

A Psychological Analysis of Narcissism and Perfectionism in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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Abstract

This study analyzes narcissism and obsession with perfection in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through a psychoanalytic perspective. The research aims to identify the internal and external factors influencing Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior and to examine how narcissism and perfectionism contribute to his moral decline. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method using library research. The primary data source is Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, while secondary data are obtained from books, journal articles, and previous studies concerning psychoanalysis, narcissism, and perfectionism. The findings reveal that Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior is shaped by both internal factors—including insecurity, fear of aging, excessive self-admiration, and the desire to maintain an ideal self-image—and external factors, such as Lord Henry's influence, Victorian social values, and the glorification of beauty and pleasure. Furthermore, the interaction between narcissism and perfectionism gradually weakens Dorian's moral judgment, leading to manipulation, violence, and self-destruction. Through Dorian Gray's character, Oscar Wilde criticizes a society that values beauty and external appearance more highly than morality and humanity. The study concludes that excessive narcissism and perfectionism may ultimately result in psychological instability, moral deterioration, and the destruction of personal identity.

Keywords: Moral decline, Narcissism, Perfectionism, Psychoanalytic criticism, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

INTRODUCTION

Literature has long been recognized as an important medium for representing human experiences, emotions, and social realities. Beyond its aesthetic value, literature offers insights into the complexity of human psychology by portraying characters who experience internal conflicts, emotional struggles, and moral dilemmas. Consequently, literary works are frequently examined through psychological approaches to better understand the motivations underlying

characters' thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. According to Thurschwell (2009), psychoanalytic literary criticism enables readers to explore unconscious desires, psychological conflicts, and the structures of personality represented in literary characters, thereby providing a deeper understanding of human nature.

One literary work that has attracted considerable scholarly attention from both literary and psychological perspectives is Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. First published in 1891, the novel explores themes

of beauty, youth, identity, morality, temptation, and the consequences of excessive self-indulgence (Wilde, 1891). The story follows Dorian Gray, an exceptionally handsome young man whose desire to preserve his youthful appearance ultimately leads him into a life dominated by vanity, pleasure, and moral corruption. Influenced by Lord Henry Wotton's hedonistic philosophy and fascinated by Basil Hallward's portrait of him, Dorian gradually becomes obsessed with maintaining his physical perfection while ignoring the ethical consequences of his actions.

Among the various psychological issues portrayed in the novel, narcissism occupies a central position in explaining Dorian Gray's personality development. Narcissism refers to excessive self-admiration accompanied by a constant need for recognition, approval, and admiration from others. Freud (1923) explains that narcissism originates from the investment of psychic energy in the self. However, when this investment becomes excessive, it may distort an individual's perception of reality and interpersonal relationships. Throughout the novel, Dorian increasingly associates his personal value with his physical appearance, making beauty the primary foundation of his identity. As his dependence on admiration intensifies, his concern for morality gradually diminishes, leading to destructive behavior.

Closely related to narcissism is perfectionism, which can be understood as the tendency to pursue unrealistically high standards while becoming increasingly intolerant of flaws and imperfections. Although perfectionism may encourage self-improvement in certain situations, excessive perfectionism often results in anxiety, psychological distress, and chronic dissatisfaction. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*,

Dorian's desire to preserve eternal youth reflects maladaptive perfectionism because he refuses to accept aging as a natural part of human existence. Instead, he continuously attempts to maintain an idealized version of himself regardless of the psychological and moral consequences. His obsession with flawless beauty reinforces his narcissistic personality, creating a destructive cycle in which external appearance becomes more important than ethical responsibility.

The psychological issues presented in Wilde's novel remain highly relevant in contemporary society. Modern culture increasingly emphasizes physical appearance, social recognition, and public image, particularly through digital media and social networking platforms. Individuals are constantly exposed to idealized standards of beauty that encourage comparison, self-objectification, and the pursuit of perfection. Consequently, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* continues to provide valuable insights into how excessive dependence on external validation may influence personality development, interpersonal relationships, and moral decision-making.

