

WOMAN'S RECONCILIATION OF DOMESTIC LIFE AND SELF DEVELOPMENT IN ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS'S THE ANGEL OVER THE RIGHT SHOULDER

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ABSTRAK

Membagi waktu bagi kehidupan domestik dan pengembangan diri merupakan isu yang tidak berkesudahan bagi perempuan seperti yang tampak dalam karya Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Angel Over the Right Shoulder*. Hal tersebut mengidentifikasi adanya ketidaksetaraan perempuan dan laki-laki. Penelitian ini melihat akar permasalahan ketidaksetaraan tersebut dan bagaimana perempuan menyikapinya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perempuan dan laki-laki memiliki bahasa yang berbeda. Analisis permasalahan menerapkan *Ecriture Feminine* yang mendasarkan diri pada keyakinan bahwa secara kualitatif, feminitas berbeda dengan maskulinitas, dan untuk mengungkapkan perbedaan ini dibutuhkan alternatif bentuk bahasa yang memadai, sesuatu yang akan menguntungkan perempuan dan laki-laki

Kata Kunci: sistem, unity, rekonsiliasi, *Ecriture Feminine*

ABSTRACT

Women face an everlasting issue of dividing their time for domestic life and self-development as the work of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Angel Over the Right Shoulder*, portrays. It shows that there is inequality between man and woman. The research aims to investigate the main reasons of the problem. It shows that men and women have their own language. This research applies *Ecriture Feminine* which bases itself on the belief that femininity is qualitatively different from masculinity and it needs an alternative form of language in order to express adequately the difference, something which would benefit both men and women

Keywords : system, unity, reconciliation, *Feminine Ecriture*

INTRODUCTION

The Angel Over the Right Shoulder tells about a typical housewife who is torn between domestic life and self development. Following her husband's *system*, she is committed to spend two hours for her own. She finds, however, that the system does

not work as she and her husband wish due to constant interruption from not only her children and maids, but also her husband. Disappointed by the failure of the plan, she withdraws herself into her bedroom on the new year's eve sleeping to overcome her restless mind. This topic is a

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never ending issue for women, particularly the 19th century middle up class American women who enjoyed higher education like Elizabeth Stuart Phelps herself. She brings this issue in four of her books to show that woman always meets obstacles in her attempt to develop her potential. She insists that expressing ideas through writing is a need. She was born to, and grew up in a religious and well-educated parents. Her father was a respected theologian and was a Congregationalist minister as well as a professor of Greek and Hebrew literature. She started to write even as a child and published her stories under the pseudonym of H. Trusta, an anagram of "Stuart", the name used on her children's books and adult novels (<http://www.essortment.com/female-author-elizabeth-wooster-stuart-phelps-39423.html>).

She abandoned her writing for a few years after her marriage to a referend due to sickness and difficulties to divide her time as a housewife and a writer. She resumed to her writing activities when her husband, Referend Austin Phelp, moved to Andover Theological Seminary to be a professor of theology, a position that did not demand her appearance by his side too much, and thus, gave her more time for her own. She put her life experiences into her works, among which is *The Angel Over the Right Shoulder*. Being a woman, Elizabeth is expected not to make herself a priority and to dedicate her whole life to the family and to give up opportunities for self development. "Woman's crowning glory was motherhood: in the bearing, nursing, and rearing of her offspring she could most fully carry out the responsibilities of her appropriate sphere," (Melder, 1977:9). Through her works Phelps shows that a woman should build her own identity. She believes that woman is able to do something more than just doing housework chores; she has the potential as well as rights to set her self as a person, and to give contribution to her society on her own ways (Kennedy, 1999). Such is a bold idea in her time. Her persistence has brought her into the industrial world which was always associated with man's domination, and she establishes her self as a well-known writer.

