

POWER AND BEAUTY RELATIONS IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* BY
OSCAR WILDE AND *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET* BY MARY ELIZABETH
BRADDON



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BY

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PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis endeavours to explore the enchanting power of beauty and its history. This thesis aims at examining the enchanting power of beauty on selected characters in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*. It further aims at examining the effects of possessing the power of beauty on the characters that possess it, namely Dorian Gray and Lady Audley. This thesis particularly focuses on the descriptions of the portraits of the protagonists in the two novels, on their effects on whoever looks at them and on the complex relationship between pictorial representation, beauty and truth. Furthermore, the significance of beauty in the two novels will be discussed inside the framework of Victorian Aestheticism. To carry out the research, this thesis addresses the following questions: What is the significance of beauty, and what is the extent of the power of beauty in *Lady Audley's Secret* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? How is beauty represented in the portraits of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray? What is the relationship between outward and inward beauty in these portraits?

Key words: Beauty Mystique, Beauty, Kalokagathia

ÖZET

Bu tez güzelliğin tarihini ve büyüleyici gücünü keşfetmek üzere bir çalışmadır. Bu tez, Oscar Wilde'ın *The Picture of Dorian Gray* ve Mary Elizabeth Braddon'ın *Lady Audley's Secret* romanlarındaki seçili karakterler üzerinde güzelliğin büyüleyici gücünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ayrıca, güzelliğin gücüne sahip olmanın, ona sahip olan karakterler, yani Dorian Gray ve Lady Audley üzerindeki etkilerini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu tez, özellikle iki romandaki baş karakterlerin portrelerinin tavsirlerine, bu portrelerin onlara bakan kişiler üzerindeki etkilerine ve resimsel anlatım, güzellik ve hakikat arasındaki karmaşık ilişkiye odaklanır. Buna ek olarak, iki romanda güzelliğin önemi Viktorya Dönemi Estetizmi çerçevesinde tartışılacaktır. Araştırmayı gerçekleştirmek için bu tez, *Lady Audley's Secret* ve *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'de güzelliğin önemi ve güzelliğin gücünün boyutu nedir?, Lady Audley ve Dorian Gray'in portrelerinde güzellik nasıl sunulur?, Bu portrelerde dış ve iç güzellik arasındaki ilişki nedir? sorularını sorar.

Anahtar kelimeler: Beauty Mystique, Beauty, Kalokagathia

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1 INTRODUCTION

“And Beauty is a form of Genius – is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation.” (Wilde, 2006, p.22).

Beauty has always been an issue that is both being praised and seen as secondary. Although beauty was once seen as a cosmic value, which is the evidence of having a good and beautiful soul, afterward it has been trivialized from time to time. An attempt has occurred to destroy the significance of beauty. There was a time when a pretty face was associated with stupidity. However, the sense of a beautiful appearance was strongly connected with a beautiful soul, intelligent mind, and the idea of an ideal person as a friend or partner. Beauty was associated with truth and goodness for a long time, and that has made the significance of beauty more powerful than ever before.

Having an interesting and mystic power, beauty has been the subject of many kinds of research and studies. The meaning of ‘beauty’ occupied the minds of philosophers for ages, and the power of a beautiful appearance is included in many literary works either directly or indirectly. As the Aesthetic movement occurred, beauty became not only an outcome but also an aim of any artwork. The beautiful women portraits that Pre-Raphaelite artists created paved the way for Aestheticism as a new sense to aim at nothing but beauty in the creations of humanity. Pre-Raphaelite portraits of women served not only as a start-up of the Aesthetic movement but also served as a uniting force of beauty and truth. The portraits, which look just like a documentary of a real moment, could also be a uniting force for the association of

beauty with truth as suggested by the Romantic poet John Keats in his poem *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

1.1 Texts and Contexts

The novels examined in this thesis belong to the Victorian Era and were composed by Victorian writers, Oscar Wilde and Mary Elizabeth Braddon.

Mary Elizabeth Braddon is an English novelist who was born in London and lived between 1835-1915. After taking a close look at her life story, it is clear that she had always been interested in art even before she became a writer as she worked and made a living as an actress for eight years. In her private life, it is known that she was living with John Maxwell who was a publisher. A close look at the private life of the author who is famous for her mysterious sensation novel *Lady Audley's Secret*, tells us that there is a mystery in her life too. When John Maxwell was living with Mary Elizabeth Braddon, he had already been married and had children. Even though his wife was known to be in an asylum, there was also a hearsay that she was living with her family. Although we do not know which rumor is true, it is known that after the death of Maxwell's wife, the couple got married and had children together. Braddon's brother Edward Braddon who became Premier of Tasmania had left for India and Australia. The reason of the beginning of this journey of him that ends up with him serving as the Premier of Tasmania, is known to be due to the weak financial situation of Braddon. In *Lady Audley's Secret*, there is a woman in an asylum and a man who leaves his country to find wealth in Australia. These parallels make the reader think that Mary Elizabeth Braddon found inspirations in her own life and the lives of family members. Braddon's best-known work is *Lady Audley's Secret*, an 1862 sensation novel. The three-volumed novel was serialized in various magazines between the

years 1861-1863 and adapted to movies and stages a couple of times. Bigamy, loss of identity, crimes, illegitimacy, and dark secrets are the features that characterize the sensation novels. The sensation novels combine romance and realism, which are not parallel modes of literature. The features that characterize sensation novels make them very similar to Gothic novels, but sensation novels are closer to reality than Gothic novels. *Lady Audley's Secret* has all the features of a sensation novel. In the novel, Miss Lucy Graham, who is a governess for Dr. Dawson, marries the rich widower Sir Michael Audley. As Miss Lucy Graham is working in the Doctor's house for a short time, people do not know much about her past. Nobody was aware that her real name was Helen Maldon who got married and became Helen Talboys later. She had one child and she was still married to a man who left her and their son for gold hunting in Australia. Even though George Talboys, husband of Helen Talboys, had left with an intention of coming back after being rich enough to provide a better life for his wife and son, Helen thought that she was left forever. After some time had passed since George Talboys left, the poor life became unbearable for Helen and she left the town for a better future. But how could she know that her new husband Sir Michael Audley's nephew was a close friend of her first husband George Talboys? Because she is afraid that her secret past might be revealed to her husband Michael Audley, Lady Audley does everything to keep her secret. This mysterious novel is a true classic of the sensation novel genre.

Oscar Wilde is an Anglo-Irish writer who was born in Dublin and lived between 1854-1900. His father Sir William Wilde was a prominent surgeon who became the surgeon-oculist of the Queen in 1863 and was knighted in 1864. Besides his success in the medical field, he published works in both his field and other fields.

His mother was a poet and translator. Thus, Oscar Wilde was the son of successful parents with literary tastes.

In their house at 1 Merrion Square, one of the largest and best maintained in the city, the Wildes at first gave dinner parties for a dozen guests, but later held receptions on Saturday afternoons for over a hundred. Writers, university professors, government officials, and visiting actors and musicians thronged to these parties. Under Lady Wilde's aegis musicians played, actors and actresses enacted scenes, and poets recited their verses. (Ellmann, 1918, p.29)

The Picture of Dorian Gray is an 1890 novel by Oscar Wilde. The novel is full of mysteries. In the novel, a young man, who has an Adonis-like appearance, makes a wish that seems innocuous but is actually very dangerous. The modern Adonis whose name is Dorian Gray wishes that his portrait gets older and he keeps his youth and beauty forever. Magically his wish comes true and he keeps his pure beauty like a fresh flower, isolated from the wickedness of the world. While the quasi-magical beauty of Dorian Gray bewitches anyone who sees him, he also becomes the victim of his own beauty. At the end of the novel, Dorian Gray is unmasked, and his power is annihilated.

2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEAUTY

Humankind has always longed for beauty. The charm of a beautiful person, a beautiful flower, a beautiful apple, or a beautiful odour cannot be denied, no matter how much the meaning of beauty differs depending upon personal experience. It is a phenomenon that makes such a strong impression that philosophers, writers, artists from all around the world made beauty a part of their studies or art. The power of beauty, the meaning, and the relativity of it, and the requirements of a true and ideal beauty became among the most important research subjects on beauty. Even though the cosmic power of beauty was underestimated time and again, it must be stated that to understand beauty itself, its power and to be aware of its magic have always been and will always be important.

Aesthetic relations are perhaps as socially significant as class relations, gender relations or race relations, despite, or perhaps because of, their non-institutionalized status. Aesthetic relations are so taken-for-granted as to be invisible. Yet, 'facism' and 'beautyism' may be as problematic as other 'isms' and the ideologies in the stigmatization of minorities. (Synnott, 1990b, p.67)

But, what is beautiful? "Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing" (Santayana, 1896, p.33). Beauty can be described as the form that gives pleasure. It is the form that pleases the soul, and it can be found in anything. Even an apple is picked from a tree chosen from fifty apples because of its good look. Because the good look of the apple gives the hint about its taste, i.e. its internal quality. This process happens without consciously thinking about beauty; it occurs intuitively or naturally. Similarly, "Humans subconsciously judge others by their looks – the attractive are deemed more capable and morally superior to those who are plain or unattractive" (Pease, 2017, p.196).

Beauty inspires and delights anyone who sees it. As such a powerful, cosmic and important phenomenon, beauty occupied a great place in thinkers', artists' and writers' minds and works. They attempted to define beauty and also searched to find the answer of what true beauty is. As a consequence, there occurred numerous ideas, concepts and many theories. In the days of yore, one of the most controversial topics about beauty was if it is objective or subjective. It was as much debated as the meaning of beauty. "Though Plato and Aristotle disagree on what beauty is, they both regard it as objective in the sense that it is not localized in the response of the beholder" (Sartwell, 2016). However, for Plato absolute beauty and beautiful phenomena were two different things. According to Grube's (1927) "Plato's Theory of Beauty": "The beautiful phenomena ... being in a world of change and flux are the objects of opinion, not of knowledge." (p.273) Yet, as with everything else, there were disagreements on this issue as well. The question of 'whether beauty is subjective or objective' occupied a place in thinkers' and philosophers' minds for centuries. There was the antinomy of taste. Two philosophers from the eighteenth century touched upon this issue of the relativity of beauty. "Hume's *Of the Standard of Taste* and Kant's *Critique of Judgement* attempt to find ways through what has been termed 'The Antinomy of Taste'" (Sartwell, 2016). Kant was one of the people who agrees that beauty is a relative term. He argued that "Taste is fundamentally subjective, that every judgement of beauty is based on a personal experience, and that such judgements vary from person to person" (Sartwell, 2016). Then, it is concluded that "Taste, that is, appears to be both subjective and objective: that is the antinomy" (Sartwell, 2016). As it is famously said, "de gustibus non est disputandum (about taste there is no disputing)" (Sartwell, 2016). But saying that taste is relative implies that beauty might be anything to anyone, and raises further questions. If seeing beauty and

giving meaning to it depend on a personal experience, then how could philosophers decide what beauty is? Hume in his book *Of The Standard of Taste*, gives a very sufficient and satisfying solution to this problem. Sartwell quotes from Hume's *Of The Standard Of Taste*: "Strong sense, united to delicate sentiment, improved by practice, perfected by comparison, and cleared of all prejudice, can alone entitle critics to this valuable character; and the joint verdict of such, wherever they are found, is the true standard of taste and beauty" (Hume, as cited in, Sartwell, 2016). Thus, according to Hume, we cannot find common features of the beautiful. Examples will show that the notion of beauty of people from different centuries and cultures are different from one another. Synnott (1990) in his "Truth and Goodness, Mirrors and Masks Part II: A Sociology of Beauty and the Face" points out that "For Plato; beauty is goodness, for Keats; truth, for Gibran; life and eternity; for Fischer Duckelmann power" (p.68). In ancient Greek philosophy, usefulness was also considered a vital aspect of beauty. "That beautiful means useful is frequently stated both by Plato and Xephanon. It appears then to have been accepted by Socrates" (Grube, 1927, p.276). As it is stated previously, according to Plato's works, beautiful phenomena are relative and cannot be defined. However, "The philosopher, with the aid of knowledge, apprehends that absolute beauty which dwells in the world of Reality and is the only true beauty, for it is the only beauty that can be known" (Grube, 1927, p.273). This explanation leads us to the conclusion that there are two kinds of beauty: absolute beauty and beautiful phenomena. This raises the following question: "What exactly is the relation between the supreme Beauty, which seems to live in a world so far removed from that of everyday life, and phenomena? Plato does not clearly say" (Grube, 1927, pp. 283-284). However, it is possible to posit that there are three conditions in which ideal beauty shows itself: "suitability, advantageousness, and pleasure of sight and hearing"

