

THE ANALYSIS OF FORM IN OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

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Abstract

The study analyzes the form in Oscar Wilde's novel The Picture of Dorian Gray through point of view, character, and symbol. Point of view is analyzed by using categories of point of view (third or first person narrator). In analyzing character, it will use discursive and dramatic method, and in analyzing symbol, it will find a person, object, action, place, or event that, in addition to its literal meaning, suggests a more complex meaning or range of meanings. After analyzing those elements, this study finds the form by looking the pattern that lies in those elements.

Key words: form, point of view, character, symbol.

A. INTRODUCTION

Literary work is the world for itself although it is based on the real world. It is considered as wholeness. Guerin said that every element in literary work is related each other become a wholeness and world itself outside the real world (1979:75). It means that every element in literary work (character, plot, setting, theme, symbol, etc) supports each other.

Meanwhile William said that in analyzing a work of art, it doesn't enough if we just analyze it as separable parts because it is an uncompleted analysis. We have to go beyond that. That is finding the form, because a work of art has to be understood in whole (1966:5).

From the interesting story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, this study wants to analyze the form of the novel, the form that lies in the novel and used to communicate with the reader. The form that covers the whole story, as a theory of formalistic said.

Form of a novel will relate all elements in it. Nothing that goes into the work will be wasted; all elements support each other.

B. ANALYSIS

a. Synopsis

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a novel, prose fiction. It is told about a young man that is influenced by philosophy of life and destroys his life. He learns the philosophy from Lord Henry Wotton who likes to criticize the moral and hypocrisy of Victorian society. Some readers say that his philosophy is Hedonism; a belief that believes pleasure is the most important thing in life without regard for conventional morality. His philosophy plays a vital role in Dorian's development. By the philosophy, Dorian becomes extremely concerned with his beauty and begins to pursue his own pleasure above all else. He devotes himself to have as many experiences as possible, whether moral or immoral, elegant or sordid. The story ends with suicide of the main character, Dorian Gray.

b. Elements of Literary Work

1. Point of View

The first element is point of view. Abram's definition about point of view is the way a story gets told — the mode established by an author by means of whom the reader is presented with the characters, dialogue, actions, setting and events which constitute the narrative in a work of fiction (1993:165). It means the way the author chooses in presenting the story whether the narrator knows everything or limited. This thing has been divided into first person or third person narrator. Williams (1966:48) said that when a story told from the inside it means a story told by one of the participants or characters in the story. This is first person narrator because it uses "I" in referring to himself/narrator. But, if the story told from the outside by a usually

nameless narrator, that is called third narrator. It will use “he” or “she” when told the story.

2. Third person narrator

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* uses third person point of view, specifically, omniscient narrator which is the narrator knows everything: he can at will enter the mind of any character and tells the reader directly what the character is thinking, he tells the reader about his character’s thought without having to explain where he gets his information. Third person narrator is when the story is seen through eyes of outside observer and uses “he” or “she” in referring to the character (2000:168). It can be seen from the story that the narrator can read Lord Henry’s mind:

“Lord Henry watched him with a subtle sense of pleasure. How different he was now from the shy, frightened boy he had met in Basil Hallward’s studio! His nature had developed like a flower, had borne blossoms of scarlet flame.” (Chapter four, page 64)

This is what in Lord Henry’s mind about Dorian. He examines him while Dorian is talking about Sybill Vane. He thinks that Dorian has changed. The narrator tells the reader what in Lord Henry’s mind.

Another example when the narrator can read Dorian Gray’s mind, it also uses “he” in referring to Dorian Gray:

“He frowned, and, tearing the paper in two, went across the room and flung the pieces away. How ugly it all was! And how horribly real ugliness made things! He felt a little annoyed with Lord Henry for having sent him the report ... Victor might, have read it.” (Chapter ten, page 139)

He can read what is in Dorian’s mind, what has annoyed Dorian’s mind. When Dorian gets Lord Henry’s note about Sybill’s death, he feels annoyed. He tears the paper, afraid if other read it. The narrator tells the reader what happens in that room where Dorian is alone. The narrator knows what happens in that room, what Dorian is thinking and what is annoying him.

3. First person narrator

This novel uses third person point of view, but there is a short part where the narrator speaks as himself. He uses first person narrator. According to Williams, first person narrator is when a story tells from the inside. It means the narrator will use “I”, “We”, and “Us” in telling the story. In some chapters, there is part when the narrator uses “I”, “We”, and “Us” outside the dialogue of the character which means that it is not the character that speaks “I”, “We”, “Us”.

