Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde and Dorian Gray
Bachelor’s Diploma Thesis

Supervisor: Michael Matthew Kaylor, Ph. D.

2012
I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently, using only the primary and secondary sources listed in the bibliography.

........................................................
Author’s signature
Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisor, Michael Matthew Kaylor, for his patient guidance, advice and encouragement, Michal Mikeš for his interesting theories, and I would also like to express my gratitude to the only person who supported me until the very end, thank you Lucie.
# Table of Contents

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................... 1
1 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 2
2 The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde ................................................................. 4
3 Duality, Sadism, Masochism and Homosexuality of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde ............... 8
   3.1 Duality .................................................................................................................... 8
   3.2 Aggression of Edward Hyde .................................................................................. 9
   3.3 Sadism of Edward Hyde ..................................................................................... 10
   3.4 Masochism of Henry Jekyll .............................................................................. 12
   3.5 Homosexuality .................................................................................................. 15
4 The Picture of Dorian Gray ......................................................................................... 20
5 Duality, Sadism, Masochism and Homosexuality of Dorian Gray ......................... 22
   5.1 Duality of Human Nature .................................................................................. 22
   5.2 Aggression of Dorian Gray .............................................................................. 25
   5.3 Sadism directed at Basil Hallward ................................................................... 26
   5.4 Sadism directed at Sibyl Vane .......................................................................... 30
   5.5 Sadomasochistic character of Dorian Gray ..................................................... 33
   5.6 Dorian and his painting .................................................................................... 35
   5.7 Homosexuality in Dorian Gray ....................................................................... 37
6 Conclusion .................................................................................................................... 43
Works Cited .................................................................................................................... 46
Resumé ........................................................................................................................... 48
Résumé ............................................................................................................................ 49
1 Introduction

Using *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* by Erich Fromm as its basis, the paper proposes an analysis of the sadistic and masochistic character traits of the main characters of both *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The aim of the thesis is to provide arguments that support the classification of the behaviour of the characters of Edward Hyde and Dorian Gray as sadistic and to compare the two characters.

The first chapter of the thesis will be focused on the Stevenson’s novel and will provide a background in terms of the different elements of the structure of the novel, as well as an insight into the process of the writing of the novel. It will also comment on and consider the importance of the setting of the novel.

The second chapter will be divided into five sub-chapters. The thesis will examine various extracts from the text to argue its implications in an attempt to analyse *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The sub-chapters will subsequently deal with the duality of the novel and its main characters, then it will try to apply the different types of aggression as they are described by Fromm to Stevenson’s novel, by using extracts from both Fromm’s book and Stevenson’s novel to support its claims, it will consider the sadism of Edward Hyde, comment on the possible masochism of Henry Jekyll and will deal with the possible origin of the main theme of the story, with the extracts from the
novel that imply homosexual liaisons and, to an extent, with the sexuality of R. L. Stevenson.

The third chapter of the thesis will be focused on Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and will comment on the genre of the novel as well as deal with its setting and will try to compare it to that of Stevenson’s novel.

Chapter four will be similar to chapter two, and will be divided into several sub-chapters that deal with the different elements of Wilde’s novel. These sub-chapters will attempt to provide an insight into the concept of duality in the novel, and by also using extracts from Stevenson’s novel, it will compare them. Will focus on the classification of the aggression type of Dorian Gray in comparison to Edward Hyde, aim to map the development of Dorian’s sadism, using his relationships with the painter Basil Hallward and an actress Sibyl Vane as the sources of its claims, it will deal with the sadism of Dorian Gray from the general point of view and will attempt to classify his character trait to one single definition, and the last of the sub-chapters will comment on and explore the homosexual references in the book, as well as the sexuality of its author and will attempt to provide an insight into the possible origin of the story and of the character of Dorian Gray, and link some references in the novel to the social events that took place around the time of its publishing.
2 The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde seems to start like almost any other detective story and Stevenson does not reveal the secret until the very end and, as Roger Luckhurst points out in his Introduction to the Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales, “Perhaps the strangest thing is the way the story is structured: it starts out like a detective fiction but like a dream it gets distracted, seems to veer off course, and transmogrifies into something far more Gothic and unnerving” (12). All the aspects of an outstanding detective story are present from the very beginning of the book, a grim figure that has no known background and origin, an uncanny act of violence, and even hints of possible blackmail and secret scandal. However, bits of supernatural are also present in the first chapter of the book, mainly connected to the character of Edward Hyde, and the strange aura that surrounds him and that inspires fear and loathing in those who gaze upon him. As the story of the novel progresses, the supernatural becomes more and more apparent and through the eyes of Mr. Utterson and also through his detective work, the reader is slowly led towards a seemingly impossible truth. With the increased presence of the eerie and mysterious the novel, over time, turns into a Gothic mystery story; as Lettice Cooper points out, Robert Louis Stevenson himself coined the story as “a fine bogey tale” (53).

Despite the fact that several biographies vary on the exact number of days it took Stevenson to write the novel, they all agree that the book was
written very quickly. Cooper, in her biography *Robert Louis Stevenson*, claims that Stevenson had a dream about the story and that the “next morning he gave orders that he was not to be interrupted, even if the house caught fire” (53). According to Luckhurst, Stevenson was “often bedridden, taking morphine for pain” (11) and while he was trying to finish a story about double life he fell into a feverish sleep:

> All I dreamed about Dr Jekyll, was that one man was being pressed into a cabinet, when he swallowed a drug and changed into another being. I awoke and said at once that I had found the missing link for which I had been looking so long, and before I again went to sleep almost every detail of the story, as it stands, was clear to me. (Hammerton 85)

Stevenson’s stepson Lloyd Osbourne left unreliable memoirs where he claims the novella was completed in three days, which matches the time mentioned in Cooper’s biography, but Luckhurst notes that due to Stevenson’s wife’s criticism, he threw the manuscript into the fire and started again from scratch, now completing the story in about six weeks. There were several versions of the story, most of which Stevenson burned.

The existence of three fragments of the narrative in notebooks, with suggestively variant phrases, particularly of Dr Jekyll’s ‘Full Statement of the Case’, has given further fuel to speculations, making the text a stranger to itself through the kind of exorbitant interpretations critics have pursued (Luckhurst 12)
The setting of the novel also is of particular importance. Irving Saposnik in *The Anatomy of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* mentions that although the "critics . . . have been quick to point out that the morality is actually more Scottish than English and that the more proper setting would have been Edinburgh", they “fail to recognize that only London could serve as the *locus classicus* of Victorian behaviour. An enigma composed of multiple layers of being, its confines held virtually all classes of society conducting what were essentially independent lives” (717). As it takes place in a late nineteenth century London, the story carries a feeling of desolation and a threat of impending doom. The streets are dark and narrow, they twist and coil or lie under the cover of fog, the descriptions of some of the houses, despite their respectable inhabitants, has a touch of decay. Most notably it is the description of the building: “A certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two storeys high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower storey and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature, the marks of prolonged negligence” and the mysterious door: “The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained” (Stevenson 6), which Edward Hyde uses as an entrance into his supposed hideout. Both of these are described as neglected, rusty, discoloured and even “sinister”, the last adjective stands out and shows how important the setting is and what is the significance of the role it plays in the novel. By using the word “sinister” in connection to the building that Hyde was seen entering and leaving, Stevenson lays down the foundations for the “evil” character. And there is something evil that seems to be lurking in the ever-present fog, as if
the whole city was threatening to engulf and devour its unsuspecting citizens. This forms a sinister landscape that matches the crimes that take place there. Mr. Utterson himself dreams about the hair-curling visions of the city and in his dreams:

He would be aware of the great field of lamps of a nocturnal city . . . The figure [of Hyde] . . . haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was but to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly . . . through wider labyrinths of lamp-lighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming (Stevenson 13) and by doing so, he, and ultimately Stevenson, sets Edward Hyde into a role of a dark, evil creature that roams free through the dark places of the night London cowered by dense fog, where an indefinite number of various crimes takes place without anyone knowing.
3 Duality, Sadism, Masochism and Homosexuality of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde

3.1 Duality

The two men-in-one motif is the most obvious example of duality in Stevenson’s novel, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde’s duality is fairly complex but very intriguing at the same time. Edward Hyde and Henry Jekyll appear to be separate individuals throughout the most of the novel, particularly because they are so different in nature that they seem to be two different people, although, for some mysterious reason, connected. On one hand, there is a reputable, respected and well-liked member of the society Dr. Jekyll, who is described as “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness” (Stevenson 18), basically a good person, whereas on the other, a sinister figure of unknown origin and no social standing Mr. Hyde who is “not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable” (9), the feeling of wrongness that Mr. Enfield describes in the quotation above is common for every other character that comes into contact with Hyde, in fact in the last chapter of the novel, Henry Jekyll’s Statement of the Case, Jekyll provides the reader with an explanation for this:

I have observed that when I wore the semblance of Edward Hyde, none could come near to me at first without a visible misgiving of
the flesh. This, as I take it, was because all human beings, as we meet them, are commingled out of good and evil: and Edward Hyde, alone in the ranks of mankind, was pure evil (55)

A more simple distinction might be used to separate them and that is: Dr. Jekyll is handsome, respectable and “good”, and Mr. Hyde is ugly, deformed and “evil”, and when looked upon by the society, in their eyes, Hyde and Jekyll are as different as black is different from white. The fact that both of these characters are “living” in the same body, smoothened the boundaries of this strict distinction and, ultimately, it becomes apparent that Dr. Jekyll is not either good or evil, but both good and evil at the same time. An interesting thought for both the historical and the modern reader of the novel, who by all means should feel implicated, because if an individual in the novel can be both good and evil at the same time, so can the reader.

### 3.2 Aggression of Edward Hyde

In his *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Erich Fromm recognises two types of aggression: a defensive “benign” aggression, which is biologically adaptive and “malignant” aggression, that is specific to the human species, absent in most mammals and is not biologically adaptive (187). The character of Edward Hyde, clearly filled with aggression and hatred, is in a way an example of malignant aggression. As Fromm states: What is unique in man is that he can be driven by impulses to kill and to torture, and that he feels lust in doing so; he is the only animal that can be a killer and destroyer of his own species without any rational gain, either biological or economic” (Fromm 218),
Edward Hyde does kill and does feel lust and satisfaction in doing so “With a transport of glee, I mauled the unresisting body, tasting delight from every blow” (Stevenson 60-1). The murder of Sir Danvers Carew, whom Hyde attacks unprovoked, for no apparent reason, although the content of the speech Carew was giving to Hyde is nowhere to be found in the book, shows just how explosive Hyde’s anger really is. “All of a sudden [Hyde] broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane and carrying on . . . like a madman” (20), there is no hint of any kind of provocation from Sir Carew, nor is there any kind of attempt from Carew to defend himself, except for taking a step back, which brought Hyde into a fit of rage and he “broke out of all bounds and clubbed [Carew] to the earth. And next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway” (Stevenson 20-1). Most of the victims of Edward Hyde are innocent and defenceless, the first one being a little girl that he “trampled calmly over . . . and left her screaming on the ground . . . it was hellish to see. It wasn’t like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut”1 (Stevenson 7), the second one is an older, gentle and much beloved man and neither one of his victims does something to provoke Hyde’s anger or to deserve death.

3.3 Sadism of Edward Hyde

As stated above, Hyde’s victims are always innocent and helpless, a little girl, and older gentleman, and to some extent even Henry Jekyll. This fact is of

1) An unstoppable force or fate that crushes the individual
particular importance and allows the classification of Hyde’s character as a sadistic one because in his *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Fromm claims that “sadist . . . is stimulated only by the helpless, never by those who are strong” (291). Fromm also notes that there are two concepts of the nature of sadism, in the first sadism is seen as a sexual phenomenon, in the other “the essence of sadism is seen in the desire to inflict pain, regardless of any particular sexual involvement” (280). Hyde, being hunted for the murder of Sir Carew, succumbs even more so to his sadistic character. He is “strung to the pitch of murder” and “lusting to inflict pain” (Stevenson 63), the pain however does not need to be only of physical nature, but can be emotional as well and Fromm points out that “Mental cruelty, the wish to humiliate and to hurt another person’s feelings, is probably even more widespread than physical sadism” (Fromm 284) and Henry Jekyll, however inseparable those two are, is in fact a victim of Hyde’s mental cruelty. Although they do not directly talk to each other, they share the same memory and towards the end Jekyll is constantly:

> Under the strain of this continually impending doom and by the sleeplessness to which I now condemned myself, ay, even beyond what I had thought possible to man, I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self (Stevenson 64-5)

the threat of involuntary transformation into Hyde, whenever the potion/drug wore off or even if he dozed of for only a moment, does torment Jekyll and
when the transformation actually happens and Hyde emerges, he is “scrawling in [Jekyll’s] own hand blasphemies on the pages of [Jekyll’s] books, burning the letters and destroying the portrait of [Jekyll’s] father” (65), basically doing everything that is in his power to inflict some kind of torment, or rather any kind of torment he can possibly think of, to his better self. Fromm mentions another fact that is common to sadistic characters and that helps to fit Hyde into the shoes of a sadist much more comfortably: “Another element in the syndrome is the submissiveness and cowardice of the sadist” (291-2). And despite all his hatred and anger, all of his destructiveness and desire to inflict pain, Edward Hyde is ultimately just scared of death, scared of being caught and punished for his crimes, torn between the desire to cause pain and his own fears as can be seen in the following “had it not been for [Hyde’s] fear of death, he would long ago have ruined himself in order to involve [Jekyll] in the ruin” (Stevenson 65). Jekyll describes it as Hyde’s “love of life” but he defines the “love” through Hyde’s fear of death “he fears my power to cut him off by suicide” (Stevenson 65), which does not declare Hyde’s love of life, because to love life means more than just to simply be afraid of dying while loathing every other living thing apart from himself, in fact even hating Jekyll with whom he shares the earthy vessel, despite the amount of transformation the body goes through each time the two “change”.

