

**The Struggle for survival in  
Tennessee Williams's  
*"Cat On A Hot Tin Roof"***

**By:**

**Lecturer: Ahmed Hashim Abbas**

**Department of English**

**College of Education For Human Sciences**

**University of Basra**



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## Abstract:

Tennessee Williams is one of the most influential American modern dramatists. His dramatic oeuvres are still disputable from many different viewpoints because of the issues they tackled. *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* (1955) is one on Williams's master pieces beside his "A Streetcar Named Desire", "The Glass Menagerie" and "The Night of the Iguana" which are considered representative and pioneering oeuvres in the American drama. The sense of inner struggle among his characters underlies most of his dramas

This wok is a domestic one in which we witness the atrocious face of the American materialism and capitalism (the most

influential doctrines spread then). The play hovers above a dilapidated family. The family is composed of the parents and two sons each with his wife. The father is suffering from cancer but his sons hide this fact from their bed-ridden father till the end when Brick overtly reveals the conceived truth. This father does not trust his elder son (the canting and lying Gooper) who has five children on the contrary he prefers his younger son Brick though not without infallibilities.

The two sons target to satisfy their father that each of them has the ability to prosper and flourish the inheriting properties. On the other hand, they try to mar the reputation and the good

characteristics of each other. The sons are guided by their wives who desire to gain the lion's share of their father in law's wealth. So, the sons and their wives aim to persuade the father that they are the best and the fittest to keep his wealth in a safe hand through their canting and lying departments and ploys except his addicted son who is indifferent to the temptations of his age. They are in a destructive warfare to gain the largest amount of the wealth.

The researcher is going to highlight the positive sides and derides ugly and bad ones in each of the characters reaching his aim which is to determine who the most faithful, the most honest person and the fittest to live as a trusted person is through the critics' viewpoints which strengthen his opinions. The researcher finally judges these characters through suitable analyses for each of them then he decides how the loyal and honest people are hard to be found so they deserve to be regarded the fittest to survive. Reaching his conclusion where the researcher uncovers that honest people are the fittest to improve and flourish the society and wealth. So, Brick is the fittest of these characters

**Keywords:** American Drama, wealth, fittest, struggle, canting

### **Introduction:**

Tennessee Williams (1911–1983) is one of the pioneering figures in the history of modern American drama. He is a very prolific playwright that he, accompanied with Eugene O'Neill and Arthur Miller, cements the strong bases of the American theatre. He gains three Pulitzer prizes for his influential contributions in tackling the important themes that deal with domestic and human traumas of the modern man and woman. The most important concern of Williams is the human mind and psychology.

This drama "*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*" adds the third Pulitzer prize in literature after his two famous dramas (*A Streetcar Named Desire*) and (*The Glass Menagerie*). Heintzelman and Howard (2005:61) notice that Williams in this piece of work play at the chord of taboo, decay, disease and demise and predicament sowed in the mendacity of life and canting which are spread among families. He always longs for cementing balanced liaisons among people of different classes within the same society. Besides, he probes deeply in many different topics like illusions, dreams, greediness, addiction, homosexuality, loneliness and aloofness,

etc.... not only this, they are also replete with a lot of warring situations among dissimilar characters who stand for various social levels. In addition, Savran (2007:52) adds us that this drama unveils the transitional period of shifting responsibilities between two generations of the same family from Big Daddy to Brick. It also discloses the secrets of dealing with homosexual subject rooted and spread in America at that time. So, as Hirsch (1979:50) thinks that the subject is covertly obscure just like the character of Brick the youngest son himself. The play studies inheritance, lukewarm marital affairs, lying, homosexuality and the war for dominance. Williams is a contemporary embodiment of the pagan spirit; a sensualist and an anarchic American human of the twentieth century life. These topics are clearly discussed within the current of this work.

This paper is divided into three parts each of which deals with one part of the conflicts among the family members. The first part studies the father- son relationship. So, this part highlights the father's (Big Daddy) thoughts about his two sons Gooper (the lawyer) and Brick (the retired sport man and the present addicted man).

The second part, has two subsections, tackles the brothers' points of view towards each other and how each one tries to polish his portrait in front of his father by counting his brother's vices, trying to prove that he is the most suitable person to carry the flag of honesty and good plans. Whereas the third part is also composed of two subsections, studies the most perilous conflict and the fatal battle which is between Gooper's wife (Mae) and Brick's wife (Maggie). In this part, we have a great waged war for dominance between these two sisters in law. Each of them tends to fulfill her desires so as to reach her aim which is the largest amount of the inheritance.

#### **1- Big- Daddy's Endeavors to Be The Fittest:**

Big-Daddy is the head of this American family. He is a rich man whose main concern in life is to see his two sons living happy lives. He aims to leave the Pollitt house (the name of the family's villa) to his honest sons. However, he always doubts his eldest son's behaviour. He thinks that Gooper is cheating, lying and unfaithful to him.

