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FREUDIAN UNCANNY AND THE DOUBLE IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

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ABSTRACT

FREUDIAN UNCANNY AND THE DOUBLE IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

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This study focuses on Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in terms of psychoanalytic elements that contribute to a better understanding of the characters. The main focal point is the protagonist Dorian Gray whose traumatic childhood results in an identity crisis leading him to suffer from a fragmented self. Lord Henry and Basil Hallward are examined in terms of their relation with Dorian. These two characters are treated as foil characters to each other. In a psychoanalytic context, Lord Henry and Basil are interpreted in this study as part of Dorian's psyche: Lord Henry representing his id which plays on Dorian's urges and impulses, and Basil Hallward representing the superego that reminds Dorian of the moral codes in the society and urges him to refrain from his unkind conduct towards others. In addition, the study deals with the uncanny elements in the novel; namely the attic and the portrait. Both are explained as instruments by which Dorian experiences the uncanny in a Freudian sense. It will be claimed that Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can be considered as an example of the uncanny experience of the individual who is stuck between his inner desires and the pressure of the social norms, struggling not only physically but also mentally to achieve a balance between the two.

Key words: Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Psychoanalysis, The Uncanny, Freud, Doppelgänger, evil twin, double.

ÖZET

DORIAN GRAY'İN PORTRESİ'NDE FREUD'UN TEKİNSİZLİK VE İKİLİ KAHRAMAN OLGULARININ İNCELENMESİ

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İngiliz Edebiyatı ve Kültür İncelemeleri Bölümü

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Karakterlerin daha iyi anlaşılmasına katkıda bulunan psikanalitik unsurların izini süren bu çalışma, Oscar Wilde'in eseri *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*'ni incelemektedir. Çalışmanın başlıca odak noktası, travmatik çocukluk döneminin, kimlik kriziyle sonuçlanmasıyla parçalanmış benliğinden dolayı acı çeken başkarakter Dorian Gray'dir. Romanın diğer karakterleri Lord Henry ve Basil Hallward, Dorian ile ilişkileri bakımından incelenmiştir. Bu iki karakter birbirine zıt karakterler olarak ele alınmıştır. Psikanalitik bağlamda, Lord Henry ve Basil, bu çalışmada Dorian'ın zihninin birer parçası olarak yorumlanmaktadır: Lord Henry, Dorian'ın alt benliğini ve dürtüleri üzerine şekillenen kimliğini temsil etmektedir; Basil Hallward ise Dorian'a toplumdaki ahlaki kodları hatırlatan ve onu diğerlerine karşı kaba davranışlarını terk etmesini öğütleyen üst benliğini temsil etmektedir. Çalışma kapsamında romandaki tekinsiz öğeler olan çatı katı ve portre de incelemektedir. Her ikisi de Dorian'ın tekinsizliği tecrübe ettiği araçlar olarak açıklanmaktadır. Tekinsizlik bu çalışmada, bireyin baskı altında tuttuğu benliğiyle yüzleştiği deneyim olarak tanımlanmıştır ve bu yüzleşmeden kaynaklanan şok, korku ve iğrenme duygularını da kapsamaktadır. Bu anlamda, Oscar Wilde'in tek romanı olan *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*, içsel arzuları ve sosyal normların baskısı arasında sıkışıp kalmış, sadece fiziksel olarak değil aynı zamanda zihinsel olarak da dengeyi sağlamak için mücadele eden bireyin tekinsizliği deneyim etmesine bir örnek olarak düşünülebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oscar Wilde, *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*, Psikanaliz, tekinsiz, Freud, eşruh, kötü ikiz, ikili kahraman.

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INTRODUCTION

Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is examined in the present study through the perspective of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism with a special focus on the psychological development of the characters and its implications on the characters' relations to and attitudes towards life and society as well as the uncanny experience the protagonist of the novel goes through. In the context of the present study, the uncanny is the ultimate experience that is conveyed through several agents such as gloomy settings where the individual is somehow forced to face the unconscious that surfaces despite being repressed and ignored, and a double, also called as doppelgänger, in the form of a ghost, shadow, reflection in a mirror, a painting, or an actual person who eerily resembles him/her in terms of physical appearance.

The present study focuses on the elements of the fragmented self and defence mechanisms that contribute to a better understanding and interpretation of the novel and the characters. The aim of this study is to interpret; *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from a Freudian psychoanalytic point of view with a particular focus on Freud's the uncanny. The main focus is naturally on the protagonist Dorian Gray whose traumatic childhood results in an identity crisis leading him to suffer from a fragmentation of the self. Dorian's double identity is represented by a portrait painted by his friend Basil and it comes to represent Dorian's other self which contains all the properties and experiences that Dorian wishes to forget. Since the novel includes such elements and Dorian's character experiences "a resurgent childhood complex" and "a previously surmounted animism – that is, a primitive belief which attributes souls to non-human beings or objects" both of which are identified by Danielle Weedman as "the source of the uncanny," it is considered suitable to be the subject of the present study (6). The uncanny in the context of the present study is defined as a personal experience of an individual which arises when the individual confronts the

impact of his repressed past experiences and suffers from the ensuing shock or fright of such an encounter.

Oscar Wilde was a famous Anglo-Irish playwright, poet and author, whose works and private life made an overwhelming impression on the late 19th century Victorian England. He was one of the leading proponents of the Aestheticism movement and he followed the principle of “art for art’s sake” in his works. Throughout his life, he produced nine plays, one novel and several poems. *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), *An Ideal Husband* (1895) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) are some of his famous plays. During his years in prison, he wrote *De Profundis*, which is a love letter and considered to contain certain autobiographical elements. After his release from prison, he tried to gain his popularity with his last work, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898). His one and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) was disapproved by the literary critics of the time as it was claimed to humiliate Victorian moral values and favour homosexual desires. Oscar Wilde is considered to be an artist ahead of his time, whose works are still very popular and being read widely. However, he was severely criticized and despised by certain groups as he was not willing to live according to Victorian ideals. Wilde believed that he did not have to convey moral messages in his works as opposed to the Victorian understanding of art according to which it should always be useful and didactic for society. In Bloom’s *How to Write About Oscar Wilde*, it is underlined that his position in English society as an Irishman and a homosexual living in the 19th century reinforced him to choose his subjects from “those living on the fringes of the outsider” (50). Being both an outsider and a part of that society gave him the chance to make an objective analysis and critique of the 19th century Victorian society. By a close study of his works, it can be seen that his themes drew on his personal life. It would not be wrong to assume that some connections can be drawn between the author himself and the characters he created. Wilde himself wrote that “Basil Hallward is what I think I am; Lord Henry what the world thinks me: Dorian what I would like to be-in other ages perhaps” (Wilde, *The Letters* 352).

The Picture of Dorian Gray is the story of a young aristocrat's search for his identity who bargains for his eternal youth over his soul. Dorian Gray loses both of his parents at a very young age and is raised by his cruel and stonyhearted grandfather. The sessions during which Basil Hallward paints Dorian's portrait prove to be a turning point in young Dorian's life. In one of the sessions, Lord Henry Wotton happens to visit Basil while he is at work on Dorian's portrait. Lord Henry is a witty and opportunist aristocrat who takes delight in contesting opinions of other people around him and imposes his own ideas. His manner of speaking is overwhelmingly convincing, which enables him to win over other people. He is in favour of hedonism and he believes that pursuit of pleasure should be the only aim of human beings. He values beauty, youth and experiencing everything in life regardless of its immorality above every other aspect in life. Lord Henry is under the spell of Dorian's fresh beauty and tells him constantly that his youth and beauty are not supposed to last forever, one day he will lose all of his charm and everything will be meaningless. Dorian is also extremely affected by Lord Henry's views on hedonism, importance of beauty and youth. One day, Dorian finds himself looking at his own portrait, jealous of its eternal youth and beauty and he makes a wish to change places with the picture so as to stay forever young and beautiful. And he says that he is ready to sacrifice everything that he has got. Surprisingly, his the uncanny wish comes true and till the end of his life, Dorian does not get a single wrinkle on his face and he never loses his naïve beauty. Instead of Dorian, the portrait gets older and older day by day and it gets a brutal appearance with every sin Dorian commits.

Upon realizing that the portrait carries all the burdens of his sins, Dorian does not refrain from any immoral behaviour. Even when Dorian's lover, Sibyl Vane, commits suicide because of his insults and breaking up from her, he does not sense any feeling of remorse or dismay. Convinced by Lord Henry that he has no guilt in her suicide, Dorian leaves his house with Lord Henry for a dinner out just after he gets the news of her suicide. Beside the influence of his own ideas and lifestyle on Dorian, Lord Henry also sends a yellow book to Dorian which affects Dorian deeply in a bad way. Dorian tries to explore every possible kind of delight in his life; he starts to show interest in art, music and literature. However, he cannot find what he is looking for and he is not able to feed his hollow soul, so he keeps going to opium

dens and even there are rumours that he has weird relations with boys. On the other hand he attends fancy gatherings with Lord Henry where he never shows his dark side of personality. He keeps leading a double life. Hearing the bad news about Dorian, Basil Hallward pays a visit to him as he is concerned about his friend's wellbeing. He insistently asks Dorian to show him the portrait which Dorian hides in the attic as he does not want anyone to see him. As Dorian can no longer hold back his repressed feelings of anger, in a burst of fury he stabs Basil to death. Later in one of his conversations with Lord Henry, Dorian talks about his decision to be a better person. In hope of finding his portrait in a better state than before, he goes to the attic. However, finding that his recent resolution to be a better person makes no effect at all on the portrait, he falls in a great disappointment and in a fit of desperation he stabs the portrait. The servants rush to the attic upon hearing the bitter shriek only to find the withered corpse of an old man. They can only recognize that this body belongs to Dorian Gray by noticing the rings on his fingers.

It is beyond argument that each era has its own spirit, its own way of thinking and its own interpretation of life. In much the same vein, the Victorian era has left an indelible mark on British History with its unique frame of mind, identity crisis and moral values. The historical period from 1837 to 1901 is defined as the Victorian Era, and during this period, under the reign of Queen Victoria, the British society underwent a remarkable transformation. Sally Mitchell points out, "England was the first country to move from an agricultural economy to one based on manufacturing" (2). This gave way to a dramatic change in the societal structures in the Victorian Era. For analysing any literary work, it is important to learn about the historical moment in which it is produced, because every work of literature is shaped by that historical moment's ideology, norms, values, and mentality consciously or unconsciously. This makes it significant, if not obligatory, for the reader and the critic to know about the socio-cultural context and all events ranging from scientific and technological developments to demographic changes resulting from various factors such as urbanisation, war, immigration and so on. Analysing a literary text, after being equipped with knowledge of the socio-cultural and historical context of that text, will undoubtedly offer the reader and the critic a wider understanding of the text and help them to explore new dimensions and layers of meaning within the text.

When it comes to psychoanalytic literary criticism, the knowledge of the historical background of both the text and the author becomes even more important. This is due to the fact that psychoanalytic criticism relies heavily on the analysis of characters' or the author's psychological development and condition to interpret the text. As an individual's personality and personal development, whether it is a character of a literary work or the author himself/herself, is inevitably influenced by the historical moment they belong to, psychoanalytic criticism must not interpret any text without taking into consideration the background of that historical moment. When set in the socio-cultural milieu of the time in which the work is produced, the actions, ideas and choices of the character or the author will be understood in a much clearer manner and certain actions or choices of the character's or the author's, which would seem meaningless on their own, may take on a new meaning. Once familiar with the historical and socio-cultural context of Wilde's novel, the argumentation and reasoning of the present study from the perspective of psychoanalytic criticism is expected to be understood better.

The first chapter of this study titled "Theoretical Framework and Key Concepts" is dedicated to introducing and establishing the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study by providing definitions and explanations of the key terms and concepts such as the uncanny, defence mechanism, the return of the repressed, and the doppelgänger that constitute the basis of the study. Within this context, the chapter deals with the emergence of Freudian concept of uncanny and how it is treated by different scholars, elaborates on its relation to literature and literary criticism, and examines the role of the uncanny in literature and how the uncanny experience is conveyed in literary texts such as novels.

The second chapter is titled "Uncanny Experience of Being Victorian" and it argues that the social context and the historical moment of which the text talks about should be taken into consideration, as no individual's psyche – be it an actual person or fictional – is free from the influence of the conditions present in that specific historical moment. As the individual's identity and psyche are shaped by the cultural norms of the society in a given historical moment, the analysis of that individual's character which ignores the historical and social background would be less of a

success in terms of a comprehensive understanding of him/her. The chapter then moves on to provide information on the Victorian era and the social conditions in which the Victorian individual formed an identity and seeks to demonstrate the psychological implications of the era on the individual's identity.

The third and the final chapter of the study is titled "Uncanny Elements in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Its Major Characters". The first part of this chapter deals with the uncanny elements in the novel, which are the attic and the portrait. Both the attic and the portrait are explained as the instruments by which Dorian is exposed to the uncanny experience of encountering his repressed self. This second sub-chapter is dedicated to the analysis of Wilde's novel and the three major characters: Dorian Gray, Lord Henry Wotton, and Basil Hallward. The chapter elaborates on Dorian Gray's character and how it is shaped by his traumatic childhood experiences and how these undesirable experiences shape his later actions. The characters of Lord Henry and Basil Hallward are examined in terms of their relation with Dorian. These two characters are also treated as contrasting with each other as foil characters. In a Freudian psychoanalytic context, Lord Henry and Basil are interpreted in this study as part of Dorian's psyche: Lord Henry representing his id which plays on Dorian's urges and impulses; and Basil Hallward representing the superego that reminds Dorian of the moral codes in the society and urges him to refrain from his unkind conduct towards others.

