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A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF THE DOUBLE LIFE IN
OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND THE
IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST

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I confirm that this thesis is my own work written using solely the sources and literature properly quoted and acknowledged as works cited.

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Abstrakt

Diplomová práce pojednává o konceptu dvojího života. Zaměřuje se na psychologické zkoumání duality pomocí teoretických informací o jejích aspektech, ale také analýzou dvou literárních děl – *Obraz Doriana Graye* a *Jak je důležité míti Filipa*. Práce se zabývá dvojitým životem vybraných postav s ohledem na aspekty obsažené v teoretické části a propojuje tak teorii s praxí. Tím práce představuje podrobný teoretický rozbor duality a zároveň nabízí různé příklady dvojího života. Diplomová práce dále poukazuje na úskalí vedení dvojího života a jeho negativní dopad na člověka, ale také uvádí pár pozitiv.

Klíčová slova: dvojitý život, psychologický rozbor, *Obraz Doriana Graye*, *Jak je důležité míti Filipa*, psychologie, analýza

Abstract

The master's thesis discusses the concept of double life. It focuses on its psychological examination by providing theoretical information about the aspects of the double but also analysing two literary works – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The thesis covers the double lives of the chosen characters in relation to the aspects in the theoretical part and so interconnects the theory with practice. By that, the thesis presents a detailed study of the double theoretically and at the same time offers different examples of the double life. The hardship of leading a double life and its negative effects on a person are shown as well as a few positives.

Keywords: double life, psychological examination, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, analysis

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1. Introduction

The concept of double life is a very interesting topic and was previously covered in my bachelor's thesis. This time the thesis will focus on the psychological insight of the double together with two literary works from Oscar Wilde. Even though the author and his life is not part of the thesis it is important to stress Wilde's direct relation to this topic. His life of a married homosexual offers a very accurate example of a person leading a double life. Moreover, his works reflect his ideas about this topic. Wilde's philosophical interest in life and art are therefore incorporated in his works and so are the ideas about imagination and creating one's own image. The pretending and inventing of new personas are part of his famous collection of essays "The Decay of Lying" and in the same way, they relate to the concept of double life.

The aim of the thesis is to present a study of the double life in Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* with the main focus on the psychological examination of duality. This will be realized through the chosen aspects of the double and then applied to the literary works. Together with concrete examples of the character's double lives the thesis will present the concept of the double as a whole and offer a detailed representation. The aim is to show the hardship of leading a double life and how it can affect the person and his self, in some cases even endanger his existence. However, some positive outcomes of the double will be provided in the case of the play.

The thesis has three main parts – one theoretical chapter and the two other parts are dedicated to the literary works. The theoretical part offers an insight into the double life by briefly presenting its concept and then examining it in psychological terms. It offers information about the double identity or the presence of the double in multiple personality disorder (MPD) and its signs. Further, the chapter focuses on the chosen

aspects of the double. That is presenting the power of the double and its dark side, the identity struggle and showing the possible occurrence of the double by homosexuals and narcissists.

In the next section, the thesis introduces the duality of the chosen characters from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – concretely of Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian Gray and Sibyl Vane – and provides a psychological examination of their double lives. The chapter connects the aspects from the theoretical part with concrete literary examples which provides a more complex overview of the topic. In the case of Basil Hallward, it shows his secret double life of a homosexual living in silence and with that the sexual identity struggle. It also points out Basil's other possible dual roles of a creator and the reflection of Lord Kelso. The double life of Lord Henry Wotton gives a great example of someone pretending to be someone else. It depicts his narcissistic traits and other aspects of the double together with Henry's possible dual roles – as Mephistopheles or Dorian's shadow. Further, a large part of the chapter is dedicated to the examination of the double life of Dorian Gray as his life relates to most of the aspects and is described more in detail in the novel. His double is more visible thanks to the existence of the portrait which highlights the separation of the body and soul. Lastly, this chapter covers the double life of Sibyl Vane and shows a different way of leading a double life or lives through her profession as an actress and so sheds light on the double on the stage.

The last main chapter is dedicated to the psychological examination of the double life in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The examination focuses on the lives of Jack Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, and Cecily Cardew in relation to Gwendolen Fairfax and offers different depictions of the double through alternative egos or fake identities. As the genre of comedy suggests, the literary work presents a bit different view of the double life. It shows certain positive outcomes of the double life alongside its complications.

The play is also rich in the double elements itself through its structure and language. In general, the play shares limited details about the characters' lives, but it still offers an interesting insight into the double. The chapter follows Jack's and Algernon's secret doubles which enable them to escape their realities for a while. It argues about the possible reasons for their double lives and the possible occurrence of the identity struggle because of social pressure. As applicable, the chosen aspects of the double are described in relation to the characters. At the same time, the chapter offers some other points such as the concept of Bunburying. The section about Cecily presents her living more in a fantasy than in reality and together with Gwendolen it shows their obsession over made-up images.

2. The Psychological Insight into the Double Life

The double life, the double is the topic of interest in this thesis. What we can expect is some form of duplicity, but what is mostly the topic of interest is the double life, which simply means leading two lives at once. It is not easy to present one definition of the term as the double or the frequently used German word ‘doppelgänger’ can be any dual structure. Further, the double is related to sexuality and the never-ending identity struggle (Webber 6-12). Originally the term doppelgänger appeared in literature and later it started to be used in psychology. There it is spoken of in terms of the possible double identity or its presence in personality disorders (Vardoulakis 111-114). Nevertheless, in the Victorian period, from which the selected literary works are, and in which Oscar Wilde lived, the double life was viewed as an act of insanity or narcissism and that made people doubt themselves (Rogers 12). However, today as in the past, some individuals need to lead more than one life so they can be themselves and at the same time fit into society.

In this chapter, the focus will be on the psychological insight into the double. It will show the possible occurrence of the double by homosexuality, narcissism, its relation to identity, and it will also present the dangerous and dark side of the double. The chapter will provide a theoretical overview of the chosen topic, which will show the duality more in-depth and provide a better understanding of the subject. In terms of psychological insight, parts of the studies of Otto Rank, a psychoanalyst from the circle of Sigmund Freud who dedicated to the study of the double great part of his life, will be presented. However, it is also important to mention thoughts and theories of other psychoanalysts and psychologists. In the case of the relation of narcissism to the double, a sociological approach by the behavioural specialist Thomas Erikson will be depicted. Nevertheless, it is crucial to emphasize that each writer or psychoanalyst offers to at least some extent

a subjective view based on the social conventions of their time and personal beliefs alongside the theories and facts.

2.1. The Double: Psychological Insight

In his studies, Rank distinguishes two types of double - the physical double and the same psychic representation of the double. The physical one is separated from the ego, and it exists individually, often as a shadow or reflection. The other type of double is represented by the same person and the two 'parts' are hidden inside (Rank 20). Another aspect, that is connected to the double, is the male sibling complex. It suggests that the double is often a brother, as in Jean Paul's novel *The Twins*. The similarity in the case of twins is quite obvious. However, there is a similarity in this male sibling complex in general – that the younger brother is similar to the older one, mostly in appearance but he also tries to follow what his sibling does. However, the theme of the sibling complex is more of an interpretation than some chief classification of the double (Rank 75-76).

Also, it is important to mention Rank's thoughts about the shadow, mirror, and reflection motives, which he considers the manifestations of duality. The shadow or mirror motives appear in lots of superstitions through various cultures, and they are also used in literature. From stories and superstitions, it comes to their duality (Rank 49-51). In literature those motives are often connected to the death of the character because of "the wounding of his reflection, portrait, or double. Also, according to Hindu belief, one destroys an enemy by stabbing his picture or shadow in the heart" (Rank 52). These motives are often connected to the death and so to the death of the double as well. We can find the dual relationship and connection between the person and his shadow in one of Wilde's tales – "The Young Fisherman and His Soul," where the hero wants to cut off his shadow. The shadow symbolizes his soul and so he dies – it is interpreted as a suicide, similar to Dorian in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Rank 57). In addition, according to

some legends, and beliefs, the devil is given only the shadow instead of getting rewarded with the soul of the person, which also supports the role of a dual element. Moreover, the mirror is often considered a symbol of double. As stated by Negelein, the mirror shows some hidden aspects based on the double (Rank 62-64). “This reference includes, first of all, the magic use of the mirror in order to discern the future” (Rank 64). Also, the breaking of a mirror is thought of as a negative sign in some countries, more precisely a sign of death or years of bad luck (Rank 64). The reflected image, the duplication of the person, applies to the soul - meaning that the soul is reflected in the mirror. This belief is common in certain cultures, by Greeks or Egyptians for example, resulting in that the image of the soul is the copy of the body (Rank 83).

2.1.1. The Multiple Personality Disorder

First of all, it is hard to characterize the multiple personality by one definition, but one of the common, standard definitions of multiple personality disorder (MPD) is “the existence within the individual of two or more distinct personalities, each of which is dominant at a particular time” (Doak 64). Often it is referred to as ‘dissociative identity’ as the person is not aware of the changes most of the time (Doak 64). The multiple personality disorder usually appears when the person is abused by their parents. The abuse can be of a different type – verbal, emotional, or even physical (Doak 67). However, to better understand what multiple personality disorder is or its characteristics, it is crucial to know its typical signs. The psychotherapist GB Greaves came up with eight signs of MPD:

- 1) [R]eports of time distortion and blackouts,
- 2) reports of being told of behavioural episodes by others,
- 3) reports of notable changes by reliable observers, including the patient referring to himself by another name,
- 4) alter-personalities elicited through hypnosis,
- 5) use of the self-referent “we” as a collective in conversation,
- 6) discovery of

writings, drawings, or other productions among his or her belongings that the patient does not recognize, 7) a history of severe headaches accompanied by blackouts, seizures, dreams, visions, or deep sleep, and 8) hearing voices that the patient identifies as internal and not coming from without (Bliss 119).

