

Comedy or mockery assignment

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Can a novel, poem, or play have two different meanings? If so, how can a reader notice the double meaning or two points the author is making others aware of? When writing a piece of literary work, an author may have a hidden meaning behind the main purpose of reading it. For instance, the main reason why people read scary stories is because the person wants to be scared or a constant state of shock. However, the author of the book may be trying to inform his/her readers how to stay away from danger.

The comedic play written by Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, is meant to make people laugh. On the other hand, Wilde is also mocking women's choice in men and how they choose them. Oscar Wilde is a famous writer who has written many plays, novels, and poems. Although he was respected by many people, he also receives plenty of criticism for being homosexual. Jeremy Lalonde, author of *A "Revolutionary Outrage": The Importance of Being Earnest as Social Criticism*, talks about how he feels that Wilde expresses his sexuality through *The Importance of Being Earnest*. One can find a current of same-sex desire running through the play that destabilizes various heterosexual assumptions...In the context of *Earnest*, this person is the fully formed, self-identified male homosexual ??? a type of masculinity that was only emerging through events like the Wilde trials (Lalonde 659) Lalonde writes that Wilde made the female characters in the story act like that to fight back against the criticism he was obtaining. This leads to the question. What was the purpose of writing the play: Mockery or Comedy?

One of the purposes of Oscar Wilde writing this play is to make people laugh. The main reason for comedy, regardless if it is a modern television show or an

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1895 comedic play, is for people to giggle and chuckle to their hearts content. Benjamin La Farge, author of *Comedy's Intention*, talks about how *The Importance of Being Ernest* is meant to make people laugh. "Whether my reaction is mainly triggered by the actors' expressions and gestures, or by the lines they speak, or a combination of all three, something on the screen that signals comedy will have prompted me to chuckle and smile" (La Farge 118).

He goes on to talk about how the scene when Lady Bucknell questions Ernest, also known as Jack at this point, about his life to make sure he is qualified to marry Gwendolyn whom he already propose to. "This scene is funny because one expects Lady Bucknell to react different to his answers" (La Farge 120). This explanation can lead someone to believe to believe that the whole purpose of the play is to just make people laugh. The purpose of the play is to make fun of women ideals during his time. Both Gwendolyn and Cecily both have unique desires to marry a guy name Ernest and feels that every other name is not as desirable.

Algernon and Jack, whose name is actually Ernest, both acquired the name Ernest to try to win their love ones' heart, but tries to convince them to love them if they change to their genuine names. Early in the story, Ernest tells Gwendolen he feels about Jack and this is how she reacts. Gwendolen: Jack? ... No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations...I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain...And I pity any woman who married to a man called John (Wilde 11-12).

Later in the play, Algernon, posing as Uncle Ernest, has a similar conversation with Cecily and she gives a similar answer. Wilde is using Gwendolen and Cecily's attitude toward the name Jack to make fun women's idealism during his time. Since Oscar Wilde had a hard life during the time because of his sexuality while he was writing *The Importance of Being Ernest*, one should believe that the play has two purposes. Either comedy or mockery of women could be the main reason for writing the play. Regardless of the purposes of the play, this is a great play.