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Exploring the Tangible Conscience in The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde

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FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Miami, Florida

EXPLORING THE TANGIBLE CONSCIENCE IN THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

BY OSCAR WILDE

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of

the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

ENGLISH

by

Chasib Alezeirj

2022

To: Dean Michael R. Heithaus
College of Arts, Sciences and Education

This thesis, written by Chasib Majeed Mezban Alezeirj, and entitled Exploring the Tangible Conscience in The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde, having been approved in respect to style and intellectual content, is referred to you for judgment.

We have read this thesis and recommend that it be approved.

Michael Grafals

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Date of Defense: November 10, 2022

The thesis of Chasib Alezeirj is approved.

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Florida International University, 2022

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During writing this thesis, I imagine myself kissing the hands of my mother, father, grandmother, and grandfather.

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I want to thank every teacher who taught me a letter, a word, or a sentence or enlightened my path from childhood until now.

AN IRAQI ROOSTER

After a long school trip, I realized that a rooster was my first teacher. Since childhood, the rooster has been a mediator between me and the dawn. This creature was committed to its responsibility and performed its task at the right time because it knew that the workers and farmers must rise and begin their daily work and the teachers and students to start a new school day. Thank you to every rooster "who" woke me up to go to school. I thank every rooster "who" kept crowing for me to get out of bed and prepare my schoolbag to learn something that would secure my future.

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Chasib Alezeirj

Florida International University, 2022

Miami, Florida

Professor Maneck H. Daruwala, Major Professor

This thesis explores the Tangible Conscience in The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde and its roles and defines conscience to clarify many of the discussed concepts. The paper focuses on the psychological aspect of the novel, so I use psychoanalytic theory alongside definitions of conscience by Sigmund Freud, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Christine Korsgaard. I combine this with close textual reading to analyze parts of the story. This methodology also evokes queries about the latent psychic semantics and their relation to the text.

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INTRODUCTION

When I read *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde, the Arabic text of 2015, I felt that the Arabic had nourished the text with poetic touches, making it more readable. However, it was not only the poetics of the Arabic version that encouraged me to continue reading the novel; the philosophy of the narration and the writer's diving into the depths of psychology prompted me to complete the reading with passion, as Wilde was sailing inside the mind and revealing to the reader some secrets about the human psyche. The presence of psychological terms in abundance in the novel prompted me to classify it as a psychological literary work or a psychological hypothesis that Wilde wants to prove through the novel events and outcomes. At the novel's beginning, I observed that the writer draws on the Greek myth of Narcissus, the boy who saw his picture in the lake and admired it without paying attention to others until he died. So Wilde dug two lakes to test Dorian's narcissism. The first lake is the portrait painted by Basil-- while the second one is the language used by Lord Henry. Nevertheless, the extensive use of the words "mind" and "brain" in the narration indicates that the writer focuses on the mind. Concentrating on the reason is not merely a coincidence-- it is an integral part of the narrative strategy in Wilde's novel.

When I read the English version during ENL 5934 Special Topics with Dr. Maneck H. Daruwala in the fall of 2020, I became sure that the strength of the text, its music, and its philosophy had been accurately transmitted by the translator, Louis Awad, into Arabic, because the English version assured that the philosophical and poetic style in the novel belongs to the writer himself, not to the translation.

Why did I choose *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) for my thesis?

During my experience in life, I have always wondered about the consciences of the corrupt, the

criminal, the oppressors, and the unjust. I wished to see the shapes and sizes of their consciences, but this wish is an unworkable imagination. So when I saw Dorian Gray's conscience as a visible and tangible painting, I once wondered how many types of consciences we would discover if we had the same opportunity Wilde gave to Dorian in the novel. Here I felt the power of the novel's message, sent from the nineteenth century to the people of the twenty-first century and subsequent generations.

So I will discuss in this thesis everything related to the painting and its changing roles, especially conscience and the external circumstances affecting it-- its relationship to the novel's triangle, Dorian, Lord Henry, and Basil.

PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY AND CLOSE READING

Psychoanalytic theory helps explain or display the psychological aspects in the literary products and novels that delve into the mind and the depths of the soul. As a theoretical method, this way and close reading are essential in analyzing *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. Psychoanalytic theory's elements help in dissecting the psychological states of the novel's characters. Conscience and morals are critical components that help scan Wilde's characters and their behavior, especially Dorian Gray's psyche, which led him to the tragic end. Undoubtedly, Basil's painting is a tangible representation of the conscience, as it can be transferred from one place to another. It also provides a clear picture of the changes within the conscience during the commission of crimes and indulgence in the new hedonism. Since conscience is the most crucial role represented by the painting, I will define this vital element in the narrative through my innate understanding of it and based on my readings of the texts of well-known thinkers, such as Sigmund Freud, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Christine Korsgaard.

THE INNER COURT AND THE PORTRAIT

Oscar Wilde sheds a focused light on Dorian's painting and its charming aesthetic in the first chapter of the novel and puts it on the discussion table between the painter Basil and Lord Henry until the creator of the painting reveals the secret of its strength and attractiveness when he says he put a lot of himself in it. Then the conversation turns from the image to the talk about the beauty of Dorian himself, and here Basil uses the term "conscience" for the first time in the narration. Still, Lord Henry links conscience to cowardice:

" أحسست بالقدر يخبئ لي أفراحاً وأتراحاً لا حد لها، فجزعت أشد الجزع وهممت بالانصراف جبناً وإشفاقاً لا بوازع من ضميري، فلا فضل لي في ذلك." (وايلد عربي15).

I had a strange feeling that fate had in store for me exquisite joys and exquisite

sorrows. I grew afraid and turned to quit the room. It was not conscience that made me do so: it was a sort of cowardice. I take no credit to myself for trying to escape. (Wilde 10).