Some of those signs are also noticeable in the double, for instance, the behavioural episodes or at least visible changes in behaviour. Another common sign of double life is number three. The signs are of course very individual and so it is impossible to apply them generally, which is also the case by the MPD. Further, people who suffer from MPD have an increased sense of imagination, which separates them from the outside world. On one hand, the imagination could help them to escape the trauma or other disturbing situations in their life. On the other hand, it has a negative influence – resulting in aggressive behaviour or being out of control. Also, as the stress grows, the stronger personality takes over and can cause violence. This can be also found in the double life, more in the sense of creating another reality, a different life, together with similar positive or negative outcomes (Doak 66-71).

In relation to the multiple personality disorder, it is important to mention that it is not schizophrenia which someone could falsely assume. And the double life does not mean suffering from schizophrenia either. Sometimes similar symptoms could be shared – for example in the case of the physical symptoms or in hearing voices. However, for schizophrenia are typical illusions and hallucinations.

While trying to present the important link between the double and psychology it is also crucial to mention the connection with the supernatural. Of course, the supernatural double is linked to cultural production, but it depicts the physical double, which often means a visible physical change of the body - as by vampires or werewolves.

Transformations like this are indeed drastic examples of the double, but what it shows is how powerful this type of devil double can be. In the case of the everyday double, it is less extreme. Nevertheless, the supernatural examples can help us to imagine how the dark self completely dominates the person (Gyurko 194). As mentioned, this is also connected to the formation of the devil double, which will be described in the next section.

2.2. The Devil Double (Self)

There could be a positive second self, the guardian angel for example. However, more often there is the dark hidden self, pictured as a shadow, and making threats to the Other. As expected, these two sides are in conflict, and it comes to the destruction of one of the selves. In most of the cases, the double becomes extremely powerful and stronger than the original self (Gyurko 193-195). “The original self is presented as weak, bland, indecisive, physically; incapacitated, or spiritually crippled. It finds itself, transcends itself, only in the Double” (Gyurko 195). The dark self is often connected to the devil or the diabolical pact. Rank states that: there is “a double, who is either personified by the devil himself or is created by making a diabolical pact” (76). As an example of the pact with the devil and the creation of the double, we can name Dorian’s wish to remain forever young. The dark, devil double as created by the devil himself or rising from the Faustian pact introduces the dangerous side of the double and as mentioned before it has a strong power over the person. One of the main influences is the inability to be conscious of the guilt and feeling responsible for the sins (Rank 76). On the other hand, the utopian potential of the double is possible, as also implied by Freud, or in this case the utopian potential of the pact. Meaning that the double could bring a positive future and some benefits (Fritz 301). Actually, there was faith in a guardian spirit in the past, which was believed to be connected to the double and the shadow superstitions. Rochholz mentions

the original positive meaning of this spirit and that later it had a negative development (Rank 50). This is also supported by Pradel, who talks about the tragic effect when “one's guardian angel appears at the hour of death and joins one's shadow” (Rank 51). This is then often followed by the chasing of the person to their death. So, the utopian potential of the double is hard to achieve, and it usually ends in the destruction of the person (Rank 50-51).

Further, there is another aspect connected to the devil double – the fear of death. The fear of death brings the thought of the way out, which would end this fear for good, a suicide. This is also often connected to narcissism. Narcissists have a highly developed ego, which makes them the centre of importance. Because of the high ego, it is hard for the person to make the fear of death go away and it seems to them that suicide is the only way. “The double turns out to be a functional expression of the psychological fact that an individual with an attitude of this kind cannot free himself from a certain phase of his narcissistically loved ego-development” (Rank 80). What is also tied to the fear of death and narcissistic behaviour is the desire to never get old (Rank 77-79). This is stressed by Dorian in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: “When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 26).

2.3. Homosexuality and the Double

As widely known, homosexuality was thought of very negatively in the past, often considered as a disease, a mental illness. This point of view was described by Robert A. Harper, together with the contemporary opinion that homosexuality was associated with the double. Even though the article offers a toxic view of homosexuality and cannot be taken seriously, the suggestion of a connection between homosexuality and the double could be taken into consideration.

In general, people have various likings and those shape also the sexual orientation. Being a homosexual or heterosexual is influenced by many factors such as biological or social, so there is not a single way how it happens which makes it very individual. Individual as it is sexuality is also related to our identity, to who we are. Not knowing or not being sure about your sexuality can cause anxiety and disturbance. So, it is important to figure out your sexual orientation. Bancroft actually prefers to use the term 'sexual identity' rather than 'sexual orientation' which highlights its part of our identity even more (Bancroft 259). Finding yourself usually leads to confusion or comparison with others. This appears normally by the sexual identity development, but it is even more relatable in the case of homosexuality (Bancroft 261).

The hardship of finding yourself, trying to come out as a homosexual could definitely fit in today's society. However, if we consider the time Wilde was living in and the time the selected literary works were written it was much harder to be a homosexual back then. Living in the Victorian period while discovering your sexuality was not easy at all. Not forgetting to mention the brothel scandals or Wilde's trials which shocked society. Due to the homophobic environment, homosexuals were forced to hide their true selves and their natural desires (Sanna 23-24). Feeling the pressure of society, the illegality of homosexual sex, brought difficulties. The homosexuals even felt shameful for having such desires and so many of them tried to suppress them. It was usual for them to get married and have children – living in secret. They lived in silence with the fear of being found out and destroyed. It is indeed very hard to live a closeted life and this suppression is neither good for your health nor for personal wellbeing. Nevertheless, living in a society that does not support your needs, that does not bring you full satisfaction is hard to keep up. Altogether with the temptations and secret longings,

some could not resist and had to live one life according to the public expectations and hide the other one (Sanna 28-31).

2.4. The Relation of Narcissism to the Double

Narcissism is a term that describes a “form of behaviour whereby an individual treats his own body in the same way in which he might treat that of any other sexual object, by looking at it, stroking it and caressing it with sexual pleasure until by these acts he achieves full gratification” (Freud 460). Components of narcissism are included in many individuals dealing with different types of disorders, and it is also found in homosexuals (Freud 460). The name narcissism comes from the Greek character Narcissus who was known for his beautiful appearance. Because of this people fell in love with him very easily. However, he did not choose anyone from his admirers and instead fell in love with his own self, his reflection (Erikson, X). There are more versions of how this happens but “narcissus simply starves to death as he sits there by the pond, gazing at his reflection” (Erikson, X). As mentioned before, the reflection is the motive of the double. When we consider looking at the pond it creates a reflection, a dual construction similar to what a mirror does.

There are of course characteristic traits of a narcissist that can help to imagine what kind of person that is. One of the main typical signs is being self-centred and doing everything in their favour. Narcissists do not think of other people, or how their actions can affect others (Erikson 29). With that comes being in charge, having power, and being able to manipulate people. Narcissists often try to play the victim in order to gain sympathy (Erikson 46). Another aspect is admiration, they love being admired and want to be seen as the best version of themselves. Actually, there is a fight inside narcissists – these individuals love themselves but at the same time, they are concerned that they are not the best version of themselves. This means for example better looking, more famous

or appreciated, generally anything they can be better at (Erikson 65). On the other hand, apathy is their weakness. Narcissists cannot bear when someone is not giving them a proper amount of attention and admiration (Erikson 77).

Some narcissists can be very violent, but there is no evidence of a connection between narcissism and violent behaviour. However, in terms of psychology they are dangerous as they hurt other people with their manipulative and abusive behaviour like psychopaths do (Erikson 79). Nevertheless, narcissists and psychopaths are not the same. There is a distinction between these two. Psychopaths are more dangerous; they act like life is just a game and can cause big trouble. Narcissists usually know exactly what they are doing, they are aware of their actions (Erikson 107). Unfortunately, there is no cure for narcissism as it is a type of personality disorder and therapy does not have great effect. However, the problem is not the fact that there is no effective treatment but that the narcissist will not want to participate. Why would they want to change themselves when they believe that there is nothing wrong with them? So, even if there was a treatment for narcissists, the question is if they would follow the treatment (Erikson 131-134).

It is hard to directly say how narcissists are made. There is not one explanation. Several different theories exist, for example, that the children of a narcissist could be narcissistic as well. Other examples are children who experienced traumatic childhood which makes them close the door to the outside world and lower their empathic abilities. Recent theories came up with the theory of overvalued children. Those children then have high self-esteem and think that they are the best in every group. Another aspect is when parents treat their children like objects, then the children do the same (Erikson 122-124).

Narcissism is also connected to self-destruction. A narcissist is scared of destruction. It appears a higher intensity of self-love or some kind of insanity in the display of a shadow, reflection, in general of a double. So, the narcissist understands

reality “mainly only as a reflection, or as a part of his ego” (Rank 82). “The idea of death, therefore, is denied by a duplication of the self-incorporated in the shadow or in the reflected image” (Rank 83). Even though the fear of dying becomes a threat to the narcissists leaving them with the only option of suicide, the understanding of reality as reflection, and believing in the second existence makes the whole thought of death bearable (Rank 79-85).

Mentioning the reflection and being the best version of yourself suggest the connection to the double. The reflection, believed to be one of the creations of duality, supports the relation to the double and the self-centred narcissism. Being the better or best version of yourself can suggest that there is more than one self inside the person, creating the room for the double. Also, there is a connection between death, narcissism and double as already mentioned – where the idea of death is hard for the narcissistically developed ego, same as the thought of losing the beautiful young appearance.

