

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter reveals background of the research, problem statements, objectives of the study, benefits of the research, and thesis organization.

#### **A. Background of the Research**

Literature is used to express person's idea in viewing life in the society. We can find some ideas, messages and portrait of a society by exploring it. It is the mirror of human life that portrays human feeling, thought, imagination, and perception which can be viewed based on personal judgment.

Actually in some ways women are equal to men. But, in many societies women become the second. They are characterized as passive, dependent and emotional, whereas men are characterized as aggressive and active. Women have been subordinate to men in status, mobility and public leadership. They should do domestic sphere, nurturing children, maintaining the household and serving their husbands (Madsen, 2000:2).

The impact of feminism on literary criticism over the past thirty-five years has been profound and wide-ranging. It has transformed the academic study of literary texts, fundamentally altering the canon of what is taught and setting a new agenda for analysis, as well as radically influencing the parallel processes of publishing, reviewing and literary reception. A host of

philosophy, history, religious studies, sociology, anthropology, film and media studies, cultural studies, musicology, geography, economics and law (Plain and Sellers, 2007: 1).

Today, if we pay attention more to the development of women's problems, especially in the equality on the right between a man and a woman, we will find that the issues on women are controversial and complex. Those problems need more solution and discussion. Those problems are not only the responsibility for the government, but also our responsibility to solve those problems. As we know that the problems of women are the problems of society, because women are the important part of society.

Since past time, society has been dominated by men. For a long time, women have considered living from relying on men's power. Men and women mostly follow the concept that a woman cannot stand by herself without the support of a man. Men are considered as the first class in society, while women are the second. This conception eventually leads to the role distinctions between a man and a woman in society. This fact has shown us that in the whole of the life aspects, the women are always dominated by men. This domination is usually called by patriarchal system in the society.

Patriarchy is the structural and ideological system that perpetuates the privileging of masculinity. Such systems make women overlook their own

control female sexual behavior. Women, according to this view, were valuable only on the basis of their ability to reproduce (Kuhlman, 2008: 21).

A theory of sexuality becomes feminist to the extent it treats sexuality as a social construct of male power: defined by men, forced on women, and constitutive in the meaning of gender. Such an approach centers feminism on the perspective of the subordination of women to men as it identifies sex—that is, the sexuality of dominance and submission—as crucial, as a fundamental, as on some level definitive (MacKinnon, 1989: 316).

Since women have been treated as inferior they realize here that they have to do something. Thus, they can have equal right with other persons especially men. Therefore, they did a movement. According to Holman and Harmon (1986: 201) such movement is now called feminism movement.

A female inequality is defined as a state where women are universally subordinate to men; men are dominant due to their participation in public life and their relegation to the domestic sphere. The female inequality is described in the Buck's *Pavilion of Women*. The Chinese tradition influences the people's point of view about women in that era.

Buck's *Pavilion of Women* is a fairly radical approach to the subject of men and women in the decade of the 40s. It is the story of Madame Wu, a woman whose surprising decision to retire from married life and select a concubine for her husband upsets her extended household.

The novel is about a woman named Madame Wu. She lives in a patriarchal society which believes that a man is the head of a social unit. Actually, patriarchy itself means ruled by the male head of a social unit. However, feminist writers have used the concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. Buck here tried to show about a woman named Madame Wu that struggles to have the same right as men in some aspects of life. The male domination and Chinese culture force Madame Wu to be a woman that has no right to have a good education.

Madame Wu lived in the era of the Second World War when many foreigners came and visited China. It is also the era of women's movement in Europe and America. However, China still maintains their tradition and beliefs to restrict women. They believe that women are not allowed to work outside of the house because they do not have a smart brain like men.

Women just become wives that give birth, nurture the babies and do the household matters. It also happens to Madame Wu. She did and handled the household matters like choosing a wife for her sons, doing accounting, and designing the house. However, in her fortieth birthday she realized that she had to do something for her freedom from the restrictions.

Based on those aspects, the researcher would like to analyze the characteristics, symptoms and effects of feminism as shown in *Pearl S Buck's Pavilion of Women* novel, and the title is: **GENDER EQUALITY IN PEARL S BUCK'S PAVILION OF WOMEN NOVEL (1946).**

## **B. Problem Statements**

There are some problems that the writer wants to discuss in this thesis. Those are:

1. how is the social condition of America and China in 1940s?
2. how is the personal profile of Madame Wu in Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel?
3. what gender equalities are described in Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel?

## **C. Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. to describe the social condition of America and China in 1940.
2. to portray the personal profile of Madame Wu in Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel.
3. to reveal gender equalities described in Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel.

## **D. Benefits of the Research**

The writer divides the benefits of the research into two aspects; theoretically and practically. Theoretically concerns with the analysis of feminism theory on the novel. Practically concerns with the application of feminism theory found on the novel.

1. Theoretically, the writer wants to find out the gender equality shown by Madame Wu in Pearl. S Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel based on

theory. The researcher analyzes Madame Wu's profile and her way of life to analyze the gender equality in the novel based on feminism theory.

2. Practical: to get deeper understanding about gender equalities in Pearl S Buck's *Pavilion of Women* novel. Such finding help us to understand more about feminism.

### **E. Thesis Organization**

This thesis is divided into seven chapters. Those are:

1. Chapter I is introduction. It provides a summary of the background of this thesis, the problem statements, the objectives of the study, the benefits of the research and the thesis organization.
2. Chapter II is review of related literature. It consists of previous study and the underlying theory.
3. Chapter III is research method. It consists of type of the study, the object of the study, the type of collecting data, the technique of collecting data, and the technique of the data analysis.
4. Chapter IV is social historical background. It consists of social historical background of America and China in 1940s and the life of Pearl S Buck.
5. Chapter V is profile of the main character, Madame Wu.
6. Chapter VI is feminist analysis.
7. Chapter VII is conclusion and suggestion.