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**Youth and Beauty as Central Themes of Oscar  
Wilde's Novel The Picture of Dorian Gray**

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*Vedoucí práce:*

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Prohlašuji, že jsem práci zpracoval(a) samostatně a použil(a) jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

*Plzeň, duben 2016*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor's thesis is aimed at Oscar's Wilde *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, especially at the use of its central themes youth and beauty. The main objective of the thesis is to analyse and comment the role of Youth and Beauty in the book. Oscar Wilde was an Irish writer who lived in 19<sup>th</sup> century. He became famous for his rebellious attitude toward the Victorian society as well as for his specific style of writing. His only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has proven to be scandalous for the then society.

The thesis is divided into several chapters. To better understand the appearance of the critical realism during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it is necessary to mention historical, social and cultural background of the whole century, therefore the first chapter of the thesis is dedicated to this question. The second chapter is dedicated to Oscar Wilde

## **II. VICTORIAN BRITAIN**

### **II.1. BEGINNINGS**

Even if Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901) came to the throne in 1837 the term Victorian age is sometimes used to name almost the whole of 19<sup>th</sup> century. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 could be considered as a shift from the old aristocratic order to the new progressive era. The death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832 marks as well the end of the literal period. Scott was a Scottish author who greatly popularized a novel. Novel as a literary form has become more and more attractive for the readers and its popularity even grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. [1] The Victorian novel will be discussed more in the following subchapter.

By 1837 The Industrial Revolution reached its peak. The Industrial Revolution in Britain had begun in the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century and allowed a mass production of consumer goods. [2] Firstly, the invention of steam power was a crucial milestone in the history. It was widely used from the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it helped to develop other sectors of economy, but mainly the industry. With the invention of the steam power is closely connected the development of railways, but it also enabled the construction of faster and more efficient ships, which were no more dependent on the wind or on human force. [3] Secondly, the development of industry approved the Great Britain to become economically strong country. The philosophy of Free Trade had been adopted. Britain became a leading country during the Industrial Revolution thanks to an effective central bank, highly-developed credit market and a few limitations from the British government. [4] The Great Exhibition in 1851 which took place in London served to highlight the economic national success. [5]

With The Industrial Revolution is closely connected the growth of population along with the growth of cities. The population of England and

Wales\* was 9.2 millions of people according to the first official census in 1801. In 1851 the number had grown to 17.9 million. In 1901 the population quadrupled to 32.5 million compared to the 1801. [6] The development of factories predominantly in cities and towns influenced the demography of the population as well. “In 1801 only about 33 per cent of the British population lived in towns. By 1901 the figure was 78 per cent.” [7] The biggest growth concerned industrial cities in the north of the country such as Manchester and Leeds. [8] However the biggest change of population was visible in the expansion of the capital city. In 1837, when Queen Victoria came to the throne, London had around 2 million inhabitants. When she died in 1901 there were about 6.5 million people living in London. [9]

During the reign of Queen Victoria the Great Britain witnessed a great change from a country based on agriculture to the most powerful country in terms of the economic expansion. [10] It was the age of a new technology and a rapid change that concerned the growth of population as well as a growth of the big cities. Nevertheless “this was an age of extremes: the working classes were poor, and lived and worked in terrible circumstances; the middle classes grew rich and comfortable. There were double standards in this society. Many writers used their works to show that although on the surface this was a successful society, below the surface there were many problems.” [11]

## **II.2. Victorian Literature, Art and Society**

Even though the Victorian Era is known for the growing inclination towards the critical realism the idea of Romanticism was still present in the British society. English Romanticism emerged at the end of the 18th century due to expansion of the middle class often called the bourgeoisie. The Romantic Era reached its peak at the beginning of 19th century and continued up to the 1850s. Romantic ideas reflected the decline of old social circumstances and the creation of the new ones. [12]



“The word realism comes from the French term Le Réalisme. The French realist school of the mid-19th century created a manifesto; Le Réalisme, stressed 'sincerity' as opposed to the 'liberty' proclaimed by the Romantics; it insisted on accurate documentation, sociological insight, ... an avoidance of poetic diction, idealization, exaggeration, melodrama, etc.; and subjects were to be taken from everyday life, preferably from lower-class life." [13] Nevertheless in the English literature a novel had its own tradition of "unlabelled strain of realism" since the Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and the term realism has a variable sense. Sometimes the term 'social' or 'psychological' realism is used to describe the English realism. [14]

### **II.2.2. Victorian Novel**

The poetry was considered as the most important literary form in the Romantic period, but during the Victorian era the novel took over its position and became a leading form of the literature in popularity as well as in importance. [15] The first author, who greatly popularized the novel, was Sir *Walter Scott*. His historical novels became worldwide best-sellers during the 1820s and 1830s. [16] The novels of that time were often published in monthly issues.