### 3.4 Masochism of Henry Jekyll

Where the character of Edward Hyde can be seen as a sadistic one, his counterpart, Henry Jekyll, might be in a way placed into the role of
a masochist. Although he does claim that he feels a “horror of [his] other self” (Stevenson 65) and he “hate[s] and fear[s] the thought of the brute that sle[eps] within [him]” (64) he repeats his “mistake” over and over again like an addict seeking another dose of his drug. “I began to be tortured with throes and longings, as of Hyde struggling after freedom; and at last, in an hour of moral weakness, I once again compounded and swallowed the transforming draught” (60), he keeps returning to his dark counterpart, despite knowing the dangers and possible harm that may come to the innocent when he does so. Fromm points out that “Sadism and masochism, which are invariably linked together, are opposites in behaviouristic terms, but they are actually two different facets of one fundamental situation: the sense of vital impotence. Both the sadist and the masochist need another being to “complete” them, as it were” (Fromm 292). Hyde needs Jekyll to break free of his imprisonment, and to retreat and hide right back from where he desires to escape if there is any sign of threat towards him; “he needs [his] victim in a perverse way” (Fromm 292). Jekyll on the other hand did manage to live without Hyde for the better part of his life, concealing his pleasures up to a point where he realises that “[He stands] already committed to a profound duplicity of life” (Stevenson 52), however, once Hyde emerges and the dam is opened, he does not possess the mental resilience needed to close it back again. In his Statement of the Case Jekyll admits that the nature of his misdeeds left him with an “awful pressure” that is “bound forever on man’s shoulders” (53) and in an attempt to free himself from this burden, he creates a drug to separate the good from the evil, where, supposedly, the evil leaves the body forever. Despite his failure to
approach his “discovery in a more noble spirit” and “under the empire of generous or pious aspirations” and by doing so, to “come forth an angel instead of a fiend” (55-6), he does not dislike the body of his “evil side of nature”, but rather feels “younger, lighter and happier in body” (54). He knows right from the first moment, that when he changes into Hyde, he is “more wicked, tenfold more wicked, sold a slave to [his] original evil; and the thought, in that moment, braced and delighted [him] like a wine” (54), but although he is aware of Hyde’s wickedness he still sets out to pursue his own pleasures under the disguise of Edward Hyde. “This familiar that I called out of my own soul, and sent forth alone to do his good pleasure, was a being inherently malign and villainous; his every act and thought centered on self; drinking pleasure with bestial avidity from any degree of torture to another; relentless like a man of stone” (57), Jekyll’s “undignified” pleasures are turned monstrous at the hands of Hyde, but he still indulges himself in his other persona, his evil alter-ego. Despite knowing the monstrosity of Hyde’s crimes through the memory they both share, Jekyll reassures himself that “It was Hyde, after all, and Hyde alone, that was guilty” and that “Jekyll was no worse; he woke again to his good qualities seemingly unimpaired; he would even make haste, where it was possible, to undo the evil done by Hyde. And thus his conscience slumbered” (Stevenson 57), but attempts like this do not seem to be more than an attempt at self-justification, because Jekyll was directly responsible for any action Hyde took by unleashing him via the use of the drug he created. He keeps returning to his “tormentor” as if he liked the mental anguish that comes hand in hand with the transformation due to Hyde’s sadistic nature, and by doing so Jekyll
slowly but surely loses the upper hand and becomes enslaved to his own personal “daemon”.

### 3.5 Homosexuality

Elaine Showalter mentions in a chapter *Dr. Jekyll’s Closet* that “the same month that Robert Louis Stevenson published *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*...a case of “multiple personality” was introduced...in the pages of The Journal of Mental Science” (105), the patient in this case, Louis V., was located at Rochefort Asylum in France and his case of “morbid disintegration” fascinated the doctors. His “hysterical attack begun in adolescence” and “he underwent a startling metamorphosis” a street urchin that used to be “quiet, well-behaved, and obedient” became “violent, greedy, and quarrelsome, heavy drinker, a political radical, and an atheist” as a result of suffering a shock when he was frightened by a viper (105). This patient might have served as an inspiration for Stevenson’s Jekyll/Hyde duo. According to Showalter, Stevenson himself was the “fin-de-siècle² laureate of the double life” and even as a young student at Edinburgh “he dreamed of leading a double life - one of the day, one of the night” (106). A double life that Stevenson wrote for Henry Jekyll’s account of his youth, would, according to Nils Clausson, “certainly have resonated particularly strongly with...members of the homosexual subculture that was emerging in London at the end of the nineteenth century” (349). And the fact that there are virtually no female characters in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* might lead the reader towards a suspicion that the true

---

2 French for “end of the century”
nature of Jekyll’s “undignified pleasures” was a homosexual one. As Showalter notes “For most middle-class inhabitants of the [Victorian homosexual] world, homosexuality represented a double life, in which a respectable daytime world often involving marriage and family existed alongside a night world of homoeroticism” (106), this can be connected to Dr Jekyll’s recollection of his youth, because although he kept up a public appearance of a respectable Medical Doctor, Doctor of Civil Laws, Doctor of Laws and a Fellow of the Royal Society, he:

> Found it hard to reconcile with [his] imperious desire to carry [his] head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before public. Hence it came about that [he] concealed [his] pleasures; and that when [he] reached the years of reflection . . . [he] stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life (Stevenson 52)

And as Clausson argues this “must have struck a responsive chord in contemporary homosexual readers struggling against what conventional morality-and more recently the law\(^3\)-regarded as “irregularities” and “degradation,” and who were forced, as a result of their dual nature, to “conceal” their “pleasures”” (350). Jekyll mentions that “such irregularities . . . [he] was guilty of”, that he “regarded and hid them with an almost morbid sense of shame”, and continues on that:

---

\(^3\) In 1885, a year prior to Stevenson’s publication of *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Parliament enacted the eleventh amendment of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, which created the new offense of *gross indecency* between males. It covered homosexual acts not involving anal intercourse and was punishable by a maximum of two years’ imprisonment with hard labor. (Adut, 224)
[He] was driven to reflect deeply and inveterately on that hard law of life, which lies at the root of religion and is one of the most plentiful springs of distress. Thought so profound a double-dealer, I was in no sense a hypocrite; both sides of me were in dead earnest; I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of day at the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering (Stevenson 52)

Clausson points out that “Jekyll’s language here . . . perfectly describes the lives of many gay men at the time” (350), particularly the phrases “concealed my pleasures,” “profound duplicity of life,” “so profound a double-dealer,” “laid aside the restraint and plunged in shame” and a “profound duplicity of life” combined with a “morbid sense of shame”. When Mr. Enfield and Mr. Utterson talk about how Hyde marched into a door at 4 a.m. and came out with a cheque for close to a hundred pounds in Jekyll’s name, Mr. Enfield suspects “an honest man paying through the nose for some of the capers of his youth” and he refers to the place with the door as “Black Mail House” (Stevenson 8), which, according to Showalter, “for contemporary readers of Stevenson’s novel...the term “blackmail” would have immediately suggested homosexual liaisons” (112). She goes on further and points out that in the manuscript of the novel the homosexual nature of these “pleasures” is even more clearly hinted at:

In his original draft of the manuscript, Stevenson was more explicit about the sexual practices that had driven Jekyll to
a double life. Jekyll has become “from an early age . . . the slave of certain appetites,” vices which are “at once criminal in the sight of the law and abhorrent in themselves. They cut me off from the sympathy of those whom I otherwise respected” (112)

And as Clausson adds, this description of “appetites” of Jekyll, that were “at once criminal in the sight of the law” is especially revealing their nature if the reader realises that the novel was published in the same month as The Criminal Law Amendment Act went into effect and many homosexual men that read the novel in early 1886 clearly must have connected the novel to the public debate on criminalizing private encounters of homosexual nature, and even to their own “double” lives (350-1). A fact that must have been the desire of many contemporary homosexual readers is the liberation Jekyll feels when he transforms into Hyde:

Men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures. I was the first that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty (Stevenson 56)

This Jekyll’s scientific achievement lets him enjoy a safe double life, and the ability to “plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability” was according to Clausson a longing of many contemporary homosexual men who wanted to be able to “strip off” their conventional respectability and “spring headlong to the sea of liberty” (351). Just as the homosexual undertone of his
novel, Stevenson’s own sexuality was questioned by the public and according to Showalter “biographers have long hinted that Stevenson’s own double life was more than the standard round of brothels and nighttime bohemia, and have rattled such skeletons in [his] closet as “homosexuality, impotence, a passionate feeling for his stepson, submission to a wilful and predatory wife” (107), but there is no proof of Stevenson being a homosexual and Wayne Koestenbaum says that “Stevenson [only] served as a lightning rod for the fantasies of other male writers, some of whom were self-identified homosexuals”(33).
4 The Picture of Dorian Gray

"The Picture of Dorian Gray" says John Paul Riquelme in his Oscar Wilde’s Aesthetic Gothic: Walter Pater, Dark Enlightenment, And The Picture of Dorian Gray, “proceeds against the background of Walter Pater’s aesthetic writings” (25), Wilde does not repeat what Pater wrote but rather takes it to the next level and “responds to Pater by projecting the dark implications of Pater’s attitudes and formulations in a mythic Gothic narrative of destruction and self-destruction” (25). Through the novel’s narrative the reader is experiencing Wilde’s talent for social comedy and satire as well as is being introduced to some elements that are characteristic to the Gothic fiction, often focused on tales of horror, cruelty and romance. Allusions to the principles of the Gothic novel can be seen in Dorian’s mysterious and even melodramatic past through “a dark and darkening recognition that transforms Dorian’s life by actualizing a potential that was already there in his family” (26); be it his wicked grandfather, abandonment on the part of his parents, murder of his father or the untimely death of his mother, these all represent the type of romance not uncommon among Gothic authors. But as Clausson writes in his essay “some critics read the novel as belonging to a single genre . . . others see it as a kind of heteroglossia combining two or more genres” (341). He suggests that:

4 Walter Horatio Pater (4 August 1839 – 30 July 1894) was an English essayist, critic of art and literature, and writer of fiction.
The Gothic texts most relevant to Wilde’s novel are not the earlier ones of Maturin (to whom Wilde was distantly related) and Poe, but the contemporary fin-de-siècle Gothic tales of Stevenson, Machen, Wells, and Stoker...Decadence and degeneration in Dorian Gray are thus related primarily to fin-de-siècle Gothic rather than to the Paterian novel of self-development” (343)

Similarly to Jekyll and Hyde, the story of the novel is mostly set in London of the late nineteenth century. Wilde’s London, however, is different from the London Stevenson introduces in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. It seems to be divided into two parts, as if each of those “parts” was to represent one of Dorian’s two “sides”, the wealthy part where Dorian lives, frequents various gentlemen’s clubs, theatres and Operas, and the “slums” in the vicinity of the dock with its saloons and opium dens, which he frequents in order to satisfy his peculiar tastes as well as to escape the weight of his conscience.
5 Duality, Sadism, Masochism and Homosexuality of Dorian Gray

5.1 Duality of Human Nature

One of the aspects that both Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* have in common is the duality of human nature. Just as Jekyll claims that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson 52), Dorian suggests that “Each of us has Heaven and Hell in him” (Wilde 116). But where Jekyll desperately tries to “free” himself from his evil side, “There are moments” when Dorian “look[s] on evil simply as a mode through which he could realise his conceptions of the beautiful” (109). They both have a way of apologising and overlooking the evidence of their own sins, Jekyll calms himself by thinking that “It was Hyde . . . and Hyde alone, that was guilty” (Stevenson 57), and by attempting to correct the wrongs that Hyde committed. And Dorian, despite an initial attempt to make amends, to apologise to Sibyl by writing her a letter after which “he felt he had been forgiven” (Wilde 78), only to learn of her death shortly after finishing it, overlooks the first changes that his painting goes through and represses the guilt by thinking “What did it matter what happened to the coloured image on the canvas? He would be safe. That was everything” (Wilde 84). By avoiding the apparent truth and lessening the fatality of the wrongness of their deeds, both Dorian and Jekyll open the “Pandora’s box” of their own soul and evil is
allowed to gradually gain in strength and intensity. As Basil talks about sin in the novel he mentions that “Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man’s face. It cannot be concealed . . . if a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even” (Wilde 111). This proclamation might prove to be of significance to both Dorian Gray and Jekyll and his alter ego. Just as Edward Hyde is marked by his evil that “was written broadly and plainly on [his] face” and that “left on [his] body an imprint of deformity and decay” (Stevenson 55), Dorian Gray’s painting slowly but surely changes in his pursuit of pleasure at all costs, and evil seems to deform and alter his “soul”. When people who come into contact with Hyde feel that “There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable” (9), Basil, as the only person, except for Dorian himself, to ever see the terrible transformation suffered by Dorian’s very own “soul”, as Dorian himself refers to the painting, feels disgusted and appalled by it:

An expression of horror broke from the painter’s lips as he saw in the dim light the hideous face on the canvas grinning at him. There was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing . . . through some strange quickening of inner life, the leprosies of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful” (Wilde 115-6)

As Nils Clausson points out: “When Dr. Jekyll metamorphoses into Mr. Hyde, he degenerates to a lower, more primitive form of existence, a degeneration signalled in the novel by the repeated comparison of him to an ape. Dorian
similarly degenerates to a lower, bestial level of existence” (Clausson 357). He locks the painting in an abandoned room where “the face painted on the canvas could grow bestial, sodden, and unclean” (Wilde 94; italics added). As Dorian descends into the underworld of criminality, drugs and sexual depravity, his descent is according to Clausson:

Portrayed in language similar to that describing Hyde’s parallel excursions into the same nether regions: “He [Dorian] remembered wandering through dimly-lit streets, past gaunt black-shadowed archways and evil-looking houses. Women with hoarse voices and harsh laughter had called after him. Drunkards had reeled by cruising, and chattering to themselves like monstrous apes. He had seen grotesque children huddled upon doorsteps, and heard shrieks and oaths from gloomy courts” (Wilde 73; italics added). The lower classes are described as ape-like, and by his increasing association with them, Dorian becomes bestial and ape-like too” (Clausson 357-8).

