



The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness from Literature: A Case Study of “The Good Earth” by Pearl S. Buck and “A Child of the Northeast or Look I-San” by Khamphoon Boonthawee.

Teeradet Chuenpraphanusorn*

Graduate School, Suan Dusit University, Bangkok, 10300 Thailand

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Abstract

The research aims (1) to investigate, and analysis the methodology or persuasive writing techniques. (2) to analyze the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness from two stories and (3) to study the attitude of the reader after reading. The primary sources such as the document, novel, theories and in–depth interview-form are employed as the instrument of this research.

The results reveal that both novels can answer the three research objectives as (1) Point of view, theme, plot, characterization, dramatic conflict and setting are also persuaded in both novels and portray the relationship between humans, nature and believe in the cultural society by the following details. (1.1) The point of view of the Good Earth is the first person and third person, but In A Child of the Northeast, the objective or dramatic point of view is the main point. (1.2) Two novels have similar themes in earth, homeland and environment. (1.3) The open plot appears in the two novels. (1.4) The characterizations are round or dynamic and flat or statistic. (1.5) The dramatic conflict appears in the Good Earth as; the physical, the elemental, the social and the psychological conflict, but is found as the natural conflict in A Child of the Northeast. (1.6) The two novels have the same setting; the culture, the geography or natural and the outdoors. (2) The ecological insight is characterized by a quality of wholeness and the author’s ecological awareness and holism suggests a sense of unity such as a farmer in the Asian Region, which depends on the weather, natural resources with hope in their land. Moreover, both novels are concerned with the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy, especially the teaching of the concept “middle pathway of life”. This philosophy transfer from the actions and visions of the main characters as Wang-Lung and Koon’s father from the beginning until the end of the story. (3) After reading, the students admired the valuable concept of ecological awareness and the philosophy of sufficiency economy and it can be assumed that both novels are good examples for the new generation, particularly in the modern era.

* Corresponding Author
e-mail: Teera_det@hotmail.co.th

Introduction

In the past two decades, much research in the field of English literature has examined the relationships between characteristics of literature and methodology more than other issues. Since 1960's, many critics have studied the famous author Pearl S. Buck from a variety of viewpoints which can be concluded into three major trends. First, both of her work took a Marxist approach and considered her as a grassroots writer of the underdog. Second, critics used a historical approach and life background of Pearl S. Buck to analyze and interpret her novel in a global context, and still delivered in modern time.

The third trend, other critics, such as Huntley (1974); Schiff (2010); Corbett (2013) noted that Pearl S. Buck was truly a pioneer in this appreciation and though her writings and humanitarian activities. She often made attempts to reduce the cultures of China and the United States to their lowest common denominator in order to bridge the two worlds in which she lived and it absolutely relevant and vital nearly 90 years after it was written.

While, Spence (2021) noted in his New York Review of Books article on Pearl Buck: Journey to the Good Earth, claimed that Pearl S. Buck is not writing about a Chinese farmer only, but a universal farmer, one who knows that his riches and his security come from the good earth itself.

Similarly, the well-known Thai novel named "Look I-San" by Khamphoon Boonthawee was translated into English by Susan Fulop Kepner titled "A Child of the Northeast". The story is about Northeastern Thailand real-life styles and was drawn from the real-life experience of the author.

A Child of the Northeast and The Good Earth present the real life of people in an agricultural society. First, the two novels tell the story and represent the low class people in the local community, especially in Asian countries. Second, the two novels focus on the farmers life, that was the main career of Asian people, who lacked knowledge, lacked food, lacked planting and farming utensils and lacked ways to empower their life. Third, the novels emphasize and focus on the relationship between 3 main things, such as nature, earth and humans, that should not be separated for any reason.

Additionally, historically in Asian people's vision, the nature and earth were the main point of life because, the land is the place of birth, the place of spirit, the source of the creatures, the place of hope, and humans must be concerned with nature and keep it for a long time for any reason. Fourth, these two novels are still relevant to the

real-life situation in the present-day context, both of the social philosophy and ecological awareness advocated in the two novels allows the reader to adapt and use it for their life.

In the Thai context, the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy of His Majesty the King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX appeared in Thai Society more than 30 years ago by the King's vision and it has been delivered to the people of Thailand until now. Nowadays, this philosophy is like a road map for Thai people and it guides the livelihood and the behavior of people at all levels, from the family to the community to the country, it is called a "middle way" or "middle path".

At the present time, the benefit of the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy has influenced ecological awareness and influences Thai people at every level and every part of Thailand. This philosophy and concept is not only words, but it also can be used in real life situations in any circumstances.

It can be concluded that The Good Earth and A Child of Northeast are directly relevant to this philosophy and can be suitable for the present time. The two novels were written a long time ago, takes place in different countries and yet the conceptual framework aligns with a global teaching and can be adapted in daily life. Furthermore, the benefit of these two novels are not for special readers, but also students studying at the university level can acquire the benefit of the philosophy by reading The Good Earth and A Child of Northeast.

Based on the above, the researcher believes The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and the Ecological Awareness are found in the two novels and are beneficial to the reader in the following ways, (1) The two stories explain the social culture, tradition and the way of life of Asian's people and their concern with nature. (2) The culture, traditions and the way of life can be learnt by reading allowing the reader to gain an appreciation of the concepts more than by lecturing. (3) The two novels have implied knowledge and valuable concepts of sufficiency economy and ecological awareness, consequently the reader could have feelings and their own interpretation that will stay in their memory after reading, and finally the reader can adapt it for their own life, and 4) The researcher believes that, if people adjust or change their attitude toward this philosophy, then social problems and environmental disasters may be reduced as, Wan Lung in the Good Earth and Khoon's father in A Child of the Northeast, who never abandoned their homeland.

