

Group one

deceit - "Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong."
- Lady Bracknell Act 3 lines 82, 83

Important quote because Lady Bracknell is basically stating that not deceiving her husband would not be right. Shows that truth is not valued and deceit is expected.

Class - "never speaks disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can't get in do that."
- Lady Bracknell Act 3 lines 187, 188

This is a quote relevant to class because Lady Bracknell has stated character traits of those in a lower class. Shows that classes have so much attention paid to them that those involved and uninvolved in the higher class act in specific ways.

"I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing."
- Lady Bracknell Act 3 lines 368, 369

In this quote Lady Bracknell is explaining what is expected of those in the upper class. Expressing that scandal only occurs in the lower classes.

"I am glad to say that I have never seen a ~~spade~~
It is obvious that our social spheres have been
widely different."

- Gwendolen Act 2 lines 556, 557, 558

Gwendolen is speaking to Cecily and is implying
that she is of a higher status and therefore they can
never see eye-to-eye.

"...I cannot understand how anybody manages to
exist in the country if anybody who is anybody does!"

- Gwendolen Act 2 lines 674, 675

Implying that people who live in the country are
nobody. Insult that Cecily must be a nobody.
Also is: country vs. city.

"Care is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays".

- Gwendolen Act 2 lines 886, 887

More characterization of upper class. Also is
good example of how anything and everything can
be linked to class.

↳ because they place strong importance on
class.

deceit

"From the moment I saw you I distrust you. Rachel Hill
I felt that you were false and deceitful"
- Gwendolen Act 2 lines 699, 700

Highlights that characters distrust is often based on no 'true' facts. They expect to be deceived.

"A gross deception has been practiced on both of us."
- Cecily Act 2 line 746

The deception placed on them was not as intense as they are making it out to be. Can also be used to show how much emphasis they place on beauty.

↳ so much so that when the beautiful comes no longer apply they become hurt and react strongly.

Class

"This is not the moment for German scepticism."
- Gwendolen Act 3 lines 35, 36

Linking German culture to a negative aspect.
Because they are not German they have positive attributes and are of a better class.

Style & vision / seeing

Style: ~~lots~~

- lots of very elaborate sentences, not that simple but very ^{decorated.}

ACT 1 * "I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money." (308-9)

ACT 1 * "Ah, that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them". (394-6)

can also be used for inter-sections example

- lots of inter-sections which shows how decorate their sentences, gives the best a sort of high class feeling.

ACT 1 * How are you my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town? (38-9)

ACT 1 * My dear Alg you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. (172)

* Horrid ~~geography~~ Political Economy! Horrid ~~geography~~ Geography! Horrid, horrid German. (95-6)

* Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled? (451-2).



Vision / seeing:

There are a lot of beliefs being expressed through dialogues they can be common beliefs, or stereotypes, or the characters' belief. It's like looking at things from their point of view.

- Common

ACT 1 * "I hadn't been there since her poor ~~husband's~~ husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite 20 years younger" (292-4)

ACT 1 * ~~Only relatives, or creditors~~ My dear Alg, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very ~~not~~ vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression. (172-4)

ACT 1 * "That, my dear friend, is the theory that the corrupt & French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years (263-5)

~~These common beliefs~~

* ~~Only~~

These common beliefs are expressed about people or opinion and include a lot of class discrimination (like the one w/ the denier) and stereotypes, like the one of the French Dramatist or the following:

ACT 1 * "Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner" (272-3).

(Wagner being a famous German composer, very strong, ~~and~~ powerful music).

- The personal vision is seen especially in the dreams said by ~~the~~ the characters, particularly Algy.

ACT 1 * "The truth is rarely pure and never simple" (20)

ACT 1 * "You don't seem to realize, that in married life three is a company and two is none" (261-2)

ACT 2 * "The good ended happily the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means" (52-3)

Algernon

"My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree"

~ Act II line 359

He cares little for the important things in life, but rather spends his time seeking pleasure, or anything for his own benefit.

"What a fearful liar you are Jack" ~ Act II line 354

It is ironic that he is accusing Jack of being a liar because Algernon is a liar as well. This makes him a hypocrite in not only this act but throughout.

"If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being immensely over-educated." ~ Act II line 381-82

Algernon focuses more on trivial aspects than matters of importance, and he is very much concerned about fashion. He wants to make sure he looks his best at all times and cares little about education.* Non-sequitar

"Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded." Act III line 100

For being educated, Algernon seems to not think very rationally or logically. He is absurd and speaks a lot of nonsense, as Jack often tells him.

"I have a business appointment that I am anxious ... to miss!" Act II line 134-35

He is extremely deceitful and a liar if the circumstances and situation are not in his favour. Due to his social status and reputation he does whatever he likes.

"Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd." (Jack speaking) Act II 383-84

Algernon is unforgivingly nonsensical and he feels no shame for it, either entertaining or frustrating people. He is of good conduct according to Lady Bracknell.

"The truth is rarely pure and never simple" ~ Act I line 209

It is obvious that truthfulness is not admirable in society, and Algernon adheres more to society's rules than to common decency.

Lady Bracknell

"Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old" Act III line 74-75

She is extremely strong-willed which often disturbs the happiness of others, such as Jack and Gwendolen not being allowed to marry. She is always affirming her superiority and using her power as an indicator that everything she believes should be the absolute truth, using many truisms in her language.

"I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice" ~ Act III line 108-110

She is extremely judgemental and shows no external sympathy with anybody, except perhaps Cecily, whom she wants to mould to the perfect socialite. She uses no logic in her answers other than what she makes up herself. She trivializes somebody's death as he should decide whether to die or be alive, which is nonsensical.

"... seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that."
~ Act III line 67-68

Being natural is supposed to be positive, but Lady Bracknell prefers a shallow, materialistic view of life.

"Pardon me, you are not engaged to anyone" Act I line 448

She is clearly used to being the person with all of the power, and she enforces her will and opinion upon everybody simply because she can.

"Until yesterday I had no idea there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus" Act III line 128-29

She cares a lot about social status and the fact that Jack doesn't know who his parents are offends her.

"There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile" Act III line 183-84

She judges everybody by their status so when she finds out that Cecily has a lot of money she wants to bring her into society to be like her.

Sara Ormskirk

Algeron

Lady Bracknell

Class

① * Fashion

weeest

② * Death

style

vision/seemg

absurdity: death of a loved one brings about youth rather than grief

② "I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger." (260)

death is a decisive factor in society

② "... I think it is high time that Mr Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die." (261)

superficial, needs approval of others

① "I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present." (264)

① "The unfashionable side. I thought there was something." (266)

② "Both? ... That seems like carelessness." (266)

lack of sympathy, cares more about the style of things

to die of over-excitement is common?

② "I am sick to death of cleverness." (268)

exaggeration, over-dramatic

② "Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?" (269)

(heart attack?)

a little arrogant, but nothing contemporary, reality at the same time

① "The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out." (270)

② "Australia! I'd sooner die." (275)

comical insertion of Australia being a punishment

② "... you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia." (275)

↳ death again, is conveyed as a choice

death is an act of repentence



② "As a man sows, so shall he reap." (277)

① "In Paris! I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last." (278)

→ aspect of comedy:
English-French
relationship
(absurd)

① "I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result." (281)

judgemental,
focuses on the
exterior of
things

① "Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Earnest." (284)

① "Sugar is not fashionable anymore." (289)

→ follows trends evidently,
lack of individuality

① "Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays." (289)

② "... he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice." (297)

↑ death is a
choice

① "That sounds not unsatisfactory." (298)

→ unable to give
compliments,
societal absurd
expectation

↑ superficial,
exterior-base

① "Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn." (299)

③ "These delightful records should have been my constant study." (306)

written word

↓
problem resolved by a book
instantaneously and without question

The Importance of Being Earnest - Group 2 (Act I)

"Morning-room in Algernon's flat... The room is luxuriously

"Morning-room in Algernon's flat... The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished..." (Act I) ~~Stage~~ p. 253

- Setting: Play begins here and immediately the elaborate description of the room indicates the lifestyle of Algernon.

"...I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand." "Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralizing as that?" (Act I) p. 253

- Marriage: In this conversation between Algernon and his servant marriage is brought up and the importance of this is when Algernon describes it as "demoralizing" giving the audience a clear impression that marriage is not taken seriously. Thereby also introducing the theme of Triviality vs. Serious.

"When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring." (Act I) p. 254

- This quote is from Jack when he is ~~the~~ working Algernon in town as Ernest. There is a truism used in this quote provides an example of wit Oscar Wilde includes throughout the play. It also provides some characterization of Jack and his behavior in town.

"...you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to [Gwendolen] already..." (Act I p. 255).

- The quote from Algernon establishes ~~an important~~ ^a link between marriage and food. Food is a trivial matter given great importance, contrary to the concept of marriage. This again shows how Wilde makes a statement about Trivial vs. Serious using these motifs.

"Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time?
... I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I
was very nearly offering a large reward." (Act I p. 255)

- Setting: Jack mentions, in the quote, ~~then~~ Scotland Yard. This is located in Great Britain and so a more general setting is given to the audience and may indicate more about the quality of living in this time period of the play. It also puts more emphasis on the triviality of humans: Jack was going to give a reward for a cigarette case.

"... you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case." (Act I p. 258)

- Etiquette: Jack describes Algernon as being ungentlemanly for trying to read his cigarette case which is a bit comical particularly when he continues to follow Algernon around the room and kneels on the furniture to reach him.

"More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read." "... I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private..." (Act I p. 258).

- The conversation here between Algernon and Jack involve a bit of knowledge ~~where~~ and wit. ~~as~~ Algernon includes knowledge in terms of intellectualism where he mentions modern culture and reading. This also brings up the written word. The wit appears in the truisms used in the quotations ~~particularly~~ where Jack says culture shouldn't be discussed in private and Algernon say more than half relies on what shouldn't be read to define it.

"It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression." (Act I, p. 257).

- Etiquette: This quotation ~~can~~ appears to comment on acceptable language and terms used in society. Jack describes the language Algernon uses ~~as~~ when attempting to get the truth out of Jack about his use of 2 names as being vulgar for making Algernon sound like a dentist. The irony of ~~By calling Algernon a dentist for his speech~~

"You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian one has to adopt a very moral high tone on all subjects..." (Act I, p. 258)

- Jack: The quote by Jack provides some characterization ^{enough to understand} of him. He ~~begins~~ calls Algernon not serious ~~about the~~ the 'art' of his ~~double~~ use of two names. However in having two identities Jack isn't being particularly ^{moral} ~~serious~~ as he says a guardian should be. Also, by speaking with the truism, characterization of him suggests that Jack thinks of himself as being serious and moral, this is supported by his language in other Acts. •

"A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it." (Act I, p. 259).

- Marriage: Algernon's ^{use} of the quote involves some of Wilde's clever wit. He says basically that married men will be bored without having an escape or other 'identity'