

An Orchestration of Narcissistic Expressions in John Osborne's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* -A Moral Entertainment: A Reflection on Kohutian Self Psychology Psychoanalysis

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Abstract—This paper aims to provide an interdisciplinary space for fruitful debate concerning psychoanalytical representations of narcissism, narcissistic personality disorder, and its implications in artistic, literary, and health discourses. A close textual reading of John Osborne's most impressive play, *The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment*, reveals narcissistic traits or abnormal behavior patterns in the protagonist, Dorian Gray, who, like the mythological narcissus, orchestrates a flurry of interpersonal abuse and antagonism. As such, the critical analysis and interpretation of the main character, Dorian, provides new therapeutic understanding to clinicians, academicians, parents, and mental health enthusiasts around the world and thereby helps recognize individuals with symptoms of NPD and efficiently deal with them on the grounds of empathy and wisdom as encapsulated in self-psychology psychoanalysis.

Index Terms—Kohut, self-psychology psychoanalysis, narcissistic personality disorder, self-object needs, empathy

I. INTRODUCTION

Oscar Wilde, the Irish author, is certainly one of the flamboyant literary figures who caught the literary world by storm with his trailblazing creative genius. He is notoriously known for his only novella, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which appeared in Lippincott's Magazine in 1890. The publication of the book had only a lukewarm reception as it shocked the common readers with its gross homosexual and narcissistic overtones and had to be subsequently censored and modified twice to suit the reading palate. Despite the controversy, the book has managed to sway and continues to attract the interests of general readers and authors all over the world, inspiring creative output in a variety of artistic media, including opera, music, literature, and, filmmaking as well.

The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment by John Osborne is an intriguing play of Oscar Wilde's much-controversial novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which is deeply grounded in Wilde's personal experience. This melodrama recounts the harrowing tale of a young man who is engulfed by his narcissistic obsessions with ideal beauty and eternal youth and ventures into a Faustian gamble in a vain attempt to preserve his crumbling youth and virility by selling his soul in exchange for the perpetual charm. On being granted the boon, is adored by everyone, leads a debauched life of sins and perversions, and eventually meets his catastrophic end. The captivating tale tells in a very graphical way how an innocent boy's narcissistic pursuits and passions turn him into a selfish monster who ends up digging his own grave.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study employs both qualitative and descriptive approach to achieve the objectives of the critical examination of the drama by John Osborne, *The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment*. Different primary and secondary sources that were collected from university and college libraries, online databases, and other sources have been researched and incorporated. The descriptive methodology has enabled researchers to extensively analyze the portrayal of narcissism and Narcissistic Personality Disorder present in the play.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The popularity of Wilde's infamous narrative *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has not dwindled through the sands of time,

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and it continues to be one of the most influential literary masterpieces of the Victorian era. Despite the controversy, the book has managed to gravitate the interests of general readers and authors all over the world, inspiring creative output in a variety of artistic media, including opera, music, literature, and finally, filmmaking.

Critically examining the adapted version of John Osborne's *The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment*, Sigalinggi (2010) posits the problem of morality and the characterization of Dorian Gray. Linda On examining the narcissistic mania, Taghizadeh and Jaihouni (2014) state that Dorian Gray's mental collapse is eventually caused by extreme narcissism, psychological trauma, and social isolation. Linda (2015) made a comparative analysis, unearthing the major impact of censorship on the main character's moral character in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in contrast to the original unfiltered and censored versions. In exploring the concept of figure double in Mark Twain's historical novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, Taylor (1992) employs Freudian narcissism formulation and graphically demonstrates how Tom, the protagonist's sexual energy, is displaced by economic compulsion in the context of American slavery and the slave economy. Likewise, Campbell (2017) investigated the updated version of Dorian Gray, which was shown as a 27-episode web series on YouTube, set in contemporary America with a female Dorian Gray named Dori. Moreover, through the lens of 'Thing Theory', Bill Brown and Vittorio Gille's 'embodied simulation', Dogan (2018) examined how the ontologically portrayed hero, Dorian Gray, becomes the embodiment of the portrait and human nature in a comparative analysis of the book version, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, published in 1891, and the adapted film versions of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945), *Dorian Gray* (2009). Similarly, Pereira (2019) emphasized in his study how *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s geographical portrayal and the unique setting of the story considerably hinder the reader's understanding in the context of deciphering the underlying meanings. Besides this, Christensen (2019) addressed the enigmatic aspect of why Wilde preferred a "picture" instead of a "portrait" for the appreciation of his enchanting narrative, relying on the transcendental and metaphysical conceptions of visual art prevalent in the British tradition. Aliaga (2020) investigated effeminacy and aesthetic amorality in her work. Furthermore, Robinson (2021) used Victorian Gothic, Greek myth, psychic duality, monster theory, and the Faustian pact as examples to show how allusions and influences work.

