

**ALTRUISM OF MAIN CHARACTERS IN OSCAR WILDE'S SELECTED  
SHORT STORIES**



**BY:**

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**A Thesis**

*Submitted to the Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University in Partial  
Fulfillment of Requirements to obtain an Undergraduate Degree in English  
Literature Study Program*

**ENGLISH LITERATURE STUDY PROGRAM**

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With reference to the letter of the dean of Faculty of Cultural Sciences Hasanuddin University No. 2400/UN4.9.7/TD.06/2022 regarding supervisor, we hereby confirm to approve the undergraduate thesis draft by Ahmad Roqib Arqi Suardi (F041171338) to be examined at the English Department of Faculty of Cultural Sciences.

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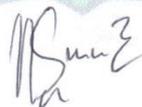


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SHORT STORIES**

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and is declared to have fulfilled the requirements.

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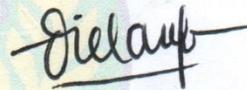
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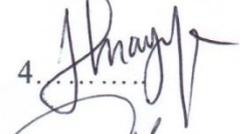
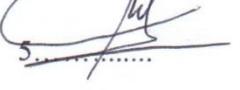
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Submitted in fulfillment one of the requirements of undergraduate thesis examination to obtain Sarjana Sastra (S.S.) Degree at the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Hasanuddin University.

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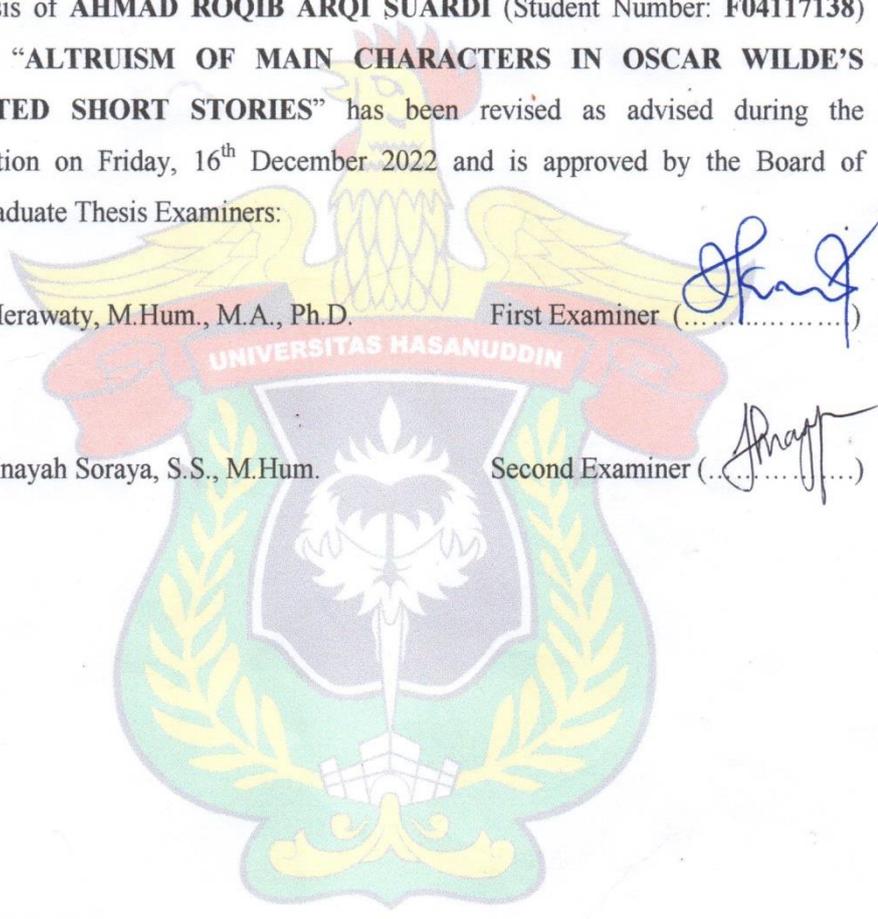
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Yang Menyatakan,



Ahmad Roqib Arqi Suardi

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## ABSTRACT

**Ahmad Roqib Arqi Suardi.** 2022. *Altruism of Main Characters in Oscar Wilde's Selected Short Stories.* (Supervised by **M. Amir P** and **ST. Aldilah Khaerana**)

This research aims to find out altruism that is done by the characters in Oscar Wilde's selected short stories entitled; *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire*. This research also aims to elaborate what drives of these characters in doing their act of altruism.

