

**THE NEED FOR ETIQUETTE REFLECTED IN SUZANNE ENOCH'S  
*ENGLAND'S PERFECT HERO* NOVEL (2004):  
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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**by:**

**Anindya Nurul Kusuma Dewi**

**A 320100259**

**SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION  
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA  
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FAKULTAS KEGURUAN DAN ILMU PENDIDIKAN**

Jl. A. Yani Tromol Pos 1- Pabelan, Kartasura Telp. (0271) 717417 Fax: 715448 Surakarta 57102

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Nama : Drs. M. Thoyibi. M. S.

NIK : 410

Nama : Titis Setiabudi, S.Si, M.Hum

NIK : 948

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Nama : Anindya Nurul Kusuma Dewi

NIM : A 320100259

Program Study : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Judul Skripsi : **THE NEED FOR ETIQUETTE REFLECTED IN SUZANNE ENOCH'S ENGLAND'S PERFECT HERO NOVEL (2004): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

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Drs. M. Thoyibi. M. S.

NIK. 410

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Titis Setiabudi, S.Si, M.Hum

NIK. 948

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A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**

Anindya Nurul Kusuma Dewi

A 320100259

anindya.nkd@gmail.com

**(School of Teacher Training and Education,  
Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta)**

**ABSTRACT**

*This study is about the need for etiquette in England at the nineteenth century in England's Perfect Hero novel using sociological approach. The objectives of this study are identify by the structural elements of the novel and analyze the novel based on the sociological approach. This study is qualitative research. There are two data sources: primary and secondary. The primary data source is England's Perfect Hero novel by Suzanne Enoch released in 2004. The secondary data sources are other sources taken from books, dictionary and internet that supported to the analysis. The result of study comes to the following conclusions. Firstly, based on the structural analysis, England's Perfect Hero describes the lack of etiquette in English men, it causes the women create several etiquettes to make man act as gentleman. Secondly, based on sociological analysis, there is a close relationship between the story of the novel and the reality condition of English society in the twenty first century, in which some people ignore the importance of etiquette in social interaction.*

**Key words:** *The Need for Etiquette, England's Perfect Hero Novel, Sociological Approach*

## **A. Introduction**

*England's Perfect Hero* is a novel written by an American author Suzanne Enoch. She was born in Southern California. She is an American author best-selling contemporary and historical regency romance novel. She graduated from the University of California with a degree in English. This novel is a historical romance. The book was first published by Avon Books, on February 2004. This novel has twenty five chapters and 386 pages. It takes setting in London at 19<sup>th</sup> century with the outbreak of Napoleon wars. The background of each character is a military family. The story of the novel is about men had no idea how to act as gentlemen. There is a woman who is writes the etiquettes that she thinks men rarely do. The etiquettes are attentive, sociable, inner beauty, and personal integrity. The woman is Lucinda Barrett. She is chooses Geoffrey who will get her manners lessons. Then Robert Carroway comes into her life and offers some helps to gain Geoffrey easily. They are make good plans until her second lessons. Then, Robert gets slander that he has steals some documents in the war office. In fact, Geoffrey is the burglar and he did that because he wants profit from sell the document. However, Lucinda knows and follows her heart that Robert is the man who is she looking for. This novel gets positive review and some awards. There are one of Amazon.com's Top 10 Romances in 2004, Romantic Times Career Achievement Award Nominee and Romantic Times Book Reviews Magazine based on E-Library Co-Op of Southeast Lusiana.

The study on *England's Perfect Hero* novel (2004) is first being conducted in the research paper due its latest publication that is in 2004. The writer has researched through local and digital libraries and did not find it. Library of UMS, UNS, UGM, UNNES, until international libraries have reported no one research on *England's Perfect Hero*. So that the researcher cannot compare this research with other research because there is no study about *England's Perfect Hero*.

The writer analyzes this novel using sociological theory which is considered as the appropriate approach. Sociology is a branch of knowledge that focuses on social phenomena and anything connected to society, including value, cultural system, custom, and artistic life. Sociology is essentially the scientific, objective of the study of man in society, the study of social institutions and of social processes (Swingewood and Laurenson, 1972: 11). In sociology of literature, it is clear that sociology and literature is influencing and complementing each other. According to Swingewood and Laurenson (1972: 13), "Although it would seem that literature and sociology are not wholly distinct disciplines, but on the contrary complement each other in our understanding of society, historically they have tended to remain apart". There are three major principles of sociology of literature: literary work as the social document, literary work deals with the social situation of the author and literary work as a manifestation from the historical moment (Swingewood and Laurenson, 1972: 13-21).

