CAPITOLO

4

Doubles and Dandies: Stevenson, Wilde and the Fin de Siècle

"Life imitates Art far more than Art imitates Life." — Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying", in Intentions (1891)

OBIETTIVI

1. I can describe late-Victorian Britain from the Second Reform Act to the death of Victoria, and explain the fin de siècle mood.
2. I can outline the works of Stevenson and Wilde and define the double, aestheticism, decadence, the dandy and the aphorism.
3. I can analyse a confession, a page of aphorisms and a comedy scene, and explain how a Wildean paradox works.
4. I can use *will* and *would* for assumption, insistence and general truths.
5. I can play devil's advocate in a discussion and write a manifesto in aphorisms.

INDICE DEL CAPITOLO

4.1 History and Society: the Late Victorians, 1867–1901 2

4.2 Literature: Doubles, Aesthetes and Dandies 5

4.3 Texts: Two Selves, a Preface and an Interview 8

4.4 Language: Will and Would at C1 13

4.5 Skills: Identity and the Mask 16

4.6 Connections: Wilde and D'Annunzio; the Portrait and the Photograph 21

English 5 · Parte I · The Victorian Age · versione 1.0
Capitolo 4: Doubles and Dandies: Stevenson, Wilde and the Fin de Siècle · pagine 117–144 del volume completo · estratto per lo studio

In January 1886 a short novel with a strange title appeared in London: *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Within months it was being quoted in sermons and newspapers, and "Jekyll and Hyde" became, as it still is, a phrase for anyone who leads a double life. Five years later Oscar Wilde published a novel about a beautiful young man whose portrait grows old and corrupt in his place, and he opened it with a page of provocative sentences ending "All art is quite useless."

This chapter covers the last thirty years of Victoria's reign. Britain was richer and more democratic than ever, but also more anxious: about crime in the great cities, about the health of the "race", about women who wanted independence, and about what was hidden behind respectable faces. Its writers answered with doubles, masks and paradoxes. In the Language section you will see how *will* and *would* express much more than the future, and in the Skills section you will learn to play devil's advocate and to write a manifesto of your own.

4.1 History and Society: the Late Victorians, 1867–1901

Figura 4.1 places the authors of this chapter against the main events of the period. Three themes run through it: the slow growth of democracy, the confidence of the Jubilees, and a new kind of fear.

