



## يا صاحب القُبَّةِ البِيضاءِ

يا احب القُبَّةِ البِيضاءِ في النَّجفِ  
مَنْ زارَ قَبْرَكَ واسْتَشْفى لَدَيْكَ شُفي  
زوروا أبا الحَسَنِ الهادي لَعَلَّكُمْ  
تُحْظُونَ بالأجرِ والإقبالِ والزُّلفِ  
زوروا لِمَنْ تُسْمَعُ النَّجوى لَدِيهِ فَمَنْ  
يَزُرُهُ بالقَبْرِ مَلهُوفاً لَدِيهِ كُفي  
إِذا وَصَلَ فاحْرِمْ قَبْلَ تَدْخُلِهِ  
مُلَبِّياً وإِسْعَ سَعِياً حَوْلَهُ وَطُفِ  
حَتَّى إِذا طِفْتَ سَبْعاً حَوْلَ قَبْتِهِ  
تَأْمَلِ البابَ تَلْقَى وَجْهَهُ فِقِفِ  
وَقُلْ سَلامٌ مِنَ اللَّهِ السَلامِ على  
أهلِ السَلامِ وأهلِ العِلْمِ والشَرَفِ





فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية  
السنة الثالثة شعبان ١٤٤٦ هـ شباط ٢٠٢٦ م العدد (١٠)

No.:  
Date



ديوان الوقف الشيعي/ دائرة البحوث والدراسات

م/ مجلة القبة البيضاء

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته...

اشارة الى كتابكم المرقم ١٣٧٥ بتاريخ ٢٠٢٥/٧/٩، والحاقاً بكتابنا المرقم ب ت ٤ / ٣٠٠٨ في ٢٠٢٤/٣/١٩، والمتضمن استحداث مجلتكم التي تصدر عن دائرتكم المذكورة اعلاه، وبعد الحصول على الرقم المعياري الدولي المطبوع وانشاء موقع الكتروني للمجلة تعتبر الموافقة الواردة في كتابنا اعلاه موافقة نهائية على استحداث المجلة.

...مع وافر التقدير

م.ب.ا

أ.د. لبنى خميس مهدي  
المدير العام لدائرة البحث والتطوير  
٢٠٢٥/٧ / ٢٠

نسخة منه الى:

- قسم الشؤون العلمية/ شعبة التأليف والترجمة والنشر.... مع الاوليات
- الصادرة

إشارة إلى كتاب وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي / دائرة البحث والتطوير

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مهند ابراهيم  
١٥/ تموز



فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية  
السنة الثالثة شعبان ١٤٤٦ هـ شباط ٢٠٢٦ م العدد (١٠)  
تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية  
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تصدر عن دائرة البحوث والدراسات في ديوان الوقف الشيعي

### العنوان الموقعي

مجلة القبة البيضاء  
جمهورية العراق  
بغداد / باب المعظم  
مقابل وزارة الصحة  
دائرة البحوث والدراسات

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#### مدير التحرير

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لسنة ٢٠٢٣

#### البريد الإلكتروني

إيميل

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## دليل المؤلف.....