Big- Daddy is not amiable to his wife Big-Mama and ridicules her present shape. They almost misunderstand each other

openly. Though his wife is loyal to him, he hates her deportments and her style. So, his main focus is to increase his wealth and find good inheritor who can develop and flourish his belongings" The human animal is a beast that dies but the fact that he's dying don't give him pity for others, no sir."(COAHTR: act ii)\*. He expresses his philosophy of life and his behaviour towards the members of his family.

Zia'ee and Shamsa'ee (2005:34) depict Big- Daddy as being a millionaire and an owner of a huge, raw and productive area. He has a twenty thousand acres plantation. Big-Mama, Gooper and Mae hide the truth that the father is suffering from cancer to gain his contentment. They allied to cheat him claiming that he has a fit of spastic colon to win his rewards and satisfactions. So, the father's main aim is to be on bed -ridden while he is surrounded by honest family members. Alas! his wish proves to be impossible and beyond the reach of his hand.

Gooper, the mother and Mae are hypocrite because they aim to the inheritance. They do not have the courage to tell the father of his patience since he will be angry and deprive them from his rewards and charities. They are searching for the lion's share to establish themselves peacefully.

Big-Daddy hates their behaviours and always describes them as being liars' deceivers. He is an old hand person who probes the inner soul of his family and knows the honest and the dishonest. He often repeats the phrase" made spastic by disgust" by" all the lies and liars..... and hypocrite"(COAHTR: act ii). He also makes use of Brick's ridiculing phrase when he belittles his wife in the same sayings Big- Daddy announces "wouldn't it be funny if that was true" in his responding to her speech that she loves him, despite his "hate and hardness" for forty years: says Big-Mama because he knows her reality since she always sided with Gooper who is deceiver.

Boxill (2007:19-20) peeps in the history of Mr. Pollitt ( Big-Daddy) as being the present owner of the Pollitt after the passing away of his queer partners, Straw and Ochello. He married Ida (Big-Mama) at the age of 25. This marriage resulted in two sons. While Big Daddy cannot stand the first, Gooper, he is fond of the second, Brick. The neglected boy (Gooper) proves his success as a lawyer. However, Big-Daddy is disappointed because of the miserable situation of the spoiled son (Brick). The first son married and established his life carefully and seeks to increase and assure his future through

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exploiting the biggest share of the dying father's wealth. Big Daddy is an atheist, hard-hearted and greedy in his business but he is patient to the far extreme in dealing with Brick, the pig-headed son. Not only this, Big-Daddy deplores his present bed-ridden case to Brick during the family celebration of his birthday party. Later on, Patterson (2007:70) sheds light on the confrontation between Big-Daddy and Brick. Big-Daddy derides the childish and irresponsible conducts of his drunkard son towards his wife. He also mentions Brick's indifference in his duties and health. The father reveals, in his heart to heart talk his hope which is in turn a sign of paternal love. Big Daddy wishes that Brick enjoys his life with his lovely wife and his urgent need for a grandson and be intimate to Maggie so that they may get a baby and an heir to be the pupil

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COAHTR is the abbreviated form of the full title of this drama "Cat On A Hot Tin Roof". The abbreviated form is used from now on through the paper.

of his eyes because Big-Daddy is eager to meet his Brick's children. Not only that the father asks his son to stop drinking

alcohol and addiction, otherwise he will destroy his life.

Beside the aforementioned advice of Big-Daddy, he also gets wind of the secret about the scandal raised here and there about the homosexual affairs of Brick with his friend Skipper" One thing you can grow on a big place more important than cotton!- is tolerance!- I grown it"(COAHTR: act ii). The father tends to persuade his son that everything should have an end and Skipper is now dead. This advice makes Brick infuriated and justifies his liaison but Big-Daddy assures that Brick's justifications are wrong. "Tell Maggie got the idea you're talking about. Normal? No! It is too rare to be normal, and anything between two people is too rare to be normal"( COAHTR: act ii). "You been passing the buck. This disgust with mendacity is disgust with yourself. You! You dug the grave of your friend and kicked him in it! Before you'd face the truth with him!"(COAHTR: act ii).This is the last straw which leads Brick to throw the accusations away from himself and spill the beans of his father's suffering from dying cancer and all people are lying to reach their aims by destroying other honest people and he is not a homosexual person his friendship is innocent and

honest" You told me! I told you!"(COAHTR: act ii).

Big Daddy has a major role to keep his son Brick under his control otherwise Brick persists his indifference and destructive mood in his marital affairs. Bloom (2007:3) discusses that the roles of Big Daddy and Maggie are dedicated to settle down warring conflict in Brick's mind after Skipper's demise. They try to tranquilize his oscillating inner soul. Big-Daddy advises Brick in his fatherly style that every sweet thing should have an end like your liaison with Skipper. With the passage of this meeting, we can guess the predicament of a well- to- do man is to get rid of lying and liars because they corrupt each and everything" Hell, you got to live with it, there's nothing else to live with except mendacity, is there?"(COAHTR: act ii).