### **II.2.3. The Division**

The social and cultural development during the reign of Queen Victoria can be divided into three stages early, middle and late. The early-Victorian era marked an economic success of the country. Britain greatly benefited from its position of first industrialized nation in the world. Yet there existed lot of conflicts under the guise of the prosperity. Not just in the terms of politics “there was cultural conflict too in the arguments between Evangelicals and Tractarians and in the battle of styles between Greek and Gothic, and there was a sharp contrast in

literature between 'silver fork' novels centred on 'the condition of England'. Disraeli's<sup>1</sup> picture of 'two nations' was not over-fanciful". [17]

To better understand Wilde's concept of gothic novel we have to mention Horace Walpole (1717 – 1797) who is considered to be a founding father of the gothic novel. Walpole had fought with the social situation by returning to the old feudal theme of baroque castles whereas Wilde used the world of art as an escape from the capitalistic England. [18]

#### **II.2.4. The Aesthetic Movement**

The Aesthetic movement did not include only literature, but also fine arts, music and other art. Their motto art for art's sake reflects the tendency to remove the art out from any influence the political, social or didactic. According to Aesthetes art should serve only one purpose to expressing its own beauty. "The giving of absolute values to such abstracts as art, beauty, and culture, is part of the late Victorian search for constants in a fast-changing universe." [19]

Art as the mean of escape corresponded with the ideas of the Aesthetic movement of which was Wilde the most famous representative. Aesthetic movement during 1880s experienced the biggest success was heavily influenced by Walter Pater. "Wilde proclaimed himself a disciple of Pater and the art for art's sake." [20]

### **III. Oscar Wilde**

#### **III.1. Works of Oscar Wilde:**

Wilde's works prove he belonged between versatile authors. His work is comprised of poems, essays, plays, short stories and also one novel. [21]

Plays:

*Vera, or the Nihilists* (1880)  
*The Duchess of Padua* (1883)  
*Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892)  
*A Woman of No Importance* (1893)  
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Essays:

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*A Few Maxims for The Instruction of the Over-Educated* (1894)  
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*De Profundis* (1905) written in 1897 in a form of a letter

Stories:

*The Canterville Ghost* (1887)  
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*The Portrait of Mr. W. H.* (1889)  
*Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories* (1891)  
*A House of Pomeragnates* (1891)

Novel:

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)

### **III.2. The Picture of Dorian Gray**

Wilde's only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was firstly published in the July 1890 as the issue of the *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*<sup>1</sup>. The first version of the work caused wave of indignation from the British reviewers for its homoerotic passages. Nevertheless in 1891, Wilde published his work again this time as a book. In comparison to the magazine version Wilde added seven more chapters and preface. Also, he revised the most controversial ideas. [22]

#### **III.2.2. PLOT**

The story begins when Lord Henry Wotton visits his friend Basil Hallward, who is a painter. Basil is currently working on a picture of a beautiful young man called Dorian Gray. Basil tells Lord Henry everything about Dorian Gray. Basil is obsessed by Dorian's beauty. Lord Henry becomes more curious about this young man and he convinces Basil to introduce them. Later on, Lord Henry meets Dorian despite Basil's fears of Wotton's view of life and its possible influence over Dorian. While is Basil finishing the painting, Dorian and Lord Henry go to the garden where Lord Henry admires Dorian's beauty and reveals his opinion that young beautiful people can do whatever they desire. Under Lord's Henry influence Dorian gradually loses his pure soul and he cares more about his beauty.