Music had stirred him like that. Music had troubled him many times. But music was not articulate. It was not a new world, but rather another chaos, that it created in us. Words! Mere words! How horrible they were! How clear, and vivid and cruel! One could not escape from them ... (Chapter two, page 26)

The narrator describes the situation of the characters in the novel and then straightly speaks to the reader by using “us” in referring to the reader and himself. He states his thought about the power of words.

There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest that gives us absolution. (Chapter eight, page 109)

In chapter eleven, the narrator uses first person narrator again. He uses “we” and “us” in referring to himself and the reader, and “them” in referring to other objects. He speaks about his idea of society. In this part, the narrator talks about a play. He compares society as art and says that insincerity or pretending like in play is not a terrible thing but it is a method which we can multiply our personalities. He straightly tells his mind and he uses “I” in referring to himself.

For the canons of good society are, or should be, the same as the canons of art. Form is absolutely essential to it. It should have the dignity of a ceremony, as well as its unreality, and should combine the insincere character of a romantic play with the wit and beauty that make such plays delightful to us. Is insincerity such a terrible thing? I think not. It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities. (Chapter eleven, page 158)

c. Character

The novel has two possible main characters. The main character can be Dorian Gray or the picture of Dorian Gray. According to Abrams characters are the persons presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral, dispositional, and emotional qualities that are expressed in what they say – the dialogue – and by what they do – the action (1993:23). According the theory of Williams, there are two general methods of characterization, namely: discursive and dramatic method (1966:34-35). Discursive is a method that simply tells us about his characters. The author directly tells the reader about the characters, giving his own explanation, comments, and judgments about the characters. While dramatic is a method of showing rather than telling. The author allows his character to reveal themselves to us through their own words and actions.

In the first chapter of the novel, it is about the picture of Dorian Gray painted by Basil Hallward, while Dorian Gray himself does not appear yet. He appears in the second chapter. The picture is not inanimate thing, but it has characteristic as animate thing has. The picture has soul, the soul of Dorian Gray which can be seen through Dorian's words when basil wants to destroy the picture. "Don't, Basil, don't! he cried. "It would be murder!" (Chapter two, page 35). Dorian says that it would be a murder, words that only said to something that has soul. Dorian also shows the picture when Basil asks him to show his soul "come: it is your own handiwork" ... "I shall show you my soul" (Chapter twelve, page 170). Basil even says that the picture is the real Dorian. It is something more than just a picture. Dorian is just like it in appearance "At least you are like it in appearance" ... "That is something" (Chapter two, page 37). Furthermore in the novel, the one which is changed (physically) is the picture, not Dorian Gray.

The face appeared to him to be a little changed. The expression looked different. (Chapter seven, page 103)

"Hour by hour, and week by week, the thing upon the canvas was growing old" ... "the hair would lose its brightness, the mouth would gape or droop, would be foolish or gross, as the mouth of old

men are ...” (Chapter ten, page 137) while Dorian Gray: “He hasn’t changed much since then” (Chapter seventeen, page 213)

Here, is a confusion between which is the real one, Dorian Gray or the Picture. It is said that the picture is the soul, but the one who think is Dorian Gray. In the last part of the novel, it is said that all sin that Dorian Gray commits are done by the picture/the portrait “It was the portrait that had done everything” (Chapter twenty, page 245). But, as far as we know, Dorian Gray is the one who did everything. In short, the picture play important role in the novel. Dorian Gray and the picture become the main character overlappingly.

Put that matter aside, the writer focuses on Dorian Gray as the main character rather than the picture because the one who has the dialogue is Dorian. Dorian Gray is presented as **a good looking young man**. His grandfather is Lord Kelso and his mother is Lady Margareth Devereux. Their family is a rich family. But, Dorian is a combination of high class and lower class status, because his father is a man from lower class.

“He is the last Lord Kelso’s grandson. His mother was a Devereux; Lady Margareth Devereux ... she was an extraordinarily beautiful girl, Margareth Devereux; and made all the men frantic by running away with a penniless young fellow; a mere nobody, a subaltern in a foot regiment, or something of that kind ... he (Dorian) should have a pot of money waiting for him if Kelso did the right thing by him. His mother had money too. All Selby property came to her through her grandmother.” (Chapter three, page 40-41)

This is Lord Henry’s uncle description about Dorian when Lord Henry asks Dorian’s background. It is said that his mother is a rich beautiful girl that run away with a poor man. Dorian has much money which he gets from his family heritance.

