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MASTER'S THESIS

ON BEAUTY: THE CONFLICT OF BODY AND SOUL IN OSCAR WILDE'S *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* AND NELLA LARSEN'S *PASSING*

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APPROVAL PAGE

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this master's thesis/non-thesis master's term project titled as "On Beauty: The Conflict of Body and Soul in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Nella Larsen's *Passing*" has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

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Gökçem Menekşe GÖKÇEN

ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

On Beauty: The Conflict of Body and Soul in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Nella Larsen's Passing*

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The "beautiful" and the "sublime" are two notions that intermingle with each other in Aesthetics. The beautiful often viewed in "the objects with exact forms" stands with the sublime recognized in "formless objects with an image of limitlessness" in literature, the arts and many other subject areas. They explore the senses of attraction and awe aroused in people's mind. Taken these forms of judgements into consideration, this study analyses Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) from American Literature and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) from English Literature in terms of race, the unity of body and soul in reference to two philosophers Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke.

The white beauties of both novels, Larsen's Clare Kendry and Wilde's Dorian Gray, highlight the fear of ugliness and the appreciation of beauty in their tragic stories. The study centres on the process and ways in which their enchanting beauty results into a division of their body and soul throughout their search for the sublime. Beauty which brings along wholeness and pleasure, now threatens the protagonists' corporeal and spiritual aspects. The study concludes that *kalokagathia* (referring to the unity of corporeal beauty and spiritual refinement) is not achieved neither in *Passing* (1929) and nor in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) for Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray's betrayal of authenticity (Eco, 2010: 45). It is also underlined that Nella Larsen and Oscar Wilde through these bodies' traumatic murders harmonize beauty and stability.

Keywords: Beauty, Sublime, Nella Larsen, Clare Kendry, Oscar Wilde, Dorian Gray, Duality.

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Güzellik Üzerine: Oscar Wilde'ın *The Picture of Dorion Gray* ve Nella Larsen'ın *Passing* Adlı Eserlerinde Beden ve Ruh İlişkisi

Gökçem Menekşe Gökçen

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"Güzellik" ve "yücelik" Estetik felsefesinde iç içe geçmiş iki kavramdır. Güzel olan yani "belirli biçimi olan objeler," "sonsuzluk imgesiyle özdeşleştirilen biçimsiz objeler" olarak anılan yücelik kavramıyla edebiyat, sanat ve birçok alanda birlikte anılırlar. İnsanların zihninde uyanan çekicilik ve huşu hislerini çalışırlar. Bu kavramları dikkate alarak, bu çalışma Amerikan Edebiyatı'ndan Nella Larsen'ın *Passing* (1929) adlı romanını ve İngiliz Edebiyatı'ndan *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*'ni (1891) ırk, beden ve ruh bütünlüğü açısından inceler ve filozoflardan Immanuel Kant ile Edmund Burke'e gönderme yapar.

Her iki eserin beyaz güzelleri, Larsen'ın Clare Kendry'si ve Wilde'ın Dorian Gray'i, çirkinliğin korkusunu ve güzelliğe duyulan hayranlığı trajik hikayelerinde vurgularlar. Bu çalışma, onlar yücelik arayışındayken büyüleyiciliklerinin beden ve ruh ayrımıyla sonuçlanış şekil ve sürecini temel alır. Bütünlüğü ve hazzı beraberinde getiren güzellik, şimdi ise bedensel ve ruhsal açıdan başkarakterleri tehdit etmektedir. Çalışma, Clare Kendry'nin ve Dorian Gray'in gerçekliğe ihanet etmesi nedeniyle, *kalokagathia* (beden ve ruh bütünlüğünün ifadesi) kavramının ne *Passing*'de (1929) ne de *Dorian Gray'in Portresi*'nde (1891) sağlanamadığı sonucuna varır (Eco, 2010: 45). Ayrıca, Nella Larsen ve Oscar Wilde'ın bütünsel güzelliği ve tutarlılığı bu iki travmatik bedenin ölümüyle sağlamaya çalıştığının da altını çizer.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Güzellik, Yücelik, Nella Larsen, Clare Kendry, Oscar Wilde, Dorian Gray, İkililik.

ON BEAUTY: THE CONFLICT OF BODY AND SOUL IN OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY AND NELLA LARSEN'S PASSING

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Muses and Graces, daughters of Zeus, you who one day
At Cadmus' wedding sang the fair words:
"What is beautiful is loved; what is not beautiful, is not loved."
– Theognis (sixth-fifth century AD), *Elegies, I*

As much as "beauty" delights and enchants the human mind, to the contrary "ugliness" generates feelings of fear, disgust and displeasure. Therefore, the beautiful and the ugly have always been argued contrastingly in aesthetics. The qualities of beauty have long been in discussion since ancient times. Especially, in Ancient Greek, beauty was idealized as *kalokagathia*, indicating the union between corporeal beauty and spiritual refinement (Eco, 2010: 45). On the other hand, in classical aesthetic thought "ugliness" corresponds to all that is indecent, frightening, disgusting and displeasing. In this regard wherever "ugliness" finds expression, it conveys a negative meaning load and potentially excites terror, awe and perplexity as it mostly finds shape in the deformed, monstrous, evil or foul. Similarly, "beauty" – for its delightful aesthetic experience – is universally considered more valuable without exception.

Although beauty is experienced subjectively, aesthetic tastes and values are universal. Everything including a novel, a landscape, a body, a moment, a work of art, and many others can be determined as the beautiful. In aesthetic experience, a subject judges the object via its sensorial qualities and holds a response, like hate, disgust, love and fear by distinguishing it as beautiful or ugly (Chinchilla, 2012: 324-325). For instance, a beautiful object can be admired by everyone across the world; if a piece of art, like Michelangelo's *David* (1501-15044) or Jean Delville's *The School of Plato* (1898) or Taj Mahal (1631-1648), is beautiful for an American, it can again be delightful for a Japanese person. Moreover, ugliness is perceived similarly by everyone across the world; the vivid portrayal of the Devil and monsters is certainly fearsome, or old bodies and wrinkled faces are perceived as displeasing, or the canvas painting of Pieter Paul Rubens *The Head of the Medusa* (1617-1618) reveals horror and generates reactions of disgust in most people. In fact, the beautiful and the ugly have always been argued contrastingly in aesthetic sense. Though ugliness has

its own nature, beauty – for its delightful aesthetic experience – is considered more valuable without exception. As Theognis argues: "What is beautiful is loved; what is not beautiful, is not loved" (cited in Eco, 2010: 39). Where beauty is pleasing and inspirational, ugliness gives uneasy feelings: breaking the order and creating an imbalance in human equilibrium, "ugliness" also stands for a lack of prestige (Chinchilla, 2012: 326). From that point, this thesis takes on the relation between "beauty and prestige" by pointing at their problematic existence in Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) through Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). Likewise a much recent example, Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) highlights similar social and cultural biases met by a human response, known as "passing." Roth's novel points at the protagonist's fear of exclusion from society. In the novel, the protagonist Coleman Silk, who used to be a Classics professor at Athena College hides his African-American heritage and passes for a "white" person in order to strengthen his social power and prestige. Professor Silk's race trauma may not be the only problematic aspect of the novel. However, it helps understand people's biases and their dramatic consequences. For example, people's biases regarding physical appearance such as wrinkles, skin colour, scars or handicaps may generate a fear of ostracism from a community. This condition points at the undeniable link between beauty and prestige. Just as in *The Human Stain*, the protagonists of Larsen and Wilde will take risks to evade from stigmatization– blackness in *Passing* and old age in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – and maintain their appreciated positions in American and British societies. Therefore, this thesis advances a criticism towards the idea of "passing" compensating for the fear of losing prestige in society. For the purpose this thesis will focus upon established aesthetic perceptions of "beauty and ugliness" in Victorian Britain of the 1890s, and the Harlem society of the 1920s in the United States, as an aesthetic condition.

In Aesthetics, Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke – two philosophers of the Enlightenment – explore the idea of beauty and ugliness in consideration with the judgement of taste in subjectivity. The definitions they provide are effective in shaping the perception of these concepts. The reason for choosing the philosophers of Enlightenment is that the protagonists of *Passing* (1929) and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) alter the conventional celebrations of the seen and the unseen.

However, being deceived by what they sense through the sight, the members of societies in the novels, except for the characters in dilemma, are puzzled by their minds.

Among German philosophers of Enlightenment, Immanuel Kant's philosophy encapsulates metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, politics and aesthetics. The critical philosophy of Kant takes human reason into the centre and regards a priori (pure intuition independent from experience) as the source for empirical employment (Goldthwait, 2003: 13). Kant's *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) and *Critique of Judgment* (1790) are used as theoretical context of this study. In these works, Kant analyses judgements of taste by unifying the theoretical and the practical in his philosophy. For Kant, judgement of taste preserves its subjectivity and universal validity; also, aesthetic experience comes out of two intellectual faculties "the imagination" and "the understanding" (Goldthwait, 2003: 4). In his definitions of the beautiful and sublime, Kant views the importance of senses: the feeling of sublime "arouse[s] enjoyment but with horror;" however, the feeling of the beautiful "occasion[s] a pleasant sensation but one that is joyous and smiling" (2003: 47). Kant emphasizes the strong emotion felt by the sublime compared to the beautiful and he exemplifies these two notions with "Milton's portrayal of the internal kingdom" or "a raging storm" for the sublime and "Elysium" or "Homer's Venus" for the beautiful (Kant, 2003: 47). Additionally Kant also attributes colours to the beautiful and the sublime. While he identifies the beautiful with "blue eyes," "blonde colouring," and "daytime": for in daytime everything is clear and obvious: he ascribes the sublime with "black colour," "dark eyes," and the nightime: for the night is inexplicit, and it is open to every possible danger. In addition to which one cannot "define" things in darkness therefore it includes horror. More appropriately, the idea of beautiful is pleasing, charming or enjoyable while the sublime is something limitless, overwhelming or moving (Kant, 2008: 37; 75). Nevertheless, Kant believes in "multiplicity" in the beautiful and he thinks that "unity" is not necessary to name the beautiful (Goldthwait, 2003: 22).

Edmund Burke, a philosopher of the British Enlightenment relatedly on aesthetics, in his *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) explores the beautiful and sublime through Joseph Addison. His fundamental

principle argues for visual images to guide all judgements of taste. Burke analyses the ways sensations, judgement and imagination affect experiences of pain and joy through aesthetic concepts of the beautiful and sublime. Burke, similar to Kant, associates delight, smoothness, lightness and delicacy with the beautiful whereas terror, vast dimensions (*e.g. oceans or the Alps*), and astonishment with the sublime. He defines beauty as "a social quality" which inspires people and adds a fair colour to the idea of beauty by rejecting "dusky and muddy" forms of bodies (Burke, 1998: 89; 150). Also, in his perception of human beauty, Burke believes in the "gentle and amiable qualities" as well as "the softness, smoothness, and delicacy of the outward form" (1998: 152). Burke's work explores the beautiful and the sublime including a variety of ideas, such as "Magnificence," "Ugliness," "Pain and Pleasure," "The Eye," "Blackness," and many others. Especially, his emphasis on the unpleasant aspect of danger and pain is applicable to both Nella Larsen and Oscar Wilde's novels.

Shapes, colours, sizes and shades have always affected human perception. The idea of beauty and ugliness has an intensified effect deep inside human psychology. The skin colour of African people has always had a powerful impact upon human psychology, both for the blacks as well as whites. Nevertheless, in the presence of a culturally conditioned colour conceptions, "ugliness" has found a variety of cross-cultural responses. For example, in the rule of the white supremacist ideology "beastliness" was the sole existing attribute for darker complexions. Winthrop Jordan affirms in *The White Man's Burden* that the "Black was an emotionally partisan colour, the handmaid and symbol of baseness and evil, a sign of danger and repulsion" (1974: 6). Blackness arouses fear, danger and disgust as a form of ugliness, whereas whiteness is an appropriate colour for human beauty, particularly for female beauty. Unfortunately, the common perception on beauty is centred on the colour of skin and that is the problem of Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929). This will be the central point for our discussion in Larsen's novel.

In this regards, the first chapter concentrates on the issues of race, gender, and passing from an aesthetic perspective. Establishing the ideas of Immanuel Kant and Edmund Burke's ideas on beauty and the sublime, Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) is analysed in application of these notions to the mentioned subjects: beauty and

ugliness. The novel explores the dilemma of two biracial women who are legally designated as black but with fair complexions. Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry subvert the colour caste through passing in order to have an access to all benefits and opportunities of white Americans in a predominantly white society. The repression of ugliness in characters (Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield) is discussed in the framework of aesthetics. As part of Chapter I, "On Beauty" concentrates on the physical beauty of Clare who is defined as glamorous and attractive in her caressing smile, ivory skin, red lips and mysterious eyes. Following the description of *the beautiful* by Kant and Burke, Clare certainly conveys a sense of pleasure and joy through her charming appearance. This part responds to the critic Johanna M. Wagner's thesis which claims Clare to be the sublime effect in embodying power, pain and pleasure within herself. Nevertheless, Wagner states Clare's magnificent beauty to astonish Irene and, therefore, it fits perfectly into the understanding of *the beautiful* in aesthetics, whereas the act of passing as a white person within a black community generates an effect of *the sublime* for both female characters. In the same chapter the part titled "On Sublime" examines the dual nature of passing, which arouses astonishment – for its benefits, and terror – for the fear of being discovered through the qualities of sublime as defined in aesthetics.

Additionally, prior to the analysis of Larsen's *Passing*, the notion of passing and Harlem Renaissance are explained in order to give a brief idea on the twentieth-century black literature and its primary concerns. The early twentieth century of Harlem opened a path for black artists and intellectuals to trigger a literary awakening in American culture by altering the black image. Black artists, poets, novelists, and intellectuals began to search for their own selves in separation of themselves from white men. In forming their unique identities, a group of intellectuals and artists fulfilled their souls with their folk roots and African culture. In the following parts of chapter one, the term of "passing" known as one of the most popular problems of black identity and – relatively – white identity, is defined. It is a strategy for blacks or African-Americans to escape from the colour caste and embody freedom in order to have a place within the white society. Because ascribing the concept of beauty a colour, or in other words, relating the beautiful one with fair colour doubtlessly lies in the ability of white society to set the standard of beauty

while factionalizing different forms of beauty as "not quite right" (A. Tate, 2009: 5). Therefore, the standard of beauty set by white society becomes the utmost target which Clare (the white beauty with African blood) wishes to attain. Meanwhile, the ones in favour of protecting their race, like Irene, continue to represent the black soul.

In the second chapter, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) portrays a similar dilemma to Larsen's characters in her novel, *Passing*. Prior to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s analysis, the Victorian age and Oscar Wilde's philosophy of aesthetics will help to establish a background information for following the conditions of the novel's characters. The Victorian Era (1830-1901) was identified with progress, and its troubles related with industrialization, urbanization, colonialization, artistic movements, scientific approaches, reforms for the working class, and new rights for women. The contradictory nature of the Victorian era gave way to a variety of literary genres and movements. Especially, Victorian morality that held conventional moral codes by restraining individuals and preventing them from leaping over the threshold was something discussed in every sense by Victorian thinkers. Oscar Wilde's protests of the Victorian morality were even considered a black spot in his career. Although he strived for being judged for his art and aesthetic personality only, he could not avoid Victorians' involvement in his private life by using his works of art. Thus, in order to clarify his ideas and stance, in the chapter titled as "A Brief Analysis of Ethics and Aesthetics in Wilde's Essays, Lectures and Novel," his art and aesthetic philosophy are studied through examples given from his works. Oscar Wilde was a fanatic supporter of the idea of "art's for art sake," thus he touched upon beauty, art and the creation process in art by stressing its "incomparable and unique effect" in the rejection of dogmatic morality (Wilde, 2007e: 937). This part in chapter one clarifies his philosophy of aesthetics which lies deep in his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

In the last part of the second chapter, Oscar Wilde's novel is reviewed according to the notions of *the beautiful* and *the sublime* in Kant and Burke's aesthetic philosophy. The novel's popular protagonist Dorian Gray is the embodiment of beauty in his ivory skin, blue eyes, bold lips, and pure youth. Through Dorian Gray, the painter Basil Hallward, the hedonist Lord Henry Wotton

and the artist Sibyl Vane, experience a variety of pleasures. His inspirational youth and beauty get the plot going in the novel: for Basil his beauty is a "motive in art," for Lord Henry his youth is a blank page waiting to be filled, and for Sibyl Vane his "extraordinary personal beauty" is her indispensability. Therefore, his beauty is regarded as a social quality which enables him to dazzle the minds of others while he is masking his own desires. *The sublime*, with its awe and admiration, is determined as Dorian's youth. However, his desire for eternal youth and immortality hypnotizes him by giving him new chances to experience new sensations and pleasures, but at the same time, drags him into corruption. Thus, establishing or bringing him nearer to the sublime, like the danger in passing, eternal youth brings terror and endangers Dorian, and unfortunately, puts him into an inescapable situation.

In the final part of this thesis, the novels *Passing* (1929) by Nella Larsen and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) by Oscar Wilde will be compared in respect to the concept of beauty and its potential destructiveness on human nature. Both novels of different literary and cultural contexts: *Passing* from American and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* from British Literatures find a common ground of analysis in the aesthetic concepts of beauty through the harmony of body and soul towards ideal perfection accomplishing the ancient ideal of *kalokagathia*. The duality of Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray is so similar to each other that the chapter attempts to show the satisfaction generated by the socially constructed idea of beauty for everybody else except for the holder of beauty who is desperately in search for his or her desires. Making use of their ivory-like beautiful faces as masks, both characters hide their uncontrollable souls and secretive desires. To maintain their social statuses, they create an illusion for the beholder by suspending their beauties in time. On the other hand, they also try to hold their desires back in their mirror-images: Irene and the portrait. Clare may pass for a white person to gain privileges, but she wishes for her Harlem soul – represented by Irene, while Dorian who may look for eternal youth, wishes for a free soul. To start with, although Clare, and Dorian's motivations differed, (for Clare, white privileges and for Dorian, eternal youth) gradually they strove to free themselves from the pressures of society, which may be read as well for their desire to free their souls. The fear of discovery is the main motive for these characters to free themselves. Each character holds a deadly secret; for Dorian it is

his evil soul reflected in the portrait, and for Clare it is her black soul reflected in Irene. The mirror-image of their secret persona is their secret selves. Prior to recognizing their secret selves, everything seems to be normal; nevertheless, after encountering with Irene and the portrait, the lives of Clare and Dorian change. These self-centred characters, who used to be so much determined to get what they wanted in life, are now lost in their desires to be in harmony with their souls and bodies. Their divided bodies prevent them from beginning a new life in peace with their souls. Therefore these characters' tragedies resulting from their so called disharmony is analysed, and scrutinized for the causes of their mysterious deaths, either deemed to have resulted in reflection of their souls – Irene and the portrait, or "death by misadventure." It must be noted that the endings of both novels are accomplished deliberately by Larsen and Wilde not only to maintain the society's order with an artistic effect but also to emphasize the idea to "selfhood."

Following this introduction, the major objective of the thesis is to clarify the role of beauty in Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). In both novels, the lack of beauty or expressly, the emphasis of ugliness in various forms, troubles the protagonists, Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray, leading them into self-destruction. In order to avoid the "ugly" (black complexion in *Passing*, and old age in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) and to embrace their desires (harmony of a beautiful body for Dorian Gray, and a free soul for Clare Kendry), they deceive society in order to survive. The expectations of society for beauty arouse strong feelings of anxiety in the characters, and keeping them in dilemmas in which they are lost eventually. Therefore, it needs highlighting, that the fear of ugliness and the appreciation of beauty have an undeniable effect over the characters' choices. Either Clare or Dorian may be the apple of society's eye, but they are incapable of handling the burden of their beauty. Although both novels have already been analysed in different categories, such as race, aesthetics, or sin, this study brings them together by claiming that the motivations of the characters are the same: unifying their divided bodies and souls. Therefore, to provide a sound explanation for their motives, the characters of both novels are analysed through the perspective of aesthetics. The reason for choosing Kant and Burke as leading philosophers regards the similarity of their doctrines in treating the "beautiful" and

the “sublime” particularly in providing more vivid descriptions for physical beauty, thus allowing for an analysis of both protagonists in concern of their beauty that has ever been at stake. This study does not exclude however Clare and Dorian’s psychological conditions concerning their physical dilemmas. For in the pages to follow it will also become possible to view the manifestations of their potent charisma with a creative as well as destructive force.

CHAPTER ONE

NELLA LARSEN'S PASSING: BLACK BODIES WITH WHITE MASKS[1]

1.1. NELLA LARSEN AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

1.1.1. A Movement of Black Artists in 1920s America

In the first years of the twentieth century, Harlem's black intellectuals believed that they were changing the ever lasting image of their people through their renaissance. For the black intellectuals, this "Black Metropolis" was a great city to develop their new identity, since it showed a sign of future to achieve "greater and greater things" for Afro-American society (cited in Huggins, 1971: 4). Before World War I and thereafter, Harlem had been an exotic place for white citizenry with its "brothels and cabarets" (Huggins, 1971: 13). On the other hand, for black citizenry, Harlem was "[…] a capital for the race, a platform from which the new black voice would be heard around the world, and an intellectual centre of the New Negro" (Huggins, 1971: 14). In other words, Black Americans saw Harlem as an optimistic centre which gave a "sense of possibility and power" (Huggins, 1971: 15).

Harlem was the "largest Negro community in the world," a community of a variety of black citizens from different backgrounds and interests, including business men, towns men, adventurers, criminals, professional men, artists and intellectuals who met for mutual concerns: to "rediscover" themselves by freeing from their problematic pasts (Huggins, 1971: 58-59). For Alain Locke, this "race capital" had "the sense of a mission of rehabilitating the race in world esteem" (Huggins, 1971: 59). It was a zone saved from all racial boundaries, and represented freedom in which African-Americans built up their individual spirit. America, after the Great War in the 1920s, was "self-conscious about newness and change" (Huggins, 1971: 52). The spirit of a "general liberation" and "innovation" had affected Negro intellectuals as well as other "young" American intellectuals, including Van Wyck Brooks, Randolph Bourne, Waldo Frank, Harold Stearns, and Lewis Mumford[2] (Huggins, 1971: 52).

The early twentieth century of Harlem was an outbreak of motivated black artists and intellectuals who wanted to initiate a literary awakening in American culture with an ancestral perspective, or in Robert Bone's terms "[t]he theme [was] American; the variation black" (cited in Eversley, 2004: xv). The Harlem Renaissance writers were aware of "the need to develop pride of the race" in the entire world of literature (Keller, 1968: 32). They sought to prove themselves in order to cross racial boundaries, to ascend to a democratic and equalized level in American society, and to improve American culture by providing permeability between African motives and American cultural values. In that sense, Harlem was symbolizing the "Afro-American's coming of age" (Huggins, 1971: 13). For Alain Locke, Harlem intellectuals with the New Negro image would "[…] repair a damaged group psychology and reshape a warped social perspective" (Locke, 1925: 3). Locke approached expectantly to the rehabilitated[3] image of the Negro:

> *In this new group psychology we note the lapse of sentimental appeal, then the development of a more positive self-respect and self-reliance; the repudiation of social dependence, and then the gradual recovery from hyper-sensitiveness and "touchy" nerves, the repudiation of the double standard of judgment with its special philanthropic allowances and then the sturdier desire for objective and scientific appraisal; and finally the rise from social disillusionment to race pride, from the sense of social debt to the responsibilities of social contribution, and off-setting the necessary working and common-sense acceptance of restricted conditions, the belief in ultimate esteem and recognition.* (Locke, 1925: 4)

As it was stated by Locke, the new steps of the Negro in the process of race-building and self-discovery of himself could have been achieved by rejecting old assumptions and altering their previous image. "[T]he belief in ultimate esteem and recognition" was the major motivation behind the black movement; accordingly, the Negro Renaissance, or Harlem Renaissance, was regarded as "[…] a ready cultural and historical parallel to today's abundant African American cultural production" (Locke, 1925: 4; English, 1999: 808). Harlem Renaissance with its rebirth brought "a broad cultural shift" which had an impact upon the Negro akin to the effect of Celtic Twilight[4] on Irish people; furthermore, the changes in the American Negro leaked into American culture and fertilized it "[…] just as the earlier Renaissance diffused classical Greek culture throughout Europe" (Mitchell II, 2010: 645). In addition to Locke, few old writers like James Weldon Johnson and Charles Chesnutt regarded Harlem as "a new field for literary exploration" while acknowledging Alain Locke's

"interracial and global outlook"[5] of Negro Renaissance (Mitchell II, 2010: 647). Nonetheless, some intellectuals did not welcome the black movement vehemently compared to Johnson, Locke, Chesnutt, and Langston Hughes. For instance, George S. Schuyler, with his satirical essay "The Negro-Art Hokum" in 1926, criticised the usage of the term "renaissance," and stated that the "Negro art there has been, is, and will be among the numerous black nations of Africa; but to suggest the possibility of any such development among the ten million colored people in this republic is self-evident foolishness" (cited in Mitchell II, 2010: 646). Schuyler remarked that considering the black movement as an epochal phenomenon was delusive, since no traces of inherent differences could be determined between blacks and whites in the context of American culture (Mitchell II, 2010: 646). Furthermore, Hubert Harrison, who was a literary critic and political activist from St. Croix, and probably best known as "The Father of Harlem Radicalism," reviewed the term "Renaissance" (Perry, 2000: 39). He held an independent attitude by counselling the importance of self-reliance and self-respect to Negroes in shaping their future. However, the reason that Harrison approached the term critically was the authenticity of renaissance considering the unremitting "stream of literary and artistic products" in the years between 1850 and 1920s, including the works of George Williams, William C. Neill, Rufus L. Perry, and Francis E. Watkins to Pauline Hopkins (cited in Perry, 2000: 39; Mitchell II, 2010: 646). Thus, for Harrison, it would be improper to interpret the movement as a new rebirth when the history writers' canon was regarded. Another critique was Wallace Thurman with his question: "How can there be a rebirth without an original awakening?" (cited in Mitchell II, 2010: 647). Thurman underlined that the black literary movement could not be separated from the American renaissance, and it was not a renaissance rather it had to be perceived as "a legitimate outgrowth" or "a microcosmic circle in a macrocosmic vortex" (cited in Mitchell II, 2010: 646-647). Through these words, Thurman wanted to share his consciousness about black authors, such as Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, and Eric Walrond while referring to white artists like Carl Sandburg, Sherwood Anderson, and Theodore Dreiser within a single literary phenomenon (Mitchell II, 2010: 646). It is also worth noting that from Locke to Thurman, all

intellectuals and the writers who observed the movement closely expressed their ideas to develop the voice of the black movement.

1.1.2. In Search for an African Identity in American Culture

From 1619[6] to the twentieth century, despite the abolition of slavery in America in 1865, the Negro has always felt himself out of the way of the American society. The black man was conscious of being a "coloured" man in a white society. He ought not to intervene in a white racial category. The violence of Ku Klux Klan[7] against blacks and rigid Jim Crow laws[8] including separate public schools; separate coaches and buses in transportation for black passengers; segregation in libraries, hotels, restaurants, restrooms, parks along with prohibiting a person of pure white blood from marrying, engaging or having intercourse with anyone with African blood were to keep blacks in their places (U.S. National Park Service, 2015). Nevertheless, the Negro was a central figure for white supremacy, in other words, helping whites to feel the one and only power in the world. The Negro was also "a guise of alter ego" of white identity, which was sometimes a threat for both communities, since that "minstrel mask" as an alter-ego was certainly a "trick" in that "psychic dependency" (Huggins, 1971: 84). The black man used masks for adopting an artificial white identity, while the white man satisfied himself through the black man's deception. For Huggins, Harlem through its artistic output gave "a sophistication and charm" to the long-lasting American race relation between blacks and whites during the 1920s (1971: 85). However, Harlem was questioned on whether it "fitted" into the American tradition. Firstly, Harlem was "contradictory" to the American tradition, since Locke's racial capital was lacking "Puritan fathers," "idealism of the transcendentalists," "frugality," "chastity," and even Emerson's "self-reliance" (Huggins, 1971: 85-304). Secondly, this "Black Metropolis" "fitted" utterly to the American tradition due to the fact that it contained "arminian and pantheistic tendencies" of Puritanism, "the same romanticism which generated transcendentalism," "the same human volition that could sustain self-reliance" (Huggins, 1971: 85). If these two distinctive thoughts are put down, a single trait lays beneath the American culture: identity. Both black and white men had always

struggled for a common purpose; the reason of their crises was about discovering their identities. The black man followed the white man in forming his unique self; on the other hand, the white man used the black man as a mirror to search for his own self. Thus, they were both fed by each other to form strong and divergent identities. Harlem, in that sense, had become a place where the Negro intellectuals – including the Negro artists, poets, and novelists – fulfilled their soul in appreciation of their folk roots and African culture.

