

T.C.
ISTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

GENDER-RESISTANCE AND PUNISHMENT IN OSCAR WILDE'S
LITERARY WORKS

M.A. Thesis

Burak Irmak

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAM

Istanbul, 2015

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Sayfa</u>
FOREWORD	I
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IV
ÖZET	V
ABSTRACT	VI
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 A Brief History of Sexual Rights Movements	9
2.2 Butler and Queer Theory.....	13
2.3 Gender Resistance, History of Sexuality, and Michel Foucault	18
2.4 Life and Works of Oscar Wilde	22
2.4.1 Uranian poets and Oscar Wilde	29
3 THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY	31
3.1 An Overview of the Plot	31
3.2. Dorian Gray, The Paedarastic Student.....	33
3.3 Lord Henry Wotton	35
3.4 Lord Henry Wotton, the Teacher	38
3.5 Lord Henry Wotton as a Frustrated Husband	39
4 LORD ARTHUR SAVILE’S CRIME	43
4.1 An Overview of the Plot	44
4.2 Crime and Punishment	46
5 THE PORTRAIT OF M.R. W.H.	51
5.1 An Overview of the Plot	52
5.2 George Erskine, the Fearful Gentleman.....	55
5.3 The Storyteller, the Gender-resistant	56
5.4 Cyril Graham, the Effeminate Actor	58
6 THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST	60
6.1 An Overview of the Plot	61
6.2 John (Jack) Worthing, a Bored Countryman.....	65
6.3 Algernon Moncrieff, a Freedom Excavator	67
7. CONCLUSION: A WILDE CENTURY	70
REFERENCES	73
RESUME	76

OSCAR WILDE'İN EDEBİ ÇALIŞMALARINDA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYETE KARŞI DİRENİŞ VE CEZALANDIRMA

ÖZET

Toplumsal cinsiyete direniş bütün insan hakları hareketleri içinde hayati bir yer arz eder. Döneminde ünlü bir şahsiyet olan Oscar Wilde cinselliğe ilişkin döneminin normlarına karşıydı. Yazar, kurgusal olmayan yazı türlerinden kısa hikayelere kadar birçok edebi türde eserler Verdi. Farkında olmamasına rağmen, toplumsal cinsiyetin değişebilir, akışkan bir kavram olduğundan ve de bu konudaki cahiliyetin, toplumdaki bireylerin kurallar tarafından sıkıştırılmasına neden olduğundan bahsetti. Bu tezde, temel hedef, toplumsal cinsiyete karşı direniş ile Oscar Wilde'ın karakterleri arasındaki ilişki incelenecektir. Üstünde durulacak temel nokta eğer karakterler normlara karşı çıkmayı denediler ise cezalandırılıp cezalandırılmadıkları olacaktır.

Analiz yapmamızı sağlayacak temel teoriler cinsiyet kavramının akışkan olduğundan ve de heteroseksüel matrisin olumsuz özelliklerinden bahseden ve tüm toplumsal cinsiyetlerin insan yapımı olduğunu açıklayan Kuir Kuram ve güç-direniş ilişkisi içerisinde toplumsal söylemin insanları doğduğu günden itibaren nasıl şekillendirdiğini gösteren Foucault'nun kuramı olacaktır. Tez, Oscar Wilde'ın eserleri ve hayatının bağlamında bir genelleme ile sonuçlandırılma amacı gütmektedir. Bu sebeptendir ki, kullandığı her yazı türünden örneklemeler ile tez sürdürülecektir. *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*, "Lord Arthur Savile'in Suçu", "Bay W. H.'in Portresi" ve *Ciddi Olmanın Önemi* toplumsal cinsiyet karşıtı olan ve cezalandırılan karakterler bağlamında incelenecek örnek eserler olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kuir, Oscar Wilde, Victoria Dönemi, Cinsiyet

GENDER-RESISTANCE AND PUNISHMENT IN OSCAR WILDE'S LITERARY WORKS

ABSTRACT

Gender-resistance is a vital part of the whole equal rights movements. Oscar Wilde, who was a celebrity author of his period, was against the sexual norms of his period. He wrote several literary works varying from non-fiction essays to short stories. Even though he did not know it, he talked about gender fluidity and how unawareness of it led to its constraint by the society. In this thesis, the main intention is to show the relationship between gender-resistance and Wilde's characters and to see if the characters are punished if they try to stand against the norms.

Theories included to help us to analyze will be Judith Butler's Queer Theory which is mainly about gender fluidity and the negative aspects of the heterosexual matrix, proving that all genders are man-made and they are social constructions, and Foucault's theory of resistance and power relationship and the discourse which leads the society since the day each person is born shaping it with its rules. The thesis is intended to conclude with a statement regarding Oscar Wilde's works and his life in relation to the literary works he wrote. Therefore, there will be at least one sample from each of the styles he writes. The sample works that will be examined to see the punishments of the gender-resistant characters are *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "Lord Arthur Savile's Crime", "The Portrait of M.R. W.H.", and *the Importance of Being Ernest*.

Keywords: Queer, Oscar Wilde, Victorian Period, Gender

1. INTRODUCTION

The topics of gender and sexuality heavily in Oscar Wilde's works have been debated since the day they were written. There were a lot of different and interesting ideas on the issue. Especially after the theory that is called "Queer", a lot of new articles have been written. Dorian Gray was the target of the attention after almost a century again. The question of "why" is very important here.

After such an era as the Victorian, people have started to realize how repressed they were sexually. In the 20th century, they have started to change their perspective over their own sexuality. Women who were not allowed to talk or even think about sex made the revolution. People rose up against the old order of the Victorian Age. Today we can see various and sometimes very harsh criticism over this era. Foucault wrote a whole book called *The History of Sexuality* giving his examples mostly from the Victorian Period.

With ACT-UP and Queer Nation, a new era was born in the beginning of 1990's that we can call the Era of the New Genders. In this era, we are trying to understand the milestones of the change in the perspectives. Therefore, it is very natural to look at the master of the paradox, Oscar Wilde. He was the wild one in his era. A sodomite father, a Uranist husband, a pervert celebrity, a shocking writer and a son. When he did something, he was talked about a lot. A lot of people knew him as a writer even when he did not have any literary works. He was put into prison because of his perverted relationships, but even then he was not feeling guilty according to his famous lover Bosie. What he did was revolutionary and shocking for the high society of his day. From taking boys with "green carnations" to the theatre on the premiere of his play- which was sign of Uranism or in today's word homosexuality at the time, to smoking in front of the audience. He became a kind of martyr for Uranist thought when he was sentenced and became more popular after his death in 1900 (McKenna, 2014).

Academicians examined his works after his death with various views. As it is said before, in the 1990's it took a different shape. However, most academics shaped their ideas on Queer Theory from its view about sexuality in general and sexuality of his characters which seem irritating because, as a gay writer, he was assumed to write mostly about homosexual characters which may not be the case although it was the mainstream research topic on his works. They did not work on "the Heterosexual Matrix" of Victorian Society and its effects on his works, or "performativity" and how much the characters in his works were forced into that order, or what Wilde's reaction was to the non-conformist genders in his own characters if there existed any (Butler, 2004, p. 6). Therefore, more ideas on the issue are needed. That is what intends to do in this thesis. In this thesis, what will be examined in this thesis are the performativity, gender-resistance and punishment in the 19th Century Victorian period in general, specifying it to the dictated male performativity in the works written by Oscar Wilde - *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, "the Crime of Sir Arthur Seville", and "The Portrait of M.R W.H".

In *the History of Sexuality*, Foucault explains how gender is perceived in the 19th Century: "A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents' bedroom" (Foucault, 1978, p. 3). Foucault's view presents that any other sexual conduct was marginalized and was illegitimate. For illegitimate sexualities, Victorian society created its own rules and laws to banish or punish them.

Foucault presents some of the ways to punish illegitimate sexualities. However, he does not mention the laws the Victorians had. The Act of Amendment, for instance, punished a person who committed the act of sexual impropriety was kept in penal servitude for life and for any term not less than 10 years (Criminal Law Amendment Act 1885, 2014). Oscar Wilde was imprisoned under The Act of Amendment. On his punishment he wrote in prison: "I must say to myself that I ruined myself" (Wilde, 1997, p. 1097) In his words, a great sense of guilt can be sensed. His guilt grows more and he realizes the dominance of pleasure over him and adds: "I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace"(Wilde, 1997, p. 1072). Even before being sent to prison, he had lived a life of moral dilemma and, he was stuck between his true self and his Victorian

reflection. He expresses his guilt and dilemma in his works the most when in prison. Firstly, his masterpiece and most probably his most famous work *The Picture of Dorian Gray* should be examined. This work holds a lot of autobiographical elements in it which prioritize its place among his other works. It was also used during his trials to prove his love for young boys. Alex Ross from *the New Yorker* says:

At the libel trial, Queensberry's chief attorney, Edward Carson, needed to demonstrate that the words on the card were justified. So he set about establishing that Wilde had already advertised his proclivities in print. "Dorian Gray" became Carson's main resource, and he elected to treat it as Wilde's life story (Ross, 2011) .

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a novel full of symbols about Oscar Wilde's own sexual experiences and his view of gender and sexuality. Performativity, an unknown concept for his time was an important part of this work since the whole novel revolves around the gender norms and how they are performed and perceived.

Gender resistance is very clear in the novel as we will see shortly. The male characters play their parts in the society very beautifully but, they resist what they are forced into in one way or another. This case seems very similar to Oscar Wilde's real life in which he was forced into a specific gender norm while he resists it and ironically was punished for his resistance just like his characters.

The character of Lord Henry Wotton always talks about the taboos and forbidden subjects. Lord Henry Wotton says "The only way to get rid of temptation and that's to yield to it"(Wilde, 1997, p. 16). He is stuck in a reality he does not want. He cannot do anything about it because he is a part of the society. What he can do is to talk about what is forbidden.

Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton are in a platonic relationship in its paederastic sense. To direct Dorian within his desires is his escape from the heterosexually dominated stereotypical Victorian world. Dorian Gray and Lord Henry Wotton are in a teacher-student relationship.

Lord Henry Wotton is the teacher or the instructor. Luljeta Muriqi illustrates the situation when she says: "In regard to his pedagogic role, Lord Henry realizes this, quite early in the novel, at his very first meeting with Dorian" (Muriqi, 2014). Like everybody

else, though a fiction-made character, Lord Henry Wotton lives or performs those roles he has without realizing that he is an actor on the stage.

The dominant role he performs is not very apparent in the novel, but each of the roles he has in the novel will be analyzed in the thesis, and his roles in relation with each other will show some results of grave importance for the dilemma of Oscar Wilde's thoughts over gender-resistance and punishment. In the novel, it is revealed that Lord Henry Wotton has various roles. He has some normative roles which do not affect his life but the unorthodox role he has leaves him on the brink of self-destruction. He is a teacher of desire and that role which is an escape route from the normative reality creates a monster. This role also results in the collapse of his marriage in the most horrific way for the character. As mentioned before, Oscar Wilde and Lord Henry Wotton have similar characteristics. Therefore, Dorian is a warning to Oscar Wilde as well as being a reason for the punishment for Lord Henry Wotton.

When a careful analysis is made, the results of the gender-resistance can be clearly seen. Although Lord Henry Wotton resists the norms which are dictated by the society, since the Victorian period is his reality, he will not be able to get away from the results of his words and his effects on Dorian and will live a destiny drawn by the author.

Dorian Gray has a similar destiny with Lord Henry Wotton. However, Dorian is not a realistic character like Lord Henry Wotton. They are different from each other on account of the number of roles they have. While Lord Henry Wotton has many, Dorian Gray has just a few. He is gender-resistance in flesh and blood. Therefore, as the focal point of the novel and the symbol of resistance, he needs to be examined in detail.

Basil Howard is a complex character and he is the symbol of "the love that dare not speak its name" (Douglas, 1894). As Oscar Wilde himself said "Truth is rarely pure and never simple" (Wilde, 1997, p. 674). Basil is different from Lord Henry Wotton. Like Dorian Gray, many roles Basil Howard may have cannot be seen in the novel. He is a painter, he is a friend, and he is passionate about his works. He has an artistic side like Oscar Wilde. He is so passionate about his works of art that he falls in love with a picture he created and it just so happens that it is the picture of a handsome man. So far, with the other characters of the novel, it can be understood that Oscar Wilde was in a

tendency to punish the characters with marginalized sexualities and those who resist the sexual rules of the society. Different from Lord Henry Wotton and Dorian Gray, he is not interested in sexual desires. His love is purely artistic. His love is pure like the light of the day. He stands against Lord Henry when Lord Henry desires to be a teacher of desire for Dorian Gray. Because Basil sees Dorian as his work of art. He wants Dorian Gray to be pure and untouched forever. He does not want Lord Henry Wotton to affect Dorian and stain his purity of a young naïve boy. According to Basil, Lord Henry is the black spot on his work. However, no matter how hard he tries to show that Lord Henry Wotton does not have good intentions, it does not work. The more Basil tries to take Dorian away from Lord Henry, the closer they get day by day.

It can be seen that Lord Henry Wotton and Basil Howard are like the two faces of a coin. Both of them represent a side of Oscar Wilde. Oscar Wilde is in the knowledge of that he cannot get away from the uncontrollable sexual passion he has, but constantly tries to be away from his desires. He makes up the Basil Howard character. It was a relief for Oscar Wilde. The pure love in Basil Howard keeps Oscar Wilde away from the desires and leads him to pure love. However, the deceit he creates for himself doesn't last long. Sexual passion's symbol in his novel, Dorian Gray, destroys the pure and artistic side of love totally and tears it into pieces and goes on with his dark desires. Oscar Wilde, while writing the novel, may have realized that there is no escape from the real self and sexual desires. Even though desire is seen as a dark side of sexuality, he had to live it. A person cannot get away from the inevitable. They can only merely delay the reality of their passions. It is understood from the novel that Dorian is the symbol of sexual desire and also the dark side of humans. Therefore, in this logic, sexual desire is a dark side of us. This can enlighten the reason why there is a character like Basil Howard.

Another point of view for the existence of the character of Basil Howard is the same as the general theory in this thesis which is that even though Oscar Wilde resists gender norms in his life which can be observed in several occasions, he is still under the pressure of the society, and traditionally the society wants immorality- which can only be explained as the out of gender norms of a society in a specific time period- to be punished. Therefore, with the voice of the society in his head, he constantly does that in almost all his works.

Both theories have the truth in it. Even though the love of Basil Howard for Dorian and the picture seems pure, which is a very rare case even to show such an interest in Dorian, in a 19th century novel, it is between the same-sex. Pure, though platonic, love for the same-sex is shocking, immoral, and out of the question for the Victorians. Therefore, since same-sex love is an abomination both for the religion and for the law, Basil Howard should be punished. Even writing about such a character as Basil Howard was not good news for Oscar Wilde. Oscar Wilde, for the first time among famous authors of English Literature, writes about a character that is passionately in love with another man.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was Wilde's only known novel. There is another novel called *Teleny, or the Reverse of the Medal*, but even today academics cannot be sure whether it was written only by Oscar Wilde or a group of authors. Some authors for instance Rictor Norton claim that it was not the work of Oscar Wilde (Norton, 1998). He also wrote several literary works with different styles ranging from poetry to theatrical play. Another style he used was the short story. Lord Arthur Savile's Crime is one of his famous stories. In the story, there is a character named Lord Arthur Savile, who believes a fortuneteller when she says he will kill a distant relative and go to jail before his marriage. This story is very compelling with its plot. Whenever we realize Lord Arthur's duty, a question pops into our minds: How far can a person go for the society's wishes?

