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Existential Crisis and Search for Meaning: A Critical Analysis of Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois as Alienated Characters in *A Street Car Named Desire*

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Abstract
The current research critically analyzes Stella Kowalski as an alienated existential character in A Streetcar Named Desire (1947). The study focuses on examining Stella's character for existential subjects like alienation, freedom, responsibility, emotional dispute, anxiety, suffering, and the quest for purpose. Despite the fact that Stella is frequently viewed as a minor or passive figure in the drama, this essay contends that her decisions, emotional challenges, and psychological intricacy give her a major existential position. The main method of interpretation used in this qualitative research study is textual analysis. Close analysis of certain portions from the play is done to see how Stella's behavior and relationships reflect his existential concepts, particularly the ideas of freedom of choice, accountability, and "existence precedes essence." The study's findings demonstrate that Stella Kowalski endures ongoing existential tension because of her conflicting emotional bonds, especially those between Stanley Kowalski and Blanche DuBois. Existential freedom is evident in her choice to stay in a violent but emotionally satisfying relationship, but it also causes psychological suffering and moral uncertainty. Additionally, the report emphasizes Stella's feeling of alienation from her old identity, her family's ideals, and even her current emotional condition, putting her in a state of existence in-between. Stella Kowalski is an existentially complex character whose identity is formed by her emotional experiences and individual choices, according to the study. Through her personality, she demonstrates that human existence encompasses both freedom and responsibility, which unavoidably lead to anxiety, pain, and the quest for meaning in life.

Keywords: Existentialism, Alienation, Freedom, Responsibility, Stella Kowalski, Sartre, Tennessee Williams.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of Study

Human emotions, struggle, anxiety and social realities are all depicted in the various genres of literature. Existentialism is one of the prominent philosophies that affect human existence, loneliness, alienation, freedom, suffering and seeking of meaning in life in modern literary theories. The twentieth century was a time when existentialism became a dominant presence in the philosophy of such thinkers as Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus and Kierkegaard. Existentialism is a philosophy that emphasizes the nature of human existence in an uncertain and meaningless world where people are trying to define themselves and find a purpose in their lives through their personal experiences and decisions.

Tennessee Williams is considered one of the most influence American playwrights to depict psychological tension, emotional anguish, and human loneliness in his dramas. The renowned *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* portrays the tragic story of people caught between desire, reality, social norms and emotional volatility. The play deals with several existential issues: loneliness, alienation, identity crisis, suffering, emotional conflict and the fight for survival in a tough modern world.

Stella Kowalski is one of the main characters of the play and is a character rife with complexity and psychological tension, who feels emotionally isolated and lost throughout the play. The family loyalty and personal desire/survival conflict occur as Stella is caught between her sister Blanche DuBois and husband Stanley Kowalski. While superficially Stella seems emotionally sound, she is

tormented on the inside from the confusion, guilt, and feeling alienated she feels because of her hard choices and her family's unstable situation.

In addition, Stella's departure from her Southern, aristocratic roots to live like Stanley, a working man, symbolizes existential considerations of freedom of choice and individual responsibility. Her emotional reliance on Stanley and her failure to be fully supportive of Blanche reveal her psychological rift and existential angst. A life of illusion and reality, morality and desire, security and suffering, is Stella's life from now on. Thus Stella can be read as an alienated character who is trying to find a sense of meaning and emotional balance in a volatile and violent world.

The aim of the present study is to examine the existentialist approach of the character, Stella Kowalski, in The Glass Menagerie with a view to critically analyse how loneliness, emotional conflict, alienation and search for meaning influence her personality and decisions in the play.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) (1947),* Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois characters face emotional isolation, psychological tension, loneliness and a search for life's meaning and stability. The play portrays Stella's personality being split between her sister Blanche and her husband Stanley in her life that causing her emotional suffering and inner conflict throughout the play. This study aims to critically discuss the character of Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois as an alienated character from the existentialist perspective. The study examines the emotional conflicts, personal choices, suffering and existential anxieties that Stella and her sister face through the brutalities of the contemporary world. The study examines the existential nature of Stella and Blanche DuBois quest for security, love and meaning which ultimately relates to issues of alienation and psychological conflict.

1.3. Research Questions

1. How does Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois have face alienation in *A Street Car Named Desire*?
2. What are the factors responsible for emotional conflict and existential crisis of Stella and Blanche DuBois in *A Street Car Named Desire?*

1.4. Research Objectives

- To analyze the Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois have face alienation in *A Street Car Named Desire*.
- To explain the factors responsible for emotional conflict and existential crisis of Stella and Blanche DuBois in *A Street Car Named Desire.*

