wealthy Americans built an enormous mansion, wore the finest clothing, ate in the best restaurant, could afford to buy anything they desire, and enjoyed lives of luxury. Every day of life in

the city poor was dismal and drab. The poor lived crowded together in slums. Much of their housing is considered cheap apartment buildings called tenements (The World Book Encyclopedia).

Dignity holds an important role in increasing the self-confidence or self-esteem of those who reflect it and it influences woman's attitudes and behavior toward their performance regarding themselves and their families in society in this play Blanche Dubois is a southern woman who came from a dying world. The family mansion is called "Belle Reve" (Beautiful Dream), the old life Dubois homestead may have been something beautiful is gone forever. She felt the Southern Aristocracy as she tries to escape poverty and reputation although her ancestry is dead.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literature

Literature is something important to our life. It is one of the human activities in the work of art and becomes a self-expression of man which is expressed in the form of words or language to picture human life. We are able to see our life shown by the imaginary person. Lerner D.H. stated:

Literature is the result of handling no longer everyday occurrences but with a profound insight into the life of man, the more literature one has read and understood, the more one understands life (5).

The description above means that literature is an observation of life so it is very essential to pay attention to literary works in order to get more understanding of life. In other words, we can get knowledge from a literary work.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Williams presents the human experience to the audience through the characters, particularly Blanche, a southern woman who draws on an idealized past for her aristocratic values. In addition, she is living genteelly on memories of her southern youth.

In this play, the experiences of Blanche in dressing, doing the housework, and depending on the kindness of strangers, give an explanation of the reality that occurred in America's society in which there is a contradiction between the Old and the New Southern values through the confrontation between Blanche, Stella, and Stanley. In every incident, the readers and audiences are enforced to recognize the truth in human life whereas in Blanche, Stella, or Stanley.

The play contains the accumulation of experience of each character that is various and different one to each other depending on the subject. This statement is supported by Hudson:

Literature is a vital record of what men saw in life, what they have experienced of it, and what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it, which have the most immediate and enduring interest for human beings. It is true fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (10).

It implies that literature can deal with every human experience according to its aspect, making a varying appeal to people. Blanche's memory of her southern aristocratic and her gold past in the Belle Reve bring her to act like a respectable woman. In fact, she is haunted by reality, fading beauty, and the loss of her dignity, genteel ancestry, lover, and life purpose. Blanche lives in a world of fantasy as she equates her career as an English teacher to romance, spirituality, and happiness, yet because the 'romance' of the South is dead in post-war New Orleans, she has no realistic possibility of future happiness.

Drama

Drama is a form of literary work that presents a story through the speech act action of the character. Tennyson pointed out:

Play ought to be, a just and lively image of human nature reproducing the passion and humorous and changes of fortune to which it is the subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind (1).

The definition explains that drama is not only a tool for gaining entertainment but also a medium of education. It transfers the messages of life such as the values of morality, the sense of humanity, the human experiences, and the manner of life. Those aspects are presented through conflict, speeches, and actions of characters in the play.

Plot

The plot is one of the various aspects of fiction that is important to be studied. Through the sequence of events in the plot, the reader or audience can predict what will happen next, why it happened, and how the end is.

In *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Williams presents the story from the minor conflict between Blanche, her sister Stella and Stanley in scene 1. Starting from when Blanche comes to New Orleans and she looks at her sister Stella's apartment. It makes her surprised by Stella's condition. She tries to persuade Stella to leave Stanley and her poverty (120). Blanche says that she must struggle alone to hold Belle Reve meanwhile Stella came to New Orleans and looked out for herself (125). Blanche rationalizes "the loss"-the fate of their old family estate, a beautiful dream mansion, the aristocratic Dubois homestead. Blanche had been felt to care for the family holdings, but soon lost her home, her job, and her respect. Blanche lies because she refuses to accept the hand fate has dealt her.