## **B. Research Method**

The type of this research is qualitative research. Thus, the writer does not need statistic to collect, to analysis and to interpret the data. It is library research while the data sources are using literary data. There are two sources that are needed to do this research. The primary data source is the novel *England's Perfect Hero*, and the secondary data sources are the other books and other sources that support the analysis. In collecting data, the writer doing some steps are: reading repeatedly the book, determining the character that will be analyzed, underlying the important parts in both primary and secondary data, classifying and determining the relevant data, taking notes from the material and some other resources related to the novel. The technique of data analysis is descriptive analysis based on sociological approach. Focus will be on the need for etiquette reflected in *England's Perfect Hero* novel and in English society in early of twenty first century.

## **C. Research Findings and Discussion**

After analyzing *England's Perfect Hero* novel, the writer gets some findings has some cases to be discussed. All the components will become unity in the discussion.

### **1. Findings**

In analyzing *England's Perfect Hero* novel, the writer gets some findings. They are the etiquette in the novel and the etiquette in the society.

### **a. The etiquette in the novel**

In the novel, shows that the men are lack of etiquette. It makes woman, Lucinda Barrett makes some lists of etiquette that men rarely do. The lists are:

#### Lucinda's List

1. When speaking to a lady, a man should be attentive and not gaze about the room while he's conversing, as if looking for someone more interesting to come along.
  2. At a dance, a gentleman should dance and interact. Attending an event for the sole purpose of staring or of being seen—especially when some ladies are left lacking partners—is rude.
  3. A gentleman should look for interests in more than just the latest popular trend. A fine mind is more interesting than a well-tied cravat.
  4. Simply because a gentleman is courting a lady doesn't mean he has to agree with everything her father says—though he should still be respectful, even behind her father's back.
- (EPH, 2004: 2)

There are etiquettes that reflected in the novel. The setting of time is in the nineteenth century. The etiquette can be seen from the speaking manner, dressing manner, acting manner, and dining manner.

#### 1) Speaking Manner

The lists mention when speaking to a lady, a man should be attentive. It explains that the speaking manner of the male characters are bad. It can be seen when Lucinda talking with Geoffrey, he gazes about the room.

...he continued, nodding at the group of young men surrounding debutante Elizabeth Fairchild...  
(EPH, 2004: 20)

However, this novel shows some formal and informal greetings. The formal greeting is shown when Lucinda and Agnes

greet into each other. The informal is shown when Lucinda meets Georgiana. There is no formal gesture, only call nickname and kissing on the cheek.

“Miss Barrett,” a male voice said from behind her.  
With a start she turned around, looking into the round, smiling face of her most determined suitor. “Mister Henning,” she returned, nodding.  
(EPH, 2004: 19)

“Luce,” Georgiana said, dragging her husband, Lord Dare, up beside her. “A good beginning, yes?” she whispered, kissing Lucinda on the cheek.  
(EPH, 2004: 21)

People like insult other who are not as perfect as they, especially from physical looks.

“At least someone’s noticed. And look. There he goes again.” He gestured toward one side of the room as Robert escorted Miss Jane Melroy onto the floor. “The cripple seems determined to ask every ugly chit in London to dance.” He snorted. “Maybe that’s all he can manage, these days.”  
(EPH, 2004: 147)

## 2) Dressing Manner

The upper class is fashionable. Therefore, how they are wearing clothes is one of important thing to make them good looking and show that they are from upper class. They have many dresses for different occasion.

The female character is reflected by Lucinda Barrett. When she visits her friends, she wears walking dress. It is shown from this following script:

...frowning into the mirror at the darkening splotch across the bosom of her green muslin walking dress.



(EPH, 2004: 8)

The male character is reflected by Robert Carroway. His daily clothes are simpler than when he attends to party. It can be seen when he comes to Barrett house.

...he had on a very nice pair of Hessians. Lucinda looked up, and up, past tanned doeskin trousers, a black jacket, brown waistcoat, snow-white cravat,  
(EPH, 2004: 32)

Lucinda likes to tend the roses and ride a horse. She wears old gown when gardening. While ride a horse, she wears riding jacket.

For the first time he seemed to notice the old blue muslin gown and straw hat she wore.  
(EPH, 2004: 31)

She'd done her own part to encourage his interest, of course, having decided to wear her crimson military-style riding jacket and skirt.  
(EPH, 2004: 129)

They are wearing formal clothes when attend to party. When party usually the dress code is more specify. The woman wears a ball gown and the man wears black tie.

The deep blue silk gown with silver trim was a particular favorite of hers, and it was nice to know that he appreciated it.  
(EPH, 2004: 138)

His black jacket and trousers called attention to the lean hardness of his frame, while his crimson waistcoat stood out as bright and surprising as blood.  
(EPH, 2004: 140)

### 3) Acting Manner

The tradition of English society at that time is held party. Men usually join to their groups and rare to interact with other people. When they are looking for woman to dance, they only choose from her beneficial such as pretty, wealth, or popularity. That is make many women have no opportunities to dance and interact with more people. It can be seen when Geoffrey asked Lucinda to dance with him twice in a party.

