THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

Class 1, 20/09/2022
MISE EN CONTEXTE
THE VICTORIAN ERA
4 INTRODUCTION

• **Queen Victoria (1837-1901).**
• The period has often been divided into 3 sub-periods:
  • “Early” (1832–1848)
  • “Mid” (1848–1870)
  • “Late” (1870–1901)
• or into two phases:
  • Pre-Raphaelites (1848–1860)
  • **Aestheticism and Decadence (1880–1901)**
INTRODUCTION

• Some social issues of the period (due to the Industrial Revolution):
  • working and housing conditions
  • health
  • prostitution
• Elizabeth GASKELL and Charles DICKENS, for instance, were famous for their descriptions of Victorian urban society.
6 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERIOD

• Britain was very rich and powerful.
• Britain also became industrialized (it was the apex of the Industrial Revolution): railways, factories
• Culture flourished: architecture (Gothic revival), music, literature (Charles Dickens, the Brontë sisters, Lord Alfred Tennyson, George Eliot etc...) painting (the Pre-Raphaelites), but also photography which was brand new at the time.
• The Great Exhibition of 1851 displayed many innovations.
OSCAR WILDE
OSCAR WILDE: A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

• **Full name**: Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde

• **Born** October 16, 1854, Dublin, Ireland

• **Died** November 30, 1900, Paris, France (buried in Père Lachaise cemetery)

• **Most famous works**: The Picture of Dorian Gray (1891), Lady Windermere's Fan (1892) The Importance of Being Earnest (1895).

• WILDE was part of the late 19th-century Aesthetic movement in England.

• He's also known for the time he spent in jail (1895-1897) because of his homosexuality. He wrote « The Ballad of Reading Gaol » in 1897.
• At the height of his fame and success, Wilde prosecuted the Marquess of Queensberry for criminal libel (= defamation).

• The Marquess was the father of Wilde's lover, Lord Alfred Douglas.
CONVICTION & PRISON

- The trial unearthed evidence that caused WILDE to drop his charges and led to his own arrest and trial for « gross indecency with men ».
- After two more trials he was convicted and sentenced to two years' hard labor (the maximum penalty), and was jailed from 1895 to 1897.
- On his release, he left immediately for France. There he wrote his last work, The Ballad of Reading Gaol (1898), a long poem about prison life.
LAST YEARS & DEATH

• Although DOUGLAS had been the cause of his demise, he and WILDE were reunited in August 1897 at Rouen.

• During the latter part of 1897, WILDE and DOUGLAS lived together near Naples for a few months > then separated by their families under the threat of cutting off all funds.

• WILDE finished his life in Saint-Germain-des-Prés, Paris. He spent what little money he had on alcohol.
SO LONG, MR WILDE

- WILDE died of meningitis on **November, 30 1900**, in Paris.
- In **1909** his remains were transferred to *Père Lachaise Cemetery*, Paris.
- In **2017**, WILDE was pardoned for homosexual acts that were no longer considered offences under the *Policing and Crime Act 2017* (homosexuality was decriminalised in England and Wales in **1967**).
- The 2017 Act implements what is known informally as the *Alan Turing law*.
THE NOVEL
THE CHARACTERS

- **Dorian GRAY**: main character. Attractive young man called “Prince Charming” by Sibyl.
- **Basil HALLWARD**: the artist who paints Dorian. Killed by Dorian.
- **Lord Henry WOTTON**: mentor to Dorian and encourages him to lead a life devoted to pleasure
- **Sibyl VANE**: seventeen-year-old actress. She loves Dorian and eventually commits suicide because of him.
COMPREHENSION ORALE
Lors des exercices de restitution (lorsqu’il n’y a ni texte à trous, ni questions), vous devrez suivre les étapes suivantes :

- 1ère écoute : pas de notes, concentrez-vous sur ce que vous entendez, essayez de suivre l’argumentation / comprendre le sujet principal.
- 2ème écoute : prenez des notes, écrivez tout ce que vous entendez, même les mots que vous ne connaissez / comprenez pas.
- 3ème écoute : complétez vos notes.

A votre niveau, le but est de comprendre la majeure partie de l’audio et d’en restituer les principales idées. Ce n’est pas grave si vous ne comprenez pas la totalité du document !
VIDEO 1: THUG NOTES
1. When and where does the story take place?

2. What did the painter named Basil paint?

3. What does Lord Henry say to Dorian?

4. Can you guess what Sybil’s job is?

5. What does Dorian do about Sybil? Why?

6. What happened to the painting after that?

7. What happens to Basil?

8. How does the story end?
Pouvez-vous résumer l’intrigue en français ?
OVERVIEW OF THE PLOT

- **Dorian Gray** has a portrait painted of himself by **Basil Hallward**, who thinks Dorian Gray is handsome. He becomes obsessed with him.

- One day, in Basil's garden, Dorian Gray meets **Lord Henry Wotton**. According to him, **beauty is the only thing that matters in life**. That day, Dorian realizes that his **beauty will eventually fade**. He wishes the portrait Basil painted would become old in his place. **He thus sells his soul**...

- Dorian's wish comes true, but every time he does something evil, the portrait ages.
• Hoping that his picture will become as beautiful as it once was, Dorian eventually decides to stop doing bad deeds... **but it only makes it worse.**

• He does not feel guilty for anything he has done. So Dorian picks up a knife and **destroys the portrait.**

• When his servants hear a scream from the room Dorian is in, they call the police. They find Dorian's body on the floor with a stab wound in his heart. **His body has become very aged.** However, the **portrait has returned to the way it was when it was first painted.**
VIDEO 2 : PENNY DREADFUL, 3X09

Une fois la vidéo visionnée, complétez le texte à trous.
“Do you not yet comprehend the **wicked** secret of the **immortal**? All age and die, **save** you. All **rot** and fall to **dust**, save you. Any **child** you bear becomes a crone and perishes before your **eyes**. Any **lover** withers and shrinks into incontinence and bent, toothless senility. While you, only you, **never age**. Never tire. Never fade. **Alone**. But after a time, you'll lose the desire for passion entirely, for connection with anyone. Like a muscle that atrophies from **lack of use**. And one day you'll realize **you've become** like them. **Beautiful** and **dead**. You have become a perfect, unchanging **portrait of yourself**.”
CE #1 : Lecture d’un article

• Lisez l’article attentivement, et répondez aux questions suivantes :

1. What is the nature of the article ?
2. What is the source of the article?
3. Who is the author?
4. Sum up the article in French (just a few sentences).
5. What is the main argument of the article?
6. What do you think of this argument?
26 CE #2 : The Preface to The Picture of Dorian Gray

• Answer the questions p. 15

• “There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written.” Do you agree with this statement?
1. Résumez la scène en français.

2. Relevez les champs lexicaux principaux de l’extrait.

3. Comment qualifiez-vous l’atmosphère de la scène ?

4. “I know you will laugh at me,” he replied, “but I really can’t exhibit it. I have put too much of myself into it.” Comment interprétez-vous ces dernières phrases
EXPRESSION ECRITE
• Pick a character, and write accordingly (p. 19):
  
  • **Basil** (the painter): you think Dorian is spiraling out of control. What would you tell him?
  
  • **Dorian**: explain Basil why you enjoy your way of life as it is.