The conflict arises in scene II-VI when Stanley opens Blanche's wardrobe trunk standing in the middle of the room and jerks out an armful of dresses. These are feathers and furs, a solid gold dress, and pearls (130). Blanche always preens and takes a bath as a symbol of the cleansing of her past. It is a part of her dignity as a southern woman. The point of this climax occurred in scenes VII-VIII. On Blanche's birthday, Stanley opens the secret about Blanche to Stella from the supply man (186). Blanche is famous in Laurel as if she was the President of the United States, only she is not respected by any party, and she stayed in a hotel called the Flamingo. Blanche wants Mitch

to come to Stella's apartment, but Stanley wouldn't be expecting Mitch to come on Blanche's birthday. Stanley gives a little envelope to Blanche. It is a ticket to Laurel. He doesn't like Blanche.

In scene X, Blanche uses her drinking problem as a way to escape her interior world, while fantasizing that her former suitor Sheep Hunt Leigh will come and rescue her from reality (209). By the end of the play, Blanche is so convinced that she is going to be rescued that when a doctor comes to take her to an insane asylum (225).

Character and Characterization

Talking about characterization, Williams brings the various characters' traits such as dignity, desire, illusion, etc., which are reflected in the characteristics of Blanche. Williams characterized southern dignity through Blanche as a Southern woman who draws on an idealized past of her southern aristocratic values. Even, when she stayed in the apartment, she used her elegant and genteel manners. She is representative of the old south.

Character is different from characterization. According to Griffith (47) in other words, characterization is forward to the behavior, and attitude of the character. And character is the person who in narrative work, is endowed with disposition qualities that are expressed in what they say (dialogue) and what they do (action).

In general, there are two types of characters main character or major character, and a supporting character or minor character is the person who supports the main character in a story (67).

In the drama *A Streetcar Named Desire*, there are some characters. They are:

-Blanche Dubois

A fading Southern Belle from an aristocratic background. She has just lost her ancestral home, Belle Reve, and her teaching position as a result of promiscuity. Blanche was described by Tennessee Williams as delicate and moth-like. She is a refined, sensitive, cultured, intelligent woman who is never willing to hurt someone. Blanche is at the mercy of the brutal, realistic world.

-Stanley Kowalski

Stanley is a common, working man who is simple, straight forward, and honest. He tolerates nothing but the bare, unembellished truth and lives in a world without refinements. Stanley views women in a limited capacity. He could be seen as common, crude, and vulgar. He is the opposing force to Blanche's struggles and her world of illusion.

-Stella Kowalski

Blanche's younger, married sister lives in the French Quarter of New Orleans. She has turned her back to her aristocratic upbringing to enjoy common marriage. Stella is caught between the two opposing worlds of Blanche and her husband Stanley. She is also a pawn in the struggle between Blanche and Stanley. Stella is a passive, gentle woman.

-Mitch

Stanley's best friend and colleague, who went through the war with him. He is an unmarried man who lives with his ailing mother to whom he feels great devotion. His soft-hearted and sensitive nature allows him to relate to Blanche and her world but often places him in conflict with Stanley.

-Steve & Eunice

Hubbel-Stanley and Stella's landlords live up the stair and are very much a part of the Kowalski household. Steve is Stanley's friend and poker buddy, and Eunice acts as Stella's confidence. This couple and the location of their apartment add another layer of atmosphere to the New Orleans setting.

-Other Characters

Mexican women, Negro women, Pablo, A young Collector, Nurse, and Doctor. These characters make small appearances throughout the play but contribute to the diverse New Orleans atmosphere. They punctuate the scenes with their thematic dialogue and opposing viewpoints. In short, they often serve as extensions of the lead characters.

Setting

Williams portrays the setting of this play in a building on a street in New Orleans which is named Elysian Field. It is Stella's apartment. To the writer, New Orleans brings a new atmosphere of changing from the Old South to the New South. Williams also emphasizes the southern customs that are known for their aristocratic values in the past, with their glory and dignity but still remain up to the modern period. In the South, Blanche is known as a popular girl with the prestige of southern gentility but in the New South, her dignity is not respected anymore.

