

Derek Mello Noble

**THE PEDAGOGICAL ASPECT OF BEAUTY IN
*THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY***

Porto Alegre
2017

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO SUL
INSTITUTO DE LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE LÍNGUAS MODERNAS
SETOR DE INGLÊS

**THE PEDAGOGICAL ASPECT OF BEAUTY IN
*THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY***

DEREK MELLO NOBLE

Trabalho de Conclusão de Curso apresentado ao Instituto de Letras da UFRGS como requisito parcial para obtenção do grau de Licenciado em Letras pela Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Orientadora: Prof.^a Dr.^a Sandra Sirangelo Maggio.

Porto Alegre,
2017

CIP - Catalogação na Publicação

Noble, Derek

The pedagogical aspect of Beauty in The Picture
of Dorian Gray / Derek Noble. -- 2017.

39 f.

Orientadora: Sandra Sirangelo Maggio.

Trabalho de conclusão de curso (Graduação) --
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Instituto
de Letras, Licenciatura em Letras: Língua Inglesa e
Literaturas de Língua Inglesa, Porto Alegre, BR-RS,
2017.

1. Oscar Wilde. 2. Beleza. 3. Estética. 4.
Imaginação. 5. Literatura. I. Maggio, Sandra
Sirangelo, orient. II. Título.

Beauty will save the world.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky¹

¹ *The Idiot*. Tr. Elina Yuffa. New York: Barnes & Noble Classics. 2004 [1869].

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank, first and foremost, to my parents for the education given. For all the stories they have told me and for being the best examples of what is like to feel and to be human. Also, I thank my sisters for the patience in times when I was not the best version of a brother and for helping me out in times of trouble. Of course, I cannot forget all the people who have taught me something in life: colleagues, classmates, friends and professors.

Among those, I would like to thank Professor Rosalia Neumann Garcia for all the lessons, talks and advice; especially for allowing me to speak my mind, to write freely and for encouraging me to pursue knowledge in the good things of life. Also, I thank my advisor Professor Sandra Sirangelo Maggio for the support, advice and suggestions to this paper.

Thanks to my best friend Renata, who has taught me how to refine my taste for life and for beautiful things through Art. Also, for the insights to this work and especially for all the journeys we have been through, from Lisbon and London to our walks to the gas station in search of cigarettes.

Last but never least, I thank my beloved girlfriend Andressa, who has given me all the support and love I could ever be given. For all the nights reading the book and debating the ideas. It meant the world to me.

RESUMO

O presente estudo traz à luz determinadas reflexões sobre Beleza em relação à Educação. Para tanto, o romance *O Retrato de Dorian Gray* (1890), de Oscar Wilde, escritor Irlandês do período Vitoriano, foi escolhido como corpus de análise. Os argumentos são desenvolvidos com base na convicção de que um aspecto pedagógico da Beleza é sugerido no livro em questão, e que isso se presta a relevantes análises. Tal aspecto é assim explorado tanto na forma quanto no conteúdo do livro. A beleza particular de pessoas e objetos pode ser julgada de diversas formas, mas nunca passa despercebida. Pelo contrário, ela atrai nossa atenção por razões que pertencem à ordem das ideias, dos sentidos e da imaginação. Portanto, visto que percebemos frequentemente a Beleza na natureza ou na arte, isso pode ter profundas influências na Educação. Sob a influência de Lord Henry, Dorian Gray busca uma educação voltada para coisas belas, mas acaba falhando. Uma peça literária visa a retratar o que geralmente acontece na vida humana através de uma série de eventos e descrições que exageram as situações possíveis da vida real, independentemente dos elementos fantásticos, e que por fim acabam refinando nossa sensibilidade. Teorias esboçadas por Platão em muitos de seus escritos, juntamente às teorias de Alexander Baumgarten, Northrop Frye, Carlos Velázquez, Roger Scruton e Bertrand Russel, entre outros, incluindo o próprio Wilde, servem ao propósito desta pesquisa. Este trabalho reúne ideias relacionadas à Beleza, à Estética e à Imaginação e advoga pela necessidade de uma educação sensível que capture o papel da Beleza em nossas vidas. Finalmente, como contribuição, esta monografia é uma tentativa de trazer ao debate a importância de encontrar a beleza da experiência literária, nunca esquecendo que somos, ao mesmo tempo e continuamente, educadores e aprendizes.

Palavras-chave: Oscar Wilde; Beleza; Estética; Imaginação; Literatura; Educação.

ABSTRACT

The study at hand brings forward reflections upon Beauty in respects to Education. For this purpose, the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), by Oscar Wilde, Irish writer of the Victorian period, was selected as corpus. The arguments are built upon the conviction that a pedagogical aspect of Beauty is suggested in the book in question, and it might render many relevant analyses. Such aspect is thus explored in both form and content in the book. The particular beauty of people and things can be judged on many ways, but it never goes unnoticed. Instead, it catches our attention for reasons that belong to the world of the ideas, senses, and imagination. Therefore, inasmuch as one often perceives Beauty in Nature or Art, it may occasion profound influences in education. Under the influence of Lord Henry, Dorian Gray seeks an education towards beautiful things, but fails to do so. A literary piece aims at portraying what usually happens in human life through a series of events and descriptions which exaggerate the possible frames of real life, regardless of fantastic elements, and ultimately refine our sensibilities. Theories outlined by Plato in many of his writings, alongside Alexander Baumgarten's, Northop Frye's, Carlos Velázquez's, Roger Scruton's and Bertrand Russell's, amongst other authors including Oscar Wilde himself, serve the intention of this paper. The work gathers ideas regarding Beauty, Aesthetics and Imagination and advocates for the need of a sensible education that captures the actual role of Beauty in our lives. Eventually, as contribution, it is an attempt to cast light upon the importance of finding the beauty of the literary experience, never forgetting that we all are, at the same time, constant educators and constant learners.

Keywords: Oscar Wilde; Beauty; Aesthetics; Imagination; Literature; Education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION	9
2 WHAT BEAUTY IS	12
2.1 RECOLLECTING BEAUTY	144
2.2 BEAUTY AND EROS IN “THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY”	166
2.3 EROS AS A MEANS OF EDUCATION.....	17
2.4 DORIAN GRAY’S SEARCH FOR BEAUTY	18
3 AESTHETIC VALUES IN THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY.....	21
3.1 THE AESTHETIC EDUCATION OF MAN.....	26
4 THE FACULTY OF IMAGINATION.....	29
4.1 THE EDUCATED IMAGINATION.....	300
4.2 SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF.....	322
5 CONCLUSION.....	344
REFERENCES	38

1 INTRODUCTION

This work consists of an analysis of the pedagogical aspect of Beauty in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The topic caught my attention when I first read the book for an English Literature course taught by Professor Rosalia Neumann Garcia at this university. I wrote an essay about the importance of Beauty in our lives and briefly commented on how the idea of beauty has almost vanished from our culture and what the implications of such a swerve are. However, the issue I raise in the present research is less political than educational. Thus, my conception of education is based upon three important pillars that I intend to develop throughout this work: Beauty, Aesthetics and Imagination. My objective is to connect the concepts aforementioned relating them to the novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: I present the parts of the book which describe, define and emanate Beauty; also, I hope to cast light on the relevance of Aesthetics to education as well as to discuss the outright importance of developing imagination in order to reshape our everyday reality.

In the first part, the definition of Beauty to be adopted in this work is provided. According to Plato, in *Phaedrus*, we are immortal souls that once lived in a heavenly realm of light, colours and shapes. In this ideal universe, our souls had access to pure, eternal and non-sensible principles, which Plato calls forms, such as the form of Good and the form of Beauty. However, upon reincarnating in this world, the soul forgets this previous existence and needs to learn it all again. The myth says, and some might actually experience it, that whenever we perceive a beautiful object or a beautiful person, there is something direct, warm and bright about that perception which elicits our love for those forms as we recollect memories from our former dwellings.

Therefore, we see Beauty acting as a pedagogical device and the lover who perceives the beauty of the loved one is encouraged to fly back to that heavenly realm in which they once lived. It is important to mention the Ancient Greek term *καλός* (*kalós*), which means beautiful, but also what is morally noble and virtuous. This is the association to which Plato is referring in the myth, as well as the connection with which I intend to work throughout this assignment. By giving Beauty this definition, I aim not to exhaust the concept, but rather to distinguish from others developed over the history of ideas.