The term conscience takes me away from its psychological field to the popular Iraqi environment. We use this term when experiencing injustice or an immoral act; for example, when seeing the strong attacking the weak, we describe the attacker as a person without conscience. When we witness employees ask for bribes to complete a transaction, we characterize them as corrupt. When we see soccer referees siding with specific teams, we say they are unscrupulous. This daily use of conscience indicates that it is linked to morals in our culture, meaning that conscience is an ethical scale used to avoid harmful and destructive behavior.

Nevertheless, I consider conscience an innate sense by which people distinguish right from wrong; that is, it is an invisible measure and a hidden force that guides them to the right path.

Therefore, it is the central catalyst of moral sense. Furthermore, I see the conscience as an inner

court within the individual that acts according to various circumstances, facts, and imaginations. However, it is not always fair.

Also, Research Professor of Philosophy Christine M. Korsgaard sees conscience as a source of suffering in some cases and describes it as an ethical motive:

It is most commonly thought of as the source of pains we suffer due to doing what we believe is wrong—the pains of guilt or pangs of conscience. It may also be seen, more controversially, as the source of our knowledge of what is right and wrong, or as a motive for moral conduct. Thus a person who is motivated to act on principle is said to act "conscientiously." (Korsgaard 1).

I agree with Korsgaard's view of conscience. However, pangs of conscience (تأنيب الضمير) is used frequently in Arabic when a person feels remorse for an action. I gave an example of conscience in Iraqi culture because of the initial influence of the Arabic version of the novel on me.

Wilde's use of the term conscience in a specific context moved me from the fictional narration to daily reality and how to use it in different contexts because it exposes corruption, injustice, racism, prejudice, and tyranny. However, I argue Wilde uses this psychological term intentionally -- it constitutes the narrative's mainstay because it will play a significant role in the novel that represents real life in many aspects.

On the other hand, Lord Henry sees the conscience as a disabling tool that prevents people from enjoying their desires and instincts. He compares conscience with cowardice, meaning that whoever acts according to the dictates of conscience is a coward who cannot achieve the pleasures that make happiness. "conscience and cowardice are really the same things, Basil. Conscience is the trade-name of the firm. That is all." (Wilde 10). Lord Henry provides a definition contrary to Victorian and societal values, which is a rebellion against traditions and

social concepts. Harry's interest in the new hedonism and focus on the senses and pleasure lead him to associate conscience with cowardice. Harry wants to break the taboo by disrupting the accountability and punishment mechanism. He also wants to consider the practice of immoral pleasure as natural behavior, not moral deviance. Linking conscience to cowardice is far away from how B. Klein describes developed conscience:

Conscience is thus no new, mysterious psychic process different in kind from the mental mechanisms utilized in other daily situations. It is a name given to emotionally toned habits of adjustment to situations involving the rights of others. It is not a thing or an entity, but a manner of responding to a given group of social stimuli. The highly developed conscience is nothing more than a highly integrated system of social habits. (Klein 256).

Klein's definition of conscience is reasonable and acceptable because most people adhere to the culture, customs, and traditions in many matters. Therefore, I accept the concept of "developed conscience," but I also call it a wise conscience that helps its owner to respect others, but not necessarily absolute compliance with the customs and traditions of society; there are old, outdated customs that prevent development, prosperity, and stop the wheel of life. However, linking conscience to cowardice is the station from which Lord Henry sets out to preach the new hedonism because the existence of the "developed conscience" impedes the implementation of this doctrine. Therefore, I find that linking cowardice to conscience is firstly an acknowledgment of the role of conscience and, secondly, a rebellion against the values and customs of Victorian society.

In an early discussion between Basil and Lord Henry, Basil explains why he refuses to display Dorian's painting and confirms that displaying it reveals his secret, which he does not

want to show. Basil reveals to Lord Henry that he put his soul in this picture, so he wants to keep it away from other eyes. It is clear to us through this insinuation that the image inhabited by the soul will play a distinct role in the events because it is no longer an inanimate object or a commodity for sale. "I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul." (Wilde 9). The painter alludes to his relationship with the beautiful boy, as this relationship transcends normal friendship and may bring him social shame or harsh punishment that he cannot bear or destroy his reputation. The early detection of the painting's power in the narration puts it at the center of monitoring and analysis. It arouses apparent conflict between Lord Henry and the painter before it is completed and grabs Dorian's attention. As a result, Dorian puts his soul into it as well.

Without intending it, I have put into it some expression of all this curious artistic idolatry, of which, of course, I have never cared to speak to him. He knows nothing about it. He shall never know anything about it. But the world might guess it, and 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 14).

I conclude from this passage that Wilde assigns the Portrait's first role as the soul that can take its holder to heaven or hell. Basil reveals the picture's secret and magical power to Lord Henry, confirming that its role defies the traditional concept of the artwork. The painter wanted the image to remain a secret far from the eyes of critics and art lovers.

On the contrary, painters make great efforts to obtain opportunities to show their artworks in well-known exhibitions to enhance their artistic reputation by displaying their creations in front of people and art connoisseurs. Still, Basil refuses to send Dorian's picture to the show for the

reason he explained to Lord Henry. This is evidence that the image is outside the traditional standards of art and that it is a special symbol that plays a vital role in the psychological hypothesis that Wilde wants to prove through the events and results of the novel.

Dorian Gray's Painting stimulates Basil and Lord Henry to speak of conscience. I repeat that this picture plays various roles; the most prominent and dangerous part is the representation of conscience. I realized early the importance of the painting in the narrative track, especially when Wilde intervened to prevent the creator from destroying his creature in the second chapter. The image that appeared at the novel's beginning as inanimate consisting of lines and colors, later turns into a living being with arteries and veins and a mind capable of making decisions:

Harry, I can't quarrel with my two best friends at once, but between you both you have made me hate the finest piece of work I have ever done, and I will destroy it. What is it but canvas and colour? I will not let it come across our three lives and mar them." Dorian Gray lifted his golden head from the pillow, and with pallid face and tear-stained eyes, looked at him as he walked over to the deal painting-table that was set beneath the high curtained window--- He was going to rip up the canvas. With a stifled sob the lad leaped from the couch, and, rushing over to Hallward, tore the knife out of his hand, and flung it to the end of the studio. "Don't, Basil, don't!" he cried. "It would be murder! (Wilde 27).