W.E.B. DuBois saw black man's experience of identity and "[…] measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" as "a peculiar sensation" (cited in Huggins, 1971: 244). Therefore, Harlem was symbolizing a new freedom, opportunities and dreams. The Negro was fascinated and motivated by "spiritual and emotional enthusiasm" which Harlem offered; furthermore, contrary to what white common man thought, with Harlem he felt the sense of belonging rather than feeling "ludicrous" and bizarre in a civilized and democratic American society (Huggins, 1971: 85-268). Thus, the Negro intellectuals and writers wanted to use art as a medium to show how they felt through Harlem and what that black capital presented to them. Their feelings, ideals, and observations were formed in and out of Harlem. The leading figures of the movement sought to rediscover the ethnic tradition and folklore, reform the Negro character and personality, elucidate the black experience and racial psychology, show their attitude towards black racism, and express their ideas on class, sexuality while portraying contemporary life in Harlem (Huggins, 1971: 137-244). As noted by Houston Baker "[a]rt seemed to offer the only means of advancement because it was the only area in America – from an African American perspective – where the color line had not been rigidly drawn" (1987: 90).

Harlem Renaissance was the name of the period in which possible progress and Negro genius could be achieved through artistic outputs of black writers and intellectuals. *Messenger*, *Crisis*, and *Opportunity* were the magazines which were encouraging Negroes to publish their works and to own a place via their success in literary world (Huggins, 1971: 29). In the period, respectable amount of qualified works were produced in the fields of poetry, fiction, drama, and also, philosophical and political issues were taken into account in order to develop the Negro genius.

Alain Locke, an African American philosopher and cultural critic, provided "the philosophical basis" both for Harlem Renaissance and the New Negro Movement (Calo, 2004: 88). He intended to bring an analytic approach to African American art, praise it and to blend it gradually into both the black experience and American culture (Calo, 2004: 91). Locke's *The New Negro* (1925) was an anthology of essays altering the image of the Old Negro and re-establishing the new Negro's sense of individualism within American society. He considered African Americans as "the advance-guard[s] of the African peoples," and centred his ideas on the development of black race both in social and cultural sense (Bell, 1975: 160). Similarly, W.E.B. DuBois and James Weldon Johnson served to expand the cultural and literary tradition of the African American. DuBois gave voice to the spiritual world from which blacks endeavoured to escape. Also, he considered African folk music as an important tool to be used in establishing "a new nation's formal art," and it was "a window into the souls of a people" (Bell, 1975: 157). In shaping black art, DuBois motivated black Americans to use their past for inspiration and unique form of art (Bell, 1975: 158). In addition to DuBois, James Weldon Johnson – while producing his art – used his own experience as a Southerner, and Negro folklore; nonetheless, in his novels, his subject matter was "the independent Negro middle-class;" he preferred to "dramatize" neither the furious, nor the compliant black (Payne, 1979: 51). Johnson used the tragic mulatto type, and wrote about a cultural phenomenon known as passing in his thought-provoking novel, *An Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912). Correspondingly, Jessie Fauset with her bildungsroman *Plum Bun* (1929) worked on the same subject: passing. However, *Plum Bun* was not only a tragedy of divided souls but also it was "a novel of manners, an investigation of racial liminality, an analysis of gender roles," and "female sexuality" (Preiffer, 2001: 79). Fauset added a female perspective by approaching values of the community critically and questioned their effects upon identities. Another female writer of Harlem was Zora Neale Hurston who "was out of step with the times" with her folklorist and anthropologist identity. As a Southerner, she used her rural experience and urban education together in defining her folk as "complex, dignified human beings, no matter how white representations distorted and stereotyped them" (Spencer, 2004: 17). Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) depicted the

Southern rural life sentimentally while discussing racial discrimination in America in the background (Spencer, 2004: 27). Almost every masterpiece written in Harlem Renaissance included a reference to the ethnic tradition of black people. Some of the writers of the period like Countee Cullen reflected their racial roots on the art that they had produced. For instance, Cullen ornamented his poetry with his African origins and pagan motifs. In his poems named as "The Shroud of Color," "Heritage," and "Pagan Prayer" from *Color* (1925) he expressed the race consciousness of a Negro and the division between a pagan self and a Christian self (Smith, 1950: 217). Conversely, Langston Hughes did not insert "primitive" or African characteristics in his poetry to describe American Negroes; rather he indited his poems in the American tradition (Huggins, 1971: 164). He shaped his poetry with the influence of Walt Whitman to Carl Sandburg (Huggins, 1971: 221). As a folk artist his subject matter was "Negroes, workers, farmers, gamblers, musicians and anyone who lived his life without intentional deceit" (Huggins, 1971: 222). Having been affected by the new movement, Hughes wrote about Harlem from an "exotic" perspective and never lost his faith in the common man and his future (Davis, 1952: 278; Huggins, 1971: 221). On the other hand, Claude McKay identified himself with his people, and his poetry had "a deeply sensitive" tone and it contained an "independent spirit" while dealing with "good and evil in both man and nature" (Cooper, 1964: 298). He was the first writer who gave voice to the spirit of the New Negro (Cooper, 1964: 297). McKay left his mark as a "pace setter" for the new generation of black poets with his work *Harlem Shadows* (1922) (McKay, 1988: 195). Also, his picaresque story *Banjo* (1929) in which the characters wanted to get away with the "disillusionment of American society" offered a call for a return to racial roots with a challenging vision (Kaye, 1979: 165). From Alain Locke to Claude McKay – counting many other prominent black intellectuals and writers in – provided a new and critical perspective through their masterpieces for American culture.

1.1.3. Nella Larsen's Harlem Renaissance

Nella Larsen is one of the chief figures of the Harlem Renaissance. She was born in Chicago with a hybrid identity from white Danish and West Indian parents in

1891. Throughout her educational life – although some records may claim the contrary[9] – she had been to the University of Copenhagen for three years, and also, attended Fisk University, the Lincoln Hospital Training Program to study nursing (Berlack, 2007: 149; Hutchinson, 1997: 330-31). After having served as a nurse in Lincoln Hospital and done social work for the Board of Health, she moved to New York and worked as a librarian both in the Seward Branch of the Public Library, and in the West 135th Street Branch of the New York Public Library (Berlack, 1928: 149; Roffman, 2007: 752). That was a noteworthy period in her life, because her career as a librarian and her training in the library school shaped the ideology of Larsen and the style of her works. Until she was discovered by Carl Van Vechten[10] and published her works via Blanche and Alfred A. Knopf publishing houses, she had produced some short stories "The Wrong Man" and "Freedom" in 1926 for *Young's Magazine* under the pseudonym "Allen Semi" (Nella Imes) (Moynihan, 2014: 39). Her great success came with her two novels: *Quicksand* (1928) and *Passing* (1929). Her literary career was praised with the Harmon Foundation Bronze Medal in 1928 for her novel *Quicksand*, and also she was the first African American woman writer who was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in support of her future works and for creative writing (Gillespie, 2015: 280; Durrow, 2008: 613). In 1930, Larsen shook the world of literature, especially Harlem, with her short story "Sanctuary" which accused her of plagiarism. The story which was published in *The Forum* in 1930 was thought to be "plagiarized" from another shorty story "Mrs. Adis" written by Sheila Kaye-Smith in 1922. As an accomplished writer of Harlem, Larsen offered an explanation to the readers and the literature community explaining the origin of her story, and defended herself in a letter[11] for the last time. Later on despite the Guggenheim Fellowship she never produced anything, or at least she never published again after her explanation, and ended her career as a writer.

In the 1920s, many black writers of the Harlem Renaissance chose the African American identity as a subject matter of their works and set it as a starting point to discuss "the most significant issues to be addressed in the post-World War I period" (Dawahare, 2006: 22). The new effort was to assert Negro traits into their artistic works in a "positive and appealing" way (Huggins, 1971: 157). From James Weldon Johnson's *An Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* to Jessie Fauset's

Plum Bun, from Charles Chesnutt's *The House behind the Cedars* to Nella Larsen's *Quicksand* and *Passing* strengthened the issue of "double consciousness" in their works by converting identity into the theme of passing – which was invoked by William Wells Brown and Frances Harper (Rottenberg, 2007: 489). W.E.B. DuBois's take of the theory of the "double consciousness"[12] made the theme of passing as a modernist element with its "fragmentation, alienation, liminality, self-fashioning" and with its "betrayal" against authenticity – for Henry Louis Gates authenticity was "among the founding lies of the modern age" (cited in Caughie, 2005: 387). In her embrace of Harlem, Larsen pushed the reader to question the authenticity of characters, author and narrative style in the fragmented frame of modernism. Both in *Quicksand* and *Passing*, she created a racial melodrama by giving voice to her Negresses: Helga Crane, Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry. While the experiences and the insight of the individuals were making the novels modernist, these elements also contributed to have an idea about historical realities of Harlem in 1920s.

Quicksand charmed almost everybody with its theme, style and subject; it was placed as one of the best novels of Harlem Renaissance written by a female African-American author. Larsen's mixed identity – Scandinavian descent and the black blood of her father – led her to add autobiographical details to both Helga Crane – the protagonist and her text. Helga Crane's mobile character was trapped between black and white worlds in search of freedom; her quest was an escape from the world's definition a Negro; however, it was not successful enough to embrace "happiness"[13] (Larsen, 2006: 10). In her quest, though she never completed her self-definition, she baulked at male definitions of womanhood and "oldest and systematic injustice" (Byron, 2013: 42). At that point, Karin Roffman drew a parallel between Larsen's library school education, also her career as a librarian[14] and her creation of Helga Crane. In "Nella Larsen, Librarian at 135th Street," Roffman suggested that Larsen formed a character "[…] who rejects all systems of knowledge as flawed and who seeks entirely other ways to learn – outside of libraries, schools, and any other systematized forms of knowledge production" (2007: 763). Taking Helga Crane out of the standardized social scene, Larsen pushed her limits via the theme of passing and altered the image of middle-class Harlem. The content of the novel was so

charming that *Quicksand* is reviewed by W.E.B. DuBois in *The Crisis* as "the best piece of fiction that Negro America has produced since the heyday of Chesnutt" (cited in Tate, 1995: 237).

Her second novel *Passing*, after *Quicksand*'s success, was not welcomed forcefully enough by the literary world at first. Later, *Passing* became a much spoken novel due to its flexible characters and rich themes. Additionally, it had become an inspiration for a lot works from reviews, essays to books. The novel presented the psychic conflict and weight of the character's choices in a complex level, like Nella Larsen's former novel, it questioned loyalty to black racial identity and also, the authenticity of race in American culture. Through the theme of passing, all characters particularly Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry moved out of their comfort zones; disappeared in hollow values and a deformed sense of security. *Passing*'s sociological and psychological aspect blew up the illusion of a coherent American identity, and showed that identity is fluid rather than pre-established. In both of her novels, Larsen reflected "problems without solutions" and handled the tragic mulatto type successfully, just because her "[…] mixture of blood has given her a double perception which few purely Negro or purely white authors can hope to attain" (Byron, 2013: 20; Griffin, 2007: 96; my emphasis). Nevertheless, despite their ambiguous endings, like *Quicksand*, *Passing* was also praised in some degree – compared to her first novel – and found as "a work of so fine, sensitive, and distinguished that it rises above race categories and becomes that rare object, a good novel" (Seabrook, 2007: 92-3).

Her third work "Sanctuary" (1930) caused a sensation not because it was a breath-taking short story, but because it was a "plagiarized" one. Sheila Kaye-Smith's "Mrs. Adis" (1922) and Larsen's short story published in *The Forum* shared similarities in some dialogues and elements.[15] The story took place between a female protagonist Miss Poole and the murderer of her son, around a moral question whether to report him or covering the case up –as Larsen states: "[…] if the Negro race would only stick together, we might get somewhere someday, and that what the white folks didn't know about us wouldn't hurt us" (cited in Hoeller, 2006: 424). Nonetheless, her work was regarded as a "failed experiment" by Cheryl Wall; "literary suicide" by Beverly Haviland, and "literary dirt" by Harold Jackman (cited in Hoeller, 2006:

422-23). Larsen's story was out of her Victorian genteel tone – when it was compared to her novels – since it included dialects, and also it pushed her out of Harlem literati[16] or Larsen removed herself deliberately in order to be out of "certain unpalatable requirements" (Roffman, 2007: 779).

Nella Larsen's simple but effective tone in her writings played a central role in Harlem Renaissance and added dimension to a wide range of subjects, including race, authenticity, authorship, gender and sexual politics. Her modernist approach, while shaping her works in her own style, contributed to the inner drama of the tragic mulatto in middle class settings. Larsen was able to shed a light on the African American identity by questioning the sociological and psychological aspects of it. With her words, "I don't have any way of approaching life… it does things to me instead" Larsen renewed the image of "Madame X"[17] who "[felt] that people of the artistic type have a definite chance to help solve the race problem;" she has never solved any problems or ever recommended any ways, but she rather put some questions into our minds to reject espousal (Rennels, 2007: 150; Berlack, 2007: 149-50).

1.2. THE TERM "PASSING" AND REFLECTIONS OF THE SUBLIME

"If black, and white blend, soften, and unite,
A thousand ways, are there no black and white?"
– Alexander Pope, "Essay on Man" [18]

The long lasting story of blacks in America first started in the beginning of 17th century[19] leading to a sequence of events including Jim Crow laws (Jordan, 1974: 26). This racial caste system affected African Americans, especially the ones who lived in southern and border states, between the years 1877 and mid-1960s. These strict anti-black laws not only classified the black people as "inferior beings" while praising whites, but also interfered in their public spheres. Including "hospitals," "prisons," "public and private schools," "churches," "public restrooms," "public accommodations," and even "cemeteries" were separated for blacks and whites. Jim Crow states, especially gained a legal way to avoid performing constitutional obligations for black citizens after the Plessy vs Ferguson[20] case

(Pilgrim, 2000). By enforcing racial segregation in all fields, laws underlined the notion of segregation boldly. The sharp distinction between citizens had coloured Social Darwinism[21] as half black and half white. Especially, it was the time when whiteness began to be assumed to function "[…] as self-identity in the domain of the intrinsic, personal, and psychological; as reputation in the interstices between internal and external identity; and as property in the extrinsic, public, and legal realms" or as "[…] the quintessential property for personhood" (Harris, 1991: 1725-30). Subsequently, the colour line between black and white lost its sharpness due to inequities in economic, educational, political and social areas. The broken balance paved the way for the movement of "passing"[22] that became a practical and emancipatory option for blacks to obtain all privileges, rights and opportunities rejected by law and formality of society. Therefore, the so-called colour line already established by the white privileged society between the races- the black and the white- in America later have become blurred and gave birth to "tragic mulattos"[23] who carry "the invisible blackness"[24] within themselves (Blackmer, 1995: 52; cited in Ginsberg, 1996: 8). With the term "the invisible blackness," race construction is brought into question. Through miscegenation or interracial sexual relations, this is also the reason of "one-drop rule," black bodies are mixed into white heritage. The ones who have "one drop" of black blood are considered as black. As Booker T. Washington states "[…] if a person is known to have one percent of African blood in his veins, he ceases to be a white man" (cited in Khanna, 2010: 98). The understanding was the result of an anxiety that the African heritage would "taint" white blood (Khanna, 2010: 98). Nevertheless, while the white community tries to maintain the strict colour line through directions,[25] mulatto children begin encountering problems of "belonging." Therefore, some individuals who are light-skinned find an effective way, which is "passing," to adopt privileges and status of whites by carrying "invisible blackness" in their veins.

Passing, is usually motivated by the desire of creating "a space not demarcated," had become an effectual strategy for escape to articulate broader notions of freedom or as it was called by African- Americans, for "the recognition of their humanity" (Davis, 1997: viii; Hobbs, 2014: 31). The ones who were "culturally and legally defined as 'Negro' or black by virtue of a percentage of African

ancestry" adopted "the white identity" by taking the advantage of their lack of difference from white Americans (Ginsberg, 1996: 3; Davis, 1997: ix). Nevertheless, such an individual practice in further extent resulted in "personal and familial loss" for black people, while turns into a cultural threat for the white society (Hobbs, 2014: 5). While deciding between the heritage and privileges, the passing ones turned their backs to their racial background – that is "an exile" for Hobbs – to create a new self (Hobbs, 2014: 4-5). In that sense, to pass as white means leaving behind one's own family and people for the new white identity. On the other hand, passing led to anxiousness in white society by threatening "the priority of 'white' […] in the hegemonic ideology" (Ginsberg, 1996: 5). To put it differently, the ones who were inherently black, but chose to be white shook identity codes of white society and created disillusion for both black and white individuals. Thus, it directly puts the concept of identity into question which is seen "the necessity for the 'hegemonic cultural imaginary' to *see* difference to interpret it" (cited in Ginsberg, 1996: 5).

Numerous understandings of passing have already been established as a research area within the academia. Firstly, racial passing and gender passing must be listed. However, this study will primarily focus on racial passing. Passing as "a spatial practice"[26] fills the meaning of cutting the ties with one's own true identity, crossing over one's own cultural and social spaces by stepping into a new world of manners (Pile, 2010: 26). This new world of manners corresponds to a process of adaptation which includes socialising at locations frequented mostly by a well to do white clientele: for example, within the context of Nella Larsen's novel *Passing*, the protagonists are practising passing either at the roof restaurant of Drayton Hotel, therefore, they wish to be seen at a famous spot of 1920's Chicago; or going for a shopping along the Fifth Avenue, Manhattan. Thus, metaphorically speaking, the case of passing resembles to the chameleon adaptations in which the passing individual constantly moves between a private sphere and a social sphere in order to successfully assimilate into the white community. For instance, in *Passing*, the protagonist Clare Kendry smokes cigarette: in the 1920s cigarette smoking was a status indicator for liberated women or in the company of her spouse –John Bellew. Clare disguises her black identity and behaves according to their white mask (Amos et Haglund, 2000: 4). Since race and individual identity are neither fixed nor visible,

as cited earlier in Joel Williamson who calls this "invisible blackness" is further problematized by Elaine Ginsberg who asks: "[…] if 'white' can be 'black,' what is white?" (1996: 8). In other words, if a black person easily disguises himself or herself as white, so whiteness is no longer distinctive. In such a vague situation, automatically as Steve Pile underlines -while explaining the quotation of Eric Olund[27]- "[…] whiteness becomes ontologized as mobility, agency and responsibility, yet seemingly removed from the 'fact' of having white skin (or not); [on the other hand,] blackness becomes passivity, objectification and irrationality, yet detached from bodies that might have black skin – whatever that is" (2010: 28). In order to simplify, it can be said that whiteness itself is identified with "mobility, agency and responsibility" while blackness is associated with "passivity, objectification and irrationality," however, in both definitions it is possible that these "racially targeted 'commitments'" may be detached from the bodies to which they belong (Pile, 2010: 28; Olund, 2009: 500). Herein, it must be underlined that skin is actually "a dense surface where the social, the psychological and the fleshly are inseparable," nevertheless, as Pile argues removing "the social from the body" veils the ways that the body may form the social (2010: 28).

Inequalities in economic, social and educational areas might not merely be the rational motive for "passing," when Kenneth and Mamie Phipps Clark's "Doll Test"[28] is examined. The test is held by psychologists, the Clarks in 1940 in order to measure the development of black children's sensitivity upon colour, as well as "[…] the development of self and self-esteem […] [and] their sense of their own race and status" (Kenneth Clark, personal communication, November 4, 1985). Nevertheless, the disturbing results of the test appear to show the prejudice about skin colour and its connotations, since a majority of the children exposed to the Doll Test responded to a series of questions related with "black and white dolls" by refusing to choose "black doll" and attributing positive qualities to "the white doll" (Kenneth Clark, personal communication, November 4, 1985). The most striking observation to emerge from "the Doll Test" is that whiteness as the beautiful one makes it desirable and closer to the ideal skin colour.

Whiteness itself is desirable and is assumed as the perfect colour for the skin. Further, Edmund Burke, who is a political theorist and philosopher of the Age of

Enlightenment, emphasizes whiteness as follows: "the colours of beautiful bodies must not be dusky or muddy, but clean and fair" (1998: 150). Thus, it is similar in most renowned fairy tales; female personalities with good moral traits or ladies of noble descent display a fair countenance. Neither Cinderella nor Snow White are dark skinned, like most female protagonists, they are portrayed in white skin.

When all the points are taken into consideration, a confirmatory explanation is provided regarding the reasons for the white colour perception as the universal colour of beauty in a white world. On the other hand, dark colours are associated with "terror," "fear," and "dimmer and distorted reflections of the beautiful" (Armstrong, 1996: 223). Additionally, Burke – in his section titled as "DARKNESS terrible in its own nature" – presents a story which emphasizes darkness as terrifying. Burke, with the story of a boy who was blind until he had a cataract operation, shows us the boy's aesthetic judgement of darkness and tells us the feelings that may arouse when it is faced with a black body:

> *Mr. Cheselden has given us a very curious story of a boy who had been born blind, and continued so until he was thirteen or fourteen years old; he was then couched for a cataract, by which operation he received his sight. Among many remarkable particulars that attended his first perceptions and judgments on visual objects, Cheselden tells us, that the first time the boy saw a black object, it gave him great uneasiness; and that some time after, upon accidentally seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight.* (Burke, 1998: 173)

The reaction of the boy in the story above and the responses of black children in "the Doll Test" concludes that "[…] there are inevitable associations of white with light and therefore safety, and black with dark and therefore danger […]" (cited in hooks, 1992: 169). The observation made by Richard Dyer above actually draws our attention to the perception management of the majority who subscribed to the white skin's goodness so firmly. These are the chief reasons behind passing; the supremacy of whiteness in every area causes the rejection of one's own skin colour and heritage, corroborates the ideas of passing for black bodies exposed to skin trauma. Accordingly, all these associations or connotations force black individuals to adapt to different body images. Hence, passing turns into an unavoidable, but a temporary solution for problematic skins. Blacks feel themselves secure when they escape subordination and oppression of the social in order to access the privileges of whites not only economically, but also corporeally (Ginsberg, 1996: 3). In Larsen's *Passing*,

Clare Kendry says "[…] nobody wants a dark child" and nobody wants a dark body (Larsen, 1997: 36). Whiteness is "always privileged and the only desirable colour, or, in other words, […] there is only one ideal race" (Rottenberg, 2007: 495). Thus, whiteness becomes related to "the ideas of infinity, magnitude, or power," this relation makes whiteness preferable (Armstrong, 1996: 225).

In other respects, some of the definitions of Burke's on *the sublime* are: "obscurity, where darkness and uncertainty arouse dread and terror; power, where the mind is impelled to fear because of superior force; magnificence" (cited in Armstrong, 1996: 218). The feeling of sublime, as it is stated, is intriguing by being great and this greatness includes danger and risk. Therefore, the idea of passing for white itself is *the sublime* including fascination, awe and terror. *Trespassing*[29] between corporeal and cultural zones is charming and perilous, as well as being treacherous. In the same breath, Armstrong regards that – commenting on Burke's ideas on sublime – "[…] sublime objects or scenes, and each of them threatens the *vision*, and *not* the body" (1996: 219). On that note, passing with its double, unlimited, non-fixed nature is conflicting and threatening the vision. It may be told that the fake image of passed black individual has an impact on both his/her self and the authority of his/her society. In this respect, the eye gains authority over the body,[30] since the deception by sight will leave the individual unsafe moreover, in shock. Thus, the violation of white society's conventions via passing causes illusion and discomfort among the members of the community. That is the point where notions of beauty and the sublime get closer to the corporeal and spiritual aspects of the fleshly experience.

Analysing all the points above, it would be wise to come to a conclusion that passing as an act of mobility[31] is appealing for blacks to get the advantage of whiteness, yet appalling for it threatens to society, body, and identity. Passing for white enables blacks to gain freedom economically, physically and sexually, while leading them to feel anxious constantly in the environment in which they live. Also, the passing ones may bear "an ache for family and interconnections" or sometimes they may long for their "music, humour, and food" (Hobbs, 2014: 14). Since, passing as an "individualistic" practice means more than "an individualistic rejection of the

race," at the same time it means a complete rejection of one's own family, and "memories of times past" (Hobbs, 2014: 14).

Race passing can be considered as "deception" for the reason that it is actually "an attempt" of "the legally or culturally black individual" to move to the space of "the dominant race" in society (Ginsberg, 1996: 8). The dominant white race, in that sense, is deceived by the false image of the passing one, and also, status or privileges gained by that image shake the ground of fixed society. This deception threatens the security of white community and identity, for their status and privileges are no longer in effect. They are accessible "even" by inherently black people. For Elaine Ginsberg (1996), this disappointment leads to the feeling of insecurity for the white community which later creates –in Garber's term- "a *category crisis"*[32] (1996: 8; italics in original). That is, according to Garber, a collapse of a borderline which is for defining the distinction between two categories, such as black and white or Jew and Christian (1997: 16). At this juncture, when Pope's lines are re-read, contrary to what he says as follows: "If black, and white blend, soften, and unite / A thousand ways, are there no black and white?" it can be assumed that *category crisis* breaks the optimistic tone of Pope. On the grounds that as Kobena Mercer states "when it is in crisis, […] something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (cited in Ginsberg,1996: 8). Therefore, when black and white category becomes "permeable," the colour line already established by the white privileged society is no longer secure (Garber, 1997: 169). Additionally, as if he attempts to solve the *category crisis* resulted by passing, Burke says that:

> *Black and white may soften, may blend, but they are not therefore the same. Nor when they are so softened and blended with each other, or with different colours, is the power of black as black, or of white as white, so strong as when each stands uniform and distinguished.* (1998: 158)

In other words, bodies create their own spaces in which they can freely and boldly exist. When they are "softened and blended," they lose their strength, as they lose their sharp colours. Such concepts, like passing, only present temporary solutions towards strict prejudices. The most reasonable thing is not to make one's skin a burden for the person, because a body must be free of the society's mold.

1.3. "THE COLOUR OF THE SUBLIME IS WHITE"[33]: THE NOTIONS OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUBLIME IN *PASSING*

> *Whereas the beautiful is limited, the sublime is limitless, so that the mind in the presence of the sublime, attempting to imagine what it cannot, has pain in the failure but pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt.*
>
> – Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*[34]

Two visually white, but legally and socially designated black women- named as Clare Kendry and Irene Redfield- have had a chance to use an appropriate language in Nella Larsen's fiction to name their reality. First published in 1929, Larsen's *Passing* explores the shifting racial and sexual boundaries in Harlem Renaissance. Apart from her first book *Quicksand*, *Passing* demonstrates the inner drama- being visible as "non-black" and invisible as "non-white" – of two females by putting a contrasting image of each other. Larsen's "artistic vision" allows her to use the notion of passing as "an intentional stylistic device" through which she projects the other side of the medallion (Tate, 1980: 142). The story takes place between two biracial women: Clare who is "a beautiful light-skinned mulatto passing for white in high society," and Irene who is exposed to passing due to her instable ideas (cited in Tate, 1980: 142). The unreliable narrative of the novel presents an unforgettable story for its taste in gaining a seat as a Modernist canon in world literature.

Having reunited after years long at a rooftop of the Drayton Hotel in Chicago, Clare and Irene's childhood friendship maintains its unique story through letters from where it is left. Over the coming weeks after the first letter, their secret passing, or as it is depicted by Du Bois "the veil of colour caste," increases the tension of the story. Moreover, their revolutionised identity passes the colour line by breaking away from what is familiar, or in other words, their black background, and carries their desires and dilemmas to Harlem. These middle class women both have desires in passing for white identity that is supreme, besides this, their motion is a way for disrupting social meanings by subverting the rigid colour caste. Black cultural consciousness within themselves forms a body which is not in harmony with its soul. Their biracial lifestyles lead to the division of soul and body by avoiding them reaching their freedom.

Irene Redfield is a biracial female character who passes occasionally due to her subtle desire to be white. Her skin is depicted as "olive," "warm olive," "beige," and "dark white," so she is always taken for "an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican, or a gypsy" not a black person (Larsen, 1997: 16). Especially, recognizing Irene from her palm, fingers or teeth is rather impossible, even for the white people who are incapable of determining passed Negros. However, she avoids taking risks for her future life by not preferring "passing permanently." She is portrayed as a woman who has an instinct of loyalty to her race, family and past. Her rigid character is parallel to her family life; she renounces consistently the desire of her husband Brian, who wants to "move" to Brazil for a better life, and persists on their current life in Harlem. Through this, she stabilizes her status, puts everything in her own order for the sake of her family, race and life. Thus, these make Irene, compared to Clare, stable, therefore, safe; restrained, therefore, steadfast. Irene, besides her roles in public sphere, performs her role as a mother and wife, at least in her way. How much she is successful in her gender roles is controversial. For instance, despite the fact that "Brian […] was extremely good-looking […] in a pleasant masculine way, rather handsome […] the beauty of his skin, which was of an exquisitely fine texture and deep copper colour," as a reader, it is beyond the bounds of possibility to see a sexual relation between him and her (Larsen, 1997: 54). Brian's approach to sexuality as a more biological issue rather than sexual compatibility, and Irene's dull and tepid manner towards love lead to the loss of their sexual intimacy. To add, her sensitivity crashes with Brian's reasonableness almost in all issues – notably, race. When he talks about "lynching" to his sons, she reacts against him by saying that "I want their childhood to be happy and as free from the knowledge of such things as it possibly can be" (Larsen, 1997: 103). Her "laudable" attitude is – in fact – overlapping the realities about future and past of her sons, although she considers it as a maternal instinct. With her conservatism, certainly "[…] Irene shores up her personal sense of her body as black – and her relationship with her husband as a black family, in a progressive black neighbourhood, in a global city where black people have a place" (Pile, 2010: 36).