This research uses structuralism theory by only focusing it only on the character and characterization, this story also use Kristen Monroe's six critical point of altruism theory as an additional approach. These theories are applied to find out the main drives of each main characters to do their act of altruism and also to find out if the actions done by the characters are truly an act of altruism. In addition, the writer uses qualitative and descriptive methods in analyzing the data. The data is collected through the short stories namely *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire* by Oscar Wilde.

The result of this research shows that the altruism done by the characters are proven to be truly an altruistic art, the altruism is done in a way of sacrificing the characters' own well-being just to further others' welfare by the basis of sympathetic and empathetic feelings from the characters.

**Keywords:** *Altruism, Characters and Characterization, Short Stories, The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose, The Model Millionaire.*

## ABSTRAK

**Ahmad Roqib Arqi Suardi.** 2022. *Altruism of Main Characters in Oscar Wilde's Selected Short Stories.* (Dibimbing oleh **M. Amir P** and **ST. Aldilah Khaerana**)

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat bentuk altruisme yang dilakukan oleh karakter dalam cerita pendek karya Oscar Wilde yang berjudul *The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose, and The Model Millionaire.* Penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui apa yang menjadi pendorong bagi karakter-karakter dalam cerita tersebut untuk melakukan tindakan altruisme.

Penelitian ini menggunakan teori strukturalisme dengan memfokuskan kepada karakter dan karakterisasi dari karakter utama yang terdapat dalam cerita pendek pilihan, penelitian ini juga menggunakan teori Kristen Monroe tentang *six critical point of altruism.* Teori ini digunakan untuk mengetahui apa yang menjadi landasan utama bagi setiap karakter utama dalam melakukan tindakan altruisme mereka, ini juga bertujuan untuk melihat jika tindakan yang dilakukan oleh para karakter betul merupakan sebuah tindakan altruisme. Sebagai tambahan, penulis juga menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dalam menganalisa data. Data diperoleh dari Cerpen *The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose, and The Model Millionaire* karya Oscar Wilde.

Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa terbukti tindakan dari karakter-karakter dalam cerpen pilihan karya Oscar Wilde sebagai sebuah tindakan altruisme, altruisme dalam cerpen-cerpen tersebut dilakukan dalam bentuk pengorbanan kesejahteraan dari satu pihak demi meningkatkan kesejahteraan orang lain, hal ini terjadi dengan dasar perasaan simpatis dan empatis yang mereka rasakan.

**Keywords:** *Altruisme, Karakter dan Karakterisasi, Cerita Pendek, The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose, The Model Millionaire.*



## **CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION**

This chapter consists of the background of study, identification of the problem, scope of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of study, significances of study, and sequence of writing.

### **1.1 Background of Study**

Human as a social being means that human needs other human to sustain life. Even so, the individualism phenomenon where people put themselves first than others can still be found in the society nowadays. Social awareness between human is one of the most essential things for human to have in order to live a better life since human is a being that is gifted with the ability to be empathetic. Empathy is necessary in order to create a harmonical relation between people so it can create a social justice for others (Segal, 2011:141).

In order to achieve the harmonical relation in society, empathy indeed become an essential aspect in it. According to Hurlock (1999:118) empathy is the ability to understand the feelings of others people and to put themselves in other's place. Thus, we can see that empathy itself is a form of social ability and social intelligence, where people have the tendency to feel and the ability to connect to other's feeling from their perspective. This ability of being able to feel others' feelings often times pushes someone to help others and even at some cases those people who helps others are really putting others' wellbeing first instead of their own self, even if it means sacrificing. This act of sacrificing their own wellbeing and putting others' first is called as "Altruism".

Altruism can be simply defined as a selfless act of a person who put others first instead of themselves. Ozinga (1999:17-18) adds more definition to it, he stated that altruism is not just a mere act of putting other people first but it is an act of benefitting others but it comes with a cost to someone that usually sacrifice something for the goodsake of others. Thus, the writer able to define that altruism is the complete opposite of an act of egoism and individualism, altruism is an act where a person is willingly to sacrifice their own good just to put others first, it is an act that came from the ability of a human being to feel sympathetic and empathetic towards others, which usually pushes a person to do an act of altruism. In addition, altruism is an act of an individual or a group of people where they help others in need without expecting anything in return, it is an act that is done willingly by the base of empathy, with the indicator as such, sharing, cooperating, honesty, and helping (Myers, 2012:21).