Banach (2010:187) elucidates that big part of this play is concerned with the characters' conflict to capture their share of the inheritance. Big- Daddy's major aim in the life is to keep Gooper's hand away from exploiting his experience in law to exclude and prevent Brick and hold each and everything under his control. He knows that his cross comes over will soon which is the ultimate truth determined for every human being. He should identify the

good and bad features of his sons to decide the fittest inheritor for his wealth and land. He tends to show himself as being the fittest among other landlords outside his house. The most important point is that he strives to prove that he is suitable to fight those who want to exploit him by degrading and stultifying his favourite son in front of his eyes since it is the only hope of him to shift his belongings to his most lovable son and his grandsons from Brick. So he succeeds to persuade his son to bestow him a child and the greatest success is to make him come under his wife's spell and admiration.

## 2- The Brothers' Endeavors to Be The Fittest:

### 2.1- Gooper

Gooper is the eldest son of the Pollitts. He is a lawyer and he has an old hand in his profession. He stands for the human's mind of modern people. Through his knowledge of law, he aims to capture his father's belongings and deprives his young brother from his rights and inheritance. He seeks to beguile his father because Gooper doubts his father's feelings towards his family (wife and children). So, he tends to do some arrangements and



loys so that he might not lose his share. He prepares some papers and asks his father to sign them as abandonments and waives for him. Griffin (2007:113) identifies Gooper's poignant hints towards his father's deportment with him as well as his family. He seeks to justify his greediness and the warring desire in his soul to appropriate everything to compensate this inner complex. He confesses in a very brooding mood that his father degrades and doubts his well intentions" I've resented Big Daddy's partiality to Brick ever since Brick was born, and the way I've been treated like I was just barely good enough to spit on and sometimes not even good enough for that"(COAHTR: act i). He frankly unfolds these feelings to his wife Mae and Big Mama during the preparation of Big Daddy's birthday celebration in which he prepares some papers which are useful to enhance his control over the whole properties of the Pollitts. Winchell (2007:84) overtly tackles the idea that Gooper and his wife (Mae) hyperbole the scandals about Brick and the unfamiliar Skipper as well as Maggie's childlessness to glorify their suitability and privileges in comparison to others' drawbacks. They tend to deform the character of their main competitor Brick whenever they have the

chance to do so. They are planning to convince the parents that Brick is sexually deviated so that they may gain the best place in Big- Daddy's heart which in turn will help them fish their power to be the best heirs of the Pollitts.

Gooper feels very proud when Big- Daddy matches between the fertility of Gooper's wife and that of his farm animals. They both are very productive. He is an opportunist who always waits for his chance to pounce at his father's estate. The worse is that he is a flamboyant person who hides the truths and cheats for his own benefit. Gooper is not an exception from other members of the family who have great sense of arrogance and ego. He also belittles Brick and Maggie and ridicules their efforts to achieve their goals. He has his pride that enables him to impede others understanding of what is happening under the current.

Beside the aforementioned notes about Gooper, he moves on doing his best not only to deride his brother Brick for his irresponsibility and his sister in law's sterility but he dares and challenges the familial tradition to depreciate his father's recent decisions in business. Gooper here and there raises his trump card assisted by his wife to defame Brick who keeps on

his way unaware of Gooper's inclinations to displace him from his right and inheritance" Brick kept living in his past glory at college! Still a football player at twenty seven!" ( COAHTR: act i). The matter is worsened when they deliberately insist on stultifying Brick's personality when he appears in the first act Mae shouts" Behold to conquering hero comes!" then Gooper follows her" The fabulous Brick Pollitt". Moreover, to add insults to injury is the appraisal of Big-Mama who refers to Brick as her "only son". What has doubled Gooper's dilemmas is the father's announcements now and then that Brick will capture his sizable estate. Not for the sake of talking about others but to polish and count his merits in contrast to others' faults which in turn tell his family member that he is the fittest. His appearance as the fittest enables him to gain his chance and opportunity in the inheritance under his clutches. His lying and dishonesty reduce his points to be the fittest at least in the readers' viewpoints.

#### 2.2- Brick:

Though he is not the hero of this anti-heroic play, Brick is the pivot around which all the drama revolves. Brick is the main focus of this domestic play and his affairs are the fertile topics of each

meeting between the family members. As an instance for young men of his age, his dilemmas and traumas are spread now and then in the after two-world- wars – society and they are worth to study because people's moralities are changed to the worse and the familial affairs are lessened. War really destroyed these familial connections which were tight before. He is a retired athletic man whose major interest now is drinking alcohol. Brick is shocked because of the amount number of lying, canting and concocting people around him. His predicament is increased when he sees his brother and his sister in law persuading his mother to compose the "spastic colon" story of Big-Daddy's health. Banach (2010:187) states that Brick's name refers to solidity and power. Though he refuses to succumb himself to the wills of his surrounding people, he tends to be scatty and uncontrolled man. He believes that everything has gone in a wrong way and he is unsatisfied with the miserable situation of the family and this makes him come far away from their clutches. But alas, since no one is free, his situation will be imposed by others' wills which oblige him to change his way of life. These intrusions in his life though harmful, people want him to be responsible,

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effective and conscious of his department and be aware of other's conducts.