Beauty is perceived in Wilde's book in both form and content. The former can be noticed in the choice of words as well as in the unfolding of the story. The latter concerns what is being informed by the author. The form is beautiful in the way that Wilde uses

compound nouns and adjectives and controls the release of information in an imaginary world combined with reflections that accompany the plot, reinforcing its significance (SCRUTON, 2009). The content is beautiful because it is scattered throughout the narrative, with thoughts on the nature of people and the essence of Beauty.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is a masterpiece that intends to portray Art not as a means to an end, but as an end in itself. Thus, Wilde dialogues with the Aesthetic movement of his time that praised “Art for Art’s sake”. The writers of Aesthetic style did not convey moral or sentimental messages in their works, leastways not in the surface of their descriptions. Accordingly, Oscar Wilde presents us some thoughts on this matter. And certainly one that is specifically helpful to this work: “All art is quite useless” (p. 8), he states in the foreword of his novel, although he did not intend to submit art to a lower position. Rather, he meant quite the opposite: he meant that the work of art was a thing whose value resides in it and not in its purpose (SCRUTON, 2009), and therefore cannot be used as an argument for condemning vice nor for hailing virtue.

In the second part of the work, I discuss the aesthetic education and its connection with the main argument. At this point, it is likewise relevant to discriminate the concept of the term Aesthetics in use. I chose the definition of Aesthetics outlined by the German philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, who used the term in his *Aesthetica* in 1750, as a “theoria liberalium artium, gnoseologia inferior, ars pulchre cogitandi, ars analogi rationis, scientia cognitionis sensitivae” (p. 95), i.e., the science of sensible knowledge through which we apprehend the beautiful. It would thus be possible to think beautifully and to find true knowledge through the senses. Baumgarten's theory serves as my guide for it deals with the inner connections between perception and knowledge.

According to Velásquez (2015), our perception gathers information through our senses in three levels: clear representations; confused representations and obscure representations. Any discourse presented as a sequence of clear ideas, expressed in words or signs, is associated with previous sensible representations located in the confusing and obscure levels. Likewise, in analytical psychology, Jung (1964) posits that the soul also consists of three levels: conscious, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. There is a direct relation between the confusing and obscure levels and the personal and collective unconscious. Most of the information we perceive is processed below the conscious level. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that any form of learning is mostly of an unconscious nature; thus leaving the task of judging what was learned to rational thought.

Finally, in the third part of the assignment, I present the element of imagination. In a general way, imagination is the capacity of thinking of something that is not present to the senses. Vague though this conception may be, it serves us well when we think of its ordinary uses. When we go out and see the city, we may imagine what it is like to live in a particular place in a particular neighbourhood. When I am hungry I have to imagine what to cook with the ingredients that I have. Also, imagination may be related to something that is not real, i.e. imaginary, such as our fears as a child, which indicates some kind of failure in the cognitive process because it functions as a deceiving feature of our mind.

As opposed to that, we may think of our imagining power as an ability to think of things one conceives as fictional and be able to recognize the differences, such as to imagine what and how the characters in a book are or look like. Here I reach the thread of concept that matters to this work. Imagination may as well be thought of as the sensuous component in the appreciation of works of art without classifying them according to their purposes. In reading a novel or looking at a painting I may be stimulated to imagine all sorts of things without conceptualising them as a representation of anything definite or attached to any historical process. As to the role of the literary writer in regards to his task, the Canadian critic Northrop Frye maintains:

The literary writer isn't giving information, either about a subject or about his state of mind: he's trying to let something take on its own form, whether it's a poem or play or novel or whatever. That's why you can't produce literature voluntarily, in the way you'd write a letter or a report. (...) The writer of literature can only write out what takes shape in his mind. It's quite wrong to think of the original writer as the opposite of the conventional one. All writers are conventional, because all writers have the same problem of transferring their language from direct speech to the imagination. (FRYE, 2002, p. 24)

Thus, in developing the argument for the educational importance of Beauty in our lives, it is also necessary to define the ideal concept of imagination, without which it is impossible to understand the relations between art and life, seeing that imagination acts as a device that provides us with clues to the unity of reality as a whole. These clues, as they will be developed later, can be found in Literature, and amount to a significant part of human experience (FRYE, 2002). Oscar Wilde imprints in the writing of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the most beautiful scenarios to be imagined. Also, it allows readers to listen to the most enlightening and sordid thoughts, as well as to witness the vilest actions, only to help us understand the obscurity of the human soul. The present work connects the beautiful and the imaginative aiming at reality through the aesthetic experience of the subject.

2 WHAT BEAUTY IS

*Beauty is truth, truth beauty – that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*²

Beauty is a formal nature in which beautiful things that touch the visual sensory participate (GAZZOLA, 2009). When the subject beholds a beautiful object or person, the perception sets the soul in motion through the body organs, particularly the eyes and the ears. It was Plato who observed that “if we denominate beauty what gives us pleasure, or rather, not every kind of pleasure, but only those which can be reached by sight and hearing, in which ways could we defend ourselves? [...] Beauty, dear friend, is what delights us through the eyes and the ears”. (p. 426) In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry Wotton says that Beauty “needs no explanation” and “it is one of the great facts of the world, like sunlight, or springtime, 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.” (p. 34). Therefore, how do we perceive the intrinsic features that incite us to call something or someone beautiful?

The answer lies in the aesthetic experience of the subject. It is important to mention the concept of *arete*, as a divine presence in all levels of life. *Arete* is an aggregate of qualities that make up good character. Thus, the beautiful is what points to *arete*, meaning a way of acting and existing that is complete and excellent. Whenever we see something, our eyes are affected by light: the thing itself and the reception of this *pathos* in the soul. Gazzola (2009) states that from the thing seen, a copy or image (*eikon*) is created due to the power of imagining, namely, the power to create images in the soul (*phantasiai*). Hence, imagination (*phantasia*), along with the judgement of the images (*doxa*), accounts for what we understand as perception. This perception has the power to affect the soul and its origins demand the analysis of the fundamentals of the genesis of all things (Gazzola, 2009). It is only through peculiar movements of the soul that the subject comes to recognize the beauty in the things he sees. In order to understand how the images are connected to the judgements, it is necessary to know what the soul is.

In *Phaedrus*, Socrates renders us with a beautiful myth about the immortality of the soul and its connections with love. According to Plato, it is possible to reach Beauty through Love. This love means “madness” towards the loved one, who the lover deems beautiful. To

² KEATS, John. *Ode on a Grecian Urn*. Retrieved: Jan 12th from poetryfoundation.org, 1820.

understand the metaphor in the myth which will be mentioned presently, the concept of soul is extremely relevant:

The soul through all its being is immortal, for that which is ever in motion is immortal; but that which moves another and is moved by another, in ceasing to move ceases also to live. Only the self-moving, never leaving self, never ceases to move, and is the fountain and beginning of motion to all that moves besides (PLATO, p. 13).

Plato also talks about the cosmic origin of the soul, which gives movement to bodies when “it receives an earthly frame which appears to be self-moved, but is really moved by her power; and this composition of soul and body is called a living and mortal creature” (p. 14). The body is moved from within: it becomes animated by the soul. To Plato, the soul is a composite figure – a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. One of the horses has a noble nature but the other is of ignoble nature and therefore hard to steer. The myth tells us that the soul

traverses the whole heaven in divers forms appearing – when perfect and fully winged it soars upward, and orders the whole world; whereas the imperfect soul, losing its wings and drooping in its flight at last settles on the solid ground there, finding a home [...] (PLATO, p.14).

The wing is the body element that is closer to the divine which soars and gravitates in heaven. The divine is beauty, goodness and wisdom; they feed the soul. Our souls are imperfect when fed upon evil and foulness and the opposite of good; hence mortal.

Under these conditions, the charioteer has difficulties to steer the horses towards heaven beyond and, for this reason, the mortal soul only visualizes partly “the very being with which true knowledge is concerned; the colourless, formless, intangible essence, visible only to mind, the pilot of the soul”, whereas the immortal soul “beholds justice, and temperance, and knowledge absolute, not in the form of generation or of relation, which men call existence, but knowledge absolute in existence absolute” (p.14). That said, it is understood that by following the paths of the gods, namely immortal souls, the mortal soul gazes at truths that prevent it from harm and from being affected by the wrong passions.

2.1 Recollecting Beauty

The soul which has seen truth is able to recollect the true nature of existence. This soul or subject, in recollecting the divine things he has seen, would be closer to the nature of gods. Seeking these sights becomes then his aim in life. The more he lives pursuing such images, the more he is considered mad. Such madness is actually inspirational, a “calling”. When he witnesses the beauty of earth, he recognizes the true beauty he once laid eyes upon. Thus, learning is recollecting:

But, I suppose, if we acquired knowledge before we were born and lost it at birth, but afterwards by the use of our senses regained the knowledge which we had previously possessed, would not the process which we call learning really be recovering knowledge which is our own? And should we be right in calling this recollection? (PLATO, p.61).

