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**The Image of Women in Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* and *A Woman of No Importance***

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

{يَرْفَعِ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ  
وَاللَّهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ خَبِيرٌ}

صدق الله العلي العظيم

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## **Dedication**

To my mother, my husband, the memory of my father and to everyone who supported me and helped me in this work.

To my parents, my husband, and the homeland.

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It is the will of Allah, the merciful God, to surround us with brilliant and supportive people. Word are not enough to express how grateful we are to our supervisor, **Asst. Lect. Muhannad Ajel**. His comments and precious guidance have been indispensably valuable .

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## **Abstract**

Oscar Wilde wants to prove that the Victorian period has witnessed the appearance of the transgressive woman, the spiteful woman who tries to achieve her goals throughout her sexuality regardless of morals and the common sense. A tool of perceiving this ambivalence is the self-fashioning dandy, who repudiates social constraints and yet foils transgressive women's attempts at self-fashioning. The surface mockery of conventional fears of female aspirations as threats to masculine orderliness conceals a greater fear of female autonomy as a threat to masculinity itself.

This paper is divided into two chapters; chapter one includes two parts, the first part deals with the image of women in drama and the second part includes Oscar Wilde's life and career. While chapter two deals with Wilde's two selected plays, *Salome* and *A Woman of no Importance* and, shedding light and concentrating on the author's treatment of woman protagonists in these two plays.

Finally, the conclusion will sum up the findings of this paper.

## **Chapter One:**

### **An Introduction**

#### **1.1 The Image of Woman in Drama**

When England faced the French and the Industrial Revolutions one after another in the 19th century, suffering was mainly restricted to the poor, women and children. Those who were forced to work for gaining the daily food, they were working under bad conditions. In the early nineteenth century and as a contrivance to protect women from the exploitation in the street, a new gender ideology arose in which women were apparently restricted to the home, or 'private sphere', while men's field was defined as the 'public sphere'. While it restricted women's activities and opportunities, women nevertheless occupied public and carried on public activities.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage for countless women at that sometime means happiness and stability, whereas many Victorian theorists, philosophers, and commentators call marriage as a legally binding contract.<sup>2</sup>

The Victorian Era was a time of change and development. The trade markets were increasing, British Imperialism was at its peak and English society lived under strict rules of the proper "English" ways of behaviour. As portrayed in various literary works of the time, there were many with strong aspirations for social climbing such as gaining wealth, marrying into higher social classes or trying to get a higher education. For members of the Victorian society, reputation was highly important and scandal was to be avoided at all costs. Women of the time were supposed to take on the role of the "Angel in the House", following a set ideal of being "devoted, docile wives and mothers; paragons of domesticity, virtue

and humility” .<sup>3</sup>

Victorian women were put in a position of dependency on men. There were hardly any opportunities for them to be financially independent, and being unmarried or rejecting motherhood was seen as a social faux pax. Therefore, women were inseparable from men as the only way to live a respectable life was together with a man. Furthermore, if a woman acted immorally (according to contemporary values) with a man, she would be inseparable from him, marrying that same man being her only way to escape the destiny of a ”fallen woman”.<sup>4</sup>

The view on women was around an image of women as both inferior and superior to men. They did not have their legally rights , they could not vote and had to pay workforce that appeared after the Revolution. Women forced to do their domestic sphere , they should clean, home, food and raise their children. The husband controlled all the property. The rights and privileges of Victorian women were very limited for both, the single and married. She faced many kinds of verbally and physically violence, and she did not have the right to divorce. The educated class especially the writers appeared to stand against the injustice law. Victorian culture exhibits in both literature and visual arts an accruing interest in nineteenth-century women's periodicals has found expression over the last decade in countless volumes of literary and historical scholarship. Many authors began to write about the sufferings and endurances of women in Victorian Age. Their novels focused heavily on traditional, typical Victorian female characters and their interactions.<sup>5</sup>

Until the middle of the 19th century, it was not considered necessary for women to get an education as they were supposed to marry. However, it was



important that women had various skills such as singing, painting and playing instruments in order to entertain both her husband and his guests. In the middle of the 19th century schools such as Queen's College in London were established which gave governesses better qualifications . It should also be noted that towards the second half of the century, first wave feminism emerged. Focusing primarily on the question of suffrage and legal inequalities, activists fought for more opportunities for women.<sup>6</sup>