Objectives

1. To investigate and analyze the methodologies or persuasive writing techniques that the authors used.
2. To analyze the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness from the two novels.
3. To study the attitude of the reader (participants) after reading these two novels and the adaptation of the philosophy to use in their ownlife time.

Conceptual framework

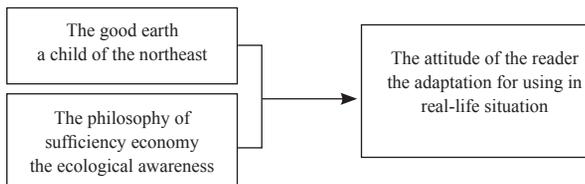


Figure 1 Conceptual framework

The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and the Ecological Awareness can be merged in the Good Earth and A Child of the Northeast and the students can gain the attitude and adapt within the real-life situation after reading these two novels.

Research methodology

1. Research setting

The research setting is divided into two steps, step one is the analysis by the researcher of novels of two famous authors such as Pearl S. Buck novel The Good Earth and Khamphoon Boonthawee novel A Child of the Northeast. Step two; study the attitude of readers and adaptation for using in real life after they finished reading both two novels.

2. Research participants

The participants in this study were the fourth year English Major students of the Suan Dusit University in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. These students were already studying The Good Earth and A Child of the Northeast. All subjects were selected by the researcher in purposive sampling of 5 students, who had finished reading the novels.

3. Research instrumentations

This research instrument consisted of ;

3.1 Step one concentrated on document analysis in two objectives; (1) study and analysis the methodology and writing techniques of authors used in their novel such as point of view, plot, theme, characterization, dramatic conflict, setting, and style

in narrative explanation. (2) analyze the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness from the two novels by the qualitative research method in narrative explanations.

3.2 Step two is the studying of the reader's attitude after reading the two novels and the adaptation for use in their ownlife by the qualitative research method in interview form. Explanation of the research instrument setting consisted of the following;

3.2.1 Research Instrument Setting on Step One

The instruments were primary source and secondary source, documentation and the two novels that the researcher selected (The Good Earth by S. Buck and A Child of Northeast by Khamphoon Boonthawee translated by Susan Fulop Kepner).

3.2.2 Research Instrument Setting on Step Two

The instrument used was an interview form that asked about the reader's attitude and the adaptation— designed to collect data and information on the subjects and it was constructed by the researcher, based on the Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness.

Results

1. The methodology or persuasive writing techniques used in the good earth and a child of the northeast

1.1 Point of view

The point of view of the Good Earth differs from A Child of the Northeast. The Good Earth is told as though the author is in it. Pearl S. Buck took herself as an observer of this story and she absolutely knows anything with every character by a mix of two types of point of view such as the first-person point of view and the third person point of view, which catches the reader's attention. The story is told as it happens to one of the character's named Wang Lung.

Although the first-person point of view is mainly used in this story, but the third person point of view is also used for creating and catching the reader's attention such as; Wang Lung suffered because she must not be pretty. His father with an angry face, cried out to him : "And what would we do with a pretty woman? We must have a woman who will look after the house and bear children as she works in the fields, and will a pretty woman do these things?" (p.6) This sentence uses the technique of integrating two types of point of view such

as objective point of view, for preparing the reader as the observer of this story. The reader is permitted to see and hear as he or she might with real people, but he or she is not permitted to go into their deep thoughts of the main character or protagonist, like Wang Lung's thought when he heard his father taught him like this. But Pearl S. Buck can tell anything that she wants the reader to know about Wang Lung's father's opinion and can reveal the innermost thoughts of her characters by the conversations that was expressed. This procedure is called the "Omniscient".

Moreover, *A Child of the Northeast* differs from *The Good Earth*. Because, the author's duty is just the narrator, he never takes himself in the story in depth as Pearl S. Buck does., e *A Child of the Northeast* is the author's autobiography. So, the readers must observe the behavior of the characters by their critical eyes and judgement. Many types of point of view are present in this story such as the first-person point of view and the third-person point of view for persuasive the reader's attention. The story is told as it happens to one of the young boy character's named Koon. These two types of point of view were merged in many chapters.

It can be said that the point of view is shifted from the beginning to the end, for example; the author starts in the objective point of view or the dramatic point of view, letting the reader see and hear the character's manner. But the reader is only the observer, Kamphoon is permitted to see and hear as he might with real people, but he is not permitted to go into their thoughts. The thoughts of the characters are included only in dialogue, overheard conversation, etc.

1.2 Plot

Pearl S. Buck begins her story with the action of Wang Lung with her explanation by portraying the sense of the people in a rural area, that everything in their life does not differ from the common day, in spite of the day is a wedding day ; It was Wang Lung's marriage day. "At first, opening his eyes in the blackness of the curtains about his bed, he could not think why the day seemed different from any other. The house was still, except for the faint cough of his old father." (p.1).

This is the first statement that the author calls the reader's attention and took the reader as one part of the build-up of the story. She needed to say something to the reader and this must lead to something, that is called open plot. At that time the event(s) moved from the first sentence to the rising action through climax

until the falling actions and finally to the end of the story.