Being a very popular novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has been studied widely in the field of literature. There are thematic studies about the novel which seek to explain gothic elements in the story. These studies mainly focus on the themes of horror and violence. Another topic that has been studied about the novel is the theme of aesthetics versus morality. As Oscar Wilde is one of the followers of "art for art's sake" movement, his works contain many traits of aesthetic tradition. Therefore, there are many theses and dissertations that support the idea that Oscar Wilde is devoted to aestheticism. Besides these, there are also psychoanalytical studies that concentrate on themes such as loss of identity, self-destruction, narcissism and double personality. For example, Meng Li Yin's dissertation is a Jungian psychoanalysis of the novel. He focuses on the individuation process of the

protagonist, Dorian Gray. He supports the idea that Dorian fails to complete the process of individuation. Another psychoanalytic approach to the novel is studied by Yue Hai Gu. He adopts Freudian and Jungian psychoanalysis techniques to analyse the major characters in the novel as he believes that they reflect Wilde's own psychological conditions. His main purpose is to analyse the author's own gender identity problems, double personality and homosexual tendency by focusing on the analysis of the psychological problems of the characters in the novel. The present study adopts Freudian psychoanalytic approach too; however, it differs from Yue Hai Gu's study as it aims to analyse the psychological problems of the main characters rather than the author. Besides this, the study is significant in that it can be considered as one of the few M.A. studies in Turkey which searches for the uncanny elements in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with a Freudian approach.

CHAPTER I

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND KEY CONCEPTS

1.1 Freudian Uncanny and The Double

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was one of the most significant neurologists and philosophers of his time whose concept of the uncanny still sheds light on research in the field of literature besides psychology and many other related subjects. In the field of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism, the term ‘the uncanny’ is one that holds a significant place and thus needs to be addressed elaborately. Freud generated his seminal essay “The Uncanny” (1919) as a response to Ernst Jentsch’s essay “On the Psychology of the Uncanny” (1906) and it has become a guiding work in the field of the uncanny studies since then. Freud states at the beginning of his essay that he does not agree with Jentsch’s understanding of the uncanny. According to Freud, Jentsch supports the idea that “The better oriented in his environment a person is, the less readily will he get the impression of something the uncanny in regard to the objects and events in it” (“The Uncanny”, 221). However, Freud argues that this is not an adequate explanation of the uncanny. He puts forward that what is unfamiliar cannot always be regarded as the uncanny. According to Freud, the uncanny is “in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression” (“The Uncanny”, 241). He gives a list of definitions of the uncanny in different languages in order to demonstrate that “the uncanny is beyond the equation to unfamiliar” (Freud, (“The Uncanny”, 221). He finds out that the uncanny indicates several meanings in a variety of different languages. Some of these are strange, foreign, uncomfortable, uneasy, haunted, and gruesome, unhomely and so on. At the end of this linguistic study, he realises that the German equivalent of “the uncanny” “unheimlich” possesses the same meaning with its opposite “heimlich”. Robin Lydenberg explains the shocking similarity between the opposite words as follows:

The ambiguity of the uncanny as both familiar and unfamiliar is reinforced by Freud's examination of the German word *unheimlich*: the root, *heimlich* carries the primary signification "familiar and agreeable" but in its secondary meaning it coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*, "concealed and kept out of sight". What is most intimately known and familiar, then, is always already divided within by something potentially alien and threatening. (1073)

Freud clarifies the situation with Schelling's own words: "everything is *unheimlich* that ought to have remained secret but has come to light" ("The Uncanny", 224). According to Freud, the prefix 'un' is the token of repression ("The Uncanny", 245). An uncanny experience is considered to be a well-known feeling encountered before; yet, it has become estranged as it is tried to be kept hidden and repressed in the unconscious but rises to the surface at another moment in life unexpectedly. Freud's explanations regarding the meaning and etymology of the word *heimlich/unheimlich* help us to grasp an understanding of what the term stands for, even though that might be a little vague due to the much-contested status of the term. The term the uncanny has its origins in the German word 'unheimlich' which can be translated into English as "unhomely". First of all, *heimlich* means, as Freud explains, "native", "familiar", and "belonging to the house" ("The Uncanny", 222). The word also means what is confined within the domestic, kept from outside, which can be put into context with the repression of things we do not want others to know or see. *Unheimlich*, on the other hand, stands for what is unfamiliar, unknown and strange in a frightening manner. Rosemary Jackson deduces from the semantic explanation of the uncanny by Freud that the importance of the uncanny takes its source from the duality of its meaning. It reveals what is hidden and secret while at the same time it transforms the familiar into something unfamiliar (65). Likewise, Anneleen Masschelein points out Freud's elaborate lexicographic research on the meaning of the word the uncanny as follows:

In the lengthy display of dictionary entries Freud reproduces, there are several difficulties which have to do with the negativity of the notion. *Unheimlich* is the negation of the adjective *Heimlich*, derived from the semantic core of *Heim*, home. Except, it turns out that *heimlich* has two meanings. The first sense is the most literal: domestic, familiar, intimate. The second meaning departs from the positive, literal sense to the more negative metaphorical sense of hidden, secret, clandestine, furtive. One might say that a certain change of perspective has taken place: in the positive sense, *heimlich* takes the inside-perspective of the intimacy of the

home. In the negative sense, by contrast, the walls of the house shield the interior and in the eyes of the outsider, the secludedness of the inner circle is associated with secrecy and conspiracy. (2-3)

Having assigned such a central role to the concept of the uncanny in his works, Freud not only explored the term “the uncanny” in terms of lexicography and semantics, but also paid great attention on explaining how it worked on the human psychology and which elements it consists of. Freud elaborates on the origin of the uncanny and points to two different origins, “the one deriving from repression (Verdrängung) of infantile traumatic experience and the other from the surmounting (Überwundensein) of primitive cultural superstitions” (Flanagin, 14). The mechanism of repression, which is thought to lead to the uncanny experience, as Flanagin suggests, results from the “rationalist protocols of the Enlightenment” in the Western Culture (14). It is Freud’s opinion that Enlightenment scholars denounced religious beliefs and notions as being primitive superstitions did not effectively eradicate these beliefs and notions from existence, yet, on the contrary, they have survived in the unconscious in the form of the repressed. Freud names this feeling of “return of the repressed” as an uncanny experience. He argues in his essay “The Uncanny” that the uncanny feeling always comes with dread and horror but everything that arouses fear cannot always be considered as the uncanny. He puts forward that “it is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general” (219). Freud thinks that the uncanny is related to the feeling of horror; however, it is also different from it in the sense that the uncanny feeling arises from what is familiar and has been with us for a long time. Freud makes his definition of the uncanny as “that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar” (“The Uncanny” 220). Danielle Weedman explains in *Men, Monsters and Morality: Shaping Ethics through the Sublime and Uncanny* how the uncanny and sublime in general differentiate from each other as follows: “the uncanny is further distinguished from the sublime in that it derives its fear not from something external, alien, or unknown, but from something strangely familiar which is inextricable from the self” (5). It is comprehended that the thing that arouses the uncanny feeling in us is always related to our experiences, desires, traumas or our “self” in general.

In order to clarify the subject and to give examples of the uncanny situations, Freud refers to E.T.A. Hoffmann's story "The Sandman". He marks that he does not follow Jentsch's idea that "In telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating the uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton" ("The Uncanny", 227). Freud argues that the uncanny atmosphere evoked by the story, does not have any connection with the theme of the doll Olympia. It is, however, closely related to the theme of the 'Sand-man' who tears out children's eyes ("The Uncanny", 227). Freud reminds us that "A study of dreams, phantasies and myths has taught us that anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the dread of being castrated" ("The Uncanny", 231). He sets forth that the protagonist of the story, Nathaniel's fear of losing his eyes, is strongly associated with the fear of castration. He also adds that "elements in the story like these, and many others, seem arbitrary and meaningless so long as we deny all connection between fears about the eye and castration; but they become intelligible as soon as we replace the Sand-man by the dreaded father at whose hands castration is expected" ("The Uncanny", 232). Freud associates Nathaniel's father with the Sand-man who tears out children's eyes, and therefore he concludes that the uncanny effect of the story stems from "the anxiety belonging to the castration complex of childhood" ("The Uncanny", 233).

In the story, several examples of "the double or doppelgänger" convention, which is one of the representations of the uncanny in literature, can be seen. Fredrik Svenaeus suggests in his article "Freud's Philosophy of the Uncanny" that "The uncanniness of Coppélius seems to come precisely from the uncertainty regarding his identity. He seems to assume the identity of three different characters at the same time in the story: the sandman, Coppélius the lawyer, and Coppola the optician" (243). Nathaniel's father and the lawyer Coppélius are also considered to be doubles of each other. While the father is associated with the good, Coppélius is associated with the evil. The double in literature connotes two identical figures, each of them represents completely opposite character traits. The double convention is associated with the duality in human nature.

The visuality is important to create the uncanny effect in literature. The uncanny occurs especially when an individual or a character in a literary work comes to encounter his/her own “self” in the form of a double or any kind of visual image, may it be an apparition, reflection or a portrait. In literature, it is possible to find a myriad of examples of the uncanny and its motifs, especially in late-Victorian fiction. Since the uncanny has to do with death, doubles, estrangement towards the self, repression of certain experiences and/or feelings, it offers a great deal of material for literary works. The uncanny experience comes into existence through certain motifs; one of the most common motifs of the uncanny in literature is that of the double, also often called *doppelgänger*. Rosemary Jackson explains that the German word *doppelgänger* means “double-goer” or “walker”, and it was first used by Hoffman with the meaning of double or dual (108). The double in a literary work usually bears a strong, sometimes even identical, resemblance to a character; sometimes the double can be observed to parallel the character’s personal traits, situation and so on. The double is usually portrayed to be the result of a fragmentation of the self-due to the repression caused by the pressing dictates of the society or the psychological effect of a traumatic experience.

As Freud suggests, the double as a literary motif has to do with “mirrors, with shadows, guardian spirits, with the belief in the soul and the fear of death” (“The Uncanny”, 235). Freud considers the double as the “insurance against destruction of the ego” (“The Uncanny”, 235). What he means by this is that the individual ends up fragmenting his/her self and creates two separate selves, one of which allows him/her to appear the way the society expects them to appear, while the other is shaped by their repressed traits and inner desires. Mostly, the individual tries to keep the latter hidden, away from sight, thus sweeping the unaccepted into the unconscious. Rosemary Jackson asserts that “The double signifies a desire to be reunited with a lost centre of personality” (108). As a kind of defence mechanism, creating a double identity helps the individual to reconcile his inner desires with the societal expectations and go on with their life. As Freud suggests, the double results from the return of the infantile material which is repressed and the primary source of creating a double is the narcissism of the child by means of which projections of multiple selves are created. When these created selves are encountered later, the uncanny

experience of returning to a primitive state is felt. With regard to this, Freud points out that “when the primary narcissism stage has been surmounted, ‘the double’ reverses its aspect. From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death” (“The Uncanny”, 235). What he means by “harbinger of death” can be interpreted as the annihilation of the self. When the created self, the double, becomes dominant on the self and starts to control its actions, it results in the destruction of the real identity.

The tradition of double in literature can be divided into several categories such as evil twin, shadow, ghosts and apparitions, two different persons bearing the same name, a person’s past or future self. When examined, it can be seen that the doppelgänger as a literary device serves a range of different purposes in literature. Firstly, it can be used to portray the “other” self of a character which may help the reader to explore the character’s darker/brighter side. Hence, the portrayal of a character can be reinforced in complexity, depth and dimension. Secondly, the doppelgänger can play a significant role in terms of plot structure, either raising a climactic point or leading to the resolution of a conflict. The doppelgänger adds sub-dimensions and helps the story develop in a multi-layered form.

Freud also thinks that man’s attitude towards death and dead bodies create an uncanny effect. He suggests that “insufficient scientific knowledge about death” and “old belief that the dead man becomes the enemy of his survivor and seeks to carry him off to share his new life with him” drags people into a feeling of the uncanny (“The Uncanny”, 242). He also adds that “the primitive fear of the dead is still so strong within us and always ready to come to the surface on any provocation (“The Uncanny”, 242). Even if the educated people do not believe that the dead may appear to them as ghosts or spirits, they breed a feeling of the uncanny due to their repressed fear of death.

Weird coincidences and involuntary repetitions are also considered as the uncanny experiences. Freud exemplifies this type of the uncanny as follows: “if we come across the number 62 several times in a single day, or if we begin to notice that everything which has a number-addresses, hotel rooms, compartments in railway

trains-invariably has the same one, or at all events one which contains the same figures. We do feel this to be the uncanny” (“The Uncanny”, 238). In the same manner, thinking about someone whom you have not heard of for a long time and coming across with him on the same day is another example of the uncanny feeling of coincidences. Freud relates this kind of the uncanny experience with the infantile psychology and “compulsion to repeat,” which is directly connected with the unconscious and childhood traumas. The thing that is repeated is considered to be the result of the process of repression.