However, in literature, Heinz Kohut coined the phrase "narcissistic personality disorder" in 1968 and proposed the "deficit model" through his Self-Psychology approach. Kohut contends that a lack of parental empathy leads to the development of a narcissistic personality in children. Grandiose omnipotence develops as a defensive response against the disruption of the self since the distinct merging of the "grandiose self" and the "idealized parental imago" does not take place (Kohut, 1971). Later on, Kernberg proposed the Object Relations approach, emphasizing conflict and antagonism in the psychological development of narcissism. Kernberg posits that the early childhood experiences of parental indifference or hostility drive the child to retreat into thoughts of specialness. It is these impulses that cause the obsessional grandiose self-structure that develops, protecting a child from his or her frustration at not being able to integrate good objects into the process of "self" (Kernberg, 1974). Furthermore, the successors in the field of psychiatry developed the concept of a narcissistic personality type with their divergent concepts. For instance, Ehrlich's (2021) notion on theories of the true and false self as proposed by Winnicott of late.

IV. HEINZ KOHUT'S BIPOLAR SELF AND PATHOLOGICAL NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY

Self-psychology is one of the more comprehensive, seminal psychoanalytic theories spawned by Heinz Kohut (1971, 1977, 1984) that emphasizes the constructs of empathy and cohesive self-structure. According to Kohut, empathy is a vital technique for obtaining the necessary knowledge about the client. Empathy enables clinical experts to help their patients define and therapeutically resolve their challenges. Through this vicarious introspection or empathetic understanding, Kohut posits, clinicians could help patients formulate self-awareness and realize the connection between their past experiences and how they have a punctuated psychological bearing on their present challenges in life. Kohut (1966, 1971) also avows that both the psychotherapist and the client would become cognizant of the patient's unmet needs or requirements related to self-deficiencies over time. Furthermore, for Kohut, the development of the nuclear self is comprised of two-dimensional nature: mirroring self-image or grandiosity (someone who validates and reacts to the infant's intrinsic feelings of grandeur, power, and perfection); and idealizing parent imago (someone whom the infant could admire and internalize as an ideal of tranquility, assurance, and omnipotence) within the ambit of self-psychology. The formation of a healthy sense of self is constituted and developed as a result of the conflict and harmony that exist between the two variables, namely mirroring and Idealizing. Mirroring is a developmental process in which an infant's sense of grandiosity or omnipotence is mirrored and responded to by a self-object. In Kohut's view, Objects which we experience as part of our self are referred to as self-objects, and "a selfobject completes, stabilizes, soothes, and otherwise integrates" (Kohut, 1971, p.414). The mother is usually the first to administer this self-reflective role as a self-object, and as a result, the child perceives her as a part of herself. Due to a lack of ego restrictions, the child thinks of himself as limitless and all-powerful. When the mother as a "self-object" acknowledges the child's impulsive, showy behaviour with joy, she thus extends an "empathic mirroring." The child naturally internalizes the mother's positive ministrations and develops a sense of a healthy, cohesive self, which leads to a strong sense of self-worth. In Kohut's view, the desire for empathetic mirroring has a narcissistic quality to it. It is an intrinsic yearning for confirmation and identity that persists throughout a person's life. When the need to be liked and admired by others is too great, it can be a sign of narcissism, which can be unhealthy.

