

The good earth by  
pearl s bucks



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The Good Earth by Pearl S Bucks Perhaps the most difficult passage in this section for the modern reader is O-lans decision to end her newborn daughters life (Baw 14). This act captures the gender dynamics of the society in The Good Earth -- its implied that O-lan would not have killed the newborn if it had been a male child -- as well as the strength and resolve of O-lan. She knows how horrible an additional mouth to feed would be; it might well mean the end of the family (Baw 16). Moreover, she knows that the newborn girl has little to look forward to aside from life as a " slave." Thus, out of compassion and wisdom, she ends a life she cant sustain. As with the ox, Wang Lung is reduced to a passive role, burying the infant and contemplating, in so far as hes able, his wifes striking drive to live (Baw 16). This is actually one of the more tragic events that occur in this book. After the birth of her latest child in this chapter, when Wang Lung goes into his wifes room to see how she is and how the baby is, O-Lan tells him that the girl child has died, with the simple word " dead"(Baw 24) However, Wang Lung heard the baby cry after it was born, and so he is somewhat suspicious. When he takes the babys body and sees two " dark, bruised spots" (Baw 24) on the neck of his daughter, he understands that his wife, driven by desperation of the poverty and want that his family were facing, actually killed her own daughter to spare her a life of starvation and slow, grinding death. Wang Lungs response to this is a sign of the depth of his despair (Baw 23).

During the period of the devastating drought and famine, the family has to flee to the south in a large city to find work for them to survive. Wang Lung's uncle, for significantly lesser value, offers to buy his possessions and land. Except for the house and land, everything else is sold by the family (Baw 17).

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Wang Lung later found out that O-lan had a bundle that contained many jewels that were very precious. She had come by the jewels when she, together with her husband, happened to be in a house of a rich man. Wang Lung used the jewels to buy more land (Baw 16). Then there came successive prosperity years and Wang Lung became very rich landowner and farmer. He then decided to educate his sons, ware of the disadvantages of his illiteracy. He now had a boy and girl- twins, apart from the daughter and two sons they had before they went south (Baw 18).

Much of Wang Lung changed after he got rich- his attitude, his personality as well as his family life. He started having affairs. He was passionately wild when he came across Lotus at fight sight and the intoxication had no limits. He had her first for money and later she became his mistress. His grew more and more lust for her (Baw 19). He became no longer interested in his job or work. Instead, he kept spending his wealth, money and time satisfying Lotus needs. He made to look like a town-dweller who was rich. This was because he wanted Lotus not to think of him as rustic-natured as he used to be. His madness was later gone and the richness in Wang Lung was also nowhere, at least for the short period of time (Baw 19).

#### Work Cited

Baw, San Shwe. " PEARL S BUCK'S PORTRAYAL OF MAN AS VICTIMS OF VICISSITUDES IN THE GOOD EARTH." The Good Earth By Pearl Buck (2010): 21.