Blades (2011:174) opines that through Brick's character Williams avers the overall of the broken– down values in the contemporary American society nowadays. Brick comes under the spell of routine life. He is unable to pace a single step to escape mendacity and slanderous people. Generally speaking, the characters are fighting in their inner selves with guilty secrets and sins lest these secrets and sins are disclosed. The topic of inheritance and money always fuel conflicts among people. Bloom (2007:2) elaborates that the corner stone of Brick's indifference to multiple circumstances is the increasing interest of his parents which leads to spoil his conduct and irresponsibility. The worse is that the real thing that disturbs Brick's mood is mendacity of life which is plaguing his soul.

In an advanced step, we deal closely with another aspect of Brick's life concerning his marriage. Boxill (1987: 108) exposes the essence of hatred or negligence in Brick's heart for his wife's sessions of temptation which is that she has a very humble origin and common beauty. She plans to control him but he prefers his queer friend Skipper. Brick's marital life is

not that good for he has a lukewarm feeling towards her because he realizes that his wife (Maggie) is the only cause behind his dearest friend's fatal demise when she him to make love with her and leave her husband so that she can conceive a child to reach her desire. She is surrounded by doubts about Skipper's homosexuality that attracts her husband which in turn results in his aloofness. She sees that Skipper is her competitor and enemy in her intimacies with Brick. However, Brick justifies his pure friendship with Skipper" one man has one great thing in his life"(COAHTR: act iii). Moreover, he defends his conducts loudly" Skipper and me had a clean, true thing between us!– had a clean friendship, practically all our lives,...."(COAHTR: act iii).

Lilly (1995:70) moves on depicting the feeling of sympathy that Williams carries for homosexual people. Williams through Brick declares that it is not a matter of being neglected and queer but it depends openly on the desirability and attraction of them, something related to their sexual predilections. So, Brick neglects his wife and marital affairs to punish her because she puts an end to the scandalous intimacies between Brick and Skipper. Winchell (2007:86) emphasizes the idea that Brick severely chides himself by

addicting alcohol because he considers himself the guiltiest and the most responsible person for his friend's death. Winchell (2007:87) mentions that Williams confesses that Brick suffers from his pierce and remorse of conscience and resorts to alcohol drinking to find solace only to expiate his regret about Skipper's passing away so his mood refuses the compensation given by his wife as well as his family's demands. This regret leads him to deny any intimacies or wooing attempts from his wife. Her existence irks him and tortures his mind.

Crandell (2007:124) diagnoses another feature of Brick's personality. He mentions that the family backgrounds of narcissistic members clarify that a patient of narcissism has some inner features rooted in his innate soul and mind which in turn incite the feeling of envy and admiration of other characters. Narcissism is one of Brick's privileges as other characters say. For instance, Mae his sister-in-law refers to him as a "beautiful athlete" reached his great reputation as an experienced footballer and after that as an announcer. These increasing concerns of the family as well as public people and supporters aggravate his sense of narcissism. His wife also affirms his attractive pros when she depicts him as "a superior creature"

and a "godlike being". Yet the matter with Gooper is different when he expresses his envy announcing that "I've resented Big-Daddy's partiality to Brick ever since Brick was born."(COAHTR: act ii).

Furthermore, Brick is always the centre of interests of the parents and the reason behind all types of hate sowed and deepened in Gooper's heart. Whenever there is a meeting in the house Gooper and Mae raise their voice and stir their children's feelings to bother Brick and Maggie due to their atrocious jealousy because they feel that Brick's family is happy and prestigious. They try to mar and stultify his personality when he appears in the first act Mae shouts "Behold to conquering hero comes!" then Gooper follows her" The fabulous Brick Pollitt". Moreover, the appraisal of Big-Mama who refers to Brick as her "only son" makes Gooper feel upset.

To express his independence, Brick supports the idea that he should not mix different aspects of life together in the same time. He prefers to separate each aspect from the other. He deals with his marital life separately as well as his affairs with Skipper are dealt with in dissimilar techniques. He wants to live quietly that is why he rejects all the intrusive members of his family like parents, brother and his

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wife. Winchell (2007:84) focuses on the idea that Gooper is incited by his feeling of greed and envy to prevent Brick from his right and inheritance and this leads people to sympathize with Brick though he is not without follies. Brick represents the modern young American men in his infallible spirit. He is a footballer whose leg is broken while jumping the hurdles. He is suffering from losing his best friend which makes him infuriated with wife.

