

**The Changes of Dorian's Personality to be Narcissistic Caused by
His Environment Reflected in Oscar Wilde's Novel *The Picture of
Dorian Gray***

SCIENTIFIC ARTICLE

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The Changes of Dorian's Personality to be Narcissistic Caused by His Environment Reflected in Oscar Wilde's Novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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Abstract

God creates human with the biological aspect as the foundation that build someone from the body, personality, character, etc, and biological is not the only factor that build some one's character. There are some key factors, which provoke particular changes in human character, and these aspects can be divided into two groups, internal and external. Everyone has different personality and character, and they also have bad side and good side inside them, which is the most strongest side will be seen clearly as they wants.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a novel with uncommon theme or supernatural thing. Yet the real theme which is going to be analyzed deal with the change Dorian's character a handsome young man from innocent nature into an evil selfish person. Dorian Gray was a pure man until his meeting with Lord Henry brought him to realize that beauty is everything. The writer will use psychologycal approach to analyze possible cause of Dorian's changes, and the psychological theory in this thesis is Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Later on Narcissistic Personality Disorder proves to be a complete and scientific theory to be used to analyze Dorian's changes towards his attitudes. The thesis writer finds out that Dorian's attitude after the change such as his selfishness and show-off are actually caused by Narcissistic Personality Disorder.

Keywords: Character, Attitude, Narcissistic Personality Disorder

Life is filled with temptation, obstacle, frustrations, inner struggles and dilemmas that create our character as human being. The character itself is built according to how we deal with these things since we were born. God creates human with the biological aspect as the foundation that build someone from the body, personality, character, etc, but biological is not the only factor that build some one's character. There are some key factors, which provoke particular changes in human character, and these aspects can be divided into two groups, internal and external. The first group includes factor, such as life problems and the other is environment, such as friend and people around us. Abraham Lincoln said "Reputation is a shadow, character is the tree". Therefore our character is much more than just what we try to display for others to see. It is show who we are even when no one is watching. It shows how the character takes a big role in someone's life to show, how bad or good

he is.

Legerstee (2005, para.1) stated that “in human developmental process, character are influenced by endogenous factors, which are nature since they were intrauterine, and exogenous factors, which come from external environment.” Those factors are things which are derived from somebody’s society and make people grow not only by their nature, but also by the influences from their external environment.

In the world of literature, human characters developments are usually portrayed in prose, poem, and dramas. Literature itself is a human being’s creation which is related to art, involves language in it and could raise emotional effect to those who enjoy it. It is sometimes defined as anything written, but this definition is actually too narrow or too broad to describe literature. Barnet, *et al* (1963, p.1) defines literature as “a performance in words which has an element of entertaining display and reflects a special view of reality.” It can be said that we are able to see certain human life aspects by reading literary works. Besides, it also has a function as a tool to entertain people.

As a product of the literature, novel can be considered as a tool that portrays human life aspect. Novel may portray a clear story of human experience in a series of events. It describes an individual’s description, both his behavior and mental process, through one of fiction’s elements, character. Beaty, *et al* (2002, p.102) define character as “someone who acts, appears, or is referred to as playing a part in a literary work.” In most cases, the reader do not only see what characters look like, but also see what they do and hear what they say; learn what they think and what other people think or say about them. This character’s complexity in a novel is regarded as

human being's complexity, which could be analyzed by psychological approach.

Based on explanation above, the writer see a novel that shows the psychological aspect happened in one strong character inside it. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* clearly shows a strong role of the change of trait it is shown by the main male character, Dorian Gray. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* tells about Dorian as the main character who has a pure nature personality. The story began in Basil Hallward studio in London. The painter was finishing his painting, a portrait of his handsome young friend, Dorian. Then, Lord Henry Basil's friend joined and ruined the day. With his hedonism philosophy, he tried to influence the pure Dorian. The conversation finally brought new ideas and awakened part of his conscious he never encountered before. Dorian suddenly admired himself and felt storm of envy when he saw his portrait and realized that his beauty will be disappeared someday, but not the picture. Even, at that day, he would sell his soul for his eternal youth. Since that conversation, Dorian became selfish and individual person. These external effects have made Dorian's personality completely different from before and it made his life so mess.