Clare Kendry, as a counter character, creates her own space with her beauty, passions, and mobility. She is a biracial woman, too, yet – contrary to Irene –

untrustworthy, self-absorbed, and flirty due to her beauty. She is married to a white man, called John Bellew who "[…] was a tallish person, broadly made […] His hair was dark brown and waving, and he had a soft mouth, somewhat womanish, set in an unhealthy-looking dough-coloured face" (Larsen, 1997: 38). Through her marriage, being "a wife of a wealthy and influential businessman," she has left behind being the daughter of a janitor (Cutter, 1996: 91). Clare is a mobile character; she has changed cities constantly before she settled down in Chicago. She has been to European cities, but as far as to New York and Philadelphia in America (Larsen, 1997: 34). Besides being "a bird of passage," she "passes" to epidermal[35] and corporeal zones, too. She moves to new places dauntlessly but also she steps into new spaces where "[…] the social, the psychological and the fleshly are inseparable" (Pile, 2010: 28). For Steve Pile, who reviews the relation between time and space in Nella Larsen's *Passing*, the protagonists of the novel "easily cross the borders" of "highly racialized" spaces" (Pile, 2010: 25). For instance, Clare "is interested not in a fixed and stable identity; rather she wants one that is most 'having'," so she uses her "white" beauty to pass (Cutter, 1996: 92). The act of passing provides her with "an ivory mask" which can be used as "a strategy of empowerment" throughout the novel (Larsen, 1997: 24; Cutter, 1996: 91).

Nella Larsen draws Clare as a sexual woman who represents the "exotic and erotic" without any racial label (Davis, 1997: xvii). Nonetheless, on the other hand, Clare's dual natured body thwarts the "process of racialization," because of her skin (Pile, 2010: 28). The skin, at the surface of the body, is an active menace that saps established race and gender relations (Pile, 2010: 28). In the novel, Clare "[…] denies all the boundaries that the other characters work for so hard to establish and maintain," such as race, class and even roles of womanhood (Cutter, 1996: 89). She behaves as if she is an anti-essentialist[36] agent with her "rejection of patriarchal conceptions of gender" (Witt, 1995: 325). It can be restated that Clare is not suitable to "properties" acceptable "necessary" for "being a woman, like being nurturing, or being oppressed, or having a uterus" (Witt, 1995: 322). Contrary to Irene, for Clare, her social codes, roles, memories, and family do not take priority over her desires. She prefers to stay alone for a couple of months in New York rather than going to Switzerland to see her daughter in spring. She thinks that "Children aren't

everything." For her, "[t]here are other things in the world [...]" to live for (Larsen, 1997: 81). While she is uttering these words, she is teasing and laughing at Irene's image, which is contrasting with Clare's. Nonetheless, it is obvious that Clare with her racial difference, glamorous appearance, property, sophisticated, and self-centred manner creates her own social space while threatening the others'.

1.3.1. On Beauty

What we know about *Passing,* the novel is based upon the drama of Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry who represent binary oppositions of the text, by showing the margins of a race psychologically, culturally and corporeally. Keeping "race," as the background knowledge of the novel, the main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the notions of *sublime* and *beauty* through an analysis of its characters and to "move the novel beyond the tragic mulatto type" (Wagner, 2011: 144).

Johanna M. Wagner, one of the critiques of Nella Larsen's *Passing,* approaches distinctively and discusses the novel in the perspective of Gothic Sublime in her article. Taking this modernist canon into consideration, Wagner, by making use of architectural terms, presents the sublimity of "gothic façade" to show the awesome and inhumane terrors of Nella Larsen's protagonists. First, the article argues that Irene is moved by Clare's "sublimity" while Clare is revealing Irene's faults and weaknesses by threatening Irene's sense of security (Wagner, 2011: 145). Clare's mysterious, secretive and selfish nature helps her to gain a powerful presence despite the prejudices of the dominant society that is also represented by Irene's self. The magnificent face of Clare is an architectural space for Irene like gothic cathedrals "summoning both terror and awe in human mind" (Wagner, 2011: 151). Wagner puts forward that "Irene sees Clare as the sublime" as "she can think of nothing else but Clare's immeasurable power, and the pain – and pleasure – she can provide" (Wagner, 2011: 153). At this point, as a response to Wagner, I would like to discuss that Clare is the representation of *beauty*, not the *sublime* in spite of her threatening nature. The idea of passing is the *sublime* embodying delight and horror within itself. In fact, it is Clare's magnificent *beauty* that astonishes Irene, while the concept of passing has the effect of the *sublime* upon both Clare and Irene.

The notions of beautiful and sublime are *almost* intermingled with each other. Their definitions can be boiled down as pleasing to the senses in some way. According to Kant, *beauty* is used for the things that are "delicate and pleasing" whereas *sublime*, is "absolutely great" and a source of fear (cited in Armstrong, 1996: 221; Kant, 2008: 78-90). When we adapt these forms to the characters and the novel, these concepts break the rigid codes of 1920's society and its individuals. For instance, with her delicate, glamorous image, Clare is "[…] the blonde beauty out of the fairy-tale" (Larsen, 1997: 75). Larsen's following lines portray her beauty:

> *Just as she'd always has that pale gold hair, which, unsheared still, was drawn loosely back from a broad brow, partly hidden by the small close hat. Her lips, painted a brilliant geranium-red, were sweet and sensitive and a little obstinate. A tempting mouth. The face across the forehead and cheeks was a trifle too wide, but the ivory skin had a peculiar soft lustre. And the eyes were magnificent! Dark, sometimes absolutely black, always luminous, and set in long, black lashes. Arresting eyes, slow and mesmeric, and with, for all their warmth, something withdrawn and secret about them.* (Larsen, 1997: 29)

Clare herself is the symbol of beauty in the novel. Her "tempting mouth," "pale gold hair," "ivory skin," and "luminous"-"magnificent" eyes are strong enough to charm every person exposed to her, including Irene. Since, she corresponds to what Kant underlines as the beautiful in *Observations of the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime*, he refers to the beautiful woman as follows:

> *For without taking into consideration that her figure in general is finer, her features more delicate and gentler, and mien more engaging and more expressive of friendliness, pleasantry, and kindness than in the male sex, […] which distinguish it clearly from ours and chiefly result in making her known by the mark of beautiful.* (Kant, 2003: 76)

As it is mentioned above, Clare is a "finer" figure; she has "delicate" and "pleasant" features with her "luminous," "arresting" eyes, gold hair and marble face (Kant, 2003: 76; Larsen, 1997: 29). She gives a sense of pleasure and joy with her charming beauty. In their encounter at Drayton Hotel, Irene while questioning her appearance she cannot take her eyes from Clare, or her thoughts alter in the presence of Clare's enchanting beauty; she criticizes and disapproves Clare's way of living when she is not close to her, yet when she is around, Irene is unable to incline from her (Wagner, 2011: 153). It is as if the entire text is fictionalized around the grace of Clare that makes her the focal point of the novel. Again in another passage, Clare is described as follows: "*An attractive looking woman*, was Irene's opinion, with those *dark*, almost *black*, eyes and that wide mouth like a scarlet flower against *the ivory of her*

skin. Nice clothes too, just right for the weather, thin and cool without being mussy, as summer things were so apt to be" (Larsen, 1997: 14; *my emphasis*). While she is depicted by the narrator, the attention is always projected to her "ivory skin" and "dark eyes." There are two reasons of this: first, making us remember that in spite of her skin colour, she is not "originally white," since they are "Negro eyes"; second, they are "mysterious and concealing" the truth and away from the notion of beauty (Larsen, 1997: 67). For Kant, "[i]n fact, *dark coloring and black eyes* are more closely related to the *sublime* [that is why it includes awe and terror], blue eyes and blonde coloring to the beautiful" (Kant, 2003: 54; *my emphasis*). Clearly, it can be concluded that Clare, except for her eyes, she is illustrated and placed as the only white beauty in the novel. Clare has a qualified beauty for a passed woman. People get an aesthetic pleasure from watching her. She charms slowly but effectively. Although for Kant, "charm is not merely a necessary ingredient of beauty, but is even of itself sufficient [is] to merit the name of beautiful" and it is sufficient to refer to Clare as the *beautiful* one (Kant, 2008: 55). Her "incredibly beautiful face" – as DeVere Brody tells – "[…] conform[s] to *a fixed standard of beauty* that Irene idealizes or affirms as do those in the Black community […]" (1992: 400; *my emphasis*). Her concealing and disguised beauty under an ivory mask, places her in a desirable space for she meets the demands of "social quality" in the perspective of *beauty*.

Clare's name is significant with her physical features. Her name is derived from "clear," "clear light" or "clarity," so, the name emphasizes her skin colour, her white face (Cutter, 1996: 94). The connotations of her name consolidate her physical magnificence. It also fulfils the definitions made by Kant and Burke as "blonde coloring" or "clean and fair" belonging to the beautiful (Kant, 2003: 54; Burke, 1998: 150). Not only Kant and Burke but also Bonaventure, known as the scholastic theologian and philosopher of the Middle Ages, indicates that "light is the substantial form of bodies" and "[i]n this sense light is the principle of all Beauty" (Eco, 2010: 129). Correspondingly, "[i]t was, Clare *fair* and golden, like a sunlit *day*" that belongs to the beautiful, not to the sublime, on the grounds that clarity and light are the perfect assertions of the ideal form of beauty (Larsen, 1997: 76; *my emphasis*).

Clare's epidermal advantage is not the mere reason of her attractiveness. Her perfection is shaped by her flirty movements, feminine appearance, clothes, and her mysterious tone. For instance, her smile, which is constantly emphasized, is "provocative," tempting, and "caressing"; her voice is "so appealing" and "so very seductive"; her weeping is even so prepossessing that "[f]ew women […] wept as attractively as Clare" (Larsen, 1997: 15; 30; 111; 33; 67). Also, she is smoking which is indeed a tiny detail, yet it is used to convey a message of an appealing woman, and "torch of freedom"[37] in 1920s (Amos and Haglund, 2000: 3). Moreover, her style reflects her exclusive sense, "Nice clothes too, just right for the weather, thin and cool without being mussy, as summer things were so apt to be" (Larsen, 1997: 14). In addition to the former example, the following quotes from the novel explain how Larsen draws a hypnotizing beauty: "Clare, *exquisite*, *golden*, *fragrant*, *flaunting*, in a stately gown of *shining black taffeta*, whose long, full skirt lay in *graceful* folds about her slim golden feet; her glistening hair drawn smoothly back into a small twist at the nape of her neck; her eyes sparkling like dark jewels (Larsen, 1997: 74; *my emphasis*). Another example depicting Clare's dazzling appearance may be read in the following lines:

> *Irene couldn't remember ever having seen her look better. She was wearing a superlatively simple cinnamon brown frock which brought out all her vivid beauty, and a little golden bowl of a hat. Around her neck hung a string of amber beads that would easily have made six or eight like one Irene owned. Yes, she was stunning.* (Larsen, 1997: 92)

Larsen's scope to form such pulchritude is to stress the correlation between Clare's wealth – thanks to her passed body – and her breath-taking image. Apart from all, Clare is companionable, sociable and sophisticated. To exemplify, Clare accompanies Irene and Brian in parties, some special occasions and dances. It is also important to mention that she even joins Brian to some bridge parties or dances when Irene cannot participate. Though she generally keeps her silence standing like a beautiful marble statue if there is not anything entertaining, she is "generally liked," by reason of being "friendly and responsive" (Larsen, 1997: 80). Even men like Brian or Dave Freeland who is the author (for Irene, a man of intelligence) and the husband of Felise Freeland can fall for Clare's meaningless, flattery words. This is "[…] all because Clare had a trick of sliding down ivory lids over astonishing black eyes and then lifting them suddenly and turning on a caressing smile" (Larsen, 1997:

93). It is obvious that she knows how to approach or charm someone with her flirty attitude. Clare has such a distinctive and indescribable air that when Irene's week is almost full she tries hard to grant Clare's wish to see her again by arranging her program according to her. She definitely cannot a find a proper answer for her desire "[...] to spend another afternoon with a woman whose life had so definitely and deliberately diverged from hers [...]" (Larsen, 1997: 30). The actual reason is that she has a mesmeric and enchanting energy through which can control others, or as Burke states "I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, […], they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them […]" (1998: 89). The characters in the novel want Clare to share the moments together, maybe this is – for Irene – because they "admire" or "pity" her; nevertheless, the following conclusion can be drawn that this is due to her "social quality" related to her beauty (Larsen, 1997: 80).

Giving a beauty a colour, or in other words, relating the beautiful one with the fair colours is doubtlessly the ability of white society to "mark" itself as "the beauty norm" while factionalizing different forms of beauty as "not quite right" (Tate, 2009: 5). Therefore, it is the natural outcome of the novel – metaphorically speaking – to pit Irene against Clare; the deification of the beauty through the image of Clare (white beauty) forms sides: the ones in favour of Clare and the ones in favour of protecting their race, like Irene.

1.3.2. On Sublime

Sublime, on the other hand, as it is mentioned before, is beyond the notion of beauty in ontological sense. For Edmund Burke, the sublime is our response to certain objects, situations and the modes of power all which include "some degree of horror," awe and terror while threatening the self-preservation, causing danger or physical pain (Burke, 1998: 101; Des Pres, 1983: 137). In *The Critique of Judgement*, Kant's sublime holds an air of deep anxiety caused by the ideas of magnitude, infinity and power with their eccentric glory (Armstrong, 1996: 225). Thus, apart from the harmony of imagination and reason in the concept of the

beautiful, the sublime occurs out of the disharmony between such faculties (imagination and reason). In the novel, the sublime is reflected upon the *long lasting dream* of being white or desire to pass, for the reason that this cultural phenomenon has a relation with power, privileges and opportunities through white supremacy. Human mind is overwhelmed by the power of that image, and the fascinated mind is dragged into awe and terror through passing.

One of the main reasons of passing is indeed the association of whiteness with beauty that is recognized as a norm in society. If we go back to the "Doll Test,"[38] the beautiful one is the white person, and being white opens all the doors, especially for a black person. Contrastingly, getting darker or being dark "gives the creeps," or as it is told in Mr. Cheselden's story it gives "great uneasiness" (Larsen, 1997: 40; Burke, 1998: 173). The other is the privileges that are obtained through "whiteness." It is "the *dream* of a *metamorphosis*, where that changeableness signifies a certain *freedom, a class mobility* afforded by whiteness that constitutes the power of that seduction" (Butler, 1993: 420; *my emphasis*). The concept provides a path to get rid of the skin trauma, or the epidermal burden, and to escape from the titles of ugliness, slavery via flexibility (Hobbs, 2014: 5). In other words, whiteness or fair skin serves as "a cloak" for the ones who desire to "*embrace* the power and superiority" of whites in order to "be free" (Hobbs, 2014: 29). The eagerness of preserving the values of the race they belong to, creates a prison effect on black people, because "[…] in 1920s is that to be a 'negro' is to be perpetually in the position of being ejected from one's 'place' " (DeVere Brody, 1992: 401). Whereas to be born as a white person or to pass for white affords one the luxury of living and gives the person the peace of mind knowing that "nobody will touch one" unless one is "discovered." Although all of these conditions form "the tragic mulatto," it turns "passing" into a sublime imagery to which characters want to attain throughout the novel (Blackmer, 1995: 52). Passing does not only serve as the sublime in Larsen's novels. For instance, in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) Coleman Silk disguises himself as a white man to have a place in Athena College as a classics professor; in Jessie Fauset's Angela Murray in *Plum Bun* (1928) also passes the colour line for possible freedom and for "a freer, fuller life" (cited in Rottenberg, 2013: 265). Also, in Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912),

the narrator passes to get rid of the "[s]hame at being identified with a people that could with impunity be treated worse than animals" and to have the "notions of chivalry and bravery and justice" of the Southern whites (cited in Al-Shraah, 2017: 10).

"*Sublime* is the name given to what is *absolutely great*," but at the same time, it "arouses awe" as well as "admiration" (Kant, 2008: 78; 2003: 18). Hence, in Larsen's *Passing*, the sublime functions as a strategy – in Hobbs' terms – to achieve the status of a white person which is both "absolutely great" and frightening (2014: 29). The concept of passing is identified with the sublime, it pushes the limits of imagination, threatens reason; however, the impossibility of representation gives terror and at the same time it gives a peculiar pleasure for reaching a super-sensory idea. Passing becomes a romantic dilemma preserving the "emotion" despite the contradictions of the sublime. At this juncture, it is argued that – regarding the relation of Gothic architecture and Clare made by Wagner – the power which moves Irene to "awe and terror" is *not* Clare's herself, due to her representation of "mystery and past," it is *the idea of passing* in the novel that challenges both characters (Wagner, 2011: 151-3). Additionally, Wagner uses the contradiction of the sublime[39] in the analysis of Irene's and Clare's friendship:

> *Like a response to the sublime, if we look at the dynamics of Irene's and Clare's friendship we note that it is full of contradictions as well, especially in Irene's response to Clare. Irene instinctively recognizes that Clare is a danger, a threat to her racial ontology, and is repelled by her; but even as she is repelled, she finds herself sexually drawn to Clare as well.* (2011: 151)

Wagner provides in-depth analysis of the work of Larsen – concentrating on Clare – showing its relevance to the sublime; the correlation between Clare and the sublime is convincing enough to detect the impasse of pain and pleasure from a single image. In agreement with Wagner's point above, it would be proper to add that Wagner's thesis does not engage with passing in general. Nevertheless, the theme of passing throughout the novel serves much more vigorously as the sublime than Clare's self. Interpreting Clare as the sublime would be incomplete; although Clare may be taken into consideration as the source of the sublime with her infinite beauty and causing a threat for Irene's racial ontology, she is not the only one affecting the response. Clare's mind is also affected by the idea of passing like Irene. This phenomenon (passing) has an impact on both characters; both Irene and Clare are overwhelmed by

the idea of passing, invoking both terror and awe in minds of the characters. Our female protagonists pass occasionally so the contradictory response to the sublime in the novel arises in the presence of the chance of passing, and in the act of passing.

"The sublime *moves*, the beautiful *charms*" (Kant, 2003: 47). Passing, intrinsically, includes "moving" constantly. It is "being alive in both worlds," for it allows travelling between the world you own and the one socially constructed in American society (Cutter, 1996: 93; Blackmer, 1995: 52). The term includes masquerading, duality, mobility, admiration, and pain; subsequently, it leads to "the *dilemma* of the 'negro' whose blood is nearly all white, whose appearance is nearly all white" (Kaplan, 2007: 88; *my emphasis*). So, the "negro" is "*tempted* to step over the strict bounds of 'coloured' society into the freedom of the white world," a world that is "fair," charming, and perilous (Kaplan, 2007: 88; *my emphasis*). This "hazardous business" – defined by Irene – is the source of sublime, arousing "ideas of grandeur in [their] minds, by its […] awful obscurity, [and] its strength […]" (Larsen, 1997: 24; qtd. in Botting, 2005: 26). For instance, Clare is so enchanted by the concept of "passing" that she says: "It, they, *made me* what I am today. For, of course, I was determined to get away, to be a person and not a charity or a problem, or even a daughter of indiscreet Ham. Then, too, *I wanted things*. I knew I wasn't *bad-looking* and that I could 'pass' [...] (Larsen, 1997: 26; *my emphasis*). Clare's complex and determined mind pave the way for her passing. Clare always takes risks for her beauty and desires. To exemplify, when she was younger (before she passed), "in spite of certain unpleasantness and possible danger, she had taken the money to buy the material for that pathetic little red frock" just for she "made up her mind to wear a new dress" (Larsen, 1997: 10). She can *easily* put herself into danger to get what she wants, and her current appearance shows that she has "succeeded" (Larsen, 1997: 20).

While Clare defines "passing" as "a frightfully easy thing to do," for Irene leaving your background, being away from your family and your people are not manageable or painless as it is assumed by Clare (Larsen, 1997: 25). However, Clare assures Irene that living in a white society is more untroubled than having a life with their (black) people. She explains her thought by these words: "Maybe because there are so many more of them, or maybe because they are secure and so don't have to

bother" (Larsen, 1997: 25). In fact, passing promises to deliver economic prosperity as "[w]hite ladies were to be protected" (Hobbs, 2014: 12). Nonetheless, still Irene prefers not to pass "permanently" rather, she performs in short plays. For example, in their encounter with Clare at Drayton Hotel, she passes "temporarily." The idea of being suspected as 'negro' disturbs her, yet actually, her concern is not related to her race, it is "the idea of being ejected from any place, even in the polite and tactful way [...] disturbed her" (Larsen, 1997: 16). Thereupon, the idea which is to be taken for a gypsy makes the best of circumstances for Irene. The suspicion threatens her "safety," since the idea of passing is "[n]ot safe at all"; however, at the same time, it raises admiration. Irene's explanation about passing is exactly clarifying its double nature: "It's funny about 'passing.' We disapprove of it and at the same time condone it. It excites our contempt and yet we rather admire it. We shy away from it with an odd kind of revulsion, but we protect it" (Larsen, 1997: 66; 56). On the grounds that, as Kant indicates the feeling of sublime "arouse enjoyment but with horror," whereas the feeling of the beautiful "occasion a pleasant sensation but one that is joyous and smiling" (2003: 47). It provides privileges in a secure white society; though it is "worth the price," the characters sacrifice for most of their values. Since, while you are passing, as Clare states "[e]verything must be paid for"; this is the sublimity's source of fear as well as its contradiction (Larsen, 1997: 37).

Burke states that "When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience" (Burke, 1998: 86). To illustrate, Clare is afraid of being "busted" through her daughter for the fear that "she might be dark," as "nobody wants a dark child" (Larsen, 1997: 36). She is foolhardy enough to own what she desires; however, when the danger hits closer to home, "awe and terror" takes over the delightful and playful aspect of passing. Another example is, she is anxious about her epidermal security, because her experience is unknown to her husband, Mr. Bellew, who associates blackness with "creepy" images. That is, Clare feels horrified by her husband – Mr. Bellew's negative attributions to blackness: "creepy," and for a probable disclosure of her well-kept epidermal secret currently unknown to him (Pile, 2010: 29). For him, "the darkness [is] originally an idea of terror," accordingly, the ones who have

black skin are unequivocally "black scrimy devils" (Burke, 1998: 173; Larsen, 1997: 40). Living for white privileges costs her freedom, and leave the characters in purgatory.

Additionally to black people, the notion of sublime also affects the white race. It is a threat to visions of totality or broken unity caused by the black female. The woman can be beautiful, like Clare and Irene, but she is also threatening at the same time. This can be allegorized in white man's fear just as it happened in Kate Chopin's "Desiree's Baby."[40] Besides, exotic or erotic bodies, blacks are menacing, unsafe since they are breaking the natural orders of white society. As Armstrong points out, the terror that surrounds the image of black female may be the result of "the pressure exerted by culturally marked categories of race and gender" (1996: 215). So, what Clare's husband feels, is the fear of being colour-deceived or biologically interfered? It is the fear of maintaining the white lineage properly or "[i]nstinct of the race to survive and expand" (Larsen, 1997: 56).

When we recall the words of Kant, "the sublime is limitless" and the things which correspond to the sublime directly overwhelm the mind by "attempting to imagine what it cannot," such as passing in the novel. The characters struggle hard to reach the sublime; despite the fact that they are exposed to terror, horror or fear of the concept, they are dragged into the "pleasure in contemplating the immensity of the attempt" (cited in McTernan and Wolcott, 2013: 10). To put it differently, the notions of sublime and beautiful serve effectively in Larsen's *Passing*. The judgment of the beautiful provides certain rules of order and limitation; nonetheless, the "bodily schemas" interrupt the feeling of satisfaction in the sublime by experiencing it in the novel (Pile, 2010: 29). Beautiful by symbolizing the white beauty opens the doors of privileges for blacks, while the sublime brings terror by threatening the vision and authority through passing. In other words, we can say that whiteness itself is desirable and closer to the perfect, and this creates a dilemma between the beautiful and the sublime, while dividing identities within the social space.

CHAPTER TWO
OSCAR WILDE'S THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY: THE MASK OF MALE BEAUTY

2.1. OSCAR WILDE AND VICTORIAN ERA

2.1.1. Victorian Era and Literature

The spirit of nineteenth century England was shaped with the reign of Queen Victoria who was known as Queen of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and especially the Empress of India for her overseas success. Her monarchy brought respectability, self-dependency, domestic virtues, ambition, progress and at the same time, conservatism. In 1831, John Stuart Mill named the age as "an age of transition," since it comprised of financial, educational and moral changes, as well as artistic movements, scientific approaches, new doctrines, political and economic theories, working class reforms, and new rights for women (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 981).

The Victorian period was replete with contradictions for it carried both the tiger and the lamb.[41] During her sovereignty – the years of 1830-1901[42] – Victorian Britain grappled with virtues and vices of progress. A forerunner of industrialization,[43] England faced with social consequences of financial growth, such as urbanization, working class issues in factories and poverty. The effects of industrialization on economy and society was so drastic that the 1830s and 1840s were known as the "Time of Troubles" and "Hungry Forties" due to the economic crash of 1837 and subsequent bad harvests, unemployment, and poverty (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 983). In spite of the negative consequences of industrialization, Colin Matthew stated that "Victorian Britain [was] one of the most successful states in the history of the world," since Britain had the power to control world markets through trading and cheap goods (Marshall, 2002: 9). Along with this growth brought by industrialization, a new social order was introduced to Victorian England. British aristocracy and the new business class were social and cultural forces in conflict during the nineteenth century. The aristocracy with its established customs and noble family backgrounds was sustaining Victorian high-culture and the

dignity of British ancestry; on the other hand, the new business class or middle-class was an influential power in preserving traditional values while shaping the present Victorian culture. This newly introduced social class with the money they owned could also act as managers between the lower and upper classes. Apart from all, in the Victorian class system, lower classes, which included skilled workers, and artisans, servants, agricultural workers, and industrial workers,[44] as part of the manufacturing system, was at the bottom of the social hierarchy. The lower class also consisted of a group of people who were unemployed and poor,[45] such as criminals, prostitutes, or in other words, those who were barely surviving within society.

The industrial and agricultural revolution had changed the population's balance in rural and urban areas. Economic opportunities and technological advancements[46] were the main reasons which drove rural people to urban areas; nevertheless, moving to cities like London and Manchester had changed the metropolitan social scene due to the growth in population.[47] This complex and confusing social scene was reflected by Alexis de Tocqueville when he saw the condition of Manchester:

> *It is in the midst of this foul drain that the greatest stream of human industry has its source and goes out to fertilize the whole world. From this filthy sewer flows pure gold. It is here that human nature reaches towards perfection and to brutishness; that civilization works with its miracles and civilized man reverts almost to a savage.* (Urgan, 2018: 950)

Not only Alexis de Tocqueville marked the situation of England but also Charles Kingsley's *The Water Babies* (1863), *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet* (1850); Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton* (1848), *North and South* (1854-5); Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* (1838), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Hard Times* (1854); Thomas Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843); Benjamin Disraeli's *Coningsby: or The New Generation* (1844), *Sybil: or The Two Nations* (1845), *Tancred: or The New Crusade* (1847), and Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley* (1849) were a response to the "Condition of England." The examples given above were not the only novels that were concerned with the period; nonetheless, they were the novels of the "Condition of England[48]," as they were the milestones of the early and mid-Victorian literature which vividly showed the age's social and economic problems. Those novels aimed to raise awareness by narrating the industrial, social and political scene of England through literary realism.[49] The central figure was Thomas Carlyle,[50] who had a noteworthy impact

upon a group of writers of the mid-Victorian era: Charles Kingsley, Elizabeth Gaskell, Alfred Tennyson, John Ruskin, and especially Charles Dickens whose novels reflected Carlyle's marks. Carlyle revealed his observations relating the conflicting aspects of early Victorian Britain in his satirical and critical works. To illustrate, in the opening chapter of his work *Past and Present*, Carlyle examined the duality of industrial Britain, and the present condition of England with these words:

> *The condition of England, on which many pamphlets are now in the course of publication, and many thoughts unpublished are going on in every reflective head, is justly regarded as one of the most ominous, and withal one of the strangest, ever seen in this world. England is full of wealth, of multifarious produce, supply for human want in every kind; yet England is dying of inanition.* (1870: 3)

Carlyle's scholarly writings of investigation on industrial and political Britain, civil society and religion were later on heard as "echoes of Carlyle" in Charles Dickens' novels (Sanders, 1994: 404). Although his collection of works were rather a review of the condition of England compared to Dickens' and other writers of the age, Carlyle – as a scholar – also sought to transfer the analysis of his time and his country ironically to remark the spiritual price paid by his country, and relatively to raise awareness for forming a fairer and more equalitarian system (Schapiro, 1945: 99-100; Sanders, 1994: 403).

