

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I.1 Background of the study

The word *drama* comes from the Greek word "to do" or "to act". Drama is character in action. Words, action, scenery, lighting, possibly music and dance – all join to make that world within a world that we call the theater (David 1). It makes a play to be different from other literary works. The play is not conceived by its author ~~as~~ a literary end in itself, like a novel or poem, but only as one means to the end of experience in the theater(1). Warnock Thus, to read a play, "the reader must somehow stage it in the theater of his mind" (1). It means the readers must be capable to feel and imagine in their mind the atmosphere and situation in the play.

Besides, what makes the play be different from other literary works is that any types of narrative literature make demands upon a reader's imagination but a play, which assumes at the start the assistance of so many other artists, gives the reader far fewer clues to work with (Warnock1). With fewer guides than in the novel, the readers can have the fun of re-creating these images very much as they choose (Warnock1). 2). However to recreate clear or good images of the situation

and atmosphere of the play, the readers need many practices. Thus, the more plays have already been read by the readers, the easier they could recreate their imagination.

In drama, the words are mainly dialogue; people talking are the basic dramatic action (Reinert xi). Dialogue shows relations, reveals conflict, moves the *story*, and sets the tone (David 4). This dialogue may be interrupted by wordless activity (Reinert xi). It is called stage direction, which is important to understand the dialogue. The stage direction makes the readers understand about what the actors or actresses are wearing, what their feelings are, or what has happened in their life.

A literary form, which depends wholly upon dialogue, obviously faces complex difficulties. Speeches must not only be plausible **as** speeches and convey they heightened tension of drama, and be always appropriate to time, place, and character; but they must also present character and situation, bring the past perceptibly into view, and progress toward the future (Brooks 33). Therefore, in order to understand a play, the reader should read it many times, and also the reader could read the criticism concerning with the play so that the better understanding about the play could be built up. Even though it is difficult to understand a play, the thesis writer is challenged to make it **as** the main source to do the analysis in this thesis since with fewer guides than in the novel, the thesis writer has the chance to develop her imagination **as** widely as possible. Besides, the content of the play, which is conceived in dialogue and stage direction, makes

the thesis writer be able to be involved into what is happening in the play. It makes the thesis writer does not get bored in reading the play.

Among modern American dramatists, the thesis writer chooses Tennessee Williams's play to be analyzed. Tennessee Williams has had considerable influence on American and international stages (Falk 20). Williams's plays about contemporary life differ from those of more orthodox writers, such as O'Neill, Miller, and Wilder. For Williams, dramas are not simply written about common people, they are designed for common people (Downer 86). This principle leads him to translate the emotional, social, and moral issues of the time into a common language, and his ability to translate those issues into the common language is a significant advantage for Tennessee Williams. It is like what is stated by Jackson "Tennessee Williams has a significant advantage over other American dramatists in his ability to translate the particulars of the emotional, social, and moral issues of the time into a common language of great power" (91).

As a dramatist, Tennessee Williams has shown his talent and dedication in his works. "He has a genius for portraiture, particularly of women, a sensitive ear for dialogue, and the rhythms of natural speech, a comic talent often manifested itself in "black comedy", and a genuine theatrical flair exhibiting in telling stage effects attaining through lighting, costume, music, and movement" (Stanton 2). Besides, another outstanding talent of Tennessee Williams is his ability to see his life and his world metaphorically. The most exciting Williams symbols are those fashioned from his own experience (Curley, M. Kramer, E.F. Kramer 376). For instance: in The Glass Menagerie, the glass menagerie ornaments which belong to

Laura is the symbolization of her character. This symbolization is taken from the life of Williams's own sister, Rose. Rose likes to collect the glass menagerie ornament, and her character is like those ornaments, which is so fragile (James 10).