“... he was certainly wonderfully handsome, with his finely-curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair. There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth’s passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world.” (Chapter two, page 23)

This is the impression that Lord Henry gets when he meets Dorian for the first time. He says that Dorian can make other people trust him once they look him. Dorian's appearance looks pure. That is Lord Henry's opinion. Lord Henry gives compliment in their first meeting. He says that Dorian is very charming. "You are too charming ..., Mr. Gray — far too charming." (Chapter two, page 23)

Here, the character of Dorian Gray is analyzed by using dramatic method that his character is analyzed through 'Lord Henry and his uncle's description; "characters on other characters."

Dorian **likes new thing**. He is drowning in hedonism; a philosophy of pleasure that Lord Henry teaches him. He begins to adore his own beauty and pleasure of new experiences above all else although they are immoral.

"That curiosity about life which Lord Henry had first stirred him, as they sat together in the garden of their friend, seemed to increase with gratification. The more he knew, the more he desired to know. He had mad hungers that grew more ravenous as he fed them."
(Chapter eleven, page 144)

From the quotation above, it shows that it uses discursive method because it is the author's explanation.

Dorian **has double life**. It is proved when the narrator tells Dorian's mind about Basil's dead body. It is discursive method because it is taken from the author's description.

"The dead man was still sitting there, too, and in the sunlight now. How horrible that was! Such hideous things were for the darkness, not for the day." (Chapter fourteen, page 180)

It means that such hideous things or sins have to be hidden and only for the darkness, so for the day it is different. He has two lives; the darkness and the day or the good and the bad. That is why in public, people see him as a fascinating young man without knowing his crimes that he can do.

Before Basil died, he says that Dorian still looks as charming as he is but there is something about Dorian that is hidden behind his charming look.

“Dorian, this is horrible! Something has changed you completely; you look exactly the same wonderful boy who, day after day, used to come down to my studio to sit for his picture. But you were simple, natural, and affectionate then. You were the most unspoiled creature in the whole world. Now, I don’t know what has come over you ...”
(Chapter nine, page 122)

This is dramatic method because it is analyzed through Basil’s dialogue. It means that it is from other character’s description.

Lord Henry also does not believe that Dorian as innocent man can commit crime. Lord Henry’s thought was representation of society’s thought about him and probably represented our thought that do not know his other side of life.

“I would say, my dear fellow, that you were posing for a character that doesn’t suit you. All crime is vulgar, just as all vulgarity is crime. It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder.” (Chapter nineteen, page 236)

This is also dramatic method when Dorian’s characteristic is analyzed through other character’s description that is Lord Henry’s.

d) Symbol

Symbol becomes element that will be analyzed in order to find the form. According the theory that is stated by Kirszner and Mandell, symbol is a person, object, action, place, or event that, in addition to its literal meaning, suggests a more complex meaning or range of meanings. Many symbols, however, suggest different things to different people. Thus, symbols enrich meaning, expanding the possibilities for interpretation and for reader interaction with the text (2000:254). Symbolism transforms the idea into an image, and even if expressed in all languages, still would remain inexpressible (Abrams, 1993:208). It means that symbol is the use of object or action to represent an idea, or in other words, the object or action has a broad meaning in it. That meaning will be more powerful in that object than in a single word. The idea is inexpressible. We cannot limit the whole idea only in one meaning

because that is the use of using symbol, to state what is inexpressible with simple words; it is also why every reader can have different interpretation with another.

Kirszner and Mandell say that we recognize symbol by considering how an image used, how often it is used, and when it appears (2000:255). Potter also says that we can recognize it when it is repeated several times in the course of the play (1967:186). So, we can recognize the use of an image as symbol through recognizing when it appears, how often it appears and its repeated appearances.

The first symbol that is analyzed is **the picture of Dorian Gray**. It is clear that the picture represents as symbol. It appears so many times. At first, it is said that the picture might be the main character, but it is more appropriate to consider it as symbol because it has no dialogue and is recognized as an object. It can be considered as symbol since it appears several times and seems very important in the novel; its first appearance is in the title of the novel and then becomes an object that always appears with Dorian especially after he commits immoral experiences. This picture always alters and shows Dorian's sin.

“In the centre of the room, clamped to an upright easel, stood the full-length portrait of a young man of extraordinary personal beauty, and in front of it, some little distance away, was sitting the artist himself, Basil Hallward ...” (Chapter one, page 7)

The picture appears firstly before the character of the novel. It means that it is important.

“A portrait like this would set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion.” (Chapter one, page 8)

The picture becomes the discussion topic when Lord Henry enters in the novel. He is impressed with it. He says that the picture will make Basil famous.