The distinction of the social class can be also applied to both Jekyll’s and Dorian’s “double lives”. They both, under the disguise of people of high social status, hide their own desires and pleasures and keep up a public persona that is respectable, in the case of Henry Jekyll, and has a beautiful nature, in case of Dorian Gray. However, they both set to seek out pleasures among the lower social classes of London, Jekyll under the ultimate disguise of Edward Hyde, Dorian under some disguises of his own that are not closely described in the novel. Both of them are scared of the possibility that their “private” self might
be revealed and that their “public” self will suffer the consequences of their actions. In order to sustain their social “respectability” both Dorian and Jekyll go through great efforts to conceal their corruption. After all, the society of their time expected at least that much from them, because as Gertrude Himmelfarb mentions in her *Manners into Morals*: “The Victorians thought it no small virtue to maintain the appearance, the manner, of good conduct even while violating some basic precept of morality” (Himmelfarb 223).

5.2 Aggression of Dorian Gray

The character of Dorian Gray, similarly to that of Edward Hyde, shows signs of what Fromm describes as “malignant aggression” when he murders Basil Hallward:

Suddenly an uncontrollable feeling of hatred for Basil Hallward came over him [Dorian], as though it had been suggested to him by the image on the canvas, whispered into his ear by those grinning lips. The mad passions of a hunted animal stirred within him, and he loathed the man who was seated at the table, more than in his whole life he had ever loathed anything . . . He rushed at him, and dug the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear, crushing the man’s head down on the table, and stabbing again and again (Wilde 117)

But unlike Hyde, Dorian does not necessarily feel joy in committing murder, and when he reflects upon his crime he realises that:
There were sins whose fascination was more in the memory than in the doing of them; strange triumphs that gratified the pride more than the passions, and gave to the intellect a quickened sense of joy, greater than any joy they brought, or could ever bring to the senses. But this was not one of them. It was a thing to be driven out of the mind, to be drugged with poppies, to be strangled lest it might strangle one itself (Wilde 119).

By killing the only person who knows the real wickedness of his soul, and despite all that is still willing to help him find the path of righteousness again, Dorian seals his fate and condemns himself to the life of sin and depravation.

5.3 Sadism directed at Basil Hallward

An interesting thing to note is that even before Dorian was exposed to the influence of Lord Henry Wotton, and despite being described as having “a simple and beautiful nature” (Wilde 26), he shows signs of a sadistic behaviour towards Basil Hallward: “Now and then, however, he [Dorian] is horribly thoughtless and seems to take a real delight in giving me pain. Then I feel . . . that I have given away my whole soul to some one who treats it as if it were a flower to put in his coat, a bit of decoration to charm his vanity, an ornament for a summer’s day” (24). What Basil describes here fits Fromm’s description of a sadistic character “the essence of sadism is seen in the desire to inflict pain” (Fromm 280). In the case of Dorian Gray, the pain he inflicts upon his victim is emotional at first, but as his personality steers ever closer towards the threshold of ultimate evil, the emotional pain becomes physical.
pain and, eventually, murder. His sadism in the beginning of the story is just barely starting to develop, but after the seeds of Lord Henry’s hedonism take roots in Dorian, he slowly begins spreading the net of his victims. Basil Hallward, however, remains one of the most important targets of Dorian’s sadism. As was stated earlier in the paper, Fromm points out that “Both the sadist and the masochist need another being to "complete" them, as it were” (Fromm 292), and Dorian show’s this need for Basil “You are better. And how happy we used to be together! Don’t leave me Basil, and don’t quarrel with me. I am what I am. There is nothing more to be said” (Wilde 87), just as much as Basil shows his need for Dorian: “I couldn’t be happy if I didn’t see him [Dorian] every day. He is absolutely necessary to me” (23). Ultimately, by forcing the painter into admitting that “from the moment I [Basil] met you [Dorian], your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you . . . 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” (89), he gains an information that helps him maintain and even increase the hold he has over Basil. “Dorian Gray smiled to himself. Poor Basil! How little he knew of the true reason! And how strange it was that, instead of having been forced to reveal his own secret, he had succeeded, almost by chance, in wresting a secret from his friend! How much that strange confession explained to him!” (91), upon realising just how much power he has over Hallward, Dorian expresses satisfaction in a form of smile, but the mere knowledge of his own dominant role in Basil’s life is not enough after a time. For that reason, after Basil comes to see Dorian to discuss some of
the terrible rumours that are being spread about the object of the painter’s love and admiration, Dorian decides to intensify the torment inflicted upon the painter even more. “A bitter laugh of mockery broke from the lips of the younger man. ‘You shall see it [Dorian’s soul] yourself, to-night!’ he cried, seizing a lamp from the table. ‘Come: it is your own handiwork. Why shouldn’t you look at it? . . . You have chattered enough about corruption. Now you shall look on it face to face’” (Wilde 113), by saying that it is Basil’s “own handiwork”, he implicates that the painter in fact holds responsibility for the crimes Dorian committed. Dorian “felt a terrible joy at the thought that someone else was to share his secret, and that the man who had painted the portrait that was the origin of all his shame was to be burdened for the rest of his life with the hideous memory of what he had done” (113) and according to Fromm:

The core of sadism, common to all its manifestations, is the passion to have absolute and unrestricted control over a living being, whether an animal, a child, a man, or a woman. To force someone to endure pain or humiliation without being able to defend himself is one of the manifestations of absolute control, but it is by no means the only one. The person who has complete control over another living being makes this being into his thing, his property, while he becomes the other being’s god (288-9)

By making Basil look at his “soul” and by implicating that he is to be blamed for it’s current state, Dorian seeks to secure this “absolute control” achieved through “forcing someone to endure pain or humiliation without being able to
defend himself” that Fromm writes about. As Basil pleads “Deny them [charges made against him], Dorian, deny them! Can’t you see what I am going through? My God! Don’t tell me that you are bad, and corrupt, and shameful” (Wilde 114), Dorian just “smiled” and there even “was a curl of contempt in his lips” (114) showing that he indeed does not care at all about the feelings of the painter. Instead of denying what Basil begs him to deny, he lures him to “Come upstairs” where he “keep[s] a diary of [his] life from day to day, and it never leaves the room in which it is written” (114), Dorian even goes as far as to admit “I am delighted” (114) at the thought that Basil was about to see the monstrosity that Dorian had made of his very own soul, while knowing exactly how terrible will be the painter’s pain upon that discovery. As he notions the painter to “draw that curtain back” and see his soul, “The voice [Dorian’s] that spoke was cold and cruel” (115). And when Basil points out: “You have done enough evil in your life. My God! Don’t you see that accursed thing leering at us?” (117), Dorian succumbs to a sudden fit of rage and loathing towards the painter and by “[digging] the knife into the great vein that is behind the ear… and stabbing again and again” (117), where according to Fromm “nonsexual sadistic behaviour, aiming at the infliction of physical pain up to the extreme of death, has as its object a powerless being” (Fromm 283; italics added), he completes his dominance over the painter in a most definitive way, by taking away the thing most precious to every living organism, his life.
5.4 Sadism directed at Sibyl Vane