Among the "Condition of England" fictions, Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* was one the best novels of mid-Victorian England that explored social problems from the perspective of the lower class, and industrial problems by giving vivid descriptions of the environment. In *Hard Times*, Dickens throughout the novel in order to emphasize the negative and harmful consequences of industry used "blur," "smoke," "soot," "sulky blotch" upon a town, or "unnatural red and black like" for bricks (1920: 98; 19). For Dickens, although industry brought progress, prosperity and power to England, it changed the colour of the air and society – by enlarging the gap between classes even more. Another Dickens' novel, *Oliver Twist* while telling the story of an orphan child, actually introduced the new legislation, the New Poor Law of 1834[51] (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 169). In the novel, Dickens "[…] challenge[ed] the inhumanity of the new social legislation" and also, "[…] look[ed] at the question of how to control an increasingly complex society" same as with his other novels (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 170). A notable example of industrial

Manchester was given by Elizabeth Gaskell[52] in her novels: *Mary Barton* and *North and South*. Gaskell dealt with class division, labour and industrialization of Manchester. In *Mary Barton*, she provided an example of the late 1840s urban life by reflecting the conditions of Manchester's slums, and other people's lives, and their daily concerns in a "politically optimistic" viewpoint (Sanders, 1994: 410). Gaskell's main target was to show the other side of the medallion by studying the reader's ignorance of Britain's "new reality" for she believed that "[…] a modification in the views of individuals [could] affect the whole nature of the society" (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 181-82). In her complicated social work, *North and South*,[53] the novelist also brought the life of industrial workers and industrialists together to confront with each other; provided visual realization of cotton mills, and reconciliation of different middle-class ideologies.[54] Moreover, Charles Kingsley's *Alton Locke: Tailor and Poet* told the story of a tailor-poet who was at the centre of the Chartist movement[55] by rebelling against "sweated labour, London poverty," and the exploitative economic system (Sanders, 1994: 411). Kingsley, through his fiction, "[…] suggest[ed] a way out of the bind of poverty and ignorance that he felt was at the heart of England's problems" (Rauch, 1993: 200). The novel harmonizes religion, the Chartist movement, science and the metaphor of transformation without "destruction of traditional values" (Rauch, 1993: 203). Not only Kingsley but also Thomas Carlyle had long before studied the Chartist movement in his long pamphlet *Chartism* (1840), and explored the change of social conditions due to the rapid growth of industry and population in industrial centres. For Carlyle, "[…] [t]he matter of Chartism is weighty, deep-rooted, far extending; did not begin yesterday; will by no means end this day or tomorrow" (1885: 6). Both Carlyle and Kingsley, by studying Chartism, explored the contemporary situation of England's politics through the perspective of working class and shared their thoughts in a louder voice. Another mid-Victorian novelist with his political career was Benjamin Disraeli.[56] His literary career besides his political life gave him a chance to show "[…] a real grasp of historical precedent and of modern social complexity" in his fictions of "paradoxical and simply wishful" suggestions (Sanders, 1994: 412). Despite the fact that his novels included autobiographical points, and a mockery of aristocratic follies, for example, in *Coningsby: or The New Generation* he told about the

contemporary society of England in 1830s and 1840s; however, Disraeli's aim through that novel was "to vindicate the just claims of the Tory party to be the popular political confederation of the country" (cited in Smith, 1970: 201). Like the other novels of the Victorian age, Disraeli's novels also addressed the current ideas, just as he did in *Sybil: or The Two Nations* that explored "[…] the Rich and the Poor, living side by side in England yet knowing nothing of each other" (Smith, 1970: 203-4). Therefore, it is important to note that the "Condition of England" novels ought not to be separated from the historical and political context of its age, and to be interpreted within that context.

Beginning with the Industrial Revolution and its butterfly effect, certainly the "Condition of England" novels were taking the lead. Nonetheless, the other key aspect of the age was Victorian morality that restrained the society, kept it in a bell jar, and avoided individuals from being at the margins. For that reason, Victorian social morality was something ambivalent to which Victorian people conformed, but at the same time, to which the Victorians opposed, and on which Victorian thinkers had long debated and wrote about. As it was stated by Anthony Kenny in his article "Victorian Values," "[m]ost Victorians believed that morality was *objective* and *absolute* […]" (1992: 223; my emphasis). Queen Victoria and Prince Albert's family image and the seeds of Puritanism were the effective points in shaping the strict social codes of the Victorians. As the preserver of Victorian values, the middle-class or bourgeoisie adapted Puritanism to both their commercial and daily life. Walter Houghton related both by saying that "[…] it is certain that Puritanism laid great stress both on moral discipline (the prerequisite for business efficiency) and on hard work and well-earned profits (the latter rationalized as the reward of God upon industry); and consequently neglected, or viewed with suspicion, the intellectual and artistic life" (1952: 303). Thus, it must be underlined that Victorian Puritanism was the leading factor in orienting business and intellectual life, as well as in controlling the conscience of the British society (Houghton, 1952: 302). The Victorian morality could be defined as repression, intolerance towards crime, and predicating virtuousness; however, due to the inconsistency in the public and private lives of the Victorians, Victorian morality was always related with hypocrisy. That was the point for which many writers and thinkers of the age criticized. For instance, Matthew

Arnold referred to bourgeoisie as "philistine" by accusing them of lacking in culture, being against "the beautiful," and being bigots (Urgan, 2018: 949). Besides, D.H. Lawrence[57] defined the biggest crime of the age as "[…] the condemning of the workers to ugliness […]" (cited in Urgan, 2018: 948). Not only workers but also the entire society had suffered from hollow codes of their own: the taboos and sexual suppression bound up with the divine institution of marriage while prostitution was performed in a high rate.

The novel was the leading form of the Victorian era, and "[…] Victorian novels [sought] to represent a large and comprehensive social world, with the variety of classes and social settings […]" (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 994). The Victorian writers aimed to present a world through their characters, settings and vision just like the "Condition of England" novelists, there were writers who structured a world of Victorian morality, as well as the economic and social changes in their novels. Since, Victorian Britain was seen as the "morally respectable society," prescriptions on people's behaviours became the controlling idea of some stories, thus the characters were designed in accordance with the current lifestyle and practice of the society (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 175). To exemplify, besides Dickens, in the novels of the Brontë sisters, Thomas Hardy, Bram Stocker, Oscar Wilde it was possible to encounter with the age's moral codes and Victorian hypocrisy both as a way to throw light on social reality, and to criticize it ironically for a possible change. Especially, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* was a great example illustrating Victorian society's classification of people based upon their social status. The novel closely observed the concept of marriage, status, and power as the core ideas of the period through a well-developed plot. In *Wuthering Heights*,[58] homeless Heathcliff tried to get a place as an individual for he was an outsider and victim of capitalism. Catherine and Heathcliff's love was prevented by the bitter social reality and genteel culture, which was a "crucial economic weapon" of the age (Eagleton, 2005: 105). The marriage between Earnshaws and Lintons were pre-determined by an idealistic society for sustaining civilised life and a healthy social structure. In the novel, Emily Brontë asserted the forcefulness of property and power relations' influence upon society in the effort to maintain prevailing social standards.

It was important to note that middle-class female figures were among the ones "[…] who contributed so much to the prosperity of Victorian Britain" (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 175). Until mid-nineteenth century, before the beginning of feminist studies, it was assumed that women belonged to "domestic sphere" in which women managed both household duties and the role of motherhood in a private and secure place; contrary to man's liberated, economic, and social space known as "public sphere." In that dichotomy, women held a high moral posture, a balance for sociability, emotional and religious influence both in private and public spaces.[59] Therefore, in Victorian novels, the reader was familiar with the "angel in the house"[60] scenes and female domesticity performed through heroines portrayed according to the Victorian ideal of women[61]: they organized the relationship between servants and masters as well as developing social relations of their class to meet the requirements for their family's status. For Sarah Stickney Ellis, a woman "[…] endeavours to prove that it is the minor morals of domestic life which give the tone to English character, and that over this sphere of duty it is her peculiar province to provide" (1839: 39). In her works such as *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839) and *The Daughters of England: Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities* (1842), Ellis studied the domestic sphere as "woman's happiest and most beneficial influence" (1839: 40). Not only Ellis but also Isabella Beeton's *The Book of Household Management* (1861) celebrated the middle-class domestic life by "resembling" mistress to "the general of an army or the manager of a great business concern" while giving advice as "[a] woman's home should be first and foremost in her life" (1907: 9). Additionally, Dicken's Agnes Wickfield in *David Copperfield*, and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre were some of the figures that could be shown as an example for managing the household and governing domestic sphere.

Contrary to "the angel in the house" figure, a new female image, who was sexually free, active in public sphere through her engagements in work life, self-expression in almost every areas including the electoral system emerged in the second half of the eighteenth, and late nineteenth century. It was obvious that Victorian thinkers had affected the stability and order of the society while changes and reforms in social and political areas shaped the Victorian literature. Despite its

domestic scenes, George Eliot's *Jane Eyre* was representing working middle-class women by breaking the rigid codes of her submissive image; also Catherine Earnshaw and later on called as Catherine Linton in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* could be listed among the strong and free-minded female characters with her intellect, passionate and emotional independence. Charlotte Brontë's *Shirley*, Benjamin Disraeli's *Sybil*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*, Sarah Grand's *Ideala*, Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Princess*, and Emily Dickenson's *They Shut Me Up in Prose* were some of the exemplifications in Victorian literary life illustrating themes such as: free love, educated women, the new independent women in the public sphere, and an increasing individualism of new women outside the domestic arena. George Meredith, George Gissing, Grant Allen, and Thomas Hardy were prominent names who treated the nature and role of women in the society through their works. Furthermore, John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) was a male perspective for Women's Question; through his work Mill suggested equality for both women and men in legal and social contexts: "[…] the legal subordination of one sex to the other – is wrong in itself, and now one chief hindrance to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other" (1870: 1). In a word, the plots redesigning the presence of women and bringing them to a new place forged Victorian literature into a new mode of thinking.

Additionally, the Victorian period hosted also three major European thinkers: Charles Darwin, Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud; those names offered "a new means of making sense of all of life" politically, scientifically and psychoanalytically (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 190). When Charles Darwin's *The Origin of the Species* was published in 1859, it was considered as a kind of battle between science and religion, for Victorians it was not morally acceptable (Bowler, 1992: 129). As it was known, Darwin in his scientific study was discussing the theory of evolution[62] in the framework of "natural selection" and adaptation, question of existence, and nature. The points made by Darwin such as the "elimination of unfit," "survival of the fittest," "natural selection," and "struggle for existence" had affected literature and scientific world as well as society in Victorian era (cited in Howerth, 1917: 254). The belief in "natural selection" and the outcome of it "survival of the fittest" were later

on recast as Social Darwinism in which "[…] only the most intelligent and adaptable of each generation would survive" (Rogers, 1972: 280). His views, like his contemporaries Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud, had a great impact upon Victorian literature, life and minds. Especially, in the works of Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, Bernard Shaw, and Alfred Tennyson,[63] it was possible to sense allusions to Darwinism and anti-Darwinism. For instance, in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* the characters were struggling for surviving in society; within the perspective of Herbert Spencer's social Darwinism the protagonists Jude and Sue were hardly leading their lives due to the societal pressure; their desires and social circumstances could not complement each other. Their son Little Father Time and his siblings were eliminated from the society; being exposed to Social Darwinism's "natural selection," Little Father Time committed suicide by leaving a note: "Done because we are too menny" (Hardy, 1994: 401).

Social Darwinism also enhanced the imperial mission which was to protect the poor natives and advance civilization outside the European countries, Darwin's "survival of the fittest" helped the growth of empire and economic prosperity in the global market. The desire to access raw materials for expanding their market brought the title of Empress to Queen Victoria as the British Empire expanded her borders to India (Marshall, 2002: 16). Victorian colonialism had been so influential that Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* (1883), Joseph Conrad's *Hearth of Darkness* (1899), Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden (1899)" and *Kim* (1901) became some of the works that set colonialism and imperialism as their themes. To illustrate, in Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness,* The Central Station Manager called Kurtz believed in the civilization and improvements brought by European countries and expressed his goals as follows: "Each station should be like a beacon on the road toward better things, a centre for trade of course but also for *humanizing, improving, instructing*" (Conrad, 2012: 29; my emphasis). Like Conrad, writers of the age selected powerful words, such as "humanizing," "improving," "savages," "primitives," and many others in order to either praise or criticize imperialism and colonialism while moulding public opinion.

In brief, the Victorian Era could be identified as a period of duality: for the reason that each new approach brought with its controversy, reformism challenged

conservatism, advancements in technology and science subverted theology, and strict codes of morality disclosed hypocrisy of society. When it came to the late nineteenth century, the period was getting prepared for "an overall change of attitudes" (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 989).

2.1.2. Oscar Wilde: A Literary Figure in Late-Victorian England

The final phase of the Victorian period (1870-1901) was remembered for its national and imperial glory, though 'Victorian' values, hypocritical morality and exaggerated social behaviours were judged unfavourably by "a new generation of intellectuals and writers" (Sanders, 1994: 457). Compared to the first half of the century, the writers and intellects of the late Victorian period assumed more sophisticated and self-confident manners displaying higher intellectual interests in their works. The new style and critical attitude of the late-Victorians captured thinkers' interest of the age; referring to one of the critical and influential names of literary realism and modernism Henry James expressed the English fiction's current potential in the following lines in "The Art of Fiction": "[…] the English novel was not what the French call *discutable*. It had no air of having a theory, a conviction, a consciousness of itself behind it—of being the expression of an artistic faith, the result of choice and comparison" (1884: 52; emphasis in original). However, Emile Zola's naturalism in George Moore's *A Mummer's Wife* (1882) or in *Esther Waters* (1892), Social Darwinism in Thomas Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891) or in *Jude the Obscure* (1895), aestheticism in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), contemporary approaches to women's issues in George Gissing's *The Odd Women* (1893) and Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (1895) were some of the examples that challenged domestic Victorian concerns in fiction generating "discutable" narrations.

Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde, or shortly known as Oscar Wilde was an Anglo-Irish poet, playwright, critic and novelist of late-Victorian era. His "classical scholar" image was moulded by the education he had received in Trinity College, Magdalen College and finally, Oxford University (Drabble, 2000: 1098). His mother's gift – whose pen-name was "Speranza"[64] – came to light with his

awarded poem "Ravenna"[65] which delivered pastoral echoes of Italy (Drabble, 2000: 1098). Wilde's private life and interest in fashion always grabbed the attention of Victorian society, and he was harshly criticised for his sexual attraction. The importance he gave in physical appearance in frame of fashion – decorating himself with moiré bows, fur coats, and velvet jackets – was seen as a reference to "Dandy"[66] figures in his works. Beneath his life, the influence of Baudelaire's decadent aestheticism, Ruskin's and Walter Pater's theories of art and culture, Kant's "rational ideal of self-development," and Huysmans's *fin de siècle* novel *À Rebours*[67] (1884) were obvious upon establishing the aesthetic taste, bohemian lifestyle, anarchist and socialist attitude in Wilde's works (cited in Roden, 2004 :156). Wilde's "aphoristic and paradoxical wit" and influence of aestheticism were to challenge the mid-Victorian approach both in art and life, and to destroy the sense of purposeful art (Sanders, 1994: 475). Subverting social codes and "clichés" made Oscar Wilde a man of "[…] a new mood at the end of the nineteenth century" (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 222). Known as one of the prominent names of British Decadence, Wilde constituted an image of provocative critic that was "outside conventional manners and morality" (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 222-23). When a glance was taken at his works, transcended gender roles, matter of sexuality including homosexuality, the pursuit of pleasure, the sense of pain, and the notion of beauty were at the heart of his understanding (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 222-23). Additionally, in his essays and critical notes, Wilde led significant discussions in aesthetic philosophy – sometimes preferring Socratic dialogues – and art criticism by presenting his understanding on the necessity of art and the existence of an artist in the form of thought and passion.

As a prolific and desirous writer Wilde interpreted the nineteenth century in his intentions and plays from the perspective of art and culture. He never used any realistic approach in his works rather his remarks were in the taste of Renaissance, and especially in his plays, he criticised the Victorian society and morality satirically, however for taunting, not for rehabilitating. In his most popular play *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) Wilde stressed hypocritical values and senseless but pompous social beliefs and ideals of aristocracy with the help of eccentric characters. The play questioned and made its audience rethink about solid ideals of high Victorian society via the illusion of Jack as Ernest (the protagonist led a double life),

Lady Bracknell's detailed list of an "ideal son-in-law" (including his politics, parents, income, age, and investments), a naïf characterization of Cecily Cardew and unsubstantial ideals of Gwendolen Fairfax. With *The Importance of Being Ernest,* Oscar Wilde overthrew "earnestness" that was actually defined as "serious in mind or intention/showing or characterized by sincerity of intention" and for that reason it had a vital place among Victorian moral codes (*Collins English Dictionary,* 2005: 515). In the dialogue between Jack and Gwendolen, Gwendolen uttered that "[…] We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in *age of ideals* […] my ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires *absolute confidence*." (Wilde, 2007a: 675; my emphasis). However, the absurd part in the play was that reality was overlooked; Gwendolen's love towards Jack's fake name "Ernest" was not reflecting the probity as she had thought of. Thus, the mocking of that sublime virtue in the play was displaying the hypocrisy of societal mores while artfully portraying the erosion of Victorian solid soil. In the gifted hands of Wilde, the play went beyond "a witty and superficial comedy," and it "[…] offer[ed] us a disconcerting new vision of life" (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 221). His other plays such as melodramatic tragedy giving a view of "Russian political realities" *Vera*: *or, The Nihilists* (1880); his unperformed play *The Duchess of Padua* (1883); his uncompleted blank verse *A Florentine Tragedy* (1894-1897); his dramatization of an Biblical story in French *Salomé* (1891); his comedies of manners *Lady Windermere's Fan*: *A Play about a Good Woman* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893) and *An Ideal Husband* (1895) in which Victorian sexual and societal mores, social illness as hypocrisy, fallen and good woman images, class restraints, and upper-class Victorian society with its ideals were satirically treated, were woven attentively to provide readers and audience with maximum taste of art endowed with intellect just as in *The Importance of Being Ernest* (Sanders, 1994: 476-77).

Oscar Wilde's tendency to revive artistic experience by means of his appreciation for "the Italian Renaissance," Greek philosophers – "Plato, Sappho, and Theocritus," Greek art, and its ideal forms of beauty drew him out of late-nineteenth century and put him into the world of master names of art and philosophy (Ivory, 2007: 517; 520). His imitation of predecessors in their styles and his "communism of

language and ideas," from time to time, caused him to be identified with "plagiarism" (Saint-Amour, 2000: 61). Wilde's Irish heritage[68]and parental effects[69] on him were the other motivators of his aspiring to oral tradition (Saint-Amour, 2000: 64). His propensity for orality and plagiarism were so intermingled with each other that Wilde had never hesitated to share his ideas and stories with others. Therefore, except for his well-known tales in *A House of Pomegranates* (1891) and *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888), and his collection of stories *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime and Other Stories* (1891), as it was stated by Hesketh Pearson the biographer of Wilde, "countless stories of his invention have been published under other men's names and hundreds of his sayings have brightened other men's book"; Frank Harris, Evelyn Waugh, George Moore and Arthur Symons were the counted names who took the advantage of oral narrative and used Wilde's tales as if their own (Saint-Amour, 2000: 65). The attitude of Wilde presented so far that not only he himself plagiarized but also he encouraged other writers to steal "his literary ideas" (Saint-Amour, 2000: 66). In addition to those, actually Wilde saw writing down as a kind of interruption in creation process, and defended orality while praising it in *The Critic as Artist* as following: "[…] When Milton became blind he composed, as everyone should compose, with voice purely, and so the ripe or reed of earlier days became that mighty many-stopped organ whose rich reverberant music has all the stateliness of Homeric verse […] Yes: writing has done much harm to writers. We must return to the voice." (Wilde, 2007d: 973). For him, it was via orality that an artist seized freedom in the creation of his art.

Oscar Wilde's thoughts and enthusiasm on aestheticism and art were prosperously celebrated in his intentions. To illustrate, "The Decay of Lying" (1889) was structured on the idea of "[a]rt never expresses anything but itself"; in the dialogue of Vivian and Cyril "modernity of form" was rejected for it was "vulgarising," the relation of "lying" and "art" was acknowledged, and the influence of art in life was highlighted: it meant that life followed art, not art followed life (Wilde, 2007e: 938; 927; 923; 936). Moreover, through biographical notes of Thomas Griffiths Wainewright in "Pen, Pencil and Poison" (1885), Wilde was partially discussing aesthetic theory, as well as "authorial identity," "literary property," "authenticity" (Saint-Amour, 2000: 70). The resemblance of

Wainewright's biographical points on his artistic identity to Wilde's creation of himself was intriguing, especially when he was noting that "[…] he [reffering to Wainewright] never lost sight of the great truth that art's first appeal [was] neither to the intellect nor to the emotions, but purely to the artistic temperament […]," Wilde subtly drew a parallel between himself and the art-critic (Wilde, 2007c: 951). Again written in Socratic dialogue, "The Critic as Artist" (1891) was his other work that centred on the aesthetics of art-criticism through the characters Gilbert and Ernest. Comparing art in past and present, Wilde urged on the view of art's beauty of its own; for him, "Art is a passion […] It is to the soul that art speaks […]," for that reason, when an art-critic raised his ideas and thoughts critically, he must have been aware that art could not be confined to "a scientific formula or a theological dogma" (Wilde, 2007d: 1004). The critic in his criticism must have revealed what had not been given by the artist in his piece without being "fair," "rational," and "sincere" (Wilde, 2007d: 1004-5). Other than his previous approaches, "The Soul of Man under Socialism" (1891) was an aesthetic-political essay within the perspective of Socialism. As a libertarian socialist, Wilde posited the need of Individualism in developing perfect and complete members for a healthy society by the help of Socialism. To him, Socialism would provide the destruction of "private property" which actually hindered the realization of one's self (Wilde, 1915: 6; 13). With a new system for Individualism, "far freer, far finer, and far more intensified" life would be gained; thus, individuals, like Darwin, Keats, M. Renan, and Flaubert did long before, would discover "the perfection of what was in him" (Wilde, 1915: 13; 3). As long as the suggested system was set, even art would never serve for a purpose or vain fads of the public rather the public would be "artistic," since "Art is the most intense mode of Individualism that the world has known" (Wilde, 1915: 30; 29).

What was known about Oscar Wilde, his poetic works was not limited to his Irish inheritance and his awarded poem "Ravenna." He had also composed a wide range of poems. Rhymes were at the heart of his musical poems, while he did not choose certain subject for he had believed that "[t]o art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent. We should, at any rate, have no preferences, no prejudices, no partisan feeling of any kind"; art must seize anything but the beauty (Wilde, 2007e: 927). Generally, Wilde's poems carried pagan images, pastoral scenes,

mythological beliefs, and religious ideas, as well as delicate artistic effects and finely detailed moments. The poems, like "Le Jardin," "La Mer," in *Impressions* carried images of nature, though Wilde stated that: "All bad art comes from returning to life and nature […]," in those poems he used nature as "art's rough material" by turning it into "artistic conventions" (Wilde, 2007e: 942-3). When the influence of Pre-Raphaelites,[70] romanticism and decadence were taken aside, the "imitativeness" and complexity in his poems could be sensed sufficiently (Stalheim, 1973: 100). Baudelaire's afflatus on Wilde's "Humanitad" and "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" with his "L'Héautontimorouménos" and "Le Vin de L'Assasin" was observable (Stalheim, 1973: 103). Despite the fact that Wilde had produced a remarkable amount of poems, broadly speaking, it was "The Ballad of Reading Gaol" the most recognizable one. Apart from Baudelaire's traces, that long poem actually told the story of a murderer-lover from the days of his prison life. At that point, it was necessary to note that Wilde's inclination to ancient Greek doctrines was not simply a curiosity and artistic taste; it was also his safe age that he identified his sexual freedom with Sappho's homosexuality or Plato's theory of love in the *Symposium*. Therefore, when he was sentenced due to the accusation of sodomy, Wilde composed a ballad poem concerning the tragedy brought by love (Wan, 2011: 710). In the following lines of the poem: "The man had killed the thing he loved, / And so he had to die," Wilde gave the bitter atmosphere of the most dramatic moment in his life; on the other hand, he introspected and returned to his own tragedy in which he was betrayed by Lord Alfred Douglas with the lines: "Yet each man kills the thing he loves / By each let this be heard […] Some love too little, some too long / Some sell, and others buy [...] For each man kills the thing he loves / Yet each man does not die." (Wilde, 2007b: 892). Overall, like his other works, his poems were also woven with an anti-modernist style and classical reflections of art which offered the splendid artistic taste.

Wilde's first and only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was firstly published as a story in an American Magazine called as *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine* in 1890, one year later the text was revised and published in book version (Lorang, 2010: 19). The book was the ultimate expression of Oscar Wilde's aesthetic philosophy; put another way, it was an influential story in which his collection of

essays, poems and plays came into existence. The book was always criticised either constructively or unfavourably for its homoerotic theme and reversing Victorian moral codes; however, "beauty" became a plot mover of the novel, and a major ambition of the characters. The artist Basil devoted himself to Dorian and eternalized him with a portrait. Everything started with that portrait, and followed by Dorian's Faustian desire.[71] Wilde's first and only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* – as it could be inferred from the title – based on a story which developed itself through a portrait in *fin-de-siècle* London. Dorian was reborn with that portrait and decayed with the same. More exactly, the novel covered the tragedy of the portrait in "[…] [Wilde's] most complex, nuanced, and surprisingly contemporary meditation on the paradox of artistic creativity, particularly on the charged relation between the body and the text," in spite of having been founded "indecent"[72] (Gomel, 2004: 75; Bristow, 2008: xxiv).

On the whole, Oscar Wilde through his variety of works proved himself as an artist, an aesthete and an art-critic in late-nineteenth century England. Although he was criticized for his artistic expression, which valued art above everything, primarily ethics, he was praised for his complex intelligence, satirical wit and thought-provoking ideas. His sense of belonging to previous centuries helped him establish a unique aesthetic taste by reviving old doctrines of Greek, recalling Renaissance art and additionally, introducing political and economic theories of his age. As a man of letters, Oscar Wilde was "a protest against current ugliness and smugness, a fine frenzy set against average ideals and commonplace platitudes," for that reason, he persisted in developing and discovering himself until his death (Ellis H., 1918: 191).

2.2. A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF ETHICS AND AESTHETICS IN WILDE'S ESSAYS, LECTURES AND NOVEL

"*Love art for its own sake, and then all things that you need will be added to you*."

– Oscar Wilde, *"The English Renaissance of Art"*[73]

2.2.1. Wilde and Art

Aesthetic Movement or Aestheticism was the name given to an artistic approach which developed in late-nineteenth century and took its roots from France. French traces of the movement set its motivating phrase as "l'art pour l'art"[74] – "art for art's sake" (Abrams, 1999: 3). While the reflections of Aestheticism were being sensed through works of Théophile Gautier, Gustave Flaubert and Stéphane Mallarmé in Europe, in Victorian England it was Walter Pater who presented the philosophy of art with his study *The Renaissance* in 1873 (Abrams, 1999: 3). Later on, some of the late-nineteenth century writers, including Charles Swinburne, Arthur Symons, Oscar Wilde and others, were overwhelmed by the surge of that new art movement. Especially, Oscar Wilde expressed his overflowing enthusiasm in his variety of works, such as in his essays "The Critic as Artist," "The Decay of Lying," "The Soul of Man under Socialism," in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and in his lecture "The English Renaissance of Art."

Oscar Wilde's appreciation of art was formed in Oxford long before with Hellenism and the Renaissance art when he encountered with a new phase of Italian Renaissance in virtue of Pater (Ivory, 2007: 519). Aestheticism provided a philosophical basis for his future works and even for his world-view, and his interest in classical Greek spirit and ideals – Hellenism, gained a critical aspect through it. His first cultivation began with his lecture "The English Renaissance of Art" (1882) in which he unified artistic taste and Hellenism as: "It is really from the union of *Hellenism*, in its breadth, its sanity of purpose, its *calm possession of beauty*, […] the passionate colour of the romantic spirit, that springs the art of the nineteenth century in England […]" (Wilde, 1913: 112; my emphasis). His belief in the new expression of beauty in English was so provoking that he saw this new spirit as the revival of English art by resembling it to the Renaissance.[75]

In Wilde's stance, there were different influential names, so it would be proper to say that Pater was not the only one. John Ruskin was the other English art critic who created an impact upon Wilde; nevertheless, Pater and Ruskin were in disaccord with the "preoccupation" of human form in an artwork, subject of art and its function (Ivory, 2007: 519). Wilde blended both Ruskin's idealism and Pater's

Aesthetic theory with each other by striking one's strong points against another's to form his unique artistic taste. Wilde as an aesthete was against art's usefulness contrary to what was stated by Ruskin about art's "utility" in *Modern Painters* Volume I, he negated the idea in the lines of "The Decay of Lying," "[A]rt never expresses anything but itself" (Wilde, 2007e: 938). For Ruskin, it was "[…] not a vain devotion of the lives of men," and had "[…] functions of usefulness addressed to the weightiest of human interests," on the other hand, for Wilde, art refused "the burden of the human spirit" and developed "purely on her own lines" (Ruskin, 1891:5; Wilde, 2007e: 938).

