

**ENVIRONMENTALISM REFLECTED AT HENRIK IBSEN'S *PUBLIC ENEMY*  
(1882): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH**



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ABSTRACT

**MUHAMAD JAFAR, A320110201. ENVIRONMENTALISM REFLECTED AT HENRIK IBSEN'S A PUBLIC ENEMY (1882): A SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH. RESEARCH PAPER. MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA. 2015**

*The research is proposed to analyze the social aspects in A Public Enemy. The major problem in this article is to explain how the social problem reflected in A Public Enemy. The object of the study is An Enemy of the People drama written by Henrik Ibsen. Qualitative study is a method which is used to analyze the sociological aspects reflected in the drama. The result of this study is Henrik Ibsen shows the social condition of Norway. Although Norway in nineteenth century was including progresive country, Henrik Ibsen also criticized the goverment for controlling the society and ruling as the majority to the minority.*

**Key word: Social Aspects, An Enemy of the People, Sociological approach.**

## A. Introduction

Environment influences people's life and health. People should keep their environment always clean so that people can live healthy. Environmentalism or Environmental rights is a board of philosophy, ideology, and social movement regarding concerns for environmental protection and improvement of the health of the environment, particularly as the measure for this health seeks to incorporate the concern of non-human elements. Environmentalism advocates the lawful preservation, restoration and/or improvement of the natural environment, and may be referred to as a movement to control pollution or protect plant and animal diversity. (Boyle, 2007: 14)

Environmentalism denotes a social movement that seeks to influence the political process by lobbying, activism, and education in order to protect environmentalism goes not to property theory, not to economic analysis, but to the construction of institutions and the broadening of the debate on policy (Boyle, 2007: 14).

Environmentalism is the science of how to keep the earth well. One example is the use of plastic. It is a non-biodegradable plastic products which have the potential to create serious damage to the environment. Plastic is not biodegradable garbage, so it took several hundred years to decompose the plastic waste. In this case, the writer takes the theory of environmentalism to inform the public about the dangers of excessive use of plastics.

Public Enemy is interesting drama to be performed. As far as the writer concerns, the research on the *Public Enemy* drama script has been conducted by some students. The first study about *An Enemy of the People* drama is conducted by Nurcahyani Retno Pambudi, a Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta student, in her article published on March, 2014, entitled "Struggle for Public Welfare in An Enemy of the People Drama (1882) by Henrik Ibsen; A Sociological Approach".

She concludes that the result based on the sociological approach, she wants to show the modernization occurred in Norway society, but she also criticizes that the society is not sensitive about the problem occurred. Because they do

not have enough knowledge, so they do wrong decision when someone will help them to solve their problem. The pedagogical implication which is shown in this drama is the society does not get the education about the bath from the government. So they do not have enough knowledge to understand how the disease can contaminate the water. The other reason is the detail cause is not yet explained by Dr. Stockmann to society so they do not believe with him.

The second is study which was conducted by Mordecai Roshwald (2004). A new critical edition of novel entitled *The Alienated Moralist in An Enemy of the People*. Roshwald concludes that the doctor is a defiant and militant moralist. He believes that he is true and the people are wrong. Consequently, he suffers for his independent and unbending stand. It is not an unfamiliar phenomenon, whether in the annals of human history or in the experience of contemporary societies.

The third is study which was conducted by Candra Bagus Santoso (2008) by his research paper *Making Meaningful choices in Ibsen's An Enemy Of The People Drama (1882); An Existentialist Criticism*. He focused in how the actor makes a meaningful choice in his problem. Candra shows what actors do to finish some problems with the government in his city. He uses an existentialist criticism to analyze this drama.

Based on the description, the researchers above are different with the writer because the research discuss about *Struggle for Public Welfare, The Alienated Moralist and Making Meaningful choices*. The writer here wants to conduct a study about environmentalism. The third research uses an existentialist criticism while the writer uses sociological approach. The similarity of these researches is the use of *Public Enemy* drama (1882) as the data source.

