

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter provides general information about this research. This section contains the research background which begins by defining the research topic and also contains the reasons for choosing the research topic chosen by the researcher as well as information about a research problem which will later be studied by the researcher. then there is a research question related to the problem of the research topic. Next, there is a research purpose which contains the purpose of conducting this research and there is also research significance which contains the benefits of this research.

#### **1.1 Research Background**

Literature can be said to be a reflection of society, even the value of literature is closely related to the social life of the general public, so that in a literary work there are many things related to social problems and even things related to violence in society, but these are often displayed subtly by writers, and also every literary work can describe certain social groups and problems in it (Suwardi, 2011, p. 169). Based on this quote, the researcher understands that literary works reflect the social conditions of society, such as social life, values that exist in society, and also social problems. In addition, literature as a reflection of people's lives as well as social diseases that arise in society, is intended to make people realize their mistakes and correct them. In addition, literature is often presented with descriptions of what people in society think, say and do, and this also has a considerable impact on the development of social life. Meanwhile, literature can influence the shape of civilization and expose injustice. The creation of literary works is based on the author's imagination, in the imagination there are ideas, thoughts, and feelings of an author that will later be poured into the form of literary works, but it is not uncommon for authors to also find ideas from observing the social environment or social conditions around them. Pradopo (2002, p. 59) states that literary works are directly or indirectly influenced by the author's environmental experience. This is reinforced by Gebstein's opinion in (Damono,

1978, p. 4) that the concept of literary sociology, namely literary works cannot be fully understood without being connected to the culture and civilization that produced them. This means that literary works are reading materials that are entertaining and enjoyable, and contain life values and morals or life lessons.

Literary works are a form of human artistic expression that has beauty and a deep meaning for the author. Eagleton (1996, p. 2) says that literary works perfect everyday language, literature as a writing changes ordinary language to be more aesthetic and meaningful. Literature often involves the creative, artistic and sometimes complex use of language that goes beyond ordinary communication. It is known that a literary work can amplify ordinary language or words to become more beautiful, vivid, powerful and impactful. This change is of course followed by some rules and styles of authorship of a literary work that include the use of similes, metaphors, rhythms, and others. Overall, this highlights the unique qualities of literary language that distinguish it from ordinary texts or language, emphasizing its artistic and expressive nature so that it can be said that the placement of literary works in cultural traditions that give them additional meaning is a mirror and reflection of the norms, values, and social dynamics of society. This definition then provides a rich analytical framework for exploring how literature functions as a unique medium of communication, incorporating aesthetic elements and social and cultural messages. Through the transformation of language, authors can create reading experiences that not only entertain, but also stimulate critical thinking and deep reflection on the human condition and its environment. This also indirectly explains that the creation of a literary work will evolve following various periods and cultures so that the literary works reflect and influence the social and cultural context in which they were created.

Literary works are a form of human expression that uses language as its main medium to express ideas, imagination, feelings and experiences of the author. Literary works can be found in various forms, styles, characteristics and purposes. In general, literary works are divided into several types, each of which describes life and conveys the author's message. There are several forms of literary works including poetry, prose, short stories, novels, drama, and movies. Poetry is a form

of literary work that prioritizes the aesthetics of language, rhythm, and the use of other language styles. Poetry is often used as a means of expressing human feelings, thoughts and experiences in writing. Poems are usually organized into lines and stanzas with special attention to the sound patterns and structure. Eagleton views poetry as a form of expression that is full of meaning, beyond its unique structure. Eagleton (2007, p. 25) says that poetry is the most concentrated form of language, rich in allusions and dense and poetry is a fictional and inventive moral statement verbally. Based on this, a poem contains thoughts and messages that the author wants to convey, besides that it is also mentioned that poetry has its distinctiveness as a form of literary work that combines imaginative expression, moral contemplation, and the poet's personal touch. Unlike poetry, which often has rhythm or rhyme in its writing, prose is a literary work that prioritizes fluency and regularity in its writing. As said by Eagleton (2007, p. 25) that prose is a literary work written in the form of paragraphs and ordinary sentences, it does not have a rhyming structure. So prose allows the author to convey ideas, ideas, stories or arguments more freely. Prose literary works can develop and be found in other literary works such as short stories and novels. A short story is generally a literary work of the prose variety and is usually shorter than a novel, this is because short stories focus on telling a single event. Abrams (1999, p. 286) says that short stories are literary works of prose, short stories tell an event or an incident and there is also a setting of action, thought and dialogue of the characters which then enter into an artful plot. like novels, the plot form or theme of a story in a short story can be romantic, satirical, and even tragic. the story in a short story will be presented from one of the many points of view of the characters.