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Lord Henry Wotton sees the influence of the Platonic ideas in the presence of Dorian Gray to the painter Basil Haward and his own presence in regards to Dorian’s spirit:

[...] And Basil? From a psychological point of view, how interesting he was! The new manner in art, the fresh mode of looking at life, suggested so strangely by the merely visible presence of one who was unconscious of it all; the silent spirit that dwelt in dim woodland, and walked unseen in open field, suddenly showing herself, Dryadlike and not afraid, because in his soul who sought for her there had been wakened that wonderful vision to which alone are wonderful things revealed; the mere shapes and patterns of things becoming, as it were, refined, and gaining a kind of symbolical value, as though they were themselves patterns of some other and more perfect form whose shadow they made real: how strange it all was! He remembered something like it in history. Was it not Plato, that artist in thought, who had first analyzed it? Was it not Buonarotti who had carved it in the coloured marbles of a sonnet-sequence? But in our own century it was strange... Yes; he would try to be to Dorian Gray what, without knowing it, the lad was to the painter who had fashioned the wonderful portrait. He would seek to dominate him – had already, indeed, half done so. He would make that wonderful spirit his own. There was something fascinating in this son of love and death. (WILDE, 2003, p. 51)

According to Lord Henry’s inner reflection, Basil recollects his very nature through the image of Dorian. His art is modified and becomes more beautiful than never only by the mere sight of Dorian’s figure. After Basil finishes painting the picture of Dorian, he explains why he will not exhibit it. He states: “I have put too much of myself into it” (p. 15). The ideas of beauty that come from the artist Basil Hallward seem tuned with some ideas concerning the philosophy of art. In the descriptions that Wilde develops in the narrative, we see some beautiful images associated to the great secret of the artist. When Lord Henry and Basil

Hallward are walking to the garden, Henry insists on Basil to answer why he would not exhibit Dorian Gray's picture. The artist replies by saying:

Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter. The sitter is merely the accident, the occasion. It is not he who is revealed by the painter; it is rather the painter who, on the coloured canvas, reveals himself. The reason I will not exhibit this picture is that I am afraid I have shown in it the secret of my own soul. (WILDE, 2003, p. 14)

During this conversation, the narrative leaves us hanging for some time while it describes Lord Henry's picking up a pink daisy from the grass. He gazed intently at the flower and replied that he would believe Basil's reasons if they are "quite incredible" (p.14). At this moment,

The wind shook some blossoms from the trees, and the heavy lilac-blossoms, with their clustering stars, moved to and fro in the languid air. A grasshopper began to chirrup by the wall, and like a blue thread a long thin dragon-fly floated past on its brown gauze wings. Lord Henry felt as if he could hear Basil Hallward's heart beating, and wondered what was coming. (WILDE, 2003, p. 15)

The reader also wonders what is coming. The control of the flow of narrative is seen in this part; the chirrup of the grasshopper, produced by the rubbing of its hind legs against its leathery forewings is similar to Lord Henry's rubbing his hands in curiosity about Basil's secret to come, causing the reader to feel as though he was also present in the dialogue.

The reason, as we come to know afterwards, is that Dorian Gray inspires Basil Hallward in a refreshing manner. He says: "I can now recreate life in a way that was hidden from me before." (p. 20), and continues "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!" (p. 20). Basil provides a definition of beauty that is based on the authentic impressions that he acquires concerning the world that surrounds him. Hallward, and Wilde likewise, believes the artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. The painter adds up to his elucubration: "We live in an age when men treat art as if it were meant to be a form of autobiography. We have lost the abstract sense of beauty." (p. 21) Having said that, it is relevant to find in the book the clues to this sense of Beauty to which Basil is referring.

2.2 Beauty and Eros in “The Picture of Dorian Gray”

According to Plato, the soul is not easily affected by the things the eyes see and the ears hear. This abstract sense of beauty is not available to all souls. Some are not able to interpret this rapt of amazement that a beautiful thing causes. The subject might confuse beauty for pleasure and “instead of being awed at the sight of her, he is given over to pleasure, and like a brutish beast he rushes on to enjoy and beget; he consorts with wantonness, and is not afraid or ashamed of pursuing pleasure in violation of nature” (PLATO, 2017, p. 16). Wilde addresses our attention to the aspect of the pursuit of beauty in chapter four when Dorian Gray is waiting in the little library of Lord Henry’s house. His mood is described as “rather sulky” as he turns over the pages of *Manon Lescaut*. Why specifically *Manon Lescaut*?

The mention of the novel *Manon Lescaut*, by Abbé Prévost, brings a new aspect of Beauty in the novel: the subversive nature of Beauty. The work shows the moral ruin of the Chevalier des Grieux, brought about by the beautiful Manon (SCRUTON, 2009). Likewise, Dorian Gray attracts people with his beauty and destroys their values, as unintentional as it may be. Some people to whom Dorian is related are brought to tragic endings, like Basil Hallward or Allan Campbell, who commits suicide.

Oscar Wilde ironically refers to a certain facet of Beauty to his readers: the Beauty of tragedy. Dorian Gray falls in love with the actress Sybil Vane and invites his friends to attend one of her plays at the theater. After performing terribly – precisely because she falls back in love with him and therefore values less highly her occupation as an actress –, Sybil is shunned by Dorian Gray, who is completely disappointed with her performance and feels that her Beauty has disappeared. He then leaves her hopeless and desperate, not before withdrawing his marriage proposal to her. She kills herself on the very night.

Dorian, who came to know of the suicide on the following day, admits to Lord Henry that he did not feel hurt by her death: “It seems to me to be simply like a wonderful ending to a wonderful play. It has all the terrible beauty of a Greek tragedy, a tragedy in which I took a great part, but by which I have not been wounded”. (p. 129) Actually, this could be interpreted as a misconception of the what the Greek tragedy was. Dorian’s attractive features combined with his attitude turned out to be fatal to people of his acquaintance. But he does not seem to be moved by the tragedy of death, nor to be capable of acknowledging the extent of his misdeeds. It seems that the pursuit of Beauty that Dorian leads is opposed to the life of virtue (SCRUTON, 2009, p.3). The life of virtue is only reached if we are educated to be

affected by the right things. Lordy Henry in the first conversation he had with Dorian talks about the influence that one person has in another's soul.

Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of someone else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. The aim of life is self-development. To realise one's nature perfectly – that is what each of us is here for. (WILDE, 2003, p. 29).

But self-development requires great effort. As Plato states in book VI of *The Republic*, “for all great things are precarious and, as the proverb truly says, fine things are hard” (p. 243). Therefore, if the pursuit of Beauty is full of hardships and trials, we must look for it in the right places. The path to Beauty is through love, that is, Eros.

2.3 Eros as a Means of Education

In the *Phaedrus*, Plato depicts the nature of Eros as a divine force that mediates the sensible and the intelligible. It lifts us to Goodness through Beauty. Eros is the wish one has to fly once again, to fly anew, after having lost wings and fallen down to earth. Moreover, Eros is the bridge between what we have and what we will acquire. (TEIXEIRA, 2015). The lover is the one who seeks more in life, always in search of beautiful things which he or she never ceases to look for. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Dorian says that he remembers that Lord Henry once told him “about the search for beauty being the real secret of life” (p. 66). Similarly, education is a work of love.

Reason is not enough and there is a knowledge that outdoes reason: it is the knowledge that derives from love. (TEIXEIRA, 2015) Therefore, the whole point of education would be to guide someone through love in hopes of finding more elevated values such as the Good. In order to do that, the subject starts ascending by beholding the beautiful beloved figure. After that, the lover learns to love the moral beauty of the soul, which is more praiseworthy than that of the body. Eventually, he will love the feelings and divine ideas reaching even the scientific ones and the transcendental idea of Beauty itself, as Plato explains in *Symposium*:

So when a man by the right method of boy-loving ascends from these particulars and begins to descry that beauty, he is almost able to lay hold of the final secret. Such is the right approach or induction to love-matters. Beginning from obvious beauties he must for the sake of that highest beauty be ever climbing aloft, as on the rungs of a

ladder, from one to two, and from two to all beautiful bodies; from personal beauty he proceeds to beautiful observances, from observance to beautiful learning, and from learning at last to that particular study which is concerned with the beautiful itself and that alone; so that in the end he comes to know the very essence of beauty. (PLATO, p. 156 sections 211b – 211d)

From the concept of Eros, it is possible to affirm that every education is an aspiration to become or to achieve the best possible. Thus, education is a permanent process of trying to discover the truth of things; it tries to fulfill a soul devoid of what is good, true and beautiful. Nevertheless, the soul experiences the ambivalence of forces that sometimes will pull it down and other times will bring it up. As the story of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* unfolds, it is the reader who is invited to plunge into the soul of things described in the narrative.