The "grandiose self," according to Kohut (1968/1978b, p. 67), is characterized by an overwhelming demand for affirmation. The "grandiose self" is one pole of the bipolar self, and this basic or "archaic" narcissism is the core that develops into a mature, "cohesive self" given the correct circumstances. The grandiose self becomes an obsession and the basis of a traumatized self when paternal ministrations to a child's mirroring requirements are missing or insufficient, it results in narcissistic character disorders. Whereas, Idealizing, which is another core aspect of the bipolar self, is the process by which a kid comes to understand and seeks to unite with the power of an omniscient self-object. Idealization, which is the basic mechanism of the self's opposite pole, strives to be united with its potential. Moreover, the child perceives the mother or father as an impeccable and all-powerful image, and the infant incorporates these flawless, idealized self-objects due to this lack of ego constraints. Disappointment and disillusionment creep in as these internalized images are at odds with the actual parents in real-life circumstances. This disappointment, on the other hand, catalyzes further healthy self-development. These flawless images or Idealized objects are now transformed by the child into a source of aspirations, ambitions, and values. In addition, these values, which drive an individual's motivation, provide an internal foundation of purpose and significance, as well as motivation for worthwhile goals. These goals are driven by more than just a sense of self, as shown by the intellectual, artistic, government, or societal projects that go beyond just individual goals (Kohut, 1977). Traumatic damage to either pole of a bipolar self can cause narcissistic defects. This stops the growth of a cohesive self and shows up in several psychopathologies, like drug addiction, sexual deviance, criminality, and an abnormal desire for mystical union with idealized, all-powerful religious or political figures.

Barring mirroring and idealizing, Kohut (1984), in his final publication, also acknowledged the emergence of the twinship selfobject as a unique part of the self since it persisted to manifest in the clinical setting as transference. This element of the self evolves as a result of the tension between the two poles of aspirations and ideals (Kohut & Wolf, 1978), and represents the repository of physiological activities that urge an individual to achieve his or her objectives. Its roots stem from an infant's need to obtain intrinsic abilities and skills by mirroring and collaborating with acceptable objects. In addition, the requirements of the subjective self are known as "self-object needs." For Kohut, the self, which is thus regarded as a process or system that organizes subjective experience, is the epicenter of a person's psychological existence consisting of perceptions, thoughts, beliefs, and dispositions toward oneself and the world (Kohut, 1971, 1977, 1984). Furthermore, Kohut thought of the "self" as a mental drive that is directly responsible for both psychological maturity and mental health. In Kohut's perspective on self-psychology, narcissism is not a defensive or aberrant state, but rather a natural and constructive process of normal development. Kohut (1971) postulates that the narcissistic curve of development starts as soon as a person is born and sets the stage for a person's successful growth.

From his clinical findings, Kohut is of the perspective that patients would reveal their transference or self-object needs during therapeutic sessions to the extent that therapists provide compassionate and empathetic attunement. The process of rehabilitation would begin with this insight, and patients make progress as they identify their own needs. When their needs are recognized and affirmed by the therapist, patients would gradually be able to get good self-objects and heal from past trauma and self-object deficits (Kohut, 1966, 1971).

V. BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION OF MANIFESTATION OF NARCISSISM IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*—A MORAL ENTERTAINMENT