He preferred to be drawn by the ecstasy of art and beauty for he found art as a medium through which a man could be aware of his "perfection" (Wilde, 2007d: 995). He was fond of artistic impression and aesthetic sense reflected by art's own self, and also, the "incomparable and unique effect" felt by fine art (Wilde, 2007e: 937). In "The Critic as Artist," it was stated that "It is to the soul that art speaks […]," and also, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil Hallward, as an artist expressed correspondingly what he had felt via art: "The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid that I have shown in it the secret of my own soul" (Wilde, 2007d: 1004; 2008: 8). Art, as worded above, was the ultimate and ideal celebration of soul's energy. Wilde celebrated "art's supremacy over life," his view completely restrained realism and modern forms of art, since they were "vulgarising"; art's "abstract decoration" revealing "imaginative and pleasurable work" was the ultimate motive in aesthetics, but if art's subject matter became something "useful or necessary to us," then it deviated from "the proper sphere of art" (Wan, 2011: 713; Wilde, 2007e: 927-29). Thus, in here, he was closer to Pater not to Ruskin in matter of aesthetics; in fact he was entirely opposed to Ruskin's view of useful art. John Ruskin's "art-conscious" had a moral perspective; in *Modern Painters*' second volume he approached Aestheticism by beginning to call "Theoretic" instead of "Aesthetic," and in the "Theoretic faculty" he found "moral perception and appreciation of ideas of beauty" (Ellmann, 1988: 46; Ruskin, 1906: 11-13). Wilde, in contrast, repudiated orienting one's action morally – to be good or evil – in a work of art; "puritan morality" had no place in Wilde's aesthetic view of art (Quintus, 1980: 563; 569). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s Preface, he remarked that "An ethical

sympathy in an artist is an unpardonable mannerism of style," he had to be in search for creating beautiful things, not to be a part of the mechanisms of decision-making that set social standards for proper or improper behaviours (Wilde, 2008: 3). Richard Ellmann, an autobiography writer of Oscar Wilde, told that Wilde approached Ruskin's and Pater's doctrines differently and moulded them into his own:

> *Though both Ruskin and Pater welcomed beauty, for Ruskin it had to be allied with good, for Pater it might have just a touch of evil. […] Ruskin spoke of faith, Pater of mysticism, as if for him religion became bearable only when it overflowed into excess. Ruskin appealed to conscience, Pater to imagination. Ruskin invoked disciplined restraint, Pater allowed for a pleasant drift. What Ruskin reviled as vice, Pater caressed as wantonness.* (1988: 47)

Wilde's "spiritual guidance" was Ruskin, but Pater's *The Renaissance* had a great impact upon him; in *De Profundis* he spoke of that "golden book" emphasizing its "strange influence over [his] life" (Ellmann, 1988: 47; cited in Ivory, 2007: 519; Wilde, 1905: 30). That "strange influence" was so tempting that even sometimes Wilde became more aesthete than Pater. By rejecting view of Pater on art's form, he gave priority to "the subjective experience of the artist" rather than sharing "those experiences" (Wood, 1915: 908). Nonetheless, it would be fair to mention that Pater and Wilde were in agreement in instantaneous effect of art; Pater in his Conclusion in *The Renaissance* remarked that "Experience, already reduced to a swarm of impressions […] those impressions of the individual mind […] that each of them is limited by time," Wilde similarly told in "The Critic as Artist" that "Art is a passion and, in matters of art, thought is inevitably coloured by emotion, and so is fluid rather than fixed, and, depending upon fine moods and exquisite moments" (1888: 248-49; Wilde, 2007d: 1004). The one who was into the art could get the pleasure of those "fine moods" and "exquisite moments," while impressions were enhancing the experience of the individual. Wilde posited art as "the secret of life" in "The English Renaissance of Art," later he shared that view more extensively in "The Critic as Artist"; for him, art had access to soul, we could feel and go for everything without hurting the soul via art, and it was there for "everything" we were in search because art did not "hurt" (Wilde, 1913: 155; Wilde, 2007d: 995).

In his works, he concentrated on art-criticism as a part of artistic creation. He believed that being a form of art, criticism was also "creative and independent" (Wilde, 2007d: 982). In view of the highest criticism, a critic while interpreting the

work of art were completing the parts which might have been left "void, or not understood, or understood incompletely" by the artist (Wilde, 2007d: 986). It was not only the work of art exposed to criticism but also "beauty" was in the process of art-criticism. While filling the "void" parts and driving his own resolutions, in fact, the critic created his own work of art by embracing the beauty that contributed to creation "its universal and aesthetic element," also, "makes the critic a creator in his turn, and whispers of a thousand different things which were not present in the mind of him[76]" (Wilde, 2007d: 986). In "Pen, Pencil and Poison," he pre-exemplified his art-critic as Thomas Griffiths Wainewright who had never neglected that "art's first appeal is neither the intellect nor to the emotions, but purely to the artistic temperament" (Wilde, 2007c: 951). Wainewright, as an art-critic, put his emphasis on the impressions got through a work of art; to weigh his opinions accurately and to experience a unique "taste" he preferred to be guided by the individual impressions gained in his interaction with work of art (Wilde, 2007c: 951). Hence, an art-critic in the production of the highest criticism ought to have returned to his impressions for the best result.

2.2.2. Wilde and Morality

Fin de siècle[77] (end of the nineteenth century) hosted two significant movements: an intellectual-art movement, Aestheticism and a literary movement, Decadence. Those French originated movements had immoderately influenced Victorian literary world. Though it might be seen that two were separated and must be considered within their categories, they were always mentioned together due to their common elements, such as "the insistence on the autonomy of art," and "a disgust with bourgeois philistinism and utilitarianism"[78] (MacLeod, 2006: 1). The argument of the movements were centred on "anti-conformist" view of life, they both challenged the artificial and tried to purify art and literature from materialistic culture (Denisoff, 2007: 32). Owing to the fact that aesthetes' praise of the forms of beauty over other values and Decadents' reversing the traditional values were comprehended as "lacking of moral concerns" (Iacob, 2015: 66). The "morally lacking" image in Aestheticism and Decadence was so *avant garde* for Victorian

society that the works of those writers related to both movements were "condemned" (Denisoff, 2007: 31). Oscar Wilde was one of those writers, he was both associated with Decadence and Aestheticism, besides being blamed for moral decay. Wilde's only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was one of them that criticized for being immoral, inappropriate and decadent, as a result of this, he felt a need for writing a preface in which he strongly stressed his aesthetic concerns. He supported the idea that "Aesthetics are higher than ethics," it was because Aesthetics "make life lovely and wonderful, fill it with new forms, and give it progress" while Ethics "make existence possible" (Wilde, 2007d: 1015). Conducting personal behaviours as right or wrong only provided existence in society, whereas experiencing beauty helped a person recognize himself. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry revised the idea of Wilde as: "Experience was of no ethical value […] Moralists had, as a rule, regarded it as a mode of warning, had claimed for it a certain ethical efficacy in the formation of character […] But there was no motive power in experience" (Wilde, 2008: 52). Lord Henry followed Wilde's own principle in "The Critic as Artist," his words were signifying the quality of the experience of a lived moment unthinking its moral stand. Wilde always suffered from accusations of immorality and was exposed to defamation of Victorian people in his defence of art. His sexual life even was seen as "decayed" for being a decadent writer; his literary career was interrogated in detail, sometimes his works were analysed word by word, to demonstrate his immoral life. However, Wilde tried hard to introduce his philosophy and to disregard the backbreaking comments of the society by clarifying his aesthetic attitude over and over again. It was his Preface in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* in which he resisted and held on to his aesthetic views. In the Preface he responded to the ones who found his book as immoral: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." (Wilde, 2008: 3). Through his words, he sought to refer to his ideas in "The Critic as Artist," in his critical essay he declared art as unethical quoting as: "All art is immoral" (Wilde, 2007d: 995). For him, art's immorality was "for the sake of emotion" in spite of society's "dreadful" ideals; evoking "beautiful sterile emotions" were the primary concern of art but this was not forgivable within the conservative social ideals (Wilde, 2007d: 995-96). Also, C.E.M. Joad held a similar attitude towards morality in art, and said that:

"Writers who seem decadent are not immoral; the authors of books in which morality is 'loose' are not decadent" (cited in Goldfarb, 1962: 372). Additionally, Wilde defined a purposeful work of art, which was regarded as morally perfect by public, as "unhealthy work of art": "An unhealthy work of art," he said "is a work whose style is *obvious*, old-fashioned, and common, and whose subject is *deliberately* chosen, not because the artist has *any pleasure* in it, but because he thinks that the public will pay him for it" (Wilde, 1915: 38; my emphasis). In the creation of a work of art, he highlighted the importance of the artistic spirit both for artistic impression and for pleasure gained through art's personality regardless of its moral standpoints.

His doctrines in aesthetics regarding morality separate from art were not convincing enough for Victorian society. Although his expressional preface was the summary of his ideas and theories in his lectures and essays in order to demolish all prejudices before starting the novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was still exposed to cruel comments. Wilde defended his work which was reviewed as "poisonous book" and his point of view on morality as follows:

> *As for what the moral is, your critic states that it is this – that when a man feels himself becoming "too angelic" he should rush out and make a "beast of himself!" I cannot say that I consider this a moral. The real moral of the story is that all excess, as well as all renunciation, brings its punishment, and this moral is so for artistically and deliberately suppressed that it does not enunciate its law as a general principle, but realises itself purely in the lives of individuals, and so becomes simply a dramatic element in a work of art, and not the object of the work of art itself.* (Hart-Davis, 1962: 263)

Victorian moral ideals were described as "the noblest recorded in history" by Anthony Kenny, in spite of the false practices of the British society (1992: 223). The corruptive society of the age clung so firmly to their codes that they were unaware of their decay within themselves. Encouraging chastity and avoidance of committing sin and crimes were some of the "duties" of an individual; however, Wilde saw it as a vain struggle when "self-development" was at issue. In the words of Lord Henry, he put it into discussion as:

> *People are afraid of themselves, nowadays. They have forgotten the highest of all duties, the duty that one owes to one's self. Of course they are charitable. They feed the hungry and clothe the beggar. But their own souls starve, and are naked.* (Wilde, 2008: 18)

Wilde's words were pointing at contradictory characteristics of social and moral values in Victorian Era; nonetheless, his aim was not to improve Victorian morality via criticism, it was to show the deficiency of the society while actually boasting

about its righteousness. In another one, he raised a question about duplicity: "And what sort of lives do these people, who *pose as being moral*, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the *hypocrite*." (Wilde, 2008: 128; my emphasis). Wilde, as a member of Victorian society, had suffered from its strict codes and expectations of Victorian society. In the minds of Victorians, there were no place for alternative ideas; disallowing everything which was conflicting with the mainstream consciousness, the society intended to form a dogmatic group.

Being one of the prominent names of aesthetics, Wilde always avoided linking life and art with each other, for the reason that art had its own independent spirit; if there was some kind of relation, so it was not art that imitated life, life imitated art. That was because the "energy of life" was constantly sought for an expression which could be obtained from multifarious forms of art (Wilde, 2007e: 936). He was strict in his theory and resolute enough to hold onto his stance that even in his trials he did not compromise his aesthetic principles. When he was accused of being a sodomite, Edward Carson, in defence of John Douglas the Marquess, presented different literary pieces including Wilde's own to prove the relation between his homoerotic works and his tendency to commit sodomy (Wan, 2011: 716). However, in the trial, he said that "it is impossible for a man of letters to judge a piece of writing than from its fault in literature," and he added that he "couldn't criticize a book as if it was a piece of actual life" (cited in Wan, 2011: 718). Since, he strongly defended in "The Decay of Lying," "Art finds her own perfection within, and not outside of, herself. She is not to be judged by any external standard of resemblance" (Wilde, 2007e: 933). Art must not be liked "rationally," like Wilde did, it must be loved "beyond all other things in the world," completely eluding the reason (Wilde, 2007d: 1005).

To conclude, Wilde had completely adapted his aesthetic theory to his life and art. He was influenced by many names including Plato, Ruskin, and Pater; however, he was sometimes more aesthete than Pater, more Romantic, and more Hellenist than others. His over-emphasis of art's beauty made him regret about his adoration of art from time to time. For William Chislett, his sacrifice of "his life for sensationalism and for theories," vitiated his life and art (1915: 363). In his letter *De Profundis*, he confronted that "I must say to myself that I ruined myself, and that

nobody great or small can be ruined except by his own hand" (Wilde, 1905: 9). This confession was not only an evaluation of Wilde's life but also a manifestation of his broken stamina. His search of perfection through art was precluded by Victorian society and prevented him from getting pleasure in the process of his self-development.

2.3. ENCHANTMENT OF YOUTH AND BEAUTY: THE NOTIONS OF THE BEAUTIFUL AND THE SUBLIME IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

A beautiful body perishes, but a work of art dies not.

– Leonardo da Vinci[79]

What discipline, what precision of thought was expressed in that outstretched, youthfully perfect physique!

– Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*[80]

The late 1800s (1889-1895) get most of its provoking character[81] from Oscar Wilde's modifications of literature and life. His high taste in art, extravagant lifestyle and attendant spirit painted the late 1800s and created an engrossing portrait of him – that was always polemical. Interestingly, Victorian society and Wilde have an intertwined relation in which Wilde mocks Victorian sensibility and the Victorians reciprocate by harshly criticising him. Though he is not the most "just" in the late nineteenth century society, he is surely a transformative and avant-garde figure with his art and genius. Oscar Wilde's aesthetic exploration and the process of artistic creation in his variety of works including "The Critic as Artist," "The Decay of Lying," "Pen, Pencil and Poison," now become the intellectual setting of his only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. His interest in stories of portraits and images encouraged him to form his stimulating hero, Dorian Gray (Ellmann, 1988: 293). His novel has been analysed and reviewed considerably since its publication as a novel in 1891. His characters – Dorian Gray, Basil Hallward, and Lord Henry Wotton – have even been associated with his private life and real personas, despite his defence of art for its own sake. His style in the novel deconstructs external and internal forces by uncovering what is hidden and pointing at what is on the surface, additionally, it evaluates the authentic and the unctuous while boldly diverting the indispensable and

the dispensable in the relation of body and soul. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a written declaration of an individual who explodes the public opinion to establish the new and celebrates the value of art through his own martyrdom. This chapter will review Dorian Gray's body and his perplexity within the context of the beautiful and sublime by touching upon the classical male beauty and the influence of Lord Henry and Basil in his self-development.

The Picture of Dorian Gray opens in a fabulous studio in which fine perfumes of roses, lilacs and pink-flowering thorn could be smelled on a beam of summer light and oriental décor enriches the pleasurable moments (Wilde, 2008: 5). In these moments, Basil Hallward, the artist, is completing the portrait of a beautiful young man called Dorian Gray. The novel is the story of this young beauty's development that will be completed concurrently with the final stroke on the portrait. Throughout the novel, Dorian Gray's unspoiled beauty and youth will engage the attention of both Basil and his hedonist friend Lord Henry. They bring Dorian to his own grief by manipulating his thoughts and desires on youth and beauty. The young protagonist falls in love with his own beauty in Basil's work of art and it is the instant at which he recognises his potential. Worried that his youth and beauty will be faded in time, Dorian curses his portrait through a kind of Faustian pact in which he believes his beauty and youth will be eternal in exchange of his soul. In a fit of madness, he fixes his age and extraordinary beauty endlessly in the portrait while his soul will bear the burden of his curse. In a few weeks, Lord Henry enhances his influence on Dorian and drags him into the new Hedonism – a philosophy that promises the pursuit of pleasure and emphasises the importance of experience for its own sake. Nevertheless, Dorian's growing interest in Hedonism and Narcissism cause his isolation: he firstly loses his lover Sibyl Vane, a young actress who represents fine art for Dorian, kills herself after their broken relationship; thereafter he causes the death of James Vane – the brother of Sibyl Vane, and Basil, his own creator. As the time goes by, his legendary beauty leads him to his own end, he cannot bear his decaying soul reflected on his portrait and stabs the portrait, and thus, fantastically murders himself in the end. The spell of the portrait is broken: the bizarre tie between Dorian's corporeal beauty and the portrait's internal force which has been continual from the first moment, now, ends.

Oscar Wilde's novel aims not to hold a moral lesson – like his poems, plays, and stories – instead it is for the sake of that moment, for the unique and instantaneous artistic taste got from it. The novel explores the earthly pleasures, intense desires, the process of creation and the mental condition of a human from a perspective of Aesthetics. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is not simply a story of a young boy that serves as an antithesis to Victorian morality and society via the theme of sin; Wilde's philosophical study on aesthetics and ethics constitutes the entire intellect of the novel. Considering all, the chapter attempts to clarify Dorian's external and internal motivations by reading and referring to the notions of *the beautiful* and *sublime* in the works of Kant and Burke.

2.3.1. On Beauty

Beauty is admirable. It attracts the attention, pleases the senses, and appeals to the eye. When something or someone is beautiful, the thing or the person captivates the experiencer, holds his interest of sight and hearing at the beauty, and also, gives delight through that beauty. Therefore, the beautiful object – including human body, art (music, sculptures, paintings, and etc.), animals, and flowers – is beloved, and even in some cases it is a thing to be worshipped.

The Classical idea of beauty and the beautiful in Ancient Greece are always associated with "harmony," "symmetry," and "moderation" (Eco, 2010: 37). The beautiful illustrations of Gods and Goddesses of their mythology have given a unique characteristic to the figures that makes them celebrate their "noble simplicity" and "calm grandeur" in "pose and expression" (Eco, 2010: 47). Nude or half-clothed statues that arouse erotic senses and display shameless bodies of elegance and symmetry of form presumably come to our minds when the notion of beauty is thought in Ancient Greece. Apart from female beauty, male beauty in Greece has femininity in him. The beautiful Greek boy is depicted as "beardless," "frozen in time," and always "desired" (Paglia, 2001: 114-5). His naivety and youth are given through small sexual organs and an angelic face; these artistic expressions are the reason that he is being admired. Sigmund Freud explains the situation as:

> *Among the Greeks, where the most manly men were found among inverts, it is quite obvious that it was not the masculine character of the boy which kindled*

> *the love of man; it was his physical resemblance to woman as well as his feminine psychic qualities, such as shyness, demureness, and the need of instruction and help.* (cited in Paglia, 2001: 115)

The characteristics of the beautiful and young Greek boy image could easily be traced in Wilde's protagonist, Dorian Gray. Dorian's youthful beauty is an influential matter for art, a strong whirlpool which swallows all the characters – it drags Basil into death, charms Lord Henry and Sibyl Vane – and also, it delivers a solid aesthetic experience. Dorian's beauty is a formulation of ancient Greek philosophy combining external and internal expressions of beauty or else holding proportion and harmony combined. For this reason, though his harmony is ruined in the existence of the portrait, it becomes the central point of discussion in this chapter: Dorian's ideal beauty is an objectified pleasure that the characters in the novel hold onto. His naïve beauty is the motivation of Basil, Lord Henry, and Sibyl Vane. Dorian is in search for youth not for his beauty, which will be later discussed in this thesis as *the sublime*.

From the first moment, Dorian's "extraordinary personal beauty" is associated with iconic time-honoured male beauties, such as Adonis, Narcissus, Antinous (*Antinoüs*) (Wilde, 2008: 5). Dorian's pose has "the air of a young Greek martyr" as the beautiful Greek boys have always been considered "victim[s] of nature's tyranny" (Wilde, 2008: 18; Paglia, 2001: 114). His fragile beauty is adored by Basil and Lord Henry as if they are viewing a precious jewel or the God's gift: "Yes, he was certainly *wonderfully handsome*, with his *finely-curved scarlet lips*, his frank blue eyes, his *crisp gold hair* […] All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's *passionate purity*" (Wilde, 2008: 17; my emphasis). Each word is woven with admiration of Greek ideal beauty; the depiction of Dorian is obviously akin to Narcissus' delicate beauty: "His hair worthy of Bacchus or Apollo / His face so fine, his ivory neck, his cheeks / Smooth, and the snowy pallor and the blush […]" (Ovid, 2008: 63). His posture is not different from Adonis' lovely physique and dignified manner: "[…] this young Adonis, who looks as if he was made out of ivory and rose-leaves" (Wilde, 2008: 6). His marble Faun[82] form is the production of Wilde's interest in the Classics, especially in Greek, also contributed to his view of beauty. His love of Ancient Greek and his sympathy for Renaissance Italy deliver its seeds throughout the novel combining the art and philosophy of both cultures.

Wilde's aesthetic view of beauty as "the symbol of symbols" generates Dorian's aesthetic sensibility (Wilde, 2007d: 986). His pure beauty is the spirit anticipated in which art could find a new expression. His perfect form is enough to name the beautiful, for Kant "the form of the object" is the subject of *the beautiful*, thus Dorian's objectified physique directly becomes the matter of aesthetics.

Wilde has always been regarded as a Dandy, who is – as it is mentioned before – fond of his self-fashioning, elegance and uniqueness, because of this Dorian is also regarded as the reflective image of his author. Dorian Gray as an influential stunner may share the characteristics of a Dandy by whom he aestheticizes himself, for not working but only existing[83]; however, abiding by the notion of "art for art's sake," he ought to be separated from reality both for being a subject-matter of the artist, and for his beautiful form – he could take in everything that sustains his appearance. Dandies, as Baudelaire affirms, "[…] have no other calling but to cultivate the idea of beauty in their persons, to satisfy their passions, to feel and to think" (cited in Glick, 2001: 147). Baudelaire's thought on the pursuit of desires through the cultivation of beauty motivates Dorian Gray who blends Narcissism and Hedonism in his dandy image. His beauty and desires are boiled down into the "exquisite originality" of dandyism; for instance, Lord Henry contributes to Dorian's interest in New Hedonism in which a man devotes himself to a moment of the experience and renovates his life. The secret of New Hedonism is hidden in some of the chapters of "a book bound in yellow paper" reputed as J.K. Huysmans's *À Rebours*[84] - a kind of "manifesto"[85] (Wilde, 2008: 105; Hartnett, 1977: 367). Dorian takes delight in various "thoughts and passions of men" acquired from Mysticism, scrutinizing perfumes and from interpreting "a real psychology" of them – how "scented pollen-laden flowers" or "sweet-smelling roots" or "aromatic balms" affect men, from losing himself in "Schubert's grace, and Chopin's beautiful sorrows, and the mighty harmonies of Beethoven," from collecting eccentric instruments, and lastly, from exploring jewels and their old stories (Wilde, 2008: 113-4). Moreover, his Narcissism has begun with the first moment that he encountered with his portrait, or as Freud defines: "the moment the infant has a rudimentary awareness of himself" (Treurniet, 2012: 78). Dorian's pride in his own beauty is extended through certain attitudes and adorning himself. His elegant charisma – "Prince Charming" figure – is

admired and loved by not only himself but also fascinates many (Wilde, 2008: 59). Through his portrait, he falls into an indescribable joy and sensuous life:

> *When he saw it he drew back, and his cheeks flushed for a moment with pleasure. A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time. He stood there motionless and in wonder, dimly conscious that Hallward was speaking to him, but not catching the meaning of his words. The sense of his own beauty came on him like revelation.* (Wilde, 2008: 24)

It is his reflection of Narcissus myth, the mirror-like water that gives the awareness of his naïve beauty, so he prefers to consummate his look in every sense. The pleasure he gains from his marvellous image and enhancing the moment of experience via "subtle influences" and "intellectual curiosity" (Wilde, 2008: 112).

Wilde's Dorian symbolizes "the beauty" for the brevity of existence of the characters, in spite of being hypnotic. His "youthful beauty" captivates many, but especially, bewilders Basil Hallward, Lord Henry Wotton and Sibyl Vane. Dorian means more for these people than he thinks: for Basil, he is "the secret of [his] own soul," and his art; for Lord Henry, he is "the most marvellous youth," a new life awaits for new sensations, a property to possess, and the enchanting ancient beauty that enthuses as well as arousing intense feelings; for Sibyl Vane, he is her happiness, her "wonderful lover," her "god of graces," her "spring-time" and the one to be worshipped (Wilde, 2008: 8; 21; 59). Although three of them are moved by his charm, Lord Henry and Basil have a distinct relation with Dorian's precious existence compared to Sibyl Vane. Dorian sees Sibyl Vane as a part of art; her artist identity derives him into the Shakespearian world, her dramatic performance takes his breath away, drags him into pure romance and stirs him with her melodic voice. For him, Sibyl with her "little flower-like face" and "small Greek head" is not only "the loveliest" but also "sacred" (Wilde, 2008: 45-6). Sibyl Vane is a piece of art for Dorian; she is Juliet, Cordelia, Rosalind, Beatrice while for Sibyl he is her awakened consciousness, a break in her innocence and reality in which art is no more than a reflection.

Basil Hallward uses Dorian as a subject through which his art is expressed in a new form; he interprets and forms an abstract image into a perfect visage. Wilde affirms in "The Decay of Lying" that "Art takes life as part of her rough material, recreates it, and refashions it in fresh forms […] invents, imagines, dreams, and keeps between herself and reality […]" (Wilde, 2007e: 929). This is what Basil does

with him; he "recreates" Dorian out of his inspirational beauty, ephemeral youth and stabilizes all that is seasonable in the perfect form of art. Basil and Dorian without having any physical interaction meet merely through the portrait which promises immortality and enthusiasm for both (Mahaffey, 1994: 198). In *Critique of Judgement*, Kant says that the taste got from the representation of an object and how it is formed within you must be independent from the existence of the object in order to name *the beautiful*, and he later adds that "the beautiful is what simply PLEASES us" (2008: 37; 41; original capitalization). Basil finds his self-realization and the form of personal delight in his painting, so Dorian pleases his senses and his portrait reveals the ideal beauty on Basil's mind. Basil says that Dorian's self has given him "an entirely new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style," and he continues "'A dream of form in days of thought:' […] it is what Dorian Gray has been to me" (Wilde, 2008: 12). In his presentation of an "abstract sense of beauty," the painter is deeply involved in the artistic process and is confused by "exquisite joys and exquisite sorrows" (Wilde, 2008: 13; 9). Basil depicts his first moment of the artistic impulse:

> *When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of terror came over me. I knew that I had come face to face with some one [sic] whose mere personality was so fascinating that, if I allowed it to do so, it would absorb my whole nature, my whole soul, my very art itself. […] I have always been my own master; had at least always been so, till I met Dorian Gray.* (Wilde, 2008: 9)

Dorian Gray with bold blue eyes, gold hair, and ivory face is indisputably called as the beautiful in aesthetics; since, for Kant, *the beautiful* is charming – tells that "[…] charm is not merely a necessary ingredient of beauty, but is even of itself sufficient to merit the name of beautiful" – and also, the one with "blue eyes and blond colouring" whereas Burke relates it with "clean and fair," "smooth and polished," "light and delicate" (Kant, 2008: 55; 2003: 54; Burke, 1998: 150; 157). The wonderful face of Dorian is absolutely reflecting the ideal beauty; he may have been iconized by both Kant and Burke with regards to their aesthetic judgements. To watch him gives an aesthetic pleasure for the onlooker just as happened to Gustav Aschenbach,[86] the artist, who watches the perfectly beautiful Tadzio almost every moment and in the presence of him, his mind "[…] quite forgets its proper state and clings with astonished admiration to that most beautiful of all the things […]" (Mann, 2008: 304). Basil, with the same instinct of an artist, would not live

contentedly, if he misses a moment with him; he wants to see Dorian every possible day because he thinks Dorian is definitely essential: "It was delightful to watch him" (Wilde, 2008: 51). Basil's desires in the painting of Dorian's physical beauty, or in other words, abstract passions in a concrete form, have been mirrored by Basil himself artfully. Dorian as "a motive in art" for Basil has reshaped his desires and motivates him to recreate Dorian with strokes of colour (Wilde, 2008: 13).

As a man of thoughts Lord Henry's influence upon Dorian is incontestable, he is constantly noted as the snake in the Garden of Eden. He is the key person that matures Dorian by showing how to exceed Victorian thresholds, to live a sensuous life, and to keep his youth eternal. It is important to note that not only Dorian is under the influence of Lord Henry; conversely, it is Lord Henry who is – *in actual fact* – overjoyed by Dorian's existence. Unlike Basil's artistic contact with Dorian – artwork and artist relation – Lord Henry's excitement is Dorian's promising youth. New passions, new ideas, and new sensations could be discovered via his youth and could strongly penetrate his untouched world. For Lord Henry: "[…] youth is the one thing worth having," and Dorian Gray with his "rose-red youth" owns "the most marvellous" thing in the world (Wilde, 2008: 21; 19; 21). His poisonous effect is to make Dorian "a visible symbol" of New Hedonism (Wilde, 2008: 22). When the portrait is completed, it is Lord Henry's turn to fill its soul by manipulating ideas of premature lad.[87] He has his own world-view indeed; his frank, limitless and marginalized ideas that captivate Dorian's mind and shake the Victorians' tough ground. The moment he encounters with Dorian he certainly decides to study him; like Basil, he is charmed by Dorian's beauty, yet he is moved by his youth:

> *Yes, he was certainly wonderfully handsome […] There was something in his face that made one trust him at once. All the candour of youth was there, as well as all youth's passionate purity. One felt that he had kept himself unspotted from the world. No wonder Basil Hallward worshipped him.* (Wilde, 2008: 17)

Dorian is "too charming" in a hypocrite and decadent society, he has "a beautiful nature" which holds a bold spirit (Wilde, 2008: 17; 15). Lord Henry with his wit and wisdom has sensed that courage and enthusiasm that long before left the Victorian society. He is Lord Henry's blank canvas to paint, and to reflect his own art, as Basil has previously done. When Basil says: "You might see nothing in him. I see everything in him," he is totally mistaken; Lord Henry sees through Dorian, he is the unlived youth of Henry (Wilde, 2008: 13). Most probably, he has discovered a

Hedonistic life very late; this could be the reason of his unfulfilled desires. He is constantly criticizing the Victorian society in a cruel manner and wants to alter some points in his life; nevertheless, he has not so much chance like Dorian. His promising youth has passed long ago and he talks as if he wasted it unconsciously, so it is time to warn Dorian for his "unspotted" youth; he must exploit his life, focus on his own desires without dedicating himself to faithfulness – not devoting himself to a single person, he must live more than one romance, must taste new delights with his curiosity and must experiment on himself. For Camille Paglia: "Dorian is attractive, in the original meaning of the word. He aligns the imagination of others toward himself by inborn magnetic power" (2001: 522). Lord Henry Wotton, like Basil, is dragged by this "inborn magnetic power" that is for both characters an elusive chance to show their talents by passing their souls into Dorian's.