The role of the mother drew particular attention as the highest office a woman could possibly hold. As a cautionary legend, the narrative of the fallen woman, imitated from the French tradition, became a popular one and that of the fallen mother a special variant of it. The popular stage perpetuated the dominant model of the female both by eulogising women who played their appointed gender roles and by condemning those who did not. The theatre made a staple out of the fallen woman in her many forms adulteress, adventuress, intriguer but the fallen mother was a figure of particular menace.<sup>7</sup>

Wilde's plays have been traditionally recognized as satires on his contemporary world of privileged men and women and the conventions by which they lived. His targets are not particular persons but the character types inhabiting the upper reaches of the world of late Victorian Britain and include all relationships, personal and social, the codes that govern them and the principles on which they were founded, especially those of gender identities and sexual conduct. The re-appraising imagination that informs Wilde's plays shapes itself most constantly around the idea of the feminine, which includes the way both men and women think about women's nature and function.<sup>8</sup>

While Wilde mocks his society's confinement of women into prescribed roles, he also fears the disruptive power of women's self-determination. Regressing through the gender identities and relations that Wilde dramatizes, there is a constant tension between the assertion of women's autonomy and fear of women's ascendancy over men.<sup>9</sup>

Feminist political action of the time depended from the large part on journalism and Wilde as an editor of *The Women's World*, actively took part in this movement. The magazine focused mainly on the women's suffrage, education and employment, and other issues concerning the position of women in the society. Wilde was in close contact with the prominent figures of the women's movement. Nevertheless, the more aggressive feminist agenda of morality was later parodied and criticized in Wilde's society comedies.<sup>10</sup>

Elizabeth Lee, in *A Literature of Their Own*, summarizes that Elaine Showalter shows how women's literature has evolved, starting from the Victorian period to modern writing. She breaks down the movement into three stages – the Feminine, a period beginning with the use of the male pseudonym in the 1840s until 1880 with George Eliot's death; the Feminist, from 1880 till the winning of the right to vote in 1920; and the Female, from 1920 till the present-day, with a new stage of self-awareness about 1960.<sup>11</sup> It was a the most important historical culture, reflected in the fictions of that era. As the nineteenth century was an age rich in fiction, it was the most enjoyable way to appreciate the textures of Victorian life. It is worth to read Victorian novels and, because of woman's precious weight in Victorian fictions, the researcher finds it valuable to write about this kind of culture.<sup>12</sup>

As to the movement for the emancipation of woman from the unjust burdens

and disabilities to which the authors made it a subject to reveal the benign qualities of woman, there were novelists (besides Dickens) such as the Brontë sisters, with a remarkable account of the social institutions of Victorian London. In addition, Hardy, Thackeray, Gaskell, Trollope, Brontë and George Eliot also focused on the condition of woman.<sup>13</sup>

Dickens was one of the novelists who paid great attention to female characters from various social classes of Victorian England. Each character is developed enough for the audience to make an assumption about Dickens's observations on domestic and social conditions. He was one of the most significant novelists of the Victorian age, and he aimed to accommodate and promote his characters to reflect that time. This does not mean that Dickens nourished feminist thoughts, he simply wanted to give woman her feminine privileges and rights.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1840s and 1850s, there was a considerable amount of literary works which concerned prostitution and other sexual transgressions and, where women who had lost their virtue were severely condemned as fallen women. Charles Dickens challenged the idea that fallen women were the source of disease, moral pollution and degradation when they lost their chastity. The three female characters, Nancy in *Oliver Twist* (1837-9) and Little Emily and Martha in *David Copperfield* (1849-50), re-evaluate the popular misconceptions about fallen women. These three characters are described as both victims and subjects of exploitation and betrayal in Dickens' novels. Dickens criticizes the cruelty of society, people, and social value towards fallen women. He illustrates the causes of downfalls of fallen women and the cures for the disgraceful condition. It is undeniable that Dickens sees the goodness in fallen women and questions the prevailing image of corruption.<sup>15</sup>

Dickens' concern is extended not only about accusing the condition where fallen women were put, but about how women should be restored to decent conditions in society through family and social support. Dickens realized that fallen women who want to make a new start could not get the chance to do so. Nancy's death exemplifies the difficulty in going back to normal life. However, the immigration into Australia of Emily and Martha with Mr. Peggotty means Dickens' hope for fallen women to begin new life with help. Dickens discovers a more positive treatment for girls who broke the moral code through his activities as a philanthropist and demonstrates the possibility of recovery of fallen women to the life in his novels.<sup>16</sup>