The fourth previous study is by Terrance McConnel. The journal discusses *Moral combat in An enemy of the people: Public health versus private interest*, the journal discusses the Baths have been marketed as a health resort to lure visitors. Dr Stockmann alerts officials about the problem and assumes that they will close the Baths until it is corrected. He is met with fierce resistance,

however. His brother, the town's mayor, favors keeping the Baths open and correcting the problem gradually.

The fifth, Joan Templeton entitled "*Making the Theater Matter*". In his journal they discuss about the life journey of the father of modern drama, Henrik Ibsen. The journal explains some things which are finished by Henrik Ibsen. Beside that Joan also proclaims establishing some social events to remind Henrik Ibsen.

Then, Martin J. Walker, MA by his journal "*Uncomfortable of Science and Enemies of the People*". In his analysis he wanted to write an account of Henrik Ibsen's play 'An Enemy of the People'; the narrative of the play uncannily replicates the situation, feeling, and social consequences of the case of Dr. Andrew Wakefield.

The seventh study is from Noorbakhsh Hooti entitled "*The Battle Between Responsibility and Manipulation in Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People*". His study is an attempt to bring into picture the nature of responsibility and manipulation and their ceaseless battle, which leads to uncalled for and untoward repercussion in the play in hand.

The next literature review is from A.S.M. Anwarullah Bhuiyan, "*Quest for Administrative Ethics in An Enemy of the People*". In his study he wants to focus on some ideas such as virtue ethics, principle of duty, problem solving model and some form of democratic model. As a case study, he has chosen a play of Henrik Ibsen's: *An Enemy of the People*.

The ninth, Fatemeh Ghafourinia by her research journal entitled "*The Individualism in Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People*". The objective in her paper is to trace the struggles of the free individuals and the visionaries against tyranny of the majority through contextual analytical study of Dr. Thomas Stockmann, the individual rebel hero in *An Enemy of the People*.

The tenth research, Pameessou Walla entitled "*Political Corruption and Intellectual Activism in Henrik Ibsen's An Enemy of the People*". His article, therefore intends to explore the issue of politics and discuss the responsibility of

an intellectual political activist as viewed in the play *An Enemy of the People* by the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen's.

The similarity of the previous studies with the writer study is that they have same object of study that is Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* drama. The other author writes about the life journey of Henrik Ibsen and the other else about alienated and making meaningful choice in *An Enemy of the People* drama. Meanwhile, the writer focuses on the environmentalism reflected at Henrik Ibsen's *An enemy of the people*. The writer will use a sociological approach to analyze the drama. So, the title of the study that will be conducted by the writer is *Environmentalism reflected at Henrik Ibsen's Public Enemy (1882) : A Sociological Approach*.

## **B. Research Method**

In this research, the writer analyzes Henrik Ibsen's *Public Enemy (1882)*. There are five elements that should be taken into account in this research, they are:

### **1. Type of Research**

In writing this study, the writer employs the descriptive qualitative research. Moleong (1983: 3) affirms that qualitative research is a research which result in the descriptive data in the form observed people or behaviors. Then, the steps of conducting this qualitative study are (1) determining the object of the study, (2) determining the source of the data, (3) determining the method of data collection, and (4) determining the technique of data analysis.

### **2. Object of the Study**

The object of the study is *Public Enemy* drama by Henrik Ibsen which is published in 1882. It is analyzed by using sociological approach.

### **3. Type of the Data and Data Source**

There are two types of data namely primary data and secondary data that are needed to do this research.



#### A. Primary Data

The primary data are the main data obtained from all the words, dialogues, phrases and sentences in the drama. The primary data sources of the study are *Public Enemy* drama by Henrik Ibsen.

#### B. Secondary Data

Secondary data are the supporting data taken from literary books, criticism, and some articles related to the drama. The secondary data of the study are taken from any information related to the drama.

#### C. Technique of the Data Collection

In conducting the study, the writer uses the technique in collecting the data as follows:

- a. Reading the drama script and watch the drama film repeatedly.
- b. Watching drama directly
- c. Taking notes of important part in both primary and secondary data.
- d. Underlying the important word, phrases and sentences which are related to the study.
- e. Arranging the data into several part based on its classification.
- f. Selecting the data by rejecting the irrelevant information which does not support the topic of the study.
- g. Drawing the conclusion of the analysis that has already done in the former chapter and formulating its pedagogical suggestion.