Contrary to Lord Henry Wotton, Lord Arthur is all about normative duties. He never wants to change the way the society is. He is an eligible bachelor with a decent job. He has a fiancée and wants to get married. We can see him as the system of symbol of male gender performativity of the society. He conforms to the Capitalist system of gender in which the only aim of having sex is reproduction. Capitalist system needs workers to abuse within the system. Each person is a chain of this big machine of economy and to keep the economy up, the system needs new tools every day. Therefore people need to produce new children. This system fits perfectly to Lord Arthur. In the story he is described by Lady Windermere: "He is not mysterious, or esoteric or romantic-looking. He is a little stout man, with a funny bold head, and great gold, rimmed spectacles; something between a family doctor and a country attorney"(Wilde, 1997, p. 154). He is an ordinary Victorian man. In the end of the story he commits a murder and

interestingly, gets away with it. He fulfilled his duty to get married. Unlike the characters in Wilde's novel who were non-conformists concerning gender, he is not punished.

To sample all kinds of his works, we should also examine a play. *The Importance of Being Ernest* is a significant play to talk about. One of the male characters is Jack Worthing. He is a character whose past is what Victorians are all against. His parents are unknown making him the fruit of an illegitimate relationship. He also masks himself with his irresponsible brother Ernest. With the double life he has, as is expected from Oscar Wilde, he should suffer until he has the legitimate gender role which he does because his punishment comes swiftly in the play which brings us to our second male character: Algernon Moncrieff. He is the actual Earnest who makes the mischiefs and goes to the country to seduce the girl whom Jack is trying to raise. Algernon also has an excuse to lead his own double life and this is his made-up friend Bunbury who is a very sick man.

After talking about his works in detail, we will be able to realize how Oscar Wilde shaped his characters in shame and in pride at the same time, making them both revolutionary and traditional at the same time.

In the thesis, Gender resistance/punishment theory briefly shown above will be explained in detail. Firstly, a literary review on Butler's Queer Theory; and Foucault's theory on resistance, power and pleasure should be shown. When taken into consideration, they have shown an interesting path to take about Oscar Wilde's perspective on his works. Although both of the philosophers lived a century after Oscar Wilde, they can show us the answers to the questions of why and how, both in his works and in his own life. Then Wilde's life and perspectives on gender in Victorian times will be examined. Although the writer should not be included in the works while reading, we need to make an exception for Wilde because his life and his works are bound together with the immense symbolism he uses. After that, the focus will be on his works.

Four different works by Oscar Wilde have been chosen for this thesis because one will not be sufficient to prove the points on the theory created. Giving only one sample from his works can make the points made here in question since there is a generalization in

the theory for Oscar Wilde's works. The main point being Oscar Wilde's showing a resistance to the norms and punishing his character at the same time for being ashamed of himself needs samples for all kinds of literary styles he uses.

His essays are not included in the sample works by the author. However, they will also be used. Though non-fiction, they give us a clue why he created characters with the same problems over and over again. They will help to support the ideas in the thesis and illustrate the symbols in his fictional works.

Main characters that are usually male will be focused on in his works because male resistance seems more important in his life as it will be seen in his own life. Although it is also applicable to the female characters as well, it will not be possible to see all the characters in detail. It can get more complex than it is intended. Therefore, analyzing each and every character is not practical and also time-consuming for the reader.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 A Brief History of Sexual Rights Movements

Debates over sexuality and gender are as old as the history of England itself. We need to see the whole picture so that we can understand the tradition of Oscar Wilde's England. The first known laws against homosexuality or with the existent more inclusive word sodomy were put in practice in 1102 (Norton, Rictor Norton, 1998). England was condemning sodomy with laws for the first time. In 1533, under the rule of King Henry VIII, the Buggery Act passed. According to the new law, male-to-male sexual intercourse was punishable by death (Arundel, 2015).

The law stayed intact for three centuries. It was the law of the norms which came with the religion at hand. Despite the law, a new life in the back streets of London began in the seventeenth century. Margaret Clap who was known as Mother Clap ran a coffee house which was a meeting point for the underground gay community of the century. Similar places were opened in England during the century. They were called Molly Houses (Emsley, Hitchcock, & Shoemaker, 2015). They were the gay bars of the century.

Apparently distinctive to eighteenth-century London, Molly Houses usually consisted of "a large open room for music, dancing, and drinking" and several private rooms in the back where men could "get married" and have sex (Emsley, Hitchcock, & Shoemaker, 2015). These were energetic and animated clubs and the men who frequented them were often christened with female names, sometimes having to do with their physical features or professions. Cross-dressing was also a commonplace, as was the use of affected and effeminate language.

In the Nineteenth Century, Molly Houses could not be seen anymore. Molly Houses could be traced through the proceedings of trials. However, trials of the nineteenth

century over the issue were more discreet. The gay subculture of England went out of Molly Houses to live in more secrecy and started to meet in coffee houses known between the homosexual men. Cruising also became more common. It was so common that the state released a law concerning cruising in parks and public urinals. That was the culture Oscar Wilde lived in this century.

The Act of Buggery was replaced by “Offences against the Person Act 1861” (Offences against the Person Act 1861, 2015). With this law capital punishment for the act was abolished. However, in 1885, the famous act over which Oscar Wilde was punished, the Criminal Act of Amendment, or more commonly known as Labouchere Amendment was passed. Section 11 of the Act is our concern since Wilde was tried for that:

Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof shall be liable at the discretion of the court to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years (1885 Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2015).

Despite the law, the first openly gay bar in England, the Cave of the Golden Calf was opened in 1912. This is the history of Laws and Culture of Homosexuality until the beginning of the twentieth century. Thinkers started to talk more openly about gender and sexuality in the twentieth century. However, steps taken towards making a difference for the society has not been taken until the last decade of the 20th Century. Literary theories on gender mainly focused on women rather than both genders have been created since the beginning of the 20th Century. Of course, oppression of women was a very effective reason behind it. The idea of gender equality created its own thinkers and philosophers. Feminist theories created a huge canon from Wolstonecraft to Simone de Beauvoir. However, as I mentioned above, they were all women-centered. Women wanted to be free of men’s hegemony. Ideas evolved. However, at some point in the history of twentieth century, thinkers realized that to be free from this patriarchal view, sexual freedom for both genders is more important. For this realization, the Stonewall riots in 1969 were very effective.

Patriarchal oppression over both genders was very clear especially on homosexuals because they were out of the capitalist view of reproduction in which a person is

beneficial in society when they produce something for the society and for ongoing production, you need reproduction. However, homosexuals were not reproductive becoming the third sex which should not be part of the society.

Homosexuals were like the third wheel which caused a nuisance for capitalism. Therefore, the police had authority to do whatever they want to those individuals and religions, which are a crucial support system for the machine of capitalism naturally were not in favor of different sexualities. So, the police beat, tortured both mentally and physically whenever they wanted but, as in several instances in history, people rose up against those who oppressed them. So, as it was going on for years, there was a police bust to a bar called Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village in New York which was a gay bar. The police again started to beat homosexuals for no logical reason. So, people in the bar that time stood up against the police. Then, they all went out and started to walk in the street and soon there were thousands walking with them and things started to change about sexual oppression.

Stonewall Riots happened in the US. However, we should not think that the history of social movements only affect the country in which they happen. Especially if it is about the rights of different genders and sexualities, it becomes universal. Wilde's trials were not just the concern of the UK. It had an impact on the whole course of the gender movements. The same thing is applicable to the Stonewall Riots. It triggered the founding of the first British gay activist group, Campaign for Homosexual Equality, in 1969 in England. Right after that, in 1970, Gay Liberation Front was founded in England. Their motto was "Out, Loud, and Proud". Again in 1969, Paul Goodman published "Politics of Being Queer". Today, Pride Day is celebrated on the starting day of the riots all around the world with an exception of a few countries.

A new age was about to start. It was realized that at the moment, oppression was not for one gender alone. The fight for freedom was for both genders. One cannot be freed alone, it has to be together. The thing that needed to change is the mentality. The mentality that gave pink triangles for homosexuals in the death camps of Nazi regime made them the worst group in the death camps worse than Jewish people. Their struggle, however, dates back to the nineteenth century, when *Scientia Sexualis* emerged.

A group called Uranians was the first one in the Western History who stood in the point where same relations should be seen natural. After them, authors like Christopher Isherwood stood for the same idea. In 1950, Mattachine Society which is the first society fighting only for gay rights was founded in the US. In 1959, the Daughters of Bilitis, first lesbian rights organization was established, and in 1966, National Transsexual Counselling Unit was founded in the US. However, they were only the minority. It was not until Stonewall that they grew that many in numbers.

After the riots, the first openly gay politician, Harvey Milk, was elected to the public office in 1977 in California, the US, but he was shot 11 months later. In 1984, a politician named Chris Smith came out right after the elections becoming the first openly gay elected politician in England. Both in the US and in the UK, homophobia became very common. However, Pandora's Box had been opened. 10 years later after the assassination of Harvey Milk and eighteen years after the Stonewall Riots, a very important LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex) organization was founded under the name of ACT-UP.

Three years after it, a short living but very efficient organization was founded and its name was the Queer Nation. Their main aim was normalization of what is seen as unnatural by the capitalist system, and they started to change discourse. Their motto was "We are queer, we are here, get used to it" (Queer Nation Manifesto, 2015). It became a worldwide motto for all the LGBTI organizations around the world and once seen as an oppressive and humiliating word "queer" changed meaning becoming more than a swear word. In the same year, Judith Butler published her famous book *Gender Trouble* which we will talk about in the next part.

In 1990's the world entered a new era. Organizations originating from the US and the UK became international organizations. People who were afraid even to walk on the street now could make campaigns for marriage equality. In December 21 2000, the Netherlands legalize same-sex marriage. Then in 15 years, 21 countries legalized same-sex marriage. The UK passed the law in 2013. The most recent is the US. They legalized it in 2015 with the motto of "Love wins" (Live Updates on #LoveWins: The Supreme Court Rules that Gay and Lesbian Couples Can Marry, 2015).

Their act turned into a world-wide celebration. From death penalties, to the conviction of Oscar Wilde, the fight for equal rights has been a very painful war with a lot of lost battles, but humankind almost always goes forward. We are in a place where we can freely talk about the academic research on the issue without fear of being bashed. Theories of sexuality and gender created new academic fields such as queer studies and women studies. We will look into some influential theories that lead to the point where we are now.

2.2 Butler and Queer Theory

Judith Butler is one of the most important philosophers of our century over the issue of gender and sexuality. Her thoughts and theories are debated widely all around the world in almost every field of Social Sciences and Humanities from Law to Literature. Almost all the philosophers since Hegel created a binary opposition in their works. Generally speaking, in Marxist theory, we see the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeois. In feminist theory, the struggle is between man and woman. In post-colonial discourse, the debate is almost always over the east and the west. The examples can be multiplied. Her theory, however, does not have such a binary opposition. Her theory is over gender and sexuality, but can be used to explain anything from wars to politics.

Unlike the other philosophers before her tackling the issue of gender, she noticed that genders should not be viewed solitarily. In an interview, she explains:

I went back to “Le Deuxième Sexe” and there I found this one passage which is of course perhaps the most famous passage from Beauvoir where she says that ‘One is not born a woman but rather becomes one’. And I wrote something about this problem of becoming and I wanted to know does one actually ever become one or is it to be a woman is a mode of becoming without end a mode of becoming that has no end or goal? And then I thought maybe you could say the same of gender more generally. One is not born a man but rather becomes one or perhaps one is born a male or a female but becomes something which is neither, a man nor a woman. And to me that notion of becoming could lead to any number of directions (Butler, Judith Butler, 2015).

In that part, we see that the discussions over gender are taken to another level. Now it is not just about women. Taking women into consideration as the only gender that should be talked about was broken. The discussion of her idea did not only include heterosexual

men and women, but also homosexual and intersexual individuals as well. Homosexuality and what the word defines will be the topic of another part in this thesis.

Going back to Butler's Queer Theory, she put forth an idea with her first speech on feminism. She developed it and turned it into an elaborate theory which led to a world-wide heated discussion over the topic of gender and sexuality. Departments at universities were set up just to discuss the issue. What was her idea that affected the way we used to think about gender and sexuality? It was mainly gender fluidity and production of a heterosexual matrix of the societies, and gender performativity.

In her first book, she starts a discussion in the beginning over identity by questioning and criticizing the feminist views on women's identity. Her view in this discussion is that traditional feminist view takes the subject of women universally and she claims that it is not possible to talk about such a universally defined women and its oppression and it is not very different from the ideas of orientalism. Oppression on women is only seen from a Western perspective, whereas there are also non-western cultures in which the thought of oppression over women is entirely different. She explains:

The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism, one, which must be found in an identity assumed to exist cross-culturally, often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of universal patriarch has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contents in which it exists (Butler, 1990, p. 3).

Her critique of conventional feminism is actually a way of showing that we cannot talk about a universal woman or we cannot define it, which leads us to a question of what a woman is or what a man is. What are the limitations of those two subjects and how do we define them? Her first result is that there isn't a unity of women so an idea of universal feminism in which you can apply and hence, defy all the problems concerning masculinity and patriarchy within a singular view. If there isn't a singularity and it changes from culture to culture and therefore we cannot define it, does that mean that in fact there are not two gender discussed on the table? In her book Butler says:

Although the unproblematic unity of "women" is often invoked to construct solidarity of identity, a split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender. Originally

intended to dispute the biology-is-destiny formulation, the distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex (Butler, 1990, p. 6).

This means that cultures actually explain the sexes as they live them and they create genders. However, their explanations are usually not enough for the experiences they live. They put some standards for the two sexes making them genders. However, the undefined becomes more important than the defined because they are almost as much and become the attention of debates.

Each culture has a way of explaining the undefined ones. They have made up words and tried to define them in their own contents. For instant if the gender rules of sexual relationship was different and was between men, it was called as paederestia. It is not a word used as we use words like homosexual or gay today. It was more concerned with pedagogy than sexuality. It was a practice of mentoring.

Sexual intercourse was a part of the mentoring and teaching though practices varied from culture to culture around the Greek Peninsula and the Balkans. Sexual interactions between the older *erastes* (mentor) and *eromenos* (youth/future citizen) occurred in Crete and Athens primarily (Herbert, 2012, p. 4). This was the only way acceptable in those cultures; any other same sex relationships were restricted. As it is said before, cultures tried to define the different one, the one outside their gender norms. In the 19th Century, however trying to define the undefined took a different shape. People started to talk about and tried to define the other. In 6 May 1868, the German-Hungarian Károly Mária Kertbeny used the word *Homosexualität* becoming the word homosexual in English language (Norton, 2008). It was a heated time of discussion on the issue. Karl Heinrich Ulrichs categorized the sexological types (Bristow, 1997, p. 22).

1. Men
2. Women
3. Urnings
 - a. Mannlings
 - b. Intermediaries

- c. Weiblings
- 4. Urningings
- 5. Uranodionings
 - a. Conjunctive
 - b. Disjunctive
- 6. Uranodioningins
- 7. Hermaphrodites

Do those types of sexualities sound similar? Probably, you have not heard of most of them. He, just like many others tried to explain the ones outside the gender norms. We still try to explain the types of sexualities outside the gender norms today. Some of the categories we have today are cis man, cis woman, androsexual, asexual, bigender, bisexual, closeted sexuality, cross-dressing, drag king, drag queen, FTM, MTF, trans-man, trans-woman, genderless, genderqueer, gynosexual, hermaphrodite, intersex, skoliosexual, polysexual, pansexual, gay –top, gay-bottom, gay-versatile, lesbian-but, lesbian-femme, lesbian-versatile etc. Our list today is not a short one. The ones I wrote is just about the people who may identify themselves as man or woman and have a sexual relationship with the same sex or opposite sex.

There are also sexual sadist, masochist, leather-folk etc. The list goes on and on. There should be a limit to the unidentified because, each passing day we try to come up with a new word for a different type of sexuality. It should be comprehended that it is not possible. We can basically say that there are as many sexualities and genders as people lived and still live in this world. This takes us back to Judith Butler. That was the exact thing she said: Gender fluidity.

We can be all genders and neither one. Genders are socially and culturally constructed and cannot define each individual. There is no limit. She refuses the binary oppositions in terms of gender and sexuality. If gender norms applied to all humanity, we should have been able to love and live with the exact same people as defined and their definitions have also limits. The traditional Western gender norms define man and woman as the ones having sexual intercourse with each other.