In this passage, Wilde reassures the significance of the painting's presence in the narrative. The painting looks like a beautiful art form, yet its role does not stop at its merit as an art product but much more. Basil admits that the painting is the best he has produced; however, in a state of anger, he predicts that this painting can disturb the relationship between the three friends. Furthermore, he describes the painting as just a canvas and colors, contrary to what he said earlier: he put his soul into it. Dorian sees it as a soul, so he prevents Basil from stabbing the

image and ripping it with a knife. The painting became essential to Dorian, Basil, and Henry. It is the central pillar on which the narrative depends, as it represents the painter Basil's secret relationship, the masterpiece for Lord Henry, and the lake of Narcissus for Dorian.

After Basil finished digging the first lake of Dorian to awaken his narcissism through the painting, it was Lord Henry's turn to prepare the second lake through the philosophical use of language, as he reflects Dorian's beauty through descriptive rhetoric. Lord Henry's words penetrate Dorian's mind quickly, and he feels the beauty and the importance of this charm; Lord Henry realizes that the boy is without principles and may need a secure attachment with someone, doing or trying new things in his life. So Henry casts the bait to Dorian and uses it to test his ideas and approach, which are sweet and beautiful on the surface but dangerous and intrinsically deadly. In addition, Lord Henry uses seductive eloquence to subdue Dorian and persuade him to strive for a profligate lifestyle away from societal constraints and traditional morals:

Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? ... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And beauty is a form of genius—is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. (Wilde 22).

Lord Henry's emphasis on Dorian's beauty and his preference for it over genius intrigues the boy's imagination and brings back his childhood narcissism and a dream of eternal youth. I argue that Lord Henry's concentrated language shows a magical force that works in Dorian's mind with incredible speed, where the boy repeats many of the sayings of Lord Henry in his life. However,

Lord Henry reshapes Dorian's consciousness through linguistic seduction. First, Dorian receives Henry's rhetoric as stimulating ideas; then, he responds to this impact by changing his behavior. Lord Henry realizes that language opens all the doors. So he plants his words in Dorian's mind, which unleashes instincts.

In *Words can Change your Brain*, Andrew Newberg and Mark Waldman articulate the effect of language on the brain and its magical power in changing behavior. This is evidence that language has the power of a drug, and it is a dangerous weapon that must be used correctly and safely:

Concentrating and meditating on positive thoughts, feelings, and outcomes can be more powerful than any drug in the world, especially when it comes to changing old habits, behaviors, and beliefs. And to the best of our knowledge, the entire process is driven by the language-based process of the brain. By changing the way use language, you change your consciousness, and that, in turn, influence every thought, feeling, and behavior in your life. (Newberg and Waldman 35).

This passage reveals the power of language and its effect on the brain, as it can lead to ports of safety or shores of peril. Although the language of Lord Henry is soft and transparent, it is poisonous, significantly when it changes Dorian's behavior. Lord Henry's words and thoughts immediately affect Dorian's ambitions, dreams, caprices, and plans. Because of this influence, the boy seeks to sell his soul for a painting to remain young and gorgeous forever, practicing his whims and crimes without being detected:

How sad it is!" murmured Dorian Gray with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait. How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. 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 25- 26).

The exchange of the soul with the image will give Dorian a mask that allows him to choose the path of life that suits him, the painting does not authorize him and does not change his conduct, but instead hides every behavior contrary to the values that he acquired from society, and this is what Dorian wants. Still, the young man is the first and last responsible for his actions, and he can preserve the aesthetics of the painting, the consistency of its colors and aura, and the permanent youth he seeks. But returning to Lord Henry's words, Dorian hints that he will give freedom to his savage instincts and do everything to unleash these instincts; he seems ready to go so far with the new hedonism that Henry promotes.

Basil fears Lord Henry's poisonous influence on Dorian, and this concern stems from his knowledge of the boy's weaknesses and Henry's rhetorical strength that manipulates the minds of young people looking for new pleasures in life. Basil fears losing his friend Dorian because of Henry's expected effects on the boy, who appears to be psychologically vulnerable. Furthermore, Basil realizes that Lord Henry will stimulate Dorian's instincts and deactivate his Victorian conscience:

Then he looked at Lord Henry. "Dorian Gray is my dearest friend," he said. "He has a simple and a beautiful nature. Your aunt was quite right in what she said of him. Don't spoil him. Don't try to influence him. Your influence would be bad. The world is wide, and has many marvellous people in it. Don't take away from me the one person who gives to my art whatever charm it possesses: my life as an artist depends on him. (Wilde 16).

Basil sees that Dorian's loss would be inevitable if Lord Henry did not remove the boy from his poisonous plan; at the same time, Basil cannot do anything about it. It can be noted that Basil's

relationship with Dorian is not only artistic but extends to more than that. However, Lord Henry does not heed the painter's pleas because he is looking for new prey ready to test his new doctrine:

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. You might be its visible symbol. (Wilde 23).

Lord Henry mentions a new hedonism directly in his conversation with Dorian. However, Henry's rhetoric is accompanied by seduction and warning, in which he describes the beauty of the boy and his ability to do all things and goes so far as to realize the various pleasures suppressed by Victorian society. Simultaneously, he warns him of the lack of permanence of beauty. But what is hedonism? Merriam- Webster links this concept to debauchery:

When hedonism first appeared in English in the middle of the 19th century, it referred to the doctrines of certain schools of philosophy in ancient Greece (such as the Epicureans and Cyrenaics), who held that happiness or pleasure constituted the chief goal in life. As used today, the word frequently carries a judgmental tinge. If someone is described as living a life of hedonism, the implication is that he or she derives happiness from debauchery rather than, say, spending quality time with family or forming meaningful relationships at work. Hedonism comes from the Greek *hēdonē* (“pleasure”), which also provides the root of the word *anhedonia* (“a psychological condition characterized by inability to experience pleasure in normally pleasurable acts. (Merriam-Webster).

