



A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY OF THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND DR. FAUSTUS: A COMPARISON

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Abstract

Using Psychoanalysis theory, this paper intends to attempt a comparative study by analyzing the characteristics brought by Dorian Gray in Oscar Wild's The Picture of Dorian Gray and Faustus in Christopher Marlowe's Dr Faustus. The objectives are to describe the characterizations and psychological characteristics of Dorian Gray and Dr Faustus. This article uses Lacanian and Freudian psychoanalytical perspectives for its theoretical framework, mainly Lacan's concept of "mirror stage" and Freud's concept of "defense mechanism". In both the works, the protagonists are lured into the world of evil but by different forces. Dr Faustus portrays the story of a man, who in order to become all powerful through magic pledged his soul to the devil, only to meet with total damnation at the end, whereas Dorian Gray, a handsome young man, who on knowing the transient nature of his mortality, trades his soul for everlasting beauty and youth, with his portrait bearing the physical marks of time and his sins.

Keywords: Dorian Gray, Dr Faustus, Characterizations, Psychoanalytical Criticism, Mirror Stage, Defense mechanism, craze for power and glory.

Introduction

Characterization is the technique through which an author portrays a character, so that it appears real to the reader. The word character has two meanings. On the one hand character refers to individuals in a work, and on the other it refers to the traits or characteristics of that individual's behavior in a work of fiction, which is referred to as

characterization. It plays an important role in providing the story with several layers of signification. So, an understanding of the behavior of the characters would help analyze the plot, and the development of the story.

This paper is an analysis of the lives of the protagonists in the works *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde and *Dr Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe, using psychoanalytic criticism. In both the works, the protagonists are lured into the world of evil by different forces. *Dr. Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe was one of the renowned works written in the golden era of renaissance. It was his second play, published in 1604. *Dr. Faustus* is remarkable for its density and complexity of its levels of meaning which makes it an archetypal dramatic fable. *Dr. Faustus* tells the narrative of a man who, in his pursuit of all knowledge, pledged his soul to the devil, only to meet with the pain of fruitless remorse in this life and to ultimate damnation. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that had been revised for several times is the masterpiece of Oscar Wilde, a major writer of the nineteenth century. In his work *Dorian Gray*, a handsome young man, who upon understanding the transient nature of his mortality, unknowingly trades his soul for everlasting beauty and youth, with his portrait bearing the physical marks of time and his sins. Caught in the web of temptation and greed, men of all time have faced all sorts of problems and keep on suffering, being unable to entangle the absurd illusions of the mind. The desire to engage in the mirage of permanence by neglecting the inevitable truth of mortality has led both these characters to psychological perplexity, leading to loss of peace of mind. Throughout these works we find, both the characters fighting their conscience between good and evil. There are archetypal situations where the actions of the protagonists carve out their inevitable destiny. These archetypal characters are seen motivated by a desire for power to achieve a superhuman state by being aware, not the least of their own mortality.

Theory of Psychoanalysis

In Freud's psychoanalytic theory, defense mechanism refers to a group of mental processes that enables the mind to reach compromise solutions to conflicts that it is unable to resolve. The process is usually unconscious, and the compromise generally involves concealing from oneself, their internal drives or feelings that threaten to lower self-esteem or provoke anxiety. The concept derives from the hypothesis that there are forces in the mind that

oppose and battle against each other. There are several processes in the defense of ego such as repression, sublimation, denial and projection.

In Lacan's psychoanalytic theory the mirror stage refers to the age of about six months, when the infants recognize themselves in a mirror or other symbolic device which induces apperception. The child's initiation into this stage entails a "libidinal dynamism" by which the child identifies its own image, what Lacan terms the "Ideal-I". There is a reflexivity inherent here, as recognizing oneself as "I" is like recognizing oneself as other. It is thus a fundamentally self-alienating act, involving mixed feelings towards the image, caught between hatred and love.

Analysis of Dorian Gray

The Picture of Dorian Gray is Oscar Wilde's novel, published originally in 1890 (as a serial) and then in book form the following year. The book explores the doctrine of Aestheticism: devotion to hedonism, beauty and art for art's sake. Dorian devotes his life to debauchery and sensory pleasures; his portrait steadily ages and decays, representing the depravity of his acts, but he remains youthful. After being poisoned by his colleague, Lord Henry Wotton, an innocent and graceful Victorian young man named Dorian Gray eventually drifts into a hedonistic lifestyle. Dorian whose extraordinary beauty was portrayed on Basil Hallward's magnificent portrait refused to be older and lose his beautiful youth by making a pact with his own portrait. He wanted to remain beautiful while the picture will display his aging signs and his wish was granted but then Dorian recognised that the photo bore his ageing, as well as his misdeeds and corrupted spirit, after being committed in his fiancée's death. He spent several years with drugs, hedonism, and causing some of his friend's death and submerged condition without worrying his action because his eternal youth and innocent face protect him from some people's condemnations. Dorian wiped off the portrait when the weight of his transgressions became unbearable, effectively ending his own life.

