DRAMA

LECTURE THREE

The most difficult thing is to know the characters not to remember them , we will start to know some characters and we will start the play with these characters and later when the other characters enter we will know them .

Let's begin with characters that do not play any part in the play , Mr. Erlynne , Margret was a year or 2 when her mother left her to go with her lover , so only the father and the daughter are left at the house , when Margret grew up the father did not tell her that her mother left her, instead he tells her that she died , Margret grows up and marries lord Windermere, after marriage she becomes lady Windermere, so now the new couple with which the play begins is lady and lord Windermere, this is what happened before the play began .

Margret is 21 around this age the mother who had left her daughter comes back to the same society , her name is Mrs. Erlynne, she comes into the scene and she sees her son in law and she tells him what she is , both of them decide to keep it a secret from Margret, they will not tell her the truth , according to her knowledge her mother has died .

According to the Victorian society a woman that leaves her husband's house for a lover loses her social respect , she cannot return to the same society with the same respect she is deserted also from her respectable friends , now she came back she wants to gain the social respectability that she lost, for that lord Windermere is trying to help getting her back to the respectable society, how to come back???

It means someone has to invite her to one of the parties , then she will be known by others , someone must introduce her , so lord Windermere tries to introduce Mrs. Erlynne back into the respectable society , and by means Mrs. Erlynne needs badly financial support , which lord Windermere is already providing .

The play opens with the celebration of Margret's birthday and coming of age which means now she has all the adults rights in her country, and this is the occasion lord Windermere wants to take benefit of , to invite Mrs. Erlynne as a friend, she will be introduced to the society and maybe she will make friends , and slowly she would be part of that society , but his plan is spilled by the rumors that had reached the lady Windermere that your husband is visiting a woman, their visits appear as a scandal, and lady Windermere is shocked that her husband betrayed her, who bring this news ???

Duchess of Berwick she is an important part in the society but she does not have an important part in the play , just to bring news and to show you what kind of ladies existed in that society , a picture of the Victorian woman, she moral very strict to what is right and what is wrong and she does not meet or see any immoral people , this is the strict moral code of the Victorian society , she also has a daughter , a young lady and she is very conscious where she takes her daughter and where she must not take her , although she is hunting for a husband for her daughter , and she keeps the appearance of being very virtuous and very moral and she has this view about men that all men are bad and all women are good and they are suffering and she expresses that if there is something about immorality it should not be spoken of in front of young girls. So when the duchess of Berwick wanted to tell lady Windermere about her husband visits she does not want to say it in front of her daughter , though she is mature enough it is the struggle to keep appearance, Agatha is an example of a good Victorian girl, her mother send her to see some pictures so she can talk freely with Margret and probably the girl knows why she has been sent they all know what is going on but the keep appearance for custom and culture .

Margret does not believe what the duchess is telling her , she says my husband loves me very much , how can he betray me, and from the conversation we know that they have been married for 2 years and they have a young boy , at the same time she tells Margret that this is an exclusive party only selected people should come to it , and then the duchess makes sure that Margret will invite Mr. Hopper how has come from Australia, because she plans to secure this young man as a husband for her daughter .

Some of the names in the play seem to be carrying some meaning, symbolic meanings and they give a clue to the character .

Hopper = to jump , the word is most used for the grass hopper , so he has hopped from Australia to England, and then he will hop back .

Windermere = she has a fan and the fan blows the wind .

Mr. Darlington arrives and like a gallant young man he pays complements to lady Windermere, lady Windermere calls herself a puritan, according to Puritanism marriage is a sacred bond and it is immoral to be bonded to one and pay attention to another person ,so as a young Victorian puritan she discourages Darlington's complements , he complements her because he wants to please her and in return she is annoyed .