1.5. Significance of the Study

The present study is important because it critically investigates the character of Stella Kowalski and Blanche DuBois from existentialist perspective, which is still relatively under the spotlight for studies in the literary field. The emphasis of most critical examinations on *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* is on Blanche DuBois's psychological breakdown and Stella's emotional and existential problems are rarely examined. This study is a contribution to literary criticism as it shows that Stella is an important existential character in the play. The study enables the reader to appreciate the psychological and emotional depths of Stella's character in existential terms such as alienation, loneliness, suffering, free choice and the quest for meaning. The study also helps in the ongoing debate in modern literature and philosophy on the emotional problems and identity crisis of women in the patriarchal and unstable society. This thesis could be a valuable resource for students, researchers and scholars of existentialism, modern American drama, and Tennessee Williams's works. Furthermore, it expands the field of existentialist literature criticism by utilizing it to analyze a rather under-discussed character in the play.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

This study is only an existential analysis of the character of Stella Blanche DuBois in *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* written by Tennessee Williams. The research is particularly focused on existential issues of alienation, loneliness, suffering, emotional conflict, anxiety, freedom of choice and the search for meaning in Stella's character. The research mainly concentrates on Stella's psychological and emotional experiences rather than conducting a complete character analysis of Blanche DuBois or Stanley Kowalski buy using a theoretical framework of *Existentialism is Humanism (2007)*by Jean Paul Sartre,

2. Literature Review

Literature review is an essential part of research, which is an examination of previous research, concepts and academic discussions related to the selected topic. The literature review in this chapter examines recent publications on existentialism, alienation, psychological suffering and character analysis in Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*. Furthermore, this chapter will discuss key research related to Stella Kowalski and identify the research gap which the current study aims to address.

In the 19th and 20th century, existentialism emerged as a major 19th and 20th century literary and philosophical movement. The main themes of the theory are the search for meaning in life, in human life, in freedom, in alienation, in suffering and anxiety. While people may choose to make decisions, they also experience accountability, concern and emotional suffering as a result of this choice (Sartre 2007). Existentialism focuses on the attempt of human beings to make sense of this world that is unpredictable and erratic.

Camus (1955) asserts that people are constantly seeking meaning in a world that can provide no answers and so human life often appears to be meaningless and ridiculous. So loneliness, emotional struggle, hopelessness and isolation are

common motifs in existentialist writing. Kierkegaard (1985) believes that anxiety and hopelessness are part of human life and that they occur as a result of the fact that people are faced with ambiguity and difficult choices throughout their lives.

Existentialist literary criticism was successful because it has given an understanding to the analysis of identity crisis, alienation, and psychological distress of the characters in contemporary literature. Industrial and materialistic civilizations cause emotional instability and spiritual emptiness in modern humans, according to Barrett (1962), as shown in existentialist literature.

Modern American literature's most important playwrights include Tennessee Williams. Most of his plays deal with social tension, sexuality, loneliness, human emotions and psychological conflicts. Bigsby (1984) argues that Williams' characters are fraught with emotional torment and struggle with hardships in society. His plays generally have alienated people seeking emotional stability and self-identity.

A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) portrays the transformation of the old southern culture and the rise of the new industrial society through the conflict between Blanche, Stella and Stanley. According to Adler (1990), the drama represents emotional anguish, violence, yearning, and mental unsteadiness of people living in marginal social and interpersonal relationships.

Furthermore, Williams' theatrical style is a blend of symbolism and realism looking at emotional breakdown and human solitude. Falk (1961) claims Williams' characters are often trapped between illusion and reality, increasing their sense of anguish and feeling alienated from reality.

The theme of alienation is one of the central themes of "*A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*". According to Fromm (1955), alienation occurs when one neglects relationships, one's community, and one's self. Psychological isolation is a result

of the drama's characters inability to establish emotional stability and real communications.

Many critics consider Blanche DuBois to be the main alienated character. For instance, Blanche finds herself living without social status, family lineage and emotional health which leads to identity problems, trauma and loneliness as stated by Riddel (1961). Her tendency to embrace an undesired reality is reflected in her use of illusion.

Yet, throughout the play, Stella Kowalski is emotionally distant and troubled. Stella remains torn between Blanche and Stanley, and her loyalty to the latter. Griffin (1995) speaks of Stella's character as one that suffers from internal conflict, in that she is always compromising moral clarity in order to keep alive emotionally and maintain domestic equilibrium.

Cardullo (1998) suggests that Stella's passivity and quietness should not be interpreted as a result of emotional weakness, but as a way of coping with Stella's attempts to survive a violent and unpredictable world. Stella's emotional reliance on Stanley exacerbates her feelings of existential anxiety and loneliness.

Blanche DuBois is given existential understanding, but Stella Kowalski does, too. Emotional ambiguity, grief, alienation, and difficult decisions are all factors that Stella deals with throughout the drama. Sartre (2007) states in his existential theory that people define themselves via their decisions and actions. The choice of leaving her privileged Southern upbringing and living with Stanley is an illustration of personal choice and existential freedom.

However, Stella's choices also cause inner turmoil and emotional pain. She has a split personality and feels torn between desire and morality, love and guilt, and security and truth. Murphy (2013) believes that Stella's condition is the result of her inability to escape Stanley's violence and Blanche's emotionalism.