The aspects of altruism itself can be found in several literary works as how literature has always been linked with human life, it is even to say that literature itself is a reflection of human life. Wellek and Warren (2014: 3-4) also states that a literary work is a creative activity produced by the author through the work their imaginations, literature itself though it may contains some real events, it still have the power to create its own world. Pradopo (2003: 61) defines that a literary work is the reflection of the world and activities that humans lives in, or everything that the authors wants to show in their works.

From the statements above it can be concluded that literature represents life, such as the social reality and even the subjective world of human being or in other

words, representing life here means that literature is a copy of the real world through the perspective of the author which often brings a real life matter or fact and through it and literary work can contains inner contents, values, behaviors, and morals of human being, because of that reasons the characteristics of altruism can also be found in several literary works, some of them are the objects that will be analyzed through this study.

The objects of this study are Oscar Wilde's selected short stories entitled *The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire* which contains the aspects of altruism in the short stories stated above. *The Happy Prince* is a story about a prince who lives happily all his life without ever knowing what was happening to his people, one day the prince was made into a statue where the happy prince gained consciousness and he was able to see that the people are actually suffering meanwhile he had been living happily all his life and after that the happy prince met a swallow bird where later he asked the bird to take every valuable part of his statue to be given to those in need, the happy prince and the swallow bird then keeps on giving them to the people until the time where it costs both the happy prince and the swallow bird's lives. It is interesting to see the progress of how the happy prince is feeling empathetic towards the suffering of the people which ended up making him willingly to sacrifice everything in him prince also brought an effect to the swallow bird making it also willing sacrifice to help the happy prince sacrifice in helping those in needs.

*The Nightingale and The Rose* is a story about a nightingale who fell in love with a student in the story, in the story, the student is struggling to find a red rose

to give to a girl he is love with, where if he can't give a red rose to the girl, the girl won't go with him to an aristocratic ball, the nightingale sees the student struggling and because of its love the student, the nightingale decides to help the student to gets his red rose, but eventually, the only way to gain the red rose is going to cost the nightingale owns life, even so, the nightingale is willing to do it, the student later gets his red rose, but he is still get rejected by the girl. In this story it is interesting to see how the feeling of love might also be the greatest drive for someone to do sacrifice for someone they love.

*The Model Millionaire* is a story about Hughie Erskine who is a poor young man, Hughie is in love with a girl named Laura Merton, a daughter of a retired colonel, but the father is against the engagement because Hughie financial condition. One day, Hughie visited his friend Trevor who was painting a model of a beggar man, Hughie can't help but to feel sorry and sympathetic for the old man, Hughie later decided to give what was left in him to the beggar man, little did Hughie know the beggar man is actually a rich baron who absolutely did not neet Hughie's help, feeling amused by Hughie's kindness to him, the baron later send Hughie a cheque for thousand of ponds which later being able to make Hughie and Laura wedding's possible to happened. In two of the short stories mentioned before, an act of altruism made the person who helps ended up in a misery, however in this particural short story, it shows that an act of altruism might not always bring someone to such situation, in fact, in this story, an act of altruism ended up making the person who done it to be rewarded a fortune because of his act of altruism, which is a really interesting part of this short story.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde was born on October 16, 1854, in Dublin, Ireland. Oscar Wilde was a popular author and a well known literary figure in the late Victorian era. After graduating from Oxford University, Wilde decided to move to London, in London, Wilde were focused on writing poetries, he later published his first collections entitled *Poems* in 1881. In 1882 Wilde traveled to New York City, there he embarks on an American lecture tour where he held 140 lectures within nine months after that he came back home and did another lecture in England and Ireland until the middle of 1884. In the same year, he married Constance Lloyd, a wealthy Englishwoman. Wilde began his year of creativity in 1888 while he was still working as an editor of *Lady's World* magaize, he later release *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* which is a collection of children's stories. In 1892 Wilde released his first play, *Lady Windermere's Fan* which make him known and which encouraged him to make playwriting as his main literary form. He was known for how he keep criticizing the society of 19th century England, the social inequality between the upper and lower class where at that time people sees values of other people through their wealth and material possessions, this can be seen through his works such as, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888), *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1896), and *The Women of no Importance* (1893). While he was enjoying his success, Wilde got into a trail for his affair with a young man. After his imprisonment, he went exile to France where he lived in a cheap hotels and friends' apartments. Oscar Wilde died at November 30 in 1900 at the age 46.

