

**THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN OSCAR WILDE'S *AN IDEAL*
HUSBAND (1895): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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by:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is describing the life style in the late nineteenth century focus on Victorian society. The object of this study is one of play written by Oscar Wilde An Ideal Husband, and it takes setting in London. In this opportunity this studies applying the qualitative method. There is relationship between this play and social condition in that time. The theoretical approach using sociological approach is appropriate with the main idea of Oscar Wilde. The data sources are collected from the internet and sociological books includes the play itself, biography of the author, sociological condition, structural elements of play, and are the data analyzed by descriptive analysis. The result of the study it can be seen in this following conclusion: (1) The purpose of the author of this play is to criticize the social reality in that time using the structural elements of play; (2) this play is written during the England's in industrial revolution; and (3) this play tell for us about the reality social in the late nineteenth century England, conduct with Hypocrisy, social status and damaged of trust.

Key words: Trust, Victorian era, Sociological perspective.

INTRODUCTION

During the nineteenth century English Britain was grow up by the industrialization. It make this century was transformed become modern age. Industrialization influences the standard life in this society. The modern life charges people to do anything to get all of their will. Trust is not something important again in life. Generally in the modern age trust is damaged such as manipulation, corruption, embezzlement and bribe

Industrial revolution gave impact for the society such as social structure, social status, and social activities. In reality the life's of people in the late nineteenth century Victorian society especially upper class group life with many acting to get their will. It can be seen from the dominance of upper class group in all the aspects of society. This authority influences the moral of upper class group. Many people received hypocrisy to build their good image and social status in society. In this society especially upper class group life with glamorous style such as attending party, watching opera and exhibition. In the modern age most of people in this society life with ambition to get wealth and much money.

But this condition is very different from lower class. Lower classes are just complement in all aspect of society. Their life very standard life and considered poorness life. They are not having opportunity to show their mind and emotion. In this society the lower class can be seen in the factory worker, Phips, Mason who work long day.

The sources of this information can be found in literature. Literature is the result of human creativity to express their idea and imagination through literary work. Literature also reflects the life of society and society also influences the author to express his idea. According to Swingewood (1972: 11), said that "sociology is the scientific and objective study about people in society; it is also study about some institutions and social processes."

Literary work is not just the imagination of author, but literary work is mirror up of social condition in such period of time. The author can express their idea through literary work. Literary works not only show the condition in that time but also it can be using to critics the social condition in that time. With literary work can found the data more deeply. Includes the social condition, social processes, and blooming of society.

There are many kinds of literary works, such as drama, movie, novel and poem. The emergence of literary work is not sudden but it is from the mirror of the author to express their idea. Oscar Wilde is one of famous author in the nineteenth century who will express about social condition in this society. He wants criticize the lifestyle of people in the late nineteenth century. He begins

popular with his play *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) etc.

The literary works above is one of example of literary work that is use by author to show their idea about society life. It is important thing to study, because with analyzing this literary work it can know the reality social in that time.

Great deals of Oscar Wilde's works are reflecting the social criticism. *An Ideal Husband* is one of the most popular plays which written by Oscar Wilde and published in 1896. This play consists of 105 pages and 4 scenes. It takes setting in London. Like many Wilde's play, it is a mirror up of the lifestyle Victorian society.

An Ideal Husband play tells about a brilliant politician, Sir Robert Chiltern who is in danger of losing his love and career because his scandal in the past. In the past, Sir Robert Chiltern is secretary government come from middle class group. One day Baron Arheim tries to persuade him to sell a government secret to get wealthy and good position in politic. The late Victorian society famous with hypocrisy to built their social status and prestige in society. Because the social condition especially the lifestyle of Victorian society is dominant in this play, so this study chooses the importance of trust as an issue and Sociological theory as the approach of the study.

A Sociological theory deals with knowledge that focuses on social phenomena. Laurenson and Swingewood (1972:11) state that "Sociology is the essentially the scientific, objective study of man in society, the study of social intuitions and of social process". Its means that sociology has relation with social society. The term society may include social, historical, cultural, religious, politic, and economic.

RESEARCH METHOD

According to the data, this study includes the category of qualitative research. And the object of the study, type of the data and data source, and technique of data collection are follows:

The object of the study is *An Ideal Husband* play written by Oscar Wilde (1895). This play tells about the brilliant politician who gets power and wealth based on the terrible act.

The data sources that are use to analyze this play divided into two parts. The first is primary data and secondary data sources. Primary data source is the data taken from the script of this play itself. It is included the dialogue between the characters. The second data source is the data taken from some materials that have connection with this study including books of sociology, home pages in internet, and other relevant books.

The technique of collection data is taking notes of important part from primary and secondary data available, such as reading the drama script and then taking notes, determining the character that will be analyzed, classifying and determining the relevant data and then taking notes from the others material that related.

In this study the technique of analyzing data is descriptive analysis. It is beginning with structural analysis of the literary work includes the character and characterization, theme, plot, style and symbol. After analyzing the structural elements, and then the data are analysis by sociological approach. The result of analysis by sociological approach can determine the aspect social, economic, science and technology, religious, and cultural. This analysis can describe and responses of the author condition especially the damaged of trust by hypocrisy in modern age.

THE RESULT OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Based on the issue the importance of trust reflected in Sociological approach. The reality social reflected in literary works includes the social aspect (social structure, social status and social relation), economic aspect, political aspect, science and technology aspect, and religious aspect. This study tries to discuss the kinds of aspects sociological approach. The sociological analysis in this play is reflected the sociology of Victorian society. Background of Victorian

society has several relationships with the theories and the content of the story. *An Ideal Husband* play tells about society in the late Victorian era. In this modern age hypocritical is being a life style in society to get wealth and social status.