(Grube, 1927, p.273). Moving away from ancient Greece and considering medieval Europe, the “arrangement of integral parts into a coherent whole” (Sartwell, 2016) was regarded as one of the most crucial elements of beauty. As Sartwell quotes from Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*: “There are three requirements for beauty. Firstly, integrity or perfection – for if something is impaired it is ugly. Then there is due proportion or consonance. And also clarity: whence things that are brightly coloured are called beautiful” (Aquinas, as cited in, Sartwell, 2016).

“To the Ancients and Christians absolute Beauty existed, and God was absolute beauty. All things beautiful participated in God and reflected God. The original equation was formulated by Plato but persisted through Augustine to Aquinas, Dante and Castiglione, and even to Emerson and Gibran” (Synnott, 1990b, p.70).

Moving forward in time and space, moving to late 16th-century England, it is evident that beauty played a vital role in the thought and work of Shakespeare. In Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, particularly in the sonnets traditionally referred to as “Fair Youth” sequence, the descriptions of the “Fair Youth” reads almost like a definition of beauty. Significantly, the sonnets addressed to and about the “Dark Lady” depict a woman as relatively beautiful and worthy of the speaker’s love, who is not beautiful according to the beauty standards of Renaissance England (at the time, ideal feminine beauty was defined by fair skin and hair). But Shakespeare portrays a woman with dark hair as beautiful. What is perceived as beautiful changes from era to era and also from person to person. Thus, it is a relative notion, and opinions on ‘what beauty is’ are innumerable. Even though thinkers in the past tried to find a universal, cosmic formula to define beauty, it became impossible to name only one thing as beautiful or to equalize it to one universal notion. Thus, “each individual seems to perceive beauty somewhat differently. Beauty is many things to many people” (Synnott, 1990b, p.68).

300 years later, in the Victorian Era, it is evident that fair skin and golden curls are again determining features of the ideal of feminine beauty. As is well known, the Victorians aspired to a high level of morality and virtue both individually and socially. Goodness was a vital issue in Victorian England. With a view to examining the protagonists of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Lady Audley's Secret*, who both possess the power of beauty, in the main part of this thesis, it is important to consider the ancient Greek notion of *kalokagathia*, which proposes a link between beauty and goodness: “Physical beauty was always connected with goodness of character – the Greek ideal of *kalokagathia* – and since it was thought that character was reflected in one’s physiognomy, physical ugliness connoted moral ugliness” (Karoglou, 2018, p.5). *Kalokagathia* is a word that is derived from the unity of two different words and concepts.

In the word combination *kalokagathia* (καλοκαγαθία), the concept of *kalos* (καλός) means “beautiful”, it is not by chance that it comes first. For a long time, it showed the priority purpose of education to each Greek, that is, the achievement of physical beauty with a sort of erotic “aura”. The second place in this word combination takes the concept of *agathos* (αγαθός) that means “good” or “valorous”, “valour” (αρετή) in the knightly sense, highlighting the moral purpose of education (Bazaluk, 2017, p.7).

Kalokagathia is the ideal man in whom moral and physical beauty unite. With the idea of *kalokagathia*, the concepts of beauty and goodness became integrated. In time, the word beauty started to create a halo effect in the eyes and minds of people. This ideal can be exemplified by thinking of the apple example as it is stated before. The appearance of the apple is seen as a hint about the inside of the apple. “Plato believed there was a biconditional relation between goodness and beauty. That is, everything

that is beautiful is good and everything that is good is beautiful” (Riegel, 2014, p. 143). However, to accept that everything that is beautiful is good can be fatal, as will be shown in the following.



3 THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE GOOD – THE UGLY AND THE EVIL

Kalokagathia, the ancient Greek concept of ‘the good and the beautiful’ gave rise to the idea of what Anthony Synnott called the *Beauty Mystique*, which is basically seeing “Physical beauty ... as a symbol of moral beauty and goodness” (Synnott, 1990a, p.407). According to Synnott (1990b), who mentions the beauty mystique frequently in his writings, even “our everyday language indicates the prevalence of the beauty mystique. We might say that someone ‘looks good’, ‘looks divine’, or is ‘divinely beautiful’: phrases which neatly equate beauty, goodness, and God. Conversely the phrases ‘as ugly as sin’ or ‘looks like hell’ equally neatly equate ugliness, evil and the devil” (Synnott, 1990b, p.55). What makes beauty so powerful is this association that was made hundreds of years ago. With this belief which is also known as kalokagathia people tend to think that what is beautiful on the outside is also beautiful on the inside. In the same way, what is ugly on the outside is often thought to be evil on the inside.

As any notion that is strongly integrated with life itself, this one also takes place in literary culture. The belief that “Appearance symbolizes ‘reality’” (Synnott, 1990b, p.57) is evident in many novels, poems and children’s stories. The villain is depicted as the ugliest while the hero/heroine is depicted as the most beautiful. Thus, “Moral rectitude almost always goes hand-in-hand with physical beauty” (Jones, 2011, p.883) in the following examples. Starting with a fairytale, *Cinderella* or *The Little Glass Slipper*, as it is the oldest among the examples: Cinderella’s story goes back hundreds of years and has many variations. Cinderella’s stepsisters are known to be ugly and in the adaptations of the story to movies and cartoons, the stepsisters are portrayed as ugly. Indeed, “Cinderella’s magnificent beauty makes her stepsisters appear odious by comparison - though none of the variations of the tale refers to them

as ugly” (Jones, 2011, p.883), or maybe it is their bad personality that makes people think of them as ugly stepsisters. Another reason for this perception might be the fact that people find ugly appearances suitable for characters with ugly personalities. The second example of this is a 1814 poem by Lord Byron. In the poem *She Walks in Beauty* by Lord Byron, the lady’s beautiful appearance is seen as the sign of her inner beauty and innocence. If we think that these examples have hundreds of years between one another, it is clear that “The tradition of ... the beauty mystique is perhaps too deep-rooted in the culture to disappear soon” (Synnott, 1990a, p.423). Continuing with poems, a 1667 poem, *Paradise Lost* by John Milton, can also be linked with the equation of beauty with goodness. According to Synnott, “Milton also subscribed to the beauty mystique. Adam and Eve are beautiful in Paradise before the fall” (Synnott, 1989, p.624). Synnott quotes from *Paradise Lost*:

Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
 God-like erect, with native honour clad
 In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
 And worthy seemed; for in their looks divine
 The image of their glorious Maker shone,
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure –

(Milton, as cited in Synnott, 1989)

It was not only Adam and Eve who were showered with the holy beauty of the paradise. “Even Satan, newly expelled from heaven, is at first still glorious and majestic; but as his evil intent develops he appears ‘squat like a toad’ and then ‘mixed with bestial slime’, a serpent” (Synnott, 1989, p.624).

A 1862 poem by Christina Rossetti is the next example of the idea. In *Goblin Market* by Christina Rossetti, the Goblins who are the evil characters and the reason

of the moral corruption of Laura are portrayed as ugly. In the poem, the Goblins are mentioned as “Rat-faced” and “Parrot Voiced” (Rossetti, 1862). Thus, ugliness is the appearance that fits to the evil ones in this work too. A very famous 1958 comic named *The Smurfs* by Pierre Culliford is another work that is based on the issue of the good and the beautiful versus the bad and the ugly. Gargamel who is a fictional character from *The Smurfs* is portrayed as ugly as he is the wizard and the villain of the story. He has a hump and his teeth are rotten. As Gargamel is the villain of the story and the enemy of the smurfs, his ugliness is very much fitted with his soul. The last example is Ian Fleming’s Bond novels, the first of which was published in 1953 and the last one in 1966. It is not surprising to see the rules of the beauty mystique still continue their domination after hundreds of years. In the Bond novels, “the villains are uniformly ugly, indeed usually grotesque; they look as evil as they are ... Ugliness, evil and foreignness go together, complementing and reinforcing each other” (Synnott, 1990a, p.413). Likewise, Bond is the good one with a good physical appearance. In the Bond novels, not only Bond himself is good-looking, but “Bond’s friends and allies are also good-looking” (Synnott, 1990a, p.412). Among the female villains who wanted to kill Bond there were exceptions whose souls do not match their beautiful appearance. “Vesper Lynd, the beautiful double agent whom Bond had hoped to marry, and the blonde Soviet sniper, saved by her beauty from death” (Synnott, 1990a, p.423). While all the villains are to be dead, the beautiful Soviet sniper lives. “Bond refusing to kill her, only shot her in the hand so she could not kill again. Note that the ugly villains, male or female, die” (Synnott, 1990a, p.416). It is very common that when people are evil but good-looking, they get society’s approval much more easily than evil but physically unattractive and sometimes even than good and physically unattractive people. This shows the power of beauty.

4 VICTORIAN AESTHETICISM

Today, a concern with beauty or the appreciation of beauty is often expressed by the word 'aesthetic'. Thus, beautiful and aesthetic have become almost synonymous. However, in ancient Greece, the term aesthetic had a broader and more profound meaning. "The term *Æsthetic* is derived from the Greek, *aisthesis*, signifying perception" (Hamilton, 1882, p.vi). According to Walter Hamilton's (1882) book *The Æsthetic Movement in England*, "The term was ... adopted by German philosopher Baumgarten whose work *Æsthetica* was published in 1750" (p.vi). From then on, aesthetics became a branch of study which was concerned with the beautiful. Like the Romantic poets, many Victorian writers became concerned with the beautiful in the face of Industrialization which caused an increasingly ugly type of city, countryside and even human being (crippled and mutilated miners and factory workers, many of them children), some people did not even notice or deplore the rapid uglification of living spaces, bodies and, presumably, minds. Thus, beauty and the perception and appreciation of beauty were at stake in Victorian England. According to Hamilton (1882), "The ones who found out the real beauty in nature and art and who are fully capable of appreciating such qualities are *Æesthetes* and the ones who do not see the true and beautiful are called Philistines" (p.vii). The Victorian Era was an era of change and contradictions. While industrialization accelerated, the place of women in society was reshaped. While strict rules of morality dominated Victorian society, there was an increase of prostitution and poverty. With the occurrence of the industrial revolution, commercialism and materialism became many citizens' main focus in life. This focus reduced the importance of an aesthetic perspective and of the arts and handicrafts. Aestheticism was a reaction to this capitalist system and its excessive emphasis on materialism, utilitarianism, and commerce. "At its best aestheticism was

a revitalizing influence in an age of ugliness, brutality, dreadful inequality and oppression, complacency, hypocrisy and Philistinism” (Cuddon, 2013, p.13).

