



Proceedings  
**58<sup>th</sup>** TEFLIN International  
Conference



# “Language Teaching and Character Building”

**IKIP PGRI SEMARANG**

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>rd</sup> November 2011**

**English Education Department  
Faculty of Language and Arts Education**



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# Language Teaching and Character Building

Editors

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## PREFACE

The quality of education is in fact inseparable from the quality of the students' character. Education is considered successful when it can change the students' behavior and attitudes toward life. It implies the meaning that the better the quality of the students, the better their character will be. If in recent years students tend to be immoral, doing anarchism, cheating, being irresponsible, being intolerant, it shows an indication of the failure of the education itself. In response to this problem, the English Education Department of IKIP PGRI Semarang hosted TEFLIN International Conference by taking the theme of "*Language Teaching and Character Building.*"

This conference explores approaches, issues and questions related to the character building in language teaching. Therefore, the topic areas include (1) the concepts of character building, (2) method and material development in character based language teaching, (3) trends in the linguistics study of English for science and technology, (4) courses assessment and evaluation, (5) the role of IT in language teaching, (7) translation in language teaching.

In this opportunity, the committee extends deepest gratitude and high appreciation to all contributors to make this conference possible. It is realized that the publication of this proceeding is still far from being perfect; however, hopefully it will be useful for the readers as a reference for enriching their knowledge on language teaching and character building.

Semarang November 3, 2011

Chair of the Committee

Dr. Suwandi, M.Pd.

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## WOMAN'S DECONSTRUCTION TOWARDS IDEAL WOMAN ON OSCAR WILDE'S PLAY "LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN"

by Sri Hartiningsih

### Abstract

A woman in the world faces being marginalized because of her culture. One of her culture is ideal woman perspective as every woman should be perfect that never makes mistake and forgives her husband when he makes scandal and also brings her husband away to another place in order the husband forgets his love affair. It means that there is different law for woman and man. This perspective is viewed by man and it is influenced by his society. This one is obstacle for a woman that every woman wants to be ideal woman and having different perspective about ideal woman and also different characteristic. This perspective is not only obstacle for woman but also symbol of tyranny so that is why she struggles to deconstruct the ideal woman perspective.

Key words: Woman, deconstruction, ideal woman

### A. INTRODUCTION

Discussing a woman is endlessness as she has many interesting things to discuss as beauty, not only physical but also characteristic such as motherhood, softness, patience, smartness, struggle of life and vice versa.

The woman is a creature in the world like man but in history she is treated unfairly as marginal person because of its culture. For example a woman is not necessary to study in higher education as her place is at kitchen. This culture implies the woman is sacrificed for her brother's education. The education she gets is given by her mother. She learns to read, write, sew and manage the household even there are some ladies who do not have to do anything except reading poetry, retailing local gossip and awaiting the attention of the gentleman (Trevelyan, 1961) To overcome this culture, the woman struggles with several ways. This thing is recorded by play, a part of literature that "is vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experienced in daily life, what they thought and feel about those aspects of it" (Hudson, 1965:100). Furthermore drama describes human life more detail.

Small (1980:XVI) says that *Lady Windermere's Fan* indicates that Wilde's initial intention to use his plays to debate these contemporary topics of divorce, cruelty and adultery. This statement is interesting as those topics commonly happen in daily life then leads to know more about this play.

The play, *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) written by Oscar Wilde reveals ideal woman. Lady Windermere is well known as a ideal woman that has good reputation woman so everybody wants to come to her house to be called a good one too. In fact, she does mistake in her life as she elopes to the other man. On the other side, Mrs. Erlynne is well known as disgraceful woman but she sacrifices her life to Lady Windermere for the sake of Lady Windermere's reputation

without asking reward. Moreover Mrs. Erylne asks her deed as secret between her and Lady Windermere. That is why it is interesting to discuss the play with feminism theory to turn over dominant and subordinate (Ashcroft et al, 2003: 271, 274) as the character from this play is subordinate. The way to turn over that binary opposition deconstruction theory is needed.

*Lady Windermere's Fan* has ideal woman conflict. That theme still occurs up to now so this play could be considered as contemporary play as it is up to date to discuss them although it is written in previous time but that play has main character, Mrs. Erylne who faces unfair treatment from her culture. That woman tries to struggle the unfair treatment she gets but she is minority and powerless so she is marginalized and subordinated. This is going to be given understanding by cultural studies as it has shown a specific concern with subordinated groups, at first with class, and later with races, gender, nations, age groups (Barker, 2000:10). Those are the reasons why this drama is taken to discuss.