Dorian's initial sins and moral decline is connected with his first romance with Sybil. Her appearance into Dorian's life leads to fill two major voids of his unconscious desires- female image of mother and his lost childhood. This can be seen as related to the mirror stage that is inspired through the impact, the picture creates. Without the idealized image she is nothing for Dorian. The fragile bond between the couple is made up of Dorian's

perfectly crafted images and the intermittent transition of Dorian's imaginary self which also results in Sybil's death.

Basil is the creator of Dorian's portrait and thereby occupies a position of "Mother" leading to position herself as an oedipal mother in Dorian's reconstruction of his internal and external self. Dorian receives a fake image of his self through the passionate portrait, Basil has created but regardless of Basils individual imaginative character which he has executed he is not able to influence the real Dorian as he likes. From the initial to the latter part of the novel we watch Basil's relentless attempt to correct Dorian into the right path. Through these actions of his, we can relate his role as a motherly figure trying to keep Dorian away from the toxic Henry.

One of the most important and authoritative figure in the mirror stage of Dorian's life is Lord Henry Wotton. Lacan's theory put forward the idea that a child develops oedipal complex only at the intervention of the father. But contrasted with James Vane, Henry acts as an incompetent father for his negative influence on Dorian. He sways Dorian with his ideology of hedonism and aestheticism which guide him ultimately to the decay of his character. Basil by taking the role of a father figure remould Dorian with his own desire which he cannot achieve for himself. Besides, he also reveal to him that "all influence is immoral" which makes Dorian confused with the way of life he is about to follow. Henry acts as a hurdle of negative influence, thereby shifting Dorian's real need to become an independent individual.

Faced with different mirrors, the protagonist starts to put theories he receives into practise and explores his inner world. He learns to identify himself and becomes an independent individual, trying to shake off the influence from others. Unfortunately, he fails to understand his true self and has to terminate himself. His destruction is doomed since he has gone long on the way of immoral self alienation. In short, the effects of the different mirrors are decisive factors in the process of Dorian's self identification to self annihilation.

Analysis of Dr.Faustus

Faustus establishes his field of interest in the first monologue. This speech vividly displays the conflict between id and super ego, with ego acting as a balancing force. Faustus already has a PhD in theology, so he wants a better option this time. He contemplates Aristotelian logic as his new topic of study, and this is a wise decision based

on super ego. Along with medical science and the law, he discarded this notion. He returned for his own theological theme. Superego presented these excellent possibilities, but he ultimately selects Magic as his new field, driven by the need of id and its yearning for pleasure.

Because of his quest for ultimate profit, honour, and power, Faustus prefers Magic. According to Faustus, a powerful magician is a mighty god. Through the psychological agent of Id, he strives to be as powerful as God in order to experience the pleasures and endure the tragedies of humanity. The fact that he chooses magic as his field of study attracts both good and bad angels. Here, the evil angel represents id, which is in charge of Faustus's decision based on the pleasure principle. As a result, Faustus follows his id rather than his superego. He makes his decision without hesitation. Faustus's id craves instant fulfilment, so he summons Valdes and Cornelius and displays his own eagerness to learn magic.

After summoning Mephistophilis, Faustus's negative ego-ideal emerges. He grows infatuated with his heavenly power. Such is the might of magic and its spells. He continues his negative ego ideal by following the devil's sight. Faustus, under the influence of Id, abandons his faith and becomes diabolical in order to satisfy his desires. Faustus wants Mephistophilis to carry out anything he orders. This demon even tries to convince Faustus of the loss of eternal happiness, but it was not manly fortitude, for Faustus to feel remorseful as he was even willing to offer Mephistophilis as many souls as there are to have his service. His Id is so dominant that it prohibits Faustus from examining moral, ethical, or spiritual perspectives. Faustus' first demand after sacrificing his soul to the devil is to have a wife and a more potent magical book to satisfy his libidinal wants of Id. Id's greatest control of super ego and ego is shown in the portrayal of Seven Deadly Sins. After that, a scene with the Pope demonstrates Faustus's natural or animal inclination, which indicates Id, in which he steals dishes and drinks from the Pope to mock him for no apparent reason. His Id is completely gratified here, and he feels like he's in ecstasy. He is certain of his eternal damnation as a result of his Id fulfilment.

