

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854. He is known as a famous playwright, poet, and essayist. He is also famous for his involvement in bringing aestheticism to England. Nearly all of his plays are comedy of manners in Victorian period. That is what makes him unusual in comparison with other playwrights. According to Christopher Russel Reaske's How to Analyze Drama, comedy of manners relates to an artificial social life in the Victorian period:

Comedy of manners usually concerned themselves with manners and customs of a very synthetic or artificial highbrow society; the comedy of manners is a satirical thrust at the mores of the so-called establishment and thus the manners of the upper-crust and the conventions of "social" people are hold up for ridiculous (Reaske 11).

The definition above conveys that comedy of manners is a description of manner in a certain period and is also a recount that Wilde's comedy of manner consists of the idea and picture of the Victorian society, in which he puts the satire and sense of comedy simultaneously.

I decide to analyse his work not only because of his great sense of comedy but also for his worth reading play. In my thesis, I choose A Woman of No Importance, one of his plays. I find the play interesting because he explores all the characters, especially women characters. In one of his biographies, Wilde says: “I took the drama, the most objective form known to art, and made of it as personal a mode of expression as the lyric or the sonnet; at the same time I widened its range and enriched its characterization” (“biography”). As Wilde states above, especially about the enriched characterization, I perceive that he as playwright has his own purpose of making the characters unusual and of keeping a close distance between his characters and his readers.

A Woman of No Importance discusses some female characters that lived in a Victorian Period. Based on Reaske’s How to Analyze Drama, “there is no narration or description in drama. Because this is so the playwright must present his ideas and his pictures of the characters almost entirely through dialogue and action” (Reaske 13). Throughout the three female characters’ dialogue and action of this play, I believe that I can find the theme as the meaning of story. “The theme of a piece of fiction is its controlling idea or its central insight. It is the unifying generalization about life stated or implied by the story. To derive the theme of a story, we must ask what its central purpose is: what view of life it supports or what insight into life it reveals” (Perrine 102). I can also identify the writer’s point of view. The message from this play can be found from the female characters since the outstanding characteristics of Wilde’s plays are the witty presentation of images.

Statement of the Problem

The problems are stated as follows:

1. What is the theme of the play?
2. How do the portrayals of the female characters help to reveal the theme?

Purpose of the Study

Based on the statement of the problems above this study is done:

1. To show the theme of the play.
2. To reveal the theme through the portrayal of female characters.

Method of Research

I use library research in my analysis and I start reading A Woman of No Importance as the primary text. I also read and compile some texts that are taken from books and the internet to support my analysis. Then I analyze the novel and draw some conclusions.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter One is the Introduction, which consists of the Background of Study, The Statement of the Problem, The Purpose of the study, The Method of Research, and The Organization of the Thesis. Chapter Two is the Discussion of A Woman of No Importance. Chapter Three is the Conclusion. The thesis ends with the Bibliography and the

Appendices, which consist of the Synopsis of the Play and the Biography of the Author.