This reveals that the problem woman encounters comes from inequality between woman and man. Inequality has produced conflict not only between man and woman, but also inside woman, especially concerning her potential development. From this point of view, it needs a study on the root cause of the inequality and how woman responds to it as reflected in the work of Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, *The Angel Over the Right Shoulder*. The problem analysis applies *Ecriture Feminine*, an approach which is based on a belief that woman and man are physically different and that it affects their relation with language. *Ecriture Feminine* is a terminology for writing produced by woman writers in the light of French feminism theory. French feminists create actively woman's language, and they argue that woman's writings form a specific discourse more intimate to body, emotion, and unspeakable aspects under the repression of social contract (Humm, 2002:126). They believe that both writing and literary work are very important domains because they speak about the oppressed, the hidden, and the unspeakable, which, with the potency of imagination, could become a pleasant world of fantasy (p. 126). Keith Green (2005:243) underlies Humm's statement with:

Ecriture Feminine is a discourse which is written out of a concern with subjectivity, sexuality and language. It maintains the belief that whatever symbolic systems currently exist they are not adequate. They relentlessly place women within a restrictive systems in which it is impossible for them to be active subjects. The force of patriarchy is always inscribed upon women, and upon men also, by the prevailing symbolic systems. It is a fundamental belief of ecriture feminine that the only way to transform relations between the sexes is to transform the ways in which we represent these relations.

Feminity is different from masculinity in a qualitative manner. Supporters of *ecriture feminine* maintain that it needs an alternative form of language sufficient to reveal the difference, which will be of benefit to both sides, so that woman will no longer be an object of feminity marginalization (Green, 2005:244).

French writers such as Monique Wittig, Julia Kristeva, Helene Cixous, and Luce Irigaray are all against *phallogentric* language. They have different ways of opposing it and different strategies to move on. They anonymously agree that language has served as a central mechanism by which man dominates the world (Humm, 1986:44). Cixous attacks the patriarchal language. She holds the view that the only alternative to reduce man's domination is creating woman's language separated from man's discourse and able to demonstrate sexual distinction. Woman should write in order that they could shatter man's domination and replace it with a feminine one (p.51). Like other French writers, Irigaray, a French philosopher and psychoanalyst, holds that femininity has a very strong relationship with the idea of a specific woman's language. Her statement is quoted by Moi (1985: 144—145) as follows.

Irigaray's analysis of femininity is closely bound up with her idea of a specific woman's language which she calls "womanspeak." The question is whether the attempt backfires, showing that irigaray's "woman" is a product of the same patriarchal logic. She said "she' is indefinitely other in herself

Tong (2008: 299) summarizes Irigaray's words by exploring an analogue between woman's sexuality and woman's language. If woman wants to be one which is beyond the excess of man's world, she must take the following courses of action:

- a. creating woman's language in which gender-neutral terms are avoided as strongly as woman avoids man's language. A search for neutrality is wrong, since a true neutrality on something is non-existent. Irigaray encourages woman to brave the challenge of using active sentences and to avoid as best as she could quasi-sanctuary and true unauthenticity of passive sentences (p.297).
- b. creating woman's language in which the implication of male sexual organ singularity is put in contrast with that of female.

Patriarchy is a social manifestation of the libidinal masculine organization which will remain as an order until the feminine characteristic of the feminine is set free. Woman can set her potential free from this suckle by committing lesbianism or auto-eroticism practices. (p.297)

- c. accepting man's image but reflecting it back with exaggeration; in other words, expressing phallogentric language by adopting a strategy of emulating, distracting, and overusing it (Humm, 2002:224). This strategy is applied in the problem analysis.

THE MIDDLE-UP CLASS AMERICAN WOMAN IN THE EARLY 19TH CENTURY

The life of middle class American woman in the 19th century centered around the domestic domain, namely cooking, tidying up, washing, and child-upbringing. It means they were economically dependent on man. Sarah Hale, publisher of *Godey's Lady's Book* magazine, described woman's place and characteristics as follows. "A true woman was delicate and timid; required protection; possessed a sweet dependency; was above all things modest; and had charming and insinuating manners" (Cott, 1977: 67). She advised that woman devote her whole life to the family. In line with Hale, Dew, a teacher, mentioned that as far as she remained pious, protected, obedient, and contented with household, woman would win respect from the society. She would be regarded as *lady*, a title for European aristocrat. In America, this title is related to economic strata and is attributed to wealthy woman, or woman from a respected family. Since becoming a *lady* demands economic capacity, a husband who has no means to fulfill woman's needs ignores the title (p. 67). Thus, neither a poor woman nor female labor is a *lady*

To be a lady was no longer a social position to which a woman was born. Instead, women became ladies by staying at home, by behaving in what was considered proper way, by devoting themselves to their husband and children, and by developing feminine traits (p. 67).

