

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

II.1 Related Theories

In order to understand a literary work well, one has to possess a basic theory about it. Generally it consists of four different theories. The differences lie on the appropriate position in judging literary work. They are pragmatic theory, expressive theory, imitative theory and objective theory.

The appropriate theory applied in analysing this play is the objective theory since this thesis in dealing a lot with an intrinsic aspect of literary work itself, especially on the element of the play. This theory views the nature of literary work in relation with its form and content of literature. According to M.H. Abraham in his book entitled The Mirror and the Lamp (1976) :

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

From that quotation above, I can conclude that if one wants to understand the meaning of literary work, one

is able to trace it through the intrinsic aspect without any other supporting theories. So far we have known that intrinsic aspect consists of content and form. These elements according to Rene Wellek and Austin Warren are called the structure of literature.

Structure is a concept including both content and form so far as they are organized for aesthetic purposes. The form of art is, then, considered as a whole system of signs, or structure of signs, serving a specific aesthetic purposes (p. 140).

However, this research is limited on the form of literary work since this thesis is basically character analysis, that is discussing about (obsession of Blanche Dubois). Meanwhile, the presentation of plot and setting on this thesis are to support my analysis for these three point as they are major elements which are representative enough to reveal the aim of this research. Thus, I consider it is essential to describe these elements of the play.

II.1.1 Element of Play

A play, like any other kind of fictions, has its elements such as plot, characterization, setting, point of view, style, subject matter and theme. These elements are included in intrinsic aspect of play. I will

only, limited on plot, characterization and setting to find out the inferiority feeling of Blanche. The reason is that, these three points are very important elements of literary work. For example, by understanding the plot, we will know the message, meaning, of the story since every stage of plot has already contained the whole elements that could build the fiction work. And the presentation of characterization is also very important since every conflict, events, emotion, idea and motivation are created by the characters. The setting is also essential since it is able to create a totality and unity of the whole content of fiction work. By, knowing the setting, we will know the personal habits, their social status and their interest.

II.1.1.1 Plot

Plot is the sequence of incidents or events of which a story is composed (Laurence p, 1973). As we know, a play is composed of a series of incidents or episode which follow after one another according to the playwright's imagination. Actually any plot of a dramatic work is related to the conflict aspect, which can either be psychological, social or even both. It can involve a character's struggle against another

person, against the environment or against himself or herself (Edgar V 1986). Moreover, the most important aspect in plot is its relationship to character's. Everything in plot, that is, every incidents are introduced because of the particular feeling of particular character at a particular time. There is nothing in the play which is not a product of character motivation. What plot does, then, is translated the essence of the character ideas into appropriate action (Christoper Russell R, 1966). In short, understanding a plot we will enable us to know about the content of the story clearly since every plot has already contained some elements that are able to form a story, moreover through plot we will know the characters and setting are like.

According to Edgar V Roberts on his book entitle Literature: An Introduction to Reading and Writing (1986), each plot generally has five plot structure. They are exposition, complication, crisis or climax, catastrophe and resolution. In the exposition, in this stage, we are introduced with the essential background information, we are introduced to the characters, the situation and the conflicts. In this play, the author provided the exposition by introducing some characters

(Stella Kowalski, Stanley Kowalski, 'Blanche Dubois, Mitch, Eunice Hubbell, Negro women, doctor, nurse), the situation of the place (the city and the building) and also the conflicts or the problem. The problem is an events as Blanche Dubois arrives to visit her sister, Stella. It is very important because her arrival has caused a great influence toward Stanley's family and the people around them due to her obsession. The exposition is followed by complication, in which the conflicts grow more heated and the plot becomes far more involved. The complication in this play begins when Stanley becomes angry over series of incidents. Blanche Dubois's arrival in Elysian Fields has disturbed Stanley's pleasures as well as privacy. During a poker game with his friends one evening, Stanley is upset by Mitch's interruption for wanting to chat with Blanche. He is furious as well by the loud music from the radio coming from Blanche's Room. Stanley enters Blanche's Room fiercely and later loses the radio out the window.

Small conflicts between Stanley and his wife, Stella and between Stanley and Blanche grow bigger, moreover, since Blanche keeps on persuading Stella to leave her husband. Blanche has called Stanley "animal",



"sub humas", or "survivor of the stone age". The conflict reaches its peak when stella has asked stanley to clear the table after his meal; a favor which has never done by stella before Blanche's arrival. In his anger, stanley has hurled the plate to the floor, yelling and convincing Stella that he is the master on his own house; therefore, he may do what he wants.

Two important things have occurred in the climax. First, Stanley has "graciously" asked Blanche to leave Elysian fields for laurel by given her a bus ticket on her birthday. By asking Blanche to leave his house, stanley wants to prove to Blanche that he is the head of the family; and moreover, the Kowalski needs more space room in the house since stella is going to have a baby. The second is when he convinces mitch that Blanche has fooled him with her great lies of her being "pure" and "innocent". Mitch, who is disillusioned by the information refuses to marry Blanche but is trying to seduce her after learning about her conduct in laurel.

The catastrophic, the part in that single moment of revelation when all the pieces fall into place, is often caused by the discovery of information on the coming to light of some event, later, we learn that

Stanley as well as Mitch realize that Blanche's obsession has troubled their existence. Mitch decides not to marry Blanche because she is not clean enough to bring in the house with his mother. The resolution is the part of play in which conflicts are resolved, lives are straightened out or ended, and loose ends are tied up. The end of the conflicts and the problems are the raping of Stanley Kowalski toward Blanche Dubois and taking her to the state mental institution.