Oscar wild use certain techniques that produces some amusement like epigrams to show the absurdities of the society , clever sentences to amuse people, and in Oscar wild's play it is the language that is important not the action or the characters and he engages the audience in his clever dialogues not by action , while paradox consists of contradictory statements and ideas which analysis prove to be true وحدة أدينها بردانة وقعدت تدفيها على النار وتقول النار جنة يعني يازينها fire is heaven!!

There could be paradoxical epigrams , which is a clever, witty and sharp statement which has opposite ideas .

Act 1 scene 1: at the house of lady Windermere , it is early morning and she has a visit from lord Darlington, in the Victorian society it was improper to visit someone without informing before visiting so the upper class families decide an at home day , meaning that the person you want to visit is available and you are welcome to visit .

PARKER. Is your ladyship at home this afternoon?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes--who has called?

PARKER. Lord Darlington, my lady.

LADY WINDERMERE. [Hesitates for a moment.] Show him up--and I'm  
at home to any one who calls.

She is at home and she is ready to receive visits , she was arranging flowers and she refused to shake hands with lord Darlington because her hands were wet.

LORD DARLINGTON. They are quite perfect. [Sees a fan lying on the  
table.] And what a wonderful fan! May I look at it? LADY WINDERMERE. Do. Pretty, isn't it! It's got my name on it,  
and everything. I have only just seen it myself. It's my  
husband's birthday present to me. You know to-day is my birthday

The fan was in fashion at that time and was considered a available gift since there was no electricity, here the fan was a gift for her husband on her birthday.

We are in the exposition , we will know the situation and the relation of the characters and what are the situations.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes, I'm of age to-day. Quite an important day  
in my life, isn't it? That is why I am giving this party to-night.  
Do sit down. [Still arranging flowers.]

I am of age today that’s why I am giving this party tonight , does Darlington knows about the party ??? yes he is invited already otherwise she would not say THIS party, he knows about the party but he does not know it is a birthday party .

If he knew it was a birthday party what gift he would have brought ???

He would cover the streets with flowers for her to walk on! ! very exaggerated statement , probably he wants to tickle a feeling of love , but he received an opposite response , she does not answer immediately.

LADY WINDERMERE. Lord Darlington, you annoyed me last night at the  
Foreign Office. I am afraid you are going to annoy me again .

This is what she wanted to say since yesterday when he paid her generous complements , which made her angry and she is afraid he might do the same thing tonight , that’s why she wanted to warn him .

LORD DARLINGTON. [Takes chair and goes across L.C.] I am quite  
miserable, Lady Windermere. You must tell me what I did. [Sits  
down at table L.]

If you notice the dialogue here is not natural , it is polished complete polite dialogue , it is an etiquette of the upper class that there language must be elegant, and it is also in harmony with the aesthetic movement.

Aestheticism means to create a work of art which is more beautiful than reality , reality speech is broken , in art speech is made polished .

Why is Darlington miserable ???

Because his efforts to please her turned against him, it gave the opposite response she was not pleased but she was annoyed.

LADY WINDERMERE. Well, you kept paying me elaborate compliments  
the whole evening.

LORD DARLINGTON. [Smiling.] Ah, nowadays we are all of us so hard  
up, that the only pleasant things to pay ARE compliments. They're  
the only things we CAN pay.

Now he understands why she is annoyed , he says we are short of money we cannot offer more than complements , Oscar wild from time to time criticizes the social conventions .

LADY WINDERMERE. [Shaking her head.] No, I am talking very  
seriously. You mustn't laugh, I am quite serious. I don't like  
compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing  
a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that  
he doesn't mean.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, but I did mean them. [Takes tea which she  
offers him.]

She expresses that she does not like compliments and it is misconception among men , that when they pay complements to women they think they are making them happy , why do they think like this !?!! I am not happy and she knows that he does not mean it , it is not a sincere expression , only a habit. If he is sincere and she accepts it will lead her to think something , Darlington wants to starts a soft feeling for him in lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. [Gravely.] I hope not. I should be sorry to  
have to quarrel with you, Lord Darlington. I like you very much,  
you know that. But I shouldn't like you at all if I thought you  
were what most other men are. Believe me, you are better than most  
other men, and I sometimes think you pretend to be worse.