## 1.2 Oscar Wilde's life and career

There is no doubt that Oscar Wilde is one of the most acclaimed, as well as criticised, authors of his century. To this day he is admired for his wit and sharp dialogue, and his satire. Born in 1854, Wilde was a writer of the Victorian Era. Looking back at the Victorian Era through descriptions of life and society an image appears of a rigid society characterised by prudishness, tradition and strict social codes, which is precisely what Wilde commented on and satirised in his comedies of society.<sup>21</sup> He was the son of Sir William Wilde, a distinguished surgeon, and the writer and poet Jane Francesca Elgee (who wrote under the name of Speranza). Wilde left Ireland at the age of 20 to study at Oxford University in England, where he achieved a brilliant academic record.<sup>17</sup>

In 1884, Oscar married a rich Irish woman called Constance Lloyd, and the couple had two sons. After this, Oscar edited a popular magazine called *Women's World* for two years. But he gradually lost interest in being a professional adviser on fashion. After 1888, he spent nearly all his time writing the works for which now he is remembered by. He wrote two books of fairy stories for his children, *The Happy Prince* and *A House of Pomegranates*, and then a book of short stories – *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*. He also wrote a famous novel called *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.<sup>18</sup>

Wilde was not only a writer but also a 'spokesman' of a European art movement called Aestheticism. The members of the Aesthetic movement proclaimed that the purpose of art is art, or beauty, itself and that it should not be used for any political, social, moral or other purposes. They were also trying to assert beauty into people's everyday life meaning that everything, even things of everyday use, should have high aesthetic value. When it comes to Oscar Wilde, it

might be said that he has a number of literary writings but was also a theoretician of art who defined his own aesthetic theories and rules.<sup>19</sup>

There are several verified influences on the work of Oscar Wilde such as John Ruskin, the 'father' of Aestheticism, Walter Pater and French Decadent writer Charles Baudelaire. In addition, there is another influential person that must not be forgotten: a great philosopher whose thinking and aesthetic views were important for Wilde's works at least as much as were Ruskin, Pater and Baudelaire, and is mentioned in Wilde's most famous book about the theory of art, *Intentions*.<sup>20</sup>

Between 1892 and 1895, Oscar returned to writing plays. One of these, *Salomé*, from the Old Testament story of St John the Baptist, was written in French and was intended for the famous actress, Sarah Bernhardt. The other four plays, *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband*, and *The Importance of Being Earnest*, are comedies. They are very witty plays, full of short, memorable sentences. All these plays were very successful in London, but in the year that *The Importance of Being Earnest* was first produced, Oscar suddenly fell from public favour.<sup>21</sup>

After he separated from his wife, he first met Lord Alfred Douglas in 1891. One year later, their relationship became intimate. Wilde didn't care much about his being homosexual in public, and so many rumours caused his slow decline. Lord Alfred's father accused him and he was sentenced to two years of hard labor in prison for the crime of sodomy. Oscar was first in the Wandsworth prison, and then in Reading Goal. During this time he wrote 'De Profundis', a dramatic monologue and autobiography, which was addressed to Alfred Douglas. When he was released in May 1897 he wrote "The Ballad Of Reading Goal", which he had

already started in prison.<sup>22</sup>

The last three years of his life he spent in France under the false name of Sebastian Melmoth in poverty and isolation. At the age of 46 Wilde died of cerebral meningitis on 30th November, 1900, penniless, in a cheap Paris hotel. He was buried without much ceremony in the cemetery of Père Lachaise.<sup>2</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>May Hasan Srayisah, *Victorian Women in Literature* (Craiova: University of Craiova, 2017), 142.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Minon Weber, *Wilde's Women* (Halmstad: Halmstad University, 2017), 2.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup>Srayisah.

<sup>6</sup>Weber, 3.

<sup>7</sup>Sarika Bose, *Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde* (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1999), 40.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 1.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>10</sup>Lucia Svobodová, *Self-censored Wilde Social pressure on Wilde's revisions of his society plays* (Brno: Masaryk University, 2014), 13.

<sup>11</sup><http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/womlitov.html>. (Accessed in 28/11/2017).