2.4 Dorian Gray's Search for Beauty

In the book, *Dorian Gray*, influenced by Lord Henry, endeavours to find the ideal forms of Beauty in his life. He looks for beauty in all forms of art, all kinds of people and things. Dorian, on his strolls around London, winds up in an old-cramped theater where the actress Sibyl Vane plays several parts in different plays. Dorian Gray is fascinated by her acting and her Beauty and falls madly in love with her:

She was the loveliest thing I had ever seen in my life. You said to me once that pathos left you unmoved, but that beauty, mere beauty, could fill your eyes with tears. I tell you, Harry, I could hardly see this girl for the mist of tears that came across me. And her voice – I never heard such a voice. It was very low at first, with deep mellow notes that seemed to fall singly upon one's ear. Then it became a little louder, and sounded like a flute or a distant hautboy. In the garden-scene it had all the tremulous ecstasy that one hears just before dawn when nightingales are singing. There were moments, later on, when it had the wild passion of violins. You know how a voice can stir one. Your voice and the voice of Sibyl Vane are two things that I shall never forget. When I close my eyes, I hear them, and each of them says something different. I don't know which to follow. Why should I not love her? Harry, I do love her. She is everything to me in life. (WILDE, 2003, p. 68)

Dorian is affected by the countenance and voice of his admired actress. Again, Beauty is regarded as something that is reached through sight and sound, and it “elevates” Dorian; it makes him remember of ideal forms taken from nature, such as the nightingale; or produced by humans, such as the hautboy.

Furthermore, Dorian Gray relishes the Beauty of many other things. He devotes himself to the study of the most exquisite scents that provoke sensory shapes to his feelings;

he gives concerts in his house, dedicated to several different tunes from all over the world; he studies jewelry, from which he learns about various distinct rocks of all hues and shapes:

Then he turned his attention to embroideries and to the tapestries that performed the office of frescoes in the chill rooms of the northern nations of Europe. As he investigated the subject – and he always had an extraordinary faculty of becoming absolutely absorbed for the moment in whatever he took up – he was almost saddened by the reflection of the ruin that Time brought on beautiful and wonderful things. (WILDE, 2003, p. 74)

The pursuit of Beauty described above brings Dorian closer to the Good. It is by learning how to desire things that he learns how to love, that is, the lover tames and teaches his soul not to indulge to the ignoble and fractious part of his soul. However, Time is the variable that makes Dorian seek for ignominious things and associate with the most despicable characters. Dorian Gray is aware that his beauty would perish had the painting never existed. He keeps it well-locked in a room where it stains and the figure grows uglier whenever he does something immoral or hurt someone. He resorts to drugs and filthy pleasures that seem to ease the ache in his soul. Society starts talking about his deeds, especially the ones concerning his friendship with young men. Basil Hallward comes to his house to inquire on the things said about Dorian:

Why is your friendship so fatal to young men? There was that wretched boy in the Guards who committed suicide. You were his great friend. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England, with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable. What about Adrian Singleton, and his dreadful end? What about Lord Kent's only son, and his career? I met his father yesterday in St. James's Street. He seemed broken with shame and sorrow. What about the young Duke of Perth? What sort of life has he got now? What gentleman would associate with him? (WILDE, 2003, p. 190)

At this point, it seems that Dorian's beauty has been fatal to those that surround him. It is never clear to what kind of vices Basil is referring or what exactly Dorian has done to the young men. It could be implied that Dorian has had romantic affairs with those young men, which for the time of the book would be scandalous, but would fit perfectly in the Platonic perspective of Love that I have been discussing. Besides, Basil states that Dorian has a "madness for pleasure" (p. 191), which is opposite to what Plato sees as the path for happiness. Plato condemns pleasure as the ultimate meaning of existence, which is not to say that Plato does not value the importance of pleasure to human life. Life is pleasure, but the question is, according to Teixeira (2015), which pleasures fulfill us and truly make us happy?

To Plato, the pleasures that tend to the intelligible, and are not submitted to the allure that sensible things cause, are worthwhile. Knowledge, for instance, is connected to happiness; and happiness is in the search for Beauty and Goodness. Sensible pleasures are different from Goodness since they are unstable, incomplete and evanescent. Dorian Gray has failed in finding this facet of Beauty. He does not seek to find tranquility nor he has a more enduring ideal of life. He knows that time is slipping through his fingers and that his beauty will vanish soon. Hence, his actions will soon be forgotten; there is no point in caring for what is virtuous and what is morally correct. He will look for what is corrupted, sometimes only to his amusement: “There were moments when he looked on evil simply as a mode through which he could realise his conception of the beautiful” (p. 185).

Nevertheless, to this analysis, the pedagogical aspect of Beauty is inherent to the Good. The Good is the educational condition for the discovering of the objects of true knowledge. A good action is also a beautiful action and the doer is at peace with himself. What is more, education, to Plato, is the practice of the Good (TEIXEIRA, 2015). The ideal literary education is that which seeks, through the contemplation of a beautiful story, the narrative aspects of a story that are worthwhile and the recognition of aesthetic features it presents. After reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, one will not necessarily engage in the same activities that Dorian was involved in; nor one should judge Dorian’s character based on what a narrator says about it.

Rather, the reader must sort out what is relevant to him and what reflects his own personality when mirrored in the book. As Oscar Wilde states in the preface, “It is the spectator, and not life, that Art really mirrors” (p. 8). Books provide us with hints on reality through beautiful sentences, images, descriptions and characters. This feature of Literature will be further explained, but for now it is possible to affirm that Literature is a kind of exaggeration of life, which portrays not what will happen or happened but simply what usually happens. (FRYE, 2002)

3 AESTHETIC VALUES IN THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY

*There is nothing in the imagination that has not previously been at the heart of the senses.*³

At this stage, it is relevant to elucidate in more detail certain philosophical precepts that were briefly mentioned in the introduction to this paper. Having discussed the myths that our beliefs concerning the beautiful are based upon, it is important to describe which elements are responsible for arousing our perceptions towards Beauty. Aesthetics, as defined by Georg W. F. Hegel in his *Lectures on Aesthetics* of 1818, is the proper name to the science that concerns the beautiful as a creation of Art (p. 34). This definition resounds in Baumgarten, who dealt with the elements that compose the sensible facts. These elements are universal rules that are propagated all over the arts (BAUMGARTEN, 1993). The presuppositions for this theory find their grounds in psychology. It is through the association between analytical psychology, which provides the norms for sensible knowledge, and philosophy, which establish the aesthetic rules, that Baumgarten intends to form a concept of the search for perfection through Art.

Baumgarten posits that Aesthetics is a faculty similar to Reason. He regards it as technique; a series of phases organized and orientated to the execution of an objective. He proposed an analysis of the inferior procedures of knowledge. By inferior he does not mean less valuable in quality, but rather unconscious procedures of the cognitive exercise (VELÁZQUEZ, 2015). Baumgarten sustains that through perception, it is possible to elaborate convenient material to the sciences of knowledge.

He then develops a set of items that amount to a theory of cognitive faculties consisting of three levels: clear representations, confused representations and obscure representations. In other words, he claims that the soul is a representative force, since thoughts are representations. Thus, one might think of some things in a clear manner, and of others in a confused manner. Besides, the bottom of the soul perceives things obscurely. The faculty of knowing things in a confused or obscure way is the faculty of the inferior knowledge, which is particular to our souls (BAUMGARTEN, 1993). These representations

³ BAUMGARTEN, A. G. *Estética – A Lógica da Arte e do Poema*. Tr. Mirian Sutter Medeiros. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993. P.73, my translation.

are called sensible representations and can be verified in the opening chapter of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*:

The studio was filled with the rich odor of roses, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees of the garden there came through the open door the heavy scent of the lilac, or the more delicate perfume of the pinkflowering thorn. From the corner of the divan of Persian saddle-bags on which he was lying, smoking, as usual, innumerable cigarettes, Lord Henry Wotton could just catch the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-colored blossoms of the laburnum, whose tremulous branches seemed hardly able to bear the burden of a beauty so flame-like as theirs; and now and then the fantastic shadows of birds in flight flitted across the long tussore-silk curtains that were stretched in front of the huge window, producing a kind of momentary Japanese effect, and making him think of those pallid jade-faced painters who, in an art that is necessarily immobile, seek to convey the sense of swiftness and motion. The sullen murmur of the bees shouldering their way through the long unmown grass, or circling with monotonous insistence round the black-crocketed spires of the early June hollyhocks, seemed to make the stillness more oppressive, and the dim roar of London was like the bourdon note of a distant organ.” (WILDE, 2003, p. 9)

In this passage, there is a description of a moment of apparent stillness, with many of the representations pointing to the senses. First, the smell of the flowers call forth our sense to take part in the cognitive process. Then, the shine of the laburnum catches our sight followed by the motion of the birds in a momentary Japanese effect that arouses an image in Lord Henry’s mind and, naturally, in the reader’s mind as well. Finally our hearing is evoked to notice the murmur of bees and the motion of the city of London which resembles a bourdon, or drone, an instrument that is tuned to produce a single continuous tone.

