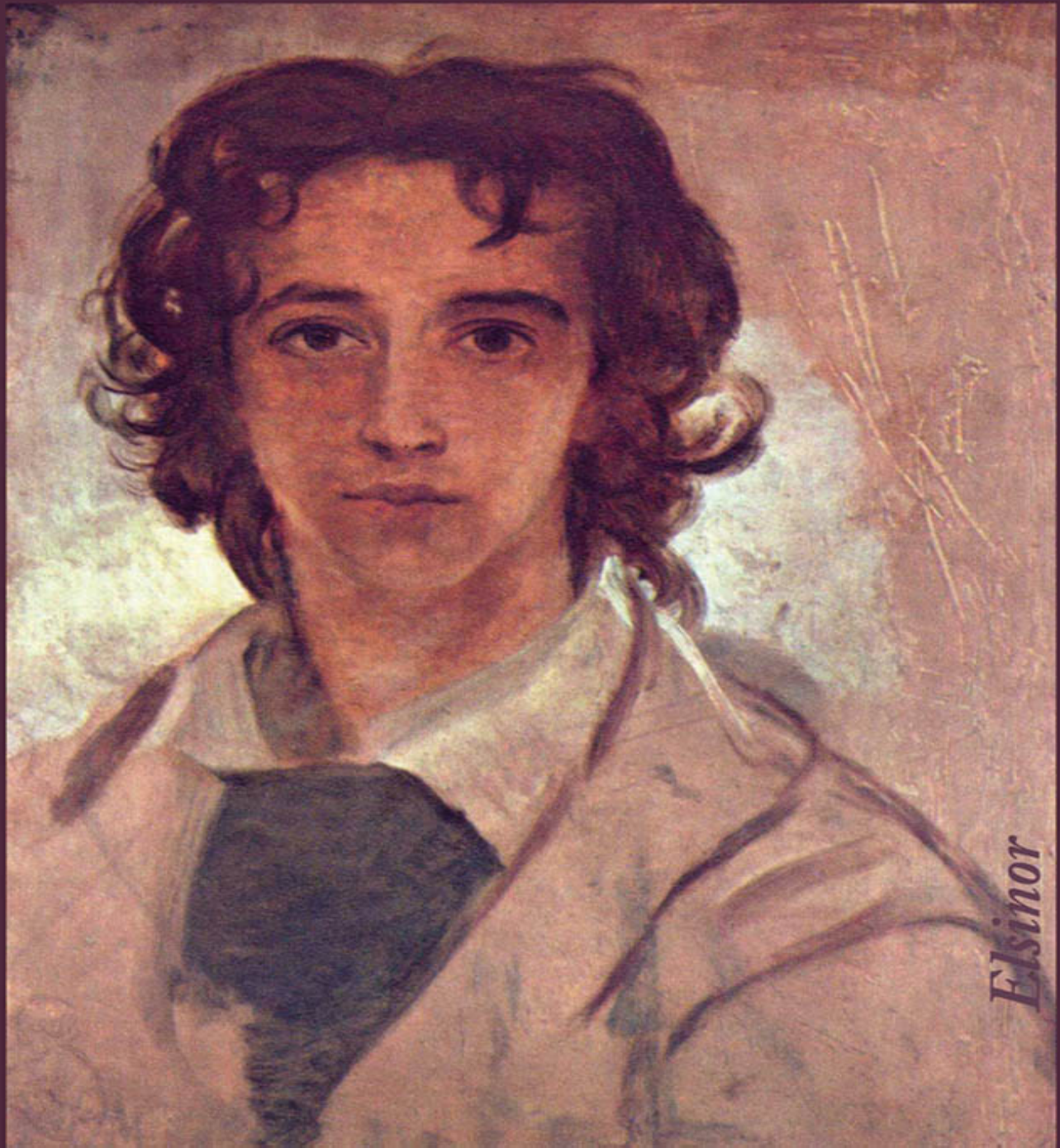


**Oscar Wilde**  
**The Picture of**  
**Dorian Gray**  
The Uncensored Wording  
of the *Lippincott's* Text



Oscar Wilde

# The Picture of Dorian Gray

1890

Reading Edition

A Reconstruction of the Uncensored Wording of the *Lippincott's*  
Text

Edited by Jörg W. Rademacher

With a Preface by Danny Morrison

Elsinor Verlag

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## A NOTE ON THE TEXT

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* was first published in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* (quoted as *Lippincott's*) on both sides of the Atlantic in 1890. This edition presents a reconstruction of the uncensored text. It first came out as part of a translation of Wilde's novel into German in 2000 which was reissued in a revised and extended edition by Elsinor Verlag in April 2012, with acts of censorship and self-censorship being placed in the context of the genesis of the novel. The current text like the first printing follows certain American conventions of spelling because copy-editing and censorship alike were done by the editors at Philadelphia as highlighted in Appendix A to *The Picture of Dorian Gray. An Annotated, Uncensored Edition* (edited by Nicholas Frankel, The Belknap Harvard University Press, 2011, pp. 261-263). While semantics were not necessarily affected by such changes, nor by normalising the capitals in Wilde's typescript, which, following Frankel's policy, have also been restored, the rhythm of Wilde's prose certainly was by inserting more dashes and parentheses where he had wanted to put commas in most cases. Here, this edition follows Frankel's policy to restore the punctuation Wilde had authorized in the typescript of the novel (cf. Frankel, pp. 266-271). All other changes relative to censorship or self-censorship are marked by numerals in the text and documented in endnotes.

Since both the afterword and the editorial apparatus were made available online in English by the journal OSCHOLARS ("May I Say Nothing") in early 2013, it is now time to issue an inexpensive reading-text suitable for the classroom with line numbers, highlighting the acts of censorship and self-censorship. At the same time, a bilingual travelling exhibition is being prepared featuring key passages of the genesis of the novel as well as those sentences that made it part of legal history, too. People and institutions

interested in showing the exhibition are kindly asked to approach the editor through the publisher.

Finally, it should be said that the pioneer in this field of Wilde studies, the German scholar, teacher and politician Wilfried Edener, published his critical edition of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) [Nuremberg: Hans Carl, 1964], systematically displaying the divergences between the two texts issued in Wilde's lifetime, exactly fifty years ago, in 1964.

Jörg W. Rademacher,  
Leer, East Frisia, 16th May 2014