Novels are a form of literary work that has a more complex plot than short stories, as well as in-depth character development and themes. Abrams (1999, p. 190) states that novels are known to be very long and extensive works of prose literature. novels are very different from short stories, this is because novels allow for a greater variety of characters and also allow them to explore the characters and motives of their characters, in addition to novels also present more plot development. This makes it a very complex literary work. Novels are a variety of

prose besides short stories and romances, in which there are events experienced by the characters in a systematic and structured manner. Abrams (in Atmazaki, 2005, p. 40) states that novels are longer and more complex stories than short stories, which reveal something about human experience. This is also in accordance with the thoughts of Wellek and Warren (2014, p. 260) saying that novels are a picture of real life and behavior from the era when the novel was written. Thus, novels are literary works that are closely related to human life. Meanwhile, drama is a form of literary work written to be staged, the difference with the previous literary work is staging. Drama requires actors to dialogue and act out the story on stage, the actors in a drama are called actors. Abrams (1999, p. 69) says that drama is a form of composition designed for performance in a theater, where actors act out a role and perform the actions shown and speak pre-written dialogue. Similar to drama, film is also a literary work that requires staging and actors to make it. The only difference is that movies are not staged on stage but in front of a camera lens which will then produce moving images. Movies often involve many art forms such as scriptwriting, acting, cinematography, and directing. Of the various forms of literary works that have been described previously, researchers have a very deep interest in novels, of course this is reasonable because novels are literary works that have a very broad storytelling and are also very close to human life and the problems that exist in their social environment.

It is known that literary works use language as a medium, as in some literary works such as novels, films and dramas that contain conversations that of course use language, actually language is not only used in the form of conversation but body gestures, facial expressions and others. Therefore, language is a social creation of literature to present picture of life, and life is a social reality. Swingwood (1972, p. 11) explains that sociology is a science and an objective study of humans in society, the study of institutions and social processes. This means that sociology is the study of human life and the process of human life in a social institution such as in a job or group, and also examines the phenomena that occur in it such as problems between people, social inequality and social stratification that distinguishes the upper and lower classes in society. Likewise, literary works in the

form of novels often include themes in the form of various life problems such as religion, philosophy, law, psychology, sociology, ethics, and politics, this is because literary works are very close to human life. Therefore, novels can be said to be an important part of the social and cultural process.

The development of literature is a phenomenon that cannot be separated from the development of human life. In every period of human life, literary works are created based on various elements such as social life and social problems in society. Novels are literary works that are created based on various periods. The period of English literature is at least divided into several main periods, including the old english period, middle english period and modern period. The Old English period, also known as the Anglo-Saxon period, began around the 5th century with the invasion of Celtic England by Germanic tribes, and ended in 1066. The literature of this period began with oral literature and the development of written literature began around the 7th century with the development of Christianity (Abrams, 1999, p. 211). Literary works in this period used a language that was very different from modern English, this was due to the influence of the Germanic language, literary works in the old english period were mostly epic and religious poetry, the themes contained were heroism, destiny and religion. Middle English period started from 1066 to 1500. Literary works in this period began to show their development towards language change, starting with vocabulary and language structure, this is due to the Norman conquest in 1066 which brought great influence from French into English. As Abrams (1999, p. 211) says that the Norman conquest had a radical impact on English language, life, and culture. so that old English has turned into modern English. Even so, literary works in this period still have religious themes in them. Then, the Modern Period is a literary period that is also divided into two parts, namely, Early Modern which took place from 1500 to 1700, and Late Modern starting from 1700 until now. The development of literary works in this modern period is quite rapid, with the development of language that is getting better and also the standardization of grammar that allows many literary works to be created in this era. According to Abrams (1999, p. 210), modern literature can be divided based on the reign of England, such as the Elizabeth age, Jacobean age, and

Victorian age. In the late modern period, literature became more diverse with the emergence of novels, essays, and various forms of prose. The development of English literature shows how language and culture can change and develop over time, and produce works that are relevant today.