Dorian Gray however, similarly to Edward Hyde, does not content himself with just one victim of his sadistic behaviour. While he still yet keeps “mentally tormenting” the painter Basil Hallward, he finds himself another objects that would satisfy his desires to master. His selfish and untrue feelings for Sibyl Vane mark the start of the development of his sadistic character. Although he claims that “Sibyl is the only thing [he] care[s] about” (Wilde 51), he does not care about her at all. All he cares about is her acting, in fact, her acting is the only thing that Dorian does feel “in love” with, what she represents on the stage is what attracts Dorian, he tells Lord Henry that “She is all the great heroines of the world in one”, that she is “more than an individual” (51). When he wants to charm Sibyl to love him, it is not because of his feelings for her but because of his own selfishness and desire to make “the dead lovers of the world to hear our [Dorian’s and Sibyl’s] laughter, and grow sad.”, to “stir their dust into consciousness, to wake their ashes into pain” (51-2), he wants to have power over her, in which he succeeds, because Sibyl feels that “Prince Charming rules life for us now” (55), implicating her whole family in her love to Dorian, rather than just herself. And as he “dominates” her, she feels that she is “not worthy of him”, and even feels “so much beneath him” (56), but feels absolutely certain of the fact that she “Shall love him for ever!” (61). Dorian, in his declaration that: “the man who could wrong her would be a beast, a beast without a heart.” (66), describes himself in advance, but despite his own proclamation, later on he does not feel to be “heartless” (Wilde 80). Dorian’s superficial love for Sibyl, however, proves to be rather short-lived. Even though
she does not lose anything of her former beauty, her acting changes as a response to her love for Dorian, and just as the “staginess of her acting was unbearable”, “Her gestures absurdly artificial” and just as she “over-emphasised everything that she had to say” (69), Dorian comes to recognise that it really was just her acting that he was in love with, not the actress. “She seems to me to be simply callous and cold. She has entirely altered. Last night she was a great artist. This evening she is merely a commonplace, mediocre actress” (70), realises Dorian and sends his friends away saying “Can’t you see that my heart is breaking?” (70), upon the realisation, all his supposed feelings of love vanish, and are replaced with a desire to cause emotional pain, because “It [Sibyl’s acting] was dreadful” and as he tells Sibyl “You have no idea what I suffered” (71). From his “suffering” rises a wave of sadistic behaviour directed at the young actress, and his language from that point onwards, is full of the intention to hurt her: “You make yourself ridiculous . . . I was bored” (71), although she does not seem to hear what he is saying to her because she is “transfigured with joy” and “an ecstasy of happiness dominate[s] her” (71), and her love for Dorian blinds her from seeing him for what he truly is. Dorian however, only keeps focusing selfishly on his own feelings and is completely oblivious to Sibyl’s. His intention to hurt her feelings thus only intensifies to a point when “he leaped up, and went to the door. ‘Yes,’ he cried, ‘you have killed my love. You used to stir my imagination. Now you don’t even stir my curiosity. You simply produce no effect’” (72), his language now even more clearly fits Fromm’s definition of a sadistic character as one that desires to inflict pain to a helpless beings, in this case, the pain is again of the “mental”
rather than the physical kind. He continues on however: “You have thrown it all away. You are shallow and stupid. My God! How mad I was to love you! What a fool I have been! You are nothing to me now. I will never see you again. I will never think of you. I will never mention your name” (Wilde 72), until she begins to respond in a way he desires “The girl grew white, and trembled. She clenched her hands together, and her voice seemed to catch in her throat” and eventually “A low moan broke from her, and she flung herself at his feet, and lay there like a trampled flower. ‘Dorian, Dorian, don’t leave me’”, as she continues in her pleading and she begs him to not “be cruel to [her] because [she] loves [him] better than anything in the world”, eventually “A fit of passionate sobbing choked her” and she is “crouched on the floor like a wounded thing” (72-3). Dorian however does not show her any kind of mercy and, “With his beautiful eyes, he looked down at her, and his chiselled lips curled in exquisite disdain”, when he realises that “There is always something ridiculous about the emotions of people whom one has ceased to love. Sibyl Vane to him seemed to be absurdly melodramatic. Her tears and sobs annoyed him” (73). As he finally gets home after leaving her heartbroken on the floor, he reflects “Why should he trouble about Sibyl Vane? She was nothing to him now” (75), but the change of expression on his painting, with its “touch of cruelty in the mouth” (74), drives him into a short period of fear induced regret, when he is afraid of the significance that the change in the painting symbolises, and in which he tries to make amends with Sibyl by writing her an apologetic letter. He mentally torments Sibyl to a point where she is desperate enough to commit a suicide, as he later learns from Lord Henry, but even though he
realises “I have murdered Sibyl Vane . . . murdered her as surely as if I had cut her little throat with a knife”, he shows signs of detachment from his guilt and, also, a great deal of indifference, “Yet the roses are not less lovely for all that. The birds sing just as happily in my garden. And to-night I am to dine with you [Henry], and then go on to the Opera, and sup somewhere, I suppose, afterwards” (Wilde 79). And he even feels amused, and almost pleased by the fact that she killed her “How extraordinary dramatic life is! . . . to me it seems far too wonderful for tears” (79), goes on to refer to Sibyl’s suicide as “a marvellous experience” (82), only strengthening the initial pleasure it gave him, and ultimately, he blames her for killing herself, claiming, that “She had no right to kill herself. It was selfish of her” (80), because by doing so, she robbed him of an object upon whom he could realise his sadistic desires.

5.5 Sadomasochistic character of Dorian Gray

“Even the sadist who has power suffers from his human impotence. He may kill and torture, but he remains a loveless, isolated, frightened person in need of a higher power to whom he can submit” (Fromm 292), this definition of sadism fits Dorian Gray almost perfectly. Where he clearly has power over others, and where “he had been an evil influence to others, and had experienced a terrible joy in being so” (Wilde 156), his life, dominated by the pursuit of pleasure at all costs, leaves him an “isolated” and “frightened” person just as Fromm describes it. Despite all the pleasure he had experienced, he is haunted by the sins of his past, and detached from the rest of the society by the terrible burden of his secrets. Even though he claims to “never do anything
else” (Wilde 142) than love, his life is loveless, because he drives off anyone who shows any signs of what might be considered a real love to him, in his desire to have power over them. Be it Basil Hallward, Sibyl Vane, or anyone else whom he claims to love or have loved.