<sup>12</sup>Saryisah.

<sup>13</sup>Saryisah, 142-43

<sup>14</sup>Srayisah, 143

<sup>15</sup><http://www.dickens.jp/archive/ot/ot-hashimoto-dc.pdf>. (Accessed in 28/11/2017).

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup><http://www.skoletorget.no/abb/eng/wilde/pdf/ow2.pdf>. (Accessed in 24/10/2017).

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Michaela Murajdová, *Analysis of Oscar Wilde's Salome on the Basis of Aristotle's Poetics* (Brno: Masaryk University, 2012), 5.



<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup><http://www.macmillanreaders.com/wpcontent/uploads/2010/09/Oscar-Wilde-Author-Data-Sheet.pdf>. (Accessed 24/10/2017).

<sup>22</sup><http://www.agora-kolleg.ch/a-woman-of-no-importance-by-oscar-wilde> (Accessed in 24/10/2017).

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

## Chapter Two

### **The image of women in Oscar Wilde's *Salome* and *A Woman of No Importance***

*Salome* is a catastrophe by Oscar Wilde. The first 1891 rendition of the play was in French. After three years an English interpretation was distributed. The play tells in a single demonstration the Biblical story of Salome, stepdaughter of the tetrarch Herod Antipas, who, to her stepfather's dishearten however to the pleasure of her mom Herodias, asks for the head of Jokanaan (John the Baptist) on a silver platter as a reward for moving the move of the seven veils .<sup>1</sup>

*Salome* is set in the castle of Herod, the Tetrarch of Judaea, commending his birthday. Herod welcomes Salome, saying

Salome come drink a little with me. I have here a wine that is  
impeccable. Caesar himself sent it to me. Dunk into thy minimal red  
lips that I may deplete the container .<sup>2</sup>

When she declines his demand, he tries to entice her, first by drink, at that point by nourishment lastly by the honored position of her mom to demonstrate that she will be the Queen. This offer reveals that the connection amongst Herod and Herodias, the Queen, is segregated. They are isolated however they are hitched and the family is smashed due to Herod's want for her girl, Salome. As per Nassaar "Herodias and Salome are sexual adversaries, and Salome is a definitive victor" (1974, 99).<sup>3</sup>

Through the discussion between the two fighters, The Young Syrian and a page, it is seen that Salome, the hero of the play, is an exceptionally delightful lady with a so baffling appeal that she can pull in any man. Besides, when The Young Syrian encourages the page to abstain from taking a gander at her, it is perceived that she is by all accounts a detestable lady since she means to allure others, a reality that hints an awful thing that may occur in future .<sup>4</sup>

The voice of the detained prophet, Jokanaan , contributes the officers' discussion which demonstrates that Salome's dad has been detained in a similar reservoir for a long time before he is killed by his sibling Herod who has later hitched Salome's mom Herodias. Herod, a degenerate and merciless man, utilized every single vicious mean so as to take the position of royalty. Here, it is unmistakably demonstrated that Salome has lived in a smashed family because of her uncle's shrewd and ravenousness. His double-crossing marriage to the ruler never impedes his want for Salome, his progression little girl and niece.<sup>5</sup>

Then again, *Salome* knows that Herod is pulled in to her so she chooses to utilize his fascination for her detestable practices. By displaying such a sort of lady like Salome who utilizes her magnificence and temptation to rise and get what she needs, Wilde depicts crumbled and smashed family whose roots are installed in abhorrence and interbreeding. Wilde will likely demonstrate the association between the detestable and undermined picture of a lady with the demolition of a wellbeing, agreeable and joined family . Inside jail Jakanaan begins to yell. His voice anticipates passing and is viewed as an indication of the insidiousness and mayhem that will be caused because of Herod's double-crossing marriage to the Queen. At the point when Salome hears his voice, she begins to allure the fighters keeping in mind the end goal to convey him to her. She utilizes every single

fiendishness mean conceivable to accomplish her objective.<sup>6</sup>

At the point when Jokanaan comes before her, he starts to assault the kingdom and her mom saying:

Offer her ascent from the bed of her evil entities, from the bed of her depravity, that she may hear the expressions of him who prepareth the method for the ruler, that she may apologize her of her wrongdoings (Wilde ,588).