- ١- إن يتسم البحث بالأصالة والجدة والقيمة العلمية والمعرفية الكبيرة وسلامة اللغة ودقة التوثيق.
- ٢- إن تحتوي الصفحة الأولى من البحث على:
  - أ. عنوان البحث باللغة العربية .
  - ب . اسم الباحث باللغة العربية . ودرجته العلمية وشهادته.
  - ت . بريد الباحث الإلكتروني.
  - ث . ملخصان أحدهما باللغة العربية والآخر باللغة الإنكليزية.
  - ج . تدرج مفاتيح الكلمات باللغة العربية بعد الملخص العربي.
- ٣- أن يكون مطبوعاً على الحاسوب بنظام (office Word) (٢٠٠٧ أو ٢٠١٠) وعلى قرص ليزري مدمج (CD) على شكل ملف واحد فقط (أي لا يُجزأ البحث بأكثر من ملف على القرص) وتُرَوَّد هيئة التحرير بثلاث نسخ ورقية وتوضع الرسوم أو الأشكال، إن وُجدت، في مكانها من البحث، على أن تكونَ صالحةً من الناحية الفنية للطباعة.
- ٤- أن لا يزيدَ عدد صفحات البحث على (٢٥) خمس وعشرين صفحة من الحجم (A4).
- ٥ . يلتزم الباحث في ترتيب وتنسيق المصادر على الصغية APA
- ٦- أن يلتزم الباحث بدفع أجور النشر المحددة البالغة (٧٥,٠٠٠) خمسة وسبعين الف دينار عراقي، أو ما يعادلها بالعملة الأجنبية.
- ٧- أن يكونَ البحثُ خالياً من الأخطاء اللغوية والنحوية والإملائية.
- ٨- أن يلتزم الباحث بالخطوط وأحجامها على النحو الآتي:
  - أ. اللغة العربية: نوع الخط (Arabic Simplified) وحجم الخط (١٤) للمتن.
  - ب . اللغة الإنكليزية: نوع الخط ( Times New Roman ) عناوين البحث (١٦) . والملخصات (١٢) . أما فقرات البحث الأخرى؛ فبحجم (١٤) .
- ٩- أن تكونَ هوامش البحث بالنظام التلقائي (تعليقات ختامية) في نهاية البحث. بحجم ١٢ .
- ١٠- تكون مسافة الحواشي الجانبية (٢,٥٤) سم والمسافة بين الأسطر (١) .
- ١١- في حال استعمال برنامج مصحف المدينة للآيات القرآنية يتحمل الباحث ظهور هذه الآيات المباركة بالشكل الصحيح من عدمه، لذا يفضل النسخ من المصحف الإلكتروني المتوافر على شبكة الانترنت.
- ١٢- يبلغ الباحث بقرار صلاحية النشر أو عدمها في مدّة لا تتجاوز شهرين من تاريخ وصوله إلى هيئة التحرير .
- ١٣- يلتزم الباحث بإجراء تعديلات المحكّمين على بحثه وفق التقارير المرسلّة إليه وموافاة المجلة بنسخة معدّلة في مدّة لا تتجاوز (١٥) خمسة عشر يوماً.
- ١٤- لا يحق للباحث المطالبة بمتطلبات البحث كافة بعد مرور سنة من تاريخ النشر .
- ١٥- لا تعاد البحوث الى أصحابها سواء قبلت أم لم تقبل.
- ١٦- دمج مصادر البحث وهوامشه في عنوان واحد يكون في نهاية البحث، مع كتابة معلومات المصدر عندما يرد لأول مرة.
- ١٧- يخضع البحث للتقويم السري من ثلاثة خبراء لبيان صلاحيته للنشر .
- ١٨- يشترط على طلبة الدراسات العليا فضلاً عن الشروط السابقة جلب ما يثبت موافقة الاستاذ المشرف على البحث وفق النموذج المعتمد في المجلة.
- ١٩- يحصل الباحث على مستل واحد لبحثه، ونسخة من المجلة، وإذا رغب في الحصول على نسخة أخرى فعليه شراؤها بسعر (١٥) الف دينار.
- ٢٠- تعبر الأبحاث المنشورة في المجلة عن آراء أصحابها لا عن رأي المجلة.
- ٢١- ترسل البحوث على العنوان الآتي: ( بغداد - شارع فلسطين المركز الوطني لعلوم القرآن)
- أو البريد الإلكتروني: (off\_research@sed.gov.iq) بعد دفع الأجور في الحساب المصرفي العائد إلى الدائرة.
- ٢٢- لا تلتزم المجلة بنشر البحوث التي تُخلُّ بشرط من هذه الشروط .



مَجَلَّةُ النَّسَائِيَّةِ اجْتِمَاعِيَّةٌ فَصَلِيَّةٌ تَصَدُرُ عَنْ دَائِرَةِ البُّحُوثِ وَالدِّرَاسَاتِ فِي ذِيوَانِ الوَقْفِ الشَّيْبَانِيِّ  
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السنة الثالثة شعبان ١٤٤٦ هـ شباط ٢٠٢٦ م



السنة الثالثة شعبان ١٤٤٦ هـ شباط ٢٠٢٦ م



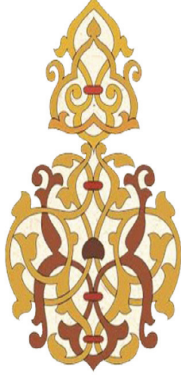
## Sibyl Vane: Silent Beauty and The Feminine Ideal in The Picture of Dorian Gray

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فصلية تُعنى بالبحوث والدراسات الإنسانية والاجتماعية العدد (١٠) المجلد الرابع

السنة الثالثة شعبان ١٤٤٦ هـ شباط ٢٠٢٦ م



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#### Abstract:

The social and emotional constraints that shaped the lives of Victorian women are illuminated through the character of Sibyl Vane. Dorian's notorious declaration, "You have killed my love," reflects how male fantasy and performance define Sibyl's identity. It also exposes the aestheticized cruelty that frames her existence. Her choice to prioritize love over the stage leads to her erasure, while her suicide is romanticized rather than acknowledged as a genuine human loss. Although Wilde condemns the objectification and idealization of women, his narrative paradoxically enacts their marginalization through Sibyl's disappearance. By portraying her loss of agency and voice, Wilde not only mourns Sibyl's personal tragedy. He also exposes the pervasive gendered oppression that equates female worth with beauty and obedience.

**Key Words:** Gender Roles, Female Objectification, Idealization, Agency, Suffering

المستخلص:

تتجلى القيود الاجتماعية والعاطفية التي شكّلت حياة النساء في العصر الفيكتوري من خلال شخصية سيبيل فين. إن تصريح دوريان الشهير: «لقد قتلت حبي» يعكس كيف تُسهم خيالات الرجل والأداء المسرحي في تعريف هوية سيبيل، كما يكشف القسوة المُؤنّسة جمالياً التي تُؤطر وجودها. إن اختيارها تفضيل الحب على المسرح يؤدي إلى محوها، بينما تُروّمن نهايتها بدل الاعتراف بما بوصفها خسارة إنسانية حقيقية. وعلى الرغم من أن وايلد يدين تشييء النساء ومثاليتهن، فإن سرده يعيد إنتاج تميشهن من خلال اختفاء سيبيل. ومن خلال تصوير فقدانها للوكالة والصوت، لا يرثي وايلد مأساة سيبيل الشخصية فحسب، بل يكشف أيضاً عن القمع الجندي المتغلغل الذي يساوي قيمة المرأة بالجمال والطاعة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: أدوار النوع الاجتماعي، تشييء المرأة، المثالية، الوكالة، المعاناة.