Talking about southerners, they live in honor separate from others since they regarded themselves belong to the highest status in the Old South. As stated by Horton and Edward in *The Background of American Literary Thought*: Most views of the South, expressed by both Southerners and outsiders, have accepted the hypothesis that the area was a separate and distinct part of the United States, differing markedly from the rest of the country in the background, economy, culture, and social attitudes (375).

In other words, to the American people, this land was viewed as a land with higher honor. This honor influences the attitude of southerners. According to Brown:

Honor in the Old South applied to all white classes in which gentility was a more specialized, refined form of honor, involved mastery of quite subtle marks of status the proper accent, the right choice of words and conversational topics, the appropriate attire, and acquaintance with various kind of social properties and other rules not easy to follow with aplomb (38).

From the quotation above, gentility is an honor in the South that contains the manner of speaking, dressing, and treating the caller. There are also three components that appeared to be necessary for public recognition of gentility: sociability, learning, and piety (Brown, 38). These aspects of gentility appeared in Blanche's traits in *A Streetcar Named Desire* as a part of southerner customs that have a relation to honor and pride.

It is true that setting is the wholeness of the story's circumstances including the culture, customs, and character's view of life in other words setting is the place and time of action in which the characters' events or actions will become more concentrated if it is related to the time, place and condition or any culture aspects.

Theme and Style

The theme is the central idea in the work whether fiction, poetry, and drama. According to Rubin: Williams, developing the theme of the south in complex. Captures the network of often unexpressed ideas and attitudes that enmesh a family and culture (350).

It means that the theme of this play points out the family and culture of the South. This theme can be developed as a central concept in the story that the playwright wants to transfer for the audiences or the readers through characters, plot, setting, and also style in telling it.

Biography of Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)

Tennessee Williams was born in Columbus, Mississippi on March 26, 1911. He was the second child and first son of Cornelius and Edwina Williams. His father was an international shoe salesman, a heavy drinker, and a strong gambler. He was gone a lot during Tennessee's childhood, which forced him to spend enormous amounts of time with her sister Rose, mother, and grandparents. At seven, Tennessee was diagnosed with Diphtheria. For two years he could do almost nothing. His mother wasn't going to allow him to waste his time just sitting around, so she encouraged him to use his imagination a lot. At thirteen his mother gave him a typewriter.

After his grammar and high school years ended in 1929, he set out to find a college. The first college he went to was the University of Missouri. His father didn't approve of his son becoming an author so, after his year in Missouri, his father made him quit and work in the home business. All he wanted to do was write, in this case, it was his form of escape from the outside world. At times, it would keep him up all night, and it made him terribly exhausted, later on leading to a nervous breakdown and a heart problem due to lack of sleep. After going to the hospital for a while his father agreed to let him go to the University of Washington. There he got some of his papers published. He didn't win the writing contest he entered, so he quit and went to the University of Iowa. That is where he received the name Tennessee. Around this time, he got his Bachelor's Degree from Iowa, and Rose, his older sister had gotten a Frontal Lobotomy.

He dreamed of joining the writer's Project of Chicago but was turned down. That is when he decided to come to New Orleans. He came and went from New Orleans. He lived here on and off in and around the French Quarter.

When his eyesight faded as his writing began to spout. He was an overnight success as a result of "The Glass Menagerie". Even though this happened his play was slowly produced one by one. In fact, many of them failed but never gave up. During this time, he had to support himself in doing so he had worked as a Teletype operator, a poetry-recycling writer, and a theater usher. In 1943, he got a job as a scriptwriter.

He won a Pulitzer prize for his story *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Many of his plays were made into movies and were hits. The others play by Williams is *Battle of Angel* opened (1940). *The Rose Tattoo* in 1950, and *Cat on A Tin Roof* in 1955. *The Last Summer* in 1958, and *the night Poker* (Meyer, 1145).

At one point in his life, he thought he had breast cancer and had surgery. The surgery proved that it wasn't breast cancer but a lump due to his heavy drinking. He had psychiatric help.

He traveled to Europe, Africa, Mexico, and finally to Key West. He was very famous at the time. After he had gotten psychiatric help he started to get his life together.