Based on the three periods of English literature, it is known that the development of literary works in the form of novels began to develop in the late modern period. The Victorian era is a period full of significant social, political and technological changes. Of course, the development of literary works in this era contains a variety of criticisms due to social problems in social society. And also literary works often explore various aspects of social life that existed at the time of the creation of literary works. This provides a rich insight into the social and cultural dynamics of the period. The researcher searched for several literary works in the form of novels created during the Victorian period, but during the search the researcher chose a novel entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde which caught the researcher's attention. The researcher was initially interested in reading this novel because he wanted to know what the contents of the novel with that title were. However, after Reading the early chapters, the researcher was very interested in the description of society and the issue of social class, which in the novel is mentioned to be located in London and during the Victorian period. The main character is Dorian Gray, a handsome young man who is faced with self-perfection and life in luxurious London, but on the other hand, his environment has a stratum with an upper class characterized by luxurious life, dress, intelligence and wealth ownership. The time and place setting of London during the reign of Queen Victoria is also quite aptly portrayed, as the novel was written during the reign. In the Victorian era, the dominant literary works produced during this period were prose, while novels were an effective means of conveying the problems and ideas that existed at that time. And literary works at that time were aimed at improving the morals of society, so literary works not only describe life as it is but also suggest how it should be. Therefore, the researcher is very interested in this novel and also feels that this novel is very suitable for the research to be carried out.

In sociological studies, this research emphasizes human life in social reality. This is because the subject of research is society and the object is human life. Meanwhile, in the sociology of literature, the subject of research is literary works while the object is human life in the fictional world as a result of imagination (Sujarwa, 2019, p. 2). As human life continues to develop, so do literary works. Literary works will continue to move, grow, and develop. In literary works, various events of human life and all its problems become one of the objects of the creation of literary works themselves, one of which is in the form of novels. It can be understood that novels are fictional stories in the form of writing or words and are very complex because in novels there are intrinsic and extrinsic elements such as theme, characterization, plot, setting, point of view, and mandate. Novels also tell about human life in interacting with the environment and others in which they discuss in detail the description of human life.

In the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde reflects on the life of British society in the Victorian era. One example is to describe the state of society that justifies all kinds of behavior in order to maximize beauty, pleasure, in human life. Also people's assumptions about beauty and beauty in one's appearance which are primary things or in another sense people consider the beauty and beauty of one's appearance as the highest form of assessment of an individual, of course this is one of the factors for social problems such as class differences in society. This novel tells about a young man named Dorian Gray who has a portrait of himself. It is said that an artist named Basil Hallward was very interested in the beauty and appearance of a Dorian Gray. Basil is very obsessed with Dorian to make a portrait painting for Dorian Gray. One day in the basil garden, Dorian Gray was sitting down to model a self-portrait that Basil Hallward was working on. Dorian Gray meets a man named Lord Henry Wotton. Lord Henry Wotton made Dorian Gray believe that the only important things in life are youth and beauty and appearance. Dorian then talked with Lord Henry who considered that the purpose of life is to develop oneself without any obstacles, and one's appearance, including beauty and beauty, is the highest value in life. Dorian who thought that Lord Henry's words

were the truth began to be influenced, and with interest in these ideas Dorian hoped that his portrait could age while he could maintain his youthful appearance.

With his skill in uttering intelligent words, Lord Henry expresses his thoughts on Freedom and selfishness thereby rejecting the prevailing norms. He thinks that life should be lived with freedom and there is no need to be afraid of any consequences, continue to seek pleasure and also support the hedonism movement in order to enjoy life. Dorian, who was deeply influenced by Lord Henry's philosophy of life, then began to live a life like Lord Henry. Then Dorian met a beautiful actress named Sibyl Vane, Dorian was then very interested in Sibyl's acting talent and planned to love her and get engaged to her. But later in the day Dorian proudly invited all his friends to see Sibyl's show, but because his acting that day was terrible, he decided to leave Sibyl for good. However, because of the separation, Sibyl finally decided to commit suicide. And since that incident Dorian began to realize that his portrait has changed as if he was bearing the sin and all the disgraceful deeds that Dorian had done.