Burke relates beauty with social attractiveness: "I call beauty a social quality; for where women and men, […], they inspire us with sentiments of tenderness and affection towards their persons; we like to have them near us, and we enter willingly into a kind of relation with them […]" (1998: 89). As it is mentioned by Burke, Dorian is such kind of a beauty that people, especially referring to Lord Henry, Basil and Sibyl Vane, want to be with him all the time, close to him to be inspired and actuate their emotions, creativity, passions and ideas in his presence. The objectified beauty of Dorian is an indispensable motive for the pursuit of aesthetic pleasure; as it is told before, three main characters of the novel cannot resist Dorian's charm while Dorian – though he is dealing with his self-fashioning – concerns merely for his youth.

2.3.2. On Sublime

The Greek aesthetic ideal depicts the beautiful boy as sacred, untouched, carved out of marble, or created with "an aristocratic fashion"[88] (Paglia, 2001: 118). He is an artful phenomenon that carries soft curves, an ivory skinned body, feminine naivety, a graceful head and a noble air. He is "a celestial visitor from the Apollonian realm" in which "simplicity," "purity," and "unity" are part of the form of beauty (Paglia, 2008: 115; 97). His beauty is completed with youth: his purity is the result

of his boyhood and his delicacy is of his youthful beauty. Dorian Gray, in the cult of Greek beauty, is the beautiful boy of the novel: he is elegant in his physical form and beautiful in his nature. His "marble Faun" like of a posture gives him an unspoiled physical beauty that is steady and stabilized in time: "The beautiful boy, suspended in time, is physicality without physiology" (Paglia, 2001: 117). His beauty is "frozen in time," it needs to resist to the flowing of time and must not be moved by transient concepts (Paglia, 2008: 114). Dorian's "rose-white boyhood" challenges the reality with the mysterious power of the portrait, stabilizes his youthful beauty, but perplexes the seen and the unseen through his indescribable secret. His anxiety for keeping his youth eternal is the strong influence of Lord Henry. At the moment of their encounter, Lord Henry is fascinated by his marvellous beauty, yet he manipulates his thoughts on ephemeral youth:

> *Some day, when you are old and wrinkled and ugly, when thought has seared your forehead with its lines, and passion branded your lips with its hideous fires, you will feel it, you will feel it terribly. Now, wherever you go, you charm the world. Will it always be so?... You have a wonderfully beautiful face, Mr. Gray. Don't frown. You have. And Beauty is a form of Genius – is higher, indeed, than Genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or spring-time, or the reflection in dark waters of that silver shell we call the moon. It cannot be questioned. It has its divine right of sovereignty […] When your youth goes, your beauty will go with it, and then you will suddenly discover that there are no triumphs left for you […] Ah! realize your youth while you have it. Don't squander the gold of your days […].* (Wilde, 2008: 22)

A part of his speech is a warning to be aware of his seasonable youth: in such a limited time he must be in search for "news sensations" by rejecting "the false ideals" of Victorian age (Wilde, 2008: 22). What Lord Henry foreshadows about youth is actually based on the confrontation of time; when "the thief of time"[89] promotes Dorian, he leads him to react to God's order. His long speech is a sermon for Dorian, and he is so much impelled by Lord Henry's bold words that he reveals a crazy wish to freeze his beauty in time. Though many critics relate Dorian's trouble with his youthful beauty, in this part, beauty and youth are separated in the frame of aesthetics: *the beautiful* and *the sublime*, and it is set that the primary concern of Dorian Gray is not his beauty but his youth which triggers the "gothic sublime effect."

The effect of *sublime* could be discussed within Narcissism and New Hedonism, since they attend the self-consciousness of Dorian for whom youth is the

highest quality of his existence. It is a social force through which he is able to deceive the society and to enjoy all kinds of aesthetic feelings. In *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, Kant – previously told – defines *sublime* as: "[…] the sublime arouses awe and admiration, whereas the beautiful arouses joy" (2003: 18). His beauty fascinates many and gives aesthetic pleasure to the viewer; however, his desire to maintain his youth unspoiled certainly belongs to *the sublime* because youth brings "admiration" with its chance to explore new sensations in its golden days while it gives "awe" and terror with its devastating consequences in the process – that is symbolised by the change in the portrait. The portrait, since it was uncovered and presented to its owner, has had an inexplicable effect mixed with joy and amazement on the beholder. It is the beginning and the end of everything: Dorian signs his Faustian pact for immortality and murders himself due to his incontrollable desire for that immortality. More obviously, Lord Henry speaks to him about the bitter reality of age, how it changes triumphs into painful memories, how it exchanges joy of soul and beauty of body with sorrows and ugliness. When Lord Henry says: "Youth! Youth! There is absolutely nothing in the world but youth!" (Wilde, 2008: 23), Dorian hereafter begins to think about his precious youth that will leave him soon, but never disappears in the portrait:

> *I am jealous of everything whose beauty does not die. I am jealous of the portrait you have painted of me. Why should it keep what I must lose? Every moment that passes takes something from me, and gives something to it. Oh, if it were only the other way! If the picture could change, and I could be always what I am now!* (Wilde, 2008: 26)

If it was possible, every moment would be fixed by Dorian in order to stop the vicious circle of age. The time does not pass in the portrait, it is invariant. May Dorian have the same conditions as of the portrait? Could this be real for him, too? Dorian is indeed conscious of that his youth is for a spring time, it is temporary. Thus, the portrait is not simply an objectification of Dorian's beautiful youth, it has a subtle power: Basil's imitation of youth and beauty bewilders Dorian, makes Lord Henry rethink on age and discovery of new pleasures, and brings out Basil's own artistic ability. Therefore, these three characters have been moved differently by the portrait; their devotion to beauty and youth passes into obsession. When Basil and Lord Henry are driven by aesthetic beauty, yet Dorian is dominated by youth through which he could be in search for new ideas and sensations.

Dorian is referred to the icons of young male beauty; one of them is the mythical figure of Ovid, Narcissus. Like Narcissus, he falls in love with his own reflection and develops an egoistic admiration. His worship of his own physical beauty is to extend his life with an effort to destroy old age completely. Being desperate in his pursuit of youth against the fear of old age and death is the result of "the narcissistic personality" of Dorian: "Because," says Christopher Lash in *The Culture of Narcissism*, "the narcissist has so few inner resources, he looks to others to validate his sense of self. He needs to be admired for his beauty, charm, celebrity, or power – attributes that usually *fade with time*" (1991: 210; my emphasis). He is aware that his charming youth establishes a social force upon the characters of the novel. His repulsion for old age is to keep his people around for earnest company. While he is avoiding decay by old age with the help of certain attempts, he sadly falls into the paranoia of losing his youth. This is what actually serves as *the sublime* in the novel: youth opens up new chances with its optimistic air – admiration; however, old age abolishes all the charm of golden days as the person gets closer to death – awe. By referring to an essay,[90] Fred Botting, also, interprets "age" and "durability" as *the sublime* for it invokes "divinity" and "infinity" just as happened in the gaze of Gothic buildings (2005: 26). His mind is overwhelmed by the reflection of his eternal youth within the portrait. Dorian is lost in the prime of his life. Burke claims that fear is the strongest of passions which "robs the mind" (1998: 101). The protagonist's fear of old age heightens the effect of *the sublime* by threatening his reason and actions.

Paglia affirms that "The beautiful boy dreams but neither thinks nor feels," so Lord Henry and Basil become his parents that guide him in his moral decisions and exploring new pleasures. Lord Henry's ideas on New Hedonism have become the great passions of Dorian. Lord Henry's gift book in a yellow paper reveals the curious secrets of life for Dorian, with the book his brain is troubled, his senses are revived and somehow, he finds a chance to be away from the malady of old age. Now, he lives satisfactorily by filling each moment of his life with refinement. Through "subtle influences" of art, "sensuous life" of perfumes, "marvellous power" of Mysticism and sweetness of music, Dorian lives pleasurably (Wilde, 2008: 112-13). In this sense, Kant defends "enthusiasm" as *the sublime* from an aesthetic

perspective: "[…] enthusiasm is sublime, because it is an effort of one's powers called forth by ideas which give to the mind an impetus of far stronger and more enduring efficacy than the stimulus afforded by sensible representations" (2008: 102). Dorian's youth may reflect the sublime, but also his enthusiasm, as it serves for the joy of it (for Kant, *the sublime* "arouse joy with horror"), is for the feeling of sublime (Kant, 223: 47). He is fascinated by the New Hedonism, but at the same time, he defines it as poisonous: joy with horror in his quest for eternal youth. Despite the warnings of Basil, who is actually the representation of Victorian values, Lord Henry does not take him into consideration in his way to manipulate Dorian. His impact could exactly be the contribution to "Dorian's-becoming-Dorian" and Dorian's recognition of the concepts of desire and desirability (Craft, 2005: 122). In one of the dialogues of Dorian, he admits their confusing influence:

> *Years ago, when I was a boy […] you met me, flattered me, and taught me to be vain of my good looks. One day you introduced me to a friend of yours, who explained to me the wonder of youth, and you finished a portrait of me that revealed to me the wonder of beauty.* (Wilde, 2008: 132)

Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton have definitely influenced Dorian, it is an inevitable consequence for both, since they are reflexively depending on him; nevertheless, it is Dorian's weakness that drags him into the awe and terror of youth. He is flattered by their fancy words, and affected especially by Lord Henry's ingenious speeches and provocative ideas. However, it must be highlighted that his addiction for his youth and his dread of outer degradation in lack of marvellous youth are the motives of Dorian's self-transformation. He is developed by the joy of youth whereas feels distressed when its pain presses too closely reminding him his limited time, it does not give him delight.[91] Suzanne Raitt draws a parallel between the portrait and Dorian in the subject of old age, and explains that the portrait of his old age is terrifying for being the metaphor of inescapability of "biological decay" except for its psychological grounds (2017: 176). Even though old age accords with the characteristics of the sublime,[92] Dorian correlates old age with ugliness counter to youth's beauty. In his view of age, he comes closer to Burke's idea on ugliness for evoking terror (1998: 153). Dorian escapes from the idea of dying as an old and ugly man, in his growing obsession, he highly performs for his innocence and beauty of the fragile youth. Consequently, he has achieved to suspend his youth in time via the power of the portrait, when he enters a room, he still astonishes and his pure face

demolishes all the facts and beliefs: “They [the people in a room] wondered how one so charming and graceful as he was could have escaped *the stain of an age* that was at once sordid and sensual” (Wilde, 2008: 108; my emphasis). Dorian Gray with a mask of delusion could be hidden from “the stain” of an old age, and he pretends to sterilize his physical beauty from the awe of ugliness and terror of biological decay.

Finally, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with its complex character designs, multifarious themes and pioneering ideas is an artful Late-Victorian novel from a pen of Decadent aesthete. One of the most popular characters of the literary world, Dorian has been moved by his precious youth and titillated chiefly Lord Henry, Basil and Sibyl Vane, and everyone by his heavenly beauty. The chapter has studied two intermingled themes of the novel: beauty and youth from an aesthetic perspective. Using the ideas of Kant and Burke on *the beautiful* and *the sublime*, two themes of the novel are conformed to these aesthetic notions. Dorian’s beauty is definitely related to the idea of *the beautiful* for it arouses pleasant sensations and joy on the beholder whereas *the sublime* displays itself in the form of youth for exciting astonishment with terror. Although Dorian develops an interest in his physical beauty, he is moved by his youth. His desire to keep his youth frozen by challenging the natural order is actually what drags him into action. Contrary to general belief, in Dorian’s mind youth serves for beauty, without it he could never feed his soul and body considering that “The sublime *moves*, the beautiful *charms*” (Kant, 2003: 47).

CHAPTER THREE
WOUNDED BEAUTIES: THE HOLLOW BODIES OF *PASSING* AND *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

Well, – yes, well, it must be told; I am afraid of myself, afraid of that horrible sensation of incomprehensible fear.

– Guy de Maupassant, "HE?"[93]

Can a history of ugliness be seen as the symmetrical foil of a history of beauty?"

– Umberto Eco, *On Ugliness*[94]

Unconsciously he defines for me the lines of a fresh school, a school that is to have in it all the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body – how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and have invented a realism that is vulgar, an ideality that is void.

– Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*[95]

The feelings of love and pleasure aspire to the idea of beauty and the beautiful objects, horror and dislike belong to the idea of ugliness. Two feelings are compared and always put as a contrast to each other. Ugliness is regarded as "everything that beauty is not" (Chinchilla, 2012: 323). This belief directly situates ugliness as aesthetically not valuable while constituting a common belief on beauty that is invaluable and qualified for its pleasing sensorial features. The terror of ugliness is just as effective as beauty that generally it is avoided and related with the negative actions and images: evilness, crimes, moral decays, scars, death, deformity, darkness and etc. Ideas about ugly things evoke disgust, fear, and uneasiness whereas beautiful things are graceful, harmonious, and admirable. Beauty is "balance" and "pleasurable" (Chinchilla, 2012: 326). The concept provides consistency to harmony and arouses positive feelings in the subject. On the other hand, the unbalanced nature of ugliness is unsatisfying for the subject; ugly objects are considered within the same category of mistakes, otherness, deficiency, and undesirability, due to which ejection is unavoidable. In truth, the ugly contributes to order, its presence completes the overall beauty; however, especially for the members of the society, it advances order when it is eliminated.

Despite the fact that exterior details (size, colour, shape) of an object determine the beautiful, in Classical world, the beautiful is mentioned together with a body in harmony with its soul (Eco, 2010: 45). The ideal perfection is named as *kalokagathia* which is "the union of *kalos* (generically translated as "beautiful") and *agathos* (which is usually translated as "good" but covers a whole series of positive values)" (Eco, 2007: 23). Nevertheless, the ideal perfection is controversial in Nella Larsen's *Passing* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray,* in both novels the characters are torn between their desires and the idealised beauty. The displeasing effect of ugliness irrefutably governs the minds of the protagonists of *Passing* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The inescapability of the general belief in ugliness, which is the complete rejection of an object or form exciting terror, disgust, and uneasiness in the aesthetic experience, leads the characters of both novels to have inner conflicts. Each character is motivated by a different reflection of ugliness: in *Passing* a biracial Clare Kendry's escape is her blackness as a form of ugliness; in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* a naïve young Dorian Gray's refusal is coming of old age herewith death. In the former chapters, the protagonists' problems have been discussed within the perspective of aesthetics. By referring to the definitions of Kant and Burke in the philosophical study of aesthetics, the notions of *the sublime* and *the beautiful* have been applied to the central problems of the characters. In *Passing*, Clare Kendry's attractive white face and delicate posture is of *the beautiful*, while her passing with its astonishment (opportunities got through white supremacy) and terror (the fear of being unmasked) is of *the sublime*; in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian Gray's inspirational youthful beauty and adorability is for *the beautiful*, but his main concern is eternal youth which is *the sublime* by presenting a chance to discover new sensations (admiration) and reminding its ephemerality (awe). Hence, apart from its enjoyment, the terror of *the sublime* is associated with the loss of whiteness and youth; blackness and old age bring danger and pain[96] in the absence of beauty. *Youth is beautiful*: Dorian tries to suspend his age in time as if he was a "marble Faun" through the power of the portrait which helps him to fulfil his desires. *Fair skin is beautiful*: Clare holds her skin as an armour to gain opportunities out of it, and Irene is with her to fulfil her desires for her black soul. Clearly, this chapter will review the relation between "Dorian – the portrait" and "Clare – Irene" by

considering the disharmony of these characters' bodies and souls in their journey towards an idealised beauty.

Nella Larsen's *Passing* is the story of two biracial women who use their fair and olive skins as an advantageous step for passing. The story explores how these women transgress racial and sexual boundaries by altering the common beliefs. The mobility of passing enables legally designated black women to move to the sphere of dominant race for its privileges and comfort. Taking the advantage of invisibility of race in blood, Clare, whose blood and appearance are "nearly all white", passes constantly to the white world (Kaplan, 2007: 88). Irene, on the other hand, occasionally passes by still preserving her Harlem soul and representing her black people. The motive of Clare is the freedom in the white world in which security and opportunities are desirable:

> *It, they, made me what I am today. For, of course, I was determined to get away, to be a person and not a charity or a problem, or even a daughter of indiscreet Ham. Then, too, I wanted things. I knew I wasn't bad-looking and that I could 'pass.' [...] You had all the things I wanted and never had had. It made me all the more determined to get them, and others. Do you, can you understand what I felt?* (Larsen, 2003: 26)

Her delicate ivory skin, her caressing smile and her "gleaming" dark eyes are provocative enough to pass. She could not let one drop rule hinder her ideal beauty in her prestigious journey. Clare's "the blonde beauty out of fairy tale" is a social pass for breaking away from what is familiar because as Thomas Aquinas suggested "proportion, integrity and *claritas* (clarity)" are required for beauty (Larsen, 2003: 75; Eco, 2010: 100). Nevertheless, when it is aesthetically viewed, blackness is mostly seen as a mark of ugliness, the spot of blackness is a kind of abnormality of the skin.[97] Therefore, the so-called freedom in white society has an enthralling force in Clare's mind. Judith Butler claims that passing is: "[…] the dream of metamorphosis, where that changeableness signifies a certain freedom, a class mobility afforded by whiteness that constitutes the power of that seduction" (2007: 420). Being captivated by the idea of passing and moved by her good-looking, Clare imprisons her fervent black soul in her delicate white body. Ironically, the double-consciousness of passing consistently reminds the inescapability of the soul, Clare – after she re-encounters with Irene – starts to long for Harlem society in which she is free of the burden of her black soul and fear of being discovered. The "innate drama" of Clare – visibly non-black and invisibly non-white – is "pregnant with pathos"

(Hyman, 2007: 93). Clare pays the psychological costs of racism with the disharmony of her body and soul. Her pathos is brought by her desire to keep *the beautiful* (the whiteness) as her material security from which psychological security draws apart. Here, Irene inherits Clare's life of duplicity and solitude . Though it seems that Irene remains in the world of blacks whereas Clare leaves this world after she marries to a white man, it is actually Irene who serves as the soul of Clare. To put it differently, Irene with her Harlem soul mirrors what Clare cannot dare to bear in her white prison.

Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a novel that aesthetically deals with the maturing of a young protagonist, Dorian Gray. His development from innocence to experience is narrated not only with pleasure, passions, heightened individuality but also with multifarious ideas on science, ethics, aesthetics and art. The novel has always been at the centre of many criticisms owing to its "immoral" plot; nonetheless, Wilde's preface is a response to the reviews on the immorality of the story. In this respect he said that, "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book" (Wilde, 2008: 3). Though he defends his story as a kind of "symbol[98]," his protagonist Dorian has always been attacked for his actions. In the former chapters, Dorian Gray is analysed through *the beautiful* and *the sublime* both for his physical beauty and his passions. His marvellous beauty is the subject-matter of Basil's art and Lord Henry's regrets while for Dorian it is a reminder of his ephemeral youth, approaching death. Like the moment of re-encounter of Irene and Clare, Dorian's real story actually begins with the first moment that he sees his portrait. The art of Basil means more than what it represents for Dorian; now, his youth is hidden in the colours of canvas: "How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. But this picture will remain always young. It will never be older than this particular day of June…" (Wilde, 2008: 25). Lord Henry's bitter words about youth infuse terror into the mind of Dorian. Undeniably, Dorian is the beautiful with his "rose-white boyhood," "extraordinary personal beauty," "finely-curved scarlet lips," "frank blue eyes," and "air of a young Greek martyr" (Wilde, 2008: 19; 5; 17; 18). His inspirational beauty is the motive of Basil's art; he recreates Dorian by expressing the idealised moment in his mind and stylizing his curves for delightful experiences. Leonardo da Vinci emphasizes the "painter's power" and tells

that: “The painter is master of all the things that may come to man’s mind, and so if he wishes to see beauties of which he may become enamoured he has power to make them […]” (Wilde, 2008: 178). Basil uses his artistic powers to reflect the inner and outer beauty of Dorian. The portrait moves beyond its creator’s soul and colours, and declares its own autonomy: it is the lively soul of Dorian. His naïve nature may be under the influence of Lord Henry, yet his uncontrolled actions are definitely decaying the soul of the portrait. As the time goes by Dorian starts to be controlled by the power of the portrait. The more he obsesses with his youth, the uglier he gets via poisonous ideas of Lord Henry.

In both American and British literatures, there are numerous stories about doubles and divided selves, such as Robert L. Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Edgar Allen Poe’s “Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Fight with the Double,” and Vernon Lee's (Violet Paget) “Dionea.” Generally, the human duality explores disharmony of body and soul which is mostly the result of the conflict continuing between society’s expectations and individual’s desires. The inevitable consequences of the characters of such stories are often deadly. The torn bodies are unable to succeed themselves in their tragic stories and disappear at unexpected times. Larsen’s *Passing* and Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are among these stories focusing on deadly costs paid by the perplexed protagonists. The tragedies of Clare and Dorian are similar in their longing for a complete soul and body. Though these novels are usually studied from the perspective of Queer Theory[99] – the bisexual relation of Irene-Clare and homosexual relation of Basil-Dorian, the chapter will gather common points of two stories with an analysis of the conditions of the characters from the perspective of aesthetics and race relations in 1920s America. Surprisingly, both novels offer the terror of *the sublime* in the characters’ desires which are “masked” by the beauties of them. Their illusive beauties threaten the perception of the visible and invisible inextricably putting the characters into danger. In the context, the seen and the unseen could be applied as the beautiful bodies of Clare and Dorian, and souls of these characters as Irene and the portrait. Through this schema, it could be claimed that Clare’s and Dorian’s beauty turns into their destroyers when it could not harmonize with their souls. Symbolizing the souls of the characters, Irene and the portrait overcome the seductive beauties of

these bodies. The bodies may overwhelm the beholder with their delicate beauties, but since they are not filled with the souls, it is proper to call them "hollow bodies." If the tragic stories of these hollow bodies are examined comparatively under some titles, the similarity of disharmony in the body and soul will be displayed better.

3.1. THE MASKS OF CLARE KENDRY AND DORIAN GRAY

As it has been told many times, Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray are defined as "ivory" beauties in the novels. Dorian's "scarlet lips," "gold hair," and ivory face find its reflection in Clare's "geranium-red" lips, "pale gold hair," and soft ivory skin (Wilde, 2008: 17; Larsen, 2003: 29). Their beauties constitute of a social effect through which they save their places and statuses in society. Clare is depicted as: "She was generally liked. She was so friendly and responsive, and so ready to press the sweet food of flattery on all." and Irene when she comes closer to Clare she gets under her influence and her thoughts are provoked to change (Larsen, 2003: 80). Similarly, Dorian charms everybody with his youth and beauty when he enters a room, even Basil says "I couldn't be happy if I didn't see him every day." (Wilde, 2008: 12). Both Dorian and Clare dominate everybody with their enchanting beauties; thus, they could easily be after their self-discovery without reflecting their true feelings. Their magical ontologies are hidden behind their "ivory masks," this is what makes their bodies more seductive, the hidden souls that are different from the visible. The mystery of Dorian – his unlimited struggle for youth without hesitation and Clare's secret – her Harlem soul not adaptable to her white skin are dragging people around into a whirlpool. Others are lost in their mysteries.

Clare is a mobile character who subverts the colour caste in both the Harlem community and white society. Back then the white social order had rigid codes on the colour caste restricting the individual to live in a segregated society. Furthermore the white racial category had legally designated a person "black," in condition the person carried any trace of black blood regardless of its ratio.[100] The ones like Clare used passing as a way to alter the image of blackness and to secure their existence in a white society by deceiving the perception. In such cases reality transforms into a fatal secret enabling the passer to move freely; nonetheless, the secret occupies their

consciousness constantly. In this regard Clare's beauty might be an "ivory mask" concealing the truth, but unfortunately, her soul is pressured by the burden of her secret. Likewise, Irene, who is the mirror-image of Clare's hidden Harlem soul, tries hard to keep her mask on her beautiful face: "She couldn't betray Clare, couldn't even run the risk of appearing to defend a people that were being maligned, for fear that defence might in some infinitesimal degree lead the way to final discovery of her secret" (Larsen, 2003: 52). Irene conceals Clare's secret while helping her move a little more freely in her private life. Although it is thought that Clare moves without restricting herself, she is oppressed considerably with the mental weight of passing. In a white society, she feels insecure – for fear of being discovered and trapped by her racial boundary. On the other hand, in Harlem she is secure and "safe" just like Irene. In Clare's words to Irene, she confesses her inner drama: "How could you know? How could you? You're free. You're happy." (Larsen, 2003: 67). The privileges of the white society grant a better life for passing identities; however, the souls of tragic mulattos are not satisfied by materiality. Dorian's trouble is not distinctive from Clare's dilemma. Basil's painting of extraordinary beauty makes Dorian fall in love with his artistic reflection. His Narcissistic obsession with the portrait leads Dorian to be the part of a Faustian pact in which his soul shifts into Basil's art. The supernatural tie between him and the portrait imprison Dorian in his own physical beauty, whereas his crimes corrupt his soul. The way Clare is connected to Irene is similar with the dependence of Dorian on the portrait; they both bear the secrets of these beautiful but hollow bodies. When he looks at the portrait, it reminds him of his deadly secret: "But the picture? What was he to say of that? It held the secret of his life, and told his story" (Wilde, 2008: 79). His crimes, regrets, evil thoughts and Hedonist life are synchronized with the portrait: his soul. This inexpressible relation is what makes Dorian feeling repressed in his physical beauty. Irene and the portrait control powerfully the bodies of Clare and Dorian reminding of their secrets. On the faces of these "helpless and defenceless" tragic, "Amorous Beauties" regardless of their well-fortified masks, an unguardedness, and a strong sense of constant exposure to danger is detected (Eco, 2010: 304).

3.2. THE VISIBLE AND THE INVISIBLE SIDES OF CLARE KENDRY AND DORIAN GRAY

Beauty is originally produced by truth, but in *Passing* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* it is linked to delusion and corruption. Clare's deification and Dorian's beauties are threatening to the eye: in addition to their visible aspect, an underlying invisible part exists, standing for their decaying, divided, and lastly, corrupted souls. In classical terms, where human beings were expected to be complete and in harmony with their souls, in condition of "disharmony" the quality of beauty decreased into "ugliness." This is the case for Clare and Dorian: their souls are not in harmony with their own bodies. In both novels, the characters are in a dilemma. Clare and Dorian try to preserve both their beauties and their souls. Their greed or their corruption may be the cause of their fatally divided bodies. The protagonists ought to decide on living either for their beauties or for their souls. Unfortunately, Wilde and Larsen's "Decandist Beauties" are "[…] permeated by a sense of corruption, swooning, weariness and languor" (Eco, 2010: 346). Such enchanting beauties fail to accomplish their dreams eternally: Clare pays for her decisions; she is neither completely white nor completely black and neither dedicates herself to her family nor to Harlem. She is always passing and mobile in both spheres; this exhausting journey hinders her completeness. Towards the end of the novel, she dreams to begin a new life in Harlem: "I'd do what I want to do more than anything else right now. I'd come up here to live. Harlem, I mean. Then I'd be able to do as I please, when I please" (Larsen, 2003: 106). After their encounter with Irene, her soul in Harlem, she is surrounded by a desire to spend time with her people (black people) with the help of Irene; especially, after their re-encounter, she starts to be in Harlem mostly. She joins in the Negro Welfare League dance, comes to dine with Irene, and attends tea-parties in there. Her encounter with Irene in Chicago, Drayton Hotel has altered her way of life; from now on she will lead a double life. Her soul will be in Harlem whereas her white body is in an affluent white society. Metaphorically, Irene is Clare's black soul, or in other words, Irene "mirrors" Clare's self. The ideas of Jean de Meung and Guillaume de Lorris on mirrors are taken by Umberto Eco in *On Beauty* as: "If you look into a normal mirror you see things as they are, real." (2010:

126). As it is mentioned above, Irene mirrors the reality of blackness and when Clare meets Irene at Drayton, she recognizes the reality of her longing for a black soul. "For I am lonely, so lonely… cannot help longing to be with you again, as I have never longed for anything before […]," in her words, Clare clearly admits her "wild desire" to be completed (Larsen, 2003: 11). Since the first moment with Irene, Clare has been provoked by a tempting desire to be whole again. Irene, as the exotic other, is there to the represent Harlem society, real and unchangeable people. The tragic mulatto Clare is actually rendering the racial and patriarchal expectations of American society which refutes the existence of blacks. For example, Clare's husband John Bellew is an agent for white racist society even tells his abhorrence in a talk about blacks: "I don't dislike them, I *hate* them" (Larsen, 2003: 40; my emphasis). In such a situation, with that kind of understanding, Clare is always left alone. Her black blood weakens her position in a white society. However, Harlem with its exotic otherness enables Clare to act for her desires. Moreover, Irene is exposed to Clare's existence, and held by some inexplicable "allegiance" to Clare (Larsen, 2003: 41). Just as Clare, also Irene is around her: Irene is dragged by the personal beauty of Clare and controversially, Clare demands Irene to satisfy herself by fulfilling her black soul. Although they are separated bodily, they are tied to each other existentially.

