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Echahid Cheikh Larbi Tebessi University -Tebessa-
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of Letters and English Language



**A Psychoanalytical Study of Hedonism in Late Victorian Literature:
The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde as a Case Study**

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Candidates:

MAAFA Oussama

Supervisor:

Dr. ARSLANE Ghazouane

Board of Examiners:

President: Ms. Nedjlaoui Ines

Examiner: Ms. BOUHELAIIS Samira

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents. My father, Maafa Mohammed who did not only raise me and nurture me but always had high hopes for me. My mother, Henia who has been a source of motivation and strength during moments of despair and discouragement, her motherly care and support have been shown in incredible ways throughout my educational journey. I hope this achievement will make them proud.

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Abstract

Discussing psychology in relation to literature is the major focus of this dissertation. More specifically, this research studies the psychological causes of hedonism and its effects on individuals, using *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde as the case study through which the research tries to understand the nature of hedonistic behaviour. The novel portrays pleasure, desires, beauty and youth, how they change ideologies and morals and the psychological states of individuals. This study aims at unveiling the source of hedonism and its types in the novel and beyond through the lens of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic dissection of the characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* aims to offer a detailed outlook of what it is like to be a hedonistic person or to experience obsession about beauty, immortality and immorality. In addition, the dissertation examines the psychological nature of hedonism and ethics during the late Victorian era in relation to the concept of elegance, ethics, good looks and youth obsession. It investigates whether hedonism helps the key characters to fulfil their desires and happiness, probing the ways in which hedonism is portrayed and the reasons behind the hedonistic lifestyle.

Keywords: Hedonism; Psychoanalysis; Oscar Wilde; *The Picture of Dorian Gray*; Late Victorian Era; Beauty; Youth; Desires; Pleasure; Immorality.

Résumé

Discuter de la psychologie en relation avec la littérature est l'objectif principal de cette thèse. Plus précisément, cette recherche étudie les causes psychologiques de l'hédonisme et ses effets sur les individus, en utilisant *The Picture of Dorian Gray* d'Oscar Wilde comme étude de cas à travers laquelle la recherche tente de comprendre la nature du comportement hédoniste. Le roman dépeint le plaisir, les désirs, la beauté et la jeunesse, comment ils changent les idéologies et la morale et les états psychologiques des individus. Cette étude vise à dévoiler la source de l'hédonisme et ses types dans le roman et au-delà à travers le prisme de la psychanalyse. La dissection psychanalytique des personnages de *The Picture of Dorian Gray* vise à offrir une perspective détaillée de ce que c'est que d'être une personne hédoniste ou d'éprouver une obsession pour la beauté, l'immortalité et l'immoralité. En outre, la thèse examine la nature psychologique de l'hédonisme et de l'éthique à la fin de l'ère victorienne en relation avec le concept d'élégance, d'éthique, de beauté et d'obsession de la jeunesse. Il cherche à savoir si l'hédonisme aide les personnages clés à satisfaire leurs désirs et leur bonheur, en sondant les façons dont l'hédonisme est dépeint et les raisons derrière le mode de vie hédoniste.

الملخص

مناقشة علم النفس فيما يتعلق بالأدب هو الهدف الرئيسي لهذه الأطروحة. وبشكل أكثر تحديداً، يدرس هذا البحث الأسباب النفسية لمذهب المتعة وتأثيراته على الأفراد، باستخدام "صورة دوريان جراي" لأوسكار وايلد كدراسة حالة يحاول البحث من خلالها فهم طبيعة السلوك المتعلق بالمتعة. كذلك تصور الرواية الإنجراف وراء الرغبات، الجمال والشباب وكيف يغيرون الأيديولوجيات والأخلاق والحالات النفسية للأفراد. يهدف التحليل النفسي لشخصيات لرواية "صورة دوريان جراي" إلى تقديم منظور مفصل لما يعنيه أن تكون شخصاً متعي كما تشرح تجربة الهوس بالجمال والخلود وغياب الأخلاق. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تبحث الأطروحة في الطبيعة النفسية لمذهب المتعة والأخلاق في نهاية العصر الفيكتوري فيما يتعلق بمفهوم الأناقة والأخلاق والجمال وهوس الشباب. يحاول الوصول إلى معرفة ما إذا كانت المتعة تساعد الشخصيات الرئيسية على إشباع رغباتهم وسعادتهم، من خلال التحقيق في الطرق التي يتم بها تصوير المتعة والأسباب الكامنة وراء أسلوب الحياة المتعة.

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Introduction

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) is an Irish poet and playwright. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a work of fiction that tries to explore what hedonism is, what aesthetic is, and what stereotypes they can be linked to. His personal background surely had a significant impact on how the novel was created, shaped, and intended. Both in his era and in ours, Wilde was and is well-known, respectively. Early critics perceived *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as immoral and perverse, particularly due to its underlying hedonistic motives. Nevertheless, the homosexual hints in the story help to scrutinize pleasure and its value or worth. In this era, some people believe that morality should strongly prevail within the society; however, some other people believe that morality is just a delusion. As a result, morality, pleasure and egoism are seen as selfish conducts that have no concern for the rules or the opinions of others.

Personal experiences with the social, historical, and cultural backdrop of a particular time period have a big impact on authors. The elements of the world around Wilde helped to develop *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Morality in the late Victorian era had an impact on the novel's themes. During the Victorian Era, a deeper movement known as aestheticism was very influential. Its central concern was the yearning for beauty and personal pleasure.

The Victorian era's social movements heavily impacted Wilde, and as a result, the theme of hedonism is prevalent in the story, showing the presence of aestheticism and further elaborating on the negative effects of selfishness and self-gratification. The drive toward aestheticism dramatically questioned all pre-existing norms of sexuality, pleasure, and love.

The emergence of psychoanalysis has contributed to numerous literary interpretations. Psychoanalysis as a theory is particularly helpful in evaluating Oscar Wilde's novel. Hedonism as a theory, however, offers fresh approaches to reading and understanding the novel, as well as helping to deconstruct the intricate nature of individuals and social constructs found in the text like ethics, morality, and decision-making. Moreover, beyond

conventional conceptions of moral fantasy literature, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s genuine significance and aim are revealed in terms of depicting the power of aestheticism over people and the decadence that stems from the moral conflicts within them. Wilde imprints his creative creations with the philosophical and psychological characteristics of his world. Finally, by tackling the nature of Wilde's characters' "psyche," the psychoanalytic lens can greatly help to offer new perspectives to issues that have vexed readers about hedonism for centuries.

By concentrating on the scandalous behaviours, the age of decadence, and the late Victorian era, many critics and researchers have written about and analyzed *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Using various literary approaches, they examined the unspeakable events in the Victorian story and the mindsets of the key characters. In addition, due to the importance of hedonism, decadence, aestheticism, beauty, youth and narcissistic self-love in the book, they specifically expressed interest in the modern life. Therefore, numerous studies conducted to study hedonism in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through the main characters' lifestyle and aestheticism in the age of decadence.

Authors like Roger Luckhurst in "Perversion and degeneracy in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*" examined how the transgressive, supernatural components of the Gothic novel provided a framework for discussing of forbidden things. Additionally, he shed lights on the protagonist, who is allowed the freedom to indulge in every sin or eagerness while hiding his moral decay under a painted image that displays all indicators of his degeneration.

Academics like Zrinka Frleta in her article entitled "Art, the Artist and Ethics in *Wilde's Picture of Dorian Gray*" looked at epigrams in the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and the ideological and philosophical underpinnings of aestheticism described in Wilde's critical essays, "The Critic as Artist" and "The Decay of Lying," both of which provide a philosophical background for the book. Because art's ultimate objective is to be

appreciated for its own sake, or *l'art pour l'art* (art for art's sake), aestheticism emphasized that it cannot be limited to moral, social, religious, or didactic goals.

In “Review of Michael Davis’s Mind and Matter in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,” Hannah Brunning explored Wilde's novel in terms of degenerative theory and evolutionary theory to consider how the novel interacts with current psychological scientific controversies, particularly those that focus on the interconnections between mind and matter. In other words, hedonism and the concept of pleasure can be studied from an evolutionary perspective; the study helped one to understand the gaps that are left such as Dorian’s materialistic mentality and pragmatism. Morality, aestheticism and hedonism are not absolute; they evolve over time just like the human mind. Most crucially, psychological and scientific discoveries can explain the human’s behaviours in a relationship to matter.

This dissertation purports to explore the novel's intriguing themes, which have generated a variety of analyses on its psychological dimensions. It attempts to reintroduce and study the theme of hedonism through the lenses of Freudian, Lacanian, and Jungian psychoanalysis, because they have the capacity to provide a new reading to the psyche of the characters and the motives behind their actions. Freudian psychoanalysis explains hedonism in a relation to the id, ego, and super-ego as well as to the various psychosexual stages and their contribution to the development of Dorian’s personality. Jungian and Lacanian psychoanalysis analyses the buried reasons behind hedonism and the mirror self.

Furthermore, this dissertation focuses on such psychological impulses as obsession with pleasure and beauty or suppression of internal desires. It attempts to investigate the psychological and the philosophical roots of egoistic hedonism. It seeks to examine these significant issues by endeavoring to address the following questions: How is hedonism portrayed through the key characters of Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? What are the reasons behind hedonistic lifestyle in the novel? Were the characters able to fulfill their yearnings in re-creating themselves?

Due to the requirement for writing about internal suppressed desires, we believe that a researcher's focus and subject matter are determined by the age in which they live. This is an age where hedonism is a social, cultural and psychological problem. Addressing it, therefore, might help us shed new lights not just on the period in which the novel was written, but on our period as well, because those issues are universal despite their different manifestations across different cultures and time periods.

The study's significance lies in demonstrating how Oscar Wilde's writing has addressed a range of psychological and social issues pertinent at once to his age and ours. Further exploration of the characteristics of egoistic hedonism and its causes has been undertaken in the effort to address important philosophical and psychological issues through literature. The study also aims to illuminate how morality is built into late Victorian novels.

This research depends on an analytical method to investigate the roots of hedonism and morality in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* without taking a position in advance. The idea is to provide a critical interpretation that is compatible with the researchers' understanding of the subject under investigation while remaining critical of what has already been discussed. The goal is to offer the academic community a new and fresh interpretation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray's* theme of immorality.

In order to address the primary research topics, the dissertation is divided into three chapters of comparable importance. The theoretical background of this research is defined and explained in the first chapter, which is entitled "Theoretical and Contextual Framework: Psychoanalysis, Hedonism and (Late) Victorian Literature." It frames the study theoretically and contextually by highlighting psychoanalytic theory, hedonism, and Victorianism.

The Second chapter is entitled "The Psychological Construction of Moral Disgrace in: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*". It attempts to offer a literary reading of the novel that enlightens the roots of morality along with the novel's characterization. It also attempts to analyse the development of the psychological conflict of Dorian Gray along with hedonism in

the novel. The Freudian, Lacanian and Jungian psychoanalytical perspectives are adopted in this chapter to explain the psychological conflict within Dorian's psyche, Oedipus complex, homosexuality, and the psychosexual identity.

The third Chapter is entitled "Hedonism as Seen in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*". It deals with the factors that contributed to Dorian Gray's changing behaviors. It also focuses on the supporting characters' contributions through the main character. Moreover, it is concerned with the change of Dorian Gray's behaviours and his lifestyle associated with the Victorian society. This chapter discusses Dorian's narcissistic self-love, the types of hedonism that the protagonist reflects in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the relationship between hedonism, beauty and psychological influence. It also scrutinizes the Victorian morality and its victims by focusing on Oscar Wilde and his characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

The overall aim of this dissertation is to illustrate and discuss hedonism, aestheticism, and decadence in Oscar Wilde's novel. Through an in-depth reading of the novel this dissertation will discuss the different aspects of the text and analyze the different sides of the character of Dorian Gray and other key characters that influenced him. In doing so, this study will particularly focus on what makes Dorian Gray a hedonist and on whether he was able to fulfil his desires or not. Additionally, this dissertation aims to connect these concepts to other characters.

This research has some limitations that confine it from analyzing the philosophical side of hedonism, such as self-absorption, nihilism, existentialism, and their psychological roots in the novel. The lack of free books and articles that are related to the scope of the study was one of the major difficulties. Despite that, we used what was available and endeavoured to produce what we hope is a good dissertation.

Chapter One:

Theoretical and Contextual Framework: Psychoanalysis, Hedonism, and (Late)

Victorian Literature

1.1. Introduction

The theoretical background and explanation of the essential terminology and concepts that serve as the foundation for the dissertation are covered in this chapter. It includes definitions, historiographies, and a more in-depth theoretical understanding of psychoanalytic theory, late Victorian literature, aesthetic movement and most importantly hedonistic egoism, which is one of the main concerns of this study. This will, eventually, lead this research process to reach a hopefully thorough understanding of the psychology behind pursuing beauty and internal desires through artistic works in the late Victorian age.

1.2. Psychoanalysis

Freud's theories provide an illuminating understanding of personality, dreams, sexuality, thinking mechanism, awareness and beyond it. However, early psychoanalysis was developed for the therapeutic treatment of hysteric patients. It was first introduced in his work entitled *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which addresses the fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis.

1.2.1. Definition and Historical Overview

Psychoanalysis is a theory that has been tackled by many psychologists and critics. It was first introduced and used by the Austrian psychiatrist Sigmund Freud, who coined the term psychoanalysis. Freud would advise his patients to speak openly about their thoughts. Hence, psychoanalysis is often known as a cathartic theory.

The term psychoanalysis relates to both a theory and a method of therapy based on the concept that everyone has unconscious emotions, desires, experiences and thoughts (Cherry).

According to the American Psychoanalytic Association (APA), Psychoanalysis can assist in self-understanding by investigating the unconscious for unrecognized urges. It

mainly focuses on how an individual's mental life and adjustment are impacted by unconscious influences such as suppressed desires, internal conflicts, and early traumas.

