I WOULD GIVE MY SOUL

The text is an extract from O. Wilde’s “The Picture of Dorian Gray”. The sequence can be divided in to three paragraphs. The first one is Lord Henry’s monologue about the importance of youth. At the moment Dorian is unselfconscious about his beauty and he does not agree with Lord Henry. Even if he does not speech, this is made clear by Henry’s exclamations “Don’t frown” and “You smile?!”. Henry is persuasive; his monologue is made clear, incisive and passionate by the use of short sentences and frequent exclamations. Words like “live” and “youth” are frequency repeated to underline Henry’s vision of life: you can really live only when you are young and beautiful. He persuades Dorian also by the use of adulation: “you have a wonderfully beautiful face”, “you might be its visible symbol. With your personality there is nothing you could not do”, “…what you really are, what you really might be”, “there was so much in you that charmed me”. He focuses only on the worst aspects of the old age; on the other and he exalted an ideal of youth and beauty, seen like two perfect virtues. Finally he makes a dramatic comparison between Dorian’s youth and beauty and a flower: youth is like a blossom flower, but the flower dies and blossoms again every springer; youth never turn back.

The second paragraph opens whit the sentence “Dorian Gray listened, open-eyed and wondering” that makes its content clear. Now Dorian is reflecting about Henry’s words. He becomes conscious about his beauty for the first time and he start to change. This is underline by the sentences “as if he had recognized himself for the first time”, “the sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation” and “they had not influenced his nature” referred to Basil’s compliments. This also anticipates Dorian’s future attitudes: he will start to follow whit his behaviors Henry’s vision of life.

In the last paragraph Dorian totally agrees with Lord Henry and he is overcame by the fear of death (“as he thought of it, a sharp pang of pain struck through him like a knife and made each delicate fibre of his nature quiver”). He does not hear Basil because now he is not important for him; the only important thing is his beauty. The concept his underlined by the dialogue about the portrait: Henry perfectly understands Dorian, Basil does not know him anymore. Beauty is more important than soul; the main theme is underline by Dorian pact: for beauty he gives his soul.