The above quotation reveals the controversial meanings of the title *lady* in that woman, despite her title, has a marginal position. She has to stay at home and becomes the symbol of her husband's status. In magazines published in America during the early 19th century, the role of a *lady* was suggested as manager. She was to control the work of her domestic servants. The elite society expected a lady to restrain herself from doing manual labor. Woman may work, but aristocratic woman may not; or when she has to, she is no longer a lady. Middle-class woman of this period continues to have a lot of work to do despite the fact that she has maids. Although she has access to new technology, many others keep on thinking that cooking in traditional way gives food a better taste. This view, according to Harriet Beecher Stowe and Catharine Beecher, distinguishes the civilized from the uncivilized.

Bread: What ought it to be? It should be light, sweet, and tender. This matter of lightness is the distinctive line between savage and civilized bread. The savage mixes simple flour and water into balls of paste, which he throws into boiling water. The air cells in bread thus prepared are coarse and uneven: the bread is as inferior in delicacy and nicety to that which is well kneaded as a raw servant to a perfectly educated lady (Goldberg, 2000:194).

Harriet's statement also implies the difference between the elite and the commoner. It is the price woman has to pay for her hard work as a housewife.

Stowe and Beecher argue that housework chores must be appreciated as a decent job based on scientific technique and strong moral foundation. In *Treatise on Domestic Economy* (1841) Beecher proposes that housewife should be trained appropriately in order that she will be able to speak about and demonstrate her power in household domain that the society has so long put aside. Beecher was upset by the words of woman activists, such as *women's suffrage* (woman's rights to vote).

She believed that women's inequality in relation to men helped contribute to "the general good of all." By gaining power over the home, however, Beecher declared that American women were "committed to the exalted privilege of extending over the world those blessed influences which are to renovate degraded man. The efficiently run, morally uplifted home would save the American republic from degradation (p. 194).

Catharine Beecher rejects woman's suffrage and declares that the biggest contribution woman gives is through her role as a mother, wife, and teacher. A healthy home and happy family that she creates brings about a wealthy and healthy society.

The priests insist that good woman is the pillar of religion both in her home and in the society. They often cite Proverbs 13 for inspiration when teaching women about household life and social responsibility.

A good wife who can find? She is far more precious than jewels ... She puts her hand to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle. She opens her hands to the poor, and reaches out her hands to the needy. ... She opens her mouth with wisdom and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue. She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat of the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her (Salmon, 2000:175).

The sermons deliver a picture of typical Protestant woman as a wise, hardworking mother who aspires to raise her children to be good a Christian. The priests regard that mother has a strategic position in the improvement of the national welfare. She plays a central role in teaching her children good moral, since exposures to moral teaching during their early life is very important to build children's character.

In her argument for higher education for girls, Abigail Adams (p. 176) claims that boy's intelligence could be enhanced when he is brought up by woman of high intelligence.

Much depends . . . upon the early education of youth, and the first principles which are instilled take the deepest root. . . If we mean to have heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, we should have learned women.

William Lyman (p. 176), a priest, further explains the influence of mother. He is of the opinion that mothers actually have control over the government and fly a flag of the state's welfare and sovereignty. We should turn our head to her, for they help to shape the morality.

Middle and up classes of the 18th century American society provided high standard education for woman. Acquiring the reading, writing, and speaking skills is obligatory for a rich woman. Man from the elite class wants that his daughter gets education at nearly equal level to that his son obtains from university. Similarly, young man looks up to woman with good education as an ideal wife. He wants a wife who is capable of bringing up his children as well as intelligent to be his discussion partner. In response to this, educators in urban Northeast open a new academy to educate women. The establishment of that academy is a breakthrough in the improvement of woman's education, but her intellectual development remains unimportant.