Price (2007:93) assures that Brick is an ideal young man. He is a young man surrounded by money- lust and power – lust, sexual pleasures, greediness which please any human man in his age. His opinions are direct and straight. Vaidyanathan (2011:92) certifies Brick's idealism by remarking that he is an athletic young man who is innocent but the sense and charm of defeatism is deeply rooted in his soul. That is why, he

refuses panting behind money and properties like other characters of the same family. He dislikes hypocrite and canting people. He criticizes lying and liars more than once. He rejects to come under the spell of his wife who woos him to follow her plan to lie. However, he is not far from infallibility because he is obliged to subject to her desire because of his urgent need for alcohol. Big- Daddy and Maggie try to impose their wills on Brick's life to improve it. Through their trial, they tend to amend Brick's faults to make him the fittest. Brick is indifferent to what others regard as scandals like his intimacies with Skipper and how these intimacies have shameful significances. This causes him to live in a state of castration to compensate his friend's loss and his refusal to his wife's lying habit. He prefers being loser to be regarded as liar as Maggie remarks:

You always had that detached quality as if you were playing a game without much concern over whether you won or lost, and now that you've lost the game, not lost but just quit playing, you have that rare sort of charm that usually only happens in very old or hopelessly sick people, the charm of the defeated. (COAHTR: act ii)

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Brick is a guileless person who is not aware of the ploys around him. So, he is not thinking of others' chase for wealth and inheritance. His aim is to get rid of deceivers and liars neither more nor less. His trend is leave those deceivers Gooper, Mae and even Maggie is not an exception.

Brick's broken leg stands for something deeper. Vaidyanathan (2011:88): sheds light on the idea of (moral paralysis) Brick suffers from. He refers to Brick's paralysis and crippling as the representative young man of his contemporaries. This paralysis is not in the physical appearance of his leg but by impediments of his family members who are also portraits of their contemporaries in their dreams and desires, greediness, lust for money and power. He is maimed not only by sport but by his family members and his wife is not excluded. He has a very high self-esteem of himself. Tilak (2011:270) expounds the idea of Brick as being an athletic man. While he is stretching his muscles by jumping the hurdles he fell broken. These hurdles simplify his predicaments of life. The first hurdle is that of family reputation because he is accused of disreputing the family name by his irresponsible conducts with Skipper. The second hurdle reflects his relationship

with Maggie who seeks to control him under her wings, but Brick rejects these endeavors. The third hurdle is that he refuses Big- Daddy and Maggie's demands to make his wife conceive a child because he preoccupies himself by alcohol addiction as a resort to his peaceful sanctuary; i.e. bedroom. The fourth hurdle is his denial of canting, lying, and hypocrisy of his family member. Each one aims to gain the biggest share of the inheritance. The last important hurdle is that of his desire to expose each work and conduct to the sun light without hiding, deceiving and cheating others. However, Griffin(2007:105) sees that with all his efforts to avoid canting and mendacity of people at that time, Brick loses the match against liars and lying and he piques his wife whose existence irks him"....how in hell on earth do you imagine- that you're going to have a child by a man that can't stand you?" (COAHTR: act iii) to this question she answers full of prowess" That's a problem that I will have to work out."(COAHTR: act iii).

Price (2007:96) hints that the present state of paralysis in Brick's leg resembles the obstructions of his desire to continue his daily life affairs peacefully. His marital life is obstructed because he

accused his wife of his friend's suicide. His life is also hindered because of the lying family members around him. His life is handicapped because of his brother's will to appropriate each and everything related to their inheritance. It is impeded because he is not free to determine his own determination. He thinks that his father's demands control him pitifully and his father pokes his nose here and there in his marital affairs however for the sake of his welfare. The tightest ties that he suffers from are those imposed by his wife who thinks of her marital future and opportunity. She is preoccupied by the idea of establishing her future on sound bases. She does her best to catch her desire. Brick is sided with the opinion which calls for diminishing the importance of money and wealth because they are going to fade out sooner or later whereas true love, friendship and reality are eternal and lasting forever. Brick is obliged to obey his father's demands and his wife's desire at the end. The atmospheres go against his will but his pure and honest features are still there in his soul. He represents the hope of reality that will shine in the end of dark tunnel of lying and mendacity of the modern age.

3- The Daughters- in-Law Endeavors to Be the Fittest:

3.1: Mae:

The issue of battles for the sake of control and authority among the daughters in law is one of the new subjects rendered by modern dramatists. They tend to control the family and make others follow the demands and orders. Hirsch (1979:48) maintains that the Pollitts's have urgent desires to dominate other members of the family to extend their authorities to the extremest degree.

The battle crescendo is started when Mae rekindles the fire for this battle of dominance by eavesdropping the speeches of other family members; expressing her jeering observations to deride others. The worse is that she used to insinuate and disclose others' secrets to defame them in front of the family members. She is the mastermind of all her husband's decisions. In addition to these techniques she never forgets titillating the emotions and senses of dominance in her husband innate soul to facilitate her efforts because Gooper is her way to achieve her desire.