The excerpt in question is clearly directed not to any rational recognition, but to a sensible perception that contains confused (the gleam of the honey-sweet and honey-colored blossoms of the laburnum) and obscure (the bourdon note of a distant organ) features and, consequently, knowledge concerning flowers, smells, textures, musical instruments, animals and the city life of the context.

Consonant to my inductive attempt to explain how perception works in Aesthetics, the theory of the soul, which Jung proposed, also consists of three levels: conscious, personal unconscious and collective unconscious. The conscious is the intermittent phenomenon of the mind. It is the state of direct awareness. In spite of that, it can only apprehend a small amount of data at instants of existence. It is the level that relates the psychic facts to the *ego*, which is formed by a general perception of the body and by registers of the memory (JUNG, 2001). The personal unconscious is the level that works independently of the volition of the consciousness. It is made up of dreams, fantasies and symptoms but also of content arising from the individual’s history and his experiential memory. Its content is ignored, forgotten or

repressed for some reason; frequently for its affective potential. Finally, the collective unconscious is the level of the soul of humanity. It is a pool of myths, archetypes and instincts that are shared by all human beings. It is inherited by people and it is available in culture through images, traditions and symbols.

From the principle of association of representations, we can assume that different personalities might emphasize their correspondent cognitive levels without diminishing the importance of the object analyzed (VELÁZQUEZ, 2015). In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the object that raises diverse impressions in three different characters is the portrait of Dorian painted by Basil Hallward. I suggest that the picture affects Lord Henry Wotton only on a conscious level. He considers it beautiful at once and makes a brief remark on it: “My dear fellow, I congratulate you most warmly. [...] It is the finest portrait of modern times” (p. 37). Lord Henry can recognize and compare the portrait to what is consciously available to his knowledge. He seems to be aware of the greatness of such artistic endeavour. To him, it is a clear representation of a fine young man.

However, to Basil Hallward, as I have analysed under other terms before, the painting is the product of an unconscious level of his soul. I gather Basil Hallward is moved by the portrait on a personal unconscious level. He explains why he will not exhibit the portrait with a comment that might be connected to my analysis:

He is a suggestion, as I have said, of a new manner. I find him in the curves of certain lines, in the loveliness and subtleties of certain colours. That is all.” “Then why won’t you exhibit his portrait?” asked Lord Henry. “Because, *without intending it*, I have put into it some expression of all this curious artistic idolatry, of which, of course, I have never cared to speak to him. He knows nothing about it. He shall never know anything about it. But the world might guess it, and I will not bare my soul to their shallow prying eyes. My heart shall never be put under their microscope. *There is too much of myself in the thing, Harry—too much of myself!* (WILDE, 2003, p. 21, emphasis mine).

Unaware of the future outcome, in the process of creation, the artist yields to his deepest feelings in order to give shape to his soul. Analogously, the personal unconscious is composed of

“everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things that are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness: all this is the content of the unconscious” (JUNG, 2013, p.62).

Finally, I offer for consideration, my interpretation of the desperate rapture which gets hold of Dorian once he beholds his own image on the portrait. I sustain here that his feelings towards the painting come from a collective unconscious and are based on archetypes. The archetype is “a category of fantasy and it is a content that is not present in any individual’s mind. It reappears throughout history, whenever creative imagination is freely expressed” (JUNG, 2013, p. 82). It is therefore a mythological figure. In the case of Dorian Gray, the mythological figure that is brought to the surface of his perception is Narcissus. Dorian gazed at the picture and,

[...] 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 a revelation. He had never felt it before. (WILDE, 2003, p. 38).

At first, he is astonished by his own beauty, and similarly to Narcissus, he had not been conscious of the fairness of his own countenance until that somewhat epiphanic moment. Narcissus was also

in the bloom of young manhood, and fair as a flower in spring. But, though his face was smooth, and soft as any maiden's, his heart was hard as steel. When he was born, the blind seer Teiresias had made a strange prophecy concerning him. “So long as he knows not himself, he shall live and be happy” (BUCKLEY, 1908, p. 2)

Dorian, likewise, would not be happy from that moment on. The reason why is perhaps associated to another narrative. The sight of his image had excruciated him “as if a hand of ice had been laid upon his heart” (WILDE, 2003, p. 38). According to Jung, “the moment in which the mythological situation appears is always characterized by a peculiar emotional intensity” (p. 82). Dorian Gray is feeling quite sorrowful seeing that his fate is to age whereas the image of the painting will remain forever young. So much so that, at this moment, the reader can recognize another unconscious exaltation that evokes the myth of Dr. Faustus in the novel: “If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! 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!” (p. 39) Apparently, however, Dorian is not addressing to any particular entity in his appeal to eternal vitality unlike Dr. Faustus, who conjures the devil.

Dorian feels, after being told by Lord Henry, that youth is the only thing worth having. He is jealous of the things whose beauty is everlasting. His desire is to cheat aging

and remain beautiful. In order to so, unconsciously, he will make a pact with the unknown which eventually will make the image in the picture look uglier whenever he does something evil to someone. Thus, this could be another hint that Wilde gives us on the Platonic ideals of the novel, namely, the Good is beautiful and the bad actions mar the Beauty of the soul.

Futhermore, to Jung

every reference to the archetype, be it experienced or only spoken, is “disturbing”, that is, it acts, for it releases in us a voice more powerful than ours. Those who speak through primordial images, speak as though they had a thousand voices; they move us and subdue, elevating simultaneously that which qualifies as unique and ephemeral in the realm of a continuous *to become*; they elevate personal destiny to humanity destiny and by doing so, they unleash in us all of those beneficial forces which since forever have made possible to human kind to save itself from all dangers and also to survive the longest night ⁴ (JUNG, 2013, p. 83).

Therefore, the aesthetic choices of Wilde are the secret of his art. His criative process appears to be an unconscious activation of the archetypes in an elaborated and original form. By doing this, Wilde offers readers the possibility to access the most profound forms of living, educating the reader to what was prominent in his lifetime. Coincidentally, the spirit of our time longs for education. Whether in academic circles, in the media or in social meetings, the theme of education is a common topic. Nonetheless, there is not very much being sad about what kind of education we are pursuing, let alone about an aesthetic education. Thus, I suggest that the artist acts as an educator. Whenever he succeeds in bringing forth the primordial image that once lied in the unconscious, back to the conscious, he is bringing up what the spiritual atmosphere of his epoch really needs (JUNG, 2013, p. 84).

Similarly to the individual, the peoples and the epochs have their attitudes and spiritual trends. The artist is able to find the psychic elements that are not participating in the great scheme of life. He can, with his art, contribute to the spiritual development of his lifetime, portraying the elements that are missing in people’s lives. In the next section, I intend to demonstrate how the aesthetic education of man is important to society as a whole.

⁴ My translation: “[...] toda referência ao arquétipo, seja experimentada ou apenas dita, é “perturbadora”, isto é, ela atua, pois ela solta em nós uma voz muito mais poderosa do que a nossa. Quem fala através de imagens primordiais, fala como se tivesse mil vozes; comove e subjuga, elevando simultaneamente aquilo que qualifica de único e efêmero na esfera do contínuo devir, eleva o destino pessoal ao destino da humanidade e com isto também solta em nós todas aquelas forças benéficas que desde sempre possibilitaram à humanidade salvar-se de todos os perigos e também sobreviver à mais longa noite.”

3.1 The Aesthetic Education of Man

We are living a moment in our society in which ugliness is dominating the personal and the political sphere of our lives. Violence, depression, corruption, lies, all of these if are not increasing, they are at least being more displayed on the media, in art or in our everyday lives. The philosophers that I have chosen to use as a source for this work were aware of the problem also in their lifetime. Alexander Baumgarten, for instance, in his works, aimed not at developing a philosophy of art, but rather an educational proposal. In his Aesthetics, he does present a “theory of liberal arts”. However, he meant liberal arts as the curriculum dedicated to learning Grammar, Rethoric, Logic, Arithmetic, Geometry, Music and others offered by universities from the Middle Ages on (VELÁSQUEZ). Therefore, Velázquez suggests that Baumgarten demonstrates that knowledge is not only restricted to rationality. Rather, it extends to irrational aspects that could be understood and weighed in a better way through different approaches by the scientific logic:

Since no philosopher can ever reach such profundity that allows him to contemplate all things purely with his intellect, without dwelling on the level of confused knowledge; in like manner, almost no discourse comes to be so scientific and intellectual that not a single sensible idea can be found throughout its development. As a result, the one who dedicates himself, before everything, to distinct knowledge can find any distinct representations in a sensible discourse; the latter, however, remains sensible, as well as scientific discourse remains abstract and intellectual.⁵ (BAUMGARTEN, 1993, p. 12).