Freud's psychoanalytic theory provides an appropriate theoretical framework for explaining Dorian Gray's psychological transformation. Freud (1923) argues that human behavior results from the interaction among the id, ego, and superego. The id seeks immediate gratification of instinctive desires, the ego mediates between desire and reality, and the superego functions as an individual's moral conscience. When these three components become imbalanced, individuals experience psychological conflict that influences both behavior and decision-making. This theoretical framework is therefore particularly relevant for explaining Dorian Gray's obsession with beauty, his

narcissistic tendencies, and his gradual moral deterioration.

Previous studies have examined *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from various psychological perspectives. Artati (2006) emphasizes Dorian's pathological narcissism by explaining how excessive self-admiration contributes to the transformation of his character. Pérez López (2019) investigates Dorian's psychological condition through Freud's psychoanalytic concepts, including narcissism, neurosis, paranoia, and the interaction among the id, ego, and superego. Silva and Tanaka (2020) discuss narcissism within the context of the Victorian Age and the Aesthetic Movement, arguing that Dorian's obsession with beauty is shaped by both psychological and sociocultural influences. More recently, Maulidini (2023) analyzes Dorian's narcissism using a deconstructive approach.

Although these studies have significantly contributed to understanding Dorian Gray's psychological development, they generally examine narcissism, psychoanalysis, morality, identity, or character development as separate issues. Only limited attention has been devoted to explaining how narcissism and perfectionism interact within Freud's structural model of personality to influence Dorian Gray's moral deterioration. This limitation reveals a research gap that deserves further investigation.

Therefore, the present study aims to identify the internal and external factors influencing Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior and to examine how narcissism and perfectionism contribute to his moral decline through Freud's psychoanalytic perspective. By integrating these psychological concepts within a single analytical framework, this study is expected to provide a more

comprehensive understanding of Dorian Gray's personality development while contributing to psychoanalytic literary criticism concerning the relationship between personality, morality, and psychological conflict in literary works.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the psychological aspects of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study focused on interpreting meanings, explaining psychological phenomena, and understanding the complexity of literary characters rather than measuring numerical data. Specifically, a descriptive approach was used to analyze how narcissism and perfectionism are represented through Dorian Gray's thoughts, behaviors, and psychological development throughout the novel.

The primary data source of this research was Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). The analysis focused on narrative descriptions, dialogues, character interactions, and significant events illustrating Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior, obsession with physical perfection, and progressive moral deterioration. Meanwhile, the secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly journal articles, undergraduate theses, and other academic publications discussing psychoanalytic literary criticism, narcissism, perfectionism, and Freud's psychoanalytic theory. These sources were used to strengthen the interpretation of the primary text and provide the theoretical foundation for the analysis.

Data were collected using library research. The novel was read repeatedly to

obtain a comprehensive understanding of the plot, characterization, and psychological conflicts experienced by Dorian Gray. During this process, relevant quotations, dialogues, and narrative passages concerning narcissism, perfectionism, and psychological conflict were identified, classified, and documented. In addition, various academic references discussing Freud's psychoanalytic theory and previous studies on *The Picture of Dorian Gray* were reviewed to support the interpretation and establish the research context.

The collected data were analyzed using Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly the structural model of personality consisting of the id, ego, and superego (Freud, 1923). The analysis began by identifying textual evidence reflecting Dorian Gray's psychological condition. The selected data were then classified into two main categories: internal factors and external factors influencing Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior. Furthermore, the analysis examined how narcissism interacted with perfectionistic tendencies and how these psychological characteristics contributed to Dorian's moral deterioration. The interpretation was conducted by relating textual evidence from the novel to Freud's psychoanalytic concepts and supported by findings from previous studies.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, this study applied data triangulation by integrating multiple academic sources. Interpretations of the novel were supported by psychoanalytic theories, literary criticism, and previous research discussing narcissism, perfectionism, and psychological conflict in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Through the integration of primary textual evidence and relevant scholarly references, this study sought to provide a comprehensive and

reliable interpretation of Dorian Gray's psychological transformation.

