



THE ANALYSIS OF PLOT AND CHARACTERS
 IN "SASTRA WILAYAH"
 "THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A CRISTY"



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A Thesis
 Presented to Faculty of Letters Hasanuddin University
 in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
 For Sarjana Sastra Degree

BY
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UJUNG PANDANG
 1996

*Kepada
Kedua orang tuaku tercinta,
Bapak V.F.Marentek dan Ibu O.Malota
serta suami dan anakku tersayang,
Mika S.Popang dan Andika K.S.Popang
"Untuk segala sesuatu ada masanya,
untuk apapun di bawah langit ada
waktunya...la membuat segala sesuatu
indah pada waktunya..." (Pkh.3:1,11)*

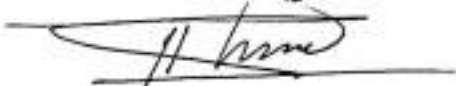
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FAKULTAS SASTRA

Sesuai dengan Surat Tugas Dekan Fakultas Sastra Universitas Hasanuddin No.: 1571/PT04.H5.FS/C/1995 tanggal 27 September 1995, dengan ini kami menyatakan menerima dan menyetujui skripsi ini.

Ujung Pandang, J u l i 1996

Pembimbing I



(Drs. Agustinus Ruruk L., M.A.)

Pembimbing II



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Disetujui untuk diteruskan
kepada Panitia Ujian Skripsi
Dekan
u.b. Ketua Jurusan sastra Inggris,



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UNIVERSITAS HASANUDDIN

FAKULTAS SASTRA

Pada hari ini, Jumat , tanggal 26 Juli 1996, Panitia Ujian Skripsi menerima dengan baik skripsi yang berjudul:

THE ANALYSIS OF PLOT AND CHARACTERS IN OSCAR WILDE'S
"THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST"

yang diajukan dalam rangka memenuhi salah satu syarat ujian akhir guna memperoleh gelar Sarjana Sastra jurusan Sastra Inggris pada Fakultas Sastra Universitas Hasanuddin.

Ujung Pandang, 26 J u l i 1996

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, the writer would like to say her deepest gratitude to God The Merciful for giving her such blessing days and health in finishing this simple thesis as one of the requirements for Sarjana Sastra Degree at Faculty of Letters, English Department Hasanuddin University.

There are many difficulties which the writer has faced in composing this thesis, but with hard work and prayers, and also with her lecturers' guidance and assistance, the writer lastly can finish it. But, the writer obviously realizes that this thesis is still far from being perfect, therefore it needs many suggestions and revisions, especially the constructive ones for the completeness of it.

In this opportunity, the writer would like to express many thanks to her first and second consultants, Bapak Drs. Agustinus Ruruk L., M.A. and Bapak Drs. M. Amir P., M.Hum. who have spent their time in guiding and directing her to finish this thesis.

The writer also would like to thank to Bapak Prof.Dr. Nadjamudin, M.Sc., as the Dean of Faculty of Letters Hasanuddin University with all his staff members, and to all the lecturers of Faculty of Letters Hasanuddin University who have served her well in finishing her study, and also to her friends and others that she cannot mention their names one by one who have assisted her both material and spiritual

in finishing this thesis.

And the writer's deep gratitude is specially expressed to her loving father, Bapak V.F. Marentek and her loving mother, Ibu Octovina Malota who pour her with their loves all her life, guide and pray for her in achieving her aim, and to her beloved husband, Mika Popang and her beloved son, Andika who have given her a great motivation in finishing this thesis. May God The Almighty is taking care all of you now and forever.

Finally, the writer sincerely hopes this very simple thesis can be useful or at the most readable by readers.

Ujung Pandang, July 1996

The Writer

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ABSTRAK

Tujuan membahas drama *"The Importance of Being Earnest"* karya Oscar Wilde ini adalah untuk menjelaskan hubungan peristiwa-peristiwa yang terdapat di dalam drama tersebut dalam membangun cerita, dan untuk menemukan jenis plot yang dipakai pengarang; juga untuk menjelaskan motivasi-motivasi tokoh-tokoh utama serta tindakan-tindakan mereka dalam menyelesaikan masalah-masalah mereka, selain itu untuk menemukan nilai-nilai kehidupan yang terkandung di dalam cerita drama tersebut.

Dalam membahas *"The Importance of Being Earnest"* karya Wilde ini pendekatan yang digunakan adalah pendekatan struktural dengan penekanan pada plot dan karakter-karakternya yang membahas tentang hubungan peristiwa-peristiwa dalam membangun cerita, motivasi-motivasi yang mendorong tokoh-tokoh melakukan tindakan, dan tindakan-tindakan yang dilakukan mereka sehubungan dengan motivasi yang ada.

Hasil pembahasan menunjukkan jenis alur 'man in a hole' di mana dua orang pria, masing-masing bernama Jack atau John Worthing dan Algy atau Algernon Moncrieff yang terperangkap dalam kepura-puraan mereka dalam memakai nama "Ernest" untuk memenangkan cinta dua orang gadis pujaan hati mereka, yaitu Gwendolen dan Cecily yang memiliki impian untuk menikah dengan seorang pria bernama "Ernest". Pada akhirnya kepura-puraan kedua pria tersebut terungkap juga yang membuahkan



penolakan dari kedua gadis tersebut. Tetapi keberadaan Lady Bracknell, ibu Gwendolen, menjelaskan segala sesuatu yang berhubungan dengan Jack dan Algy sehingga drama ini berakhir bahagia dan kedua pria tersebut dapat menikahi kekasih pujaan hati mereka. Nama "Ernest" yang dalam bahasa Inggris kalau diucapkan sama dengan "earnest" yang berarti serius atau bersungguh-sungguh menghubungkan seluruh proses atau jalannya cerita mulai dari awal sampai akhir. Melalui karakter-karakter di dalam cerita drama ini, Oscar Wilde sang pengarang, mengejek dan menyindir kehidupan orang-orang pada zamannya yang penuh dengan kepura-puraan dan kemunafikan. Nama "Ernest" yang mirip bunyinya dengan "earnest" yang diimpikan dan dikejar oleh kedua gadis dan kedua pria tersebut mewakili impian kita juga untuk mengarungi hidup ini dengan bersungguh-sungguh tanpa topeng kepura-puraan dan kemunafikan.

CHAPTER I

I N T R O D U C T I O N

1.1 Background of Writing

As we have known that every literary work is made up by the author for communicating something to the readers just like other works. But there is difference between literary works and other works, for instance science. Science communicates absolute knowledge and methods for human to dominate his environment and to use it as his desire. It fulfills the physical needs of human life. Whereas literature, as Sumardjo (1984:15) says that it is not a kind of sciences or knowledge which provides exact definition about something. It is an art, or a part of arts with its various branches. Art devotes to beauty, and beauty brings pleasure and entertainment. Entertainment is one of human spiritual needs. So, literature fulfills the spiritual needs of human being.

Besides giving enjoyment and entertaining us, literature also communicates facts or realities of human life-values. Certainly the life-values that are described in literary work are profitable. They can be projected in our real life. Realities of the life-values are pointed out by the difference between the strongmen and the oppressedmen, the poor and the rich, the unjust and just in a society,

and many other things. In other words, the benefit of literary works is to make human beings understand each other and become wiser in facing life.

In general, Sumardjo (1984:25) divides literature into non-imaginative and imaginative literature. Non-imaginative one consists of essay, biography, daily record, memoir, literary criticism, and history. Imaginative one includes prose and poetry. Poetry is still divided into epic, dramatic, and lyric. Whereas prose is divided into fiction and drama.

The literary work which the writer analyzed here is drama. If we talk about drama, our mind may be connected directly to drama on television, or drama performed on a stage. Let us examine the definition of drama below:

"A drama is a work of literature or a composition which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various actions of-and dialogues between-a group of characters. Drama is furthermore designed for theatrical presentation; that is, although we speak of drama as a literary work or a composition, we must never forget that drama is designed to be acted on the stage." (*Reaske, 1966:5*).

It is not the play or drama on a stage that is analyzed here, but the writer analyzes it as a work of literature. Certainly we do not have to forget that drama is designed to be acted on a stage. As readers, through our unlimited imagination can be the director, the actors, and the audiences ourselves. So that, the play that we

read can be like the play on a stage.

