STEREOTYPE OF CHINESE WOMEN IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PORTRAYED IN PEARL S. BUCK'S THE GOOD EARTH (SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE APPROACH)

A THESIS

Submitted to Faculty of Cultural Science Hasanuddin University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements to Obtain a Sarjana Degree in English Literature Study Program

AINUN TAMIRA

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ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM

FACULTY OF CULTURAL SCIENCES

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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
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APPROVAL FORM

With reference to the letter of the Dean of Cultural Sciences Number 374/UN4.9.1/KEP/2020 regarding supervision, we hereby confirm to approve the thesis draft by Ainun Tamira (F21116321) to be examined at the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

Makassar, 27 October 2020

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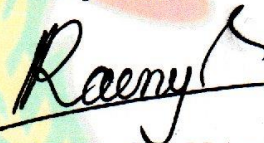First Supervisor,

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THESIS

STEREOTYPE OF CHINESE WOMEN IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PORTRAYED IN PEARL S. BUCK'S THE GOOD EARTH (SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE APPROACH)
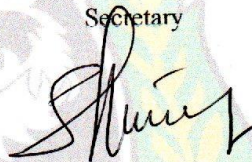
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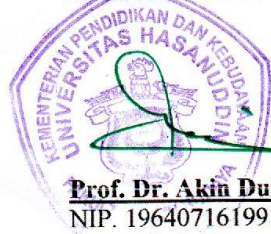Chairman   Secretary

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Today, Monday, 23 November 2020, the Board of Thesis Examination has kindly approved a thesis by AINUN TAMIRA (Student No. F21116321) entitled, **STEREOTYPE OF CHINESE WOMEN IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY PORTRAYED IN PEARL S. BUCK'S THE GOOD EARTH (SOCIOLOGY OF LITERATURE APPROACH)**, submitted in fulfillment of one of the requirements of undergraduate thesis examination to obtain Sarjana Sastra (S.S) Degree at the English Department, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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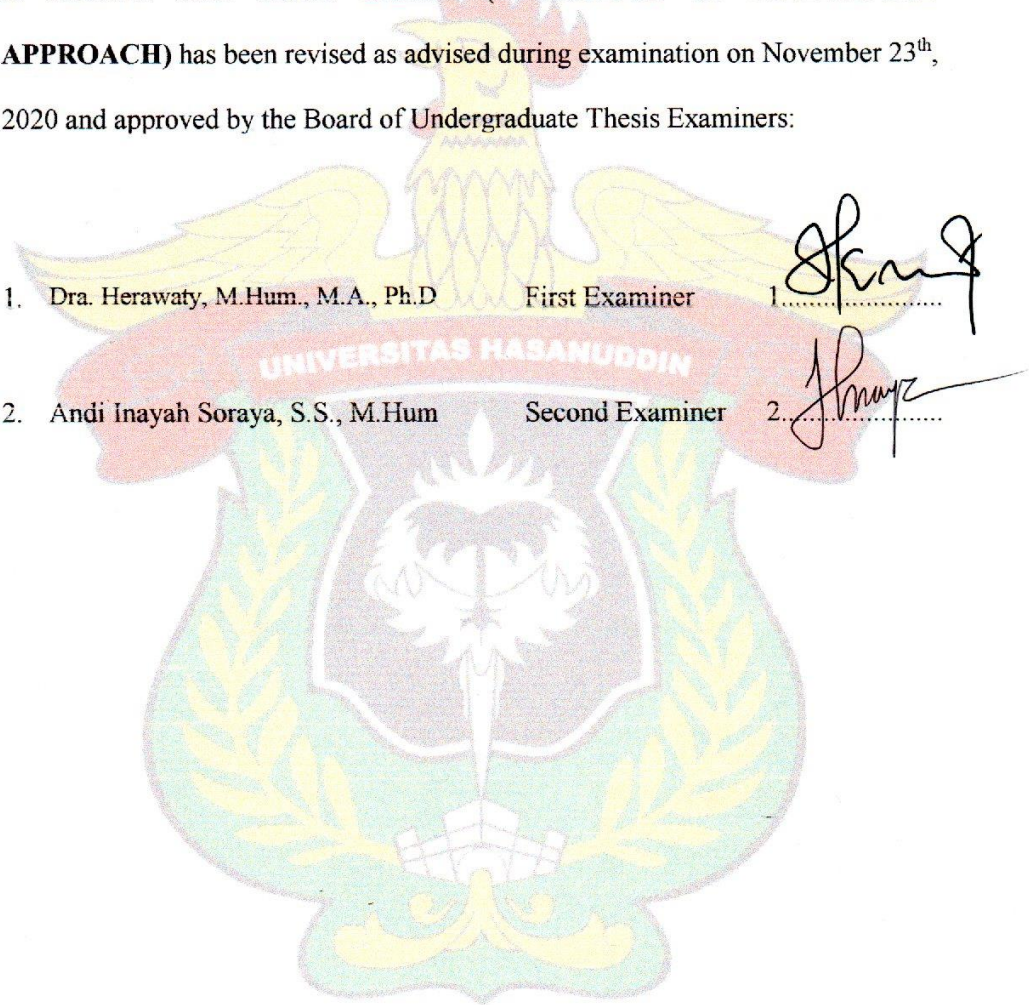
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Makassar, 26 November 2020