The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment by John Osborne is one of the most intriguing plays that revolves around a fascinating plot of how Dorian Gray, an exceedingly charming, wealthy, and naive young man, falls prey to the worldview of hedonism and epicureanism in the absence of adequate empathetic self-object or environment. In his blind pursuit of inordinate passions and pleasures, Dorian takes the incarnation of a grandiose narcissist, who then indulges in orchestrating a slew of narcissistic machinations, thus plunging people into untold miseries for the sake of safeguarding his fragile, fragmented "self," caught and tormented in the vortex of his actual world of aspirations, ambitions, and the idealized world of perpetual beauty as captured by Basil Hallward in his portrait. Self-psychological psychoanalytical scrutiny of the play also reveals the themes of parental absence and loneliness, and also how such an unpalatable condition psychologically deprives a child and culminates in full-blown narcissism, as it occurs in the case of Dorian Gray. Dorian Gray is presented as an incredibly handsome young man of 20 years of age, with impeccable mannerisms of the aristocracy. Dorian is the last grandson of Lord Kelso, an eminent aristocrat. Dorian's mother, Margret Devereux, was an extremely beautiful lady who fell in love with a penniless soldier and married him and begot Dorian against the will of her father, who then hired a goon and killed his son-in-law in an open challenge and took her daughter back. Embittered and traumatized by her father's act, Margret shunned Lord Kelso, never speaking a word with him until her death. Dorian was brought up in Shelby Royal under the custody of his grandfather, who bequeathed him an enormous inheritance and wealth after his demise. Thus, it's crystal clear at the very outset of the play that Dorian emerges as an abandoned child, lacking parental care, love, and validation, though he was born with a silver spoon. Thus, the structure of the 'nuclear self,' whose healthy development requires the process of mirroring and idealizing on the part of parents, remains adversely affected and stumped in the nascent stages for Dorian as a child, signaling a potential kernel for the narcissistic defect. In other words, Dorian was deprived of the necessary self-object or intra-psychic experience due to the absence of his mother and the premature death of his father. Thus, Dorian as a child was conspicuously deprived of any positive "mirroring" ambiance during his infancy and missed out on one of the

developmental elements of the "bi-polar" self. On this ground, Kohut(2018) reinstates that narcissistic defects develop following traumatic damage in either of the bi-polar self's poles, which arrests the growth of a cohesive self and materializes in a variety of psychopathologies, such as drug addictions, sexual deviance, criminality, and an abnormal yearning for magical union with idealized, infinitely powerful religious or political figures. Moreover, this pronounced lack of "emphatic mirroring" and the need for positive intervention from his mother Margret prevented Dorian's "embryonic self" from internalizing a sense of grandiosity, perfection, self-worth, or value in himself. On this stance, Kohut underscores that "the feeling of being within the compass of human empathy may indeed exert a beneficial, wholesome, and, under certain circumstances, 'therapeutic' effect" (Kohut, 2014, p.398). This is certainly a disoriented, menacing hit to the self-esteem and self-cohesion of an abundantly beautiful kid like Dorian, who would otherwise have gained the cuddling attention and praise of everyone as the cynosure in a normal familial environment, as it were. Moreover, H. Kara, (2014) puts it, this profound absence of "symbiosis" (a merging experience with the caregiver) between the child and mother hatches the "ugly narcissistic duckling". Though Dorian's early childhood circumstances deprived him of potential emphatic attunement or mirroring self-object needs, the latter part of his early adulthood appeared to have compensated for the deficiencies. In this way, Dorian's meeting with the artist Basil Hallward and Lord Hendry Wotton in Basil's art studio has opened the floodgates for the lapsed and much-needed "mirroring selfobject" and the "idealizing parent imago" experience for Dorian.

Moreover, Basil, enamoured by the cherubic beauty and the countenance of Dorian, offers to draw his portrait and falls in love with Dorian in the process. The interactions, affiliation, and affection that he develops for Dorian and the Portrait are nothing short of motherly ministrations and care. Basil's very confession that there is an intrinsic, enigmatic bond between him and the portrait; his motherly cautions not to be influenced by the evil incarnate, Lord Hendry Wotton; his periodical chidings to Dorian to turn over a new leaf; and above all, on knowing the duplicated, debauched lifestyle of Dorian from the hideous transformation of the image in the portrait; his final pleadings to repent before being murdered in cold blood by the latter; all his actions and motives only illustrate that Basil Hallward accords immense motherly symbiotic attunements and fulfills the mirroring self-object needs of Dorian. The following conversation illustrates this standpoint.

"LORD HENDRY. Is he fond of you?

BASIL. He likes me I think...Although, now and then, he seems to have a real delight in giving me real pain. I flatter him.

BASIL. Dorian Gary has a simple and beautiful nature. Don't try to influence. For my sake, and my work's sake. Mind, Harry, I'm trusting you.