In order to gain pleasure and more understanding of drama, we need to examine the elements which build up the drama from inside it. The elements are plot, characters, theme, setting, atmosphere, and so on. In this case, the elements that the writer intends to analyze are plot, for plot is the central aspect or the essence of the story, and characters, for characters develop the plot to clarify it to the readers or spectators. There is a close union between plot and character, any discussion of plot necessitates discussion of character. Since the writer decided to choose structural approach as a method in analyzing data which sees the literary work as a complete one, the analysis is also related to other elements such as theme and setting, but the emphasis is on plot and characters.

In doing this analysis, the writer has chosen to analyze the plot and characters of Oscar Wilde's drama entitled *"The Importance of Being Earnest"*.

Oscar Wilde as an author of 'The Importance of Being Earnest' is an Irish poet, novelist, and dramatist who lives in the period of Queen Victoria. He writes literary works such as drama or plays, novels and poetry. Among them, drama or play especially comedy is his forte.

He is some kind of an artist who spends his life in a relaxed manner. He is considered 'hedonism' that is the living of a life of pleasure against regulation and tradi-

tion of its society. However, behind the deliberately outrageous behavior and opinions he has a remarkable brain which produces stimulating essays, fairy stories, novels, great comedies and poem of considerable power. Robert Barnard (1984:177) says that in his works the uglinesses of the age are transmuted into something infinitely witty, imaginative and delicate. Wit, style, and fantasy are Wilde's forte. About him, Samekto says:

"Wilde mentertawakan segala sesuatu yang dianggap serius oleh masyarakat, seperti kelahiran, cinta, kawin, mati, hubungan tidak sah, kehormatan, dan sebagainya, tetapi semuanya ini dilakukan dengan nada yang begitu ringan dan begitu lucu sehingga tak seorangpun merasa tersinggung."

(Samekto, 1976:75)

So, through his works Wilde laughs everything that taken seriously by society such as birth, love, marriage, death, etc., and he does it lightly and wittily, so that nobody is offended.

Underneath his pose of being relaxed and cynicism Wilde is a man of wide learning and humanity. His friends remember him as the greatest talker of his age, and they claim that this aspect of his genius far surpass that shown in his writings.

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is Wilde's great comedy and one of the finest comedies in English during his period. About the drama, Robert Barnard (1984:177) says that on the surface the play is drawing-room comedy

raised to the point of fantasy, but beneath the surface it carries out a desire to shoot down Victorian morality. Through out the discourse of the narration of the drama he actually ridicules the morality of the people in his period and laughs at the hypocrisy of the society. It is a lighthearted farcical comedy that has deservedly become a classic and deservedly to be read and analyzed by readers.

1.2 Scope of Problems

This analysis emphasizes on the plot and the characters of 'The Importance of Being Earnest'. So, the writer scopes the problems by arising several questions as follow:

- a. What kind of plot is Oscar Wilde used in telling the story of the drama?
- b. How the events of the story are related to one another leading to the main plot?
- c. What are the characters' motivations in doing their actions?
- d. What actions are displayed by the characters in solving their main conflicts?
- e. What life-values can be obtained from the dramatic narration?

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of analyzing Oscar Wilde's 'The Impor-

tance of *Being Earnest*' are as follow:

- a. To find out the kind of plot which Oscar Wilde used in telling the story of the drama.
- b. To explain the relationship of the events to one another leading to the main plot.
- c. To explain the characters' motivations in doing their actions.
- d. To explain the characters' actions in solving their main conflicts.
- e. To find out life-values within the dramatic narration.

1.4 Methodology

In analyzing 'The Importance of Being Earnest', the writer chooses its plot and its characters. Analysis of plot includes the events and their connection in developing the story, whereas analysis of characters covers the characters' attitude towards their problems. A method of getting data from literary text is done throughout library research including two points as follows:

1. Method of data collection

In composing this thesis, the writer has read and collected the data from some texts or books which have relevance with the first source of the data, that is the original text by Oscar Wilde entitled *The Importance of Being Earnest*, published by Heinemann Educational Books Ltd., London, 1967, and the object of

the analysis that is plot and characters.

2. Method of data analysis

The data are analyzed by using literary approach so-called structural approach or intrinsic approach. The structural approach is explained in chapter two.

1.5 Sequence of Chapters

The writer has divided the sequence of chapters into four chapters. The division of chapters are as follows:

Chapter one deals with introduction including background of writing, scope of problems, objectives, methodology, and sequence of chapters.

Chapter two deals with review of literature including explanation of structural approach, plot and its parts, character and its features, and synopsis of the drama.

Chapter three deals with analysis including the plot of 'The Importance of Being Earnest' which consists of introduction (exposition), beginning of the action (complication), middle of the action (continuation of complication), end of the action (resolution), and conclusion (aftermath), and characters of 'The Importance of Being Earnest', they are John Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, Gwendolen Fairfax, Cecily Cardew, and Lady Bracknell.

Chapter four deals with conclusion, suggestion and afterwards bibliography.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Structural Approach

Structural approach is a method the writer used in analyzing the data. About this approach, Aminuddin (1987:52) says that literature is a verbal structure which has its own autonomy apart from other elements outside it. The basic assumption is, literary text is seen as a complete work and has its inner coherence. In its totality, every part or element in it displays authentic role. And the element furthermore has its complete meaning from the entire meaning of the text. Or as Semi (1993:67) says that literary works as creative ones have to be seen as independent creation free from other elements outside of themselves. So, if we want to analyze a literary work by using this approach, we must analyze some elements inside it which build up the work itself such as theme, plot, character, setting, style, etc. The elements inside the literary work are interdependent in creating a complete work. We can say it in other words that structural approach is one of the literary approaches which analyzes the elements from inside of the literary work. It is also called intrinsic approach.

About the structural approach, Atar Semi (1993:67,68) explains as follows:

- (1) Karya sastra dipandang dan diperlakukan sebagai sebuah sosok yang berdiri sendiri, yang mempunyai dunianya sendiri, mempunyai rangka dan bentuknya sendiri.
- (2) Memberi penilaian terhadap keserasian atau keharmonisan semua komponen membentuk keseluruhan struktur. Mutu karya sastra ditentukan oleh kemampuan penulis menjalin hubungan antarkomponen tersebut sehingga menjadi suatu keseluruhan yang bermakna dan bernilai estetik.
- (3) Memberikan penilaian terhadap keberhasilan penulis menjalin hubungan harmonis antara isi dan bentuk, karena jalinan isi dan bentuk merupakan hal yang amat penting dalam menentukan mutu sebuah karya sastra.
- (4) Walaupun memberikan perhatian istimewa terhadap jalinan hubungan antara isi dan bentuk, namun pendekatan ini menghendaki adanya analisis yang objektif sehingga perlu dikaji atau diteliti setiap unsur yang terdapat dalam karya sastra tersebut.
- (5) Pendekatan struktural berusaha berlaku adil terhadap karya sastra dengan jalan hanya menganalisis karya sastra tanpa mengikutsertakan hal-hal yang berada diluarnya.
- (6) Yang dimaksudkan dengan isi dalam kajian struktural adalah persoalan, pemikiran, falsafah, cerita, pusat pengisahan, tema, sedangkan yang dimaksudkan dengan bentuk adalah alur (plot), bahasa, sistem penulisan, dan perangkatan perwajahan sebagai karya tulis.
- (7) Peneliti boleh melakukan analisis komponen yang diinginkannya.

So, literary works should be viewed as independent creations, having their own space and form. Besides giving an evaluation for the harmony of all components in forming the whole structure, structural approach also gives an evaluation for the writer's success in connecting harmonically between the content and form. Although it pays


attention to the connection between the content and form, we need to analyze each aspect inside of the literary work excluding extrinsic ones. And for the researchers, they may choose which components they want to analyze.

The writer analyzes "The Importance of Being Earnest" a drama written by Oscar Wilde using this structural approach and it is emphasized on its plot and characters, especially what kind of plot the author used in telling the story, how the events of the story related to one another leading to the main plot, what action the characters displayed in solving their main conflicts, and what the characters' motivations in doing their actions.