4.1 The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood can be considered a precursory movement of Victorian Aestheticism. The Pre-Raphaelites were a group of artists who were poets, painters and sculptors that “banded together in London about thirty years since to revolutionize English poetry and painting” (Hamilton, 1882, p.105). Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais and Thomas Woolner are the names of the first brothers who founded the school. “These youths were enthusiastic in their admiration of early Italian art and the mediæval Pre-Raphaelite painters, and they christened themselves the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood” (Hamilton, 1882, p.1). The Pre-Raphaelites used nature as their guide and map. They valued intense colors and affluent details. One of the most important characteristics of the Pre-Raphaelites was their combining different arts. Especially Dante Gabriel Rossetti who was both a poet and a painter combined the two arts. The Pre-Raphaelites used literature, including the Bible, to produce paintings inspired by literature, for example stories from the Bible. They regarded literature as a source of inspiration. The Pre-Raphaelites painted religious subjects and characters in a vivid and lifelike manner. John Everett Millais painted *Christ in The House of His Parents*. He rejected the conventional way of dealing with religious subjects in painting and added realistic details to the painting and made it seem like a photograph - like a scene straight out of a real moment. The Pre-Raphaelites did not only paint religious subjects, they also painted scenes of contemporary life. Even though the Victorian era was known as a dogmatic era, prostitution and illegitimate relationships were common. Also, industrialization caused dramatic changes in many people’s lives. Thus, there were many working

women in the society. It was a time in which the role of women was questioned and redefined. The Pre-Raphaelites often painted loose- and long-haired women who were usually modelled on the painters' lovers and sometimes even on prostitutes. As can be seen from such paintings, the Pre-Raphaelite artists sought to draw attention to the beauty and plight of so-called loose or fallen women, who were usually poor and frowned-upon working-class women. Their choice of subject was not surprising as the Pre-Raphaelites were revolutionary artists. They were painting to rebel against conventional ideas of virtue and art predominant in Victorian England. Prostitution was very common and known by the whole society. The Pre-Raphaelites often daringly and provocatively put prostitutes in the centre of their paintings. Annie Miller who was painted in *The Awakening Conscience* was a working-class woman whom Hunt was in love with. She was the model in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Elizabeth Siddal was another model who was a working-class woman and also Rossetti's lover. The models' not being random ones might explain the painters' sympathy for painting beautiful and luscious women. It is clear that in some paintings the hair is painted as loose, long and flowing because of the fact that a private moment is described in the painting or the woman in the painting is a prostitute. Yet, it is important to point out that hair means more than the hair itself in the Victorian Era. The long and loose hair of beautiful women takes centerstage in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings, for example *Lady Lilith*, *Helen of Troy*, and *Beata Beatrix*. Women's hair has been associated with beauty, female sexuality, purity, power and youth. In any case, the long and loose hair became one of the characteristics of many Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Such paintings may lead a spectator to think about the character or personality of the portrayed women and to wonder about their feelings and attitudes toward life and the society in which they lived. Were they angry, hopeless, happy?

The Pre-Raphaelites founded a magazine called *The Germ* in 1850 to make their voice heard and to disseminate their ideas. Yet, it was an unsuccessful attempt as the magazine was published in only four issues. “For some time after the death of *The Germ*, the Pre-Raphaelites were the objects of ridicule and misrepresentation” (Hamilton, 1882, p.12). *Patience*, *The Colonel* and *Punch* which are respectively comic opera, drama, and comic magazine started to attack the Pre-Raphaelites with harsh criticism. Even though the harsh criticisms were unfavourable, it was a step for the dissemination of the ideas of the Pre-Raphaelites. It was not only *The Germ* that made their voice heard. In 1849, the works of the Pre-Raphaelites in the Royal Academy Exhibition “were highly spoken of” (Hamilton, 1882, p.2). The bad press about the Pre-Raphaelites led up to the misapprehended parts to be corrected. Because when there is bad press about anything, the defenders are to be expected. In this case, the defender was the highly influential Victorian art critic John Ruskin. He “came to the rescue of the persecuted youths ... in a letter to *The Times*, and also in a pamphlet entitled ‘Pre-Raphaelitism’ [he] took up arms on their behalf” (Hamilton, 1882, p.2). Hamilton (1882) quotes Ruskin and aligns three reasons of why statements that are directed to the Pre-Raphaelites are wrong. Ruskin explains and introduces the aims of the Pre-Raphaelites and corrects the misapprehensions about them. In the first matter that he presents he gives a lot of information about the Pre-Raphaelites and why they call themselves ‘Pre-Raphaelites’. Hamilton (1882) quotes Ruskin:

The Pre-Raphaelites imitate no pictures, they paint from nature only. But they have opposed themselves as a body, to that kind of teaching before described, which only began after Raphael’s time; and they have opposed themselves as sternly to the entire feeling of the renaissance schools – a feeling compounded

of indolence, infidelity, sensuality, and shallow pride. Therefore, they have called themselves Pre-Raphaelite (Ruskin, as cited in, Hamilton, 1882, p.3).

As it is stated in the quotation above, the Pre-Raphaelites are not opposed to Raphael himself but his followers who came after his time and their conventionalized way of imitating Raphael. Talking about the Pre-Raphaelites and their characteristics, it is essential to indicate that “One of the earliest Pre-Raphaelite goals was to achieve the highest degree of objectivity in their depictions of nature.” (The Art Story, n.d.) According to Hamilton (1882), “Raphael himself, so far as he was great, and all who proceeded or followed him who ever were great, became so by painting the truths around them as they appeared to each man’s own mind, not as he had been taught to see them” (p. 4). This doctrine of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood makes them paint in a way that is objective towards what is painted, and this makes their art truthful. Thus, they paint only what they truthfully see. Oscar Wilde also touched on this doctrine of the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood in his lectures. In *The New York World*, there is a summary of Oscar Wilde’s discourse from his lectures quoted in Hamilton’s (1882) *The Aesthetic Movement in England*: “Pre-Raphaelism was above all things a return to nature – to draw and paint nothing but what was seen” (Wilde, as cited in, Hamilton, 1882, p.105). The paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites can be considered as anticipating Aestheticism, as they sought to foreground beauty.

4.2 Théophile Gautier and L’Art Pour L’Art

Like the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, L’Art Pour L’Art or Art For Art’s Sake, initiated by the French writer Théophile Gautier in the early nineteenth century, can be considered as a precursor movement to Victorian Aestheticism. Gautier first used and explained the term ‘l’art pour l’art’ (art for art’s sake) in the preface to *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835). According to Gautier, it aims at beauty in art, not at moral or

didactic content. “Théophile Gautier, poet, critic, and essayist, defined it as follows: ‘Art for art’s sake means for its adepts the pursuit of pure beauty – without any other preoccupation’” (“Art for Art’s Sake”, 1917, p.98). Thus, according to Gautier, art should not have a moral or didactic aim. It was a very rebellious expression considering it in the context of the Victorian era, which was based on conservatism and morality. Because the claim that art should not have a didactic or moral purpose implies “That an artist may choose any subject, moral, unmoral or immoral, and that so long as he expresses that subject which fine ‘artistry’ all is well” (“Art for Art’s Sake”, 1917, p.98). Oscar Wilde states in the preface to his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, “There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all” (p.3). It can be argued that Aestheticism did not aim at promoting morality or immorality, but was a “genuine search for beauty and a realization that the beautiful has an independent value” (Cuddon, 2013, p.13). Thus, it can be interpreted as a critique of industrialization, utilitarianism and capitalism.

4.3 Aestheticism in England: Walter Pater

Walter Pater has been regarded as the father of Aestheticism in England. His collection of essays *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, first published in 1873, came to be considered as the golden book of the Victorian Aesthetes. According to Pater’s (1980) *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry*, “the attempts to define beauty in abstract and to find a universal formula for it helps us very little to enjoy what has been well done in art or poetry” (p.xix). So, by his not attempting to find a universal formula for beauty, Walter Pater is clearly of the opinion that beauty is relative and changes from person to person. It is clear that beauty is at the centre of Aestheticism. In the next quotation, Pater clarifies the aim of Aestheticism: “To define beauty, not in the most abstract but in the most concrete terms possible, to find, not its

universal formula, but the formula which expresses most adequately this or that special manifestation of it, is the aim of the true student of aesthetics” (Pater, 1980, p.xix). As pointed out earlier, the Pre-Raphaelites sought to see and paint in an objective and truthful manner, i.e. they sought to represent objects, human beings, places and situations as they really are or occurred. Similarly, the Victorian Aesthetes valued objectivity and truthfulness in observation and artistic representation: “the first step towards seeing one’s object as it really is, is to know one’s own impression as it really is, to discriminate it, to realise it distinctly” (Pater, 1980, p.xix). This quotation shows that Aestheticism also acknowledged the influence of subjective emotions and value judgments on readers and spectators. In *The Renaissance Studies in Art and Poetry* (1980), Pater makes a very illuminating comparison: He likens the “arts that are the subject of Aesthetic criticism to a receptacle of powers which possess the products of nature and so many qualities and virtues” (p.xix). He thus emphasizes the mysterious and enchanting power of art and beauty. In another chapter of this thesis, the mysterious and enchanting properties of paintings, particularly portraits and mirrors, are explored. However, it can be argued that not only the paintings and mirrors have enchanting and mysterious powers. All works of art, music, poetry, and literature in general can be regarded as powerful and enchanting as portraits and mirrors.

Pater emphasized the importance and value of works of art which give the reader or spectator pleasure, as the following quotation from *The Renaissance* (1980) shows:

What is this song or picture, this engaging personality presented in life or in a book, to me? What effect does it really produce on me? Does it give me pleasure? And if so, what sort or degree of pleasure? How is my nature

modified by its presence, and under its influence? The answers to these questions are the original facts with which the aesthetic critic has to do (p.xx).

Then, there is no need to worry and think about “what beauty is in itself, or what its exact relation to truth or experience” (Pater, 1980, p.xx). As pointed out earlier, Pater is eager to draw attention to the importance of pleasure. Besides, it has become evident that Aesthetes like Pater valued the individual subjectivity of each reader or spectator. Aesthetic critics regard works of art as “powers or forces producing pleasurable sensations” (Pater, 1980, p.xx). It is not about finding a cosmic formula that will work on anything that will make the critic decide on the definition of beauty and then decide about the work. It is all about finding its special manifestation, its virtue, its effect on one, and the pleasure that it gives; in this way art and the art critic are valuable. In the words of Pater: “The function of the aesthetic critic is to distinguish, to analyse, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this special impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is and under what conditions it is experienced” (pp. xx – xxi). With this idea, Pater refuses to find a cosmic, universal formula to define beauty, but in a way, he does find a cosmic formula as this idea applies to anything that beauty appears in.