The Picture of Dorian Gray was published by Oscar Wilde in nineteenth century in other words Victorian literary works; yet the complexity in moral problem makes this novel more outstanding. "A touch of supernatural" makes this novel classified as Gothic novel.

This novel presents a major moral problem, especially concerning moral decadence as the main male character describes a moral corruption as stated by Rene

Wellek in his book *The History of Modern Criticism*. Because of many critics at Wilde's master piece, this novel is considered as an immoral book. Then, the discussion of morality brings the writer to analyze the development of the trait of the main male character from pure and innocent to a morally corrupted. Besides Dorian, the writer also includes other character such as Lord Henry Wotton, who takes a role in Dorian's change.

Based on the background of the study, the writer uses the theory of characterization and also uses psychological approach to explain the reason behind the change of Dorian's character reflected in his behavior. While for the focus, the writer chooses Narcissism as a theory to analyze more deeply about the character of Dorian Gray.

Research Method

(1) Deciding the Object of the Study

The Picture of Dorian Gray novel is chosen as the material object of the study because this novel portrays about the changes of the main character because of Narcissism Personality Disorder and it influenced by environment.

(2) Using psychological approach

This study is connected with Narcissistic behavior which is experienced by the main character as portrayed in the novel.

(3) Analyzing and interpreting the data

In this step, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is read several times to observe the novel main character, Dorian Gray, so that the writer can analyze the main character behavior. In this case the writer tries to connect the original personality of Dorian which changes because of his Narcissistic behavior that influenced by his environment

Findings

In this chapter the writer uses sub-theory of Psychological Criticism that is Narcissism, to reveal Dorian's change of traits from pure to selfish. Dorian Gray is an innocent young man with outstanding handsome face. The innocent and good appearance of Dorian Gray makes Basil Hallward interested to paint him into a portrait in the first sight. Basil really understands the power of his desire since he sees the strong character that is shown in Dorian's inner. However everything changes since Dorian meets with Lord Henry, he becomes someone that takes an important role in Dorian's change in term of personality. People around Dorian are used to recognize him as a kind man, later on he becomes so evil as it can be seen from his action. Nonetheless, Dorian's wishes to keep handsome and the eternal youth comes true, time by the time, when Basil and Lord Henry grow old, Dorian stays handsome, and young. However, not with the picture, while there is no change in Dorian's appearance, his portrait is altered by age and deed. The more Dorian made the bad thing the more his portrait changes into an ugly and bad person as if the portrait

shows the soul of Dorian Gray. Yet, the origin of the altering picture, which seems to have supernatural source exists in the story will remain a mystery. Dorian has clarified a deal to sell his soul to the devil in return for eternal youth, just like Goethes's Faust, which according to Donald H.E is the direct source of this novel. In Faust legend in return for youth, knowledge, experience, and pleasure the man sells his soul to the devil.

Although Dorian says to Lord Henry that he feels more live than he used to be, he is not entirely free from his inner conflict. It is shown in his relationship with Sibyl Vane, after he says to Lord Henry that he falls in love with the actress, later on he breaks off with Sybil because of her bad acts in her last performance. Dorian feels confused with his own feeling to Sybil Vane, he does not understand what is going on his mind. Suddenly he feels like he is much in love with Sybil, but when he saw her bad performance on the stage, at that time Dorian feel that he hate and need to dump and leave her. Dorian felt the inner conflict inside himself, whether he has been cruel to Sybil or it is the right thing to do to leave her. In one hand, he believes that it is Sybil's fault that makes Dorian hate her because her bad acting, but on the other hand he feels so selfish to dump her simply because she cannot fulfill his expectation.

DISCUSSION

Dorian is influenced by Lord Henry's ideas of New Hedonism. Lord Henry make Dorian realizes the important thing of being youth and how to seeking a pleasure.

Dorian already becomes a selfish and arrogant person who only cares for himself. He does not care for others and ruin many people's life and he even does not care of it. His selfishness is shown by his inability to show empathy to other.