Apart from these, there are other features such as omnipotence of thoughts, dread of the evil eye, animism, and fulfilment of unrealistic wishes and silence, darkness and solitude which create the uncanny effect in literary works and real life as well. Related to this kind of the uncanny, Freud’s explanation is that;

we---or our primitive forefathers---once believed that these possibilities were realities, and were convinced that they actually happened. Nowadays we no longer believe in them, we have surmounted these modes of thought; but we do not feel quite sure of our new beliefs, and the old ones still exist within us ready to seize upon any confirmation. As soon as something actually happens in our lives which seem to confirm the old, discarded beliefs we get a feeling of the uncanny. (“The Uncanny”, 248)

Human beings who are able to free themselves from these kinds of animistic beliefs, do not experience this type of the uncanny feeling, Freud adds. Silence, darkness and solitude belong to the type of the uncanny which bothers most of the human beings as repressed infantile complexes. At the end of his study, Freud reaches the conclusion that the uncanny experience occurs in two ways: “an the uncanny experience occurs either when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed” (“The Uncanny”, 249). Once again, it is confirmed that Freudian understanding of the uncanny is closely related to repression of childhood syndromes and surpassed primitive animistic beliefs that are awakened by a random stimulant.

As a psychologist, it is still a matter of curiosity why Freud chose a subject from the aesthetics as the discussion of his study. Derrida mentions in his *Writing*

and Difference that “Freud loved the arts and (literature, poetry, music) and this essay is an example of how he uses them to affirm and describe his ideas. The most obvious example of this process in his writing is the Oedipus complex” (qtd. in Noam Israeli, 383). It is apparent that Freud enjoyed arts and borrowed from its notions while naming his psychological concepts. Besides his interest towards art, Freud may intentionally choose his subjects from aesthetics as both literature and psychoanalysis search for the hidden and implicit meanings. Portier points out why Freud made a detailed study on the uncanny and why it was of great importance to him as follows:

Freud’s understanding of modern human psychology and the psychoanalytic process relies on the uncanny. The “talking cure” is intended to call to light that which is simultaneously hidden but central to the patient’s hysteria or other psychological condition. The patient must experience the uncanny to break through and set foot on the path towards a cure. This is one explanation for why Freud took up the uncanny as the subject of an essay despite his claim that he does not normally deal with problems of aesthetics. (29)

By generating his essay on the uncanny, he not only started a new genre in literary criticism, but also initiated a discussion on the subject which is still in progress.

In his article titled “In Search of the uncanny in the Narratives of the Great War”, Taner Can suggests that “the uncanny has been part of critical thinking since 1906” (66). The first reference to the term the uncanny dates back to the very same year when the German psychologist Ernst Jentsch described a form of anxiety in his essay titled “On the Psychology of the uncanny”. In his analysis of the uncanny, Jentsch focuses more on the feeling of uncertainty as a highly important element of the uncanny experience. As Anneleen Masschelein suggests, “the bulk of the critical and theoretical reception of “Das Unheimliche” is located in the field of aesthetics: literary theory and criticism, art history, philosophy, architecture and cultural studies. The growing interest in the uncanny in literary studies first occurred in the late sixties, early seventies, and coincided with the transition of structuralism to post-structuralism” (4). There are many contemporary interpretations on the concept of the the uncanny. As Nicholas Royle observes, the uncanny is a concept constantly in

transformation as it relies on the unfamiliar which “is never fixed, but constantly altering”; therefore, definitions may not work efficiently on this topic and it could be more helpful to attempt to understand how the concept works rather than attempt to provide a fixed definition (5). For instance, Andrew Barnaby defines the experience of the uncanny as “a moment of reversal, the point at which our sense of reality as what is comforting, safe or friendly (heimlich) is suddenly exposed as unfamiliar, obscure or self-estranging” (985). While Barnaby’s take on the concept retains much of Freud’s original ideas, Tom Gunning focuses more on the repression of certain experiences and emotions and their inaccessibility through conscious memory:

The return of the repressed and the residue of surmounted beliefs both refer to past experience, although a past that has been made difficult to access using conscious or historical memory. The uncanny not only finds one of its clearest examples in the experience of *deja vu*, but this paradoxical experience also reflects its contradictory relation to the past. The uncanny strikes us as somehow returning us to a past moment, but a past moment, which, while almost overwhelmingly (and certainly unsettlingly) familiar, nonetheless cannot be grasped or represented by conscious memory. (83)

Gunning’s point of view is much more in line with the contemporary understanding of psychoanalytic approach in that it puts specific emphasis on defence mechanisms which help to repress socially unacceptable behaviours or experiences putting them to rest undisturbed in the unconscious until they are surfaced by means of an the uncanny experience. Another explanation for the uncanny is given by Marc Falkenberg whose explanation is of a nature that attempts to describe how the uncanny occurs rather than to define it:

Uncertainty also plays a role in Freud’s the uncanny, but an unacknowledged one. The return of the repressed or the revival of the surmounted beliefs is initially disorienting, because we do not recognize what was repressed or surmounted at first. Our non-recognition itself creates the initial sense of threat, independently of the threat posed by the return of the repressed or the revival of surmounted beliefs. (22)

Following the failure of the Enlightenment rationalism in eradicating what it deemed to be primitive and superstitious, “the uncanny is thus significantly linked to the astonishing proliferation of supernatural themes and motifs in the Gothic novel and fantastic story of the late eighteenth and nineteenth century” (Flanagan 14). It is

in this manner that the uncanny has been transformed into a common literary motif in the branch of literature called Gothic fiction. The theme of the double is often encountered as a literary motif in Victorian novels. Some of the most well-known are; *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Bronte, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) by Oscar Wilde.

As Masschelein observes, “nowadays, the topic of the uncanny no longer begs for an apology. On the contrary, it is an accepted and popular concept in various disciplines of the humanities, ranging from literature and the arts, to philosophy, film studies, theory of architecture and sociology, and recently even crossing over to the ‘hard’ field of robotics and artificial intelligence” (1).

The concepts of the uncanny and the doppelgänger, then, have influenced and inspired the literary world to such a great extent that authors have created several literary works dealing with and/or working on the theme of the uncanny experience. Based on the uncanny and its sub-categories such as the doppelgänger, it has become possible to interpret literary works in such a way that adds new dimensions and unearths new layers of meaning in literary works.

1.2. Freudian Key Terms

In order to have a better understanding of Freudian the uncanny, one needs to get familiar with Freudian key terms as they set the ground for the theory. It is already mentioned in this chapter that, Freud associates the uncanny effect with repressed infantile complexes. It will be a correct step to relate the uncanny experience to the development of a child’s psychology.

There are many external factors that shape the child’s psychological development. Undoubtedly, the most important of all, is the child’s relationship with the family. The child’s first interaction with the outer world starts within the family. For example, the roles attributed to the child in the family or the amount of love she/he receives from the family members affect the character development of the

child and determine what kind of psychological problems the child will have during his/her adult life. Most of the psychological dilemmas overtaking our adulthood period have their roots back in our childhood fears, disappointments, loss of the loved ones and so on. Hence, Freud commences analysing the psychological problems of an adult from his/her childhood.

According to the Freudian view, there are two principles which rule the life-cycle of human beings. These are “the pleasure principle” and “the reality principle”. The pleasure principle urges the individual to take pleasure from life, whereas the reality principle stimulates him/her to do what is expected him to do, work or study, ignoring the pleasure. A new-born baby, whose only aim on earth is to feel at ease, forms its life around the pleasure principle. It performs all its limited actions, such as sleeping, eating and relieving itself, in order to get pleasure. Freud uses the term “polymorphously perverse” for defining the all-round sexual or instinctual drives of the baby directed to any object or person while seeking pleasure. The polymorphously perverse baby does not feel the need to repress these desires as it has not encountered the reality principle yet. Its actions are directed by its “id” and this phase of sexual development corresponds to the oral stage where the baby gets pleasure by its mouth such as suckling the mother or objects. Freud suggests that as the baby gets pleasure from its interaction with the mother, the relationship between the baby and the mother is incestuous. The second phase of sexual development is anal stage, which corresponds with the toilet-training of the baby. The last stage of the psychosexual development is the phallic stage, during which the child observes the genital organs and has a curiosity towards the opposite sex’s genital organs. Up to that time, the child thinks that everybody has the same genital organ as with the others. When the child first finds out that, the mother does not have a penis as he has, he begins to think that something is wrong. He thinks that his father has cut off his mother’s penis as an act of punishment. And this idea makes him frightened that his father might also castrate him in order to punish his desire to take his father’s place and unite with his mother. Freud names this desire to be with the parent of the opposite sex as “Oedipus complex” and the fear of being punished by cutting of the genitals as “the castration complex”. With the help of the castration complex, the child is able to overcome the Oedipus complex. Feeling the authority of his father

over himself, the child is afraid of him and learns to repress his unacceptable sexual desires for her mother. This is the very first time when the child encounters the presence of “superego”. In *Literary Theory; A Guide for the Perplexed* it is stated that;

The Oedipus Complex explains how desires get repressed, how these repressed desires form the unconscious, how girls and boys learn to desire objects outside of their own families, how each sex learns to desire someone of the opposite sex, and how the superego-the reality principle, or what we call “conscience” – gets formed. (68)

As Freud claims if something goes wrong at this stage, the child will not be able to build a healthy bond with the opposite sex and will develop homosexual desires for his own sex. Freud asserts that the situation for the girls is more complicated as directing her desires from her mother to the opposite sex is not easy for girls and lead them to direct their desires towards their fathers. Freud does not explain thoroughly how the girl overcomes the Oedipus complex since maybe he is not good at empathizing with women as he calls them “the dark continent”. His theory of “penis envy” is still being harshly criticized by feminists. Freud argues that when the girl realizes she does not have a penis, she feels inferior to the boy. The envy mentioned here might be the envy to live like a man and have the same opportunities. Freud states that;

For boys and girls, the Oedipus complex installs repression as a means by which to manage prohibited desires; it involves “the transformation into affects, and especially into anxiety, of the mental energy belonging to the instincts”. The onset of repression is simultaneously the destruction of the Oedipus complex. Subsequent repressions are made under the aegis of the super-ego that emerges as a result of a successful oedipal experience. The super-ego is thus “the heir of the Oedipus complex. (“The Ego and the Id” 153)

If the child manages to overcome the Oedipus complex, the child learns to repress its immoral desires that will not be socially accepted and starts to behave according to “the reality principle”. The repression of these desires initiates the formation of the “superego” in the child according to Freud’s structural theory of mind. Freud suggests that the human psyche is divided into three parts; id, ego and superego. The id is the primitive part of the human psyche and directed by “the pleasure principle”. Unlike the ego and the superego, the id exists in our personality

from the day we are born. It is controlled by instinctual desires and requires the immediate satisfaction of them. If they are not, then the anxiety occurs. The ego tries to find a reasonable and socially accepted way to fulfil these desires. Like the id, the ego is also controlled by “the pleasure principle” but it seeks out a realistic way to achieve pleasure. Freud explains how the ego works as follows: “...To adopt a popular mode of speaking we might say that the ego stands for reason and good sense, while the id stands for the untamed passions.... The ego’s relation to the id might be compared with that of a rider to his horse” (*Lectures* 109). The horse has the potential and energy to run fiercely however it should be controlled by its rider to win a competition. Freud also believes that; “The ego is that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world” (“The Ego and the Id” 25). With the interaction of the outer world, we all try to find a way to shape our childish demands into socially accepted behaviour. The development of the superego in the psyche of a child corresponds to the phallic stage after the Oedipus complex. The child, experiencing the castration fear, meets the authority of the father and reaches to the realization that he/she should always behave according to certain unwritten moral codes. Tyson underlines that; “The ego, or the conscious self that experiences the external world through the senses, plays referee between the id and the superego, and all three are defined by their relationship: none acts independently of the others and a change in one always involves changes in the other two (25). She explains that by playing the role of a bridge between the id and the superego, ego is constructed as a “product of conflicts” between what we want and what society dictates us to do or not to do. She also suggests that the relationship among these three may give us clues about someone’s personality as well as the culture he/she was raised in.

Another important and well-known key concept of Freud is the defence mechanism. Freud puts forward that in order to maintain a socially accepted image of the self, the ego unconsciously generates certain defence mechanisms as a way to hide anxiety and feelings that we do not want to cope with. Repression, regression, denial, identification, displacement, rationalization and sublimation are just some of them. The theory of the uncanny revolves around “repression” which is the process of hiding one’s traumatic memories, uncomfortable thoughts, sexual instincts and

desires into the unconscious. Acquainted with the reality principle, human beings repress those desires in the unconscious.

Identification first starts with the Oedipus complex and it is important for gender formation. Despite being afraid of the father, the child starts to imitate the behaviours of its father. The same situation happens, when the child tries to adjust to new surroundings. He mimics the manners, jokes, and way of speaking of his new friends so as to avoid being excluded from the group. Identification with an object is also possible.