Yang menyatakan,

Ainun Tamira

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The researcher recognizes that this thesis is still far from perfection. Hence, the all of the constructive inputs and criticisms are highly welcomed. The researcher hopes that this thesis will be helpful for the readers, whether for the students who just love to read or for the further researchers who want to analyze a topic related to this thesis.

Makassar, 23rd November 2020

The researcher

Ainun Tamira

ABSTRACT

AINUN TAMIRA. 2020. *Stereotype of Chinese Women in Early 20th Century Portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's The Good Earth (Sociology of Literature Approach)* supervised by **Abidin Pammu** and **Sitty Sahraeny**

This research is aiming to; (1) identify the stereotype of Chinese women as portrayed in the novel *The Good Earth* by Pear. S. Buck, and (2) determine how the stereotype is portrayed in the novel *The Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck.

The researcher uses sociology of literature theory by Alan Swingewood in analyzing the stereotype of Chinese women, and how the stereotype affects the position of women in the early 20th century. Furthermore, this research also uses descriptive qualitative method to elaborate the novel.

Based on the result of the research, the writer concludes that the stereotype of Chinese women in early 20th century can be divided into three aspects, which are the role of women, beauty standard, and women inferiority. The role of women in the novel is then divided into three, which are; (1) women as a wife whose purpose is to be the legal companion of a man, and also as a property that produces descendant to their husband, (2) women as a concubine that are bought by men whose had a family beforehand, and said men chooses to do so only to satisfy their biological needs, and (3) women as a slave, which are women who were sold by their families for economic reasons. Moreover, the beauty standard as portrayed in the novel mainly focuses on foot binding. Lastly, women inferiority can be proven by the fact that women does not have any freedom of speech, and also giving birth to a daughter is deemed to be a disaster for the family.

Keyword: *Stereotype, Sociology of Literature,* and *Chinese Woman*

ABSTRAK

AINUN TAMIRA. 2020. *Stereotype of Chinese Women in Early 20th Century Portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's The Good Earth (Sociology of Literature Approach)* dibimbing oleh **Abidin Pammu** dan **Sitti Sahraeny**.

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk; (1) mengidentifikasi stereotipe perempuan Cina yang digambarkan dalam novel *The Good Earth* karya Pearl S. Buck, dan (2) menentukan bagaimana stereotip digambarkan di dalam novel *The Good Earth* karya Pearl S. Buck.