“And you’ve saved two spaces on your dance card for me?”

“Other than my father, you’re the first gentleman to ask for a spot.”

“It’s a shame there aren’t enough men here to keep Francis Henning off the dance floor tonight,” he commented. “Are you certain you’ll only allow me two dances?”

(EPH, 2004: 138)

Personal integrity is one of the important etiquette. It means man should have same respect in front of and behind the lady’s or her family’s back. It can be seen when Geoffrey always agree with Lucinda’s father but he has purposes closest to him. If he closes to General and marries Lucinda, he will get promotion. Different case with Robert, he loves Lucinda even he hates her father but he still respects to Lucinda’s father.

### 4) Dining Manner

There is no explanation about table manner, but it can be analyzed from the eating behavior. The Carroway family rarely

breakfasted together. It is shown that there is no specific rule in this family. It can be seen when Robert breakfast alone.

At the sideboard he shoveled ham and toast onto his plate, then sat at the far end of the table. He sliced a piece of ham and brought it to his mouth just as the butler stepped into the breakfast room.  
(EPH, 2004: 47)

The Carroway like to eat in the restaurant or bar at lunch. When they arrive, they can choose where they want to seat with no reserving a table first.

“Welcome, Lord Dare, Mr. Carroway,” the host said, glancing at Robert and then leading them into the club’s large dining room. “Watson, by the window if you please,” Tristan drawled, nodding at some acquaintance or other.  
(EPH, 2004: 96)

Before they order a main course, they drink the glass of port. It is their beverages. After that, they order a main course. When ordering, it is shown impolite attitude because Tristan Carroway does not say please when request.

Tristan signaled a footman. “Roast lamb all around, Stephen,” he ordered, smiling at Bradshaw’s grimace. “And lemonade.”  
(EPH, 2004: 99)

The table format is seated with food served at the table. It can be seen that the food is brought to them (Post, 2004: 437).

The food arrived, and Robert found himself calm enough that he actually had an appetite.  
(EPH, 2004: 100)

Evelyn and Saint held a dinner party in their house. They invited best friends and family. They sent a letter invitation. The guests come early before the food is already served. While waiting the food, the male guests are playing billiard and the female are gossiping.

“General Barrett, allow me to challenge you to a game of billiards. I believe the ladies wish to chat.”  
(EPH, 2004: 72)

#### **b. The etiquette in the society**

The national culture in Britain has changed along with the population and the world at large. Nevertheless, their cultures are shaped by their histories and traditions (Higgins 2010: 1). It can be seen by their norms, social practice, and also physically looks such as fashion.

According to Post (2004: 3) today’s etiquette is more casual approach to dressing, communicating, and entertaining has taken hold. Manners are very nature adapt to the times. Today’s manners are more situational, they remain a combination of common sense, generosity of spirit, and a few specific rules that help us interact thoughtfully.

##### 1) Speaking Manner

Nowadays, people when speaking have some principles: respect, consideration, and honesty. Respect means respecting other people value regardless of their background, race, or creed. It can be shown by refraining by demeaning others for ideas and opinions,

refusing at racist or sexist jokes, putting prejudice aside, and open minded (Post, 2004: 3). Consideration means being thoughtful and kindness. Thinking about what you can do to other people and make them comfortable, while kindness is about acts (Post, 2004: 4). Honesty ensures that we act sincerely and is also speaking and acting in ways that would not cause unnecessary offense (Post, 2004: 4). A tactful person can say something honest about another person without causing great embarrassment or pain. In other words, tact calls for both empathy and benevolent honesty (Post, 2004: 4).

Body language is a series of silent signals that play a vitally important part in the impression you give to the world. (<http://www.debretts.com/british-etiquette/communication/face-face/body-language>). It can be a negative signals or positive signals. Negative signals include crossed arms, hunched shoulders and fidgeting. Fiddling with fingers and hair or nibbling your nails will make a thoroughly bad impression.

Positive signals include good posture, appropriate eye contact and confident hand gestures. During conversation, gently leaning towards the other person and nodding occasionally to acknowledge agreement conveys interest and smile. (<http://www.debretts.com/british-etiquette/communication/face-face/body-language>).

## 2) Dressing Manner

The multicultural nature of modern Britain contributes the diversity of youth culture and the passion of fashion culture. British youth culture has strong relation with the café and the street, and popular music. According to Evans (2010: 209-214) “The United Kingdom designers produce fashion that is both striking and innovative. The association of British fashion with youth culture is one of the sources of a widely held belief that it is more creative than fashion in other country.”