2.2 Plot and Its Parts

As a literary work and an art creation, drama is read and watched by readers and spectators as something full of events, characters and conflicts. In short it is immediately accepted in shape of unity. As a unity, actually it can be analyzed in its elements such as plot, characters, setting, and so on. Analyzing these elements will bring forth our insight about drama.

Plot is one of the structural aspects which has to be analyzed. According to Joseph V. Landy (1972:5), plot is the sequence of the actions and events in a story. It is a very important part in every story, just like a skeleton



to a man or a blueprint to a skyscraper. There are many other elements in a story, but plot holds them together in building up a story. The plot has a quality if it is exciting us, or at least more exciting than everyday reality that surrounds us. Besides being exciting, a successful plot must be arranged effectively. In a good plot there is always some kind of a string, and the most effective string in plot structure is causality.

Christopher Russell Reaske also gives his definition about plot as follows:

"Plot is the central aspect of all drama, for drama is primarily concerned with *what happens*. 'Plot' is basically another term for structure, the difference being that when we discuss plot we more or less are committed to discussing everything that happens in the play." (Reaske, 1966:35).

So, plot is also called structure of a drama for it arranges all events happen in a drama.

Landy (1972:7) divides plot in three kinds namely 'man in a hole', 'man on a road' and 'man in a tub'.

'*Man in a hole*' is a kind of plot set up by the author which begins with a man or group of men getting trapped in some kind of a hole, goes on to show how they try to climb out, and ends with them either escaping to safety or sliding back to the bottom for good. Its unity is achieved through its central action. This plot consists of five parts which can be explained as follows:

1. Introduction (Exposition)

It presents the necessary knowledge about the main characters and the situation existing prior to the action proper.

2. Beginning of The Action (Complication)

It is about a man (or a group of men) falls into a hole. It is the beginning of the action or also called the rising action.

3. Middle of The Action (Continuation of Complication)

It is about what happens to the man in the hole. It is the middle part of the action and also called the climax. This part is a defined turning point or crisis, where the action takes a decisive turn for better or worse.

4. End of The Action (Resolution)

It is the end of the action in which the man either gets out of the hole or stay there for good. It is also called the falling action.


5. Conclusion (Aftermath)

It rounds off the action, and underlining its point. It is the main action of the play in which everything else has been working either directly or indirectly and it is almost the logical result of the beginning of the action or rising action and the end of the action or falling action.

Certainly, the structure of 'man in a hole' plot should not be applied too rigidly. Many stories which use this kind of plot may start at the beginning of the action instead of giving the introduction. An author in his story may not give the aftermath. However, the basic framework of 'man in a hole' remains the same.

'*Man on a road*' is a kind of plot which has separate episodes within its story, or by other words it is episodic. The time sequence is mostly reshuffled and its action might open in the middle of the story. Its unity achieved through a single hero, whom we watch walking through various stages on the road of life. This is commonly shown in epics. The relation between the events is not causal. However, the episodes are still connected each other, since they all happen to the same person, even though not as firmly as 'man in a hole' plot. In addition, the separate episodes in the story might constitute a 'man in a hole' plot.

'*Man in a tub*' is a kind of plot which has two steps, first a straightforward, unstructured, usually commonplace event, and then a flash of realization. Generally, it contains trivial incidents which trigger an exciting internal experience. Humdrum incidents from ordinary life in the story usually constitute only external action. Inexperienced readers might baffle and complain that there is nothing happen in the story. Actually, a great deal is



happening, but the excitement is in the mind. The external event is so skilfully narrated by the author, the details so carefully selected and arranged, that they direct the perceptive readers straight as an arrow to a climactic realization. This kind of plot is usually shown in anecdotes.

From these kinds of plot, 'man in a hole' is the oldest and most popular kind of plot which used by many great author including Oscar Wilde, the author of "The Importance of Being Earnest", the drama which I have analyzed in the following chapter.

According to Reaske (1966:36), any plot of a dramatic work necessarily has to do with conflict. Throughout the play there are repeating challenges of one force by another. A plot presents incidents in which the opposing forcing meet head-on until there is some short of final resolution.

The most important aspect of plot is its relationship to character. Everything in the plot-that is, every incident-is introduced because of a particular feelings of a particular character in a particular time. There is nothing in the plot which is not the product of character motivation. What plot does, then, is translate the essence of characters' ideas into appropriate actions. Plot informs us to what the characters are like. Thus while we talk about the structure of a play in terms of artistic

development and relationship of parts, we also need to refer specifically to the plot, to the actions which, in effect, delineate the characters. All of the actions arise out of the characters and thus we must explain the actions in terms of the characters. When we discuss plot then, no matter for what ultimate purpose, we necessarily need to pay more attention to the fine points regarding the various characters.

About plot, X.J.Kennedy (1991:969) adds that besides main plot, some plays, usually longer ones may contain a double plot (or subplot). Double plot or subplot is a secondary arrangement of incidents, involving someone less important.

2.3 Character and Its Features

Character is also one of the structural aspects which has to be analyzed. In dealing with characters determining plot Reaske (1966:44) says that the essence of a drama, its plot, develops out of the characters themselves. Things should happen in the play because the characters in the play are the way they are. That is, the plot with all its small episodes and incidents, its complications and simplifications, is motored by the natures of the characters. Things happen because the characters act in accord with their feelings. We must deal with probability in considering the plot ; we must estimate whether characters

act as they should in light of what we know about them. There is a close union then between character and action. Any discussion of plot necessitates discussion of character.

According to Aminuddin (1987:79), the incidents happen in a drama are carried out by certain persons. The persons whose carry out the incidents so that they can build the plot are characters. And the way an author displays his or her characters is called characterization.

Each of the characters has his different role. Characters who have significant roles in a story are called main characters or major characters. Whereas characters who have less important roles for their appearances only to serve or to support main characters are called minor characters.

Jakob Sumardjo (1984:132) analyzes character's personality by using four stages, they are *physical appearance* in which we need to know whether a character is a male or female, how old the characters are, their physical shape, skin colour, and so on. *Social degree*, it deals with the characters' job, religion, family, and environmental situation. *Psychological condition*, it is actually the most important part of characters' personality. The characters can be seen from their deeds, their aims, thoughts, ways of taking decision, etc., and all of these must be performed clearly, firmly, and completely. *Moral condi-*

tion, it is shown when the characters are facing critical moments, and we can know whether the characters are traitors, hypocrites, or honest ones from their deeds toward the critical moments.

Even though there are four stages to obtain characters' figure, in fact a playwright emphasizes only one aspect or may be several aspects relating to his theme.

It is not easy to know characters' figure. In dealing with this, Aminuddin (1987:80) says, the readers can obtain character's figure by observing the author explanation about the characters, the author description through characters' environmental life and how they wear certain clothes, the characters' contemplation about themselves, the characters' thoughts in facing conflicts, the characters' conversations about and with other characters, other characters reaction against certain character, and so on.

According to Reaske (1966:40) we can know a great deal about characters in a play by closely observing their actions. There are several questions in dealing with it such as how they behave in different situations, how they differ from one another in their behavior in sharing the same situations. By answering the questions, we attempt to analyze the characters in terms of their actions. We ask primarily why a character does, what he does, and conclude that it must be because he is a certain kind of person.

Every character in a drama has motivation to act or to

do something. In analyzing the characters' motivations, we have to notice the larger actions which characters complete in the course of a play; there are identifiable motives behind them. So, every action created by a character is for the sake of particular reason.

While we can usually speak of character's central motive for doing things in the course of the play, we can rarely assume that he has one and only one motive. The playwright has the option to allow his or her character to have only one motive, but in general, characters come to us as complex human personalities with many facets. Therefore, we should try to arrive at an understanding of characters as complicated human beings with patterns of motivations rather than single motive.

2.4 Synopsis of The Drama

The story begins in a Morning-room of Algernon's flat in Half Moon Street, London. It is about two rich young men, Jack or John Worthing and Algy or Algernon Moncrieff who are getting trapped in their 'pretending of being Ernest' in order to marry Gwendolen Fairfax and Cecily Cardew, the girls they love.