The ego serves as a counterbalance to the id and super ego. Throughout the play, we can observe how ego fails to maintain the equilibrium between them. Throughout this play, id often reigns supreme, and super ego can be overbearing at times, but there are indications of ego in the play as well, as it tries to fulfil both id and ego. When Faustus finally declares his judgement on magic and discloses his plans, we encounter ego for the first time. At

this moment, powerful Id pushes super ego down, while ego pushes up super ego, and Faustus notices something whispering in his ear telling him to abjure magic. In Faustus' mind, the conflict between good and evil (as represented by the angels) is a battle between id and super ego. Faustus is continually relinquishing his spiritual existence, which is his super ego, by surrendering his soul to evil.

Faustus came from a lowly background and pursued studies and made significant progress in theology, indicating that his superego was dominating during these years of life; his knowledge of divinity was greatly valued by Faustus's ego-ideal, but it was overvalued, resulting in it a negative ego-ideal, i.e. pride. When Faustus selects magic as his new vocation, he expects his pleasure-based desires to be met right away. The old man is emblematic of super ego in the last scenes, who even persuades Faustus to ask pardon from God at his last breath, but Id triumphs over superego here as well, as it does throughout the play. The old guy here represents the superego's conscience, which pricks one's self, but the old man was whisked away by the devil, leaving Faustus with Helen to enjoy his final hours with her.

A person's superego can never truly be buried; even when we are at the end of our lives. At this moment, Faustus' plea for mercy, forgiveness, but protection is futile. Throughout his life, he suppressed his superego and never paid attention to it, but he was interested in the demands of id and pleasure which resulted in his regretful bargain with the devil and ending up being ripped to shreds.

Picture of Dorian Gray and Dr. Faustus: A Comparison

Throughout the works we find both the characters' conscience struggling between good and evil. It is an archetypal situation where the protagonists undergo specific situations and tread along the path they choose, ultimately leading to their inevitable destiny. These archetypal characters are often seen motivated by a desire for power to achieve a superhuman state by forsaking the primary knowledge about human mortality. Frazer's anthropological studies, Jung's psychological analysis, and Northrop Frye's literary interpretation are helpful in attempting archetypal analysis. In the twentieth century, archetypal criticism was significant in literary studies in the West. Frye's archetypal theory tries to link several literary works through a recurrent pattern in order to expose the deeper meaning beneath the surface meaning.

The two works *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Dr Faustus* as dealing with biblical themes is one sure ground for a comparison in terms of archetypal narrative. The protagonist's fall and the loss of the ideal world for the sake of achieving their desire under the negative influence of evil is the theme of both works. Considering Wilde's eccentric personality, the template for the main character, Dorian Gray, can be compared to Eve in the Bible. The reason for this is because Dorian has many female qualities, as evidenced by the novel's depiction of him. Dorian's life experience and the deprivation of his soul, on the other hand, have a lot in common with Eve's. Apart from Dorian, Henry's archetypal character is revealed with reference to the serpent from the Bible, who seduces Eve to rebel against God and gives in to her own desires in exchange for being ejected by God and, suffering all types of miseries in her later life. Meanwhile, Basil's reference goes to the story of Adam in the Bible.

The same might be said for Dr. Faustus, who, in his ravenous thirst for power, resembles Eve. Despite God's perfect creation of Eve's world, which provided her with every luxury, she was seduced by the serpent to commit the sin that God forbade. Dr. Faustus can be considered in the same perspective since, despite having a wide range of expertise in numerous domains, he yearns for becoming all powerful. The bad angels, Valdus and Cornelius, represent the serpent who encourage Faustus to do the crime, whereas the scholars can be represented by Adam. God and Lucifer play the typical archetypal roles in both works, as they do in the bible.

Both characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Dr. Faustus* are drawn into the domain of evil by distinct means. Dr. Faustus and Dorian Gray both sell their souls to the devil. Dorian Gray unwittingly bargains with the devil, while Dr. Faustus conjures the devil. Dorian becomes an unethical criminal after selling his soul, even resorting to murder. After selling his soul, Dr. Faustus enjoys a hedonistic lifestyle and amuses himself with practical pranks. Though both Dorian Gray and Faustus were corrupted by knowledge, Dorian wrecks people's lives and commits crimes, whilst Faustus simply does things for his own enjoyment.