Sublimation unlike others can be recalled as a positive defence mechanism bearing good results. When we manage to divert our energy and our will to the reality principle from the pleasure principle, sublimation takes place. Sublimation is a psychological defence mechanism through which humans learn to convert their repressed and unacceptable behaviours into something fruitful. For example, by sublimation mechanism, the artists or authors transform their sexual drives into their work and they create novels, sculptures or compositions. Freud thinks that without the sublimation process, civilisation would have never reached the state where it is today. Freud suggests that “the manner in which the sexual instincts can thus be influenced and diverted enables them to be employed for cultural activities of every kind to which indeed they bring the most important contributions” (*Autobiographical Study*, 222).

Freud says that the unfulfilled desires or wishes which are not sublimated are repressed and kept in our unconscious. Unconscious is resembled to a dark attic of the house where all the ugly and damaged furniture are hidden away as they are not wanted to be shown to the visitors. In the same manner, our childhood traumas, instinctual drives, fears, desires and behaviours that are not socially accepted are all repressed in the unconscious and it is not always easy to reach them. Freud affirms that there are certain ways that give away our pent-up desires. Jokes, slips of the tongue, absentmindedness and dreams are some of them. He says that an error in speech is never coincidental; it always indicates a hidden desire or an unfulfilled wish. Freud suggests that our unconscious is only free when we sleep as the defence

mechanisms are also at rest and, because of this, dream analysis is one of the most common ways to release what is going on in the unconscious. By examining his dream about one of his patients, as Mary Klages observes, Freud comes to the point that dreams are the symbols for our wishes which are not fulfilled:

According to Freud in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, dreams are symbolic fulfilments of wishes that can't be fulfilled because they've been repressed. Often these wishes can't even be expressed directly in consciousness, because they are forbidden, so they come out in dreams-but in strange way, in ways that often hide or disguise the true (forbidden) wish behind the dream. (38)

The last key term of Freudian the uncanny that I will mention in this study is the concept of narcissism. It is apparent that the term narcissism takes its name from the Greek myth of Narcissus. The myth is about the story of a young man who falls in love with his own reflection upon seeing it on the river surface. He believes that his image on the water is another individual who is also in love with him as he thinks that it is answering him back when he hears the voice of Echo, who actually loves Narcissus. At the end of the story, Narcissus whose love is unrequited dies just near the river side. According to Freud, the origin of the narcissistic personality disorder goes back to the infancy. The loss of the mother or not giving necessary care to the special needs of the baby may cause the development of narcissistic personality disorder in the child. Freud defines narcissism as; "The libido that has been withdrawn from the external world has been directed to the ego and thus gives rise to an attitude which may be called narcissism" (*On Narcissism* 75). The child who is deprived of the love and compassion that he/she should have received from his mother turns his libido to himself and tries to prove that he is worth being loved in order to protect his ego. Narcissist people show similar character traits and the most well-known is their incapability to love. They perceive loving someone as a threat to their self-esteem. On the contrary, they conceive being loved as a means of boosting their self-respect. They are also unable to empathize with other people; they ignore others' feelings and opinions. They believe that they always deserve to be appreciated in every little piece of work they do. Calling back to what he claims to happen after an unsuccessful castration process, it can be said that he is affirming his own allegations. Freud's connection between narcissism and paranoia brings to mind

the myth of Narcissus regarding that the voices Narcissus hears can be resembled to the voices that paranoiacs hear.

In accordance with the information about the Freudian terms given above, it will be illuminating to comprehend and interpret Freud's concept of the uncanny and the double and apply them to Wilde's text.



CHAPTER II

UNCANNY EXPERIENCE OF BEING VICTORIAN

The present chapter argues that in the context of the Victorian era, the uncanny experience was a result of the conflict which arose due to the clash between the societal expectations and personal desires. In a society like the Victorian society where social roles were firmly designated, there are always moral codes that govern the individual's life. The Victorian era witnessed an unprecedented development in terms of industrialisation and science, which put people of the era in a position where they found themselves stuck in between the old and the new. The era's outlook on life was based on reason and rationalism, thus the emotional and spiritual side of the human being was overlooked. However, due to the complex nature of being human, one cannot simply put aside the emotional and spiritual part of his/her way of looking at life. As a result, the overwhelming rule-based, over-rationalised way of thinking in the Victorian era, paved the way for the emergence of doppelgänger tradition in literature. The present study will focus on Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as the example of doppelgänger tradition which depicts the socio-cultural milieu in which the Victorian society found themselves.

In Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry seems to pin down how the Victorian individual's life is shaped: "The terror of society, which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion – these are the two things that govern us" (30). These two establishments – society and religion – were the most important factors that shaped the lives of the Victorian individual. In the case of the Victorian society, which was always associated with strict morals, the moral codes, by which the members of the society were supposed to abide, can be listed as abstinence from degrading behaviours such as showing interest in sexuality, hard work, honesty, prudence, sense of duty towards the less fortunate, respect for family, and so on. In order to be a respected member of the society, one had to pay

utmost attention to these matters. If one put on an image which avoided openly expressing an interest in sexuality, worked hard, was honest and prudent in all his/her affairs, and proved to be charitable, this person would build up a good reputation for himself/herself, and others would speak well of him/her. Without a good reputation, one would be on his/her own against the society and have to lead a life of exclusion. At this point, it is noteworthy to pay attention to a dialogue between Basil Hallward and Dorian Gray in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*:

“It is not much to ask of you, Dorian, and it is entirely for your own sake that I am speaking. I think it right that you should know that the most dreadful things are being said against you in London.”

“I don’t wish to know anything about them. I love scandals about other people, but scandals about myself don’t interest me. They have not got the charm of novelty.”

“They must interest you, Dorian. Every gentleman is interested in his good name. You don’t want people to talk of you as something vile and degraded. Of course, you have your position, and your wealth, and all that kind of thing. But position and wealth are not everything. (177-178)

As Basil Hallward argues in the quotation above, in the Victorian era people had to care about their public image in order to avoid exclusion and degradation in the eye of the respected members of the society. Otherwise, they would lose favour of their peers and become alienated from the good company they wished to be a part of. Bearing in mind all such expectations, social codes and roles imposed on the individual by the society, it would not be wrong to assume that an average person would undoubtedly have a hard time to keep up with what was expected of him/her; therefore, would feel too much pressure as he/she was, in a way, supposed to fight against human nature. The roles defined by the Victorian society’s understanding of morality forced people to repress certain human feelings such as sexuality and to feign to have a personality which not only concealed their true selves, but also put them in a light to be favoured by the society. However, since it would be unbearably difficult to maintain this pretentious image, people started looking for other ways of obtaining pleasures that were deemed sinful or unacceptable in the eyes of the public.

Referring to characters in Oscar Wilde’s works who represent the Victorian society, Felicia Appell points out that “[b]ecause the characters are concerned about

the ideals of society, the men are forced to live double lives to keep their sanity as well as their acceptance in the Victorian society” (n.p).

For instance, in the novel it is implied through a dialogue between Basil and Dorian that Dorian would take a trip every once in a while, to the countryside where he was able to satisfy his repressed desires “What about your country-house and the life that is led there? Dorian, you don’t know what is said about you” (Wilde 180). In the countryside, he would not reveal his real identity, giving himself a pseudonym to go by incognito. This double life would ensure that he would not risk his public image in the city while he would be able to enjoy his freedom which was denied to his true self. Living a double life was the consequence of the conflict between the uncompromising expectations of the society and the inner desires of mankind which he was forced to ignore. In relation to that, Lerzan Gültekin suggests “... the novel depicts Wilde’s critical approach to the Victorians’ conventional moral standards and vanity through the characters of Lord Henry and Dorian who conceal their personalities through the mask of hypocrisy” (57). According to Gültekin, Victorian people had to conceal their true identities in the eyes of public by wearing a kind of imaginary social mask.

The psychological impact of this conflict on the individual is so great that the individual creates a second self in order to attribute all his “unacceptable,” “condemnable” behaviours to this created self. In doing so, he will be able to maintain his pure and respectable image among his peers. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan state in “Introduction: Strangers to Ourselves: Psychoanalysis” that

as each child grows and enters first the family then society, he or she learns to repress those instinctual drives and the conscious desires they instigate and to mold aggressive and sexual impulses as well as an initially grandiose sense of self to the demands of life with others. Repression is essential to civilization, the conversion of animal instinct into civil behaviour, but such repression creates what might be called a second self, a stranger within, a place where all that cannot for one reason or another be expressed or realized in civil life takes up residence. This, for Freud, explains why people experience what he calls “the uncanny” feelings of doubleness that consist of a sense that something strange coexists with what is most familiar inside ourselves. (389)

As suggested by the quotation above, people are forced to choose between their individual desires and the social acceptance. However, as no person can survive all by himself or herself, they feel obliged to choose the social acceptance over their personal desires. In other words, the individual is forced to sacrifice a part of his/her personality in order to get accepted by his/her peers. In the Victorian era, in which the society was organized around certain stereotypical roles defined for individuals, whether they were male or female, the individual faced a crucial conflict, as a result of which he/she had to create a double self and by this double identity he/she attempted to by-pass the consequences of not fitting in the social roles expected of him/her. Creating a double self naturally resulted in a fragmentation in the individual's sense of self. Due to this fragmentation of identity, the individual was estranged to his/her true self which was repressed. Having performed the socially approved identity for too long, the individual would end up believing this constructed image was his/her true self, and when the repressed true self surfaced, the individual experienced what Freud called "the uncanny".

Having so far drawn an outline of the Victorian society and the concepts of double and the uncanny, it is important to focus on the literature of the era, because, as suggested by the New historicist critics, "new Historicism considers works of literature as historical texts" (Dogan 77). Based on this assumption, it can be said that the literary works produced in the Victorian era is not an exception, and they too reflect the social issues and the zeitgeist of the era. Barbara Dennis observes that during the early Victorian period the literary works mainly dealt with the theme of the relationship between the society and the individual and how their psychology and the way their identity was formed were influenced by the stark changes that were taking place during that time (16). At times, the socio-cultural and socio-political events may give rise to new movements and genres in the fields of art and literature or may trigger the revival of a certain movement and genre. One such genre is the Gothic fiction. Although the consensus is that it started with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), the genre of Gothic fiction enjoyed a revived interest during the Victorian era. A quick glimpse on the works produced during the late Victorian era will suffice to see that many works were produced that follow the doppelgänger tradition. Some notable examples are Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of*

Dorian Gray, and Robert Louise Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Although it is possible to add many more examples to the list, Greg Buzwell points out that "Oscar Wilde's only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), is a superb example of late-Victorian Gothic fiction" (Buzwell, n.p). He considers the novel as "a representation of how fin-de-siecle literature explored the darkest recesses of Victorian society and the often disturbing private desires that lurked behind acceptable public faces" Since the strict social codes of upholding one's public image dictated people to restrict themselves even to the point of sacrificing part of their identity, people looked for ways to fulfil their repressed desires, and to this end, they led a double life. Buzwell states that:

[t]he idea of a double life – outwardly playing a respectable role while inwardly pursuing an existence that crossed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour – is central to the plot of the novel [*Dorian Gray*]. Dorian Gray, once he becomes aware his portrait will bear the scars of his corruption – thus leaving his actual appearance unstained – feels free to ignore the pious morality that pervaded the Victorian era (n.p.)

The portrait in the novel can be considered as Dorian Gray's the uncanny double, the mirror which reflects his true self with all its "dark" desires and bears the mark of his actions that would have put him to public shame should they come into daylight and become known by his peers. In the novel, Dorian Gray, enjoying the freedom of remaining unstained, goes on to commit one misdeed after another. He adopts the philosophy of pleasure – "a wish to abandon the restraints of Victorian morality on the grounds that sin and conscience are outmoded primitive concepts to be swept aside in the pursuit of new sensations" (Buzwell, n.p). The narrator hints at the pleasure Dorian Gray derives from being able to go unstained by his immoral behaviours: "He himself could not help wondering at the calm of his demeanour, and for a moment felt keenly the terrible pleasure of a double life" (Wilde 205). However, the moment he comes to realise the alteration in the portrait he feels shocked; it is the shock of the uncanny experience of facing his double which is burdened with the heaviness of his "sins" and unlawful acts. The terror of realising that the portrait was the reflection of his stained soul brings Dorian face to face with his inner self whose existence he chooses to ignore. The narrator echoes his thoughts upon this painful encounter:

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? Or was there some other, more terrible reason? He shuddered, and felt afraid, and, going back to the couch, lay there, gazing at the picture in sickened horror. (Wilde 117-118)

To Dorian, the portrait is “the symbol of the degradation of sin” and “an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls” (Wilde 118). As Saul McLeod observes, Freud “noted a number of ego defences which he refers to throughout his written works. Defense mechanisms are “psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings” (n.p). In the novel, Dorian Gray instinctively feels the need to get the portrait out of his sight and thus decides to lock it into a room in the attic which is not used by anyone. A metaphorical reading would undoubtedly suggest that what Dorian instinctively does is to try to push the uncomfortable awareness of doing bad things out of his consciousness into the unconscious. If we were to liken the house to the mind as it is structured by Freud, the attic, which is hardly ever used or visited, would correspond to the unconscious. This defence mechanism is called “repression” by Freud. In the novel, Dorian Gray can be seen to use this psychological strategy to fragment his identity and seeks to attribute the uncomfortable and guilty feelings to his repressed true self which is represented by the portrait locked in the attic:

But there was no other place in the house so secure from prying eyes as this. He had the key, and no one else could enter it. Beneath its purple pall, the face painted on the canvas could grow bestial, sodden, and unclean. What did it matter? No one could see it. He himself would not see it. Why should he watch the hideous corruption of his soul? (Wilde 148)

By locking the portrait in the attic, he is able to feel at ease with himself, although this temporary peace is interrupted when an occasion offers itself to remind him of the portraits, therefore his dark self’s existence.

