CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Discrimination against women's role and rights is still happened nowadays and the writer did not agree with the condition. It also happened to American women in the Second World War. The Second World War has had a massive impact to all nations including the United States. The United States got into the Second World War after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 (U.S. History, 2005: 221). The war itself involved everyone including women. Women replaced men's job while most of men were sent to the battlefield. Since then, for the first time women were confronted to new roles not only at home but also in the military. Thus, Women's Army Corps (WAC), Women Appointed for Volunteer Emergency Service (WAVES) and Women's Air Force Service Pilots (WASPS) were established to fulfill these needs. Women were recruited to work in many kinds of jobs including the assembly line. To promote this, the federal government created a kind of propaganda by creating the image of "Rosie the Riveter" to attract more women to join into the work force (Berkin, Miller, Cherny and Gormly, 2006: 809).

Though "Rosie the Riveter" symbolizes the image of a patriotic woman who was always pictured as doing manly tasks, the writer perceived the impression that the messages in the posters can be perceived as preserving discrimination against women

instead of suggesting equality. This phenomenon has triggered the writer to explore more about this issue where the image and role of women were seen differently by the people at that time.

1.2 Problem Formulation

This study is trying to analyze the following problems:

- To what extent did the posters for women workforce in World War II have strengthened the discrimination against women?
- How did the whole messages in the posters including images, words, and colors, suggests the discriminative points towards women?

1.3 Scope and Limitation

In conducting the analysis, the writer has selected 17 posters derived from digital official sources such as www.loc.gov, www.usmm.org, www.oberlin.edu, www.archieves.gov, www.ncmuseumofhistory.org, and www.history.navy.mil. The analysis limits on the images on the posters and the text lines.

1.4 Goals and Function

The goals of this study are to discover the ways and how the posters were created during Second World War and how it can be perceived as reflecting discrimination and undermining women. The function of this study is to show that there was an underlying message in every object including posters, although the posters were made under good intention to promote women's role, the meaning can be different in different time and era.

1.5 Research Method

The writer applies a qualitative method in collecting and analyzing the data, which are examined through library research. The library research is done by selecting posters, textbooks and journals which are relevant to the writer`s topic. Then, the writer uses some theories in the resources to further analyze and summarize her findings.

The writer first searches the posters of working women during the Second World War through the internet. 17 different posters are chosen to represent seven categories of women's issue to be highlighted in the discussion, which are American macho: "Rosie the Riveters", women's passivity, individualists, male superiority, temporary commodity, women as sentimental figures, and easy tasks.

The writer then looks for any clues in each picture that needs to be highlighted in the discussion, including the postures, colors, icons, compositions, writings, etc. First, the writer presents these clues through description and explanation one by one. Then, the writer summarizes them into each findings of each picture.