LORD HENRY. What nonsense you do talk! Come". (p. 21-22)

However, Basil's empathetic resonance with Dorian is short-lived and can no longer hold the momentum when Lord Hendry Wotton arrives in the mindscape of Dorian with the proposition of new hedonism and Epicureanism. Hendry, with his doctrine of aesthetic pursuit and self-development, which according to him, is the ultimate purpose of one's life, lures the young, responsive, innocent Dorian into becoming a wild seeker of unbridled passions and vile sensations. Thus, through his acquaintance and subsequent guidance as a mentor, Lord Hendry Wotton ominously influenced the young lad, giving him wings to flutter and soar into the world of pleasure-centric hedonism on the pretext of aestheticism to the point of no return. As a consequence, Lord Hendry Wotton supplements the second component of the bipolar self-structure needed for the normal development of a cohesive self, totally severing Dorian from all forms of pre-oedipal attunements that Basil Hallward semiotically extends. That is to say, Lord Hendry compensates to a greater extent for the lost self-object needs of the idealized parent image for Dorian Gray throughout the play.

"LORD HENRY. He's right. You are indeed a wonderful creation. You know more than you think you know. Just as you know less than you want to know.

(DORIAN is disturbed.)

LORD HENRY. You mustn't let yourself become sunburnt. It would be most unbecoming.

DORIAN. (Laughs.) What could it possibly matter?

LORD HENRY. It should matter everything to you.

DORIAN. Why?

LORD HENRY. You have the most marvellous youth. And that is the one thing worth having.

DORIAN. Well, I don't feel that, Lord Henry.

LORD HENRY. Don't frown so, Mr. Gray. Beauty is a form of genius. Higher, in fact. It requires no explaining. It is one of the great facts of the world. Like sunlight on water or the darkness of seasons. Or whatever we call these things. It makes princes of those who have it. Do you smile? Ah-when you have lost it will be no time to smile... Let nothing be lost upon you. Be afraid of nothing. A new sensation-horizon-that is what our century wants. You might be its visible-oh, symbol if you like. The reaches of your personality are endless. For a season. (Pause.) The moment I met you I saw that you were unconscious of what you might be. I felt I must tell you. The twenty-year pulse becomes sluggish. Limbs fail. Senses rot. Become cringing puppetry there is absolutely nothing else in the world. Youth-no...there is absolutely nothing else in the world". (p.22-23)

Not to say the least, the pattern of twinship or alter ego self-object transference is equally very evident in the

relationship between Dorian and his interim love interest, Sybil Vane, in the play. Twinship self-object needs arise out of the conflict between internalized values, ambitions, and idealized goals that a child acquires through the process of mirroring and idealizing. It emerges out of the child's desire to exhibit the acquired skills and values by way of collaborating the same with acceptable objects in real life. Dorian, having received the mirroring selfobject experience through adequate validation and appreciation from Basil Hallward and the idealized parent imago experience in the reception and the inoculation of eternal youth and perpetual beauty meted out by Lord Hendry Wotton, becomes narcissistically obsessed with his own image as a paragon of immortal beauty as captured in the portrait by his painter friend Basil Hallward. As Sandler (1966) puts it, one of the tactics utilized by the kid in an effort to re-establish the basic state of narcissism, the sensation of being loved, is identification with and imitation of an idealized object.

This relentless pursuit leads Dorian to engage in a Faustian gamble of selling his own soul in exchange for the perpetual good looks that he so yearns for. This means that he would retain his youth and beauty perpetually while the portrait grows wizened and old as time progresses. After this momentous yet tantalizing revelation through Lord Hendry Wotton, it dawns on Dorian, lulling him into an irrecoverable fixation that worshipping and preserving that ideal youth and handsomeness he himself so embodies ought to be the very purpose of his life no matter what comes in his way.

However, he is conflicted when he meets Sybil Vane and falls in love with her and, presumably, for her acting skills as a promising Shakespearian actress. Not only does Sybil Vane reciprocate his proposal, but she idealizes and worships Dorian as an immaculate, ideal lover, so much so that she even relegates her entire acting career and even commits suicide when spurned by Dorian. In her short episode of courtship, Sybil offers twinship transference and thus fulfills alter ego self-object needs.