Penulis menggunakan teori sosiologi sastra oleh Alan Swingewood dalam menganalisis stereotip perempuan Cina dan bagaimana stereotip tersebut mempengaruhi kedudukan perempuan di awal abad ke 20. Selain itu, penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk mengelaborasi novel.

Dari hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan bahwa stereotip perempuan Cina di awal abad ke 20 dibedakan atas tiga aspek yaitu melalui peran perempuan, melalui standar kecantikan, dan melalui inferioritas perempuan. Peran perempuan di dalam novel lalu dibagi atas tiga yakni; (1) perempuan sebagai seorang istri yang dijelaskan sebagai pendamping legal dari seorang suami dan juga sebagai properti penghasil keturunan kepada sang suami, (2) perempuan sebagai selir yang dibeli oleh laki-laki yang telah berkeluarga atas pilihannya untuk menemani kebutuhan biologisnya, dan (3) perempuan sebagai budak adalah perempuan yang dijual oleh keluarganya kepada keluarga kaya demi menyambung kehidupan. Adapun standar kecantikan perempuan Cina di dalam novel ini berfokus kepada kaki perempuan yang terikat. Terakhir, inferioritas perempuan dapat dibuktikan dari perempuan yang tidak memiliki hak dalam berpendapat juga melahirkan anak perempuan dianggap pembawa malapetaka terhadap keluarga.

Kata Kunci: *Stereotype, Sociology of Literature,* dan *Chinese women*

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Since a few centuries ago, stereotyping has been a recurring phenomenon in the society. Stereotyping is often done to classify a certain group of people or organization. For example, society tend to stereotype woman, in the way that women in general are perceived as physically inferior, soft, *et cetera*. In the other hand, men are generally thought to be strong, hardworking, and so on.

Furthermore, stereotyping also occurred towards races. Mongoloid races, especially Chinese people, are notorious for being calculated (cheap), or known as a mathematical prodigy. Caucasians are perceived to be aristocratic, whilst people of Negroid race are often seen as a group of low social class people that is only useful as a slave. Of course, these are extreme examples, perhaps even ancient, but the fact remains that these examples are happening either in the past or in the present. Due to the fact above, some people may benefit from stereotypes. Unfortunately, for the others stereotyping can affect their reputation, to the point that society in general genuinely believes that demeaning a certain group of people is appropriate.

When discussing about women and women stereotypes, obviously these values that society has embedded towards them will be a cause of concern to these women themselves. Especially in the modern era, where the stereotypes of women may even prevent them from achieving their dreams. Women with their stereotyped to be nothing more than mere housewives that wanted to be more, to break the status quo, are going to be judged as a rebellious woman, and generally won't be seen as a "good" individual. Women who are often forced to be weak will be mistreated by her partner, either verbally or non-verbally, or even mistreated by other women.

It is undeniable that the issue of women stereotype is a popular topic in literary works. Literature is a media for people to convey their imagination, by the means of structured sets of words that are influenced by personal experience, social phenomenon, or natural phenomenon within certain period. Novel is a type of literary work. Novel is a form of literature that contains long narration, with a complexity of plot on its story. Novel consists of intrinsic and extrinsic properties, which are connected with each other. Intrinsic properties are the aspects that breathes life in the universe portrayed on the novel, which consists of character, characterization, plot, setting, moral value, and point of view. Meanwhile, extrinsic properties are the aspects that influences the creation of said novel, either from the existing social or natural phenomenon at that era, or a personal experience from the writer themselves.

In this research, the researcher will be focusing on discussing about stereotypes of Chinese women in early 20th century, the researcher perceives that the story of the novel "The Good Earth" by Pearl S. Buck is relevant when discussing about the condition of woman and all of the disadvantaging classifications. Pearl S. Buck was American author who was born in Virginia but dedicated all of her life in China as she was raised in the land of her beloved China. The novel itself tells a story about the life of a poor farmer (Wanglung) that can only marry an unattractive slave woman (O-Lan) because of his financial condition, in which he was unable to provide for an attractive woman who aren't a slave. As time passes by, fortune came by to Wan Lung's family, and now he is able to afford a concubine (Lotus). In this novel, there are stereotypes of Chinese women in early 20th century, i.e. being a devoted wife, slave, or a concubine. Born from Buck's very own hand, this novel is awarded a Pulitzer (1932) and a Nobel Prize (1938) award in the same year, and this convinced the author that this novel has its own uniqueness and authenticity in literature.

