

**QUEST FOR SELF- IDENTITY IN OLIVER PARKER'S *THE
IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST* MOVIE (2002):
A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The Importance of Being Earnest is a film released on November 12, 2002 with duration 97 minutes and directed by Oliver Parker, based on Oscar Wild's classic comedy of manners play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The original music score is composed by Charlie Mole. The movie grossed about 8.3 million dollars. The movie got one awards as the winner in the 2003 Italian National Syndicate of Film Journalists' Silver Ribbon award for Best Costume Design, the movie's costumes are designed by Maurizio Millenotty. Reese Witherspoon was nominated for a Teen Choice Award (Choice Actress - Comedy) for her performance as Cecily.

Oliver Parker was born September 6, 1960 in London, England UK. He graduated from English Literature of University of Surrey in 1993-1996. In 1996, he continuous education in University of Kent London Center for International Relations (LSE).

This movie gets some responses from many people such as Robert Moore, Colin Firth, and Cancade. First response is Robert Moore (2002) from Chicago, he said that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is the funniest play in the English language. Second responses is *Colin Firth* (2009), he gives the responses that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is mostly a delightful film to watch on the big screen. The setting, the

cinematography, the director and the cast all put on a delightful adaptation of Oscar Wilde's play. Although this film is quite well done, unfortunately it is not exceptional. It is a pretty standard Hollywood movie, with interesting bits and battles of the wits here and there. So everybody who watches this movie will laugh and feel happy.

Third responses are Candace (2002) from Meridian, USA. He gives different responses of other people about this movie. Candace said that he cannot imagine a better cast for this film. That makes this dreadful travesty of Oscar Wilde's play even more appalling. Oliver Parker's hubris in thinking that he can improve on Oscar Wilde and one of the finest comedies in the English language is an outrage. He has cut some of Wilde's best lines, only to replace them with idiotic dream sequences, a ridiculous subplot involving Algernon's creditors, and even a hot-air balloon ride. Further, the production is heavy-handed and the music is just wrong.

Literary work is attractive work to analyze. Every work has different characteristics. Movie is one of literary works. It has good pictures as it is life in the box and it has good arrangements music so it gives edit value for the movie. Different with the poem, to analyze this literary, the reader must read the poem until clear. A poem consists of some stanzas. It has rhythm, rhyme, figurative language, and form and meaning. So the reader must detail to analyze this literary work.

Jack is a major character in this movie, he is a man who quests for self identity. From child, he never knows who his parent is. He strives to

find his parents. Jack in problems, if he cannot find his parents, it means that he cannot marry with his love, Gwendolen. Jack confuses how to find his parents and where he was born. All of questions are in his self, at the end Jack gets the answer when Lady Bracknell meets Miss Prism. They are talking a lot about the happening. Although Jack still is confused with what happens between Lady Bracknell and Miss Prism. So Lady Bracknell questions, where gives the question about the baby who is carried 35 years ago. All of the people are shocked. The end, Miss Prism explains the happen in 35 years ago. She leaved the baby in Victorian station, London. After the happening, she does not know the condition of baby. This happening remembers Jack about he found by Mr. Thomas Cardew in the hand bag at the place in Victorian station. In fact, the baby is Jack Worthing. He is happy, because he finds his family, his status, and his social background. The Jack's problem is clear. He finds his self-identity. Jack is nephew of Lady Brackell and also the brother of Algernon. The Jack's problem is clear, because he has found his family, so Lady Bracknell gives them permission to marry.

The movie is important for the writer, especially the story of the movie. The story describes a man who has quests for self identity and fights to find his parents. Although he does not opportunity to m them, he is happy because he has still other family. The problem is clear; it means that he has social status in society. In the beginning, it is serious problem

for him, social status makes he cannot propose his love. And the end, he proves that he has the parents and status social in the society.

The movie is interesting, because it is a comedy movie so it makes the writer be happy, and it makes laugh. The music very supports this movie, it makes like live; and gives fresh situation in this story.

Based on the story of the movie, the writer can take a point about quest for self- identity. The writer is interested study about the quest for self- identity that is presented in the movie *The Importance of Being Earnest* using sociological approach.