Moreover, the online etymology dictionary defines the term psychoanalysis as the theory or therapy of treating psychological disorders by examining unconscious components and bringing suppressed fears and conflicts to the patient's consciousness, from *psychoanalyse*, which Freud first used in French in 1896 and which is derived from the Latinized form of the Greek words *psykh*, which means the soul, mind, spirit and understanding.

Mahroof Hossain states openly in his article entitled "Psychoanalytic Theory Used in English Literature: A Descriptive Study" that re-narrating a person's life is a key component of psychoanalytic treatment. The relationship between the unconscious and thought processes has received a great deal of attention. In other words, being aware of this is beneficial and essential for maintaining mental health. Psychoanalysis places a strong emphasis on motives and concentrated on subliminal or buried impulses, which assists in the clarification of literature on two levels: the level of the writing itself and the level of character behavior in the text.

As the individual who is credited with creating psychoanalytic theory, Freud published a large amount of writings in which he provided his own theories on how he saw the human mind. Norman N. Holland claims in his article entitled "Freud on Shakespeare" that the emergence of the "unconscious" by Sigmund Freud at the end of the nineteenth century would define intellectual life in the twentieth century.

Stephen A. Mitchell and Margaret J. Black in their book *A History of Modern Psychoanalytic Thought* argue that psychoanalysis was mostly the creation of Freud's singular genius over the first five decades of the history of psychoanalytic thought (up to Freud's death in 1939). In addition to being a sort of therapy, Freud saw psychoanalysis as a

brand-new field of study. He gave his invention meticulous attention, and it grew up around him (13).

1.2.2. Major Assumptions of Freudian Theory

A theory is based on a set of rules and assumptions. Freud set some major principles to his theory of psychoanalysis in order to understand and explain the development of an individual's psyche, emotions, and personality. More specifically, the Id and the Psychosexual are two of those principles that have been tackled by Freud.

1.2.2.1. Psychosexual Theory

Freud's theories are predicated on the idea that internal motivations and emotions have an impact on behavior, leading to developmental changes (Psychosexual Stages). After conducting extensive studies and studying human development, he came to the conclusion that undesirable behaviours and suppressed emotions are caused by childhood trauma and experiences, which influence how an individual develops as they reach adulthood. Following his findings, Freud established the psychosexual theory of development, which has five stages of development ("Psychosexual Theory").

In addition, according to Freud the pleasure-seeking impulses of the id become focused on specific erogenous zones during a succession of infancy stages, which lead to the development of personality. An area of the body that is highly responsive to stimulation is known as erogenous zone.

Tomy Philip, in his article "Psychosexual Development: Freudian Concept," points out that one of the earliest explanations for how human personality develops is the notion of psychosexual development, commonly referred to as the theory of libidinal development. The findings of Sigmund Freud's clinical tests with emotionally disturbed individuals lend credibility to this idea. The notion of psychosexual development is a crucial component of Freud's psychodynamic personality theory (180).

Philip also argues that the life instinct is continuously activated during the process of personality development. Engagement in various sensual acts is necessary to activate the life instinct since sex is the most significant life instinct in an individual. The earliest signs of sexuality appear in response to biological processes that are essentially nonsexual, such as eating and getting rid of waste. Throughout the first five years of life, every individual goes through a number of stages, and then for the next five to six years, the dynamics become more or less stable (182).

The five stages of human development identified by Freud's psychosexual theory are oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital. These psychosexual stages concentrate on various aspects of wants, needs, and desires and represent the major developmental milestones of a person from birth to adulthood ("Psychosexual Theory").

To begin with, Philip tackles every phase of psychosexual development, which is explained in terms of the mode of response of a specific body zone. A newborn baby's mouth operates as the primary area of dynamic activity for the first 18 months of life. Therefore, this phase is called the oral stage. The oral stage is followed by enjoying one's own elimination functions, which is why it is referred to as the anal stage. Another 18 months pass after this, and then follows the phallic stage, during which the sex organs become the dominant erogenous zones (182).

Moreover, Philip says that depending on the phase of development, the mucous membrane of the mouth, the anus, and the external genitalia become the center of the child's erotic life at various periods. The child undergoes a phase of latency at the end of the fifth year during which their sexual impulses are suppressed. The pregenital impulses are reactivated with the commencement of puberty, and the individual reaches the genital developmental stage (182-183).

1.2.2.2. Homosexuality and Freud's Theory

J. Edgar Bauer argues that considering the inconsistencies and ambiguities in the psychoanalytical evaluation of homosexuality, the widespread use of psychoanalysis in gay, lesbian, and transgender studies is all the more essential. Freud considered homosexuality to be a fixation at one of the developmental stages.

Jonathan Barrett, in “Misusing Freud: Psychoanalysis and the Rise of Homosexual Conversion Therapy,” affirms that Freud initially believed that everyone had both heterosexual and homosexual tendencies. Those characteristics might be shaped into one's own orientation as an adult based on psychosocial development throughout childhood and adolescence. Moreover, one of the rare psychoanalysts who did not categorize homosexuality as a pathological disorder in the early 20th century was Sigmund Freud. As claimed in Barrett's article on homosexuality:

Although homosexuality is undoubtedly not advantageous, it is also not a sin, a vice, or a depravity, and it cannot be categorized as a disease. Instead, we view it as a variation of the sexual function brought on by a particular halt in sexual development.

(6)

Strictly speaking, when a worried mother enquired with Freud as to whether he could cure her son of homosexuality, he answered by claiming that her son did not require treatment and that there was nothing serious about his psychological well-being.

Nevertheless, while Freud's theory suggested that homosexuality was a deviation from typical psychosexual development, many modern psychologists argue that biological variables play a significant role in determining sexual orientation.

1.2.2.3. The Oedipus complex

Daniel K. Lapsley and Paul C. Stey foreground in their article “Id, Ego, and Superego” that the phallic erotogenic zone's instinctual cathexis causes an urge for union and contact with the opposite parent of the same sex as well as a concomitant desire to displace

them. In addition, K. Lapsley and C. Stey also argue that intrinsically as the rival's vengeance is feared (castration complex), the competition for the opposite sex parent results in anxiety. This is coped with by suppressing incestuous desires and forming a superego by associating with the same-sex parent. However, later formulations delayed the resolution of the oedipal conflict for girls until marriage and motherhood, refuting Freud's original claim that the course of oedipal development for boys and girls was perfectly identical.

1.2.2.4. Id, Ego, and Superego

Kendra Cherry highlights that Sigmund Freud considers the human personality to be complicated and contains multiple components. The id, the ego, and the superego are the three components of personality, according to Freud's well-known psychoanalytic theory. Nonetheless, complex human behaviors are the result of the interaction of these factors.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality states that the id is the personality element made up of unconscious psychic energy that serves to satiate primal urges, needs, and desires. K. Lapsley and C. Stey assert that intuitive drive energies and everything else that is a part of our evolutionary heritage are incorporated into the id, which develops into a psychological province—the Unconscious. In accordance with this basic process, the id drives the organism to engage in need-satisfying, tension-relieving activities that are pleasurable for the organism. (1)

Moreover, according to the Oxford dictionary, the ego is defined as self-esteem or self-importance; a conscious thinking subject in metaphysics; the portion of the mind that mediate between the conscious and the unconscious and is in charge of reality-testing and a personal identity sense in psychoanalysis. Hossain underlined that the ego serves as a mediator between the id and the super-ego, seeking solutions that will appease both. (43) One could think of it as an element that balances between the id which is driven by instincts and the super-ego which is driven by morals.

Finally, in Freud's psychoanalytic theory, the superego is one of the three most recent-evolving agencies of the human psyche, together with the id and ego. The superego, which makes up the ethical part of the personality, establishes the moral principles that the ego should stick to.

1.2.3. Lacanian Psychoanalysis: The Mirror Stage

"All sorts of things in the world behave like mirrors"

(“Lacan, the Ego in Freud's Theory” 49).

Jacques Marie Émile Lacan was a significant figure in the intellectual life of Paris for much of the 20th century. He was sometimes called "the French Freud." Lacan has played a significant role in the development of psychoanalysis. In his lectures and writings, Freud's discovery of the unconscious is examined in relation to the theory and practice of analysis as a whole as well as a broad range of other disciplines (Jacques Lacan).

Lacan demonstrates how the formal and aesthetic construction of a literary work can be the focus of a psychoanalytical reading. In other words, he argues that a literary work reflects our unconscious and that it is constructed like a language (“Psychoanalytic Criticism”). Psychoanalytic theory adopted a post-structuralist shift as a result of Lacan's interpretation of Freud, which placed a strong emphasis on language (“Mirror Stage”).

According to Lacan, a child's development goes through a period called the mirror stage between the ages of 6 and 18 months during which time they start to make crude distinctions between themselves and others after seeing their reflection in a mirror (“Mirror Stage”). Rohit R in “A Psychoanalytic Study of the Picture of Dorian Gray and DR. Faustus: A Comparison” states that the mirror stage is when infants first identify themselves in a mirror or other symbolic object that prompts apperception, which occurs at around six months of age.

Moreover, according to Lacan, the child's sudden self-awareness allows him to realize not only having a unique identity that sets him apart from others, but also that others exist

independently of him and that subject and object are different from one another (“Lacan and the Mirror Stage”).

It is at this point of alienation and obsession with one's own image that the ego first manifests. The organizing and forming qualities of the picture serve to both create and shape the ego. Finally, as shown by Lacan, the ego is founded on an illusion of wholeness and control, and it serves to maintain this delusion of coherence and mastery (“Mirror Stage”).

Ktherin P. Ewing emphasized Lacan’s idea which means that the ego is built on the delusion of coherence and mastery, and it helps to sustain this delusion. It also implies that delusion and conflict in human history and awareness are caused by this illusion of control and coherence.

1.2.4. Jungian Shadow Archetype

We do not like to look at the shadow-side of ourselves; therefore there are many people in our civilized society who have lost their shadow altogether; they have got rid of it. They are only two-dimensional; they have lost the third dimension, and with it they have usually lost the body. (Jung 23)

Carl Gustav Jung, a renowned psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who was born in Switzerland, is most likely known for establishing analytical psychology, a new approach to psychoanalysis that marked a break from the more traditional psychotherapy that Sigmund Freud pioneered. Analytical psychology places special emphasis on a person's symbolic experiences and their path to a successful future growth.

David J. Leigh asserts that Jung released the first part of *The Psychology of the Unconscious*, disagreeing with Freud's theories on pansexuality in 1911. This rupture caused their working friendship to end. Jung published a significant work titled *Psychological Types* (1921) after serving in World War I, in which he exposed his theories of the individual and collective unconscious, the archetypes, and the individuation process (“Jung’s Archetypal Psychology”).

Leigh also argues that the significance of the unique individual and the teleological purpose and meaning of one's inward and outward life on the conscious and unconscious levels were stressed by Carl Jung, who made a significant contribution to psychology in this area. According to Jung, the individual's ultimate objective is to integrate the psyche's conscious and unconscious components, each of which has a personal and a collective dimension ("Jung's Archetypal Psychology").

Moreover, the ego, which contains memories and emotions about the individual past, forms the personal consciousness. Some of these memories and emotions are accessible, but others have been repressed into the personal unconscious, where they exist as complexes (such as the mother complex, the inferiority complex, the hero complex, etc.). The archetypes or symbolic "shapes" of tales, people, settings, or images that have been collected from human experience throughout history create the collective unconscious, which is located deeper in the psyche ("Jung's Archetypal Psychology"). As claimed in Robin Robertson's *Jungian Archetypes Jung, Gödel, and the History of Archetypes*: "The archetypes are eternal principles that reside in the human psyche. As such, they are beyond any individual human's ability to integrate into the personality" (184).

Archetypes can also be defined as innate, ubiquitous representations of people, behaviors, and personalities that have an impact on how people behave. According to Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung's theory, these archetypes represent ancient variations of the innate wisdom that our ancestors handed down to us. The most common places where these archetypes can be found are in literature, dreams, myths, and other imaginative works. Persona, shadow, anima/animus, and other significant archetypes are among them.

It has been claimed that one of the most crucial archetypes is the shadow which is the repressed part of the human psyche. People choose to ignore the shadow because it contradicts their personal values. Besides, given that it embodies human beings' instinctual

needs and deepest desires, it can be compared to the Freudian id. In this respect, Robertson states that:

The nature of the essential problem was the same for all patients: how to get patients to acknowledge that the shadow figures were part of their own psyche, that they had such thoughts and desires. The issue at this stage was not how to deal with the desires; the issue was merely to acknowledge that one had such desires. This requires great courage on the part of patients. (183-184)

In other words, as part of the individuation process, according to Jung, humans should confront their shadow because the more they repress it, the stronger and more dangerous it grows.

1.3. Hedonism

Hedonism is one of the earliest, most fundamental, and frequently discussed theories of ethics and values. It is related to fulfilling happiness through pursuing one's desires and being opened to pleasurable experiences.

1.3.1. The Birth of Hedonism

Gordon Graham in his book *Eight Theories of Ethics* contends that the Cyrenaics, who took their name from the birthplace of their founder Aristippus of Cyrene, a Greek town in what is now Libya, were the ancient philosophical school that first introduced the philosophy of hedonism, not the Sophists (40).

According to Kurt Lampe in his book *The Birth of Hedonism*, many readers believe that Aristippus chose the easy path because of the way Xenophon presents him. Of course, this is not a trustworthy description of the principles of the real Aristippus. It is a work of fiction influenced by Xenophon's ideas on Aristippus and Socrates, as well as his own thoughts about virtue, evil, pleasure, and happiness. However, it serves as a helpful parable for considering the inspiration behind the intellectual movement that Aristippus founded (1).

The name "Cyrenaic" refers to the movement's origins in the North African city of Cyrene, where the majority of its members were born. Xenophon is accurate to portray Cyrenaic philosophy as the decision of pleasure, despite the fact that the Cyrenaics do not connect pleasure to vice (Lampe 1).

According to the Cyrenaics, pleasure is the only genuine natural good. That is to say, everyone agrees that happiness is best achieved through experiencing pleasure, and only pleasure. Contrarily, pain is a universally recognized natural evil that is undesirable. Therefore, the best state of existence, as far as the Cyrenaics are concerned, is one that contains as much pleasure and as little pain as possible; to propose such an idea is to speak in terms that people from all backgrounds and eras can understand (Graham 40).