2.4.1. Narcissist and Love

It is important for narcissists how you make them look in front of other people. So, if you are very beautiful, attractive, etc. you will be wanted. Unfortunately, narcissists know how to trick the person to be in a relationship with and they get away with their poor and abusive treatment (Erikson 67). “Some people describe feeling used, exploited, ignored, betrayed, and abandoned” after experiencing narcissistic abuse (Erikson 68). Narcissists are using and abandoning their partner constantly, leaving them feeling unwanted by others and so keeping them in this toxic relationship. They go deeply into getting to know you, especially in the early stages of a relationship. They are in fact studying you, creating an environment for you to open up. The point is to get any information for its possible use in the future. Narcissists lack empathy, but they can master their pretending to care so much to further manipulate you or to gain something

from it. Moreover, they are great at lying, so it is easy for them to get away with anything (Erikson 72-77). “Know that narcissists often plan ahead – way ahead. They might well perform their role as Prince or Princess Charming for months before they show their true colours” (Erikson 147). So, there is no problem for them to pretend to be somebody else and lie their way out of everything. By pretending to be someone else the narcissist is already creating a double. Altogether with the lies, and the duplicate information, there is a whole different person, a double. Of course, this helps narcissists when they are fooling the victim, but it also leads them to live with different versions of themselves.

To conclude, narcissism is a serious personality disorder. It is not precisely known how it appears though there are some theories such as the traumatic childhood, and different ways of coping with the outside world and with people, which can be found also in the case of double. The connection with the double as mentioned above is through the reflection of oneself, pretending to be someone else, or the lies. The aspect of power and manipulation that often comes with the double, or as mentioned by the devil double, are also the strengths of the narcissist. The worst influence of narcissists is in intimate relationships. Indeed, narcissists are all around us, but they have more power in the closer bonds. Pretending to care and manipulating their partner while playing Prince Charming is their expertise. It is also a great example of the presence of the double, along with the lies. More about the narcissist in love was already mentioned but to highlight their endless power it is important to mention that trying to fix this kind of relationship has no point. The best what the victim can do is to leave the manipulative and abusive environment. The mentioned narcissistic attitudes are also presented in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

2.5. Double and the Identity Struggle

Before moving to the literary chapters, one more aspect related to the double needs to be mentioned and that is identity, more precisely the identity struggle. This struggle is also visible in the characters in the chosen literary works which will be shown through concrete examples later but first a short overview of the topic is covered. Identity is a very unique concept; it is a set of personal views, but it can be also affected by the outside world or by particular people. “The measurement of identity importance has three identity aspects, namely personal, social, image identity” (Chen and Yao 405). Image identity is an aspect “defined as the characteristics of external-self, which is formed based on individuals’ superficial/concrete attributes” (Chen and Yao 405). The social identity is influenced by society and its views. Social pressure by a group or a person can require a specific identity profile. By identifying or not identifying with the group or some situation we choose different identity roles. This is also connected to moral identity when our actions are questioned through the pressure of the immoral members from the group. These identity roles shape our behaviour and intentions and match them with a particular situation (Carter 204-209). The social, moral or gender identity are just examples of many types of different identities and with the complexity of this topic, it is impossible to cover all the aspects. However, what those different identities have in common is that uncertainty could appear in any of them. A person could be in doubt, lost or unable to identify. The outside world can guide these individuals figuring themselves out by offering some identity images, but at the same time, it can cause great damage and pressure. The pressure to identify with some made-up image and so fit in society creates a space for the double life. A person takes on a certain image to be part of the society and plays their role while keeping their true selves hidden inside of them. At the same time, this pressure can cause identity struggles for those who are sure about themselves but

have to pick another image. With the created double or multiple identities comes the clash of the selves which can complicate the person's life. Moreover, it can lead to the destruction of the true self.

2.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter offered the psychological insight into the double life. The physical double and the same psychic reflection of the double were mentioned, together with the motives of shadow, mirror, and reflection. Further, the characteristics of the multiple personality disorder pointed out some signs of the double such as the behavioural changes or the possible increased imagination that can cause lots of problems and separate people from the outside world. Another part was dedicated to the dark self, the devil double which has lots of power and leads to self-destruction. In that sense, the fear of death and of getting old was mentioned, which also appears in the case of narcissism. Homosexuality and the double formed another sub-chapter. There the appearance of the double was explained in relation to the aspect of 'living in silence and secret.' This phrase often describes the life of a homosexual in Victorian England and its duality. Hiding their orientation and living in secret offers a clear example of leading a double life. It speaks for itself but will be more clearly covered with the examples from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in the next chapter. Moreover, the relation of narcissism to the double was presented in this chapter. Part of this personality disorder is the manipulative and abusive behaviour that can also appear by the double. Also, the need of narcissists to become the better version of themselves all the time, shows the possibility of more versions of a person, of a double or multiple selves, and that highlights the occurrence of duality. Lastly, the identity struggle was covered. The pressure to identify with a certain identity image can lead to the formation of double or multiple identities and cause more damage than one can think.

3. Psychological Examination of the Double Life in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

This chapter presents the psychological insight into the double lives of the chosen characters – Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton, Dorian Gray and Sibyl Vane - and interconnects them with the theoretical chapter by concrete examples. The background of the characters and information relating to the different sections of the double described in the previous part are covered. The chapter goes deeper into the analysis of Dorian Gray as the main character and thus the main representative of the double life. So, several areas of the double such as the devil double self, the relation of homosexuality and narcissism to the double are mentioned more in detail in his case. However, it does not mean that the other characters' parts are limited or less important.

3.1. The Double Life of Basil Hallward

Basil Hallward is Dorian's friend and the painter of the portrait. Through him, we get to know Dorian and the details about the portrait. As a painter he admires Dorian's beauty and stresses how beautiful Dorian is, but his fascination with Dorian is more like an obsession which is easily visible from the way he talks about him to Lord Henry. Basil describes Dorian as the inspiration for his art through which he tries to mask his sexual attraction to Dorian. Blinded by love, it is hard for Basil to see Dorian's true colours and he thinks that Dorian is a good person with a pure soul. He falls in love with the body and according to its beauty, he simply idealizes Dorian. The difference between the body and soul presents a great example of duality. Later as the story progresses Basil is able to notice Dorian's changes in behaviour thanks to his strong focus on morals.

In the case of Basil, the double life is tied to homosexuality which is presented through his hidden love for Dorian. We can observe the element of silence which was mentioned before. There is silence while Basil is painting Dorian because Basil does not like to talk while painting. However, it can also be understood in connection to homosexuality. The silence and secret relate to a person's sins. By creating the portrait Basil can express how he feels about Dorian, and the picture is indeed very personal for him and so he will not even exhibit it like he originally thought (Sanna 28-32). Basil even states that the painting shows his soul and its hidden secret which supports Basil's love towards Dorian: "Every portrait that is painted with feeling is the portrait of the artist, not the sitter. ... It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. ... I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 5). So, in order to fit in the society and not to raise any suspicion, Basil had to hide his feelings. Of course, this was surrounded by a great confusion, and Basil found it hard to understand – so there appears to be a certain sexual identity struggle. "Of course I never let you know anything about this. It would have been impossible. You would not have understood it. I hardly understood it myself," explains Basil to Dorian (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 116). Then he is able to put it into words and confesses his feelings to Dorian: "I worshipped you. I grew jealous of every one to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself. I was only happy when I was with you" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 116). Dorian is surprised but he thinks of it as a compliment, nothing else. In addition, this happens by chance, it is not a planned confession to gain something. Basil knew even back then that he could not have Dorian only for himself. Further, it is hard to distinguish the line between Basil's actual love for Dorian and the artistic inspiration that Dorian presented to him as Basil was often hiding the adoration of Dorian behind his art. Nevertheless, there is a certain struggle in terms of sexual

identity and the connection between homosexuality and the double life, but unfortunately, the story does not provide many details about this.

3.1.1. Basil as Creator and the Reflection of Lord Kelso

Another Basil's possible double are the roles of a creator and the reflection of Lord Kelso. In this sense, Basil is interpreted as some kind of 'Frankensteinian creator' (Walker 98). He is the initiator who makes Dorian realize how beautiful he is. Basil does not further support Dorian's corruption like Lord Henry, but indeed he is the creator of the portrait. So, it is no surprise that Dorian blames him for the hideous picture. The other possible double role is him being the reflection of Lord Kelso. Lord Kelso was Dorian's grandfather who played a significant role in his life. He raised Dorian after his mother died but he was not a good surrogate parent. He in fact hated Dorian, tried to organize his life, and had a certain power over him. Similarly, Basil wants to be part of Dorian's life in which the connection is often interpreted as the sexual attraction but can be also interpreted from a different perspective as 'paternal.' Further, Basil has strong morals and when he sees how Dorian behaves, he tries to talk him into better behaviour. So, Basil in a way attempts to control Dorian like his grandfather did. Dorian then tends to spend more time with Lord Henry who does not preach him about the morals of his life, so he distances himself and sometimes even avoids meeting with Basil. Murdering Basil could represent the life-long struggle with Lord Kelso and so ending this suffering (Rashkin 76-78). Moreover, Dorian's actions evoke certain details about his childhood when he tries to get the painting out of sight. He wraps the picture into a satin piece of cloth that belonged to his grandfather and hides it in the room where Lord Kelso put him in order to distance himself from Dorian (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 121-124). Those shared details are linked to Lord Kelso and the portrait created by Basil Hallward, and so show a relation between them. Speaking of connection there is a strange connection between

Basil and Dorian when they first see each other. Basil explained his feelings about the meeting like this: “Suddenly I found myself face to face with the young man whose personality had so strangely stirred me. We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 7). So, the similarity of Basil to Lord Kelso in some behaviour patterns, the specific depiction of Dorian on the canvas, or the strange immediate connection suggest another possible duality of Basil.

3.2. The Double Life of Lord Henry Wotton

Lord Henry Wotton, a friend of Basil, is a master at speaking and gifted with a specific wit. He has a different philosophy of life compared to others, and a way of enjoying life. Lord Henry can influence a person very easily. He is very good at observing people and chooses friends according to what benefit they can bring him and according to their good looks. Basil knows him and so is worried about his influence on Dorian, that is why he does not want Henry to meet Dorian in the first place. Dorian becomes a project, an experiment for Henry.