The industrialisation in the Victorian Era exerted a major influence on the society and how it had been organised until then. The new inventions which started

to be used in agriculture and other sectors necessitated the labour force to be re-organised, as manual labour was starting to be replaced by machinery and factories where mass production reached a point at which manual labour could no longer compete. That is to say, opening new job markets in urban areas and at the same time causing the ones in rural areas to disappear, industrialisation caused a great transformation within the society due to the migration of people from the countryside to the cities. The novelist William Makepeace Thackeray notes the influence the Industrial Revolution had on the lives of the ordinary people as follows: “we of a certain age belong to the new time and the old one. We are of the time of chivalry ... We are of the age of steam” (110). As the quotation suggests, the people of the era were well aware of the ongoing changes in their lives and felt that they were stuck in-between the ways of the old and the newly emerging ways of life just dawning upon them. Maureen Moran, in her book *Victorian Literature and Culture*, states that “[l]ike many of his contemporaries, Thackeray saw his culture as one in transition, embracing the modern scientific revolution yet reluctant to surrender the values of the past” (7). Mary R. Anderson underlines that “[a]t present ... we are merely passing through a transition stage – a cycle of disintegration ... old habits, modes of thought ... are totally inadequate for modern needs. But they have not yet been replaced by new ones” (110). The Victorian era witnessed many important historical, scientific and industrial changes and these changes brought new challenges as well. The Victorian people could not resist the impact of these changes, either.

The Victorian society was having a painful transformation from conventionalism towards modernity. Farmers were replaced by the factory workers and machines. The use of machines led to an increase in unemployment, as they reduced the need for human labour force. Lower classes had to accept to work for a low income under bad working conditions and immigrate to cities in order to find work and survive. Leaving rural settlements for opportunities in the urban areas undoubtedly changed the demographics and the traditions as well. Bad living conditions caused a rise in epidemic diseases such as cholera, tuberculosis, and sexually transmitted diseases. The contradictory existence which the Victorian society found itself in can be described by the words of the acclaimed author Charles Dickens in his *A Tale of Two Cities*:

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair (1).

As Dickens points out in the quotation above, the Victorian era can be interpreted to be one in which the best and the worst co-existed. Although the industrial developments improved the conditions for the upper class which controlled the means of production, it caused a significant deterioration in the living conditions of the lower classes. It was an era when the gap between social classes increased enormously. Thus, Dickens' above quotation can be said to sum up the gist of what the Victorian Age stood for.

Despite being considered to be the golden period of the British Empire due to the Industrial Revolution and the colonial power the Empire had obtained, the Victorian era was full of contradictions for the individual and highly problematic in terms of social affairs. As the social life was being transformed by the industrial developments, the daily life of individuals was also being influenced by the transformation that was taking place. Ironically, the Victorian Era, which is today called the height of the British Empire, was a time of inner conflict and identity crisis for the individuals in the Victorian society, since they were trapped in between the old and the new as well as the social borders imposed upon them. The Victorian society liked the idea of clearly defined social roles within precise borders and cared about making a good name in the public. There were clear-cut roles for men and women; in other words, the Victorian society made a precise distinction between the public and domestic spheres. For example, women were thought to belong to the domestic sphere and were expected to become the "Angel in the house" and never leave the domestic sphere they were assigned, which means they were supposed to be in charge of household chores, bringing up children, and they were confined to the domestic sphere. If they attempted to take another role outside of these domestic boundaries, they were either ridiculed or belittled by their male contemporaries. It is possible to read about many women writers' struggle to publish their writings only to get refused solely on the basis of the belief that writing was not an area for women

whose wit and intellect was nothing compared to that of men. Lilia Melani explains the idealization of women as follows:

The popular Victorian image of the ideal wife/woman came to be "the Angel in the House"; she was expected to be devoted and submissive to her husband. The Angel was passive and powerless, meek, charming, graceful, sympathetic, self-sacrificing, pious, and above all--pure. The phrase "Angel in the House" comes from the title of an immensely popular poem by Coventry Patmore, in which he holds his angel-wife up as a model for all women (n.p).

With no regard to what women actually desired for themselves, the society imposed a set of values and a role model for women to follow in the Victorian Era. Women were not expected to have their own opinions on matters outside of the family and the house, since these matters were considered to be men's affairs. On the other hand, there were also some rules governing the family life and how it ought to be organized. As Sally Mitchell puts forward in detail;

The husband had legal and economic control over his wife, children, and servants. The family depended on his income: the wife did not bring in money through labor (as in the working class) or have a private settlement (as among gentry and aristocrats). The children remained subordinate and obedient. Boys, who needed extended schooling to reproduce their parents' style of life, were under their father's authority until they had enough training and experience to make their own way in the world. Middle-class daughters were not expected to "make their own way"—with a very few exceptions, they stayed at home unless or until they married. (146)

As the quotation above clearly demonstrates, the family life, roles of man and women as well as sons and daughters were strictly defined in the Victorian society. There was no room for divergence; if there was someone who did not follow these norms, they would get negative reactions and harsh criticism from the society. The mentality of the Victorian era would have people follow the prescription in order to lead happy lives. One could not wish for something else which was not included in their lot. Marriage, for the Victorian society, was another highly important institution. There were many rules regarding marriage. One could marry only his equal, and marriage was seen by the lower classes as an opportunity to climb up the social ladder and perhaps inherit a fortune. In marriage too, there were precise roles for men and women. Men were in charge of the financial matters and women were the caretakers of the household with no say in any matter. Marriage would require

both sexes to follow the accepted prescription of how to lead their lives and how to behave. Lord Henry in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* comments on marriage as follows: “The real drawback to marriage is that it makes one unselfish. And unselfish people are colourless. They lack individuality...They are forced to have more than one life” (93). Lord Henry hints not only at the double life led by the Victorian upper-class men, but also how marriage required people to give up their individuality.

In conclusion, as suggested earlier, literary works are a means of depicting the socio-cultural milieu in which they are produced. Literary works not only pass down onto the new generations the historical developments taking place at that time, but also depict the psychological state of the individuals they deal with, as the individual is the inevitable material for literature. In the Victorian era, the individual was under pressure to fit into certain roles, which obliged them to create a double identity and repress certain feelings that were part of their human nature. As Athena Vrettos observes, “Victorian psychology and Victorian fiction challenged the unity and stability of the self and the coherence of consciousness” (82). Thus, it can be said that the dualities of the Victorian era were the main factor causing the individuals’ identity problems. Stuck among the conflicting interests of the self and the expectations of the society, the individuals were not able to channel their life as they wished to. Having adopted a social mask for themselves, the individuals alienated themselves from their true selves. When their true selves surfaced for some reason or another, they experienced what Freud called “the uncanny”. The uncanny can be described as the feeling that arises when the repressed unexpectedly comes into daylight and causes a feeling of shock and horror in the person. One of the elements by which literature portrays the uncanny experience is the convention of double. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the double is represented by the portrait which serves to reflect Dorian Gray’s inner self. As the examples mentioned in this study, the psychoanalytical reading of a literary work can enable the reader not only to envision the social conditions in which the text was written, but also to interpret life back then from the perspective of the characters through their psychological frame of mind. Therefore, psychoanalytical critique of literature allows for a deeper understanding of literature.

CHAPTER III

UNCANNY ELEMENTS IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* AND ITS MAJOR CHARACTERS

3.1 Uncanny Elements in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the uncanny is experienced by the young protagonist Dorian by means of two agents: the attic in Dorian's home as the gloomy setting which stimulates the repressed past experiences to surface and Dorian's portrait which is painted by the artist Basil Hallward.

First of all, the attic – also referred to in the novel as the play-room and the study-room of Dorian's earlier years – holds a significant place for the analysis of the novel from a Freudian psychoanalytic point of view. The attic, being a place in the house which is used to store unwanted stuff away from sight and also being rarely visited, can be resembled to the unconscious of the human psyche where unwanted, traumatic experiences and memories are repressed. In quite a similar manner, grandfather Kelso keeps Dorian, the child, locked in the attic, as the sight of him brings back undesired memories of his daughter, Dorian's mother, who married a man disapproved by him. After many years, when Dorian enters the attic for the first time, it is noted in the novel "How well he [Dorian] remembered it all! Every moment of his lonely childhood came back to him as he looked round. He recalled the stainless purity of his boyish life, and it seemed horrible to him that it was here the fatal portrait was to be hidden away" (Wilde 147). The attic is associated with feelings of exclusion, isolation, and unbelonging, by Dorian. The attic where Dorian has undergone all the traumatic and negative experiences during his childhood reinforces its role as Dorian's unconscious when he decides to hide his portrait there upon discovering the grim change that takes place on the portrait. Having nearly avoided the discovery of the grim change in the portrait by Basil, it is indicated in the

work that “the portrait must be hidden away at all costs. He could not run such a risk of discovery again. It had been mad of him to have allowed the thing to remain, even for an hour, in a room to which any of his friends had access” (Wilde 142). As can be understood from this quotation, Dorian is afraid of revealing his repressed feelings and experiences; by hiding the portrait in the attic which is the only place “secure from prying eyes” and “no one else could enter,” he hopes to prevent his friends and other people from discovering his transformation into a cruel person which is reflected in the alteration of the portrait (Wilde 148). At the same time, he wishes to be able to move on with his life of pleasures and debauchery by enjoying the bliss of ignorance and negligence which can be obtained by keeping bad memories buried in the unconscious. As explained by Gordon A. Schulz, Dorian’s “behaviour of locking the picture in the schoolroom [the attic] is analogous to the intrapsychic repression of guilty memories into the unconscious” (7). In a sense, the attic is the essence of what makes Dorian who he is; all the traumatic experiences of his childhood by which his personality was shaped are kept in the attic; and it is where he chooses to hide his transforming true self. Julian Wolfreys suggests that “it is important to register ... the production of the uncanny precisely in the place where one should feel most like oneself – at home” (124). Therefore, due to the fact that the attic comes to represent what and who Dorian really is, it is the ultimate setting where the uncanny is experienced by Dorian by means of confronting the repressed feelings and experiences of his life.

The attic is also significant in that it is the place where Dorian stabs Basil Hallward to death and keeps his dead body till Alan Campbell, whom Dorian blackmails, destroys the corpse. It is seen that the attic is a place where Dorian carries out his dirty works and keeps them out of sight. After murdering his friend Basil, it is seen that he tries to normalise what he does in order not to be overwhelmed by remorse and guilt: “He did not even glance at the murdered man. He felt that the secret of the whole thing was not to realise the situation. The friend who had painted the fatal portrait to which all his misery had been due had gone out of his life” (Wilde 188). In a sense, he is trying to repress his thoughts and feelings of guilt by keeping the dead body unseen in the attic. In this case, the attic again appears to be an uncanny motif where a disturbing occasion which is wished to be

forgotten takes place. At the same time, the attic is significant in that it is the place where Dorian's life comes to an end. And the gloomy atmosphere in the attic also creates an uncanny effect.

Another crucial, and perhaps the most striking, motif by means of which the uncanny experience is realized in the novel is that of the portrait. After the portrait is painted by Basil, Dorian convinced by Lord Henry to believe that the sublime beauty presented in the portrait forms a contrast to Dorian's temporariness and he admires it so passionately that he wishes to have that eternal youth for himself while the portrait bears the burden of every trouble and ages instead of Dorian. In a fit of envy, he says:

How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. 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 39)

At this point, his wish is granted supernaturally and the portrait becomes the scapegoat of his future misdeeds as well as the bearer of the signs of old age. The following thoughts go through his mind; "Surely his wish had not been fulfilled? Such things were impossible. It seemed monstrous even to think of them. And yet there was the picture before him, with the touch of cruelty in the mouth" (Wilde 112). This supernatural happening of the fulfilment of wishes is another example of uncanny occurrence. From this moment on, the portrait can be considered as a "double" or "doppelgänger" of Dorian. In other words, as Kenneth Womack puts forward, "the picture becomes Dorian's ethical doppelgänger, his wilful sacrifice for a decadent lifestyle and the means via which he will preserve his youth" (176). Dorian assumes that "eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins" await him while "the portrait was to bear the burden of his shame" (Wilde 128). That is to say, he expects to be able to go against the society's moral codes and enjoys all kinds of forbidden pleasures, and yet to be able to get away with it by keeping up his unspoiled, beautiful image: "The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more

enamoured by his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul” (Wilde 154).