In order to get up to town Jack tells his family in country that he has a younger brother called Ernest Worthing who lives in town. But, in town, Jack introduces himself as Ernest Worthing. Actually, having a brother called Ernest which he states to his family in country and introducing himself as Ernest Worthing in town, are only Jack's reasons to meet and to impress his beloved girl in town, Gwendolen Fairfax, who has an obsession to marry a man of the name of Ernest. When Jack's friend in town, Algy, finds out his pretending of being Ernest, Jack tells that he will stop doing it. But, Jack's lover, Gwendolen, the girl who loves him for the sake of the name of Ernest prohibits him to stop using the name of Ernest. The fear of loosing her and his love for her push Jack to use the name of 'Ernest' as his Christian name.

So, when Jack goes down to the country, which is located in The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire, he states that his brother is already dead. Then Jack asks Dr. Chasuble, a reverend to arrange a christening under

the name of Ernest for himself.

Algy also uses the name of Ernest to meet Cecily, Jack's ward in the country, whom he is in love with. And Cecily also has a peculiar dream to have a man of the name of Ernest. Fear of losing her restrains Algy to tell the truth about himself and then he decides to be christened under the name of Ernest, too. But, Algy's coming in the country makes situation increasingly hot, especially when Jack knows that Algy introduces himself as his younger brother, Ernest Worthing. And things get hot when suddenly Gwendolen comes to the manor house to meet Jack.

The situation reaches its climax when Jack, Algy, Gwendolen and Cecily meet together. Both Jack and Algy make both Gwendolen and Cecily having a quarrel. Each of the girls claims that she is the one who is engaged with Ernest. None of them gives up until Jack and Algy join them and explain the misunderstanding. Certainly Gwendolen is Jack's darling and Cecily is Algy's lover. But, Gwendolen and Cecily, who love Jack and Algy for the sake of the name of Ernest reject to marry the men after hearing their real name. To solve this matter, Jack and Algy decides to be christened at once under the name of Ernest.

Unexpectedly, Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen's mother, a presumptuous and materialistic old lady who never agrees Jack to marry her daughter for he is only an adopted child of Mr. Thomas Cardew, comes to Jack's house. Lady

the name of Ernest for himself.

Algy also uses the name of Ernest to meet Cecily, Jack's ward in the country, whom he is in love with. And Cecily also has a peculiar dream to have a man of the name of Ernest. Fear of loosing her restrains Algy to tell the truth about himself and then he decides to be christened under the name of Ernest, too. But, Algy's coming in the country makes situation increasingly hot, especially when Jack knows that Algy introduces himself as his younger brother, Ernest Worthing. And things get hot when suddenly Gwendolen comes to the manor house to meet Jack.

The situation reaches its climax when Jack, Algy, Gwendolen and Cecily meet together. Both Jack and Algy make both Gwendolen and Cecily having a quarrel. Each of the girls claims that she is the one who is engaged with Ernest. None of them gives up until Jack and Algy join them and explain the misunderstanding. Certainly Gwendolen is Jack's darling and Cecily is Algy's lover. But, Gwendolen and Cecily, who love Jack and Algy for the sake of the name of Ernest reject to marry the men after hearing their real name. To solve this matter, Jack and Algy decides to be christened at once under the name of Ernest.

Unexpectedly, Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen's mother, a presumptuous and materialistic old lady who never agrees Jack to marry her daughter for he is only an adopted child of Mr. Thomas Cardew, comes to Jack's house. Lady

Bracknell again refuses Jack to marry her daughter, but she approves Algy's engagement with Cecily when she knows that Cecily is a wealthy girl. But, it is Lady Bracknell who then reveals Jack's real identity. It starts when she sees Miss Prism, Cecily's governess. From their conversations revealed that twenty-eight years ago, Miss Prism who was lived at Lord Bracknell's house, by mistaken put a baby in her hand-bag instead of a perambulator. Then, she left the hand-bag contained that baby in the cloak-room of Victoria Station in The Brighton Line. When Jack hears the story that exactly likes the story of his babyhood, he soon rushes to take the hand-bag which was contained him in it. And when Jack shows the hand-bag to Miss Prism, she acknowledges it as hers. So, it is revealed that the baby who was lost twenty-eight years ago is Jack himself. From Lady Bracknell, it is also revealed that Jack is actually the son of Mrs. Moncrieff, Lady Bracknell's sister and consequently Algy's elder brother. Then, Jack finds out that his Christian name is really Ernest following his father Christian name, Ernest John Moncrieff as listed in the Army Lists.

Everything is ended happily and cheerful. Jack or Ernest and also Algy now can marry the girls they love. Especially for Jack or now Ernest Moncrieff, it is the moment when he feels how importance it is to be a serious or an earnest man in facing his life.

CHAPTER III

A N A L Y S I S

3.1 Plot of "The Importance of Being Earnest"

The drama "The Importance of Being Earnest" written by Oscar Wilde consists of three acts. As have been mentioned in the preceding chapter that according to Joseph Landy (1972:5), there are three kinds of plot namely 'man in a hole', 'man on a road' and 'man in a tub'. In this drama, the writer finds that the author uses a kind of plot so-called 'man in a hole'. It is about two young men, Jack or John Worthing and Algy or Algernon Moncrieff getting trapped in a hole made by themselves. They get trapped by their pretending of being 'Ernest' in order to marry the women, Gwendolen Fairfax and Cecily Cardew who have a romantic dream to marry a man of the name of Ernest.

As mentioned before, 'man in a hole' plot has five parts namely 'introduction' or 'exposition', 'beginning of the action' or 'complication', 'middle of the action' or 'continuation of complication', 'end of the action' or 'resolution' and 'conclusion' or 'aftermath'. Let us see each part of the plot.

3.1.1 Exposition (Introduction)

The story begins in a morning-room of a flat in Half-Moon Street, London. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The exposition begins with introducing one of the main characters, Algernon Moncrieff, the owner of the flat, who is having a 'five o'clock tea', and there is also his man servant, Lane, who comes before him and he is arranging the table for tea time. From this picture we can find out that Algernon or Algy is a man of a high class society. While having tea time, John Worthing or Jack is coming. Let us see their conversation below:

ALGERNON

How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

JACK

Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

ALGERNON

(Stiffly.) I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday.

JACK

(Sitting down on the sofa.) In the country.

(Wilde, 1967:3)

From the dialogues we can know that Jack is called Ernest by Algy. He has a residence in the country. Then, Jack tells Algy that his purpose for coming to town is to propose to Algy's cousin, Gwendolen Fairfax, the girl Jack loves. But, Jack is surprised when Algy says that he will



never marry Gwendolen, and there is certain reason for him not to give his allowance for Jack to marry his cousin. Here are their dialogues:

JACK

I am in love with Gwendolen. I come up to town expressly to propose to her.
.....

ALGERNON

... You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

JACK

Why on earth do you say that?

ALGERNON

Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girl don't think it right.

JACK

Oh, that is nonsense!

ALGERNON

It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

JACK

Your consent!

(Wilde, 1967:4, 5)

Jack is so surprised because it is out of his mind that an old friend like Algy cannot give his permission for Jack to marry one of Algy's relatives.

3.1.2 The Beginning of The Action (Complication)

The beginning of the action or the complication

occurs when Jack tries to deny Algernon when he mentions the name of Cecily engraved in Jack's cigarette case. At first, Jack tries to deny the name. He says Algy that he never knows the name. Let us read the following conversation:

ALGERNON

My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. (*Rings bell.*)

JACK

Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily? I don't know any one of the name of Cecily. (*Enter Lane.*)

(*Wilde, 1967:5*)

In this conversation, it is revealed the reason why Algy does not give his consent to Jack. He wants him to explain first about the name of Cecily. And we have seen that Jack denies to know the name. But, when Algy shows Jack's cigarette case he left in Algy's smoking room which has the name of Cecily written inside it, Jack admits it. Yet, Jack still lies and tells Algy that Cecily is his aunt, a charming old lady who lives at Tunbridge Wells. Of course, Algy who has read the inscription inside the cigarette case does not believe him. He keeps on asking him about it. Let us examine the continuation of their conversation:

ALGERNON

(*Retreating to back of sofa.*) But why does she call herself Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tun-

bridge Wells? (*Reading.*) "From little Cecily with her fondest love."