In three of the selected short stories by Oscar Wilde we can find an aspects of altruism in the story where the characters from each stories are willing to sacrifice their own wellbeing and put other first, for example in *The Happy Prince*, the swallow bird sacrifice itself to help the happy prince statue, in *The Nightingale and The Rose*, the nightingale also sacrifice itself to get the red rose for the young student, and in *The Model Millionaire* Hughie is willing to put himself in such a dire situation just to help someone who seems to be a poor old beggar. As how it was stated before, altruism is an act of sacrificing one's self for others' good. The writer find this topic to be interesting to analyze because even now in the modern society, altruism has become something that is rare to be found. Therefore, the writer found it interesting to study altruism, to be able to describe more about the acts of altruism that is found in each stories and to know more about what pushes these characters to do an act of altruism.

## **1.2 Identification of Problem**

After reading all three short stories which are *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire* by Oscar Wilde, the writer found several problems related to this research issue

1. A way to determine a person value is by looking through their material possession in *The Nightingale and The Rose* and *The Model Millionaire* by Oscar Wilde
2. The urge for material possessions can lead to a downfall in a person life *The Nightingale and The Rose* by Oscar Wilde

3. To achieve happiness for other people, a person is needed to make a sacrifice.
4. Empathy is the reason to why people are willing to sacrifice themselves for the sake of others.
5. An utopianism in *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde
6. Altruism always shown to comes with a sacrifice

### **1.3 Scope Of Study**

According to the identification of problem, this study focuses on the altruism that exists in Oscar Wilde's selected short stories namely *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire* and to find out what drives the main characters in each selected short stories to do their act of altruism.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

1. How is altruism portayed in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire*?
2. Why do the main characters do their act of altruism in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire*?

### **1.5 Objectives of Study**

These are what the writers aims to in this study:

1. To describe how alturism is portrayed that in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire*

2. To find out the causes of the altruism acts that is found in Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince, The Nightingale and The Rose, and The Model Millionaire*

### **1.6 Sequences of Writing**

This study is composed of 5 chapters as follows:

1. Chapter I contains introduction of the study. It includes the background of the research, the identification of the problem found in the literary work, the scope of the problem, the objective, as well as the significance of the study.
2. Chapter II contains literature review. It includes the list of previous related studies and theoretical background.
3. Chapter III is contains research methodology, which shows the methodology, data sources, technique of the data analysis, and procedures of data collection.
4. Chapter IV contains the analysis, which will explains the ideas and discuss the problems found in the three of Oscar Wilde's selected short stories
5. Chapter V contains conclusion and suggestions where the writer concludes the result of the research and where the writer will make suggestions for the next researchers

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter consists of previous related studies and the theoretical background of this research.

#### **2.1 Previous Related Studies**

Based on the problem stated in the earlier part, there are also other researchers who have discussed the related topic in graduating papers and journals. These studies are important in order to support the writer's analysis. Anggiyandra Rahmadanti (2012) “*Sisi Altruis Tokoh Aku dalam Novel Зануцку уз Подполья „Catatan dari Bawah Tanah“ Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostroyevski.*” This study aims to analyze the altruistic side of the character “I” in the novel. Rahmadanti uses two theories in doing the study, the first theory used is the character and characterization theory by E.M. Forster, the second theory used is altruism love theory by Stephen G. Post. Rahmadanti finds that the character “I” in this novel shown a form of altruism through the act of the character that is shown through the expression of love from the character.

Muh. Haedar Amin (2019) wrote “*Altruism Values on Les Miserables Miniseries Season 1*” This study aims to find the altruism values of Jean Valjean in Les Miserable miniseries. This study centered on Monroe’s theory of altruism which focuses on six main points of how an act can be considered a an altruism act. The data in this study were gathered using descriptive qualitative method and dynamic structuralism approach. The researcher later finds that there are five data

in the first point in the theory of monroe, three data in the second point, three data in the third point, one data in the fourth point, one data in the fifth point, and two data in the sixth point.