The researcher chooses the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde as the object of study in this study because this novel represents a lot of human social life at the time the novel was written. Oscar Wilde is a famous poet, writer and playwright, Wilde was born on October 16, 1854 in Dublin, Ireland. He had written throughout the 1880s and became one of London's most popular playwrights in the early 1890s. Wilde died on 30 November 1900 in a Paris hotel from meningitis and was buried in Cimetière de Bagneux outside Paris. But in 1909 his remains were dismantled and transferred to Père Lachaise Cemetery. and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* became one of Oscar Wilde's most popular novels, published in 1890. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* novel by Oscar Wilde is set in London around 1890. This novel represents the life and social problems of society in the Victorian era. The term 'Victorian' is often used to describe an era. And Era has also been understood in a very broad sense such as a period that has different sensitivities and characteristics. In this novel, the Victorian era can also be called the era of covers, where the most important thing in people's lives is reputation. It is no longer kindness that is most people's main interest but rather the



reputation one has that takes one's rank higher. People, especially gentlemen, care more about their appearance and reputation than anything else, this is what causes hypocrisy to be born. Where the gentlemen began to hide their crimes and mistakes behind the appearance of a respectable face to the public. As it is known that the Victorian era was a revival for the image of British men formed. It can be seen from one of the main characters of this novel, Lord Henry. Lord Henry Wotton, is a captivating speaker who has an interesting and toxic theory that has the power to corrupt young minds just like the main character. Lord Henry is a smart, rich and successful person, but that is only part of his identity, while his ugliness or true identity is still hidden. His corrupt thoughts and influential bad behavior remained a secret even to his own wife. In addition, in the novel, there is also a lot of hedonistic behavior carried out by some of the characters. Hedonism is behavior to find pleasure regardless of the consequences. In this novel there is also the behavior of British society that describes life in another Victorian era, namely about sexuality, rampant unhealthy sexual behavior and also prostitution which makes social perception of women very low.

The following is an excerpt from the novel which shows that there are characteristics or elements of social life in the Victorian era. One of them is about a person's appearance, in the Victorian era people considered that beauty was a primary thing or in another sense people considered a person's beauty/appearance as the highest form of assessment of an individual,

“You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr Gray. Don't frown. You have. And Beauty is a form of Genius – is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon.” (Wilde, 2019, p. 35)

In the quote Lord Henry praised Dorian's appearance by saying that his handsomeness exceeds any genius. This is sufficient to describe the social situation in this novel regarding the assessment of beauty which is very important. And it also explains how there are levels or social classes in society in this novel. The next quote is to describe the lifestyle of people in the Victorian era, namely hedonism, which is a lifestyle that focuses on the pursuit of pleasure alone.

“These are the sickly aims, the false ideals, of our age. Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. . . . A new Hedonism – that is what our century wants.” (Wilde, 2019, p. 36)

In the quote explains that Lord Henry tried to influence Dorian not to waste his youth, namely by suggesting doing all the pleasures without thinking of any consequences.

In social reality, phenomena or influences often appear in literary works such as feminism, racial, religious, and social class conflicts. According to Welles and Warren (1993, p. 3), "literature is a form of creativity and productive activity in producing a work that has a sense of aesthetic value and reflects social reality". Because Oscar Wilde represents the life of British society in the Victorian era in his novel, of course, there are many interesting things to investigate further. One of them is about social class which is described in the novel *The Picture of dorian Gray*. Oscar Wilde makes an in-depth analysis of aesthetics in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde emphasizes his analysis by discussing the hypocrisy of the upper classes of English society. The middle class is described as people who often judge the morals of other humans by not considering that what they do is not necessarily better than others. They pretend that they are in an intelligent society, but still do things that are not necessarily right according to social values.

The researcher intends to use Karl Marx's theory of social class to examine more deeply about social class in the novel. Social class is a concept in the social sciences that is defined subjectively by the model of social stratification, where people are grouped and distinguished by certain categories and the most general categories are upper class, middle class and lower class. And also the researcher will use the literary criticism approach in this study. In the sense that the researcher will analyze the content of the literary work, the goals and other things that are implied in the literary work and of course related to social problems. The task of criticism is to analyze the complex historical articulations of the structures that produce texts. By using literary criticism approach, researchers can conduct in-depth analysis of literary works and provide valuable insights into their meaning, value, and impact within a broader cultural and social context. This allows

researchers to see literature as a direct reflection of life as well as various social relationships and conditions in it, such as social problems related to social class and others. Which of course will then be related to the social class contained in the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde.