Overall, this qualitative descriptive approach enabled the researcher to explain not only the psychological factors underlying Dorian Gray's narcissistic behavior but also the relationship between narcissism and perfectionism in shaping his moral decline. Consequently, the study demonstrates the applicability of Freud's psychoanalytic theory in interpreting personality development and psychological conflict in literary characters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Internal Factors Influencing Dorian Gray's Narcissism

The analysis reveals that Dorian Gray's narcissistic personality develops through the interaction of several internal psychological factors. Rather than emerging suddenly, his narcissism gradually evolves as a result of his excessive concern with physical beauty, fear of aging, emotional insecurity, and desire for admiration. These psychological tendencies become increasingly dominant after Dorian realizes that his extraordinary appearance attracts constant praise and social approval. Consequently, he begins to associate his personal value with his physical attractiveness rather than with his moral character.

One of the most influential internal factors is Dorian's fear of aging. Before meeting Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian appreciates his youthful appearance without becoming excessively preoccupied with it. However, Lord Henry's philosophy dramatically changes his perception of beauty by convincing him that youth is life's greatest possession. As a result, Dorian becomes terrified of losing his physical attractiveness and begins to regard aging as a threat to his

identity rather than as a natural process of human life.

This psychological transformation is clearly illustrated in Dorian's famous wish:

"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, 1891, p. 29).

This statement represents the beginning of Dorian's psychological conflict. His willingness to sacrifice his soul merely to preserve his youthful appearance demonstrates that beauty has become more valuable than morality, spirituality, or even life itself. Instead of accepting the inevitability of aging, Dorian attempts to escape reality by pursuing an impossible ideal of eternal perfection.

From Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, this behavior reflects the increasing dominance of the id, which seeks immediate gratification without considering ethical consequences (Freud, 1923). The ego, which should mediate between instinctive desire and reality, gradually loses its regulatory function. Consequently, Dorian becomes incapable of accepting natural human limitations because his desire for eternal youth overrides rational judgment.

Another significant internal factor is excessive self-admiration. As Dorian becomes increasingly aware of his exceptional beauty, admiration gradually transforms into self-obsession. Instead of viewing his appearance as one aspect of his identity, he begins to regard beauty as the defining characteristic of his existence. Every compliment strengthens his confidence, whereas every possibility of physical decline generates anxiety and emotional distress.

Freud's concept of narcissism (1914) explains that excessive emotional investment in the self may produce an unstable personality that constantly depends on admiration from others. This theoretical explanation corresponds closely with Dorian's psychological condition. His self-esteem no longer originates from personal integrity or moral achievement but instead relies almost entirely on external validation. Consequently, his identity becomes increasingly fragile because it depends upon maintaining an ideal physical appearance.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that emotional insecurity also contributes significantly to Dorian's narcissistic personality. Although he appears confident, Dorian continuously fears losing the admiration he receives from society. This contradiction suggests that his narcissism functions as a psychological defense mechanism rather than as evidence of genuine self-confidence. Behind his flawless appearance lies persistent anxiety concerning aging, rejection, and the loss of social recognition.

The interaction among these internal factors ultimately produces a distorted perception of self-worth. Beauty becomes the primary measure of personal value, while morality gradually loses its significance. As Dorian's narcissistic personality develops, his psychological stability increasingly depends on preserving an unattainable image of perfection. This condition establishes the psychological foundation for the moral deterioration examined in the following sections.

4.2 External Factors Influencing Dorian Gray's Narcissism

The findings indicate that Dorian Gray's narcissistic personality is not solely shaped by

internal psychological conditions but is also significantly influenced by external factors. Throughout the novel, several individuals and the surrounding social environment reinforce Dorian's growing obsession with beauty, admiration, and perfection. Among these influences, Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward, and the values of Victorian society play the most significant roles in accelerating Dorian's psychological transformation.

The most influential external factor is Lord Henry Wotton, whose hedonistic philosophy fundamentally changes Dorian's perception of youth and beauty. Before meeting Lord Henry, Dorian is portrayed as an innocent and morally sensitive young man. However, Lord Henry repeatedly persuades him that youth is the greatest privilege in life and that pleasure should be pursued without restraint. His philosophical views encourage Dorian to prioritize personal satisfaction above ethical responsibility.

Lord Henry states:

"The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it." (Wilde, 1891, p. 18).