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## OSCAR WILDE: TRAPPED BY HIS OWN WORDS

Oscar Wilde died twice. Of course his final resting place was in *Père Lachaise*, Paris, where he had succumbed to meningitis in 1900. But he had already died in London, his spirit crushed by a prison sentence of two years hard labour (1895-1897) on a charge of gross indecency, this humiliation, this downfall having destroyed the brilliant, flamboyant Anglo-Irish writer.

Unwittingly, Wilde had forged some of the nails for his own coffin, in his own hand, by his own words, when he submitted the manuscript of *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* to the American publication, *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, in spring 1890. In this first version homosexual themes border on the explicit. But the second version, the British-published book of 1891, was a more circumspectly crafted text and included a Preface which attempted to negotiate his way around the initial criticisms that *Dorian Gray* was scandalous and immoral. Damaging quotes from the *Lippincott's* version, along with compromising letters, and the prospect of testimony from young male prostitutes, would later be used against Wilde in court by Edward Carson to discredit him and pave the way for his prosecution on charges of committing indecent acts.

Carson, like Wilde, a Protestant Dubliner and former student of Trinity College, was the leading barrister of his era. He was not only Wilde's Nemesis but, later, when he rose to political prominence, that of Irish nationalists. What a contrast between the lives of Wilde and Carson! One, a gifted artist who would hardly hurt a fly and who brought joy to thousands of readers and theatre-goers and who would, after his death, be exonerated; the other, a skilled lawyer and consummate politician who would engage in illegal activity, threaten the will of Parliament and bring immense suffering to the Irish nation, the repercussions of which are still felt today.



From 1911 Edward Carson became involved in subversion against the British government, opposed democratic Home Rule for Ireland, helped raise an illegal, paramilitary army (armed from Germany) and threatened civil war – all with impunity! When the First World War broke out, Carson's (Protestant) Ulster Volunteer Force largely converted into the British army's 36<sup>th</sup> (Ulster) Division; Carson became British Attorney General, a member of the War Cabinet and First Lord of the Admiralty. He was to symbolize the partition of Ireland, the man who sabotaged his country's independence.

*Dorian Gray* is the story of a young man selling his soul in a Faustian pact in exchange for eternal youth. The plot is quite staid: “all conversation and no action”, as Wilde described it. Overtly, it is a novel of ideas about aesthetics, and the relation of passion to art. Wilde, a married family man but a practising, covert homosexual for the four years prior to 1891, could not help but use his art to promulgate his ideas.