This is very important= pretend to be worse= it is an unusual phenomena ,people pretend to be better than they are not worse .

LORD DARLINGTON. [Still seated L.C.] Oh, nowadays so many  
conceited people go about Society pretending to be good, that I  
think it shows rather a sweet and modest disposition to pretend to  
be bad. Besides, there is this to be said. If you pretend to be  
good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be  
bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of optimism .

Here this is an epigram, nowadays there are many conceited people in the society who pretend to be good, so it is sweet to do something different from them and pretend to be bad, this is Oscar wild's dialogue by which he wants to capture the attention of the audience, all the girls in the society are noisy but if there is a quiet I will be pleased to see her, because she is different from others and also good.

LORD DARLINGTON. [After a slight hesitation.] Because I think we  
might be great friends. Let us be great friends. You may want a  
friend some day…

He offers her to be good friends, she says we are already friends , he says you may need a friend , here he gives her a clue , that she might need a friend after she separates from her husband to cry on his shoulder and feel supported , she is surprised , she says we are already friends unless you spoil it with your silly complements.

She says I have puritanical traits in me..

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't spoil it by saying extravagant silly things  
to me. You think I am a Puritan, I suppose? Well, I have  
something of the Puritan in me. I was brought up like that. I am  
glad of it. My mother died when I was a mere child. I lived  
always with Lady Julia, my father's elder sister, you know. She  
was stern to me, but she taught me what the world is forgetting,  
the difference that there is between what is right and what is  
wrong. SHE allowed of no compromise. \_I\_ allow of none.

Lady Windermere states her preferences about morals , that she was brought up by a lady who was puritan , and that lady taught her the difference between right and wrong , but the word now is forgetting the difference , the mix between right and wrong, her aunt does not allows any compromise, that lady do not allows any mixture and I do not allow it also , he is shocked by her code of morality.

LORD DARLINGTON. My dear Lady Windermere!

Why do you look at me like an old thing coming from the past

LADY WINDERMERE. [Leaning back on the sofa.] You look on me as  
being behind the age.--Well, I am! I should be sorry to be on the  
same level as an age like this.

LORD DARLINGTON. You think the age very bad?

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a  
speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its  
ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

LADY WINDERMERE. Yes. Nowadays people seem to look on life as a  
speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. Its  
ideal is Love. Its purification is sacrifice.

LORD DARLINGTON. [Smiling.] Oh, anything is better than being  
sacrificed!

She is not ashamed of having old ideas and concepts, because the modern generation is immoral and corrupt , now people look at life and live it on a thing they might they only believe in it ,as a secreting life and its idea is love and this life is heightened by sacrifice , she believes in sacrifice.

Lord Darlington is the opposite he is an aesthetic, he take pleasure in life would do anything to escape sacrifice.

He gives her clue that there is a man married to a lady and that lady has a child but he goes and visits another woman, he gives her a clue only he does not tell her any details, and then he asks her opinion , what would this wife do??? That woman is hurt , how would she make a compensation??? Shouldn't she make the loss , he says I might seek somebody for consolation ex. Toffee is a great consolation for a child who is crying, he says you think the wife should not console herself and what would be the consolation for the wife , if her husband is seeing someone she should do the same, but she got angry and frowned , she does not agree to that point of view, now look how they play with words:

LADY WINDERMERE. [Frowning] Console herself?

LORD DARLINGTON. Yes, I think she should--I think she has the  
right.

LADY WINDERMERE. Because the husband is vile--should the wife be  
vile also?

LORD DARLINGTON. Vileness is a terrible word, Lady Windermere.

LADY WINDERMERE. It is a terrible thing, Lord Darlington.