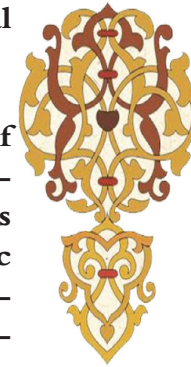
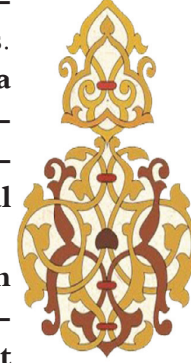
#### Importance of the Study:

The study emphasizes how societal views of women are both mirrored and molded through literature. This dynamic is vividly illustrated in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through the character of Sibyl Vane. It demonstrates how young women were confined by Victorian ideals of devotion, beauty, and purity, which restricted their autonomy and suppressed their voices. Sibyl's fate exposes the ongoing idealization and objectification of women. It calls for a renewed assertion of women's voices in shaping both literature and modern society.

#### Introduction

Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* captures a moment of



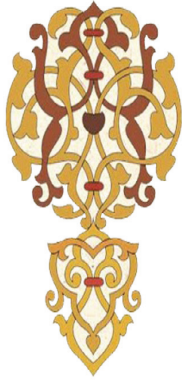
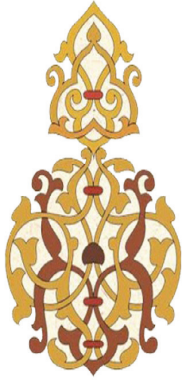


notable socio-cultural upheaval. It occupies the heart of Victorian and modern British literature, mirroring these social tensions. In this era, traditional norms, especially among the upper strata of society, underwent heightened critique. Through the character of Dorian Gray, whose behavior exposes the elite's moral detachment from those of lower status, Wilde condemns the moral bankruptcy and hedonistic excesses of the privileged classes.

Dorian's moral decline begins with his initial fascination with Sybil Vane, a talented actress of modest origins, and his abrupt rejection of her. To him, Sybil is merely an ephemeral embodiment of beauty rather than a living, feeling individual. He repudiates her once she no longer fulfills his aesthetic illusion (Zis, 2021). This act of dehumanization underscores the moral and social divide within Victorian society. It also marks the onset of Dorian's spiritual decay, reflected in the progressive corruption of his portrait. Dorian's icy, egotistical, and contemptuous response to Sybil's suicide reinforces Wilde's disapproval of sexism and emotional detachment in art. Sybil's death marks a turning point in the novel. It drives Dorian's descent into moral corruption and self-absorption. Although Sybil's status as a love interest is often emphasized by reviewers, her character exposes deeper critiques of gender, art, and morality. She stands for sincerity and innocence in contrast to Dorian's growing shallowness (Wang, 2016, p. 7). Her tragic fate ultimately acts as the narrative's central point of focus. It reveals the harms of class and gender inequality, while simultaneously bearing the weight of the pressures of unethical Aestheticism.

#### 1. Sibyl Vane: Between Idealization and Silencing

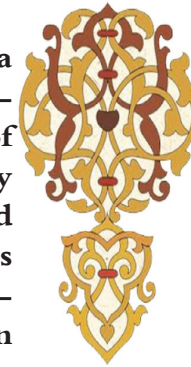
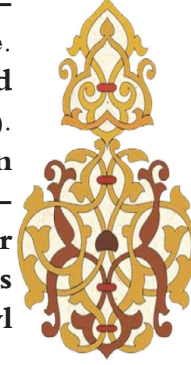
Seemingly the sole notable female presence in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Sibyl Vane acts as a key medium for Wilde's exploration of the marginalization of women in art and society. She is continually portrayed as an actress through aesthetic and artistic imagery. Performance and others' perceptions, rather than individual will, determine her identity. Her significance in the narrative rests solely on pleasing Dorian. Her sense of worth depends on the male gaze but is rescinded when she ceases to satisfy his aesthetic expectations. She is ultimately reduced to a decorative



figure, appreciated only from afar. (R, 2020) Sibyl's vulnerability off stage contrasts with her commanding brilliance on stage. When she reveals her genuine love beyond performance, Dorian deems her worthless. This underscores Wilde's focus on the conflict between artistic illusion and genuine emotion. (Aliaga, 2020, p. 22). This reaction illustrates how women were often viewed as abstract symbols rather than autonomous individuals. Victorian ideals of femininity celebrated women for their beauty and virtue, yet seldom granted them power or self-determination. This dynamic is mirrored in Sibyl's vulnerability and submissive demeanor. (Moghari, 2020, p. 169). Her existence is mediated through the eyes of men throughout the narrative. Her own voice gradually fades into silence, reflecting the broader suppression of women in both literature and society.