In specific, Cyrenaics all concur that the greatest and most certain intrinsic good is either mental or physical pleasure. This could be described as formal hedonism. Second, they genuinely enjoy a variety of common pleasures like food and sex. In other words, despite differences among movement participants, they generally do not try to live pleasantly through self-control or sober parsimony. They differ (at least slightly) from many formal hedonists in this regard, including the Epicureans, who were both their rivals and ultimate successors. This could be described as daily hedonism (Lampe 2).

Gisela Striker discusses another version of hedonism in her article entitled "Epicurean Hedonism". She states that since Epicurus' version of hedonism does not seem to remain true, it appeared paradoxical from the beginning. The Cyrenaics claimed that what he believed to be the greatest pleasure was actually more akin to someone being asleep or even dead in his own time (3).

Common discourse contains examples of this hedonistic philosophy. A person who enjoys the finer things in life—good food, good company, urbane literature, elegant clothing, and so forth—is referred to as an "epicure." This definition of the term accurately reflects the

Epicureans' belief that life can only be filled with pleasure if it comes without any pain (Graham 42).

Nonetheless, seeing how Epicurus could present his assertion that the greatest good was a state of absence of pain and suffering from body and spirit as a form of hedonism has remained challenging for both ancient and modern critics (Striker 1). Also, if humans tried to maximize our happiness and minimize our suffering, they would ultimately lead an epicurean lifestyle (Graham 43).

For that reason, the nineteenth-century English philosopher John Stuart Mill introduced a new approach known as qualitative hedonism. It argues that quality matters more than quantity when it comes to experiencing pleasure. In essence, Mill differentiates between two types of pleasure: body-related and mind-related. He asserts that enjoying intellectual activities is related to the pleasures of the mind ("Qualitative Hedonism").

On top of that, Graham argues that in Mill's moral philosophy, the good life is to be evaluated in terms of pleasure and pain, just like the Cyrenaics and the Epicureans thought. Mill assumes that pleasure is a natural good and pain a natural evil. However, he also believed that there are significant distinctions between the various lives that individuals can lead, distinctions that cannot simply be attributed to pleasure (44).

The distinction between greater and lower pleasures was first suggested by Mill. He argues that pleasure is the measure of worth, but he also believed that some pleasures are better than others (Graham 44). All that has been demonstrated is that producing more pleasure cannot be a criterion for their superiority. Humans can enjoy "higher" things, but what makes them "higher" is not the pleasure they provide for us, but rather something unique about the activities themselves. Therefore, appealing to both higher and lower pleasures achieves little and creates more questions than it answers (Graham 46-47).

Aristotle attempted to define pleasure in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. He is actually not against the idea that pleasure is a good. Indeed, he explicitly stresses that "necessarily

pleasure is a good" and even refers to the primary good as "a kind of pleasures" (13). But he believed that unless we carefully consider what is meant by pleasure, we cannot evaluate the benefits of hedonism (Graham 49). As Aristotle points out, pleasure itself is neither good nor bad, but it does have a positive impact on how well an activity is performed ("Aristotle on Pleasure").

1.3.2. Definition of the Concept

Throughout history many philosophers, academics and critics attempted to define the concept of hedonism. According to the Merriam Webster dictionary, when the term "hedonism" first appeared in English in the middle of the 19th century, it was used to refer to the doctrines of some Greek schools of philosophy (such as the Epicureans and Cyrenaics), who believed that the main purpose of existence was to experience happiness or pleasure.

John J. Tilley, in his article "Hedonism," stresses that the word "hedone," which means pleasure in Greek, is where the term "hedonism" derives from. There are three main varieties of it: axiological hedonism, which holds that the only thing of intrinsic value is pleasure; psychological hedonism, which holds that every intentional act ultimately results from the desire for pleasure; and ethical hedonism, which holds that the morality of an action depends on the pleasure it causes. Moreover, hedonism is the term used in ethics to refer to all theories of behaviour where pleasure of some sort serves as the deciding factor ("Hedonism").

In short, Hedonism is the concept according to which the morality of a possible course of action should be judged primarily on the basis of pleasure, or the absence of pain. Pleasure can be "sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll," but it can also be any activity that is intrinsically worthwhile, such as reading a good book ("Hedonism").

1.3.3. Definition of Morality

Özge MAVIŞ SEVİM, in his article "What is Morality?: The Concept of Morality from Prospective Teachers' Perspective," asserts that the idea of morality, which is linked to

temperament, character, or manners, reflects the established character structure in individuals as well as their own freely willed behaviours. Many thinkers have attempted to define morality and have aligned morality to different theories.

According to the Online Dictionary, morality was first recorded in 1350. It is derived from the Late Latin word *mōrālītās*, which means "human nature." It combines the term moral, which means "related to goodness," and the suffix -ity, which creates abstract nouns that express a situation. Being moral means adhering to the standards of righteous or moral behaviour. It can also refer to a person's virtue or goodness. In other words, morality is an extremely complex concept that pertains to the established social norms which define appropriate conduct.

S M Tazuddin defines morality as a set of principles or a way of acting that form the foundation of society. Some moral principles are ubiquitous, such as the prohibition of homicide and the fundamental obligations to act righteously and promote the welfare of others. In addition, morals tend to be widely accepted and have a stronger societal component. On morals rather than ideals, one tends to judge others harsher.

1.3.3.1. Definitions of Immorality

According to Merriam Webster dictionary, a person or a behaviour that consciously violates accepted morals is referred to as immoral. By accepted morals, researchers mean the correct principles and viewpoints regarding what constitute right and proper behaviours. According to Aristotle, being immoral is the same as not recognizing what is required for a happy life. However, for Kant immoral behavior is illogical behavior. While it does apply to humans insofar as we are rational, he attempts to establish morality as it necessarily applies to all rational beings.

1.3.3.2. Value Hedonism

According to Daniel Weijers, when philosophers talk about hedonism, they most frequently refer to hedonism about values, particularly the marginally more specialized

theory of hedonism about well-being. According to hedonism, all and only pleasure has intrinsic value, while all and only suffering has intrinsic disvalue. Additionally, it is believed that pleasure has intrinsic worth because it is pleasurable to experience even if it does not result in any other advantages. Strictly speaking, value Hedonism turns everything valuable into a source of pleasure (16-17).

Toni Rønnow-Rasmussen argued in his article “Hedonism, Preferentialism, and Value Bearers” that despite receiving a great deal of criticism over the years, hedonism is still a generally accepted axiological position. One argument that seems to be widely acknowledged as particularly troubling to hedonists is that their core claim that ultimate value only accrues to experiences of pleasure gives us a limited understanding of value.

It has been claimed that the goal of value hedonism is to define value in terms of the pleasure experienced. In this situation, value hedonism assumes that even the most difficult human endeavors are motivated by the desire to maximize pleasure, and that these endeavors are rational because of this desire (“Hedonism Examples”).

1.3.4. Hedonistic Egoism

Enggin Valufi and Retno Budi Astuti in their article “Types of Hedonism on the Main Character Sir Walter Elliot in the Novel Persuasion by JaneAusten” argued that hedonistic egoists also often have little concern for the consequences of their pursuit of happiness on the people around them. Nonetheless, hedonistic egoists often disregard ethics in favor of seeking their own pleasure. Even so, it is unclear whether the satisfaction value limit is being sought.

Weijers adds that hedonistic egoism is a hedonistic interpretation of egoism, the belief that humans should act morally in a way that serves their own interests the most. The hedonistic egoism theory holds that, morally speaking, humans should always do what makes them happy, or, more specifically, what gives them the most net pleasure after subtracting any suffering (21).

1.4. The Victorian Era

In British history, the Victorian era encompasses the years roughly between 1820 and 1914. It roughly corresponds to Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901) and is distinguished by a class-based society, a rise in the number of voters, an expanding state and economy, and Britain's position as the world's most powerful empire (“Victorian era”).

To begin with, the Victorian Compromise, also known as a duality or double standard, is something that can be seen in the literature from this time period between the concerns of the individual (such as exploitation and corruption both domestically and overseas) and national achievement (Lombardi).

Besides, Britain was a strong country with a vibrant society in the Victorian era. Its franchise was increasing, its state was expanding, and its government was stable. Despite having a working-class population that comprised roughly three-fourths of its population, it was wealthy and ruled a sizable empire, in part due to its level of industrialization, its imperial holdings, and other factors (“Victorian era”).

Nevertheless, today the term "Victorian" denotes a prudish refusal to acknowledge the presence of sex, coupled with hypocritical discussions of sex that are thinly disguised as a series of cautions. Both aspects of this stereotype contain some elements of truth. A small number of educated Victorians did produce a large amount of writing about sex, including pornography, scientific studies, and psychiatric works (“Victorian era”).

Moreover, it has been mentioned that the majority of people avoided discussing sex, and decent middle-class women in particular took pride in their ignorance of their own bodies and childbirth. Additionally, until the end of the era, few people ever questioned the sexual double standard that Victorians had to deal with. Men needed and desired sex, while women had no sexual desire and only engaged in sex to appease their husbands, according to this double standard (“Victorian era”).

In addition, the evolution of science during the Victorian era influenced the religion during the Victorian Era. To start off, it has been argued that Christianity predominated among Victorian Brits. The state churches, of which the monarch served as the nominal leader, were the Anglican churches in England, Wales, and Ireland, which pre-dominated the religious scene (“Victorian era”).

Moreover, Bernard Lightman argues in his article “Victorian Sciences and Religions: Discordant Harmonies” that it seems to capture the significance of the entire Victorian era for our comprehension of problems involving science and religion. Thomas Henry Huxley is seen as one of a strong group of scientists who, during the Victorian era, fiercely attacked the Christian church, and with some success, in contrast to Galileo, who is portrayed as a scientist who stood alone in defending scientific truth against a dogmatic Roman Catholic Church. (343)

Besides, Lightman also asserts that the development of Darwin's theory of evolution in 1859, a novel element in the relationship between science and religion, has been seen as a crucial turning point (343). The once-harmonious relationship between science and faith, exemplified by natural theology, was somewhat upset by Darwin (“Victorian Sciences”).

Although Charles Darwin is frequently given credit for it, previous thinkers also contributed to its development, and the Victorian evolutionary theory was the ugly offshoot that gave rise to the pseudoscience of eugenics. The developing field of psychology and the science of energy also captivated Victorians (“Victorian Sciences”).

1.4.1. Victorian Literature

Victorian literature is the collection of poems, stories, essays, and letters written during Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901) and the time period that carries her name. The authors of the romantic era and the modernist literature of the 20th century are connected by it and are transitioned by it.

The early Victorian Period (ending around 1870) and the late Victorian Period are the two main divisions of the time period (Lombardi). Hence, the literary works can be divided into two categories. Strictly speaking, early Victorian literature was preoccupied with religion, duty, and morals. In a world populated by Christians, ruled by God, and regulated by the Church of England, many Victorian protagonists grapple with how to behave appropriately in particular circumstances. The traditional domestic duties of women and the class system were frequently reinforced in novels ("Early Victorian Literature").

However, the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and other societal and scientific discoveries are issues that Victorian literature also addresses. It is not surprising that the literature of the Victorian era frequently addresses societal reform because the Industrial Revolution brought about a great deal of shifts during that time. Another crucial concern of early Victorian writings is duality or double standards, which is something that can be seen in the literature from this time period between the concerns of the individual such as exploitation and corruption both domestically, overseas and national achievement.

Additionally, Victorian authors responded to works by earlier eras. They assert that the Victorians wanted to escape what they saw as 'the excessive subjectivity of the Romantics' while at the same time maintaining their "individuality, originality, intensity, and, above all, sincerity (Landow).

On top of that, James Eli Adams in his book *A History of Victorian Literature* states that the majority of Victorian literature, which was largely written by writers of roughly middle-class background, has exoticism and a nebulous dread of people who seem so far away in their representations of the poor. Novels largely dealt with these anxieties by externalizing them and turning them into something curiously fascinating. In the "Newgate" novel about criminal life and "industrial" fiction featuring people from the working class, the fascination assumes a quasi-ethnographic tone, as if it were examining the operations of a perilous alien society (10).

1.4.2. Late Victorian Literature

French for "end of the century," *fin de siècle* refers to, characterizes, or resembles the sophisticated, escapism-driven, extreme aestheticism, world-weariness, and fashionable hopelessness of late 19th-century literature and art. The term, when applied to literary movements during this time, basically refers to the Aestheticism movement in England and the Decadent poets of France.

By the end of the century, what had once been certain had become more flexible and ambiguous. In light of this setting, Michael Patrick Gillespie contends that writing from the *fin de siècle* is characterized by a diversity of characters and readings rather than having "no fixed image." (59).

Many Gothic novels from the late Victorian era were published, and many of them are now considered canonical. The Gothic genre proved out to be the perfect method to calm the anxious populace. Gothic literature has long been a place where societal fears can be projected because of its monstrosities and haunting. In this respect, Jerrold E. Hogle states:

The longevity and power of Gothic fiction unquestionably stem from the way it helps us address and disguise some of the most important desires, quandaries, and sources of anxiety, from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural, throughout the history of western culture since the eighteenth century. (4)

1.4.3. Loss of Faith during the Victorian Era

Great changes and innovative thinking, such as a break with traditional religion and a crisis of faith, characterized the Victorian era. Scientific advancements that cast doubt on conventional religious beliefs, the rise of secularism and skepticism and the growing power of the industrialized world all contributed to this. "Victorian Crisis of Faith" describes a time in the Victorian era when a lot of people started to question the reliability of the book of Genesis as a source for the origins of the universe. ("The Crisis of Faith")

“Crisis of Doubt: Honest Faith in Nineteenth-Century England” by Timothy Larsen aims to challenge conventional ideas about faith, doubt, and secularization in the late nineteenth century. By offering a corrective, Larsen hopes to dispel the idea of a pervasive Victorian "crisis of faith." Strictly speaking, the influence of established churches, particularly the Church of England, was diminished by the growth of secularism and doubt. According to Larsen,

Doubt is frequently overstated and faith is “dwarfed” throughout the body of existing historiography on this subject. Too frequently, the crisis of faith is portrayed as the most significant aspect of religion and the Victorians, if not the only aspect. What was actually a telling counterpoint in a time when Christianity in particular and religion in general were pervasive and dominant in so many ways has frequently become the primary narrative. (1)

Larsen thinks that a focus on religious doubt, which runs counter to the age's pervasive religious culture, has had an undue impact on this period's historiography. He accuses several generations of Victorian England scholars, including Richard D. Altick, A.O.J. Cockshut, Edwin Chadwick, and Basil Wiley, in support of this assertion. In particular, Larsen charges Wiley with using George Eliot's conversion to agnosticism as a flat means of conveying a pervasive, spurious Victorian doubt. (6–8).

