



**THE CRITIQUE OF VICTORIAN MORALITY IMPLIED IN
OSCAR WILDE'S *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST***

THESIS

Written by:

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**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LETTERS
JEMBER UNIVERSITY
2013**



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A Thesis Presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letters,
Jember University as One of the Requirements to Get
the Award of Sarjana Sastra Degree
In English Study

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DEDICATION

This thesis is profoundly dedicated to:

- ❖ My beloved father, H. Abdurrahman who has inspired me to be a patient person. I do thank you for your patience and support during finishing my thesis
- ❖ My dearest mother, Hj. Khoiriyah who encourages me to be a strong man. I do thank you for your endless love and prayer
- ❖ My old brother, Maulidi S.H.I., M.A. for the full support and prayer
- ❖ My young brother, Mujahid for the prayer
- ❖ All of my friends in the Academic Year of 2007. Thanks for their support, friendship, and care
- ❖ My Alma Mater

MOTTO

Humans believe themselves free of fear when
there is no longer anything unknown.

(Max Horkheimer and Theodor w. Adorno)

DECLARATION

I hereby state that the thesis entitled “The Critique of Victorian Morality Implied in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of being Earnest*” is an original piece of writing. I declare that the analysis and the result described in this thesis have never been submitted for any degree or any publications. I certify to the best of my knowledge that all sources used any help received in the preparation of this thesis have been acknowledged.

Jember, September 25th, 2013
The examinee

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Jember, September 25th, 2013

Ahmad Naufal

SUMMARY

The Critique of Victorian Morality Implied in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance Of Being Earnest*; Ahmad Naufal, 070110191002; 2013: 46 pages; English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

The Importance of Being Earnest is a well known drama written by Oscar Wilde. He shows the problems of society especially in Victorian era. He paints a picture of the upper class' hypocrisy that behaves in particular manner characterized by its decadence. Therefore, this research is conducted to analyze the critique of Oscar Wilde toward Victorian morality.

Nietzsche's theory is used to find the concept of morality and the decadence of Victorian morality. He divides into two terms; slave morality and master morality. Meanwhile, Victorian era is covered by slave morality, Wilde through this drama offers a new perspective marked by master morality. To strengthen this analysis, John Huizinga's society of play is applied to determine the aspect of the concept of play in Wilde's drama. The society of play developed by Huizinga suggests that society must practice fairness instead of dishonesty. His theory is beneficial to give a counter toward Victorian morality. It is also applied to understand sociologically Victorian era since he writes the condition of this era in his masterpiece.

From this research, it is finally found that Wilde has criticized Victorian morality that loses its sense of humor through his social comedy work. Through *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde seems to suggest that triviality should sometimes replace seriousness. He conceives definitively that seriousness is another form of hypocrisy to cover one's weakness. It does not mean that seriousness is a mistake, but the seriousness used as the mask is no longer seriousness and it is very ironic. Wilde in this drama reminds his readers at that time that Victorian people lose their spirit of play signed by honesty. This spirit is replaced by hypocrisy covered with seriousness.

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