Sibyl's eventual suicide operates on several intertwined levels. It effectively erases her presence as a character, writing her out of the narrative. At the same time, it marks a crucial turning point in the deepening of Dorian's moral corruption. Her death stands as the first profound consequence of his vanity and moral blindness. Yet rather than awakening genuine remorse, it only dulls his sensitivity to the suffering he causes (Poorghorban, 2025, pp. 5-6; Miao, 2025, p. 53). In a symbolic sense, Dorian's loss of innocence marks his descent into valuing appearance over authenticity. At this point, Wilde brings his aesthetic vision sharply into focus. Sibyl loses her worth as a living, feeling person and gains value only as an idealized artistic memory (Wang, 2016, p. 7). Her tragedy highlights the destructive impact of the male gaze. It also exposes how women are reduced to mere aesthetic objects and punished for failing to meet unrealistic expectations. In this sense, Sibyl's death transcends personal tragedy. It also illustrates the moral vacuum produced by an unethical aestheticism. Real human lives are disregarded when performance and beauty (artistic illusion) are prioritized over the realities of life and love (genuine emotion). Dorian's desire is to erase Sibyl's true self while clinging to the actress's image. It signifies a haunting philosophy where the quest for art overrides human welfare.

Through Sibyl's character, Wilde exposes the systematic silenc-



ing, idealization, and denial of women's independence. This reflects the pervasive misogyny in his text and in the broader culture. At times, Dorian resists or questions Lord Henry's gender-biased assertion that 'women are a decorative sex (Wilde, 2000, p. 47). This defense is flimsy because it praises Sibyl's talent rather than her full humanity. Dorian's admiration rests solely on her appearance and stage performance, ignoring who she truly is. When her performance falters, his affection turns to disdain. This reveals that his so-called love was merely an illusion (R, 2020). Thus, Sibyl embodies how women are reduced to mere visual ideals.

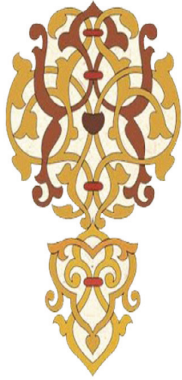
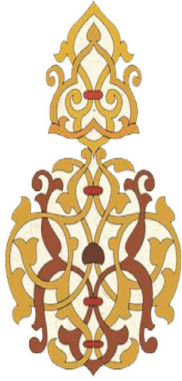
Sibyl Vane stands as a warning of a society that prioritizes appearance and performance over humanity, making her transcend the confines of a simple tragic love interest. Her being written out of the narrative serves as a critique in itself. It underscores how women's stories are marginalized once they no longer serve male-dominated storylines. By depicting Sibyl's death as simultaneously silenced and aestheticized, Wilde urges readers to recognize the harm of reducing women to mere ideals rather than autonomous individuals.

## 2. Sibyl Vane: A Fantasy Constructed Through the Male Gaze

Perhaps the only truly significant female figure in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is Sibyl Vane. She serves as a focal point for Wilde's critique of the objectification of women in both art and society. Her identity as an actress exists only through aesthetic imagery; her worth lies in the illusions she performs on stage rather than in who she truly is.

In Dorian's eyes, she is not a real person but a living artwork—a fleeting, romantic performance crafted for his pleasure. He describes her not through her individuality but in the language of Shakespearean heroines: "But Juliet! Harry, imagine a girl, hardly seventeen years of age, a little flower-like face, a small Greek head with plaited coils of dark-brown hair..." (Wilde, 2000, p. 50). As long as she continues to perform the roles that Dorian confuses with reality — "Rosalind," "Imogen," "Juliet"—his infatuation deepens (Wilde, 2000, p. 51; Oliveira, 2010, p. 250)

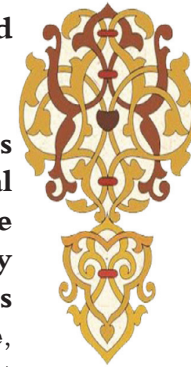
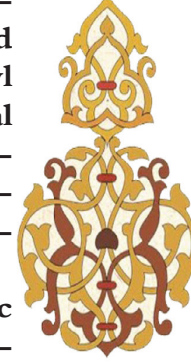
For her part, Sibyl calls Dorian "Prince Charming" and embraces him as the embodiment of her own theatrical fantasy. Just as



Dorian's love for her is connected to artifice, Sibyl's perception of love is mediated through fiction. She tells him, "The painted scenes were my world. I knew nothing but shadows, and I thought them real" (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 84) (Oliveira, 2010, p. 251), revealing how both are ensnared in their own illusion. Dorian feels repulsed when she forsakes her performance to embrace genuine love. He reacts, "I loved you because you were marvelous, because you had genius and intellect... You are shallow and stupid." (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 85). This demonstrates that his affection was directed at her performance, not at Sibyl herself.

