



Reflection of Upper Class in an Ideal Husband and the Importance of Being Earnest

DEVASI M. CHANDRAVADIYA
Assistant Teacher,
Shri Arablush Primary School, Lalpur
Dist. Jamnagar Gujarat (India)

Abstract:

Oscar Wilde is a greatest Anglo Irish play writer. He was born on 16th October, 1854, in Dublin into a protestant Anglo Irish family. He left Ireland in 1878 and spent some time in London, Paris and United States where he traveled with intent to deliver his lecture. He was not only greatest play writer but also he contributed on fiction, child literature, fairy tale and poem such various literary fields. His marvelous dramas are Salome (1891), An Ideal Husband (1895), A Woman of No Importance (1893), Importance of Being Earnest (1898) and Lady Windermere's Fan (1892): he presented very smart way like that satire, comic, tragedy, fashion and realism. He was fabulous master of drawing the realistic sketch of the character. He unmasked the social evils and weakness of the society.

Keywords: *Being earnest, Society, Upper class*

1. Introduction

In the time of Victorian era so many social evils spread in the society and upper class of human mind. Oscar Wilde took the responsibility to expose these evils and intrigue by his splendid plays. He reveals reality through his greatest plays with his unique writing skill.

2. Luxurious life Style

Oscar Wilde's play An Ideal Husband (1895) starts with big high profile culture party. The whole atmosphere was grand and splendid, decoration and light shining. Highly political and upper class people came to the party and slowly party took the color. Sir Robert Chiltern and Lady Gertrude Chiltern were raising couple of the political scene. Sir Robert built his career with some misstep of selling States properties in secret and Mrs. Cheveley knew the entire scam about it. She has letter which proved this scam so she blackmailed Sir Robert. She wanted Sir Robert reverses or to step out in Argentina Canal because she invested in. If he doesn't do she would expose him in press and devalue him in public. His wife didn't want him to take reverse in Argentina Canal. Sir Robert's head come between block and sword. If he reversed he would lost his wife and if didn't do it, Mrs. Cheveley would expose him and so that he may lose his public fame. She told all his crime to Lady Chiltern so she argued with Sir Robert and announced at large. She couldn't love the person who is unfaithful to the people of his country.

3. Political Atmosphere

At the time Lord Goring son of Lord Caversham biggest politician, come to the ground to save the life of Sir Robert and Lady Chiltern and Lord Goring did it. Lord Goring visits Mrs. Cheveley; he captured the black mail letters and destroyed it. Here he found that Mrs. Cheveley inquired about brooch which was lost in the party. So Lord Goring knows that she had stolen the brooch many years ago. If she wouldn't give him, he would call the police due to this threatened she gave the letters to him and he destroyed it. But she has one more trick, the pink letters of Mrs. Chiltern, it is something about Lord Goring and Mrs. Chiltern. She stole the pink letter (from Lady Chiltern to Lord Goring, announcing her visit) and promised to send it to Sir Robert as evidence of an affair. She expected that

Lord Goring was in favour of her and also pretended that Lord Goring was in favour of her. But in reality she has proposed marriage to Lord Goring and in exchange of Sir Robert's incriminating letters. Lord Goring refused he was disgust with her for seeking to destroy the love of a good couple. When Lord Caversham (Lord Goring's father) arrived with the news that Sir Robert can have a place in the Cabinet (a government position), his resolve is tested. Sir Robert might reject the post. Lord Goring begs her not to ask such a sacrifice from her husband. She should forgive him, and accept that her job is to support her husband no matter what. She agrees. When Sir Robert returns with the letter rejecting the appointment, she forgives him and she tears it up. They again lived their life happily. When Lord Goring visited Mrs.Cheltern and proposed Mabel's hand for marriage. She is a sister of Sir Robert Chiltern. But Sir Robert refused his proposal. He still thinks Lord Goring is involved with Mrs. Cheveley. Now Lady Gertrude Chiltern came forward, in favor of Lord Goring. She explained the whole story that not Lord Goring but Mrs. Cheveley was involved in it.

4. Thematic concern

Here we found the various themes of the play the themes of morality, ethic, women of femininity, marriage, and politics. Oscar Wilde covered varied themes in this play. He presented realistic picture of the upper class society in Victorian era. This is his masterpiece drama. He presented his mastery by varied characters and various themes. It was unique combination of plot construction and action in vivid places that indicated his geniuses.