When Dorian sees the finished portrait for the first time he is jealous, because the picture will always be beautiful and young, whereas he will grow older. He curses his faith and he wishes that the picture will

grow older instead of him. Basil shocked by Dorian's reaction tries to destroy the painting, but Dorian stops him and then, they decide Dorian will keep the picture. [23]

Over the next few weeks, Dorian and Lord Henry become friends. The Lord's Henry influence over Dorian is even stronger. Dorian dedicates his life to the pursuit of pleasure. He meets Sibyl Vane, a young actress. He falls in love with her due to her ability to act. Sibyl in return calls Dorian "Prince Charming". Sibyl do not listen to her brother James who is not happy about her relationship with this young man, he even promises that he will kill Dorian if he would hurt her. Dorian wants Lord Henry to meet Sibyl. One night they go to see her playing Rosalind in the play of Shakespeare\*. However, Sibyl is not capable to play. She experienced true love, as she believes, and she cannot pretend the feelings on the stage anymore. Dorian, who loves Sibyl because of her acting, is angry. He cruelly cancels his engagement with Sibyl and leaves her crying in the theatre. At the same night Dorian notices that his face on the picture has changed. [24]

Next day, Dorian regrets his behaviour towards Sibyl, nevertheless before he can apologise to her Lord Henry tells him that she committed a suicide. Dorian, convinced by Lord Henry, starts to believe that the death of Sibyl was not his mistake. Dorian hides his portrait upstairs in his old schoolroom, because he fears that somebody else could see his true-self. [25]

Years pass and Dorian keeps his youth and beauty. Passing years and Dorian's sinful life are only visible on the portrait. He lives under influence of a yellow book, a French novel, which was a gift from Lord Henry. [26]

On the eve of Dorian's thirty-eight birthdays, Basil visits his friend Dorian before he will leave to Paris. Basil, horrified by the rumours he has heard about Dorian, wants to know the truth. He believes that Dorian as

he knows him is still pure as he was in the day he first met him. Dorian takes Basil to the place, where is hidden his portrait...his true self. Basil, confronted by the true image of his friend, wants Dorian to pray for his soul. Dorian in the fit of rage kills Basil with a knife. Next morning Dorian blackmails Alan Campbell to get rid of the painter's body. Campbell under the threat of divulgence of his secret does as Dorian wishes. At the night Dorian goes to the opium den because of his bad conscience. There he meets James Vane, brother of his long dead fiancé, who tries to revenge his sister. Dorian escapes thanks to his youthful appearance. Dorian leaves on the countryside where an unknown man is shot by mischance. Afterward, Dorian finds out the man was James Vane. Dorian feels he needs to change his life. He believes he did a good deed by ending relationship with a young girl Hetty, who wanted to escape with him. He wonders, whether the picture has reflected his good intentions, but the picture has not changed. Dorian considers the painting his conscience. Nobody should see it and then Dorian decides he will destroy the picture, because it is showing his guilt. Dorian stabs the picture with the same knife he killed Basil with. Servants who were woken up by a strange sound enter the room and they find there a body of a very ugly man with a knife stabbed in the chest. On the wall hangs a portrait of their beautiful and young master. The dead body is eventually recognised as Dorian Gray's by the ring on its hand. [27]

### **III.2.3. Main characters**

First of all, the book contains 3 main and several secondary characters. All three names have certain symbolic connection with Wilde's acquaintances or with Wilde himself.

The name Dorian Gray carries deeper meaning. According to Ellmann the hero of the novel is named after John Gray, alleged lover of Wilde. By naming his character Gray Wilde paid tribute to the beautiful and young John Gray. Gray even signed himself Dorian in the letters to Wilde. [28] Another symbolism of the name is given by Zdeněk Stříbrný. In his opinion the name Dorian Gray symbolise the human evolution from golden youth (in French d'or) to the old age, which has lost its colourfulness, therefore the surname indicates grey colour. [29]

Lord Henry's quotes often remind these of Walter Pater. Wilde himself referred to Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* as to "my golden book". Nevertheless Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* expressed disagreement with Pater's ideals. It is evident that Lord Henry's influence has a bad impact on Dorian's behaviour. [30] Secondly, when reading the novel a resemblance between Lord Henry and Oscar Wilde could be found by the reader especially in the chapter three. In the beginning of the chapter Lord Henry visits his uncle lord Fermor, who calls him a dandy. [31] Wilde himself was considered a dandy before he started his writing. Secondly, the discussion about America gives a hint that the opinions of Lord Henry corresponded with these of Wilde. "The Americans are an extremely interesting people. They are absolutely reasonable. [...] I assure you there is no nonsense about the Americans." [32] Finally, at the end of the chapter Lord Henry pronounce a wish to write a novel "[...] a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet, and as unreal." [33] *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is Wilde's only novel and the word unreal or fantastic could be used to describe it.