This underscores how Dorian's admiration was restricted to Sibyl's artistic façade. He praises her as a "genius," but this praise is confined to her performance on the stage. His love disintegrates as the illusion does. Sibyl embodies the very image of the Victorian ideal of feminine delicacy and submission. Her value rests on her beauty and ability to please others, leaving her with little room for personal will or genuine expression (Wang, 2016, p. 10). Underscoring the reduction of her identity to a decorative fiction, Sibyl's worth fades the moment she ceases to captivate her audience, as Wilde illustrates in her swift narrative erasure through suicide. Her death reduces her to little more than a decorative construct within the novel (Oliveira, 2010, p. 253; Thang, 2016). Echoing the Victorian "Angel in the House" ideal, a woman's value under this notion is tied to her purity, obedience, and ability to inspire devotion in men. She is easily discarded the moment she fails to fulfill this ornamental ideal (Moghari, 2020, p. 169). Wilde's portrayal, therefore, exposes how such ideals strip women of individuality, turning them into fragile symbols that cannot exist beyond the confines of male fantasy.

Moreover, neither Dorian nor Lord Henry perceive Sibyl's suicide as a human tragedy. Rather, they view it as an aesthetic event — something "beautiful" and even "artistic" in its finality (PUŞKİN, 2021, p. 227). Through this response, Wilde critiques the harmful consequences of aesthetic indifference. Yet he also perpetuates it by narratively silencing Sibyl once she no longer contributes to the story.



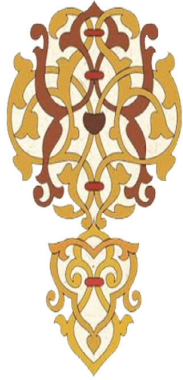
Ironically, Sibyl's portrayals of Shakespearean heroines—Juliet, Rosalind, Imogen—are all characterized by wit, agency, and emotional vitality within their plays. However, Wilde strips Sibyl of the same depth once she abandons those roles and enters “real life” (Oliveira, 2010, p. 251) The uncomfortable reality that Victorian women were frequently given complexity as artistic constructs, rather than as social subjects, is highlighted by this intertextual contrast.

Critics often emphasize Sibyl as a symbolic casualty of artistic obsession. Her fate underscores the consequences of prioritizing illusion over reality. One scholar notes that Sibyl is “destroyed through masculine rejection.” She loses her sense of self once she no longer functions as an idealized figure (R, 2020; Oliveira, 2010, p. 253). Through Dorian's behavior, Wilde critiques this tendency. Yet he simultaneously reflects it: Sibyl's narrative presence is silenced—she is admired at first, then erased, and her voice disappears when she stops performing.

Through Sibyl's trajectory, the fundamental paradoxes of Wilde's artistic philosophy are revealed. Her tragic path subverts the very values of Aestheticism it purports to promote. Dorian's belief that “Life imitates Art” (Wilde, *The Decay of Lying, Intentions.*, 1905, 1998, p. 10), contributes to her destruction. At the same time, Wilde himself, by silencing her voice and presenting her death as merely beautiful, maintains her identity as a decorative and discarded object of art (Oliveira, 2010, p. 253). Thus, she represents both victimhood and a challenge to male fantasy. Her story demonstrates how fin-de-siècle art can simultaneously confront and rely upon hierarchical social structures (R, 2020).

### 3. Sibyl Vane: A Tragedy of Female Powerlessness

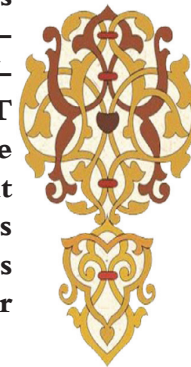
Sibyl Vane's tragic destiny in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* stems from the intertwined pressures of youth, poverty, and a patriarchal world. She exists in a society that dictates her worth through the expectations of others. As a teenage actress, she performs nightly in a dilapidated theater to support her impoverished family. This economic dependence severely limits her autonomy. Mrs. Vane, Sibyl's mother, views her daughter's relationship with Dorian not as an affair of the heart but as a possible escape from hardship and a path toward social advancement (Moghari, 2020, p. 172). She



supports the match, prioritizing respectability and material stability over emotional fulfillment. Mrs. Vane therefore exemplifies what feminist theorists term the patriarchal bargain. This dynamic describes a situation in which women uphold and enforce male-dominated norms in return for modest safeguards or advantages. (Candiyoti, 1988, p. 274). Mrs. Vane unwittingly compromises her daughter's agency in pursuit of social gain by encouraging Sibyl's emotional involvement with Dorian. Her behavior reflects internalized sexism. She reinforces traditional gender expectations and prioritizes social respectability over her daughter's emotional well-being. (Bearman, Korobov, & Thorne, 2009, p. 11).. Wilde reveals in this depiction how women in Victorian society could become agents in maintaining their own subjugation. This exposes the deeply entrenched and firmly ingrained nature of gendered power hierarchies.

James, Sibyl's brother, while exhibiting a more protective form of affection, similarly compromises her autonomy. By threatening to kill Dorian if he hurts Sibyl, saying, "If you ever wrong that girl, I swear I'll kill you," (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 67). He situates her at the center of a male-dominated narrative shaped by ideals of honor and vengeance. He determines her significance through male intervention instead of individual agency (Khan, Hassan, and Imran, 2023, p. 195). Dorian becomes "Prince Charming" in Sibyl's eyes, reflecting how she internalizes her loss of control. She fantasizes about a romantic future rooted in illusion rather than reciprocal understanding. Once she believes her love is genuine, Sibyl relinquishes performing and says, "Love is more wonderful than art. (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 82) . She feels that her artistic passion is eclipsed by her emotional fulfillment.

