

Basil's studio

Oscar Wilde

The Picture of Dorian Gray - Chapter I

The extract is taken from the first chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde.

By the title the intelligent reader can understand that the subject of the extract is the studio of one of the characters whose name is Basil. Description of the setting recalls different semantic fields (smell and audition)

The first part of the extract consists of the description of the setting and the attitude of the character. The description of the setting reminds of the concept of beauty which was the absolute value of the Aesthetic Movement. The character is surrounded by beauty according to the codes of the aestheticism. The setting is similar to a painting of the pre-Raphaelite, inspired by nature rich of details and vivid color. There is the presence of symbols like painters of Tokyo.

The second part introduces the picture of Dorian Gray, the speaking voice refers to the object of the portrait with the words "extraordinary personal beauty". Later the narrator gives hints about Basil's disappearance.

The speaking voice describes Basil's attitude towards his creation ...

In the third section of the extract Wilde introduces a second character, whose name is Lord Henry, who congratulates himself to the artist and suggests him to send his creation to the Grosvenor.

Basil did not want to spend his creation to the Grosvenor because his priority was not to become celebrated and envied

The phrase "if old men are ever capable of any emotion" provides an indirect negative judgment towards the old men of the Victorian age who followed restrictive moral codes which prevented them from involving themselves into emotion.

By the description of the artist the intelligent reader can understand that Basil was frustrated and singular/unusual. It reflects the classic artist of the Aesthetic Movement.

In the last part of the extract Basil reveals the reason why he does not want to exhibit his creation because it is too personal. It is clear the concept of art for the sake of art according to which art is representation of himself; it can not be subject to moral purpose because its ultimate purpose is itself.