

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

An Ideal Husband is one of plays written by Oscar Wilde and published in 1896. It was the play of Wilde's comedy plays to be staged, and it was as a big success. This play consists of 105 pages, 4 scenes. The action of the play is completed within twenty-four hours, and it takes setting in London. *An Ideal Husband* is often called a "social comedy" because it has both a serious social as well comedic plot line. Like many comedies, it is a biting satire on the moral of late Victorian society. Oscar Wilde writes this play to criticize the late Victorian society about their life. Victoria society is famous with power and wealth their life is full of acting and pretend to be someone else to get good image from the society.

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin on October 16th 1854, he is Ireland to two accomplished parents, his mother being a respected poet and translator and his father a knighted surgeon. Educated at Portora Royal Scholl in Enniskillen and Trinity College, Dublin, in 1875 he won a Scholarship to Magdalen College, Oxford; where he soon acquired a reputation for wit, charm and conversational ease and went on to gain a first class degree. After university, Wilde moved to London, where he insinuated himself into London's most glamorous drawing rooms as wit, dandy, and high aesthete. In 1881 he published a volume of poetry and left for an American lecture tour on the arts the following year, during which he met Henry Longfellow, Oliver

Wendell Holmes, and Walt Whitman. Upon returning to London, he married, fathered two sons, and published several collections of children's stories and Irish folktales. In 1887 he also took a post as editor of *Woman's World* magazine.

Oscar Wilde begins popular with his first play *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895). *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* (1891), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), *The Sphinx* (1894), *The Canterville Ghost* (1887). These plays were a most popular play by Oscar Wilde that established him as the greatest playwright.

An Ideal Husband play is a story about a man namely Sir Robert Chiltern. He is a man who has everything, brilliant politician, perfect man, and ideal husband for Lady Chiltern. But his wife does not know that her husband get his wealthy and powerful is based on the terrible act of parliamentary corruption. In the past, he was an assistant of the British Cabinet. One day Baron Arheim tries to persuade him to sell a government state secret.

In their life, suddenly Mrs. Cheveley comes to the party at the Sir Robert Chiltern's house. Mrs. Cheveley is a woman who knows the secret of Sir Robert Chiltern's past life. Mrs. Cheveley invites Sir Robert Chiltern to make relationship to build a canal in Argentina, but she cannot realize her plan because Sir Robert Chiltern does not agree with her plan. Then Mrs. Cheveley tries to threaten to tell his wife about his scandal life.

Mrs. Cheveley reveals Sir Robert's past to Lady Chiltern but she does not believe her husband's scandal. In her mind, he is an ideal husband without sin and has good reputation. Lady Chiltern begs Sir Robert to deny Mrs. Cheveley's pronouncement, but he tells her the truth about his past. Then, after Lady Chiltern knows Sir Robert in the past, she hates and the image of him is shattered.

An Ideal Husband received response after staging this play. There are some responses from audiences about *An Ideal Husband* according to George Bernard Shaw's comments on the original production: "Mr. Oscar Wilde's new play at the Haymarket is a dangerous subject, because he has the property of making his critics dull. Mr. Wilde is to me our only thorough playwright. He plays with everything; with wit, with philosophy, with drama, with actors and audience, with the whole theatre."

The second response of *An Ideal Husband* is "... much of the characterization and a good deal of the dialogue is admirable either in its truth to life or in its literary cleverness. Mr. Wilde knows the fashionable world, and supplies of it a graphic and effective picture..." (*Morning Post* Jan. 4, 1895 quoted in Tydeman *Comedies* pg. 60)

The third "*An Ideal Husband*... has as a central theme the hazards of precipitate and inflexible moral judgment... and the way in which that judgment has to be modified. (Ian Gregor, 112). ... "If Lady Chiltern demands an ideal husband this is intimately connected with the requirement that he

must be an ideal politician. Corruption in the one sphere is, for her, corruption in the other.” (Ian Gregor, 117)

An Ideal Husband was as big a success with audience as previous two. Although this play is satire social comedy which reflects the late life of Victorian society about a prominent politician who is in danger of losing his reputation as a paragon of integrity, owing to a youthful indiscretion that the play's villain is threatening to expose. Many manipulations, corruption in politic and nothing trust, give inspiration to Oscar Wilde to produce the play about it. He tried to criticize the Victorian society through their play based on social condition where he lives. Based on the phenomenon, the writer is interested in analyzing this drama using sociological approach.

There are four reasons that make the writer choose to analyze. The first is *An Ideal Husband* has the interesting story; which reflects the life of a late Victorian society and loaded many critics. Oscar Wild wants to express their imagination about the real condition in society and politic. In this situation a late Victorian group obsessed with purity and goodness with hypocrisy but, of course, as imperfect as the people of any other age. It shows that the condition in this play is similarity with the real condition in this era.