Similarly, Dorian lives through his portrait: his soul. His mad wish for suspending his youthful beauty in time later on turns into a dream of a new life: "A new life! That was what he wanted. That was what he was waiting for." (Wilde, 2008: 186). However, the portrait mirrors the bitter reality of his soul. He thinks that he will break his chains after he kills his creator, Basil and will be freer. Contrary to his thoughts, his portrait does not renew itself and gets much uglier. His purity may still be on his face, yet his evilness is directly on the portrait's scars and wrinkles:

> *But the strange expression that he had noticed in the face of the portrait seemed to linger there, to be more intensified even. The quivering, ardent sunlight showed him the lines of cruelty round the mouth as clearly as if he had been looking into a mirror after he had done some dreadful thing.* (Wilde, 2008: 78)

Dorian is reborn with this portrait and decays with the same. His body and soul are divided into two as time progresses. He has started to be nourished via his portrait. The way Irene mirrors Clare, is equivalent for the mirror-effect of Dorian and the

portrait. As Jacque Lacan submits "the identification of the self with an image external to the self provides a basis for identity by substituting the coherent image of the other for a complex, unstable self" (Kawash, 1996: 65). The self is recognized through a mirror image, the psychic response which is reflected from an external image of the body foreshadows the selfhood of an individual. As it was mentioned before, in *Passing*, Clare's mirror-stage is when she recognizes Irene as her ideal "I" at Drayton Hotel, Chicago; in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian's mirror-stage is the first moment of realizing his own beautiful youth with pleasure: "A look of joy came into his eyes, as if he had recognized himself for the first time" (Wilde, 2008: 24). He is now aware of his marvellous youth which gives chance to experience new sensations and pleasures. His ideal "I" hidden in the portrait is what divides him and leads him to corruption. His body is seen as charming as always it is seen; nevertheless, his soul ruins the longer he holds onto it. As it is mentioned in the novel: "Soul and body, body and soul-how mysterious they were! There was animalism in the soul, and the body had its moments of spirituality," it is tantamount for Dorian, his soul is totally the reflection of animalism, and his body is totally the reflection of his fascinating attractiveness (Wilde, 2008: 51). The more he commits crimes, the closer he reserves a sit in the kingdom of Lucifer. His sin writes itself across his own face (Wilde, 2008: 126). What he does directly is reflected to the portrait. "The portrait was to bear the burden of his shame: that was all" (Wilde, 2008: 90). Dorian is unable to unify his soul and body's beauty in a unique form. His animal soul has rotten his beauty and like his portrait, he has decayed. Since, he has depended on his portrait's soul so much that the deeper he holds onto its youth, the closer he gets to his downfall. In both novels, beauty has been admired in the bodies of Clare and Dorian; yet, the concept does not embrace the harmony of the soul and body. Souls are out of their bodies moving and acting independently, Irene and the portrait express Clare's and Dorian's desires and ideal "I". The mirror effect reflects the reality, the reality of blackness and ephemeral youth, from which they are unable to escape.

Lord Henry says that "The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible…" in his dialogue with Dorian (Wilde, 2008: 22). The visible is perceptible to the naked eye that is mostly associated with actuality; on the other hand, the

invisible is out of sight and also, not discernible by mind. Nevertheless, in both novels beauty is "superficial" and illusive; what the eye holds is actually deceptive. Clare with passing and Dorian with the power of the portrait have left their bodies by mocking the visible. The suffering and pain of her dark secret have not touched upon Clare Kendry, she "[…] had remained almost what she had always been" with her fascinating beauty, selfishness and wilfulness (Larsen, 2003: 73). Furthermore, for Dorian Gray, who is obsessed with his beauty and devoted himself to Hedonism, thanks to the magical relation between him and the portrait's self, it seems that there is not any single change in his face. His beauty does not lose its value as the time passes, rather he "[…] had always the look of one who had kept himself unspotted from the world" (Wilde, 2008: 108). Dorian's attractive face has not been spoiled by "the stain of age," he is still inviting and provoking with his mysterious nature. People around Clare and Dorian judge them by external qualities; however, both Clare and Dorian are aware of the fact that they are changed by desires. They may look the same for everybody, but for them they have already been spoiled. Clare points at the change in her by praising the stability of Irene and says: "you're priceless! And you haven't changed a bit" (Larsen, 2003: 66). Moreover, in his dialogue with Basil, he refuses Basil's thoughts on his sameness and adds that: "I am not the same, Harry" (Wilde, 2008: 182). The portrait's influence leads him to the self-transformation and he is conscious of the invisible, like Clare.

3.3. THE BEAUTY AND FEAR OF UGLINESS

Anne Anlin Cheng evaluates the relation between beauty and fear by touching upon the idea of loss: "The fear in the face of beauty is that we may not be able to own it, buy it, give it, or refuse it, even as we are profoundly moved by it" (2000: 210). The tragedy that comes with the concept of beauty is precisely the problem of possessing it. It is like a gift which bears the trouble of owning and not having it. In the absence of beauty, ugliness exists for our characters, and the fear of losing beauty opens up about the threatening side of owning it. Using beauty as a social pass in their present lives will doubtlessly decentre Dorian and Clare and will leave them out of their social environment. The fear of ugliness in the absence of beauty is "hateful"

for it makes things “real,” and “[u]gliness,” Dorian thinks, “was the one reality” (Wilde, 2008: 156). Clare is also afraid of being revealed because almost everybody including her husband Jack Bellew “hate” blacks who give him “the creeps” and are identified as “black scrimy devils” (Larsen, 2003: 40). How much it is related to the idea of ugliness is discussable, but the effect produced by ugliness is a potential evil. Thus, the conjunction of loss of beauty and existence of ugliness is moving Clare and Dorian towards the love of their bodies. Pausanias from Plato’s *Symposium* claims that the one who is attracted to the body more than to the soul is “wicked” (Eco, 2011: 26). In this sense both Clare and Dorian are reprobate with the love of their bodies more than their souls, since through their bodies they expect to hold a higher place in their societies.

Clare and Dorian may be moved by their beauties but the whole constant idea built on the desire to live for youth and freedom seems to destroy their moral consciousness. The protagonists are so blindly devoted to accomplish their desires that they disregard morality. To exemplify, Clare regarding her rebellious attitude says that “It’s just that I haven’t any proper morals or sense of duty, as you have, that makes me act as I do” (Larsen, 2003: 81). Clare acts selfishly and not only does she transgress the racial boundary, but also gender roles. Correspondingly, Dorian, as a dandy of Lord Henry, acts only for his benefits. Lord Henry’s influential manner which is critical about the Victorian society and its vanity has affected Dorian greatly and spoiled Basil: “Yours seem to lose all sense of honour, of goodness, of purity. You have filled them with a madness for pleasure” (Wilde, 2008: 128). Lord Henry’s promoting pleasure and personal experience is something to form the character of an individual apart from rules of moralists. For him, ethical efficacy has no function in experience; therefore, for new experiences and sensations, it had better apply his own passions. Dorian, like Clare is, is unstoppable in his decisions to act.

3.4. MYSTERIOUS DEATHS: IS IT “DEATH BY MISADVENTURE” OR NOT?

Each character are motivated by their best interest. Clare and Dorian long for the missing and the hidden parts in their stories. For Lacan, desire stems from lack

(Fink, 1997: 44). Aims and dreams are motivated by lack. Also, desire is kept in the unconscious and it cannot be destroyed permanently, it leaves perennially its marks behind. Desire is out of "will" and "control," for that reason, it is always complex, conflicting and troublesome (Petry and Hernández, 2010: 67). Just as in the novels, Clare and Dorian are passionate enough to possess freedom and eternal youth, and this makes them "unsafe." Considering all her reasons, Clare has passed for the privileges of whites, but now, she is determined to fulfil her black blood with the Harlem soul. Passing may be a "hazardous business," for Clare however it is worth to take risk, she says: "Why, to get the things I want badly enough, I'd do anything, hurt anybody, throw anything away. Really, 'Rene, I'm not safe" (Larsen, 2003: 81). These words describe her opinions on passing, yet her thoughts on passing will not be any different especially when she dreams moving into Harlem. In this respect, she risks her life to be with Irene. Similarly, Dorian had sold his self for immortality and exchanged his personal beauty obsessively. His enchantment with his own beautiful youth and purity was a difficult struggle to keep up with his self-portrait. Dorian expresses his feelings 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, 2008: 25). As he says above, he gives everything for a frozen youth. He buries his love with Sibyl Vane into scars of the portrait, his appraiser of youthful beauty – Basil into the wrinkles of the portrait and his self-destructive obsession into his mortal body.

Clare and Dorian have desires and fears, their desires are certainly different from one another, yet their fear is same: ugliness. Ugliness as old age and ugliness as blackness are prime movers of the protagonists. The clash between their desires and fears perplex them and divide their souls and bodies. Thus these novels display disharmonious body and souls' corruptive and lethal consequences. The mysterious and sudden deaths of Clare and Dorian are as effective as the recognition of the other in the mirror. The downfall of the protagonists starts with the discovery of their own reflections. These moments of realization find explanation in Irene's free soul of blackness, and the promising soul of eternal youth in the portrait of Dorian. Once these dualities come forth the results become deadly, and paid by their lives. As

Clare says: "[…] everything must be paid for," the troubled characters pay the cost of their desires by their deaths (Larsen, 2003: 71). Each novel has mysterious endings at which the sudden deaths of Clare and Dorian actually shock the reader. In both stories, the protagonists face with death as a result of their quandaries. While they are moving for fulfilling their souls and at the same time not damaging their social quality through their physical beauties, they break into pieces. At the end, the single question may be raised for both: Is it death by misadventure or not? When Clare dies, the story ends with an engrossing comment: "Death by misadventure […]" (Larsen, 2003: 114). This ironic comment on Clare's demise indicates her death's potential underestimation from the point of view of any outsider. Clare's inexplicable death like Dorian's is, successfully designed to enhance the effect of her tragedy. Towards the end of the novel, as her visits to Harlem and especially to Redfield's house increase, the risk of her discovery becomes a probability. During the final party with the Freeland couple, Jack Bellew enters into the room and reveals her secret to Clare's face: "So, you're a nigger, a damned dirty nigger!" (Larsen, 2003: 111). From now on, Clare has no chance but to refute her blackness, to lie in order to conceal it or to act as if she was white; she has to face with the bitterness of reality, death. When John Bellew is enraged with pain, Irene gets closer to Clare, who has still "a faint smile on her full, red lips, and in her shining eyes," and starts to think quietly:

> *It was that smile that maddened Irene. She ran across the room, her terror tinged with ferocity, and laid a hand on Clare's bare arm. One thought possessed her. She couldn't have Clare Kendry cast aside by Bellew. She couldn't have her free.* (Larsen, 2003: 111)

After that moment, what has happened keeps its mystery. In a split second, Clare falls from the window where she stands. Is this a murder, or is it a death of misfortune? That one thought possessing Irene could be inciting for Clare's murder; however, Clare might have committed a suicide as well. In both cases, something must be kept in mind that Irene is the direct or indirect reason of Clare's death. Towards the end of the story, Clare is tempted so strongly by her black soul that she is devoured again by the representation of it, Irene. If Clare's death is unintentional (suicide), the reason may be Irene's free skin or black soul that is constantly reminding Clare of "the right choice" and "hazardousness" of passing. Prior to encountering Irene, Clare was much happier with her fake ivory skin than the

awareness of her black soul. The danger of exposing her black soul is pressed too nearly that Clare decides to end her dilemma after her husband's humiliating words. On the other hand, when it is considered from the perspective of Irene, it may be concluded that Clare's inviting beauty and air had threatened Irene's position in her family and the white society. For instance, Irene begins to be suspicious about a forbidden relation between her husband (Brian) and Clare; due to her sceptical manner, Irene wants to be "tranquil," "[…] for their own best good the lives of her sons and her husband" and Clare to be annihilated (Larsen, 2003: 107). Moreover, Irene's status is weakening by Clare's charm day by day. Even in Harlem, her social position loses its popularity when Clare appears; for example, Dave Freeland and Felise Freeland – popular figures of the society – are among the ones who are attracted by Clare's inspirational pose. Thus, Clare's attractiveness in Irene's environment threatens her directly that she may have decided to act against Clare. Therefore, whatever the reason is, Irene is Clare's murderer; she wants to reset the order by eliminating Clare's existence. Irene has done this either by reminding Clare of the reality – her Harlem soul in a white body which she has always been regretful – or by murdering her in a careless instant for her own safety: "One moment Clare had been there, a vital glowing thing, like a flame of red and gold. The next she was gone" (Larsen, 2003: 111). Her tragic life has ended as a result of her painful soul. Her death resembles to the death of any other amorous beauties in literature, like Ophelia or Juliet:

> *Gone! The soft white face, the bright hair, the disturbing scarlet mouth, the dreaming eyes, the caressing smile, the whole torturing loveliness that had been Clare Kendry. That beauty that had torn at Irene's placid life. Gone! The mocking daring, the gallantry of her pose, the ringing bells of her laughter.* (Larsen, 2003: 111)

Clare's death is obviously the end of her tragedy and the last moments of her life summarizes her attractive and enchanting ontology. Her mysterious death is decorated with beautiful words in order to emphasize her beauty; even her death is beautiful. Nevertheless, it must be underlined that Clare Kendry's death is not an accident or "death by misadventure," it is deliberately done either by Irene or Clare as a result of their personal temptations.

Similarly, Dorian Gray is another tragic character who had faced with a sudden and mysterious death. His decaying soul and obsession over youth has

corrupted his beauty, since his obsession of youthfulness and beauty had become a burden. For spiritual beauty makes the person glamorous; nonetheless, Dorian could not handle his life properly, thus his obsession for beauty lead him to death. In his own dilemma, Dorian thought likewise: "Then he loathed his own beauty, and flinging the mirror on the floor crushed it into silver splinters beneath his heel. *It was his beauty that had ruined him, his beauty and the youth that he had prayed for*" (Wilde, 2008: 185; my emphasis). The mirror-reflection of the portrait and reflection of his soul maddened him and caused him to regret his choices. Being remorseful about his desires, he had to put an end to "the living death of his own soul" (Wilde, 2008: 185). First, his mind was set to destroy the creator of the portrait, Basil. When he killed him, he thought that he would get rid of the burden of it, thus his soul would be reincarnated. However, after Basil's murder, his dreams gradually prepared his tragedy:

> *As it had killed the painter, so it would kill the painter's work, and all that that meant. It would kill the past, and when that was dead he would be free. It would kill this monstrous soul-life, and, without its hideous warnings, he would be at peace. He seized the thing, and stabbed the picture with it.* (Wilde, 2008: 187)

The scene is vividly expressing Dorian's suicide, but when Dorian stabs the portrait, he directly murders himself. At the end, when the servants get into the room after they hear a cry, they find that their master is dead and the portrait still preserves its splendid beauty. The mysterious death of Dorian has appalled everybody, and raised the question about its mysterious occurrence. Like in Clare's death, it is Dorian's soul that has killed him. During the final days before his death, he confesses that the portrait no longer gives him pleasure anymore but brings "melancholy across his passions" (Wilde, 2008: 187). His decaying soul brings him terror and day by day is chocking him. The change in the portrait controls the tension of the novel and towards the end, it sets its own rules by demolishing the desires of Dorian.

In *Passing* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the protagonists' soul have always directed the beautiful bodies by manipulating their desires and dragging them into death. They do not sacrifice from their desires – eternal youth and free black soul – and keep their beauties as the illusive power for their societies; however, that make their survival in the society impossible. Dorian and Clare's transgressing images are destroyed by their souls. Their societies refused the duality of the characters, and unfortunately, Dorian and Clare have been put out of it. Irene as the

soul of Clare and the portrait standing for Dorian's soul resettled their orders in the murder of their traumatic bodies. At the end of both novels the concept of change is demolished and stability is re-established. Following the deaths of Clare and Dorian, *Passing* ends with "Then everything was dark" and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is concluded with "Everything was still" (Larsen, 2003: 114; Wilde, 2008: 188). Thus, chaos has left its place to harmony, stability, and order. The threatening ontologies of Clare and Dorian are removed from the societies they belonged.

To conclude, Nella Larsen's *Passing* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are two different novels from two different eras. The novels are the productions of the Harlem Renaissance and Victorian era, both exploring the corruptive effect of beauty in the tragic bodies of Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray. The fascinating beauties of Dorian and Clare are inspirational and deliver aesthetic pleasures to the viewer. However, their beauties functioned as masks to experience new sensations, new opportunities and as well as, new threats. Their ivory faces resisted change in time. Clare's passing, and Dorian's mad wish do not harm their physical beauties, but their souls are corrupted by their unlimited desires. Their desire to complete the lack, Clare's black soul and Dorian's eternal youth, resulted in their tragedies. Both novels end with the mysterious deaths of "amorous beauties'" accomplished by their own souls. The reflection of Clare and Dorian's souls directly and indirectly murder them. Thus through murder, Irene and the portrait with Clare and Dorian's reflective mirror images, out of chaos reset the order.

CONCLUSION

Beauty or "a beautiful object" has a quality to please our senses and even in some situations, it makes us happier with its existence. In the presence of beauty, a variety of senses, including passion, pleasure, happiness, delight and sometimes envy arouse. As it is pleasing to the eye, the beautiful is always loved, on the other hand, basically, if something or someone is not beautiful, the object or the person is not loved.

Ugliness is – without exception – thought as a contrast image to the idea of beauty. Contrary to the idea of beauty, ugliness excites disgust, horror, rejection, terror and repulsion. Though it may be regarded as an alteration over beauty, ugliness has its own nature which is also exposed to human curiosity. The contrasting nature of both concepts constituted the points in the discussion. In this regard, the problems in Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) are discussed in the light of *the beautiful* and *the ugly*.

Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) explores the ideal beauty as fair skin and the effects of this idea over the social, financial and psychological conditions of black and white people during 1920s. For this reason *Passing* constitutes one of the inspirational works of Harlem Renaissance, in which possible progress and Negro genius were accomplished via black writers' arts and intellectuals. This novel sociologically and psychologically analyses the illusion of a coherent American identity, and showing the dilemma of mulatto individuals. This dilemma is studied through the concepts of *the beautiful* and *the sublime*: the beautiful is the attractiveness of Clare Kendry, whereas the sublime is the concept of passing. In the novel, passing may provide all privileges and rights to those with almost white skins yet legally designated as blacks. Nevertheless, it involves dangers and risks, lest a person could be discovered in the act of passing. On the other hand, Clare Kendry serves as a beautiful figure with her "luminous," "arresting" eyes, gold hair and marble face (Larsen, 1997: 29). Her beauty helps her to challenge both white and black American societies in 1920s. Also, another biracial character called Irene Redfield directly contrasts with Clare through her traditional way of living and conservative decisions to highlight Clare's downfall. In this sense, these biracial

female characters successfully frame family life, black individual life, white society, personal desires and love-hate relations through Larsen's symbolic narration on physical beauty. Additionally, her novel contributes to the inner drama of the tragic mulatto type in a middle-class setting by looking into race, authenticity, authorship, gender and sexuality in a modernist approach.

The other novel that treats the same case as Larsen's *Passing* is Oscar Wilde's only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). The novel examines aesthetic concepts, such as *the beautiful* and *the sublime* again by reflecting Dorian Gary's tragic story. It displays the inner conflict of Dorian's personal beauty and how his obsession over beauty destructs him. In the story, the protagonist Dorian Gray constitutes the ideal beauty with his marvellous youth and enchanting charisma because his physical beauty pleases the senses and eye. On the other hand, his desire to control his marvellous youthful beauty brings astonishment and terror of *the sublime* together. Nevertheless, beauty and youth are separated in the frame of aesthetic notions in this thesis, and it is claimed that Dorian Gray's anxiety is actually his youth which excites the "gothic sublime effect." While his extraordinary beauty charms every single person throughout the novel, Dorian only acts for maintaining his pure youth. To put it differently, Dorian's beauty influences painter Basil Hallward and hedonist Lord Henry; however, the fear of losing youth and facing with ugliness certainly arouses terror for Dorian Gray. As it is done by Nella Larsen in *Passing*, Wilde also projects his aesthetic philosophy, the relation of art and artist, and the desires of the characters via Dorian Gray's symbolic beauty. Therefore, this study compares and analyses these two novels by studying their symbolic beauties' – Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray's – masked desires, fears, and questionable deaths.

Both Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) study the beautiful characters – Clare and Dorian – as martyrs of their attractiveness. Though the novels are from different literatures and eras, interestingly, their dilemmas and corruptive souls bring these works together. Harlem Renaissance's black voice – *Passing* and the narcissistic image of the Victorian era – *The Picture of Dorian Gray* face with the disharmony of Clare and Dorian's bodies and souls. The characters of both novels are transgressing figures that actually

challenge the orders of their societies, deceive society's perception, and so alter the general idea on the seen and the unseen. The deification of Dorian's and Clare's beauties forms their tragedies and causing the duality of their desires. Both characters' secret desires repress them and towards the end of the novel, trap them. That avoids them to act freely or in other words, to live peacefully with their bodies. Clare's desire to live as a black individual in a white attractive body and Dorian's desire to be young eternally in a white beautiful body collide with the expectations of their societies. Thus, it can be said that identical situations in *Passing* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* produce similar tragedies.

Additionally, it is highlighted that the two stories have produced parallel characters whose troubles are different but motivations are the same: to be in harmony with their souls. Nevertheless, their selfish and determined manners to get what they desire are hindered by the expectations of the Victorian and African-American societies. Threatening the security of society, as well as their ontologies, has devastating effects on Clare and Dorian; the threat unmasks the reality at the end. Their deaths interrupt their dreams of beginning a new life. It could be affirmed that both deaths are not "death by misadventure" but predetermined murders of Irene and the portrait. If these novels hadn't been written by Larsen and Wilde, it might only be inferred that the endings of the novels are designed to reset the society's order which has been formerly harmed by Clare's and Dorian's dualities. Nevertheless, Wilde and Larsen use the protagonists' deaths slyly as a textual strategy through which they free Dorian's and Clare's souls. These characters' mirrored souls – that are the portrait for Dorian and Irene for Clare – are put into the texts deliberately to show their disillusion, too. It may seem that both Dorian and Clare may deceive the visible (the seen) by their dualities; nonetheless, they are also fooled by their reflections on the mirror. At the end of the text, Irene and the portrait set their rules via annihilating Clare and Dorian. Even though Larsen and Wilde pretend to be neutral in their texts, they actually work for the sake of a free soul. Acknowledging the social pressure upon individuals – especially, socially appraised ones for their beauties, like Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray – Larsen and Wilde escalate the tension of their tragedies until the end. Then, they put an end by eliminating these two characters in time. The strategy hidden in the deaths of these characters is also some kind of relief and

satisfaction both for Larsen and Wilde. Throughout their lives, both authors experienced the hypocrisy of their societies and observed the effects of the socially constructed beauty ideal; for that reason, they suggest alternatives for their societies in their novels. Larsen and Wilde use Dorian's and Clare's "betrayal" against authenticity as a way to reach the ideal beauty: "harmonized body and soul" *(kalokagathia)* (Caughie, 2005: 387; Eco, 2010: 45). Also, through these characters they set their own ideals – that is "freedom is the freedom to 'be yourself'" – apart from their societies' (Kawash, 1996: 73). In both stories, soul is finally freed: after the mysterious deaths of Clare Kendry and Dorian Gray, Irene Redfield in *Passing* and the portrait in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are relieved and find completeness. From now on, the portrait is a perfect piece of art and Irene is an idealized body.

In conclusion, this thesis marks two things; firstly, out of duality, stability arouses and secondly, out of harmony *(kalokagathia),* beauty emerges. The idea of beauty or the beautiful may gladden the eye and excite positive feelings, but it has a dangerous side of which becomes a destroyer, unless the corporeal beauty is harmonized with its soul (Eco, 2010: 45). In *Passing* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the characters are lost and destroyed by beauty, since they could not find the perfection in their bodies and souls. Their dilemmas may lead Dorian and Clare into corruption yet out of their dualities Irene and the portrait complete themselves. Nella Larsen's and Oscar Wilde's neutrality is broken by the last sentences of their novels. *Passing* ends with the praise of black soul and body: "Then everything was *dark*" is dedicated to Irene's completeness (Larsen, 2003: 114; my emphasis). Also, Wilde's last words "Everything was *still*" are for the perfection of the portrait, or art (Wilde, 2008: 188; my emphasis). In the end, Larsen and Wilde provide the harmonized beauty – *kalokagathia* – of Irene Redfield and the portrait with "darkness" and "stillness.

ENDNOTES

[1] It is an allusion to Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952) in which he discusses the "fact of blackness" through his experience. In Chapter II: "The Woman of Color and The White Man," Fanon states that "the [black] race must be whitened […]" to "save the race" because whiteness "[…] possess[es] beauty and virtue" and he explores this idea via Mayotte Capécia's love story (2008: 33; 31). In addition, Steve Pile who analyses the work of Fanon and Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929) in terms of "the relationship between race and space" in "Skin, race and bodily schemas in Frantz Fanon's *Black Skins, White Masks* and Nella Larsen's *Passing*" mentions "[…] race as a cultural category versus race as a bundle of biological bits" (2010: 25; 28). Interpreting these two approaches within Nella Larsen's *Passing*, the title of the chapter aims to suggest that due to the superiority of white race, the inferiority of black race hides behind masks and this makes the notion of race controversial for it neither can be defined by skin nor by culture.

[2] American Young Intellectuals were a group of intellectuals and writers who maintained a critical and artistic activity in the years just before the entrance of America in World War I. Van Wyck Brooks, as a leading figure, and his fellows sought to establish a "national literature growing out of a healthy culture" by condemning "useless past" (Dowell, 1970: 30; Jones, 1971: 711). *See also* the quote of Brooks about "usable past" in Alfred H. Jones' *The Search for a Usable Past in New Deal Era*, pp. 711-12. Their aim was to provide "freedom, experiment, and creativity in all phases of the national life," and also they promoted "self-expression" both for an individual and for art by reforming "old America" (Dowell, 1970: 30-1).

[3] Alain Locke, in his article titled as "Enter the New Negro," uses "rehabilitation" for the metamorphosis of American Negro. For Locke, the New Negro solved his problems within American society and renewed his self-respect through "his poetry, his art, his education and his new outlook" (Locke, 1925: 2).

[4] Irish Literary Revival – also known as the Irish Literary Renaissance or Celtic Twilight – was an Irish literary movement during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The movement was triggered by nationalist movement, demand for home rule and independence (Gross, 2013). The literary movement was based on the revival of Irish culture, including Celtic folk culture, and Gaelic language. Especially, poems, dramas, stories and novels were woven with Irish folk motives, or old themes from Gaelic legends, ideals of literary revival, and sense of rebellion to form independent Irish identity. The prominent names of the movement were W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, George Moore, G.W. Russell, J.M. Synge, Douglas Hyde and many others (Ray, 1906: 20-27; Weygandt, 1904: 420-431).

[5] When Alain Locke envisioned Harlem Renaissance as a movement which both would spread across and outside of America, he related the movement with the word "global." For him, African roots of the New Negro would intertwine with American culture, and would make the renaissance "interracial" as well (Mitchell II, 2010: 644-645).

[6] It was stated in the archives of History.com, in 1619, the North American colony of Jamestown welcomed the first African people as slaves for the aid in the production of tobacco.

[7] Knights of Ku Klux Klan or known as Invisible Empire, is a secret group formed shortly after the Civil War to restore white supremacy. In December 1865, six former Confederate veterans gathered in Pulaski, Tennessee to make their ideal society by eliminating newly black freedmen. This phenomenal organization's rise and fall appeared in three waves: first wave begun with 1865 and lasted until 1870s, and Knights of the Klan took aim at blacks, they paid night visits to black homes, committed assault, rape, murder and also, lynched blacks. Second wave was after 1915 when there were societal changes as a result of the Temperance Movement in 1920s America and World War I. In that period, Knights of Ku Klux Klan focused on Catholics, Jews, and anyone who was out of their ideal society image, too. For the third time, the Klan rose between 1950s and 1960s, during the Civil Rights Era. The members of this American hate group wear white robes and sheets in order to frighten blacks, and also prevent the members from being identified. Moreover, Knights of the Klan perform some rituals with grotesque masks and hoods in order to strengthen their relations and threaten the ones they are

fighting against (McAndrew, 2017; Wood, 1906: 262-268; The Southern Poverty Law Centre, 2011: 7-13).

[8] Jim Crow laws were a range of laws, practices and ordinances between 1874-1975 to separate whites and blacks in the American South. Theoretically those practices were based on "separate but equal standard;" however, in practice the codes underlined the black inferiority and white superiority. That physical separation included going to separate schools, churches, libraries and many other public spaces, using separate bathrooms which had "for colored only" signs, travelling in separate coaches, and eating in divided sections of a restaurant (Hansan, 2011).