Educating and teaching woman is aimed at preparing her to be a good mother. Having big responsibility in children's early education, she is capable of shaping them to be strong, tough, and well behaved individuals who will, later in their life, become good citizens, or shaping them to be just the opposite. Regarding her strong influence, it is sufficient to say that the future of the nation is in mother's hands.

A woman who is skilled in every useful art, who practices every domestic virtue ... may, by her precept and example, inspire her brothers, her husband, or her sons, with such a love of virtue, such just ideas of the true value of civil liberty . . . that future heroes and statesmen, when arrived at the summit of military or political fame, shall exaltingly declare, it is to my mother I owe this elevation (p. 151)

Being a mother gives her a major role in building her son's character that enables him to participate directly in the political world. Woman without a son still holds an important role because she continuously gives influence to men around her. It will be much easier for husband, brother, and father to be good citizens when they get support from their female relatives (p. 152). To be able to give best education to her children woman should have a high standard of morality. She could reach the highest standard if she is educated and has good manner. All women should ideally be able to read, write, calculate, and think logically about current issues.

Despite their good grades, women could not continue their education to university level. Higher education and some fields of profession will not let women in. Women may be an excellent healer, but they cannot enter school of medicine nor earn a title of doctor. They give religious lesson at home, but can never be a priest for a congregation, except the Quakers. They may become successful business women, but upon marriage, they need to get their husband's permission to leave home. Women have no other opportunity than to marry and to become a mother. Most of them take their roles without complaints. Indeed, family life offers them happiness, but it cannot satisfy their longing for intellectuality growth.

Industrial revolution in America widens the gap between woman's and man's worlds, that is, business world which is competitive and tough as man's world, and nursery, religious, and domestic world as woman's world. Such job division and role assignment is based on the structure of sex, or sex-based job division. The society regarded woman to be more suitable to deal with activities involving emotion. Care giving and educating children, cleaning the house, cooking for the family, sewing, and washing clothes are, therefore, woman's appropriate jobs because she has been psychologically prepared by the society to handle them. On the other hand, man is ambitious and active. He must fight tooth and nail outside home in order to earn the best life. To survive he must enter competition bravely,

use his intelligence, and be more creative and imaginative. Consequently, he must keep up with political and business information, arrange some journeys, have negotiation, and carry out sales and purchase transaction. On the other hand, woman is regarded as a passive, irrational, and dependent being whose activities revolve around household. (Hymowitz, 1978:64-68).

Like politicians who improve the image of mother's role, priests lift up her role to a level equal to, or even higher than that of man. Not only the future of the nation is in her hands, but also the future of the church. Woman is praised very highly for what she does, but it is the only source of social acknowledgement given to woman in the 18th century (p.151). Other professions remain closed for woman. She could have such respected jobs as healer, midwife, and teacher, all of which are extension of mother's role as caregiver in the family.

The above account reveals that woman's role is both theologically and socially marginal. She is unable to participate actively in public affairs which are considered as man's domain (Juliasih-Kusharyanto dkk, 2004:288). However, some women who are endowed with intelligence are trying to exert their influence to their surrounding through writings. Among them is Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

“SISTEM” VS “UNITY”

The Angel Over the Right Shoulder begins with Mrs. James's complaint over her daily routines in the house, which seems endless.

THERE! a woman's work is never done” said Mrs James. “I thought, for once. I was through; but just look at that lamp. Now! It will not burn, and I must go and spend half an hour over it.”

“Don't you wish you had never been married?” said Mr James, with a good natured laugh “yes”—rose to her lips, but was

There is no need of that; all you want is system. If you arranged your work systematically, you would find that you could command your time” (Phelps, 2000:157)

Mr James, her husband, responds by expressing critical observation that the problems come from the absence of a *system* in their household management. The word *system* is written in italic to show that it carries an important message. In *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (2007: 1076) “system” refers to 1) a set of elements which are interrelated regularly to build a totality; 2) a good order of view, theory, principle, etc.; 3) method.