It is apparent that Dorian is fond of his double identity at the beginning. Sybil names him as “Prince Charming” because of his handsome look as she is not aware of his cruel soul (Wilde 77). “Prince Charming” can be considered as the name of Dorian’s represented self to the public, in a way, his double. Bearing a double identity makes him a privileged person most of the time. For instance, when Sybil’s brother, James Vane comes across him, hearing someone calling him “Prince Charming” he feels sure that it is the man for whom his sister kills herself. James is determined to kill Dorian to take his sister’s revenge; however, Dorian convinces him that he does not know Sybil Vane as he looks too much younger than the man who he is looking for: “He [Dorian] seemed little more than a lad of twenty summers, hardly older, if older indeed at all, than his sister had been when they had parted so many years ago. It was obvious that this was not the man who had destroyed her life” (Wilde 223).

As mentioned in the first chapter of the present study, it is suggested by Freud that the double serves as a kind of insurance to prevent the ego of the individual from being destroyed. It can be said that Dorian needs a double in order to relieve himself of the burden of his actions that go against his conscience as well as the moral codes of the society. However, as Weedman notes, “as a function of the uncanny, the safe haven of one’s conscious becomes self-haunted by ghostlike traces of the unconscious, a phenomenon that transforms an otherwise comfortable and familiar setting into a place that feels inexorably strange” (6). In other words, Dorian cannot escape from being haunted by the grim and cruel look in the eyes of his doppelgänger – that is the portrait – even though he hides it away in the attic. Every time he faces the look on the face in the portrait, he is reminded of his repressed true self. He cannot help remembering that the image of innocent beauty which he presents to others around him and which attracts people is just an illusion. The attractive beauty and innocent looks of Dorian narrated in the novel as follows:

Even those who had heard the most evil things against him – and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs – could not believe anything to his dishonour when they saw him. He had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world. Men who thought grossly became silent when Dorian Gray entered the room. There was something in the purity of his face that rebuked them. His mere presence seemed to recall to them the memory of innocence that they had tarnished. They wondered how one so charming and graceful as he was could have escaped the stain of an age that was at once sordid and sensual. (Wilde 154)

In spite of being able to reveal such an image in the eyes of the society for the sake of his beauty, Dorian is tormented by the remembrance of his true self and the alterations that take place on the portrait each time he commits a misdeed or violates a moral code. Thus, the world of pleasures in which he initially expected to revel without any worries, fears, or restrictions is ruined.

The relationship between Dorian and his portrait is central to the realization of the uncanny in the story. As Weedman observes, the uncanny is “represented in Dorian Gray mainly through Dorian’s portrait and his relationship to it, mirroring the changes of his character in accordance with his actions” (14). She further suggests that “in Dorian’s case, his portrait reflects the monstrosity he has become – a grotesque reflection of his conscience which, ironically, portrays his true self. ... Dorian recognizes himself in the painting, but simultaneously feels like a separate entity – a stranger” (18-19). Mentally, Dorian attempts to split his identity into two different parts and, by means of projecting the consequences of his misdeeds onto the second identity represented by his double in the portrait, he wants to make himself believe that he is still pure and innocent. However, he cannot avoid what Freud calls “the return of the repressed”:

For weeks he would not go there, would forget the hideous painted thing, and get back his light heart, his wonderful joyousness, his passionate absorption in mere existence. Then suddenly, some night he would creep out of the house, go down to dreadful places...On his return he would sit in front of the her times, with that pride of individualism that is half the fascination of sin and smiling with secret pleasure at the misshapen shadow that had to bear the burden that should have been his own. (Wilde 167)

According to Freud, as elaborated earlier in the first chapter of this study, the uncanny occurs when the repressed comes to the surface. In the case of Dorian Gray,

the portrait is both the reservoir and the outlet. It keeps the repressed feelings of Dorian stored away and also leaks the repressed to disturb Dorian's temporary peace he strives to achieve by means of forgetfulness.

Despite enjoying the "terrible pleasure of a double life," with each passing day Dorian gets more and more disturbed by the portrait's reminding him the sins he commits (Wilde 205). In a conversation with Basil, Dorian confesses that "I am tired of myself... I should like to be someone else" (177). In another conversation with Lord Henry, Dorian expresses that "My own personality has become a burden to me. I want to escape, to go away, to forget" (Wilde 238). It is obvious that Dorian is not content with the portrait's showing him his real identity; he feels like the portrait, his double, is haunting him. In the last conversation with Basil, they talk about the portrait, and when Basil asks if he was able to destroy the portrait, Dorian replies: "I was wrong. It has destroyed me" (Wilde 185).

In Dorian's case, the double can no longer be considered as an "insurance against the destruction to the ego" or an "energetic denial of the power of death" but it is the "harbinger of death" ("The Uncanny" 235). As can be seen from the quotation above, the double becomes the destruction of the ego itself. Dorian is no longer able to gain dominion over his double; on the contrary, he feels like he is being controlled by his double: "Dorian Gray glanced at the picture, and suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him, as though it had been suggested to him by the image on the canvas, whispered into his ear by those grinning lips" (Wilde 187). Dorian holds the portrait responsible for killing Basil and all the other sins he commits. He believes that if he makes good deeds, the evil face of the portrait will change, and he will be free and innocent again. However, it does not come out as he imagines; the expression of the old man in the portrait does not change at all. He could erase all the evidence of Basil's murder as long as he keeps the portrait; he will always remember what he does and bear its burden in his heart:

The picture itself – that was evidence. He would destroy it. Why had he kept it so long? Once it had given him pleasure to watch it changing and growing old. Of late he had felt no such pleasure. It had kept him awake at night. When he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it. It had brought melancholy across his passions. Its mere

memory had marred many moments of joy. It had been like conscience to him. Yes, it had been conscience. He would destroy it. (Wilde 261)

As can be understood from the quotation above, the portrait is no longer a means of pleasure for Dorian that gives him the advantage of living a double life, yet it turns out to be a nightmare which reminds itself even during his joyful moments. The dreadful feeling that comes to Dorian is apparently what Freud defines as the uncanny. It is seen that Dorian is trying to repress this unpleasant memory of him and move on; however, the portrait does not let him do so as it is acting as if it is his conscience. Therefore, he decides to destroy the portrait with the same knife that he kills the painter of it so as to be free from his past; “It would kill the past, and when that was dead, he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it” (Wilde 261).

However, by destroying the picture, Dorian causes his own death. His servants enter the attic and find that “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” (Wilde 262). Strangely enough, the portrait is hanged upon the wall with all its beauty and grandeur. It is seen that Dorian and his double change places. The portrait or the double of Dorian becomes “the uncanny harbinger of death” rather than “from having been an assurance of immortality” (“The Uncanny” 235). At the end of the novel, it is witnessed that Dorian is not able to achieve immortality; however, the portrait as his double will be hanged upon the wall just as the same as the first day it is painted.

Throughout the novel, Dorian brings death to many people including himself: Sybil Vane, James Vane, Alan Campbell and Basil Hallward are the characters that are killed by Dorian directly or indirectly. It is also seen that Lord Henry refers to Dorian as “son of Love and Death” (Wilde 51). This nickname can be interpreted as a reference to the duality of Dorian’s nature. In spite of having an innocent and decent public image, it is evident that Dorian is prone to evil deeds. At another time, in a conversation with Basil, Dorian utters that “Each of us has heaven and hell in

him” (Wilde 186). It is understood that Dorian is aware that he is both capable to do good and evil things; in a sense, he is aware of the duality in his nature.

The portrait is not an uncanny device only for Dorian, but it is an uncanny agent also for Basil Hallward. Despite Henry’s insistence on Basil to exhibit the portrait, Basil is determined not to exhibit his best work. Basil says to Henry that “I know you will laugh at me, but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it” (Wilde 13). Basil makes this explanation of what he means by putting too much of himself that in a sense the portrait displays the hidden feelings of him which he cannot reveal even to himself. He is afraid that if he exhibits the portrait, it will reveal “the secret of his soul” to all the people:

Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul. [...] I will not bare my soul to their shallow prying eyes. My heart shall never be put under their microscope. There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry—too much of myself! (Wilde 16, 22)

To conclude, the two agents, the attic and the portrait, are the main instruments in the novel that cause the uncanny experience of Dorian Gray. The attic is the place where Dorian becomes who he is and at the same time it is where he seeks to hide his true self. In line with the definition of the uncanny by Freud, it represents for Dorian the familiarity of his true self in a frightening manner; the familiarity to his true self is frightening because he imagines himself to be different than what he sees in the portrait – he imagines he is still beautiful and innocent. He tries so much to convince himself that the portrait is not his true self that he achieves a certain level of estrangement which eventually collapses at the inevitable confrontation with his true self. He is shaken when he recognizes himself uncannily in the cruel and gruesome looks on the face that he sees in the portrait.

3.2 Freudian Psychoanalytic Analysis of Major Characters

In order to get a clear understanding of the character development in Wilde's novel, it is necessary to make an assessment of his pivotal character's life starting from his early childhood. In the light of psychoanalytic theory, we know that the first interactions of the baby with the outer world, the bond with its parents, childhood memories, fears and traumas have a significant impact on the child's personality development. Therefore, it is beneficial for the psychoanalytic analysis of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to take a careful note of all details regarding the pivotal character's personal development and identity formation, which helps the reader and the critic to gain a more holistic understanding of the character to be analysed. Within this context, to make an in-depth analysis of the character development in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it is significant to begin by taking a closer look at the early childhood years of the protagonist of the novel. It is explained clearly in the novel that Dorian does not lead a very happy childhood. The marriage of his mother and father has never been approved by his grandfather Kelso. Kelso hires a guy to kill Dorian's father and with her husband's pain in her heart, Dorian's mother dies after a couple of years, too. After the demise of his parents, Dorian is brought up by his cruel grandfather, Kelso as briefly summarised by the following quotation: "A beautiful woman risking everything for a mad passion. A few wild weeks of happiness cut short by a hideous, treacherous crime. Months of voiceless agony, and then a child born in pain. The mother snatched away by death, the boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man" (Wilde 50). Growing up in solitude, without the affection of his mother and not having an ideal parent figure in his life, Dorian had serious problematic issues affecting his mental development. Apart from these, his grandfather's mistreatment of him leaves its mark in the form of childhood traumatic experiences. The hatred which Dorian bears against his grandfather is suggested in the novel as follows: "He winced at the mention of his grandfather. He had hateful memories of him" (Wilde 144). The fact that Dorian cannot stand even hearing his grandfather's name stands as the proof of the extent to which his grandfather mistreated him. Being brought up by his grandfather, who does not refrain from showing that he does not have the slightest affection for his grandson,

causes Dorian to have serious psychological problems such as fear of intimacy, longing for the acceptance of others, identity crisis and so on.

He has not entered the place [the attic] for more than four years---not, indeed, since he had used it first as a play-room when he was a child, and then as a study when he grew somewhat older. It was a large, well-proportioned room, which had been specially built by the last Lord Kelso for the use of the little grandson whom, for his strange likeness to his mother, and also for other reasons, he had always hated and desired to keep at a distance. (Wilde 147)

As can be concluded from the above quotation, Kelso bears a deep hatred for his grandson, Dorian and he keeps him in the attic in order not to see him in the house. Being brought up this way, Dorian cannot be expected to be able to create healthy bonds when he becomes a grown-up. Being deprived of his parents' love and attention, Dorian transforms into a young boy longing for the attention of the people around him.

As Dorian loses both of his parents at an early age, he grows up with the lack of parental figures and authorities. However, this lack is filled by his grandfather as an authority figure. In this case, Kelso can be said to replace the figure of the father, and being the only parental figure around Dorian he exerts great influence on Dorian's identity formation and character development. Substituting the father's role in Dorian's life, Kelso becomes part of the father-son relation which is attributed great importance in terms of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. By exerting cruel authority over his grandson, Kelso causes Dorian to live a traumatic childhood and, as a result, to grow up to be an individual who cannot form healthy bonds with other individuals. At this point, fear of intimacy can be mentioned. Fear of intimacy suggests that the individual cannot form and maintain healthy relationships with others, which can be exemplified in the case of Dorian. Throughout the novel, Dorian meets a wide range of people, and his relationship with most of them seems to be superficial and not based on mutual love and trust. He is only admired by others for his youthful beauty, not for his personal traits. On occasions where the upper-class people come together to dine or during the cocktails, Dorian is invited due to the popularity of his beauty, and it can be said that he is seen as an object of desire expected to please the eye, rather than an individual.