This statement becomes one of the central principles guiding Dorian's life. Rather than resisting temptation, Dorian gradually embraces a lifestyle centered on immediate gratification and aesthetic pleasure. From Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, Lord Henry's influence strengthens the dominance of the id, encouraging instinctive desires while weakening the balancing functions of the ego and the moral authority of the superego (Freud, 1923). Consequently, Dorian increasingly interprets beauty and pleasure as the ultimate goals of human existence.

Another important external influence is Basil Hallward. Unlike Lord Henry, Basil does not intentionally corrupt Dorian's character. Nevertheless, his sincere admiration for

Dorian's extraordinary appearance unintentionally reinforces Dorian's awareness of his own beauty. Basil repeatedly portrays Dorian as the embodiment of artistic perfection, causing Dorian to perceive his physical appearance as an exceptional gift that must be preserved indefinitely.

The portrait painted by Basil serves as a powerful psychological symbol throughout the novel. Initially, it represents innocence, youth, and artistic beauty. However, after Dorian wishes that the portrait would age in his place, it gradually records the consequences of his immoral actions while his physical appearance remains unchanged. The portrait therefore symbolizes the conflict between Dorian's flawless external image and his increasingly corrupted inner self. Instead of encouraging self-reflection, the portrait intensifies his determination to preserve external perfection regardless of moral consequences.

Beyond interpersonal influences, Victorian society also contributes significantly to Dorian's narcissistic development. During the Victorian era, beauty, elegance, social prestige, and public reputation were highly valued among the upper classes. As argued by Silva and Tanaka (2020), Wilde's novel reflects the ideals of the Aesthetic Movement, in which beauty was frequently regarded as the highest expression of art and human experience. Within such a cultural environment, Dorian gradually learns that physical attractiveness often receives greater admiration than moral integrity.

As a result, Dorian becomes increasingly dependent on external validation. Compliments concerning his appearance strengthen his confidence, whereas the possibility of losing his beauty generates anxiety and emotional insecurity. Instead of constructing his identity upon moral

principles or personal integrity, Dorian bases his self-worth almost entirely on the admiration he receives from others. This dependence intensifies his narcissistic personality because his confidence becomes contingent upon maintaining an ideal physical image.

From Freud's structural theory of personality, these external influences continuously reinforce the dominance of the id while progressively weakening the regulatory functions of the ego and superego. Lord Henry encourages instinctive pleasure, Basil unintentionally elevates Dorian's awareness of his beauty, and Victorian society legitimizes aesthetic perfection as a desirable social ideal. Together, these influences diminish Dorian's capacity for moral judgment and self-control, thereby accelerating his psychological deterioration.

These findings support Pérez López (2019), who argues that Dorian's psychological transformation cannot be explained solely through his internal desires but must also consider the influence of significant individuals who shape his unconscious motivations. Likewise, Silva and Tanaka (2020) emphasize that narcissism in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* develops through the interaction between individual psychology and the aesthetic values promoted by Victorian society. The present study extends these perspectives by demonstrating that narcissism emerges from the continuous interaction between internal vulnerability and external social reinforcement rather than from either factor alone.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Dorian Gray's narcissistic personality is the product of both psychological vulnerability and environmental influence. Lord Henry's philosophy of pleasure, Basil Hallward's admiration, and Victorian ideals of beauty

collectively strengthen Dorian's obsession with youth and perfection. These external influences gradually reinforce his dependence on admiration, weaken his moral awareness, and prepare the psychological conditions that ultimately lead to moral corruption and self-destruction.

4.3 The Relationship between Narcissism and Perfectionism

The findings demonstrate that narcissism and perfectionism are closely interconnected throughout Dorian Gray's psychological development. Rather than functioning as two independent personality traits, these psychological characteristics continuously reinforce one another, creating a destructive cycle that gradually transforms Dorian's identity, behavior, and moral values. While narcissism motivates Dorian to seek admiration through his physical appearance, perfectionism intensifies his determination to preserve an ideal image of himself. Consequently, his admiration for beauty develops into an overwhelming fear of imperfection, aging, and moral accountability.