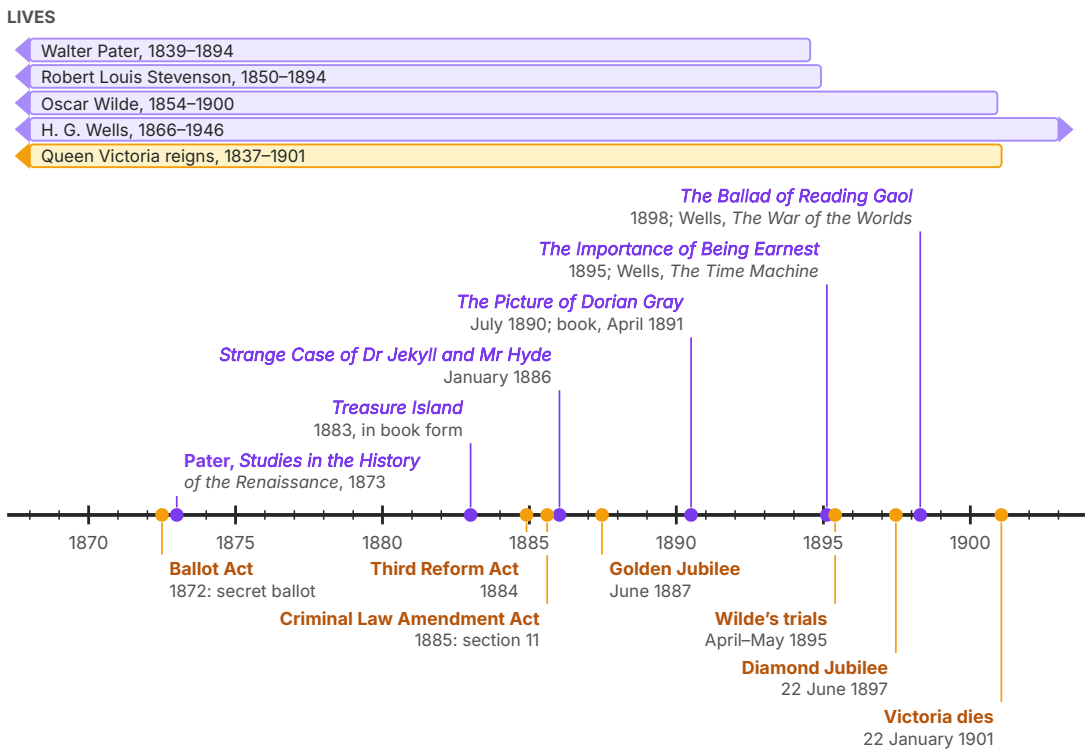


Figura 4.1 The late Victorian decades, 1868–1903: lives (top), literary works (above the axis, violet) and events (below, amber), on a proportional axis with ticks every year and labels every 5 years. All four writers were born, and Victoria began her reign, before the left edge; Wells died in 1946.

4.1.1 Democracy step by step

The **Second Reform Act** (1867), steered through Parliament by Disraeli for Lord Derby's Conservative government, gave the vote to male householders in the towns, and so to many skilled workers for the first time. The **Ballot Act** of 1872 made voting secret: before it, a man declared his vote in public, and a landlord or an employer could see how he had voted. The **Third Reform Act** (1884), under Gladstone's Liberals, extended the same householder vote to the countryside. Even then a large minority of adult men, and all women, still could not vote in parliamentary elections; the story of 1918 and 1928 is the one you read in English 2.

4.1.2 Jubilees and the "New Woman"

Victoria, who had withdrawn from public life after the death of Prince Albert in 1861, returned to the centre of national ceremony. Her **Golden Jubilee** (June 1887) celebrated fifty years on the throne; the **Diamond Jubilee** (22 June 1897) was also a display of empire, with troops from across the Empire marching through London (the Empire is the subject of chapter 7).

In the same years middle-class women gained new ground: the Married Women's Property Act of 1882 (chapter 2), places at university colleges, work as typists, teachers and clerks, and, for many, the bicycle. Magazines of 1894 began to argue about the **New Woman** (*la "donna nuova"*): an educated, independent young woman who questioned marriage as her only future. The phrase is a **period label**, used by supporters and satirists alike, not the name of an organised movement.

4.1.3 Fear in the city

London was the largest city in the world, and its poorest districts frightened the comfortable classes. In the autumn of 1888 a series of murders of women in Whitechapel, in the East End, was never solved; the newspapers turned the unknown killer into a figure of terror, and the poverty of the district became national news. Novels of the period are full of fog, closed doors and respectable men with secret lives in other parts of town.

Science seemed to offer explanations, some of which have not survived. In Italy Cesare Lombroso's *L'uomo delinquente* (1876) claimed that criminals were "born" and could be recognised by physical signs; the Hungarian-born doctor Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (German 1892–93, English 1895), dedicated to Lombroso, treated modern artists, Wilde among them, as symptoms of a sick civilisation. The idea of **degeneration** (*degenerazione*), the fear that a nation or a "race" could evolve backwards, was a misreading of Darwin (chapter 3), and both theories were later rejected by science. They matter here because they were in the air the novelists breathed.

4.1.4 Wilde, the law and the end of the century

In 1885 the Criminal Law Amendment Act, passed to protect girls, received a late addition, the **Labouchere Amendment** (section 11), which made any act of "gross indecency" between men a crime, even in private. Ten years later, in the spring of 1895, Oscar Wilde, then one of the most successful playwrights in London, sued the Marquess of Queensberry, the father of his friend Lord Alfred Douglas, for libel. The case collapsed; Wilde was then prosecuted himself, and on 25 May 1895 he was sentenced under that section to two years' hard labour. He left prison in 1897 a ruined man and died in Paris in 1900. Sex between men was partly decriminalised in England and Wales only in 1967.