Furthermore, David Nash argues that the people Larsen writes about were "often top leaders in the movement, some of them once standing among the leading half dozen or so national leaders of popular, organized freethought" (240). The quote refers to the figures who once held the position of leadership within the freethought movement. It also supports Larsen's thoughts about secularism as a competing belief system (69).

1.4.4. Aestheticism and Decadence

Aestheticism and decadence are two late 19th-century literary and artistic trends that are linked and frequently cross over. Both movements were an outcry against Victorian-era conventions, moral codes, and societal norms.

The Aesthetic Movement, also referred to as "art for art's sake," influenced American and other cultures as well as British society in the latter part of the 19th century. Writers, artists, and designers sought to produce works that were admired solely for their beauty rather than any narrative or moral purpose, based on the notion that beauty was the most important aspect of life. Of course, this was a slap in the face to the heritage of art, which maintained that art needed to convey a moral lesson or an uplifting message (Easby).

The movement developed into a cult committed to fostering beauty in all spheres of life, including literature and art, interior design, clothing, and adopting a new simplicity of style (Easby). Nonetheless, Joseph Bristow notes that aestheticism was characterized by the celebration of beauty in the face of modernity.

The celebration of beauty in the face of modernity is a complicated subject that has been studied by many artists, writers, and philosophers. Some contend that modernity has lost sight of aesthetic principles and that the appreciation of beauty is dwindling. Others contend that beauty is ever-changing and that different cultures and eras appreciate it in various ways. For instance, Charles Baudelaire revolutionized the idea of beauty by praising the beauty of contemporary life, such as the beauty of prostitutes and the urban environment (Brenner).

Moreover, Francesco Carelli, in his article "The Aesthetic Movement: Perfect Beauty So Pale and Cold," argues that nothing less than the creation of a brand-new genre of art, unconstrained by dated cultural norms and ethical principles, was what the artists affiliated with the Aesthetic Movement, as it later came to be known, sought. This was to be "Art for Art's Sake," or beauty for beauty's sake: pictures that did not have narratives or moral lessons; sculptures that simply provided a sensory experience and ventured to allude to sensual pleasures (73).

Robert Vincent Johnson notes that aestheticism makes an effort to keep art and reality apart in order to minimize moral implications. Art is valued for the immediate aesthetic pleasure it entails rather than allowing attitudes toward life influence the piece of art (13-14). However, by focusing on sensual pleasure and a living ideal of beauty, aestheticism put Victorian respectability and morality in jeopardy.

On the other hand, decadence was a movement that supported extravagance, sensuality, and decadence in order to defy the conventions of Victorian society (Bradley), also decadence is a literary category that originated in France in the mid-19th century and was associated with writers such as Charles Baudelaire and Théophile Gautier (Bradley).

Decadence has been characterized by themes of excess, transgression, and perversity and celebrated the beauty of decay, decline, and destruction. The darker facets of human nature, such as sexuality, violence, and death, were frequently depicted by authors and artists who are identified with decadence, including Charles Baudelaire, Joris-Karl Huysmans, and Aubrey Beardsley (Burdett). Finally, recent studies such as “Late Victorian Decadence” by Russell M. Goldfarb, have shown that decadence and aestheticism have been the focus of some of the most innovative research within Victorian studies.

1.5 Conclusion

After discussing the theoretical framework of this study and the historical and cultural contexts in which Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is published, one can extract central themes which are derived from the late Victorian circumstances along with the psyche of people who lived during that period. This will be highlighted by studying the presence of hedonism in late Victorian society, which is exemplified by homoerotically coded language, decadence, aestheticism, from a psychoanalytic perspective. In other words, yearning for desires eagerly often entails being a hedonist. The desire to pursue happiness can also imply that individuals in the social sphere should go to whatever length to be satisfied.

The concept of hedonism has many roots and it can be caused by many circumstances. It is only by high leveraging of emotional intelligence, extreme vigilance and some patterns of behaviours that one can obtain this title. Even though that concept remains abstract and obscure, this phenomenon is mostly caused as a result of an everlasting thirst to achieve personal fantasies that might or might not appear to be the most idyllic purpose of all time. It drives psychologists and even artists to write about it in many forms of expository only to deepen the understanding and projection of such fascination with beauty, high positions and extreme pursuit of desires. Therefore, the roots, causes and effects of this concept become a big quandary that stipulates answers.

To that end, the first chapter has attempted to provide a theoretical and contextual framework that should hopefully assist us in gaining a grasp of the psychology involved in late Victorian art's pursuit of inner desires and beauty as exemplified Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Looking at the novel from the perspective of psychoanalysis, through its different Freudian, Jungian and Lacanian lenses, should shed a new light on our understanding of the novel and late Victorian literature.

Chapter Two

The Psychological Construction of Moral Disgrace in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this analytical chapter is to clarify the roots of hedonism. It also concentrates on exploring the ways in which hedonists in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* choose to satisfy their cravings and find happiness. Examining the psyche of hedonists and indicators of pleasure desire, which fall under the general heading of various varieties of hedonism, is crucial. This chapter also focuses on how the id, ego, and super-ego function and how they impact people. Therefore, understanding psychosexual identity, homosexual desire, and the Oedipus complex is crucial because they enable hedonists to pursue pleasure in all of its forms. The construction of the imaginary self, the protagonist's mirror, and the shadow side of the mind in Dorian Gray is also explained using important concepts from Lacanian and Jungian psychoanalysis; taken as a whole, they enable one to delve deeply into the psychology of the main characters. The psychological construction of morality in the novel is examined through the analysis of the protagonist's psychological developments and the Dorian Gray's syndrome. The psychological construction of morality in the novel is examined through the analysis of the protagonist's psychological developments and the Dorian Gray's syndrome.

2.2. Characterization

Characterization is the process by which an author presents the characters in a way that makes them clear to the reader. Characters are the people who carry the events in a narrative. A creator develops the characters in the book. Characters in a fictional tale may be depicted as humans or as other creatures like rats, deer, trees, chairs, and so forth.

The characters are a component of a literary work that the reader of the literary work itself comes to be fascinated and in awe of. A story's characters serve a purpose as couriers or carriers of information that the author wants to get across. M. H. ABRAMS states that:

Characters are the persons represented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with particular moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities by inferences from what the persons say and their distinctive ways of saying it the dialogue and from what they do the action (32-32).

The quote implies that since characters in a story serve as representations of someone's behavior and actions, they are often closely related to that person's ethical or moral standards. In other words, the author develops the character in a tale based on their knowledge of human nature and the principles that govern behavior.

Actions and choices made by the characters in the story represent the author's empathetic reach and understanding of human nature beyond his own opinion, which can be interpreted as reflecting the author's own ethical or moral standards. As a result, a character in a literature can convey an implicit set of moral principles and behaviours about how people behave.

The author of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* describes the personalities that appear in the book, including Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton, and Sibyl Vane. He shed lights on the way they act and how they influence each other. Therefore, it is important to understand their lifestyle, cravings, and their personal and social backgrounds.

2.2.1. Dorian Gray

An incredibly attractive, impressionable, and rich young man, whose picture is painted by artist Basil Hallward, Dorian Gray starts to prioritize his own enjoyment over all else after being influenced by Lord Henry Wotton, who makes him very concerned about the fleeting nature of his beauty. He dedicates himself to experiencing as many things as he can, whether they are righteous or sinister, exquisite or repulsive.

The beauty of Dorian comes from his mother, Margareth Devereux, who “was an extraordinarily beautiful girl” (Wilde 32); “Margaret Devereux was one of the loveliest

creatures I ever saw, Harry” (35). This explains the hereditary beauty of Dorian’s mother, the lady who has a beautiful face that makes many people amazed.

Nevertheless, Dorian is the last grandson of Lord Kelso, one of the richest men in England: “He should have a pot of money waiting for him if Kelso did the right thing by him. His mother had money too. All the Selby property came to her, through her grandfather” (35). This provides some context about Dorian's family background and social status, which may be relevant to understanding his character and motivations in the story.

2.2.2. Basil Hallward

Basil is the artist who falls in love with Dorian Gray and sees him as the standard to which all of his previous work has aspired because of his beauty and innocence. He had Dorian pose for countless pictures. His emotions overpower him when he. One day, he draws a portrait of Dorian that is a true likeness. Although it is the greatest work he has ever produced, he worries that too much of himself is present in it: “I know you will laugh at me ... but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.” (6). This clarifies that it is challenging for Basil to share the portrait with others because he has put a lot of himself into it.

Basil even considers Dorian to be his source of inspiration and thinks that the beauty of art Dorian brought upon the world through his attractive face would determine the course of his work as a renowned painter; he tells us:

I did not want any external influence in my life. You know yourself, Harry, how independent I am by nature. I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray. Then – but I don’t know how to explain it to you. Something seemed to tell me that I was on the verge of a terrible crisis in my life. (10)

Here, Basil emphasizes his independence and the fact that he has always been in charge of both the sources that influence and affect his art. However, the moment he encountered Dorian, everything changed. Above all, Basil has become completely consumed by Dorian:

“He is all my art to me now” (13). This displays that this Dorian has become the sole focus of the painter's artistic vision and inspiration.

2.2.3. Lord Henry Wotton

Lord Henry lives in the most fashionable groups, where he spreads his own brand of highly sophisticated, paradoxical philosophies about art and life. He is cultured and intelligent. He has a strong and frequently toxic impact on the young Dorian:

Have you really a very bad influence, Lord Henry? As bad as Basil says?

There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr Gray. All influence is immoral – immoral from the scientific point of view.

Why?

Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. (20)

As the narrative progresses, Dorian's speech begins to resemble Lord Henry's dubious manner, and his cold-hearted sentiments appear to take the latter's seductive philosophies—that morality is less essential than artistic, pleasurable experiments in living—too seriously. Lord Henry is always prepared with clever epigrams that attack the moralism and corruption of Victorian society.

2.2.4. Sibyl Vane

An innocent girl is destroyed by an aristocratic seducer in the life of Sibyl Vane, a young actor and Dorian's first love. This is a common theme in the melodramas that her mother depicts. However, she is Lord Henry's most potent foe in the argument over art that pervades the entire novel because of her ferocious, if unspoken, intellectual conviction about the power of art. As Dorian tells Lord Henry:

Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget. When I close my eyes, I hear them, and each of them says something different. I don't know which to follow. Why should I not love her? Harry, I do love her. She is everything to me in life. (51)

In other words, that implies Sybil's opposition to Lord Henry's views is a significant force in the debate over art that is present throughout the novel.

Later, when Sybil loses her craft, Dorian loses interest in her in turn. He abandons her, leaving Sybil—a Juliet-like sacrifice for love—broken, to commit suicide. As mentioned in Wilde's novel:

You have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now you don't even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect. I loved you because you were marvellous, because you had genius and intellect, because you realized the dreams of great poets and gave shape and substance to the shadows of art. You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid. My God! how mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name. (85)

This implies that the person Dorian once loved no longer has any effect on him, and that he no longer finds Sybil interesting or inspiring. Also, Dorian's love was based on Sybil's perceived qualities, rather than her true character, and these qualities have since lost their appeal.

2.3. A Psychoanalytical Reading of Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde has been the topic of numerous scholarly and critical analyses. Psychoanalysis helps one comprehend the psychology of characters and the reasons behind their actions as it approaches the novel from a new lens. It is useful to examine the dynamics of Dorian Gray's behaviour and his path to failure by combining the psychoanalytic methodologies of Freud, Lacan, and Jung with literary analysis.

2.3.1. Freudian Psychoanalysis

The Picture of Dorian Gray is analyzed here from the perspective of psychoanalysis. The id, ego, and superego have been studied in some of the characters depicted in the novel. However, the element of homosexuality and oedipal complex, which were aligned with some

characters, is the center of attention in this research along with the parts of the key characters' psyche.

2.3.1.1. The Psychosexual Identity in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Nilam Gogoi and Archid Gogoi, in "Psychosexual Identity: An Analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*," claim that psychosexuality arises from the power of irrational sexual development that is established with age and Freud's "id," "ego," and "superego" personality controllers. In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the protagonist Dorian Gray is transitioning into a psychosexual identity. He goes through a number of trying experiences in life and gradually adopts a hedonistic way of living (2109).

According to Gogoi and Gogoi, Wilde metaphorically depicts the psychosexual ambiguity or identity challenges of a human being and its mental expression in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The story revolves around the personality of Dorian Gray and how that is reflected in his own self-portrait. In this piece, Dorian Gray and his Portrait serve as an example of the psychosexual confusion of reality (2109).

Dorian, whose beauty was captured by artist Basil Hallward, struck a deal with his own portrait to stop aging and lost his youth. He was willing to sell his soul for his appearance in order to maintain his beauty (2109); the narrator states:

How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. 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 – for that – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!. (Wilde 27-28)

The quote reflects the character Dorian Gray's desire for eternal youth and beauty, which he believes can be achieved by transferring the effects of aging and corruption to a portrait of him. His beauty makes him walk head high, yearning vigorously for a way to fulfill his desires. In other words, Dorian's craving for youthfulness becomes his walking stick.

However, when to analyze the quote based on Freud's psychosexual theory of personality one can infer that the fixation of the id causes one to pursue pleasure as in the case of Dorian Gray. Furthermore, pursuing youth and beauty relies on the high costs of attaining it. This is illustrated in the novel through the fact that Dorian Gray is ready to give his soul for that.