On February 24, 1983, one night before going to sleep he took his usual decanal to help him sleep. There were many pills scattered on the bedside table along with a picture of the Virgin Mary and Child (he took it everywhere he went). Later that night he reached for another decanal and grabbed a plastic cap. It was stuck in a throat, and as he tried to summon help, no one could hear him. He knocked something over and made a crashing noise. His friend in another room, Jon heard the noise and ignored it, so then he died.

The Southern Aristocrats and Values

Talking about the South, there are some myths that support and give the reason for the Question "why does the South have different values from other regions?" One of the most pervasive southern myths was the Cavalier South. According to this legend, the differences between the North and the South lie in the notion that the North was settled by middle-class puritan or persons who are very strict in Christian morals, meanwhile the South was founded by Cavaliers, by gentlemen adventures whose aristocratic lineage in which they gave rise to the pattern of gracious living and elegant refinements (Horton and Edward 387).

These Cavaliers, automatically bring their aristocratic values to their descendants. It is not astonishing if genteel living and heredity become the Southerner's identity in regarding themselves as higher than others. It is asserted that the region in which the aristocrats live becomes the leader of the regions (ibid). Because of this perception, the region and its society have unique values in their social status.

One of these values is gentility which includes the manner of speech, the manner of dressing, and the manner

of treating the caller. According to Brown:

Nearly every Southern community could boast a representative of gentility ... they were kindly toward folk, stranger, and even neighbor whom others despised (140).

It means that gentility is a mark for Southerners and it appears in their attitude. It is also stated that Hyperbole as the style in southern speech is not only a sign of southern romanticism but it was a part of ritual speech (ibid 96). It means that southern gentility can be seen both in attitude and words. It is supported by the statement; "For all their imperfections, gentility and honor together were not only functional aspects of southern life but, at times, create one as well " (ibid 111). It means that gentility is not just a formal social event, but influences the behavior of southerners. Brown stated:

The South concern with classical sources reflected the continued relevance of traditions of honor and virtue. It signified high-mindedness, pride in one's self-worth and achievements, greatness, and openness of heart (95).

It is true that the traditions of southerners always reflect their dignity, pride, or honor through their manner.

The General Description of the North

In order to know, the description of Northerners, Brown stated "The Northern version of gentility stressed dignity, reason, sobriety and caution" (97). The quotation means that Northerners are calm and serious in manner, sensible in which they use the power to think and understand. It makes them careful to avoid danger or mistakes.

Brown also asserted that Hyperbole language and models were no longer held in the North (ibid 98). It means that they are careful uttering words and avoid telling something greater than its origin.

Talking about Southern education he said:

In the North teaching, and charity jobs...served as temporary expedients for young men still in search of more lasting and satisfying commitment. Chances to be a plantation tutor or academy master were snatched up by Yankee College graduates, whose credentials from Princeton, Yale, and other schools gave them a decided advantage over home-trained rivals (ibid) 186).

It means that the Northerners emphasize developing themselves in education to gain a career, not in heredity. In short, the Northerners do not have the same custom as the old Southerners. It stated by Horton and Edward that they don't bullets on the dining room table (378). According to Brown: " Every northerner ...by its appeal to conscience its implicit encouragement to Negro to revolt against his master " (188). It implies that they try to reduce the feeling of slavery or to be sure, the northerners are against slavery.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Using a method is very important in scientific research. A method is an overall plan, proceeding from a chosen approach. For this reason, the methodology is applied in the writing process to this research.

Dealing with this research, the writer used qualitative research as Hopkins pointed out that "qualitative research is empirical in that the researcher collects the data, organizes and studies it against idea hypothesis and categorical definition to test them (174).

In another word, this research is based on the analysis of the writer as the key instrument. Since the study is concerned with drama as literary work, the writer used the qualitative method, the data contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. It implies that qualitative research is a gathering of data in the form of words. Therefore, in this study it is reasonable for the writer herself to be the research instrument and drama is the source of data.

Data Collection

In collecting the data, the writer divided into two sources; the primary source is the drama itself, in this case, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and the secondary source namely other relevant books to enrich the writer's perception and analysis.

Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the writer used mimetic theory. According to Abram "Mimetic orientation-the explanation of arts as essentially an imitation of aspects of the universe" (8). This theory views literature is the imitation and combination of the reality and imagination of the playwright or the result of his or her imagination that comes from reality.

4. ANALYSIS

Blanche's Dignity as a Southern Woman

According to John Vogel, dignity is self-esteem depends largely on how a person maintain and acts on ethical standard(396). In this case, the ethical standard refers to a Southern Woman.

In this play, Williams wants to describe a Southern Woman who represents Blanche. She lived in New South but still possesses the custom of the Old South as her dignity. Williams emphasizes the reality of a Southern Woman has custom and aristocratic values that still exist in some of American society nowadays, although the era has changed and the values are not all relevant to the truth.

Blanche shows that her dignity comes from her cultural and social background as a Southern woman.

Blanche as a Southern Woman used to live in elegance and pleasure reflected through her attitude that contains Southern dignity. According to Brown:

Nearly every Southerner community could boast a representative of gentility...they were kindly toward the folk, stranger, and even neighbor when other despised them (104).

The dignity of a Southerner involved gentility. It is an honor for Old South ladies to master gentility since it reflects their dignity. Blanche as a Southern woman knows how to welcome the caller through the manner of speech: how she chooses the words and utters them in a polite accent. It can be seen in scene III when Blanche first Mitch. Mitch strikes up a conversation with Blanche in the back room, naively admiring her genteel ways and impressed that she knows a quote from a "favorite sonnet" by Mrs. Browning inscribed in his silver cigarette case given to him.

Blanche: Oh, good. What a pretty case, silver?

Mitch: Yes, Yes, read the inscription.

Blanche: Oh, is there an inscription? I can't make it out.

And if God choose, I shall but love thee better-
after death!

Mitch: There's a Story connected with that inscription.

Blanche: It sounds like a romance.

Mitch: The girl's dead now.

Blanche(in a tone of deep sympathy: Oh! (149).

From the quotation above, Williams points out the custom of the South through Blanche selected the words and the ways of guiding the caller to the conversational topic as it is seen in scene III, and a Coquettish she explains her name for him:

Mitch: Miss Dubois?

Blanche: It's a French name. It means woods and Blanche
woods, woods, like an orchard in spring! You can
remember it by that if you care to (150).

It is clear that the gentility of southerners also relates to the manner of speech. It is supported by Brown:

Gentility was a more specialized, refined form of honor in which moral uprightness was coupled with a high social position. The gentility involved the mastery of quite subtle marks of status the proper accent, the right choice of words and conversational topics, the appropriate attire; and acquainted with kinds of social properties and other rules (88).

Williams tells us that Blanche is a woman who has a great interest in choosing clothes. It's proved when she arrived at Stella's apartment. Her expression is one of shocked disbelief. Her appearance is incongruous with the setting. She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace, earrings of pearl, white gloves, and a hat. Her delicate beauty must avoid a strong light (117).

Williams shows the easy manners of treating the caller in this play. It seems in scene III when Blanche welcomes Mitch. She decorates the room with a light bulb and turns on the radio.

Blanche: I bought this adorable little colored paper lantern
at a Chinese shop on Bourbon. Put it over the light
bulb! (150).

It is true that the tradition of Southerners always treating the caller with the music and make dancing with some liquor as in scene VI:

Blanche: I want you to have a drink!

I want you to create Joie de vivre! I'm lighting a candle (117). I found some liquor! Just enough for two shots without any divided honey ... (177).

Blanche is a Southern woman who lives on wealth and has a plantation in Belle Reve. According to Horton and Edward:

The South was founded by cavalier, gentlemen's adventures aristocratic lineage which gave rise to the pattern of gracious living and elegant refinements. These cavaliers automatically, being their aristocratic values to their descendants (378). It is not astonishing if genteel living and heredity become the leader of the region(ibid).

Because of this perception, the region and its society have unique values in their social status. One of these values is gentility which indicates the manner of speech, the manner of dressing, and the manner of treating the caller.