In contrast with the beginning of the story, the author changes her plot from the open plot to close plot at the last paragraph; "And the old man let his tears dry on his face, and they made stains there. He bent down and took up a handful of the soil. He held it and he whispered; If you sell the Land, it is the end. His two sons held him,...They spoke softly to him: Do not worry father, you can be sure of this – the land is not to be sold. But over the old man's head they looked at each other, and smiled."(p.133).

In this case, Pearl S. Buck shows her intelligence embodied the *Good Earth* and closed her novel by using a flashback technique. The reader can observe the last sentence of Wang Lung's sons who spoke to the father with a soft sound. This sentence is the conclusion of the story for allowing the reader's appreciation and rethinking the whole of the story as the name of the novel as *The Good Earth*.

In the *Child of the Northeast*, the plot is planned by the author and constructed, which the researcher calls organic unity. The organic unity starts at the beginning of the story and deals with a single group of characters or protagonists as Koon with his parents and his neighbor through a series of actions or incidents, speeches, thoughts, and observations linked together to make up an entirety.

Kamphoon opens his story with the narrative and descriptive methods for persuasive the reader's attention by his explanation as: "Long ago, more than half a century ago, a small wooden house stood on round wooden stilts, baking in the sun." (p.17).

The plot is straightforward from the beginning and then uses scenes in narrative passages to move the story along. It can be analyzed that the plot of this novel is the 'open plot', because the author allows the readers to decide what they think, guess, what events will happen at the closing of the story.

The movement of the plot is very slow at the beginning and then moves by a series of time in the actions of the protagonist as Koon and his father's speech. Koon asks his father, why his family doesn't move to another place, like another family in this village, then his father describes to him and his mother in a soft and friendly sound as; "If the rain falls, and the rice crop is good, we will, his father replied. But if we go with a fishing caravan this year, we will have to borrow a cart and a team. May be next year, then, Koon said. Perhaps,

his father replied. If you are a good student, that will help. Koon frowned. How can that help? Good things happen to people who work hard.” (p.24).

It can be said that the speech of Koon’s father is the inciting force or the tool of Khamphoon used for calling the reader’s attention, to continue and follow his novel. The reader can guess from the speech that the author tries to tell something and this must lead to something and leads up to climax or its peak-most intense, or most dramatic such as; after Koon’s father decides to go to Chi River.

1.3 Theme

In *The Good Earth*, the theme is stated directly as the explicit theme, by two obvious points, firstly, by its own name. It may be clear and seem to suggest certain kinds of solution about the earth. The solution of this work also describes the manner and the ideas of human or the protagonist as Wang Lung and his wife O-Lan in a clear viewpoint. This novel tries to explain some career, especially the farmer, who was concerned with the nature and the environment around them. The truth of nature is also the nature, the environment is still maintained, they never made the troublesome to the universe, but everything was changed by human’s hand.

The second, the solution of the earth in a human sense is the place of birth, a place of hope, a place of happiness. So, in *The Good Earth*, Pearl S. Buck pointed out from her critical eyes and took herself as the observer of this situation. The second, the whole story seems to point out the theme, such as at the beginning Wang Lung, and O-Lan worked together in the field as the author narrated ; He had no clear thought about anything; there was only a deep pleasure in sharing the work, as they turned this earth of theirs over and over to the sun – this earth, which formed their home and fed their bodies and made their gods. (p.19)

For *A Child of the Northeast*, Khamphoon devotes the first part of this novel, which includes everything up to the long episode involving the narrator and the character conversation. And then defines the different concept between the villager who runs away from their homeland and another villager who needs to stay on their mother’s land. So, the author points out it has many human difficulties can be treated with humor like I-San people, as *Are your wives as big as you are?* Jundi asked the youngest Gula. ‘He has no wife, said the man who had first spoken to them. Oh, what do you eat with your rice, that makes you get big like that? Pork,

Fish,....Strong enough to grab a thief by his ankles, and bash his head on the ground as if he were a toad.” (p.204).

This narration shows the imply thought of the author, who is taking place in I-San peoples’ opinion. They lack of food, lack of water, and starvation, but they can adapt themselves very smoothly in their difficult environment and very funny in that oblivious situation.

At first, if we are just looking only the surface structure of this novel, it can be concluded that the explicit theme, is the main point of this story by its own name, as *The Child of the Northeast*. But if we continue to deeply consider, the theme is an implicit theme, because the reader must image themselves in a character’s place, situation or time in the story and follow the character’s action or conversation when they want to concern their lives in their homeland.

1.4 Characterization

At the beginning of the story “*Wang Lung*” as a quiet person as a flat character, his manners and actions continue as a normal farmer. Until the middle of the story, his manner changes, such as when he was a very poor farmer. He is content to eat no more than some garlic wrapped around some unleavened and strong bread, but by the end when he has established his family as one of the great families, he prefers more “dainty foods” and is able to pick and choose among his foods.

In contrast, O-Lan is sold by her parents during a famine and food shortage to the Great House of Hwang. Pearl S. Buck used two methods for building O-Lan’s character based on the researcher’s analyzes, such as (1) by another character’s telling, like the old mistress to explain the behavior of O-Lan. And then, (2) the author used the conversation and narrative method to describe O-Lan manner, as Wang Lung said to her; “Here is this box and this basket, he said roughly. Without a word she bent, and picking up one end of the box she placed it upon her shoulder.” (p.11). So, O-Lan can be calculated as the flat character or static character, who did not change her manner from the beginning until the end of the story.