At the beginning of the novel, Dorian's appreciation of beauty appears relatively natural. However, after encountering Lord Henry's philosophy concerning youth and pleasure, he gradually begins to regard physical perfection as the ultimate purpose of life. Beauty is no longer appreciated as an aesthetic quality but becomes the central foundation of his identity. As a result, maintaining his youthful appearance becomes more important than preserving his moral integrity.

This psychological transformation reaches its turning point when Dorian wishes that the portrait would age instead of himself:

"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, 1891, p. 29).

This wish symbolizes the inseparable relationship between narcissism and perfectionism. On the one hand, Dorian's narcissism encourages excessive emotional attachment to his own appearance and an intense desire to be admired. On the other hand, his perfectionism prevents him from accepting the natural process of aging, convincing him that even the slightest physical imperfection represents failure. Consequently, beauty is transformed into an absolute standard against which he measures his personal worth and social value.

Freud's structural model of personality provides a useful framework for explaining this psychological condition. The id continuously demands immediate gratification by encouraging Dorian to preserve his youth and pursue pleasure without limitation. Meanwhile, the ego gradually abandons its role of balancing instinctive desire with reality. Instead of accepting aging as an inevitable aspect of human existence, Dorian seeks extraordinary means to preserve his appearance. At the same time, the weakening influence of the superego diminishes feelings of guilt and moral responsibility, allowing narcissistic and perfectionistic desires to dominate his personality (Freud, 1923).

The portrait itself functions as one of the novel's most powerful psychological symbols. Rather than reflecting Dorian's physical appearance, it gradually records the consequences of his immoral actions, exposing the corruption concealed beneath his flawless exterior. Each visible change in the portrait intensifies Dorian's determination to preserve his external perfection while

simultaneously increasing his psychological anxiety. Instead of encouraging self-reflection and moral awareness, the portrait paradoxically reinforces his obsession with maintaining an ideal self-image. This contradiction demonstrates that perfectionism does not produce genuine satisfaction but instead deepens psychological instability and emotional insecurity.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that perfectionism strengthens Dorian's narcissistic personality by making external admiration essential to his self-esteem. His confidence is no longer based on integrity, compassion, or ethical values but almost entirely on continuous approval from others. Consequently, every possibility of losing his beauty threatens the identity he has carefully constructed. Freud's (1914) concept of narcissism supports this interpretation by explaining that excessive emotional investment in the self often produces an unstable identity that depends heavily upon external recognition.

Comparison with previous studies further highlights the contribution of the present research. Artati (2006) primarily emphasizes pathological narcissism as the central aspect of Dorian's personality, whereas Pérez López (2019) focuses on psychoanalytic conflict through Freud's concepts of narcissism, neurosis, and personality structure. Silva and Tanaka (2020) argue that Victorian aesthetic ideals reinforce Dorian's admiration for beauty. While these studies provide valuable psychological interpretations, they generally examine narcissism, psychoanalysis, or aesthetic influence separately. The present study extends this body of research by demonstrating that narcissism and perfectionism function as mutually

reinforcing psychological processes. Narcissism motivates Dorian's desire to obtain admiration, whereas perfectionism compels him to preserve the ideal appearance that sustains such admiration. Together, these characteristics accelerate his psychological instability and moral decline.

Moreover, the findings suggest that Dorian's perfectionism ultimately becomes unattainable because perfection itself is impossible to maintain. Although his physical appearance remains youthful, his conscience continues to deteriorate, as reflected in the portrait. The widening gap between his flawless exterior and corrupted inner self creates continuous psychological tension. Rather than acknowledging his moral failures, Dorian repeatedly suppresses feelings of guilt and chooses to conceal the consequences of his actions. This psychological contradiction illustrates how perfectionism, when reinforced by narcissism, may lead to distorted self-perception, emotional isolation, and increasingly destructive decision-making.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that narcissism and perfectionism function as mutually reinforcing psychological forces throughout Dorian Gray's development. Narcissism encourages him to seek admiration through beauty, while perfectionism compels him to preserve that beauty regardless of ethical consequences. Viewed through Freud's psychoanalytic framework, the interaction between these two characteristics reflects the dominance of instinctive desire over rational judgment and moral conscience. Consequently, Dorian's pursuit of physical perfection becomes a major factor contributing to his psychological instability, progressive moral deterioration, and eventual self-destruction.

4.4 Moral Deterioration and Self-Destructive Behavior

The analysis demonstrates that Dorian Gray's moral deterioration is the inevitable consequence of the continuous interaction between narcissism, perfectionism, and psychological imbalance. Throughout the novel, Dorian gradually abandons ethical principles in his determination to preserve his youthful appearance and satisfy his desire for pleasure. As his narcissistic personality becomes increasingly dominant, moral values are progressively replaced by vanity, self-interest, and the pursuit of immediate gratification. Consequently, his psychological transformation extends beyond a change in personality and develops into a profound moral collapse that ultimately results in self-destruction.

One of the earliest indications of Dorian's moral deterioration is reflected in his treatment of Sibyl Vane. At the beginning of their relationship, Dorian admires Sibyl because of her extraordinary beauty and remarkable talent as an actress. However, when her performance fails to meet his expectations, he immediately withdraws his affection and cruelly rejects her. Rather than valuing Sibyl as a human being, Dorian evaluates her solely according to his idealized standards of beauty and artistic perfection. His inability to empathize demonstrates the growing influence of narcissistic personality traits, in which other people are appreciated only insofar as they satisfy personal desires.

Sibyl's tragic death further illustrates Dorian's psychological transformation. Instead of experiencing lasting remorse, Dorian quickly accepts Lord Henry's suggestion that the incident should be regarded merely as another interesting experience in life. His emotional response reveals the gradual weakening of the

superego, which normally functions as the source of moral conscience. Rather than confronting the consequences of his actions, Dorian suppresses feelings of guilt and continues to pursue pleasure without moral restraint. Freud (1923) argues that when the superego loses its influence, instinctive desires increasingly dominate human behavior. This condition is clearly reflected in Dorian's decisions, which become progressively detached from ethical responsibility.

As the story develops, Dorian becomes increasingly involved in deception, manipulation, and violence. He hides the portrait to conceal the visible evidence of his moral corruption while continuing to present himself as an innocent and respectable gentleman before society. This separation between external appearance and internal reality symbolizes the fragmentation of his identity. Although Dorian remains physically youthful and socially admired, his conscience becomes overwhelmed by fear, anxiety, and psychological instability. The portrait therefore functions as a symbolic representation of the unconscious mind, revealing the moral consequences that Dorian repeatedly attempts to deny.

Dorian's relationship with Basil Hallward provides the clearest evidence of his complete moral deterioration. Throughout the novel, Basil represents sincerity, compassion, and moral integrity. When Basil finally confronts Dorian after witnessing the horrifying transformation of the portrait, he urges Dorian to repent and seek forgiveness. However, instead of accepting responsibility for his actions, Dorian perceives Basil as a threat to the ideal identity he has constructed. Unable to tolerate criticism or acknowledge his own guilt, Dorian murders Basil in an attempt to eliminate the source of his

psychological discomfort. This act represents the climax of his moral corruption because he deliberately chooses violence to preserve the illusion of perfection. At this point, protecting his ideal self-image becomes more important than respecting human life itself.

Following Basil's death, Dorian's psychological condition continues to deteriorate. Although he successfully preserves his youthful appearance, he experiences persistent fear, paranoia, emotional isolation, and profound dissatisfaction. The external perfection he has pursued for so long fails to provide genuine happiness or psychological stability. Instead, every attempt to conceal his moral corruption intensifies his inner suffering. Pérez López (2019) similarly argues that Dorian's inability to reconcile unconscious desires with moral values produces continuous psychological conflict, ultimately leading to emotional instability and self-destruction.

The novel reaches its psychological climax when Dorian attempts to destroy the portrait, believing that it is responsible for his suffering. In reality, however, the portrait symbolizes his own conscience and the accumulation of his immoral actions. Consequently, destroying the portrait becomes equivalent to destroying himself. Wilde (1891, p. 248) describes the final scene as follows:

"When they entered, they found hanging upon the wall a splendid portrait of their master as they had last seen him... Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in his heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage."