Those ideas (that it is right – healthier and cathartic – to give in to temptations of the flesh) certainly aren't as monstrous as that suggested by Dostoyevsky's Smerdyakov's character, that “Everything is permitted”, but they did outrage the Victorian establishment, Wilde's enemies and jealous critics. Wilde's unique wit, his affectation of speech, manner and eccentricity of dress, which was often ridiculed, incensed this section of society, the philistine majority, who allegedly practised self-denial, and who viewed him as immoral and degenerate, but lacked the opportunity to humble and humiliate him.

It was a combination of Wilde's own hubris, and the encouragement of his lover, which set the scene.

One of those who read and was beguiled by *Dorian Gray* was Lord Alfred Douglas, a handsome young man, nicknamed ‘Bosie’, a spoilt and self-indulgent brat. He and Wilde were introduced in June 1891 and thereafter began an affair, often acting quite incautiously, though it was Alfred who was reckless and publicly flaunted himself so that they would be recognized as ‘Oscar Wilde and his boy’. Alfred's father, the Marquess of Queensberry, was outraged at what he considered was the corrupting of this son (though it was actually Alfred who introduced Wilde to the

subterranean world of male prostitution), and when Wilde was challenged by Queensberry in June 1894 he denied the allegations. But in February 1895 the Marquess threw down the gauntlet in the form of a calling card left in Wilde's club, basically publicly accusing him of being a sodomite. Against wiser counsels, Wilde sued and Queensberry was arrested and charged with criminal libel.

However, during the trial, which began on 3rd April 1895, the tables were turned and Edward Carson, who was brilliant, eloquent and forensic in regard to highlighting 'immorality' in Wilde's work, including the *Lippincott's* version of *Dorian Gray*, easily demonstrated Wilde's licentious life and that he had an insatiable sexual appetite and predilection for young men. When Carson announced that he would produce male prostitutes as his witnesses who would testify to having had sex with Wilde, Wilde dropped the prosecution. Not only did the court costs bankrupt him but the court ruled that the accusation that he was a sodomite was "true in substance and in fact", and this triggered the next stage of the tragedy – his arrest on twenty-five counts of gross indecencies and conspiracy to commit gross indecencies.

His first trial ended with the jury unable to reach a verdict. (To be fair, at this stage Edward Carson appealed to the Solicitor General for clemency but was told it was too late as the case was now "too politicized" to stop. This is a reference to speculation that the British Prime Minister, the Earl of Rosebery, had had a homosexual affair and was being threatened with exposure if he failed aggressively to prosecute Wilde.)

At the second trial, in May 1895, which heard lurid details and allegations of hotel sex with male prostitutes, Wilde and his co-accused, Alfred Taylor, were convicted of gross indecency and sentenced to two years' hard labour.

Imprisonment broke Wilde. He experienced hunger, insomnia, disease, bouts of dysentery, loneliness, desertion, and the death of his mother. When being transferred in prison stripes to Reading Gaol a crowd gathered around him on the railway platform and jeered and spat at him. He wrote that he knew that when he would be released from prison that there was "nothing before me but a life of a pariah – of disgrace and penury and contempt."

His tragedy was the second occasion within a few years of a prominent Irish figure being brought down on the issue of morality. Charles Stewart Parnell, the greatest Irish politician of his era, was leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster and appeared to be on the verge of achieving a measure of Home Rule (the Second Home Rule Bill). But, in 1890, in a London divorce case Parnell was named as co-respondent, as living with another man's wife with whom he had two children. The subsequent fallout from the scandal, especially in Catholic Ireland, destroyed Parnell and bitterly divided his party. Meantime, others had become disillusioned with the failure of constitutional politics to deliver and were to go down the separatist road which would eventually lead to the 1916 Easter Rising and the formation of the IRA. Although the Irish Parliamentary Party had recovered by 1900 and looked again as if its lobbying at Westminster would finally result in the passing of a Home Rule Act, onto the stage strode Sir Edward Carson to thwart their Irish aspirations.

Wilde was released in May 1897 and immediately went into exile, unaware that history and public opinion would exonerate him. His writings are celebrated, his plays constantly performed and attract new admirers, his life is the object of biographers, and his epigrams (used to blacken him at this trial) are regularly quoted in books, in film and in the media. In Ireland and Britain today homosexuality has been decriminalized and gay partnerships/marriages are recognized. In another ironic twist, the newspaper symbolic of Rupert Murdoch's modern global media empire, the *News of the World*, which throughout its 168-year-old history specialized in scandal, salacious stories and prurience, and which rejoiced in Wilde's imprisonment and downfall, itself was brought down by scandal in 2011 and court cases! Police revealed that the newspaper was involved in widespread phone hacking of royal, public and celebrity figures, of the families of soldiers killed in Afghanistan and of the families of teenage girls who had been raped and murdered.