In some western cultures in the nineteenth century even the way of sexual intercourse was defined. However, these definitions do not tell whether the opposite sex should be taller or shorter or have blond hair or black hair. Defining with only the other sex does not work well and it is not very different from defining sexuality with a person's liking of a specific hair color. That's the exact reason why the word queer is defined or remains undefined or defined within unidentified limits. Sedgwick (Bristow, 1997, p. 199) explains:

That's one of the things that "queer" can refer to: the open mash of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excess of meanings when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made(or can't be made) to signify monolithically.

The experimental linguistic, epistemological, representational, political adventures attaching to the very many of us who at times may be moved to describe ourselves as(among many other possibilities) push femmes, radical faeries, fantasists, drags, clones, leatherfolk, ladies in tuxedos, feminist women or feminist men, masturbators, bulldaggers, divas, Snap! queens, butch bottoms, storytellers, transsexuals, aunties, wannabes, lesbian-identified men, or lesbians who sleep with men, or ... people able to relish, learn from, or identify with such.

This is the gender fluidity; a person cannot be identified within the limitations of gender and sexological types. Queer is the unidentified gender and remains so that people can find a place sexually without limiting themselves and turn into a letter such as LGBTTQI ...

However, we live in a society. We cannot turn a blind eye on it. Therefore, it affects every bone of us turning us into those defined people with limits. We try to limit ourselves because it is dictated and constructed so that we can live by it. To fit it and not to stand out, we live our roles and we do not realize it. We become, fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, aunts, teachers, engineers, politicians, or in short; actors of this society.

The worst part is that we live and act our lives without thinking about it. And the rule-breakers will be beaten and sometimes killed on this stage because they cannot play well. Some of the rule-breakers however do it intentionally, they know that this is what society gives us and there is another world that can be lived and cherished. They have the courage to live. Unfortunately, some of them are so bound to society; they commit suicide because they cannot stop what they are. They are unable to perform for the

society, not good actors. Shakespeare (Shakespeare, 2008, p. 336) may give us the best picture in his play:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages.

He talks about life and death. However, it also gives us a clear explanation of what we actually live and perform. What we do is not by choice, it is mandatory. We wear our genders, our jobs; all our roles are like coats, pants and every other thing on us. The difference is that our metaphorical clothes are heavier than our real ones. They are like chains hanging us on a wall. However we can take them off like the clothes we have today. Since there is the real us in all the postmodern, modern and conventional roles we are given and we live, we can be sure that it is not impossible to be released. Butler says:

... that gender is a choice, or that gender is a role, or that gender is a construction that one puts on, as one puts on clothes in the morning, that there is a 'one' who is prior to this gender, a one who goes to the wardrobe of gender and decides with deliberation which gender it will be today (Butler, 2004, p. 6).

Gender fluidity and Queer Theory is important in our lives today. Through the eyes of this theory, we now have a new perspective on our genders. However, an important question needs to be asked: how did we come to a point where we can talk about the queer today? The answer can be found in Foucault's thoughts and theories.

2.3 Gender Resistance, History of Sexuality, and Michel Foucault

To understand today, we need to look into the past but where do we start? For the history of gender and sexuality, the Victorian Period is crucial and still important to this day. In his famous book, Foucault's first two sentences are:

For a long time, the story goes, we supported a Victorian regime, and we continue to be dominated by it even today. Thus the image of imperial prude is emblazoned on our restrained, mute, and hypocritical sexuality. (Foucault, 1978, p. 3)

In literature departments, we still talk about hypocrisy of Victorian morality. Why is that important? It was the time when the *Scientia Sexualis* actually began. The Victorians not only confined the sexuality in “parent’s bedroom”, they also marginalized the other forms of it in a way that it can only be explained in one word: fear. Therefore, they made up a whole science dedicated to their fears: *Scientia Sexualis* or the science of sexuality. They made up illnesses about the things they did not understand such as hysteria. They put the other Victorians into brothels or mental hospitals. Foucault says:

If it was truly necessary to make room for illegitimate sexualities, it was reasoned, let them take their mischief elsewhere: to a place where they could be reintegrated, if not the circuits of production, at least in those of profit. The brothel and the mental hospital would be those places of tolerance: the prostitute, the client, and the pimp, together with the psychiatrist and hysteric- those “other Victorians” (Foucault, 1978, p. 4).

People were confined into a legitimate and one type of sexuality, and even in it they could not be alone. First, you have to get married or else the questions about your gender and sexuality would arise and not following the gender rules meant being a social outcast. However, it does not stop there. Parent’s bedroom was not the place you would be free from the society. Whenever you went to bed, you felt the people around you between you and your partner. Because, the second stage is in action: reproduction.

If you did not have any children your incompetency would be the talk of the day and reproduction was the sign of a man’s strength. Pleasure from sex was out of the question and you could not talk about what you have in your bedroom. It was a mutual agreement in the society. A respectable Victorian did not talk about sex.

The rules about gender and sexuality were not only unspoken, they were also in the law. There were acts about marriage and sexuality. There are always powers governing people in every aspect of their lives especially their sex lives. Because pleasure is the sign of power and it can only be hold by power. How the rules are deployed and forbid everything except for the binary, opposite sex relationship is important. Foucault put the principle on this issue under 5 titles (Foucault, 1978, pp. 83-84):

1. The negative Relation: According to him, Power always says No to sex. This insistence after a while starts to change the views of people. Masking, concealment and relating sex with negative aspects of life has always been a part of Western tradition. Most of the folk stories in Europe follow a tradition of a girl who is alone is raped or killed. Sex is always a negative element in discourse. Even Shakespeare joins the game from time to time. He kills Romeo and Juliet who have sex in the first week they meet and it was unsanctioned. The classical literature has also two women characters: the angel in the house and the whore or the witch. The whore is the opposite of angel in the house and the word itself is directly connected to sex and the whore is usually a bad character which supports Foucault's idea on the issue.

2. The Insistence of the Rule: If you insist on the rule, after some time, it turns into tradition. The rule of negation of sex puts basis on the other confinements. Also sex is put into the binary system by the power. Insistence turns sex in the binary system into the law. After that, power controls sex through the language or discourse.

3. The cycle of prohibition: To suppress sex, power deploys prohibition. Foucault says "Do not appear, if you do not want to disappear." The only way to exist in the society is being the part of it or else you will be suppressed by the rules. In the cycle of those prohibitions, taboos are created and deployed.

4. The logic of censorship: It may be the most interesting principle that Foucault shows us. According to him, it happens in three stages. First, you put it in the cycle of prohibition. You say it is not permitted. Then you say with the every instrument possible that it should not be talked about and make it a taboo. You can educate people on that. You can show that it is a very bad thing to talk about. It is important not give any reasons while doing that. The third stage is significant. You pretend that such a thing does not exist. This situation still is very active today. For example, Iran is famous for its denials about gender and sex. In an article in *Daily News* it is said (We Don't Have Gays in Iran, 2007):

In Iran we don't have homosexuals like in your country," Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad said at Columbia University last night in response to a question about the recent execution of two gay men there. "In Iran we do not have this phenomenon," he continued. "I do not know who has told you we have it.

The same can apply to China in 1940's. According to Lemi Ozgen in her article on Christopher Isherwood in the magazine named "K", when Isherwood wrote to Communist Party in China concerning gay rights in China, their reply is interesting: "Since there are no homosexual citizens in Chinese population, we can't include that in our party program".

5. Uniformity of the apparatus: The power does not come from the bottom or the nucleus part of the societies. It comes from the top. Therefore, the application of the power on sex is the same. It is given from the top such as state, then it goes down from there. It gives a sense of uniformity and holds the dynamics so that it will not be changed from the bottom or fall apart.

We can give Freud's ideas basically in one sentence: Everything is about sex. European thought is shaped with sex consciously or unconsciously. They fought wars, made deals using the power they have with sex. It was and still is a center of attention. Therefore, we shape the world in this concern. We like to talk about sex. It is an important aspect of life. The more it was talked about, the more it was confined.

The roots are important in this issue. Since I am going to examine Oscar Wilde who has studied Greco-Roman culture at university and his works which have a lot to do with Greco-Roman culture which shaped Christian-European culture, it is vital to see their rules. They were the ones who first put the rules. In *The History of Sexuality, The Use of Pleasure*, Foucault categorizes the principles of sex. He puts four categories which we will examine (Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 1985, pp. 15-20).

1. A fear: Excess of sexual conduct was seen as a kind of illness which needs treatment. They were afraid of seminal weakness and exhaustion of the organism which could cause an unproductive sexual life. Therefore, they mention of "an economy in use of sexual pleasures".

2. An ideal of conduct: Being against adultery, contrary to Christian culture was not a must for Greko-Roman world. However, a lot of philosophers including stoics thought that it is a manifestation of virtue. Secrecy of sex was also a virtuous behavior. In Aristotle's ideal city, for instance, a husband or a wife having a sexual intercourse

with any other person except for their legitimate partners were “dishonorable ... in any circumstances whatsoever”

3. An image: The stereotype of feminine men had already been described in Ancient Greece and Imperial Rome. Socrates in Phaedrus shows disapproval of the love that is given to soft boys, too delicate to be exposed to the sun as they are growing up. And all made up with rouge and decked out in ornaments. However, it is important to note that in Ancient Greece, the relationship between the same sexes was free under some rules.

4. A model of abstention: In ancient Greek stories, the hero who can turn aside from pleasure is always seen as virtuous. One example is the Sirens who would lure the sailors with their beautiful voices. Odysseus was tied to mast. However, he was praised as a virtuous hero in the legend.

2.4 Life and Works of Oscar Wilde

Oscar Fingal O’Flahertie Wills Wilde was born in 1854 in a radical family for their times. A mother who was a kind of feminist- I am using the term loosely since the term was not used in today’s sense until the middle of twentieth century and an Irish nationalist who was also a painter and a poet, and a father who was a surgeon had an important impact on him. His father was also a knowledgeable man. He travelled to a lot of European countries and went to Egypt. He wrote books and examined different cultures. Naturally, Oscar Wilde was open to new cultures and also very eager to read about them.

Oscar Wilde grew up in a philosophical environment. His family had a lot of intellectual friends such as poets, painters and poets. His mother used to hold meetings in their house where they discussed intellectual issues. He was not allowed to talk but, he had to attend the meetings. Therefore, in childhood, he learnt to listen before he learnt to talk. That worked a lot for him in his later life. He got used to upper class environments of Dublin. He was the intelligent boy of a very colorful family.

His mother was also an Irish nationalist who used the nickname Speranza in her writings and poems. Her first poems were published in *the Nation*, a nationalist Irish magazine.

She was not the greatest poet of her times but, she was an important figure who also raised a person like Oscar Wilde. We can see her nationalist thoughts in her poems:

As Miriam's, by the Red Sea strand
Clashing proud cymbals, so my hand
Would strike thy harp,
Loved Ireland! (Speranza, 2015)

She also wrote essays such as *American Women* and *The Bondage of Women*. Lady Wilde's influence on Oscar Wilde is definite. Later in life, Oscar Wilde will say "The poetry and music of Ireland have been not merely the luxury of the rich, but the very bulwark of patriotism the very seed and flower of liberty. Both Oscar Wilde and Speranza wrote about women rights. Speranza has an article called *American Women* where she states that American women are more liberated and they can be friends with males while the English women can merely befriend men. Oscar Wilde later wrote an essay called *American Invasion* where he states similar ideas to his mother.

Wilde attended the Portora Royal School where he was very good at studying the classics, won a scholarship and went to Trinity College in 1871. He met John Pentland Mahaffy there. Mahaffy was an expert on rhetoric and also Greek history. Those two topics had a central role in Wilde's life. Wilde became an inseparable part of London high class dinner tables because of his talent of conversation. His teacher was also an expert on the issue. Mahaffy wrote a book called *the Art of Conversation* in 1887. Wilde heard of Greek love from Mahaffy for the first time. Mahaffy thought that this issue should be examined in social environments. Wilde wrote to an Oxford friend on 27 April: "I never went to Rome at all! What a changeable fellow you must think me, but Mahaffy my old tutor carried me off to Greece with him to see Mykenae and Athens" (Pierce, 2000, p. 95).

With his success in Greek which later in life would play very important roles both in his own life and his works, Wilde gained another scholarship in 1874 and went to Oxford. Oxford is the place where Oscar Wilde became what we know today. In *De Profundis*, Wilde says "I want to get to the point when I shall be able to say quite simply, and

without affection that the two great turning-points in my life were when my father sent me to Oxford, and when society sent me to prison” (Wilde, 1997, p. 1074) .

Oscar Wilde studied classics at Magdeline College in Oxford. Iarla Manny, on the impact of Oxford and Wilde’s studies there on his life and his works, says:

He was torn between pagan Greece and Papal Rome, which symbolised the two sides of his sexual and religious struggles. Wilde visited both places during his classical studies, but for the budding poet and playwright Oxford was "paradise" and "in its own way as memorable as Athens" (Clemency, 2014)

He was very into Ancient Greece and his enthusiasm for the subject grew more in Oxford. One of the most important events in his life would be him meeting John Addington Symonds who was a Greek scholar. He was called “Mr. Soddington Symonds” by Swinburne implying that John Symonds was a sodomite. Mathews says:

Wilde began a correspondence with John Addington Symonds while he was still at Trinity College, Dublin. In the notebooks he kept at Oxford, Wilde, who considered Symonds' prose to be the equal of Pater's and Ruskin's, copied numerous passages from Symonds' work, especially his *Studies of the Greek Poets* (1873). A key figure in both aestheticism and Oxford Hellenism, Symonds was also one of the most important Victorian homosexual apologists, the author of *A Problem in Greek Ethics* (1883) and *A Problem in Modern Ethics* (1891) (Elkins & John, 2015).

Along with his mother and Mahaffy, Symonds was a very influential person in Wilde’s life. Symonds along with John Raskin and Walter Pater was the reason behind why Wilde became an Aesthetist. He thought that beauty of objects can improve the quality of life. A person should become a work art or wear a work of art. He was becoming a person very ahead of Victorian times. However, Oscar Wilde wanted more in his life. Oxford was not enough for him. He needed to feel the world and passionately wanted to become famous. He needed to be the part of the upper class. Oscar Wilde ominously said:

I’ll be a poet, a writer, a dramatist. Somehow or other I’ll be famous, and if not famous, I’ll be notorious. Or perhaps I’ll lead the life of pleasure for a time and then—who knows?—rest and do nothing. What does Plato say is the highest end that man can attain here below? To sit down and contemplate the good. Perhaps that will be the end of me too (Ding, 2015).

He did exactly what he told in the exact order he told. First, he became famous, then notorious and it was the end of him. After his graduation, he moved to London in October 1879 to promote himself as a professor of aesthetics. He moved in with Frank Miles who was a famous painter and he introduced Oscar Wilde to the higher class London. In his play later, he says:” The man who can dominate a London dinner table can dominate the world” (Wilde, *The Collected Works of Oscar Wilde*, 1997, p. 566)

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, he says: “There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about” (Wilde, 1997, p. 124). London was gray in the Victorian England. He became the rainbow of the London society. He was the talk of every event. He could influence women and easily become friends with them. He was treating them equally. He could talk to anyone without any distinction of class, gender, religion and sexuality.

He became exactly what he wanted to be: famous. If we have Kardashians today to talk about, Victorians had Wilde. Of course, it is fame-wise. Even the Prince of Wales said: “Not to know Mr. Wilde is not to be known” (Oscar Wilde Bio, 2008). He was known as a literary figure, but he did not have any works. People were asking questions about this. Therefore, he published his first play, but it was not staged. Then in 1881, he published his collection of poems, and he was heavily criticized for being unoriginal. In a caricature in *Punch* magazine, they said “Aesthete of Aesthetes, O I ‘eel just as happy as a bright sunflower, What’s in a name? The poet is Wilde, but his poetry’s tame” (Oscar Wilde Bio, 2008). He was drawn with a sunflower around his head. After *Punch* magazine, Wilde was satirized in a very popular play. He was still being talked about and it was just the beginning.