II.1.1.2 Characterization

A character in a play is a person created by a playwright to carry the action, language, ideas and emotions of the play (Edgar V. Robert, 1986). From that quotation, we have already known that the presentation of the characters in a story is very important because the conflicts, the events, motivations, ideas, emotions and incidents are produced by the existence of the characters. The main action and the attitude of each character on a story are logically interrelated so that we know exactly the plot of story and the best plot is also naturally generated by the presentation of the characters, moreover, we will gain the credibility and the clear understanding to the whole content of the story.

Basicly there are many types of character in fiction work. They could be minor and mayor character, protogonist and antagonist character, foil and flat character, realistic and non realistic character and so on. And this thesis is limited on the focusing of the protagonist character of this play (Blanche's personality):

In short, eventhough the characters in a story is some times a fictional man, but they are able to reveal some human problems encountered by man's life nowadays. The problem presented by the characters are generally phenomena and unavoidable in man's life such as obsession, revenge, hatred, greedy, jealousy and so on. That's why through a literary work is one the good ways to find out some solvings, guidance in order it will bring us more human.

II.1.1.3 Setting

Setting in a fiction is the place where the events occur and the time or age of the action. Setting is so related to the other structure of a literary work to make totality meaning and unity of the content of fiction purposed by author. That's why setting has a relationship with characterization, plot, atmosphere

and theme of the story. Besides that, 'setting is able to establish the atmosphere which help create the mood, setting may also explain something about the fictional character in a story. And the details of setting can give the information about their personality traits, their personal habits, their social status and their interest. (Guenes, Ed. D. 1980). According to Leo Hamalian and Frederick setting is not just concerning of physical such as place, time, or event but it is also much concerning with psychological one such as atmosphere related to attitude, way of thinking or style of life in the society (Drs. Aminudin M.Pd 1987) As in A Streetcar Named Desire, the background of this play is in New Orleans (a cosmopolitan city) where there is a relatively warm and easy intermingling of races in the old part of town. Tennessee Williams presents this setting to show us the materialistic and industrial society on his age. It is a busy town and the way of thinking do not lie on religious, traditional culture or norm of society but everything can be measured by material success. The one who can not adapt in this society will be isolated, like the protagonist character of this play, Blanche Dubois. She is disillusioned since her way of thinking is always referring to

her defending the old traditional culture of the southern plantation.

II.2 Related Studies About This Work

Tennessee Williams' work, A streetcar Named Desire is a drama that is never ending to be analyzed. I believe many writers have discussed many aspects of this play; Since this work contains many valuable elements of life. Nevertheless, in this thesis, I have focused and observed another aspect of life; that is the inferiority feeling that occurs in the protagonist's in this case Blanche Dubois, life.

The related studies in the thesis came from several artists who have given comments as well as critics about the play; particularly regarding Blanche Dubois personality. Their Comments and critics, in one way or another, not only relate to my study but also give me more ideas for my thesis.

The first comment or criticism are coming from Signi Lenefalk on his book entitle Tennese William (1961) :

The most obviously trapped individuals are the delicate and unconvintional character: the southern gentlewomen like Laure Wingfied who can not adjust to contemporary society: or others like a Blanche Dubois or an Anma Winemiller, torn between a natural instincts and ideals imposed by

a puritan culture: or derelicks like Hardluck Kilroy, stranded and helpless in ruthless, business society - none of them prepared for survival in a highly competitive world are of special interest to the playwright (p.169).

Based on the quotation above Signi Lenefalk has tried to reveal the women's character who are a survival for their existence in a highly competitive world. Most of them are not able to adapt on this world. They avoid to face the real fact of the time which unfortunately is contrast with their personality. By avoiding to realise that their "real" world is merely a dream of the past, they are destroyed since they can hardly survive in a world which is highly competitive.

The second comment comes from C.W.E. Bigsby on his book entitled A Critical: Introduction to Twentieth Century American Drama (1986). According to him A Streetcar Named Desire suggests a story of a girl of good family who was reduced by rape to destitution, degradation, insult and madness. The truth of the protagonist of this play Blanche Dubois, consists as much of her desperate fictions as of the moment of betrayal they are invoked to exercise. The past has its secrets but they are not flourish as a total explanation of the present. Their strength lies in their

imaginative power at a time when the imagination is itself under assault by rationalism and materialism, (p.3).

II.3 Psychological Approach

In order to make my analysis more accurate, I use psychological approach in focusing the problems as stated by Rene Wellek and Austin Warren in their book entitle 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)

From the quotation above, this thesis limits on the study of psychological types and laws present within works of literature, especially on the study of character (protagonist character). When we study the fiction work's character, we are indirectly studying about man's behaviour and man's life. The problems presented by the author through the characters are general phenomena, although it may not exist on the author's life but it may exist up to now. The presentation of psychology in this thesis is appropriate since

the approach is very closely related to man's behaviour and human mental process. In this matter I want to see Blanche Dubois' interiority feeling. By having psychology as my support I am looking for the answers of Blanche Dubois' reasons for being inferior. I also hopes that the resolution concerning the problem can be obtained through psychological approach, since miller in Psychology: The Personal Science believes that "psychology is a profession aimed at improving the quality of life", (p.3).

In applying the approach in my study, I have used John altrocch's theory who states that obsession is a persistent, recurrent thought. In an obsessive reaction, the anxtely of inner carflict is translated into one or more obsession that plague that person, whatever he or she is doing and no matter how hard he or she tries to get rid of it. An obsessive reactions are aften accompaned by severe doubting and brooding but little constructive behaviour and it is especially troubling to the person what the obsession contains exactly the thought or words that are most feared and repugnant. An obsession can be also viewed or devices to occupy the mind and displace painfull though. (Abnormal behaviour, John Altrocch, 1927, p.68).