“I know you will laugh at me, he replied, but I really can't exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.” (Chapter one, page 8)

Basil says that he will not exhibit the picture and he put too much of himself into the picture. It is his masterpiece which he makes seriously and means a lot to him. Through this statement, we can interpret that the picture is very important.

“How sad it is! Murmured Dorian Gray, with his eyes still fixed upon his own portrait.

How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June ... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that – for that – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!”
(Chapter two, page 33)

In this passage, the picture has been emphasized. This passage also is the initial problem in the complication of the novel. The problem is concerned with the picture; it is when Dorian says his wish about the picture. It means that the picture plays an important role in the novel.

“His unreal and selfish love would yield to some higher influence, would be transformed into some nobler passion, and the portrait that Basil Hallward had painted of him would be a guide to him through life, would be to him what holiness is to some, and conscience to others, and the fear of God to us all. There were opiates for remorse, drugs that could lull the moral sense to sleep. But here was a visible symbol of the degradation of sin. Here was an ever-present sign of the ruin men brought upon their souls.” (Chapter eight, page 109)

When Dorian sees that his picture has altered, he fills with horror and he decides that the picture will be a guide and sign to show his sins.

The second symbol is **Dorian Gray**. He is considered as a symbol for its repeated appearances in the story. It also appears many times with the picture. Whenever he goes, he takes public attention whether good or bad rumors.

“Even those who heard the most evil things against him, and from time to time strange rumours about his mode of life crept through London and became the chatter of the clubs, could not believe anything to his dishonor when they saw him. He had always the look

of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world.” (Chapter eleven, page 142)

People know that he commits many crimes but when they meet him that rumor seems impossible for him because his appearances look innocent and charming. Although physically he doesn't change but his souls alter to be worst because he commits many crimes: commit with opium, kills Basil and blackjacking his friend. In relation with his picture, it alters physically but he who did the crime. He symbolizes the degradation of sin.

In this novel, the picture and Dorian become oneness. In this novel, the picture is the soul of Dorian Gray because in his wish he says that he would give his soul to the picture and so it happens. It is also told that Dorian shows the picture as his soul to Basil. The sins that they have are hidden; if the sins in Dorian are hidden with his charming and innocent looks, the sins in the picture are hidden behind the screen that Dorian put in front of it and are hidden in a locked room where no one has access except Dorian. They symbolize the same thing; degradation of sin. They are one, when the picture is harmed so with Dorian, in the last part of this novel Dorian died when he stabs the knife to the picture; his own soul.

The third symbol is **a book**. The book is from Lord Henry. It is not mentioned about the title or the author, only about the story in it. It appears in chapter ten after Dorian hides his picture in a locked room.

On reaching the library, he found that it was just after five o'clock, and that the tea had been already brought up. On a little table ... lying a note from Lord Henry, and beside it was a book bound in yellow paper, the cover slightly torn and the edges soiled. (Chapter ten, page 138)

Dorian has been poisoned by that book. The book is about young Parisian who has a principle double life just like his life, and it is said that the book seems to Dorian to contain the story of his own life, written before he lives it.

For years, Dorian Gray could not free himself from the influence of this book ... The hero, the wonderful young Parisian, in whom the

romantic and the scientific temperaments were so strangely blended, became to him a kind of prefiguring type of himself. And, indeed, the whole book seemed to him to contain the story of his own life, written before he had lived it. (Chapter eleven, page 142)

The book has many similarities with Dorian's life. In its appearance, it is told that the book is slightly torn and the edges soiled. It means that the book is slightly broken just like Dorian's life because that book appears when Dorian begins to commit immoral experiences and hides his picture. The book and Dorian's first meeting is when they are slightly broken.

After a few minutes he became absorbed. It was the strangest book that he had ever read. It seemed to him that in exquisite raiment, and to the delicate sound of flutes, the sins of the world were passing in dumb show before him. Things of which he had never dreamed were gradually revealed. (Page 139)

The book shows the sins of the world were passing in dumb before him. It can be interpreted as hidden sins since it is said about the sins that are dumb which means cannot say anything. These sins are the same as Dorian's hidden sins. The book's story is also the same as Dorian's life.