Mae is a young lady in the middle of her thirties. So she is the eldest daughter in law of the family. Patterson (2007:71) reveals for us some features about Mae's

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character. She is a fertile lady who has five neckless children. Her goal to control the Pollitt's estate overweighs her duty to build strong connection among the family members to unify the efforts of them to flourish the belongings. She malignantly stirs the feelings of exploitation in her husband's heart to possess the Pollitt's belongings and leave the Bricks empty handed

She complains the hard business of her husband in running his father's affairs to Big Mama to win her side. These speeches, as she hopes, will make Big Mama sympathize with Gooper and facilitate his being the fittest heir of the Pollitts. She follows some mischievous techniques to devalue Brick and his childless wife (Maggie)" you never experience the sense of breeding children yet"(COAHTR: act i). She rooted some malicious hints in her children's hearts to tell for their uncle's wife.

Though her role is not that major one, her advice to her husband and speech with Maggie and about Maggie in her absence has great effects. She appears only in the first act but her foot prints are not hidden. Tilak (2011:261) mentions that other characters called her "monster of fertility". She plays on the chord of her children and her husband's experience in law to

fulfill her desire which is to be the fittest heiress of the Pollitts and to control the estate.

Her origin is very common but she is beautiful. She wages a severe ware against Brick and Maggie for the sake of approving who the fittest heir is. She applies her malicious plans to defame and ridicule her in laws conduct to achieve her hope for dominance. Mae is a scourge to all familial ties in her remark about her in laws then to her husband's emotion towards the prosperity when she incites him to dominate everything.

### 3.2: Margaret (Maggie):

Maggie is a thoughtful young lady and she is aware of the circumstances around her. This play focuses on her dreams of palmy life and wills to escape the nightmares of insecurity and bereavements from children and wealth. She is fed up with recent case of her negligent husband. She tends to secure and fortify her marriage by titillating the emotions of her husband to reach her hopeful desire. She is bored because of the sense of incapacity for creating useful thing neither to her husband's family nor to her husband himself. Her main concern is to rid the ennui of her life through conceiving a child to silence the insulting remarks of fertile



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Mae (her sister in law). May (2007:5) exposes for us the significant role of Maggie as a woman in the prime of her youth. She is an impressive lore lady who is trapped with an inebriated and inert young gentleman.

A close portrayal of Maggie is shown by Price (2007:97) who states some significant details of Maggie's shape. She is a despondent young lady. She has a very attractive body with a slender throat and her voice is not noisy.

Her facial countenance is nice and pretty. She tries to express her suitability to be the fittest heiress of the estate by stultifying the "five monsters" children of Mae and their dog like names to keep her ability to fight and save for her rights. Big-Daddy has an old hand to observe her features and compares between his daughters in law. He sees that she thinks a lot and she is preoccupied by something. In his conversation with Brick, Big Daddy analyzes her personality:

Big- Daddy: That woman of yours has a better shape on her than  
Gooper's but somehow or other they got the same  
look about them.

Brick: What sort of look is that , Big- Daddy?

Big-Daddy: I don't know how describe it but it's the same look.

Brick: Nervous as a couple of cats on a hot tin roof?

Big -Daddy: Crap.....I wonder what gives them both that look?

Brick: Well. They're sittin'in the middle of a big piece of  
land, Big Daddy, twenty eight thousands acres is a  
pretty big piece of land and so they're squaring off on  
it, each determined to knock off a bigger piece of it  
than the other whenever you let it go. (COAHTR: act ii)

Though she is recently married there are a lot of plans and intrigues in her inner heart. She tends to surmount success to her disappointed and miserable

circumstances at any cost. For her necessities allow prohibition.

Griffin (2007:106) renders Maggie as being disappointed because of the obstinate mood of her husband which

makes her suffer from aloofness. She thinks that her life is like that of a cat "My hat is still in the ring, and I am determined to win!"(COAHTR: act iii). Furthermore, she adds "I am not living with you. We occupy the same cage, that's all. You know, that's the first time you've raised your voice in a long time. Crack in the stone wall? I think that's a fine sign, mighty fine."(COAHTR: act iii). Maggie's good intentions to cement her family future outweigh her bad intentions to harm Gooper's family. She does her best to gain success. She follows a lot of strategies to drag Brick's leg to her nest. Sometimes she stirs her husband's fertility and ability by wooing and coaxing to make him feel her love and attract him. Next she teases him in order to upset him then she goes to reconcile him openly. Then she nags him, she challenges Skipper to leave her husband, next she is obliged to lie in order not to feel the sense of loss and bereavement, till she decides to blackmail him by preventing him from drinking unless he makes love with her" you look so cool, so cool, so enviably cool."(COAHTR: act iii). She unveils her persistent desire to settle her hot tin roof marriage and fish her chance to gain her share in Big- Daddy's plantation. She expresses her promptitude at different

occasions. She often predicts that there is a designation to dismiss her and her husband from the plantation hatched by Gooper and Mae. So, she informs Brick of their intention" Mae an' Gooper are plannin to freeze us out of Big Daddy's estate because you drink and I am childless. But we can defeat that plan. We're going to defeat that plan! *Brick y'know, I've been so God damn disgustingly poor all my life!*"(COAHTR: act iii). So, she designs her strategy to lie that she is pregnant at first then to stir her husband's emotion to fight for his share from the clutches of Gooper and Mae next.