This decision has catastrophic consequences. Dorian's affection is directed at the persona Sibyl projects on stage, not at her true self (Oliveira, 2010, p. 253). When she steps out of her theatrical persona, his affection evaporates. His affection evaporates when she abandons her theatrical persona. Sibyl is left with nothing—without her acting, financial independence, or emotional support. Her collapse thus exposes how women in the Victorian world relied on inconsistent external approval rather than cultivating an



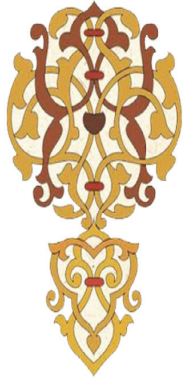
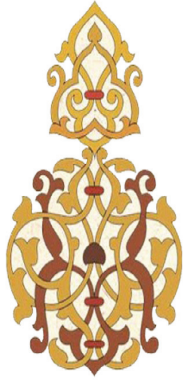
intrinsic sense of self. Her life and identity were entirely defined by her bond with Dorian. Once that illusion crumbles, she cannot envision a way forward (Oliveira, 2010, p. 255).

Feminist scholars argue that Sibyl embodies the destructive consequences of romantic idealization and objectification. She is perceived not as a complete individual, but as an artistic fabrication shaped by male imagination. Her death is not mourned as a human tragedy; instead, it is transformed into an aesthetic and romantic spectacle. This transformation exposes the chilling indifference to women's suffering that pervades the novel (R, 2020). Victorian women, as Elaine Showalter notes in *The Female Malady*, often internalized their emotional collapse as personal shortcomings instead of acknowledging it as stemming from systemic oppression. This was especially true when they lacked avenues of self-definition outside of men (Showalter, 1985, p. 5). Sibyl's suicide signifies more than a mere act of despair over lost love. It exposes her complete lack of agency, her silenced voice, and the absence of any realistic alternatives.

Regenia Gagnier notes that Wilde's fictional figures often blur the boundaries between art and life. They treat performance as a means of self-definition (Gagnier, 1988, p. 152). Yet for Sibyl, this blurring leads to her undoing. The moment she steps off the stage, the roles that define her as actress and beloved dissolve. This reveals that a woman's value was determined by the roles she fulfilled for others.

Sibyl's erasure reflects a recurring Victorian trope that sidelines women and renders them voiceless within the novel. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that nineteenth-century literature often "sacrifices" women to facilitate male development (GILBERT & GUBAR, 1979, p. 29). This tension between Wilde's critique of aesthetic objectification and his simultaneous reinforcement of it through Sibyl's erasure continues to be among the novel's most disquieting paradoxes. Joseph Bristow observes that Wilde's portrayal of women reduces them to aesthetic instruments rather than independent agents (Bristow, 2003, p. 29)

Ultimately, Sibyl's demise reveals the central paradox of Aestheticism in Wilde's narrative. Her passing functions as a powerful critique, laying bare the tragic cost of objectification. How-



ever, by silencing her narratively when she no longer contributes to Dorian's transformation, the narrative critiques the aesthetic confinement of women. Yet, it simultaneously reproduces that confinement within its own structure. Thus, Sibyl Vane emerges as the essential tragic victim, underscoring the pervasive hierarchies of gender and power that underpin the Victorian society.

#### 4. The Death of Sibyl Vane: An Instance of Romanticized Misogyny

In the Picture of Dorian Gray, Sibyl Vane's suicide exposes the fragility of women's social standing. It also reveals the pervasive disregard for their suffering. Sibyl is left alone after Dorian's cruel dismissal. Her mother is preoccupied with financial security. Her brother, despite his protective intentions, remains physically absent. Isolated and unsupported, Sibyl perceives suicide as the only means to reclaim control over her life. Dorian meets her death with a chilling lack of empathy: "So I have murdered Sibyl Vane... Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that" (Wilde, 2000, p. 96). His lack of concern demonstrates not only his emotional emptiness, but also a reflection of society's broader indifference to women's emotional well-being.

Dorian expresses no remorse; instead, he recounts Sibyl's death through the lens of his own experience. He protests, "She had no right to kill herself. It was selfish of her," (Wilde, 2000, p. 97), shifting all blame onto Sibyl and casting himself as the true victim. His swift return to diversions such as the opera highlights the depth of his emotional detachment. It also reveals his preference for aesthetic pleasure at the expense of moral responsibility.

In a broader sense, Sibyl's death underscores the tendency to aestheticize women's suffering rather than attend to its reality and significance. Dorian exclaims, "There is something to me quite beautiful in her death. (Wilde, 2000, p. 99). The act of her taking her own life is rendered as part of an artistic display rather than acknowledged as a human tragedy. According to feminist interpretation, "Sibyl's sufferings and plights during their pursuit of the highest form of art are ignored, and she is egotistically believed by Henry and Dorian to enjoy the cruel treatment too." (Wang, 2016, p. 7). By romanticizing her suffering, it is reduced to a superficial aesthetic detail, intensifying the objectification and silencing of

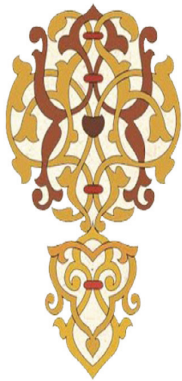
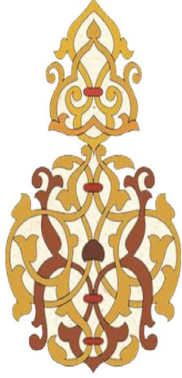


women in narratives dominated by male perspectives.

