

Worksheet 3 – Scene Two

Review: Lecture 2

In the previous lecture of the unit, Prof McRae discussed the opening scene of the play, including the symbolism of certain names in the play.

- ✓ What is the symbolism of the name of the street that Stanley and Stella live on?

Recall: Lecture 3

Complete this task after watching the video lecture to check how much you remember. You can also take the “Module Quiz” online.

1. Divide a piece of A4 paper into six squares. In each square write one of the following headings:
a) Stella c) Stanley e) American Civil War
b) Blanche d) New Orleans f) Tennessee Williams
Time yourself, giving yourself two minutes per box. Write down everything you can remember about that character or topic.
2. After you have finished, look back at what you have written. Decide:
a) Were there any topics you had less information for?
b) What might you need to rewatch, reread or revise?

Analysis

3. In his lecture, McRae discusses the contrast between the past and the future in the play, for instance ‘Blanche’s past in all the documents and papers and the future represented by Stella’s baby’.

Using the template below, create a table where you track the contrasting presentation of the past and the future in the play. Some examples have been given for you.

| Past | Future |
|---|--|
| <i>Belle Reve – the name of the plantation implies the antebellum past as a kind of nostalgic dream</i> | <i>Bowling – increasingly popular sport, representing new working class American culture</i> |
| | <i>Kowalski – newly “heterogeneous” America represented by Polish immigration</i> |
| | |
| | |

4. McRae states in his lecture that ‘Blanche DuBois is the product of her history’. Reread the following extract from Scene 2 and find three quotations to support this view.

BLANCHE: [*picking up a large envelope containing more papers*] There are thousands

of papers, stretching back over hundreds of years, affecting Belle Reve as, piece by piece, our improvident grandfathers and father and uncles and brothers exchanged the land for their epic fornications--to put it plainly! [*She removes her glasses with an exhausted laugh*] The four-letter word deprived us of our plantation, till finally all that was left--and Stella can verify that!--was the house itself and about twenty acres of ground, including a graveyard, to which now all but Stella and I have retreated. [*She pours the contents of the envelope on the table*] Here all of them are, all papers! I hereby endow you with them! Take them, peruse them--commit them to memory, even! I think it's wonderfully fitting that Belle Reve should finally be this bunch of old papers in your big, capable hands!...

Evaluation

5. Prof McRae poses the question of whether Blanche is already 'a lost cause' at the start of the play, or whether the audience is 'still willing it to work out for her'.

Based on your reading of the play so far, which attitude do you have towards Blanche's character?

Explain your position, with reference to play, in an evaluative paragraph.

Glossary

- **Antebellum** – (adj.) occurring or existing before a particular war, especially the American Civil War.
- **Heterogeneous** – (adj.) containing diversity or variation.
- **Louisiana Purchase** – (n.) the acquisition of the territory of Louisiana by the United States from Napoleonic France in 1803.
- **Napoleonic Code** – (n.) The Napoleonic Code, officially the Civil Code of the French is the French civil code established in 1804. It made the authority of men over their families stronger and deprived women of individual rights. As France owned Louisiana prior to the Louisiana Purchase, Stanley is referencing an old set of state laws that apply to his rights over his wife's property.