The second reason is unique characters in *An Ideal Husband* especially Lady Chiltern. Oscar Wilde described about Lady Chiltern like a perfect woman, though a poised, charming, and dignified society wife. Lady Chiltern was new woman who best represented by an educated wife involved in women's issues and supportive of her husband's political career.

The third reason is the plot of *An Ideal Husband*; the writer wants to know more about plot in this play. The plot plays is to critique the late Victorian society about their life. The life of Victorian society is not different from situation in this era. Many people want to get the power from the deceitful. In this play Sir Robert Chiltern sell a government state secret to get the power and reputation. The plot makes the writer so curious, because it showed how Sir Robert Chiltern is struggle for life between fear and afraid of losing his wife because Chiltern's demand that her ambitious husband be pure and without stain.

The last reason is the importance of trust as the main issue reflected in the *An Ideal Husband* play. Trust can make better condition in society and environment. After reading this play, the writer can take conclusion that Wilde's play has been made and play at 1985, but we can match with this situation now. As we know that some trust is damaged such as manipulation, corruption, embezzlement, and bribe.

Based on the reason above, the writer is going to observe *An Ideal Husband* play by using sociological approach, So the writer constructs the title **THE IMPORTANCE OF TRUST IN OSCAR WILDE'S *AN IDEAL HUSBAND* (1895): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH.**

B. Literature Review

The study conducted by the writer has a close relationship with the study conducted by Martha Kurniati, a Petra Christian University student

(2003), entitled *A Mistake in the past and its Consequences as Seen in Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband*. She uses literary approach using characterization and conflict to analyze the topic. She finds out that Sir Robert Chiltrens reason to commit the mistake is to be wealthy and powerful. The consequences of his mistake is that he lives in fear and afraid of losing his wife love and the efforts to pay for his mistake that he refuses the new position and to make a cooperation with Mrs Chevely.

Different from the previous researcher, the present researcher has different approach and object in analyzing data. The researcher uses sociological approach to analyze the data. The researcher analyzes the importance of trust in *An Ideal Husband* play by using sociological approach.

C. Problem Statement

Knowing that the problem is the most important part of research, the researcher proposes the problem of this study “How the importance of Trust is reflected in *An Ideal Husband* play?”

D. Limitation of the Study

The researcher focuses this research in analyzing the importance of trust in the society in late Victorian reflected in *An Ideal Husband* play based on sociological approach.

E. Objective of the Study

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze *An Ideal Husband* play based on the structural elements of the play.

2. To analyze the importance of trust reflected in *An Ideal Husband* based on sociological approach.

F. The Benefits of the Study

The Benefits of the Study are:

1. Theoretical Benefit

The study is hoped to give new contribution and information to the larger body of knowledge, particularly the literary studies on *An Ideal Husband* play.

2. Practical Benefit

The study is hoped to give deeper understanding in literary field as the reference to the other researcher and students of University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta or other students universities who have interest in analyzing this play from sociological approach or different approach.

G. Research Method

1. Object of the Study

The object of this study is *An Ideal Husband* play which is written by Oscar Wilde, premiered in London, England, on January 3, 1895, and was published in 1896.

2. Type of the Data and Data Source

Type of data in this research is text, text can be defined as all of written works. The text of this research is dialogue between the characters in *An Ideal Husband* play. While, source of data can be divided into two parts as follows:

a. Primary Data Source

The primary data source of the study is taken from *Oscar Wilde's An Ideal Husband* play.

b. Secondary data sources

The secondary data sources are taken from other data that have connection with the research including books, thesis, homepages and other relevant books.

3. Technique of Data Collection

The technique of collection is taking notes of important part from primary and secondary data available. The steps are:

- a. Reading the drama script rapidly.
- b. Determining the character that will be analyzed.
- c. Classifying and determining the relevant data.
- d. Taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the drama.

4. Technique of the Data Analysis

In this research the technique of analyzing the data, is descriptive analysis. It was beginning with the structural analysis of the work and finally the sociological analysis of the literary works.

H. Research Paper Organization

The systematic of research paper is the ways which refer to the roles that systematic. The research paper organizations of this research are: In chapter I, the researcher explains the background of the study, problem

statement, the literature review, objective, benefit, and research method and thesis organization. Chapter II contains the underlying theory used in analyzing *An Ideal Husband* using sociological approach. Chapter III deals with the social background of Victorian Society in the late nineteenth century. Chapter IV is the structural analysis of the work, which includes the structural elements of *An Ideal Husband* play, such as the character and characterization, setting, plot, and other elements of the work. Chapter V is the sociological analysis of the society in *An Ideal Husband* play. Finally, this study presents conclusion and suggestion in Chapter VI.