For *A Child of the Northeast* is an imitation of the author’s life, using the device of I-San people and subjects are the autobiography of the author. So, the characters may be defined as a verbal representation of I-San people ; for example, Koon is a young boy of eight years old. He is a significant person that the author replica himself as Koon. Koon is a main character that the author wants to transfer his way of life , especially,

the way of thinking, the way of concern with another person or the way of the survivor at that time. He is the questioner and always asks his father and mother for daily life concerns in I-San, studying and learning how to practice to be good member of I-San society, and finally he can do it well.

Moreover, Koon's father is a real model of I-san people that the new society needed, he is very nice, gentle, and has an optimistic vision with his homeland. He believes in ancestor's teaching and respects the place of his birth rather than moving to another place. It shows his strong heart that is hidden inside his mind as he speaks with his wife and his son. Koon's father is usually the main figure in the novel. It must be himself, an individual that is fitting to the role and reflecting the environment or the circumstances.

1.5 Dramatic Conflict

The physical or the elemental conflict is based on the principle character of O-Lan, which we can see by the author's narration at the beginning of the story like; "Her feet were not bound. . . .she had a square, honest face, a short, broad nose and her mouth was wide. Her eyes were small and of a dull clearly expressed." (p.10-11).

From the weak point of her physical feature, it makes trouble for her life and starts from the beginning until she passed away. When she stays at Hwang House, she looks like an inferior person for many reasons; such as she comes from a poor family, lack of food, starvation and even begs money like a beggar girl, it means that she is a low-class person of Chinese society and treated as a slave. Second, her family did not love O-Lan and sold her to be the slave at Hwang House, in spite only being ten years old. The main point that is always printed in her mind is her "physical features." Her physical features are different from other young ladies in Chinese society, her feet are not bound and her face is not beautiful. Her physical features influence O-Lan to be a silent person. She never talks to other people, has no friends, and nobody takes care of her, so her boss told O-Lan to only stay inside the kitchen.

From the weak point of O-Lan's is a physical conflict, the conflict is rapidly changing and transferred to the psychological conflict or the inner conflict of the principle character. This conflict appears when O-Lan has a pretty daughter, she tries to do many things for her daughter that she never received such as, bond her daughter's feet.

O-Lan's conflict seems to be only about

physical feature conflict, but when the story arrives at the middle until the end; her conflict changes to social conflict and psychological conflict. This is the clever method of Pearl S. Buck in presenting her characterization by using the silence sound of O-Lan's heart that it is running out in fluently actions and narration in simple language.

Not only O-Lan, but also Wang Lung suffers many types of conflict, such as at the beginning of the novel, Wang Lung is not happy when he must marry an ugly girl, like O-Lan. Because it is common rule of any human, especially, the man who needs the beautiful girl as his wife rather than the ugly one. But finally, he obeys his father who teaches him in withreason. (His psychological conflict is diminished by his father suggestions, but his subconscious emerges and he thinks his wife should be a young lady with beauty such as lotus flower). It is the reality of people that Pearl S. Buck tries to express to her reader. It does not mean that Wang Lung has bad manners, but when we are thinking in opposite side, the lesson of human should learn it.

Wang Lung is a main character, who concentrates about his land so much, so he gets some natural and geographical conflict at the beginning of the novel. Even if, Wang Lung is a silent person, nice, claim, and gentle but sometimes he is very nervous and concentrate to do something without reason. Sometimes he is creating trouble for his family, like making the emotional tragedy for his lover as the pity O-Lan and his child.

When Wang Lung hears the word of O-Lan, his old feeling of guilt strikes him again, he absolutely absorbs O-Lan's inner pain. Now, he thinks of himself as a Killer or Satan or Destroyer of her fate, she is a faithful servant beside him that never goes away from him even when he is a very poor farmer. And then he extremely admires his awful manner with his pity wife and hides it in his deepest minds until he dies. It can be concluded that Wang Lung is also suffering from the psychological conflict not only O-Lan.

In *A Child of the Northeast*, conflict is a fundamental technique that the author uses to present his story and it can motivate the reader's emotion. In this story the natural and geographical conflicts are the dominant conflicts that the author uses for creating his novel.

In *I-San*, these two conflicts still maintain as the I-San people's problem from the past until now, but nowadays it is better than the former day. Khamphoon tries to present I-San people, who are suffering from

disaster during the depths of his depression, lack of food, lack of water, etc. But the I-San people tolerate and survive their life, even in the worst situation and crisis of natural shortage. At the beginning of the story, the conflict emerges in the main character as Koon, he is very serious about the nature problem and needs to run away from his homeland, but it can be solved finally by the teaching of his father and his real-life experiences.

1.6 Setting

The setting of *The Good Earth* was based on real events at that time. It presents the cultural condition and assumption of one Chinese family; whose name is Wang Lung. They are living on their land and fighting with the disaster that it is creeping into China.

At the beginning of this novel, the political and social conflicts push the Chinese people to be the slave. There are big gaps between the rich and the poor people of the society and many "Land Lords" around the country. The rich own big houses, but the poor stay in small traditional houses located in upcountry, such as, on the first page of this novel, the author opens her novel by using the objects manufactured by humans as the setting (the house of Wang Lung).