2.3.1.2. The Operation of Ego, Id and Superego in Dorian's Psyche: Psychosexual Identity

The three layers of human personality in Freud's the theory are the Id, Ego, and Superego. The three components work together to create an individual's behavior and personality, which are reflected in how they engage with other people and behave in social situations. The foundation of Freud's personality theory is the Id, Ego, and Superego theory. The path that brought Dorian to his devastated ending will be more easily understood in light of Freud's division of the human psyche, which was first suggested in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and completely developed in *The Ego and the Id* (1920).

Dorian enters the story as a pure and innocent orphan who has not yet matured, primarily because he received little direction when he was younger. Dorian's evil grandfather, who had ordered the murder of his daughter's eloping father not long after the boy was born, also caused the terrible event's devastated widow to pass quite quickly after it occurred. Thus, little Dorian was orphaned, raised by a dictatorial grandfather, and was robbed of his life as a result of the typical Oedipus complex that Freud wrote about in his book *The Ego and the Id*.

However, at the beginning of the novel, Dorian is portrayed as "little more than lad, though he is really over twenty" (Wilde 13), calling the reader's attention to his childishness. And just like that, Dorian enters adolescence without actually owning it and develops a superego or ego ideal which, as described in Freud's *The Ego and the Id*, is "the heir of the Oedipus complex and thus it is also the expression of the most powerful vicissitudes experienced by the libido in the id" (48).

Corresponding to the Oedipus myth, Oedipus haphazardly kills his father and marries his mother, and this complex is considered the "heir" of this narrative. According to Freud's theory, the id is one of the three components of the psyche, and the Oedipus complex is considered to be the most murderous indication of the id. Dorian also killed Basil Hallward similar to how Oedipus killed his father. That makes him childish because a part of his identity was created by Basil, yet Dorian's id was overwhelming and made an immature person out of him.

In the perspective of Gogoi & Gogoi, Dorian's friend Lord Henry Wotton, who lavishly compliments him and encourages him to appreciate his attractiveness, is the driving force behind his desire to remain young and attractive throughout his life. In this case, Lord Henry Wotton symbolizes the "id" for Dorian Gray in terms of Freud's personality traits, Basil Hallward the "superego" and Dorian Gray the "ego" (2110).

The protagonist's own words shed lights on his level of egocentrism, which is another representation of the id. When he breaks up with Sybil, Dorian Gray only has himself and his ambitions in mind; "My God! How mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name... Oh I can't bear to think of it! I wish I had never laid eyes upon you!" (Wilde 87). From here, the repetition of the personal pronoun "I" is an indicator of how big his self-absorption is.

In addition, the super-ego can be seen in Dorian's sense of guilt; "The thing was still loathsome – more loathsome, if possible, than before – and the scarlet dew that spotted the hand seemed brighter, and more like blood newly spilt. Then he trembled" (Wilde 228). The terms "loathsome" and "scarlet" imply disgust, immorality, and the color of blood, respectively, while "blood spilt" might make the reader think of a murder, and "tremble" denotes fear and also reflects the state of the portrait and Dorian Gray's understanding of the nature of his actions (ERDEMLI 6).

When discussing the concept of intrinsic conflict between id, ego and super-ego in literature, it can be projected on Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in a very interesting way. The idea of mental confusion was both directly and indirectly apparent in Wilde's narration of the main character Dorian:

Lord Henry shrugged his shoulders. It is the real Dorian Gray – that is all.

It is not.

If it is not, what have I to do with it?

You should have gone away when I asked you, he muttered.

I stayed when you asked me, was Lord Henry's answer.

Harry, I can't quarrel with my two best friends at once, but between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it (Wilde, 28-29).

The quote stresses the level of conflict between Basil and Lord Henry along with Dorian. Therefore, applying the three basic elements of Freud's theory about the human psyche is the best way to draw the relationship between Basil Hallward, Lord Henry and Dorian Gray. Basil the "super-ego" feels pity for Dorian who follows Lord Henry the "id" blindly; here, the super-ego wants to take over the id. However, the id has a convincing reason to stay. Basil, Dorian and Lord Henry are best friends for that ending Basil finds it hard to disagree or argue with them.

Dorian's psychosexual identity in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can be explained through important experiences. The fixation of the id in an early stage of the psychosexual development is claimed to be one of the key factors. Cherry asserts that a fixation is an obsessive urge on a thing, idea, or person that may or may not be manifested as behavior. A fixation is a persistent concentration of the id's pleasure-seeking impulses at an early stage of psychosexual development, first described by Sigmund Freud. When a problem or conflict in a psychosexual stage is not resolved, the person becomes fixated on that stage

and is unable to advance to the next, which leads to oral, anal, and phallic fixations (“What Is a Fixation?”).

Cherry also asserts that the key objective of the phallic stage of development is to identify with the same-sex parent. According to Freud, fixations at this stage could result in adult personalities that are excessively arrogant, exhibitionist, and sexually aggressive (What Is a Fixation?). Freud also theorized that those who were locked in the phallic stage would develop vanity, a desire for pleasure, or aggressive sexual behavior (“Fixation”).

A phallic character that is reckless, resolute, self-assured, and narcissistic—excessively egotistical and proud—is developed as a result of fixation on the phallic stage. A person may become fearful or incapable of deep love if the conflict is not resolved; Freud also suggested that fixation may be the underlying cause of homosexuality.

The primary character in Wilde's novel might be viewed as being trapped in the anal and phallic stages of development. Dorian exhibits characteristics of the anal stage behavior such as neatness, stinginess, and rigidity. A phallic can also be kind, messy, or act loosely or carefreely, much like Dorian appears to be doing: "I owe a great deal to Harry, Basil ... more than I owe to you. You only taught me to be vain" (Wilde 9). In a nutshell, Dorian displays characteristics of the phallic stage in his infatuation with youth and beauty as well as his disrespect for morality and ethics.

2.3.1.3. Homosexual Desire and the Oedipus Complex

Homosexuality is a sexual attraction and interest in one's own sex. Ben Winyard proposes that the 19th century was an important period for the emergence of gay identity, subculture, and politics in their current form. During the last quarter of the 19th century, the term "homosexuality" and the associated concept of sexual identity developed and became trendy. It was a time of countless opportunities, difficulties and risk for homosexual men and women (“Homosexuality”).

In “Silent Homosexuality in Oscar Wilde’s *Teleny* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*,” Antonio Sanna argues that the relentless implementation of heterosexual regulations during the late Victorian era compelled the systematic silence of many homosexuals. The discourses about homosexuality were developed in the cultural and historical environment of the late nineteenth century by both the anti-homosexual apologetics and the period’s medical and scientific establishment. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is one of the gothic stories from the late 20th century that reflects homosexuality (21).

Sanna also posits that *Dorian Gray* serves as an indirect representation of the lives that many homosexuals in late Victorian England were compelled to lead, particularly their struggle and conflict over whether to indulge their urges in a liberated manner or suppress them in the face of social pressures and legal constraints (21). One interpretation of Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is that it presents homosexuality’s alternative and silent discourse (Sanna 21). This is initially accomplished by portraying their heroes as being extremely worried about the judgment or condemnation that current culture and legislation could impose, much as was the case with many late-Victorian homosexuals (26).

After discovering that Dorian was partially responsible for the actress Sibyl Vane’s suicide in Wilde’s book, Lord Henry orders the young, inexperienced man to keep his involvement in the girl’s death a secret, since “in London people are so prejudiced. Here, one should never make one’s *début* with a scandal” (Wilde 95). Later in the story, the narrator states that “from time to time strange rumors about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs” (96), which is exactly what happens. Even though Dorian is never embarrassed by such rumors, his fear of them permeates every aspect of his existence (Sanna 26).

Moreover, the temptations and risks of sin and pleasure, as well as the happiness and fulfillment they provide, are consistently emphasized throughout Wilde’s *The Picture of*

Dorian Gray. Lord Henry encourages the young Dorian to freely partake in the "splendid sins" and "sordid shame" of London by asserting that "we are punished for our refusals" (Sanna 29). This suggests that the Id dominates Dorian's behaviour, not just from the inside but from the outside, that is, Lord Henry himself.

Joseph Carroll, in "Aestheticism, Homoeroticism, and Christian Guilt in the Picture of Dorian Gray: A Darwinian Critique," asserts that numerous studies have focused on the explicitly homosexual nature of Dorian Gray in recent years, and by explicitly addressing this problem, these studies have made an important new advancement in our comprehension of the novel's complex symbolic framework. However, most of these studies have liberationist viewpoints and are written within a Foucauldian framework of sexual theory, seeing homosexuality as a literary device or discursive construct. None of these researchers have utilized evolutionary psychology (288).

By mentioning the primitive, innate and natural biological needs, Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* pursues his internal instincts, and attempts in shaping an unethical life, leading to self-absorption and emptiness, which seems to be inevitable and unchangeable. More important, the biological needs along with the psychological and social needs contributed in the development of Dorian leading to a tragic ending.

Thus, in assessing how Wilde's homosexuality affects the meaning of the book, Carroll draws on Donald Symons' sharp Darwinian analysis of homosexual behaviour from *The Evolution of Human Sexuality*. As stressed above, most analyses of homosexual behaviour have been written from within a Foucauldian framework, and none have used evolutionary psychology. In fact, he contrasts the psychological nature of homosexual partnerships to heterosexual ones (288).

Another crucial element in the novel that contributed to Dorian's downfall is the Oedipus complex which was conspicuous throughout the novel. Yan Zhang, in "From Self-identification to Self-destruction—A Mirror Image Interpretation of Dorian Gray's Psychic

Transformation,” claims that when Dorian reaches the oedipal stage, he continues to see himself through the eyes of others and progresses further down the path of estrangement from himself. During this time, the idea of the word "Father" being able to destroy one's false self is offered. Basil, the Oedipal "mother," and Lord Henry and James Vane, the Oedipal "fathers," are the key influences.

Many critics ignored Basil, who appears to be a minor character in the book (Zhang 379). However, Vicki Mahaffey in “Père-version and Im-mère-sion: Idealized Corruption in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,” contends that in the encounter of Lord Henry and Basil in the garden before Dorian emerges, Wilde indicates that they not only help to shape his sense of self, but that they also work together to "parent" him. Wilde emphasizes Basil's association with motherhood once again (245).

In Dorian's maturation and transformation, Basil appears as the Oedipal Mother. He also had an impact on Dorian, which is undeniable (379); he “is depicted not only as a man who secretly desires Dorian but also as his ‘mother,’ the creator of his physical image: the portrait that Basil has painted and labeled his masterpiece” (253). Basil is portrayed by Yan Zhang as this failing oedipal mother who loves Dorian without condition and always nudges him to act appropriately and be a perfect gentleman (379).

Moreover, the character Lord Henry Wotton, who "influences and molds Dorian according to his own theory about hedonism and aesthetic," would be an undeniable father figure because he is the one who passes his feelings and thoughts onto Dorian Gray (Zhang 379). It has been claimed that Lord Henry shapes Dorian according to a dogma that he cannot himself follow. He shares some radical and scandalous ideas throughout the novel; however, he does not have the courage to live according to them, because, unlike Dorian, he still abides by an acceptable social conduct:

‘I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry,’ said Basil Hallward, strolling towards the door that led into the garden. ‘I believe that you are really a very good

husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. You are an extraordinary fellow. You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose. (8)

Despite the fact that Lord Henry hides his virtues behind a façade of cynicism, Basil thinks that he is a wonderful husband. This displays that he believes in principles that cannot be applied in real life. Lord Henry lacks empathy as he is aware to the poisonous nature of his thoughts and words, yet he intends to impact other characters' behaviours. He does not do wrong things because he cares deeply about his reputation and how he is perceived by others as part of his self-esteem hangs in the balance. Strictly speaking, Basil knows Lord Henry's real intention and the ways via which he manipulates people.

2.3.2. A Lacanian Psychoanalytical Reading of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Shiting Lu, in "Lacanian Interpretation of Dorian Gray's Self-Identifying under the Influence of Others," argues that in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the sole novel written by Oscar Wilde, the protagonist Dorian Gray makes the psychological transition from ignorance to self-awareness with the help of others, such as Lord Henry Wotton, artist Basil Hallward, and the magical picture (86).

Hence, to better comprehend Dorian's self-construction process on both a psychoanalytical and semiotic level, a Lacanian reading of the early mirror stage of ego formation can be expanded, with an emphasis on the fact that Dorian Gray's quest for self is based on the potent influence of the others (Lu 86).

2.3.2.1. Dorian Gray's Construction of the Imaginary Self

Dorian Gray ultimately evolves as a result of the Others' various impacts, which exert influence on Dorian's lifelong process of self-identification. Despite the fact that both little others¹ and huge others² are accountable for Dorian Gray's self-realization and self-

¹ For Lacan, the little other is the other who is not actually the other but rather the ego's mirror or projection. It serves as both the specular image and the counterpart in the imaginary order.

degeneration, they differ in their penetration of Dorian's spirituality and their degree of identity reconstruction. The complex psychological journey of Dorian Gray is inextricably linked to the influences of the other, particularly the magnificent portrait created by Lord Henry Wotton and artist Basil Hallward (Lu 90).

Dorian initially has no awareness of himself or his own identity, and Henry and Basil's mental control and manipulation amount to the erasing of the true self. As the plot develops, Dorian is gradually taken over by the Others, including Sybil the actress and the attractive portrait, and he lives in an illusionary world where he believes in never-ending youth and beauty, which refers to the creation of an imaginary self. Towards the end of the novel, Dorian Gray grows weary of his luxurious and affluent lifestyle and realizes that his search of the actual him – that is, his own self – is what disturbs and destroys his life. Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton's stunning portrait, in particular, are separate from Dorian's intricate psychological journey (90).