Henry’s public image is also very characteristic of him – the image of a gentleman and a married man. However, that is the surface picture offered to the public, but the reality is different. Usually what he says does not match with what he really thinks or what he stands for. His reactions or actions differ from his words. That is where his duality appears. He holds different opinions and tries to keep his public image while hiding his immoral desires. So, he is pretending to be someone else than he actually is. Henry makes certain poses through his comments, and it often shocks his friends or in general people around him. As he says: “... there is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 2). So, he tries to have a certain interesting image for the public, but the reality is often different. One of the examples is the way he talks about his marriage. He often criticizes the act of

marriage and makes comments about women in general, for example he says: “I never know where my wife is, and my wife never knows what I am doing” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 4). Suggesting that he and his wife are not spending much time together and so implying some indication about their marriage. It could be true, but his friend Basil seems to know otherwise and with Henry’s way of talking it could all be just a pose. “I hate the way you talk about your married life, Harry, said Basil Hallward. ... I believe you are really a very good husband, but that you are thoroughly ashamed of your own virtues. ... You never say a moral thing, and you never do a wrong thing. Your cynicism is simply a pose” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 4). All in all, it is hard to know what Henry means, what is true or what he really thinks. His duality is therefore some kind of a pose with which he wants to differ from society, be interesting for others and then mainly for Dorian. Also, the pretending to be someone else could be part of Henry’s identity struggle and so a certain coping mechanism between the posing and his true self as he tries to have certain identity image but at the same time differ from other people. However, this behaviour and later his influence on Dorian are very intentional and are motivated by the sense of the profit it might bring for Henry.

Further, Lord Henry shows certain narcissistic behaviour. He thinks highly about himself. He chooses people for the benefit of the friendship and manipulates them for his own benefit. There is no violent behaviour in Henry’s case to pursue things, but he is indeed a rhetorical mastermind in influencing others and so gets his way very easily. In the friendship with Dorian, Henry creates a space for Dorian to open up to find out as many details about him. This is what people with narcissistic traits do. Also, narcissists are often pretending to be someone else so their victim will fall in love with them or just simply fall under their influence, and by that, they are creating a double. Henry pretends to be someone else and tries to influence people with his different philosophy of life. He

does not care if he has a bad influence on a person. Besides, Henry loves to speak in society and is very sociable which requires a lot of attention. Narcissists need attention and admiration. Henry is getting it from society and later mainly from Dorian – “He felt that the eyes of Dorian Gray were fixed on him, and the consciousness that amongst his audience there was one whose temperament he wished to fascinate” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 41). To get Dorian’s attention is Henry’s aim, then it is easier to influence him. As Henry is older and knows more about life, Dorian sees him as someone he can learn from. So, at first, he is not aware of the bad influence Henry has on him, but as time progresses, he starts to slowly realize. However, it is not easy to get away from a narcissist and even after deciding several times not to stay in contact with Henry, Dorian fails in this attempt. Overall, Henry’s narcissistic traits go well with his pretending to be someone else and so they support the complexity of his double life.

In the area of love, Henry is married and as described before he makes several comments about the nature of marriage, about women. Through the story, we learn that his marriage is ending in divorce. Henry’s narcissistic behaviour and so his inability to love could have supported its ending. However, there can be more possible interpretations as for example Henry’s increased interest in Dorian or the influential book *A Rebours* which Henry gifted to Dorian, but it also made him think of his own life (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 224). The fact that Henry is fond of Dorian is no secret. They spend so much time together, just the two of them, and grow very close, which can suggest some hidden sexual desires. They even used to share a place to stay with each other as Dorian mentions: “the villa that he had shared at Trouville with Lord Henry, as well as the ... house at Algiers where they had more than once spent the winter” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 143). Further, Dorian is for Henry his walking experiment, but he is also amazed by Dorian’s beauty. It is stressed several times throughout the novel that men in general

were fascinated with Dorian's beauty – which on one hand can suggest some homoerotic motives, leaving Basil as not the only possible homosexual character in this novel. On the other hand, they were more likely to be just jealous of Dorian's beauty and youth. This jealousy or wish to be as young and beautiful as Dorian is stressed by Lord Henry multiple times through the story. In addition, Henry is so focused on Dorian for the sake of the experiment, occupying him with his presence and influence.

3.2.1. Lord Henry as Mephistopheles

Similarly, like Basil is compared to the creator of Frankenstein, Henry is compared to Mephistopheles from Faust. It is because of his influence on Dorian and their so-called 'friendship' in which Henry held a certain power over Dorian as of his little experiment (Walker 98-99). "To a large extent the lad was his own creation" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 57). In this sense, Walker talks about Henry as the creator, and initiator of Dorian's corruption and not Basil as raised before (Walker 99). Actually, Lord Henry thinks of Dorian as his experiment, notices how Dorian has changed from the first time they met and is fascinated by it. He is in fact psychoanalysing Dorian. That is why he is not happy about Dorian's engagement because it can disrupt his experiment. He realizes how things are about to change when Dorian has someone to spend a life with and he feels that Dorian will not be that close to him. Nevertheless, he gets his way when Sibyl's bad performance helps Dorian to change his mind, but Henry's comments influence the situation. On the other hand, there are more possible interpretations. For example, Nunokawa marks Henry's role as Dorian's teacher (316). So, it depends on how one looks at it, but it is obvious that both Henry and Basil played a certain part in Dorian's corruption – Basil as the author of the picture showing Dorian's beauty, and Henry as the negative influence. However, it is also important to say that it is not possible to blame

other people entirely and not the person who is directly responsible for his behaviour and his sins, Dorian.

3.2.2. Henry as Dorian's Shadow

Another possible interpretation of Henry's influence on Dorian is that Henry could be Dorian's shadow, suggesting another theory about the double. When Lord Henry first meets Dorian, he talks about influence and how all influence is immoral. He also compares influence to giving your soul to a person. "Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 17). Knowing that Lord Henry is intentionally influencing Dorian, this whole 'experimenting' could result in giving Dorian his soul. Through the story they grow quite close and other people start to notice that Dorian acquired some opinions from Henry or in general his thoughts and expressions. This is of course recognized by Basil as he knows Henry is able to do that, and the same is immediately noticed by Lady Henry when she meets Dorian for the first time (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 45). So, Dorian could be thought of as the copy of Henry in this sense, the double (Raitt 170) (Fritz 299).

However, later as Dorian's behaviour gets stranger, even Henry starts to wonder what is happening. Previously Dorian was telling him everything, which was part of Henry's purpose, but then Henry does not know about the changes in the portrait or that Dorian has committed a murder. Dorian shares some information about the murder when he expresses the hypothetical scenario about him killing Basil, but Henry does not even consider that this could be the truth. So, it is true that Henry gave bits of himself to Dorian and influenced him, but he was not wholly his shadow. His impact awoke something in Dorian and continued to grow further on its own. As sometimes happens the experiment got out of hand. Overall, this interpretation needs to be taken with reservations as

Dorian's corruption is a combination of more factors, but Henry's influence certainly played a significant part in that.

3.3. The Double Life of Dorian Gray

Dorian Gray is the main character of the story and the most characteristic in the sense of the double life. His double life is visible to the reader as the existence of the portrait helps to imagine the separation of the body and soul. However, first of all, it is important to highlight Dorian's appearance as he immediately caught everyone's attention and his image led others to think of him highly so no one would even think he killed a person. Lord Henry said after seeing Dorian for the first time: "There was something in his face that made one trust him at once" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 16). Once the portrait is finished and soon after hearing Henry's comments about his exceptional beauty and youth, Dorian becomes obsessed with his image. That is when he makes a wish to stay young and beautiful like the painting forever, suggesting he would do anything for it, even give his own soul. "Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 26). Similar to Doctor Faustus, Dorian sells his soul (Milbank 30). After that wish his body and soul are disconnected, they exist on their own. The duality is supported by the interaction between Basil and Henry: "You really must not say things like that before Dorian, Harry. Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea or us or the one in the picture? Before either" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 29). It is likely meant as a joke or to show how accurately the picture looks like Dorian as no one knows about Dorian's double at that time. Nevertheless, Dorian feels a certain connection between him and the portrait already at Basil's studio: "It is part of myself. I can feel that'" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 28).

3.3.1. Dorian's Family Background

To have an idea where the roots for Dorian's corruption might lie it is crucial to focus on his childhood, more precisely on the childhood trauma and its influence on his life. As mentioned, Dorian was raised by his grandfather Lord Kelso because his mother died. However, the relationships in the family were not ideal. Before the death of Dorian's mother, Lord Kelso had Dorian's father killed because he disliked this man so much. So, he was left with the child. He in fact hated this boy who inherited the appearance of his mother. Because of this and other reasons, he distanced Dorian from himself and put him in the upper room, and so in a way imprisoned the boy (Rashkin 70). As Wilde writes Dorian was left to "the tyranny of an old and loveless man" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 35). It already causes great harm when one loses both parents and with a guardian like Lord Kelso makes the trauma even worse.

According to the Hungarian psychoanalyst Ferenczi, children suffering from child abuse "feel physically and morally helpless, their personalities are not sufficiently consolidated in order to be able to protest" (Rashkin 71). They cannot easily stand up against the aggressor. The identification with their aggressor plays an important role. This can be understood as a type of safety, but it does not mean they change roles or that the child does not see the inappropriate behaviour of the aggressor. It means that the child unintentionally acquires the image, the identity created by the aggressor like it happens to Dorian (Rashkin 71-72). Raised in isolation and hate Dorian identified with the image presented to him, which could be the origin of his corrupt double.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that Lord Kelso was part of Dorian's life for a long time. We do not know precisely from which age the grandfather raised him, but he is referred to as a boy or as "the little grandson," which suggests a very young age (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 124). However, it is known from the story that Lord Kelso died

about five years before Dorian asks his housekeeper for the key to his old room and she answers: “Why, it hasn’t been opened for nearly five years, not since his lordship died” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 120). Dorian is twenty years old at the beginning of the novel. This chronology is supported later by the mention of his thirty eighth birthday and the fact that it has been eighteen years since Sibyl died (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 150, 197). So, the terror must have lasted for almost all his life. There are not many details of Dorian’s feelings about his grandfather in the story. We only find out that he does not like to hear about him and that “he had hateful memories of him” when the housekeeper mentions Lord Kelso (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 120). However, that is probably enough. No one would be happy to remember a traumatic experience like this and the man who arranged their father’s death. From all of this, it is noticeable that Dorian’s corruption probably does not originate with the influence of Lord Henry Wotton or with the existence of the portrait but with his grandfather.