[9] For some scholars there is not any evidence to prove this information, for Thadious Davis and Charles R. Larson, Larsen could have never been to Denmark since her first passport application was made in 1929 to visit Spain and France (Hutchinson, 1997: 332).

[10] Carl Van Vechten was known as "the undisputed prince" of Harlem in the 1920s. Van Vechten was so into Harlem that he helped Negro artists and performers to make a career both "socially and professionally." The names he promoted were: James Weldon Johnson, Nella Larsen, Chester Himes, Rudolph Fisher, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen,and many others. Moreover, Van Vechten was "responsible for the gathering of Negro manuscript materials at Yale University" (Huggings, 1971: 93-5).

[11] "Author's Explanation" was not only a defence but also includes an argument about "the racial politics of literary writing and reading" and inquires "the relation between race and literary property" (Hoeller, 2006: 424). *See also* the full text of the explanation in Hildegard Hoeller's *Race, Modernism, and Plagiarism: The Case of Nella Larsen's* "*Sanctuary*," p. 424.

[12] In his text *The Souls of Black Folk*, DuBois writes "The Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world […] One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder" (cited in Ramon, 2012: 50).

[13] Helga Crane seeks for happiness: "But just what did she want? Barring a desire for material security, gracious ways of living, a profusion of lovely clothes, and a goodly share of envious admiration, Helga Crane didn't know, couldn't tell. But there was, she knew, something else. *Happiness*, she supposed. Whatever that might be. What, exactly, she wondered, was *happiness*. Very positively she wanted it. Yet her conception of it had no tangibility. She couldn't define it, isolate it, and contemplate it as she could some other abstract things. Hatred, for instance. Or kindness." (Larsen, 2006: 10; my emphasis).

[14] Roffman added as follows: "As her training in library school and in Dewey classification scheme had made increasingly clear […] to be professional was to be an expert or an authority over something. Since she had come to understand through her work as a librarian that all systems needed to be resisted (because they carried within them limits and exclusions that could be institutionalized in other models of thinking), she had to include within her body of work her resistance to even her own achievements" (2007: 778-79).

[15] For detailed examples *see also* Hoeller's *Race, Modernism, and Plagiarism: The Case of Nella Larsen's* "*Sanctuary*," pp. 421-23.

[16] Beverly Haviland sees the attempt of Larsen as "self-destructive logic paranoia" and adds that "Larsen turns her aggression toward her husband and his white lover against herself, at once identifying herself with the white author of 'Mrs. Adis' and also rejecting her white mother by making the story 'black' by using dialect, which she never had elsewhere in her writing. She attempts to re-mother herself in a way that allows the Harlem literati to reject her in ways that may have felt all too familiar" (cited in Hoeller, 2006: 423).

[17] It was used for Nella Larsen in the interview of *The New York Amsterdam News* by Thelma E. Berlack in 1928 (2007: 149).

[18] Alexander Pope's *An Essay on Man* is a philosophical poem published in between the years 1732-34. This philosophical poem comprises four epistles. His heroic couplets are to "vindicate the ways of God to men" (I.26). These lines are from Epistle II which advises man to concentrate on knowing himself rather than trying to comprehend the purposes of God. These lines are referred by Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* Part III. In this part, Burke argues that black and white must stand apart contrary to what Pope thinks.

[19] In Winthrop D. Jordan's *The White Man's Burden*, it is said that the first Africans landed in 1619 in Virginia, America. Jordan adds that although there is little information about what happened to Africans between the years 1619-1640, it is certain that between 1640 and 1660, there is enslavement of Africans (Jordan, 1974:6).

[20] Plessy v. Ferguson: It is a landmark case which acknowledged the racial segregation constitutionally. The case based on an 1892 incident in which Homer Plessy, who was seven-eighths white and one-eights black, but accepted as African American despite his light skin in Louisiana law, denied sitting in a "whites only" railcar and broke Louisiana law (Separate Car Act) (Maidment, 1973: 125-26). This law provides accommodations for blacks and whites separately, even in railway cars. An American lawyer and judge of the criminal District Court for New Orleans John H. Ferguson judged Homer Plessy guilty of not obeying Separate Car Act (Gordon-Reed, 2002: 67-8; Boyd, 1909: 22-3; Bernstein, 1962: 192-3). Homer Plessy later appealed to U.S. Supreme Court for the reason that 13th and 14th Amendments are violated; nevertheless, the Court decided on that the Louisiana law did not violate 13th amendment, which was for officially abolishing slavery and 14th amendment, which was for granting equal citizenship rights to anyone born in the United States of America (Gordon-Reed, 2002: 67-8; Boyd, 1909: 22-7). On May 18, 1896 the Court allowed the doctrine of "separate but equal" which legitimized Jim Crow laws and maintained in U.S. law until it was overturned by the decision of Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954 (National Archives, "Plessy v. Ferguson (1896)," n.d.).

[21] It is a term which corresponds to an ideology or an understanding founded in 19th century. The term reflects the doctrine of "survival of the fittest" and holds "the defence of wealth, hierarchy, and struggle" within the social. Here, the term is used for emphasizing white supremacy over blacks (Halliday, 1971: 389-92).

[22] The term passing includes travelling or "movement" between separate social spaces. In the introduction of the novel *Passing*, Thadious M. Davis (1997) describes passing as "a psychological, social, cultural *movement* signalling both a reconfiguration of the self" (ix), besides in *Passing and The Fictions of Identity*, Elaine K. Ginsberg (1996) defines passing as "geographical *movement*," since "the individual had to leave an environment where his or her 'true identity' – that is, parentage, legal status, and the like – was known to find a place where it was unknown" (3). Also, in Eve Dunbar's dissertation (2004) titled as *The Crossroads of Race: Racial Passing, Profiling, and Legal Mobility in Twentieth-Century African American Literature and Culture*, Dunbar states that with the notion of passing "characters [are] *moving* between the poles of whiteness and Blackness [sic] as they move from city to city, state to state, uptown to downtown, or even upstairs and downstairs" (42; *my emphasis*).

[23] Corinne E. Blackmer (1995), in his article uses "tragic mulatto" in order to emphasize "psychologically and culturally divided" African-American men and women (52).

[24] This term belongs to Joel Williamson. In his book titled *New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States* (1980), he argues that carrying a drop of black blood or known as "one drop rule" may lead to "invisible blackness" (cited in Ishida, 2010: 115).

[25] In 1890, the U.S. Government gave a scientific definition of a black person in order to erase suspicions of white blood in a black body: "Be particularly careful to distinguish between blacks,

mulattoes, quadroons and octoroons. The word 'black' should be used to describe those persons who have three-fourths or more black blood; 'mulatto,' those persons who have three-eights to five-eights black blood; 'quadroons,' those persons who have one-fourth black blood, and 'octoroon,' those persons who have one-eighth or any trace of black blood" (Hahn, 1929: 118)

[26] Steve Pile (2010) considers passing as "a spatial practice." For Pile, the practice of passing is not only a reconfiguration of one's own identity but also a move to another direction, like "crossing a line" (26).

[27] In "*Traffic in Souls*: 'the new woman,' whiteness and mobile self-possession," Eric Olund (2009) states that: "In the Progressive era, reformers sought to ontologize whiteness as mobility, agency and responsibility, and blackness as passivity, objectification and irrationality. These racially-targeted 'commitments' are needless to say quite different from Saldanha's, yet they were the twin products of Progressive era understandings of human agency as produced, as a material and mobile assemblage of objects, images, affects, practices and spaces that moved in some ways toward sexual equality, but maintained white privilege" (500).

[28] In 1940s, psychologists Kenneth and Mammie Clark hold a test which studies "ego development" and "self-awareness in black children within the perspective of racial identity. Through several questions and requests – including: "Give me the doll that is a nice doll," "Give me the doll that looks bad," "Give me the doll that is a nice colour" – the Clarks tried to investigate racial preferences, self-identification, and racial identification (Clark, 1947: 169). At the end of the test, it was concluded that the children, who were exposed to the test, had sufficient knowledge of "racial difference." Besides, the racial concepts of "white" and "black" had already established; however, the concept of Negro or being coloured were not positively developed. The majority of black children preferred the white doll and refused the brown doll. Fifty-nine percent of these children pointed that coloured/brown doll looked black. Sixty percent of these children related "nice colour" with white doll. In addition to all that has been said already, the test showed that there was a difference between the southern and the northern children. The northern children had a tendency to choose "white doll" as a response to the requests compared to the southern children (Clark, 1947: 169-178).

[29] Elaine Ginsberg termed passing as "*trespassed*," since an individual while practicing passing crosses the racial boundaries in order to access the privileges of the other (Ginsberg, 1996: 3).

[30] It is a reference to Sigmund Freud's "The Uncanny" ("Das Unheimliche") which was published in 1919 as a comment of the modern human condition. In his article, Freud holds that the uncanny is a notion which is "frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar" (1955: 220). Nevertheless, it is not simply something which is unknown that enters our consciousness simultaneously rather the uncanny is a feeling of anxiety that is arisen from a break in "what is known of old and long familiar" (Freud, 1955: 220). He exemplifies this through E.T.A. Hoffman's short story titled as "The Sand-Man" and underlines the importance of an eye with regards to psycho-analytic experience. For Freud, "the fear of damaging or losing one's eyes is a terrible one" like in Sand-Man's story – a man "tears out children's eyes" (1955: 231; 227). Freud emphasizes the significance of an eye and the feeling of restfulness in its presence, while he states that "[a] study of dreams, phantasies and myths has taught […] that anxiety about one's eyes, the fear of going blind, is often enough a substitute for the dread of being castrated" (1955: 231). Therefore, eye has an immense effect on mental life just as castration. In that sense, eye controls the body and mental life as a form of authority.

[31] Passing individuals are mobile ones, constantly moving and having social shifts. Allyson Hobbs identifies passing with "the social and physical mobility" (2014: 26). For Hobbs, passing becomes "a crucial channel" enabling individuals to be free, instable in their identities (2014: 27).

[32] In *Vested Interests: Cross-Dressing and Cultural Anxiety*, Marjorie B. Garber creates a term called "category crisis" which overturns the pre-determined categories. For Garber, this term reflects "a failure of definitional distinction, a borderline that becomes permeable, that permits of border crossings from one (apparently distinct) category to another: black/white, Jew/Christian,

noble/bourgeois, master/servant, master/slave," and also, she notes that "category crises can and do mark displacements from the axis of *class* as well as from *race* onto the axis of gender" (Garber, 2011: 16-7).

[33] This title is a reference to the essay of Jeffrey Downard. Downard's work titled "The Colour of the Sublime is White" focuses on Herman Melville's literary discussion in *Moby Dick* and Immanuel Kant's philosophical analysis of the sublime. Downard stresses the whiteness of the whale in Melville and its relation with "the mathematical and dynamical sublime."
[34] This quotation is cited from the essay of Elizabeth McTernan and F. Luke Wolcott's "'A Capacity for the Sublime': Math and Art as Experience."

[35] Steve Pile, in his essay, uses Frantz Fanon's concepts of corporeal and epidermal schema when he analysing Nella Larsen's *Passing* in the perspective of time and space. Pile states that though these two schemas are both "bodily," "racialized," "experiential," "psychological," and "social," "[t]he corporeal schema appears to provide the self with a place in the midst of the world, while epidermal schema allows the body to be recomposed by the world […]" (2010: 29).

[36] *Anti-essentialism* in Feminist Theory is the theory and practice which refuses "the thesis of gender essentialism (including individual and generic essentialism)" (Witt, 1995: 322). Anti-essentialist feminists reject the patriarchal thought both in past and present by supporting that a woman does not need a set of societal norms (including passivity, nurturing, subordination, home orientedness) to be counted as a woman.

[37] Amanda Amos, from the Usher Institute of Population Health Sciences and Informatics of the University of Edinburgh, and Margaretha Haglund, from National Institute of Public Health of Sweden, discuss the use of tobacco in different periods in America, Europe and Canada, and also its reflection on public sphere in their essay. Amos and Haglund present that the use of cigarette by women was considered as "dubious sexual behaviour" and especially, they stress that those women were viewed as immoral, and "fallen women" until the First World War when women began to use the cigarette as "a weapon in their increasing challenge to traditional ideas about female behaviour" (2000: 3-4). It is also mentioned in the essay that tobacco companies altered the "fallen women" image by working on the ideas of "liberation, power and other important values for women" (Amos and Haglund, 2000: 4). Therefore, smoking became "sociable, fashionable, stylish and feminine" for women in 1920s and 1930s (Amos and Haglund, 2000: 4).

[38] *See endnote* [27].

[39] The point is basically made by Fred Botting in his analysis of Edmund Burke. For him, the sense is contradictory in response to the sublime: "Objects which evoked sublime emotions were vast, magnificent and obscure. Loudness and sudden contrasts, like the play of light and dark in buildings, contributed to the sense of extension and infinity associated with the sublime" (Botting, 1996: 26).

[40] Kate Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" (1893) is a short story about miscegenation in Creole Louisiana during the antebellum era (before the Civil War). In the story, the dynamics of Désirée's and her husband Armond Aubigny's marriage get damaged after they have a mulatto son. Armond who is the owner of Aubigny plantation rejects the situation and accuses her wife Désirée for her unknown origin. His fear and hate lead to Désirée's and their baby's loss. He abandons his love and kindness towards his wife since she has brought shame on his home and name by giving birth to a mulatto boy. Nevertheless, at the end, surprisingly it is discovered that Désirée is not the one who is from a black descendant; it is Armond himself who is a mixed blood (Chopin, 2008: 193-98).

[41] It is an allusion to William Blake's poem called "The Tyger" and "The Lamb" from *The Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789). Out of his collection of poems, "The Tyger" arouses uncomfortable and sinister feelings, whereas "The Lamb" gives a sense of pleasure and joy. The two poems draw a contrasting image through symbolic animals.

[42] The reign of Queen Victoria is officially the year 1837; however, the period, which is divided into three as: the early Victorian (1830-1848); mid-Victorian (1848-1870); late Victorian (1870-1901), includes two historical events for England as the beginning date: firstly, "the opening of England's first railway," and secondly, "the opening of the country's Reform Parliament" (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 982).

[43] In his book titled as *Victorian Fiction*, Gail Marshall reminded that "The Industrial Revolution was already under way as we enter the Victorian period, but it was during this time that industrial technologies were most fully exploited, and large-scale factory systems and the beginnings of a production-line style of manufacturing seen" (2002: 8).

[44] Although working class was an important force for maintaining financial prosperity of nation and also, of business class, working conditions and hours were severe, appalling and gruelling. Even children were employed in industrial units, mills and or coal mines, and used as chimney sweepers. In order to improve the conditions, series of "Factory Acts" were put into action. One of the main ones were: *1833 Factory Act* regulated working hours (working hour was limited to 12 hours for the ones under 18 years old) and restricted children under nine to work; *1847 Factory Act* limited working hours up to ten for women and children; *1844 Factory Act* was the first act which provided safe and healthy working conditions for labourers; *1867 Factory (Extension) Act* was a noteworthy act which restricted the working hours for children and women per day in a workplace where more than fifty labourers were employed (Parliamentary Archives of UK, Feb., 2018).

[45] For the poor, in 1834 The Poor Law Amendment Act was passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Through that new act it was ensured that the poor was sheltered in workhouses and taken care of their nutrition and clothing, too (Parliamentary Archives of UK, Feb., 2018).

[46] As it is stated in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*: "[b]y the end of the century – after the resources of steam power had been more exploited for *fast railways* and *iron ships*, *looms*, *printing presses*, and *farmers*' *combines*, and after the introduction of the *telegraph*, *intercontinental cable*, *photography*, *anesthetics*, and universal compulsory education – a late Victorian could look back with astonishment on these developments during his or her lifetime" (2006: 979; *my emphasis*).

[47] J.A. Banks in the article "Population Change and Victorian Society" draws our attention to the dramatic change in population and adds that "Between 1841 and 1901 the population of England and Wales more than doubled rising from 15,914,148 to 32,527,843 persons" (1968: 277); additionally, with the reign of Queen Victoria, London "[…] expanded from about two million inhabitants […] to six and a half million" until her death (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 979).

[48] " 'Condition of England' novels sought to engage directly with the contemporary social and political issues with a focus on the illustration of class, gender, and labour relations, as well as on societal turbulence and the growing animosity between the rich and the poor in England" (Ameera, 2013: 1).

[49] *Literary realism* or *realism* is a term used for the art movement of mid-nineteenth century that create a true-to-life effect on reader by demonstrating a social world out of everyday life and characters who may possibly exist; therefore, the reader relates the fiction world and the world he lives in. The novelists of realism – like Charles Dickens, George Eliot – wanted to hold a mirror to raise collective awareness or to give a message about the contemporary situation of their era (Abrams, 1999: 260-61).

[50] *Thomas Carlyle* was known as the scholar of Scottish Enlightenment; however, he had a collection of critical essays, pamphlets, books that examined "the disconcertions and anomalies of early Victorian Britain" (Sanders, 1994: 401).

[51] *See endnote* [44].

[52] "Gaskell (1810-65) is still generally associated with industrial Manchester by her readers, though only two of her novels are actually set in the city" (Sanders, 1994: 409).

[53] *North and South* "[…] contrasts the snobberies, chivalries, and artificiality of the country gentry of the South of England with distinctive energetic anti-gentlemanly world of self-made manufacturers of the North" (Sanders, 1994: 410).

[54] In *North and South*, Gaskell offers "[…] a liberal vision of moral responsibility for the general well-being of society and a sense of obligation to the less fortunate," as well as "[…] business and profit" as the two versions of middle-class ideology (Peck and Coyle, 2002: 181-82).

[55] *Chartist movement* or *Chartism* was a working-class movement which was active between 1838 and 1848. The aim was to have social responsibility for political reform in British Parliament after the Reform Bill of 1832. That act "[…] extended the right to vote to all males owning property worth £10 or more in annual rent" except for the working class (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 982). The Charter listed six demands including equal electoral system, right to vote for all men over 21 years old, and abolishing the need for property to be a member of the Parliament (Parliamentary Archives of UK, Feb., 2018).

[56] *Benjamin Disraeli* was also Earl of Beaconsfield and the British Prime Minister from Conservative Party with his Jewish identity (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 2006: 413; Ezratty, 2010: 60).

[57] The full quotation of D. H. Lawrence: "The great crime which the moneyed classes and promoters of industry committed in the palmy Victorian days was the condemning of the workers to ugliness, ugliness, and ugliness: Mean and formless and ugly surroundings, ugly ideals, ugly hope, ugly love, ugly clothes, ugly furniture, ugly houses, ugly relationships between worker and employers" (cited in Urgan, 2018: 948).

[58] In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Catherine Earnshaw, who was the free-spirited and arrogant daughter of Mr. Earnshaw, was actually in love with Heathcliff, who was brought by Mr. Earnshaw to Wuthering Heights as an orphan, was later treated as a servant after Mr. Earnshaw's death. However, the Victorian class system offered Catherine marriage to Edgar Linton, who was the heir of wealthy Linton family, and the owner of Thrushcross Grange.

[59] In the article "Separate Spheres? Beyond the Dichotomies of Domesticity," Deborah L. Rotman refused the idea of sharp distinction of spheres by supporting with a quotation from Yentsch "public space was not wholly public for it also contained a private component; private space was not wholly private for it also contained a public component" (cited in Rotman, 2006: 666).

[60] It was a reference to the image of ideal women in Victorian period who were regarded as self-sacrificing, emotional, pure, in need of protection, and subservient to man or her husband. It was also an allusion to Coventry Patmore's poem "The Angel in the House (1862)."

[61] For Victorian woman image Susan Zlotnick states that: "Emphasizing separate, gendered spheres of private and public life, the ideology of domesticity emerged out of the evangelicalism of the Clapham Sect in the earliest decades of the nineteenth century to become the dominant ideology of the middle classes by the 1830s and 1840s. It figured women not merely as disembodied angels in the house but as powerful moral missionaries within the domestic realm." (1996: 53).

[62] In his ground-breaking study, Darwin puts forward the theory of "[…] the evolution and preservation-of living organisms was the pressure they constantly experience to be well adapted to their environment; individuals who best meet that criterion have a greater chance of survival than those less well adapted. The natural occurrence of variations within species provides for change: if a variation offers a selective advantage, it will be favoured through differential survival and reproductive success" (Darwin, 1989: 139).

[63] It is a reference to *In Memoriam*. Although Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam* was a collective of poems published in 1850, and the date was before the study of Darwin, due to some of the lines in his work (e.g. "[…] finding that of fifty seeds," nature "often brings but one to bear"), his allusions were considered as pre-Darwinian (cited in Harrison, 1999: 28).

[64] Jane Francesca Elgee was an Irish poet having supported the Irish nationalist movement.

[65] Oscar Wilde's "Ravenna" was awarded the Newdigate Prize in 1878 (Drabble, 2000: 1098).

[66] Dandy is an idle man figure whose "[…] life is devoted to a self-conscious celebration of style and personal elegance rather than to the creation of anything outside himself" (Godfrey, 1982: 23). His primary concern is self-fashioning, as well as adopting nonsensical hobbies, and using sophisticated vocabulary in speech.

[67] For Kirsten MacLeod, in *À Rebours,* Huysmans "[…] created the prototypical modern hero 'torn between desire and satiety, hope and disillusionment, aspiration and despair.'" This hero type was adopted not only by Decadents but also Modernists of twentieth century (2006: 2).

[68] For Deirdre Toomey, Irish culture was assumed as "the most oral culture in Western Europe" (cited in Saint-Amour, 2000: 62).

[69] In one part of the article "Oscar Wilde: Orality, Literary Property, and Crimes of Writing," the tendency of Oscar Wilde to "primary orality" was discussed in the frame of parental impact on him. Jane Francesca Wilde's inspiring speeches and William Wilde's "archaeological and folklore-gathering expeditions" were his first acquaintance with oral culture (Saint-Amour, 2000: 62).

[70] Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was a company of artists including painters, poets and illustrators, whose motivation was praising art's own value via concentrating on subjects of medieval age, artistic self-examination, sexuality and a new moral expression (Brown, 1984: 463; Barringer and Rosenfeld, 2012: 9).

[71] It is a reference to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's tragic play *Faust* in which the protagonist signed a pact with Mephistopheles, the Devil in order to gain infinite knowledge and worldly pleasures in exchange for his soul.

[72] When *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was published in *Lippincott*, *The Scots Observer* in 1890 commented as: "[…] false to morality—for it is not made sufficiently clear that the writer does not prefer a course of unnatural iniquity to a life of cleanliness, health, and sanity. […] Mr. Wilde has brains, and art, and style; but if he can write for none but outlawed noblemen and perverted telegraph boys, the sooner he takes on tailoring (or some other decent trade) the better for his own reputation and the public morals." (cited in Hart-Davis, 1962: 265).

[73] The quotation is cited from the page: 143, in *Essays and Lectures* (1913).

[74] Being the central point of Aesthetics, it was firstly used as a phrase in Théophile Gautier's *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1835) (Denisoff, 2007: 34).

[75] In "The English Renaissance of Art," Wilde quoted as: "I call it our *English Renaissance* because it is indeed a sort of new birth of the spirit of man, like the great Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century, in its desire for a more gracious and comely way of life, its passion for physical beauty, its exclusive attention to form, its seeking for new subjects for poetry, new forms of art, new intellectual and imaginative enjoyments: and I call it our romantic movement because *it is our most recent expression of beauty*." (1913: 111-12; my emphasis).

[76] Here, he refers to the artist of the original work: "[…] in the mind of him who carved the statue or painted the panel or graved the gem" (Wilde, 2007d: 986).

[77] It is a French term used for defining "the end of the 19th century, when traditional social, moral, and artistic values were in transition" (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2005: 609).

[78] Other elements of the Decadents' style and theme are: "an interest in complexity of form and elaborate and arcane language", "a fascination with the perverse, the morbid, and the artificial", "a desire for intense experience and a seeking after rare sensations in order to combat a feeling of *ennui* or world-weariness" (MacLeod, 2006: 1).

[79] It is cited in *Masters of Art: Leonardo da Vinci* (1452-1519) published by Delphi Classics (2014); in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci* (1955) a similar expression is given as: "In life beauty perishes and does not endure" and again in the same book, that aphorism was formerly translated as: "[I]n life beauty perishes, not in art."

[80] It is for Tadzio, the "godlike beauty" for Gustav Aschenbach who was the honourable writer in the book. The quotation is cited from the page: 303 of Mann, T. (2008). *Death in Venice and Other Stories*. David Luke (Trans.). New York: Bantam Classic.

[81] For Richard Ellmann, the late nineteenth century found its character through Wilde: "[…] without Wilde the decade could not have found its character" (1988: 288).

[82] It is a reference to Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Marble Faun* (1860). In the novel, as the title suggests, one of the characters – Donatello – is associated with a sculpture which is beautiful mythic creature. The Faun is originally called as The Faun of Praxiteles, in the novel it is depicted as: "The Faun is […] marvellously graceful, but has a fuller and more rounded outline, more flesh, and less heroic muscle, than the old sculptors were wont to assign to their types of masculine beauty. The character of the face corresponds with the figure; it is most agreeable in outline and feature, but rounded, and somewhat voluptuously developed, especially about the throat and chin; the nose is almost straight, but very slightly curves inward, thereby acquiring an indescribable charm of geniality and humour. The mouth, with its full, yet delicate lips, seems so nearly to smile outright […] The whole statue […] conveys the idea of an amiable and sensual creature […]" (Hawthorne, 2008: 9-10).

[83] Barbey d'Aurevilly describes a Dandy as a person who "does not work; he exists" (cited in Glick, 2001: 144).

[84] For Richard Ellmann, the references, which are actually thought from *À Rebours*, are altered by Wilde and the mentioned chapters of *À Rebours* in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are "delibaretely inaccurate" (1988: 298). Also, Renaissance scenes are taken from John Addington Symonds' *Renaissance in Italy*. The hero of Huysmans, Des Esseintes, is told that he has "grotesque dread of mirrors" and is distressed "by the sudden decay of a beauty"; however, Ellmann states that Huysmans does not depict his hero as beautiful and does not tell about him with none of these relations (Wilde, 2008: 108; Ellmann, 1988: 299). Thus, the mentioned book in Wilde's novel is "a fantastic variation" of Huysmans's fin-de-siècle novel (Ellmann, 1988: 298).

[85] In "J. K. Huysmans: A Study in Decadence," Hartnett states that *À Rebours* is "a sort of manifesto, without a program but implying certain necessary political and social choices […]" (1977: 367).

[86] Aschenbach sees Tadzio as the youthfully perfect form, this young Polish boy reminds him ancient Greek figures who are elegant and appealing to beautiful senses, so in his presence he is overwhelmed by his beauty , and in its joy, he is titillated: "Aschenbach saw much of the boy Tadzio, he saw him almost constantly; in a confined environment, with a common daily program, it was natural for the beautiful creature to be near him all day, with only brief interruptions" (Mann, 2008: 301).

[87] The original sentence is "Yes, the lad was premature. He [Lord Henry] was gathering his harvest while it was yet spring" (Wilde, 2008: 51).

[88] "Long male hair, sometimes wrapped round the head, was an aristocratic fashion in Athens" (Paglia, 2001: 118).

[89] It is a reference to Lord Henry with relation to his punctuality (Wilde, 2008: 40).

[90] According to Botting's citation, an essay called "On the Pleasure Arising from the Sight of Ruins or Ancient Structures" in European Magazine of 1795: "No one of the least sentiment or imagination can look upon an old or ruined edifice without feeling sublime emotions; a thousand ideas crowd upon his mind, and fill him with awful astonishment" (cited in Botting, 2005: 26).

[91] In *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, Burke notes the effect of the sublime on the body and mind: "When danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distances, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful, as we every day experience" (1998: 86).

[92] Kant states in *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* that: "A somewhat greater age conforms more with the qualities of the sublime, but youth with those of the beautiful" (2003: 54).

[93] This quote is cited from the page: 817 of the story "HE?" in *The Complete Short Stories of Guy de Maupassant: Ten Volumes in One*.

[94] This is cited from the page: 16, in *On Ugliness*.

[95] The quote is from the explanation of Basil Hallward about Hellenic ideal, the page: 13.

[96] Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* says that: "Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling" (1998: 86; emphasis in original).

[97] In "Towards a Better Understanding of the Ugly in Literature," Chinchilla discusses ugliness by approaching its symbolic reflections on body – "sores," "boils," and "ulcers" – as the characteristics of ugliness. He names all these as the "abnormalities of skin" which excite horror and disgust (2012: 332). In aesthetic sense, beautiful bodies must be fair, so black bodies are abnormal for white society, since they have a different colour.

[98] In his preface, supporting the art is for its own sake, Wilde also adds that: "All art is at once surface and symbol" (2008: 3).

[99] Jaime Hovey's *A Thousand Words: Portraiture, Style and Queer Modernism* and Matthew Garrett's *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative Theory* use these two books as some of the examples of queer narratives.

[100] *See endnote* [24]. Also, Booker T. Washington states "[…] if a person is known to have one percent of African blood in his veins, he ceases to be a white man" (cited in Khanna, 2010: 98).

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