

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the Study

Defining literary work precisely is difficult since authors have given various interpretations. Literature, according to Robin Mayhead in his book entitled Understanding Literature can mean anything written, so biographies and autobiographies, work of history, travel and adventure, philosophical treatises, essays on social, political or event literary topics, many books by famous scientists - all these can and often do deserve to be called literature by reason of certain status and permanence given to them usually by a combination of intrinsic importance or interest of their subject-matter and the mastery with which it is handled by the author (1965:10). Meanwhile, poems, plays, short stories and novels can also be called 'literature', in this case as 'imaginative literature'. However, they do not just talk about an imagination purposed by the author but they are also able to reveal the important kinds of value for human being. As Robin Mayhead stated on his book entitled Understanding Literature (1965) :

Literature has been found over the centuries to have certain important kinds of value for human being (p.3).

To obtain those values, the readers should be able to recognize a literary work. Careful reading and comprehension are basically needed to find the worth of something on that literary work than merely passing on interest. Since that literary work is able to stimulate us to behave well in our real life and also makes a man become more human. In short, by understanding literary work, our awareness of life will be heightened. As Robert V. Edgar stated on his book entitled Writing Theme About Literature (1969) :

Literature, like all art, is one of the essential things that make human being human. In one way or another, everyone is touched by it, (p.3).

From that statement, we are expected that after reading any kinds of literature, our concerning about human problems is getting deeper and deeper; and our attitude towards others can be more.

Drama is one of the imaginative literature that is presented a lot on the stage through actions and dialogues. As an imaginative literature, drama is not only for the sake of intertainment, but it can also reveal the important values for human life, since

drama, like any other works of art, is able to portray human problems and life. As Christopher Rusel wrote in How To Analyze Drama (1966):

A drama is a work of literature or composition which delinates life and human activity by means of presenting various actions of-and-dialogues between a group of characters, (p.5)

Therefore, by reading drama, we can also enjoy the power of the language and feel the hopes and fears of the characters. We can sympathize with the heroine and loathe the villain, we can also learn about ourselves and about humanity by watching the ways characters deal with the great and small pleasure and pains of living. This is the reasons why I have chosen drama as subject of my analysis.

As the author of drama in the 1930's Tennessee Williams has become one of the best known literary figures on the American scene. His plays were mostly concerned with human problems on his era, because at that time, physical and material drives had changed the view of life, especially, the loss of an old traditions in the South. The South according to Signi Lenefalk in his book Tennessee Williams is a kind of region loyalty to tradition; a nostalgia for a pattern of aristocratic, non-urban life that was rich in promise, an

awareness of distinctive character, mores, and belief peculiar to the Southern areas—all have provided inexhaustible resources (1961:21). From that quotation, the South is a region that reflected the peace, unexhaustible and simple life. But the influences of materialism and industrialization coming from the North, the South, finally, had lost its best tradition. All religious and moral codes have become mechanical rituals as stated by Signi Lenefalk in his book Tennessee Williams. The South, with its old-fashioned agrarianism, might counter the materialism and cultural "barbarism" of the North which was threatening to destroy what was best in the Southern tradition (1961:22). The loss of south tradition had caused Tennessee Williams sympathy. Through his plays, he shows his sympathy for the decaying tradition and aristocrat in the South whom he place in incredible situation. Most of his subject matter is to deplore about sex and violence and his other works defend his bravery to investigate thoroughly the dark areas of human desire and compulsion in which have not been treated by other cotemporary dramatists. This is the first reason why I choose Tennessee Williams as my analysis. The second reason is that most of Tennessee Williams char-

acters sustain an imaginative world to survive in the practical world, These characters hold the world characterised by impotence, sterility, fragile spirit, illusion.

A Streetcar Named Desire is one of Tennessee Williams' works that present us with the idea of romanticism in an unromantic world. Blanche Dubois, the protagonist of this play, is a symbol of romantic world by the way of her action that tends to romantic life. Naturally, she is destroyed by the unromantic world. Blanche, in this case, is not the real character, she is presented by the author as a symbol of the south people who their culture lost as result of the influence of the North's culture. The south people's way of life is not based on their best culture anymore but they like to live in materialistic life and the one who is able to adapt on this would will survive.. They maintain the happiness based on materialistic one and not based on religion, culture or norm that they are possessed by the society before. Because of this, Blanche's thought was disturbed, she felt humiliated, and an, obsession occurred on her mind to convince the society that her world is still able to give the

happiness that's why she tried so hard to get rid of any ideas of unromantic world on the society. In this case, she used myth, illusion, pretense and lying to influence the society so that her world could be accepted again in the society and of course, what Blanche's obsessive reaction is caused disharmony on the society. In short, I am interested in this problem since Blanche Dubois has an obsession. And many people nowadays, tend to encounter with this obsession. Therefore, by knowing more about the causes of obsession, we can do much better in life not only by minimizing it but also to know more about the hard edge of reality that could be balanced by imaginative freedom.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

As I have stated in the background of the study this play reflects the obsession of Blanche Dubois. Blanche felt humiliated and disturbance on her mind since the society lives on unromantic world to reach some happiness. That's why Blanche tries so hard to get rid of any unromantic world around her and she emphasizes to the society that her world is also able to give some happiness as she possessed before. Based

on the explanation above, the statement of the problem will as follow:

- (1) How far does an obsession exist on Blanche Dubois?
- (2) What impacts does Blanche Dubois achieve to her own personality and the people around due to her obsession?