3.3.2. Dorian and Signs of MPD

As mentioned in the theoretical chapter some characteristic signs of multiple personality disorder could also be factors of the double. In the case of Dorian, it is easier to compare, than by the other characters, as he is the main character of the story and so his figure is presented in a complex way. Similar to the MPD each of the personalities/selves is dominant at a concrete time and the person does not even notice. The same happens to Dorian, he does not feel the change of the selves inside him in the actual time, but he usually becomes aware of something wrong going on with him through the committed actions, his sins. Those reminders are made through the portrait which is mirroring his soul. The behavioural changes are one of the main signs of MPD and they are at the beginning of the list of the common signs presented by GB Greaves, under numbers 2. and 3. - “2) reports of being told of behavioural episodes by others, 3)

reports of notable changes by reliable observers, including the patient referring to himself by another name” (Bliss 119). Moreover, those two signs highlight that the behavioural changes are observed by others, which is also the case of the double life. This applies to Dorian’s double life as well – he is reminded many times of his different or changed behaviour by Basil. Further, another sign of MPD is hearing voices, having visions etc. which is covered by numbers 7. and 8. and it happens because of the great mixture of personalities. In general, people suffering from MPD have an increased sense of imagination. Dorian too experiences similar things. After the incident where James Vane tried to kill him, he keeps seeing James (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 196, 205). It leaves him paranoid, and he constantly thinks that he is being followed: “The consciousness of being hunted, snared, tracked down, had begun to dominate him” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 206). However, this happens because he is paranoid and haunted by his sins when he has one of his states of feeling terrified. Sometimes he is so paranoid and scared and in other moments extremely calm which supports the switch of the selves. In the case of Dorian, the hearing or the visions are not the result of more personalities in him but mean that the little left in his conscience is haunting him. The existence of different selves by the double or MPD is hard to manage and so is their harmony. They are often in conflict, and each wants to take control which can result in violence. Last but most importantly, multiple personality disorder is more likely to appear in victims of child abuse. This supports Dorian’s acquisition of the image presented to him and the identification with the aggressor mentioned in the previous section (Bliss 119) (Doak 66-71).

This identification with the aggressor brings the topic of identity, and so the identity struggle. Dorian as not having an ideal childhood could be struggling with identification when we consider the traumatic environment and the loss of both of his parents. So, he actually does not know much about his family background, only about

his grandfather whom he hates. Further, he is much younger than Basil and Lord Henry and so he gets influenced through the friendships with such people and his interactions in society. As known, Lord Henry has a significant influence on him. However, Dorian is also very interested in knowing Lord Henry and is very fascinated with his personality. He in fact praises Henry and learns a lot from him. So, we can see a certain influence on the formation of Dorian's identity. He indeed picks up certain identity images that other people show him (Carter 204-209).

3.3.3. Dorian and the Devil Double (Self)

The first time Dorian's cruelty is shown is when he breaks off the engagement with Sibyl. It is followed by a feeling of guilt, but it comes with the realization that the portrait has changed and that it can project his sins. He plans to make it right with Sibyl, not to talk with Lord Henry, and just be good so the picture will not alter anymore. However, when he finds out that Sibyl killed herself, after being in shock and worrying that his behaviour might have caused it, his feelings are very quickly substituted with apathy. He even says things like: "She had no right to kill herself. It was selfish of her" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 100). Of course, Lord Henry talked him out of the connection between him and the suicide, but still, his thinking of Sibyl shifts completely and he does not care at all. It is probably because Dorian realizes that he cannot make up for his sin and blames Sibyl for everything. He wanted to try to love her again just for his own sake, which shows how selfish he was. Later when he looks at the painting, he feels that "his own soul was looking out at him from the canvas and calling him to judgement" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 121).

Starting with his bad behaviour towards Sibyl, Dorian unwraps his evil self little by little as the story progresses. For instance, when the men are carrying the picture to the upper room and one of them wants to see it Dorian “felt ready to leap upon him and fling him to the ground if he dared to lift the gorgeous hanging that concealed the secret of his life” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 125). We get to know that Dorian has certain violent thoughts and the fact that he would do anything to protect his secret. Further, Dorian’s corruption gets worse through the years and so others start to talk about his strange behaviour, but because of his looks most people still find him nice and charming. Basil cannot believe what is being said in society about Dorian, so he decides to visit his friend. He wants to see Dorian’s soul so Dorian shares his secret with him and shows him the portrait. “He felt a terrible joy at the thought that someone else was to share his secret” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 156). Dorian is enjoying it which makes the whole situation even more terrifying. During their interaction, Dorian starts to feel full of hatred towards Basil and blames him for everything. This sudden evil shift is caused also by the worry about his secret and so Dorian kills his friend. He does not think about it as of a monstrous act, he is not even bothered by the dead body afterwards. Instead, with a calm feeling he fakes his coming home creating the alibi for himself. (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 161-164).

After the death of Basil, Dorian engages further in criminal behaviour. He manipulates and blackmails the chemist and his former friend Alan Campbell to help him get rid of the body. Dorian lacks empathy about killing a human being and thinks of the body as evidence that needs to disappear. It does not disturb him that he is forcing Alan to be part of the crime he committed (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 172-175). However, the portrait is terrorizing Dorian. In order to escape reality, to forget, he spends more time in the opium dens. Dorian’s paranoia that his true soul would be revealed intensifies and he is afraid that he will not be able to hide behind his mask. So, it is harder for him to exist.

The opium dens help him but with the drug usage also comes self-destruction (Sanna 33-34). His double life comes to the point when it starts to be more complicated, and the two selves appear in frequent conflict. As mentioned before, there are certain shifts in Dorian's life, times when he hides behind his double and in others he shows his corrupt soul. Or there are those changes when he is extremely worried, has regrets and wants to change, but then periods when he is on the other hand extremely wicked. There is a time when Dorian expresses a wish to get better and actually plans to change. This happens after James Vane's death (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 215-216). Dorian shares his intentions with Lord Henry who does not really see the point in Dorian's wish to change and says things like: "You cannot change to me, Dorian" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 224) or "It is no use. You and I are what we are, and will be what we will be" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 225). So even though Dorian wants to be good and live a better life as he recently started, his selves are 'fighting' inside of him and in the end, the powerful dark self wins. He feels like he does not need to confess to his sins at all, that there is no evidence against him except the painting. So, instead of trying to be good, Dorian destroys the picture as the only proof of his dark life (Sanna 35-36). "It would kill the monstrous soul-life, and without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 230). From this, we can see that it is not easy to escape the dark self as it is more powerful and so it succeeds in taking over the person. Nevertheless, with the devil double usually comes self-destruction which ends in suicide as mentioned before. Here it is the example of destroying the portrait as the way out which also means destroying the mirror showing the corrupt soul and so Dorian himself.

3.3.4. Dorian as Homosexual

Dorian is not a characteristic homosexual figure like Basil or for example Oscar Wilde himself. Dorian's double is more visible in relation to the devil self or narcissism which will be covered in the next section. However, there is a possibility of homoerotic practices in Dorian's male friendships and so some secret double life in this respect. This comes to light when Basil mentions Dorian's companionships with young men and that people make bad comments about it. Unfortunately, there is not enough detail about this, but we get to know that some men Dorian was very close with leave the country, one committed suicide, another risked his career (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 152-153). So, these companionships definitely do not end well, but Dorian does not want to talk about it and so we do not know the real reason behind the end of them. Further, we can consider the closeness of Dorian with Alan Campbell. The novel even mentions the word intimacy but again the details are missing (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 171). Instead, there appears to be some unfinished business between these two and Dorian uses it to blackmail Alan. It could suggest some hidden practices which could possibly expose Alan and his secret life (Sanna 31). However, it is very hard to reach a final conclusion as there is not enough information about this topic, we can only make assumptions. What we know is that Dorian rethinks his life after reading the influential book Henry gave him: "One hardly knew at time whether one was reading the spiritual ecstasies of some mediaeval saint or the morbid confessions of a modern sinner. It was a poisonous book" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 128). So, it definitely left a certain impact on him and corrupted him. Also, he could experiment in terms of his sexual identity (Nunokawa 316). In fact, the book had a great power and Dorian confronts Lord Henry about its influence a few years later: "Yet you poisoned me with a book once. I should not forgive that. ... It does harm" (Wilde, *Dorian*

Gray 224). And he asks Henry to promise him that he will never show the book to anybody else.

3.3.5. Dorian as Narcissist

This chapter mentioned already some concrete narcissistic traits by Lord Henry, but in the case of Dorian, the narcissism is even more interconnected with other aspects. He is, as narcissists are, selfish, manipulative, and lacking in empathy, which also appears in Lord Henry. However, Dorian's narcissism is very well supported by the obsession over his image, by his toxic relationships and last but not least by the self-destruction of the narcissist himself. Dorian loves his appearance and youth for which he is highly admired by others and so is the centre of attention. He is obsessing over his image, the reflection, and so to say the double. As Erikson says: "narcissus simply starves to death as he sits there by the pond, gazing at his reflection" (Erikson X). Similarly, Dorian is gazing at the portrait, his double: "Morning after morning, he had sat before the portrait, wondering at its beauty, almost enamoured of it ..." (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 106). Later when the picture already changed, Dorian was secretly entering the room and stood in front of the picture with a mirror watching the two faces, his own and the one on the canvas (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 130). This supports the fact that a narcissist treats his or her body like an object (Freud 460).