JACK

(*Moving to sofa and kneeling upon it.*) My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For heaven's sake give me back my cigarette case.

(*Wilde, 1967:7*)

From the name of Cecily asking by Algy, it is revealed who Jack is. His name is not Ernest as he uses all this time, it is Jack. Jack tells Algy that he uses the name of Ernest whenever he comes up to town, but actually his name is Jack. For that statement Algy accuses him Bunburyist, a term he picks up to designate someone who is pretended as someone else in other place. Nevertheless, he still wants to know about the name of Cecily. After receiving his cigarette case, Jack explains him as follows:

JACK

My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact, it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his granddaughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charges of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

(*Wilde, 1967:9*)

Thus, Jack is an adopted child of Mr. Thomas Cardew, and Cecily who calls him her uncle is a granddaughter of Mr. Cardew and is Jack's ward. About his names as Ernest

in town and Jack in the country, he tells:

JACK

.... in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

(Wilde, 1967:9)

It is in order to come up to town he pretends to have a brother called Ernest. If we read the following lines we will know that actually Algy does the same thing. He uses the name of Mr. Bunbury. Let us examine the following lines:

ALGERNON

You have invented a very useful young brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis' tonight, for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

(Wilde, 1967:18)

So, both Jack and Algy pretend to have a brother and an invalid friend so that they can get up to town and go down into the country whenever they like to. But, for Jack, he tells Algy that he will not stay in his pretending any longer, especially if Gwendolen accepts him. Read the quotation below:

JACK

I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr.... with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

(Wilde, 1967:10,11)

For Algernon, he really does not have any intention to get rid of it. He even thinks it would be useful in marriage lives. While they are talking, Gwendolen and her mother, Lady Bracknell come. In this occasion, Jack tells Gwendolen about his love and he proposes her. Luckily, Gwendolen feels the same and she accepts his proposal. But, poor Jack, because Gwendolen accepts him just for the sake of the name of Ernest. This makes Jack feels afraid and does not dare to speak frankly about who he is. Judge the following quotation:

JACK

(*Nervously.*) Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl... I have ever met since...I met you.

GWENDOLEN

Yes I am quite aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. (*Jack looks at her in amazement.*) We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in age of ideals. The fact is instantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reach the provincial pulpits I am told: and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspire absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned that he

had a friend called Ernest. I knew I was destined to love you.

.....
JACK

But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN

But your name is Ernest.

JACK

Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWENDOLEN

(Glibly) Ah! That is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference to the facts of real life, as we know them.

(Wilde, 1967:16)

From the dialogues, Jack tries to know Gwendolen's reaction whenever he tells her about his real identity. And he has to regret because Gwendolen likes him for the sake of the name of 'Ernest'. He intends to tell the truth, but the fear of loosing her restrains him to speak candidly.

Beside Algy there is Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen's mother who forbids her daughter to marry Jack. This is because of Jack's unclear background. Jack is just an adopted child found by Mr. Thomas Cardew in a hand-bag at Victoria Station. Lady Bracknell, who comes from an aristocratic family and rather presumptuous of course wants her daughter to marry a man of the same level. And she presumes Jack out of her list.

Then we will see what happened to Algy in act two.

After hearing Jack's address in the country, Algy decides to go there to prove what Jack has been said to him. There he meets with Cecily Cardew, Jack's ward, and he falls in love with the girl for the first look. He introduces himself as Ernest Worthing, Jack's brother who lives in town and comes to visit his brother. Cecily who has been told about Ernest, accepts Algy with open arms.

When Jack goes down to his residence in the country which is located in the Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire, he brings with him a terrible news that his brother Ernest is already dead because of an illness in Paris. Examine the following lines:

CHASUBLE

Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

JACK

My brother.

MISS PRISM

More shameful debts and extravagance?

CHASUBLE

Still leading his life of pleasure?

JACK

(Shaking his head.) Dead!

(Wilde, 1967:41)

So Jack seriously does what he tells to Algy. When he arrives in the country he soon gets rid of his brother 'Ernest'. But, it does not mean he stops using the name of Ernest. In fact, it is even worst because he wants to

use it as his Christian name, and he asks Dr. Chasuble, the reverend to do it. Let us read the following lines:

JACK

....you mentioned christenings, I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right?...

CHASUBLE

But is there any particular infant whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing?...

JACK

But it is not for any child, dear Doctor...the fact is, I would like to be christened myself,...

(Wilde, 1967:42,43)

Surely, Jack does not know yet about Algy's arrival in his house. And how angry Jack is when he knows it. Moreover, when he finds that Algy has introduced himself as his only brother 'Ernest Worthing' which obviously contrast with the statement he has just made. In his wrath, he tells Algy to leave his house at once.

Before leaving the house, Algy takes a chance to tell his feeling to Cecily and proposes her. Here are their conversation about it:

ALGERNON

Oh I don't care about Jack. I don't care about anybody in the world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

CECILY

You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

(Wilde, 1967:51)

The strange thing is without any requirements and in a

very short length of time Cecily accepts his proposal. She even says that they have been engaged. Of course Algy does not understand about it because it is for the first time he meets with Cecily. We will find her reason by reading the quotation below:

CECILY

Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack First confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you, of course, have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And, of course, a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I dare say it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:52)

Just like Gwendolen, Cecily is also obsessed to marry someone of the name of Ernest. And she falls in love with the name since her uncle tells about his younger brother called Ernest. It is even worst because she pretends herself as though she always had a regular correspondence with her dream lover and finally decided to be engaged with him. All the events are recorded in her diary. That is why Algy's proposal accepted unconditionally. Thus, her acceptance is just for the sake of the name of Ernest. Let us read her statement about it:

CECILY

You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had been a Ernest. (*Algernon rises, Cecily also*) There is something in that name that inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:54)

Then suddenly, Gwendolen arrives from town. She is looking for her beloved Ernest. There she meets with Cecily. In the beginning of their meeting, they seem to get along with each other. But, when their conversations touch the topic of 'Ernest', everything suddenly changed. Each of the girls insists that she is the one who engaged to be married to the man of the name of Ernest. And they are involved in a serious quarrel. Read the conversation below:

CECILY

(Rather shy and confidingly.) Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little country newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWENDOLEN

(quite politely, rising.) My dear Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

(Wilde, 1967:59)

The situation is getting hot between them. They maintain their opinion that 'Ernest' is engaged to each of them. They fling out severe words at each other, until comes Jack followed by Algernon.

3.1.3 The Middle of The Action (Continuation of Complication)

The middle of the action or also called the climax is

happened when Jack, Algy, Gwendolen and Cecily meet together. The men can explain the misunderstanding between Gwendolen and Cecily. Jack, of course is engaged with Gwendolen. And Algy is engaged to Cecily. The matter is both Jack and Algy introduce themselves to their lovers by using the name 'Ernest'. They pretend to be the men who have the name of 'Ernest' so that they can marry the girl they love. But now, their pretending is revealed. They cannot pretend anymore. And, this is become a great problem for Jack and Algy, because Gwendolen and Cecily who obsessed to marry a man of the name of Ernest reject to marry them. Let us examine the quotation below:

CECILY

Are you called Algernon?

ALGERNON

I cannot deny it.

CECILY

Oh!

GWENDOLEN

Is your name really John?

JACK

(Standing rather proudly.) I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

CECILY

(To Gwendolen.) A gross deception has been practiced on both of us.

(Wilde, 1967:64)

So, when they hear the men's confession about themselves, the girls change their minds. They refuse to be

engaged to each of the men. Here are the statement below:

GWENDOLEN

I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

(Wilde, 1967:65)

But, in the next sections, seemingly, the girls still hope to marry the men, especially after hearing their reason to behave like that. Nevertheless, the first impression about the name of Ernest still becomes their requirement if the men still want to marry them. Judge the following conversations:

CECILY

...Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

ALGERNON

In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

.....
GWENDOLEN

...Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

JACK

Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

GWENDOLEN

I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German skepticism. (*Moving to Cecily.*) Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

CECILY

I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff

said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

GWENDOLEN

Then you think we should forgive them?

