

**METAPHOR AS AN IMPORTANT LITERARY DEVICE IN
“PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY” BY O. WILDE.**

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Anotation

The article mainly deals with the role of metaphor and other linguistic devices in “Picture of Dorian Gray. The examples of metaphor use are analyzed and explained in detail showing how this device is able to make the work more attractive to readers. It is also illustrated that metaphor as well as other stylistic devices can trigger readers’ emotions and cognitive skills.

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These days enthusiasm towards metaphor has already gained wide popularity. It is hard to imagine a piece of fictional writing without it. Now reader’s expectations are not met in case descriptions in the fiction are directly provided having no linguistic means. An avid reader may not value the work unless its descriptive tools are mysterious. And in this respect, writers are likely to win reader’s satisfaction by including metaphors in their work.

Having understood the importance of metaphor, it should also be defined in wider perspective. Many linguistic scholars have conducted numerous researches to answer what the metaphor is. According to Davidson, “metaphor is the transference of the relation between one set of objects to another set for the purpose of brief explanation”. In simple words metaphor is a figure of speech which is widely used to compare one thing to another depending on the common feature between them.

It is not fair to refer metaphors as just literary devices, it has a power to simulate our pragmatic and cognitive skills by the organization of our experience, unique expressions and creation of convincing realities. Writers often apply metaphors to form better internal visual images of characters and compare a particular concept with their intentions. As a result of this, insightful close reading appears.

In this article we look into the study of metaphor and its descriptive expressions applied by Oscar Wilde in “The Picture of Dorian Gray”.

In the following passage expressed below, the author uses imagery function of metaphors to describe the book in parallel to some descriptive literary devices.

“One hardly knew at times whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediaeval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book. The heavy odor of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain. The mere cadence of the sentences, the subtle monotony of their music, so full as it was of complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated, produced in the mind of the lad, as he passed from chapter to chapter, a form of reverie, a malady of dreaming, that made

him unconscious of the falling day and the creeping shadows.

Cloudless, and pierced by one solitary star, a copper-green sky gleamed through the windows. He read on by its wan light till he could read no more.” (Wilde, 1958 : 210)

Oscar Wilde describe the book stating “it was a poisonous book”. This metaphoric description increases the impact on the reader. It is also stated “the heavy odor of incense seemed to cling about its pages and to trouble the brain.” In this respect, the verb “cling” is collocated with odor and at the same time contribute to the image of the book.

In the passage the lines of the book are regarded to a piece of music, and musical atmosphere is created. The text is complemented with rhythm, melody, and structure, though the writer pick the words “cadence, subtle monotony of their music, and complex refrains and movements elaborately repeated.” The strength of these words is to draw the reader’s attention to the illustration of protagonist Gray.

In the passage “reverie, dreaming, and unconscious” are the words with connotative meaning on the purpose of hypnotizing the reader. As well as metaphors and the diction, reader may also find the text gripping due to rhythmic syntax.

As it can be seen in the following passage connotative words such as “hollow, flaccid, fading, droop, wrinkled, blue-veined, and twisted” are able to enrich metaphoric value of the image. which make the atmosphere more dramatic and emphasized.

“Hour by hour and week by week the thing upon the canvas was growing old. It might escape the hideousness of sin, but the hideousness of age was in store for it. The cheeks would become hollow or flaccid. Yellow crow's feet would creep round the fading eyes and make them horrible. The hair would lose its brightness, the mouth would gape or droop, would be foolish or gross, as the mouths of old men are. There would be the wrinkled throat, the cold, blue-veined hands, the twisted body, that he remembered in the grandfather who had been so stern to him in his boyhood. The picture had to be concealed. There was no help for it.” (Wilde, 1958: 206)

Overall meaning from the passage implies the view that beauty will not live forever as people grow older. What is youthful, full, firm, lively, and nimble now will become old, flaccid, faded, droopy, wrinkled, blue-veined, and twisted. The flower motif can be remembered by this clear description because flowers blossom in spring and have a youth of beauty, but “winter” comes one day and time says its word. Petals lose their freshness, stems have little energy, and colors gradually disappear. The writer widely employed such metaphors intending the impact of aging. Reader can notice how time is undefeated. It is notable that age itself is not the matter that irritates Dorian but old people are. He points them implicitly in the line, “the mouth would gape or droop, would be foolish or gross, as the mouths of old men are,” and the passage shows Dorian and his grandfather is not in a good relationship. By describing a character so horridly, vital role of such a character intrigues the reader. In the example below writer employs features of conscious stream which provides a range of tropes and figures of speech and especially metaphors.

“Kiss me again, my love. Don't go away from me. I couldn't bear it. Oh! Don't go away from me. My brother... No; never mind. He didn't mean it. He was in jest....But you, oh! can't you forgive me for to-night? I will work so hard, and try to improve. Don't be cruel to me, because I love you better than anything in the world. After all, it is only once that I have not pleased you. But you are quite right, Dorian. I should have shown myself more of an artist. It was foolish of me; and yet I couldn't help it. Oh, don't leave me, don't leave me!” A fit of passionate sobbing choked her. She crouched on the floor like a wounded thing, and Dorian Gray, with his beautiful eyes, looked down on her, and his chiseled lips curled in exquisite disdain. There is always something ridiculous about the

emotion of people whom one has ceased to love. Sibyl Vane seemed to him to be absurdly melodramatic. Her tears and sobs annoyed him.” (Wilde, 1958: 77)

It is undoubtedly revealed that reader may find syntactical parallelism intriguing provided by this creative piece of writing (...Don't do away.....Don't go away...), simile (She crouched on the floor like a wounded thing), metaphor (...his chiseled lips curled in exquisite disdain), etc..

“So that was the story of Dorian Gray's parentage. Crudely as it had been told to him, it had yet stirred him by its suggestion of a strange, almost modern romance. A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad passion. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Months of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man. Yes, it was an interesting background. It posed the lad, made him more perfect as it were. Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic. Worlds had to be in travail, that the meanest flower might blow...” (Wilde, 1958: 27)

Wilde possesses a unique taste of word use. The reader is extremely astonished by stylistic devices and expressive means used in a professional linguistic manner. The epithets “voiceless agony”, “mad passion”, “hideous, treacherous crime”, “the meanest flower” significantly contribute to emphatic level of the work. One of the most awesome metaphors here is “Wild weeks”. O. Wilde with great ability of playing with words can associate the word “weeks” with “wild” successfully and this literary figure makes the reader enthusiastic.

Last examples of colourful metaphoric devices are “Dimly-lit streets... gaunt black-shadowed archways and evil-looking houses”, “monstrous apes” and “grotesque children” which Wilde uses to influence his reader in high esthetic level.

“Where he went to he hardly knew. He remembered wandering through dimly lit streets, past gaunt, black-shadowed archways and evil-looking houses. Women with hoarse voices and harsh laughter had called after him. Drunkards had reeled by, cursing and chattering to themselves like monstrous apes. He had seen grotesque children huddled upon door-steps, and heard shrieks and oaths from gloomy courts.” (Wilde, 1958: 163)

According to us, the reason why this book can be easily found in the bookshelves of majority of readers is that the charming metaphors which O. Wilde enriches effectiveness of his work.

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