After the play satirizing him went to the US, he was offered to give lectures on Aesthetics in the US, and he went there. In the US, he met Walt Whitman, whom Wilde liked a lot. Though a rumor, it is said that Wilde had intercourse with Whitman in his house. Except for that, they talked about their arts and Wilde became friends with Whitman. While in the US, Wilde was satirized more than ever. His clothes and accessories seemed very interesting. *The New York Times* magazine described his

lectures as “dull” (Oscar Wilde Bio, 2008). However, a lot of people were going to them just to see Oscar Wilde.

In the US, he realized the hypocrisy of the English society. Americans were sincere, open, and direct in their thoughts. He used this difference in almost all his plays. Now he was more famous than ever. He became an international figure. Then he went to Paris and met important figures such as Emile Zola and Victor Hugo. Upon his return to London, he decided to get married. He got married to Constance and had two children Cecil and Vivian. He seemed like a devoted father playing with his children, and reading stories to them. However, he was Wilde and could not be tamed with the conventional marriage in the Victorian life.

While his wife got pregnant, he told his friends that he was physically revolted by her. With his marriage, another person became part of his life a Cambridge student he started tutoring named Robbie Ross. Wilde became life-long friends with him. Robbie was an open-minded person and he helped Wilde discover his sexuality. After his relationship with this Cambridge student, Oscar Wilde became a different person. Although Robbie was only 17 years old when the two first met, Robbie was sexually mature and never felt remorse for who he was. They were sexually involved at first but, their friendship was more than that. They used to discuss the philosophical side of the Uranian movement.

Oscar Wilde actually started to produce his famous works at this time. He became the editor of *The Lady's World*, he wrote “The Canterville Ghost” and “Lord Arthur Saville's Crime”. With those stories he started using his famous intense symbolism to express being torn between the self and the society. After being more confident with his sexuality thanks to Robbie, Wilde had a “fan” group around him. Andre Raffalovich used to call these boys “Oscar's Sons”. Oscar Wilde also said for the boys are like “Aeolian harps that play in the breeze of” his “matchless talk” (McKenna, 2014, p. 157).

One boy was about to get involved in Oscar's life. Lord Alfred Douglas, after reading Oscar Wilde's *Dorian Gray* was really eager to meet the author. Lord Alfred Douglas, on his account, read *Dorian Gray* nine to fourteen times. Lord Alfred Douglas was 20 years old at the time while Oscar was 36. Three months after the book was published, Bosie with Lionel Johnson went to Tite street to meet him. Lord Alfred Douglas was a

young boy and the son of Sybil and John Sholto Douglas, The Marquis of Queensberry. In their first meeting, they drank tea, talked about Uranist philosophy and, Wilde, as a habit, introduced Lord Alfred Douglas to his wife Constance.

Lord Alfred Douglas quickly became the love of Wilde's life. He was a dangerous boy. He took Oscar Wilde to the backstreets of London to the underworld of male prostitutes. Wilde loved this experience. He said: "The danger was the half the excitement." Oscar Wilde lavished this love. He gave silver cigarette cases to these boys. Everybody in the society knew what he was doing. It was Victorian London. As long as you do not say it, you can do it.

Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde lived an elegant and expensive life together. They drank the most expensive champagne together and stayed at luxurious hotels. They spent the weekends in the country together. Wilde was telling his wife that he needed the privacy to write. Constance did not doubt him. The beginning of 1890's was very productive for Oscar Wilde. He produced much of his plays while he was with Lord Alfred Douglas. In 1892, he staged *Lady Windermere's Fan*. A year later he produced *A Woman of No Importance*. In 1895, he wrote *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. Those plays were mocking London High Society. However, they had more meaning than that which we will discuss.

Lord Alfred Douglas was always in anger. They argued a lot. It was a poisonous relationship yet Oscar Wilde still continued until his own destruction and even after it. Soon the rumbles of destruction started being heard. Queensberry, Lord Alfred's father found out Lord Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde's relationship and went into a campaign to end it. He was an unstable man who was almost illiterate and beat his wife and mentally tortured his own children causing one of them to commit suicide. Lord Alfred Douglas was also an unstable person. He bought himself a pistol to shoot his father if he sees him. Lord Alfred Douglas tempted his father with arguments and angry letters and postcard. However, after being accused of sodomy by Queensberry, Oscar Wilde had to go to the court.

Queensberry prepared a defense using rent boys to testify against Oscar. Oscar lost the case. His name was removed from London Theatres. To pay his debt to creditors, his

belongings were auctioned. State opened another case in 1995 against Oscar Wilde arresting him for gross indecency under the Act of Amendment in which a person who commits the act of sodomy is sentenced to two years in jail. His friends recommended him to flee the country. His mother suggested otherwise. Oscar Wilde loved his mother and chose to stay. He said he did not want to be seen as a coward.

At court, he defended the love that dare not speak its name. He was found guilty and sent to Reading Jail for two years. There was not a toilet or writing materials for him in there. In that prison, the aim was to break a person's will to live. They gave them food just enough to be alive. It was also cold. However, with special permissions, he was allowed to use pen and paper. He wrote a very long letter showing his anger to Alfred Douglas. He also showed regret for his actions in this letter. After his death, the letter was published under the name *De Profundis*. However, Bosie later said that he did not believe Oscar Wilde's regrets. Lord Alfred Douglas said:

I am convinced it was written in passionate sincerity at the time, and yet it represents a mere mood and an unimportant of the man who wrote it, a mood too which does not even last through the 250 pages of the book (Hyde, 1963, p. 208) .

As I said before, Oscar Wilde was first famous. Then he became notorious. He went bankrupt and went to Paris after getting out of prison. His wife sent him a letter stating that she could send her money on condition that he would not see Alfred Douglas again. Lord Alfred Douglas (Bosie) was Oscar Wilde's love of life and also his poison and destruction. He could not resist it and met him again. As he said before: "The only way to get rid of the temptation is to yield to it" (Wilde, 1997, p. 16) So he did. He met Bosie in Naples again but, they argued and couldn't get along and broke up three months later. Now without the allowance from Constance, Oscar Wilde was penniless.

He published the *Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898 using his prison cell number as a pseudonym. Ironically, he wrote his best poem after becoming an exile from the society which cherished him with his worse poems. He begged for money in his last years. His last words were "My wallpaper and I are fighting a duel to the death. One or the other of us has to go" (Oscar Wilde Bio, 2008). At the age of 46, in November 1900, he died in a horrible hotel room in Paris.

After his death, Robbie Ross bought Oscar Wilde's estate and started a movement of revival for his works and by 1920's his plays were back on stage. In 1980's, he became a hero for gay rights movement for what he tried to accomplish in the 19th century and for the love which can't be named. Oscar Wilde was defending the love itself which was an entirely different concept from just sex between the same-sex. He had a philosophy on the issue. He found beauty in this love. He was not alone in his philosophical struggle. There was a group in Europe who called themselves Uranians. To understand Oscar Wilde and his works better, we need to know about the movement of Uranism too.

2.4.1 Uranian poets and Oscar Wilde

The Uranian Poets as we know from Oscar Wilde were very fond of Ancient Greek culture and literature. Michael Mathew Kaylor (Kaylor, 2014) states:

The name, appropriately, had been adapted from Plato's *Symposium*, in which he drew the distinction between Aphrodite Pandeumia and Aphrodite Urania: the former being a "common" love, the vulgar and sexual pleasures, while the latter is a "heavenly" love, spiritual and more pure in its nature.

These poets created a subculture in Victorian Society. They had to be very secretive and had to write very symbolical. They were being hunted down by the society. They were seen as criminals. Oscar Wilde was an important example for that situation. They used symbols to protect themselves from that horrid hypocritical society. Trevor Fisher says: "The Uranians had a culture in which the inhabitants maintained a more than masonic secrecy to survive in a hostile environment" (Mathew, 2006, p. 8). They used publications to connect. They did not have meetings like Freemasons did. They used some symbols. They had three major journals: *The Artist*, *The Spirit Lamp* which was edited by Bosie, and *the Chameleon*.

They used the word Pailerastia to explain their philosophy. It is a kind of relationship between a teacher and his pupil. It was a common practice in Ancient Greece. Philosophers had tutors from the sons of aristocracy. The final stage of their education was to attain the liquid knowledge of their teacher. Symonds, one of the most famous Uranians, remarked: "What the Greeks called the Pailerastia, or boy-love, was a phenomenon of one of the most brilliant periods of human culture".

One of the most important symbols of Uranian Poets was green carnation which was invented by Oscar Wilde. Ellevsen says:

On 20 February 1892, for the first performance of his play *Lady Windermere's Fan*, Oscar Wilde arranged for one of the actors to wear a green carnation in his buttonhole. He also encouraged friends he had invited to the play to wear a green carnation, too, so that a select part of the audience would be connected to a character on stage. Artist Graham Robertson was one of the people Wilde asked to wear the flower. (Ellevsen, 2013)

He used the green carnation to shock and he surprised the audience. Oscar Wilde's fan boys wore the carnation that day.

Almost all the Uranians were struggling with the fact that they were marginalized because of their love for the same sex. Most of them wanted to fight for their rights in secrecy. However, they were always in between. This poem by Lord Alfred Douglas shows the remorse perfectly:

‘What is thy name?’ He said, ‘My name is Love.’
Then straight the first did turn himself to me
And cried, ‘He lieth, for his name is Shame,
But I am Love, and I was wont to be
Alone in this fair garden, till he came
Unasked by night; I am true Love, I fill
The hearts of boy and girl with mutual flame.’
Then sighing, said the other, ‘Have thy will,
I am the love that dare not speak its name.’ (Douglas, 1894)

Even Lord Alfred Douglas who was very much in those kinds of relationships was in remorse. After Oscar Wilde's death, he tried to make peace with his past. In the end, he went bankrupt and killed himself.

In the next chapters, we will see that Oscar Wilde continuously punished himself and his characters because of their resistance to the society. He was not very different from Lord Alfred Douglas in this sense.

3 THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

3.1 An Overview of the Plot

In the opening of the novel Basil Howard, a Londoner artist who paints pictures and has friends in Victorian High society meets Dorian Gray in a house. In the first chapter, as readers we witness that Dorian Gray is a naïve young man from the country. He is a noble man. He is well-educated but he does not know the Victorian life of London. He becomes a model for Basil Howard. However, we feel that Basil Howard has some feelings for Dorian Gray. He depicts him like a Greek demi-god. He is afraid to reveal his feelings. In the novel, Basil Howard says of the picture: “but I can’t really exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it” (Wilde, 1997, p. 6)

We are also introduced to one of the most shocking characters for the Victorian reader: Lord Henry Wotton. He is very witty and likes scandalous talks and shocks his friends with his conversations about pleasure, marriage, youth and fun. Lord Henry Wotton insists on that Basil Howard should exhibit the picture. He thinks that it is Basil Howard’s masterpiece and everyone should see it. During their conversation, Dorian Gray comes to the scene.

Basil Howard’s feelings for Dorian Gray are a kind of platonic Uranian love. He wants Dorian to be pure and away from the wickedness of his witty and immoral friend Lord Henry Wotton. Since they come by, it becomes impossible for Basil to hide Dorian away. Reluctantly, Basil Howard introduces Dorian Gray to Lord Henry Wotton. Another reason for Basil’s reluctance is that since he is naïve, he is very impressionable to the new and dangerous ideas of Lord Henry Wotton.

Basil Howard turns out to be right in his fears. Lord Henry Wotton affects Dorian's thoughts. Lord Henry Wotton talks about how youth and beauty goes away so quickly and people don't have enough chance to experience it. Lord Henry Wotton says:

No, you don't feel it now. Someday, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? (Wilde, 1997, p. 18)

Youth is also an important part of the Uranian love which gives us an important clue of the semiotic features of the novel. It is self-revealing in every word written. Dorian Gray feels sorry for himself since he is aware his beauty and youth and it will be gone soon.

He gets very upset the fact that he will be old and wrinkled and his painting will stay the same and protect its youth. Dorian Gray says:

How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that, I would give anything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that! (Wilde, 1997, p. 21).

Lord Henry Wotton still continues to say that Basil should exhibit it but, Basil says it belongs to Dorian. In a few weeks, Dorian Gray becomes a student to Lord Henry Wotton. He introduces Dorian Gray to the new ideas on beauty, marriage and living one's youth to the fullest. According to Lord Henry Wotton, everyone should pursue their pleasures to live their lives. Dorian Gray becomes another person under Lord Henry's education.

Dorian Gray falls in love with a beautiful girl when he goes to see a play in a theatre. This girl is an actress named Sibyl Vane. What Dorian Gray doesn't realize in the beginning is that it is her acting he loves, not her. He confuses his feelings and Sibyl falls for Dorian Gray. Sibyl's brother warns her against Dorian Gray, but she does not listen to her brother.

They get engaged. As she is really in love, she can't act as a person who is in love. Seeing that, Dorian Gray understands he does not love her. He breaks off the engagement. When he returns home after this, he realizes that the portrait has changed.

He gets afraid and goes to Sibyl for amendment. However, he finds out that Sybil commits suicide after the breaking-off the engagement. After her suicide, Dorian Gray hides the portrait so that no one can see it except for him. Lord Henry Wotton still teaches him to live his pleasures and gives him a book becoming a bible of sins and pleasures for Dorian Gray. He experiences every kind of pleasure imaginable no matter what the consequences are for him or the people around him.

Eighteen years later, London High class talks about his notorious reputation. He is seen as a scandalous man. However, he is still accepted to the parties because he is still young and beautiful and never changed a bit in eighteen years. On the contrary, his portrait becomes hideous and unbearable to look at.

One night, Dorian Gray and Basil Howard argue heavily and Dorian Gray offers to show his soul to Basil Howard. Basil Howard is terrified by the portrait he painted. He wants Dorian Gray to make amends. Dorian is now furious and kills Basil Howard that night. With the help of a doctor he blackmails, Dorian Gray gets rid of the body of Basil. The next night, while going to an opium den, he sees James Vane. James wants to kill Dorian for what he did to his sister. He threatens Dorian Gray to kill him. One day, while Dorian having guests in his country house, he sees James outside the window but he is shot by a group of hunters accidentally. James' death relieves him greatly.

After a while, he cannot stand seeing his portrait but he does not have the courage to confess his crimes. He takes a knife which is ironically the knife he used to kill Basil Howard when they argued. He tries to destroy the painting with this knife. After he stabs the portrait, he is found dead on the floor as a wrinkled, old and horrifying-looking man with a knife on his heart. In the meantime, Lord Henry Wotton's wife cheats on him with another man and leaves him. Though, he seems not to love his wife, he feels sorry for himself for being left and he sees his marriage as a habit he did not want to lose.

3.2. Dorian Gray, The Paedarastic Student

It is important to analyze the name of the main character which is also the name of the book to understand the content. As we see in all the Uranist poets and writers, Oscar Wilde tends to use symbolism to hide away the real meaning of his stories. We talked

about what paederastia is in the previous chapter. Paederastia was very common among ancient Greek cities and tribes. Oscar Wilde, as a Uranist and an expert on the Greek culture, knew exactly what paederastia was and where it was common. Dors were a tribe where Paederastia was practiced widely.

He made the character's name Dorian meaning the boy who comes from Dorian culture. It is a hint right from the title of the book in which we will see a paederastic relationship between the characters. It is hidden well in the novel with a lot of word plays. The character's surname is a bit more private for Oscar himself. In 1889 at a party, Oscar Wilde met a young man named John Gray. He was an attractive young man just like the main character in the novel. It is remarked in many resources that John Gray was the real-life Dorian Gray.

Oscar had taken John Gray's surname, changing his Christian name to the suggestive Dorian – a name replete with implicit paiderastia. The Dorians were a tribe of ancient Greece, inhabiting the major cities of Sparta, Argos, and Corinth. The Dorians were generally held responsible for the spread of paiderastia throughout ancient Greece (McKenna, 2014, p. 24).