CECILY

Yes. I mean no.

GWENDOLEN

True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

(Wilde, 1967:72,73)

So, in the conversation it is revealed the real reasons of Jack and Algy to pretend having a brother and a name of 'Ernest'. It is in order to meet Gwendolen, Jack pretends to have a brother called Ernest and it is in .pm order to meet Cecily, Algy pretends to be Jack's brother 'Ernest'. But, we have seen that for Jack, he uses the name Ernest for himself in town to attract Gwendolen, the girl he loves. When Gwendolen and Cecily ask about their Christian names, Jack and Algy who seem to do everything just to make the girls their own are quite ready with their answers. Examine the quotations below:

GWENDOLEN AND CECILY

(Speaking together.) Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

JACK AND ALGERNON

(Speaking together.) Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

(Wilde, 1967:73)

In order to solve the problem of their name, the men decide to be christened under the name of Ernest, so that

they can marry the girls who peculiarly obsessed to marry a man with the name of Ernest. Everything seems settled among them. But, unexpectedly, Gwendolen's mother, Lady Bracknell comes from town to pick her daughter up. Of course, she still does not give her consent for Jack to marry her daughter because of his unclear background. She sticks to her decision. But, about Algy and Cecily, it is a different case for her. When she hears Cecily's inheritance which proves that Cecily is a rich girl, she directly gives her permission. The problem comes from Jack who does not allow his ward to marry with Algy . He accuses Algy as being untruthful and dishonest. But still, there is a requirement from Jack about it, that he will give his consent if Lady Bracknell gives her allowance for him to marry Gwendolen. Judge the dialogues below:

JACK

But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

LADY BRACKNEL

(Rising and drawing herself up.) You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.
(Wilde, 1967:81,82)

Lady Bracknell who is a firm woman with a conceited heart, of course still stick to her decision. She again refuses Jack's wish to marry her only child.

3.1.4 The End of The Action (Resolution)

The resolution or falling action appears in act III, when the questions about their background, especially Jack's unclear background revealed. It begins when Lady Bracknell hears the name of Miss Prism. Here are their dialogues:

LADY BRACKNELL

(In a severe, judicial voice.) Prism! *(Miss Prism bows her head in shame.)* Come here, Prism! *(Miss Prism approaches in a humble manner.)* Prism! Where is that baby? Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of perambulator that contained a baby, of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of the three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. *(Miss Prism starts in involuntary indignation.)* But the baby was not there! *(Everyone looks at Miss Prism.)* Prism! where is that baby? *(A pause.)*

MISS PRISM

Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is for ever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old, but capacious hand-bag, in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinet, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

(Wilde, 1967:84)

From their conversation, we can obtain that sometime in the past, Miss Prism was a nanny who lived at Lord Bracknell's house. But, when once she took a baby of a

male sex out in the morning in his perambulator she was putting by mistaken the baby in her hand-bag and her manuscript in the perambulator. Then, she left the hand-bag. Jack who listens attentively then asks where Miss Prism deposited the hand-bag. How surprised he is because the place where Miss Prism left her hand-bag is just the same with the place where he was found, that is in the cloak-room at Victoria Station in The Brighton Line. When he produces the hand-bag and shows it to Miss Prism, she acknowledges it as her hand-bag. Everything becomes clear when Lady Bracknell explains that he is the son of Mrs. Moncrieff, her sister, who was missing in the charge of Miss Prism, and certainly Algy's elder brother. Let us read the explanation:

LADY BRACKNELL


I am afraid the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

(Wilde, 1967:87)

Moreover, his Christian name is really Ernest following the name of his father, Ernest John Moncrieff as listed on the Army lists. We can read it in the following quotation:

JACK

The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. (*Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.*) M. Generals ... Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly



names they have - Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869. Christian names, Ernest John. (*Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.*) I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:88,89)

3.1.5 Conclusion (Aftermath)

Finally, everything is settled. Jack Worthing, whose background was unclear for he is only an adopted child found by the late Mr. Cardew, now finds out that he really has a family and is the son of Mrs. Moncrieff, Lady Bracknell's sister. He is also Algy's big brother and consequently Lady Bracknell's nephew. One thing that makes him excessively happy is his Christian name which is really Ernest himself. So, all this time he was pretending as Ernest Worthing who is his Christian name by natural. Now, there is no barrier anymore for him to marry his darling 'Gwendolen', and there is no reason for Lady Bracknell not to give her consent for them to be engaged to be married. The same thing is also for Algernon, he also can marry Cecily. Let us read the happy moment below:

GWENDOLEN

Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

JACK

Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

GWENDOLEN

I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

JACK

My own one!

.....

ALGERNON

Cecily! (*Embraces her.*) At last!

JACK

Gwendolen! (*Embraces her*) At Last!

(*Wilde, 1967:89*)

Thus, everything ended happily and cheerful. And it is closed with a meaningful phrase which is the central theme of the whole discourse of the story said by Jack or now Ernest Moncrieff when he answers to his aunt, as follows:

JACK

....,I've now realized for the first time in my life the vital importance of Being Earnest.

(*Wilde, 1967:89*)

3.2 Characters of "The Importance of Being Earnest"

About the characters, there are nine characters in the drama, five are major characters and four are minor characters. The five major characters are John Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, Gwendolen Fairfax, Cecily Cardew, and Lady Bracknell. The four minor characters are Lane, he is Algy's manservant, Miss Prism, she is Cecily's governess, Dr.Chasuble, the reverend and Merriman, the butler.

In a drama, every character in it has motivation to do something. As Reaske (1966:41) says that there must be

identifiable motives behind the larger actions which characters complete in the course of the play. So, there is a close relationship between character's motivation and character's action. Every action created by a character is for the sake of particular reason. In analyzing the actions especially the main actions, at least we have to answer the questions such as: what do the characters do?, why do they do the actions?, and what conclusion can be drawn based in the actions?.

In this case, the analysis about the characters will be restricted on two points, they are: characters' motivations and characters' actions. But, the writer doesn't intend to analyze all the actions and motivations, only the main ones connected to the theme of the story which is "the importance of being earnest". And the writer will present her analysis descriptively in the five main characters, they are: John Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, Gwendolen Fairfax, Cecily Cardew, and Lady Bracknell. Let us see each of the main characters' motivations and actions.

3.2.1 JOHN WORTHING

A. His Motivations

Jack tells Algy that he takes the name of Ernest in order he can get up to town as often as he likes. Let us read his answer when Algy asks him about it:

ALGERNON

...Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

JACK

...When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

(Wilde, 1967:9)

Jack says that his position as Cecily's guardian makes him not free to go up to town. Hence, he pretends to have a younger brother called Ernest Worthing so that he can get up to town whenever he wants to. But on the contrary, we have seen that Jack addresses himself as Ernest in town. When Algy finds out Jack's pretending, Jack says that he will not use the name anymore if his beloved 'Gwendolen' accepts to marry him. He also suggests Algy to do the same thing. Examine the following quotation:

JACK

I'm not Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr....with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

(Wilde, 1967:10,11)

But his darling 'Gwendolen' accepts and likes him for the sake of the name of Ernest, the name he is going to

throw away from his life. Let us examine the conversation between them:

JACK

(Nervously.) Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl... I have ever met since...I met you.

GWENDOLEN

Yes I am quite aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. *(Jack looks at her in amazement.)* We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in age of ideals. The fact is instantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reach the provincial pulpits I am told: and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspire absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

.....
JACK

But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWENDOLEN

But your name is Ernest.

JACK

Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWENDOLEN

(Glibly) Ah! That is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference to the facts of real life, as we know them. *(Wilde, 1967:16)*

The power of love which he has for Gwendolen and the fear of loosing her motivate Jack not to tell her about himself. And when he gets back into the country he decides

to be christened under the name of Ernest. This is what he said about it:

JACK

...I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5.30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it...

(Wilde, 1967:68)

So, Jack is still pretending of being 'Ernest', but now he will use it as his Christian name. The fear of losing Gwendolen and his love for her are Jack's real motivations to pretend to be 'Ernest'.