The portrayal of women stereotypes in this novel is backed by the Pearl S. Buck personal experience, whom lived in China for a long time and experienced first-hand the stereotypes of women in early 20th century, leading to the birth of "The Good

Earth". The experience of the author validates the assumption towards the stereotypes of Chinese women in early 20th century itself.

There are a few existing researches regarding "The Good Earth" namely Faizatul Widak and Muh. Khoiri's journal titled "Men's Oppression in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*", Hadiyan Muhammad Hariz in his thesis titled "Chinese Women as seen in *The Good Earth*", Susiyani in her thesis titled "The Influence of Other Characters to Wang Lung's Character Development in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*", and Avi Mahaningtyas in her thesis titled "The Analysis of Characters and Setting in Pearl S. Buck's Novel: The Good Earth". The approach of choice in these researches are different, in accordance to the aim of their research and leaving a gap to be filled by the researcher of this thesis to discuss about women stereotype. This particular issue is different from the previous researches due to its nature in specifying to the effect of said stereotype as perceived by society. This is also the reason why it is important to further examine this aspect due to the existence of women stereotype even in the modern day. Hence, the researcher will be researching "The Good Earth" novel by Pearl S. Buck, and the research is titled "Stereotypes of Chinese Women in Early 20th Century Portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*".

1.2. Identification of the Problems

After reading the novel several times, the researcher then identifies some problems presented in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth;*

1. Chinese women in the early 20th century does not have the freedom of choice based on their will.

2. The portrayal of women in the novel is monotonous and highly discriminative.

3. The portrayal of the different social class in The Good Earth is vivid.

4. The power of man in a family is overtly portrayed.

1.3. Scope of the Problem

In accordance to the problems aforementioned above, the researcher then decided to limit the problems to only discuss about the stereotype of women in *The Good Earth* and the impacts of the stereotype received by women themselves.

1.4. Research Question

Based on the aforementioned discussion, the writer then develops some question regarding the problems as follows:

1. What are the stereotypes of Chinese woman as portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*?

2. How are the stereotyping portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*?

1.5. Objectives of the Study

This research aims to:

1. To identify the stereotypes of Chinese woman as portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth.*

2. To determine how stereotyping is portrayed in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth.*

1.6.Significances of Study

The result of this study is expected to be beneficial, to provide detailed information about Chinese society, specifically regarding women stereotype that occurred in early 20th century china. It is also hoped that the research will impose the readers to be more aware of women's position and role. Furthermore, the researcher also hopes that this research may push future researchers to utilize literary works as a subject of research.

1.7. Sequences of The Study

The research is divided into five chapters that are explained as follows:

1. Chapter I is the Introduction. This chapter consists of background, scope of the problems, research questions, objectives of the writing, and sequences of the writing.

2. Chapter II is the Literary Review. This chapter consists of literature review which provides review of some previous study and applies some theories to support this analysis.

3. Chapter III is the Research Methodology. This chapter provides the method of collecting data and method of analyzing data.

4. Chapter IV is the Analysis of Data. This chapter presents the result of data that has been analyzed.

5. Chapter V is the Conclusion and Suggestion to whom want to analyze the exact literary work.

   Bibliography is the list which contains valuable and useful books and articles used in order to complete this research.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Previous Studies

In the process of solving problems raised and examined by the author, the author seeks several relevant sources. In this process, the author finds several theses that discuss the novel The Good Earth as follows.