Tilly Wulandari (2014) she wrote "*The Altruism of Sara in a Little Princess by Frances Hodgson Burnett*" this thesis contains the study of altruism of Sara in the novel *A Little Princess* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. This study uses the Dynamic Structuralism approach to analyze the character, setting, and the plot. The writer aims to give description of Altruism as a part of literary work that not many people know of. This study also used the six critical points of Monroe about altruism and by that the researcher finds that Sara's act of altruism is proven by Monroe's six critical points of altruism, it is also found that Sara's altruism is driven because of her nature of motherhood and her cleverness which also affects other characters in the story.

All these studies above are all focused on the altruism featured in each object of the study, even so, this particular study is researching a different object, which are *The Happy Prince*, *The Nightingale and The Rose*, and *The Model Millionaire*. In this study, the writer aims to see what is the cause of an act of altruism to be conducted by the characters of the stories and how is the altruism itself portrayed by the main characters in each stories.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

Theoretical reference that is used in this study in order to support the writer's analysis is structural approach to mainly focuses in analyzing the main

characters and their characterization. This study also uses Monroe's six critical points of altruism in order to analyze the actions done by the main characters.

### **2.2.1 Structuralism Approach**

In analyzing the three of Oscar Wilde's selected short stories, the researcher uses structuralism approach. Structuralism is basically a concept which says that within a set of elements there is a connection that exists between these elements. Structuralism has been used since the time of Greek which was brought by Aristotle in his talk about Plot with the concept of wholeness, unity, complexity, and coherence (Teeuw, 1984: 121-134). Pradopo (1987:118) also states that Structure is a form of system between the elements; That there is a reciprocal relationship between each of these elements.

Structuralism later began to spread into various study fields, one of them is literary criticism. A literary work is a product of a language which is made of a construct whose mechanism can be identified like any other scientific objects (Eagleton, 1983:106), this what makes structuralism approach in literature possible to be conducted, structuralism approach in literature focuses on the connections between the structures that build the literary work from the inside, which make the structural approach view literary work as a merging of all the elements inside the literary work which influence one another. Therefore, structural criticism stands free from its author, audience and environment or any other aspects outside the literary work, which makes it focus only on the relations between the elements inside the literary works itself (Abrams, 1981:87).

The application of structuralism approach can be seen as a way to analyze meaning between the relations of the element inside a literary works, as how Teeuw (1984:135) also states that structural approach is a way to decipher the relevance and function of each element of literature as a structural unity that together produce a comprehensive meaning. What is meant by the meaning here is basically the product of the inseparable relations between the elements, which the element is a system of structure where they will produce a meaning after they get linked together (Hawkes, 1978:11)

In this way it can be concluded that structural approach is a way to analyse a literary work just through from its intrinsic elements the build up the literary work from the inside in order to find the relevance and the comprehensive meaning that can be found in between the intrinsic elements.

Intrinsic elements are compositions of a literary works that build the literary work itself, without including other aspect such as the extrinsic elements, which makes intrinsic elements consists of characters and characterization, settings, plot, and theme.

In this research, the writer only focuses on analyzing the main characters and their characterization as a part of the intrinsic elements of the story in trying to get a better understanding in answering the question to what drives these characters to do their acts of altruism in the story.

### **2.2.1.1 Character and Characterization**

In literary works we can always find characters, which is an important element for a story. To add more to the definition of characters, Minderop (2005:2) states that characters can be found in the form of a person, community, race, mental, or even moral attitude. From the definition itself it can be seen that characters represent humanity in literary works for how they also have the same quality of human being in doing actions.

According to Abrams (2009:42) characters are what the reader found to be the person represented in a narrative work, the characters are always accompanied with their own morals, intellectual and emotional qualities which these traits can be found from the dialogues, the thoughts, and the actions from the characters themselves. In addition Baldick (2001:37) described character as a figure in a story which illustrates to have their own certain personalities.

All those things stated above that were poured into the character by the author is called characterization. Robert (2003:17-18) states Characterization is a way for the author to represent a human being through the traits that can be found in the character. Characterization, by this definition, means the real description of the characters participating in the story through their actions. Which makes the reader can get the idea of the characterization of the character by seeing their dialogues, actions, beliefs, and personal values through the story.

From all the definitions above, the writer concludes that characters are products of the characterizations themselves by seeing through their dialogues, thoughts, moral values and the actions they do in the story, Bennet and Royle (2004:65)

also add that characters can be seen as a way for the author to develop the images of the characters towards the audience, it is a way for how the author to show the portrayal of the characters.

