

**PSYCHOLOGICAL CONFLICT OF DORIAN GRAY IN THE NOVEL  
ENTITLED *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* BY OSCAR WILDE**

**Submitted by:**

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**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, the writer would like to analyze a novel entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The purpose of this writing is to analyze the psychological conflict of the main character. The writer uses psychoanalysis theory to analyze the psychological conflict of the main character in the novel and use library research. In this theory, the writer will discover the changes behavior of Dorian Gray. The main themes in this novel are youth, beauty and homosexuality; it becomes the reason why the writer entitles “Psychological Conflict Dorian Gray in The Novel Entitled “*The Picture of Dorian Gray*” by Oscar Wilde”.

*Keywords: psychological conflict, youth, beauty, homosexuality.*

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**1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 Background of Study**

Novel is a fictional narrative prose connected with sequence of events that involve some characters in a specific setting. In this paper, the writer analyses classic fictional novel.

The writer would like to analyze the novel entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. In this novel, there is psychological conflict in the character of Dorian Gray. An ambitious nature appears when Lord Henry flatters and tells Dorian that youth is everything.

## **1.2 Research Problems**

In this paper, the writer would like to discuss the research problems as follows:

1. How is the psychoanalysis theory applied in the novel?
2. What are the factors that make the psychological nature of the main character change?
3. Why does Dorian Gray want to replace his soul with the portrait of his?

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## **2. THEORIES AND METHOD**

### **2.1 Intrinsic Theories**

#### **2.1.1 Theme**

According to Perrine, “usually theme is delivered implicitly so that a theme can be found through process; it covers intrinsic aspects of the story, including plot, setting, character, etc.” (Perrine, 1988:90).

#### **2.1.2 Character**

Based on the function of the characters in the story, characters can be divided into protagonist, antagonist, deuteragonist and tritagonist.

### **2.1.3 Plot**

Perrine said, Plot is the sequence of incident or events which the story is composed and it may conclude what character says or thinks as well as what he does, but it leaves out the description and analysis and concentrate ordinarily on major happening (Perrine, 1974:41).

## **2.2 Extrinsic Theory**

Psychoanalysis is a theory of personality. Hall said,

The total personality as conceived by Freud consists of three major systems. These are called the id, the ego and the super ego. In the mentally healthy person these three systems form a unified and harmonious organization. By working together co-operatively they enable the individual to carry on efficient and satisfying transactions with his environment. The purpose of these transactions is the fulfillment of man's basic needs and desires (Hall, 1956:22).

### **2.2.1 Id**

According to Hall,

The sole function of the id is to provide the immediate of discharge of quantities of excitation (energy or tension) that are released by organism by internal or external stimulation. This function of id fulfills the primordial or initial principle of life which Freud called the pleasure principle (Hall, 1956:15).

### **2.2.2 Ego**

Ego is operated based on the reality principle. Hall said, reality means that which exist. The aim of the reality principle is to postpone the discharge of energy

until the actual object will satisfy the need that has been discovered or produced (Hall, 1956: 22).

### **2.2.3 Superego**

According to Freud, the superego begins to emerge at the age of five.

Hall also added:

The superego is the moral or judicial branch of personality. It represents the ideal rather than the real, and it strives for perfection rather than for reality or pleasure. The superego is the person's moral code. It develops out of the ego as a consequence of the child's assimilation of his parents' standard regarding what is good and virtuous and what is bad and sinful (Hall, 1956:31).

### **2.2.4 Sexual Aspect**

Explanation about sex according to Hall is as follows,

If the factor of narcissism is very strong, a person may derive satisfaction only from choosing a love object which resembles himself. This is the reason why a person may choose homosexuality in preference to heterosexuality, or why a man may marry a masculine woman or a woman marries a feminine man (Hall, 1956:75).

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## **3. ANALYSIS**

### **3.1 Intrinsic Analysis**

#### **3.1.1 Theme**

A novel entitled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has major and minor theme. The major theme is beauty and youth. It tells that Dorian wants his beauty and his youth to be everlasting. The minor theme is homosexual triangle love among Dorian, Basil and Lord Henry.

### **3.1.2 Characters**

#### **Protagonist Character**

Dorian Gray

Dorian is described as having a perfection of male beauty and youth. His goal of life is just for achieving pleasure.

#### **Deuteragonist Character**

Lord Henry Wotton

Henry is the main cause of the behavior changes of Dorian Gray. He gives inappropriate philosophy of life to Dorian's mind.

#### **Antagonist Character**

Dorian's Evil Soul

Dorian Gray has two different roles in the novel: protagonist and antagonist. On the antagonist character Dorian's soul plays against the real positive sides of him.

#### **Tritagonist Character**

Basil Hallward

Basil is the cause of Dorian's suffering of mind. He defends Dorian when the society spread the bad rumor about him.

### **3.1.3 Plot**

Exposition

Basil introduces Henry to Dorian Gray in his studio. When Basil saw how Henry talks to Dorian, he knows that Henry will give a negative influence to Dorian's mind.