Blanche serves to symbolize what is left of the Southern aristocracy as she tries to escape poverty and her reputation although her ancestry is dead. By stating, 'Here I am, all fresh bath and scented, and feeling like a brand new human being! (135).

Blanche shows the use of her baths as a symbol for the cleansing of her past. She also puts on airs of gentility and refinement to cover up the fact that she has become a fallen woman in society's eyes. Blanches' eviction from Belle Reve furthers her expulsion from society and she eventually becomes a relic from a defunct social hierarchy (<http://www.google.com/search? A Streetcar Named Desire>).

Blanche's dignity, vanity, and dependence on men culminate as the play nears its end, as she was taken away from the fantasy she desperately clings to and dragged into a New world of reality and a New South. Although she puts on a veneer of social snobbery and has a manner that is dainty and frail, in reality, Blanche lies because she

refuses to accept the hand fate has dealt her.

Blanche's dignity and her aristocracy as a Southern woman bring her to dementia. By the end of the play, Blanche is so convinced that she is going to be rescued that when a doctor comes to take her to an insane asylum.

The memory of the Old South is reflected through her attitude that contains Southern dignity.

Blanche Attitude toward Stella and Stanley

When fading Southern Belle, Blanche Dubois first arrives at her sister Stella's apartment, she is already an internally dealing struggle for her dignity. Blanche arrives at the back, she looks at the address and is shocked that her sister Stella lived in such a place and the poor conditions. Blanche seems to disapprove of the relationship; the Dubois sister comes from Southern aristocracy, and how Stella is married to working class, polish immigrant husband Stanley Kowalski in New Orleans, but how much Stella needs Stanley.

Blanche:You sit down, now explain this place to me!

What are you doing in place like this?

Stella:

Blanche: No, why did you let me know?

Stella: Tell you what, Blanche?

Blanche: Why, that you had to live in these condition!

Stella:It's not that bad at all New Orleans isn't like other cities (121).

Blanche and her sister come from a dying world. The life and pretensions of their world became a thing of memory. The family mansion called "Belle Reve" or Beautiful Dream is gone forever. Yet, Blanche clings to the pretensions of her aristocracy. She is now as poor as Stanley and Stella but she can not help but look down on the humble Kowalski apartment.

Blanche's memory of her Southern aristocratic and her gold past bring her to act like a respectable woman. In the Old South, the housework is done by the servant, It's clearly in Blanche's words in scene I:

Blanche: You hear me? Stella, you have a maid, don't you?

Stella: No, with only two rooms it's-

Blanche: What? Two rooms, did you say?

Stella: This one and= (she is embarrassed)

Blanche: The other one?(122)

The interior world of the apartment becomes Blanche's reality. She refused to accept the reality that she is as poor as her sister and lived in an apartment have only two rooms, a bathroom, and a collapsible bed.

Blanche: After all I've been through?....Stella, there's -only two rooms?

Stella: and a bathroom.

Blanche: Oh, you do have a bathroom!But, Stella, I don't see where you're going to put me.

Stella: We're going to put you in here.

Blanche: What kind of bed's this- one of those collapsible things?

Stella: Does it feel alright ?

Blanche: wonderful, honey. I don't like a bed that gives much. But there's no door between the two rooms, and Stanley-will it be decent? (123)

Blanche shows the use of her baths as symbol for the cleansing of her past. She has a manner that is dainty and frail.

Stanley: where is she ?

Stella: She's soaking in a hot tub to quite her nerves.

Stanley:.....

Stella: when she comes in be sure to say something nice about her appearance (131)

Stanley: So?

Stella: And admire her dress and tell her she's looking wonderful. That's important with Blanche. Her little weakness !(133).

Blanche: Hello, Stanley! Here I am, all freshly bathed and scented, and feeling like a brand-new human being!

Stanley: That's good

Blanche: Excuse me while I slip on my pretty new dress!

Stanley: Go right ahead, Blanche (135)

Blanche's habit of always bathing is symbolic, when she emerges, she always announces that she feels like a new person. The baths are a cleansing ritual, but the feeling of refreshment and renewed strength is not long. We have seen before how frail Blanche is, and how quickly she tires. We also will see the past does not wash away so easily (<http://www.google.com/sewarch?hl:A> Streetcar Named Desire).