I.3 Objective of the Study

3.1. To find out how far the obsession exist on Blanche Dubois's personality.

3.2. To find out the impacts of Blanche Dubois's obsession. In this sense, there are two impacts. First, the one that will ruin her own personality in which it may bring into self destruction. The second, one which will also ruin the relationship with other people.

I.4 Significance of the Study

I hope this thesis can be a valuable contribution to the study of literary work, especially on the intrinsic aspect of literature. By analysing the protagonist's obsession of this play (Blanche Dubois), we are able to understand more about human sufferings and human problems portrayed by her actions on this

play. By doing so, we can study from her and possible to apply it in our real life. The problems presented by the author is a universal phenomena, it does not only happen on the author's time but it also happens at present. Through this analysis, we are expected to understand about the obsession of Blanche Dubois, so that we able to take a valuable learning in our life.

I.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope and limitation of this thesis lie on the study of Blanche's obsession. In this case, I will observe how far Blanche's obsession exist on this play through studying on the intrinsic aspect, especially on plot, characterization and setting. Moreover, since I also observe the impacts of Blanche's obsession, the psychological approach is used to support my analysis.

I.6 Theoretical Background

The relevant theory of this thesis is the objective theory. The reason is that the objective theory views the nature of literary work related with intrinsic aspect of literature. As stated by M.H. Abraham in his book entitle The Mirror and the Lamp 1976:

The work of art in isolation 'from all these external points of reference, analyses it as self sufficient entity constituted by its parts in their internal relations, and sets out to judge it solely by creteria intrinsic to its own mode of being (26).

However, I do not take all these intrinsic aspect of my analysis, I only concentrate on plot, characterization and setting to find out the obsession on this play because these three terms are considered representative for portraying the problems.

In order to make my analysis more accurately, I use psychological approach in focusing this problem, in this case, the basic theory is stated by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in his book entitled Theory of Literature 1956 :

By psychology of literature, we may mean the psychological study of the writer, as type and as individual, of the study of creative process, or the study of the psychological types and laws present within works of literature, or, finally, the effects of literature upon its readers (81).

The concept of psychology used is the concept of obsession stated by John altroucch. He mentioned that obsession can be viewed as devices to occupy the mind and displace painfull thought. An obsession reaction, however, the anxiety of inner conflict is translated into one or more obsession that plague the person,

whatever he or she is doing and no matter how hard he or she tries to get rid of it. (John Altrocch, abnormal behaviour, 1927, p. 68).

I.7 Methode of the Study

In analysing this thesis, I use a library research to obtain informations dealing with my subject of discusion. In this research, I collect some data from books, theories, dictionaries, articles, encyclopaedia and some printed materials related with Tennessee William's plays especially on A Streetcar Named Desire. Moreover, I also look for information from other books related with my approach.

Descriptive analyse is also presented in dealing with this play, I collect some words from the scripts on my data, sometimes I analyes those data and quote them in pure form and also I describe them by paraprasing and using connotative meaning. After analysing them, I arrange them in chronological order.

Besides that I use an interpretative analysis. In this case, I want to interprete what Tennessee Williams tried to illustratc his idea of the play's meaning. In this matter, I collect and arrange some events, incidents and dialogue from that play in which back up my interpretation.

I.8 Definition of Key Terms

Obsession : A recurring thought or image that seems irrational and beyond controll. (Essential of psychology, Spencer a rathus p. 317)

An obsessive reaction: Troubling to the person when the obsession contains exactly the thoughts or words that are most feared and repuqnant. (Abnormal behaviour, John Altrocch, p.69).

Illusion : A perception that does not correspond to objective facts. (Encyclopedid of psychology, fuble jean).

I.9 Organization of the Paper

Basically this thesis is devided into four chapters. The first chapter is introduction which consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, significance of the study, scope and limitation, theoretical background, method of the study, definition of key terms and organization of the paper. The second chapter is theoretical framework. This chapter consists of three parts. The first one is

related theory. The theory used on this thesis is objective theory especially the study on the three basic elements of play, that is, plot, characterization and setting. The second one is related studies about this work. And the third one is psychological approach. In this part, I use John Alrocch's theory about obsession. The third chapter is analysis. It consists of four parts. The first part talks about the plot of this play, the second part talks about the characterization of Blanche Dubois, the third part talks about the setting and the last one, I also present the impacts of Blanche's obsession toward the people around as well as her own personality. And the last chapter is the conclusion of this thesis.