Lord Henry wants to test the new hedonism on Dorian, whose extraordinary beauty helps him indulge in all pleasures after the painting gives him a mask from society. Lord Henry's hedonism

is not tied to any societal norms but is an expression of rejection of Victorian constraints and moral values that impede sheer pleasure. Henry does not focus on the pleasure of education, friendship, sports, or community and family activity. Instead, he seeks to satisfy the instincts and the senses by all means, and he sees beauty as essential for implementing the new hedonism.

Dan Weijers from the University of Waikato separates philosophical definitions of hedonism from others. He sees that non-philosophers associate this doctrine with immorality and pursuing pleasure without being bound by traditional societal moral values:

When the term “hedonism” is used in modern literature or by non-philosophers in everyday talk, its meaning is quite different from the meaning it takes when used in the discussions of philosophers. Non-philosophers tend to think of a hedonist as a person who seeks pleasure without any particular regard for their future well-being or the well-being of others. According to non-philosophers, then, a stereotypical hedonist is someone who never misses an opportunity to indulge in the pleasures of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll, even if the indulgences are likely to lead to relationship problems, health problems, regrets, or sadness for themselves or others. (Weijers 1)

In this case, Lord Henry's thinking about hedonism complies with non-philosophic considerations and interpretations. Harry considers hedonism as a cure for the sickness of the soul, and indulging in it gives young people great happiness that cannot be achieved by abiding by the norms and traditions of Victorian society. The new hedonism that Lord Henry wanted to implement as an empirical mechanism encourages the rejection of traditional moral constants. Instead, it supports the experience of pleasures without remorse or fear of consequences: "Its aim, indeed, was to be experience itself, and not the fruits of experience, sweet or bitter as they

might be."(Wilde 108) Lord Henry convinces Dorian Gray to invest his beauty and youth, allowing him unlimited power to satisfy all his inclinations and curiosity about life. The New Hedonism and Dorian's unbridled pleasures negatively impact the painting because the image's purity is seen as opposed to this doctrine.

BASIL'S PAINTING AND HENRY'S SEDUCTIVE LANGUAGE

Dorian did not allow the painting to preserve its aesthetics. Instead, he quickly made a fatal mistake reflected in the picture, causing it to begin its work as a representation of memory and conscience. Dorian scolded Sibyl Vane with hurtful words devoid of mercy or pity and did not pay any attention to her feelings as a human being. Instead, he treated her as a rigid piece without feelings because of her weak performance in the play. Furthermore, he did not listen carefully to the explanation of her position, so Dorian remained harsh and heartless--he did not show respect while addressing or responding to her pleas. Insulting Sibyl is Dorian's first sin since he moved his picture from the Basil salon to his home:

You are shallow and stupid. My God! how mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name. You don't know what you were to me, once. (Wilde 74).

The painting reflected Dorian's cruelty by showing a warning sign in the mouth area, meaning that the image began to exercise its function as a conscience or observer. Guilt or sin turned into a code or symbol that appears in the painting's shape and colors. It is no longer a mere picture or a masterpiece of art:

The strange expression that he had noticed in the face of the portrait seemed to linger there, to be more intensified even. The quivering ardent sunlight showed him the lines

of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing. (Wilde 77).

The painting seems fair in determining the size and location of Dorian's sin, as it shows the cruelty in the mouth area that rebuked Sibyl and does not go beyond that, so this case offers us an indication that each sin will take its natural size and place without exaggeration or increase. Just as an ordinary mirror reflects outward appearance, the image will remember the sins in size, colors, and symbols.

The change in the painting was no longer customary for Dorian, so he had to act because this seemingly supernatural picture would record every sin. Moreover, it would be a long-term memory immune to Alzheimer's and forgetfulness. Just as Lord Henry's language affects Dorian and leads him down the path of decadence, Henry's seductive language reshapes the colors and lines of the masterpiece Basil painted, which records the sins and crimes of Dorian, who adored the new hedonism. The painting became a representation of tangible conscience that could be moved from place to place. When the image was transferred from Basil Salon to Dorian's house, it was just a masterpiece in which the painter put many talents and best painted its lines and distributed shadow and light on its area in a professional manner that makes it a luxurious work of art worth watching. Still, it is no longer an image but a representation of conscience: "The picture, changed or unchanged, would be to him the visible emblem of conscience." (Wilde 78).

After believing in the picture's new role, Dorian chooses to keep it out of sight, as he no longer doubts its supernatural abilities and its role in recording his immorality, crimes, and brutality, so he decides to move it to the second floor and put it in his childhood room. Dorian fears any external scratch that can distort the painting during the transfer to ensure that all changes will occur are related to his behavior and actions and not to any other effect: "Can you

move it, covering and all, just as it is? I don't want it to get scratched going upstairs."(Wilde100). This indicates that Dorian is continuing to experiment with his instincts that are fueled by the new hedonism that Lord Henry seeks to apply instead of traditional social values and principles so that the painting will be the mirror of the soul, its actions, and its sensory activity, not are the reflector of the body. When Mr. Hubbard and his man held the portrait and moved it upstairs, the two men felt its weight, and Dorian focused on the picture's heavyweight. Here I go beyond the literal meaning of "heaviness" associated with material things and go to the symbolic dimension related to the weight and burden of conscience. This weight can increase with every sin and crime: "I am afraid it is rather heavy," murmured Dorian." (Wilde 101). I claim that the transfer of the conscience constitutes a qualitative leap in defining it or presenting its images because the transfer process will allow readers to visualize the conscience. It also gives scholars many opportunities to shed more light on this controversial psychological issue. The text tells us that conscience is heavy and can be even heavier with committing immoral acts.