As a Southern Blanche represents life in her mind. She displays her wardrobe of showy, yet cheap evening clothes and hides in the shadows to prevent men and her sister from realizing her age (<http://www.google.com/search?A> Streetcar Named Desire).

Blanche :don't you look at me, Stella, no, not till later,
not till I've bathed and rested! And turn that
over-light off! Turn that off I won't be looked at

in this merciless glare! (120).

Williams tells that as a Southern woman, Blanche's attitude toward money tremendous difference in class between them. She cares nothing for money, her class only understands how to spend it, and that is part of why Belle Reve was lost. It is proved in scene II, when Stanley pulls open her wardrobe :

Stanley : Look at these feathers and furs that she self in!

what is this here? A solid-gold dress, I believe ! And this one! What is there here? Fox-pieces! Genuine fox fur-pieces, a half a mile long!.. Pearl! ...And diamonds! A crown for an empress! (134).

From the quotation above, show that Blanche lived in luxurious life and elegant in the Old South. Conflict between Blanche, Stella and Stanley always comes up caused by the different perception of Old South and the New South. Southern aristocracy becomes lost amongst the growth of the American economy. Blanche remains prejudiced against the working class. Upon meeting her brother in law Stanley, Blanche is horrified to realize everything her represents. She even tells Stella later in the play:

Blanche : You can't have forgotten that much of our bringing

up, Stella, that you just suppose that any part of gentlemen's in his nature! Not one particle, no! oh, if he was just ordinary! Just pain- but good and whole some, but-no. There's something downright-bestial-about him! (163).

While Blanche tells herself that she represents Southern gentility and aristocracy, she resents the fact that Stanley is of the new working class. He is grounded in reality, lacks ideals, and is incredibly passionate about work, fighting, and poker.

Blanche : Why! I've been half crazy, Stella! When I found

out you'd been insane enough to come back in here after what happened-..... All right, Stella. I will repeat the Question quietly now. How could you come back in this place last night? Why, you must have slept with him!(157).

By the play's conclusion however, Blanche and what is she left of her class ancestry has disappeared and she becomes outcast, while Stanley becomes symbolic of new America and the family man

Blanche's Attitude toward the Gentlemen Caller

As a Southern woman, Blanche depended on men or kindles of strangers. Blanche's struggle with dignity and reality serves as the main causes of the character's downfall. Although she puts on a Veneer of social snobbery and has a manner that is dainty and frail, in reality, she refuses to accept the hand fate has dealt her. In the Old South, women depended on men for comfort and status. ([http://www.google.com/seach?hl:american woman](http://www.google.com/seach?hl:american%20woman)).

Williams tells us that Blanche is a woman who has great in choosing the clothes:

Blanche: You haven't said a word about my appearance.

Stella: You look just fine (122).

Blanche: Ha-ha! Yes-clothes are my passion!

Stanley: what does it cost for a string of fur-pieces like that?

Blanche: Why, those were a tribute from an admirer of mine.

Stanley: He must have had a lot of – admiration!

Blanche: Oh, in my youth! I excited some admiration. But look at me no! I was once to be attractive? (136).

It means that Blanche in her youth has many gentlemen caller in the South and when she comes to New Orleans she was to get back her identity as a Southern woman. She has to have dignity, honor and own much money but the era has changed.

Blanche: I bought some nice clothes to meet all your lovely friends in. I bought nice clothes and I'll wears them (124).

Williams shows that as an Old Southerner, Blanche is so proud to have many gentlemen callers or strangers as the planters because, in the South, she has gentlemen, Likewise, the more Plantation, and servants she has the higher her wealth, status, and dignity she has. It can be seen in Blanche's statements when the first comes to Stella apartment.

Blanche: You hear me?....Stella, you have a maid, don't you?

This statement is asserted by Horton and Edward in *The Background of American Literary Thought* :

In the Old South, a few prosperous families, will well-established holding of a thousand acres or more, for a short time held a position of leadership and began to set standards of genteel behavior for all to admire and a host of pretentious to imitate (383).