This technical technique in setting presentation is very glowing and it persuades the reader's attention to follow the story as well. Moreover, it is not only the objects of humans manufactured as a setting, but also the geographical and temporal environment becomes the main setting of this novel. The clever author uses the geography as her main setting as relevance with the name and the theme of the story. So, geography or nature and the outdoors are also the obvious location for the action of *The Good Earth*. In this novel, more than 80 % of the story has this type of setting.

Furthermore, in *The Child of the Northeast*, a novel about a year in the life of a village in Northeast Thailand during the 1930's. It is also a tale about a world scarcely known in the West: the world of 'I-San,' which is what the natives call their corner of Thailand (Kepner, 1987). The setting of this novel was imitated from the real events at that time (nearly eight three years ago). It presents the cultural condition and assumption of one family in the Northeast of Thailand, or commonly known as I-San, they are living in their homeland and fighting with shortage and starvation that it is creeping into I-San for three years continuously. The geography, history, identity, I-San dialect, Buddhism, poverty and prayer are also introduced into the setting of this story.

On the first page of this novel, Khamphoon presents the setting of I-San very well; he uses the narrative and descriptive methods for catching the reader's attention and opens the story very smoothly in the clearing scene of the reader, who doesn't know or never been to I-San before.

1.7 Style

In *The Good Earth*, Pearl S. Buck has her own style and always adapts word or some words to fit the situation, with takes herself as an "observer" but obviously knows everything about the story as; "Wang Lung was very hungry all at once. He took up the bowl of cold rice and began to eat. When he had eaten all he wished, he went to the door again. She called to him to come and he went in. She was lying neatly covered on the bed. Beside her, wrapped in his old clothes, lay his son. He went up and for the moment there were no words in his mouth." (p.24).

From the stressed sentence, the author uses some words to the situation and transfers Wang Lung's feeling when he sees his first child at that moment. This sentence makes the reader understand the emotion of father, who never had a child before, may be so excited but very happy.

In another method, Pearl S. Buck presets the methodology of her own writing the *Good Earth* by language usage. It can be assumed that the language used is depending on the author's vision in knitting her story together and it is depending on the diction or choice of words, that is divided into three types of diction; (1) formal, (2) neutral and (3) informal.

Furthermore, Pearl S. Buck has her own style in language usage selected and used the narrative method and descriptive method for the reader's making imagination very excellent. The figurative language as "simile" is presented very well in this narration, especially, "cold as a knife of steel". This phrase is presented about the feeling and emotion of the actor or actress that the author needs to present at that moment, "it differs from other cool that we can suffer, but it can make human die as, a knife of steel hurts them."

In *The Child of the Northeast*, the author has his individual style, because he puts words together uniquely to fit the specific conditions in his work, especially the distinct style of narrative and descriptive passage and always adapts word or some words to express the situation. Some critics defined Khamphoon's writing style, as putting the right words in the right place at the right time and in the right circumstances.

The researcher finds that the author always describes his general style in direct, clear, forceful and powerful as can be seen from the following detail; “Koon had never gone to hunt in the forest, or, at Nong Yai Knoll beyond the village, because his mother loved him. That was what she said, that she loved him and was afraid of what might happen to him out there, she said that there was plenty of time for such things. But Koon wanted more than anything in the world to go hunting with his father. He was not afraid at all.” (p.29).

This narrative passage shows the normal language that the author uses for describing the emotion and feeling of Koon’s mother, how much she loves him, and then the author explains of Koon’s trust, safety with his father by not being afraid. It can analyze that the selection of words or diction in this novel is accurate and explicit, so that all actions, scenes, and ideas are clear, such as the reader can notice by the name of this novel as *The Child of the Northeast* or *Look I-San* or in every chapter’s name. (*Food in a Dry Season*, *The Vietnamese Invade the Chinese*, *A Village Courtship*, etc.). It gives a powerful imagine for his reader and the explicit theme that the author needs to narrate for his reader to know beforehand and if the reader wants to know more.

2. Analysis of The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness from the two novels.

2.1 The fundamental concept of human life and living in the local area

Both of two novels are concerned with the fundamental concept of human life and living in the local area. The Chinese and Thai culture doesn’t differ from each other, because the principle career of people is the farmer, who is considered a lower-class person of society. But they are so proud to be the farmer from their ancestors until their generation. So, the fundamental concepts of human life and living with the ecological awareness of these two novels are concerned with many subjects.

2.2 The Relevance of the Ecological Awareness with Human

The relationship between human and environmental as well as among individuals in society through the learning process of the protagonist whose life is closely interwoven with nature around them. In the *Good Earth*, there is an existing intelligence that earth is the provider of all basic things needed to sustain life. There is also the sense that the earth is the place where a man rises from and ultimately returns to at the end of life.

The two authors, Pearl S. Buck and Khamphoon Boontawee try to express their attitude of earth and homeland toward the conversation and narrative methods of the protagonist and other characters, in various situations. Even it differs in time and country but the same attitude in preserving the land or the earth is also the same.

This attitude and concept give universality to the novel as the Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The two novels allows the reader a vision and attitude of China and I-San – a knowledge as excessive as that which the stranger can acquire. Readers can glimpse the natural life of the countryside of northern China o and I-San or the northeast of Thailand. A deep insight is given of the Chinese peasant in the *Good Earth* and I-San farmer in *A Child of the Northeast*.

