

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Study

Literature is a kind of entertainment that has function to entertain our feeling. With literature we can express our ideas, feeling from our experience that happen in our daily lives. Rees (1973: 2) states that literature is writing that express and communicates thought, feeling and attitudes toward life. In broadest sense, literature includes all written materials such as magazine, newspaper, dictionary, etc. in its narrow sense, literature may be in the form of novel, drama, short stories, and poems.

In this writing, the writer is interested in analyzing the drama entitled *Death of A Salesman* written by Arthur Miller. Drama is a work of literature or composition, which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various action of-and dialogues between-a group of characters (Reaske, 1966: 14). Drama is written to be acted, to be seen, and to be felt by the audiences.

Arthur Miller created *Death of A Salesman* in 1949. During Second World War men had to participate in the war. Women replaced their position. Factories were established to produce the equipment of war. Women look the significant roles at that time. Women replaced the works that man conducted before. The war made the position of women more significant. After the Second World War ended, women returned to their former household duties, and women should go back to nurturing their husband and children. And then the industry was growing,

under the capitalistic economy, the exploitation of women become stronger. So Arthur Miller was interested to write a drama experienced with the condition of United States during that time. In analyzing the drama entitled *Death of A Salesman*, the writer is interested in analyzing the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman. Gender is the issue that people frequently face in their lives, which relates to the problem of human right. In the beginning, gender is a term used to make the differences between men and women, especially the differences of sex. Sex refers to a biological category (Arlis, 1991: 60). Moreover, she states that gender is the term used to describe socially constructed categories based on sex. It means that gender is the location of society in certain place and culture, which is aimed at showing the differences of nature, characteristics, and function between men and women.

In fact, women frequently become the victims of gender discrimination. There are, three effects of gender discrimination against women. First is marginalization of women. Marginalization of women is allowed to exist by the governmental politics, religious and cultural interpretations, social norms and scientific considerations (Fakih, 1996: 14). It means that in a certain society, woman is considered as the second-class people. The functions of women are just to support what men want and do. Second is the existence of violence. The violence against women takes place in various different forms such as rape, prostitution, pornography, enforced sterilization, and emotional harassment (Fakih, 18-20). Such a condition is reflected on the inability of women to free themselves from the violence conducted by men. And the third is the inequality of

duties and responsibilities. The duties of women are ones related to the household matters, such as cooking, cleaning, sewing, etc. While, men do their works outside of the house to make income for their family.

Death of a Salesman written by Arthur Miller is one of greatest American plays the world has ever known. The greatness of the play lies on its theme, which involves the serious, social issues. One of the issues reflected in the play is the discrimination of gender. Although the play focus greatly under character of Willy Loman to get the dream, the presence of Linda Loman, Willy's wife, allows other interpretation on this play, that is the subordinate position of women in society. The presence of Linda Loman that just supports whatever her husband wants and does and never criticizes him, suggest the existence of gender discrimination in this play. Linda Loman is considered to be weak because she cannot contribute to the decisions in making the family, especially the one taken by Willy Loman, her husband. The weakness is based on Linda's position as a woman and a wife. Here, lies of the source of the discrimination.

From the explanation above, the writer is interested to analyze the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*. The writer thinks that this writing has an interesting problem to be analyzed and it is never to be discussed before, so the writer chooses this title to be his thesis.

1.2 The Statement of Problem

There are three problems that will be discussed in this thesis. They are formulated as follows:

- 1) What are general characteristics of Linda Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*?
2. What is gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman?
3. What is the factor causing the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman?

1.3 The Limitation of Problem

The writer analyzed the play entitled *Death of A Salesman* written by Arthur Miller, which published in 1949. In analyzing this play, the writer limits the writing on the general characteristics of Linda Loman and the factors causing the existence of gender discrimination.

1.4 The Objective of Study

The objective of the study is as follows:

1. To analyze the general characteristics of Linda Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*.
2. To know the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman.
3. To elaborate the factor causing the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman.

1.5 The Significance of Study

By studying this topic, the readers will have the deeper and comprehensive understanding of the issues of the gender discrimination experienced by Linda Loman. The writer hopes that the readers will understand the practices of gender discrimination, commonly existing in household besides, this study will help readers to be conscious that certain practices, behaviors, and custom in society can be categorized as the gender discrimination although most of the people take them for granted. By understanding the social issue of gender discrimination will help readers to consider literary works not only as a means of entertainment, but also as a means of communication values, moral teachings, ways of life, etc.