**BASILS’ STUDIO**

The following extract is taken from the first chapter of the novel “The Picture of Dorian Gray” written by Oscar Wild in 1891.

The extract can be divided into 3 sequences and each of them have a different function. It is interesting to notice how the novelist describes the scene form the big to the particular. Also Oscar Wilde uses a lot of words which refers to the five senses.

The first paragraph is a detailed description of a garden. It is a clear reference to the aesthetic movement: nature is described in its his beauty and all its particulars. The roses, the light and the delicate perfume give a sense of purity , sensations and passion . the description provides also the weather and the season : it is a sunny day of spring.

In the second paragraph the novelist provides us a description of a room. It is an exotic room , full of ethnic decorations and mobiles which recalls the beauty of the garden and of the nature. In this paragraph appears a first character of the story : Lord Henry Wotton. His figure is in contrast with the beauty of the room, the cigarettes indeed break the atmosphere. The reader gradually enters the room and feels surrounded by the singing of the birds and the perfume of the flowers.

In the third paragraph the attention of the reader focuses on a portrait of a young man who stands in the center of the room. The young man painted id Dorian Gray, the protagonist of the novel who will compare only in the second chapter of the book. The painter, Basil Hallward, is standing behind the painting and he is in admiration in his work with Lord Henry. Basil , differently from the other painters, doesn’t want to sell or expose his masterpiece in an art gallery; according to him there are too much feelings and emotions in it.

Lord Henry represents the typical Victorian bourgeois , a men who embodies the values of aestheticism and materialism . He admires the painting because of the beauty and the youth of Dorian. Here is the first idea that art is the only way to stop time, the painting closes in passion, feelings and intense experiences dues to youth. The painting will record gradually the signs of time, the sins and the corruption of Dorian and its morality.

**I WOULD GIVE MY SOUL**

The second extract is taken from Chapter 2 and is the clue passage where Lord Henry finally meets Dorian. The narrator doesn’t reveal the thinking of the characters, he doesn’t know their ideas and doesn’t judge their behavior. He limits himself to describe their behaviors and their reactions to something or somebody. He particularly describes their attitudes and their feelings in front of something.

This is one of the most dramatic and important scenes of the whole novel. Lord Henry , with a long monologue, exposes his philosophy about life. it is the extreme form of Decadentism and aestheticism, all the values are based on material things and material concepts. Lord Henry gradually tries to persuade and corrupt the young men. According to Lord Henry beauty is the only form of genius and needs no explanation. Beauty is not superficial and rules the entire word, triumphs on everyone and on everything. Similarly youth is something unique but something that disappears with time. Lord henry exhorts Dorian to enjoy and tom live every second of his life. Dorian should always search for sensations and pleasures , he should never waste his beauty and his youth. As well Dorian should not be afraid of passions and should live every pleasure of life.

Dorian reaction is very curious. It seems like he has never watched to himself and never analyzed his beauty, the sense of wonder comes on him like a revelation and gradually realizes that one day he will grow old and loos all his beauty. He feels like hit by an iceberg and starts to complain hi existence. He would like to live forever and that the picture will grow old at his place.

As we have already said, Lord Henry embodies the typical bourgeois of the Victorian age. He is a rich man who bases his existence on material things and futile values.Lord Henry represents also the devil who leads Dorian to sell his soul for eternal beauty and youth