In conclusion, both novels suggest that the farmer lost their homeland which leads to the loss of their power and identity. The traditional agrarian life that is emotionally involved in their earth and homeland encourages the farmers to identify themselves with their land, which cannot be separate for many reasons. When the farmers are forced leave their homeland, it always means that their sense of self is completely wrecked. From the point of view of the farmer, they regard their homeland as their cultural roots and source of life which have an impulsive power to bring them back to their cultural ancestry again. Pearl S. Buck and Khamphoon illustrate that the farmers’ journey to the south of China as Wang Lung’s family and I-San people in *A Child of the Northeast* have absolutely destroyed their traditional agrarian lives in the local area. The authors sympathetically depict the effect of the migration on the farmers’ way of life as Wang Lung’s destiny in the south of China and the I-San people in t Northeastern Thailand.

2.3 The way of practicum and develop their knowledge and practicing themselves by the ‘Middle path’ of Sufficiency Economy’s conceptual.

In the two novels, the author portrays the antagonist as normal person in the flat characterization, who is taking themselves in the middle pathway of life. Especially, the author makes it very clear that the philosophy of sufficiency economy is one of the major factors that growing up the relationship among people in society. Pearl S. Buck portrays the manner of Wang Lung which represents moderation by his ideas and actions, as being in his land who is the owner. The author criticizes the protagonist’s thinking with his land in moderation because Wang Lung seems to be happy when

he becomes the owner of this land, even it is very less in the eyes of the millionaire, but he is so proud himself. The moderation in Wang Lung's concept is like a lesson of life that he has created by himself and it is depended on the interpretation of individual vision in many aspects such as in positive thinking or in negative thinking. If some person has a vision as Wang Lung's thinking in a positive way, he can also stay in the society with joyful life than another person, who is avoiding the moderation.

Consequently, in this novel, the author Pearl S. Buck tries to put this conceptual frame work from the beginning until the end such as, at the beginning the author explains the protagonist's vision between the young men and his old father about wife in contrast; but in fully and completely reasonableness. Wang Lung's father teaching the topic of wife, it can be assumed that the reasonableness could not emerge in all people from their birth time, but it is depended on the teaching of their ancestor as Wang Lung's father teaches him in reality concept.

The reasonableness can take the people in the right way and can help them see themselves, then to see another person and acting as they did. The protagonist's father tries to teach his son softly and with reason and points out the fundamental concept of thinking that its relevant with their actions or manners. This teaching finally makes Wang Lung to be a reasonable person.

Moreover, In A Child of the Northeast, the author portrays the character as the normal person in the poorest society of Thailand, who are the indigenous people and they always call themselves as "I-san people" but the characters are taking themselves in the middle pathway of life. The author makes the obviously senses that the philosophy of sufficiency economy is one of the grass-root of the Thai people.

The moderation or enough to live on is the key word or the main theme of this novel that the author tries to relocate and build up the spiritual foundation of all people in the nation, especially for everyone not only the older but also the younger ones. After reading this novel, some readers think that the sufficiency economy is related only to farmers in the remote areas of Thailand. In fact, people of other occupations such as the state officials, teachers, scholars, and businessman at all levels can apply this concept to their work as well.

In addition, there are some beneficial concepts hidden in the two novels. They also have some knowledge both of implicit and explicit knowledge in

physical, social, environmental and cultural changes from the outside world. Moreover, the consciousness of moral integrity and honesty and they strive for the appropriate wisdom to live life with forbearance, diligence, self-awareness, intelligence, and attentiveness is also present in the novel. It is a lifelong process attempting to moderate oneself and there is no specific aspiration nor guide one can use creativity in an internal process as well as unending.

3. To study the vision of the reader (participants) after reading the two novels and the adaptation for using in their real-life by group discussion.

The relevance of Pearl S. Buck and Khamphoon's novel to Thai society and Sufficiency Economy and Ecological Awareness analysis of this literary work has prompted me to discuss with 5 students, who are the reader of the two novels about their vision.

The ecological awareness and responsibility are sometimes beyond the farmers' competence and teaching background. Due to their economic shortage, it is needed for them to primarily focus on their everyday survival rather than on the significance of land conservation. But is not true, because in the Good Earth and A Child of the Northeast can imply, and gives some benefit of this concept, especially the teaching of Luang Paw Ken that "the sky never hurt anybody, only people can really hurt people". The students think that the authors illustrate that Wang-Lung and Koon's family's Journey in south China in the Good Earth and to the village of black and fertile soil and good water in A Child of the Northeast has destroyed their traditional agrarian lives. Both authors sympathetically illustrate the effect of the migration on the farmers' way of life, they serious concern about their journey draws their lives and minds away from the homeland. They are dispossessed of their identity as farmers whose lives are closely tied to homeland.

This action indicates that the farmers who have once lived in harmony with the natural and good environment become separated from their old way of lives; their relationship with nature is absolutely destroyed, such as my family is living in the Northeastern of Thailand and finally moved to the big city as Bangkok for finding a good job.

Not only the ecological awareness appeared in the ideas of my 5 students, but the local wisdom also persuaded as the main point of their explanations as the following ideas. The students also reveal that the knowledge and local wisdom are the main point of

ecological awareness because; humans can be one part of the environment, even if they concern in nature and the environment around them.

Moreover, the local wisdom is the main point of people, who are living in Asian country, especially, in the Good Earth; Wang-Lung always goes to worship the God of Earth in his village before doing anything. This action and belief are not different from Thailand, especially, in the local area, the people always maintain their local wisdom strongly in every village for good luck and happiness.