However, Dorian Gray's surname can also refer to the character's situation. He was not entirely evil. Therefore, Dorian Gray is not a black character. However, he is not white. He is a complex character in a gray area. That can also explain the surname of the character. Oscar, like many other Victorian writers such as Charles Dickens, liked word plays with the names of his characters. Another example of such word-play name is Earnest from the play *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

As I remarked, Dorian Gray is a very complex character. A lot of articles were written and a lot of things have been said on his character. There is not only one word to describe such a character. Oscar Wilde painted a character with his pen while creating Dorian Gray. He is pure and he is not. He sometimes seems narcissistic but not always. He likes using people but feels remorse. We can add more examples for the opposite parts of this one character. But if we look for one word to describe Dorian it is "becoming". He is a much more different character in the beginning of the novel than in the middle of it or in the end.

3.3 Lord Henry Wotton

In *the History of Sexuality*, Foucault talks about gender and sexuality in Victorian Period: “A single locus of sexuality was acknowledged in social space as well as at the heart of every household, but it was a utilitarian and fertile one: the parents’ bedroom” (Foucault, 1978, p. 3). Except for the ones in “parent’s bedroom” every other form of sexuality was marginalized. Again Foucault says:

The brothel and the mental hospital would be those places of tolerance: the prostitute, the client, and the pimp, together with the psychiatrist and his hysteric-those ‘Other Victorians’, as Steven Marcus would say- seem to have surreptitiously transferred the pleasures that are unspoken into the order of things that are counted (Foucault, 1985, p. 4)

Issue of sexuality became very problematic for the Victorian Society. They invented “the Scientia Sexualis” in this century. What was different was unacceptable. In this century, they created ways of punishing different sexualities. First, English Parliament ran an act in which people who committed the act of sodomy was punished by death. Then they released The Act of Amendment and its result was putting people who committed the act between two to ten years.

Oscar Wilde was also put in prison under this act. After he went to prison, he regretted the act: “I must say to myself that I ruined myself” (Wilde, 1997, p. 1071). However, the question is whether he really regretted it or not. In *De Profundis*, he says: “I allowed pleasure to dominate me .I ended in horrible disgrace” (Wilde, 1997, p. 1071). Even before going to prison, it was clear in his works that he was always in between. He wanted to free himself from the chains of the society. At the same time, he was committed to that society and felt guilty for his actions.

As I said he was in between. He was defending “the love that dare not speak its name” and he was similar to his character in this defense. According to him, while Oscar Wilde likes some “special” feelings and thoughts, Lord Henry “endorses every feeling, thought, dream, and impulse, rather than any particular” (Nunokawa & Sedgwick, 1997, p. 151). Oscar’s and Lord Henry Wotton’s common characteristic was that they both talked about desire and it was confined in Victorian times. The hypocrisy at that time was as long as you did not talk about it, you could do it but, they were both talking.

According to Nunokawa, Lord Henry Wotton was advocate for “sexual passion” (Nunokawa & Sedgwick, 1997, p. 160). Duggan remarks “Dorian lives according to what Lord Henry professes” (Duggan, 2008, p. 63). This is the philosophy of Oscar Wilde: Uranian philosophy of paederastia. Oscar, himself put this into action in his own life. His “fan boys” were mostly students who liked Oscar’s works and these students were also writers who wanted to be like Oscar Wilde so Oscar Wilde was their teacher. But Sinfield was against such a reading: “*The Picture of Dorian Gray* invokes the queer image, to some readers at least, despite at no point representing it” (Richler, 2014).

Sinfield is against Nunokawa and Sedwick in his book by remarking that Sedwick’s search for a “gay scenario” does not seem possible, because “Wilde was neither gay nor homosexual” (Luckhurst, 1995, p. 663), and these two terms were non-existent in his time. Barbara Charlesworld thinks that three male characters (Lord Henry, Dorian Gray and Basil Howard) have the characteristics of Oscar Wilde together and Wilde himself in a letter to a friend says: “Lord Henry, what the world thinks me” (Caroll, 2005, p. 290)

Articulation of or talking about sex and desire was out of discussion. That is why *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was very surprising for the Victorian reader and was seen as immoral by them. Lord Henry talks about what is marginalized. Lord Henry says “The only way to get rid of temptation is to yield to it” (Wilde, 1997, p. 16) However, Lord Henry Wotton’s most important feature is conversation. He cannot do anything. He just talks. He is still part of the society and did what he was told by the society.

His performative role of marriage is very much part of his life which he cannot get rid of. Instead he became a platonic teacher to Dorian. That was his way of freeing himself from the vicious cycle of life in the Victorian society. We can easily see the paederastic relationship between the two with a dominance of Lord Henry Wotton over Dorian in the beginning. Luljeta Muriqi illustrates this “In regard to his pedagogic role, Lord Henry realizes this, quite early in the novel, at his very first meeting with Dorian” (Muriqi, 2014, s. 9). Like everybody, though a fictional character, Lord Henry Wotton has many different roles, which he performs without realizing that he is acting. He is an actor in his own life. Butler says:

If gender is a kind of a doing, an incessant activity performed, in part, without one's knowing and without one's willing, it is not for that reason automatic or mechanical. On the contrary, it is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint (Butler, 2004, p. 1)

In this "scene of constraint", he relieves himself with his teacher-role. It is a means of escape from the reality and dullness of his life. He has two roles which seem opposite to each other: He is a teacher to Dorian Gray, and a bored husband

Those two roles are equally important for him. He cannot give up on neither of them. The first role is his dream world and things he wants to do and the latter is his reality and you cannot escape from your own reality. But we will analyze both of those roles and see the results of those two roles in the character's life.

In the novel, we see Lord Henry Wotton as a character with different roles. Some of these roles are normative and these normative roles are inseparable from him because he performs them without realizing that they are imposed rules of the society. Butler says that "Heterosexual privilege operates in many ways, and two ways in which it operates naturalizing itself and rendering itself as the original and the norm" (Butler, 2004, p. 126)

His "natural" roles which are being a high socialite and a husband do not put him in danger. They include standards put in front of him probably right after when he was born. However, his unnatural Uranist role is what makes things bad. As a teacher of desire, Dorian Gray becomes the flesh and bones version of what Lord Henry Wotton wants to do. This situation makes his marriage end by the end of the novel. Lord Henry Wotton creates a person whom he cannot control later on and Dorian Gray becomes a monster which Lord Henry Wotton makes out of his desires unwillingly. In fact, with Lord Henry Wotton's end, Oscar Wilde punishes himself.

As it is mentioned before Oscar Wilde was always in between when it came to his illegitimate relationships. He used to introduce his lovers to his wife to relieve himself from the burden of the pressure of society, and as a Protestant who had a strict Protestant childhood, acceptance from his wife is not enough. He punishes himself through his characters as well. Wilde is a gender resistant with a sense of regret. *De Profundis* is a proof of this situation all by itself but, his life-long love, Lord Alfred Douglas, does not

believe in the sincerity of his regrets interestingly. Bosie's thoughts on Wilde's *De Profundis* are interesting: "I am convinced it was written in passionate sincerity at the time, and yet it represents a mere mood and an unimportant of the man who wrote it, a mood too which does not even last through the 250 pages of the book" (Hyde, 1963, p. 208). As an unstable man, Bosie may have written these words just out of anger or spite against Oscar. We need to go into detail in Lord Henry Wotton's roles to see that.

3.4 Lord Henry Wotton, the Teacher

Even in the first moments he meets with Dorian, he starts with some suggestions to him leading us to believe that he is becoming a teacher for Dorian Gray day by day and Dorian Gray follows the rules and teachings given him by Lord Henry Wotton. Dorian Gray is already ready to have a teacher. In the start of the second chapter of the novel Dorian Gray says: "I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming" (Wilde, 1997, p. 14) He even goes much further by stating he would do everything Lord Henry Wotton says. Moreover, Lord Henry Wotton is here and ready to take up the role.

In the same chapter right after Lord Henry Wotton and Dorian Gray meet, Lord Henry Wotton suggests Dorian Gray not go in for philanthropy. And Dorian Gray as if he was his student asks: "I want you to tell me why I should not go in for philanthropy"(Wilde, 1997, p. 15). This is the beginning of their paiderastian relationship. In the novel Dorian Gray-Lord Henry Wotton relationship is never active. Lord Henry Wotton only talks the way in which he wants to live, and Dorian Gray listens to his ideas and puts them into practice. Lord Henry Wotton never does anything except for teaching Dorian Gray the way to live his desires freely. Dorian Gray should live his life freely and escape from the constraints of the society. However, Lord Henry Wotton cannot do what he asks from Dorian Gray. He becomes an audience on Dorian Gray's stage with only one difference. He leads the play until some point.

Their relationship is like the one between Socrates and Plato, or Oscar and Bosie. It is more like Oscar's own relationship because, just like Henry, Oscar also cannot control Bosie. The difference is Bosie was always out of control. In Dorian Gray – Lord Henry Wotton relationship, Dorian Gray is perfectly pure and naïve like an angel in the

beginning. However, it does not change the fact that Dorian became a punishment for Lord Henry in the end. Dorian Gray becomes a monster Lord Henry Wotton cannot control. The moral of this book in the end becomes: People may want to live their desires or passions. As long as the person accepts the horrible consequences, there should not be any problems.

3.5 Lord Henry Wotton as a Frustrated Husband

As was the expectancy from a member of Victorian High Society, Lord Henry Wotton is a married man. Hence, he becomes the direct personification of Victorian Men. But the way in which he carries out these roles is our concern.

We barely see Lady Wotton in the novel. It is very similar to Wilde's life since we rarely see Oscar Wilde side by side with Constance. It does not mean that he is completely away from the norms of the society he lives with; he only does not fit in those norms in many ways. Therefore he finds his escape with his writings. He tells what he thinks through his characters.

Lord Henry Wotton says "One charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception absolutely necessary for both parties" (Wilde, 1997, p. 7). What does he tell us here? It is the perfect definition of marriage for Oscar Wilde. You carry out your role as a husband as the society wishes but, it is only a deception. Only thing you need in a marriage is a show-off. It is a kind of game a person lives in his life. You do not have to talk with your partner or even live with him/her. It is as Freddy Mercury says show-must-go-on type of relationship. You attend parties and social occasions. People see you in this marriage and that is the last point. Lord Henry Wotton approves of it when he says: "I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing" (Wilde, 1997, p. 7).

However, he does not do anything different in his life. It is not important whether his wife knows or not. He does not want to be the one in a normative life, but he does not change the way he lives. He only talks about it. His conception of love is also out of the ordinary. He does not think that a relationship should be monogamous though he is in a monogamous. He says "Those who are faithful only knows the trivial side of love: it is

the faithless who knows loves tragedies” (Wilde, 1997, p. 12). Those contradictions make him more interesting for us. Because on the one hand he does not agree with what society forces him to do. On the other hand, he does exactly what he is expected to do.

His behavior and sometimes even his talk show us that reality. When he is asked what he would change in England, instead of saying a lot of things, his only wish for England to change is its weather. But throughout the novel, he talks about pleasure, desire and lack of them in a marriage a lot. When it comes to reality or in other words those ideas are put onto the table of High Socialite, he turns exactly to the other way and agrees with the society.

Lord Henry Wotton is a man who is tired of life. He can only talk about it but he is not going to live. He shows his frustration especially with the life of a married man in his own words when he says “Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious: both are disappointed” (Wilde, 1997, p. 35). We don’t need any other proof but his words. Performing a gender which you don’t want to do is tiring. He may have thought that he would be relieved when he gets married since he fulfilled the wishes of the society. On the contrary, it puts more performative weight on his shoulders. While when he was a single man, he had the role of a man as a brother, maybe, a young man who needs to get married; when he got married, he becomes so much more. Family life is the focus of the society. It is where our morality comes from. Any other form of gender performativity is seen immoral. It was like that in the Nineteenth Century and it is still the same for some people today. Or else we would not see people who are against gay marriage.

Their whole argument is that of the holiness of the family and the family as a source of morality. With this weight in his shoulders, he gets disappointed. Because he does not get what he wants from the life of a married man. So we often see him complaining about this marriage. Although he complains constantly, he never intends to end it. Maybe this is because he thinks a woman as “decorative sex” (Wilde, 1997, p. 35).

Lord Henry Wotton is so frustrated in his marriage which is with this “decorative sex” that he cannot even fulfill his role in the marriage entirely. Throughout the novel, we do not see the hints of a child. Arguably, Lord and Lady Wotton do not have a child. This

leads to the question whether they are the symbol of Victorian couple which Foucault would describe as a reproductive one. However, Wilde's family of Wottons is the face of the hypocrisy of Victorian family life itself. He lives his role in front of the audience as a person of high class. But his fantasies are different from what he has in his life.

Butler says "One does not 'do' one's gender alone" (Butler, 2004, p. 1). One does gender for the others. When we think of Lord Henry Wotton, we may say that he has two-gender performance. One is when he is with Dorian Gray, and the other one is in his life in general. While the first one is more talking than action, the latter is more about action without many words. His performance for the latter can be exemplified by his marriage as an action. And his actions are in a constant mood of frustration. He talks about marriage in general as something terrible that should not be approached by anyone in his right mind. Even people around him see his frustration and constant grouching about marriage. In the middle of the novel Dorian Gray says to Lord Henry Wotton: "I know what you are going to say. Something dreadful about marriage. Don't say it" (Wilde, 1997, p. 69). At this point, it is not hard to realize Lord Henry Wotton's marriage is nothing but a game. But this game is exactly what the society wants. One person can be the representation of the whole society. And here we have a man who is really exhausted with his role in that society.

His escape, his desires in flesh is Dorian Gray. He dictates to Dorian Gray like a teacher what to do. What Lord Henry Wotton actually does is putting flesh onto his desires and making them a walking man. Dorian Gray becomes his walking desire, his one and only young friend. Dorian Gray is his escape route from reality, a harbor that he can go. Dorian makes a similar confession in the book when he says "...It never would have happened if I had not met you. You filled me with wild desire to know everything about life"(Wilde, 1997, p. 36).

With desires filled in him by Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian Gray becomes more than what he expects. At first Dorian Gray is a student, a personification of Lord Henry Wotton's fantasy. But after a while, Lord Henry Wotton's fantasy shatters. Dorian does the unexpected for Lord Henry. He kills a man. Making a girl commit suicide is not important for Lord Henry. The decorative sex can die. However, killing a man, though

acceptable for low class, is not for someone from high class society. When Dorian Gray asks Lord Henry Wotton what if he killed Basil, his answer is: “Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders” (Wilde, 1997, p. 147)

In conclusion, Lord Henry Wotton is punished by Oscar Wilde. One may think that he will not care about his wife running away with another man. But he is tied to his social role so much that he does not think it is something good. Because he is part of a society in which your gender role is important and you should not fail in this role. A break-up is a failure especially if the reason behind it is the man’s passion and sexual desires. In short his fantasy crushes his reality. In the end, he says:

Poor Victoria, I was very fond of her. The house is rather lonely without her. Of course, married life is only a habit. But then one regrets the loss even of one’s worst habits. Perhaps one regrets them the most. They are such an essential part of one’s personality (Wilde 147).

One’s mode of becoming, his gender sometimes becomes so much part of him that he cannot undo his gender very easily, especially when the reason behind it is also the society as well.

4 LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME

Language is a social device and we use it to think. We express our feelings, emotions, and thoughts with this device. Since we use it to communicate with people, sometimes we use the device to hold our social positions. The moment we are born, we are exposed to a language which gives us our social personalities. We act under the control of this device which is surrounded by the norms of the society. If we start to think seriously on the effects of the results, we may realize that the thoughts we have are not always the thoughts we produce all by ourselves. It is the part of a social consciousness. We abide by this consciousness most of the time.

Symbols and sounds create a language. Therefore, we think with those images and those images come from the society we live in. For instance, when we use the word “marriage” while talking, we usually have an image of a man and a woman. This image creates the husband who is a man and a wife who is a woman. This image changes from society to society. In Denmark or Holland where gay marriage has been legal for a decade, the image of marriage does not always consist of a woman and a man. In Turkey, it does. These images shape our consciousness. It does not matter how modern we see ourselves. In a country where marriage is traditionally between a man and a woman the image is fixed and this creates a kind of butterfly effect. They lead to a web of images.