This ending symbolizes the ultimate restoration of truth after years of deception. The portrait regains its original beauty,

whereas Dorian's body finally reflects the moral corruption that he had attempted to conceal throughout his life. Wilde suggests that external beauty can never permanently conceal psychological conflict or ethical failure. Instead, continuous dependence upon physical appearance and social admiration ultimately destroys both personal identity and human dignity.

From Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, Dorian's death represents the final consequence of the prolonged imbalance among the id, ego, and superego. Throughout the novel, the id dominates his desire for beauty, pleasure, and immediate gratification, while the ego repeatedly fails to mediate between instinctive impulses and reality. At the same time, the superego gradually loses its moral authority as Dorian consistently rejects guilt, responsibility, and ethical values. The collapse of this psychological balance inevitably culminates in irreversible moral corruption and self-destruction.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Dorian Gray's moral deterioration is not caused by a single event but develops progressively through the interaction between internal vulnerability and external influence. Narcissism encourages excessive dependence on admiration and beauty, whereas perfectionism creates an unrealistic determination to maintain flawless physical appearance. Reinforced by Lord Henry's hedonistic philosophy and the aesthetic ideals of Victorian society, these psychological tendencies gradually erode Dorian's moral judgment, destroy his interpersonal relationships, and culminate in his tragic death. Through Dorian Gray's character, Oscar Wilde ultimately presents a profound criticism of a society that values physical beauty and social prestige more

highly than morality, compassion, and authentic humanity.

CONCLUSION

This study examines Dorian Gray's psychological development in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by focusing on the relationship between narcissism and perfectionism through Freud's psychoanalytic perspective. The findings reveal that Dorian's narcissistic behavior is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, his fear of aging, emotional insecurity, excessive self-admiration, and desire to preserve an ideal self-image gradually shape a narcissistic personality that depends heavily on physical appearance and external validation. Externally, the hedonistic philosophy promoted by Lord Henry Wotton, Basil Hallward's admiration, and Victorian society's emphasis on beauty and aesthetic values reinforce Dorian's obsession with youth and perfection.

The study further demonstrates that narcissism and perfectionism are closely interconnected rather than functioning as separate psychological characteristics. Dorian's narcissism motivates him to seek admiration and recognition through his physical appearance, while his perfectionistic tendencies intensify his determination to preserve an ideal image of himself. The interaction between these psychological traits creates a destructive cycle in which beauty becomes the primary source of self-worth, gradually replacing moral principles and personal responsibility. Through Freud's structural model of personality, this condition reflects the dominance of the id over the ego and the superego, resulting in impaired moral judgment and increasingly destructive behavior.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that Dorian's obsession with physical perfection ultimately leads to moral deterioration and self-destruction. His inability to accept aging, acknowledge personal flaws, and take responsibility for his actions causes him to manipulate, deceive, and harm others while attempting to maintain his flawless appearance. Although he successfully preserves his youthful beauty, he fails to achieve genuine psychological well-being because his conscience continues to deteriorate. The portrait functions as a symbolic representation of his unconscious mind, revealing the irreversible consequences of suppressing guilt and prioritizing appearance over morality. Dorian's tragic death therefore symbolizes the inevitable collapse of an identity constructed solely upon external beauty and public admiration.

This study contributes to psychoanalytic literary criticism by demonstrating that narcissism and perfectionism should be understood as interconnected psychological processes rather than independent personality characteristics. While previous studies have generally discussed narcissism, psychoanalysis, or character development separately, the present study integrates these concepts to explain Dorian Gray's psychological transformation and moral decline through Freud's structural theory of personality. This integrated perspective provides a more comprehensive interpretation of Wilde's novel and highlights the complex relationship between personality, identity, and morality.

Finally, the findings remain relevant to contemporary society, where beauty standards, social recognition, and digital self-

presentation increasingly influence individual identity. Similar to Dorian Gray, many individuals experience pressure to maintain an ideal image and seek validation through external appearance. Wilde's novel therefore continues to offer an important reflection on the psychological consequences of excessive narcissism and perfectionism, reminding readers that genuine personal fulfillment cannot be achieved solely through physical beauty or public admiration but must also be grounded in moral integrity, self-acceptance, and humanity.

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