BASIL’S STUDIO

The text is an extract from O. Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray”.

In the first paragraph the studio is described through Lord Henry Wotton’s point of view. The third person omniscient narrator appeals to the language of sense to convey the idea of a place rich of contrasting odours (the perfume o flowers and the odour of cigarettes) and different things (the divan of Persian, flowers, ecc.). This gives the idea of a place rich of beautiful things but oppressive. This idea is also conveyed by the use of language: the sentences are long and complex. Finally the description of the laburnum focus the attention on a beauty that is at the top of his possibility, but it starts to become rotten.

Also the external sounds are presented like something of sinister and oppressive (“the sullen murmur of the bees”; “the dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ”), even if it is just the buzz of the bees and the sound of the city.

The portrait of Dorian is at the centre of the room. This suggests that the beauty is at the centre of Henry’s mind. The portrait is presented in the story before than Dorian himself; consequently the reader can understand that Dorian’s beauty is more important than his personality.

After that is introduce the painter, Basil Hallward. He is presented through the episode of his disappearance; this conveys the idea of a mysterious character. In a second moment are described his reactions in front of the portrait: his worship and affection for Dorian comes clearly to life when he smiles in front of the portrait and close his eyes, as if he is lost in his dreams.

In the following paragraph Henry try to persuade Basil to send his picture to the Grosvenor. In the sequence the passion of Lord Henry for art comes to life. He considers as important look the pictures as look the people who see them. In the follow sequence Lord Henry says “and makes old men quite jealous, if old men are ever capable of any emotion”. In these lines the reader could understand Henry’s despise for the old age.

The last lines make the difference between Henry and basil clear: Basil loves Dorian’s beauty, and is jealous of his feelings; Henry loves beauty and wants the word to see it.