The image of marriage also creates the image of relationships. Image of friendship becomes between the same sexes. A relationship involving sexual conduct becomes only heterosexual. It also creates the image of family. Then we see children in the picture. Those pictures created in our minds with the language become norms. If something is not in this picture frame, it is feared. It does not even exist in the language itself.

Not being able to define everything, societies get far from the reality and make up new words for the ones out of this picture. They give negative attributions for the undefined and everybody start to use it. Then we have the words like fag, slut, and weirdo. This problem of images creates a dilemma in each part of our lives. With those negative attributions to the unknown becomes a social problem and if we are the undefined, we become the problem. In practice, we become the image of the problem. It shows itself in literature as well with writers like Andre Gide, Oscar Wilde, and Walt Whitman. They are famous and with the negative attribution of the image, they are also notorious.

Oscar Wilde is a dilemma himself. On one hand he thinks of himself as a “Uranist” – defending sexual freedom which is seen in his speeches, yet in his works, he creates punishments for the people who are the defenders of a modern life and free thought and praises the ones who do their duties for the society. In his works, if someone is part of the imagery frame of the social consciousness, s/he can get away with almost anything and, if a person is against the norms, they will be punished even if they do not commit a crime. His work, *The Crime of Lord Arthur Savile* which I am going to examine, is about a man who tries to murder people in the name of a gendered duty and who gets away with it.

4.1 An Overview of the Plot

Lord Arthur Savile is a man who is engaged. Doing his duty and being about to get married makes him very happy. However, Lady Merton's chiromantist Podgers reads his palm to tell his future. At first, Lord Arthur does not think it is a problem since nobody can see the future and it is nonsense. Because, he holds a feature every man should have in the Victorian society: reason.

Mrs. Podgers says that she sees blood on his hand and it means that he will commit a murder in the near future and he will have to kill someone who is a relative but not a very close one. Then he gets concerned. Because he was taught all his life that he should do his duties. Therefore, he wants to prevent this future. He thinks of his wife-to-be and feels that if he does not do it before the marriage, it will give shame to his wife.

Therefore, he reaches a decision. He will kill someone before his marriage so that nothing shameful happens in his marriage.

First, he decides to kill his aunt, Lady Clementina. Because he thinks that she is old and she always complains about heartburn. He gets a candy and it contains Wolf's bane which is strong poison. Lord Arthur says it will be good for her to take it. She promises to take it. The next day, Arthur finds out that she is dead. He is really happy now that the deed is done. Soon, he learns that she did not die because of the poison.

On the same night, after the dinner, she complains about her heartburn. Then she dies with a heart attack before being able to take the poison. In the lady's house, he sees Sybil by the box of candy. He thinks that she swallowed it. When he asked about that, Sybil says it looks dusty and old and she can never swallow it. However, he decides not to use poison to murder someone. He is relieved by the answer. The only reason for this relief is not love but his strong feeling of duty imposed on him by the society.

In his second attempt, after getting poisoned himself, wants to kill someone without using any poison. He decides to kill the Dean of Chichester, with an explosive clock. Dean of Chichester is a very cultured man and very interested in clocks. He has a whole collection of them. That's why he thinks he can give it to him as a present. He meets Mr. Winckelkopf and Mr. Winckelkopf helps him with the clock. Mr. Winckelkopf sets up the clock at noon on Friday for him. Instead of making a big explosion at noon, it explodes in every hour with a bit of gunpowder.

Lord Arthur Savile gets desperate. It is his second attempt and it does not work. First two attempts are important. Author specifically chooses two characters as one is male and the other is female. It means that he wants to kill someone just because of his duty not because of the gender of the chosen people. One day while walking on the road by the Thames, he sees Mr. Podgers, the chiromantist and Lord Arthur has an idea. If he cannot kill anyone with poison or a bomb, he should do it by his bare hands. He holds Mr. Podgers by the legs and flings him into the river. He drowns Mr. Podgers. He is successful. The next day, he reads the paper and sees that his corpse is found in the river. The police think that it is a suicide. Lord Arthur is not arrested. He gets married three weeks later. He has two children and lives happily ever after.

4.2 Crime and Punishment

Lord Arthur Savile is a typical Victorian man. He embodies the norms of the society. Lord Savile is engaged to get married which is a duty of every respected man in the Nineteenth Century England. The story begins at Lady Windermere's party and the party shows the stereotypical Victorian women in one room altogether. We clearly see the mentality that created hysteria actually exists in the story from a different man. However, this man actually shows resistance to the norms in his real life.

The first stereotype we see is that woman believes in magic and fortune telling and cannot live without them and seeing it as a kind of science. On the first page of the story Gladys, an insignificant character of the story says "My chiromantist, Duchess; I can't live without him at present." (Wilde, 1997, p. 157). Chiromantist is a person who is actually a fortuneteller who reads hands and tells the future and women are really interested in seeing their future and believe in it. However, in spite of his "reason", Lord Savile believes in it when his hand is also read. With both direct and indirect use of words, Wilde creates a world of morality and duty like a conformist. Wilde does not want his own performative roles which are forced onto him. In the story he writes:

Actors are so fortunate. They can choose whether they will appear in tragedy or in comedy, whether they will suffer or make merry, laugh or shed tears. But in real life it is different. Most men and women are forced to perform parts for which they have no qualifications. Our Gildernsterns play Hamlet for us, and our Hamlets have to jest like Prince Hal. The world is a stage but, the play is badly cast (Wilde, 1997, p. 163).

Forced genders and sexualities are the basis of Victorian life. Just to fit in and complete their duties people living in that society are capable of doing anything for that matter. Lord Arthur Savile is not different. After the fortuneteller reads his hand, he is shocked and mortified with the news that he will kill a relative before his marriage. His reason fights with his feelings.

In the story after he learns his future, Wilde writes "His reason revolted against it, and yet he felt that some tragedy was hanging over him, and that he had been suddenly called up to bear an intolerable burden." (Wilde, 1997, p. 163) This burden is the burden of duty. His duty given by the society to get married is twice as heavy now that he will kill someone. Of course, there is a direct meaning of "burden" here as well as an indirect

one. As a direct word, we see that this “burden” is the feeling of his having to kill someone while it indirectly indicates that his duty of getting married is a burden and needs to be completed even if a murder is a part of this duty. Oscar Wilde’s language style for the story is also interesting.

His main character does not talk much; he does what he is told by the society. His feelings and thoughts are given indirectly. As Foucault’s saying “On the subject of sex, silence became the rule”, Lord Savile is also almost always silent even for his duties over sex. His silence in the story may be the indicator of Wilde’s view that the society does not care about the individuals. The important thing here is to abide the rules and stay silent. You can talk in your head but, you should not say anything. The main character is terrorized by the idea of the murder. He is really afraid but he does not say it. He only tells these things in his head and we learn his fear from the writer not by him. Because as a man he is not supposed to be afraid of anything, he says nothing. He is the male performativity in flesh with his thoughts and actions and the other characters representing the higher class society give direct speeches and lead the main character into murder with their talk in the name of morality and duty. Women in the story, on the contrary, always talks and their speech is almost always direct. Their characteristics are not significant. They are presented in the story as a whole package of the society. They like the idea of marriage so much that they want to say it out loud very often. We can see the excitement of a woman in the story of Lord Savile’s engagement when she says: “Don’t tell him that he is engaged to one of the most beautiful girls in London, because it appeared in the Morning Post a month ago” (Wilde, 1997, p. 167). She is clearly excited and beauty is important for her since the only fact we know about the person Lord Savile is engaged to is her beauty and that is the only quality that is expected by the society for a woman. Another fact we see about woman and marriage is that they should get married but only once, for a woman with more than one partner in her life is not moral. The story actually begins with a woman’s story on how she got married three times and this being a scandal.

When it comes to man according to the direct speech of women in the story they should not be “fascinating”. They set standards and norms for Lord Savile. He does not talk but do as what he is told to do by the society, or in other words the women surrounding him. This direct speech versus action way of language use shows us the direct relation between language, power and knowledge. While the power which holds the language in its hands gives the orders, everyday Victorian man abides by it with his/her actions.

Simone De Beauvoir’s famous saying “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman” may apply here though the saying should be extended for both genders. Even though you may have been put in that gender role, he may not be able to hold on there forever because it is not just like you become a man because of the way you raised, but you try to stay that way since you are supposedly born into that role. The idea of becoming was taken from Beauvoir, and extended by Butler. Mode of becoming does not end, but continuous throughout our lives. In fact, Lord Savile is tired of his role though he tries to stay in that role. As I quoted before from the story, he thinks that he does not fit in the role properly but, he knows that he has to follow the rules. He can’t just let his performativity go. Because it is not productive, the society doesn’t want him to be himself. People who are not reproductive do not suit in the capitalist British society of the 19th century. However, he also has an original self, we are not able to uncover from the story.

Lord Savile has to wear the gender that is found suitable for him: a rich noble man who will get married. On his way to fit that role, he has to kill a person. Such a savage act is normal and performable if it is for the society’s norms. At least this is what Lord Savile thinks. He is afraid but, he wants to do it anyway. Unlike the actors on the stage, we hold onto our roles for life. It is rare that an actor makes mistakes about his roles on the stage. Not everyone is an actor. Even if everyone was a great actor, we would not be able to perform our roles perfectly in real life as long as we live. Therefore everybody makes mistakes within their roles. Those failures or those mistakes are the things that are interesting about our gender performativity.

Most people still assume that since they are born into the heterosexual matrix of the society, they will be a straight and natural part of it but, you cannot be part of something

unnatural and manmade fully. You just act into it and you fail from time to time. We see those failures every single day and those failures make people angry, stressed, fearful, terrorized, aggressive and sad. They even cause wars between the countries just to see who holds the land which is seen as a lady. It is a manly act.

Those who fail are all around us and it is us. If we do not realize that all the tags we have on us are just roles and we may fail, we will not live our lives to the fullest. Like teachers who gets angry and stressed in their class, when they are not listened to by their students, our main character in the story also gets frustrated when he fails to kill someone.

Since we do not perform our genders alone, people around him also get frustrated and angry. Sibyl, Lord Arthur's fiancée wants to break off the engagement when Lord Arthur fails to murder someone to get married to her and postpones the wedding. Lord Henry gets so frustrated that in the story Wilde writes "He had tried to do his duty, but it seemed as if Destiny himself turned traitor" (Wilde, 1997, p. 178).

After two failures, he finally manages to kill someone and that someone is no one but the fortuneteller himself. Traditionally, in Wilde's works as he says "The good ended happily and the bad unhappily" (Wilde, 1997, p. 685). In that sense, Lord Savile ends up happily ever after. He is good because he conforms to his roles. He kills a man but, that is not important as long as it is for marriage.

In the story, there is a moral. He lives happily because he performs his duty. That's where we see the paradoxical structure of Wilde's works. He says "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all". After saying such a thing, he adds a moral back ground to almost every work he writes. The way he writes his works is like a true Uranian poet. He fights for the sexual freedom but, in the end all the fighters die or get punished. His life and his works show two things. He seems like guessing the future events. He says he will be famous if not famous, not notorious. He becomes both. There are characters who fight for their freedom. Those characters get punished just like in real life.

As it is mentioned in the gay rights movements, activists or people from different sexual orientations are punished most of the time. In the eighteenth century, people going to

Molly Houses were killed. In the nineteenth century, blackmailers and some male prostitutes lead to the imprisonment of a lot of people. In 1950's in the US, McCarty went out gay hunting just like the witch hunts of Salem. However, this realism of Wilde does not come from the actual situation in hand. He usually punishes himself for being out side of the social norms. He thinks that he ruins himself for the things he is doing. Duty-conformer Lord Arthur gets away with his crime. However, in the next part we will talk about a man of high intellectual dying without an actual criminal act.

5 THE PORTRAIT OF M.R. W.H.

This story is interesting in many ways. First of all, it is not like a usual story. It involves a theory and it is written to defend an idea. Therefore, theory takes up most of the space in it. It is about Shakespeare and his lover Willie Hughes. The idea is alluring for Wilde because Willie Hughes is a young actor compared to William Shakespeare. His paederestic ideal is very applicable in this situation. Probably the theory has been discussed among Uranian poets many times. Therefore, it is not very strange to see Wilde turning it into a story. Wilde was also a man who was attracted to the same sex and had a relationship with a younger man just like Shakespeare.

Oscar Wilde was not the first person tackling with the issue of the Willie Hughes and William Shakespeare relationship. In the eighteenth century, Thomas Tyrwhitt was the first person who proposed that there is a relationship between the two because of Shakespeare's Sonnet 20 "A man in hue, all Hues in his controlling" (Willie Hughes, 2015). The word "Hue" was written with a capital letter and it was italic. However, Oscar Wilde's story made the theory more popular and it was widely discussed afterwards.

The story is intense and full of implications of people who are attracted to the same sex. In the story, Oscar Wilde was more interested in explaining the theory than the story itself. Therefore, the plot is not very strong. It looks like it has the structure of *The Republic* by Plato.

Before analyzing the story itself, we will look at the story briefly and while looking at the story we need to see it as a whole theory about Shakespeare, not a usual story with a definitive plot. What we are going to examine is the theory of Will Hughes and the punishment of the characters that again create something against the norms, this time created by the academia. This makes the story even more important since even the

academia is a part of the society. Sometimes, academics have taboos which will not be broken so easily.

The story can even be true for today's societies since even today most academics deny theories concerning homosexuality. They see it only as an academic rumor and think that those things do not have an academic value just because of their resistance of seeing things from a new perspective. It can be said that they are afraid of new ideas. Even though almost all of them think of themselves as objective and open-minded, in a conference you can easily see that this is wrong. Whenever someone give a speech about literature and different sexualities and gender, you can hear the opposing views not on the grounds of scientific facts but because of their beliefs and finding sexuality discussions immoral.

5.1 An Overview of the Plot

The story begins with George Erskine and our unnamed storyteller dining in Erskine's house in Birdcage Walk. Erskine is a man in his forties and he likes teaching something new to others. Our storyteller is "a good deal younger". It can be sensed that there is a paederestic relationship. When they are at the dinner, Erskine suggests that he can tell a story to the storyteller. The storyteller accepts it. The teacher-student relation shows itself right in the beginning of the story. Before starting his story he shows the storyteller a picture. It is the picture of a beautiful effeminate young boy. Being effeminate is not described in the story in detail. However, we can assume that it is with the standards of the century. As gender is fluid, almost all the standards change in each century. Wearing lace was not counted as feminine in the eighteenth century and before. After the twentieth century, it is counted as feminine.

Erskine says it is the picture of Mr. W.H. Then Erskine explains the theory in which Shakespeare's sonnets are dedicated to the young boy in the picture whose name is Willie Hughes. The theory shows that Shakespeare was bisexual. We have the term today, but in the nineteenth century the general term was sodomite. Therefore, Shakespeare can be called sodomite according to the theory because they say that Shakespeare was in love with this effeminate boy. Willie Hughes, according to the

theory, was an actor in Shakespeare's *The Globe*. For a while, Willie Hughes stops working in the *Globe* and goes to work for the rival theatre, but he comes back. At that time Shakespeare writes poems about a traitor he loved.

After showing the picture, Erskine goes back to his story. Erskine's story is about a man whose name is Cyril Graham and who is very interested in Shakespeare's sonnets. Erskine hints that he liked that man a lot. He says about Cyril "I think he was the most splendid creature I ever saw, and nothing could exceed the grace of his movements, the charm of his manner" (Wilde, 1997, p. 223). Erskine and Cyril went to Trinity College together. Trinity College has a place in Wilde's life. He also went to the same college. Certainly he observed some same-sex love during his time in the college.

According to Erskine, Cyril Graham was effeminate like Willie Hughes. He was not interested in football. His only interest was in acting and poetry. He was very good at acting. After graduation, Cyril did not work. He only read Shakespeare's sonnets in the day, and went to the theatre in the evenings. He got married, but got divorced shortly after. We can see here that Cyril tried to conform to the wishes of the society, and to what he was taught. However, he could not, since each person's gender is different and some people's genders are more obvious and cannot be hidden by the person easily.