## **Dorian Gray**

The book describes Dorian as a very handsome young man with scarlet lips and golden hair. He represents perfect pure beauty and youth, but at the beginning he does not realise it. Under the influence of Lord

Henry Dorian begins to change from an unspoiled boy to a man, who seeks only pleasure and does not care about the others. However beautiful and young Dorian is at the beginning, he is aware of the transience of it. At the moment he sees Basil's portrait he becomes jealous and then he pronounces a wish: "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! [...] I would give my soul for that!" [34]

#### **IV. ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK**

The final chapter is divided into several sections and aims to analyse the novel as a whole with a focus on the most important parts.

The novel begins with a preface which consists of well-known aphorisms, which introduce the essential ideas connected with the Victorian age, and more precisely with the point of view of the Aesthetes. The first three aphorisms discuss the art and its purpose. They emphasize the fact that the artist is only a creator of the art and he should not judge its beauty negatively. The only purpose of the art is to create beauty. Wilde also points out that only the elected or cultivated humans see the true nature of the art. This idea could be also related to the Aesthetic movement. Then the preface gives a short insight of the Victorian age and its values.

"The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass."

The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass."



By this two phrases Wilde sums up the double standard which existed during the 19th century. The authors of this age were the ones who attempted to show the real picture of the age. They wrote about the problems which were carefully hidden under the economic success of the British Empire.

The preface progresses to the question of the morality of art. The morality hidden in the books should not provide any proves of the moral or immoral behaviour. It is the form of subjectivity of the author and the reader has own principles.

"No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything."

According to Wilde, the artist can describe everything no matter how vulgar the theme is.

"All art is quite useless."

The final aphorism concerns the importance of art. As a mean of emphasising the beauty, the art has no deeper meaning. The beauty itself has no meaning, without morality the art is nothing it only serves to create delight of humans, but people do not need the delight. In comparison with the basic necessities of live as for example the need of eating and sleeping, the delight is inferior.

## **V. VICTORIAN BRITAIN**

### **V.1. BEGINNINGS**

Even if Queen Victoria (1819 – 1901) came to the throne in 1837 the term Victorian age is sometimes used to name almost the whole of 19<sup>th</sup>

century. The defeat of Napoleon in 1815 could be considered as a shift from the old aristocratic order to the new progressive era. The death of Sir Walter Scott in 1832 marks as well the end of the literal period. Scott was a Scottish author who greatly popularized a novel. Novel as a literary form has become more and more attractive for the readers and its popularity even grew in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. [1] The Victorian novel will be discussed more in the following subchapter.

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### **V.2.3. The Division**

The social and cultural development during the reign of Queen Victoria can be divided into three stages early, middle and late. The early-Victorian era marked an economic success of the country. Britain greatly benefited from its position of first industrialized nation in the world. Yet there existed lot of conflicts under the guise of the prosperity. Not just in the terms of politics "there was cultural conflict too in the arguments between Evangelicals and Tractarians and in the battle of styles between Greek and Gothic, and there was a sharp contrast in literature between 'silver fork' novels centred on 'the condition of England'. Disraeli's<sup>1</sup> picture of 'two nations' was not over-fanciful". [17]

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## **VI. Oscar Wilde**

### **Works of Oscar Wilde:**

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Novel:

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)

## **VI.1. The Picture of Dorian Gray**

Wilde's only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was firstly published in the July 1890 as the issue of the *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*<sup>1</sup>. The first version of the work caused wave of indignation from the British reviewers for its homoerotic passages. Nevertheless in 1891, Wilde published his work again this time as a book. In comparison to the magazine version Wilde added seven more chapters and preface. Also, he revised the most controversial ideas. [22]

### **VI.1.2. PLOT**

The story begins when Lord Henry Wotton visits his friend Basil Hallward, who is a painter. Basil is currently working on a picture of a beautiful young man called Dorian Gray. Basil tells Lord Henry everything about Dorian Gray. Basil is obsessed by Dorian's beauty. Lord Henry becomes more curious about this young man and he convinces Basil to introduce them. Later on, Lord Henry meets Dorian despite Basil's fears of Wotton's view of life and its possible influence over Dorian. While is Basil finishing the painting, Dorian and Lord Henry go to the garden where Lord Henry admires Dorian's beauty and reveals his opinion that young beautiful people can do whatever they desire. Under Lord's Henry influence Dorian gradually loses his pure soul and he cares more about his beauty.

