

### ***Dorian Gray, by Oscar Wilde (1891)***

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... old men jealous, if old me are ever capable of any emotion. [11]

I have grown to love secrecy. It seems to be the one thing that can make modern life mysterious or mavelous to so. [13]

The masses feel that drunkenness ... should be their own special property ... [20]

the face of Antinous [21]

we live in an age when men treat art as a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty. Some day I will show the world what it is; and for that reason the world shall never see my portrait of Dorian Gray. [23]

The mind of the well-thoroughly informed man is a dreadul thing. It is like a bric-a-brac shop ... [24]

HW: There is no such thing as a good influence, [...] Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of some one else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly - that is what each of us is here for. People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course, they are charitable. They feed the hungry and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked. Courage has gone out of our race. Perhaps we never really had it. The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion - these are the two things that govern us. [32]

Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul [...] That is one of the great secrets of life - to cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul. [36; 263; ]

It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible. [38] Cf. the people who love only once in their lives are really the shallow people [75] it is only shalow people who requires years to get rid of an emotion [157]

[Women] spoil ever romance by trying to make it last forever [40]

The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation [42]

[T]he costume of the nineteenth century is detestable. It is so sombre, so depressing. Sin is the only real colour-element left in modern life. [47]

Philanthropic people lose all sense of humanity. It is their distinguishing characteristic. [56]

To project one's soul into some gracious form [...] there was a real joy in that - perhaps the most satisfying joy left to us in an age so limited and vulgar as our own, an age grossly carnal in its pleasures, and grossly common in its aims ... [56-57]

intensely earnest manner .. unpardonable error ... that all really good people fall into [59]

hitting below the intellect [61]

There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathize with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life's sores, the better. [...] the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an over-expenditure of sympathy [63]

[Conversation:] He played with the idea and grew wilful; tossed it into the air and transformed it; let it escape and recaptured it; made it iridescent with fancy and winged it with paradox. The praise of folly, as he went on, soared into a philosophy, and philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad music of pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her wine-stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the slow Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her like frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the seething grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat's black, dripping, sloping sides. It was an extraordinary improvisation. He felt that the eyes of Dorian Gray were fixed on him, and the consciousness that amongst his audience there was one whose [64] temperament he wished to fascinate seemed to give his wit keenness and to lend colour to his imagination. He was brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible. He charmed his listeners out of themselves, and they followed his pipe, laughing. Dorian Gray never took his gaze off him, but sat like one under a spell, smiles chasing each other over his lips and wonder growing grave in his darkening eyes. [64-65]

punctuality is the thief of time [68]

Nowadays people know the price of everything, and the value of nothing [71]

A grande passion is the privilege of people who have nothing to do. That is the one use of the idle classes of a country. [74]

When one is in love, one always begins by deceiving one's self, and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls a romance. [79]

Most people become bankrupt by investing too heavily in the prose of life. [80]

Soul and body, body and soul - how mysterious they were! There was animalism in the soul, and the body had its moments of spirituality. The senses could refine, and the intellect could degrade. Who could say where the fleshly impulse ceased, or the psychical impulse began? How shallow were the arbitrary definitions of ordinary psychologists! And yet how difficult to decide between the claims of the various schools! Was the soul a shadow seated in the house of sin? Or was the body really in the soul, as Giordano Bruno thought? The separation of spirit from matter was a mystery, and the union of spirit with matter was a mystery also. [87]

[Jim Vane] had that dislike of being stared at, which comes on geniuses late in life and never leaves the commonplace. [97]

Children begin by loving their parents; as they grow older they judge them; sometimes they forgive them. [99]

Unselfish people are colourless. They lack individuality. Still, there are certain temperaments that marriage makes more complex. They retain their egotism, and add to it many other egos. They are forced to have more than one life. They become more highly organized, and to be highly organized is, I should fancy, the object of man's existence. [109]

"To be good is to be in harmony with one's self," he replied, touching the thin stem of his glass with his pale, fine-pointed fingers. "Discord is to be forced to be in harmony with others. One's own life - that is the important thing. [115]

no civilized man ever regrets a pleasure, and no uncivilized man ever knows what a pleasure is. [115-16]

A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want? [116-17]

“I love acting. It is so much more real than life.” [117]

[Sybil:] You taught me what reality is [126]

[A] third rate actress with a pretty face [128]

There is something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to live. [129]

Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls. [140]

Can they feel, I wonder, those white silent people we call the dead? [145]

It has all the terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy, a tragedy in which I took a great part, but by which I have not been wounded. [147]

That awful memory of woman! What a fearful thing it is! And what an utter intellectual stagnation it reveals! One should absorb the colour of life, but one should never remember its details. Details are always vulgar. [148]

The girl never really lived, and so she has never really died. [...] The moment she touched actual life, she marred it, and it marred her, and so she passed away. Mourn for Ophelia [...] Cordelia [...] But don't waste your tears over Sibyl Vane. She was less real than they are. [151]

Eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins—he was to have all these things. The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all. [153]

He would never again tempt by a prayer any terrible power. [154]

She acted badly because she had known the reality of love. When she knew its unreality, she died, as Juliet might have died. She passed again into the sphere of art. There is something of the martyr about her. [159]

To become the spectator of one's own life [...] is to escape the suffering of life. [160]

You became to me the visible incarnation of that unseen ideal whose memory haunts us artists like an exquisite dream. [...] I was only happy when I was with you. [16]

