

Using the extract as a starting point, and with reference to other parts of the play, discuss how Williams develops the issues around the theme of pain and suffering. In your answer you must consider Williams's use of linguistic and literary features and relevant contextual factors.

Williams depicts suffering to the audience through the use of music 'the polka rises up, faint in the distance.' which happens when Blanche thinks of the pain of losing her husband, something she still suffers from. This is proven in 'The boy - the boy died.' followed by 'I'm afraid I'm - going to be sick!' because of the hyphens, which convey to the actor that there is a silence between the words. From Williams' use of the hyphen, we can infer that in these silences Blanche feels the pain of her past. Her last line confirms this, because it proves that the pain has a physical effect on her.

Blanche's entire monologue depicts to what extent she is still suffering from the pain of her past. Williams includes a significant amount of pronouns referring to herself, 'I saw!', 'stare at me' and 'slipped through my fingers'. She doesn't think about her surroundings, only about finding light in the darkness she is constantly in.

This can be referred back to the stage directions 'moth', that compare Blanche to a moth. A moth does not think about who or what it surrounds itself with, it simply cares about reaching that light - even if it is not what it seems, and just ends up killing the moth. Blanche is so obsessed with finding her light, that instead of finding a way out of her suffering, she finds herself trapped in the house of Stella and Stanley.

Moreover, one could also argue that Blanche is trying to hide from the light. The line 'And turn off that over-light.' conveys Blanche's dislike of the light, arguably because she is insecure about getting older and the light will make this obvious. Her insecurity can be seen in her lie to Mitch, 'She's somewhat older than I.' where she claims to be younger than Stella.

Blanche's suffering is further depicted in the triad of pronouns 'I, I, *I*' which exemplify the fact that the suffering is constantly on her mind. This is because this triad is meant to be spoken in an exaggerated, slow fashion which conveys the slow suffering she had to go through - and is still going through - in mourning her family members, 'The long parade to the graveyard! Father, mother! Margaret, that dreadful way!' Williams is being deliberately cryptic, which conveys to the audience that Blanche is angry at Stella, since she is withholding information from her sister.

The last 'I' of the triad is written in italics, which implies to the actor that it should be said in a more dramatic fashion. Therefore it may come across to the audience as a cry for help to release Blanche from her suffering, causing the audience to feel sorry for her, or it could come across as self-absorbedness, causing the audience to do the opposite - not feel for her at all.

Other than being the one that suffers, Williams also depicts the character of Blanche as being a cause of pain. The adjacency pair 'Oh, Stella, Stella, you're crying!' 'Does that surprise you?' puts focus on the fact that Blanche is too absorbed with her own feelings to consider Stella's feelings.

This can further be seen in 'Where were *you*? In bed with your - Polak!' The pronoun *you*, written in italic, insinuates an accusatory tone in Blanche's voice. Therefore she may be trying to put the blame on Stella, despite the fact that Stella did not cause Blanche's suffering. A defense mechanism, which helps one to cope with traumatic experiences, is projection (releasing your feelings onto something unrelated to the problem). Blanche deals with the loss by projecting her own guilt onto her sister. This means that in the monologue, she is not trying to justify her actions to Stella, but rather to herself. That is another example of Blanche hopelessly trying to cope with her pain, not considering who gets hurt in that process.

This can also be found in when she flirts with Stanley. She ends up telling Stella, 'I was

firting with your husband, Stella!' but doesn't think of the impact it has on her sister.