Basil Hallward, a visual artist, introduces Dorian to Lord Henry Wotton; he thus meets the aristocrat and quickly becomes attracted by his hedonistic outlook, as mentioned in the novel: “Live! Live the wonderful life that is in you! Let nothing be lost upon you. Be always searching for new sensations. Be afraid of nothing. . . . A new Hedonism – that is what our century wants” (Wilde 25). The novel's themes of beauty, pleasure, and morality are reflected in this moving depiction of Lord Henry's worldview.

Lord Henry's words contributed to Dorian's construction of imaginary self; Lord Henry is a Machiavellian envious person who is inciting Dorian to live life to the fullest by committing hedonistic acts as he thinks that the principles of the century requires. In other words, Lord Henry is coward hedonist who represses his desires yet he wants to be the source of influence.

² The huge Other denotes profound difference, a differentness that surpasses the fictitious otherness of the imagination since it is incomprehensible through identification.

Basil Hallward is yet another significant Other who contributes to the tragedy of Dorian Gray in addition to Lord Henry's influence. Basil Hallward, in contrast to Lord Henry, who is particularly skilled at using eloquent and contradictory language, is unwilling to "bare his soul" and remains mute constantly. However, Basil and Lord Henry each aspire to control and shape this handsome young man in their own image, and they both think that Dorian Gray is a creation of their own (Lu 92); in this respect Dorian Gray states; "Basil would have helped him to resist Lord Henry's influence, and the still more poisonous influences that came from his own temperament" (Wilde 115). This represents Basil's view that he could have assisted Dorian Gray in fending off Lord Henry Wotton's and his own temperamental tendencies.

2.3.2.2. Influence of the Portrait and Sybil Vane: The Mirror of the Protagonist

Lord Henry and Basil encourage Dorian to separate from his former self and transform into an entity that is led by others. Dorian finds the gorgeous and idealized painting of himself while seeking eternal youth and beauty, and this portrait is crucial in creating his "imaginary" personality. The portrait of Dorian Gray, which serves as the spark for the protagonist and the story that develops around it, is one of the most significant aspects in the narrative, as the book's title suggests (Lu 93).

According to the Mirror Stage Theory, when a youngster is aware of the connection between himself and his reflection in a mirror, he will stand in front of the mirror, look in the mirror, and make gestures to see how his appearance changes. When Dorian understands the significance of the portrait's enchantment to him, he contemplates a future of pursuing unrestricted pleasure, much like the youngster who learns the secret of the mirror. In this sense, it is plausible to assume that Dorian's numerous pleasure-seeking adventures are his reaction to discovering beauty and youth. He even believes that the image will age and become ugly in lieu of him, keeping him permanently young and attractive (Lu 94). As stated in the novel:

How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will be never 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—for that—I would give everything! I would give my soul for that! (Wilde 27-28).

Having the first encounter with the portrait, Dorian comes to the realization that his physical appearance will change over time. This creates a sense of internal conflict as he becomes obsessed with keeping his beauty; the portrait is an element of a high importance because it gives Dorian a glimpse about his buried self which he does not discover yet.

Nevertheless, Actress Sybil Vane, Dorian Gray's first love, and the creation of his "imaginary" self are all intertwined. Dorian's artistic ideal is realized by Sybil's acting prowess, and the hero becomes desperate for her company. Dorian's preoccupation with Sybil represents a quest for what can be called completion, which might both sate his yearning and make up for his deficiencies, particularly a fleeting innocence. In other words, Dorian's first relationship with Sybil is related to his original transgressions and moral deterioration. She fills two significant gaps in Dorian's latent desires—a feminine mother figure and his longing for his lost childhood. This could be viewed as having something to do with the mirror stage that the image inspires (R, 304)

2.3.3. Jung's Archetype of Shadow in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

It has been claimed that Dorian's shadow is reflected in the portrait, which becomes increasingly grotesque and hideous as Dorian's character deteriorates. The shadow archetype is also reflected in the character Lord Henry Wotton, who represents the dark and destructive aspects of Dorian's personality.

As reported by Dyah Kurniawati, all those immoral urges and feelings which interfere with social norms and the persona form create a shadow, which is a dominant aspect of the individual unconscious. People are embarrassed by it; the shadow contains the aspects that

they would rather ignore. It also reveals the other side of people who are constantly prone to believe that they are simply what they think they are (49).

The altering of Dorian's picture is the most overt instance of shadow in the book. Through the youth of his body and the ugliness of the artwork, it displays the evil aspects of Dorian (49). As stated in the novel: "He got up and locked both doors. At least he would be alone when he looked upon the mask of his shame. Then he drew the scene aside, and saw himself face to face. It was perfectly true. The portrait had altered" (Wilde 93). This reflects the personality realization by Dorian Gray that his portrait has changed to reflect his moral decline and evil.

Later, Dorian requested his valet to take his photo up to the top of his house in order to avoid raising the suspicion of his butler and his visitors. He placed the screen to block the image while it was being taken out. He prepped the image for placement in a spacious, perfectly sized chamber that had been custom made. No other area of the home, in his opinion, was as private from prying eyes as the room. On top of that, every time Dorian does something wrong, he becomes aware of an alteration in his image:

An exclamation of horror broke from the painter's lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing. Good heavens! It was Dorian Gray's own face that he was looking at! The horror, whatever it was, had not yet entirely spoiled that marvelous beauty. (Wilde 149)

The quote shows that every unethical behaviour Dorian does alters the picture. However, the more he tries to suppress it the worse it gets. In other words, the shadow highlights itself the more one tries to ignore it. Basil's horror reflects the novel's critique of the decadence and aestheticism of the late Victorian era.

To sum up, the picture reflects Dorian's shadow, which grows more horrifying and repulsive as Dorian's character deteriorates. The figure of Lord Henry Wotton, who stands for

the dark and destructive sides of Dorian's nature, is another example of the shadow archetype in action.

2.4. The Psychological Construction of Morality in the Novel

Examining Dorian's mental anguish, how he grew more and more immoral, and the trajectory of his character growth from his early appearance as an innocent youth to his ultimate self-immolation are all examined when discussing the psychological journey Dorian underwent throughout the novel.

In her dissertation, “The Psychological Construction of Moral Disgrace in The Picture of Dorian Gray,” Andrea Durán Maury argues that numerous elements in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* contribute to the development of Dorian's moral disgrace, including the internal awareness one develops about the difference between right and wrong and the external role of society in creating stereotypes based on appearances (7). Maury also argues that Dorian's contempt for conscience led him through countless moments of self-pity and regret before he could embrace his own callousness and depraved nature.

To be more detailed about gradual psychological construction of morality in the novel, one can project and analyse the importance of being conscious about wrong and right to further understand its effects on Dorian's moral life. As maintained in the novel, Dorian Gray undergoes a long time of self-realization that starts with self-pity and ends with cruelty, dark trial and hedonistic pursuit.

2.5. Conclusion

After the analyzing Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, one could understand the construction of morality in the novel. The application of the Freudian, Lacanian and the Jungian psychoanalysis helped with comprehending the psychology of characters and the reasons behind their actions. Moreover, critics and analysts confirmed that in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the operation of the id, ego and super-ego and the fixation of the id in early stages of Dorian led to homosexuality and created the psychosexual distorted identity out of

him. From here, the causes of hedonism bring the attention to the psychological state of the vulnerable Dorian, who has internal and external conflicts, and to other narcissistic causes.

According to the chapter's examination, it is crucial to know that while Dorian is craving for hedonism, his life is changing gradually and channeling from a decent life to a hedonistic one. This means that pursuing desires vigorously can change one to a pleasure seeker, especially if one is guided by a toxic person such as Lord Henry in a modern society of pleasure and joy.

Chapter Three

Hedonism as Seen in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

3.1. Introduction

Literature is a way to express different aspects of life. Some writers such as Oscar Wilde had expressed his opinion on hedonism and aestheticism in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This chapter is dedicated to the analysis of hedonism in Wilde's novel. This practical part of the dissertation serves the purpose of expanding the notions around the contributions in Dorian Gray's changing behaviours, focusing particularly on the supporting characters contributions such as Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward, and Sibyl Vane.

This chapter allows for an understanding of the change of Gray's behaviours and his lifestyle associated with the Victorian society along with the types of hedonism on the protagonist in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In addition to that, it scrutinises Victorian morality and its victims as it is seen in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. It gives a glimpse about the concept of morality in the novel and whether it is aligned with nature or nurture.

It also studies the relationship between hedonism, beauty and influence in the novel by scrutinizing the cycle of impact that is started by Lord Henry and finished by Dorian as beauty is the main concern of the key characters. Dorian Gray's narcissistic self-love is an important element that is related to his hedonistic life.

3.2. Contributions to Dorian Gray's Changing Behaviours

At the beginning of the novel Dorian Gray appeared as a young innocent orphan who was raised by his grandfather Lord Kelso. He was not aware of his beauty, desires or the dark side of his personality. However, his behaviours started to change due to some things and characters. Dorian's meeting with Lord Henry at Basil's studio was the turning point in his life; since then his behaviours started to change gradually. Nevertheless, Basil Halward, Sibyl Vane and the portrait also contributed to the construction of Dorian's new personality.

In her article “Hedonism as Seen in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian*,” Kurnia Saputri and Anastasia Intan state that the novel's primary character, Dorian Gray, has changed in personality. From a young man of innocence to a villain, he undergoes a transformation. As a result of his environment, Dorian has changed from being good to being bad, but he is not the only one who has chosen to do so. As is clear from the narrative, Dorian's behaviour changes are made possible by the supporting players, society's standards of beauty, and the artistic creations themselves (62).

3.2.1. Supporting Characters’ Contributions

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the key characters have an influence on one another. Dorian is initially presented as a naive young man, but due to the contributions and influences of the other characters, he eventually transforms into a pleasure-seeker individual (Saputri 62). Lord Henry can be seen as the main source of influence on Dorian’s ideology, personality and life, yet Basil Halward and Sybil Vane are also crucial characters who project the lights on the hidden sides of Dorian’s internal side.

3.2.1.1. Lord Henry Wotton

Lord Henry Wotton, an upper-class gentleman who is characterized as a captivating talker, a recognized wit, and a brilliant mind, promotes the idea of a life of pleasure-seeking. He is a cunning individual who indoctrinates Dorian with the philosophy of hedonism, according to which one should live in order to experience as little pain as possible. He exhorts the main character, Dorian Gray, to enjoy life to the fullest while still young and beautiful and to disregard conventional rules (Saputri 62).

Saputri also contends that Lord Henry is a rather static character; from the start of the novel to the very the end, he does not go through any major changes. Because of this, Lord Henry leads a staid life in society despite being a hedonist who promotes the pursuit of both moral and immoral experiences.

He is additionally a man who appreciates beauty; he adores Dorian and describes him as “one of those gracious figures in a pageant or a play, whose joys seem to be remote from one, but whose sorrows stir one’s sense of beauty, and whose wounds are like red roses.” (Wilde 52). As the master manipulator feeds him his lines, Lord Henry finds it entertaining to compare Dorian to a work of art, a character in a pageant, or a character in a play.

Moreover, Lord Henry rejects the idea that someone may be both beautiful and intelligent. According to him, a person can only be either beautiful or intelligent. Lord Henry always tries to get Dorian to do what he says since he knows that Dorian is attractive. He tries to instill his notions about the hedonistic life in Dorian, but eventually Dorian takes those ideas and runs with them.

3.2.1.2. Basil Hallward

The novel explores the connection between life and art and the effects of pursuing beauty and pleasure at the expense of morality and ethics. A major theme in the book is Basil's role in Dorian's changing actions. He is the one who allows Dorian to recognize his beauty. Basil describes Dorian as being handsome; “something art cannot express” (Wilde 13). This displays the way Basil sees Dorian’s beauty. Basil believes that if he puts too much emotion into his work, he will betray himself as an artist since his painting would portray his own emotion rather than the true subject of his work.

Unfortunately, Basil's admiration for Dorian, which inspired him to create the best portrait of the boy, also helped to enable Dorian's altering conduct, which led to Basil's demise. Basil sees the portrait shift, and Dorian is concerned that Basil will tell everyone about it (Sapurti 62).

3.2.1.3. Sibyl Vane

One of the supportive figures who significantly affect Dorian's changing behaviour is Sibyl Vane. In the novel, Sibyl Vane is portrayed as a stunning and gifted actress who Dorian

instantly falls in love with. Dorian solely adores Sibyl for her beauty and her acting talent; therefore, his love for her is similar to that of a viewer of an artwork (Sapurti 62).

Sibyl is even referred to as a "school-girl who has been taught to recite by some second-rate professor of elocution" by Dorian, who finds her behavior unbearable (Wilde 81). Dorian criticizes Sibyl for her poor performance in a play and compares her to a schoolgirl who has been taught to recite by an average elocutionist.

Sapurti sheds lights Dorian's affection for Sibyl, which is only motivated by her aesthetic attractiveness and acting talent, stands for the importance of the outside self over the within. The first indication of Dorian's shifting conduct is his evil deed of dumping Sibyl, which also caused the portrait to change for the first time. Dorian now understands how effective the portrait is in hiding his immorality and ugliness. As a result, he begins to pursue his "adventure" in finding pleasure, regardless of how immoral it will be (63).

Sibyl Vane, who is the first victim of Dorian Gray's changing conduct and also serves as Dorian's turning point before he commits subsequent sins, thus plays a significant role in the plot. Dorian's decision to lead a hedonistic and immoral life while enjoying his beauty is evident in the painting, which deteriorates even as it hides Dorian's transgressions (Sapurti 63).

Guilt was eating Dorian inside out after Sybil Vane passed away; he could not accept the fact that he was the reason behind her suicide, so he channeled the pain and the anguish to become more of a heartless, careless and hedonistic person. Throughout the novel, one can see that Dorian goes astray and his ego grows bigger with every mistake he makes; until he reaches a point from which he cannot comeback.

3.2.2. The Change of Dorian Gray's Behaviours and his Lifestyle Associated with the Victorian Society

The modern city, which is full of pleasure and joy, is another reason that contributes to the change of Dorian Gray's behaviours. Hence, the environment and the surroundings (external side) are associated with the monstrous Dorian.