In the second play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, we found the various themes of the play: There are themes of marriage, love, lies and romance. *The Importance of Being Earnest* reveals the differences between the upper class and the lower class. Members of the upper class display a great deal of pride and pretense, they felt that they are inherently entitled to their wealth and higher social position. They are so preoccupied with maintaining the status that they quickly squash any signs of rebellion. In this play, Wilde satirizes the arrogance and hypocrisy of the aristocratic. The lower class in *Earnest* is less pretentious and more humble, but equally good at making jokes. Another literary play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) is the marvelous composition of Oscar Wilde. All his masterpiece plays he included variety of themes, characters, titles, style, comedy, tragedy, love triangle, marriage and evil etc., and this is his uniqueness. The play *The Importance of Being Earnest* the story goes like this: Jack lives his boring life in the country due to his brother Earnest. It was made up by him. His younger brother Earnest was a socialite in urban area. Cecil is a bit too interested in Ernest. After all, the elder brother was responsible for trouble some life of younger brother. Jack went to the party in place the name of Ernest, to know this Algernon was very surprised that Jack took the advantage of nonexistence of Earnest. Jack was in love with Gwendolen Fairfax, who was Algernon's cousin and daughter of Lady Bracknell. But Lady Bracknell refused to marry with him. Because Jack was not fit to engage her. She gave chance to prove himself and become suitable for her.

5. Social Values

In a way, it is ironic that Lady Bracknell didn't approve of the engagement to Ernest. Ernest is rich, has a good reputation around town, and seems to be perfectly suitable for Gwendolen. Except for one thing: he was an orphan, abandoned at birth for unknown reasons. He was found in a handbag at Victoria train station. This is the only reason Lady Bracknell doesn't accept him. She told him to find his parents and then they would accept him. Furiously, Jack and Algernon made a scheme for getting rid of Ernest. They show up that Earnest died in Paris of too chill.

Jack was a man of mysterious background: he was found at Victoria Station as an infant, in a hand-bag. To escape the monotony of country life, and to have fun and he creates an imaginary brother, "Ernest." who is always getting into trouble. Therefore, he is able to go to the city whenever he likes. In the city, he is known as Ernest. This becomes complicated when he falls in love with Gwendolen, whom he cannot marry because her aristocratic mother does not approve of his background.

Furthermore, she could not love him because his name was not Ernest. When Gwendolen appears at his country house, Jack is discovered as a phony. However, he is forgiven and taken back by Gwendolen. At the end of the play he discovers that he is who he was pretending to be all along. He was misplaced at Victoria Station by Miss Prism (now the governess of his ward) when he was a baby. He is really a man named Ernest, and in fact he is the brother of Algernon. He and Gwendolen were allowed to marry each other tried to convince their love for each other. At this discovery, Jack freaks out and ran upstairs to find something. When he comes back down, he's holding the handbag (remember, Jack is an orphan who was found in a handbag). Jack mistakenly thinks Miss Prism is his mother, but is corrected by Lady Bracknell, who tells him that Mrs. Moncrieff is his mother. That makes Jack Algernon's elder brother.

Then, they all wonder, what is the real name of Jack? Remember, Gwendolen will only love him if his name is Ernest. Lady Bracknell tells Jack, he was named after his father, but nobody can remember what the General's name was. Jack looks up "Moncrieff" in his book of Army Lists. The result was that, his father's name was Ernest. So he's been telling the truth all along. His name really is Ernest. And now he can marry Gwendolen. There is general rejoicing. Gwendolen hugs Ernest. Cecily hugs Algernon. Miss Prism hugs Dr. Chasuble. And Ernest closes the play by insisting that he's now learned the "*importance of being earnest*."

6. High Social Status and Power is greater than Virtues

In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, pampered young women have a skewed sense of reality, inspired by romantic novels. When real life gets too boring, these women decide to take matters into their own hands by recording their fantasies in diaries. Potential lovers enter the picture and provide an opportunity to act out the fantasies, but the women's expectations of courtship often prove too whimsical and idealistic for reality. There's no tragic disillusionment here, though. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a comedy, after all.

Oscar Wilde had marvelous technique to fill the various colors in the characters. Ex The Main character and protagonist of this play is John Worthing (known as Jack in the city). He is the main character because he responsible to the major plot developments; most action revolves around him: the conflict is his; the main setting of the play occurs at his home; the plot becomes complicated when his pursuits are jeopardized, and the plot is not finally resolved until his interests are settled. Lady Bracknell was greatest antagonist in the current play. Everyone has a problem with her. Jack and Gwendolen were angry at her, for getting in the way of their engagement. Algernon is sick and tired of her tedious dinner parties. Even Miss Prism is afraid of her. She's also the person that everyone has to please if they want to get married. Jack's entire purpose in the play is to discover his true identity in the hopes of making himself an acceptable son-in-law to Lady Bracknell. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble challenge the social order by ultimately yielding to marriage based on love instead of marrying for social rank or wealth, as most of the older generation espouse. In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Algernon represents a modern mindset towards marriage because he is skeptical about the happiness of couples in marriage, and has fears about committing to one woman, unlike Jack who holds more traditional nineteenth-century views on marriage.

7. Conclusion

We came to the conclusion that Oscar Wilde's plays exposed the reality of the social activities of upper class in Victorian age. Their belief, behavior, status, aim, and entire picture of their life, Oscar Wilde sketched it very powerfully and outstanding composition in literary work.

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