So, the local wisdom that concerns Buddhism also emerges in the sense of I-San people or in the sense of Wang-Lung. One day the villagers may consider the Buddhist monastery or “Wat” or to the “Village shrine” on the impermanence or insecure of all things that it was happening, the worthlessness of the “self,” and wisdom of detachment from what one would rather love; they always go to worship and beg for good luck.

According to the discussion of 5 students, it seems not easy for farmers to be aware of the importance of property protection (land, forest, water) since environmental conscientiousness is far from their everyday effort. Finally, the students also agree that this concept can be used and adapted in daily life by giving the education for all people in the country. Because, the education is the fundamental of life and can help them to empower themselves, and avoid from the nonsense.

Discussions

There is no question that, why the Philosophy of Sufficiency is taking place in the Good Earth and A Child of the Northeast in harmony, because of every scene are duplicated in the real-life situation. The homogeneity of I-San society and Chinese society at that time has been an important factor shaping this altruism, or the individual’s responsibility to help those who are less fortunate.

In the Good Earth and A Child of the Northeast, virtue is synonymous with harmony, kindness, cheerfulness, industry, generosity, courage that protection from internal and external shocks. The courage is the last mentioned, but hardly the least of these, often has been needed in plenty, given the gloomy facts of life. If a person is to develop and display with other five virtues in the Philosophy of Sufficiency as moderation, reasonableness, immune system, knowledge and moral integrity. Can anyone facing starvation exhibit joyfulness? What sense does it make?

The readers were puzzled to see Wang-Lung and Koon’s father’s action, and so frequently depicted smiling and laughing. It is shown that this was a man who was supposed to be distressed concerned about the survival of his life and family in famine time. Uncertain as to whether they could last through another year of shortage without leaving their homeland, scratching a bare living from the land of birth and all fields almost infertile of wildlife for more than three years, bringing home crickets and lizards for children to eat. Why was the father laughing?

In both novels of suggest that the loss of the farmer’s homeland leads to the damage of their power and identity. The traditional agrarian life that is emotionally involved in their earth and homeland encourages the farmers to identify themselves with their land, which cannot be separated for many reasons. This concept merged with the ideas of Lowder (2014), that the Asian and the Pacific region have the largest number of family farms in the world. It is home to 60 per cent of the world’s population and to 74 per cent of the world’s family farmers, with China alone representing 35 per cent and India 24 per cent of the estimated 570 million farms worldwide.

Moreover, they hold the key to achieving food security not only for themselves, but also, for the increasingly large number of families that have left the farm sector for employment in other occupations. (FAO, 2013). When the farmers have to leave their homeland, it always means that their sense of self is completely wrecked. From the point of view of the farmer, they regard their homeland as their cultural roots and source of life which have an impulsive power to bring them back to their cultural ancestry again, even a small-scale farming. The small-scale farming family in both novels are relevant to the ideas of Zhang (2011), who noted that small-scale farming family came about, in the region, as an adaptation to the high population density and relatively scarce agricultural land resources.

Not only Zhang (2011), but Soda (2003) also implied that small-scale farming family developed a specific productive feature, such as high labor input, intensive cultivation and subsistence economy. The advantages of a family-based organization of agricultural production as compared to production of inorganic substances have been expanded on by many reasons. The concept of the small-scale family farm absolutely merged with the philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy, with the point of “enough and sustain”.

The enough and sustain still remains the point of the Asian's farmer that can be seen from the past until now. Buck and Khampoon illustrate that the farmers' journey to the south of China as Wang Lung's family and I-San people in *A Child of the Northeast* have absolutely destroyed their traditional agrarian lives in the local area. And the authors sympathetically depict the effect of the migration on the farmers' way of life as Wang Lung's destiny in the southern city of China and the I-San people in Northeastern Thailand, but finally they came back to their homeland.

From this point, the cultural implication of the household as an agricultural unit also resides in its relationship with the countryside community. As Shanin (1971) claimed that the understanding of peasantry needs to relate to the lifestyle of rural communities, because that is the context in which peasants realize self-sufficiency, which would have been impossible for the single family. In this sense, family farming constitutes the cornerstone of rural societies in Asian countries. Its socio-economic sustainability throughout history is greatly indebted to the grassroots networks, village rationality and community organizations in which it is embedded.

Additionally, Buck and Khampoon point out the notion of "ecological holism", it helps develop people's attitude toward all believing, culture, tradition and religion with the Gods, influence a change from viewing believing as different, dissimilar and imbalanced to regarding them as harmoniously synchronized. Since the two authors' notions of "ecological holism" encompass not only the natural world, but also human beings, it is interesting to notice that these two novels demonstrate the oneness of all things and simultaneously suggests nondiscrimination in term of believing. As Buck examines social issues between the farmer and the owner of Hwang house that is directly connected to the co-survival of people of different social class that cannot be separated. The novel functions as a frame for what the author sees, thinks and analyze as an ultimate relationship between human and their social environment around them.

This idea is relevant to the study of Ye & Pan (2016) claiming that the agricultural production in the vulnerable environments of Asian countries brought about intimate cooperation among primary and secondary social groups such as families and village communities. Thus, family farming became an essential part of folk custom and the rural culture of Asian societies from the very start.