When the two men placed the painting in Dorian's room upstairs, and Dorian closed the filthy room, the picture added another feature to its earlier traits. It developed an odd element because it became out of sight and terrifying. It is away from other eyes, unlike it should be, in front of people, because it is originally a masterpiece. Basil refused to exhibit it in an art gallery, and Dorian "imprisoned" it in his childhood nest. However, the young man seemed sure that this painting would upset him and might testify against him if it remained in the hall where visitors could see it. Hiding the image reveals Dorian's intent to experience all the new pleasures of hedonism that violate the painting's standards and strict ethical requirements because the picture represents the conscience, as I mentioned earlier. The mark on the portrait's mouth is an ominous

sign that reminds Dorian of his tough stance against Sibyl and her suicide by drinking poison. However, Sigmund Freud brings the "uncanny" to the light and links it to horror:

We can only say that what is novel can easily become frightening and uncanny; some new things are frightening but not by any means all. Something has to be added to what is novel and unfamiliar to make it uncanny. (Freud 124-125).

I claim that the painting has become "uncanny" because new things have been added to it, including the change of its shape by corrupt actions, as well as placing it in a secure place away from people's eyes, which is not its regular place, as a masterpiece are usually under sight, not in the dark. The painting becomes an odd and frightening element and reflects Dorian's actions and bad behavior during his journey in the new hedonism sea; it stands as a wall against Lord Henry's toxic philosophy and repeatedly tries to remind the boy of his sins. Still, Lord Henry's language becomes indispensable opium, affects Dorian's mentality, and prevents him from following the safe way. In Dorian's childhood room, the painting opens a record that records all of Dorian's immoral deeds until they become terrifying by the distortions, reflecting the boy's whims that transcend all normal limits by experimenting with a new hedonism that is associated with decadence, not with the pleasure that everyday things bring, Like love, growth, prosperity and outstanding achievements.

The "uncanny" painting, which initially played the role of the lake to test Dorian's narcissism, offers another function through the "uncanny." It records the brutal deeds of Dorian and reveals his type of narcissism, whether benign or malignant. The painting expresses itself clearly as a mirror of the soul and not of the body --it is "uncanny" and frightening and has a supernatural power that science has not yet reached in depicting the soul, conscience, consciousness, and sub-consciousness. While the ordinary mirror reflects Dorian's outer beauty,

the painting" the most magical of mirrors." (Wilde 89) demonstrates his spiritual and moral corruption:

Stand, with a mirror, in front of the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him, looking now at the evil and aging face on the canvas, and now at the fair young face that laughed back at him from the polished glass. The very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure. He grew more and more enamored of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul. He would examine with minute care, and sometimes with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands beside the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs. (Wilde 106).

Excessive admiration for the beauty of the body and mockery of the rotten soul show that Dorian develops a malignant narcissism that detaches from his childhood traits. He has previously felt moral anxiety several times over his actions. On the whole, Dorian felt some responsibility and moral concern after he insulted Sibyl and after her suicide: "So I have murdered Sibyl Vane," said Dorian Gray, -- "murdered her as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife." (Wilde 83). Still, Lord Henry's interference and influence put a barrier between Dorian and any remorse. He tried to get rid of Henry's poisoned thoughts but failed. At least at this time, the significant difference between the body's aesthetics and the soul's horror does not matter to Dorian and does not cause a conflict within him between the ancient values he espouses and the evils of hedonism in which he believes; that is, he has no moral anxiety. However, modern psychology holds that malignant narcissists develop destructive behavior and lose touch with reality by exaggerating

self-importance. Dr. Carter, the author of *Let's Talk About Me: How to Recognize and Manage the Narcissists in Your Life*, explains some characteristics of malignant narcissism and their impact on individuals: "The malignant narcissists will take it even further, and it's like they have a pretty strongly developed paranoia." (Dr. Carter- YouTube). Dorian's paranoia as he compares his body and soul pushes him to commit many follies and crimes, as the text will offer later.

Dorian had to trust his conscience and negotiate with it for reform, for it was honest in its assessment. However, simultaneously, the glass mirror was "brainless," reflecting the outer shell and unable to reach the depth. There was plenty of time for reform, but the addiction to Lord Henry's philosophy made Dorian indulge his immoral instincts, disregarding societal values and religious principles. In *Émile or Education Book 4*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Savoyard Priest stresses that whoever follows the conscience is not lost; he connects the conscience with the soul, while he connects the body with emotions:

Conscience is the voice of the soul, the passions are the voice of the body. Is it strange that these voices often contradict each other? And then to which should we give heed? Too often does reason deceive us; we have only too good a right to doubt here; but conscience never deceives us; she is the true guide of man; it is to the soul what instinct is to the body; he who obeys his conscience is following nature and he need not fear that he will go astray. (Rousseau 112).

Through the Savoyard Priest, Rousseau highlights the conscience as a correct and not misleading option, so he advocates being guided and following its cues. For example, when I look at the distorted painting as a conscience, I find that the corruption has gone too far and needs to be ended because eliminating corruption restores the picture to its natural aesthetics. The text sends a strongly worded message to people in this scene when it combines the mirror of the body with

the mirror of the soul, where the two sides present two different forms of one identity, and this is a valuable message that has a radical connection with our real life, and not only in works of fiction. Paying attention to outward appearance only and letting the soul rot because of corruption is rejected by most societies worldwide.

When Basil tries to destroy the picture with a palette knife in Chapter Two, Dorian prevents him from destroying it. It was a defining moment in the text because the destruction of this artwork may divert the course of the novel to another path and a different plot and outcome. It may also change the title, which the writer derived from the famous painting that played various roles during the journey. Basil was worried about Dorian because of what he heard from people about him, and the image was the most solid evidence of whether the people were honest or not. So the painter tried to see his masterpiece, but Dorian was reluctant. Basil's criticism of Dorian was a crime in the eyes of the narcissistic boy, as he could no longer tolerate any criticism of his personality because he had developed a severe narcissism that cared only for himself. Basil asked Dorian for prayer and repentance:

Hallward turned again to the portrait and gazed at it. "My God! If it is true," he exclaimed, "and this is what you have done with your life, why, you must be worse even than those who talk against you fancy you to be!" He held the light up again to the canvas and examined it. The surface seemed to be quite undisturbed and as he had left it. It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosy of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful."Pray, Dorian, pray. (Wilde 132).