1. Social Aspect

Social aspect of late Victorian society divided into three parts. They are social structure, social status, and social relation. The society of *An Ideal Husband* play has the social structure which includes upper class, middle class, and lower class. The upper class is identified by the people who had good position and wealth in society. The middle class are the working class who has regularly worked, and then the lower class included factory workers. In this play the social structure and social status dominant with upper class.

Wilde describes the condition of the upper class. Upper class group have wealth and power in society like government's family. It can be seen from the major character like Sir Robert Chiltern. He is included the upper class with good position in politic.

This social aspect contributes the social relation of the society. In this play Wilde show the relation of upper class and lower class. The relation of upper class can be seen in the daily activity of upper class group. The upper class group only got along with upper class group too. And the lower class is not having participated in the social life. In this play the lower class show on the Phipps and Mason. They are butler included the lower class. He does not have the opportunity to show his emotion.

2. Economic Aspect

The Victorian era becomes modern country with enlarged economic after industrialization. Economic aspect contributes the economic condition of characters. Some of the economic aspect in the Victorian era is reflected in this play. *An Ideal Husband* reflects Victorian economic condition. It is represented in Sir Robert family and friends. Sir Robert family has a good economic condition. They have much money and he included the member of the government.

This play show the work of upper class is business and politic career. Business and politics can make the high standard life of people. Business people can change the social status become riches people and politic can make people have power and privilege in society.

In the late nineteenth century especially in late Victorian society politic is the most popular work. People who have position in parliament can build good image in society. It is concluded that politic is everything in this society.

3. Science and Technology Aspect

In the late nineteenth century, England was famous with invention of science and technology. Many people in this century have high technology. Besides that, the Victorian society continues their ideas by improving the technology. Science and technology aspect contributes the character and characterization of this play. In this play Wilde show the science in medical. This shared in conversation between Lord Goring and Lord Caversham about their health.

The other science in this play is education. Education is one of important thing in modern society. This case is reflected in *An Ideal Husband* at the education on Lady Chiltern who had high education and participates in woman association.

And then communication is a tool for human interaction and supports all activities. With communication many people easier to get information and interaction. In this play the communication reflected in news paper, telegram and letter. News paper and telegram are contributes the communication in politic. It can be seen in this play.

4. Political Aspect

Political aspect contributes to the setting. The setting of time is the mirror of the social reality. Here Wilde describes that politic in this Play is dominant with upper class. They had a power to control over the political system. In this play Wilde showed that only rich people and owned large land should have participated in politic. This case is reflected in *An Ideal Husband* play. In this play

only the upper class showed who active participate in politic. Politic are delineate the activity of upper class.

5. Religious Aspect

Religion is guided into right line of life. Belief can be motivated someone to get of their will. Some people hope the miracle from their god. Religion is very dominant in society. But in this play the religious is not described in details. Many people are busy with their jobs and forget with his God. Religious aspect contributes the plot in *An Ideal Husband* play. Some of people in this era did not believe again with god. They assume that life and success came from their own hard work. This matter can be seen in this play on Sir John. He think that politic is everything in life.

In this society religious is also not important. Many people belief that the successful in life is came from their work. This matter can be seen in this play on dialogue between Lady Markby and Lady Chiltern. They talk about the Lady Brancaster family trouble.

On the other hand, religion gives spirit to someone to find out the best solution in their life. So religion can make human more optimistic to face the conflict in life. Religious aspect also contributes the character in this play. Sir Robert Chiltern hopes and wishes that God can solve his problem of live.

6. Cultural Aspect

The cultural aspect contributes in the setting. Setting of time and setting of place is reflected in this play. It can be seen in the upper class group. In the late nineteenth century, the upper class group life in glamorous life style. The days were spent by attending party, watching opera or exhibition.

And then cultural aspect contributes on the fashion. Victorian era live more modernly. This matter can be seen on the women in this society especially upper class group. They life is more fashionable and wearing glamorous jewelry. It is shows in Mabel Chiltern fashions, which become the trend center of fashion in that time.

On the other hand, in this play Wilde shows Mrs. Cheveley wearing the diamond brooch in the party. The diamond brooch is symbol of luxurious jewelry.

CONCLUSSION AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATION

From the previous analysis, it is evident that there is a close relationship between the play, *An Ideal Husband*, and the English society at the end of the nineteenth century. This study wants to the conclusion such as:

1. Based on the previous analysis, the researcher can draw the following conclusion. First, based on the structural analysis, it is evident that in this play, Oscar Wilde suggests the idea that in modern age especially upper class group tends to be hypocritical to build their social status. In order to show the idea, Wilde creates the characters of upper class groups, such as Sir Robert Chiltern and Mrs. Cheveley, who get the wealth and power by hypocritical. He also creates the plot to support his idea. The structural elements of this play are related and complemented with each other in order to create this play.
2. based on the sociological analysis it is evident that there is a relationship between the story of this play and social reality of the late nineteenth century. Wilde reflects some aspects in life such as social, politic, economic, religious, science and technology and the last culture. The content of the play tells the real condition in the Victorian society. In this period, the condition of society is more hypocritical.

Finally, in this play Wilde wants to critique the way of life of upper class group in Victorian society. In the late nineteenth century many people life with many acting, to build their image and social status in society.

Relates to the conclusions above, this study wants to give some suggestion such as:

1. *An Ideal Husband* play is interesting play to be read and learned. This play shows the condition of social in the late Victorian era. After analyze this play using a sociological approach, the researcher suggests to other researcher to analyze *An Ideal Husband* play by different perspective such as a Marxist, psychoanalytic approach.

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