The 1890s were soon called by a French phrase, **fin de siècle** (*fine secolo*): "end of the century", a label for the mood of a decade that felt both modern and exhausted, refined and anxious. Victoria died at Osborne House, on the Isle of Wight, on **22 January 1901**, after more than sixty-three years on the throne, the longest reign in British history until Elizabeth II passed it in 2015.

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «Il Third Reform Act del 1884 introdusse il suffragio universale maschile.» → ✓ Allargò il voto ai capifamiglia delle campagne, ma una larga minoranza di uomini adulti e tutte le donne restavano esclusi. Il suffragio maschile completo arriva nel 1918.

✗ «I vittoriani erano tutti puritani e repressi.» → ✓ È una caricatura. La società vittoriana era rispettabile in pubblico, ma anche curiosa, inquieta e piena di contraddizioni: proprio queste contraddizioni sono il tema di Stevenson e Wilde.

✗ «*Fin de siècle* è il nome di un periodo storico preciso.» → ✓ È un'**etichetta** per il clima degli anni Novanta, non una data né un movimento.

4.2 Literature: Doubles, Aesthetes and Dandies

4.2.1 Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)

Robert Louis Stevenson was born in Edinburgh in 1850, into a family of lighthouse engineers. He studied engineering, then law, but weak lungs kept him moving in search of a kinder climate, from the Swiss Alps to the South Seas; he settled in Samoa, where he died in 1894. After the adventure novel *Treasure Island* (1883) came, in January 1886, the book that made him famous overnight.

In *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (the first edition has no "The" in the title) Dr Henry Jekyll, a respected London physician, discovers a drug that releases his hidden self, the small, violent Edward Hyde. Hyde is **not** another person but Jekyll transformed: his crimes are Jekyll's pleasures enjoyed without Jekyll's responsibility. Stevenson later wrote, in "A Chapter on Dreams" (1888), that some of its scenes first came to him in a dream.

The story is told through witnesses and documents (Figura 4.2). For eight chapters we follow the lawyer Mr Utterson as he investigates a man who tramples a child, a strange will and a murder. Only at the end do two documents explain the mystery: Dr Lanyon's narrative, in which a doctor watches Hyde turn into Jekyll, and "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case". The structure works like a detective story and keeps the horror out of sight until it can no longer be avoided.