She tries to approach him however he rejects that. His dismissal makes her more pulled in to him. Nassaar comments that "Salome is interested by the passing like nature of Jokanaan" (Wilde ,588). This demonstrates her evil nature to control him, and this is the thing that she does with other men.<sup>7</sup>

Jennie Tabak remarks on Salome's first gathering with Jokanaan, saying:

On first seeing Jokanaan, Salome's response betrays her dual attitude towards him. If Jokanaan may be read as signifying the aspect of Salome that conforms to Victorian society's norms of 'proper' behaviour in women, at this stage her fascination with him, and by implication with her own chastity, is already countered by initial resistance (165).

While beginning to look all starry eyed at Jokanaan, Salome is made to rebel against the devilish and malevolence family in which she has been raised since

Jokanaan remains as an image of good. She endeavors to fabricate a family in view of adoration and far from any perverted and evil practices. But since of Jokanaan refusal, she returns again to abhorrent. Here, she is contrasted with Cybele, the goddess of the moon. As per Greek folklore, Salome is "the image of the forceful, sexually unreasonable female whose sterile sex motivation is coordinated toward the oppression and emasculation of the male" as Nassaar calls attention to (1974, 84). So she, similar to the goddess of the moon, is the malevolence new lady who utilizes her sexuality and other insidiousness intends to control the men around her only for accomplishing her wants and points .<sup>8</sup>

Herod wants for Salome influences him to swear that he will give her whatever she needs on the off chance that she acknowledges to move for him. By utilizing all her enticing force, she requests the head of Jakanaan to be conveyed to her on a silver platter. At the outset, Herod is stunned by her demand and demonstrates his faltering whether to acknowledge or cannot. At that point he concurs without speculation painstakingly and orders the warriors to murder Jokanaan. He just thinks about his forbidden want in any case the malicious demonstration to be done against a honest man. Rodney Shewan remarks that "obscure to him [Herod], the move communicates both her resistance of Herod's progress and her ridiculing romance of Jokanaan " (138).<sup>9</sup>

The Dance of the Seven Veils underscores Salome's status as a "fake question, with pictures of covers, scents, powders, and beautifying agents prominent inside the frame"(Wilde 480). In such manner, the move importantly affects Salome as she endeavors to fit her disengaged family. Therefore, the move is viewed as a rebel against all her insidious powers that command her character. She experiences an inward battle between the powers of good and shrewdness,

however lamentably the underhanded powers win at last. Just through murdering Jokanaan, Salome can join with Herod and get what she needs. Presently, she thoroughly turns into another shrewd lady of full control over men. Karl Beckson says that "Salome depicts the picture of the forceful female, purpose on weakening the debauched Victorian male" (139).<sup>10</sup>

Salome's want for Jokanaan insists Herod's shortcoming to control her body and psyche. Besides, her want prompts her passing. She knows that her warmth is solitary at a snapshot of significant distress. It can be recommended then that an unfulfilled want is viewed similar to a perilous condition with lamentable outcomes. Amid the occasion of Jokanaan's execution, Herod says that "one ought not take a gander at anything. Neither at things, nor at individuals should one look" (Wilde 490). He implies that the individual want of a man makes him frail; for anticipating accomplishing a specific goal by unlawful means .<sup>11</sup>

A man's expanding want diminishes his/her feeling of inner voice and deep sense of being to get what he/she needs whatever the methods is. A similar thing has happened to Salome's taking a gander at Jokanaan's head, she begins to cry uncovering her actual feeling of affection. As of now she overlooks all her insidious feeling of energy which she has utilized to realize her objectives and get what she needs: However, in Wilde's incongruities, Salome soon starts to see her potential 'faithful comrade in her battle for purity as a potential sweetheart. This is a defining moment at which she quits being a simple sexual protest and bit by bit winds up noticeably mindful of the power with which her sexuality blesses her. her demand .<sup>12</sup>

Herod isolates the first group of Salome, her dad and her mom. Moreover,

the other group of Salome spoke to by her mom and Herod, is additionally partitioned since it has fed on wrongdoing and inbreeding. Indeed, even Salome's connection with Jokanaan is pulverized since it depends on a contention and war for accepting force. Thus, there is no bound together family because of the presence of an insidiousness new lady in society .The terrible closure of the play underscores Wilde's aim that the Victorian individuals should confront the underhandedness inside themselves. That is the reason he depicts human instinct as at last shrewd, and lady with full control is depicted as being extremely a shrewdness new lady .<sup>13</sup>