The issue about the social class has raised the writer's curiosity to analyze it and to find out the effect of social class to the social condition in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Social classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organization of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of the share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it (Lenin in Marx, 1971, p. 25). Based on this statement, it can be understood that social class is a form of social group division which is determined based on the ownership of a means of production and their role in a society and also seen from their wealth and the way they seek that wealth, and besides wealth being one of the main factors for distinguishing a class of honor is also an important factor in the class system, this can be seen from the role of an individual or group in an organization and society, if their role is very important, of course it will add value to their respect and honor in a social society. This is reinforced by the following statement which says that The concept of class is sometimes difficult to understand. It did not depend on the amount of money people had—although it did rest partly on the source of their income, as well as on birth and family connections Mitchell (2009, p. 17).

this research attempts to analyze the social condition focusing on social classes and its effect towards the social condition in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by using Marxist theory. as it is known that literary works are a reflection of actual social life, and one of the most interesting literary works to analyze about social life is the novel, because many novels are made to describe social conditions or at least are influenced by social conditions at the time the work was made. In Terry Eagleton (1976) Marx believes that art is a part of the superstructure of society. and to understand the literature, then, means understanding the total social process

of which it is part. The total social process in the formation of literary works is nothing but a contribution to the social conditions of society at that time. Marx believed that literature was closely related to the social conditions that existed at the time a literary work was created. as also stated by Terry Eagleton (1976) Marxist criticism analyzes literature in terms of the historical conditions which produce it; and it needs, similarly, to be aware of its own historical conditions.

Based on the description of the background that the researcher explained earlier, this research will focus on the analysis of social class in Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This topic will highlight and focus on how social class was depicted in the Victorian era in Oscar Wilde's novel *The picture of dorian Gray*. Then the researcher gave the title of this research Social Class in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* Novel by Oscar Wilde.

### **1.2 Research Problem**

Based on the background of the research that has been described previously, Social class often occurs in a society that has social inequality. Therefore, the problems that will be identified in this research are:

1. What forms of Victorian social class from Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
2. How are the relations of social class in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with the social condition at that time?

### **1.3 Research Purpose**

Social problems such as social inequality in an area of course give birth to differences in social class among the people. That way the researcher will analyze the social class that occurs. The main objectives of this research are:

1. Describe the form of social class in the Victorian era in the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde
2. Explain how the relation of social class in Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with the social condition at that time

### **1.4 Research Significance**

This research on the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde is certainly expected to provide knowledge about the analytical study of English

literature. This research is expected to increase knowledge, especially in the study of sociological analysis of literature in a novel about social life. In addition, the results of this study are also expected to help or at least be studied by students, lecturers and other people, especially those who are interested in the field of sociology of literature. It is also hoped that this knowledge can provide at least an understanding of that a literary work can be used as material for understanding social values in a life.

Also this research is expected to be a comparison or reference material for anyone who is interested in analyzing this novel or other novels, or also for those who are interested in conducting research in the field of sociology of literature, namely about social conflict. In addition, this research is also expected to help readers understand how social class in the Victorian era is described in Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. And lastly, this research can also be a material consideration for students to find or create new ideas in their research and can also provide knowledge about social phenomena in life.

### **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

In order to ensure clarity and a common understanding of key concepts within the study, it is essential to define the terms used. The research used important terms which are uniquely defined for the purpose of this research. These definitions provide a foundation for the exploration of the research.

1. Social Class : It is a grouping of society based on social, economic, or educational status. Social classes include several categories such as upper class, middle class, and lower class, each of which has its own characteristics related to income, occupation, lifestyle, and others.
2. Bourgeois : It is one of the categories in social class that is at the highest level or upper class. Bourgeois refers to the social class that has wealth and economic power. In historical and social contexts, especially in Marxist theory, bourgeois refers to the capitalist class that owns the means of production and employs workers to generate profit.
3. Proletariat : It is one of the categories in social class that is often defined as the working class. This class consists of workers and

laborers who do not own their own means of production and therefore must sell their labor to earn wages. In Marxist theory, this term is used to refer to the segment of society that is exploited by the bourgeois class.

4. Victorian era/age : It is a term that refers to the period of Queen Victoria's reign in England, which lasted from June 20, 1837, until her death on January 22, 1901. This era was marked by significant changes in various aspects of life, including politics, economy, culture, and technology. It was also characterized by the stratification within its society.
5. Marxism : It is a socio-economic and political theory developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. This theory is also the basic theory or worldview of the proletariat. It discusses a critical analysis of capitalism and highlights the class conflict between the bourgeois and the proletariat.
6. Social Condition : It is a state or situation faced by groups or individuals in society, encompassing various aspects of social, economic, and cultural life. Social conditions describe how factors such as social status, education, occupation, and access to resources affect the lives and well-being of society.