Men and women wear wools and tweeds for casual occasions. They wear blazer for weekend not to work. Slacks, sweater and jacket are appropriate for men and women ([http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_gb.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_gb.htm)). At festive attire, men wear slack, seasonal sport coat or blazer in color of choice, and open-collar shirt. Women wear short or long cocktail dress, or dressy skirt and top or dressy pants outfit (Post, 2004: 49)

People in larger cities dress more formally. Men wear black ties, business suits, morning coats or tails for formal events. Women wear cocktail suits or dresses. It can be long or short dress ([http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_gb.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_gb.htm)). Men’s clothing often expresses affiliation rather than style. Ties are denoted their school, university, army or club. It makes ties are important symbols.

### 3) Acting Manner

Nowadays, behavior of a man towards a woman is all about the natural gesture, striking a balance between treating a woman like a lady, but still respecting her independence (<http://www.debretts.com/british-etiquette/british-behaviour/h/chivalry>). The chivalry gestures such as men hold the doors for women, or a man walks on the side of the road.

Courteous people are empathetic and flexible. They are able to relate emotionally to the feelings of others. They listen closely to what people say, observe what is going on around them, and register what they see. They are willing to adjust their own behavior to the needs and feelings of others (Post, 2004: 5).

Honestly appraising your own attitudes and enable you to be more sensitive to others and their needs. Honesty ensures that we act sincerely and also speaking and acting in ways that would not cause unnecessary offense (Post, 2004: 4). A person is not in his or her group; it is not possible to judge individuals before know them. People are different, show your respect without insulting them (Post, 2004: 64).

#### 4) Dining Manner

An invitation to someone's home is more common in England than in the rest of Europe. In England, when invited to someone's home, arrive at least ten or twenty minutes after the stated

time. Never arrive early. In Scotland and Wales, arrive on time ([http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_gb.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_gb.htm)).

There are two basic formats for dinner parties, the seated meal and the buffet. Seated dinner with food served at the table, guests are seated at the dining table and food brought to them. Semi buffet, drink and dessert may be brought to the table but food and plates put out on a separate table and guests serve themselves. Buffet with casual seating, guests serve themselves at the buffet and then sit in the party area. Cocktail buffet, the food is sufficient to constitute a meal (Post, 2004: 437).

When you are eating out in the restaurant or bar, reserving a table is suggested. It enables you to specify any special seating you might in the smoking or nonsmoking areas (Post, 2004: 414). Treating a server respectfully, call him by catching his eye or raise your hand. If he is still looking elsewhere, call him softly (Post, 2004: 417).

There are some rules when dinner: eating as quietly as possible; chew with your mouth closed; make sure not to talk while eating; do not put your elbows on the table while eating; and do not talk so loudly that make people annoyed (Post, 2004: 427).

## **2. Discussion**

There are some differences between the etiquette in the novel that the setting in the nineteenth century and in the society in the twenty first



century in England. In the nineteenth century, gentlemen must act as a chivalry. They should have achievement and also good etiquette. They should know how to make a lady impresses to them. Nowadays, the etiquette is more situational, they remain a combination of common sense, generosity of spirit, and a few specific rules that help us interact thoughtfully.

The traditional etiquette seems there is not honest act such as they still speaks that make somebody hurts and uncomfortable. This day, honest is the major etiquette. People can speak honest but they can say it without make somebody hurts. Respect is not only about being respectable in front of and behind someone's back, but also people do not demeaning others for ideas and opinions, refusing at racist or sexist jokes, putting prejudice aside, and open minded (Post, 2004: 3).

The differences also can be seen in their fashion. How people are wearing dress between the nineteenth century and twenty first century. The people in the nineteenth century are wearing the different clothes in every event. They usually wearing same style in every occasion even though they wear different clothes for every occasion such as the woman wearing dress for party, she will wears dress when she is gardening. In the twenty first century, people wearing multifunction clothes that can wear it in every event. Usually, they mix the clothes with accessories. Their style is based on their favorite band, lifestyle or fashion street. Their fashion is more innovative and individualism reflects their characteristics.

#### **D. Conclusion**

Based on the previous analysis, the researcher draws the following conclusion. First, Suzanne Enoch delivers a message that a man needs to keep his etiquettes in daily life. It can be seen when women prefer to choose ethical men.

Second, Enoch through *England's Perfect Hero* novel emphasizes the cultural aspect in London in the twenty first century. The novel shows that the social structure in London is still in classes, there are upper class, middle class, and lower class. The dominant aspect is the cultural aspect, especially in norms. Enoch draws that men in London have no etiquette. They need to keep the etiquette in their daily life to make ladies impress and respect to men. It can be seen when Lucinda creates rules that men rarely do.

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Jl. A. Yani Tromol Pos 1- Pabelan, Kartasura Telp. (0271) 717417 Fax: 715448 Surakarta 57102

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Nama : Anindya Nurul Kusuma Dewi  
NIM : A 320100259  
Fakultas/Progdi : FKIP/PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS  
Jenis : JURNAL  
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