As well, Stella's alienation is clearly seen when she decides to opt for Stanley over Blanche after Blanche breaks down psychologically. This is a reflection of Stella's existential fear because her main concern is to remain stable and alive rather than being true to her emotions. Camus (1955) has argued that in spite of the moral uncertainty and psychological pain of living in an agonizing situation, many people continue to do so.

The existential reading of the character of Stella shows that she is not just a spectator, but an emotionally unsettled individual who is trying to make sense of and give structure to a harsh social environment.

2.1. Research Gap

Most of the academic research on *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* centers on Blanche DuBois's psychology, Stanley Kowalski's masculinity, or feminist interpretations of the play. The feelings of alienation and Stella Kowalski's existential angst have been under-studied. Stella, although mentioned in some reviews about her emotional dependency and passivity, has been scarcely studied from an existentialist point of view.

Accordingly, this research aims to fill this gap by examining Stella Kowalski as an alienated existential character, who battles with emotional conflict, loneliness, suffering and the search for meaning in life. Through giving Stella's character in modern American theatre a more existential interpretation, the research enhances literary criticism.

3. Research Methodology

The present study adopts research methodology. It clarifies the research paradigm, research design, data collection method, data analysis procedure and theoretical framework applicable to analyze the character of Stella Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*. The chapter explains the methodology and approach used

by the researcher to explore existential issues of alienation, emotional conflict, suffering, anxiety and the search for meaning in the character of Stella.

3.1. Research Paradigm

The interpretive paradigm of research is used in the present study. Interpretivism emphasizes the meanings, emotions, experiences, and the human behavior through interpretation and critical analysis. The interpretivist theory holds that reality is socially and psychologically created, and that a text can be analyzed from various angles and perspectives, based on the researcher's frame of analysis. In the present research, the study is based on existential themes, psychological conflict, and emotional alienation in the character of Stella Kowalski, so the interpretive paradigm is deemed appropriate for the study. The researcher critically interprets Stella's conversations, actions, feelings and relationships to interpret her existential suffering and quest for meaning in life. Thus, the study does not depend on the use of numerical or statistical data but rather depends on the subjective interpretation and understanding of the literary text through a qualitative approach.

3.2. Design of the Study

This study uses qualitative research design. Qualitative research is frequently employed in literary research because it involves understanding of literary works, thematic analysis and text interpretation. Qualitative approach enables researcher to explore the characters and themes of the text into the deeper psychological, emotional, and philosophical aspects of them. Textual analysis is the main method of research used in the study. Textual analysis helps the researcher to critically analyze the selected dialogues, symbols, themes and character interactions within *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*. Using close reading and interpretation, the researcher examines Stella Kowalski's crisis of identity/alienation, emotional distress, and psychological conflict in the play.

3.3. Data Collection

The present study is based on secondary data collection. The Primary source of information is Tennessee Williams' play *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* and theoretical framework such as *Existentialism is Humanism (2007).* Secondary source of data is the associated data to primary data such as critical view, research, articles, journals, books etc.

3.4. Data Analysis

Using the textual method of analysis the writer will interpret the character of Stella Kowalski in the movie *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*. One of the key qualitative research methods, textual analysis is an analytical tool to investigate meanings, themes, feelings, and ideologies of a literary text. The researcher engages in a close reading of the selected passages from the text to explore Stella's emotional dilemma, isolation, relationships, and mental anguish. The discussion will be based on the negotiation of challenging situations by Stella and the choices she makes regarding existential issues like anxiety, loneliness, identity crisis, and seeking meaning in life. It deconstructs the dialogues and actions of Stella using existentialist perspectives like freedom, responsibility, suffering, absurdity and alienation. The symbolic elements and interpersonal relationships are also analyzed to see how they enhance Stella's existential condition in the play.

3.5. Theoretical Framework

Jean-Paul Sartre's theory of existentialism is used as the theoretical framework in the present study to analyse Stella Kowalski in *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* by Tennessee Williams. Existentialism is a philosophical and literary movement of the focus of which is human existence, freedom, choice, responsibility, alienation, anxiety and the search for meaning in life. Jean-Paul Sartre is regarded as one of the prominent existentialist philosophers who believes that people are

free to make choices and that they are responsible for creating their own identities based on their actions and decisions.

The key existential principles that are central to Sartre's philosophy are, "existence precedes essence," which suggests that people do not have an inherent reason or an inherent identity; rather, they determine who they are and what they will do through their choices and experiences. What Sartre (2007) says that they share is "only that they think that "existence precedes essence" (p. 20). The concept is significant in the current investigation due to Stella Kowalski's construction of identity in relation to her personal choices, rather than her aristocratic Southern heritage or her socializations.