#### D. Technique of the Data Analysis

In analyzing data, the writer employs descriptive qualitative analysis of content. The steps of technique of the data analysis are compiled as follows:

- a. Trying to decide the sociological analysis of the literary work. Focus will be paid on the meaning of environmentalism.
- b. Making discussion of the finding.
- c. Making conclusion.

## C. Finding and Discussion

This chapter deals mainly with sociological analysis of the drama and the environmentalism reflected on *An Enemy of the Public*. As a mean to get better understanding, this chapter is divided into seven parts dealing with sociological analysis. It is seen from social aspect, political aspect, economic aspect, religious aspect, science and technology aspect and discussion.

### a. Social Aspect

In this drama, most people live in the town like other town in Europe. They have a Mayor who leads the town, they also have newspaper maker or the printing media, and the other public services, like public baths even the education building like university.

HOVSTAD :Yes, I hope you will forgive me, but I was delayed at the printers. Good evening, Mr. Mayor.

PETER STOCKMANN :[bowing a little distantly] Good evening. You have come on business, no doubt.

HOVSTAD :Partly. It's about an article for the paper. (Act 1, Page 7)

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN :The whole Bath establishment is a whited, poisoned sepulchre, I tell you--the gravest possible danger to the public health! All the nastiness up at Molledal, all that stinking filth, is infecting the water in the conduit-pipes leading to the reservoir; and the same cursed, filthy poison oozes out on the shore too(Act 1, Page 27)

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN. :Indeed I have been busy, Katherine. But here I had none of the necessary scientific apparatus; so I sent samples, both of the drinking-water and of the sea-water, up to the University, to have an accurate analysis made by a chemist (Act 1, Page 28)

### b. Political Aspect

In Norway there is an election and the society are part of that thing. They have right to join the election.

MRS. STOCKMANN : Then you won't be able to take part in the coming election?

HORSTER :Is there going to be an election?

BILLING :Didn't you know?

HORSTER :No, I don't mix myself up with those things.

BILLING :But do you not take an interest in public affairs?

HORSTER :No, I don't know anything about politics.

BILLING :All the same, one ought to vote, at any rate.

HORSTER :Even if one doesn't know anything about what is going on?

BILLING :Doesn't know! What do you mean by that? A community is like a ship; everyone ought to be prepared to take the helm. (Act 1, Page 19)

### **c. Economic Aspect**

Norway uses pound for the currency. As other European country the people in Norway especially in this drama have many different jobs to make a living, such as a householder, a scientist, work on newspaper, a printer, a bedger and sailor because Norway also has shore for shipping industry. In this drama, An Enemy of the Public has several kind of profession, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths, Mrs. Stockmann, his wife, Petra (their daughter) is a teacher, Peter Stockmann (the Doctor's elder brother) is the Mayor of the Town and Chief Constable, Chairman of the Baths' Committee, etc., Morten Kiil, a tanner (Mrs. Stockmann's adoptive father), Hovstad is the editor of the "People's Messenger.", Billing is a sub-editor., Captain Horster is a sailor, Aslaksen is a printer. ( Person Represented, Page 3)

PETER STOCKMANN : At a provisional estimate, the alterations that the Medical Officer asserts to be desirable will cost somewhere about twenty thousand pounds. (Act 3, Page 87)

DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN :Pooh! Do you think the newly awakened lionhearted people are going to be frightened by an official hat? There is going to be a revolution in the town tomorrow, let me tell you. You thought you could turn me out; but now I shall turn you out-- turn you out of all your various offices. Do you think I cannot? Listen to me. I have triumphant social forces behind me. Hovstad and Billing will thunder in the "People's Messenger," and Aslaksen will take the field at the head of the whole Householders' Association—(Act 3, Page 96)

### **d. Cultural Aspect**

Norway festivals become the culture of the norwegian. The greatest festivals of Norway's year fall on May 17, also called Syttende Mai, or Constitution Day. As mentioned earlier, this date in 1814 marks the date of the adoption of the Norwegian constitution, written after the dissolution of the Denmark-Norway union and just before the Sweden-Norway union. Each May 17, Norwegians celebrate Constitution Day with multiple events. In the morning, the observances are typically solemn occasions, held at war memorials and in state churches. In the afternoon, the events turn to a more celebratory tone, when Norwegians recognize the occasion with hundreds of parades.