When Dorian sees the finished portrait for the first time he is jealous, because the picture will always be beautiful and young, whereas he will grow older. He curses his faith and he wishes that the picture will grow older instead of him. Basil shocked by Dorian's reaction tries to destroy the painting, but Dorian stops him and then, they decide Dorian will keep the picture. [23]

Over the next few weeks, Dorian and Lord Henry become friends. The Lord's Henry influence over Dorian is even stronger. Dorian dedicates his life to the pursuit of pleasure. He meets Sibyl Vane, a young actress. He falls in love with her due to her ability to act. Sibyl in return calls Dorian "Prince Charming". Sibyl do not listen to her brother James who is not happy about her relationship with this young man, he even promises that he will kill Dorian if he would hurt her. Dorian wants Lord Henry to meet Sibyl. One night they go to see her playing Rosalind in the play of Shakespeare\*. However, Sibyl is not capable to play. She experienced true love, as she believes, and she cannot pretend the feelings on the stage anymore. Dorian, who loves Sibyl because of her acting, is angry. He cruelly cancels his engagement with Sibyl and leaves her crying in the theatre. At the same night Dorian notices that his face on the picture has changed. [24]

Next day, Dorian regrets his behaviour towards Sibyl, nevertheless before he can apologise to her Lord Henry tells him that she committed a suicide. Dorian, convinced by Lord Henry, starts to believe that the death of Sibyl was not his mistake. Dorian hides his portrait upstairs in his old schoolroom, because he fears that somebody else could see his true-self. [25]

Years pass and Dorian keeps his youth and beauty. Passing years and Dorian's sinful life are only visible on the portrait. He lives under influence of a yellow book, a French novel, which was a gift from Lord Henry. [26]

On the eve of Dorian's thirty-eight birthdays, Basil visits his friend Dorian before he will leave to Paris. Basil, horrified by the rumours he has heard about Dorian, wants to know the truth. He believes that Dorian as he knows him is still pure as he was in the day he first met him. Dorian takes Basil to the place, where is hidden his portrait...his true self. Basil, confronted by the true image of his friend, wants Dorian to pray for his



soul. Dorian in the fit of rage kills Basil with a knife. Next morning Dorian blackmails Alan Campbell to get rid of the painter's body. Campbell under the threat of divulgence of his secret does as Dorian wishes. At the night Dorian goes to the opium den because of his bad conscience. There he meets James Vane, brother of his long dead fiancé, who tries to revenge his sister. Dorian escapes thanks to his youthful appearance. Dorian leaves on the countryside where an unknown man is shot by mischance. Afterward, Dorian finds out the man was James Vane. Dorian feels he needs to change his life. He believes he did a good deed by ending relationship with a young girl Hetty, who wanted to escape with him. He wonders, whether the picture has reflected his good intentions, but the picture has not changed. Dorian considers the painting his conscience. Nobody should see it and then Dorian decides he will destroy the picture, because it is showing his guilt. Dorian stabs the picture with the same knife he killed Basil with. Servants who were woken up by a strange sound enter the room and they find there a body of a very ugly man with a knife stabbed in the chest. On the wall hangs a portrait of their beautiful and young master. The dead body is eventually recognised as Dorian Gray's by the ring on its hand. [27]

### **VI.1.3. Main characters**

First of all, the book contains 3 main and several secondary characters. All three names have certain symbolic connection with Wilde's acquaintances or with Wilde himself.

The name Dorian Gray carries deeper meaning. According to Ellmann the hero of the novel is named after John Gray, alleged lover of Wilde. By naming his character Gray Wilde paid tribute to the beautiful and young John Gray. Gray even signed himself Dorian in the letters to

Wilde. [28] Another symbolism of the name is given by Zdeněk Stříbrný. In his opinion the name Dorian Gray symbolise the human evolution from golden youth (in French d'or) to the old age, which has lost its colourfulness, therefore the surname indicates grey colour. [29]

Lord Henry's quotes often remind these of Walter Pater. Wilde himself referred to Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* as to "my golden book". Nevertheless Wilde in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* expressed disagreement with Pater's ideals. It is evident that Lord Henry's influence has a bad impact on Dorian's behaviour. [30] Secondly, when reading the novel a resemblance between Lord Henry and Oscar Wilde could be found by the reader especially in the chapter three. In the beginning of the chapter Lord Henry visits his uncle lord Fermor, who calls him a dandy. [31] Wilde himself was considered a dandy before he started his writing. Secondly, the discussion about America gives a hint that the opinions of Lord Henry corresponded with these of Wilde. "The Americans are an extremely interesting people. They are absolutely reasonable. [...] I assure you there is no nonsense about the Americans." [32] Finally, at the end of the chapter Lord Henry pronounce a wish to write a novel "[...] a novel that would be as lovely as a Persian carpet, and as unreal." [33] *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is Wilde's only novel and the word unreal or fantastic could be used to describe it.