Trying to show his sympathy with her wife's situation he offers a solution, that is, to try out a system in their household management. He proposes that she will spend two hours daily for her own, especially to write. The system shall be put in effect on the following day. Mrs. James reluctantly follows his proposal, and starts to spend two hours prior to dinner time during which she seems to be relatively less occupied. It turns out that the system does not work quite well as designed. The system her husband proposed looks simple as a solution and easy to implement, but she understands very well that any system will always be both complex and complicated for woman because it involves many aspects that are strongly interrelated like in her own situation.

Being a wife from an upper middle class society, Mrs. James does not need to work hard since all her needs are fulfilled by her husband. Her main duty is to manage the household and keep her husband's esteem and career. She bears no physical burdens, but heavy psychological burden from spiritual point of view. She must keep her good behaviour and look very consistently to the society's expectation.

Tell them I am engaged, Bridget.”

“I told 'em you were to home, ma'am, and they sent up their names, but I ha'n't 'em, jist.”

There was no help for it—Mrs. James must go down to receive her callers. She had to smile when she felt like it—to be sociable when her thoughts were busy with her task (Phelps, 2000:161)

She must always be ready at any time to entertain her husband's business relation and

host routines social functions for friends and neighbors. She is to maintain good social relation among friends and relatives. Mrs. James cannot ignore nor refuse a guest, for it will bring shame to her family reputation. It is such a boring and tiring job.

On the next day, Mr. James invited company to tea, and her morning was devoted to preparing it; she did not enter her study. On the following day, a sick headache confined her to bed, and on Saturday, the care of the baby devolved upon her, as Amy had extra work to do (p.161)

Taking care of her children is another routine requiring flexibility of her time, having no clear cut job division, and showing no immediate results. It is far different from the concept of system that demands strict time schedule and job description in order to give an optimum result.

Scarcely had she dipped her pen in ink, when she heard the tramping of little feet along the hall, and then a pounding at her door. Mamma! Mamma! I cannot find my mittens, and Hannah is going to slide without me Go to amy, my dear, mamma is busy.' So amy busy too; she say she can't leave baby

The child began to cry, still standing close to the fastened door. Mrs. James knew the easiest, and indeed the only of settling the trouble, was to go herself and hunt up the missing mittens (p.158)

In the society at that time Mr. James is an example of a good husband. He provides good life for the family and also opportunity to her wife for self development.

"Wife," said he, as she came in, "I have a plan to propose to you, and I wish you to promise the beforehand that you will accede to it. It is to be an experiment, I acknowledge, but I wish it to have a fair trial. Now to please me, will you promise?"

Mrs. James hesitated. She felt almost sure that his plan would be quite impracticable, for what does a man know of a woman's work? Yet she promised.

"Now I wish you," said he, "to set apart two hours every day for your own private use. Make a point of going to your room and locking yourself in, and also make up your mind to let the work which is not done, go undone, if it must. Spend this time on just those things which will be most profitable to yourself. I shall bind you to your promise for one month—then, if it has proved a total failure, we will devise something else" (p.157)

Mrs. James is doubtful with her husband's proposal. She knows that man knows nothing about household affairs. His proposal is simply impracticable. On the other hand, Mr. James sees that the root cause of her problems is inefficient time management or poor quality of household management. Therefore, he proposes to build a new system of household management. They have different perspectives as the result of different world they dwell in. For middle class woman, domestic work has been distributed to maids, but as a housewife she is still fully responsible for the good work of her maids. She will take the blame when they make mistake, or something goes wrong with her household and children. She carries the family's respect and good reputation on her shoulder. She bears household duties which have no clear boundaries and time frame.

Her husband's proposal means a transfer of the values from man's world into woman's world. Marriage is the smallest institution that makes transfer of such values possible, as indicated by Butler's (1999:13) statement in the following.