Another case of unhealthy relationship on behalf of Dorian is his relationship with Sybil Vane. Dorian is infatuated with Sybil when she performs on stage. He is attracted to her as an actress when he first sees her perform. In a dialogue with Lord Henry, Dorian is seen to imagine Sybil to be the persons she acts out on the stage: “To-night she is Imogen ... and to-morrow night she will be Juliet” (Wilde 70). Then Lord Henry asks Dorian: “When is she Sybil Vane?” (Wilde 70). To this, Dorian replies: “Never” (Wilde 70). In this example, Dorian seems to be infatuated with Sybil Vane only for her talent of acting, not really loving her for who she really is. This kind of relationship in which one person tries to replace the real personality of the other person with an imagined personality cannot be categorised as a healthy relationship. Later in the novel, when Dorian wants to show Sybil to his friends Lord Henry and Basil Hallward, his infatuation for her disappears as he is influenced by Lord Henry’s negative remarks about Sybil’s acting. This shows that Dorian is not consistent in his relationship with others, since he is open to be influenced greatly by the opinions of other people around him such as Lord Henry. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the cases of fear of intimacy in Dorian Gray’s character can be traced back to his past traumatic experiences in his childhood. Another remarkable point in his relation with Sybil is that his incapability to love her. In the previous chapter of this study, how a narcissistic personality disorder develops is mentioned. According to this, it can be deduced that being deprived of maternal affection turns Dorian’s libido to himself in order to protect his ego and to show that he is worth being loved. In the first chapter of the novel, Lord Henry refers Dorian as “Narcissus” giving a clue about Dorian’s narcissistic personality (Wilde 13). As Narcissus despises Echo in the myth of Narcissus, Dorian similarly looks down on Sybil after her bad performance and accuses her of killing his love for her:

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...Without your art, you are nothing. I would have made you famous, splendid, and magnificent. The world have worshipped you, and you would have borne my name. What are you now? A third-rate actress with a pretty face. (108)

As it is seen from the quotation above, Dorian is not interested in Sybil’s personality. What attracts his attention in her is her ability to act. With a single bad performance

of her, he loses all his interest for Sybil and thinks that he has the right to insult her. Demonstrating a narcissistic personality, Dorian is so much involved in loving himself that he cannot love somebody else. In one of his conversations with Lord Henry, he confesses that “I wish I could love. But I seem to have lost the passion and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself “(Wilde 238). It is obvious that Dorian does not maintain an intimate relationship with the opposite sex throughout the novel. According to the Freudian view, narcissist people regard loving someone else as a threat to their self-esteem while they are longing for the love of the people around them. Likewise, discovering his beauty thanks to the portrait and Henry’s manipulations Dorian sees himself worth of being loved and desires to be admired by his friends. However, he is afraid that when he gets old and loses his beauty, he will also lose the admiration and love of others. Dorian’s fear of losing attention of others can be concluded from a conversation between him and Basil: “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” (Wilde 39). As Narcissus discovers his own beauty in his reflection on the river, Dorian in the same way, becomes aware of his beauty when he sees his portrait. The portrait in a manner represents the ideal self which Dorian wishes to achieve.

From Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, another issue in Dorian’s character development is his identity crisis. Bearing in mind the fact that Dorian grows up without his parents and under a strictly authoritative grandfather who openly hates him, it is only natural that Dorian has problems with forming a consistent and healthy identity. As a child, he does not receive proper familial attention or guidance. As a result, Dorian does not have any consistent idea as to what he wants to do with his life. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs suggests that an individual first needs to assure their basic needs such as physiological needs (food, water, warmth, rest) and safety needs (security) (simplypsychology) Then come other needs such as belonging and love needs, esteem needs; having finally achieved these steps, the individual can reach self-actualization. In the case of Dorian, it can be said that he does not have any problems with achieving the first two steps of this

hierarchy; however, he is not able to satisfy his needs on the next levels which are being loved and esteemed by others. Kenneth Womack states that “as an exquisite combination of youthful good looks and a pleasant outward demeanour, Dorian enjoys the worship of nearly everyone he meets” (172). It is true that he is admired by everyone for his youthful beauty, yet such an admiration cannot substitute love based on sincere relationship which is mutual and unconditional. He is left alone to form his own identity and, being influenced by other figures in his life, he is lost and dragged from one side to another in his search for a stable identity. Besides others’ influences over him, Dorian also engages in many different fields of intellectualism and arts. As the below quotation from the novel suggests, he is constantly interested in different intellectual, scientific, artistic and philosophical approaches:

Mysticism, with its marvellous power over making common things strange to us, and the subtle antinomianism that always seems to accompany it, moved him for a season; and for a season he inclined to the materialistic doctrines of the *Darwinismus* movement in Germany, and found a curious pleasure in tracing the thoughts and passions of men to some pearly cell in the brain, or some white nerve in the body, delighting in the conception of the absolute dependence of the spirit on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased. (Wilde 159-160)

At another period of his life, “it was rumoured of him ... that he was about to join the Roman Catholic communion, and certainly the Roman ritual had always a great attraction for him” (Wilde 159). He later decides to “study perfumes and the secrets of their manufacture,” and at another point he devotes himself “entirely to music, and in a long-latticed room with a vermilion-and-gold ceiling and walls of olive green lacquer, he used to give curious concerts” (Wilde 160). Growing weary of his previous interests, “on one occasion he took up the study of jewels” (Wilde 162). As it is apparent from these examples, Dorian is a character without direction or guidance, being dragged aimlessly in all directions. Growing up without proper role models such as a mother or a father, he fails to build a consistent identity for himself; therefore, he is easily influenced by his acquaintances. Perhaps the strongest influence over the youthful Dorian is that of Lord Henry. Upon meeting him, Dorian seems to think that he has found a role model for himself, a figure that he wishes to resemble. He is eager to readily acknowledge Lord Henry’s opinions as his own. When one person adopts another’s opinions, behaviours, and attributes as their own,

it is called “introjections” in the field of psychoanalysis. Merriam-Webster Dictionary of English simply defines the verb “to introject” as “to incorporate (attitudes or ideas) into one’s personality unconsciously” (Merriam-Webster). This defence mechanism helps the individual in his quest for achieving a stable identity; having resorted to introjection for the sake of the integrity of identity, the individual renounces all responsibility and spares him the painful experience of searching for stability and integrity in identity formation.

In the novel, Dorian can be seen to adopt Lord Henry’s points of view. In one of the conversations between Lord Henry and Dorian, Lord Henry suggests that Dorian has “the most marvellous youth, and youth is the one thing worth having”, to which Dorian responds by saying “I don’t feel that, Lord Henry” (Wilde 34). Despite his initial refusal, later we see Dorian adopting this idea of Lord Henry on youthfulness when he states that “Lord Henry Wotton is perfectly right. Youth is the only thing worth having” (Wilde 39). In another conversation between Dorian and Lord Henry in which Dorian relates to Lord Henry the story of how he met Sybil Vane, Dorian refers, whether consciously or unconsciously, to the influence of Lord Henry on himself, saying: “For days after I met you, something seemed to throb in my veins” (Wilde 63). Regardless of the context in which this statement is uttered -as the psychoanalytic approach suggests utterances of an individual can give hints about the individual’s unconscious- it can be considered as a kind of confession by Dorian about how influential Lord Henry has been over him. As it is demonstrated in both of the examples, Dorian is quick to give up on his own ideas and agree with whatever Lord Henry suggests. Lord Henry tries to manipulate Dorian’s point of view on life in many ways. For example, once he sends a “yellow book” to Dorian which contributes to the corruption of Dorian’s soul.

For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book...The hero, the wonderful young Parisian in whom the romantic and the scientific temperaments were so strangely blended, became to him a kind of prefiguring type of himself. And, indeed, the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it (Wilde 153).

The book that is mentioned in the quotation above, is about a young Parisian with whom Dorian identifies himself. Like Dorian, the hero of the book tries to experience every pleasure that is accepted as amoral by the society he lives in. Dorian is so fascinated by the book that he collects several copies of the book and believes that the book depicts the story of his own life.

Besides the close circle of family and relatives, the society of which the individual is a member exerts a strong influence over the individual as well; thus, it has a crucial role in shaping the individual's personality and identity to a great extent. Dorian is not an exception to this situation. In his work titled *Gothic and Modernism*, John Paul Riquelme suggests that Wilde's narrative in the novel "brings out the dark implications of the pursuit of beauty as a narcissistic activity that represents ... the hypocritical tendencies of British society at their worst" (10). Initially, Dorian is portrayed as a character who is pure much as in line with the philosophical idea of *tabula rasa*, which is a Lockean concept suggesting that every human being is born as a blank slate without any mental content in mind and no one is either good or bad in the beginning. Following this initially pure portrayal of Dorian, we can say that Dorian embodies the Victorian individual, and therefore his struggle for establishing a stable identity can be said to represent the conflicting demands of the society and the individual. At this point, Lord Henry and Basil Hallward stand out to represent the contradictory relation between the social expectations in the Victorian era and the personal desires of the individual. Basil Hallward represents the social expectations from the individual such as being virtuous, having common sense, refraining from hurting others, and caring about others, while Lord Henry appeals to individualism and seeks to lead Dorian to the pursuit of individualistic pleasures and inner desires which go against the society's norms. Caught in the conflict between what is expected of him and what he wishes as an individual, Dorian's character transforms into a kind of battleground over which his personal desires and social expectations clash. Consequently, Dorian sways from one side to the other, not being able to find a balance between his desires and social expectations. In his struggle, due to his indecision, Dorian is forced to commit misdeeds that are impossible to compensate.

After the protagonist of the novel, perhaps the most significant characterization in the novel is that of Lord Henry Wotton. Lord Henry is a middle-aged, wealthy and influential aristocrat. As can be expected from a Victorian era aristocrat, he attends social occasions specifically organised for the members of aristocracy and upper-class gentry such as dinners, operas, gatherings and so on. In the novel, Lord Henry is portrayed as a static character representing the typical aristocratic members of the Victorian society. In terms of his character, Lord Henry does not undergo any change throughout the novel. He is a character that stands out with his philosophical discourse and witty conversation. Although his conduct is precisely in line with the mannerisms of the Victorian upper class, ideologically he goes against the Victorian moralism. In this context, this dualism reflects the hypocritical approach of the Victorian society towards morality. Lord Henry is a devout advocate of Hedonism as evidenced by the following quotation which can be said to serve as his hedonist manifesto calling upon the young:

Ah! Realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days, listening to the tedious, trying to improve the hopeless failure, or giving away your life to the ignorant, the common, and the vulgar. These are the sickly aims, the false ideals of our age. 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 35)

The quotation above precisely manages to convey Lord Henry's ideology towards life and the strictly moralizing *zeitgeist* of the Victorian era. Lord Henry is strongly in favour of the pursuit of pleasure and the realization of inner desires which are not approved by the society. In a mood reminiscent of the ancient philosophy of "Carpe diem," he calls on Dorian to know no boundaries that prevent him from chasing after the pleasures of life. Furthermore, Lord Henry takes an amoral stance towards life. He refuses to categorise things and deeds as moral or immoral. As Sheldon W. Liebman suggests in his article titled "Character Design in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*", Lord Henry's "beliefs are based on the assumption that there is no moral order (the universe is purposeless and indifferent to human needs); that the self is not only multiple, but at war with itself and driven by forces beyond its control ... This moral position leads to ... the pursuit of pleasure (both sensual and intellectual) as a

distraction from disillusionment, and the manipulation of others for one's own enjoyment and edification" (297-98).

Lord Henry believes in the utmost significance of pursuit of pleasure and places it over everything else including social expectations. Kenneth Womack suggests that "the philosophy of new Hedonism that he [Lord Henry] delineates in the novel and which Dorian, to his detriment, literally and figuratively absorbs – can only function by separating fully the spiritual from the corporeal self" (173). Lord Henry, as can be understood from the quotation above, prefers to separate the spiritual and the corporeal and does not approve of one's interference over the other. In his own words, Lord Henry emphasises the vital importance that he attributes to the pursuit of pleasure as follows:

I believe that if one man were to live out his life fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling, expression to every thought, reality to every dream – I believe that the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would forget all the maladies of mediævalism, and return to the Hellenic ideal – to something finer, richer than the Hellenic ideal, it may be. But the bravest man amongst us is afraid of himself. The mutilation of the savage has its tragic survival in the self-denial that mars our lives. We are punished for our refusals. Every impulse that we strive to strangle broods in the mind and poisons us. The body sins once, and has done with its sin, for action is a mode of purification. Nothing remains then but the recollection of a pleasure, or the luxury of a regret. (Wilde 30-31)

With his emphasis on the absolute devotion to pleasure, Lord Henry can be said to resemble the *id* in Freud's tripartite structure of the human psyche. To briefly remind what the *id* stands for, it would be convenient to mention its definition again. According to Freud, the *id* is "the dark, inaccessible part of our personality" which is unconscious, present since birth, and operates on the pleasure principle driven by instincts and primitive urges regarding basic needs. Much like Freud's theory concerning the *id*, Lord Henry refers to the mutilation of the savage, referring to the repression of desires and behaviours deemed unacceptable in the eyes of the society.

Having such an influential character that promotes hedonism, Lord Henry is seen as a role model by the youthful Dorian. As Gordon A. Schulz suggests, "Dorian's childhood needs for nurturance and guidance, for mirroring and merger

with an idealized self-object, were not adequately met. This defective childhood experience provides the basis for his extreme idealization of his newfound mentor, Lord Henry, and for the other narcissistic tendencies that he subsequently exhibits” (6). By filling in this gap of authority in Dorian’s life, Lord Henry exercises such a great influence on Dorian that Dorian adopts Lord Henry’s views and opinions. In one of the conversations between Harry and Dorian, Dorian tells him that: “You filled me with a wild desire to know everything about life” (Wilde 63). Dorian adopts Harry’s idea that searching for the beautiful is the real meaning of life. In the following quotation it is seen that Henry is pretty certain about his influence over Dorian and he intentionally encourages him to commit sins:

“Harry, you are dreadful! I don’t know why I like you so much.
-You will always like me Dorian. I represent you all the sins you have never had the courage to commit.” (Wilde 98)

Lord Henry is aware of his influence on Dorian which is evidenced by his own statement in the following quotation: “to influence a person is to give him one’s own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of someone else’s music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him” (Wilde 30). This dependence of Dorian on Lord Henry as his mentor is suggested by Richard J. Walker as follows: “Dorian’s identity is very much tied up with that of Lord Henry Wotton, who provides the Mephistophelean role in the Faustian compact he makes with the portrait and who influences many of his judgements with regard to aesthetics and social poise, the most notorious being his provision of the ‘poisonous book’ that so influences Dorian” (97). Bearing in mind this dependence which is indispensable on behalf of Dorian, it can be concluded that Lord Henry is almost as important a character in the novel as the protagonist Dorian Gray.