Mitsuharu Matsuoka asserts that in Victorian England, the Aesthetic Movement was thriving at the time *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published. An artistic movement known as estheticism supported art solely for its aesthetic value rather than for any political, moral, or practical reason. This movement is thought to be a reaction to the unattractive goods produced by the Industrial Revolution's developed machineries (78).

The Picture of Dorian Gray was viewed as immoral at the time of its initial publication in 1890. A year later, Oscar Wilde released his novel again after making revisions and including a prologue outlining his aesthetic philosophy. In the preface, Wilde famously stated: "There is no such a thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all." Since art for art's sake should not value an artwork from its morality, it is vital to analyze the novel and its relation to the genuine Victorian era to determine what kinds of activities or behaviors were deemed to be immoral in the Victorian age (Sapurti 65).

Nevertheless, in her article, Sapurti focuses on hedonism, as a philosophy of life that advocates maximizing pleasures while minimizing suffering, which is prominently displayed throughout the narrative. Through the subtle indications of Victorian lifestyle presented in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde had revealed the hedonistic component of the upper-class Victorian society. The middle-class and upper-class society in the Victorian era placed great importance on everything they did, wore, and owned. They also consider their attitude in order to maintain a positive reputation (65).

In addition, The Victorians' need to appear wealthy and powerful in society is what gave rise to the hedonism that was reflected in the fashion, social life, and furniture of the day. As a result, it encouraged the upper elite of Victorian society to consume and wear excess. In Victorian culture, a person's appearance is the most crucial factor to consider when

judging them. The Victorians thought that a person's status in society could be determined only by the way they appeared. Rather than their appearance, affluent men were respected in Victorian society since they were seen as excellent candidates for marriage due of their secure financial position.

On the other side, Gillespie and Michael Patrick claim that the men's fellow peers appreciate such guys because they will be able to provide for their wife and family's needs given their financial situation (91). Therefore, in order to maintain his good status in society as a wealthy young man, Dorian does not even want to lose some of these attributes (Sapurti 66).

Simply, the environment has a great impact on one's personality especially if it is vulnerable. Dorian's internal conflict, his past, present, family, friends and the environment contributed to creating a new version of him.

3.3. Victorian Morality and its Victims

Anita Ahmadi and Mittapali Rajeshwar, in "Victorian Morality and its Victims: Oscar Wilde and his Characters," point out that as the founder of the aesthetic movement, Wilde altered the perspectives and way of life of people in the late 19th century. He promoted "Art for Art's Sake," a movement that attempted to combine beauty and art to reveal the art of living. Actually, he had a significant impact on London society through his dominance as a great artist with extraordinary descriptive power.

He, therefore, attempted to attack the 19th-century practices that upper-class families followed and that have come to be considered as examples of Victorian morality. He claims that because of the limitations placed on people's lives, they are unable to fully enjoy them. In order to preserve the framework of their family traditions, people must compromise their wishes and goals (117).

Thus, in his influential literary works, Wilde attempted to depict all behavioral contrasts among modern people. In reality, he expressed his views against Victorian morality

in his play *An Ideal Husband* (1895), one of his well-known writings. In this play, Wilde explores themes of public and private honor while dealing with governmental corruption and extortion (117). It is one of Wilde's social comedies that are the most somber, and it has a lot of overtly political themes that humorously and cynically analyze the current political climate. The primary subject of the play is the public's general ignorance of the frequently corrupt sources of immense riches (117).

3.3.1. The Concept of Morality in the Novel

According to Simon Stern, when *The Picture of Dorian Gray* came out, obscene-content prosecutions were becoming more common in Britain and increasingly focusing on "borderline cases" using works that had not previously been regarded as obscene. Although Wilde is more concerned with the way this tendency is said to operate than with the nature of obscenity itself, he circles around the subject so intently that it seems surprising. Especially given the recommendations of some reviewers that no charges were laid against the novel, it might have escaped punishment because Wilde's trials effectively served as an obscenity trial (756).

In her "Research Study on the Novel: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*," María Villar Lourido argues that The Victorian Era (1837–1901) ended at the time *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published. Sexual constraint, intolerance, and a strict social code of conduct were prevalent at this period. Britain was viewed as a very contrastive nation during this period of numerous inconsistencies (25-26). On the other hand, there existed a set of rules for behavior that stressed so-called dignity and temperance. there were numerous instances of underage labor and even prostitution. In the objective eyes of foreigners, these instances produced a sense of contradiction. However, because of the significant influence of the British Empire, many Victorian values were exported to other regions of the world (25-26).

In addition, religious morality underwent a sudden transformation during this time. The Church of England was powerful and dominant at the beginning of this century, but it

gradually lost ground. While the Church's influence in cities was waning, it was still very strong in rural areas. Even in the industrialized cities, there were those who had an unconventional view of the Church.

The religious authority demanded submission, resignation, and obedience to God's will. All of these requirements were put forth to compel the Church to exert control over the followers. The Church did not provide for the needs of the lower classes during this time, but instead worked to increase its influence. The religious problem first emerged with Darwin's book *On the Origin of Species*. Many Christians began to doubt their Christian faith as well as Victorian ideals as a result of the hypothesis of evolution (Lourido 26).

3.3.2 Types of Hedonism on the Protagonist in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Hedonism is a concept that can be defined and explained according to its types. However, there are two important forms of it that can be distinguished from the other form as they explain the novel and the motives behind the key characters accurately.

3.3.2.1 Selfish Hedonism

It has been claimed that Dorian is motivated to kill his old friend as he appears to interpret the image on the canvas as some sort of message. The most immediate and significant threat to Dorian's way of life and his agreement with the forces of evil is neatly eliminated by Basil's passing. As stated in the novel,

He moved slowly towards it, passing Hallward as he did so. As soon as he got behind him, he seized it, and turned round. Hallward stirred in his chair as if he was going to rise. He rushed at him, and dug the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear, crushing the man's head down on the table, and stabbing again and again (Wilde 151).

The quote stresses the level of evil and hedonism that Dorian reached. It depicts the act of Basil Hallward, the painter who painted Dorian Gray's picture, being killed by Dorian Gray. When Basil confronts Dorian about his moral decline, Dorian becomes enraged and attacks Basil with a knife, repeatedly stabbing him.

Dorian's admission that it is too late to redeem his soul is one of the few honest statements he made during his corrupt life: "Dorian Gray turned slowly around, and looked at him with teardimmed eyes. 'It is too late, Basil,' he faltered." (Wilde 151), which the reader can see in the coolness of Dorian's actions after killing Basil. Dorian kills the only true friend he has, and in doing so, he also kills his only chance to atone for his sins.

According to Weijers, the hedonistic egoism theory holds that, morally speaking, we should always do what makes one happy, or, more specifically, what gives us the highest net pleasure after subtracting any pain. Hedonistic egoism frequently argues that committing crimes like robbery, murder, treachery, and other atrocities will not make individuals generally happier due to the associated guilt, fear of getting detected, and possibility of getting caught and punished (20).

Dorian was afraid of being caught and punished after killing Basil. Hence, in the hidden closet where he maintains his disguises, Dorian enters the library again and hides Basil's luggage and coat. He gathers his thoughts and understands that many guys get executed for what he just did. However, the evidence against him is scant. People will assume Basil has gone to Paris because of his peculiar habit of vanishing without letting them know where he was going. This shows that Dorian is a selfish egoist because he knows that murder has severe consequences.

3.3.2.2 Aesthetic Hedonism

In their "Types of Hedonism on the Main Character Sir Walter Elliot in the Novel Persuasion by Jane Austen," Enggin Valufi and Retno Budi Astuti define aesthetic hedonism as the pursuit of happiness through beauty. Aesthetic hedonists find enjoyment in their physical attractiveness. The primary objective that will be attained in any way is beauty. Wilde stated:

I'm jealous of all the beauty that doesn't die. I am jealous of the portrait you have drawn about me. Why must I keep what I need to lose? Every passing moment takes

something from me, and gives it to him. Oh, if it's just the opposite! If the picture can change, and I can always be like this! Why did you paint it? It will make fun of me one day, mock me horribly! Hot tears flowed into his eyes; he pulled his hand away, and, throwing himself on the couch, he buried his face in the pillow, as if he were praying. (28)

According to Servaas van der Berg, the theory of aesthetic hedonism asserts that aesthetic value is a particular form of hedonic worth, and that an object's aesthetic value is merely its capacity to pleasure us in a certain way (1).

In her dissertation "Hedonism as Seen in Oscar Wilde's Novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891): A Marxist Approach," Wiyanto claims that aesthetic hedonism is a type of hedonism that appears in the novel. The ideology of hedonism seems to be on Dorian's mind. Dorian started to believe that he would become old and frightening so that he could no longer enjoy his youth after becoming influenced by Lord Henry.

Dorian stood there frozen and bewildered as if he had never seen her when he turned around and glanced at the photo. He suddenly became aware of his own beauty, something he had never experienced before. Lord Henry's influence caused him to recognize and fall in love with his attractive, endearing artist (4). The narrator relates:

How sad it is!' murmured Dorian Gray, with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. 'How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. 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! (Wilde 27-28).

Dorian develops an obsession with the idea of everlasting youth and beauty and wishes he might outlive his portrait's aging process.

Dorian was envious of his picture since it was constantly beautiful and young. Dorian is aware that, while the picture will remain unchanged and remain that way forever, his actual appearance will age. Dorian believed that the painting will one day mock him because his

face and body were deteriorating and he was no longer able to enjoy himself as much as he once did (Wiyanto 5). As stated in Wilde's novel,

I'm jealous of all the beauty that doesn't die. I am jealous of the portrait you have drawn about me. Why must I keep what I need to lose? Every passing moment takes something from me, and gives it to him. Oh, if it's just the opposite! If the picture can change, and I can always be like this! Why did you paint it? It will make fun of me one day, mock me horribly! 'Hot tears flowed into his eyes; he pulled his hand away, and, throwing himself on the couch, he buried his face in the pillow, as if he were praying. (28)

Dorian appeared to have been so severely affected by Lord Henry's influence that he began to doubt his own reason. The quote also expresses Dorian Gray's insight that while his portrait will always be young and lovely, he will age and lose his attractiveness. It means that he is perusing happiness and pleasure through beauty.

3.3.3. Mind and Matter in the Novel

“Was there some subtle affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him? Could it be that what that soul thought, they realized? - that what it dreamed, they made true?” (Wilde 93)

In “Mind and Matter in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,” Michael Davis analyses the novel from an interesting angle. He states that in chapter 8 of *Dorian Gray*, Dorian muses on the horrifying realization he had the previous evening that the picture had been altered in some way to represent his own moral condition. As mentioned in Wilde's novel:

Might there not be some curious scientific reason for it all? If thought could exercise its influence upon a living organism, might not thought exercise an influence upon dead and inorganic things? Nay, without thought or conscious desire, might not things

external to ourselves vibrate in unison with our moods and passions, atom calling to atom in secret love or strange affinity? (103)

According to Davis, Wilde's allusions to "atoms" capture some of the complexity and paradox that define the novel's depictions of the mind and its relationship to the body. The fact that the painting and Dorian's body are both made of atoms serves as a reminder of their materiality, which in turn makes us consider the potential that Dorian and all human beings may play a small but inevitable role in the larger processes of the physical universe. Anxieties about one such material process, that of evolution, and especially of degeneration, haunt representations of the self in the novel the most, as well as in the fin de siècle more generally (547).

Dorian's ideas about "atoms" raise the even more extreme possibility that the line separating organic matter from inorganic matter may be blurred, giving rise to the overwhelming notion that human evolutionary kinship extends beyond even the most basic organisms to matter itself. As a result, the category of the human is now more threatened than ever in light of scientific theories of the material world. However, the questions Dorian poses envision the inverse of this—a scenario in which "thought" might somehow "influence" the painting's subject matter rather than the mind being reduced to matter (Davis 547).

Davis also sheds light on Wilde's philosophical perspective as being heavily influenced by a fanciful interpretation of Hegelian idealism. As the picture changes, the condition of Dorian's mind is magically given sensuous form, suggesting that the mind may ultimately prove to be the only reality, independent of and superior to matter. Like the human mind, the painting's atoms have an uncertain relationship to the physical world. The atoms are not rigid but rather flexible; like the mind itself, they are made of material yet appear to behave in ways that defy the principles of cause and effect of physics. They are also constantly changing and impervious to understanding from outside sources (547-548).

3.4. The Relationship between Hedonism, Influence and Beauty in the Novel

The Picture of Dorian Gray depicts hedonism, beauty and their influence on the main character; Dorian is being impacted by Lord Henry who is the main source of hedonism. His toxic ideology results in Dorian's pursuit of pleasure and intemperance. Worse, he makes Dorian believe that the ultimate goal of life is enjoying every bit of it. As a result, Dorian wants to entertain the years when he is still young, handsome, attractive and sturdy. Henry's impact on Dorian is entirely a result of the Victorian English upper class's values, which prioritized art, youth, and beauty while placing little weight on other people's hardships and leading a hedonistic life.

One of Wilde's most fundamental themes in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is that beauty is important in humans' lives because it increases attention, love and self-confidence. Wilde suggests that beauty is crucial and it helps people to live a delightful happy life; "A new hedonism,—that is what our century wants. You might be its visible symbol. With your personality there is nothing you could not do. The world belongs to you for a season" (Wilde 25). Lord Henry is a blatant covered narcissist whose shadow is full of envy, hatred, terror, cowardice and corruption; he is obsessed with beauty and youth, however, he is ruining Dorian Gray with what he is craving rather than affecting himself.

