

Social Pressures: gender fluidity of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* & *The House of Mirth*

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Introduction:

- Previous research shows that society's issues negatively concern how the individual perceives their sexual identities.
 - This problem is embedded in the field of literature and its context
 - Reminds one of the important connections altered by social influences and pressures.
- Earlier research reveals that gender fluidity is in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The House of Mirth*-- even if it took place in different centuries.
 - Through society's standardized pressures of their time.
 - Society strongly denied gender opposition.
 - Leading to hidden gender identities concerning the characters and the author as a person (Gomez, 2004).
- Previous research contains evidence on how the subjects and authors are affected by social pressures.
 - The author's life influences their works.
 - Gender fluidity concerns the effects of societal standards on an individual's sexual identity.
 - Greater understanding of the possible effects considering social influences affecting gender identities.

Research Question

- Are gender identities in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The House of Mirth* affected by the social pressures of their time?

- Is the author also influenced by their times while writing the novels?
- Is there a gender flexibility between the characters and their author's sexuality?

Background and Literature Review

- Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, was written in the mid-19th century.
- Edith Wharton's novel, *The House of Mirth*, was written in the 20th century.
- Gomel's (2004) study proves a parallel of identities of the author and text (Authorship)
 - By reflecting their personality through the text-- through textual phantoms, such as a ghost that affects the object or individual it takes part in.
- Carroll's (2012) study projects the society in which the individuals in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* take place.
 - Wilde's novel attracts the attention of social anxieties-- art was viewed as unmanly, weak, and homosexual
 - Dorian becomes the hidden soul of dreams of desires for Wilde, Basil of his artistic image, and Henry to his audience and class standard.
- Tuttleton's (1982) study connects to the true world between the individual self and self-aspiration.
 - By utilizing the behaviors of Dorian Gray and Lily Bart. Variables are found of the sameness and vital differences in generations (1982).
- Davis' (2013) study exploration of the self, leads to knowledge

- Detect through characteristics and features of the characters showing a connection between the “mind, body, and environment” (55).
- Mehaffey’s (1994) examines the position of women as objects and inferior to men
 - Reveals Wharton as a feminist who refuses the desires for gender status (1994).

Methods

- Experiment and non-experiments are idioms used for the social sciences and sciences but for literature, I will survey captivating interpretations to uncover the main connections between literature and its context.
- I will create a three-layered outline that uses both the primary sources, books, and secondary sources, online databases.
 - Show that social pressures of the 19 to 20th century affect the gender identities in the novels themselves and discussions on literary criticisms.
 - Investigate the flexibility between the author’s general databases such as the Academic Search Elite and One Search.
 - For literary analysis, I will use publications such as the books, and online sources such as MLA Bibliography, JSTOR, and Humanities full text.
- Online Databases & Books
 - Hidden Genders in society during 19th to 20th century
 - *The Picture of Dorian Gray* affected by social pressures
 - *The House of Mirth* affected by social pressures

Expected Conclusions

- I expect my results to bring forth a parallel in how society played their role in the characters of the novels.
- With this current study, it is hypothesized that the pressures of society do affect the authorship of literature and its relevance to gender identities when being criticized before revealing their true forms.

Significance

- The lack of considering hidden gender identities and reports that fail to include the author's connection to its current literature is the main point for this current study to include the pressure of society that interconnect male and female. If this hypothesis is proven true, it could give a basis of information for future research on the effects the pressured society has on the authors and their text regarding gender fluidity with insights into hidden identities in the novels.

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