His situation is worse and at some point he commits suicide because of his gender which he cannot suppress. According to the story, he did not like his father-in-law who saw Cyril as effeminate and Cyril thought he was a bear. It appears that Cyril's father-in-law was very committed to his gender role. It is the opposite of what Cyril has. That may be a serious problem.

Cyril became an actor when he was in Trinity College and continued to do so after it. Cyril liked being in Shakespeare's plays. He was cast for the girls' parts. According to Erskine, these were suitable for him. He was in many plays and, Erskine adored watching him in those plays. Cyril was a woman more than a man. He can be seen as a kind of transsexual person for his time. However as I said, categorizing sexualities and genders are period specific. Therefore, it is not exactly what is described. We cannot easily describe a sexuality type in the nineteenth century with today's terms.

One day, Cyril goes to Erskine saying that he found out who Mr. W.H. really was. According to his theory he was a boy in Shakespeare's theatre. He illustrates his thoughts with different sonnets by Shakespeare. He is excited about it because he finds himself in Mr. W.H. He becomes very passionate about the theory. He gets obsessed with proving it to be true.

According to Cyril Graham, there are some people who think that the sonnets are dedicated to Lord Pembroke or Lord Southampton. For Lord Pembroke, Cyril shows a line from Shakespeare in which he says "You had a father; let your son say so" (Wilde, 1997, p. 225). According to the poem's date, Mr. W.H.'s father was dead in 1598 but, Lord Pembroke's father died in 1601. For Lord Southampton, he says he does not look like his mother as the poem suggests: "Though art thy mother's glass, and she in thee..." ,and Lord Southampton's Christian name was Henry but, in the poems it is Will (Wilde, 1997, p. 225)

The theory seems sound for Erskine. However, Erskine thinks that they need proof other than the sonnets and Cyril comes up with the portrait of Mr. W.H. but, the portrait is not real but a forgery. Then, Cyril Graham and George Erskine get into a harsh discussion. After their discussion, Cyril kills himself with a gun. He is found that right next to the portrait which is a scene we can remember from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as well. The difference is that George Erskine, who seems similar to Lord Henry Wotton, is not punished right after the death of Cyril Graham.

Upon hearing the tragic story, the storyteller decides to take up the mission to prove that the theory is right. He starts to read Shakespeare's sonnets day and night. The more he reads, the more he believes in Cyril Graham's theory. He sends a letter to Erskine about his faith in the theory. However, after sending the letter, he decides that it is foolish of him to believe in such a romantic theory. He talks to Erskine and says sorry. This time, Erskine believes in the theory. After the storyteller's explanations, he realizes that it is right. They argue over it for hours. Then George Erskine goes to Germany.

Two years later, Erskine sends a letter to the storyteller, telling that he could not prove it but, he will die for it. He goes to see George Erskine but he is dead. He feels sorry for the second suicide for a literary theory. Then he finds out that George Erskine actually

did not commit suicide but dies of consumption. His wife gives the portrait of Mr. W.H. to the storyteller upon her husband's request. In the end, he thinks that there is much to tell about Willie Hughes.

5.2 George Erskine, the Fearful Gentleman

The story is two-folded. The second story is told inside the first story. First we will examine the characters in the main story. George Erskine as in most of Wilde's works is not from the working class. He is at least middle-aged. This is an important point. Right in the beginning, the author prepares us for another work with some paederestic hints. The storyteller is much younger than him and they get into literary discussions. Just like Wilde, Erskine appreciates the views of his disciple. In the story, the story teller describes Erskine "Erskine, who was a good deal older than I was, and had been listening to me with the amused deference of a man of forty" (Wilde, 1997, p. 221). This reminds us of Wilde with his relationships with younger men.

He wants to tell a story to the storyteller. The story is mainly a theory. Erskine likes the ideas in this theory but, does not think that it can be proved. At this point, we see that he wants to stay away from a theory that can put his position in the society in jeopardy. It is a theory which includes sodomy. His concern expresses itself when he says "I believe there is something fatal about the idea, and intellectually there is nothing to be said for it" (Wilde, 1997, p. 231). He hints that although he believes the theory to be true, the marginalized sexualities cannot be discussed. Therefore, he cannot express the truth. He shows the typical manners of a Victorian man. They had to be silent relating to the topics of sexuality and gender.

Foucault also expresses the situation of being silent on the issue of marginalized sexualities in several occasions as it is stated in this thesis. After hearing the story of Cyril Graham, the storyteller believes the theory is true and wants to talk more about it with Erskine. However, Erskine does not want to that. He is a more moderate version of Lord Henry Wotton from *the Picture of Dorian Gray*. He talks about something then he gets afraid of what he says. When the storyteller wants to talk more about the theory, he says "Silly boy. Go home: it is after two, and don't think about Willie Hughes anymore.

I am sorry I told you anything about it, and very sorry indeed that I should have converted you to a thing in which I don't believe" (Wilde, 1997, p. 231)

Erskine, in the end, believes the theory to be true. He is always afraid of the theory. In the Victorian society, what they defend is strictly forbidden. Therefore, Erskine who is again a defender of such a theory should not end happily. Wilde states that "The good ended happily and the bad unhappily." (Wilde 685). With such a rule, he should be punished. He defends a theory about the love that dare not speak its name. He dies in the end. He is not murdered nor commits suicide. However, his end is not happy.

Erskine also wants to live the love that dare not speak its name. We see the hints of his sodomic tendencies in his description of a character in the story. He says about Cyril Graham "He certainly was wonderfully handsome". Erskine cannot hold his words back while talking about Cyril Graham and states "I was absurdly devoted to him" (Wilde, 1997, p. 223). He goes even further when he says: "I think he was the most splendid creature I ever saw, and nothing could exceed the grace of his movements, the charm of his manner. He fascinated everybody who was worth fascinating, and a great many people who were not" (Wilde, 1997, p. 223).

Like Lord Henry Wotton from *the Picture of Dorian Gray*, he can only express his feelings. He does not take any action for it. Even talking about the forbidden was enough for Wilde to punish his character. The difference between Lord Henry Wotton and Erskine is that Erskine is afraid to talk. He is the reflection of the Victorians. He does not want to compromise his place in the society. His fear of rejection results better than his friend Cyril Graham. Erskine does not commit suicide. He does not have a reason to do that. Instead, he dies of consumption.

5.3 The Storyteller, the Gender-resistant

The person we hear the story from does not have a name. From his description of Erskine, we may reach the conclusion that he is young. He wants to defend the theory to the fullest after hearing the story. He actually gets excited with the idea of Shakespeare having a male lover. He gets obsessed with the theory.

He thinks that “Cyril Graham was the most subtle Shakespearean critic of our day” (Wilde, 1997, p. 232). His obsession grows further. He instructs his servant to say that he is not at home. He reads the Sonnets for days. He becomes one with the theory. He does not leave his home to read more and the more he reads, the more obsessed he becomes. Gender fluidity affects this character as well. He starts to see that he is different from what is expected of him in the society. That is what Erskine is afraid of.

When someone accepts who they are sexually, the society becomes a bigger obstacle and believing in such a theory is like coming out of the closet. It just proves that he does not abide by the rules. This can cause him to be marginalized. Erskine is his friend and his mentor. The storyteller’s acceptance of the theory can put his reputation in danger as well. Approval of the theory by the story teller also shows us his sodomic tendencies. His quotes to prove his point are also interesting. His excitement can be seen from the quotes he makes from Shakespeare one of which is

Why should false painting imitate his cheek,
And steal dead seeming of his living hue?
Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
Roses of shadow, since his rose is true? (Wilde, 1997, p. 233)

The storyteller even writes an end to the story of Willie Hughes whom he sees as a sodomic boy actor. The story teller says “It was not improbable that Willie Hughes was one of those English comedians who were slain at Nuremberg in a sudden uprising of the people, and were secretly buried in a little vineyard outside the city by some young men”. He wants the theory to be true. Because the moment he sees the supposed portrait of Willie Hughes, he thinks that Willie Hughes is sodomite. He describes the portrait:

He seemed about a seventeen years of age, and was of quite extraordinary personal beauty though evidently somewhat effeminate. Indeed, had it not been for the dress and the closely cropped hair, one would have said that the face with its dreamy wistful eyes, and its delicate scarlet lips, was the face of a girl (Wilde, 1997, p. 222) .

The storyteller almost falls in love with the boy in the picture. It makes the sodomic situation more evident “... but who is this wonderful young man whose beauty art has so happily preserved for us” (Wilde, 1997, p. 222)?

5.4 Cyril Graham, the Effeminate Actor

Cyril is in the center point of the whole story. From the descriptions of the other characters of the story, he is evidently out of the sexual norms of the society. He is thought as effeminate for the Victorian Period. In the Victorian Period, being different gender-wise is a crime.

We know from Butler's theory that gender is fluid. It is different for each person. However, people are not aware of this situation. They are raised to fit the society's norms. If you are different from what is expected, in the best case scenario you are institutionalized. In most cases people can hide their true identity. However, in the extreme cases, it is not possible.

A person like Cyril cannot hide what is inside and is labeled as effeminate. This causes difficult situations for him. He cannot meet the norms of the society. Therefore, in the end he is punished. He is pushed to the edge of the cliff. He commits suicide because of the pressure on him. Suicide for the marginalized sexualities is very common even today. He lives in the Nineteenth Century and this makes it more difficult for him. In the story, Cyril says he commits suicide because of the theory but this is not a sufficient reason to commit suicide. He is different. He reflects the situation through the portrait. The portrait is a reflection of his inner voice.

In the beginning of the story, Mr. W.H. is described as "effeminate" and has "the face of a girl". Therefore, our effeminate character Cyril finds his voice in the picture. He sees himself as Mr. W.H. If Mr. W.H. is not accepted by the society, neither will he be. The society he has in hand is his friend Erskine. He is the society in a way. He has the hypocrisy of the Victorian society limiting himself with only his speech. He is afraid of a theory and when Erskine rejects the theory, Cyril is rejected from the society. The result for rejection is almost always deadly.

Cyril's obsession with proving the theory to be true comes from his inner feelings. Butler believes that we are shaped by the society. We have the voice of the society. When we speak, we are bound by the limits of the society. If we are not shaped right, we are to be disposed of. That leads to many results. People around us start to reject us. What they believe is different from who you are. They hate you because you show your

real identity instead of what is given. This hatred causes homophobia. It can lead to the suicide of the person who is in this situation. It can also result in the abuse or murder of the marginalized.

Not being able to show your real identity can cause aggression. Trying to prove that you fit the society can cause masculine anger. People who try to kill others, become heroes or villains, generals trying to conquer other countries and rape women, all in the name of being a man. Not being able to accept your identity can cause something worse, something called religion in most of which women are whores or angels while the men are the prophets or brave people.

In the story, Cyril is shaped with this thing called religion as well as the other traditions of the society. This causes his obsession with the theory. That is why, in the end, our storyteller cannot believe it when Cyril kills himself. The storyteller says: To die for one's theological beliefs is the worst use a man can make of his life, but to die for a literary theory! It seemed impossible. It is indeed unbelievable. Nonetheless, the reason behind his suicide is not for the theory's sake but for his own problems with the society.

6 THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING ERNEST

The Importance of Being Ernest is one of the most famous comedies of Oscar Wilde. The play is generally about secrets and having second identities. This play is very important because having second identities haunted Oscar Wilde through his whole life. On one hand Wilde was very afraid that his second identity would be found out which could turn into a catastrophe for him. On the other hand, he liked the danger caused by the situation. He thought that danger was half the excitement. However, he did not approve of having second identities. He was again opposing himself on the problem.

The main characters in the play have second identities. They become Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde. As always, Wilde counts it as an immoral behavior and punishes both of them and the moment they decide to leave their second identities, they perform their duties as respectable parts of the society. In the end, they look happy because they can perform what is expected of them.

Both Algernon and Jack have their ways of getting away from the society they live in. Algernon makes up a friend called Bunbury who is always gravely ill. He uses this excuse to get away from the suffocating environment of English aristocracy and live his own gender as he wishes. Jack also tries to escape from his duties in the country. He acts as a respectable person. This is what is expected from him by the country people.

He makes up a brother who lives in the city and uses him as an excuse to be a little freer. Naturally, they find themselves in difficult situations because of living as they want to. What we can see from Wilde's works, society always finds a way into our lives. If we live it as they want, there would be no problems.

However, the moment we try to break our chains, everything gets complicated and problems occur. They are resolved when we go back to the norms. If norms are not followed, characters either die or suffer from the consequences of their actions. To see

the situation more clearly, we can see what the play is all about then we can examine it in more detail, focusing on Algernon, Jack, and their second identities (escape ways from the society).

6.1 An Overview of the Plot

The play starts in a room of Algernon Moncrieff's flat. There is Algernon Moncrieff and his Butler, Lane in the room. Algernon plays the piano badly. He defends the way he plays the piano. It hints that we are face-to-face with a character comes from a noble background and a rich family but he is not a very responsible person because he does not try to learn the piano very well. He does not study enough to learn it. It can be concluded that he does not perform the duties he is supposed to perform. He talks about cucumber sandwiches to Lane. After that, they talk about the nature of marriage and its relationship with the quality of wine. That situation proves he does not know much about the lower class and he thinks that they should do their duties while the rich can sit and watch. When Lane leaves, Algernon talks about the duties of servants shortly. Algernon leaves the room then reenters saying that Ernest Worthing has arrived. Ernest (Jack) says he came to town for pleasure.

Jack thinks that you can only amuse other people in the country and it is boring. Again, Jack has gender-duties in the country. Working for the duties and the norms are exhausting. People cannot act a role throughout his whole life. If they have to do so, at one point, they find a way to escape. Seeing the preparations, Jack wants to know who is coming. Algernon says it is his Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen. Jack expresses his love with Gwendolen. He also hints that uncertainty makes a relationship romantic and marriage does not have that. According to Algernon, Gwendolen and Jack can never get married because they flirt. Girls don't get married with the men they flirt with. Marriage is a duty and flirting is not. It is just someone can live freely. The word free is not in the dictionary of normative genders in the Victorian Period. Algernon takes out a cigarette case which belongs to Jack and asks about the name on it.

The name on the case is Cecily. Jack denies knowing someone with that name. Then he says Cecily is his aunt. However, on the case the inscription is "From little Cecily with

her fondest love to her Uncle Jack” (Wilde, 1997, p. 670). He tries to deny again by saying that his aunt can call herself little, but Algernon asks why she calls him her uncle. He also asks about the name. He admits that his real name is not Ernest. He calls himself Ernest in the city, and Jack in the country. Then he keeps on explaining. He was adopted by Mr. Thomas Cardew and made by him the guardian of his granddaughter, Cecily Cardew and, Cecily calls himself uncle out of respect.

Algernon asks where this farm is, but Jack says Algernon will never be invited there. He continues to explain his situation. Since he has duties in the country, he needs to have “a high moral tone” (Wilde, 1997, p. 671). Therefore, in a way he needs to be free from it from time to time. That’s why, he made up a brother called Ernest. Ernest lives in the city and he always gets into trouble and Jack goes to the city to help his troubled brother. Algernon calls him a Bunburyist. Bunbury is the name of the person whom Algernon made up. He is a very sick friend who lives in country.

The term Bunburyist comes up in the play a couple of times. It shows the two faces of Victorian Society. Since they cannot accept their real sexual identities, they have to have a second identity. Bunburyism is a term for freeing yourself from the bounds of the society. It is a sign of resistance to the norms. The moralist Jack becomes flirtatious Ernest in the city. We do not know much about what Algernon does with his second identity. With his reputation of being irresponsible as Algernon, his friend Bunbury may open up new doors to freedom.

Whenever Algernon wants to go to the country or needs an excuse to get away from something or someone, he uses his sick friend Bunbury as an excuse. It turns out that our two main characters in the novel have a common feature: having a double life. That is exactly what Wilde does in his life. Especially when he wrote *the Importance of Being Ernest*, he was in a relationship with Lord Alfred Douglas. He was leaving for the country to make love and experience his new sexuality to the fullest. In the city, he becomes a family man. He has his wife and his children. He reflects the double life in his famous play perfectly.