*A Woman of No Importance* is a play by Irish writer Oscar Wilde. The play premièred on 19 April 1893 at London's Haymarket Theater. *A Woman of No Importance* ridicules high society English society toward the finish of the nineteenth century. It happens, generally, in the homes of the rich and intense, where Lord, Ladies, and Archdeacons mingle and talk about their counterparts. The play opens in the garden of the Hunstanton bequest, where Lady Caroline Pontefract, a domineering stiff neck, is holding court and disparaging Hester Worsley, an affluent youthful American going to England out of the blue.<sup>14</sup>

As Hester uncovers her adoration of Gerald Arbuthnot, a youthful assistant, he enters enthusiastically to reveal to them that he has been made Lord Illingworth's secretary. Woman Hunstanton is satisfied for Gerald and welcomes his mom to join their gathering at the home. A clever and coy well endowed individual, Lord Illingworth plays with the intelligent Mrs. Allonby and acknowledges her test to influence Hester to begin to look all starry eyed at him. However when Gerald's mom, Mrs. Arbuthnot, enters, Lord Illingworth is stunned to find that she is his ex-darling.<sup>15</sup>

It is uncovered that Lord Illingworth enticed Mrs. Arbuthnot when they were both youthful yet declined to wed her when she fell pregnant with Gerald. Gerald is baffled with his mom's undeniable abhorrence of Lord Illingworth and his activity offer, however she declines to unveil the purposes behind her emotions. Realizing that her child is enamored with Hester, yet additionally knowing Hester's puritan sees on the transgression of an unmarried mother, Mrs. Arbuthnot chooses to unobtrusively uncover the tale of Gerald's origination in the third individual .<sup>16</sup>

At the point when Hester hurries to reveal to Gerald that Lord Illingworth endeavored to kiss her, Gerald debilitates to assault his new manager, until Mrs. Arbuthnot announces that Lord Illingworth is, truth be told, his dad. In stun the following day, Gerald composes a letter to his dad, requesting that he wed his mom. He has likewise chosen to turn down Lord Illingworth's offer to end up plainly his secretary. Nonetheless, Mrs. Arbuthnot discloses to Gerald that she won't make a joke of her life by wedding Lord Illingworth now .<sup>17</sup>

Hester catches their discussion and, understanding that the law of God is love most importantly things, bolsters Mrs. Arbuthnot's choice. She additionally tells Gerald and his mom that she needs to utilize her riches to care for them both. At the point when Lord Illingworth arrives, he offers to wed Mrs. Arbuthnot and acknowledge Gerald as his child, however he is immediately repelled by his previous sweetheart. Rather, Mrs. Arbuthnot reveals to him that she despises him and would never wed him. Master Illingworth recognizes that their previous relationship made no difference to him, carelessly calling Mrs. Arbuthnot his fancy woman and making her slap him with his own glove. Taken off alone, Mrs. Arbuthnot calls for Gerald and Hester and asks her future girl in-law to



acknowledge her as a mother. Gerald sees the glove on the floor and asks who just went to, yet his mom only answers, "a man of no significance" .<sup>18</sup>

Mrs Arbuthnot has been living a life of shame and isolation while the father of her child has been able to live his life without any complications, due to the fact that he is a man. When her son Gerald wants her to marry Lord Illingworth so that atonement can be made, Mrs Arbuthnot refuses, saying to her son:

You talk of atonement for a wrong done. What atonement can be made to me? There is no atonement possible. I am disgraced; he is not. That is all. It is the usual history of a man and a woman as it usually happens, as it always happens. And the ending is the ordinary ending. The woman suffers. The man goes free. (Wilde, 131)

Through refusing to marry Lord Illingworth Mrs Arbuthnot rejects convention. She could marry the father of her child in order to become "respectable" again but she refuses to do so, choosing instead to be alone and take care of her son independently. Later in the text, in Act III, one learns that Mrs Arbuthnot rejected patriarchal power already in her younger years, which Mrs Arbuthnot refused to accept. In a real world, accepting the money had most probably made Mrs Arbuthnot's life easier, financially at least, though it would have her dependent on the the man who had betrayed her. Accepting the six hundred a year would thus keep her inseparable from Illingworth not only mentally and socially as she would forever be a "fallen woman", but she would then also be financially in his clasp .<sup>19</sup>