Theatricality, a central motif in Sibyl's characterization, is further reinforced through her death. Over the course of the narrative, she is seen primarily through the lens of her performance. She is recognized for the roles she plays rather than for her own uniqueness. Even in death, Sibyl is stripped of psychological depth and narrative presence. Instead, her absence is transformed into an additional scene. This scene is interpreted and scrutinized from male perspectives. As Regenia Gagnier notes, "Wilde's treatment of women often collapses life into performance, turning female subjectivity into a mediated spectacle rather than lived reality." (Gagnier , 1986, pp. 82-95). Her suicide, therefore, operates as a final "performance." It confirms how thoroughly her persona has been molded by artifice.

Sibyl's suicide underscores the fragility of women's social position in Victorian society, where male approval was often tied to financial stability and personal value. Her acting career has been abandoned, and her engagement broken. As a result, she finds herself stripped of agency and support (Gökçek, 2020, p. 144). Wilde lays bare the destructive consequences of a society in which women's lives are sustained by precarious social and emotional dependencies. These dependencies leave them scarcely any room for self-determination.

Her death exemplifies the exploitation of working-class women's suffering. The upper classes turn it into a spectacle. Dorian and Lord Henry interpret Sibyl's suicide less as a human tragedy and more as an intriguing aesthetic occurrence, disengaged from its societal context. This response mirrors a recurring pattern in Victorian culture. Elite men treated women's struggles through the lens of aesthetics rather than reality, rather than as pressing moral concerns. Amanda Anderson observes that Victorian narratives often depicted working-class women as either completely degraded or unrealistically idealized. This portrayal stripped them of psychological and social depth (Anderson , 1993, pp. 22-30). Sibyl embodies this contradiction. Her gift momentarily elevates her in Dorian's perception, but the effect quickly fades. Moreover, her economic status ensures that her suffering is framed as a spectacle of art rather than alleviated.



Ultimately, Wilde's novel engages in the same aestheticization it condemns. While Sibyl's death is central to the novel's themes, it functions primarily as a narrative device to further Dorian's moral decline. It is not recognized as a tragedy in its own right. (Aliaga, 2020, p. 23). Her voice fades from the text, supplanted by male interpretations. This illustrates how male narrative authority supersedes women's experiences. It also simultaneously reinforces the commodification of beauty that Wilde ostensibly denounces. The fatal convergence of patriarchal pressures, societal constraints, and artistic idealization is revealed through Sibyl's suicide. Her tragedy demonstrates how the lives of Victorian women were frequently transformed into spectacle, rather than recognized as fully human. In the end, the silencing of her voice stands as evidence of the destructive power of Aestheticism when detached from moral responsibility. It renders her the pivotal and most tragic casualty in the novel.

##### 5. The Perils of Idealizing Women and Sibyl Vane

Sibyl Vane in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* personifies the Victorian feminine ideal: pure, beautiful, and graceful. These ideals define her worth, and any deviation leads to her rejection. Dorian remarks, "When is she Sibyl Vane? Never." His infatuation rests not with Sibyl herself but with the series of roles she performs before him. (Wilde, 2000, p. 54). Once she experiences genuine love and can no longer sustain her performance, Dorian's rejection is merciless: "You have killed my love" (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 84). This reveals that her worth is contingent upon male fantasy, rather than grounded in her own uniqueness or intrinsic humanity (Khan, 2023, p. 191) (Oliveira, 2010, p. 250).

Sibyl's tragedy illustrates how gender and class intersect to constrain women's lives. Lower-class women were seldom valued for anything beyond their social roles and outward appearance (Anderson, 1993, pp. 22–30). In contrast to Dorian's embodiment of aristocratic privilege, Sibyl personifies the contradictions faced by women constrained by class and gender norms. Born into poverty, she performs nightly to sustain her family. Her financial vulnerability leaves her with limited choices, making her acutely exposed to exploitation and eventual abandonment. Her artistic talent offers her a fleeting sense of elevation and recognition.



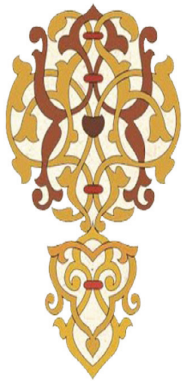
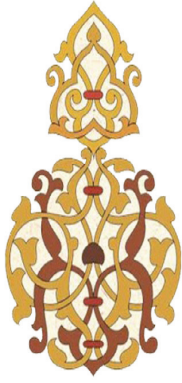
However, lacking wealth means that once Dorian's love fades, she is left with no alternative future (Miao, 2025, p. 52). Sibyl's fear of losing love intensifies as she becomes more aware of the boundaries that constrain her life. This underscores how systemic objectification erodes psychological well-being.

