

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Literature is kind of art, that offers pleasure and illumination. We can be transported from real world to a seemingly more enjoyable place. But literature is also written to express thought, feeling and attitude toward life. Hudson (1965: 10) in *An Introduction to the Study of Literature* says as follows:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which has the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language.

Furthermore, literature is an interpretation of life as life shapes itself in the mind of the authors. They often raise the social matters as themes of their works, such as the religion, love, family relationship, fear, anger, criticism of court, the struggle of someone to gain his success, et cetera.

In its broader sense, literature can be classified into prose, poetry and drama. The writer of this thesis focuses on drama. As one of literary works, drama describes the activity and life of people. According to Kennedy (1979: 833) in *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, "A drama is a work of storytelling in which the characters are represented by actors".

Drama is furthermore designed for theatrical presentation that is although the readers speak of drama as a literary work or composition, they must never forget that drama is designed to be acted on the stage. Even when they read play they have no real grasp of what that play is like unless they at least attempt to imagine how actors on a stage would present the material.

In drama, there are a lot of aspects that can be analyzed in detail, such as humanity, existence and all its aspects. As the result, the audience or the reader can add their knowledge and gets some information that they do not know before through the drama. It can be said that unintentionally drama influences our life in the society.

Further, this study will discuss Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. According to High (1986:231) in *An Outline of American Literature*, *The Crucible* is a historical play written by Arthur Miller. He was one of the greatest American playwrights. One of his plays is *The Crucible* in which the setting happens in seventeenth century which is written based on events of Salem witchcraft trials takes place in the small Puritan village in the colony of Massachusetts in 1692.

The reason why the writer chooses *The Crucible* as a topic of her thesis is because *The Crucible* is a historical play based on events of the Salem witch craft trials and she is interested in analyzing the social consciousness. This play occurs during Salem witch trial involving the

Puritan belief and religion. In this case, Miller shows how people will accuse others in order to save themselves. Here, Abigail and the girls are dancing in the woods, they conjure up spirits while dancing naked and they are discovered by Reverend Parris. This leads to the accusations of the girls as witches. Then to escape punishment they accuse other women of the town of being witches. This leads trials of these women with the girls as the jury. The example of social problem above is the social problems that could happen in every society, everywhere, to everyone, and also every time. Therefore, the writer writes drama including some social criticism through the social problems that exist in the society.

The social criticism is a kind of criticism that focuses on the social problems as its subject. It is supported by Holman and Harmon (1986: 117) in *A Handbook to Literature*. They say, "Criticism is the analysis, study, and evaluation of individual works of art, as well as the formulation of general methodological or aesthetic principle for the examination of such works." It deals with the current social problem which born in conflict and controversy and with the hope of finding solutions that give benefit for everyone. Accordingly, in this thesis the writer has formulated the title: *An Analysis of Social Criticism of Court in Arthur Miller's The Crucible*. It is one of the plays which is talking about social life and refers to criticism. It can be concluded that social consciousness represents a basic element in the play. It has specific social problem.

Sometimes, when we are accused of being a witch, in order to save our- self we accuse others. These conditions cause the social problem and enter many kinds of force and crime. Based on the statement above, the writer wants the reader to understand that the problem is different from the average reader.

### **1.2. The Statement of the Problem**

The social life has some problems. All of these problems cause criticism toward the value of human life in the society or causes the prejudice. It has a social value and causes social criticism. As a result, writer feels that it is important to analyze the social criticism that happens in the social life. In this case, there are two points as the problems:

1. How is the condition of the witch trial hysteria as reflected in *The Crucible*?
2. What are the effects of witch trial on the main characters in *The Crucible*?

### **1.3. Limitation of the Study**

In this thesis, the writer analyzes the play *The Crucible* written by Arthur Miller and focuses her attention to describe the social criticism of this play. The research is limited on any ideas related to two point, namely

the condition of the witch trial hysteria as reflected in *The Crucible*, and the effects of witch trial on the main characters in *The Crucible*.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

To find the answer for the proposed problems through the analysis, the writer has the objective of the study is as follows:

1. To describe the condition of the witch trial hysteria as reflected in *The Crucible*.
2. To elaborate the effects of witch trial on the main characters in *The Crucible*.

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

Each thesis or research has different significance. The study in this thesis is to present a social criticism, as the result of the analysis of *The Crucible*. This has close relation with social problems of the people in American society. By studying this topic, the readers will easily understand about a repressive code of conduct that frown on any diversion from norms of behavior, which can be found in this play. The writer expects that the reader will get the advantages of the result of this study to achieve a maximum level in society. Furthermore, it will hopefully be input for other further studies concerning this work.