### Conflicts

Dorian gets compliments about his physical perfection from Basil and Henry. He feels that the compliment from Basil makes him realize that he already has the beauty perfection. The compliment from Henry leads him to change his soul with his portrait paints by Basil.

### Rising Action

Dorian falls in love with Sybil Vane. The problem is that Sybil does not live up to Dorian's expectation, he ignores her. Later, Sybil kills herself, and instead of mourning her, Dorian reads the mysterious yellow book and gets everything he wants.

### Climax

It is revealed that Sybil Vane's death is caused by Dorian. James Vane wants to take a revenge for his sister. He spies on Dorian. Dorian knows that he is being stalked by James.

### Denouement

Dorian feels relieved when knowing that he is not being stalked by James anymore. The girl he meets in the countryside makes him enthusiastic to start a new life.

### Resolution/ Catastrophe

Dorian sees no change at all in his picture. He does not care anymore about what he has done all this time. Being angry knowing that his picture does not change at all, Dorian finally tore his portrait.

## **3.2 Extrinsic Analysis**

Psychological conflict of Dorian Gray is the basic study of this paper. The writer uses Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis theory that relates to the id, the ego and the super ego

### **3.2.1 The Id Conflict between Dorian and Basil**

The id of Dorian is the libidinal and the destructive impulse toward Basil. The libidinal impulse in Dorian is showed when he is having a close relationship with Basil. Dorian also loves how Basil paints his physical perfection. The destructive impulse in Dorian is Basil's murder because Dorian thinks that Basil makes him become a dreadful man obsessed with his own portrait.

### **3.2.2 The Ego Conflict between Dorian and Society**

Ego is based on reality and is influenced by society. Dorian's reality is on his portrait paint by Basil. The portrait reflects the real soul of Dorian. It is getting worse day by day every time he does the evil things. The behavior and attitude of Dorian is getting worse after he read the yellow book which contents big influence to Dorian hedonistic lifestyle. At first, the society admires and even supports Dorian, but his attitude becomes more deviant and the society annoys and cannot accept it.

### **3.2.3 The Superego Conflict between Dorian and Henry**

Dorian's superego is formed by Lord Henry. The superego in Dorian affects by Basil, formerly. Basil only enjoys Dorian's physical beauty so it does not affect to Dorian's mind. Later, superego in Dorian is influenced by Lord Henry for he always justifies what Dorian's doing, whether it is right or wrong and good or bad. Henry does not blame or warn Dorian when he regrets his evil deeds. He always distracts

Dorian's anxiety of feeling guilty to another thing. The influence of Henry is so deep into Dorian's mind and life. He can accept the good and bad sides of Dorian.

The psychological conflict of Dorian Gray is in the super ego aspect. He is trapped in super ego's mind influenced by Basil, that is, physical beauty which does not affect the negative side of Dorian. Meanwhile, the super ego influenced by Lord Henry has stronger affects in Dorian, that is, the beauty of mind. Henry takes advantage of the innocence of Dorian's mind by giving the negative things to Dorian. It affects the moral values in Dorian-self. Dorian chooses to live a hedonistic lifestyle with Henry. In the end, in his deepest heart and mind, Dorian decides to end his problems by tearing down his portrait.

#### **3.2.4 Sexual Aspect**

In this novel, sexual orientation of Dorian is bisexual. He dates Sybil, but he also has a close relationship with Basil and Henry. Dorian is always followed by Lord Henry that makes him becomes a homosexual. Dorian indicates as a homosexual disorder when Basil introduces him to Henry. Then, Dorian falls in love with a girl, Henry always interrupts his relationship by saying that all women will lead to a distress. Henry tries to influence Dorian's mind because he wants to have an ideal figure partner as he is expected. A homosexual disorder is seldom to get a pleasure from his heterosexual partner. It is depicted on Dorian when he has a relationship with Sybil and he gets so disappointed and cannot forgive Sybil just because she does not act well as usual. Heterosexual relationship between Dorian and Sybil ends with the death of Sybil. The unreasonable alibi of Dorian to break up with Sybil can be



confirmed that Dorian is homosexual. The relationship between Henry and Victoria is just for his camouflage, he does not really love her because he thinks that women are only for covering the ideal of norms in society.

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## CONCLUSION

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the only work of novel by Oscar Wilde which becomes the controversial subject at that era. The book entitled, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, has two different meaning. The word “Picture” in the book title describes Dorian’s personality from two different points of view. Basil portrays ‘the picture’ to enjoy the physical beauty of Dorian, while Henry portrays ‘the picture’ in Dorian’s soul through his mislead life philosophy and tries to make an experiment toward life to Dorian.

The behavior and personality of Dorian Gray can be studied with three psychology personality aspects by Sigmund Freud. They are Id as libidinal and destructive impulse, ego as love and hate and superego as the nature of perfection affects by Lord Henry.

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