Further, people in a relationship with the narcissist are treated as objects. As narcissists are not capable of love they focus on what one can offer and how the person makes them look. Dorian's relationship with Sibyl it is exactly like that. Dorian likes Sibyl for her appearance and acting ability, but he does not really love her. He stops liking Sibyl immediately after she plays badly because she breaks some kind of made-up image/ object created in his head. Moreover, Sibyl made him look bad in front of his friends to whom Dorian originally wanted to show how genuine she is. Those toxic

relationships are therefore based on the profit for the narcissist. Also, Dorian plays Prince Charming before he shows his true self (Erikson 147). Sibyl calls him Prince Charming and she does not know his real name until the engagement, which shows how charmed she was by Dorian (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 53). This leads to pretending to be someone else and so creating a double. In the end, Dorian ends up alone though he had some love interest, but even Dorian himself believes that he is not able to love: “I wish I could love, cried Dorian Gray ... I am too much concentrated on myself. My personality has become a burden to me” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 211).

Another aspect connected to narcissism and Dorian is the fear of getting old and with that the fear of death. Dorian does not want to get older and lose his youthful appearance. He even says that he should kill himself when he finds it is happening. This fear is common with narcissism. The same feeling comes with the fear of death but here it is more like the coming of death than dying itself. Narcissists have a high ego and so their understanding of reality as some reflected image, some duplication makes the death more tolerable (Rank 82-83). In the same way it appears by Dorian who is more terrified of the coming of death than the dying itself: “I have no terror of Death. It is the coming of Death that terrifies me” (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 210). Moreover, with narcissism comes self-destruction, which often ends in suicide and that is also the case of Dorian who stabs his soul. As mentioned, narcissism is a personality disorder and so there is no cure, which adds to the tendency of destruction.

As stated, it is not certain how narcissism originates in people and so it is with Dorian. It could be the moment when he fell in love with his beauty or a long time before that. Given the information about Dorian’s family background, the theory about children experiencing traumatic childhood where they are isolated from the outside world and their emphatic abilities are lowered, could fit his case. Also, treating children like objects

is then unintentionally done by the children, which could be acquired by Dorian from Lord Kelso (Erikson 122-124). However, it is hard to say for sure as not much information is shared about this, but the portrait was definitely a pressure point for showing his narcissistic behaviour. Overall, Dorian's narcissism supports the double by the love of his reflection, by pretending to be someone else and so creating dual scenarios or information, and by the understanding of reality as some duplication and so bearing the idea of death.

3.4. The Double Life of Sibyl Vane

Sibyl's double life is easily detectable as she is an actress and so she pretends to be other people. She learns the personalities of the characters and their lives. We get to know Sibyl from Dorian's point of view and that is through the people she plays: "Tonight she is Imogen, he answered, and tomorrow night she will be Juliet. When is she Sibyl Vane? Never" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 54). "And now I am off. Imogen is waiting for me" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 56). This directly shows that he likes the characters she plays and that he never truly loved her, instead he adored her doubles. Henry shares the same opinion even before seeing Sibyl. He thinks that Dorian just fancies Sibyl's acting which he judges from the way Dorian talks about her. Besides, he says to Dorian after Sibyl's suicide: "The girl never really lived, and so she has never really died" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 104). By that, Henry means that Sibyl lived through the lives of others most of the time and so did not lead a proper life of her own. Further, Sibyl lives in a frame of some play which is also visible through the way she calls Dorian: "You look more like a prince. I must call you Prince Charming" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 53). She referred to him as some kind of character in a play, which supports her lifestyle. Later Sibyl realizes she does not want to play someone else anymore and pretend to be in love. After meeting Dorian, she thinks she knows better: "You made me understand what love really is. ... I have grown sick of shadows" (Wilde, *Dorian Gray* 87). Sibyl is tired of the shadows meaning the characters she plays, and so with leading a double life. She shows it in her last performance where the split between her as the actress and the character is very noticeable. Sibyl is ready to focus on her own life and on what the future brings in her relationship with Dorian, but unfortunately, neither of these happen as Dorian breaks off the engagement and she commits suicide right after (Hidaka 98-99).

3.5. Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter focused on the psychological examination of the double life in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. It covered different aspects of the double life through the chosen characters in relation to the preceding theoretical part. In the case of Basil Hallward, the focus is on his double life as a homosexual, living in silence and secret, and with that the sexual identity struggle. Also, his possible dual roles as a creator and a reflection of Lord Kelso were mentioned. Lord Henry Wotton's double is characteristic of pretending to be someone else and keeping a certain image for the public. This is well connected to Henry's narcissistic traits – the influence he has over people, his manipulative techniques, etc. The sub-chapter also provides possible dual roles of Lord Henry, concretely of Mephistopheles and as Dorian's shadow. Further, a large part focused on Dorian Gray and the aspects of his double life. By describing Dorian's family background, it is easier to understand the origin of his corrupt soul, the possible acquisition of an image created by his grandfather and so the 'birth' of the double self. It also covered the relation of the double to MPD and Dorian's behavioural changes, mainly the shifts of the selves. The part about Dorian's devil double showed his corrupt soul more in detail and the following self-destruction. Besides the chapter portrayed Dorian's double in terms of homosexuality and narcissism. As Lord Henry, Dorian is pretending to be someone else and uses people for his own good. He plays Prince Charming and is obsessed with his image. Last, the chapter briefly described the double of Sibyl Vane who lives different lives through the characters she plays and so thinks of life as a play.

4. Psychological Examination of the Double Life in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

This chapter's main focus is the double life in *The Importance of Being Earnest*. It focuses on the double life of the chosen characters from the play – concretely on Jack Worthing, Algernon Moncrieff, and Cecily Cardew with relation to Gwendolen Fairfax. The lives of those characters offer another example of the double life, in the case of this play mostly connected to the identity struggle. As the genre of the play suggests, the information about the people or their lives is not as detailed as in a novel for example. So, the different aspects of the double cannot be covered as in depth as they were in the previous chapter, or by some of the characters not at all. However, the double identity and the identity struggle present another interesting psychological insight in terms of the double life.

Before moving to the actual chapter, I would like to clear up the confusion about the names. In order not to add to the confusion or to mix up which Ernest is talked about as there are several possibilities, the name Ernest will be used only in the way referring to the double identities of Jack and Algernon or to refer to the fake brother Ernest.

4.1. The Double Life of Jack Worthing (Ernest Moncrieff)

Before describing the double life of Jack Worthing, it is needed to present basic information about him which can then lead to a better understanding of his double life and its reasons. Jack Worthing is the main character of the play, a young man who is in love with his friend's cousin Gwendolen Fairfax. She is the main reason why he comes to town, otherwise he stays in the country. He is in between those two places and shifts his location according to his plans and needs. His duty in the country is to look after Cecily, Mr. Thomas Cardew's granddaughter who wanted Jack to be her guardian. Mr. Cardew is actually the substitute parent for Jack, the man who found him as an abandoned baby in the train station. This brings us to the mysterious background of Jack Worthing and this rather unfortunate background as it is often presented is also pointed to many times in the play. It happens mostly in the comparison of Jack with other gentlemen by Lady Bracknell. She even has a list of "eligible young men" which speaks for itself (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 17). The background of the unfortunate and orphaned child found in a bag at the Victoria station does definitely not match the list requirements and with the ideal candidate for her daughter's husband (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 17-20).

Jack shares information about his secret double life after his friend Algernon insists on knowing who Cecily is, the person who gave Jack the cigarette case. "From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack" is written on the case and that makes Algernon ask questions (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 7). He does not only wonder who Cecily is but also about the reference to Uncle Jack when he knows his friend as Ernest. That is where the confusion about the names starts. Jack introduced himself as Ernest to Algernon and in town, he is known as Ernest. He explains: "Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 7). Algy shares his suspicion about Jack being "a secret

Bunburyist” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 8). This term and the concept of Bunburying will be explained more in the next section. However, Jack’s way of creating a younger problematic brother named Ernest in order to be able to leave the country for the town offers a concrete example of what Bunburying actually is (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 8).

Jack has been using his fictional brother Ernest as an excuse for a while. At the time of the play, he comes to the point that he needs to get rid of his made-up brother as soon as possible. The main reason is Cecily’s growing interest in Ernest and the fact that he will eventually get married (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 10). Also, other people in the country ask about Ernest and every time Jack comes back from the town he needs to come up with some fake story about his brother (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 22). People such as Dr Chasuble or Miss Prism think this brother actually exists. They talk about him and judge too – problematic, wicked. “Still leading his life of pleasure?” asks Dr Chasuble (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 34). No wonder then that Jack does not give the main reason for his departures, as he leaves to have some time for pleasure himself, he rather hides it in order not to be judged. However, Jack benefits from this adopted image, his developed identity for the town. Thanks to his double he gets a chance to get to know Gwendolen which someone like him would not normally be able to. He is getting another chance by creating the double to fight against Victorian society’s norms and rules.

Nevertheless, Jack’s name and his life in the country are revealed and so is his double life when Gwendolen meets Cecily. The nonexistence of a man named Ernest is also cleared up. So, Jack is then forced to reveal himself even though he tried to get rid of his fake brother before Algernon invaded his plans. On the other hand, we see that he tries to partially acquire at least something of his identity created for the town and that is to be christened as Ernest for Gwendolen’s sake (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 52-56). So, he tries to become at least a bit of the version he created for London’s society. However,

Jack's real identity is found out after Lady Bracknell meets Miss Prism and confronts her about the lost baby. It turns out that Jack is the lost baby that was never found (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 68-70). Lady Bracknell explains Jack's true relations: "You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 71). Gwendolen immediately brings up the question about Jack's Christian name: "What is your Christian name, now that you have become someone else?" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 71). This is a very good point. Jack finds out his true identity after years of living a completely different person's life, in a sense living a created dual identity, and now he is to become someone else. On top of that, Jack discovers that his Christian name is Ernest. So, he was telling the truth about being called Ernest and about having a brother: "Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 73).