Sartre (2007) maintains that "Man is nothing else, but what he makes of himself" (p. 22). This quotation is a statement of an existential perspective on human beings, namely, the view that humans construct themselves through action. Despite her emotional distress and domestic abuse, Stella refuses to leave Stanley Kowalski and is trying to control her life by choosing to stay with him. Her identity is thus shaped through the actions that she performs, the emotions that she feels, and the hard choices that she makes.

The concept of responsibility is used as an existential concept in this study. Sartre (2007) explains that "Man is responsible for what he is" (p. 23). Existentialism implies that humans have no way to avoid responsibility to their actions and choices. Stella is in an emotional conflict and undergoing psychological anguish all through the play, especially when she chooses Stanley over Blanche at the end of the play.

Sartre's notion of existential anguish is important to comprehend Stella's emotional state. It has been said that man chooses himself; that is to say, each and every one of us must choose himself" (Sartre, 2007 p. 24). It's an idea that encapsulates Stella's internal conflict between good and bad, between family

loyalty and personal desire and between emotional survival and morality. Every choice she makes adds to Stella's psychological paralysis, as she feels she can't make a choice without causing more anxiety and emotional instability.

4. Analysis

I'm going to try to keep Blanche out till the party breaks ... you'd better give me some money. …. She's soaking in a hot tub to quiet her nerves. She's terribly upset. STANLEY: Over what? …STELLA: Stan, we've-lost Belle Revel. (page 32)

It's hard to control Blanche's emotions and Stella is trying to work through them and the loss of Belle Reve. The destruction of Stella's aristocratic Southern upbringing and traditional identity is represented by the loss of Belle Reve. Sartre (2007) says "What they have in common is just the notion that existence comes before essence," (P. 20). Since Stella no longer has the stable social position that Belle Reve was associated with, this statement is pertinent. Rather, she must create meaning and identity in the context of her current situation and choices. The loss of the family home exacerbates Stella's existential crisis as she feels emotionally disconnected from the past and uncertain about her future. Sartre's idea that man must take responsibility for his actions and decisions is illustrated in Stella's emotional responsibility towards Blanche. I'm going to try to keep Blanche out until the party is over, I don't know how she'd take it," says Stella to protect Blanche's vulnerability. Her work is indicative of a sense of responsibility and gravity. It is man's responsibility for what he is, Sartre (2007) argues (p. 23). Stella's choices demonstrate her conscious control of the crisis even though her choices increase her emotional anguish and worry. She cannot detach herself from the responsibility of Blanche's health, or any of her own choices. The passage also shows psychological anguish and existential anxiety. Stella says that Blanche is "terribly upset" and "has been through such a trial." His concept of suffering, which occurs when people face unpleasant truths and unclear futures, is mirrored

in the emotional instability shown here. When Sartre says “man chooses man” (2007, P. 24), he is requiring each person to make a choice for him or herself. Stella is in a battle with her existence as she's torn between her loyalty to Blanche and her home life with Stanley. The stress is evident in her emotions, which expresses the existential burden of making hard decisions in uncertain situations. Moreover, Stella's attempt to continue living through her psychological devastation as one would in the normal world is a kind of existential survival in a meaningless and unpleasant world. Believe it or not, the destruction of Belle Reve represents economic fall, emotional estrangement and loss of identity. If Sartre is correct, “Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (Sartre, 2007, p. 22), Stella's figure proves this to be true. When the family legacy comes crashing down, Stella is left to redefine herself. Her reliance on Stanley for economic and emotional security demonstrates her efforts for meaning and stability in the face of her pain and ambiguity. The conversation between Stella and Stanley also shows the seclusion and estrangement between them. "The place in the country? “Emotionally detached from the tragedy, “Stanley just asks.” He gives a reply which contrasts strongly with Stella's emotional suffering. This distinction increases Stella's loneliness as she suffers from psychological pain only to be given no genuine emotional understanding from Stanley. In Sartre's existentialism, it's often said that individuals feel rejected when trying to be their best in indifferent social environments. This existential isolation is reflected in Stella's emotional state, as she is cut off from her lost past, and also from her emotionally unstable present. Sartre's existential notion that people must make decisions is illustrated in the passage. Sartre (2007, p. 44) says that "choice is possible in one sense, but not possible in another, namely, not to choose. Stella's existential anguish is a result of her emotional turmoil, guilt and sacrifice in all her decisions. As a result, Stella Kowalski is depicted in the quoted scene as a lonely existential being struggling

with anxiety, responsibility, emotional pain, and quest for stability in the aftermath of her traditional world's collapse.

