CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Anti-Semitism is "hostility toward or prejudice against Jews or Judaism" (Dictionary Reference). Jewish people are related to Judaism because Judaism is the religion of Jewish people. "Judaism is a monotheistic religion based on principles and ethics embodied in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh)" (Judaism). In the first half of the twentieth century, in America, there is anti-semitism and it was in climax during the World War II. The form of hostility towards Jews could be found in all aspects of life. "Jews were discriminated against in employment, access to residential and resort areas, membership in clubs and organizations, and in tightened quotas on Jewish enrollment and teaching positions in colleges and universities." (Antisemitism). The issue of anti-Semitism in America is tackled masterfully by Arthur Miller in his novel <u>Focus</u>.

Miller himself is one of the great American writers in 20th century and he has produced a lot of works that become masterpieces. He is considered "one of the foremost progressives in American letters." (McCarter). The strength in both

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the plays and stories that he writes is "Miller uses his memories to trigger our own, forcing us to recall the hopes we once held dear —not just as individuals, but as citizens." (McCarter). Miller witnesses and experiences the anti-Semitism when he works in the auto part warehouse (Arthur Miller) and this memory led him to write <u>Focus</u> in 1944, a novel about anti-Semitism and published in 1945. This novel not only talks about the issue of anti-Semitism but its more concern on the effect toward Jewish, "the novel shifts from a straight discussion of anti-Semitism to an analysis of the endless suffering of the Jewish people." (Eden). The novel portrays how Jewish people are not protecting themselves and they lack self defence:

> Miller is telling his readers that the fatal mistake of Jews throughout
> history has been their repeated willingness to assume the role assigned to
> them by anti-Semitic societies, allowing themselves to be transformed
> from victims into partners in the crimes of the larger society. Miller, in
> other words, believes that the Jewish people carry the mark of Cain--for
> the sin of moral compromise. (Eden)

From this novel I would like to analyse conflict, which is one of the important elements of a novel. Conflict in this novel is related to anti- Semitism, where the prejudice and hostility toward Jews had assumed such forms of social discrimination, and it was experienced by the protagonist, Lawrence Newman.

According to Harry Shaw, conflict is "the opposition of person or forces upon which the action depends in drama and fiction." (Shaw 91). There are three types of conflicts: the first conflict is elemental or physical, which is "a struggle

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between man and the physical world." (Shaw 91), the second conflict is social conflict, which is "a struggle between man and man." (Shaw 91), the third conflict is internal or psychological, which is "a struggle between desires within a person. External forces may be important and other character may appear in the narrative, but the focus is always upon the central figures inner turmoil." (Shaw 92).

In Focus the predominant conflicts that occur are inner conflict and social conflict. Applying the formalist approach to analyse conflict in this novel, I can understand more what causes the conflict and the resolution of the conflict.

Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follow:

1. What are the social and inner conflicts in Arthur Miller's Focus?

2. What causes those conflicts?

3. How are those conflicts resolved?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is stated as follows:

1. To show the social and inner conflicts in Arthur Miller's Focus.

2. To show the causes of those conflict.

3. To show the resolution of those conflict.

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Method of Research

The method of research used is library research. First of all, I read the novel as the primary texts. I apply formalism to have a better understanding in my thesis. I then gather and search the information needed for the thesis from some references to support the analysis of the primary text. Finally I use the data that I have collected for my analysis from which I draw a conclusion.

Organization of the Thesis

I divide this thesis into three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which contains Background of The Study, The Statement of The Problem, The Purpose of The Study, The Method of Research and The Organization of The Thesis. Chapter Two deals with the analysis of conflicts in Arthur Miller's Focus. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with Bibliography and Appendix, which consists of biography and summary of the novel.