According to Fromm the “need to submit is rooted in masochism . . . [but] because of the close connection between sadism and masochism it is more correct to speak of a sadomasochistic character, even though the one or the other aspect will be more dominant in a particular person” (292). In Dorian Gray, the sadistic character is clearly the dominant one, but he expresses certain signs of masochism as well. Just as the victims of Dorian’s sadism submit to his influence and power, Dorian himself submits to his pursuit of beauty and pleasure, that had been revealed to him in his youth by both Lord Henry’s philosophy of life and by the yellow book Henry gives him, and he himself feels that he “had been poisoned by [that] book” (Wilde 109). For example, his unquestionable, and to an extent even fanatic, following of everything Lord Henry Wotton says, shows the submissiveness of Dorian towards Henry. Even after he experiences years of sinful pleasures, starting with debauchery, continuing with drug use and ending with a murder, he still admits: “I always agree with Harry...Harry is never wrong” (142). His ultimate devotion to Lord Henry’s friendship is yet another proof of what Fromm defines as one of the main traits of the sadomasochistic character: control of those below him and submission to those above. Perhaps Dorian feels to be inferior to Henry’s intellect, but whatever the reason for his submissiveness towards one particular person and one particular ideal might be, it clearly is there. An
interesting thing to note is, that similarly to the character of Edward Hyde, but
with the difference that everyone knew what Hyde had done and not a single
living person knew about Dorian’s secret, Dorian Gray is in constant fear that
his crime, the murder of Basil Hallward, will somehow come to light one day,
despite the fact that “there was no trace of the murdered man anywhere”,
because his body had been dissolved in acid and “everything belonging to him
had been destroyed” and that “[Dorian] himself had burned what had been
below-stairs” (Wilde 158). On top of that, when he meets James Vane, and an
attempt on Dorian’s life is made, he starts seeing a threat on his life on every
corner, sinking deeper and deeper into a paranoia that does last until James
Vane is shot by an accident and Dorian himself sees the body.

5.6 Dorian and his painting

Dorian’s feelings towards his painting are also highly confused:

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

When he sees the painting for the first time, he in a way pledges his soul to the
devil in a promise of eternal youth. Even though he does not know at the time
that his wish is to come true, he already claims to be “in love with it [the
painting]” and feels that the painting “is a part of [himself]” (Wilde 34). Before he learns the truth, he even is “a little jealous of the picture for being a whole month younger than [he is]” and tells Lord Henry: “I must admit that I delight in it” (52). After it becomes apparent that his wish really came through and the painting changed its expression when he is cruel to Sibyl, he begins to wonder about the significance of the change and realises that the painting “held the secret of his life, and told his story” (75), but also questions whether it “would . . . teach him to loathe his own soul” as it had already “taught him to love his own beauty” (75). Perhaps in premonition of the things yet to come “A sense of infinite pity . . . for the painted image of himself, came over him” (75) and despite his resolution at the time to not sin anymore so that the painting would not gain a “stain” that would “for every sin that he committed . . . fleck and wreck [the painting’s] fairness” (75), he dismisses it the moment he learns that Sibyl killed herself and decides that he was to have “eternal youth, infinite passion, pleasures subtle and secret, wild joys and wilder sins” and that “the portrait was to bear the burden of his shame” (84), even though used to sit every morning before his portrait and wonder at its beauty. He thinks that “there would be a real pleasure in watching it” (84) as it changes and that it does not matter what will happen to the painting because “he would be safe” and “that was everything” (84). When Basil desires to see his work, Dorian realises that the painting is not safe from prying eyes and decides to lock it away in a room to which he would be the only one with a key. To an extent he even shows signs of sadistic behaviour towards the painting, to which he himself refers as his own “soul”, as he would “stand with a mirror, in front of
the portrait...looking...at the evil and ageing face on the canvas, and . . . at the young face . . . [in] the polished glass” and “the very sharpness of the contrast used to quicken his sense of pleasure” (Wilde 98), and:

He would examine with a minute care, and . . . with a monstrous and terrible delight, the hideous lines that seared the wrinkling forehead, or crawled around the heavy sensual mouth, wondering sometimes which were the more horrible, the signs of sin or the signs of age. He would place his white hands besides the coarse bloated hands of the picture, and smile. He mocked the misshapen body and the failing limbs (98)

By taking pleasure in mocking the deformation and decay that he was inflicting to his own soul. But just as watching the painting change used to give him pleasure at one point, in the end “it had kept him awake at night” and “when he had been away, he had been filled with terror lest other eyes should look upon it” and he realises that the painting “had been conscience” (158) to him, and the only way to free himself from it he sees in its destruction. So he stabs the painting with a knife, even though he himself believes it is his own soul, and in doing so he kills himself.

5.7 Homosexuality in Dorian Gray

There are subtle, but apparent references to homosexuality in the novel, and the male relationships and bonds between men play a large role in the structuring of the novel. Painting of Dorian Gray, being an important symbol on its own, depends largely upon the admiration of and obsession Basil Hallward
has with Dorian and his beauty. Lord Henry feels, upon meeting Dorian, a strong desire to seduce and sway him and shape him into a realization of all his philosophies about life. According to Ann Herndon Marshall’s article *Winckelmann and the Anti-Essentialist Thrust in Dorian Gray*:

In the conflicting characters of Dorian Gray, [Wilde] treats Pater’s two versions of Winckelmann, or, more precisely, the Goethe-Pater opposition regarding the homosexual Winckelmann. . . . There are two versions of the homosexual man [in the novel], one fatally idealizing, favouring Goethe’s romantic figure (Basil Hallward), and one boldly protean, favouring Pater’s aesthetic man (Lord Henry) (150)

In the novel, Wilde does in fact directly compare the character of Basil Hallward to Winckelmann “the love that he [Basil] bore him [Dorian] . . . was not that mere physical admiration of beauty . . . it was such love as Michael Angelo had known, and Montaigne, and *Winckelmann*, and Shakespeare himself” (Wilde 92; italics added).

After Dorian first meets Lord Henry and is introduced to his subversive philosophy, he experiences a sort of awakening:

He was dimly conscious that entirely fresh influences were at work within him. Yet they seemed to him to have come really from himself. The few words that Basil’s friend had said to him – words spoken by chance, no doubt, and with wilful paradox in them – had touched some secret chord that had never been touched
before, but that he felt was now vibrating and throbbing to curious pulses (29)
And as Clausson suggests that “moreover, as words such as “vibrating,” “throbbing,” “secret chord,” “curious pulses” . . . all suggest that, as recent critics have argued, a central element of that development is Dorian’s discovery of his own homosexuality” (Clausson 345-6), and the development of Dorian’s character in the book supports the claim, because apart from the “feelings” he has for Sibyl Vane for a few days, he seems to attract mainly males and the lives he “ruins” are also those of young men. “There were many, especially among the very young men, who saw in him . . . the true realisation of a type of which they had often dreamed” (Wilde 98), and who viewed Dorian as a role model. So it would not be surprising to add that he was often “entertaining the fashionable young men of his own rank who were his chief companions” (106; italics added), he associates mainly with the males, which would hint more clearly at the direction of Dorian’s own sexuality. Alan Campbell might serve as an example for all of Dorian’s male friends “they had been great friends once . . . then the intimacy had come suddenly to an end” (121) and “to him, as to many others, Dorian Gray was the type of everything that is wonderful and fascinating in life” (122), which not only suggests the attraction between them but also tells that there were more men like Alan Campbell in Dorian’s life. As was mentioned earlier in connection with *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, according to Showalter, blackmail, for the contemporary reader of the novel, would have immediately suggested homosexuality. And when Dorian blackmails Alan into helping him get rid of Basil’s body: “I am so sorry for you,
Alan . . . but you leave me no alternative. I have a letter written already. Here it is. You see the address . . . If you don’t help me, I will send it. You know what the result will be” (Wilde, 125), and due to the previously mentioned intimacy of their friendship, homosexuality would be even easier to deduce.