Basil Hallward is a talented artist with a strong common sense who paints the portrait of Dorian Gray. Although not as influential over Dorian as Lord Henry, Basil is no less important a character in the novel. Basil’s character is important in that it offers an opposite view to that of Lord Henry who is in favour of hedonism and

seeking pleasure. Unlike Lord Henry, Basil Hallward “believes that the universe is a moral order in which God (or at least Fate) punishes evil and rewards good; that the self is (or can be) unitary and autonomous; and that art as well as human conduct in general can (and should) be guided by a moral code in which sympathy and compassion are primary values” (Liebman 297). As a foil character to Lord Henry, Basil advocates for values and virtues such as being morally principled, caring for others, thinking before taking action, refraining from hurting others’ feelings, tolerance, and common sense.

In order to achieve a better understanding of Basil’s character, it would be useful to take note of what Kenneth Womack has to say with regard to Basil: “In sharp contrast with the fin-de-siècle decadence that surrounds him, Basil’s philosophy of the soul argues for a healthy balance between our inner and outer selves, between our spiritual centres and external images that we present to the world” (172). Basil calls for a reconciliatory balance between the inner desires of the individual and the expectations of the society. In one of the conversations with Lord Henry, Basil criticizes the era in which he lives and complains about the loss of the harmony between the spiritual and the corporeal: “The harmony of soul and body – how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void” (Wilde 21). Since he keeps on attempting to moralize Dorian by advising him to put an end to his unkind attitudes and behaviours towards others as in the example of Sybil Vane, Basil can be interpreted to be the voice of common sense and conscience that hopes to put Dorian back on the path of virtue. In this context, Basil can be resembled to the superego in Freud’s tripartite structure of the human psyche. According to Freud, the superego is the ethical part of the personality which informs the ego about the moral codes of the society. The interference of the superego in the form of warnings, prohibitions, and restrictions creates the basis of the individual’s conscience. The superego itself is informed about the moral standards and norms in the society by means of parents, teachers, and mentors who deal with the bringing-up of the individual. Since Dorian grew up without parents and had a destructive relationship with his grandfather who raised him, Dorian’s superego has not been informed properly about the moral codes and norms in the society, and that is why other characters such as Basil and Lord

Henry -more so than Basil- make up for this lack in Dorian's life. In this context, Basil can be considered to take on the role of Dorian's superego by trying to inform him about the moral codes and norms in the society. For example, when Dorian is disappointed by Sybil Vane's poor performance on stage, he exclaims "But she seems to be simply callous and cold. She has entirely altered. Last night she was a great artist. This evening she is merely a commonplace mediocre actress" (Wilde 105). To Dorian's exclamation, Basil responds by saying "Don't talk like that about anyone you love, Dorian. Love is a more wonderful thing than art" (Wilde 105). Similarly, upon receiving the news of Sybil Vane's death, Basil visits Dorian. During his visit, he enquires Dorian about the unfortunate event of Sybil's death:

'You went to the opera while Sybil Vane was lying dead in some sordid lodging? You can talk to me of other women being charming, and of Patti singing divinely, before the girl you loved has even the quiet of a grave to sleep in? Why, man, there are horrors in store for that little body of hers!' (Wilde 132)

In the quotation above, we see Basil acting as the voice of Dorian's conscious that Dorian ignores. Basil insistently questions how Dorian can go on with his life, enjoying himself watching operas, and not mourn the death of his once beloved Sybil. This questioning by Basil can be resembled to the superego's interference on the individual's actions, questioning their compliance with the societal norms and moral standards.

To Basil's remarks Dorian responds by saying "Stop, Basil! I won't hear it! ... You must not tell me about things. What is done is done. What is past is past" (Wilde 132). Being reminded by Basil about his role in Sybil's death, Dorian tries to acquit himself of the bitter burden of feeling guilty. Here it is possible to compare this conversation between Dorian and Basil Hallward to an individual's inner confrontation with his conscience against which the individual resorts to defence mechanisms such as denial and projection. Basil as the voice of Dorian's conscience remarks further by saying:

Dorian, this is horrible! Something has changed you completely. You look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and

affectionate then. You were the most unspoiled creature in the whole world. Now, I don't know what has come over you. You talk as if you had no heart, no pity in you. It is all Harry's influence. I see that. (Wilde 132)

In the quotation above, Basil insists on trying to make Dorian come to the realization of the terrible things he has done and the harm he has caused on others. He points to his transformation from a kind and innocent boy into an unkind and heartless boy. What is especially striking in Basil's words is that he ends his speech by saying 'I see that', which can be interpreted as the conscience is somewhere deep down in Dorian no matter how much he chooses to refuse to face it.

By offering an opposite to Lord Henry's hedonistic ideas, Basil, who advocates a more moralistic and ideal attitude towards life, contributes a whole new dimension to the interpretation and analysis not only of his own character but that of Dorian's as well.

In conclusion, Dorian is a character who has suffered traumas resulting from the loss of his parents at an early age and from the harsh bringing-up and mistreatment by his grandfather. Therefore, from a Freudian psychoanalytic perspective, it can be said that he has a troublesome process of identity formation during which he is exposed to the influence of others around him. Richard Ellman underlines that "Dorian, misguided by Lord Henry who is a product of Victorian society, misinterprets art and fails to recognize the higher pleasures of generosity and goodness his soul needs. Therefore, he becomes a victim of his own sensual pleasures" (300). It can be inferred from this quotation that, among these influences over him, Lord Henry's has proven to be the strongest and paved the way for his corruption and eventual decease. In *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* the influence of Basil's and Lord Henry's guidance on Dorian's identity are referred to as follows:

His identity exists as the desired of others, first of the loving painter Basil Hallward, who worships his beauty but also creates it for Dorian, gives him this identity by objectifying, even commodifying it on the canvas; then of Lord Henry Wotton, who shows Dorian how to fashion himself by demonstrating how easily he can remake and manipulate his identity. (Maynard, 285-286)

In this sense, it can be concluded that Dorian's identity is mostly shaped by Basil Hallward's expression of his admiration for Dorian's beauty and Lord Henry's manipulations to reform his perspective on life in a hedonistic way as he sees creating Dorian's identity as a project of his own. Just as it is observed in Dorian's character development, identity is not an inherited qualification from the ancestors, yet it is a process of developing one's own personality traits in accordance with the oppression by his/her social environment.



CONCLUSION

This study has explored Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by means of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism with a focus on the theme of the uncanny. Close reading has been done in order to find out the psychological elements and indications that help to develop a better insight into the major characters psyches where lie the motives -conscious and unconscious- behind their behaviours governing their relationships both with each other and with others around them. In the context of this study, the main focus has been on the three major characters in the novel, namely Dorian Gray, Lord Henry Wotton, and Basil Hallward; therefore, rather than searching for parallels between the author's life and the lives of the characters in the novel as some applications of psychoanalysis seek to achieve, the aim of this study was to develop a deeper understanding of these characters within the conditions of the era in which the novel was written.

Psychoanalysis, a practice which emerged in the field of psychology, is one of Freud's major contributions to various disciplines including psychology and literature. He came up with the idea of "free association" which focuses on the language and word choice of the patient, considering them to be the outreaches of the unconscious. In this clinical technique, the patient is allowed to talk freely on random topics and by means of the specific words the patient chooses to describe his feelings, experiences, and ideas, it is possible to open a window into his experiences repressed in the unconscious. With such an emphasis on language and word choice, it could naturally be expected for psychoanalysis to find its way into the world of literature where language is the most crucial building block.

Psychoanalysis in literature can be employed for one of two purposes mainly: to conduct an in-depth analysis of a literary character focusing on the psychological ground upon which the character's motives behind his/her behaviours and actions are based; or, to understand the author's frame of mind and the actions he/she has taken

throughout his/her life by finding parallels between his/her writing and his/her real life experiences. According to Freudian psychoanalytic approach, each action taken by an individual, even if it seems meaningless when observed independently of the past experiences that lead to it, results from the accumulation of past experiences. When we take into account such a fear independently, it might seem to us illogical or nonsensical; however, when put into perspective, by finding out its relation to a past experience, this fear can be said to obtain a new dimension or layer of meaning which could not be observed earlier. As literature is often considered to be the mirror of life, the characters in literary texts can be considered as individuals who, to an extent, represent their contemporaries and the conditions in which their identities and psyches are shaped. American historian, novelist and critic Bernard DeVoto suggests that “Literature is a record of social experience, an embodiment of social myths and ideals and aims, and an organization of social beliefs and sanctions” (54). In this sense, analysis of the content, the characters, the stories of literary texts from a psychoanalytic perspective can help the reader and the critic to better understand the historical moment and the social conditions in which the text is produced. It would not be wrong to say that here lies the significance of psychoanalytic criticism for literary scholars, critics, and researchers.

Psychoanalytic criticism, as it is in other schools of criticism, focuses on certain elements in literary works to operate. To name some of these elements or agents, we can mention references to traumatic childhood experiences, parent-child relation, the individual’s relation with others (generally problematic or unusual), behaviours indicative of a kind of psychological complex, the individual’s estrangement to his/her self, the fragmented self, and defence mechanisms employed by characters to deal with these and other issues.

By applying Freudian psychoanalysis on Wilde’s novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, not only the characters’ psychological state in which they govern their actions can be understood better, but also the story is put into a perspective through which the ideas and their discussion in the novel make more sense for the reader/the critic who is informed about the social and historical background. Since the social and historical background inevitably impose their impact on the individual’s psyche,

the analysis of a character is not complete when separated from the context which it is -willingly or unwillingly- a part of.

Having introduced the conceptual and theoretical background of the study in the first chapter with a view to familiarise the reader with the concepts and terms that constitute the basis of this study, the social and historical background is scrutinized in the second chapter. In the second chapter, the individual's struggle for achieving a stable and integral identity despite the fragmentation of the self under the strictly moralizing conditions of the Victorian era is mentioned. It can be said that the Victorian social and moral codes require the individual to deny a large part of his/her personality if he/she wishes to be accepted as a respectable member of the society. This harsh demand often results in a fragmentation of the self in the individual and causes him/her to lead a double life under a constructed identity. As Freud suggests, the creation of such a double identity serves to protect the ego from destruction. The individual in the Victorian society assumes a different name under which he/she transgresses across the borders precisely drawn by the social and moral codes. In quite a similar manner as projection, a psychological defence mechanism which signifies the individual's creating a positive self-image in the mind by attributing his/her unwanted qualities and characteristics to another person, the constructed double identity turns into a kind of scapegoat which is responsible for all the wrongdoings. Living a double life was the final result of the struggle between the uncompromising expectations of the society and the internal needs of mankind which he was once forced to ignore. In this study, it is observed that the overwhelming rule-based, over-rationalised way of questioning in the Victorian era, paved the way for the emergence of doppelgänger motif in literature.

In the third chapter where Dorian's character is analysed in relation to the portrait as his double, it is seen that Dorian's portrait represents his repressed self; the portrait bears all the grim marks of his misconduct and violation of moral codes, while Dorian himself remains to be seen by others as the pure and innocent symbol of unspoiled beauty. This bright image, however, is only an illusion. The remembrance of the portrait's alteration into a worse state day by day keeps haunting Dorian, tormenting him wherever he goes. The uncanny, which is defined in the

context of this study as an experience of bitter confrontation with the repressed, occurs through the agency of the portrait in the novel.

All in all, the study has brought us to the conclusion that the uncanny can be described as the experience when individuality, estranged to its own true self due to being in conflict with the society's expectations and norms, comes face to face with this true self. In other words, these expectations and norms create a sense of estrangement in the individual towards their own self; and when the individual happens to encounter his/her true self, he/she is shocked, disgusted, and frightened due to not being able to accept the true form of his/her self -which is often unacceptable in the eyes of the society. It is concluded that the concepts of the uncanny and the doppelgänger have influenced and stimulated the literary world to such a tremendous extent that authors have created quite a few literary works dealing with and/or working on the theme of the uncanny experience. In this sense, Oscar Wilde's novel can be considered a decent example of the individual's not only physical but also psychological struggle for balancing his inner and outer world under the pressure of the society. Likewise, at the end of this study, it has been found out that Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a decent example of doppelgänger tradition which depicts the socio-cultural milieu in which the Victorian society found themselves. Through a Freudian psychoanalytic reading of the novel can this struggle be understood to its true extent.

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APPENDIX

CURRICULUM VITAE

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