

The Attitudes of Youngsters and Elders in Oscar Wilde's "*The Importance of Being Earnest*"

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The word 'culture' is hailed from the Latin word 'cultura', which is derived from colere. It means 'to cultivate'. According to Gandhi, 'Culture is the foundation of primary thing; this shows itself in the smallest detail of conduct and personal behaviour. Jawaharlal Nehru also pointed out that, 'culture is the widening of mind and the spirit'. Radhakrishnan commission on University education during 1948 to 1949 also remarked the 'Culture is an attitude of mind an inclination of the spirit and those who yearn for it, wish to have a vision poof greatness, sit in the presence of nobility, see the highest reach and scope of the spirit of man'. The word culture and human beings has relationship. Without human beings culture is nothing. There are many thing interrelated to human beings. Among them 'culture' is the most important in sequence. As far as culture say about human beings. It has special feature in literature.

Literature, which is reflections like the attitude, dress, art, food, moral, costumes, rituals, values, ideas, norms, knowledge, politics, skills, religion, caste, law, beliefs. Many works are written in English literature. They all reflected every period and every era of the kings and the queens. The age of Victoria has special things in every aspect. Samuel Butler, Mark Twain, Willkie Collins, Houseman, Letitia Elizabeth London, Mary Louisa, Gerald Manley Hopkins, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Robert Browning, George Bernard Shaw, John Ruskin, John Synge, Oscar Wilde.

Oscar Wilde (Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde) was a son of an eye specialist and the most important member of Irish Nationalist Movement. He was a brilliant student got medals and scholarship for his studies. He was influenced by John Ruskin and Walter Pater. He wrote reviews and criticism for journals. He was a short story writer, playwright and novelist. The Aesthetic Movement, "Art for Art Shake" became his ruling passion at this time. Many of his poems showed the influence of Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne and Tennyson. He wrote a play *Salome* in French. He won the coveted Newdigate prize for his poem *Raveena*. Among his plays, the most popular play *The Importance of Being Earnest* is a Farce (Type Drama). This play may reflect the attitude, which comes under the culture of the author's age. It is the Victorian age. Making money is the only aim of the people. Even they can change their mind for their uses and profit. The Play is his master piece. It was performed at the St. James Theater in London on February 14th, 1895. Oscar cut, short the drama of four acts into three with the help of George Alexander, the actor-manager.

Jack Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, Rev Canon Chasuble, Merriman, Lane, Lady Bracknell, Gwendolen Fairfax, Cecily Cardew, Miss Prism (governess), are the important dramatis personae in the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Every character in the play has their beliefs. And it is just the reflection of their culture in 1890s.

Jack Worthing and Algy are friends in the play. Both used imaginary person to escape from their atmosphere. Jack used it because he has to be a high moral before his young ward Cecily Cardew and her governess. Algernon Moncrieff, who is called as Algy also used Imaginary friend named Bunbury to escape from his aunt Lady Bracknell. Both Algy and Jack come to see their imaginary character from their place.

The imaginary character just highlights the attitude of the 1880s youngsters. These types of attitude show the youngster's culture. Algernon found the inscribed cigarette case of Jack, which is carelessly kept. Algernon inquired Jack about the inscription. Only there Jack reveals his double role. Again Algernon wrote the address while Jack told his address to Gwendolen. The Address scene shows, the careless attitudes of Jack. Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell's daughter had fallen in love with Jack. Only so she accepted his proposal. When Algy introduced himself as Earnest to Cecily, she takes an immediate interest in Algy. Algy introduced him as Jack's brother. Both Gwendolen and Cecily has the desire to marry a man, whose name is Ernest. Their dairies have some reference. They had written it in their dairy. By observing the message which is dairy, could be concluded that the young girls wishes and values.

When Lady Bracknell refused to consider his marriage proposal to her daughter, Gwendolen tells her mother that she may marry some other man or men. And yet she continues to be devoted to her first lover Jack. The visit of Gwendolen to Jack's Manor house shows how Gwendolen disrespected her elders. Lady Bracknell's character reflects the character of aristocrats. She changes her mind, when she heard the fortune of Cecily. Even her care for money reflects in the party scene. She invites only the upper class person who is wealthy. She is satisfied with Jack's income eight thousand a year.

At the end of the play Dr. Chasuble, rector of the country and Miss Prism embraces each other. Both Dr. Chasuble and Miss Prim indirectly express their love in many scenes. Here Oscar portrays unprincipled clergy of his day. The youngsters are against the traditional. The discussion of marriage is between Algernon and Jack. Algernon twisted the maxim and said that divorces are made in heaven. And also he scandalized women who are affection towards their husbands.

When the girls thought that they were loved the same person, both behaved in a bad manner. After realizing the reality, they join happily. Being irritated they went into the house.

But the two gents blame each other. They relieve themselves by competing with each other in eating muffins. They thought to Christianized and also to change their name as 'Ernest'. Here there are many lines which are called as Epigram shows the Victorian culture and attitude.

“When one is town one amuses oneself.

One is in the country, one amuses other people”.

The above lines show the attitude and life of Victorian culture of the town member and the country member. It is said the in town the people will encourage themselves and become happy. But in the country people who here is called as village people, make other people to enjoy and laugh. And also the following dialogue portrays the girl's attitude and men's thinking.

“Girls never marry men they flirt with.”

Even there is a dialogue about culture it the play. It was said the modern culture is very popular. But they could realize and observe only what they see. There is something in somewhere. One could not understand, realize and observe, when they couldn't move with another language, another people,

“More half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.”

This is the dialogue, which comically refer the marriage life.

“Is in married life three is company and two in none.”

“Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit, touch it and the bloom is gone”

Relations are more important than any other thing. Human beings enjoying their life with the relations like son, daughter, sister, mother, father, nephew, niece, father-in-law, mother-in-law, uncle, aunty daughter-in-law, grandfather, grandmother. Some sacrifice something for their relations. Some sacrifice relations for their materialistic world.

“Relations are simply a tedious park of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die”.

Reference

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