Baumgarten states that Reason is not the only means through which knowledge can be acquired. In fact, it is one of the means through which a theoretical speculation should be judged along with sensible components. Friedrich Schiller discusses this combination of reason and senses in the search of an aesthetic education. To Schiller, the solution to political problems has to be confronted aesthetically:

The arts of the beautiful and the sublime promote life, practise and refine the capacity for sensation; they raise the mind from gross material pleasures to pure appreciation of mere form, and make it accustomed to combine voluntary action in its pleasures. (SCHILLER, 2016, p. 127)

⁵ My translation: “Como nenhum filósofo alcança tamanha profundidade que lhe permita contemplar todas as coisas com o intelecto puro, sem se deter no nível do conhecimento confuso; do mesmo modo, quase nenhum discurso chega a ser tão científico e intelectual que não se encontre uma só idéia sensível ao longo do seu encadeamento. Por consequência, aquele que se dedica antes de tudo ao conhecimento distinto pode encontrar quaisquer representações distintas num discurso sensitivo; este último, no entanto, permanece sensitivo, assim como o discurso científico permanece abstrato e intelectual.”

The state suppresses individual freedoms through coercion, and forces a state of affairs that leaves no options to citizens but capitulate. According to Schiller, freedom can be achieved through Beauty. The complex mechanism of the states compels man to fully develop his humane capacities. This problem is addressed to Prince Frederick Christian Von Augustenburg in a series of letters written in 1795. In these letters, Schiller deals with problems of utmost importance to people in the age of French Revolution: how can society be transformed in order to allow for greater civil liberty? Should it be a top down or a bottom up process? I do not intend to answer such questions. Yet, if we are debating a certain aspect of education, Schiller's work contains some elements that are key to my argument as a whole and also resound in the book I am analyzing. To Schiller, the artist is an educator. He or she makes the one thing that the state cannot provide: Art.

Art, like science, is absolved from all that is positive and that human convention has introduced; both enjoy an absolute *immunity* from human capriciousness. The political legislator can bar the way to its domain, but he cannot rule within it. He can despise the friend of truth, but truth prevails; he can humiliate artists, but he cannot falsify art. (SCHILLER, 2016, p. 29)

In order to do so, the artist must protect himself from the “corruptions” of his or her time. Also, he should disdain the judgment of his age and live his or her epoch, attending to the needs of his or her contemporaries.

He should look upwards to his dignity and the law, never downwards to fortune and need. Free both of a vain activity that would gladly leave its mark in the passing moment, and of the impatient spirit of enthusiasm that applies the measure of all things to the petty creations of the time, he may leave the sphere of the actual to the intellect, where it belongs; for he may strive instead to create the ideal by connecting the possible with the necessary. Let him express this ideal in illusion and truth, express it in the play of his power of invention and in the gravity of his deeds, express it in all sensuous and spiritual forms, and wordlessly project it into infinite time. (SCHILLER, 2016, p. 31)

Oscar Wilde, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, criticizes the English of his time who “Of all people in the world [the English] have the least sense of the beauty in literature” (p.59). In chapter three, during a lunch, many important people of London are discussing human nature, politics and America. Lord Henry engages in a debate with Lord Thomas, a politician. The conversation goes from American women to the East End of London, an area particularly poor of the city. The debate is filled with quick-witted remarks and clever interruptions by all present at the table:

‘They are so unhappy in Whitechapel,’ continued Lady Agatha.
 ‘I can sympathise with everything, except suffering,’ said Lord Henry, shrugging his shoulders. ‘I cannot sympathise with that. It is too ugly, too horrible, too distressing. There is something terribly morbid in the modern sympathy with pain. One should sympathise with the colour, the beauty, the joy of life. The less said about life’s sores the better.’
 ‘Still, the East End is a very important problem,’ remarked Sir Thomas, with a grave shake of the head.
 ‘Quite so,’ answered the young lord.
 ‘It is the problem of slavery, and we try to solve it by amusing the slaves.’
 The politician looked at him keenly. ‘What change do you propose, then?’ he asked. Lord Henry laughed.
 ‘I don’t desire to change anything in England except the weather,’ he answered. ‘I am quite content with philosophical contemplation. But, as the nineteenth century has gone bankrupt through an overexpenditure of sympathy, I would suggest that we appeal to Science to put us straight. The advantage of the emotions is that they lead us astray, and the advantage of Science is that it is not emotional.’ (WILDE, 2003, p. 56)

Harsh though Lord Henry’s position may be, it is in tune with Schiller’s idea that every political reformation should take as a starting point the ennoblement of the human character, which is through fine art, and it remains unaffected by the corruption of history and by a degraded humanity. This humanity is seen by Lord Henry as both the group and the condition of the human race when he says “Humanity takes itself too seriously. It is the world’s original sin. If the caveman had known how to laugh, history would have been different” (p. 56). Wilde ends this tense debate with humour.

Lord Henry’s final remark springs out of Art what Schiller sees as the relaxing aspect of Beauty. This kind of beauty relaxes the moral spirit and releases the spiritually tense man from the shackles of rules (SCHILLER, 2016). In the excerpt above, Wilde seems to be mocking the apparently serious though hypocritical people who resort to the state as a means for tackling poverty. Also, I believe Wilde considers humour as a fraction of the beautiful seeing that it demands some wit to apprehend the possible meanings of a sentence such as this one.

Finally, the work of art can definitely be used as a tool for educating the reader. However, the concept of art that is assumed as intentionally instructive or morally edifying is overly contradictory. According to Schiller, nothing is more opposed to Beauty than grant to its essence a determined trend. Oscar Wilde warns the reader in his preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* not to seek for what is not intended in Art.

4 THE FACULTY OF IMAGINATION

*Everything to be imagined is an image of truth*⁶.

I have hitherto discussed two of the elements that compose the theory of the search for Beauty through Literature that this paper intends to demonstrate. In order to successfully present it, the idea of Imagination comprising the process is rather pertinent. Besides, my appraisal to such faculty of the soul is a pedagogical one; that is, through imagination we come to learn more about reality. Likewise, Baumgarten defines imagination as “the reproductions of representations of the senses. The faculty of imagining is that which extracts from sensations the shapes of the objects sensed and reproduce them in itself.”⁷ (p. 22).

Again, I do not mean to exhaust the matter seeing that several definitions of imagination were developed throughout the history of ideas. The images we can see in a conscious state are the raw material of life. These images are captured by imagination and stocked in the memory. This mnemonic background is like another facet of the soul, of the subjectivity. Hence, the greater the amount of images or representations we are exposed to, the greater our souls.

In addition to that, to Aristotle, the capacity for imitating is inherent to the human being (ARISTOTLE, p. 40). It is by means of imitation that man produces art. Let us not regard the concept of imitation as complex: if a poet wishes to communicate that there was a boom, a crash, the poet will not simply narrate what took place, but, for instance, make use of sound sequences that imitate the sound of a boom. Thus, one may imitate dance, actions, feelings. And along with that comes a capacity for learning the primordial things through imitation.

We feel a certain pleasure in contemplating images. Even the ugly ones when well represented. Besides, we think through images; hence if we have a vast supply of them, we will be able to express ourselves comprehensively, more accurately. We may even use language more appropriately. Thus, the poetical discourse addresses to imagination and alludes to what is possible in human life. In Frye’s words,

⁶ BLAKE, William. *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. 1965. Ed. David V. Erdman. Commentary Harold Bloom. Newly revised ed. Garden City, NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1982.

⁷ My translation: “[...] as reproduções das representações dos sentidos. A faculdade de imaginar é aquela que extrai das sensações as formas dos objetos sentidos e as reproduz em si mesma”.

The poet, Aristotle says, never makes any real statements at all, certainly no particular or specific ones. The poet's job is not to tell you what happened, but what happens: not what did take place, but the kind of thing that always does take place. (FRYE, 2002, p. 35).

The poet presents us the universal event and we collect our impressions of human life, one by one, in a coordinated and focused form brought by literature. It is to say that man uses discourse to clear imagination to the hugeness of the possible.

This conception may produce a belief about the purposes of studying this world of imagination. After all, what good is literature if anything is possible in it? The answer is: it encourages tolerance (FRYE, 2002). Northrop Frye in "The Educated Imagination" (2002) states that "in the imagination our own beliefs are also only possibilities, but we can also see the possibilities in the beliefs of others" (p. 46). Furthermore, Scruton in "Art and Imagination" (1998) is aware of the difficulties in defining and using imagination properly. He proposes that "In imagination one is engaging in speculation, and one is not typically aiming at a definite assertion as to how things are. In imagination, therefore, one goes beyond what is strictly given" (p. 98). This is seen as a sort of detachment in which the things described are removed out of reach of belief and action (FRYE, 2002).

It means that our experience sometimes fails us and another source is necessary for leading real life properly. Our experience resorts to past memories and present facts that, even though we call them real life, they sometimes limit our scope of action. Literature, on the other hand, allows us to think outside a timeline, and to judge outside our own beliefs through the element of illusion. "Literature does not reflect life, but it doesn't escape or withdraw from life either: it swallows it" (FRYE, 2002, p. 47).