MITCH: I believe you are right with that. Blanche, I'm positive that I am. Show me a person who hasn't known any sorrow and I'll show you a superficial-Listen to me, My tongue is a Little-thick! You boys are responsible for it. The show let out at eleven and we couldn't come home on account of the poker game so we had to go somewhere and drink. I'm not accustomed to having more than one drink. two is the limit and three [She laughs] Tonight I had three. (page 59)

During the conversation with Mitch, Blanche DuBois displays her mental instability, alcoholism and emotional pain. Important existential subjects like sorrow, emotional alienation, anxiety, suffering, and the effort to flee the hard reality are mirrored in the text. Blanche's persona can be viewed as someone who is battling to establish meaning and emotional balance in a painful and shaky world, according to Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy in "*Existentialism is a Humanism (2007)*. Blanche says that “Show me a shallow person, and I'll find you someone who has never suffered from grief.” This is an existential statement of the belief that pain is our part of life. According to existentialism, human life's most significant experiences are loneliness, anxiety and emotional pain. Blanche's comments reveal her knowledge that human life has depth and purpose in the face of misery. Those unfortunate events in her life have brought her to a tragic situation; the death of her husband, the loss of Belle Reve, and social rejection. All these have affected her psychological state and perception of herself. Sartre (2007) states, "Man is nothing but what he makes of himself" (P. 22). According to this statement, people are molded by their experiences and decisions. Blanche's condition in the drama is primarily an existential condition, and her condition of suffering and emotional breakdown of her condition has a great influence on her personality. Alcohol is a sign of Blanche's attempt to avoid emotional distress and

sense of personal uncertainty. Not used to it, she admits, “I'm not used to having more than one beverage.” Tonight I eat 3, and two is the limit! Her inability to face reality head-on is reflected in her heavy drinking. According to Sartre's existentialism, when people are faced with challenging realities about life, they often feel despair and emotional instability. Sartre (2007) said that "man is responsible for what he is" (P. 23). However, Blanche's attempts to cope with loneliness and psychological trauma end up causing her emotional breakdown and isolation as evidenced by her actions. Also, it shows the existential loneliness and emotional solitude of Blanche. In the presence of others, she remains unintegrated and divided, spiritually. After revealing her drinking habit, she jokes about it, suggesting emotional fragility and sadness. According to existentialist theory, humans are frequently lonely because they are not able to establish true feelings and certainty in the society. The theme of emotional turmoil and uncertainty that Sartre presents in his idea of human existence is seen in Blanche's anguish. Blanch's comment captures existential sadness that is caused by bad socialization and poor interpersonal relationships. Her attempts to keep a healthy balance of emotions in an unstable environment are seen in her explanation that she drinks because of outside issues. Sartre (2007) says "Choice is possible, but not impossible; it is possible in one way, but not in another (p. 44). Blanche makes one choice after another to avoid the loneliness and suffering, but each choice adds to her psychological agony and emotional breakdown. Mitch inspires Blanche to seek out meaning and emotional satisfaction in her life. Blanche fears that she will be rejected and left alone, so she desires understanding, acceptance and companionship. She's searching for security and meaning in what she sees in human relationships, which is in her conversation with Mitch. But her unsteady psychological state and incapacity to face reality stop her from finding true emotional serenity. It portrays Blanche DuBois as a character alienated from

existence, suffering from melancholy, anxiety, loneliness and emotional instability. Sartre's existentialist ideology metaphorizes Blanche's dependence on illusion and psychological plight as a reflection of the human quest for stability and meaning in a brutal and unpredictable world.

Drunk-drunk-animal thing, you [She rushes throullh to the poker table] All of you-please go hamel If any of you have one spark of decency in you.

BLANCHE [wildly]: Stella, watch out, he's---Stella cries out. Blanche screams and runs into the kitchen. The men rush forward and there is grappUng and cursing. Something is overturned With a crash.]

BLANCHE [shriUy]: My sister is going to have a babyl

MITCH: This is terrible. (PP. 62-63)

In the passage you selected from *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*, the themes of existential themes of human brutality, emotional anguish, alienation, fear, and psychological instability are all evident. The unstable home environment is reflected in the loss of emotional security and the harshness of human life as seen in the picture. Jean Paul Sartre's existential philosophy can be used to analyze the characters' emotional responses as existential anxiety and the desperate struggle to survive in an uproar-filled world in Existentialism Is Humanism. The rough and tumble atmosphere of the scenario reflects the reality of human life, which is often unstable, irrational and emotionally damaging. Fear and helplessness in the face of violence and uncertainty are reflected in Blanche's scared exclamation, "Stella, be cautious, he's—. Likewise, Stella's struggle to protect herself exposes her quest for dignity and life in an inhospitable world. The existentialists declare that people have to live in the world of anxiety and suffering, which offers no absolute security or protection, and they have to face the harsh truths of society. Sartre (2007, P. 42) states that "There is a universality of the human condition. This statement is significant because the suffering, fear and emotional turmoil of the people