From the first Dorian met Lord Henry, Dorian who never realized of his appearance, turn into someone who adore his own self until he said that he does not want to be growing old. Lord Henry's philosophy of hedonism seems to be the causes of Dorian change of trait. The feeling of grandiose self importance that happened to Dorian can be concludes as mental disorder called Narcissistic Personality Disorder. Narcissism is named after the ancient Greek myth of Narcissus who was a handsome Greek youth who rejected the desperate advances of the nymph Echo. In punishment his cruelty, he was doomed to fall in love with his own reflection in pool water. Unable to consummate his love, he pinned away and changes into the flower that bears his name to this very day.

The Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD) has been recognized as a separate mental health disorder. It has pervasive pattern in of grandiosity, need for admiration, and lack of empathy.

Dorian Gray at states in this novel can be reputed has a personality disorder, which is called Narcissistic Personality Disorder. He is quite understand that after he met with Lord Henry, he changes into a different person as he pay attention to his portrait and his lack of empathy to Sybil's death. "Why is it I cannot feel this tragedy as much as I want to."(Wilde, 1891, p.56). According to Elizabeth Hurlock (1979,

p.109) the changes of traits that Dorian experiences is from desirable trait-innocence and being replaced by undesirable one, selfishness, can be regarded as a signal of mental illness. The mental illness is Narcissistic Personality Disorder, which caused Dorian's character change from pure man to arrogant one.

It cannot be ignored that Lord Henry who has the idea of New Hedonism is the causes of Dorian's change of trait. But even with the existence of Lord Henry in Dorian's life, "a person cannot change his personality without self-willingness and efforts that come from his own willingness", Hurlock (1979, p. 133). Without he realized, Dorian changes his trait and behavior because he wants to, Lord Henry are only function as the speaker that voicing something already exists inside him. Like when Lord Henry said to Dorian, "You have had passions that have made you, thought that have filled you with terror, day dream, and sleeping dreams whose mere memory might stain your cheek with shame".

(Wilde, 1891, p.13) From the statement that Lord Henry gave to Dorian, it makes him feel confuses at first. Then he realized that Lord Henry was totally right about Dorian's inner willingness, and he realized that Lord Henry is voicing his desires and secret wishes which he was afraid to express and did before. Those questions are answered by the portrait that made by Basil Hallward, after seeing the portrait, Dorian has the courage to express his admiration for his appearance and this is the first time he feel the real desirable of himself." A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time, the sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. He had never felt it before"(Wilde, 1891, p.16). The first conversation

between Dorian and Lord Henry, become the first time open the Narcissistic that actually has already been inside Dorian without his consciousness before. Lord Henry with his influence about hedonism teaches Dorian to realize desire by saying that he wants to his handsome for his entire of life (Wilde, 1891, p.17). Because Dorian's Narcissistic Disorder, Dorian become someone who has no principle in his life, he become so lack his empathy and morality easily by following Lord Henry's ideas.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The Picture of Dorian Gray clearly shows a strong role of the change of trait that shown by the main male character, Dorian Gray. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* tells about Dorian as the main character who has a pure nature personality which is changes into a cruel condition until one day Lord Henry as the other character influences him with his hedonism idea about the greatest life. Starts from the first conversation, Lord Henry was succeed in his passion to changes Dorian personality, since that day, Dorian is totally changes and that condition makes his another friend surprised. Dorian became someone who admire his own self exaggerately, arrogant, selfish, and lack of empathy, he also felt storm of envy when he saw his portrait and realized that his beauty will be disappeared someday but not the picture. Dorian has narcissistic personality disorder which makes him unable to love, full of jealousy,

has a grandiose sense of self important that ruins his life and his relationship with others.

To analyze this novel, the writer uses an approach to figure out what can be a Narcissistic Personality Disorder can ruin someone's life. Through psychological criticism the writer can see how is Dorian's personality as the main characters in this novel. Through the Narcissism, the writer tries to reveal what Narcissism is and why it could be considered as a disease and why someone has this disorder. In the end the writer focuses on what kind of types that can be seen as Narcissistic Personality Disorder, and then the writer also takes a connection between the environment influences that became the causes that makes Dorian changes his personality in this novel.

The writer suggests the next researchers to continue the research by analyzing *The Picture of Dorian Gray* but with different case, for instance from the general structuralism that shown clearly as the external influenced that happened in that era. For example, Victorian Era, why this era indirectly makes people at that time admire the art or the value of the beauty, so that this analysis can be connected with the question why there are people like Dorian and Lord Henry as the symbols of this era.

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