

How does Williams show the conflict between men and women in this extract and in other parts of the play?

In the extract from scene eleven Williams presents conflict between men and women in many ways and throughout the play he reflects on their differences and the conflict between each other.

Women are forgotten about throughout the play, Williams uses a temporal deictic phrase “several weeks later” to show how women are forgotten, the quantifying determiner ‘several’ shows that there is a few, yet it isn’t many, this shows that it doesn’t take long for the conflict between men and women to be forgotten about. The scene prior to this Blanche is raped by Stanley and life is shown to carry on for the men yet Blanche is distressed by the event. Also in scene three Stanley hits Stella and the next day it is forgotten as Stella couldn’t control her desire. Blanches reaction to Stella being slapped seemed to be the larger problem. Stanley was shown to only be temporarily sorry for his actions as he later goes on to commit a violent act towards Blanche. In 1940’s America the women were often reliant on the men as they controlled the families money and assets this could show that the men have dominance over the women which may be why the men control the women’s social situations: the ability to hold a grudge. I also believe that Williams was affected by the treatment of women in Southerner society. He designed the play to show how the social structure of the South offered little protection for women. He exposed the unfairness that often went unconsidered.

Also the stage directions and the locations are used to demonstrate the conflict. The men are shown to be playing poker in one room and the women in the other room, this may be to avoid conflict between men and women, however it may be due to the men's beliefs, in scene three we see Mitch say that “poker shouldn't be played in a house with women”. Williams uses stereotypes to enforce the ideals of a woman and the separation between men and women “Stella goes into the bedroom and starts folding a dress”. The concrete noun dress shows the audience the female ideal of the 1940’s. We also see the divide in rooms during the other poker game in scene three, This scene balances with the poker game in Scene 3. But where Stanley was losing in the earlier game, he is now the winner, suggesting that he is once again the undisputed master in his own house. The physical attention to inside versus outside also symbolically demonstrates the complicated relationship between what goes on in the mind versus what occurs in real life. As the play progresses, the split between Blanche’s fantasy world and reality becomes sharper and clearer to every character in the play except Blanche, for whom the interior and exterior worlds become increasingly blurred this shows the conflict which Blanche has towards herself due to her mental health issues.

In scene eleven Williams uses Stanley to portray the stereotypical beliefs of a man towards a woman. Stanley says “You left nothing here but spilt talcum and old empty perfume bottles—unless it’s the paper lantern you want to take with you. You want the lantern?” This shows that Blanche had left a series of problems and the use of the concrete noun “Perfume bottles” reflect on the stereotype, there is a premodifying adjective “old” which is one of Blanches fears, she is frightened of aging as she believes that she would lose her sex appeal. This shows how reliant she is upon masculine figures. This is followed by He crosses to dressing table and seizes the paper lantern, tearing it off the light bulb, and extends it towards her. She cries out as if the lantern was her.” at the end of the scene which could symbolise the violation of Blanche and exposure of the truth Stanley has done throughout the play. Williams may have included this to symbolise male aggression in the society as the world of work was heavily male dominated and also reflects upon the idea that women are ‘damsels in distress’ and that they need a ‘knight in shining armour’ to save them. Williams may have used this to also show that times should change as women are suffering through the domination of men.