The word vile means bad and here she gives the word vile to the husband if he is unfaithful to his wife and if the wife look for the same consolation she is vile too , the word vile , she thinks it is a vile behavior , he tells her that she had used a very big hard word for this situation, and she says no the situation itself is very hard .

Mr. Darlington is a spokesman of Oscar wild , he speaks of his philosophy of aestheticism , to enjoy beauty , she says the situation is very terrible that’s why I use a terrible word .

LORD DARLINGTON. Do you know I am afraid that good people do a  
great deal of harm in this world. Certainly the greatest harm they  
do is that they make badness of such extraordinary importance. It  
is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either  
charming or tedious. I take the side of the charming, and you,  
Lady Windermere, can't help belonging to them.

This is an epigram that expresses the idea of aestheticism:

LADY WINDERMERE. Now, Lord Darlington. [Rising and crossing R.,  
front of him.] Don't stir, I am merely going to finish my flowers.  
[Goes to table R.C.]

LORD DARLINGTON. [Rising and moving chair.] And I must say I  
think you are very hard on modern life, Lady Windermere. Of course  
there is much against it, I admit. Most women, for instance,  
nowadays, are rather mercenary.

LADY WINDERMERE. Don't talk about such people.

LORD DARLINGTON. Well then, setting aside mercenary people, who,  
of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have  
committed what the world calls 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 laws 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.

LADY WINDERMERE. If we had 'these hard and fast rules,' we should

find life much more simple.

LORD DARLINGTON. You allow of no exceptions?

LADY WINDERMERE. None!

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady  
Windermere!

LADY WINDERMERE. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

LORD DARLINGTON. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything  
except temptation.

LADY WINDERMERE. You have the modern affectation of weakness.

LORD DARLINGTON. [Looking at her.] It's only an affectation, Lady  
Windermere.

Good people are good for society but if something is little bad they make a big deal of it and becomes very bad , she classifies people as good or bad but he classicizes people as charming or boring without any consideration to morality whether the charming or boring are moral or immoral .

LORD DARLINGTON. Well then, setting aside mercenary people, who,  
of course, are dreadful, do you think seriously that women who have  
committed what the world calls a fault should never be forgiven?

He is refereeing to women like her mother.

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 laws for men as there are for women?

LADY WINDERMERE. Certainly

According to her men and women are equal and they should be punished equally.

LORD DARLINGTON. Ah, what a fascinating Puritan you are, Lady  
Windermere!

Now he is not a puritan , he uses the word puritan as a complement and he uses the adjective fascinating which the lady later objects , she says the adjective was un necessary.

LADY WINDERMERE. The adjective was unnecessary, Lord Darlington.

LORD DARLINGTON. I couldn't help it. I can resist everything  
except temptation.

He cannot resist what actually should be resisted .

We will see how the duchess praises lady Windermere's house , the party only allows respectable people, and actually the duchess is praising herself too that because she is also a respectable guest too , I can bring my daughter and worry about her safety and not worry about Berwick, this is a criticism on husbands in general and her husband she does not like to take him anywhere , because our society is deteriorating, the most dreadful people seem to go everywhere , even the safe places are no longer safe because they go there , admits that even her party bad people come to it , if she does not approve of bad people coming to her party then why do they come to it , her acquaintances are good and her husband's acquaintances are bad ..

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [On sofa L.] Of course it's going to be  
select. But we know THAT, dear Margaret, about YOUR house. It is  
really one of the few houses in London where I can take Agatha, and  
where I feel perfectly secure about dear Berwick. I don't know  
what society is coming to. The most dreadful people seem to go  
everywhere. They certainly come to my parties--the men get quite  
furious if one doesn't ask them. Really, someone should make a  
stand against it.

They are living in the Victorian society even if the women don’t invite men their husbands invite them and women are helpless in front of them, the duchess is trying to encourage Margret to rebel against this custom .

LADY WINDERMERE. \_I\_ will, Duchess. I will have no one in my  
house about whom there is any scandal.