However, Flanagan argues that Jack loses his true self by situating himself as a part of the society, between its members. He fits in society exactly how they want him to. His identity of Jack Worthing, the one he grew up with and mostly identified with his entire life, is suddenly disappearing. Jack cares more about the person he can become after the revelation of his birth. Flanagan adds, talking about Jack and Algernon, that "it is not their doubles who die, of course; it is their true selves" (Flanagan 126). So, Jack in fact becomes the invented double he created, the man named Ernest who has a younger brother, and his original self disappears (Flanagan 126). On the contrary, it needs to be mentioned that Jack probably did not strongly value his identity as half of the time he pretended to be someone else and so tried to live the life of another person. This could have been his coping mechanism with reality and the possible attempt to change his fate. Also, thanks to the new findings about his birth Jack suddenly becomes one of the gentlemen on Lady Bracknell's list of eligible young men. This means a lot because a

family background like this finally enables him to marry Gwendolen and that matters the most for him.

4.1.1. Reasons for the Existence of Jack's Double Life

After explaining Jack's double life, it brings us to the possible reasons that led to the creation of the double. The first reason goes back to Jack's childhood. As he was found in a bag at Victoria Station he has no family background. His name was given to him by Mr. Cardew who found him but otherwise, Jack does not know anything about his birth, or his real parents, and so he does not know who he really is (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 19). An experience like this of course leaves some trauma inside the person. For Jack the creation of the double could be some kind of coping mechanism with the trauma. Also, as he does not know who he is, it could be a way of defining himself. Unfortunately, there is not much information about Jack growing up, but it does not seem that his surrogate family caused further harm. Mr. Thomas Cardew took care of him and in his last will he named Jack as Cecily's guardian (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 66). So, Jack probably did not have a traumatic childhood where he would be treated as badly as Dorian, was but he indeed experienced certain trauma by being the abandoned and lost child.

This unfortunate experience is closely connected to the second reason and that is the identity struggle. As mentioned in the theoretical part, society offers certain identity images but that puts a lot of pressure on people figuring themselves out and might lead to the formation of the double. However, as said this pressure can also affect people who already created a certain identity image (Carter 204-205). A similar thing could appear in the case of Jack as someone struggling to identify or someone over-questioning his image, in general someone without clear family relations. A certain pressure on him is made by Lady Bracknell when she asks him for all the personal information and most

importantly about his family background. By that, she pressures Jack to identify himself, to find at least one of his possible parents in order to determine his social status (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 17-18). Another pressure is exerted by Gwendolen by putting an extra emphasis on the name Ernest. And so that she could only love and marry someone with such a melodic name. Of course, she does not know that the man she loves just calls himself Ernest, but it is not his real name (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 15). This demand leads Jack to organize his christening so he can officially identify with the name Ernest for Gwendolen's sake. Even after Cecily reveals the identity of Uncle Jack to Gwendolen, she still insists on the name Ernest (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 60). In the end, he does not have to do that, but it is a good example to imagine the possible effect of concrete people on his identity.

Another possible reason for the existence of the double is the fear of rejection. This is combined with the social status and the differences between its social classes. In town Jack does not present himself as Uncle Jack from the countryside but as someone in a 'better' position named Ernest with some inherited property (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 17). However, he is hiding his life in the country. So, he does not tell Gwendolen his 'real' name but rather wants to be christened as Ernest or he does not want to share his other life in the country with Algernon because it might not go well with his made-up image (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 7). He rather leads a double life to fit better in society. The last reason and the most obvious one, is creating the double to have some time for himself while keeping his moral image. As Jack says: "When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. ... And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness ..." (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 8). He rather does not mention his true reasons for visiting the town because the excuses about his problematic brother sound better and even add to

keeping his moral tone. So, Jack uses his double life to escape his duties for a while, to experience a bit of the life of pleasure. It is understandable that he does not mention his double life as others could be very critical. This is noticeable from just Algernon's reaction, immediately marking Jack as Bunburyist or more precisely from the judgement Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble make about the brother Ernest living the life of pleasure (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 34).

4.1.2. Jack and Signs of MPD

There are not many signs of MPD that can be applied to Jack's duality. First of all, his created double life is coming to an end and there is no record of what happened through the years he has been leading those lives. Second, in general, there are not many details shared about his duality and so it is hard to say if some of the signs occurred or not. However, what sign could be at least partially applied is sign number 3 where the person refers to themselves by another name (Bliss 119). It is actually a bit problematic as all of it is done intentionally and so knowingly pretending to be someone else to gain something from it. So, the signs are less applicable in this case. Nevertheless, Doak talks about the increased sense of imagination by MPD, and this imagination is used to escape the trauma or some other moments that could be found in Jack's situation (Doak 66-71).

4.1.3. Jack and the Devil Double (Self)

The consequences of the devil double self form another aspect. It cannot be described in depth as in *Dorian Gray* as the play does not cover it that much and Jack soon 'kills' his fake brother and not much later after also his made-up image for the town, but there are certain signs or situations that can suggest the existence of the devil double self. The double enables Jack to keep a profile of the responsible and moral uncle, letting him experience some of the life of pleasure. Nevertheless, with that comes a certain price and that is the double becomes dominant and wants to take control over the original self.

Also, the complications start to appear when the person is getting more entangled in their two lives, and so has to pretend or lie even more. A similar thing happens to Jack when he must pretend that his fake brother Ernest died. He comes up with a story about it and has to fake his mourning. Or when we consider that Jack has to play along in Algernon's made-up story and his claim to be the brother Ernest. That is how much the devil double could be powerful and could have a great influence over the person (Flanagan 129-131).

4.2. The Double Life of Algernon Moncrieff

Algernon Moncrieff is the other main character. Similar to Lord Henry Wotton he has a specific wit and philosophy of life. He criticizes the act of marriage and society in general. He seems to have some immoral thoughts or views. For example, when Jack says that he will get rid of his made-up brother Ernest, because of Cecily and he advises Algy to do the same with his friend Bunbury, Algernon does not agree with him. He says: "Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, ... you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 10). This changes later when he gets to know Cecily and with the chaos about his and Jack's identities. However, similar to Jack, Algernon too leads a double life. In order to escape situations, he does not like, like his dinners with Aunt Augusta, he pretends to have an invalid friend Bunbury whose health is in a bad condition and so requires regular visits (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 9-12). This "Bunburying" seems to be a way of escaping the reality for Algernon, a way to get out of town. He sees the benefits of his invented double and definitely does not think about ending this double life.

Then Algernon creates another double within a double. After secretly hearing the address of Jack's house in the country he decides to go Bunburying immediately (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 25). This time it is not his normal secret Bunburying and pretending his friend needs him, but he intentionally fakes to be Jack's brother Ernest. With that, he ruined Jack's plans to kill the fictional brother, but he got the chance to meet Cecily whom he is very interested in (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 30). However, also Algernon's real identity is revealed and so is his attempt to form a double. What is crucial is that Algernon 'kills' his doppelgänger Bunbury and ends this corrupt double for good which is surprising judging from the fact that he advised Jack to keep his fake brother and also told Cecily about his friend Bunbury. So, there comes a certain realization with the confusion about the names and the double identities, which is only for the best (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 60-61). However, by that Algernon becomes the person society wants him to be and the same as Jack he loses his true self. After the revelation that Algernon actually is Jack's younger brother, he acquires the role of the previously invented double for real and with that situates himself as part of the society (Flanagan 126).

4.2.1. Algernon and Signs of MPD

Similar to Jack, Algernon identifies with a different name by pretending to be Ernest. At first his double is more like an escape to leave town whenever he wants and he does not adopt a different name, but later he adopts someone else's identity (Bliss 119). All of this is very intentional, so it is hard to judge this sign as a proper sign of MPD or the sign of the double. In general, there are not many details about this but there are aspects of the double that are more characteristic for Algernon which are covered below.

4.2.2. Algernon, Bunbury, and the Homosexuality

What could be a bit more obvious is the next aspect and its link to Bunburying. What actually is this Bunburying? Craft writes about several different meanings associated with the word Bunbury: for example, a village by this name, but most meanings refer to the male sex and homosexual desires. Moreover, there is a connection to Wilde's illegal practices within these meanings – this works as an allusion or as a “British slang for a male brothel, but also a collection of signifiers that straightforwardly express their desire to bury in the bun” (Craft 28). So, it definitely suggests male erotic practices. In the case of Algernon, we do not know precisely all the reasons he uses Bunburying. We only get to know he uses it to excuse himself from the dinners with his aunt and that he regularly goes Bunburying in the countryside. Otherwise, he is secretive about his Bunburying. There might be a possibility of some hidden practises, which could be supported by the fact that Algernon is not in a relationship before he meets Cecily and is not even interested in one when his aunt introduces him to other ladies. However, even though the word Bunbury is related to some homosexual desires and practises, and Algernon could be engaged in some, we cannot really say due to the lack of information.

4.2.3. Algernon and the Devil Double (Self)

As visible from the play, Algernon sees only the benefits of the double life at first. He uses it according to his needs but does not realise the problems the double life can bring. He is not fully aware of the danger, and consequences it might have. Eventually, later he realizes he could lose Cecily and ends his double life, which saves him from the claws of the devil double.

As said, the difference between Algernon and Jack is that Algy does not see the negatives of the double. He is getting comfortable in that kind of life and plans to continue living like that even if he gets married one day. He gets ideas like this: “You don't seem

to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none” which shows how his self started to get corrupt (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 10). Algernon says that he would use Bunburying after his wedding and so that would mean spending time without his wife, similar to what Lord Henry does in his marriage. The corruption is where the problem of his Bunburying occurs. As Flanagan mentions: “Bunbury can be seen as an alternate version of Algy, one who does all the corrupt things that Bunbury cannot do while society is watching” (129). However, we do not know for sure if Algernon is doing anything bad in the country. Moreover, judging from the fact that Algy does not care much about his reputation or how his opinions appear to society, it does not seem that he intends to hide something with his Bunburying. What happens is that he is rather amazed by the benefits the double life brings and does not fully realize its influence and power. Luckily, it is not too late for Algernon to realize the negatives of leading the double life and put an end to it.