Then they get into a discussion about marriage. After their discussion, Lady Brecknell and Gwendolen come into the room. Algernon apologizes to his aunt for not having

cucumber sandwiches. He says he went to town twice to look for them but, couldn't find any. He wants to cancel dinner with his aunt and uses his Bunbury excuse with his aunt. She seems annoyed and thinks that Bunbury should decide whether he would leave or die. Lady Brecknell and Algernon go to the next room to talk while Jack and Gwendolen stay in the room.

Jack flirts with Gwendolen and also asks if she would love him if his name wasn't Ernest. She says she does not like the name Jack. This is also an important sign. Ernest can be seen as a symbol. It is the symbol of being Ernest. Ernest means honest. What he actually means is that if he is not honest and has a double life, would she accept him as who he is. Unintentionally, she says no to him. It is also similar to Wilde's own life. What he actually does is asking the same question to his own wife. Wilde is clearly in need of approval from his wife. Previously it is mentioned that Wilde introduced his lovers to his wife.

Jack proposes to Gwendolen. She says yes. Lady Brecknell opposes the idea on the grounds that only she or Gwendolen's father can arrange a marriage for her. Lady Brecknell says she does not have Jack on the list of bachelors for Gwendolen but, she can add his name after he answers some questions. After the questioning, she suggests him to acquire some strong relatives or, Gwendolen will not be allowed to get married to him. Lady Brecknell follows the normative rules of Victorian High Society. In order to be a legitimate bachelor, you need to have a noble background and be rich. That shows there are complex rules just over gender and sexuality in the heterosexual matrix of the Victorian period.

Wilde, in his play's plot clearly expresses that having a double life has its own consequences. Sooner or later the truth would come out and hurt the person who wants to live freely. A person who wants to live their desires to the fullest will be punished to the fullest. In the second act, Algernon goes to the country to meet Cecily. After Algernon, Jack also goes back to the country announcing the death of his brother Ernest. However, Algernon tells everyone that he is Ernest. Then in surprise, Jack sees Algernon pretending to be Ernest. Algernon flirts with Cecily. Jack wants Algernon to

leave the country. However, Algernon does not have the intention to go back. He declares his love to Cecily.

When he declares his love, Cecily says they were already engaged when she found out about Jack having a brother. She bought a ring and wrote letters to herself on behalf of Ernest before she met Algernon. She even broke off the engagement once because it would be more serious if it was broken at least once. Then they get into a discussion about the name Ernest. Cecily thinks the same with Gwendolen concerning the name Ernest. After their discussion, Gwendolen comes to the country and meets Cecily. They become good friends. Their first conversation becomes interesting because they find out that both of them are engaged to Ernest. However, Cecily thinks Algernon is Ernest while Gwendolen thinks that Jack is Ernest. Quickly they become foes. Gwendolen thinks that the country is boring while Cecily says that this is a sickness of aristocracy. When Algernon and Jack come into the room, things become clear. This time Gwendolen and Cecily hold each other as if they were trying to protect each other from Algernon and Jack.

In the third act, Cecily and Gwendolen are at one side of the room while Jack and Algernon are on the other side. Women decide to stay silent and dignified. Soon women break their silence and Gwendolen asks a question to Jack. Then Cecily does the same. They ask the reason for their lies. Their answer is similar. They say they do it to have an opportunity to see their loved ones.

Both Algernon and Jack say that they will change their names. Then they make peace. Lady Brecknell enters the scene and refuses the marriage between Gwendolen and Jack. Miss Prism enters the scene and it turns out that Jack is Algernon's real brother and Jack is Lady Brecknell's long-lost nephew. In the end, even Lady Brecknell who is very strict about the traditional rules on marriage accepts. After Jack finds out who he really is, Jack looks for his real name and it turns out that it is Ernest. Lady Bracknell approves of their marriage and the curtains fall.

6.2 John (Jack) Worthing, a Bored Countryman

Jack is a man who has high moral values, and is very strict with the girl to whom he is guardian. John is the real symbol of Victorian morality. As long as you can hide your real identity, you will not have a problem. However, as every person, he has the gender fluidity. Constraining yourself with the norms of the society creates a problem. Everyone has a desire to be free. This “scene of constraint” results in lies and deceit. The story of Dr. Jeckyll and Mr. Hyde has the same story. Constraints and boundaries create monsters.

Today, if we check the rate of rapes for each country, the results will show us that the rapes are the highest in the countries where there are a lot of laws about sexuality. Jack does not become a monster but, he creates himself a new world. In this world, he can show himself as whoever he wants to be. He wants to show himself as an honest person. Therefore, he becomes Ernest. In his “boring” life with “high moral value” he is “Uncle John” (Wilde, 1997, pp. 672-673). In the character of John, becoming Ernest describes a change. He does this change in the name of freedom. He does things that his country version would not do. He comes closer his real self. He flirts with a girl.

Urges we have are instinctive. However, in the Victorian period, you cannot even have instincts. He becomes a typical father figure. He does things that he would not approve of if the girl whom he is the guardian of did them. That is what a father does in our century. They usually do not want to follow the footsteps they took to protect their children from the mistakes they made themselves. Their mistakes may be immoral. Indeed, when Algernon comes to the country and proposes to Cyril, Jack is strongly against it. Even the idea of flirting between

Algernon and Cyril is unbearable for Jack. Jack has the role of a father and it meant a lot in the Victorian Period. A man had to be heterosexual. Also, they were seen superior to women physically and intellectually. They had different roles through their lives. They are born as sons. Even in their first steps, they wore blue and were made men. They went hunting with their fathers. Although John (Jack) did not know his biological father, he had a father figure who was Cyril’s grandfather. He was raised in the country with the rules for men.

He skipped the second step in his manhood: marriage. Marriage comes later in his life. He becomes a father. He is actually a guardian but, he is a father figure. He is Cyril's "Uncle John". As the superior gender for the period, the father figure had gendered duties to their children. A father had to provide for their children. If the child was female, she became the daughter and responsibilities grew more. Firstly, she was to be educated. What was meant with education had nothing to do with science. The education of a woman involved piano lessons, courtesy rules and how to handle household duties.

With this sense of duty, John (Jack) hires a teacher for Cyril. If Cyril was male, he would be sent to a school. However, schools were usually for males. Women could go to schools for ladies. However, richer people preferred education at home for their children. This way, the daughter could stay safer from the sexual outside world. According to an article written in the University of London, "Historically, it was believed that studying was against women's nature" (Institute of Education Archives Subject Guide No. 7, 2009). It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that women could get higher education. Stay-home education model was better for the time.

Women were not supposed to meet other men outside their parent's or guardians' permission. It was mainly the father's duty to provide the conditions. For John's case, it was the same. He provided the education needed for Cyril in their country house. The next step for the daughter is marriage. The eligible bachelor was again chosen by the father. Until marriage, it was the father's duty to keep the daughter away from other men. Uncle John gets bored in the country. He changes his identity and goes to the city. He flirts with a woman. This is against the moral values he sets for himself and for Cyril in the country.

His second identity is his freedom. However, like in all Wilde's works sexual freedom is just an illusion and it comes with a cost. If you resist the rules, you will end badly. His second identity gives damage to his duty in the country. When Algernon realizes that he is the guardian of a girl in the country. He goes there and flirts with her. Breaking the rules come with its consequences in Wilde's works. John's first punishment is Algernon going to the country. Because of his second identity, he loses his duty of being a father.

A person gets their gender roles from the society and if the person cannot abide by it, he may never go back to their old role. When Gwendolen, the girl John flirts with comes to the country, the truth reveals itself. When the truth comes out, John loses his place as a father figure.

Four characters in the play, at that moment, become only heterosexual men and women. They get into an argument of women against men. Decisions made by John for Cyril are out of the question now. Even though John does not want Algernon to get married with Cyril, he cannot do anything about it. In this discussion, he is about to lose Gwendolen to whom he wants to get married. John reveals the truth and does not want to have a second identity anymore. He goes back to the traditional duties of a man in the century. The next step on his manly road is marriage and he abides by the rules. In the end, the punishment is lifted since he gives up resisting his role in the society. He realizes that he was “Ernest” all along. Therefore, he becomes the earnest man he is supposed to be.

6.3 Algernon Moncrieff, a Freedom Excavator

Algernon is another face of becoming in the story. Contrary to the farm boy John, he is raised in the city with more opportunities. He has the nobility from his family. His aunt is a “lady”. Again contrary to John, he does not have to work to earn something. According to the Hierarchy of Needs by Maslow, if a person can provide the basic needs and the sense of belonging, they can start to think. He has a sense of belonging in every sense. This feature is not found in John’s character. He does not know his real family.

Two characters’ similarity is both of them are constrained by the duties. As a part of the higher class in the city, he has duties he needs to achieve. He needs to be together with those higher class people. This is also a part of Wilde’s life. He lives among the higher class. He loves the luxury of it just like Algernon. However, he hates the hypocrisy of the higher class. He turns his face to new adventures. The new adventures were in the back streets of London and the country.

For the adventures unknown to the audience, Algernon creates a friend named Bunbury. He visits this friend whenever he is sick. Wilde’s reason or excuse for going away was writing in peace. Wilde’s Bunbury was writing. Wilde used his excuse on every

occasion. It was the reason why he got into higher society and, it was the reason for getting away from it. Wilde did not write anything at first. Writing was just an excuse for him to go to the parties. He was the professor of Aesthetics. In 1880, the Polish actress Madam Modjeska asked “But what has he done? He has written nothing, He does not sing or paint or act... He does nothing but talk. I do not understand” (Oscar Wilde Bio, 2008). After that, Oscar became a writer.

When Oscar Wilde wanted to relieve himself from the chains of the society whose rules became another ring in the chain around him, he used his writing as an excuse. His most productive time in terms of creating new literary works was the time when he was with Lord Alfred Douglas in the country. Writing became his Bunbury, and Wilde became a “Bunburyist”. Algernon, his Bunburyist character in his play does the same as his author. He goes away and unburdens himself from the roles he has. However, Bunburyism is forbidden in the society.

While Bunburying again, he goes to the country to meet his friend’s nephew, and truth reveals itself. The only solution he finds is to unbunbury himself. He needs to get back to the duties he despises. The reason for this unbunburying is marriage. However, Lady Brecknell is his source of income. Although marriage is against the characteristics of Algernon Moncrieff, he has to do it since it is the only way to get a hold on to the society which provides him with the money he needs.

We do not know the outcome of his marriage but, from the way he thinks it can be speculated that it is not very different from what Wilde had in his life. Wilde fell in love with Constance, but after the birth of their children, he hated to be in one. Algernon also falls in love with Cyril. We do not know that part of the marriage. Wilde’s first marriage proposal was not to his wife Constance but, another woman whose name is Charlotte Montefiore. When she refused his proposal to get married, Wilde wrote to her and said: “I am sorry about your decision. With your money and my brain we could have gone so far.” (McKenna, 2014, p. 30)

Algernon is like all the characters Wilde created in a delusion of his freedom. He does not realize that he cannot escape from the destiny the society wrote for him. At one point in the play, John says to Algernon that “Truth is rarely pure and, never simple”. The

truth here is about their second identities. Wilde's works always contain something autobiographical. Again here, Wilde talks to himself. There is a truth about Wilde's second identity. He wants to be free from all the suffocating duties and the repulsion he feels to Constance at this point in his life. He wants to be free as an author and as a person.

His sexual freedom becomes just an illusion for Wilde as well. He was sent to a prison for trying to achieve freedom and he has the same destiny as most of his characters in the end: a punishment. However, Bunburying constrains Algernon with marriage. Similar to John, he learns "the Importance of Being Ernest". The main idea in the end is never to try to rebel against the wishes of the society. A person should always be earnest in their duties and just do them. Otherwise, their end can be like Dorian Gray who wants to continue in his resistance against the norms. Wilde's end was more horrifying than Algernon is. He ended up in a horrible prison and, when he got out he was exiled from the society until his death. Even his works were exiled until a decade after his death.

7. CONCLUSION: A WILDE CENTURY

My thesis topic is important especially in this century. Oscar Wilde and his works are still a big part of both classical and pop culture in the world and in our lives. He was the first famous martyr of rights on sexualities. Because of his defiance of “the love that dare not speak its name”, he became a symbol for the gay right’s movement. He lived in the wrong century. He hated the heterosexual matrix of the Victorian society. We are in the Wilde century. Wilde was always in a dilemma. Therefore he became the master of paradoxes.

Almost all his works were autobiographical; he was Lord Henry Wotton with his sharp-tongue. He was Dorian Gray with his passion for new sexual experiences. He became one with Algernon in his *Importance of Being Ernest*. He had a double life just like his character. He made up lies for his second identity and bunburied the society. He became Lady Windermere’s mother who had secrets.

He fell in love with his own Mr. W.H. –Lord Alfred Douglas. He punished all the characters who wanted to live freely. He was afraid of the laws and the Victorian society. We see his own fear in his character George Erskine. His fears came true when he was sent to prison but he was the one who said the danger was half the excitement. He wanted to free his characters from the oppressing world of the Victorians. However, he could not do that. Each time he tried, he was stopped by the internalized society he had. Like the women in *The Crime of Lord Arthur Savile*, the society became the moral of his works. He said there is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. They are well written or badly written. That is all. The hints of marginalized sexualities in his books became the proof at the court.

The main concern in this thesis is the gender-resistance and punishment in Wilde’s works. Wilde was not just a man of gender-resistance. He was an Irish nationalist like

his mother Speranza or Lady Wilde. Nationalism is the supporter of heterosexual norms. In his early life, he had a religion which was inherited from his mother. He was raised in a very philosophical and artistic environment. However, this environment also contained religion and nationalism.

The only thing that is fluid is not gender. Our characteristics are also fluid. We are shaped with the culture and values of the period and the society we are born into. Wilde was born into those circumstances and the circumstances he had created a master of the paradoxes. He became a dilemma. Therefore, the thesis does not attempt to show Wilde's decisions to punish his characters rightful. However, it attempts to show the hero he became in a period of persistently pressuring society.

In the first part after introduction, focus is on the history of sexuality. The main point writing that part is to show how the whole world changed since Wilde's period. Since the history is not linear, what happens in England affects both the New and the Old Worlds. Wilde's trials and works affected the birth of gay rights movements in the US, and the Stonewall riots affected the movement in England. The same-sex marriage law in Denmark and Holland affected the US and England. In the same part, theories of Butler and Foucault have been mentioned which is a part of whole analysis of the works and Wilde's life which is needed here since his works are mostly part of his characteristics.

In the second part, the thesis starts analyzing his works. The Picture of Dorian Gray may be the most important of all his works. It was the book which was used in his trials as a proof of sodomy. It has hints of sodomy.

However, those sodomic tendencies are punished. Then his stories are analyzed which become two other parts in this thesis. Two samples are chosen to prove that he only punishes who resist.

The final work analyzed here is a play written by him. Four works have been chosen in total. The reason behind is to prove that Wilde always used the same logic in his books: Gender-resistant is always existent in the society, and it is necessary. Unfortunately, those who resist are punished by the society.

Today Wilde's plays are still on stage and especially his character Dorian Gray became a part of popular culture. Even today, he is a character in a popular TV series called Penny Dreadful and a movie was released in 2013. Wilde is popular today because he still reflects a lot of events in different society's in the world.

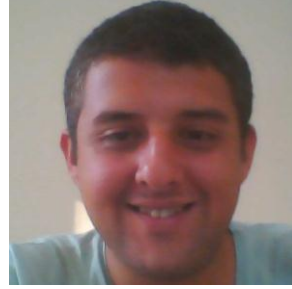
The Islamic countries still struggle with those who cannot accept people for who or what they are. Even Russia, which is a part of the European Union, has the same problems. Therefore, Wilde's works are needed in our century and our culture more than ever. We exist in the Wilde Century.

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