Maheshwari (2005:168) pertains that Maggie is replete with vitality and revivification concerning her marital affairs. She unveils that her spouse is worthless to her demands because he is more indulged with his mysterious affairs with friend Skipper. She is poignant and her reflections show her jealousy from the friendship ties between Brick and Skipper. She thinks this friendship is abnormal. Hirsch (1979:50) enhances the idea that Maggie pokes her nose in Brick's intimacy to the degree that she becomes an intruder in the clean, pure, human entente who destroys this friendship with her lust as a woman. Her remarks about his friendship with Skipper bother him and

make him resort to drinking as his sole solution to scold and punish her. She fulfills her plan" Brick, I used to think that you were stronger than me and I didn't want to be overpowered by you. But now, since you've taken to liquor- you know what?-I guess it's bad, but now I am stronger than you and I can love you more truly"(COAHTR: act iii). Clum (2007:38) affirms the mad mood of Brick when Skipper is talked about. She realizes that Brick's harmful secrets which turn him into this problematic mood is only because he cannot achieve an entire intimacies with Skipper any more. Brick warns Maggie that he will strike her head with his crutches "Brick strikes her with [the] crutch, a blow that shatters the gemlike lamp on the table."(COAHTR: act iii). Though she is neglected by her husband, Maggie gets her rights and justice when Brick in his confrontation with Gooper's family announces that he loves her and defends her plans. These confrontations happened now and then to represent the trauma of modern American human beings. Crandell (2007:138) mentions that when Maggie is accused of being liar she justifies her sins and guilt. Although she is a liar, she has some motivations that Gooper and Mae lack" No, truth is something desperate, an' she's got it"

(COAHTR: act iii). The bare truth of love shines. Though he hides his feelings for her, he still defends her against the biggest liars and intriguers" I admire you, Maggie"(COAHTR: act iii). Now, nothing can dim the light that shines from the dark tunnel. The light is that of Maggie's desires while the dark dim are those of liars like Gooper and Mae.

To persist on her right in the Pollitt family, she determines not to waive anything related to her husband, the inheritance, the conceived child and the battle of dominance with Mae. So, she refused to give up her hopes because she will lose everything. She denies surrendering her wars. Maheshwari (2005:168) adds that Maggie has to wage two fatal battles to prove her suitability to be an heiress and her fittest qualifications to survive in a world full of tricks, intrigues and lies. The first battle is to win the feeling of her negligent husband" This is my time in the calendar to conceive."(COAHTR). Maggie's target is to make Brick enchanted by her prettiness" you know, our sexual life didn't just peter out...it was cut off short...and it's going to revive again .... That's what I'm keeping myself attracted for"(COAHTR: act iii). The second warring battle is against her in laws brother and sister" I've gone through

this- *hideous!*- *transformation*, become-  
*hard! Frantic!.....cruel!!*(COAHTR: act  
iii).

Maggie knows about Gooper's strategic mechanization to dominate Brick's share in the inheritance. So, she cannot wait the moment when Brick may realize and react against Gooper's intriguing techniques. She resembles her present case to that of a cat on a hot tin roof" My hat is still in the ring, and I am determined to win! – what is the victory of a cat on a hot tin roof?– I wish I knew just staying on it, I guess, as long as she can"(COAHTR). She has a great mentality to balance between the matters and which direction will be useful to her. She is able to adapt herself against all the odds. So, she looks gloomy towards her lukewarm husband's conducts with her. The worse is that she has to wait for her indifferent husband's reaction to confront waged war of inheritance initiated by Gooper and Mae. So, she starts haggling him to sleep with her if he wants more drinks. Maggie wants to recompense her loss in her marital affair with Brick by capturing the whole plantation and this will not come true unless she follows her double edged ploy. Firstly, she has to drag Brick's leg to impregnate her" I told a lie to Big Daddy but we can make that lie come

true"(COAHTR). Secondly, she has to speak overtly of her pregnancy. She paces all these thorny steps to defend her identity as the fittest who deserves survival.

### **Conclusion:**

Tennessee Williams tackles some of the most important ideas that are newly happened during and after the world wars. Idea like the struggle between the family members to seize the biggest share of the inheritance was new at that time. Not only this but depriving other members from their rights to heir is an atrocious work of spiritless human beings. They use malicious techniques to reach their target like lying , cheating , forfeiting, canting, overhearing others' speeches, defaming and devaluing others, accusing people of some sins and misdeeds etc...the playwright denies all the critics attempt to regard the work as a play about homosexual affairs he insists that the drama hovers about human ploys and lies. So, he presents for us some crackled dialogues and explosive confrontations among the principal characters to direct us to identify the traumas of modern American human beings.

*Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* is one of the plays that overtly unveiled the ugly face and metamorphosis of family relationship and connection. The oeuvre portrays the disintegration and decay of familial traditions and authorities. This

disintegration leads to aloofness and desire to bereave others from their rights. As a result bereaved characters are going to brace and react hardly and this causes unlimited wars inside the family.