Minderop (2005:2) stated that there are two approaches in finding characterization of a characters in a story namely the direct and indirect characterization

#### 1. Direct Characterization

In direct characterization, the characters personality are found through what the author wants us to know about the characters directly, the direct characterization can be found through;

##### a) Characterization using the name of the characters

Name of the characters can also be seen as a way for the author to give clarity and sharpen the audience portrayal of the characters figure, the name of the characters can sometimes also represents the characteristics qualities of the characters itself

##### b) Characterization by the appereance

Characterizations also have a tight relation with the appearance of the characters. Which means that characterization can also be found through how the author describes about their looks their clothes even their expressions.

##### c) Characterization through speech

Characterization can also be seen through the narration of a story where it can be found that the author itself give comments towards the

characters doing and personalities.

## 2. Indirect Characterization

Indirect characterization means that the characters itself can portray themselves directly through their own behaviors in the story. The reader can analyze the characters by looking through several ways;

### a) Characterization through dialogue

Characterization of a character can be identified through their dialogue, in conveying what the characters wants to say, the reader can find the traits of the characters.

### b) Location and conversation situation

This means that the reader can find characterization through the situations and place of where the conversations happened, which is also an important thing in story telling.

### c) Mental qualities

The mental qualities of a characters usually can be found through their way of speaking in their dialogue, their emotions and expressions are something that can always be found in the story.

### d) Tone of voice

Characterization can also be found through their tone of voice, pressure, dialect, and even the vocabulary that the characters use in doing their dialogue.

Based on the explanations above, in this research the writer will use the direct and indirect characterization theory as a base for the writer to be able to get

a better understanding of each characters' traits that can be found in the story.

### **2.2.2 Altruism**

Etymologically, altruism comes from latin word “alteri” which means “other people”. It is a concept of a good act for other people. Altruism itself was first introduced by a socialist named Auguste Comte (1798-1857) in *Systeme de Politique*. Comte (in Taufik, 2012:133) stated that there are two reasons of why people help each other, the first one is based on ego and the second one is based on the altruism. Both of them are an act of helping but if it is based by ego it also means that the person who does the act are also of taking advantage from the people that needs the help and on the other hand helping by the push of altruism means a pure act of helping without the needs of getting any feedback.

Altruism can be defined by many other perspectives but in this study the writer will be focusing only in altruism in general view. Altruism can be simply defined as an behavior of human being that tends to put other's well being first instead of their own well-being without even expecting any sort of reward or feedback. If egoism is a tendency to gain profit from others, then altruistic behavior is the opposite of egoism, beause altruism is the tendency for a person to give others profit instead of gaining it from them (Ozinga 1999:15-16)

Love, sympathy, and care, has always been a part of altruism, those emotions mentioned are always closely related with altruism and is indeed what makes an act of altruism to be able to happen (Post 2002:4) and by so, it can bee seen that altruism is related to any kind of activities or behaviors that is focused

on other's sakes/well being, due to the close relation of between love, sympathy and care to altruism, it can also be said that every human being is basically exist in every human being, since those emotions are also exist in everyone.

There are many opinions when it comes to the idea of altruism. But the main focus of this study will be based by Monroe's idea of Altruism, in her book. She describes altruism as; "an action designed to benefit another, even at the risk of significant harm to the actor's well-being" (1996:4). Monroe's gives the writer a clearer insight of altruism, where altruism is truly all about the willingness of someone to sacrifice their well-being for the sake's of others. Furthermore, Monroe also gives six critical points of how an act can be perceived as an act of altruism with six critical points of altruism, which are:

1. Altruism must entail action. It cannot merely be good intentions or well-meaning thoughts.
2. The action must be goal-directed, although this may be either conscious or reflexive.
3. The goal of the act must be to further the welfare of another. If another's welfare is treated as an unintended or secondary consequence of behavior designed primarily to further my own welfare, the act is not altruistic.
4. Intentions count more than consequences. If an act of helping ends up badly or with a long-term negative consequences to the person in help, then it does not diminish the altruism of the initial action.

5. The act must carry some possibility of diminution to the people who do it. If it improves both side welfare, it would not be considered as an altruistic act but it would fall to the collective welfare act.
6. Altruism sets no conditions; its purpose is only to bring welfare to another person without expecting rewards.

These six critical points mentioned above will be the base for the writer to prove the act of altruism that will be analyzed through the main characters' characterization in the selected short stories of Oscar Wilde.