The Picture Of Dorian Gray By Oscar Wilde - A Ride Back To The Victorian Era

Oscar Wilde’s literature enables readers to encounter the best and most exceedingly awful aspects of Victorian society which gives us a chance to experience various thoughts and issues which are outside our comfort zone. Oscar Wilde was an artist, writer and a poet who was detained for ‘gross indecency’ making him very unique in contrast to the typical Victorian society. Wilde colossally valued aesthetics and its consequences on society’s diverse class. One such extraordinary novel that performs this function is The Picture of Dorian Gray(1890), a Romantic Gothic tale that follows the sinister life of Dorian Gray and his loss of morality and ethics quality. This novel by Oscar Wilde delineates the values and morals that he believed in and demonstrates to the world who he genuinely was. Through the development of Victorian society and its upper-class characters, Wilde gives readers a chance to investigate society’s obsession with aesthetics, its misogynist demeanours towards women and eventually remarks on its moral decay. These issues and ideas are not immensely scrutinized in present society which is the reason The Picture of Dorian Gray is an incredible novel which takes readers to the Victorian Era and lets us explore these ideas which fall outside our customary range of familiarity.

In the Victorian Era, the society, particularly the upperclassmen profoundly appreciated physical beauty. They valued outward appearance, aesthetics and beauty, up to the point where everyone started to pass judgment on others through the metaphorical glasses which sets the standard of who is an upperclassman and who isn’t. The main principle of aestheticism, the philosophy of art by which Oscar Wilde lived, is that art has no other need than to offer beauty. From the beginning of the novel, Dorian Gray is represented as the perfect picture of youth and beauty especially through the eyes of Basil Hallward, a skilled, though somewhat conventionally minded painter who paints the portrait of Dorian. Art in Victorian society is all about aesthetics and beauty. It was believed that 'an artist should create beautiful things, but should put nothing of his own life into them. 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.' In this quote, aesthetic diction is used as Basil feature precisely what's going on with the contemporary art scene as he and the society sees it. He believes that art should be about beauty, not the artist's personality. This goes to prove how society was extremely obsessed with aesthetics and returns us to the late 1800s and gives us a chance to encounter the fixation and consider this thought.

Since a very long time, even through the late 1800s, women were treated in a misogynistic manner and were expected to be of stereotypical behaviour. Lord Henry’s philosophies frequently criticize women and marriage, and the era of Dorian Gray’s London society, and indeed Oscar Wilde’s, becomes vivid to us in his dialogue. He says that women are just “decorative sex”, and that there are in every case just a couple of worth conversing with. This shows how women were scrutinized immensely and were not valued or acknowledged for anything they ever did. They were neither encouraged to believe in themselves nor were respected by others. It only seems that many of the women provide the male characters with the essential and distracting company. Lord Henry states, 'Never marry at all, Dorian. Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious: both are disappointed.' This dialogue records evidence that shows how Lord Henry and other members of the society thought women

as unfaithful and worthless. The society had a sexist behaviour towards women and didn't value them for the things they experienced and only treated then as an object. This idea is outside our comfort zone as sexism towards women has diminished a lot over time. We don't consider sexism as a colossal issue in most present western societies and thus, this novel lets us think outside our comfort zone.

Besides Basil, probably the most important person in Dorian's life is Lord Henry Wotton, a refined man who has quite provocative and interesting perspectives about life. Lord Henry has a strong capacity to manipulate individuals and he is the one who has the most responsibility regarding the change of Dorian's character. From the relationship between Dorian and Lord Henry, we can observe how moral decay appears as an immediate impact of a compelling person. At the beginning of the story, he recognises Dorian's innocence and vulnerability immediately and gets down to work. He perceives Dorian's vanity and he fills Dorian's mind with his own set of moral virtues. He contradicts nearly every conventional viewpoint about life. For example, his sentiment about intellect is the following: "Intellect is in itself an exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid." The metaphorical definition discloses to us that his view about temptations is that "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it. Resist it, and your soul grows sick with longing for the things forbidden to itself, with desire for what its monstrous laws have made monstrous and unlawful." He gradually contaminates Dorian by his enchanting thoughts, acquainting him to the hedonist lifestyle. He is who generated an unreasonable fear of growing old and losing youthful beauty. This demonstrates the moral decay that is hidden and is out of our comfort zone and takes us to degraded places to explore this idea.

In Conclusion, Oscar Wilde, an amazing writer, artist and poet who was likewise gay, takes us to interesting places in his novel The Picture of Dorian Gray. He lets readers explore Victorian society's obsession with aesthetics and beauty, its misogynist frames of mind towards women and remarking on its moral decay. This is a great novel because it takes the readers to the Victorian society and gives us the chance to investigate the various values and ideas that are a piece of the late 1800s which makes it one of a kind and out of our comfort zone. This novel has helped me consider various thoughts and issues which I would typically never consider as they aren't much of àn issue in today's society. Its fascinating utilization of conventions, characterisation and diverse dialogues lets readers explore a different world and various thoughts that are generally not thought about in the present western society. This makes the Picture of Dorian Gray a great novel that takes you where you need to go.