The ladies in this case also should know to welcome the caller, how they provide the beverages and meals and decorates the room as beautifully as possible through the manner of treating the caller. These are called southern gentility if they have all these capabilities of the gentility of a Southerner. It proved when Stella introduced Stanley's friends to Blanche in this play:

Stella:Blanche, this is Mr. Gonzales and Mr. Hubbel

Blanche: Please don't get up (145).

Williams stresses also that at the Old Southerner has a law of nature in treating the caller, it's supported by Blanche's statement:

Blanche: I was just obeying the law of nature.

Mitch: Which law is that?

Blanche: The one that says the lady must entertain the gentlemen or no dice (175).

Blanche's fatigue after the carnival emphasizes how frail she is. We also see the act that Blanche put on for Mitch. She pretends to be taken with old-fashioned values. Her need to be the virginal Southern belle isn't malicious in intent. She indulges in the deception not only to attract Mitch but for her own sake. Playing the southern Belle gives Blanche great pleasure. It allows her to feel young and unscarred again.

Blanche believes that her rich-man admirer Hunt Leigh will respect her for companionship, and not invade her privacy. He will want a cultured woman such as herself-with inner beauty.

Blanche : A cultivated woman, a woman of intelligence and breeding, can enrich a man's life immeasurably! I have those things to offer, and this doesn't take them away. Physical beauty is passing. A transitory possession, but the beauty of mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart-and I have all of those things!think of myself as a very, very rich woman! (211).

The quotation above explains that Education is important in the South, although it is more for gentlemen. According to Manfred:

In its intellectual life, the South suffered many handicaps common to rural society. The planters were usually well-educated and prided themselves on their cultural attainment, often asserting that they were the only true gentlemen to be found in the nation (124).

Blanche realizes that her delicate beauty and appearance or lived genteelly have changed and skill is needed in developing one's career. It is supported by Horton and Edward: in the early nineteen century....women of beauty intelligence and virtue (89). It is clearly shown in scene I, that Blanche is an English teacher before she came to New Orleans (129).

Career is important not only to provide for the self but also to get a nice man because the world in the new period needs girls with knowledge and skill, although learning in the Old South seems to emphasize on man to be sure, as stated in Brown " Southern ideals of education believed was necessary to equip young men for the world it means that learning is only consumed as a certain gender. Learning is an expensive commodity throughout the plantation south's history (92-94).

Like a mirror, Blanche's dignity as a woman of her refinement and moral sophistication is cracked and splintered. She is thoroughly traumatized by the violence and ravishment, sinking into madness and further aloneness. In the end, she has completely destroyed her sanity causing her final break from reality.

Blanche's fantasy about going on a trip with "gentlemen from Dollar". Shep Hunt Leigh proved that in the Old South, the Southerner woman and their constant dependence on men are for comfort and status. And the new South becomes a reality. Williams' characterization of Blanche is meant to symbolize the restrictions placed on women's lives in the South transitioning from Old to New.

As she responds to Blanche's attitude, Mitch naively admires and impressed Blanche's genteel way, but when she knows that Blanche has lain for everything she represents, he left Blanche alone. On the other hand, Stanley is very suspicious of it.

5. CONCLUSION

The Old South particularly the Southern Women should possess dignity, pride, and self-respect, categorized as Old Southern gentility as one of the aristocratic values that consist of beauty, elegant, dainty, worthy, manner of speech, the manner of dressing or custom of wearing elegant clothes appropriate to the situation, the manner of treating the gentlemen callers and the Southern depended to men for comfort and status.

The Southern dignity is embodied in Blanche's characteristics, and her attitude toward Stella and Stanley and the Gentlemen Caller. Blanche, in fact, wants respected and admired as a Southern woman who comes to New South, but her dignity and desire bring her to dementia.

6. SUGGESTION

There are some values of the Old South that cannot be continued since it is not relevant to the real and social condition such as regarding one's self as higher than others because of heredity or status.

As a woman, we have to cultivate knowledge and skill in order to improve our status. As a human, we must know how are good ways to make people respect us.

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