

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes all of the matter that related to the reasons and aims of the study, such as the statements of the research problem, the objectives of the study, the significances of the study, and the scope and limitation of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Literature and society are the things that cannot be separated. They fill each other by means of the values and phenomenon in the society which always try to be explored and represented by literature through its genres and kinds of literary works. Literature has a function not only as an entertainer, but also as a chronicle of one period, travelling, or society. In practice, literature can obviously take the place of many things—of travel or sojourn in foreign lands, of direct experience, vicarious life; and it can be used by the historian as a social document (Wellek and Warren, 1963: 31). It is described that in practice, literature has many function and role, especially in a social life or history that need to be written as its documentation and an important chronicle from many experiences and stories that people can feel it by themselves through any kinds of literary works.

In fact, literature has many genres and one of them is poetry. Flanagan (2015), a contemporary literature expert states that *poetry is artistically rendering words in such a way as to evoke intense emotion or an Ah Ha! experience from the reader*. It can be seen that poetry is kind of literary works that is different from the other literary genres due to the using of artistic words and its function to

evoke an intense emotion from the reader. Poetry is a kind of literary works which lead the reader to have high imagination and interpretation through the words as stated by Samuel Johnson in Kennedy and Gioia (2005: 397) that poetry is the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason. Moreover, as the expert says that the poetry gives Ah Ha! experience from the reader because poetry becomes one of media which is used to draw the truth or the experience of life.

Although poetry is a literary work which is created by solid and dense word, however poetry is more perceptively, thoughtfully, and considerately, with more attention to sounds and connotation (Kennedy and Gioia, 2005: 398). As a literary works, poetry also contains several intrinsic elements. However, the elements that exist in poetry are different from the elements of the others literary works, such as drama, novel, prose, short story, etc. Then, poetry also has some devices or elements which are not available to prose, those are rime, alliteration, meter, and rhythms (Kennedy and Gioia, 2005: 398).

This study tries to extend one of the powers of poetry or poem in society as its role which is stated by Wallace Stevens in Kennedy and Gioia (2005: 397) that poetry is a revelation in words by means of the words. This study attempts to reveal class conflict between upper class and lower class people, and social condition of lower class people themselves in America through a poem by American poets because America is famous with its class system era and human segregation not only for black people from Africa, but also for its citizens. It is a very hard life for people who are included into underclass or lower class people

until America gets its modern era. It is undeniable that the class system and segregation lead to a miserable social condition on lower class people in which they feel that the segregation is unfair and inhumanely preys their rights as human being. Therefore, by those facts, this study is conducted with the title of *The Social Condition of Lower Class People in America in "Children of the Working Class"* by John Wieners.

A poem entitled "Children of the Working Class" has written in the first of May, 1879 by John Wieners, an American poet. It was at the Taunton State Hospital that Wieners wrote "Children of the Working Class," about the sons and daughters of the poor, whose mental and physical health was sacrificed before birth in factory and field labor (Petro, 2001). This poem can be said as Wieners himself due to his life as a child who was born in working class family before he gets his success later.

Marxist criticism is chosen as the approach to analyze this poem due to the messages that is tried to be extended by the author. Talking about class system and class conflict means that talking about Marxism. Marxist class system is divided based on economical power. Tyson (1999: 50) claims that from a Marxist perspective, differences in socioeconomic class divide people in ways that are much more significant than do differences in religion, race, ethnicity, and gender. Then, the poor are oppressed even more effectively, however by ideology (Tyson, 1999: 52).

Class system is a major problem in society, so that there are some researchers that use this topic. First is Emmy Munawaroh (2012), a student of

University of Trunojoyo Madura. She analyses a class system in England by using Marxist criticism in a novel by Mark Twain. Her thesis entitled *Class System in England in Mark Twain's The Prince and The Pauper*. Second is Daryl John Trevor Sparkes (2006) who analyses a social documentary film by using Marxist ideology, in particular theories relating to class structure and the class struggle as his dissertation for the award of Doctor of Philosophy. His analysis is entitled *Screening Revolution: Constructing a Marxist Theoretical Framework for Social Documentary Filmmakers Analysing Class Structure and the Class Struggle*.

1.2 Statement of The Research Problem

The problem that is going to be analyzed in this study is formulated as: How is the social condition of the lower class people in America which is portrayed in the “Children of the Working Class” poem by John Wieners?

1.3 Objective of The Study

This study is tried to explain the lower class people in America in John Wieners poem that is: To explain the social condition of the lower class people in America that is portrayed in the “Children of the Working Class” poem by John Wieners.

1.4 Significances of The Study

Theoretically, this study gives benefit to give more knowledge about Marxist class conflict and social condition of the lower class people, especially in America that portrayed in “Children of the Working Class” poem by John Wieners. Practically, this study can be an escort to the students, especially English department students who wants to analyze the poem or use the theory.

1.5 Scope and Limitation of The Study

This study analyzes the social condition of the lower class people in America that portrayed in “Children of the Working Class” poem by John Wieners. The scope of this study is the theory of class system by Karl Marx which is used to analyze the poem. Moreover, this study is limited on the dictions, symbols, and imageries which show the lower class people in America and their social condition as the data of the analysis.