I will not have any scandals person in my house and Darlington do not say that otherwise I will not be able to come in.

LORD DARLINGTON. [R.C.] Oh, don't say that, Lady Windermere. I  
should never be admitted! [Sitting.]

Some people praise themselves by showing themselves not good.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Oh, men don't matter. With women it is  
different. We're good. Some of us are, at least. But we are  
positively getting elbowed into the corner. Our husbands would  
really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to  
time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do  
so.

Society gives concession to men but not ready to forgive women , elbowed= with no importance لو ما نحن ونزن على رجالنا مادرو عنا

LADY WINDERMERE. [Standing up stage with LORD DARLINGTON.] Yes,  
certainly. But you are not to say foolish, insincere things to  
people.

Foolish = complements .

LORD DARLINGTON. [Smiling.] Ah! you are beginning to reform me.  
It is a dangerous thing to reform any one, Lady Windermere. [Bows,  
and exit C.]

Reform me = an act of Puritanism

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. [Who has risen, goes C.] What a charming,  
wicked creature! I like him so much. I'm quite delighted he's  
gone! How sweet you're looking! Where DO you get your gowns? And  
now I must tell you how sorry I am for you, dear Margaret.  
[Crosses to sofa and sits with LADY WINDERMERE.] Agatha, darling!

This is another kind of complement, to praise somebody with words combined adjectives which are opposite like charming and wicked .

LADY AGATHA. Yes, mamma. [Rises.]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Will you go and look over the photograph album  
that I see there?

LADY AGATHA. Yes, mamma. [Goes to table up L.]

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Dear girl! She is so fond of photographs of  
Switzerland. Such a pure taste, I think. But I really am so sorry  
for you, Margaret.

Because we are running out of time read the rest of the story , the duchess tells Margret that her husband is visiting a woman ..

When she wants to talk loudly she asks her daughter to somewhere else so she won't hear anything .

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. Ah, what indeed, dear? That is the point. He  
goes to see her continually, and stops for hours at a time, and  
while he is there she is not at home to any one. Not that many  
ladies call on her, dear, but she has a great many disreputable men  
friends--my own brother particularly, as I told you--and that is  
what makes it so dreadful about Windermere. We looked upon HIM as  
being such a model husband, but I am afraid there is no doubt about  
it. My dear nieces--you know the Saville girls, don't you?--such  
nice domestic creatures--plain, dreadfully plain, but so good--  
well, they're always at the window doing fancy work, and making  
ugly things for the poor, which I think so useful of them in these  
dreadful socialistic days, and this terrible woman has taken a  
house in Curzon Street, right opposite them--such a respectable  
street, too! I don't know what we're coming to! And they tell me  
that Windermere goes there four and five times a week--they SEE  
him. They can't help it--and although they never talk scandal,  
they--well, of course--they remark on it to every one. And the  
worst of it all is that I have been told that this woman has got a  
great deal of money out of somebody, for it seems that she came to  
London six months ago without anything at all to speak of, and now  
she has this charming house in Mayfair, drives her ponies in the  
Park every afternoon and all--well, all--since she has known poor  
dear Windermere.

DUCHESS OF BERWICK. But it's quite true, my dear. The whole of  
London knows it. That is why I felt it was better to come and talk  
to you, 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  
can watch him all day long. I assure you, my dear, that on several  
occasions after I was first married, I had to pretend to be very  
ill, and was obliged to drink the most unpleasant mineral waters,  
merely to get Berwick out of town. He was so extremely  
susceptible. Though I am bound to say he never gave away any large  
sums of money to anybody. He is far too high-principled for that!

Everybody knows about your husbands scandal, then she talks about him as a property , like a thing you must take care of it and keep it safe , after that she gives personal advice , why did the duchess pretend to be ill??? Mainly to get Berwick Out of town for her health benefit

Susceptible= easily catch diseases

My husband does not give money to women but your husband is.