4.4 Oscar Wilde’s Aestheticism

The Anglo-Irish writer Oscar Wilde is one of the most important names in Victorian Aestheticism. He was also the target of satire, like the Pre-Raphaelites a few decades earlier. The works of Oscar Wilde and “The aesthetic type was ... satirised in *Punch* by Edward Linley Sambourne (1844-1910) and George Du Maurier (1834-96)” (Anderson, 2004, p.34). Certainly, these satires did not only target Oscar Wilde but also Aestheticism. Aestheticism was searching for beauty and keeping beauty at the

centre as an aim. It occurred in the 19th century when the Industrial Revolution gathered speed, and when the desire for beauty and visual appeal increased.

Nevertheless, it was not appreciated by everyone, such as the Philistines. Philistine is a word that Matthew Arnold adapted to English from German and mentioned in his book *Culture and Anarchy*. A philistine is “a person who refuses to see the beauty or the value of art or culture” (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). In another dictionary, a more detailed explanation of the word ‘philistine’ is given: “A person who is guided by materialism and is usually disdainful of intellectual or artistic values” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). Thus, this name that is given to a part of the society is not just a superficial word but a word that is strongly tied to industrialization, capitalism, the extreme gap between rich and poor people, and rich people’s caring only about money. The latter did not care about aestheticism and were often also hostile toward it.

No doubt some of the popular ridicule of the Æsthetic School has been brought about by the zeal of Mr. Oscar Wilde, whose somewhat unguarded utterances, and peculiarities of garb have been seized upon by sapient critics, who find it easier to laugh at his knee breeches than his poetry, which for the greater part they appear not to have read (Hamilton, 1882, p.99).

The interest in Oscar Wilde’s aestheticism was not only because of people’s thirst for beauty in an industrialized world. It can be argued that especially in Victorian England the reason of the admiration for the Aesthetic movement and the reason for loathing it can be found in a lifestyle based on dogmatic principles that suffocated human desires, creating longing and loathing respectively. Whereas some Victorians who felt suffocated by dogma and pent-up feelings embraced Aestheticism’s emphasis on beauty, the arts and its latent social critique, many

conservative Victorians rejected Aestheticism. As the reaction and especially the negative reaction towards the Aesthetic movement and Oscar Wilde gets stronger, the popularity and curiosity toward Aesthetes and Oscar Wilde get also stronger. The United States of America was a place where large masses of readers lived and it was also a place where people were curious about Aestheticism and Oscar Wilde. Moreover, it was a place where Aestheticism had to be made known and explicated. Thus, Oscar Wilde went to the United States to give lectures and clarify the meaning of Aestheticism in the American public's mind. He also went there “‘to lecture on the Renaissance’ which he defined as the ‘revival of the intimate study of the correlation of all arts’” (Hamilton, 1882, p.100). While in America, Oscar Wilde presented Aestheticism as a philosophy to the American public. Walter Hamilton's (1882) *The Aesthetic Movement in England* contains extracts from Oscar Wilde's interviews with American journalists. When he was asked whether he was planning to give lectures, he answered that he would give lectures only “on the acceptance of my school of philosophy” (Wilde, as cited in, Hamilton, 1882, p.101). By calling his ideas a philosophy, he placed his ideas on a profound basis. He thus linked his ideas, i. e. his interpretation of Aestheticism, with a highly renowned and prestigious discipline – philosophy, the love of wisdom, which has its roots in ancient Greece.

Considering the satire directed towards Oscar Wilde, in industrialised countries where the main focus is money, it is very much predictable to be satirised or not being taken seriously for producing art for art's sake. Thus, it is possible to say that, even though society seems like it is moving forward or developing, it is also getting primitive in some other aspects. The society of the industrialized countries start to look down on the studies which constituted the root of humanity, namely ancient Greek philosophy. The following quotation by Wilde links Victorian

Aestheticism to ancient Greek philosophy and, more particularly, to the Romantic notion of art as truthful. “Most certainly it is a philosophy. It is the study of what may be found in art. It is the pursuit of the secret of life. Whatever there is in all art that represents the eternal truth, is an expression of the great underlying truth. So far Aestheticism may be held to be the study of truth in art” (Wilde, as cited in, Hamilton, 1882, p.101). The quotation also calls to mind the Pre-Raphaelites’ concern with objective and truthful representation. The following quotation by Wilde makes a similar claim for Aestheticism:

Whatever there has been in poetry since the time of Keats, whatever there has been in art that has served to devolve the underlying principles of truth; whatever there has been in science that has served to show to the individual the meaning of truth as expressed to humanity – that has been an exponent of aestheticism (Wilde, as cited in, Hamilton, 1882, p.101).

As is well known, Keats (1819) equated truth with beauty in the concluding lines of his *Ode on a Grecian Urn*: “Beauty is truth, truth beauty.” (Keats, line 49).

5 ART AND TRUTH: Portraits as Magic Mirrors

Reflections have always had a mystic side. From the oldest version of the mirror, which is water, to the obsidian, bronze and glass mirrors, reflectors have always been associated with witchcraft, superstition, misfortune and the spirit world. These associations lead to myths and various cultural beliefs. There are many examples of these associations, myths and cultural beliefs in history. Scrying is the best known connection of the mirror with witchcraft. The witch generally looks into a cup of water or a crystal ball and then predicts the future or casts a spell. There is also the idea that a mirror always tells the truth and cannot lie. This feature of mirrors telling the truth is a subject treated, for example, in the fairytale *Snow White*. Everytime Snow White's step mother says "mirror, mirror, on the wall, who's the fairest of them all?" (Grimm, 1991, p.11), the mirror always tells the truth regardless of the consequences. In real life, when one looks into a mirror, one sees what is reflected on its surface. According to a common superstition, breaking a mirror brings seven years of bad luck. The explanation of the belief is that when someone looks into a mirror, the mirror captures their soul or a part of their soul. When the mirror is broken the soul will also be broken or harmed. As the soul allegedly heals itself in every seven years, the person who breaks a mirror is exposed to bad luck till the soul has healed. In Japanese culture the mirrors are seen as portals to the realm of spirits and as capable of summoning bad spirits; that is why they are kept covered when not used. "Similarly, in the Jewish tradition, mirrors and all reflective surfaces are covered up during the period of mourning for the dead" (Pease, 2017, p.192). Because it is deemed that the soul might be trapped in the mirror and cannot enter the afterlife and find its eternal peace. The mirror is believed to have a connection to the realm of spirits either as a portal or as a cage that imprisons souls. As implied by the examples

given above, it is believed in various cultures that the mirror reflects not only the physical presence of a person but moreover the presence of a person's soul. This belief is reflected in vampire stories. Vampires are not reflected in the mirror as they are already dead and lack a soul. For alive people the mirror serves as a tool of awareness in the vampire stories to realize the dead ones. Thus, mirrors are seen as powerful portals to the realm of spirits and considered mysterious and often even sinister in many cultures and their stories.

Painting something or someone as it really is can be regarded as capturing the moment and keeping it forever on the canvas. This way of thinking leads to the conclusion that, when a portrait is painted, it is like keeping that person on the canvas forever and making the sitter immortal in a way. In many aspects, portraits and mirrors are considered almost equal. It is known that mirrors reflect the image clearly. In a sense, portraits are also the reflections of the sitters or whatever is painted. However, the portraits and mirrors resembling one another because they reflect an image is not the only common point. There is another common characteristic that makes portraits and mirrors mysterious and sinister in some cultures. Portraits and mirrors are believed to reflect not just the visual side of people, but also their spirituality or character. Thus, there arose a belief "that mirrors and portraits have agency and that they are gateways into the spirit world." (Pease, 2017, p.190). That is why "many of the world's cultures have bias against mirrors, a distrust of portraits" (Pease, 2017, p.190). There is a couple of reasons for this distrust. In some paintings, the visual effect of the portrait makes the spectator feel as if the portraits' eyes were following them. Some paintings make the viewer feel as if the painted person was real; thus, seeing that painting is like meeting the person who is painted. The spectator can make a guess about the sitter's thoughts or life. Thus, a portrait does not reflect

only the sitter, it also tells about his or her soul. It is as if the painting has a life of its own. Yet, the painter and his style are important to make the paintings mirror-like. One of the most successful painters who drew portraits like magic mirrors were the Pre-Raphaelite painters. Pre-Raphaelite paintings are known to have a smooth surface, intense colors and many details. By taking those features of the Pre-Raphaelite paintings into consideration, paintings are very much like mirrors, especially Pre-Raphaelite portraits. The faces on the canvas of Pre-Raphaelite portraits are very suggestive. As it is stated before, the character, feelings, desires, life, and thoughts of the person on the canvas can be pondered upon and interpreted because the energy of the person is reflected in the painting like in a mirror. Moreover, the Pre-Raphaelites' truth to nature of what is painted makes their portraits like mirrors that always tell the truth. According to Pease (2017), "If the artist does too a good job on the portrait, he can literally enter the spirit world, give the portrait a life of its own, and put the sitter and/or the viewers in mortal peril" (p.190).

6 THE PORTRAITS IN *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET* AND *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, it is clearly stated that the portrait of Lady Audley was painted by a Pre-Raphaelite painter. However, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* there is no such information given. Yet, it is possible to make inferences. Dorian Gray's statement "There is something fatal about a portrait. It has a life of its own" (Wilde, 2006, p.100) can make the reader think that the portrait might be a Pre-Raphaelite one. The painter Basil Hallward's truthfulness to nature, his love of and lust for beauty, the intense colors and details that he used make the painting realistic and vivid. Therefore, it can be argued that Basil Hallward is probably a Pre-Raphaelite painter. Furthermore, in the novel, Basil explains that he used Realism as a method which is also used by the Pre-Raphaelites. When Basil Hallward talks to Dorian Gray about his love for Sibyl Vane, Basil says: "if she can create the sense of beauty in people whose lives have been sordid and ugly ... she is worthy of all your adoration, worthy of the adoration of the world" (Wilde, 2006, pp.70-71). In another part he says "An artist should create beautiful things" (Wilde, 2006, p.12). His praising beauty and giving great importance to it shows that Basil Hallward values and appreciates beauty. In both *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Lady Audley's Secret* "the role of the artist is to capture the inner essence of the sitter by portraying his or her bodily likeness" (Pease, 2017, p.190). The Pre-Raphaelite portraits of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray reveal the truth about their soul which is hidden under their beautiful appearance.

As mentioned before, the concepts of *kalokagathia* and the beauty mystique can be interpreted as suggesting that the physical appearance of a person is an expression of the state or quality of their soul, i.e. physical appearance is regarded as the mirror of the soul generally. In this way, beauty is thought to be the reflection of a

pure and good soul, whereas ugliness is seen as the reflection of an evil soul. To interpret the appearance of a person and to come to a conclusion about them, the face is likely to give the most important clues to a person's character, personality or state of soul (pure and virtuous or corrupted and evil, and states in between these two poles). By looking at somebody's face, it is possible to know about a person's "age, gender, and race ... health... moods and emotions." (Synnott, 1989, p.607). Moreover, "the face indicates ... character and personality." (Synnott, 1989, p.607). Most importantly, by looking at somebody's face, one can decide whether someone is beautiful or ugly. Thereby, one's face provides a lot of information and, besides, gives the onlooker a lot to think about and speculate upon. In both novels, there is a portrait of the protagonist. These portraits raise questions about art and truth, representation and perception. It can be argued that while the beautiful Lady Audley and the handsome Dorian Gray are generally perceived as pure and virtuous, their portraits reveal their true character like magic mirrors. In both novels, the writers display "the difference between what is intuitively expected and what is true" (Pease, 2017, p.197).