The parades are joyful events that celebrate the people of Norway and the society they have created. They occur throughout the country, from tiny villages to sprawling Oslo. In each community, the parades are open to everyone, but they are planned by committees representing local associations and political parties. Of the various community organizations responsible for planning the parades, two of the most common are sports clubs and Christian religious groups (Fauberg and Hogan 2004 : 58).

Besides the cultural above, people in Norway like other European country which has cold weather, the people love to drinking, especially alcohol to make their body keep warm or just to accompany while chatting around.

PETER STOCKMANN. :Unfortunately I must go in a moment--  
DR. THOMAS STOCKMANN :Rubbish! There is some toddy just coming in. You haven't forgotten the toddy, Katherine?  
MRS. STOCKMANN :Of course not; the water is boiling now. [Goes into the dining-room.]  
PETER STOCKMANN :Toddy too! (Act 1, Page 11)

#### **e. Religious Aspect**

The King of the Norwegian/ Swedish Union was also the head of the Church. Pietism was the dominant religion in Norway during the time that Ibsen was writing Pillars of the Community. Pietism is a movement within Lutheranism that strove to renew the devotional ideal in Protestant religion. In Pillars of the Community, the self-righteous religious characters like Rorlund portray Ibsen's highly critical view of pietism. In towns like the one where Pillars is set, the wave of pietism often replaced such activities such as music and drama with religious gatherings. Religious revival swept through Norway in the 1800s, when un-ordained evangelists began to preach the Bible without permission and approval of the church.

When the lay preaching ban was lifted in 1842, strong lay preaching movements were established in the Lutheran Church. Three years later, the Dissenter Law came into effect, which allowed other Christian congregations to

settle in Norway. Atheism was also allowed in Norway at this point, where before only the Lutheran Church had been allowed. Judaism was also allowed in 1851 and monasticism was introduced at the end of the century. (www.elementstheatre.org)

Norway has many churched, it means that they are Cristian, in this drama it happens when Morten Kill comes to Dr. Stockmann house.

MORTEN KIIL :Yes, I haven't got much money to throw away, I can tell you; but, if you can work this, I will give five pounds to a charity at Christmas. (Act 2, Page 37)

#### **f. Science and Technology Aspect**

In that time in 19th century not much technology could be seen, but some of them are already invented like printer for newspaper.

[SCENE.--The editorial office of the "People's Messenger." The entrance door is on the left-hand side of the back wall; on the right-hand side is another door with glass panels through which the printing room can be seen. Another door in the right-hand wall. In the middle of the room is a large table covered with papers, newspapers and books. In the foreground on the left a window, before which stands a desk and a high stool. There are a couple of easy chairs by the table, and other chairs standing along the wall. The room is dingy and uncomfortable; the furniture is old, the chairs stained and torn. In the printing room the compositors are seen at work, and a printer is working a handpress. HOVSTAD is sitting at the desk, writing. BILLING comes in from the right with DR. STOCKMANN'S manuscript in his hand.] (Act 3, Page 67)

#### **g. Conclusion**

Based on the analysis of the previous chapter, the study comes to the following conclusions as follows:

First, *An Enemy of the People* drama wants to show the existence and the importance of environmentalism in this drama and to know that society is taken controled by the majority, in this case the government and of course people who have power in society.

Second, the environmentalism which is reflected in *An Enemy of The People* drama is not importance, because most people do not agree with the Dr. Thomas Stockmann discovery. It is because the competence of the town is from

the Major. But Dr. Thomas Stockmann is to do in order to the public believe about his discovery.

Third, the message delivered by Henrik Ibsen in *An Enemy of The People* drama is open our mind and heart that we should keep fighting no matter what happen for our rights. Dr. Stockmann is not afraid to the majority although he is called a public enemy. Despite we are the minority but we can do something. We are free to give opinion in the society and we must fight to build the health environmental, although the Majority does not agree with the discovery but we must keep trying to make society believe at the discovery.

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