"SIBYL. Dorian, you should have understood. But you understand now, don't you?

SIBYL. Why I was so bad tonight? Why I shall always be bad. Why I shall never be any good again.

DORIAN. Understand what?

DORIAN. You are ill. When you are ill you shouldn't go on. You make yourself ridiculous. My friends were bored. I was bored.

SIBYL. Dorian, before I knew you, acting was the one reality of my life. I only lived for the theatre. I thought it was all true what went on. And then you came-oh, my dearest, and you freed myself from all that. You taught me reality. Tonight, for the first time in my life, I saw the hollowness of everything I devoted myself to. You'd made me understand what love really is. My love, I've grown sick of shadows. You are more to me than any art could ever be. It all went... Take me away, Dorian-take me away with you where we can be quite alone. I hate the stage. I might mimic badly a passion I don't feel but I can't mimic one that burns me like this... You see what blasphemy it would be: to play at being in love?

DORIAN. You have killed all that". (p.57-58)

In addition, Kohut is of the opinion that when the primary caregivers fall short of meeting their children's selfobject requirements by administering appropriate mirroring and idealizing experiences, the transmuting internalization process is disrupted, resulting in a narcissistic personality disorder. As a result, the development of a cohesive self remains hampered. However, the intense archaic desires for approval, validation, and twinship experiences would continue unabated. On this ground, Solomon (1973) postulates that the psyche continues to cling to a vaguely delimited image of absolute perfection. That is to say that the individual develops a persistent, primary "craving" for self-object experiences, and so his or her conduct is marked by a never-ending quest for selfobject needs that have not been fulfilled. Furthermore, when a child is exposed to traumatic events such as the death of a parent or the absence of a primal caregiver, social exclusion, or the absence of a primal caregiver, such disappointments and setbacks lead to the development of a psychological wall that protects the child from needless, unpleasant experiences stemming from unmet selfobject needs, in the wake of which a child, in his early adulthood, might develop a "contact-shunning personality," defined by Kohut and Wolf as "defensive avoidance of selfobject experiences and self-object demands"(1968/1978b,p.273).

Besides fitting into the three-dimensional kohutian self-psychological model of narcissism, Dorian also falls in line with the nosological prescription of a grandiose narcissist as stipulated in the DSM-V, which underscores the presence of any five of the nine diagnostic criteria, namely grandiosity, the fantasy of unlimited power, brilliance, ideal love, beauty, sense of entitlement, the requirement for self-admiration, interpersonal exploitation, lack of empathy, envy and arrogance. Of these said traits, Dorian seems to clearly embody most of them in general, and grandiosity, obsession with ideal love, beauty, interpersonal exploitation, lack of empathy, addiction to substance use, and sexual perversion in particular as defences to cover up his fragmented self.

It's observed from the development of Dorian's character from the outset to the tragic denouement that the seemingly innocent, well-mannered, refined, and responsive young Dorian literally turns into a savage narcissist under the Mephistophelian spell of his godfather Lord Hendry Wotton. Ever since the fateful revelation occurred to him, he became obsessed with a sense of grandiosity, his own ideal beauty, and eternal youth as captured in the canvas. Such was his fixation that he fell head over heels in love with his picture instantaneously which is evident when Basil offered to tear down the painstakingly drawn portrait instead of having a ruckus among comrades because of it, Dorian confessed his love for the portrait insisting it was part of himself and that the possession of it meant very dear to him.

To add to it, he ensured nobody meddled with the picture nor even take a fleeting glance at it as the portrait vividly recorded all the carnal sins revealing his depraved, debauched soul. This pervasive pattern of grandiose behavioural traits of a narcissist is found manifest in Dorian even in his choice of the submissive, dotting Sibyl Vane as his love interest.