Tennessee Williams's talent in making a play is different from Arthur Miller. Arthur Miller builds a better play, but he builds it out of bricks, while Tennessee Williams is all flesh and blood (374). It means that what he writes in his plays is usually inspired from his daily life. In addition, Tennessee Williams has shown a great dedication in his works. More than many writers, he seems to have been obsessed by a need to write for his own survival, and he has continued through the years (except for a brief period in the late sixties when he suffered a mental breakdown) to complete or revise on the average a play a year (Stanton 2)

Referring to the remarkable talent in Tennessee Williams, Walter Kerr states that "our best playwright . . . has already given us such substantial body of successful work . . . that he produces more, more and all masterpieces" (Falk 167). What Kerr is trying to say is that whatever Williams wrote, would it be his major or minor plays, they were all done with great skill and talent. Therefore, they all deserve to be called masterpiece.

Tennessee Williams's remarkable talent has made him win many prizes and awards. In 1939, he won a prize from the Group Theatre for one-act plays entitled *American Blues* (Miller 142). Then, his plays The Glass Menagerie, A Streetcar Named Desire, Cat On a Hot Tin Roof, and The Night of The Iguana which are his greatest commercial and critical successes, all receives the Drama Critics

Circle Award and two of them which are A Streetcar Named Desire and Cat On a Hot Tin Roof are given the Pulitzer Prize (Unger 382).

Moreover, Tennessee Williams is recognized as an innovator of the new American drama. His plays, like: The Glass Menagerie (1945) introduced poetic realism to the American stage, A Streetcar Named Desire (1947) explored sexual and psychological issues that had never before been portrayed in American culture, and his play Cat On a Hot Tin Roof (1955) dared to challenge the political and sexual mores of the Eisenhower era (<http://info.greenwood.com/books/0313303/031330306.html>). Thus because of his exceptional ability and his innovative idea, “his name has dominated not only on American theater but also in international theater as well for almost more than 3 decades” (Falk 167).

Besides being impressed by Williams’s exceptional ability and innovative idea, the thesis writer is also terribly impressed by his different taste in presenting the theme. “In Williams’s presentation of themes, he has revealed a broken world not often portrayed by other dramatists (155). In this broken world, he mostly concerns about “how people set up false values by not facing what is true in their nature, how the lonely misfits are trapped in the surrealistic world because of his inability to face the truth, . . .” (120). It is like what is happening in one of Williams’s play Period of Adjustment. George’s failures to do his business and to have a satisfying sexual relationship with his wife, Isabel, makes him trapped in his own dream – to build up a longhorn cattle business together with Bates, his friend. He is just concerned with his dreams instead of facing the truth in his life,

Among Tennessee Williams's play, the thesis writer is interested in taking Period of Adjustment to be analyzed because of three factors. The first factor is that Period of Adjustment is Tennessee Williams's first box office success in England. According to Harold Clurman, "Period of Adjustment is Tennessee Williams's first box office success in England. This breakthrough of a play on a sex theme, he thought, may have been due to the British recognition that they are as affected as Americans by the Puritan attitude toward sex." (109). Thus, it means that Tennessee Williams has a good instinct in creating a marvelous theme in the particular society so that Period of Adjustment can become his first box office success in England.

Secondly, the thesis writer is terribly impressed by the title of the play Period of Adjustment. Tennessee Williams's plays' titles usually contain symbolic meanings, but **the** title of the play Period of Adjustment is different. Its title does not show any symbolic meaning. This different way of Tennessee Williams in presenting the title, makes me interested in taking the play Period of Adjustment to be analyzed.

The last factor, which encourages the thesis writer to take the play to be analyzed, is that the play is a first step toward what is genuinely new in Tennessee Williams's work in 1960's (Stanton 63). The sense of desperation in Williams's work seemed to be replaced by a kind of acceptance of life and death, a resignation that is almost positive in its refusal to be sentimental or to indulge the self-pitters (Unger 393). Therefore, the thesis writer considers the play is

interesting to be discussed since in this play, Tennessee Williams creates something new and different from the former plays.