It often seems to me that art conceals the artist far more completely than it ever reveals him. [167]

[Lord Henry:] the charm of being very dangerous [167]

No man came across two ideal things [169]

The love that he bore him - for it was really love - had nothing in it that was not noble and intellectual. It was not that mere physical admiration of beauty that is born of the senses and that dies when the senses tire. It was such love as Michelangelo had known, and Montaigne, and Winckelmann, and Shakespeare himself [173]

His own soul was looking out at him from the canvas and calling him to judgement. [175]

Some love might come across his life, and purify him, and shield him from those sins that seemed to be already stirring in spirit and in flesh - those curious unpictured sins whose very mystery lent them their subtlety and their charm. Perhaps, some day, the cruel look would have passed away [...; 177]

the yellow book ... the sins of the world were passing in dumb show before him ... jewelled style ... the life of the senses was described in terms of mystical philosophy [181] It was a poisonous book [182]

ruin he had brought upon his soul ... all the more poignant because it was purely selfish [185]

Life itself was the first, the greatest, of the arts, and for it all the other arts seemed to be but a preparation [186]

The worship of the senses has often, and with much justice, been decried, men feeling a natural instinct of terror about passions and sensations that seem stronger than themselves, and that they are conscious of sharing with the less highly organized forms of existence. But it appeared to Dorian Gray that the true nature of the senses had never been understood, and that they had remained savage and animal merely because the world had sought to starve them into submission or to kill them by pain, instead of aiming at making them elements of a new spirituality, of which a fine instinct for beauty was to be the dominant characteristic. As he looked back upon man moving through history, he was haunted by a feeling of loss. [187] So much had been surrendered! and to such little purpose! There had been mad wilful rejections, monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial, whose origin was fear and whose result was a degradation infinitely more terrible than that fancied degradation from which, in their ignorance, they had sought to escape; Nature, in her wonderful irony, driving out the anchorite to feed with the wild animals of the desert and giving to the hermit the beasts of the field as his companions. [187-89]

Gothic art [189]

he never fell into the error of arresting his intellectual development by any formal acceptance of creed or system, or of mistaking, for a house in which to live, an inn that is but suitable for the sojourn of a night, or for a few hours of a night in which there are no stars and the moon is in travail. [192]

He knew that the senses, no less than the soul, have their spiritual mysteries to reveal. [192]

that pride of individualism that is half [201] the fascination of sin, and smiling with secret pleasure at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own. [201-02]

Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities. [204]

[...] Yet these whispered scandals only increased in the eyes of many his strange and dangerous charm. His great wealth was a certain element of security. Society - civilized society, at least - is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating. It feels instinctively that manners are of more importance than morals, and, in its opinion, the highest respectability is of much less value than the possession of a good chef. And, after all, it is a very poor consolation to be told that the man who has given one a bad dinner, or poor wine, is irreproachable in his private life. Even the cardinal virtues cannot atone for half-cold entrees, as Lord Henry remarked once, in a discussion on the subject, and there is possibly a good deal to be said for his view. For the canons of good society are, or should be, the same as the canons of art. Form is absolutely essential to it. It should have the dignity of a ceremony, as well as its unreality, and should combine the insincere character of a romantic play with the wit and beauty that make such plays delightful to us. Is

insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

Such, at any rate, was Dorian Gray's opinion. He used to wonder at the shallow psychology of those who conceive the ego in man as a thing simple, [204] permanent, reliable, and of one essence. To him, man was a being with myriad lives and myriad sensations, a complex multiform creature that bore within itself strange legacies of thought and passion, and whose very flesh was tainted with the monstrous maladies of the dead. He loved to stroll through the gaunt cold picture-gallery of his country house and look at the various portraits of those whose blood flowed in his veins. (pp.204-05.)

People talk sometimes of secret vices. There are no such things. If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even. [215]

we are in the native land of the hypocrite [217]

When you met Lady Gwendolen, not a breath of scandal had ever touched her. Is there a single decent woman in London now who would drive with her in the park? Why, even her children are not allowed to live with her. [217]

The horror, whatever it was, had not yet entirely spoiled that marvellous beauty. There was still some gold in the thinning hair and some scarlet on the sensual mouth. [223]

face of a satyr [225]

Certainly no one looking at Dorian Gray that night could have believed that he had passed through a tragedy as horrible as any tragedy of our age. Those finely shaped fingers could never have clutched a knife for sin, nor those smiling lips have cried out on God and goodness. He himself could not help wondering at the calm of his demeanour, and for a moment felt keenly the terrible pleasure of a double life. [250]

... a dowdy dull girl, with one of those characteristic British faces that, once seen, are never remembered; and her husband, a red-cheeked, white-whiskered creature who, like so many of his class, was under the impression that inordinate joviality can atone for an entire lack of ideas. [252]

Her capacity for family affection is extraordinary. When her third husband died, her hair turned quite gold from grief. [254]

It is said that passion makes one think in a circle. Certainly with hideous iteration the bitten lips of Dorian Gray shaped and reshaped those subtle words that dealt with soul and sense, till he had found in them the full expression, as it were, of his mood, and justified, by intellectual approval, passions that without such justification would still have dominated his temper. From cell to cell of his brain crept the one thought; and the wild desire to live, most terrible of all man's appetites, quickened into force each trembling nerve and fibre. Ugliness that had once been hateful to him because it made things real, became dear to him now for that very reason. Ugliness was the one reality. [265]

[...]