represent universal aspects of human life. It demonstrates emotional loneliness and feeling alienated from life. However, Stella is still vulnerable emotionally, and threatened physically even with lots of people around her. The men's attempts to prevent Stanley's violence and emotional distress reflect the failure in society to fully overcome the issues of violence and emotional problems. The sadness of Stella is a good example of how individuals often feel isolated even in relationship or social contact. Sartre's existentialism holds that individuals are always left to face suffering and accountability in themselves, in the midst of the bitter realities of life. It reflects Sartre's concept of abandonment and the moral ambivalence. Onthe other hand, Stanley's violent actions show that the family is uninhibited and lacks emotional accountability and moral direction. If God does not exist," Sartre (2007) argues (pp. 117), "everything is allowed. 28–29). This statement suggests that in an unpredictable world people should set their own ethical standards. Stanley's unrestrained aggression and brutality exemplify ethics in chaos and existential disorder in the play. Stella's pain is a reflection of the psychological consequences of a society that is built upon somewhat fragile moral certitude and safety. My sister is getting married and is going to have a baby! Blanche's existential anguish and emotional panic is emphasized by her pleading cry. Despite the chaotic environment continually deteriorating, Blanche attempts to halt the violence through arguments of human compassion and responsibility. Her emotional breakdown is a sign of the collapse of emotional control, fear and helplessness, which leads to existentially anxious feelings. One thing that Sartre's existential philosophy emphasizes is the sense of anguish people may experience when they encounter unpleasant circumstances which are beyond their control. It illustrates that people's actions and feelings shape their identity. In both cases, Stanley's violent and destructive actions show his aggression and emotional neediness and Stella's pain shows his lack of emotional support and existential

weakness. To say that man is nothing else than his own project is to clarify Sartre's meaning, as he says (2007) "man is nothing else than his own project" (p. 37). This implies that individuals develop their identities via their behaviour and actions. Stanley's savagery and Stella's constant affection for him shows how the characters take shape within the unstable and violent dynamic of their relationship. It represents the pain of existence as part of being human. The emotional disturbance, violence, fear and mental imbalance in the scenario point to the harsh realities of life in our culture. Blanche, Stella and Stanley each have emotional difficulties and feelings of alienation, a symptom of existential problems of suffering, isolation, and survival. Thus the passage emphasizes the negative emotional aspects of human existence in *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)* through Sartre's existential philosophy.

Stella: Yes, you are, Blanche. I know how it must have seemed to you and I'm awful sorry it had to happen, but it wasn't anything as serious as you seem to take it. In the first place, when men are drinking and playing poker anything can happen. It's always a powder-keg. He didn't know what he was doing…bulbs with it. Blanche: He did – what? Stella: He smashed all the light-bulbs with the heel of my slipper! Blanche: And you – you let him? Didn't run, didn't scream? Stella: I was – sort of thrilled – by it. Eunice and you had breakfast? (72)

In the excerpt from *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*, Stella attempts to explain Stanley's violent behavior, whereas Blanche is astounded and disbelief. It addresses issues of existential nature such as emotional conflict, sense of alienation, freedom of choice, psychological dependency, and search for meaning in fragile human relationships. Her reactions in this work expose her existential conflict over desire, moral obligation, emotional attachment, and responsibility, in an existential framework inspired by the existential philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre in *Existentialism is a Humanism (2007)*. Stella attempts to make it normal to have

violence and instability within the family, with the saying, "anything may happen when men are drinking and playing poker. According to existentialism, individuals must make sense and a sense of stability out of a chaotic and unpredictable universe. Stella is wary of emotional isolation and insecurity and understands that Stanley's destructive behavior is a part of her life. Man is not something else but something he is. (Sartre, 2007, P. 22). This is significant because Stella constructs her identity through what she chooses to do in her relationship with Stanley. She chooses to live with moral conflict and personal anguish, rather than violence, when it comes to choosing between the two. The existential responsibility, as Sartre describes it, is reflected in Stella's passionate defence of Stanley. Sartre's idea of existential responsibility is represented by Stella's passionate defence of Stanley. He didn't know what he was doing," she says, and later she tells me that Stanley was "ashamed of himself." By portraying Stanley's aggression as transient and uncontrollable, Stella tries to lessen his culpability. Existentialism, though, stresses that people are always accountable for their deeds and choices. Sartre (2007) states that "our actions can never be justified by reference to a set and unchangeable human nature" (p. 29). This quote suggests that Stanley cannot escape the consequences of his violent behaviour and that Stella has also taken on responsibility for her own decision to put up with emotional and physical instability in her marriage. It reveals Stella's emotional confusion and existential loneliness. Blanche screams when she sees how violent Stanley is, "Didn't scream, didn't run? And you, you let him? Blanche's reaction to Stella's acceptance of violence is an example of an unnatural response. But, Stella confesses, "I was kind of excited by it. These remarks point to Stella's emotional dependence on Stanley's passionate and violent manliness and to her psychological dilemma. In existentialist theory, individuals tend to make meaning of experiences that are intense, emotionally charged, painful or unstable. Stella's mix of fear, wish, and

need reflects her disoriented feelings. Sartre's concepts of fear of death and freedom are illustrated by Stella's choices. Existentialism teaches that man is free because he must make choices in a situation where there is very little information. Although she knows of the harm that Stanley causes, Stella chooses to remain with him. It is important to note here that Sartre (2007) explains that "selection is conceivable in one sense, but what is impossible is not to choose" (p. 44). But Stella can't escape making choices about her identity, emotional health and relationship. She thus becomes consumed by her continued love for Stanley to the point that her mental state is affected by her feelings throughout the play. The existential idea is that humans look for meaning in their personal relationships in spite of the emotional hardship. But Stella's love for Stanley provides her with emotional excitement, sexual desire, and a sense of security at home even in the face of fear and instability. The existential dichotomy of desire versus ethics, joy versus suffering, freedom versus emotional attachment, is reflected in her connection.