B. His Actions

We will see that Jack who uses the name of Ernest so that he can get into the town as much as he likes intends to get rid of the name of Ernest as soon as Gwendolen .pm accepts his proposal. He has told it to Algernon. Let us read the next quotation:

JACK

I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr....With your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

(Wilde, 1967:10.11)

We have seen that Jack wishes to kill his brother - of course in the sense of not using the name of Ernest any-

more - after Gwendolen accepts him. He even suggests Algy to do the same thing. But, later on when he meets Gwendolen and proposes her. Jack finds out that on the contrary, his beloved likes and accepts him for the sake of the name of Ernest. Examine the conversation below:

JACK

(Nervously.) Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girls...I have ever met since...I met you.

GWENDOLEN

Yes, I am quite aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. *(Jack looks other in amazement.)* We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals ...and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

(Wilde, 1967:15,16)

Gwendolen's words makes him confused. If he tells her the truth, he is afraid that he will be refused. The fear of loosing her forces Jack to withdraw his decision to tell Gwendolen directly about himself as what he told Algy. And for this feeling, when he gets into the country, he asks Dr. Chasuble, the reverend to baptize him in the name of Ernest. Read the next dialogues:

JACK

....I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon. if you have nothing better to do.

CHASUBLE

But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK

I don't remember anything about it.

CHASUBLE

But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

JACK

I certainly intend to have. Of course I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

(Wilde, 1967:43)

In order to marry the girl, he makes his decision to be christened, even though the matter of his christening - whether he has already been christened or not - does not bother him. Firstly, he tells Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prism that his brother has already died. Certainly it means he does not use the name anymore. Here are the conversation about it:

CHASUBLE

Your brother dead?

JACK

Quite dead.

(Wilde, 1967:41)

Of course dead here means that he uses the name no more in that way. On the contrary, he will still use the name as his Christian name. These two ways seemingly becomes Jack's solution so that he can marry his lover, Gwendolen. But then his pretending is revealed because of Algy's arrival in his house. He should be ashamed of what

he did, but on the contrary without hesitation and rather proud he states who he is to Gwendolen. Judge the following quotation:

GWENDOLEN

Is your name really John?

JACK

(Standing rather proudly.) I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

(Wilde, 1967:64)

Via the analysis, we can see that Jack intends to be an honest man as he tells Algernon, and it has become his intention to tell the truth about himself. But when he finds that his beloved loves and accepts him for the sake of the name Ernest, he changes the scenario. So, as his solution; in the country he tells the other characters that his brother, Ernest is dead. Then he arranges a christening by using the name of Ernest as his Christian name. From his deeds we can see that Jack does nothing but still pretending of being 'Ernest'. It is even worst because Jack will use it as his Christian name. But we have seen that his scenario does not flow well, because Algernon who pretended as his brother 'Ernest' arrives from town and ruins every thing. From the analysis the writer can conclude that he is not an honest and not a firm man also, he is a hypocrite who hid behind the mask of being 'Ernest' to achieve his desire.

3.2.2 ALGERNON MONCRIEFF

A. His Motivations

Just like Jack, Algy also has a man called Mr. Bunbury which he takes so that he can get down into the country as much as he likes. Let us read the quotation below:

ALGERNON

You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose...

(Wilde, 1967:10)

His curiosity brings him into the country to meet with Cecily. In order to meet Cecily he takes the name of Ernest, too, and he uses it to pretend as Jack's invalid brother who lives in town. When he meets Cecily he soon falls in love with the girl. But he finds out that Cecily accepts him for the sake of the name of Ernest. That's why he decides to be christened under the name of Ernest when his pretending eventually revealed. Let us read his decision on the following lines:

ALGERNON

...Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:68)

So, Algy is also encouraged by the power of love which he has for Cecily. He even forgets that he ever refused to

marry to anyone as he told to Jack. The power of love and the fear of loosing her blind his eyes. All he wants is to make the girl belong to him.

B. His Actions

Just like Jack, Algernon or Algy also takes the other name that is Mr. Bunbury. On the contrary with Jack, he uses the name in order to go down to the country as much as he likes it. It is different from Jack who wants to get rid of the name of Ernest, Algy does not intend a little bit to kill or not to use the name of Mr. Bunbury. He even thinks it is necessary to act like that. Judge the quotation below:

ALGERNON

Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

(Wilde, 1967:11)

He also has an opinion that it is suitable to use such name in marriage life. He seems to have his own judgement about a proposal and marriage as he states below:

ALGERNON

I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try

to forget the fact.

(Wilde, 1967:4)

For Algy, a definite proposal is unromantic and marriage life is a boring thing. But his opinion seems to change when he meets with a charming lady, Cecily Cardew. For the first meeting and in a very short length of time he falls in love with the girl. Read the next quotation:

ALGERNON

Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

(Wilde, 1967:51)

Algy seems to forget all he has said to Jack about proposal and marriage. He seems not to remember anything about it when he meets with Cecily. Moreover, he makes his proposal instantly to her. His passion of love towards the girl covers every thing, all he wants is to make the girl belongs to him. He is lucky because Cecily accepts him with open-handed. But his effort is in a mess when Jack suddenly comes from town, also Gwendolen and at last his Aunt, Lady Bracknell. Algy cannot pretend anymore. Nevertheless, his decision to marry Cecily does not change, although Jack as Cecily's ward does not give his consent. Just like Jack, in order to marry the girl, he arranges himself to be christened under the name of Ernest. We can know it from the following quotation:

ALGERNON

...Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr. Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:68)

Via the analysis of Algy's main actions, the writer can draw a conclusion that Algy is a dishonest man. Moreover, he is not a firm man, either. His dishonesty is seen when he tells Jack about his Mr. Bunbury and his opinion about marriage and a proposal. He really does not have any intention in his heart to cease from what he did. Of course, at last he has to confess about himself. And when he meets with Cecily, his opinion about proposal and marriage suddenly changed as though he never said the words before. Just like Jack, Algy's deeds are nothing but pretending of being 'Ernest' and he is also a hypocrite who prefer to pretend rather than to tell the truth about himself.

3.2.3 GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX and CECILY CARDEW

The writer will analyze these main characters under the same analysis because they have similarities in their main motivations and actions.

B. Their Motivations

These two girls have a peculiar dream to marry a man

under the name of Ernest. They fall in love with the name of Ernest even before they meet with the man. Judge the following lines:

GWENDOLEN

...Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. (*Jack looks at her in amazement.*) ...and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

(*Wilde, 1967:15,16*)

So, she likes Jack because of the name of Ernest. It is why she accepts his proposal without any requirements. It is just the same with Cecily. She falls in love with the name ever since Jack mentions about it. Examine the next quotation:

CECILY

Well, ever since dear uncle Jack first confessed that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him after all. I dare say it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

(*Wilde, 1967:52*)

And when they find out that the men whom they are in love with deceive them, they soon break up their engagement, even though in the bottom of their heart they still love the men. Let us see the dialogues below:

CECILY

(To Gwendolen.) A gross deception has been practiced on both of us.

.....
GWENDOLEN

I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

(Wilde, 1967:64,65)

From all the explanations above we can see that Gwendolen's and Cecily's motivation to act like that is because they want to have and to marry a sincere and earnest man. If we pronounce the name of a man 'Ernest', it will sound just like the adjective 'earnest' which also means serious. The name of 'Ernest' which sounds like 'earnest' is just an expression which represents their real motivation to have and to marry the men who are serious in their deeds in facing life.

B. Their Actions

Gwendolen and Cecily are charming and attractive ladies who have a similar peculiar dream to marry a man with the name of Ernest. It already becomes their girlish dream to have a man with the name of Ernest. Let us see Gwendolen's thought about her dream lover:

GWENDOLEN

...Even before I met You I was far from indifferent to you...and my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon

first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.
(Wilde, 1967:15.16)

So, Gwendolen already likes 'Ernest' even before they meet each other. When she first hears the name she feels that she has to love him by destiny.

