

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of five sub chapters to discuss. Those are the background of study, statement of research problem, objective, significance, scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of Study

Literature is a creative result of human being. Through the creativity process, an author who uses his or her mind and soul will create a literature. They will produce literary works that discuss everything about life. Life is the source an author to explore their creativity. Levin in Elizabeth and Burn (1973: 56) states that Literature is the expression of the society. The quotation above means that literature is a portrait or image of life in real world. Literature and life has relationship. Both of them are impossible to be separated.

On the other hand literature can reflect the condition of the social life in a certain time. Wellek and Warren in their book state that, Literature is a mirror of life, because literature is expression of human society (Wellek & Warren, 1963: 95). Literature presents the condition of social life in a certain time that contribute to the story of that literary work. The author also uses their imagination to create beautiful words to be accepted to readers and make the readers feel be included in the story. The literary work that will be discussed in this study is a novel, entitled *The Good earth*.

The Good Earth is one of a novel that is written by Pearl S. Buck. Pearl S. Buck is one of the great author from America in early 20th century. She was born in the end of 19th century. Since she was a child, she moved to China with her parents. In line with that statements Donald Roden in his book states that, These formative years spent in China were probably the most important ones in developing the ideas of Pearl Buck (Roden, 1965: 5). It can be concluded that her thinking was formed in China, and many of Pearl S. Buck's works uses her experience in her life. She creates many great works such as *East Wind, West Wind*, *The Good Earth*, *Sons*, *A House Divided*, *Letter From Peking*, etc.

The Good Earth is one of the book that is included in *House of Earth* trilogy. *The Good Earth* is the most interesting than two others books in the trilogy, *Sons* and *A House Divided*, and others Pearl S. Buck's works because this novel won the Pulitzer Prize in 1932. In line with that statement, Donald Roden in his book also states that, *The Good Earth* is probably the author's best work. In that novel she attempts to describe the cycle of life: beginning the story with her hero as a young man and completing it with his death (Roden, 1965: 9). Additionally Donald Roden in his book states that, it is not a political or a religious interest. Her interest is in people for themselves, and as she has so often said, the Chinese are the people she knows best (Roden, 1965: 10). From that statement it can be concluded that majorities of her works tell about social condition, especially in *The Good Earth* is one of her works that tells about the social condition of China in early 20th century.

Wang Lung is the main character in this novel. He is a Chinese peasant but not a simple man. He is obsessed with the land, in his mind the real wealth is the land. He works so hard, and if he has any extra silver he buys another piece of land. Almost this novel tells about Wang Lung's life. It begins with Wang Lung as a young man and ends with him as an old man near death. It also tells his rise from a poor man to a rich land owner. This novel is full of the story of the China's social condition. In *The Good Earth*, almost all of part in this novel are reflected as social condition in China, especially in society class, custom and marriage. This makes the writer interested to analyze about the social condition in China society in the early 20th century reflected from Wang Lung's life in *The Good Earth*.

Pearl S. Buck's novel entitled *The Good Earth* is chosen as source of the data. The Sociology of Literature is used to focus on the social condition of the China which is reflected in the novel. Besides, the sociology of literature theory is used to have a deep analysis of this novel, it is sharpened by portrait of China society in the early 20th century.

1.2 Statement of Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, this study formulates as the following questions, how does China's social condition in the early 20th century that is reflected in Wang Lung as the main character in *The Good Earth*?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to describe the portrait of China's social condition in the early 20th century through Wang Lung's life in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Theoretically, this study gives better understanding about sociology of work theory in the literary work especially in *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck. Practically, the writer hopes the readers understand well about portrait of China's social condition in early 20th century that is portrayed from the life of Wang Lung as the main character in *The Good Earth*. This study becomes a guideline for the other writers to analyze the similar topic.

1.5 Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is about sociology of work. This study focuses on social condition of China in 20th century that is portrayed from Wang Lung's life. The limitation of this study is the narrator explanation and Wang Lung and other characters utterances that had connection of China in 20th century.