4.3. The Double Life of Cecily Cardew

Cecily Cardew is an eighteen-year-old girl, Jack’s niece, who stays in the countryside (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 22). Cecily is very interested in Jack’s brother Ernest and has certain fantasies about him. She even keeps a diary where she writes her fantasies. This is revealed when Algernon confesses his love to Cecily and asks her to marry her, she answers: “You silly boy! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 42). And then she explains that from the time Jack shared that he has a younger brother, he has been the main topic of the conversation between her and Miss Prism. “And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. ... I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 43). However, Cecily brings this initial innocent love interest to a higher level. She comes up with fictional conversations, and engagement. She even buys a ring

for herself, pretending Ernest gave it to her, or fakes love letters written to her from him (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 43-44). So, Cecily lives in some kind of a story created according to her needs. By that, she is forming a double, living rather in fantasy than in presence.

Both, Cecily and Gwendolen appreciate the name Ernest. Cecily shares with Algernon her girlish dream about loving someone named Ernest: “There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 44). And like Gwendolen she could not imagine being able to love someone with a different name than Ernest. There is something very similar about those two ladies in case of their attitude towards the name Ernest. Gwendolen even shares that she thinks they will be very good friends with Cecily after just meeting her (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 46). As said, they share similar feelings about the name Ernest, and talking about the name they both say practically the same thing: Gwendolen: “There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 15). And then later Cecily: “There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 44). Even though this part is about Cecily, she can be considered together with Gwendolen, as they both developed certain ideals which they are trying to make their reality. Cecily and Gwendolen both fell in love with some kind of made-up image, or dream of theirs and consequently fell for someone’s double identity. By that they are losing their individuality, becoming mechanical as they show almost identical behaviour when finding out they are probably engaged to the same person (Flanagan 125).

4.4. The Double in the Play

The Importance of Being Earnest is a comedy and it has some elements of the comedy of manners such as the specific wit or the critique of society, but the play is not entirely classified as this genre. It is rather a satirical farcical comedy (Foster 19). There appear to be several developments and misunderstandings because of the dual identities and the made-up information which adds to the double structure of the play. Moreover, the play has a dual setting – the town and the country. Jack uses the town for his double and Algernon on the other hand the country. So, they have an extra place that is tied with their dual identity, some kind of territory for that developed double.

Further, Jack and Algernon are playing along in the made-up double structure. Sometimes they even use the other to take part in their pretending. This occurs when Algernon tells Jack that he would not be able to dine with him today if Bunbury did not exist, but Jack does not have a clue. Algernon answers: “I know. You are absurdly careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 9). This is of course wrapped up in Algernon’s specific wit, but he is already creating some dual reality and even including his friend in it without him knowing at first. A similar thing happens when Jack is forced to support Algernon’s story when Algernon shows up as brother Ernest. They come to the point when they are using their made-up doubles and the stories against each other – such as when Algernon says to Jack: “Well, I don’t like your clothes. ... It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 40). Cecily’s way of receiving the ring bought by herself and then including her “Ernest” in the story is another example of the made-up reality and the dual structure. When showing the ring to Algernon later he continues to play along in this fake reality: “Did I give you

this? It's very pretty, isn't it?" "Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest" and so she interconnects her fantasy with the reality (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 43).

Most of the action happens in the dialogue; the play is built on the dialogue. And so, there is also lots of duality in the language – for example in the wordplay, expressions with dual meanings, or very often the characters say something but mean something else. When Cecily says: "Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows" she expresses one thing and at the same time implies another (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 45). Another case is when Cecily and Gwendolen decide that they will not be the first ones to speak when the men come. Nevertheless, they immediately start asking Jack and Algernon questions as they get the chance (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 58). Otherwise, Algernon is using the wordplay or the dual meanings a lot. However, it is important to keep in mind that it is also meant in a satiric way even though it can sometimes sound serious. This happens when Jack wants him to leave but Algernon argues that he cannot leave his friend in mourning, which is actually not true (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 40). Another example of the double in language or the use of wordplay can be found in the expressions of Lady Bracknell. She tries to speak politely but her words actually have a judgemental attitude. This happens especially towards Jack as she is not supporting the engagement: "You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter ... to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel?" (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 20).

Another aspect of the double in the play is mirroring of the characters, concretely of Jack and Algernon, and of Gwendolen and Cecily. This does not mean that those pairs are completely identical, but they share some similarities, and they mirror each other's actions. When we consider Jack and Algernon, they of course have their own attitudes towards life or different views on marriage but also have things in common. They both

lead a double life or have the same ideas such as wanting to be christened as Ernest. Those brothers also mirror each other in language, for instance when Gwendolen and Cecily confront them asking if they are engaged to the other one, Jack and Algernon give the same answer: “Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?” (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 52). In the case of those two women, their similarity was already mentioned when talking about the fantasies and ideals they both have. Especially their fondness for the name Ernest connects Cecily and Gwendolen. One mirrors the other when arguing which of them is actually engaged to Ernest or when the real identities of Algernon and Jack are revealed. (Wilde, *Being Earnest* 49-52). Also, the mirroring appears between the couples, so it leaves us with two almost identical couples.

Lastly, the examined literary work in this chapter is a comedy, so it has a different structure and view on the double than the previously presented novel. In this play, the double leads to good things and it does not end with suicide like by Dorian Gray. Algernon and Jack’s creations of the double life bring certain complications and misunderstandings but at the same time some positives. Jack meets Gwendolen through his created double, and Algy meets Cecily by pretending to be someone else. So, thanks to the double they both find their future wives. Also, Jack is able to find out his real origin and meet his real brother Algernon.

4.5. Conclusion

To conclude, different depictions of the double life, in most cases connected to the identity struggle, were presented. In general, the characters acquire the made-up identity, usually the identity image society wants them to pick up. This happens in the case of Jack and Algernon as they lose their true selves and become their adopted doubles. By those two it was possible to cover some aspects of the double, meaning homosexuality, or the devil double self. As said, it is hard to reach any final conclusions about those aspects due to the lack of information shared in the play. However, the play leaves certain signs to support those aspects – such as Bunburying as a reference to possible homosexual practises and desires. Further, the double lives of Jack and Algernon are very intentional and so the reasons for the existence of their double were shared and if applicable also their causes. With Cecily and Gwendolen, we can see the obsession with some created image and living more in a fantasy world, which is mostly stressed in the case of Cecily. The last section covered the double in the play which focused on the double structure and language of the play and also the mirroring of the characters. All in all, this chapter offered another psychological insight into the different types of the double life and especially the consequences of the social pressure resulting in the identity struggle, but it also showed the positives the double can bring.

5. Conclusion

The thesis introduced the concept of the double life with a focus on its psychological examination. The first chapter covered the possible occurrence of the double in the chosen aspects – in homosexuality, narcissism, the devil self, and the identity struggle. It presented the possible double identity which can be found the multiple personality disorder (MPD) and share some of its signs – mainly the behavioural episodes or visible changes in behaviour. Another characteristic to be found was the increased imagination which could help to bear the reality but was more likely to result in a violent personality takeover. The negative outcome of the double life was also covered in the part about the devil double self with the stress on the self-destruction. The sub-parts about the possible double in homosexuals and narcissists considered its occurrence and provided more examples from everyday life - living a closeted life and in the case of narcissists pretending to be Prince Charming. Lastly, the chapter focused on the identity struggle that could lead to the creation of the double life because of social pressure and the wish to fit in. However, it needs to be said that leading a double life is very individual and so is the psychological background of each person. So, these presented areas are just examples that at the same time relate to the chosen literary works.

The connection of the aspects from the theoretical part with concrete literary examples was covered in the next two parts of the thesis which was one of the main aims. In the case of the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the negative outcome of the double life was presented mainly through the depiction of the protagonist. By that the influence of the devil double and its effect on the self was pointed out and so was the destruction of the person, Dorian Gray. Also, other areas were covered in his case. Considering his devil self and his narcissistic traits gave a reason for Dorian's corrupt and manipulative behaviour. Dorian's psychological examination was supported by his family background

and the experience of childhood trauma which offered a more detailed insight into the possible origin of his double life. Further, the aspect of the double and homosexuality was presented by studying Basil Hallward's life. In the case of Basil and Henry, their other possible double roles were covered. Lord Henry Wotton and his life showed a perfect example of someone pretending to be someone else and at the same time what it is like to have a narcissistic friend with the need for influence and control. A completely different realisation of the double life was pointed out through Sibyl Vane as the life of an actress.

Further, *The Importance of Being Earnest* followed a similar concept as the preceding literary chapter. As stressed before, this time the information about the characters was quite limited and so was the length of their double lives. However, the chapter still offered an interesting insight into the double life with the main focus on the identity struggle. In the case of Jack Worthing, the examined material was not that limited, and the thesis was able to depict, among other aspects, his family background. His experience as an unfortunate child could cause certain trauma. The childhood trauma was also mentioned in the case of Dorian and could be one of the reasons for the development of the double life. This chapter focused on the negatives of the double but also on the positives it can bring. This was in Jack's and Algernon's case some time for pleasure or the benefit of meeting their future partners. Also, the use of double in this play was to escape unpleasant situations which was introduced with Algernon and his Bunburying. For both men, the double life was not that developed, so it was easier to end it which saved them from the possible dark potential of the double. The double life of Cecily Cardew showed the obsession over a certain image and living more in fantasy than in reality. Further, the chapter considered the elements of the double in the play

itself. As stated, the play has dual structure and language, but it was also possible to notice the mirroring of the characters resulting in similar reactions to certain events.

To conclude, the thesis provided a diverse insight into the concept of double life and its psychological examination. The literary chapters then connected the findings from the theoretical chapter with concrete examples. By examining the aspects of the double and judging them if applicable by different characters, the thesis was able to present a certain sign of the double or the possible reasoning for the occurrence of the double life. As one of these could be marked the childhood trauma which could have a great responsibility for the double life of Dorian Gray and even partially of Jack Worthing. Lastly, the thesis showed mostly the negative influence of the double life, but a few benefits were also described.

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