Blanche: In my opinion? You're married to a madman! Stella: No! Blanche: Yes, you are, your fix is worse than mine is! Only you're not being sensible about it. I'm going to do something. Get hold of myself and make myself a new life! Stella: Yes? Blanche: But you've given in. And that isn't right, you're not old! You can get out. Stella: I'm not in anything I want to get out of. Blanche: What – Stella? Stella: I said I am not in anything that I have a desire to get out of. (p. 72)

Stella firmly asserts that she doesn't want to get divorce, but Blanche tries to convince her to leave Stanley. The topics covered in this debate are vital to understanding the human experience, and include: freedom of choice, responsibility, emotional attachment, alienation, and the search for meaning in relationships. Stella's persona could be considered as one who chooses to shape herself and her identity through her own decisions, even amidst emotional turmoil

and uncertainty, as outlined in the existential philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre's work, *Existentialism is a Humanism (2007)*. You're married to a madman!," says Blanche. “and says that Stella's situation is “worse than mine. " Blanche is of the opinion that Stella has submitted to a violent and damaging relationship. But Stella adamantly replies, "I'm not involved in anything from which I wish to escape." From an existential standpoint, this remark is extremely important since it shows Stella's conscious awareness of her life and circumstances. For Sartre (2007, p. 22), man is not something else but what he makes of himself. Through their deeds and decisions, people define themselves, which is in line with the existentialist view expressed in this quote. Stella is very involved in constructing her own identity and reality through her choice to remain with Stanley, even though she knows there is instability and violence in their marriage. In Stella's response, Sartre's idea about freedom and personal responsibility is reflected. She is torn between the personal and the rational, between the moral and the sensual. Sartre's existential philosophy states that when individuals are confronted with a challenging choice, they are often tormented, as there is no outside authority to guide them. Stella's statement is existential because she embraces her existence without denying it. Stella does not believe that her life is a cage but Blanche does. For Sartre (2007), the concept of choice is possible in one way, but impossible in another: choice is 'conceivable in one sense, but what is not possible is not to choose' (p. 44). Stella is not given a choice of how to live but has to make her own decisions, and the way she relates to Stanley is not a choice, it is an act of her own will. What is emphasized here is the complexity of Stella's psychology as she strives to make the emotional meaningful in a confused and painful environment. Additionally, it exemplifies Stella's alienation from conventional morality and Blanche. Blanche represents dignity and emotional sensitivity of the upper class Southerners, whereas Stella embodies the world of Stanley's modern, aggressive

environment. Her emotional lack of connection with Blanche exposes her existential isolation since she can no longer be fully identified with her previous social identity. She resides in a land of tension and uncertainty, seeking for emotional balance and a sense of purpose in her life.

Blanche: What do you want? Mitch: [fumbling to embrace her] What I been missing all summer. Blanhce: Then marry me, Mitch! Mitch: I don't think I want to marry you any more. Blanche: No? Mitch: You're not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother. (p 139)

"You're not clean enough to bring in the house with my mother," says Mitch after learning about Blanche's past. This is a scenario that examines the concept of alienation, judgment, emotional agony, identity crisis, and the breaking of interpersonal relationships from an existential view. Blanche may be seen as an existentially alone person battling for acceptance, respect, and purpose in a critical and hostile culture, according to Jean-Paul Sartre's existential theory. If you're looking for a match, Mitch, then marry me! In "is" Blanche's passionate declaration of her emotional need for security, for sense of belonging, for sense of self-worth. The play is full of Blanche's attempts to find emotional security through interpersonal relationships, for she fears being alone and abandoned. Existentialism is the belief that human beings struggle to make sense of the indeterminate and painful circumstances. Blanche's marriage proposal reveals her wish to escape from an existential loneliness and to build her identity with Mitch's expression. Mitch's rejection leaves Blanche feeling even more alone, as she had hoped to find emotional redemption with him. When he says that she is "not clean enough," he is making a moral condemnation and social judgment. The consequences of existentialist theory - which places a high priority on the ways people are often caught in other people's eyes and judgment - create emotional anguish and an identity crisis. The choice of man is the choice of oneself, Sartre