Faizatul Widak and Much. Khoiri (2015) in their research titled "Men's Oppression in Pearl S. Buck's *The Good Earth*" is aiming to depict the men's oppression in this novel, and how the women are able to survive the oppression. This research uses the descriptive analysis method, the concept of oppression and the theory of patriarchy and radical feminism.

Hadiyan Muhammad Hariz (2015) in his thesis titled "Chinese Women are seen in The Good Earth" is focusing on analyzing the roles and status of Chinese women as seen in Pearl S. Buck's "The Good Earth". The approach used by the writer to study the subject is the expressive theories approach.

Susiyani (2004) in her thesis entitled "The Influence of Other Characters to Wang Lung's Character Development in Pearl S. Buck's The Good Earth" is aiming to study two things, the first being examining Wang Lung's character and its development, and the second is to observe the other characters that contribute to the development of Wang Lung's character. The subject is analyzed by using the objective approach.

Avi Mahaningtyas (1991) in her thesis entitled "The Analysis of Characters and Setting in Pearl S. Buck's Novel: The Good Earth" is aiming to understand the story of "The Good Earth" by analyzing the characters, which, the writer argues, that in order to understand the character one must also analyze the setting used as the sociocultural background affects the character themselves. The thesis is written descriptively, and

the characters are analyzed using the mimetic approach, meanwhile, the setting is analyzed using the sociocultural-historic approach.

Based on these previous studies, the writer will reveal about the Chinese women's stereotype portrayed in the novel The Good Earth. The result of the previous studies supports the theory and analysis of this thesis, because they utilized various theories, which enable the researcher to fill in the gap of aspects of this novel that has not yet to be studied. This research is different from the studies above, signified by the use sociology of literature theory.

2.2. Sociology of Literature

Sociology is the study of society, the institutions within society, and the occurring processes within a society. According to Swingewood (1972:11) It is an attempt to understand society; how it became, how it works, and why it persists, through a more scientific way.

Throughout the years, Literature has affected society in many ways, as it often inspired people, sparking a flame within an individual to later be burning hot with passion. According to Sosa (2015:93), literature may become a major factor in psychosocial development, since it gives us the opportunity to see the world through the lens of other people, and compares it with our own. Ironically, literature itself is, in a sense, a miniaturized, or a replica of society. Within a literary works is a character, a character whom is surrounded with other human beings, governed by the existing rules, living in a society of its own. As with sociology, literary works is also concerned with the social world of a man (i.e. the character), and how he adapt to his world, namely other humans in his surroundings, the economic, political, and other institutions, the conflicts which he faced, as well as the relationship between different groups (may it be racial, or other) and/or classes.

Thus, literary works is directly related to real life. The society inside a literary work may be heavily influenced by the status quo of the society on a certain era, which can be seen through the plethora of how society and culture is being portrayed differently in a literary works, between one culture and the other, or between a time period and the other. After all, literary work is a product of a human, a human which experiences different things by living in different area or different times, which influences how the society is being portrayed inside their work.

Based on the passage above, the researcher concludes that the sociology of literature is a study which focuses on the society inside a literary work, and how it reflects to the actual society which exists in this world. A literature can be analyzed through many perspectives. Taine (1886: 1) stated that literature is not only a product of imagination, but is also a reflection of mannerisms and thought process. He also argued that with literature, it is possible to look back through the centuries, and examine how the people of that era thinks, acts, and feels. Another perspective, as stated by Endraswara (2013:77) that all literary work no matter how obscure is a product of an actual social concern, which suggests that literary works did depict a certain social condition, presumably from when it was written.

In conclusion, sociology of literature is a theory in literary research which perceives literary work to be a product that is closely related to the phenomenon of the society of that period of time, whether about history, environment, economical condition, or even the personal experience of the literary work's authors themselves. The society that is being discussed here is a group of people in the period of time in which the literary work took place and becomes the inspiration behind the creation of the literary work itself. Thus, the sociology of literature approach is an approach towards work of literature in which it connects the work of literature with the aspect of social (society) due to the author's experience and view of social life.