Dorian does not tolerate Basil's advice and criticism and considers it an insult because his narcissism is out of control-- he has become a malignant narcissist. Dorian took revenge on the

painter and killed him with a knife with several stab wounds. The young man was not ready to give up his malignant narcissism, especially after he had developed a new identity linked to the new hedonism and had become more selfish.

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ID AND THE SUPEREGO

Wilde's focus on the brain is not arbitrary, as he plays within this system that controls everything because one of the messages of his novel is to shield the mind from manipulation, especially for vulnerable young people who are subject to temptation. As it is known, the brain is affected by many things, including trauma, drugs, art, speech, seduction, and other items. Furthermore, the brain is the supposed place where the invisible elements, such as the superego, conscience, consciousness, and subconscious, come together, so Wilde chooses this vessel to test his psychological hypothesis. Wilde uses the words "brain" and "mind" excessively in the novel and frequently reuses them in the text and at different times. This indicates that the whole journey occurs within the mind, and Wilde determines the external influences that control the mind:

It has been said that the great events of the world take place in the brain. It is in the brain, and the brain only, that the great sins of the world take place also. (Wilde 159).

The passage provides irrefutable evidence that the writer plays inside the mind, but he also does not neglect the external influences that affect it. Shedding light on the brain in the narrative pushes me to center on the psychological aspects that impact Dorian's journey. Nevertheless, what are the significant events and sins that can happen inside the mind and then turn into facts? Crimes, suicide, infidelity, drug addiction, self-destruction, repentance, and forgiveness. As we know, after the first meeting of Lord Henry and Dorian in the salon of painter Basil, Henry

begins to enter Dorian's mind, exploiting his beauty. He focuses on instilling hedonism in the boy's brain. Lord Henry plants evil seeds in Dorian's mind and watches their corruptive influence take over. He molded the young man in his image, saw Dorian as a psychological experiment, and created his own shadow.

Moreover, according to hedonistic philosophy, it is acceptable if he gets some satisfaction from his poisonous seeds. "Pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about" (Wilde 67). Henry uses hedonism as an external stimulus that activates the id in Dorian's mind, regardless of whether it is moral or not. Lord Henry succeeds early in removing the principle of right and wrong from Dorian's unconscious mind. While Lord Henry snatches Dorian's conscience so he does not make him feel guilty, Basil creates the tangible conscience (superego) to record Dorian's behavior.

Freud's theory of personality defines the id, ego, and superego and their roles. Freud sees that the id is a set of uncontrolled instincts, the superego is the voice of conscience or family and societal moral standards, and the ego is a mediator between the id and superego. The conflict between the id and the superego is inevitable due to the absence of the ego, so Wilde separates the superego "conscience" from the id to avoid conflict in Dorian's mind. Nevertheless, Lord Henry stimulates the id in the boy's brain, for it is the best instrument for carrying out the new hedonism. In contrast, Basil sets strict standards in the painting that mimic the criteria of the superego, the voice of conscience. Freud described the id in his study as:

Id is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle. The logical laws of thought do not apply in the id. (Freud 91-92).

Lord Henry wants a free id with no limitations, and his philosophy opposes any values, standards, or morals that restrict individuals from using their instincts: "Lord Henry urges one to glory in the freedom derived from the absence of moral restrictions." (Gillespie 450). I argue that I can call "moral restrictions" part of superego rules because it coordinates with the ego to allow the instincts to be satiated according to moral regulations and laws. Harry encourages the existence of the id away from the superego, the voice of the conscience. The painting is isolated from the id. Instead, it begins to reshape its form and colors based on crimes and violations by brutal instincts, including murder and extortion. Here, I see the picture as a representation of Victorian standards playing the role of the superego:

The superego is an agency that has been inferred by us, and conscience is a function which we ascribe, among other functions, to that agency. This function consists of keeping a watch over the actions and intentions of the ego and judging them, in exercising censorship. The sense of guilt, the harshness of the super-ego, is thus the same thing as the severity of the conscience. (Freud 100).

The superego, or the voice of conscience, appears as a revealing account of Dorian's sins as he immersed himself in the new hedonism, where the id is ecstatic without restrictions--no "bad Conscience" disturbs the id's mood when committing wrong. The painting records every immoral act but delays the punishment later. The "painting," the superego, reveals the purity of the childish Dorian, who surrendered to toxic philosophy and indulged himself in pleasures too much. But unfortunately, the superego or conscience has become sadistic because of Dorian's many crimes. In *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, 1933, Freud asserts that the superego takes from the parents the principle of severity and punishment and ignores the method of leniency and tolerance, so in both cases, it remains as a punitive tool:

The superego seems to have made a one-sided choice and to have picked out only the parents' strictness and severity, their prohibiting and punitive function, whereas their loving care seems not to have been taken over and maintained. (Freud 4671).

Like the superego, the painting has become a punitive tool that records all sins and plays its role in a sadistic manner, leaving Dorian in panic and despair before his death. Moreover, in his interpretation of Freud's theory, British philosopher John Forrester emphasizes the sadism of the superego and likens it to the voice of the conscience: "One of the features of the superego is that it seems to be the voice of conscience and morality, but it's actually passionately sadistic." (Forrester- YouTube Part 4). I can say here that the traits of the superego and conscience are present in the painting, reminding Dorian of his immorality and crimes and making him terrified.

THE MEMORY AND THE PAST

The painting gives Dorian a long-lasting mask, but it also plays the role of a shield to protect him from an immediate threat, as his eternal youth saved him from certain death at the hands of James Vane, who wanted to avenge his sister Sibyl. Dorian was arguing with Vane about his age and telling him to stare at him because Sibyl's suicide occurred 18 years earlier. His true beauty and childish face turned into a shield thanks to the exchange of roles with the painting:

"Eighteen years," said the man. "Why do you ask me? What do years matter?"