Period of Adjustment (1960) is Williams's highly deceptive work, which many critics dismissed as the Broadway marital comedy it pretended to be. On the surface it looks like, and to some extent, a conventional attack on suburbia, making its satirical points while it tells the story of two marriages, one brand-new and unconsummated, the other five years old and teetering, both going through periods of adjustment (Stanton 62). During these periods, both of them face serious problems, which threaten the continuity of their relationship. George and Isabel could not have a satisfying sexual relationship in their first night. After a few minutes of the courtship, Isabel screams and locks herself in the bathroom. Not long afterward, she goes out from the bathroom and then sleeps in the chair, while George himself sleeps in the bed. Each of them pretends to be asleep. Meanwhile Ralph and Dorothy also face the problems in their marriage. Dorothea leaves Ralph when she knows that he quits his job in her father's company.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Both couples, George-Isabel and Ralph-Dotty, face the serious problems in their marriage since it threatens the continuity of their relationship. The problems draw the attention of the thesis writer so that the thesis writer is interested to analyze what the causes of their marriage problems are and what adjustments George-Isabel and Ralph-Dorothea do which lead to the happiness in their marriage.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Through the analysis, the thesis writer is eager to find out the causes of their problems and the adjustments George-Isabel and Ralph-Dorothea do which lead to the happiness in their marriage.

1.4 Importance of the study

By this study, the thesis writer hopes the readers are more interested in reading other Tennessee Williams's plays, especially his plays written in 1960's, for he has created something new and different in those plays. The plays written in that year begin to present about the acceptance of life and death instead of the sense of desperation. The thesis writer also hopes this study can encourage more students of Faculty of Letter to read the play Period of Adjustment and then take it to be analyzed as their thesis. Even though this play is considered the minor play. Tennessee Williams has done it with great skill and talent. Thus, it could become the first box office success of his plays in England

Moreover, by this study, the thesis writer also hopes the readers can know and understand what the causes of George's-Isabel's and Ralph's-Dorothea's marriage problems and what adjustments they do which lead to the happiness in their marriage. By knowing and understanding the causes of their marriage problems and the adjustments they do in their marriage, the thesis writer hopes the readers could learn what attitudes they should apply to get married with someone we love so that a happy marriage could be created.

1.5 Scope and limitation

The thesis writer limits the analysis to the major characters, which are Isabel, George, Ralph, and Dorothea since the thesis writer is interested in analyzing the problem they experience in their married life and since their problem seem to be the main idea of this play. Moreover, the thesis writer limits the scope of the analysis in the idea of the causes of the marital problems and the marital adjustments in George's -Isabel's and in Ralph's-Dorothea's marriage

1.6 Methodology

In the analysis of the play, the thesis writer use the internet and read books from library in order to collect and find out information, such as: the biography of Tennessee Williams, criticism, and essays about his plays. As the main source to do the analysis is the play Period of Adjustment itself (published by The New American Library of World Literature, Inc. USA in November 1962).

Besides, the thesis writer uses literary and psychological approach in analyzing the play. Literary theory will be used as the main support to help the thesis writer to do the analysis. As the literary theories, the thesis writer will use the theories of character and conflict. The thesis writer will use the theories of character to reveal the type and role of the characters of Isabel, George, Ralph, and Dorothea in the play and also to reveal their feeling, thought, and action in relation to the causes of their marriage problems and to the marital adjustments they do. Whereas, the conflict theories will be used to support the analysis related with the idea of marital adjustments they do in their marriage.

Furthermore, the thesis writer will also use the psychological theories, which are the theory of marital life and the theory of emotion **as** the secondary support. The thesis writer will use these theories to support her idea about the marital adjustments **as** seen through George-Isabel and Ralph-Dorothea.

Meanwhile, the procedure of writing this thesis is **as** follow:
The writer decides the topic that she is going to write. Then, she collects the necessary references to support her thesis and then she writes a proposal. After her proposal is approved, she comes to her advisor to discuss the proposed thesis.

1.7 Organization of the study

This thesis will be divided into **4** chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, importance of the study, scope and limitation, methodology and procedure of writing the thesis, and organization of the study. The second chapter is the review of related literature, which contains the literary and psychological theories. Then, the analysis will be in chapter three. In the analysis, the writer would analyze the causes of George's-Isabel's marriage problems and the adjustments they do in their married life. Finally, the whole discussion would be concluded in the last chapter.