The fact that it was her acting competency and good looks rather than genuine love that gravitated him so much to Sibyl Vane is the testimony that Dorian is clearly a narcissist who merely is preoccupied with entitlement with idealizing forms unlimited power, brilliance, love, etc. From this standpoint, Veronese et al. (2015) posit that admiration appears to be the most determining factor for a narcissist in their social lives. Narcissists prefer to look for potential partners with agentic traits such as competency and ambition over community values like compassion and emotional support. Narcissistic individuals tend to manipulate their partners in such a way as to make themselves feel valued and adored in romantic relationships. This can take many forms, such as narcissistic individuals chasing extremely desirable love partners (e.g., successful, gorgeous, and famous) as if they were mere "medals" that underline their personal worth as mating partners vicariously. Another common symptom of narcissism is that people with it are attracted to people who constantly pay attention to them and flatter them because this meets their need for respect and admiration. Dorian further demonstrates his narcissistic inclination blatantly spurning Sibyl when she couldn't deliver her acting skills due to lovelorn jitters in the presence of Basil Hall ward and Lord Hendry Wotton. It was his selfish motive and outlandish humiliation of Sibyl that ushered her to commit suicide. Moreover, Dorian out and out lacked empathy and could not establish any meaningful, congenial interpersonal relationships with anyone. He just goes on a roller-coaster ride of heartless manipulation with everyone all and sundry right from friends to lovers, servants, and party mates, just to achieve his pleasure-seeking intentions, thus exhibiting yet another dominant characteristic of narcissism. On this ground, Veronese et al. (2015) comment that one of the particular characteristics of pathological narcissism is a glaring difficulty in establishing and sustaining meaningful "loving" relationships with others. Their narcissistic fixation on their status and the fact that they perceive a committed relationship as a possible threat keep them from having meaningful relationships with other people or getting emotionally attached to them. The sole reason for this inability emanates from their intrinsic propensity to exploit relationships to accomplish their own needs. Moreover, Pathological narcissism is characterized by a lack of self-esteem and failure in interpersonal relationships. There is a dormant vulnerability underlining individuals with high levels of narcissistic grandiosity, which tends to be mitigated by assertive, dominating personality traits and a downplaying of emotional discomfort.

This is exemplified in Dorian's reckless act of jettisoning the earnest pleadings of his dear most friend Basil who only wished him good tidings beseeching Dorian to repent for his sins. Contrary to his implorations, Dorian ruthlessly murdered him, crushing his head against a table and stabbing him over and over again until the latter dropped dead. Similarly, Dorian's incessant frustrations impel him to lead a double standard lifestyle, one in the pretext of a courteous gentleman in the broad daylight and the other that of a clandestine, sadistic hedonist seeking carnal pleasures in filthy opium dens in the outskirts of East London during nights goes to prove that his fragile, disintegrated self-grapples with self-dysregulation and also with a sporadic sense of shame and guilt which is a marked symptom of a narcissist. At times, Dorian feels jealous and elated of his own beauty and youth etched in the portrait, while at other times feels remorseful and fuming with repugnance of what it has done to his soul whose graphic degeneration it vividly displays. He feels bitterly chastened learning the news of Sibyl Vane's premature death at one time but goes throwing caution to the wind claiming it was not his fault later. He feels remorseful for murdering his close confidant Basil and a little while later feels otherwise plotting to be scot-free of any involvement in the homicide. Thus Dorian is internally haunted by an enormous sense of shame and guilt trying to build a cohesive- self-oscillating between the ideal self and the actual self. On this Zeigler-Hill, (2010) points out that a sense of shame propels an adverse evaluation of the self as a whole rather than focusing on particular aspects of the self. That is to say, feeling ashamed or guilty about a particular behaviour leads to a disparity between the ideal and actual self. This negative repercussion, in turn, would hamper the development of healthy integration of a cohesive self.

Likewise, his manipulation of his scientist friend Allen Champel blackmailing him to do away with the corpse of Basil referring to it as 'the thing that is upstairs' lest he would expose his homosexual affairs is a clear symptom of arrogance and haughty behaviour of a narcissist. Above all, Dorian's impulsive addiction to Opium and innumerable heterosexual affairs as momentary relief and compensation for the void, guilt, and fragmented-self haunting within him and his final act of plunging a knife at the heart of the portrait in an attempt to revoke his impeccable image on the canvass, all verily illustrates the narcissistic obsession with which the protagonist Dorian launches an array of interpersonal and narcissistic abuse to achieve his ends. Commenting on this sexual promiscuity and addiction Kohut expounds that the addict uses their addictive behaviour to compensate for their low self-esteem and horrible sense of self-fragmentation.