"Eighteen years," laughed Dorian Gray, with a touch of triumph in his voice.

"Eighteen years! Set me under the lamp and look at my face!"

"Forgive me, sir," muttered James Vane. "I was deceived. A chance word I heard in that damned den set me on the wrong track." (Wilde 159).

Up to this point, the painting was generous with Dorian, giving him everything he wanted, but at the same time, it terrified him at every moment of their confrontation in the childhood room. The role of the painting does not stop at the mask and the shield. It also represents memory and the past since it does not forget anything. It provokes all the causes of pain and suffering: "Memory, like a horrible malady, was eating his soul away. From time to time he seemed to see the eyes of Basil Hallward looking at him." (Wilde 157).

The memory of Basil's murder remains painful and causes grief to Dorian. Nietzsche spoke of memory and its cruelty and sadism in bringing about pain:

Perhaps there is nothing more fearful and more terrible in the entire pre-history of human beings than the technique for developing his memory. "We burn something in so that it remains in the memory. Only something which never ceases to cause pain stays in the memory. (Nietzsche 3).

I believe memory is a tool for recording positive and negative rhetoric and deeds if it is free of sickness. It is a neutral, non-partisan element. I see that memory supplies the conscience with sins to make an appropriate decision from time to time, so the only solution is to fill this store with good deeds that help release the happiness hormones. Unfortunately, Dorian filled his memory with wicked acts, such as deception, murder, drug addiction, and extortion; he did not leave space in his memory for good deeds that would help him create a balance that would allow him to negotiate with his conscience when memory offers its diary. Forgetting may be a helpful solution: "if forgetfulness were not present, there could be no happiness, no cheerfulness, no hoping, no pride, no present." (Nietzsche 16). Forgetting is a viable settlement in some cases but not in all, so Dorian resorted to opium and committed more sins and self-destruction; the opium

dens were the refuge for him to escape from his memory filled with shame, decadence, and crime:

Lying back in the hansom, with his hat pulled over his forehead, Dorian Gray watched with listless eyes the sordid shame of the great city, and now and then he repeated to himself the words that Lord Henry had said to him on the first day they had met, "To cure the soul by means of the senses, and the senses by means of the soul." Yes, that was the secret. He had often tried it, and would try it again now. There were opium dens where one could buy oblivion, dens of horror where the memory of old sins could be destroyed by the madness of sins that were new. (Wilde 154).

Oblivion is no longer available in the usual way to Dorian except to go to the dens of opium; his crimes are too difficult to bear, especially those he committed against Sibyl, Basil, Campbell, the Guard who committed suicide, Sir Henry Ashton, Adrian Singleton, Lord Kent's only son, and the young Duke of Perth.

How did Dorian feel when he began to review his past? Dorian does not have a notebook, but the portrait captures all details of his history. The image is the conscience, the superego, the past, and the memory from which he cannot escape. In this picture lies his friend Basil's spirit, watching and informing him of his sins, perversion, obsession, and wild instincts. It chases him and counts his breath. I conclude that the past may lead to despair, frustration, and drive to self-destruction, which happened in the end to Dorian himself after he made sure that his past was a stain of shame that cannot be erased. This is one of the novel's critical messages to people who act without responsibility and pay no attention to how the negative past would affect the rest of life. I can assume that Dorian would have been in a good mood at life's end if he had had a positive history or had not committed all of those sins and crimes in search of superficial beauty.

However, finally, he stands face to face with the painting as a masterpiece, the mask, the shield, the uncanny, the conscience, the superego, the memory, and the past:

Was he always to be burdened by his past? Was he really to confess? Never. There was only one bit of evidence left against him. 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 184).

Dealing with the past remains a psychological issue that differs from one person to another because thinking about changing the past remains complicated and may lead to a tragic end. Unfortunately, Dorian could not forget the past and had to be punished by the Victorian conscience, which would accept nothing less than the death penalty based on the extent of the crimes Dorian himself committed. Erik Erikson points out that not accepting the past may lead to disastrous results:

Those nearing the end of the life cycle find themselves struggling to accept the inalterability of the past and the unknowability of the future, to acknowledge possible mistakes and omissions, and to balance consequent despair with the sense of overall integrity that is essential to carrying on. (Erikson 56).

Accepting the past, changing bad habits, and living in a positive environment are vital to relieving the pain caused by unhappy memories or socially unacceptable behavior.

Unfortunately, Dorian did not accept his past, and could no longer confront his conscience, so he

took unintentional revenge on himself with the same knife with which he killed his friend, Basil. After his death, the painting regains its first aesthetic and shows Dorian's beautiful innocent soul.

At the novel's beginning, Dorian appears as a young boy who is somewhat mysterious except for his beauty and lively youth. He immerses himself in the new hedonism and is strongly influenced by the language of Lord Henry and the Yellow Book, where he deviates a lot and commits emotional and physical murders, leading his beloved Sibyl to suicide, killing his best friend Basil, the creator of his picture, blackmailing Alan Campbell, leading him to suicide, getting addicted to opium, and other things. Dorian exchanges roles with his image. The picture grows up, and he remains young and beautiful forever. I find Dorian an innocent boy, but he stumbled at first and admired his missteps, strengthening his desire to try all the pleasures that violated Victorian values. However, due to his aesthetic power, Dorian turns into a thug. During his journey, he tried to return to his old morals more than once, but he failed because his feet became firmly entrenched in decadence and crime. His first narcissism was benign and natural but became a devastating malignant tumor. As the text shows, he was a victim of family disintegration and insecurity as a child. Sunggyung Jo blames outside influence but at the same time points out Dorian's desire to remain under that lousy influence:

Dorian's practice of 'wild reading' reinforces life's pleasures and its sensuousness: 'For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book. Or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that he never sought to free himself from it' (98). The seductive book. (Jo 71).