2.3. Social and Culture

Sociocultural theories are based on the model of social constructivism that considers knowledge as a socially constructed concept by interaction and communicated between individuals (Bryman, 2001). In the collaborative environment, sociocultural theories characterize learning and development as being embedded in social activities and occurring as a learner communicates with other individuals, objects and events (Vygotsky, 1978).

Human cognition is defined by sociocultural theories as established through as an person communicates with other people, participation in social activities, items, and occurrences. Therefore, it is difficult to distinguish human cognitive development from the social, cultural and historical conditions from which such development occurs (Johnson, 2009). Culturally designed instruments such as language, materials, signs , and symbols that generate special human modes of higher-level thought mediate this social and cultural interaction. Vygotsky stressed the primacy of social interaction in human cognitive development in his well-known genetic law of development, in which human mental abilities emerge twice: "first, at the social level, and later, at the person level; first, between people (interpsychological) and then within the learner (intrapsychological)" (Vygotsky, 1978:57).

In addition, children are born, according to Vygotsky, with fundamental biological constraints on their minds. However, and culture offers "intellectual adaptation tools." These tools help children to use their skills in a way that is sensitive to the culture in which they live. For example, while memory techniques such as note-taking might be emphasized by one culture, another could use resources such as reminders or rote memorization.

2.4. Stereotypes

All stereotypes are cognitive pictures and concepts that individuals use to subconsciously link physical features (like skin color, hair color, facial features) to physical actions. Individuals tend to string these stereotypic images together to form a vague representation of an out-group (Ford and Stangor, 1992.) In this manner, racial stereotypes tend to take the place of direct experience and knowledge (Bobo and Hutchings, 1996.) Ford and Tonander (1998) described some basic functions of stereotypes. Individuals tend to simplify or reduce the amount of information needed to understand the world around him or her into categories in order to fill in the lack of information not gained from direct interaction or by researching for information about an out-group. By doing so they are forming stereotypes about that out-group. Categorization into different groups occurs in a meaningful way. A group of individuals will tend to develop a variety of beliefs and stereotypes about another group. In doing so, most in-group members will use the same or similar racial stereotypes about that out-group.

Additionally, Ford and Tonander (1992) found that stereotypes can develop to a stronger degree when in-group members perceive out-group members to be homogenous throughout the group or when in-group members perceive the out-group to be vastly different from in-group members. Likewise, when in-group members perceive an out-group to have a wide variety of features, or that the out-group's members appear similar to in-group members, then in-group members tend to develop fewer stereotypes that are less widely believed in (Ford and Tonander, 1998.) Gordon Allport (1954) defined a racial stereotype as "an exaggerated belief associated with a category. Its function is to justify (rationalize) our conduct in relation to that category." Individuals tend to use racial stereotypes without questioning their validity. By not verifying the validity of racial stereotype an individual is willing to accept it as true even though it may have no truth to it at all. An individual tends to use one or more racial stereotypes as a rationalization to explain information about an out-group.

Accordingly, if one rationalization/stereotype does not fit, then the individual tends to refer to another rather than question the validity of the stereotype(s).

To illustrate this last statement Allport referred to a study of Whites in a California county. The study first interviewed local White Americans on stereotypes about Armenian Americans. The study found that the stereotypes tended to portray Armenians as dishonest, lying, and deceitful compared to in-group members. Contrasting this result with the county's criminal records and registered complaints failed to support these assumptions. Clearly, there was no direct relationship between facts and the creation of those racial stereotypes. Moreover, Allport found that minor differences between groups can lead to exaggerations of the truth and thus to new stereotypes. To show how this works, Allport referred to studies on comparative education levels. Such studies found that Jews tended to score only slightly higher than Whites on college entrance exams and IQ exams while Blacks tended to score only slightly lower than Whites. Despite this minor difference, many Whites believed stereotypes describing Jews as very intelligent and Blacks as very stupid.