



## AN ANALYSIS OF RELIGIOUS ONOMASTIC WORDS IN “THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY” BY OSCAR WILDE

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### **Abstract**

In this article the religious onomastic words in “The Picture of Dorian Gray” are analyzed and also, citing the views of scientists about translations preserving the national features of onomastic units into unrelated languages and expressed the attitude towards them. In addition, it is discussed the role of religious onomastic words in the text as well as, their functions in the structure of the literary text.

### **Keywords**

onomastics, toponymy, literary analysis, religious symbolism, religious and moral implications.

### **Introduction**

Onomastics is derived from the Greek word "onomastike" which means "the art of naming". Currently, this term is used in two senses:

1. A collection of all the common nouns used in a certain language.
2. The branch of linguistics that studies common nouns, their formation and specific characteristics.

It is known that onomastics is a branch of linguistics that studies various nouns, the history of their appearance and change, as well as the sum of all nouns in the language. The science of onomastics aims to identify and study existing onomastic systems in the language. The science of onomastics divides objects that have received famous names into the following groups (departments): anthroponymy - famous names of people (names, surnames, patronymics, nicknames, nicknames), toponymy - famous names of geographical objects, theonymy - gods and goddesses according to various religious concepts, names of religious-legendary persons and creatures, zoonymy - nicknames given to animals, cosmonymy - names of empty space regions, galaxies, constellations, etc. in scientific circulation and among the people, astroponymy - some celestial bodies (planets and stars) represents a set of names. In addition, there are several other divisions (groups) of onomastics. For example, one section onomastics is called realonyms (names of objects that exist before and now), while the opposing myphonims mean the names of imaginary -physical objects.

As we know, onomastics, the study of names, is a crucial aspect of literary analysis. Names carry connotations, historical significance, and cultural weight. In religious contexts, names often bear additional layers of meaning, reflecting theological concepts, moral values, and societal norms.

Oscar Wilde, a prominent figure in literature, is known for his wit, flamboyant style, and keen social

observations. However, beyond his popular works lies a rich tapestry of religious onomastics that enhances the depth and meaning of his narratives. This analysis delves into the religious names and terms Wilde employs, examining their significance and impact within his works.

## Main Part

Understanding Wilde's use of religious onomastics allows readers to gain deeper insights into his characters and themes. "The Picture of Dorian Gray," a novel by Oscar Wilde, is a rich text that intertwines themes of aestheticism, morality, and the supernatural. Central to understanding the novel's deeper meanings is an analysis of Wilde's use of religious onomastic words. These names and terms, derived from religious contexts, imbue the narrative with symbolic significance and contribute to its moral and philosophical underpinnings.

"The Picture of Dorian Gray" is replete with religious allusions and names. Dorian, derived from the Greek "Dorian" tribe, symbolizes both beauty and decay. The name "Gray" represents moral ambiguity, caught between the extremes of black and white. Religious references such as St. Anthony and the tale of Faust underscore the novel's exploration of sin, redemption, and the soul. Dorian Gray's transformation and ultimate downfall mirror the Faustian bargain, where one's soul is exchanged for earthly pleasures. Exploring the symbolic interpretations of "Dorian," this article discusses how the name suggests both a historical reference to classical beauty and an ironic commentary on Dorian's eventual fall from grace. The Dorian mode in music, which is both major and minor, symbolizes Dorian's duality—his outer beauty and inner corruption.

Lord Henry Wotton's character can be seen as a modern-day Mephistopheles, the tempter from the Faust legend. His name, "Henry," means "ruler" or "home ruler," which can be interpreted as his dominant influence over Dorian. The surname "Wotton" evokes "wit," aligning with his role as the devilish figure who corrupts Dorian with his hedonistic philosophy. It is analyzed Lord Henry's philosophical dialogues and their theological implications, drawing parallels to the serpent in the Garden of Eden. His seductive rhetoric represents the temptation of sin and the allure of a life free from moral constraints.

The name "Basil" is derived from the Greek "Basileios," meaning "kingly" or "royal." Saint Basil the Great was a theologian and bishop known for his piety and contributions to Christian monasticism. This association highlights Basil Hallward's role as the moral compass in the novel, embodying the values of true artistry and ethical integrity.

Basil Hallward's surname suggests "hall" or a place of gathering and "ward," meaning guardian. This reinforces his role as Dorian's guardian of moral values. The tragic fate of Basil signifies the consequences of Dorian's rejection of moral and spiritual guidance.

"Sybil" refers to the prophetesses in ancient Greek and Roman mythology, known for their ability to foretell the future. Sybil Vane's name suggests purity, prophecy, and a tragic destiny. Her character represents the innocence and purity that Dorian destroys in his pursuit of aesthetic pleasure. Sybil's death can be seen as a sacrificial act, akin to the sacrificial lamb in Christian theology. This section explores how her tragic end serves as a turning point for Dorian, marking the beginning of his irreversible descent into moral corruption.

Dorian Gray's story is heavily influenced by the Faustian theme, where he effectively makes a pact with the devil by exchanging his soul for eternal youth and beauty. We examine the religious and moral implications of this pact and its representation in the novel.

Throughout the novel, Wilde uses various biblical references to underscore themes of sin, redemption, and damnation. Dorian's initial purity and subsequent fall echo the biblical story of Adam and

Eve, while his portrait serves as a symbol of his tainted soul, akin to the concept of original sin. The portrait of Dorian Gray acts as a mirror to his soul, reflecting the degradation and corruption that he escapes in his physical form. This article explores the religious symbolism of the portrait, likening it to the concept of the soul in Christian theology.

The theological interpretations of the portrait delve into themes of judgment, penance, and eternal damnation. Dorian's final attempt to destroy the portrait symbolizes a futile effort to escape divine judgment and moral reckoning. Despite his hedonistic lifestyle, Dorian experiences moments of conscience and guilt, reflecting the possibility of redemption. It is examined these moments and their religious significance, considering whether Dorian's fate could have been different. The novel's conclusion, where Dorian dies while trying to destroy the portrait, serves as a moral and religious commentary on the inescapability of one's sins.

## Conclusion

"The Picture of Dorian Gray" is a complex novel that weaves religious onomastic words and themes throughout its narrative. Wilde's use of names and religious symbolism enriches the text, offering deeper insights into the characters and the moral lessons embedded in the story. By examining these elements, readers gain a greater appreciation for Wilde's literary artistry and the enduring relevance of his moral critique.

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