

# **CHAPTER I**

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#### **1.1 Background of the study**

The Teacher Training Faculty of Widya Mandala Catholic University does not belong to any of Faculty of Letters. However, the teaching of Literature at this department is assigned 8 credits, and it is started from the fourth semester. The literature courses that I have taken are divided into four levels namely: Literature I, Literature II, Literature III, and Literary Appreciation each of which is assigned two credits.

Although the literary courses occupy only 5% of the entire curriculum load (160 credits), they are still important because by studying literature the students will enlarge their knowledge about culture and ways of life of other people. In addition, the students will also learn about the feelings, emotions, dreams, and struggles of the characters written in a literary work. In brief, through literature lectures the students are given in-

sight into reality, are made more aware of the possibilities of experience and are brought to a deeper and more conscious awareness of what is valuable in the work they read (Barnet, Berman, and Burto, 1974:8). By reading literature, a student can broaden his mind and knowledge and insights about human beings in facing life reality to complete his dreams, to conduct his feelings and emotions, and also to struggle for a happy life. It is under these consideration that the writer decided to write a literary research in completing her study.

The writer has chosen drama as the subject of her research because drama present characters who feel and act on their feelings which are shown in the form of dialogues and actions. There is a clear description about characters in drama which other fictions do not have (Bain, Beaty, and Hunter, 1977:500). From the dialogues and actions from the scene to scene, the characters are vividly described.

In this study Tennessee Williams becomes the chosen playwright because Tennessee Williams has written mostly about human characters, personal emotions and the crisis of the personality. He is also a naturalist who has created most sordid settings and the most debased

characters in the modern drama (Donald Heiney and Lenthel H. Down, 1974:320).

His Cat on a Hot Tin Roof is chosen because this play portrays the tragedy of a common man. This play describes uncertainty, fear, panic, and loneliness. Those kinds of feelings describe the experience of a common man that might happen in this life. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof has an interesting protagonist, Margaret, whose attitudes toward herself and toward other characters as well have become the focus of this study.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

In line with the background of this study, the research questions that guided this study were formulated as follows:

- 1.2.1 What types of attitudes does Margaret, the protagonist in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, display to the other characters around her?
- 1.2.2 What factors make Margaret behave like that?
- 1.2.3 How does Margaret show her attitudes to

other characters?

### 1.3 Objective of the study

This study is intended to describe the attitudes of the protagonist - Margaret - in Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. To be more precise, this study is intended to describe:

- 1.3.1 The types of attitudes that Margaret display to the other characters around her.
- 1.3.2 The factors that make Margaret behave like that.
- 1.3.3 The way Margaret shows her attitudes toward herself and toward other characters.

### 1.4 Significance of the study

Literary subjects are important to study, for they seek insights of reality and truth. Consequently, literature lessons should be made interesting and rela-

tively easy to learn so that students are made more aware of the possibilities of experience and are brought to a deeper and more conscious awareness of what is valuable in the work they read with all its limitation. The findings of this study should give some contributions to the teaching of literature at the Department of English of Widya Mandala Catholic University.

Further, the findings of this study should also support the Cross Cultural Understanding subject and language courses since literature has the potency to study some views of life. Finally, this study hopefully develops our (read: Students') keenness, perceptiveness and sensitivity of life reflected in the literary work. In other words, the writer hopes that this research will make us understand other's life because everyone has his own life problems. In reading this research report, readers are suggested not to judge other people if they do not know exactly what is beyond their life.

### 1.5 Scope and limitation

Actually there are some elements in drama, but because of the limited time the writer discussed only character because character plays an important role in the story. In fact, character is considered as "one of the principal function to encourage the reader's empathy and sympathy so that he will experience the reality of the fictional world for himself" (Dietrich and Roger H. Sundell, 1974:75). Indeed, character is the centre of conflict in every literary work (Perrine, 1959:84).

This study is limited to the main character, Margaret, the protagonist in Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof.

### 1.6 Definition of key terms

Some key terms used in this thesis are defined to avoid misunderstanding:

- a. A **Play** is a special fiction which has a plot, characters, and dialogues and it uses words to create action through the dialogues of the char-

acters (Scholes, 1978:731).

The story of a play is related by means of dialogues, actions, and the design of the scenery and the grouping of the actors that make the play essential.

- b. A **Character** is a person in a literary work who generally refers to his whole nature, such as his personality, his attitudes toward life, his spiritual qualities, as well as his moral attributes (Potter, 1967:3)
- c. **Protagonist** is a character who takes the leading part or the principal part in a play and becomes the central figure in the conflict and the action of the play (Perrine, 1966:59)
- d. **Dialogue** is an important form of conversation which gives the play an emotional impact and meaning. It tells about the characters' interactions and the conflicts in the play (Scholes, 1978:754)
- e. **Literary Appreciation.** According to Gove (1969:169), Literary appreciation is a recognition of a literary work through feeling and spiritual sensitivity, and understanding and

confession of beauty values expressed by the writer.

- f. **Psychology** is the scientific study of behavior and mental processes (Munn, 1966:7)
- g. **Attitudes** is an association between some persons, things, events, ideas, or situation and evaluation of it - good or bad, better or worse and so forth (Wortman, 1986:205)
- h. **Behavior** is defined broadly to include actions that can be readily observed, such as physical activity and speaking, as well as other "mental processes" that occur even though they cannot be observed directly, such as perceiving, thinking, remembering, and feeling (Papalia and Sally Wendkos, 1986:4)

### 1.7 Theoretical framework

The writer used some theories especially those dealing with literature, behavioral psychology and some previous studies related to the topic of the study under report. To be more precise those theories will be dis-

cussed in Chapter II.

### **1.8 Organization of the thesis**

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I deals with the Background of the study, Statement of the problem, the Objective of the study, the Significance of the study, the Definition of key terms, the Theoretical framework, and the Organization of the thesis. Chapter II presents the Review of Related Literature. Chapter III deals with the Methodology. Chapter IV presents the Analysis of the attitudes of Margaret - the protagonist - and its findings. Chapter V is the Conclusion of the whole report of the study presented so far