## **Dorian Gray**

The book describes Dorian as a very handsome young man with scarlet lips and golden hair. He represents perfect pure beauty and youth, but at the beginning he does not realise it. Under the influence of Lord Henry Dorian begins to change from an unspoiled boy to a man, who seeks only pleasure and does not care about the others. However beautiful and young Dorian is at the beginning, he is aware of the transience of it. At the moment he sees Basil's portrait he becomes

jealous and then he pronounces a wish: "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! [...] I would give my soul for that!" [34]

## **VII. ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK**

The final chapter is divided into several sections and aims to analyse the novel as a whole with a focus on the most important parts.

The novel begins with a preface which consists of well-known aphorisms, which introduce the essential ideas connected with the Victorian age, and more precisely with the point of view of the Aesthetes. The first three aphorisms discuss the art and its purpose. They emphasize the fact that the artist is only a creator of the art and he should not judge its beauty negatively. The only purpose of the art is to create beauty. Wilde also points out that only the elected or cultivated humans see the true nature of the art. This idea could be also related to the Aesthetic movement. Then the preface gives a short insight of the Victorian age and its values.

"The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass."

The nineteenth century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass." [35]

By these two phrases Wilde sums up the double standard which existed during the 19th century. The authors of this age were the ones who attempted to show the real picture of the age. They wrote about the

problems which were carefully hidden under the economic success of the British Empire.

The preface progresses to the question of the morality of art. The morality hidden in the books should not provide any proves of the moral or immoral behaviour. It is the form of subjectivity of the author and the reader has own principles.

"No artist is ever morbid. The artist can express everything." [36]

According to Wilde, the artist can describe everything no matter how vulgar the theme is.

"All art is quite useless." [37]

The final aphorism concerns the importance of art. As a mean of emphasising the beauty, the art has no deeper meaning. The beauty itself has no meaning, without morality the art is nothing it only serves to create delight of humans, but people do not need the delight. In comparison with the basic necessities of live as for example the need of eating and sleeping, the delight is inferior.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

## IX. ENDNOTES

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3. Ibid., p. 272
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5. KRAMER, Ann. *Victorians*, p. 14
6. HAIGH, Christopher. *The Cambridge historical encyclopedia of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 271
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24. Ibid., p. 40-108
25. Ibid., p. 109-146
26. Ibid., p. 147-168
27. Ibid., p. 168-256
28. ELLMANN, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*, p. 307-308
29. STŘÍBRNÝ, Zdeněk. *Dějiny anglické literatury*, p. 569
30. ELLMANN, Richard. *Oscar Wilde*, p. 47-48
31. WILDE, Oscar. *The picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 41

32. Ibid., p. 49
33. Ibid., p. 53
34. Ibid., p. 34
35. WILDE, Oscar. *The picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 5
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37. Ibid., p. 6

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## **XI. ABSTRACT**

The aim of the Bachelor's thesis is to analyse Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with emphasis on the themes of Beauty and Youth and its use in the book.

The thesis is divided into several parts. The first chapter describes the Victorian Britain in 19<sup>th</sup> century and the impacts of the age on the literature. The second chapter is dedicated to Oscar Wilde; his life as well as his work. The chapter also consists of the plot and of the analysis of the main characters in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The last chapter serves as a practical part of the thesis and analyse the central themes as they appeared in the book.

## **XII. RESUMÉ**

Cílem této bakalářské práce je rozebrat román Oscara Wilda *Obráz Doriana Graye* s důrazem na použití motivů mládí a krásy. Práce je rozdělena do několika částí. V první kapitole je popsána Viktoriánská éra v Británii a to jak toto období ovlivnilo literaturu. Druhá kapitola je věnována samotnému Oscaru Wildovi, jeho životu a dílu. Tato kapitola také obsahuje děj románu a analýzu hlavních postav. Poslední kapitola tvoří praktickou část celé práce, tudíž je v ní popsáno, jak je v knize použito motivů krásy a mládí a jejich vliv na celou knihu.