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, the first point to touch upon is the resemblance of the portrait to Lady Audley. When Alicia talks about the portrait to Robert Audley for the first time, she says: "There is her own portrait, too, unfinished, but wonderfully like" (Braddon, 1997, p.54). By making this statement, Alicia confirms that the person represented in the portrait is almost as close to Lady Audley's appearance as a reflection in a mirror. When Robert Audley sees the painting, he thinks that the painting looks like Lady Audley. Yet, he also notices some oddness about her facial expression. He describes it as "It was so like and yet so unlike" (Braddon, 1997, p.57). He adds "I suppose the painter had copied quaint mediæval monstrosities until his brain had grown bewildered, for my lady, in this portrait of her, had something of the

aspect of a beautiful fiend” (Braddon, 1997, p.57). Till that time no one had seen Lady Audley with this particular facial expression because she had not shown people that she could be the woman in the painting. The source of the oddness was the fact that the portrait reflects not only her appearance but also her soul. The contrast between her appearance and soul made Robert think that there is an oddness about the painting. Robert Audley does not like the painting because he thinks the expression does not fit the beautiful Lady Audley. However, Alicia thinks that “sometimes a painter is in a manner inspired, and is able to see, through the normal expression of the face, another expression that is equally a part of it, though not to be perceived by common eyes” (Braddon, 1997, p.58). Alicia was aware of the fact that they have never seen Lady Audley like she is in the painting. Yet, she thinks that the wickedness reflected in the portrait is inside her and that the painter saw that part that was true. Lady Audley reveals the expression that Robert Audley saw in the painting a couple of times throughout the novel. She displays a horrible expression and a mysterious, sometimes mocking and triumphant smile, and cruel lines, when she tries to convince her husband that Robert Audley is mad, and when she talks to Robert Audley while Sir Michael Audley is ill, and also when she locks up Robert Audley in the Castle Inn before she sets fire to the house. The repeated appearance of this kind of expression on Lady Audley’s face throughout the novel strengthens the idea that the portrait of the Pre-Raphaelite painter reveals the truth about the sitter.

When Robert Audley sees the portrait of Lady Audley, he points out that the “lady’s portrait stood on an easel covered with a green baize” (Braddon, 1997, p. 56). The painting’s being covered is not a simple act, it has a connection with the idea of portraits resembling magic mirrors. In Japanese culture, “Mirrors ... are believed to attract evil spirits. Therefore, traditionally, in Japan a mirror is kept covered when not

in use” (Pease, 2017, p.192). Like the unblest mirrors that are kept covered, in *Lady Audley’s Secret*, it is stated that the painting is covered with green baize. It does not mean that the portrait of Lady Audley was haunted or cursed. However, it was a mirror of her soul. At first, the reader might think that the painting is covered because it is unfinished. However, at the end of the novel, the portrait is described as covered again, this time with a curtain. The act of covering the painting strengthens the idea of the painting as a mirror in the novel. The portrait of Lady Audley does not have a perpetual connection with her life throughout the novel. However, while the painting is unfinished, Lady Audley’s smile is described as wicked. After it is finished, her smile is described as mocking. This implies that she looks down upon the people whom she deceives. After the painter finished the portrait of Lady Audley, i.e. her soul, the portrait stays the same. It does not change according to her misdeeds and sins. However, as pointed out above, it reveals Lady Audley’s tendency to use everybody she encounters for her own purposes.

In the novel, it is Robert Audley who draws attention to the strong similarity of Lady Audley’s portrait to the characteristic features of Pre-Raphaelite painting. He makes the following remark about Lady Audley’s portrait: “No one but a Pre-Raphaelite would have painted hair by hair, those feathery masses of ringlets with every glimmer of gold, and every shadow of pale brown” (Braddon, 1997, p.57). Lady Audley’s hair is a vital component of her beauty and of the power she possesses through it. A similarly conspicuous emphasis on a woman’s hair can be found in Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s *Lady Lilith* portrait. According to Karoglou’s (2018) “Dangerous Beauty: Medusa in Classical Art”, “Rossetti quotes from the Walpurgis Night scene of Goethe’s *Faust* (4206-II) when Lilith makes her sole brief appearance and Mephistopheles warns Faust of Lilith’s dangerous beauty, especially her ensnaring

hair.”(p.45) About this painting, Rossetti wrote the following lines: “Beware of her hair, for she excels/ All women in the magic of her locks/ And when she twines them round a young man’s neck / She will not ever set him free again.” (The Met, n.d.) The locks that are drawn in the portrait are very important because as it is mentioned before hair is not just hair but means more than the hair itself. “Women’s hair, particularly when it is golden, has always been a Western preoccupation, for the Victorians it became an obsession.” (Gitter, 1984, p.936) It has “rich and complex meanings, ascribing to it powers both magical and symbolic” (Gitter, 1984, p.936). While it can be associated with female purity, youth, power and beauty, Gitter (1984) in “The Power of Women’s Hair in the Victorian Imagination” points out that “Golden hair is linked with wealth and female sexuality and it is the ideal vehicle to express their notorious and ambivalent fascination with money and female sexual power” (p.936). Women’s hair can symbolize various properties. “At the same time, golden hair became the crowning glory of the mythologized Victorian grand woman” (Gitter, 1984, p.936). Thus, golden hair is a very powerful, enchanting, magical, and effective part of the person who owns it. In the portrait of Lady Audley, her shimmering curls are painted in a realistic and vivid manner, and that makes the painting mirror-like and lifelike in the novel. In *Lady Audley’s Secret*, Lady Audley’s hair is not something that is mentioned only when her portrait is described. Her hair is described as “the most wonderful curls in the world – soft and feathery, always floating away from her face, and making a pale halo around her head when the sunlight shone through them” (Braddon 1997, p.9). There is a clear halo effect that arises from her hair and beautiful appearance. Her hair makes her seem as if she is an angel. Yet, her hair is just as dangerous as Medusa’s serpent hair for the characters in *Lady Audley’s Secret*. After a glimpse into her eyes and seeing the perfect

combination in her appearance, she captivates and bewitches. After seeing her childish, angelic beauty almost nobody believes that she is an evil person. In this way of thinking, Robert Audley can be likened to Perseus who is “young, brave, and handsome hero sets off to slay a hideous and wicked monster” (Karoglou, 2018, p.6). The Pre-Raphaelites emphasized the beautiful hair of beautiful women in their paintings. However, Lady Audley’s golden curls mean more than just beautiful hair both in the painting and the novel. The painter of Lady Audley’s portrait succeeded in creating a portrait that reflects both the lady’s angelic beauty and her wicked soul. That made the portrait both mirror-like and mysterious.

The resemblance between Dorian Gray and the portrait of him is extraordinary. It is described as “a wonderful likeness” (Wilde, 2006, p.24) in the novel. The resemblance is so powerful that Lord Henry says “Mr. Gray, come over and look at yourself” (Wilde, 2006, p.24) as if he was showing a mirror to him. The painting was like a copy of Dorian Gray and from the first moment the portrait was finished, everyone in the room noticed that the portrait has its own life. After Dorian sees the portrait and feels desperate about the inevitable destiny of getting old, Basil decides to rip up the canvas. Dorian wants to stop Basil and says “It would be murder!” (Wilde, 2006, p.26). His using the word ‘murder’ emphasizes how alive and vivid the portrait is. Before Dorian discovers the extraordinary magic in the portrait, he says, “It is part of myself. I feel that” (Wilde, 2006, p.27). Even before the portrait shows its magic, it made Dorian feel the power that captured his soul. Basil Hallward’s calling the portrait “real Dorian” (Wilde, 2006, p.28) and Lord Henry’s asking “Before which Dorian? The one who is pouring out tea for us, or the one in the picture?” (Wilde, 2006, p.28) strengthen the sense of the portrait’s similarity to Dorian. It was not just

Dorian who felt the life and soul in the portrait, the enchantment was strongly impressing all spectators, even the painter himself.

Like Lady Audley's portrait, the picture of Dorian was also kept covered in the novel. The first time he realizes the change in the expression of him in the portrait, he also realizes that the portrait is like a mirror that he looks at after he does cruel things. The painting makes him question himself about his behaviour towards Sibyl Vane. Just as one looks into a mirror and feels one's own gaze on oneself, Dorian's portrait was also "watching him" (Wilde, 2006, p.79). After he clearly sees the changed expression and is sure about the change, he is conscious of the fact that the portrait is the reflection of his soul. "This portrait would be to him the most magical of mirrors. As it had revealed to him his own body, so it would reveal to him his own soul" (Wilde, 2006, p.91). It was a map, a guide that he was fond of looking at from time to time, and sometimes it became a loathful experience to see his corrupted soul. To hide his increasingly ugly portrait, he puts a screen onto it. However, it would not be enough when servants are around, and Dorian cannot help thinking about a possible robbery. Besides, his friends Lord Henry and Basil Hallward want to see the portrait. Dorian Gray could not take the risk of the secret of his life being seen by anyone. That is why he uses a coverlet to cover the painting and locks it in his old schoolroom, which is a place that he has not entered for many years. This is the only way for him to feel safe from discovery – after all, the portrait is dangerously "conscious of the events of life as they occurred" (Wilde, 2006, p.90) and a clear and stark reflection of these. Thus, unlike Lady Audley's portrait, Dorian's portrait has a haunted side. "In Wilde's story the picture is metaphysically a mirror of Dorian's inner being" (Pease, 2017, p.192), and the portrait is repeatedly referred to as a mirror in the novel. Even though Basil Hallward thinks that he put the secret of his soul into the painting at the

beginning, the reader finds out that Basil was wrong. There was nothing of him. It was the exact mirror of Dorian and his soul. Dorian Gray's portrait has a mysterious side that makes it change consistently according to his crimes and sins. It becomes worse day by day as Dorian keeps committing crimes and sins. Towards the end of the novel, Basil Hallward sees the changed version of the painting. The expression of Dorian in the painting makes Basil feel "disgust and loathing" (Wilde, 2006, p.131). So the portrait was like a sinister mirror that is to be hidden under a fabric in a locked room. Even though Dorian's portrait changes consistently, unlike Lady Audley's portrait, there is a common point between the two paintings in both novels. One could see and understand the character of Dorian Gray and Lady Audley by looking at their portraits.

"What is implicit in all this is art's ability to provide a window not only on the divine, but also on the demonic" (Pease, 2017, p.197). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the portrait of him was a window on the demonic. It was a curse that occurred as a blessing at first to Dorian Gray. His staying young and beautiful by means of the portrait's getting old, saves his life and makes him live a life as a popular young man. However, these were not enough for him to live a peaceful and fulfilled life. The portrait was a curse to him. It was the window that opens to his wicked soul. At the end of the novel, he feels hate toward his beauty, Basil and the portrait. "When Dorian Gray tries to destroy the portrait, in a mad attempt to erase the evidence of his own moral decay" (Pease, 2017, p.189), he ends his own life. This end intensifies the mysteriousness of the portrait because it makes the reader think that from the time that Dorian wished for eternal youth and beauty, he was a person divided into two. His appearance, i.e. his body, was existing while his soul was trapped in the portrait. Dorian's mad wish tied fast his life to art and revealed all the ugliness of Dorian's

soul. This entanglement is a curse to Dorian Gray's life. Dorian Gray hates his beauty, and the love that he feels for his own beauty fades away. The painting's turning back to its original beauty after Dorian's death which ends the connection of his life with the portrait, emphasizes Oscar Wilde's aesthetic perspective toward the connection of life and art. The writer who supports art for art's sake gives the reader a very precious lesson with the lines: "Then he loathed his own beauty, and flinging the mirror on the floor crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel" (Wilde, 2006, p.185). Beautiful things should fade away; only then does their beauty become meaningful.