Against this history, in hindsight, who truly was the more moral but Saint Oscar?

Jörg W. Rademacher, in this reading-text of a critically edited text of the novel, in as forensically a manner as Carson indicted Wilde, liberates Wilde from the censoring and self-censorship Wilde himself, for motives of self-protection, futilely wrought on his novel in the various stages of production. Rademacher, as he explains in his afterword (English text available on the website of OSCHOLARS under the heading of “May I Say Nothing”), distills the variant texts to produce a new edition of the old but original *Dorian*, a reconstruction of the uncensored wording of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

It presents us with a unique insight into the parturition of a work, the struggle that takes place between true, unencumbered, artistic freedom and powerful social forces which compromise such work – for better or worse, but rarely for better.

*Danny Morrison, Belfast*

## ***The Picture of Dorian Gray***

## ONE

The studio was filled with the rich odor of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pink-flowering thorn.

From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as usual, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-colored blossoms of the laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flame-like as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid jade-faced painters who, in an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the black-crocketed spires of the early June hollyhocks, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive, and the dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.

In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward, whose sudden disappearance some years ago caused, at the time, such public excitement, and gave rise to so many strange conjectures.

As he looked at the gracious and comely form he had so skilfully mirrored in his art, a smile of pleasure passed across his face, and seemed about to linger there. But he suddenly started up, and, closing his eyes, placed his fingers upon the lids, as though he sought to imprison within his brain some curious dream from which he feared he might awake.

“It is your best work, Basil, the best thing you have ever done,” said Lord Henry, languidly. “You must certainly send it next year to the Grosvenor. The Academy is too large and too vulgar. The Grosvenor is the only place.”

“I don’t think I will send it anywhere,” he answered, tossing his head back in that odd way that used to make his friends laugh at him at Oxford. “No: I won’t send it anywhere. And yet, you are quite right about it. It is my best work.”<sup>1</sup>

Lord Henry elevated his eyebrows, and looked at him in amazement through the thin blue wreaths of smoke that curled up in such fanciful whorls from his heavy opium-tainted cigarette. “Not send it anywhere? My dear fellow, why? Have you any reason? What odd chaps you painters are! You do anything in the world to gain a reputation. As soon as you have one, you seem to want to throw it away. It is silly of you, for there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about. A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion.”

“I know you will laugh at me,” he replied, “but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.”

Lord Henry stretched his long legs out on the divan and shook with laughter.

“Yes, I knew you would laugh; but it is quite true, all the same.”

“Too much of yourself in it! Upon my word, Basil, I didn’t know you were so vain; and I really can’t see any resemblance between you, with your rugged strong face and your coal-black hair, and this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made of ivory and rose-leaves. Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus, and you – well, of course you have an intellectual expression, and all that. But Beauty, real Beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself an exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they don’t think. A Bishop keeps on

saying at the age of eighty what he was told to say when he was a boy of eighteen, and consequently he always looks absolutely delightful. Your mysterious young friend, whose name you have never told me, but whose picture really fascinates me, never thinks. I feel quite sure of that. He is a brainless, beautiful thing, who should be always here in winter when we have no flowers to look at, and always here in summer when we want something to chill our intelligence. Don't flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him."

"You don't understand me, Harry. Of course I am not like him. I know that perfectly well. Indeed, I should be sorry to look like him. You shrug your shoulders? I am telling you the truth. There is a fatality about all physical and intellectual distinction, the sort of fatality that seems to dog through history the faltering steps of kings. It is better not to be different from one's fellows. The ugly and the stupid have the best of it in this world. They can sit quietly and gape at the play. If they know nothing of victory, they are at least spared the knowledge of defeat. They live as we all should live, undisturbed, indifferent, and without disquiet. They neither bring ruin upon others nor ever receive it from alien hands. Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are, my fame, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks; we will all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer terribly."

"Dorian Gray? is that his name?" said Lord Henry, walking across the studio towards Basil Hallward.

"Yes; that is his name. I didn't intend to tell it to you."

"But why not?"

"Oh, I can't explain. When I like people immensely I never tell their names to any one. It seems like surrendering a part of them. You know how I love secrecy. It is the only thing that can make modern life wonderful or mysterious to us. The commonest thing is delightful if one only hides it. When I leave town I never tell my people where I am going. If I did, I would lose all my pleasure. It is a silly habit, I dare say, but somehow it seems to bring a great deal of romance into one's life. I suppose you think me awfully foolish about it?"