Dorian Gray was so vulnerable that he got influenced over time and changed his views, doctrine and life turning into a monster that is prepared to attack and kill anyone for beauty. In "The Concepts of Beauty and Love in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*," Viktoria Svalina asserts that similar to how Lord Henry affected Dorian, he also utilizes the power of his attractiveness to manipulate those around him, tricking them on a number of occasions. Dorian's question to Lord Henry about what he would say if he informed him he killed Basil is one instance when this is demonstrated (18). As mentioned in Wilde's novel:

It is not in you Dorian to commit a murder. I am sorry if I hurt your vanity by saying so, but I assure you it is true. Crime belongs exclusively to the lower orders. I don't

blame them in the smallest degree. I should fancy that crime was to them what art is to us, simply a method of procuring extraordinary sensations. (203)

Basil first takes after his role model Dorian. On a personal level, his sexual sentiments cause confusion and change, but Dorian's impact extends farther, appearing to affect both Basil's ability as a painter and the painting itself in an almost magical way. The work also depicts influence as a persuasive force. It is less of a miraculous effect than appealing concepts and idioms creeping into other people's language. Some people are hypnotized by Lord Henry's beliefs and paradoxes, and Dorian is one of them. Dorian becomes curious about these ideas and comes to live by them.

Beauty was the reason why Lord Henry wanted to influence Dorian in the first place; that led to hedonism and pursuing pleasures. The consequences of hedonism are clear throughout the novel, yet the impact of beauty and good looks are higher and stronger than any stereotypical judgment.

3.4.1. Dorian Gray's Narcissistic Self-Love and Hedonistic Life in the novel

Narcissism is a common word that is used for arrogant people who think that they are better than anyone else. It is also used for a judgmental person who complains about and criticizes every single thing. In fact, narcissistic personality disorder has many definitions. According to the DSM-5, it is a tendency toward arrogance, the need for praise, and a lack of empathy (645). People with narcissistic personality disorder expect others to see them as superior, special, or unique. They can believe that only special or high-status individuals can truly understand them, and that they should only associate with those individuals (DSM-5 670).

They might also attach "unique," "perfect," or "gifted" characteristics to those with whom they associate. People who suffer from this disorder think that their demands are unique and unmet by the general public. The idealized worth they place on those they associate with raises their own self-esteem (i.e., is "mirrored" by them). Most people with

narcissistic personality disorder demand too much admiration. Their sense of self is usually always exceedingly brittle. They might be obsessed with their performance and how well they are perceived by others. This frequently manifests as a demand for unceasing adoration and attention. They might anticipate considerable fanfare upon their arrival and be shocked if no one wants their belongings. They might continuously and charmingly seek compliments (DSM-5 670).

The Picture of Dorian Gray contains narcissism in terms of self-love, there is a tight relationship between Dorian and narcissism: “This young Adonis, who looks as if he was made of ivory and rose-leaves. Why, my dear Basil, he is a Narcissus.” (Wilde 6). He is described as the handsome man who is admired for his beauty.

In “The Different Faces of Narcissism: A Psychoanalytic Reading of *The Great Gatsby* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,” Ashkan Mir asserts that Gray, like Narcissus, appears to fall in love with his own picture after his friend Basil Hallward paints a portrait of him (11): “A look of delight came into his eyes, as if he had realized himself for the first time. He was stunned and immobile as he stood there. His realization of his own beauty struck him as a revelation. He'd never experienced it before” (Wilde 26). Like Narcissus, Gray spends a lot of time gazing at himself in the mirror. He had sat in front of the photo day after day, admiring it and becoming nearly enamored of it. Mir also argues that Dorian even made an attempt to kiss the painting: “Once, in boyish mockery of Narcissus, he had kissed, or feigned to kiss, those painted lips that now smiled so cruelly at him” (Wilde 97). Dorian’s obsession with beauty made him kiss the portrait. Before seeing the portrait, Dorian Gray was not aware of his beauty; he also sees how people admire his beauty which boosted his narcissism:

Yes,’ he continued, ‘I am less to you than your ivory Hermes or your silver Faun. You will like them always. How long will you like me? Till I have my first wrinkle, I suppose. I know, now, that when one loses one’s good looks, whatever they may be,

one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that. Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself. (Wilde 28)

Dorian thinks that he is less valuable when he loses his beauty and youth; he believes that he will lose everything if loses his goodlooks just like an ivory Hermes or a silver Faun. Dorian's self adoration makes him look like an object of internal desires and as mentioned previously his immaturity can be aligned with his narcissistic personality.

Narcissistic adults twist the facts much like children do. They assert that whatever they say at any given time is the whole truth (or at least they behave as though this is what they believe). It doesn't matter that their remarks frequently contradict one another utterly. (Neuharth)

Narcissism can be related to the perplexed relationship with the parents during childhood. A person's early trauma or family influences may cause them to become emotionally immature at a young age, which can lead to the development of narcissistic personality disorder or a narcissistic style. (Neuharth)

Thus, Dorian's narcissistic personality is developed due his grandfather's cruelty and the aggressive circumstances. The early stages of children's lives contribute to the development of their personality. Thus, spoiling a child or being harsh on them can cause a deviation in their cognitive milestones. Esther Rashkin draws attention to a number of textual elements that strongly imply that Gray was subjected to emotional abuse as a child by his grandfather. (70)

Lord Henry had a conversation with his uncle Lord Fermor about Dorian Gray's family; through the conversation one can conclude that after Dorian's mother died he was left "to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man" (Wilde 37). Lord Kelso has a hand in the murder of Dorian's father and Margret Devreux hated him for that and: "she never spoke to him again" (35). Looking closely at Dorian's grandfather, one can come to the

conclusion that the old man is a narcissist who manipulates others and hurt them with no empathy or regret.

Moreover, narcissists attempt to create meaning in life, find aim, build up confidence, self esteem and fill the emotional vacuum can lead them to a hedonistic life. Dorian Gray engages in some hedonistic activities and pursues his desires to feel good about himself; Basil Halward had a conversation with Dorian in which he pointed out the truth behind the young man indulgence:

When you met Lady Gwendolen, not a breath of scandal had ever touched her. Is there a single decent woman in London now who would drive with her in the Park? . . . Then there are other stories,—stories that you have been seen creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses and slinking in disguise into the foulest dens in London . . . What about your country-house, and the life that is led there? Dorian, you don't know what is said about you. (Wilde 138)

Basil is aware of Dorian's scandalous behaviours, including creeping at dawn out of dreadful houses, and paying visits to the foulest dens in London. He also mentioned Lady Gwendolen to shed lights on Dorian's sexual hedonistic activities that were caused by his narcissistic desires. Nevertheless, Dorian's hedonistic lifestyle can be seen as a set of buried negative emotions that are unconsciously taking over him to prevent his low self-worth. Theodore Millon contends that the goal of the sexual activities for the amorous narcissists is to increase their sense of worth and self-esteem, and as a result, they lead very hedonistic lifestyle. (140)

3.4.2. The Dorian Gray Syndrome

Dorian Gray Syndrome (DGS) refers to a sociological and cultural condition marked by an excessive fixation with one's personal beauty along with challenges dealing with aging and the obligations of adulthood. Dorian Gray Syndrome sufferers frequently employ cosmetic treatments and products in an effort to maintain their youth ("Gray Syndrom").

In "The Picture of Dorian Gray: Eternal Themes of Morality, Beauty and False Values Through Centuries," Viktoria Drumova claims that affected by DGS, many put a high value on maintaining their youth and flawless physical appearance, and they are prepared to go to any extent to achieve it. In this way, their innately excessive concern about imagined physical flaws and defects leads to a so-called "Medical Lifestyle" that includes preoccupation with procedures like plastic surgery, Botox, organ transplants, and other cosmetic procedures. The beauty industry is growing quickly and has a significant impact on our generation (27).

The majority of people in contemporary society identify with the novel's protagonist, whose hedonism, self-indulgence, and excessive self-love negatively impact their personal, social, and emotional spheres of existence. A man who is entirely focused on improving his appearance will eventually get to a point where the old beauty techniques are no longer effective (Drumova 27).

The main character of the novel exhibits several aspects of the Dorian Gray Syndrome: narcissism and an obsession with postponing aging are both satisfied by the portrait, which ages and changes with time rather than its owner. It goes without saying that the illness named after the novel's main character indicates much worse psychic problems, such as obsessive disorders, delusional disorders, and schizophrenic psychoses. As a result, Dorian Gray was a symbol of increasing obsessive tendencies in Wilde's day, and the hero represented the emergence of this illness (Drumova, 28). As stated in the novel:

I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now! Why did you paint it? It will mock me some day – mock me horribly!" The hot tears welled into his eyes; he tore his hand away and, flinging himself on the divan, he buried his face in the cushions, as though he was praying. (Wilde 28)

The quote perfectly conveys Dorian's thirst of staying young. The themes of beauty, pleasure, and mortality are reflected in it. He yearns for beauty so intensely that he fears becoming older.

3.5. Conclusion

To conclude what has been discussed in this chapter, one can deduct that hedonism has effects on the characters' behaviours in the novel. Besides, hedonism can make a sane turn into a maniac. When it becomes a means to no end, it opens the door to multiple possibilities of internal and external deviations. Dorian Gray seeks beauty and demonstrates how terrifyingly simple it is to make judgments only based on appearances and class. Following Wilde's description of hedonism, this novel depicts the darkest side of an absolute aesthetic and egoistic hedonist.

This chapter's analysis of the novel gives an insight about the psychological effects of hedonism on the main characters and the causes of narcissistic self-love of Dorian Gray. The chapter also explains the change of Dorian Gray's behaviours and his lifestyle associated with the Victorian society along with the influence of the key characters on one another. According to the analysis of this chapter, it is concluded that the pursuit of pleasure affects humans on different levels. Blind obsession over beauty and youth can turn a normal person into an unstoppable hedonist, who takes joy and satisfaction from fulfilling desires at any expense. Finally, the relationship between hedonism, beauty and influence is tight and it gathers the three elements in a toxic cycle.

Conclusion

Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* presents and illustrates a hefty psychological and social immorality. His attempt to tackle hedonism through the use of literature conveys an immense need to dig deeper in such subjects. Literature has been always the tool to defend, fight, and most importantly portray issues in different perspectives. Hence, this research has dedicated to shed light and understand reasons behind hedonistic lifestyle in the novel through a psychological analysis it. Wilde's novel provides a clear demonstration of pursuing desire, beauty and youth. In what is narrated as a moral fantasy, one can identify the dwellings of psychologically rooted traits that later on shape the fate of the main character.

When dissecting hedonistic lifestyle, desires and happiness, and its relation to Wilde's novel, one can state that hedonism leads to the egregious end of the protagonist. Therefore, egoistic hedonism destroys the infrastructure of humans and society. Nevertheless, the novel's main characters are drawn to a hedonistic lifestyle. The characters' style of life is inspired by the glamorous existence of every hedonist who is inclined to seek pleasure and avoid suffering.

According to many academics, the fundamental roots of hedonism are associated with intrinsic and extrinsic factors. As for the intrinsic causes of the hedonistic lifestyle in Wilde's novel, they go back to many reasons, namely, the Oedipus complex, homosexual desire, the shadow and the operation of ego, id and superego in human's psyche. Another cause of hedonism is the obsession about happiness. Nevertheless, narcissistic self-love is a crucial reason of hedonism; people's admirations to Dorian's beauty create a narcissistic monster out of an innocent young man.

Besides, it is also caused by the internal desire of using free will to achieve joy at any expense. On the other side, ignorance of ethics and values makes it easier for hedonists to forever fulfill their desires. However, social movements, morals, and ethics are the extrinsic

reasons. Hedonism is perfectly portrayed through the two main characters Dorian Gray and Lord Henry, who are chasing happiness and pleasure.

The human need for satisfaction is not always achievable, thus some authors such as Wilde portrayed the internal crave for pleasure through the main characters in the novel. Critics argue that Lord Henry advocates a new kind of hedonism that exhorts followers to disregard conventional morality in favor of pursuing pleasure and beauty. He persuades Dorian to live a life of pleasure and vice, which causes Dorian's moral decline and eventual demise. Dorian is obsessed with the notion of everlasting youth and beauty and longs to be the one who stays young while his image ages. He engages in all types of immorality and pleasure because he thinks that his portrait will carry the weight of his shame.

One can conclude that the novel's characters are unable to recreate themselves in a way that satisfies their desires. Dorian Gray, the main character, develops an obsession with the notion of everlasting youth and beauty and longs to live forever as his portrait ages. He engages in all types of immorality and pleasure in the hope that his humiliation will be carried by his portrait. But his hedonistic excesses result in his moral decline and, ultimately, his demise.

Interestingly, the novel gives an illustration of the concept of hedonism during the Victorian era in literal absurdity. It is likely to want to serve some purpose; however, in this case it is safe to confirm that obsession with desires goes beyond morals, beyond ethics, and most importantly beyond logic. Hedonistic traits cancel out the morality and the ethical aspects of controlling oneself. It becomes a matter of leaching into a satisfactory feeling that keeps on growing ever so strong.

In "The Perils of Pursuing Pleasure," Michael Bishop contends that if one believes that happiness is solely defined by pleasure, then the people and endeavors in one's life will only serve to increase happiness to the extent that they provide you with pleasure. That seems incorrect, too. A profound, meaningful devotion to people and pursuits is necessary for

happiness, according to philosophers' diagnostic. Hedonists, however, are unable to engage in these types of actions. When something else seems more appealing, the person will be ready to leave at any time. Thus, many hedonists concur that having hedonistic thoughts would make one miserable.

Similarly, Heather Craig asserts that according to Sigmund Freud, people: “strive after happiness; they want to become happy and to remain so. This endeavor has two sides, a positive and a negative aim. It aims, on the one hand, at an absence of pain and displeasure, and, on the other, at the experiencing of strong feelings of pleasure” (76). According to the quotation, happiness includes both the presence of pleasure and the absence of both pain and discomfort. Happiness is a basic human goal that philosophers have been studying for centuries.

According to the findings of this research, a psychoanalytic interpretation offers a better understating about hedonism and its devastating ending, which seems absolutely pessimistic in Wilde's novel. On top of that, one can think that the measures exercised by the key characters to maintain happiness and fulfill the deviated desires led to the tragic ending of the protagonist and break down his obsession about beauty and youth.

Lastly, hedonism turns out in the end to be tragic as the protagonist could not achieve all of his fantasies. Dorian needs to pass through all those unethical acts to keep his beauty and youth, he needs also to follow the doctrine, lifestyle and everything related to Lord Henry in order to be filled with confidence. He has now beauty in a hand, and youth in another. He is confident as never before, but at what cost?

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