(2007) writes (p. 25). This phrase implies that human judgments and deeds have an impact on more than just the individual, but also on larger human ties and ethical awareness. Mitch's rejection strips away Blanche's emotional humanity, confining her to her past mistakes. It is Sartre's concept of existential loneliness and abandonment. Rid of the ability to experience emotions, Blanche craves connection and acceptance, but society won't forgive or understand her pain. If God doesn't exist, then anything goes," says Sartre (2007, p. 28–29). This is a reference to the moral ambiguity and emotional turmoil of the play. In a world where people are condemned according to the whims of social morality, and where there is no emotional security, no absolute moral security. So, when Mitch rejects her, she shows us the insecurity and brutality of human relations in existential life. It shows the emotional disintegration and identity crisis of Blanche. Though Blanche is trying to build a new life and a new personality through Mitch, her past will always keep her from her current opportunities. In Sartre's (2007) view, there is no love other than the deeds of love (p. 37). This is a testament to the idea that expression is through action, not idealized words or emotions. The fragility and poor relationship between Mitch and Blanche is illustrated by Mitch's lack of support when Blanche is emotionally upset. In the end, though, Blanche desires empathy and understanding, while Mitch values judgment. It depicts existential crises due to personal insecurity and social isolation. When Blanche discovers that she cannot break free from her past and cannot be accepted by the community emotionally, she is psychologically shell-shocked. Her dismay is a feeling of emptiness and loneliness, a sense of disillusionment with the world and the human condition. Existentialism suggests that despite emotional upheavals and disenchantment, people are always striving to create a meaning and a sense of self. The rejection by Mitch also demonstrates the brutal reality of the existential condition of humans who are often defined by what others say about them, rather

than who they are. Blanche's emotional anguish grows as her wish for respect and emotional stability totally collapses at this time. She is isolated socially and psychologically and this leads to her further deterioration in mental health at the end of the play.

5. Conclusion

In this research, the existential philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre in his book *Existentialism is a Humanism (2007) (2007)*was used to analyze the existential character of Stella Kowalski from the novel *A Streetcar Named Desire (1947)*. The main goal of this work was to analyze the existential issues of alienation, freedom, responsibility, emotional struggle, anxiety, suffering, and search for meaning that are presented in Stella's character. Selected sections were carefully analyzed in the play to understand Stella's psychological and emotional state using a qualitative method. The results of the research clearly indicate that Stella Kowalski is a very complex existential personality who has been shaped by the continuous emotional and moral struggle. Although she is often considered uncharismatic and less prominent than her husband, Stanley Kowalski, and her lover, Blanche DuBois, Stella makes choices that shape her life. Sartre's quote, “man is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (Sartre, 2007, p. 22), is evident in Stella's decision to leave behind her rich upbringing and remain with Stanley, who is violent but emotionally rewarding. The research also demonstrates that Stella is disoriented at many aspects. She is missing her past, her Southern aristocratic upbringing, her Belle Reve. Blanche is the sister of the "traditional" woman, whose name represents traditional values, truth, and conscience, and who is also emotionally distant from her. Though Stanley's behavior is often violent and destructive, Stella is emotionally dependent on him. Stella is in a condition of existential in-between as a result of this contradictory position, where she is unable to completely fit into any one universe. Because of this, she experiences emotional disorientation,

psychological strain and internal instability. Further, the study shows that Stella's decision making is consistent with Sartre's concept of existential responsibility. For Sartre (2007, p. 23), the human being is totally responsible for his actions and will not be able to escape the consequences of his decisions. Although she sees Stanley's instability and violence, Stella chooses to remain with Stanley because she takes responsibility for her life. However, this duty also brings a lot of emotional and moral stress to her as she is always torn between love, fear, loyalty and guilt. Her nature is a testament to Sartre's view that human freedom is always accompanied by despair and emotional pain.

The study also shows that Stella's pursuit of a 'purpose' is not one of moral conviction or intellectual logic but emotional attachment and physical need and stability in her home. Stella faces reality as it is, while Blanche escapes from it. Her dependency on Stanley conveys the idea that she is looking for fulfillment in the relationship, which is passionately, but aggressively, demanding and is lacking. This makes her extremely sensitive and insecure about her existence. Plus, it shows that Stella's estrangement is not just social, but psychological as well. When she faces difficult situations, she emotionally disconnects, particularly when she has to choose between Stanley and Blanche. Her refusal to listen to Blanche's advice and return to Stanley is an example of the difficult task of existential decision. Even in difficult moments, Stella must make judgments here, which clearly reflects Sartre's concept, "what is not conceivable is not to choose" (Sartre, 2007, p. 44). The decisions she makes have emotional impacts on her existential state.

It concludes that Stella Kowalski is a character of importance in human life, who is a symbol of the challenges of life in a modern, uncertain world. Her character is an example of how individuals create their identities with their choices and yet experience emotional suffering, alienation, and anxiety. Stella is not a

passive character, but is an active participant in the process of affecting her existential reality. Use of Sartrean existentialism gives a better idea of the depth of her psychology.

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