

秋期大会 (1991年11月)

研究発表要旨

THE SOUL OF WILDE UNDER SOCIALISM

Atsuko Asami

(実践女子短期大学講師)

Attacking capitalism for its industrial civilisation, Ruskin had advocated despotic government with the idea of building a family-like nation.

As for Wilde, he, too, wrote, 'democracy means simply the bludgeoning of the people by the people for the people.' If it is not the right system, what is his ideal regime?

Unfortunately, democracy can not possibly assure human beings that they develop their personality, and therefore a truly great man may be driven away, and agitators will occupy the whole political stage. When the masses politically stand together, it may mean solely an ignorant-dominated society.

Is a human being essentially egoistic? Or is it because of his horrible environment that he is forced to evil ways? Wilde answers, 'It (individualism) knows that people are good when they are let alone.' It seems that he agrees with Rousseau when he attacks private property. 'With the abolition of private property, then, we shall have true, beautiful, healthy Individualism.'

According to Wilde's theory, under socialism, there would not be any exploitation in our society, and every single person would be able to flourish in his own way. Inevitably, he would find genuine individualism emerging from within himself.

By the way, isn't it rather contradictory that Wilde declares human liberty to be superb under natural circumstances and yet at the same time has a negative view of democracy? Unless democracy functions properly, perhaps the only answer will be a form of despotism.

Wilde never relies on it, and argues against it, saying that it is authoritarianism

which has ruined human nature forever.

He advocated anarchism. However, he makes a contradictory statement when he says, 'The State is to make what is useful, the individual is to make what is beautiful.'

In a state of anarchy, 'the State' means 'the individual', and 'the individual' means 'the State'. In a society which is not under the rule of legal force, how are economical activities administrated? Wilde did not have an answer to that question. Can an anarchistic society be an order by society? Without any power or authority justified by the law, can a self-governing society be able to avoid misusing their freedom and govern themselves as well as a state?

If Wilde trusts human beings that much, why does he hate democracy? If human beings are that competent, a general belief and trust will, no doubt, wonderfully blossom in the name of democracy. But first of all, anarchism must be discussed on the basis of democracy.

*The Soul of Man Under Socialism* is a book of prosecution written by a cynical critic for the purpose of poking fun at socialists and bogus socialists who were making an unreasonable demand of something which did not exist.

He did not mention how people can proceed from socialism to aestheticism. If anything he did not find out how. It must be that each individual can discover freedom of will, removing a frame from an enormous structure of society.

Also this essay performed its part most effectively in reexamining the term 'individualism' which used to have rather negative meaning.

In 1900 when the city of London was in a ferment over the Labour party being established, Wilde was on his death bed and penniless. The only private property that he had was his genius.