I claim that Dorian's wild desires responded quickly to outside influences, including Lord Henry's language and the Yellow Book, as well as the painting that revealed the magic of his beauty. Dorian made little attempts to get out of the predicament. Instead, he was escaping pangs

of conscience by going to the dens of opium. Dorian's narcissism had an impact on his life. His beauty was a fascinating one, which he used as a force to achieve all kinds of pleasures and take revenge on his critics and those who did not respond to his commands:

Narcissism ultimately proves fatal because it provides at once an image of the self and all that the self is not; it distorts as it reflects. His attempt to annihilate his true image and its visible emblem results in his own annihilation, a cracked-looking glass of the self. The portrait remains a mirror nonetheless, something by which we can see, in retrospect, Dorian in his pristine innocence. (Manganiello 31).

The appearance of his original picture after his death confirms that he is innocent and fell under the magic of influence by his decision; I argue that the beauty of the image does not exonerate him from guilt because he chose the path himself. Sheldonw Liebman believes that the conflict between the id and the superego also has a role in what Dorian has reached:

In this respect, Dorian is truly the man in the middle, unable to deny the demands of his superego and equally unable to repress the yearnings of his passions. (Sheldonw 312).

I see that the conflict between the superego and the id is an apparent reality in Dorian's personality. The superego was imprisoned in the childhood room, but in the last confrontation with the id, it won and returned to its first aura. However, Dorian's conscience seems filled with Victorian values, so it eventually retaliates to regain its original weight. Dorian's death satisfies Victorian morality.

In the second chapter of the novel, Dorian vows to kill himself if he grows old, but this vow is not binding and differs from the reasons that led him to kill himself unintentionally: "When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself." (Wilde 26). Dorian committed inadvertent suicide during the decisive confrontation with his conscience, superego, past, and

memory. He could not escape because even opium could no longer calm his fears or remove his mounting anxiety.

The text presents Lord Henry as an educated philosophical figure capable of influencing the unprincipled youth. He believes in a new life outside the Victorian box, advocates a new hedonism, and has chosen Dorian Gray to examine his doctrine. Lord Henry says dangerous things, but the text does not show his ugly acts except for his poisonous language. So he bears part of the responsibility for Dorian's fate but not all of the burden. Burak Irmak sees Lord Henry as an educator: "His roles can be described as a teacher to Dorian, a frustrated husband and a high socialite." (Irmak 79). I do not see Lord Henry as a teacher, as much as he is influential over mentally vulnerable people; he is looking for young people who prefer instincts over traditional moral values. He is quick to forget, but the aphorisms he says remains stuck in the minds of those who experience them. Lord Henry has a destructive tongue, as Dr. Gillespie points out: "Harry's suave language masks his devastatingly harsh and arrestingly amoral conclusions." (DG 450). This is true, and it is a test of the effect of language on the brain. As I mentioned earlier, the brain is greatly affected by language. Lord Henry was unscathed in the battle where Basil, Dorian, Alan Campbell, and Sibyl died.

Basil is a skilled painter, sober but fascinated by the beauty of Dorian Gray. The painter painted the picture that caused his murder and, at the same time. Basil is terrified that people will discover the secret of the image because he put his soul in it, so he refuses to show it, but later, he gives up this matter and asks Dorian to display the picture. After seeing the ominous transformations in the painting, he asks Dorian and himself to pray for forgiveness because he confesses that he has committed a sin and must get rid of it. Basil died of stabs by Dorian, but his art continued to fight evil and immorality. The influence of his painting was more significant

than his role in the narration, as it relentlessly battled Lord Henry's destructive language. As for Dorian, he is a boy who loses the right path and enters into a bloody struggle with his conscience that prevents him from enjoying the new hedonism. Finally, it may be argued that the behavior of each character--Henry, Basil, and Dorian--is a response to Victorian repression and homophobia, without which there would be no story.

CONCLUSION

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a psychological hypothesis through which Oscar Wilde presents a visible, tangible conscience with a weight and a form that people can better understand and which allows them to imagine the conscience. Wilde also displays the power of language and its effect on the brain in changing behavior and habits, so he created the character of Lord Henry, who has a language that affects young people who have no principles. Finally, Basil is a talented artist who manages to paint the painting that creates the conflict, leading to his murder and Dorian's death while trying to kill his conscience.

Basil's painting provides a visual and tangible definition of conscience. Moreover, it reveals the influences that affect it.

The painting appears at the beginning of the narration as a masterpiece and a lake to test the narcissism of the beautiful boy, Dorian. It becomes a mask he wears to exercise his freedom without fear or anxiety. In addition, the picture plays the role of a shield to protect him from public opinion by preserving his external youth and protecting him from direct murder by James Vane; then, this soul becomes uncanny, memory, past, and conscience. At first, Dorian wants to keep his beautiful youth because beauty is a power that brings pleasure: "The feeling of pleasure is founded in a feeling of power." (Adler 111). Lord Henry uses soft, poisonous language to push

Dorian to embrace the new hedonism and to use his youth and beauty for pleasure:" there is absolutely nothing in the world but youth." (Wilde 23).

After Dorian gets addicted to the new hedonism, the conflict between the id and the super-ego intensifies. This boy, who appeared at the story's beginning as innocent and beautiful, is exposed to a psychological disorder that leads him to a tragic end, where he inadvertently kills himself after facing his conscience and seeing the horror of his actions. Dorian's conscience was a powerful, sadistic, and terrifying referee, and it did not give Dorian a chance to enjoy his pleasures. Instead, Dorian committed several crimes, transgressions, violations, torture, and extortion and succeeded in all of them, but in the last, he fell into the grip of his conscience. However, I believe that conscience is an innate sense, an invisible and hidden device to distinguish right from wrong. Naturally, therefore, it is a primary catalyst for moral anxiety.

The Picture of Dorian Gray will continue to encourage people to pay attention to their actions, consult their consciences, and establish acceptable pasts so that the day may not come when remorse will be great, as happened to Dorian when he refused to accept his past and killed himself.

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