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, it is hard to say that the painting became a window on the demonic. However, it is possible to say that it showed her wicked soul like a mirror, and it also brought her misfortune. If there was not a portrait of her, George would not know that she is alive. Starting everything from this painting, her lies are uncovered one by one. At the end, the power of the paintings cause the ruin of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray. It is questionable whether the power that destroyed the lives of the main characters was of evil spirits or bad luck. Yet, it is clear that the portraits had a detrimental effect on the lives of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray.

7 THE POWER OF BEAUTY: LADY AUDLEY AND DORIAN GRAY

Beauty means power in many aspects of life. With a view to Lady Audley and Dorian Gray as literary characters, it appears advisable to differentiate between angelic and seductive beauty. Both angelic and seductive beauty yield great power, but seductive beauty is usually recognized as dangerous. In other words, a person that possesses seductive beauty is easily recognized as untrustworthy. By contrast, angelic beauty inspires trust. It is associated with purity, innocence and goodness, whereas seductive beauty is associated with desire and its consecutive dangers. In short, seductive beauty is appealing but dangerous, whereas angelic beauty is evocative of concepts and images that are linked to goodness, such as saints and heaven. Taking its roots from Plato's uniting inner beauty and outer beauty and his thought of seeing the outer beauty as climbing "the ladder to absolute beauty" (Synnott, 1990b, p.71), the notions of *kalokagathia* and the beauty mystique inform and make a deep imprint onto *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Lady Audley's Secret*. The protagonists of both novels possess angelic beauty that makes them attractive to the people they encounter. However, it is important to point out that being beautiful does not necessarily gain one friends and opportunities. Sometimes beauty makes people jealous, envious or distrustful. In the two novels, most characters feel attracted to Lady Audley and Dorian Gray, respectively. Nevertheless, not all characters are taken in by the protagonists' angelic beauty. But the fact that the majority of characters in both novels like and trust the protagonists or even find them captivating and feel drawn to them, indicate the validity of the ancient Greek concept of *kalokagathia* and its modern counterpart the beauty mystique. "Plato believed there was a biconditional relation between goodness and beauty" (Riegel, 2014, p.143). It is possible to come across many lines that can be shown as a proof of this sense in the characters' minds in both

novels. However, at the end of the novels the reader understands that a beautiful appearance is not always an indication or proof of a pure soul. “The separation of spirit from matter was a mystery, and the union of spirit with matter was a mystery also” (Wilde, 2016, p.52).

7.1 Lady Audley’s Angelic Beauty

In *Lady Audley’s Secret*, we encounter a character who is evil but also beautiful. Her golden hair, bright blue eyes, dark brown eyebrows and eyelashes, rosy lips, and beautiful face are frequently and in detail described throughout the novel. Lady Audley’s remarkable beauty attracts the attention of people anywhere she goes. Lady Audley is a woman who experiences all the advantages of the beauty that she has. Yet, to keep these high and luxurious living conditions that she gained through her beauty, she is ready to kill. Thus, she possesses an extremely beautiful appearance and a dangerous personality. But although she is both beautiful and dangerous, she is not a femme fatale. She is selfish, greedy and violent, but she conceals these characteristics from her environment. Thus, she presents herself to her environment as beautiful, innocent and child-like. She is described as “childish, helpless, babyfied little creature” (Braddon, 1997, p.111). Thus, Lady Audley’s beauty is not like the beauty of Helen of Troy or Medusa. Lady Audley’s beauty is angelic, heavenly, and innocent, like that of the Virgin Mary. It is a beauty described as “unearthly” (Braddon, 1997, p.254). Her childlike beauty seems to render her weak and in need of help and guidance. However, this makes her even more attractive in the eyes of men and thus gives her even more power over them than she already yields by means of her beauty. Her angelic beauty is more powerful than the seductive beauty of a femme fatale. Lady Audley wants to be perceived as naive and fragile, i. e. as a woman who

needs male protection. But her apparent innocence is only a cover for a number of guilty secrets in her life.

“Beauty and the face are, as we know both by experience and from scientific research, extremely powerful symbols of the self” (Synnott, 1990b, p.67). Thus, it is generally thought that a beautiful appearance is the reflection of a pure, beautiful soul. In the same way, an ugly appearance is thought to be the reflection of an evil soul. It is believed that if one does evil things, it will appear on one’s face. Yet, Lady Audley’s face retains its beauty despite her evil soul. Lady Audley’s beautiful face is a mask that hides her wicked soul and evil personality. Even though she is known as innocent, she is a liar. She looks helpless and fragile. Yet, inside her beautiful appearance, there is a potential killer. At the beginning, she looks like a woman who needs protection and high living standards as she was weary of poverty. Lady Audley is a woman who thought that she had been abandoned by her husband. In an era in which opportunities for women were very limited, the reader might think that her acts could be justified by her difficult social and economic circumstances. However, she appears to be an evil person, a beautiful devil towards the end of the novel. When Lady Audley realizes that her evil plans are about to be revealed she thinks of killing Robert Audley. She mutters “Will anything stop him – but death?” (Braddon, 1997, p.236). After thinking about killing him, she actually tries to kill him by setting Castle Inn, where Robert Audley stays, on fire. Thus, she causes the death of Luke Marks. She also attempts to kill her first husband after he threatened to reveal her secret. Throughout the novel, Lady Audley continues to commit crimes to keep her real identity secret. Her beauty serves as a curtain for her evil soul and wicked crimes. Because “The innocence and candour of an infant beamed in Lady Audley’s fair face” (Braddon, 1997, p.43), nobody has ever suspected her of harmful intentions and actions. Whenever she is

suspected or accused of being untruthful or malevolent, her husband defends her. He is completely under the spell of her beauty and cannot fathom or even imagine a possible incongruity between his wife's physical appearance and personality. Even when Robert Audley reveals all her guilty secrets and crimes, Sir Michael Audley seeks to protect and defend her. Sir Michael Audley exclaims: "Lucy! Tell me that this man is a madman! Tell me so, my love, or I shall kill him!" (Braddon, 1997, p.275). This quotation shows the power of Lady Audley's angelic beauty over her husband. It is shocking to see that Sir Michael Audley is willing to kill his nephew in order to protect his marriage (rather, the illusion of this marriage). It can further be argued that her beauty is just an illusion, because beauty without harmony is not beauty, as Plato suggested: "Neither does the beauty of man depend on the soul alone, or the body alone, but upon the harmony of both" (Grube, 1927, pp.274-275).

7.2 Dorian Gray's Angelic Beauty

Dorian Gray has an "extraordinary personal beauty" (Wilde, 2006, p.5). His beauty is described in the book many times. Lord Henry compares Dorian to "young Adonis who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose leaves" (Wilde, 2006, p.6). This description of the beauty of Dorian Grays brings to mind Shakespeare's descriptions of the beauty of the "Fair Youth" in his *Sonnets*, for example in lines such as "Describe Adonis and the counterfeit, Is poorly imitated after you, On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set, And you in Grecian tires are painted new" (Shakespeare, as cited in, Ma, 2016).

The fair youth is claimed as the archetype or defining image of all beauty, whether human or nature, male or female. By using classical epitomes of beauty Adonis, and Helen, who are perfect examples of male and female respectively, the speaker asserts that, comparing with the young man, Adonis

turns out to be a poor imitation of him, and the young man is represented anew in Grecian attire than Helen's natural beauty (Ma, 2016, p.111).

While Shakespeare described the beauty of the young man like a “‘map’ for all beauty, for all ages.” (Ma, 2016, p.112) we see that Oscar Wilde also described Dorian Gray's beauty as universal, timeless and classical. Lord Henry likens Dorian Gray to the young Adonis and Narcissus. Thus, like Shakespeare's “Fair Youth”, Dorian Gray can be considered as an icon of male beauty. His beauty attains a myth-like quality and status. In fact, it is no exaggeration to claim that Dorian Gray has become a myth (the same can be said of his creator, Oscar Wilde). In general, his beauty makes him attractive to most people he encounters. What is more, they do not only feel attracted by Dorian, but also trust him. In fact, he impresses his environment as innocent and virtuous. “One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world” (Wilde, 2006, p.17). He is thus depicted as an angelic creature. The association of Dorian with the angelic, pure and otherworldly is strengthened by the frequent use of the word ‘worship’ with regard to Dorian.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the situation is a little more complicated than it is in *Lady Audley's Secret*. The approved idea of “The nastier people become, the uglier they look” (Synnott, 1990b, p.58) is still valid in this story. The uglier Dorian's character becomes the uglier he looks but not the way it happens in real life. With the acceptance of Dorian's wish, his face retains its beauty and the painting gets ugly as the time passes and as his soul gets more wicked. “His finely curved scarlet lips, his frank blue eyes, his crisp gold hair” (Wilde, 2006, p.17) make almost everyone think that he is a good person. “There was something in his face that made one trust him at once” (Wilde, 2006, p.17). His beauty deceives everyone. After Dorian Gray's cruel behaviour toward Sibyl Vane, he finds out that the expression of him on the portrait is

changed, and he clearly sees the cruelty on his face. In the novel, Oscar Wilde raised the question of the power of physical appearance and how it affects other people and also the possessor of beauty and its concomitant power.

Throughout the novel, various characters express their admiration for Dorian's physical appearance and seemingly virtuous character and pure soul. The soul is a highly abstract and complex concept. As it is abstract one cannot see the soul – neither other people's nor one's own. Thus, even though people think that they know each other very well, it is a delusion. Basil Hallward thinks that he knows Dorian. Yet, he is mistaken when he says that Dorian “would never bring misery upon anyone. His nature is too fine for that” (Wilde, 2006, p.67). Also, Lord Henry thinks to himself “It was delightful to watch him. With his beautiful face, and his beautiful soul, he was a thing to wonder at” (Wilde, 2016, p.51). Both Basil Hallward and Lord Henry are under the effect of Dorian's beauty. How could they know that Dorian's soul is beautiful? Basil and Lord Henry could see only the part of the soul that Dorian wanted to show. By looking at Dorian's beautiful appearance, they interpret his soul or expect it to be a beautiful soul. Maybe it is because human nature yearns for harmony in everything. Because of their expectations, they become victims of the halo effect of physical beauty. Even though Dorian has a beautiful angelic face, his soul is the opposite of it. In the case of Dorian, appearance and reality are incongruent. Dorian Gray never feels guilty about Sibyl Vane's death even though he realizes that she committed suicide because of his cruelty. Basil states that “with your pure, bright, innocent face, and your marvellous untroubled youth – I can't believe anything against you” (Wilde, 2006, p.127). However, afterwards Dorian kills Basil Hallward and pitilessly and cold-bloodedly coerces a friend of his who is a chemist to dissolve every part of Basil Hallward's dead body.