It is just the same with Cecily. She also has a dream to love a man of the name of Ernest. Read the following lines:

CECILY

You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love someone whose name was Ernest. (*Algernon rises, Cecily also.*) There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

(Wilde, 1967:54)

Gwendolen and Cecily seem to have a good relationship in the beginning of their meeting. But when their conversations touch the name of Ernest, everything suddenly changes between them. Each of them insists to be engaged to the man under the name of Ernest. And the quarrel between them might not stop until Jack and Algy come and explain the misunderstanding. Then, the girls find the painful truth that all this time they have been deceived by the men. None of them is engaged to the man of the name of Ernest. When they first hear it, they reject the men. But inside their heart they cannot deny that they still hope the men to marry them. It seems that their hearts somewhat melt when they listen the men's reason of doing

it which is in order to please each of them. Somehow, they still stick to their first reason to marry a man of the name of Ernest. This is what they say:

GWENDOLEN and CECILY

(Speaking together.) Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

(Wilde, 1967:73)

Eventually, when all the main characters meet at the same time and the same place, it revealed that Jack is the son of Mrs. Moncrieff and also Algy's elder brother. But we will see that Gwendolen does not forget her first aim to marry the man under the name of Ernest. Let us read the following conversation:

GWENDOLEN

(To Jack.) My own! But own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become someone else?

JACK

Good heavens!...I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose!

(Wilde, 1967:87)

Jack is lucky because his Christian name is really Ernest Worthing. So, there is no barrier anymore for them to marry.

From their main actions, the writer can conclude that Gwendolen and Cecily are idealists who want to marry earnest men. Their aim to have men under the name of Ernest is an expression that they want serious and honest deeds of man against woman. They are firm girls in their

decisions who maintain their point about having serious men and insist to marry the man under the name of Ernest. They are also girls who tend to have personal freedom in choosing their life's companions which in their age is not permitted and is their parents or family concern.

3.2.4 LADY BRACKNELL

A. Her Motivations

Lady Bracknell is Gwendolen's mother and Algy's aunt who holds the key of the whole discourse of the drama. She forbids her daughter, Gwendolen, to be engaged to Jack after hearing Jack's background. Certainly she does not want to have a family with unclear background like Jack, even though he is a rich man. Let us judge the following quotation:

LADY BRACKNELL

The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I fell somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it has handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of a family life...

(Wilde, 1967:23)

So, it is not only richness, but highly social status becomes one of her requirements for Jack to marry her only daughter. As an aristocratic woman, Lady Bracknell certainly does not want to have a family with low degree of social status. That's why when Jack told her that he is

only an adopted child who was found by a wealthy man in a hand-bag, she cannot accept it and considers him coming from a family of low social status. But she approves Algernon, her nephew, and Cecily to be engaged to be married. Of course she gives her approval after hearing Cecily's social status and her inheritance. Examine the conversation below:

LADY BRACKNELL

...As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

JACK

Oh! about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Good-bye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

LADY BRACKNELL

(Sitting down again.) A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her...

(Wilde, 1967:77,78)

In the conversation above, she is about to leave Jack's house when she hears that Cecily is a rich girl with all her inheritance. Her view point suddenly changed. Surely, she knows before that Cecily is a grand daughter of a good social status man, but she never thinks that Cecily does not have only a little fortune. By looking at Cecily's appearance she thinks Cecily must be a poor girl even though she comes from a good society. But all is different when she hears that Cecily is a wealthy girl. She directly changes her mind about Cecily and gives her

consent for Algernon and Cecily to be engaged to be married.

B. Her Actions

Lady Bracknell is an upper class lady who is strict in rules and has a presumptuous heart. She wants to arrange everything in her daughter life including her marriage. Examine the conversation below:

GWENDOLEN

I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. *(They rise together.)*

LADY BRACKNELL

Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone. When you do become engaged to someone, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself...

(Wilde, 1967:18,19)

She is also a woman who always counts everything in the form of material. When she meets with Jack and knows that her daughter wants to marry him, first thing she does is asking for his properties. Then she asks him about his family. When she finds that Jack's background is unclear, she rejects him and forbids her daughter to be engaged to him. Examine the next quotation:

LADY BRACKNELL

Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the

utmost care-to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!
(*Lady Bracknell sweeps out in majestic indignation.*)
(Wilde, 1967:23)

She does the same with Cecily who wants to marry with Algernon. But when she knows that Cecily is a rich girl and comes from a good society, she soon approves their engagement. So, it is not only her daughter, she also wants to arrange her nephew's life. Of course she cannot prevent Gwendolen and Jack to be engaged to be married after Jack's background has been revealed. And it is she who explains everything about Jack's background so that it becomes clear. Let us see the following answer when Jack asks her about who he is:

LADY BRACKNELL

I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

(Wilde, 1967:87)

So, she gives the solution of the conflicts among the characters, especially Jack's problem.

From the explanations above we know that Lady Bracknell is a strict woman. It is shown on her attitudes towards her daughter and her nephew. She is also a materialistic and arrogant woman. It is seen on the way she behaves to Jack and Cecily. She always measures people by their social status and wealth.

CHAPTER IV



CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusions

"The Importance of Being Earnest" is a comedy of pretending which is used by the author to mock and satirizes the life of a society, especially the high class society in England during Victorian Period. He makes satire to the people who prefer to live in pretending in order to achieve their ambitions. It is shown through Jack and Algy, the two characters who pretend of having the name of "Ernest" to fulfil their ambitions to marry the girls they love. They use the name 'Ernest', the name which has the same sound with "earnest", to attract Gwendolen and Cecily. They are hypocrites who hide behind the mask of being 'earnest'. The author also makes satire to those who always measure people by their wealth and social status. It is shown through Lady Bracknell, the materialistic old lady who refuses Jack to marry her daughter, Gwendolen because of Jack's unclear family background, but Lady Bracknell approves Algy's engagement with Cecily when she knows that Cecily is a wealthy girl who comes from a good social status family. And Gwendolen and Cecily represent the women, especially young ones who claim to choose their

life's companions by themselves which is still prohibited in their society. The girls' romantic dreams to marry men under the name of "Ernest" represent their wishes to have men who are serious and honest in their deeds.

The kind of plot used in the drama is 'man in a hole', in which Jack or John Worthing and Algy or Algernon Moncrieff getting trapped in a hole that is pretending of being earnest in order to marry Gwendolen and Cecily Cardew, the girls they love.

From the beginning until the end of the story, the name of 'Ernest' plays a significant role. Jack uses the name 'Ernest' so that he can marry Gwendolen. Then he decides to be baptized under the name of 'Ernest'. Algy pretends as Jack's brother 'Ernest' in order to marry Cecily and afterwards he decides to have a christening under the name of 'Ernest'. Gwendolen has a romantic dream to marry a man of the name of 'Ernest', and so does Cecily. The name 'Ernest' has its own charisma to both men and women. It relates all the events happened in building up the whole narration. In fact, 'Ernest' here is related to the word 'earnest' in the theme of the drama which is 'The Importance of Being Earnest'. The words 'ernest' and 'earnest' have the same pronunciation. Whenever we pronounce 'Ernest' which is used as the name of a man, it sounds like 'earnest', an adjective which is also meant serious. The men use the name so that they can be seen and

considered as serious ones by the girls and afterwards they can marry the girls they love. Even though they intend to be earnest but in fact they do nothing but pretending to be earnest. The girls' dreams to have men under the name of 'Ernest' show their deep wishes to have serious men in their deeds.

From the analysis of the drama, the writer can draw several conclusions which are related to life-values as follow:

1. Being earnest or being serious is a most necessarily life-value which hardly seek by human being as Gwendolen and Cecily did.
2. Being a serious one becomes pretense to fulfill someone's ambition about something -especially if it involves someone we love- which cause hypocrisy and dishonesty as Jack and Algy did.
3. Being earnest does not come so easily as being 'Ernest' does. It is not the word, but it is the real deeds which are most needed especially when we face conflicts in our life.

4.2 Suggestions

Having conclude the analysis of the drama, the writer can extend several suggestions as follow:

1. In facing our life, we have to cope our problems seriously and honestly.

2. Pretending of being earnest and honest one is not useful, for it can only produce hypocrisy and dishonesty which sooner or later will be revealed and humiliate ourselves.
3. To be an earnest or serious one needs tough commitment, honesty, and real deeds.
4. The drama 'The Importance of Being Earnest' written by Oscar Wilde is profitable and beneficial to be read and discussed, especially by the students of English Literary Department in Faculty of Letters.

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