Sibyl's dire fate confronts the societal expectations imposed on women in Victorian society. It reflects the Victorian stereotype of the "fallen woman." Women who failed to conform to idealized roles were socially erased. (Nochlin, 1978, p. 141). Rather than perceiving her death as a human tragedy, Dorian aestheticizes it, remarking: "There is something to me quite beautiful in her death" (Wilde, 2000, p. 99). This aestheticization of suffering converts real pain into artistic fuel. It exposes the moral indifference inherent in the male gaze (Kidd, 2003, p. 4 ; Khan, 2023, p. 201).

Sibyl mirrors as a reflective counterpart to Dorian's narrative. Once she abandons performance, Sibyl simultaneously forfeits her sense of identity. To sustain eternal youth and sensual delight, Dorian sacrifices his soul. Wilde's concept of identity is reflected in both characters; however, Dorian alone is spared the moral consequences. His descent into aesthetic corruption is enabled by Sibyl's death, which functions as his narrative sacrifice (Gagnier, 1986, pp. 82–95; Bristow, 2003, pp. 120–140). The gendered imbalance of narrative survival is made evident here. Female fragility results in obliteration, while male transgression sustains the narrative. Though Dorian is praised for his charm, Wilde uses Sibyl's onstage collapse to critique the restrictive roles society dictates. Sibyl's authenticity is condemned, emphasizing how gendered inequities shape both artistic depiction and lived reality. (Miao, 2025, pp. 52–3).

By giving voice to characters like Lord Henry, whose flippant sexism— "Women are a decorative sex"—Wilde interrogates the superficiality of such beliefs (Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 2000, p. 47). Despite its critique, the novel does not entirely absolve itself of complicity in these dynamics. Sibyl's personality and inner life remain largely undeveloped, extending little beyond her relationship with Dorian. Although she is the focus of multiple chapters, her character attracts limited scholarly analysis.

Within the Gothic framework, Sibyl's death highlights how fe-



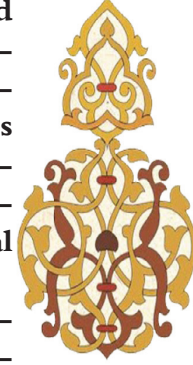
male's suffering and demise mirrors the corruption of male protagonists. She is transformed into a character of both desire and devastation, evoking the tragic patterns of Gothic literature where female fates symbolize societal fears. Kelly Hurley notes that in Gothic literature, female suffering is often employed the development of male protagonists (Hurley, 1996, pp. 63–70). Sibyl's death both critiques and exemplifies the persistence of aesthetic indulgence. It demonstrates how Wilde adapts this theme for the fin-de-siècle context.

In sum, Sibyl's narrative serves as a cautionary example about the dangers of romanticizing and controlling women, highlighting how individuality is subordinated to systemic objectification. It obliterates feminine agency and converts human suffering into mere aesthetic ornamentation, ultimately revealing the detrimental moral consequences of valuing artifice over humanity.

#### 6. Conclusion and Findings

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the narrative of Sibyl Vane illustrates how gender, class, and aesthetic culture intersected in Victorian society. It reveals how societal expectations and male perception often shaped the contours of women's lives and identities. Her tragedy exemplifies the consequences of objectification. The fantasies of Dorian and society continually refract her love, talent, and sense of self, leaving her vulnerable to exploitation, emotional silencing, and ultimately death. This vulnerability is intensified by poverty and social dependence. It demonstrates how gendered subjugation and financial constraints converge to limit women's agency. Sibyl's erasure also reflects the broader Victorian pattern of silencing women to privilege male-centered narratives. Finally, the dangers of prioritizing image, illusion, and performance over genuine human experience are revealed through the aestheticization of her suffering.

Four main findings emerge from the analysis. Female identity is frequently constructed as a performance designed to captivate the male gaze. Women's vulnerability is heightened by social and economic constraints. Those who defy male or societal expectations are rendered voiceless. Romanticized idealization transforms authentic suffering into an aesthetic display, obscuring its reality as a human tragedy.

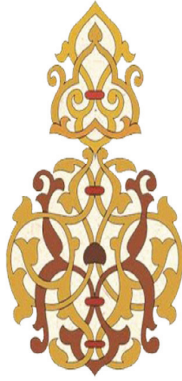


Wilde's representation of Sibyl collectively exposes the entwined forces of aesthetic fixation and entrenched gender bias. It highlights the profound human cost of marginalizing female autonomy and authentic selfhood in favor of male desire and illusion. As a result, Sibyl's narrative functions as a critique of Victorian society. It reminds readers that the normalization of female objectification and idealization carries serious moral and psychological consequences.

Ultimately, Sibyl Vane's narrative functions as a powerful cautionary tale. When societal, economic, and aesthetic pressures intertwine with the idealization and domination of women, human lives are reduced to mere spectacles. This reveals the severe moral and psychological consequences of a society that prioritizes illusion over authentic agency.

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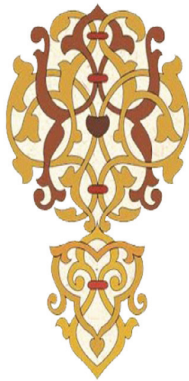


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