According to psychoanalysis, both the protagonists have the quest for insatiable power but the means they choose to achieve them is what leads to their self annihilation. According to Lacanian perspective, it can disclose an individual's ego in the same way that a mirror can display a child's form for the first time. Through the pictures offered by the mirror, one develops a sense of self, vis-à-vis the world outside. Similarly, Dorian derives his sense of self from the photograph and other images in his environment, which transforms him into a devil.

Dorian constructs his picture of himself in the mirror stage from portraits by Basil and the actress Sybil, but the image he receives is deceptive. Later, when he reaches the Oedipal stage, the intervention of his father's name causes him to recognize that the image he assumed was only a figment of his imagination. The protagonist begins to put what he has learned into practice and investigates his inner world under the effect of all these mirrors. He learns to identify himself and develops into a self-sufficient individual, attempting to break free from the influence of others. Unfortunately, he is unable to recognize his actual nature and is forced to end his life. His demise is inevitable, as he has been on the path of unethical self-alienation for a long time.

A reader can see the fight between the superego and the id in Christopher Marlowe's "Doctor Faustus." Faustus struggles with himself throughout the play, while Lucifer and Mephistopheles struggle with him. With the introduction of the Seven Deadly Sins, the most obvious issue arises. They symbolize the ongoing conflict between the id and the superego. They add to Dr. Faustus's seduction and the never ending fight in a chaotic Hell. They add to Dr. Faustus' seduction and the never-ending fight in a chaotic Hell. The id is responsible for the majority of sins, including pride, covetousness, envy, wrath, gluttony, and lechery. All six of these sins have strong and powerful qualities. Lechery, or passion, is another excellent illustration of the id. Lechery simply walks out in front of Faustus and struts her stuff. The reader learns that it is her presence, not her words, that gives her strength. Even Lucifer recognizes her power, as he dismisses her almost as quickly as she enters. Obviously, the more aggressive sins triumph over souls that demonstrate a healthy equilibrium between the id and the superego. Because of their forceful demeanor, the sins are able to break down the ego and sway it toward the id, where Lucifer may easily persuade individuals to sell their souls to Hell. Sloth, the superego, mostly persuades those who are uninterested in life. He goes out and shows the lazy folks that Hell is their destination. In the end, the struggle between the superego and the id is what causes Hell to exist as it does. It causes the chaotic state of Hell because there is no ego, or equilibrium between the id and superego.

As a result, we can conclude that Dr. Faustus' psyche is torn between id and superego. The superego is a third function proposed by Sigmund Freud. It functions as a supervisor of the psyche, monitoring one's activity and motivating value judgments that make one feel good or bad about one's actions. So Sloth's idleness clearly exemplifies superego (he is in control of his thoughts and actions). Despite the fact that all seven deadly Sins are

aggressive, their strength and power. The aspect of id is shown by their doing anything they want and saying whatever they want.

Conclusion

Dr. Faustus, was aware that he was selling his soul, whereas Dorian, who was eighteen at the time, had no idea what he was getting himself into. Dr. Faustus enjoys himself by making practical jokes. Dorian murders individuals, causes others to commit suicide, destroys the lives of many of his friends, and succumbs to pleasures from anybody he can get. As a result, Dorian becomes the more villainous character.

Both characters want to confess and do the right thing, but it is too late. They are now caught between a wrathful deity and the torments inflicted by the devils, and each of us, according to Dorian, "has Heaven and Hell in him." However, having been devoted to evil for so long, even choosing the best decision will result in disaster.

Dorian begins to put theories into practice and investigate his inner world under the impact of all the mirrors he encounters. He learns to identify himself and develops into a self-sufficient individual, attempting to break free from the influence of others. Unfortunately, he is unable to recognize his actual nature and is forced to end his life. His demise is inevitable, as he has been on the path of unethical self-alienation for a long time. In a nutshell, the consequences of the many mirrors are critical in Dorian's journey from self-identification to self-annihilation.

Exploratory and descriptive textual analysis is used to investigate Sigmund Freud's theory of Id, ego, and super ego in the play Doctor Faustus. These three concepts of mental existence can be found in the play, but Id is the driving force. Faustus is consumed by earthly pleasures and the need for id, avoiding the spiritual super ego in all of its forms and shapes, which finally leads to his doom.

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