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Oscar Wilde

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Reviews of *Dorian Gray*

Burnand, Francis C. "Our Booking Office." Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* by Oscar Wilde. *Punch* 19 July 1890.

Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1997: 76-77. Print.

In this review by Francis Cowley Burnand, he argues there is nothing worth taking away from Wilde's

The Picture of Dorian Gray. To him it can be "finished in one sitting." There is no moral to the story, in

his opinion, either. It was all just to "give us a sensation." It has aesthetic qualities that do not even

make it worth reading due to its "poisonous" nature. He also believes a writer such as Nathaniel

Hawthorne could have done something better with this topic. In order for this book to be worthwhile,

Burnand suggests, "[it] would have avoided both the glittering conceits... and the unsavory

suggestiveness that lurks in its spirit." So even though Burnand understand the book is rather aesthetic,

he still argues the art and the morals within the book are either not there at all or they are so wicked

that an audience simply cannot take away anything from the book.

Hawthorne, Julian. "The Romance of the Impossible." Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar

Wilde. *Lippincott's* Sept. 1890. Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*. New York:

Routledge, 1997: 79-80. Print.

Hawthorne argues that even though there can be many different interpretations of the work, if Lord

Henry Wotton had been the lead character, the book would have been better valued. He believes Harry

is the best portrayed character for Dorian's character hasn't quite been "realized and worked out."He

believes the portrait of Dorian is a more convincing character than the real Dorian was.

Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. *Theatre* 1 June 1890. Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar Wilde: The*

    Critical Heritage. New York: Routledge, 1997: 81-82. Print.

    This unsigned review suggests that even though this novel is a great work of art, it is not convincing in

    the slightest as he states it clever and brilliant, but it lacks humanity. Since it has no basis of humanity,

    he can only view it as a piece of elaborate art work.

Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. *Daily Chronicale* 30 June 1890. Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar*

    Wilde: The Critical Heritage. New York: Routledge, 1997: 72-73. Print.

    This man argues that even though the author claimed there is a moral to the book, unless the moral is to

    teach young people "there is not a single good and holy impulse of human nature," then there is, in fact,

    no moral to this novel. He believes it's a "sham moral" that he's teaching men that it's considered

    suffering when their souls endure too much "purity and self-denial."

Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. *Scots Observer* 5 July 1890. Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar Wilde:*

    The Critical Heritage. New York: Routledge, 1997: 74-75. Print.

    This unsigned review argues that the moral praises its hero as a devil and the art is false. He is absolutely

    outraged by the lack of humanity in this novel, and thinks it best for "outlawed noblemen and perverted

    telegraph boys" to read. It is not a decent book for the rest of society in his view.

Walter Pater. "A Novel by Mr. Oscar Wilde." Rev. of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, by Oscar Wilde. *Bookman* Nov.

    1891. Rpt. Beckson, Karl. *Oscar Wilde: The Critical Heritage*. New York: Routledge, 1997: 83-86. Print.

    This review gets deeper than the rest of the reviews as it argues farther than the novel being good or

    bad. Pater believes this novel is a failed attempt at an Epicurean Philosophy. Since Dorian did not fully

    develop and according to Pater, lessened to a lower degree of development by the novel's end, it fails in

    that philosophy. Because of this, Dorian remains as art rather than a developing character for

    Epicureanism. He depicts Dorian's world so cleverly, that it can be viewed as art since other attempts to

    make the novel worthwhile failed.