

Worksheet 11 – Scene Ten

Review: Lecture 10

In the last lecture of the unit, Prof McRae explored Scene Nine, in which Mitch confronts Blanche about her past.

- ✓ Name three key oppositions that are explored in the play (e.g. truth and lies).

Recall: Lecture 11

Answer these questions after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember. You can also take the “Module Quiz” online.

1. To where does Blanche tell Stanley she has received an invitation?
 - a) A friend’s house back home in Laurel.
 - b) A Caribbean cruise.
 - c) Mitch’s mother’s house for dinner.
2. What does Stanley change into during this scene?
 - a) A silk bowling shirt.
 - b) A dressing gown.
 - c) Silk pyjamas.
3. How is Stella’s body described when Stanley picks her up?
 - a) Stiff
 - b) Trembling
 - c) Inert

Analysis

4. Reread the stage directions from Scene Ten below, which McRae discusses in his lecture:

*The night is filled with inhuman voices like cries in a jungle.
The shadows and lurid reflections move sinuously as flames along the wall spaces.
Through the back wall of the rooms, which have become transparent, can be seen the sidewalk. A prostitute has rolled a drunkard. He pursues her along the walk, overtakes her and there is a struggle. A policeman's whistle breaks it up. The figures disappear.
Some moments later the Negro Woman appears around the corner with a sequined bag which the prostitute had dropped on the walk. She is rooting excitedly through it.*

- a) McRae states that some productions of the play choose to omit this moment. If you were staging the play would you choose to include it? Why/ why not?
- b) During the course of his lecture, McRae poses the question of whether ‘masculinity conquer[s] femininity in the play’. What do you think these stage directions suggest?

Evaluation

5. Look at the images from different productions of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. What impact do the different set design choices have on your reading of the play?



The Berliner Ensemble used a set designed by Olaf Altmann in their 2019 production of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. The set featured a rectangular box mounted at an angle high on a traditional proscenium arch stage. The actors performed while moving up and down a steep slope.

Image credit: Matthias Horn,
<https://www.berliner-ensemble.de/en/production/streetcar-named-desire>

The 2014 staging of *A Streetcar Named Desire* by barebones productions featured a set designed by Tony Ferrieri. This set is more realistic in its design and follows many of the indications given in Williams's stage directions.

Image credit: Andrew David Ostrowski,
<http://www.tfpld.com/141121-a-streetcar-named-desire.html>

The 2010 Théâtre de l'Odéon production had a set designed by Malgorzata Szczesniak. The set featured large glass screens, through which characters could be seen and could also watch each other. Here, Blanche lies in the background as Stanley and Stella are in bed.

Image credit: Pascal Victor, ArtComArt,
<https://www.theatre-odeon.eu/fr/2011-2012/spectacles/un-tramway>

6. Do you think it is important for Williams's stage directions to be followed closely? Or do you think that productions should interpret the setting in different ways?

Glossary

- **Lurid** – (adj.) very vivid in color, especially so as to create an unpleasantly harsh effect.
- **Roll** – (v.) to rob someone, especially when they are sleeping, drunk, or otherwise helpless.
- **Sinuous** – (adj.) having many curves and turns.

MASSOLIT – Williams: A Streetcar Named Desire