## B. DISCUSSION

The position of woman in Victorian age was a subordinate or a second citizen that is why the woman should have qualities of her sex tenderness like understanding, unworthiness, innocence, domestic affection as mentioning by Abram (1955) below:

Issues of the legal statues of women, issues that could be settled by legislation, are rarely featured in Victorian novels or poems, which describe feminist topics. They commonly portrayed women's domestic and social roles as educated companions of men or as doll-like subordinates. It would follow that a woman who tried to cultivate her intellect beyond drawing room accomplishment was violating the order of nature and of religious tradition. Woman as regarded, instead, for other qualities considered to be especially characteristic of her sex; tenderness of understanding, unworthiness and innocence; domestic affection, and in various degree submissiveness. It is commonly said that as a result, Victorian women, married or unmarried suffered painfully from boredom.

As the result, the society wishes that women should be perfect that never do mistake or sin. On the other hand, if a husband made a scandal, a woman should forgive it by taking her husband away to another places in order her husband forget his love affair as seen below:

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: ...That is why I felt better to come and talk to you (Lady Windermere) and advise you to take Windermere away at once to Homburg or to Aix, where he'll have something to amuse him and where you watch him all day long (p.21)

The quotation above describes that Duchess of Berwick gives suggestion to Lady Windermere to solve her husband love affair by taking him out of the town.

Another thing that a woman should do in Victorian age ia the woman should forgive her husband for having love affair as described below:

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: ...And mind you don't take this little aberration of Windermere's too much to heart. Just take him abroad, and he'll come back to you all right.

LADY WINDEREMERE: Come back to me?

DUCHESS OF BERWICK: Yes, dear, these wicked women get our husband away from us, but they always come back, slightly damage, of course. Don't make scenes, men hate them! (p.22)

The conversation above explains that Duchess of Berwick advises Lady Windermere to bring her husband, Lord Windermere abroad in order he forgets his love affair and he will come again to Lady Windermere and her husband does not like to be investigated about his love affair.

The law for man and woman is different as the dialogue below:

LORD DARLINGTON: Do you think seriously that women who have committed what the world called a fault should never be forgiven?  
 LADY WINDERMERE (standing at table): I think they should never be forgiven.  
 LORD DARLINGTON: And men? Do you think that there should be the same law for men as there are for women?  
 LADY WINDERMERE: Certainly?  
 LORD DARLINGTON: I think life too complex a thing to be settled by these hard and fast rules. (p. 17)

The discussion above it shows that ideal woman should perfect that never makes mistake, moreover she should forgive her husband if he makes mistake. On the other side it is known that everybody is liable to make mistake as Mrs. Erylne elopes with her lover to stay abroad with her lover and abandons her daughter. Although she ever makes mistake she also wants to be an ideal woman by coming to a good reputation woman, Lady Windermere as it is believed that one comes to good reputation woman will be considered a good woman too as she uses Lord Windermere to ask his wife to invite her to her party but his wife refuses as she (Lady Windermere) said "No! If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin (p.25)". in fact when Mrs. Erylne comes, lady Windermere just keeps silent moreover she bows to Mrs. Erylne and drops her fas as below:

"Mrs. Erylne enters, very beautifully dressed and very dignified. Lady Windermere clothes at her fanthen let it drop to the floor. She bows coldly to Mrs. Erylne who bows to her sweetly in turn, and sails into the room (p. 13)

Another way to deconstruct ideal woman is showing that Lady Windermere as ideal woman makes mistake as she she leaves her house to go another man as she thinks that her husband has love affair with Mrs. Erylne so thai is why she comes to Lord Darlington. Unluckly he is not at home. Knowing Lady Windermere is danger Mrs. Erylne persuades her to leaves the room as asoon as possible but it is late as Lord darlington and his friends come. Mrs. Erylne appears to meet those men so Lady Windermere goes out from that house without seeing the other. Lady Windermere is safe from disgrace on the other hand Mrs. Erylne gets disgrace as a wöman in a bachelor's room.

This play also shows that a woman that ever makes mistake also has good side as Mrs. Erylne has helped Lady Windermere from disgrace but she does not ask anything from Lady Windermere moreover she asks her to keep it as secret between Mrs. Erylne and Lady Windermere as dialogue below:

LADY WINDERMERE: Oh! What am I to say to you? You saved me last night. (Goes toward her)

MRS. ERLYNNE: Hush – don't speak of it.

LADY WINDERMERE: I must speak of it. I can't let you think that I am going to accept this sacrifice. I am not. It is too great. I am going to tell my husband about everything. It is my duty.

MRS. ERLYNNE: It is not your duty – at least you have duties others besides him. You say you owe me something?

LADY WINDERMERE: I owe you everything.

MRS. ERLYNNE: then pay your debt by silence. That is the only way which it can be paid. Don't spoil the good one thing I have done in my life by telling it to any one. Promise me that what passed last night will remain a secret between us (p. 67)

**C. CONCLUSION**

Oscar Wilde uses his play "Lady Windermere's Fan" to mock society and also deconstruct an ideal woman as perfect woman. It is impossible for someone to be perfect as "Everyone has some weak point" and also "Nobody is capable of doing a wrong thing". It means that everyone can do mistake. On the other side, it is unfair that man should be forgiven if he makes mistake while if a woman makes mistakes, she should be punished.

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