"Marriage does not transform a man's nature, nor uproot habits that have grown with his years: the licentious imagination continues its secret blight, though the outward conduct may be restrained. The man continues to be what he was . . .

He gave her wife a solution from the point of view of man ignoring the fact that man and woman have different activities. It appears when he is in need of Mrs. James' hands to mend his shirt because he cannot do it himself.

"Mary," said he, "cannot you come and sew a string on for me? I do believe there is not a bosom in my drawer in order, and I am in a great hurry. I thought to have been downtown an hour ago."

The schedule was thrown aside, the work basket taken, and Mrs. James followed him. She soon sewed on the tape, but then a button needed fastening, and, at last, a rip in his glove was to be mended

"What are you laughing at?" asked he.

"To think how famously your plan works."

"I declare!" said he, "Is this your study hour? I am sorry, but what can a man do? . . ."

"I am sure I did not hinder you long."

"No—yours was only one of a dozen interruptions" (Phelps, 2000:158)

The husband restrains himself from distracting her again during the privacy hours because he is eager to see the results of his proposed system. He believes that the system which always works well for his situation is the best solution for her situation. He could finish his job right on time due to an established system in his environment, but he missed the fact that his success comes partly from his wife's continuous support as well. She manages the household which also includes his needs, that is, mending his shirt and entertaining his business relation.

The most difficult part for Mrs. James is her guilty feeling that continues to haunt her whenever she leaves her duties as a mother and wife. This feeling even enters into her dream. She sees in her dream someone whose every conduct is recorded by two angels over her right and left shoulders. When she gets closer to her, she finds out that the person is herself.

With mind disturbed and spirits depresses, she left her household matters "in the suds," as they were, and punctually retired to her study. She soon found, however, that she could not fix her attention upon any intellectual pursuit. Neglected duties haunted her, like ghosts around the guilty conscience (hal 159) . . . Soon she found herself in a singular place. She was traversing a vast plain (hal 162) . . . Before her was a female, who was journeying towards that region of light (hal 161). . . . But what was most remarkable was that,

all unknown to her, she was constantly watched by two angels, who reposed on two golden clouds which floated above her. Before each was a golden book and a pen of gold (hal 163). . . . Eager to warn the traveler of what she had seen, she touched her. The traveler turned, she recognized or seemed to recognize herself (p. 164).

Jalaluddin (2002:238) explains that religion in one's life functions as a value system that encompasses a set of particular norms. The norms become a frame of reference for all his behavior and attitude that will guide him to be consistent with his religion. It is in line with Mc Guire (1981:24) who is of the opinion that a set of system get influences from family, friends, educational institution, and society at large. The results of learning and socialization are then internalized. Upon internalization the set of value is integrated into the shaping of one's identity. The trait will appear in one's daily routines, in the attitude, in the look, and in determining the purpose for joining a particular activity. McGuire (1981:26) elaborates further that the value system which is based on religion can give an individual and a society a set of value system in the form of legitimization and justification in dictating individual's and society's attitude. Kaswardi (1993:20) supports that such value system is the driving force or underlying principle which becomes life guideline to regulate patterns of behavior, thinking, attitude like what happens to Mrs. James. Religious teachings have been internalized in Elizabeth, including the belief in the guardian angel.

The angel represents conscience and is often accompanied by a shoulder devil representing temptation. They are handy for easily showing inner conflict of a character. Usually, the angel is depicted on (or hovering near) the right shoulder and the devil or demon on the left, as the left side traditionally represents dishonesty or impurity.

Mrs. James sees in her dream that all good deeds and evil deeds are recorded in a book. The angel over the left shoulder records everything related to evil deed, and the one over

the right shoulder records everything related to good deed. She also sees that the angel not only records all evils, but also follows the person everywhere. When he sees the person doing a good deed, he drops tears of being touched. The tears erase the record of previous evil deed.

