**Purdy Literary Analysis Overview and Examples**

**Specific Intro / Body Examples for Draft**

1. **Answer this Question:**

How does Wilde honor the Aesthetic movement through his play The Importance of Being Earnest?

OR

How is Aestheticism shown in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*?

Keep in mind the frame: Aestheticism

1. **Hook / literary theory used**: Within the Aestheticism movement, beauty over substance is an overall guide to how one views art.
2. **Quote from outside source:** The artists of the Aesthetic style, embracing the precepts of “Art for Art’s Sake,” (p 98) would agree that it is how one looks as opposed to how one acts that is truth.
3. **Answer the elements of the question:** Dualism represents the two sides to a persona or how one sees a subject or object.
4. **Introduce the Author:** Oscar Wilde believes that within a world that holds Aesthetics to be the highest standard of what beauty is – he concludes that beauty is not without its dark side.
5. **Make a Claim:** In *the Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde shows the character’s dualism through ~~the settings he puts forth, and the verbal irony in which he uses to define the ugliness in beauty.~~ The main character, jack, coming to terms with his darker nature and embracing the dynamic qualities of his identity, thus revealing that Aesthetics are a shallow interpretation of reality.
6. **Explain the claim as it relates to your literary theory:** The characters of IOBE are each harboring their true darker selves while putting on airs of superiority as their ‘fake’ counterparts.

**Body Paragraph(s):**

**Framework:**

“Wilde’s plays invariably seem to lead the artists who produce them into a **hall of mirrors** where reality and fiction, creator and creature, spectator and actor come face to face…discover that they can merge and exchange identities,”

-Victorian norms are standardized variations of class / pecking order

**Evidence:**

Earnest as Jack / Jack’s reflection of himself to others in different social contexts

**Explain the two:**

How Aesthetics are seen through the character to an ‘immoral end’. Selfishness / Vanity is the winning trait of the Aestheticist - merging of character at the end of the story, acceptance and identity revealed.

**Evidence:**

**Explain:**

**Evidence:**

**Explain:**

**Conclusion:**

1. **Idea Revisited:** Jack as Earnest is a microcosm for going against Victorian norms and exploring the true meaning of the Aesthetic as having dual nature.
2. **Detail about the Idea**: *The Importance of Being Earnest* plays on Jack’s ideals of being true to himself as he grows throughout the play and realizes through his ‘hall of mirrors’ of self-awareness.
3. **Brief Quote from Journal:** Wilde lives through Jack’s realization as he knows that **“**duplication and duplicity are at the centre of the plot” (Drugeon 97) and both embraces and satirizes the shallowness of the Aesthetic as such.
4. **Final Point Brought from Intro and explored further:** To look for an absolute beauty in both art and the world around the art, the character must also look within themselves in order to understand true beauty. Wilde not only looks at the dualism of the character, but the two sides to the movement he embraces as well.