



Banha University
Faculty of Arts- English Department
Time: 2 hours



Third Grade
Second Term-2013/2014
Drama

Respond to the following questions:

1. **Show how the character of Jack Worthing can be regarded as the protagonist in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*?**

Jack Worthing, the play's protagonist, is a pillar of the community in Hertfordshire, where he is guardian to Cecily Cardew, the pretty, eighteen-year-old granddaughter of the late Thomas Cardew, who found and adopted Jack when he was a baby. In Hertfordshire, Jack has responsibilities: he is a major landowner and justice of the peace, with tenants, farmers, and a number of servants and other employees all dependent on him. For years, he has also pretended to have an irresponsible black-sheep brother named Ernest who leads a scandalous life in pursuit of pleasure and is always getting into trouble of a sort that requires Jack to rush grimly off to his assistance. In fact, Ernest is merely Jack's alibi, a phantom that allows him to disappear for days at a time and do as he likes. No one but Jack knows that he himself is Ernest. Ernest is the name Jack goes by in London, which is where he really goes on these occasions—



probably to pursue the very sort of behavior he pretends to disapprove of in his imaginary brother.

Jack is in love with Gwendolen Fairfax, the cousin of his best friend, Algernon Moncrieff. When the play opens, Algernon, who knows Jack as Ernest, has begun to suspect something, having found an inscription inside Jack's cigarette case addressed to "Uncle Jack" from someone who refers to herself as "little Cecily." Algernon suspects that Jack may be leading a double life, a practice he seems to regard as commonplace and indispensable to modern life. He calls a person who leads a double life a "Bunburyist," after a nonexistent friend he pretends to have, a chronic invalid named Bunbury, to whose deathbed he is forever being summoned whenever he wants to get out of some tiresome social obligation.

At the beginning of Act I, Jack drops in unexpectedly on Algernon and announces that he intends to propose to Gwendolen. Algernon confronts him with the cigarette case and forces him to come clean, demanding to know who "Jack" and "Cecily" are. Jack confesses that his name isn't really Ernest and that Cecily is his ward, a responsibility imposed on him by his adoptive father's will. Jack also tells Algernon about his fictional brother. Jack says he's been thinking of killing off this fake brother, since Cecily has been showing too active an interest in him. Without meaning to, Jack describes Cecily in terms that catch Algernon's attention and make him even more interested in her than he is already.

Gwendolen and her mother, Lady Bracknell, arrive, which gives Jack an opportunity to propose to Gwendolen. Jack is delighted to discover that Gwendolen returns his affections, but he is alarmed to learn that Gwendolen is



fixated on the name Ernest, which she says “inspires absolute confidence.” Gwendolen makes clear that she would not consider marrying a man who was *not* named Ernest.

2. Write briefly on:

- **John Tobin**

Tobin was born in Salisbury, the son of James Tobin, a merchant, and his wife, born Webbe, the daughter of a rich West India sugar planter.

From 1789 Tobin had devoted time to dramatic composition. He imitated Richard Brinsley Sheridan, the Elizabethans, and Gay or Foote. Tobin approached managers thirteen times with different pieces without success. One of them, ‘The Faro Table,’ was provisionally accepted by Sheridan, but then rejected. The manager of Drury Lane dallied in a similar manner with his picturesque drama ‘The Curfew.’ In 1800 his ‘School for Authors,’ which afterwards achieved success, was rejected, and it was not until April 1803

that he (due to the good opinion of Joseph Shepherd Munden) saw a piece of his own on the boards, a farce, ‘All’s Fair in Love’. In 1804, having submitted his fourteenth production, a romantic play in blank verse called ‘The Honey Moon,’ to the management at Drury Lane (it had failed to win acceptance at Covent Garden), he left his rooms near the Temple and went for his health to Cornwall. He then heard that ‘The Honey Moon’ had been accepted; but in the meantime symptoms of consumption had manifested themselves. He was told that to save his life he must winter in the West Indies. He set sail



accordingly on 7 December 1804, but died the first day out. The ship put back, and he was buried in the little churchyard of Cove, near Cork, where the remains of Charles Wolfe, author of the "Burial of Sir John Moore", were laid nineteen years later. Tobin was unmarried.

Works

The Honey Moon was given at Drury Lane on 31 January 1805, with Elliston and Bannister in the leading rôles, and proved a decided success. It remained a favourite on the English stage for twenty years. Hazlitt thought the plot owed much to the Taming of the Shrew; John Genest detected reminiscences of Massinger and other Elizabethans. Tobin excelled at light comedies and stage lyrics. After his early death, his rejected pieces were sought after by managers.

‘The Faro Table; or the Guardians: a comedy,’ London, 1816. This was given at Drury Lane on 5 November 1816, or nearly twenty years after it had been written, when the manners it satirises were already passing away; it was not a success.

Several of Tobin's unpublished dramas were published in one volume in 1820; among them ‘The Gypsy of Madrid,’ after the ‘Gitanilla’ of De Solis,

‘The Indians,’ and two light operas, ‘Yours or Mine’ and ‘The Fisherman.’ Among other pieces by him, apparently no longer extant, are mentioned ‘The Reconciliation,’ ‘The Undertaker,’ and ‘Attraction.’

References

"Tobin, John". *Dictionary of National Biography*. London: Smith, Elder & Co. 1885–1900.

- **Joana Baillie, Walter Savage Landor and Henry Hart Milman.**

Joanna Baillie (11 September 1762 – 23 February 1851) was a Scottish poet and dramatist. Baillie was very well known during her



lifetime and, though a woman, intended her plays not for the closet but for the stage. Admired both for her literary powers and her sweetness of disposition, she hosted a literary society in her cottage at Hampstead.[citation needed] Baillie died at the age of 88, her faculties remaining unimpaired to the last.

Walter Savage Landor (30 January 1775 – 17 September 1864) was an English writer and poet. His best known works were the prose *Imaginary Conversations*, and the poem *Rose Aylmer*, but the critical acclaim he received from contemporary poets and reviewers was not matched by public popularity. As remarkable as his work was, it was equalled by his rumbustious character and lively temperament.

He was born in London, the third son of Sir Francis Milman, 1st Baronet, physician to King George III (see Milman Baronets). Educated at Eton and at Brasenose College, Oxford, his university career was brilliant. He won the Newdigate prize with a poem on the *Apollo Belvidere* in 1812, was elected a fellow of Brasenose in 1814,

and in 1816 won the English essay prize with his *Comparative Estimate of Sculpture and Painting*. In 1816 he was ordained, and two years later became parish priest of St Mary's, Reading.

In 1821 Milman was elected professor of poetry at Oxford; and in 1827 he delivered the Bampton lectures on *The character and*



conduct of the Apostles considered as an evidence of Christianity. In 1835, Sir Robert Peel made him Rector of St Margaret's, Westminster, and Canon of Westminster, and in 1849 he became Dean of St Paul's.