*A Woman of no Importance* uncovers that ladies see men as their belonging

and claim that because of numerous lone rangers' perspective concerning society, all men ought to get hitched. One lady declares that she has "saw an, exceptionally miserable articulation according to such a large number of wedded men" (Wilde 478). Here, Wilde underscores the way that Victorian relational unions are neither glad nor consummate in light of the fact that the ladies confront numerous issues. For example, one lady grumbles that her better half "talks the entire time. Yet, he has no discussion. What he discusses I don't have a clue. I haven't tuned in to him for quite a long time" (Ibid., 479). In her Preface to Oscar Wilde, Anne Varty (3) expresses that ladies of privileged societies don't have glad relational unions .<sup>20</sup>

On opposite, the lower classes appreciate cheerful relational unions since they don't have anything to battle for. Depravation of material belonging influences their families to have cozy connections. Here Wilde empowers the quietude and unobtrusiveness of lower classes for bringing together the family. Mrs. Arbuthnot is a tricky malevolence new lady. Every one of the general population who don't have any acquaintance with her past think about her an image of immaculateness, as Karl E. Beckson accepts (159). One finds that Illingworth is Gerald's dad, a man who had deserted his better half, Mrs. Arbuthnot, for more than twenty years, yet she can keep this mystery from her child for this long stretch so as to ensure the solid association with him .<sup>21</sup>

Mrs. Arbuthnot believes that by uncovering her mystery she will imperil her cheerful home so she demands to disguise it with a specific end goal to keep their family together, and all the more imperatively, keep her in full control. In this manner, she inclines toward her association with her child over her association with her better half in view of the aggregate control of the child though Illingworth ngworth; subsequently her endeavor to control him has fizzled .<sup>22</sup>

The character of this lady is uncovered plainly. She needs to control all men throughout her life, particularly her child. Fixated on thought of control, she denies, Illingworth, his child and Gerald, his dad. To have full control over Gerald, she allegorically maims him. Moreover she shows her genuine nature shedding the camouflage of being great as opposed to being an egotistical and overbearing lady whose all worries are to force control over men. One can understand that the connection amongst mother and child is similarly as a sinister one. Mrs. Arbuthnot's love for her kid has strong Freudian meanings as in their relationship is debased. His association with his mom is a despicable, offensive, mean and sinister one. Clearly Mrs. Arbuthnot shows up as the wickedness new lady who is against the unification of home was in full control when he surrendered her.<sup>23</sup>

Mrs. Arbuthnot's dominance over her tyke is demonstrated unmistakably when she tries to control his future by convincing him to reject Illingworth's action. She starts to energize his astute opinions by unveiling to him the story of a young woman whose life was decimated when Illingworth surrendered her with their tyke rather than wedding her as he ensured. She expects awesome reaction from her kid yet the last said that the fault was of both the woman and Illi.<sup>24</sup>

Mrs. Arbuthnot unavoidably uncovers to her youngster the authentic story which she has concealed for a long time that Illingworth is his father. Presently Gerald feels like he has lost his character, and as needs be he constrains his father to marry his mother in light of all the disfavor he has caused her over a drawn out extend of time. His trust in regard and commitment drives him to request his people's marriage. He needs to rejoin his family yet his mother has no desire to recognize a false marriage. This new woman crushes each one of Gerald's desires

of making a bound together family .<sup>25</sup>

A lady like Mrs. Arbuthnot is viewed as an insidious one who tends to her own particular wants in any case the damages she may cause to others, particularly the individuals from her family. At last, Gerald surrenders every one of his expectations saying, "you are my mom and my dad across the board... I require no second parent" (Wilde, 509-510). Hester is a solid lady who goes to bat for her privilege and the privileges of others, she solicits Gerald to persuade his mom from getting hitched in order to dispose of disgrace .<sup>26</sup>

Her perspective supports Mrs. Arbuthnot to acknowledge their marriage and begin another family in view of affection and goodness. Toward the finish of the play, there is a showdown between Mrs. Arbuthnot and Illingworth . Presently she rejects him as he had done numerous yearsmbefore and calls him "a man of no significance." Hence, the family isn't brought together on account of the fiendishness new lady yet at the same time there is the expectation that another family to be framed by Hester and Gerald, however it is ruled by Mrs. Arbuthnot.<sup>27</sup>