Whoever looks into Dorian's beautiful angelic face cannot fathom or imagine him to be evil and wicked. When Dorian tells the truth about himself to a girl, she does not believe him, because she believes that beauty is identical with goodness: "He had told her once that he was wicked, and she had laughed at him, and just answered that wicked people were always very old and very ugly" (Wilde, 2016, p.184). The common and rather wide-spread belief that beautiful people are good protects Dorian during his entire life. For example, it saves him from being killed by Sibyl Vane's brother. Dorian knew that "his beauty had been to him but a mask" (Wilde, 2006, p.185) that he put on his wicked soul. As it is known "Society, civilized society at least, is never very ready to believe anything to the detriment of those who are both rich and fascinating" (Wilde, 2016, p.120). Dorian lived a protected life. Dorian's appearance and his place in society make people think that he is virtuous. Basil Hallward thinks that "Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed" (Wilde, 2016, pp.126-127). Yet, he did not know that Dorian had found a way to conceal his true sinful self from the world.

By using the power of his eternal, and pure beauty, Dorian Gray starts to go after what is beautiful and what gives pleasure. Besides his lifestyle being hedonistic, it is also aesthetic. He lives the lifestyle without borders as he has his beauty that serves as a mask. Dorian falls in love with his own beauty and also trusts that his beauty will never fade away. As a consequence, he lives a life in which he becomes insensitive to others, and follows the aesthetic in anything. He follows anything or anyone that is beautiful uncontrollably, and inconsiderately of all the outcome.

Despite Wilde's publicly advocating the principles of aestheticism, Dorian's demise illustrates Wilde's recognition that aestheticism needs to be properly controlled. While the pursuit of beauty and happiness in life is always Wilde's

ideal, he also implies that the consequences of one's actions must be thought out and the impact of one's decisions, beyond oneself, must also be carefully considered before acting on any impulse (Duggan, 2008, p.67).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Lady Audley's Secret* the reader witnesses the reality of the separation of internal and external beauty. Throughout the novels, the reader experiences that "It is amazing how complete is the delusion that beauty is goodness. A handsome woman talks nonsense, you listen and hear not nonsense but cleverness. She says and does horrid things, and you see only charm. And if a handsome woman does not say stupid or horrid things, you at once persuade yourself that she is wonderfully clever and moral" (Tolstoy, 2012, p.259). Like in the words of Tolstoy, in both novels there are characters who are impressed by the beauty of the protagonists and believe that they are good and moral people. However, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Lady Audley's Secret* show that physical beauty and being virtuous, in other words, that body and soul can be incongruous and should therefore be considered separately.

There is no doubt that beauty gives immense power to its owner. It can facilitate friendship, love, popularity, success, and being respected. A beautiful person can make many things happen by impressing other people. Its power and effect on others, and its ephemeral nature make beauty become a byword. Everyone wants to have beauty, admires it, aspires to it and talks about it since the very beginning of humanity. Even though the perspective towards beauty changes depending on time and place, one thing does not change: its enchanting power. Legendary beauty has always kept its place in myths, children's stories, novels, and history. Generally, the power of beauty on other people is the first thing that comes to mind. Till Dorian Gray

and Lady Audley realize the curse of their beauty, they both use their power of beauty on others throughout the novels. They both use their power of beauty in different ways as they both have different motives. However, both of the characters end up hating their own beauty. For it is a truth that the enchanting, magical power of beauty affects the person who owns it too. The myth of Narcissus is one of the best examples of the power of beauty on the one who owns it. Beauty can be a curse on the beautiful person and while casting a spell on other people, the beautiful person might also fall victim to their own beauty, as, tragically, happened to Lady Audley and Dorian Gray.

7.3 Beauty as witchcraft: The effect of Lady Audley's Beauty

In *Lady Audley's Secret*, Lady Audley's beauty has such a powerful effect that she is described like a witch who bewitches everyone around her, mostly her husband. Her beauty is described in various parts of the novel. Apart from her physical beauty, constituted by her golden curls, blue eyes and fair skin, moreover her charm is described. "Miss Lucy Graham was blessed with that magic power of fascination by which a woman can charm with a word or intoxicate with a smile" (Braddon, 1997, p. 7). Even her apparent weakness and helplessness have a bewitching effect on people, especially on men, as Sir Michael Audley's daughter Alicia remarks: "She may bewitch every man in Essex, but she'd never make friends with my dog" (Braddon, 1997, p.84). In addition to the quasi-magical effect of Lady Audley, she is likened to a witch a couple of times. In one scene, making green tea is described as an act that gives witchery to Lady's glance. She is likened to a fairy who casts strong spells. In this part, Mary Elizabeth Braddon made a reference to Le Fanu's *Green Tea*. Just like Mr Jennings' experience about the spiritual world after drinking too much green tea, Mary Elizabeth Braddon engaged the green tea with spell and witchlike manners of Lady Audley. When Robert Audley goes to Wildernsea, which is the place where

George Talboys met his wife, he dreams of the time they met and he thinks of George falling in love with Helen Maldon. He thinks of George's falling in love with her as witchcraft, a kind of spell. Even her innocent and childlike manners are seen as bewitching. Her every move, glance, and even her existence are described as a spell on people. Lady Audley's domination over her husband is very conspicuous. "So complete was the dominion which Lady Audley had, in her own childish, unthinking way, obtained over her devoted husband" (Braddon, 1997, p.45). Especially her power over Sir Michael Audley is on such a scale that she says "It is coming – it is coming; I can twist him which way I like. I can put black before him, and if I say it is white, he will believe me" (Braddon, 1997, p.223). This brings to mind notions such as witchcraft and white and black magic. The idea of a witchlike effect and spell-like power of Lady Audley's beauty gets stronger as even after her husband learns about the truth, he still cares about her comfort and safety. After Sir Michael Audley learns the truth he tells Robert Audley: "Will you take yourself the duty of providing for the safety and comfort of this lady, whom I have thought my wife?" (Braddon, 1997, p.284). After learning about so many lies that his wife told him, that he is still thinking about her safety and comfort might seem surprising. However,

It is not surprising that when people are described or presented as physically attractive they are rated as having more desirable personality characteristics, a higher occupational, more likely to be happily married, pleasant and of higher status. This has been found to be true in courtroom decisions: attractive defendants were judged less guilty and received less severe punishment than less attractive defendants (Alcock & Sadava, 2014, p.242).

This indicates that no matter how evil or bad a person is, his/her appearance still matters and has a powerful, decisive effect.

Lady Audley's power of beauty occupies a strong place throughout the novel. As a woman who is aware of this power, she uses it to achieve her goals. Unlike Dorian Gray, Lady Audley uses her power of beauty to build a better life for herself. As a woman who has no wealth from her family, and because women in Victorian England had only very limited job opportunities, she has almost no choice but to marry a rich man who can keep her safe in every respect. When she got the marriage proposal from Sir Michael Audley, she thinks that her life will not be like the old one, no more. She says; "No more dependence, no more drudgery, no more humiliations" (Braddon, 1997, p.12). Her getting a marriage proposal is not the end of her need of using her beauty. Instead, it is a starting point. So, she continues impressing everyone, especially her husband. She does it so well that her husband refers to her as "My pretty little wife! My gentle, innocent, loving, little wife!" (Braddon, 1997, p. 16). He thinks that his wife is innocent, loving and gentle, and he comes to this conclusion by her impressive angelic beauty. It is like he is exposed to this spell more and more whenever he sees his wife. It must be stated that Lady Audley behaves gently and kind-heartedly to people. But her beauty is the power that makes her seem like she is a sincerely kind-hearted person and it is also her beauty that makes people think that she is unable to be cruel. To prove this, the following must be considered: When Robert Audley first sees Lady Audley's portrait, he finds the expression on her face strange. At that time, Alicia states that the painter saw an expression that belongs to Lady Audley, even though they have not seen her like that before. At this part this question might come to mind: Why should she think bad about a woman who behaves good? The answer could be the fact that she is not impressed and affected by her beauty. Thus, the appearance of Lady Audley cannot hide what is to be seen by the ones who are not impressed. In a conversation between Sir Michael Audley and Alicia, she says

to him: “You think her sensitive because she has soft little white hands, and big blue eyes with long lashes, and all manner of affected, fantastical ways, which you stupid men call fascinating. Sensitive! Why, I have seen her do cruel things with those slender white fingers, and laugh at the pain she inflicted” (Braddon, 1997, p.84). Thus, Alicia can see the cruel heart of Lady Audley even though she also sees her good behaviours in public. In that case, there must be a halo effect in the eyes of Sir Michael Audley and many others. Just like George Talboys never realize his wife’s selfish words to him when they got poor, Sir Michael Audley never realizes that she is selfish and uncharitable. Sir Michael Audley is so enchanted by Lady Audley’s appearance that he defends his wife against his daughter by saying, “The poor little woman is very sensitive you know Alicia, ... and she feels your conduct most acutely.” (Braddon, 1997, p.84). Lady Audley successfully creates the image she desires in the eyes of her husband.

In the novel, it is not only Sir Michael Audley who is impressed and dominated by the beauty of a woman. When Robert Audley thinks about Clara Talboys, who is described as beautiful, he says “How unequal the fight must be between us, and how can I ever hope to conquer against the strength of her beauty and her wisdom” (Braddon, 1997, p.205). Here in Robert Audley’s words we perceive that he equalizes the power of beauty with the power of wisdom. Thus, it is possible to say that the power of beauty is as strong as the power of wisdom. In her power of beauty, he submits to her dominion over him just like Sir Michael Audley accepts his wife’s dominion over himself.

Throughout the novel, Lady Audley impresses, bewitches and enchants with her beauty. She gets anything she wants by using her beauty on people. In this way, she even gets a punishment less than she deserves because of her beauty. However,

she was not aware that the importance that she gives to beauty and to her own beauty corrupts her soul. She eventually begins to think that she can achieve and get away with anything. Lady Audley is a woman who is afraid of getting old. The importance that she gives to beauty is evident in her thoughts about Luke Marks, to whom she refers as “awkward, ugly creature” (Braddon, 1997, p.87). Lady Audley is in love with her beauty like Narcissus. She “looked upon that beauty as a weapon” (Braddon 1997, p.268). Yet, she was not aware that this weapon can kill her, too.

Perhaps in that retrospective reverie she recalled the early time in which she had first looked in the glass and discovered that she was beautiful: that fatal early time in which she had first begun to look upon her loveliness as a right divine, a boundless possession which was to be a set-off against all girlish shortcomings, a counter-balance of every youthful sin. Did she remember the day in which that fairy dower of beauty had first taught her to be selfish and cruel, indifferent to the joys and sorrows of others, cold-hearted and capricious, greedy of admiration, exacting and tyrannical, with that petty woman's tyranny which is the worst of despotisms? Did she trace every sin of her life back to its true source? and did she discover that poisoned fountain in her own exaggerated estimate of the value of a pretty face? Surely, if her thoughts wondered so far along the backward current of her life, she must have repented in bitterness and despair of that first day in which the master-passions of her life had become her rulers, and the three demons of Vanity, Selfishness, and Ambition had joined hands and said, ‘This woman is our slave; let us see what she will become under guidance.’ (Braddon, 1997, p.235).

The love that she feels for her own beauty makes her an arrogant person and when one is blinded by arrogance, one also harms oneself. It was not only mirrors that

made her aware of her beauty, but people as well: “As I grew older I was told that I was pretty – beautiful – lovely – bewitching” (Braddon, 1997, p.278). Even though her beauty does not serve her as she expected in the end, it does still help her to get a punishment less than she deserves. However, all the things she went through and her giving worth to beauty too much make her loath her own beauty in the end.