B. Literature Review

As long as the writer knows there is no other writer that has conducted study on the movie *The Importance of Being Earnest* in Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta.

The writer found two researches about the object, although their researches focus in drama not movie but they have similarity in the topic that is adopted by Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* on 1895. The first previous research was done by Niniek Yuniarti Tanjung (2005), a student of Petra Christian University of Surabaya. Her thesis entitled *The Social Pressure and Their Impacts on the Main Characters in Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: Psychoanalytic Approach*. In her thesis, she analyzes the personality perspective of the main characters; Algernon, Jack, Gwendolen and Cecily experience the

pressures from the society and try to escape from the pressures. They get pressures from their families and the conventions of the society. Families are considered to be the social pressure for the main characters since families are the representative of the society and are shaped by the society.

The second previous research was done by Alfiah Dwi Purwanti (2008), a student Sebelas Maret of University. The title is *The Importance of Being Earnest: Wilde's Motive in Creating the Character Jack and Algernon*. In her research finding showed that in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde represented the two main characters as his own representation to revolt his old custom established in the Aristocratic society. Based on indication above, Wilde's motive in creating the plays is showing the condition of Victorian Aristocratic society's daily life, with all rigid manners. The play is basically a kind of criticism toward the approach of the old custom, through the events or conflicts happening in the Aristocratic society.

Meanwhile, the present research analyzes this play focusing on quest for self-identity by using sociological approach entitled *Quest For Self-Identity in Oliver Parker's The Importance Of Being Earnest Movie (2002)*.

C. Problem Statement

Considering the phenomenon, the writer formulates the problem statement in this study as “How the quest for self – identity is reflected in Oliver Parker’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*?”

D. Limitation of the Study

In this research, the writer just focuses on *The Importance of Being Earnest* movie (2002) by Oliver Parker.

E. Objective of the Study

From the problem that has been stated above, the study that will be done have several objectives as following:

1. To analyze the structural elements of the movie in order to identify the unity of the movie
2. To analyze the major characters of the movie based on the sociology approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

1. Theoretical Benefit

The result of this study is expected to be able to give theoretical contribution in literature study, particularly sociology study on literature about search for self- identity.

2. Practical Benefit

- a. To give deeper understand about the concept of the movie especially from the sociology aspect.
- b. To give additional information to literature researches especially one s dealing with Oliver Parker's *The Importance of Being Earnest* movie.

G. Research Method

1. Type of the Research

Type of the research is descriptive qualitative, because this paper has descriptive data in the forms of written or oral from observing people or behavior. Moleong (1983: 3) states that “qualitative research is a type of research that has descriptive data in the forms of written or oral from observing people or behavior.”

2. Object of the Research

Object of the research is *The Importance of Being Earnest* movie (2002) by Oliver Parker.

3. Data and Data Sources

There are two data sources in this study. The primary data and secondary data sources.

- a. Primary

The primary data source of the study is the movie.

b. Secondary

The secondary of data sources consist of the other data, which have relationship with the study, such as some biography of the author, and other relevant information.

4. Method of the Data Collection

In collecting the data, the writer uses library research, which involves several steps:

- a. Watching the movie
- b. Searching the script of the movie
- c. Reading the script
- d. Marking the point in the script to make easy in analyzing it
- e. Taking not it important in both primary and secondary data.

5. Method of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis used in this study is descriptive analysis. In addition, the writer also uses the structural analysis of the work. Firstly, the data are arranged in a list of data. Secondary, the writer is looking for a selecting the correlation of data by using the chosen approach. Thirdly, all data from the second step are arranged. Finally, to make conclusion is drawn.

H. Paper Organization

In order to guide other in reading the research paper, the writer makes outline about the contents of research such as, chapter I is introduction that consists of background of the study, literary review, problem statement, objectives of the study, benefit of the study, research method and research paper organization. Chapter II presents the underlying theory, including the review of the underlying theory covering with sociology of literature, major principle of sociology, self-identity in sociology, and structural elements of the movie. Chapter III is the social historical background of America in late twentieth and early twentieth first century. And chapter IV is structural analysis, which consists of the analysis of the structural elements of the movie. Chapter V presents sociological analysis and the last chapter consists of conclusion and suggestion for this study.