It might be seen that Hester influences Gerald enormously as he understands that he has no requirement for his dad whom he disposes of similarly. Sos Eltis remarks that toward the finish of this play, Mrs. Arbuthnot "is at long last compensated for her goodness when the child pardons his mom's past transgression as well as offers her a more joyful life, living abroad with himself and his unadulterated youthful spouse" (Wilde, 102). Truth be told, Mrs. Arbuthnot isn't remunerated for her excellence due to her malevolence depraved control over Gerald. As a fiendishness new lady she prevails upon her child by isolating the ties amongst him and his dad. Also, her child won't carry on with a more joyful life

since she will proceed with her control and mastery even after his marriage .<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, the content offers fascinating inversions of contemporary thoughts of sexual orientation. In the principal demonstration, conventional Victorian parts of man and lady are turned around in Mrs Allonby's long monolog about what the perfect man ought to resemble .<sup>29</sup>

He should persistently compromise us in public, and treat us with absolute respect when we are alone. And yet he should be always ready to have a perfectly terrible scene, whenever we want one, and to become miserable, absolutely miserable, at a moment's notice, and to overwhelm us with just reproaches in less than twenty minutes, and to be positively violent at the end of half an hour, and to leave us for ever at a quarter to eight, when we have to go and dress for dinner. And when, after that, one has seen him for really the last time, and he has refused to take back the little things he has given one, and promised never to communicate with one again, or to write one any foolish letters, he should be perfectly broken-hearted, and telegraph to one all day long, and send one little notes every half-hour by a private hansom, and dine quite alone at the club, so that every one should know how unhappy he was. (Wilde, 93-94)

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Karl E. Beckson, *The New Woman. London in the 1980s: A Cultural History*. New York: W.W. Norton,1992,61.

<sup>2</sup>Oscar Wilde, *The Plays of Oscar Wilde*. London: Harper Press, 2011,593.  
All further quotations are taken from this copy .

<sup>3</sup>Karl E. Beckson,63.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Bristow, 2009. *Oscar Wilde and Modern Culture: The Making of a Legend*. Athens. Ohio: Ohio University Press,2009,11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid,13.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Sos Eltis, *Revising Wilde: Society and Subversion in the Plays of Oscar Wilde*. Oxford: Clarendon Press,1966,152.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid,154.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Thuleen Nancy, *Salome: A Wildean Symbolist Drama*. London: Penguin Books Ltd,1995,2.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid,6.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid,7.

<sup>15</sup>Ellmann Richard, *Wilde and the Legend of Salomé in the Nineteenth Century*. London: Hamish Hamilton,1987,90.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid,91.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid,94.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Peter Raby, *The Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1997,34.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Christopher S. Nassaar, 2001. *The Farquhar and Arbuthnot Connection in Oscar Wilde's A Woman of No Importance*. Notes and Queries,2001,63.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Anne Varty, *A Preface to Oscar Wilde*. London: Longman,1998,86.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid.

<sup>28</sup>Sarika Bose, “*Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde*.” Diss. University of Birmingham,1999. University of Birmingham [[www.theses.bham.ac.uk/5081/](http://www.theses.bham.ac.uk/5081/) accessed 10 Nov 2017]

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

## Conclusion

Oscar Wilde's plays on privileged Victorian culture are separate from contemporary show both by their mind and their reappraisal of traditions, especially in managing transgressive ladies. The fallen lady's unmistakable quality in pop culture and the phase amid a time of serious suffragism bears witness to lady's part as a touchstone of good soundness, contemporary plays seeing degenerate ladies as dangers to a man's reality. Wilde derides society's repression of ladies, fallen or not, into recommended parts and undermines standard ethical quality but rather fears self-deciding ladies' problematic power.

*Salome*, the most questionable of Wilde's plays, is so remote fit as a fiddle and substance to his overall population plays that it shows up an all around outcast proximity. The harsh rapture of *Salome* indicates a point for stopping to examine over what Wilde says with respect to women.

*A Woman of No Importance* unfurls as a contention over loyalties and qualities realized by ladies' burden of their will upon the world. In this contention their enemies are men and the prize is the change of a man to their confidence. Wilde called it a "lady's play," however the expression distinguishes the play less as a development fit essentially for female utilization and more as a course of occasions directed by ladies' will and ladies' temperament.



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