

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the study

Every period of human life brings its own spirits and characteristics that differentiate the previous and after eras. Modernism, as a part of human period, marks an essential change in life. The people of modern time can make their life easier is no doubt. Their minds make everything possible through its products: technology. Yet, something is no longer there. The essence of humanity is lost. People get nothing to hold. Social and cultural values can not accommodate people to live in the way they are supposed to be.

Ford Madox Ford seemed to taste the atmosphere of European “modern” life style, especially in England, which was named after the prince Edward, that is the Edwardian era. By taking the time setting in which people loved to go to parties and celebrations, Ford tried to dig something up that people of England hid behind their good attitudes and compile it in his loved-most and best-regarded novel ever, *The Good Soldier*.

The Good Soldier portrays the complex relationships between two middle-class couples, the Dowells —the American, The Ashburnhams— the British, and a young innocent girl named Nancy Rufford. Many aspects also form much of the subject matter of the novel and passage, such as Dowell’s “naive” perspectives on the differences between Europe and America, women and gender and also about the social and culture in general. Religious ethics is also brought up to the surface.

John Dowell, the passionless character in the novel, ironically tells the readers about the “tale of passion”. He and his wife, Florence, met the Ashburnham in a small town called Nauheim, England. It was such a “smooth” relation for more than nine seasons that the two couple shared the same hobbies, tastes and also interests on many things. However, something unexpected happened. Florence, his wife flirted with Edward Ashburnham, “the good soldier”. Although Leonora, Edward’s wife, is hurt due to her husband’s disloyalty, she still tries to win back his love.

Before the affair of Florence and Edward is about to expose, Florence died. But whether from heart attack or suicide is a puzzle to Dowell. After Florence’s death, Edward flirts with Nancy. Leonora realizes that she can never win Edward’s favor, therefore reveal Edward’s true nature to Nancy. After sending Nancy back to India, Edward commit suicide, and Nancy then become insane; the only word she can say is “shuttlecocks”. And Dowell becomes Nancy’s permanent caretaker.

The writer of the thesis comes to decision to claim *The Good Soldier* as it is a “powerful” novel; as seen based on the story itself and the aspects that compose its wholeness and the language used which is ironic and full of ambiguities. The novel was written not in a chronological order, but it is moving backward and forward —non-linear narrative. It was written in such a way that the narrator might contradictorily change what was told before. There have been abrupt changes that the readers may never before.

Concerning the idea of literary technique, Ford Madox Ford was known as an impressionist, although he is never explicit about it. He used to write and revise his writing again and again in order to gain the intended impression. However, Ford's deep technical writing, it is interesting to read the novel into pieces and analyze it merely as it is.

The readers may find that it is peculiar reading the novel, even since the very first time their eyes fall on the words. John Dowell, seems to put himself as an "outsider". 'This is the saddest story that I have ever heard' (3). Dowell is a double-sided character in the novel. However, the readers have no choice about anything what he said, although that is logic or not. As the story goes, the only source of truth comes from John Dowell himself.

By describing the life he leads with Florence, the Ashburnhams and the young Nancy, Dowell was unable to find the right path that he often misleads and confuses his readers. He has nothing to attach himself on, dangled between what is happening and what is supposed to be. Dowell may be compared to a blind man who thinks that he has seen something, but then he convinces himself that he has seen nothing. This kind of double-minded can be found through the story.

Anyhow, as stated by Carl Rogers, it is quite understandable in daily life that a man can accept things differently, between what he perceives and what he experiences (Pervin, 1993:183). Sometimes it is natural that a man moves backward and then re-steps forward just to make sure he has taken the right path. However, what happens to John Dowell seems peculiar in many aspects.

B. Statements of the Problem

Based on the background of the study written above, the writer is interested to find out several problems to be analyzed. The statements of the problems are as follow:

1. How does John Dowell possesses self-experience discrepancy phenomenon?
2. How does John Dowell's self-experience discrepancy phenomenon reflected in his sense of life?

C. Objective of the Study

The writing is intended to achieve its main goals, to find out the sufficient answers to all the problems. The objectives of the study are as follow:

1. To describe the self-experience discrepancy phenomenon that John Dowell possesses.
2. To convey how John Dowell's self-experience discrepancy phenomenon reflected in his sense of life.

D. Significance of the Study

This thesis is meant to bring closeness to contemporary social life. It is human nature that people are unable to act in such a "respectable" manner. For those who are majoring in English in Faculty of Letters Airlangga University, this is to be a means of contemplation in widening self perspective on social problems. What looks good in appearance does not always represent what lies underneath.

To be self-critical and always pay effort to see things from many sides and positions will be the ideal thing to do. A deep comprehension can only be gained by “looking beyond” capability.

E. Scope and Limitation

To avoid misunderstanding regarding the analysis, the writer of the thesis decides to focus on the main character himself, John Dowell and his perspectives toward things that he sees in his life. Thus, the writer uses the intrinsic approach since analyzing this intrinsic element of the story is considered to be sufficiently appropriate as the starting point in discussing the problems.

The writer of the thesis would like to share deep and wide analysis on the way the passionless character re-builds his own life, by confusing everything he sees and hears. For this reason, the writer is using psychological approach as well in order to make a deeper analysis focusing on the main character’s personality.

F. Theoretical Background

John Dowell is man of nothing. He has no reason what he does, whereas, he is also unable to attribute some meanings for what he has done. Therefore, in analyzing the novel, intrinsic theory plays a very essential role in getting as close as possible to the novel itself.

The concepts on personality by Carl Rogers will be the main part of theory. Roger states that sometimes a man undergoes what is called

“incongruence”, a state in which there is a discrepancy between the perceived self and the actual experience. (Pervin, 1993:183)

G. Method of the Study

In order to gain the maximum result of analysis, several steps are proposed to be taken. The writer of the thesis takes *The Good Soldier* as the main source of the study. Here, a close and deep reading is committed. Tormenting the novel into pieces, the writer tries to find out as many as possible the most important materials supported to the intended result of the study.

It is widely accepted that a literary work possesses so many things attached. There is no “individual” work. Due to the limitless ideas gathered, the writer searches other information from the library, internet services and other helpful reading materials, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, journals and so forth.

H. Definition of Key Terms

The writer considers that several words needed to be given for a broader explanation. The key terms are:

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| Self-experience discrepancy | : | experiences that are incongruent with self-
structure |
| Sense of life | : | someone’s point of view toward life |
| Moral chaotic | : | complete disorder of moral |

Liaison : forbidden sexual relationship between
unmarried people

Reality : something actually seen or experienced

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK