

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Expression and creation of human life experiences can be done through the literature. In literature, the ideas, feeling, and attitude are creating to be enjoyed by the reader. They also get the impression and pleasure of it. Eagleton in *Literary Theory* explains as follows:

The literary work was neither a vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality nor the incarnation of some transcendental truth: it was a material fact, whose functioning could be analyzed rather as one could examine a machine. It was made of words, not of object or feelings, and it was a mistake to see it as the expression of an author's mind (1983: 3).

The quotation above shows that literary work is a fact of human life which is rewritten by the writer in the form of words. Furthermore, Wellek and Warren also state that literature is simply a mirror of life, a reproduction, and thus, obviously, a social document (1948: 92). It means that literature represents life and its large measure. The ideas of literary work based on human experiences and it can be the reference of life.

There are three kinds of literature, namely prose, poetry, and drama or play. Drama is chosen as the object of analysis. Drama is one of the literary works that are performed on the stage and represented by actors. Therefore, dramas are written to be acted. Furthermore, Simon and Schuster in their book entitled *How to Analyze Drama* explain that a drama is a work of literature or a composition which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various actions

of – and dialogues between – a group of characters (1966: 5). Drama represents human life, so when the readers read a text of drama, they find some similarity experiences. Consequently, the readers try to imagine how the actors perform in the stage. Finally, drama is not only as the representation of life which is acted out by the actors but also as the entertainment.

Two plays are chosen as the source of data in this research. They are *Desire Under the Elms* and *Oedipus Rex*. The researcher wants to compare those two plays to find the aspect of Oedipus complex. The researcher is interested in Eugene O'Neill's play entitled *Desire under the Elms*. It is chosen to be analyzed because the story is very interesting. It talks about the Oedipus complex of Eben as the main character of the story. The Oedipus complex happens when Eben and Abbie, Eben's stepmother, fall in love with each other. Eugene O'Neill is one of the American's greatest playwrights who produced many literary works of his own. Besides that, one of Sophocles' works, *Oedipus Rex*, is also used as the source of data. The researcher is interested in discussing Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, as it is one of the most famous classic plays. This play is one of the most interesting stories among Greek Legendary plays. The story takes place in Thebes, the ancient city of east central Greece.

The researcher focuses on analyzing two kinds of plays, namely *Desire Under the Ems* and *Oedipus Rex*. The researcher wants to compare Oedipus complex of the main characters because the story of *Desire Under the Elms* and *Oedipus Rex* tell about Oedipus complex. The Oedipus complex of main character Eben in *Desire under the Elms* and that of Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex* have the

similarities and the differences. Both of those two main characters in these two plays have affair with their mothers. Therefore, the researcher wants to know more about the similarities and the differences of Oedipus complex that happen in those two plays.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The Oedipus complex of the main characters is applied as the main topic of the analysis. It means that the researcher will analyze about Oedipus complex of the main characters in those two plays. Some problems are applied in order to get clear discussion of this research.

1. What are the similarities of Oedipus complex in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*?
2. What are the differences of Oedipus complex in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*?

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the similarities of Oedipus complex in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*.
2. To find out the differences of Oedipus complex in Eugene O'Neill's *Desire Under the Elms* and Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

In analyzing the data in this research, two plays are chosen as the object of analysis. They are *Desire Under the Elms* and *Oedipus Rex*. The researcher discusses about Oedipus complex which is done by the main characters namely Eben in *Desire under the Elms* and Oedipus in *Oedipus Rex*. The analysis just focuses on the similarities and the differences of the main characters' Oedipus complex in those two plays.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

For the reader, the researcher hopes this research can give exact and clear information of Oedipus complex in *Desire under the Elms* and *Oedipus Rex*. This research is significant since it can be the reference for further researches which have the similar topic of discussion. Besides that, both stories have high philosophical value that can take the wisdom. The researcher hopes this research can increase the repertoires of literature especially about comparative study.