4.1 The Educated Imagination

At this point, it is inevitable to mention certain features involved in the process of reading. Also, I will give a piece of my mind on what the function of literature is. We all seem to have a primitive necessity of being told stories. It appears to me that literature serves to a basic necessity of expanding life through imagination. Stories, myths and narratives are elements that describe the relation of man and the world or of man with himself. It is also an instrument to set up the way people perceive reality, but not an instrument to change it necessarily.

When we read a book, we are focusing our attention to a stream of words arranged in such a form as to create an image in us, or to make us hear the sounds of the described environment, or even feel the smell of things. Every element is assembled in conventions that do not intend to portray life as it really is, but rather as literature demands. Even the most unlikely attitudes or the simplest of the personalities will be imagined by the author while bearing only literary principles in mind. The reader must sort them out. An example of this in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is the excerpt that follows, in which the Duchess of Harley asks Lord Henry how she could become young again:

“Can you remember any great error that you committed in your early days, Duchess?” he asked, looking at her across the table. “A great many, I fear,” she cried. “Then commit them over again,” he said gravely. “To get back one’s youth, one has merely to repeat one’s follies.” “A delightful theory!” she exclaimed. “I must put it into practice.” “A dangerous theory!” came from Sir Thomas’s tight lips. Lady Agatha shook her head, but could not help being amused. Mr. Erskine listened. “Yes,” he continued, “that is one of the great secrets of life. Nowadays most people die of a sort of creeping common sense, and discover when it is too late that the only things one never regrets are one’s mistakes.” A laugh ran round the table. He played with the idea and grew wilful; tossed it into the air and transformed it; let it escape and recaptured it; made it iridescent with fancy and winged it with paradox. The praise of folly, as he went on, soared into a philosophy, and philosophy herself became young, and catching the mad music of pleasure, wearing, one might fancy, her wine-stained robe and wreath of ivy, danced like a Bacchante over the hills of life, and mocked the slow Silenus for being sober. Facts fled before her like frightened forest things. Her white feet trod the huge press at which wise Omar sits, till the seething grape-juice rose round her bare limbs in waves of purple bubbles, or crawled in red foam over the vat’s black, dripping, sloping sides. It was an extraordinary improvisation. He felt that the eyes of Dorian Gray were fixed on him, and the consciousness that amongst his audience there was one whose temperament he wished to fascinate seemed to give his wit keenness and to lend colour to his imagination. He was brilliant, fantastic, irresponsible. He charmed his listeners out of themselves, and they followed his pipe, laughing. Dorian Gray never took his gaze off him, but sat like one under a spell, smiles chasing each other over his lips and wonder growing grave in his darkening eyes. (WILDE, 2003, p. 57)

In the passage above, it is possible to visualize the aspect of the critique that Frye proposes from many angles. The position of Lord Henry concerning his own theory is rather paradoxical and ironic; it is filled with figures of speech that Wilde resorts to whenever this character intervenes in the dialogues of the book. Of course the reader cannot believe his remarks: they make sense only in the world of the book. Here’s what Frye regards about it: “What we’d never see except in a book is often what we go to books to find. Whatever is completely lifelike in literature is a bit of a laboratory specimen there. To bring anything really to life in literature we can’t be lifelike: we have to be literature-like” (p. 53).

Another literary principle we come across when reading the previous passage of the book is the exercise of imagination. Again, only in the world of literature we can behold

philosophy as a woman who wears a *wine-stained robe and dances like a Baccante over the hills of life*. The use of the verb *fancy* is also noticeable, which is a synonym for “imagine” or “suppose”. Finally, the way the mind has to absorb the description, following attentively what the text says and the associations it does are praiseworthy in this scene. The reader must enter this scene with one mental image of Lord Henry, and after reading it, he must see him quite differently. The reader should leave this description dazed by Lord Henry’s cleverness and wit, similarly to Dorian Gray, otherwise he has not been able to capture what the writer meant.

4.2 Suspension of Disbelief

Another literary principle that is part of the conventions which literary language conveys is the suspension of disbelief. The term was used by Samuel Taylor Coleridge in his *Biographia Literaria*, published in 1817. According to Coleridge, it is up to the reader to loosen his demand for verisimilitude, admitting that it is not possible that everything happens in a credible manner, or better yet, that the unfortunate events that happen to a tragical hero may happen to oneself or to any other.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the reader faces a supernatural event that apparently is the product of Dorian’s imagination, but that later is revealed as a true fantastic situation. After Dorian wishes he never grows old he alters the directions of the narrative. At any time that he harms or hurts anyone, the picture changes to a more repulsive aspect. The reader, at perceiving this, does not stop because he or she thinks the narrative has turned into something magical and incredible. He or she goes on with the reading for he or she recognizes “a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith” (WILDE, 2003, p. 99). The reader then silences his or her thinking self and participates in the literary work.

In chapter eight, the reader is still plunging in the supernatural aspect of Dorian’s pact and shares the same doubt as the character:

Was it all true? Had the portrait really changed? Or had it been simply his own imagination that had made him see a look of evil where there had been a look of joy? Surely a painted canvas could not alter? The thing was absurd. It would serve as a tale to tell Basil some day. It would make him smile. (WILDE, 2003, p. 121)

Unfortunately, only when Basil sees the picture and is killed by Dorian, ahead in the narrative, the reader is certain that such estrangement has in fact fulfilled the goal of dissociating his or her imaginative power at the same time it encompassed his or her imagination in the narrative. That is to say, the reader believes the pact was quite credible for the sake of enjoyment but he or she is cheated by the plot once he or she plunged into it. Either way, imagination works its ways and the ritual is full of pleasures and lessons that the reader will never forget.

That is precisely the point of view I am defending in this paper. As stated by Joseph Addison,

[...] there is nothing that makes its way more directly to the soul than Beauty, which immediately diffuses a secret satisfaction and complacency through the imagination, and gives a finishing to any thing that is great or uncommon. The very first discovery of it strikes the mind with an inward joy, and spreads a cheerfulness and delight through all its faculties. (ADDISON, 2002, p. 51)

Addison refers to imagination as a stairway to Beauty, the kind of connection praised in the whole of this paper. Also, through imagination, the reader consorts with the writer and is never alone in this journey. Such journey is a pursuit for a home in our interior world which is constantly changing as it is assailed by images and concepts that come from the most varied sources. For this reason, I advocate for an imaginary education, from which the person will procure a solid ground to resist the idleness of intelligence and the morbidity of theory.

5 CONCLUSION

In the previous chapters, I intended to demonstrate how the concepts of Beauty, Aesthetics and Imagination are intertwined and connected to Arts and ultimately and intrinsically to Education. Such concepts are fundamental to any attempt to educate subjects. It is important therefore that before we consider projects, laws and abilities to transmit to people, a consistent idea of education must be considered. The most relevant issue lies in answering the following question: what is the expected result from a process of education?

An answer to this question may be based on the writings of Bertrand Russell, who posits that from the point of view of the preceptor, despite the difficulties, knowledge is achievable. Also, it is possible that what is understood as useful knowledge to transmit in a certain epoch is somewhat erroneous. From such insight, one can think of the education in Brazil. What is its goal? Is it focused on the transformation of the subject? What sort of transformation is it aimed at? If we consider the gap between teaching in a regular school and the academic critique as legitimate forms of reflecting on education, we might neglect the several other forms of educating and their related goals. The mistake, it seems to me, is to consider the students as instruments to an end, rather than ends in themselves.

The fruit of education is culture, that is: the perception of the social and the individual realities, knowledges, practices and habits. Culture, a properly humane manifestation, is based on the surviving of the species and transmutes itself according to the association and the amassing of knowledge, seeking a more sophisticated and rather comfortable survival.

In Brazil, Basic Education prepares students for work, although it does not prepare them for specific or necessary jobs, considering the geography and economy of the country. Are we educating students to the job market, to make them citizens in a political arena, or to provide opportunities so that each individual can develop their own sense of belonging in this huge cosmos?

I plead for the latter. The previous precepts are written in article 205 of the Brazilian Constitution, but how are they developed at home, in schools or universities? I suggest that there should be, at least, universal characteristics that are desirable for education to be a complete process, which combines what is written in official documents to the attitude of teachers in the classroom. According to Russell (2010), vitality, courage, sensibility and intelligence are the characteristics that should be developed in children in order that they can

discern and magnify their capacities and possibilities of apprehending the world surrounding them.

Vitality is related to the physiological part of the process. It comes from hygienic care, a proper disposal of sewage and waste around the habitations and access to potable water, for instance. Vitality generates pleasure for being alive. Children have it in their childhood at a higher amount but throughout school years the intensity of vitality gradually decreases. To Russell, the educational process is responsible for such reduction. This vitality promotes interest in the external world, not only for the fact that children are free of responsibilities, but also for the absence of cognitive structures which enable them to judge the evil that surrounds them. At this stage, infants should be told stories, so that through them, unconsciously, they learn about right or wrong attitudes and their consequences.

