INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of Analysis

The question fundamental to literary study is to answer the question what literature is. The word literature etymologically derives from Latin word “litterature”, or “littera” means the smallest element of alphabetical writing or letter (Klarer, 2004:1). This definition of course is not enough to give an understanding on the essence of literature. In addition, literature is a fictitious kind of writing. It has three kinds in general that is poetry, prose or novel and drama or play.

Each genre of literary works has much in common. Poetry is centered on rhythmical writing in which lines are arranged by stanzas; while prose is focused on narrative kind of writing; meanwhile, drama is dominantly emphasized on action by having dialogue as dominant feature. Yet, the three genres are closely connected on the emphasis of imaginative creation in terms of literature.

In this thesis, the focus of analysis is directed on the absurd elements as reflected in Henrik Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House*. There is a slight difference between a play and a drama. A play is oriented on reading material in which readers replace audience in drama. Thus, drama should be viewed on theatrical concept which is defined to see the act on the stage. From the description above, it is understood that the play *A Doll’s House* contains reading material that should be revised in order to be a drama.
The word absurd simply means illogical for it is unique in its sense. To quote Albert Camus in Esslin (1969:5) the definition of absurdity refers to human condition in the world. He further stated:

A world that can be explained by reasoning, however faulty, is a familiar world. But in a universe that is suddenly deprived of illusions and of flight, man feels a stranger. His is an irremediable exile, because he is deprived of memories of a lost homeland as much as he lacks the hope his life, the actor and his setting, truly constitutes the feeling of absurdity.

It is worthy to grasp the quotation above that the word absurd originally means out of harmony with reason or propriety; incongruous, unreasonable, illogical. In common usage, absurd simply may ridiculous which is devoid of purpose because man has already cut of from his religious, metaphysical, and transcendental roots, man is lost; all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless, to quote Esslin (1969: 5).

Basically, the presents of absurd elements is related to thematic study of literary woks. What is meant by thematic study is restricted to idea or main idea reflected in the story of the literary works. In Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* the nuance of absurdity is explicitly drawn in the text of the play. How Nora as one of the main character feels disappointed on herself because she fails to find out her existence as a wife. She feels lonely and disparate for being treated as a doll in her own house by her husband.

The symbolical meaning of a doll represent a play think which has function as decoration which is less in meaning. The meaningless sense of a doll is addressed to Nora as a small creature in terms of less in meaning or purpose in
life such a portrayal is clearly pictured in the play *A Doll’s House*. This is the reason as well as the background of this thesis writing. That is why the title of this thesis is: An Analysis of Absurd Elements in Henrik Ibsen’s Play *A Doll’s House*.

### 1.2 The Problems of Analysis

The sense of absurdity appears because man fails to define the truth of his existence. It happens because there is feeling of confusion to differentiate what is right or false, what is true or wrong in the world. It seems there is no boundary anymore between right or wrong, true or false in man’s deed that makes him lost in his own world or existence. In relation to this conception, the problem of this thesis analysis is:

1. What makes hopelessness, disappointment, alienation happen in the man’s world in running the life as expressed in the play *A Doll’s House*?

2. How are the ways out resolved in order to escape from the absurd world in terms of hopelessness, disappointment, alienation as expressed in the play *A Doll’s House*?

### 1.3 The Objective of Analysis

The objective of this analysis is to describe the characteristics of absurd elements in terms of hopelessness, disappointment, alienation as reflected in the play *A Doll’s House*. In addition, this thesis is also related to the portrayal of the solution how the sense of absurdity achieved.
1.4 The Scope of Analysis

The scope of this analysis is directed to thematic expression of absurd elements through the portrayal of main characters such as Nora as a wife and Torvald Helmer as a husband including other characters such as Doctor Rank, Mrs. Linde and Nils Krogstad. Why characters are studied because the sense of absurd elements are directed to man, and man are embodied in the characters which are supposed to be human beings in the play or literary works thus the restriction is oriented to the characters’ feeling that result from hopelessness, disappointment, alienation.

1.5 The Significance of Analysis

Theoretically, the significance of this analysis is to strengthen literary study through its relation with philosophical concepts of absurdity. It means that literary work can be studied interdisciplinary to show the richness of literary insights. Practically, this analysis can be useful for further study about literary works based on the framework analysis of this thesis.

1.6 The Review of Related Literature

Henrik Ibsen’s play *A Doll’s House* is the main source of data analysis of absurdity in this thesis. The text of the play is the focus of attention in selecting the characteristics of absurd elements as portrayed in the play.
Martin Esslin’s *The Theatre of the Absurd* gives broad explanation about the sense of absurd elements. This book has been a great help to construe the basic understanding of absurdity.

Edwin Wilson’s *The Theater Experience* directs an understanding of what play or drama is in general. This book also covers essential elements of drama or play as one kind of literary works.

Mario Klarer’s *An Introduction to Literary Studies* clarifies basic framework of analyzing literary works. This book concerns about introductory steps of the realm of literary works in terms of studying them thus this book gives right clue for further analysis of literary works.