Moreover, Khampoon Boontawee, has a similar idea with Pearl S. Buck of wholeness to suggest a solution to environmental and social problems concerns. The result of the practices of differentiation between the human and the non-human world, as well as among the human being and community's believing transfers and draws by the protagonist's inside vision about their homeland, and of the consequent utilization.

This cultural aspect of family farming in the two novels can be explained by Soda (2003) commenting on why the research into Asian rural societies (e.g. Thailand, Japan and China) devotes so much attention to the 'family' aspect. Family farming is seen as the comprehensive outcome of land legacy, ancestral rules, household rights to common agricultural resources and strong social bonds interwoven by individual families.

From the explanation of Soda. (2003), it can be easily assumed that the success of family farming lies not in 'specialization' or profit maximization, but in practicing farming to meet diverse household needs, rather than responding to market opportunities alone such as the Koon's family practice. That it absolutely linked with the Philosophy of the Sufficiency Economy in a direct way.

Besides, Ye & Pan (2016) advised that to satisfy a family's various livelihood needs (sufficient and balanced diet, clothing, cash income, etc.), small family farms usually adopt a scope economy, rather than a scale economy used in large industrial farms. Instead of highlighting an environmental crisis, natural shortage, social conflicts, the two authors focus and point out into a God or the invisible objects on the natural world as a teacher of the protagonist's education and chooses to deal with the root of all conflicts. That is a discriminatory and exploitative attitude towards nature and the environment as well as those who are different from oneself in terms of beliefs, culture, and tradition in this world.

As a Thai reader, the researcher thinks the issues of the ecological awareness, environment, social, community and the philosophy of sufficiency exploitation, that Buck and Khampoon raise in their novel are relevant to social and ecological problems in Thailand. Their themes are universal and some can be related to Thai culture and situations. Similar to the *Good Earth* by Pearl S. Buck, Wang-Lung family moved to the south of China, the immigrant workers from Northeastern Thailand or I-San people have to abandon their agricultural life and try to get far away from starvation with natural resources shortage. The I-San

people search for jobs in a big city such as Bangkok, which they think is a civilized city, but it is not true because they always suffer from various forms of social exploitation. Similar problems are shared by Pearl S. Buck and invite me to consider her purpose solutions for this problem in Thailand. But Khampoon already has answered those questions in his novel. The suggestion of Khampoon about the sustainable agriculture, which corresponds with that of His Majesty the King Bhumibol should be seriously considered by Thai people in order to successfully solve the natural and social problems in every part of the country.

In conclusion, this perceived Wang-Lung and Koon's father as definite or resolutely courageous, and a man so brave that he could laugh in the face of famine time. In the sense of the foreigner, Thailand is the "Land of Smiles", but there are many kinds of smiles, signifying or telling many states of mind. A Child of the Northeast abounds with examples of behaviors, actions, thinking, moral, honesty and motivation, which may well amaze the reader, one who is encountering this culture for the first time. In the same way, *The Good Earth* is also teaching the reader in many aspects of living in "middle pathways of life" as the well-known "Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy" of the King Rama XI. The researcher believes that the two novels have been appreciated for its universal appeal. It is the simplest of tales, but fullest in quality, celebrating the most essential aspects of human life; survival, hope, diligence, self-awareness, forbearance, appropriate wisdom to live life with immune system by the moderation with reasonableness and the loyalty of the land of birth. And practicing themselves in a middle pathway of life, as the teaching of the be-loved King Bhumibol of Thailand, who taught and practiced as a sufficiency person more than 60 years ago.

Suggestions

The real condition of the Asian farmers, especially the Chinese and Thai farmers may make Pearl S. Buck and Khampoon Boontawee same to be ideal people, who perceive social and natural problems from their optimistic vision. Nevertheless, the two novels also focus on the philosophy of sufficiency economy and the ecological awareness suggests to the reader or students to be in touch with a reality and responsibility for both community and nature.

It should be noted that the two authors suggest the relationship between humans and their environment with the relevance of the philosophy of sufficiency economy, not only in *The Good Earth* and *A Child of the Northeast*, but in another literally works as well. Moreover, it also has two suggestions from this research, as (1) the implementations of this research in the literature classroom context and (2) the research for the future.

1. The implementations of this research in the literature classroom context; (1.1) Teachers should participate with the students to select the material of learning, suitable, relevant or concerns about the social or community and can give a benefit for gaining or creating wisdom. Then explain the purpose of the study beforehand. (1.2) After selecting the valuable masterpiece of literature, the teacher makes a plan for searching the concepts, theories or the related literatures that are relevant to the selected novels or the short stories. (1.3) Then, the teacher permits the first part of this research, especially in the analysis of the methodologies and persuasive writing techniques come into the classroom context. At that time allow the students to practice by themselves in analysis the selected novels or short stories by the examples from the research paper. (1.4) From 2, let the students practice in the analysis as the research paper. (1.5) This research can be the example for people who are interested in literature and need to find a new idea for creating their integrated research between the content of the novels or short stories and a new issue in the social environment.

2. The research for the future. (2.1) It should have new research in many areas of literature genre, such as, the lyrics, the poems or etc., that it relates to the philosophy of sufficiency economy in any aspects. (2.2) It should have new research to study about the influences of the philosophy of sufficiency economy from some selected literature through the reader in real life situation or the benefit of this philosophy in the sense of teenagers. (2.3) It should merge the concept of the ecological awareness, as the global warning into the new novels or short stories, because it is a hot issue at the present time.

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