... a certain young man, who spent his life trying to realize in the nineteenth century all the passions and the modes of thought that belonged to every country except his own, and to sum up, as it were, in himself the various moods through which the world-spirit had ever passed, loving for their mere artificiality those renunciations that men have unwisely called virtue, as much as those natural rebellions that wise men still call sin ... the life of the senses was described in the terms of mystical philosophy ... (Chapter ten, page 140)

It is said that the book is about young Parisian that trying to realize all passions and modes of thought; it is the same as Dorian that trying to realize all pleasures and new modes of thought. It also talks about sins committed by the young man which is the same as Dorian's committing sins. These things strengthen the assumption that the book is Dorian's life especially when it comes to the story's end.

In one point he was more fortunate than the novel's fantastic hero. He never knew – never, indeed, had any cause to know – that somewhat grotesque dread of mirrors, and polished metal surfaces, and still water, which came upon the young Parisian so early in his life, and was occasioned by the sudden decay of a beauty that had once, apparently, been so remarkable. It was with an almost cruel joy – and perhaps in nearly every joy, as certainly in every pleasure, cruelty has its place – that he used to read the latter part of the book, with its really tragic, if somewhat over-emphasized, account of the sorrow and despair of one who had himself lost what in others, and in the world, he had most dearly valued. (Chapter eleven, page 142)

It is told that in every pleasure and joy that the young Parisian experiences cruelty has its place. Dorian is also cruel in his pleasures. He is trying to feel any pleasures although they are cruel. The story's end is tragic. It ends with the sudden decay of a beauty of that young Parisian who lost what he thinks is valuable. It is same as Dorian who lost what he thinks is valuable before, that is his beauty and pleasure above all else. His life is also tragic at the end. That book is the mirror of his life. Through these evidences, the book symbolizes Dorian's own life.

e) Form

Form is built from the pattern in each element. Guerin says that form is a principle by which all subordinate patterns can be accommodated and accounted for (1979:77). Form has to cover all the patterns in elements.

In this study, there is a pattern that occurs in the elements. The patterns where there are two things in the same level means that they have the same classification, for example: both are animals or both are mammals or both are fierce, etc. This pattern can be seen clearly especially in point of view. In point of view, there are two things that have the same level. This novel has third and first person narrator. Both are in the same level: both are classified as narrator.

This pattern occurs again in character. Although the main character is Dorian Gray, but first, there is an assumption that the main characters are both Dorian and his picture. This is a clue about the pattern; there are two main characters which mean

that both have the same level as main character. But, like what it is said before in that analysis, Dorian Gray is the main character. This pattern occurs again in Dorian Gray's character. He has double life. On one side, he does many immoral actions such as makes Sybill commit suicide and kills Basil, but in the other side, he runs his life normally even adorable in society. He has two kind of life; both are in the same level that is life of Dorian Gray.

Next, this pattern occurs in Symbol. In the analysis of symbol, there are Dorian and his picture that symbolizes the same thing "degradation of sin". They both become one; the picture is the soul and Dorian is the action. They symbolize the same thing since they are one although they symbolize it in different way. They are in the same level of symbolizing "degradation of sin". The next symbol is a book that symbolizes Dorian own life. What it is in that book is the same as Dorian's life. Since the story of Dorian's life is in this novel, so the book is the same as this novel. It means that the book and this novel are in the same level as the story of Dorian's life.

Through these evidences, we can see that there is a pattern that reoccurring in the elements. The pattern of two things, which are in the same level, that appears in this novel. This reoccurring pattern has to have a principle which can accommodate it. It means the form. If we look carefully, we will find that there is a term that appears several times in the novel. The term is "double"; it appears in Dorian's life as double life; in the symbol of a book that tells about the double life of a young man. We can find the meaning of "double" when it is used in describing Dorian's life. He has two sides of life; good and bad side. He acts normally even charmingly in the society but he also has dark side of life as a murderer. This kind of life is described as "double" according to the novel. It describes about two sides of Dorian's life whether good or bad. Since the form of this novel build from the same pattern that generally there are two things in the same level, so the appropriate term of the form is **double**. Finally, according to the pattern the form is found, it is **double**.

C. CONCLUSION

The study finds that the form is analyzed from those three elements, namely, point of view, character, and symbol. From the analysis of point of view, there are two point of views; third person narrator and first person narrator. While in the analysis of the character, the writer focuses on Dorian Gray's character than the picture of Dorian Gray. From the analysis, it is concluded that Dorian Gray is a good looking man, likes new thing and has double life. The last element that is analyzed is symbol. From this, it is found the picture of Dorian Gray symbolizes degradation of sin as well as Dorian Gray himself also symbolizes the same thing. Meanwhile a book from Lord Henry to Dorian symbolizes Dorian's life.

From the analysis of those elements above, the writer concludes the form that repeats in those elements which is **double**.

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