Not unlike the first version of Stevenson’s novel, the *Lippincott’s* version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* contained a homosexual theme and “[It’s] explicitness . . . outraged many early reviewers” (Clausson 346). As he states in his paper:

Basil’s final declaration of his true feelings for Dorian is unmistakably homoerotic: “It is quite true that I have worshipped you with far more romance of feeling than a man usually gives to a friend. Somehow, I had never loved a woman. . . . Well, from the moment I met you, your personality had the most extraordinary influence over me. I quite admit that I adored you madly, extravagantly, absurdly. I was jealous of everyone to whom you spoke. I wanted to have you all to myself” (Clausson 346)

Only fact that he admits to never loving a woman screams homosexuality loud and clear, but when it is topped with a “far more romance of feeling than a man usually gives to a friend”, the homoerotic content of the confession is undeniable.

In the following passage from the book, Oscar Wilde, through the words of Lord Henry, seems to be attacking the restrictive laws, especially “monstrous laws” of the Labouchère Amendment to *The Criminal Law Amendment Act*. 
I believe that if one man were to live his life out fully and completely, were to give form to every feeling . . . the world would gain such a fresh impulse of joy that we would . . . return to the Hellenic ideal . . . The self-denial . . . mars our lives . . . Resist [the temptation], and your soul grows sick with longing for the things it has forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful (28-9)

Here according to Clausson:

It is hard to imagine that a sophisticated homosexual man . . . would not see [the] immediate and obvious relevance to his own life, regardless of what other meanings could legitimately be attributed to [Henry’s words]. Society’s “monstrous laws” have made male-to-male sex “monstrous and unlawful,” and the “self-denial that mars our lives” includes the denial those sexual impulses that are not monstrous in themselves, but made monstrous only by monstrous laws (Clausson 348)

According to The Secret Life of Oscar Wilde by Neil McKenna, Oscar Wilde took inspiration for the character of Dorian Gray in a young poet and writer John Gray. He begins writing the novel at the same time as he is “laying amorous siege” to John Gray. “A single letter from John Gray to Oscar survives, in which he signs himself ‘Dorian’. And Oscar was in the habit of referring to him as ‘Dorian’ in conversations with Ada Leverson and others” (122), he states that the novel reflects the relationship between Oscar Wilde and John Gray and that “Dorian Gray, like John Gray, is a young man of ‘extraordinary personal
beauty’, . . . And like John Gray, Dorian looks much younger than his years. He is ‘little more than a lad’ although he is really over twenty” (122). This would raise a question whether, and to what extent, is the novel in fact an account of Wilde’s own life, as he writes to a correspondent, “Basil is what I think I am; Lord Henry what the world thinks me; Dorian is what I would like to be in other ages perhaps” (Ellmann 319), which would suggest that Wilde himself sometimes hoped for a better future where male beauty could be appreciated without shame. Unlike for that of Robert Louis Stevenson, Wilde’s own sexuality was no secret and “[his] homosexuality was well known long before his trials” (Adut 227).
6 Conclusion

The paper analyzed the sadistic as well as the masochistic character traits of Edward Hyde, Henry Jekyll and Dorian Gray, by using Fromm’s *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* as its basis. The aim of the thesis was to provide arguments, that would support the classification of the behavior of the characters of Edward Hyde and Dorian Gray as sadistic and to compare the similarities between the two characters.

The first chapter of the thesis is divided into two parts and is focused on Stevenson’s novel. The first part provided a background in terms of the different elements of the structure of the novel, commented on the genre and attempted to provide sufficient biographical background of the author of the novel, to illustrate the process of writing and the possible initial reasons behind it. The second part was focused on the setting of the novel and discussed its significance.

The second chapter was divided into five sub-chapters and was focused on Stevenson’s novel *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The sub-chapters subsequently dealt with the duality of the main characters, portraying Hyde as the evil counterpart of good and respectable Jekyll. It went on to mention the two different types of aggression, as they are described by Fromm, and then analyzed the character of Edward Hyde by using Fromm’s definitions as a founding stone for its claims. Next sub-chapter, using various extracts from Stevenson’s novel and Fromm’s book, attempted to analyze the sadism of
Edward Hyde, another subchapter attempted to portray Henry Jekyll as a masochistic character in relation to Hyde, and the last one disclosed the homosexuality in the novel, commented on the possible origin of the story of the novel and discussed the sexuality of R. L. Stevenson.

The third chapter of the thesis was divided into two parts and was focused on Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. It commented on the genre and setting of the novel and compared London of Edward Hyde with the London of Dorian Gray.

Chapter four was similar to chapter two, and was divided into several sub-chapters that dealt with the different elements of Wilde’s novel. The First sub-chapter attempted to provide an insight into the concept of the duality of human nature in the novel and compare it to that of Stevenson’s. The second is focused on the classification of the aggression type of Dorian Gray in comparison to Edward Hyde, again using Fromm as a main toll to prove the point. Sub-chapter three aimed to map the development of Dorian’s sadistic behavior towards Basil Hallward in an attempt to prove Dorian’s sadism. The fourth sub-chapter did the same thing as the third one but used Dorian’s relationship with character of Sibyl Vane instead. Fifth sub-chapter was divided into two parts and subsequently dealt with Dorian’s sadism from a general point of view and with the classification of his character trait to one single definition, sadomasochism. Sub-chapter six commented on the mixed feelings Dorian had towards his painting. And the last sub-chapter, that was divided into several parts, attempted to point out the homosexual references in the book, mention the obvious homosexuality of the first version of the novel in comparison to the
subtle homosexual references in the revised edition of the book. It also mentioned a poet John Gray as a likely source for the character of Dorian Gray and provided some historical background for it. And, it commented on Wilde’s own sexuality, as well as on the possible hidden protest against the laws prohibiting homosexuality, aimed at the contemporary readers of the novel.


Resumé

Cílem práce je analyzovat a porovnat společné znaky Henryho Jekylla, Edwarda Hydea a Doriana Graye, z hlediska sadismu, masochismu a homosexuality. Práce se zaměřuje na dílo Ericha Fromma *Anatomie Lidské Destruktivity* a používá ji jako základ pro ilustrování povahových vlastností těchto tří postav. Převážná část práce se zabývá sadistickým chováním Hydea a Doriana a analyzuje jejich vztahy s ostatními postavami z románů, aby podpořila svá tvrzení. Pomocí analýzy těchto vztahů, popsaných v textu zdrojů, se práce snaží potvrdit přítomnost sadistických a masochistických charakterových vlastností a odkazů na homosexualitu jak v románu Stevensonova tak i Wildea.
Résumé

The aim of the thesis is to analyse and compare the characters of Henry Jekyll, Edward Hyde and Dorian Gray in terms of sadism, masochism and homosexuality. The thesis focuses on Fromm’s *Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* and uses it as a basis for examplification of the character traits of these three characters. The major portion of the thesis deals with the sadistic behaviour of Hyde and Dorian and analyses their relationships with other characters from the novels to support its claims. By exploring these relationships depicted in the source text, the thesis argues for the presence of sadistic and masochistic character-traits, as well as references to homosexuality, in the novels.