Not a deed, not a word, not a look, escaped their notice. When a good deed, word, look, went from her, the angel over the right shoulder, with a glad smile, wrote it down in his book; when an evil, however trivial, the angel over the left shoulder recorded it in his book—then, with sorrowful eyes, followed the pilgrim until he observed penitence for the wrong, upon which he dropped a tear on the record, and blotted it out, and both angels rejoiced. She thought of her disappointment and the failure of her plans. To her, not only the past month, but the whole past year seemed to have been one of fruitless effort—all broken and disjointed—even her hours of religious duty had been encroached upon and disturbed (Phelps, 2000:161).

Her intellectuality has led her to unconsciously rationalize the right and wrong concept. To choose one from two equally difficult choices, Mrs James relies not only on her intuition, but also her logic. Her intellectuality helps her to bring the two in balance.

She soon found too, however, that she could not fix her attention upon any intellectual pursuit. Neglected duties haunted her, like ghosts around the guilty conscience. Perceiving that she was doing nothing with her books, and not wishing to lose the morning wholly, she commenced writing a letter (p.159).

She reconciles her domestic life and personal development. It is not a simple thing to do although her husband has given her a full support to express herself. The social, cultural, economic, and religious aspects intertwine to form a totality which poses obstacles in her attempt. Mrs James uses the word *unity* (p. 162) for the reconciliation, which she thinks more appropriate for woman because her goal is pursuit of *peace*.

What then did she do? To see some results from her life's work? To know that a golden cord bound her life-threads together into unity of purpose . . . in fighting the battle, she had fought for both, yet she knew that so it could not be—that for, ourselves must we all learn what are those things which "make for our peace" (p.162).

She understands that *system* emphasizes results, while *unity* is a process that involves not only thought but also feeling all together aim to achieving harmony. She decides that she wants to reconcile her domestic life and her potential as a writer in her own way.

CREATING A NEW DIMENSION

Woman devises some strategies when responding to inequality as reflected in the work of Phelps (Coates, 1993:8). Coates declares that woman is a social group that holds an inferior social status to man. *Women do belong to a social group of this kind (in our society they are considered —overtly or covertly— to be inferior to me.* She goes on by saying that members of inferior social group may accept or reject their inferiority in the society. If they accept it, they will try to get self esteem and positive self image individually, not in group. They must do two things. First, they compare themselves to other members of their group, not of the superior one. Second, they join the superior group individually.

If they reject it, they will try to change it. They can do it in three ways. First, they will try to get equal rights by means of adopting the values of superior group, which is called an assimilation strategy. Second, they will redefine the characteristic that has negative definition into positive values. Third, they will create a new dimension for comparison of the superior group. They define for themselves positive values and create a positive, as well as distinctive image (Tajfel, 1981; Coates, 1993).

In reconciling the domestic life and world of intellectuality, Mrs James holds onto the principle of power derived from the balance of mind and emotion, a characteristic that used to be seen as

a split. Mind or ratio is man's innate characteristic, while emotion is woman's basic characteristic. For Mrs. James, the two characteristics are actually innate, and inherited not only to man, but to woman also. She creates a new dimension for comparison of the man's superior group, and builds a positive image for herself. She was hesitant at the beginning as she was afraid that her attitude she has been carrying demonstrates her weaknesses. Then, she gains a new insight that the part of her husband regards as impractical is actually acceptable because, in doing her job, she holds onto not only the logic, but also the feeling that others regard as her weakness.

CONCLUSION

The analysis reveals how man imposes the word 'system' as solution, which woman finds it difficult to adopt due to a number of embedded elements that restrict woman's potential. The word *system* is a construct of socio-cultural, economic, and religious aspects that places woman inequally with man. Thus, the problem of inequality is rooted in language. Elizabeth offers an individual approach as a solution for the problem, in that woman should become intellectual and be able to transform her society as shown by Mrs. James. Mrs James does it by expressing her ideas through her writings. She uses the word "unity", the sense of which includes harmony and compromise, as a solution for her problem. Phelps' language style is an expression of her keen observation; she describes every day life in full detail and with accuracy. Using a flexible, non formal language, she employs her language style to support, question, and defend herself.

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