VI. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

John Osborne's play *The Picture of Dorian Gray: A Moral Entertainment* is replete with the reverberation of narcissistic insinuations and proves to be the perfect epitome of narcissistic substructures. However, the exploration of the narcissistic paradigm in light of Kohutian self-psychology psychoanalysis has some limitations. Despite the fact that Kohut's contribution to the understanding of narcissistic individuals is based on "vicarious introspection," which

benefits a diverse audience of clinicians, parents, academicians, and healthcare professionals at large, his concept of "empathy" as a therapeutic tool remains ambiguous and polemic (Rowe & MacIsaac, 2004). Moreover, the current scrutiny of Osborne's play in light of self-psychology psychoanalysis is largely based on childhood trauma and parental and environmental deficiencies. As a result, the extrapolation of other potential factors such as etiological, marital, occupational, communal, and collective frontiers leading to narcissism remains largely unexplored, which also opens the door for new research.

VII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Kohut asserts that the fulfillment of a child's selfobject needs, such as mirroring, idealization, and twinship, which are usually administered by the primary caretakers or parental figures, and a congenial environment, are crucial facets that positively contribute to the healthy development of a child. When a child's self-object needs are sufficiently looked after, his or her sense of self-assuredness, idealization and attunements are positively reinforced, which in turn progressively develops self-regulation and control. So, the child could take care of his or her own self-esteem and goals without having to depend on others. The child would also feel like he or she had a sense of direction and purpose in life Banai, E. et al., (2005). The abrupt absence or lack of these denominators can potentially take an adverse toll on the personality of a child during adulthood. Besides, individuals with comparatively low and mature self-object needs who are quite mindful of the relevance of these archaic needs of the self are reported to have developed credible self-regulation methods and possess a reasonable degree of self-worth and mental well-being. On the contrary, those who harbor robust and primitive self-object needs, or try to actively ignore these needs, appear to have serious self-concept disorders and hence have problems sustaining healthy feelings of grandeur, idealization, and sense of cohesiveness like the protagonist Dorian Gray, who, like the mythological Narcissus, being oblivious to his own self-object needs, even when he was at the very disposal of them many a time, tragically caught in the mire of self-admiration. Consequently, Dorian had a bloodcurdling end, paradoxically trying to do away with his own portrait that epitomized his archetypal youth and beauty for one and all. Dorian's catastrophe is the culmination of his own negation to crystalize on the ample source of self-object structures that life offered him along the way through some of the astounding characters like the motherly Basil Hallward, Sibyl Vane, the would-be spouse of Dorian, to name a few. But no matter what, Dorian gave in to his narcissistic wounds as he was deprived of adequate emphatic selfobject sources or environment during his childhood. Thus, the application of self-psychology in the given text and context not only asserts Kohut's transcendental concerns about the cohesion of the "individual self" but also proclaims his humanistic anxiety for the mental well-being of a group as a collective entity (Mann, 2015). Ironically Dorian's incessant orchestration of narcissistic maneuvers all along the play only proves to be a sobering requiem at the end. Had Dorian capitalized on the ameliorating, empathetic self-objects (i.e., people and positive experiences) and concentrated on meaningful goals and aspirations with 'revitalized confidence and enthusiasm' (Kohut & S.Wolf, 1978), he would certainly have averted his miserable lot and led a far more fulfilling life with prosperity and mental health. Above all, the scrutiny of narcissism has certainly gained a renewed vigor and momentum in clinical research and academic inquiry at a time as these when the narcissistic conundrum such as addiction to social media, compulsive consumerism, celebrity obsession and unabashed celebration of 'self' is sweeping all across cultures and continents at supercilious phase posing an imminent threat to mental health and well-being.

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