The second item of the series is courage. It is the absence of fear, but it can also be understood as a capacity to control it. As Russell puts it, the largest part of our fears derives from experience or suggestion, such as the fear of the dark, for instance. The author also cites the repressive fear that certain dominant castes inflicted on population to keep the power centralized and restrain the ascendance of others. Russell suggests that throughout the education experience, a certain impersonal vision of life should be considered. With that, he alleges that the search for something external to us like knowledge or art is the best form of elevating the soul and of enlarging our desires and natural instincts. Thus, a person with wide interests has less fear of failing because they realise, in a pool of possibilities, several ways that a certain fearful situation may be beneficial beyond the interests of the ego. To find this way, sensibility is necessary.

Sensibility is a kind of corrective to courage; it is connected to intelligence so that from knowledge and experience acquired, the subject may be willing to new learning possibilities. A human being who is not afraid of knowing should be affected by many things, but mostly by the right things. When discussing practical education, it is important to mention a certain disarray that creates some confusion in pedagogical practices: it is the belief that it is possible to promulgate any sort of information without exercising intelligence.

However, it is not possible to exercise intelligence without sharing information or without acquiring, somehow, knowledge. The first practice is common in schools where, for instance, a piece of news is showed to students (information) so that they can, through sparse and disconnected facts and situations, criticize the reality that surrounds them as citizens. Of course such practice generates engagement because it causes knee-jerk reactions on people. But they lack discernment to judge the news compared to real life.

They also lack time to reflect, that is, to speculate. The latin origin of the verb speculate is *speculum* and it means mirror. (GÓMES DA SILVA, 1998). That is why when we think, we say we are “reflecting” – as a mirror. If reflecting is like looking at yourself in a mirror, then one can only reflect on something learned previously, which already exists in the soul. Upon speculating about the aspects of a certain phenomenon, one seeks what was previously learned sensibly, hence irrationally and unconsciously (VELAZQUÉZ, 2015). In a pedagogical practice such as the one mentioned before, the student has only time to agree or disagree, or to reproduce and accept the common sense expressed by the group, or, in the worst case scenario, by the teacher.

My paper is an attempt to cast light on the importance of finding the beauty of the literary experience. It is not enough to tell students to read books. We cannot expect enthusiasm or reverence from students before knowledge. It is relevant that we, as educators and parents, show them how to interact and how to search for it. Besides, we must have them act, paint, dance, touch, play, write, hear, taste and see by themselves. To educate is to bring the inner subject out to life; it is to prepare for the world by articulating the sensible and the abstract.

Thereby, not only children, but everyone can recognize the beauty that resides in doing. Everyone can, provided that they are correctly encouraged, recollect, appropriate and judge Beauty by themselves. The task of the literature teacher, more specifically, is to incentive the exercise of imagining, to call the student’s attention to the aspects to be noticed in a book so that they will not leave the narrative unscathed: books will certainly leave scars in one’s soul.

That said, some final questions need be answered. Why is Beauty related to education? And why have I chosen *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to illustrate my point of view? I reckon Beauty is related to education because of the light it brings to our lives. The eyes that shine brightly before a beautiful object will illuminate the paths to know more and more complex things. And knowledge leads to many paths; from relative perceptions we make objective decisions. Moreover, when we listen to music, watch a film, see a picture or touch a sculpture we feel as if something was moving us. It is Beauty elevating us and conducting our souls outwards and upwards. Education comes from Latin *ex ducere*, which means to conduct outwards. Hence, this emotion is the psychic energy necessary to education.

Finally, Frye pertinently accounts: “literature keeps presenting us the most vicious things to us as entertainment” (FRYE, 2002, p. 60). That is why I chose *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to sustain my argument. It contains the imaginary elements in a well-distributed

and concise manner, assembled in a very didactic model of a plot which teaches the reader much of the soul of the characters, and also much of his own. The book has an apparently moral ending due to the mystical and tragic death of the protagonist Dorian Gray. I do not believe Oscar Wilde decided to capitulate to a Victorian morality by the closure. I gather he was merely giving the proper ending to the story.

Although Oscar Wilde intends to produce amoral literature, and however much he criticizes a society permeated with false and hypocritical moralism, he inevitably suggests a set of moral values, from his plays to his short stories. The novel does not intend to defend morals and “good manners”, but it does convey certain moral values on the plot, *vide* the harm done to people surrounding Dorian and the fact that whenever he wrongs someone or performs petty acts, it shows in his painting, making it less and less beautiful.

Art relies upon the beauty of form. But if Art is form, one may query, should we not consider content at all? Content exists by human spiritual necessity. And it is through form that we reach ideas. Form and content are interconnected, and none of these elements should be taken for granted. The point is that an education that stems from the senses can sharpen perception, sensibility, and give rise to imagination and emotion, regardless of specific or even dated moral issues. Wilde actually restates what his preface said about the artist and books: he is the creator of a beautiful book that is indeed well-written. He shows no ethical sympathies, at least not in the surface of his work. Wilde’s literature does not

appeal to any pleasure in these things, but the exhilaration of standing apart from them and being able to see them for what they are because they aren’t really happening. The more exposed we are to this, the less likely we are to find an unthinking pleasure in cruel or evil things. As the eighteenth century said in a fine mouth-filling phrase, literature refines our sensibilities. (FRYE, 2002, p. 60).

After all, what is man before Beauty excites in him the free pleasure and the serene form that soothes his wild existence? It is a being in pursuit of a place to belong to. Only Beauty can give man a social character because upon giving harmony to the individual, the effects extend to society as a whole. The search for Beauty is the search for a home to our souls.

REFERENCES

- ADDISON, Joseph. *Os prazeres da imaginação*. Lisboa: Centro de Estudos Anglísticos da Universidade de Lisboa e Edições Colibri, 2002.
- ARISTOTLE. “Poética”. In *Os pensadores: Aristóteles*. São Paulo: Editora Nova Cultural LTDA, 2000.
- BAUMGARTEN, A. G. *Estética – A Lógica da Arte e do Poema*. Tr. Mirian Sutter Medeiros. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1993.
- BUCKLEY, E. F. “The curse of Echo”. In *Children of the Dawn – Old Tales of Greece* Retrieved: January 7, 2018, from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/40476> [1908]
- CANDIDO, Antonio. “A literatura e formação do homem” In: *Textos de Intervenção*. São Paulo: Duas Cidades / Editora 34, 2002.
- COLERIDGE, S. T. *Biographia Literaria*. Retrieved: January 05, 2018, from <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6081.bibrec.mobile>
- CROCE, Benedetto. *Estética como ciência da expressão e linguística geral*. São Paulo: É Realizações, 2016.
- FRYE, Northrop. *The Educated Imagination*. Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 2002.
- GAZOLLA, Rachel. “Do olhar, do amor e da beleza: um estudo sobre o estético em Platão no Fedro e no Timeu”. In *Estudos Platônicos: Sobre o ser e o aparecer, o belo e o bem*. São Paulo: Loyola, 2009.
- GÓMEZ DE SILVA, G. *Breve diccionario etimológico de la lengua española*. México: FCE, 1998.
- HEGEL, G.W. F. “Estética – a ideia e o ideal”. In *Os pensadores: Hegel*. São Paulo: Editora Nova Cultural, 2000.
- JUNG, C. G. *O espírito na arte e na ciência*. Petrópolis: Editora Vozes, 2013.
- _____ *O homem e seus símbolos*. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 1964.
- _____ *Fundamentos de Psicologia Analítica*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2001.
- PLATÃO. *A República*. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2012.

PLATO. *Phaedrus* Retrieved: December 12, 2017 from
<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/1636/1636-h/1636-h.htm>

_____ *Phaedo* Retrieved: December 13, 2017 from
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1658>

_____ *Symposium.* Retrieved: November 10, 2017 from
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1600>

PREVÓST, Abbé. *Manon Lescaut.* Retrieved: January 13, 2018 from
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/468>

RUSSELL, Bertrand. *Sobre a Educação.* São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2014.

SCRUTON, Roger. *Art and Imagination.* South Bend, Indiana, St Augustine's Press, 1998.

_____ *Beauty.* New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2009.

SCHILLER, Friedrich. *On the Aesthetic Education of Man.* Great Britain: Penguin Random House UK, 2016.

TEIXEIRA, E. F. B. *A educação do homem segundo Platão.* São Paulo: Paulus, 2015.

VELÁZQUEZ, Carlos. *Mas afinal, o que é Estética?.* Lisboa: Chiado Editora, 2015.

WILDE, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* London: CRW Publishing Limited, 2003 [1890].