7.4 Beauty as Witchcraft: The Effects of Dorian Gray’s Beauty

Like Lady Audley, Dorian Gray experiences all the advantages of his extremely powerful angelic beauty. The reader gets the impression that his beauty is a spell over the people who see him. It makes people like, love, and trust him and, what is even more, it makes Basil Hallward worship him. Basil Hallward says: “I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray” (Wilde, 2006, p.9). In another part Basil says that “As long as I live, the personality of Dorian Gray will dominate me” (Wilde, 2006, p.14). The reader sees throughout the book that there is nothing special about Dorian Gray personality before and after the influence of Lord Henry. Before Lord Henry’s influence over him, he is a boy who knows little and has little self-confidence. He has a weak character and can easily be influenced by people who have a strong personality. The influence of Lord Henry makes Dorian Gray indifferent to other people’s joy and sorrow. It is possible to say that there is a halo effect on Basil Hallward and that Basil Hallward is blinded by the beauty of Dorian Gray. “Basil Hallward worshipped him” (Wilde, 2006, p.17). Yet, no doubt that this worship is because of Dorian Gray’s beautiful appearance. Basil Hallward confesses to Dorian’s quasi-magical influence over himself time and again. He says “I was dominated, soul, brain, and power by you” (Wilde, 2006, p.97). Dorian serves as Basil Hallward’s muse. He is precious because of his beauty. The beautiful Dorian gives Basil, who values beauty, inspiration and an aim in life: To create

beautiful works of art. Dorian's beauty is ultimate beauty like the one of Adonis, according to Basil. Basil never believes anything against Dorian and trusts him blindly.

It is not only Basil Hallward who Dorian Gray brings a magical effect on with his extraordinary, innocent, pure beauty. It affects most of the people he encounters, and most of these people do not believe any negative rumours about him. His beauty serves as a mask that conceals the wickedness of his soul and protects him. It magically makes people believe in him and trust him.

Lord Henry speaks of Dorian Gray as a young Adonis and Narcissus. Narcissus is a very fitting name for Dorian Gray as there is a strong resemblance between them. Dorian Gray has an incredibly beautiful face, golden hair, blue eyes, and scarlet lips, so he might be seen as the modern Adonis of the time. His life is moreover like the life of Narcissus. He lives his life till the day he sees his face on canvas, similar to Narcissus who lives his life till the day he sees his own face's reflection in a pool of water. While in the myth of Narcissus water serves as a mirror, in Dorian's story the painting of him serves as a mirror. When Lord Henry tells Dorian "You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray" (Wilde, 2006, p.22) he realizes his beauty and its importance for himself. Yet, the complete awareness comes when he sees his own portrait made by Basil Hallward. After he sees his face, he falls in love with himself. That moment is explained as "A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. ... The sense of his own beauty came on him like a revelation. He had never felt it before. ... as he stood gazing at the shadow of his own loveliness, the full reality of his description flashed across him" (Wilde, 2016, pp.24-25). Then his love for himself makes him more impassive day by day. He becomes indifferent to the sorrows of other people. Dorian says "But I seem

to have lost the passion, and forgotten the desire. I am too much concentrated on myself. My own personality has become a burden to me. I want to escape, to go away, to forget” (Wilde, 2016, p.172). After becoming impassive, Dorian Gray is clearly in a dead-end road. Just like Lord Henry says “Nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul” (Wilde, 2016, p.21). Once Dorian lost his senses, there is left nothing to cure his soul that is trapped in the painting. “He grew more and more enamoured of his own beauty, more and more interested in the corruption of his own soul” (Wilde, 2016, p.109). Basil Hallward is also aware that Dorian Gray is in love with himself. While they are talking, Basil Hallward says “I worshipped you too much. I am punished for it. You worshipped yourself too much. We are both punished” (Wilde, 2016, p.133). From this point of view, we may find similarities between Echo and Sibyl Vane as they both die after their disappointment of being rejected. Thus, it is correct to say that the beauty of Dorian Gray is very powerful. While Dorian Gray, as a young man who is aware of this power, uses his extreme power to achieve his goals which is to taste every sin, every feeling, he also becomes a victim of the power of his own beauty. He begins to hate his beauty and cannot stand even hearing his own name.

There was a reason to make him wish that he wants to stay young and beautiful forever. First of all, he was a young man who could be influenced easily and Lord Henry used his youth and naivety. He says to Dorian;

Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so? You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. ...And beauty is a form of Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts of the world...It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty. It makes princes of those who have it. To me Beauty is the wonder of wonders. It is only shallow people who

do not judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is the visible not invisible (Wilde, 2016, p.22).

Lord Henry repeats the importance of beauty and appearance so many times in the novel that it suddenly becomes important for Dorian too. He wants to be a prince like Lord Henry told him. This importance of beauty in Lord Henry's eyes makes him wish that he wants to stay young forever. Thus, he makes his wish and tells the spell as "If it were I who was to be always young, and the Picture that was to grow old! For that – for that – I would give everything! Yes there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!" (Wilde, 2016, p.25). After that wish, before realizing that his wish was accepted, Dorian talks to Basil about his worries of getting old and not being liked. Dorian says, "How long will you like me?... I know, now, that when one loses one's good looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything... Youth is the only thing worth having. When I find that I am growing old, I shall kill myself" (Wilde, 2016, p.26). Beauty and youth become the core of life for Dorian. After he realizes that his evil soul will not be reflected onto his face, he uses this. He tastes almost every evil action in life. He sins all the time and he uses those sins to be eternal. Because when he was a young man, Lord Henry convinced him that the only way to stay young is to make mistakes in one's youth again and again. He obeyed Lord Henry's words as if they were laws. He tried all directions for new experiences and new knowledge. He is like a Renaissance person who is enjoying his own new awakening. However he was not aware that his new awakening would happen when he realizes that the sins he committed to become eternal will be his own murderers. He also used his youth and beauty while escaping Sibyl Vane's brother. By using his appearance, he escaped from being murdered by James Vane. When James Vane looked at his face, Dorian's youth deceives him. Dorian Gray needed his beauty

and youth to stay alive in that society because if his face would reveal his sins, then he could not stay alive and taste every sin. Thus throughout the novel, his beauty and youth serve as a mask that conceals his secrets. “Certainly, no one looking at Dorian, believed that he had passed through a tragedy of our age. Those finely shaped fingers could never have clutched a knife for sin, nor those smiling lips have cried out on God and goodness” (Wilde, 2016, 147).



8 CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the significance and enchanting power of beauty in Western culture in general and in *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde in particular. This thesis has examined the effects of beauty on Lady Audley and Dorian Gray and on their environments. Special attention has been accorded to the Pre-Raphaelite portraits of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray. The relationship between the representation of outward appearance and inward being (body and soul) has been scrutinized and discussed. It has been argued that the Pre-raphaelite portraits of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray display both the beauty of the characters and the truth about their soul and that the portraits can be compared to magic mirrors.

The results indicate that beauty has a strong significance that is rooted in the distant past; it is a cosmic value that cannot be underestimated. The power of beauty is much stronger than is commonly assumed, it is almost magical. The strongest source of the power of beauty is the idea of kalokagathia that dates back to antiquity. The idea of kalokagathia united beauty with goodness in the minds of people so that people tend to believe that beautiful people have a good soul. Humanity reinforced the very old idea of combining the good and the beautiful in their literature including fairytales. As the time passes the good and beautiful became almost inseparable. Hereby, beauty became a power that can serve as a mask that hides the evil soul, or as a spell that turns everything to an advantage of the beautiful person.

In both novels, the characters Lady Audley and Dorian Gray affect the people around them with their angelic beauty. Their beauty makes people want to be friends or partners with them. Moreover, the angelic beauty that both of the characters possess make people trust them. Yet, it is seen that the beauty of Lady Audley and Dorian

Gray is nothing but a mask that hides their evil soul and ugly crimes. The idea of the equalization of beauty and goodness in the minds of people makes them blind to the crimes of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray. Thus, whatever Lady Audley and Dorian Gray do, their beauty convinces people that they are innocent and pure.

The importance of beauty in the lives of people never disappeared fully. Yet, in the Victorian Era, the accelerated industrialization caused ugliness in both the environment and people. At that time, the appreciation of beauty became a less significant concern for humanity. Aestheticism emerged as a reaction to materialism, commerce and ugliness that industrialization brought to the era. Afterwards, the Aesthetic movement occurred, beauty became the aim of any artwork, rather than being a random outcome. Moreover, Aestheticism reminded humanity of the significance of beauty. Before the occurrence of the Aesthetic movement, Pre-Raphaelite portraits of women gave rise to beauty to gain prominence again and paved the way to Aestheticism. The Pre-Raphaelites played an important role for this thesis. It was argued that in both novels the portraits of the protagonists are Pre-Raphaelite. While Lady Audley's portrait is articulated as Pre-Raphaelite portrait clearly, there is no such information for Dorian Gray's portrait. Yet, making inferences by adducing the details of the portrait and style of the artist, it can be argued that Dorian Gray's portrait is also a Pre-Raphaelite painting. The impressive details, vivid colors, mirrorlike texture, and incredible similarity of the portraits of the sitters convince the reader that they are both Pre-Raphaelite portraits. The reader feels impelled to ponder the relationship between physical appearance and personality of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray, respectively, i.e. the duality of body and soul.

The portraits of Lady Audley and Dorian Gray have so much in common. Yet, they are also different from each other. Both portraits resemble a mirror as the faces in

the portraits resemble the sitters very much. Both portraits show the souls of the sitters while displaying their beautiful appearance. Lady Audley's portrait indicates a duality as it reflects both her beautiful physical appearance and her ugly, wicked soul. That makes her portrait mirror-like. Dorian Gray's portrait indicates a more complex duality compared to Lady Audley's. At the beginning the face of Dorian on the portrait possesses a pure beauty. Yet, as the time passes, every evil action of him that corrupts his soul is reflected on the portrait. It is a more sinister version of a portrait holding a duality. The duality that Lady Audley's portrait holds is closer and more applicable to real life.

The magnificent beauty that both Lady Audley and Dorian Gray possess gives them a magic-like power. The beauty becomes a means of making their dreams come true. Lady Audley starts living a rich and comfortable life, making people believe in her lies, she manipulates her husband as she likes, uses her beauty as a mask that hides her evil nature and secrets, and finally after her real identity comes out, her beauty enables her to elude punishment. Dorian Gray lives an aesthetic lifestyle and goes after what is beautiful to him without being worried about getting old. He enchants and inspires people around him. Moreover, his beauty makes people trust him. The ones who see Dorian's beauty do not believe the evil things that they hear about him, and because of his beauty he is able to go on with his everyday life in society. His pure beauty and youth save his life from James Vane. Both of the characters live all the advantages of their beauty. Yet, their life ends tragically. They start hating their own beauty. In the end, both Lady Audley's and Dorian Gray's lives collapse because of their utter lack of balance and harmony.

This we altogether fail to see or understand: that when a soul that is strong and great in every way has to rule an inferior body, or vice versa, the whole

creature is not beautiful – for it lacks the greatest harmony, but the creature that is in the contrary state is, for him who has eyes to see, most beautiful and lovely (Grube, 1927, p.275).

To summarise, my thesis aimed to show that beauty which is seen as superficial and insignificant by many people is an important quality that possess great power and should be taken more seriously. The duality of inward and outward beauty in art and life deserves more notice and attention.



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