This play sheds a close light on five members of a well to do family. In this family, we have devoted and honest members as well as the evil and the wicked. So, the paper highlights the varied relationships and the ways in which they deal with each other. We have the father who searches for his sons' welfare to prove that he is sound and fit to bring them up and judge them appropriately in fair. However, the father's desire is handicapped by his eldest son Gooper and Mae who want to dominate and capture everything. Unlike the youngest son Brick who know no harmful intentions to his brother and sister in law.

The paper studies these main characters and closely analyzes them to show who is the fittest to survive and who deserves life and who does not? Who can establish and sow the seeds of sound human beings. Though these characters

do not have the same amount of roles any how their presences are essential to harm others. The paper supports those pure and honest characters who do not intend to destroy and deprive other. So it eulogizes the characters of Brick and his wife Maggie. The paper encourages them as the fittest because they have no intention to exploit the others' rights. They search their lot honestly with good intention. They represent the good seeds for the next and coming generations. Despite their search for wealth, they never harm others. This feature is very nice to plant the essence of goodness to teach other how live peacefully. The research highlights these pros and devoted the paper as a reward for the characters that have these advantages. Moreover, the paper criticizes the role of Gooper whose aim is to capture everything to win the battle of dominance and his wife who is like a scourge that plagues all family members. They do not have any sense for altruism they are opportunistic characters who represent the ugly side of modern society.

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## الصراع من أجل البقاء في مسرحية تنسي وليامز " قطة على سطح صفيح ساخن "

مدرس : احمد هاشم عباس  
قسم اللغة الانجليزية  
كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية  
جامعة البصرة

الذي يمتلك خمسة اطفال بل على العكس فانه  
يفضل بريك الابن الاصغر الذي بدوره ليس  
معصوما من الاخطاء.

يهدف الولدان الى اقناع والدهما ان كلا منهما  
يملك القدرة على تنمية وانعاش الاملاك التي  
سيرثانها. من جانب اخر، يحاول الولدان كلاهما  
تشوية سمعة الاخر وخصاله الحميدة. يقاد الابنان  
من قبل زوجتيهما اللتين ترغبان بالحصول على  
حصه الاسد من ثروة حماهما. ولهذا ينوي  
الولدان وزوجاتهما من اقناع الاب بانهم  
الاحسن والانسب للحفاظ على الثروة في ايدي  
امينة رياتهم وتصرفاتهم الكاذبة وحيلهم باستثناء  
الابن المدمن غير المبال باغواءات عصره فهم  
جميعاً في خضم حرب مستعرة للاستحواذ على  
النصيب الاكبر من الاملا والثروة.

سيسلطُ الباحث الضوء على الجوانب  
الاجيائية ويتقد السلبية منها في كل شخصية  
من شخصيات العمل وصولاً الى مايرومه  
بتحديد من هو الشخص الامين والاكثر نزاهةً  
واكثرهم ملائمةً للعيش كشخص موثوق به

### المستخلص:

يعد تنسي وليامز احد اهم كتّاب المسرح  
الامريكي الحديث. ولاتزال اعماله تثير جدل  
وجهاً النظر المختلفة لما تناقشه من قضايا.  
ان مسرحية " قطة على سطح صفيح ساخن "  
(1955) تمثل احدى اهم اعمال وليامزالي  
جانب " عربة تسمى الرغبة" و " تماثيل الوحوش  
الزجاجية" و " ليلة السحلية" والتي تمثل رمزاً  
واعمالاً رائدةً في المسرح الامريكي الحديث.  
تعد هذه المسرحية مسرحية عائلية او منزليةً  
حيث نجد فيها الوجه الفظيع للمادية والرأسمالية)  
وهما المذهبان السائدان انذاك) الامريكية  
الحديثة.

تحلق المسرحية في اجواء عائلة متهدمة. تتكون  
من الاب وزوجته مع ولديهما وزوجتيهما التي  
تمتلك احدهما خمسة اطفال. يعاني الاب من  
السرطان لكن الولدين يخفيان الحقيقة عن  
والدهما الذي يشارف على الموت حتى النهاية  
حين اماط بريك اللثام عن الحقيقة المستترة. فلا  
يثق الاب بابنه الاكبر (المرائي والمنافق غوبر)



مستعيناً بوجهات نظر النقاء التي تدعم آرائه. أخيراً سيبتُ الباحثُ بامر هذه الشخصيات ويقرر كم هو صعب ان نجد الاوفياء والنزيهين ولذلك فهم يستحقون الحياة لانهم الانسب. وصولاً الى الاستنتاج بان الاكثر صراحة ونزاهة من الناس هم الانسب لتحسين وانعاش الثروة والمجتمع. ولهذا فشخصية بريك هي الاكثر مناسبة للعيش والبقاء.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المسرح الامريكي، الثروة، الانسب، الصراع، الرياء

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