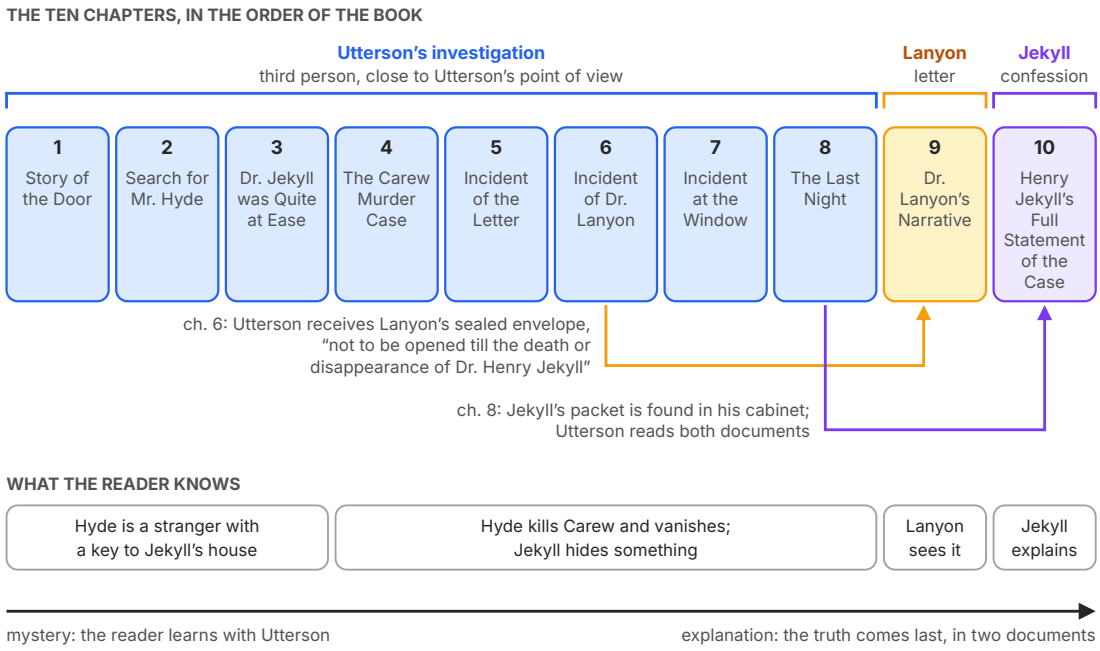


Figura 4.2 The narrative structure of *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*: the ten chapters in the book's order, with their titles as printed in the Project Gutenberg text (eBook #43). The truth is held back in two sealed documents, opened only in the last two chapters.

Hyde is the most famous example of **the double** (*il doppio*): a second self who shares a character's identity, such as a twin, a reflection, a portrait or a hidden part of the same personality; German writers called it the **Doppelgänger** ("double-goer"). Stevenson's Edinburgh offered a model: elegant New Town above, crowded Old Town below, and the memory of Deacon Brodie, a respectable cabinet-maker who was a burglar by night and was hanged in 1788. Like the Gothic novel (English 4, chapter 10), this late-Victorian Gothic places terror among doctors, lawyers and laboratories, in a modern city.

APPROFONDIMENTO

Before Hyde. The word *Doppelgänger* was coined by the German novelist Jean Paul in *Siebenkäs* (1796). E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixirs* (1815–16), James Hogg's Scottish novel *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), Poe's "William Wilson" (1839; chapter 5) and Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1846) made the double a figure of guilt and madness. Stevenson's originality was to make it the result of an experiment.

4.2.2 Aestheticism and decadence

In 1873 the Oxford tutor Walter Pater (1839–1894) published *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*. Its Conclusion told readers that life is a series of fleeting impressions, to be lived intensely: "To burn always with this hard gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life." Pater left it out of the second edition (1877); restoring it in 1888, he explained in a note that it "might possibly mislead some of those young men into whose hands it might fall."

Pater became a founder of **aestheticism** (*estetismo*): the belief that beauty is the highest value and that art should be judged by its form, not by its moral or social use. Its slogan, **art for art's sake** (*l'arte per l'arte*), came from French criticism (*l'art pour l'art*). Earlier, in 1848, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Everett Millais and William Holman Hunt had founded the **Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood** (*Confraternita dei Preraffaelliti*), painters who rejected academic art for the bright colour and exact detail of painting "before Raphael".

In the 1890s aestheticism shaded into **decadence** (*decadentismo*): a taste for the artificial, the exquisite and the forbidden, and a sense of living at the end of a civilisation. Its models were French, Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (1857) and Huysmans's *À rebours* (1884); its London showcase was the quarterly *The Yellow Book* (1894–97). Its human type was the **dandy** (*dandy*), a man who makes his clothes, manners and conversation a work of art and answers seriousness with wit (English 3, chapter 12).

4.2.3 Oscar Wilde (1854–1900)

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin in 1854 and studied classics at Trinity College Dublin and at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he knew Pater's work and heard Ruskin. By his American lecture tour of 1882 he was a public figure, the aesthete cartoonists loved. Fairy tales (*The Happy Prince*, 1888) and essays (*Intentions*, 1891) were followed by four comedies that filled London theatres between 1892 and 1895.

The Picture of Dorian Gray first appeared in the July 1890 issue of *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. The painter Basil Hallward portrays a beautiful young man; the witty cynic Lord Henry Wotton persuades him that youth and pleasure are all that matter; Dorian wishes that the portrait could grow old instead of him, and the wish comes true. Each cruelty, beginning with his rejection of the actress Sibyl Vane, who kills herself, marks the canvas while his face stays young. In the end Dorian stabs the portrait and is found dead, old and disfigured, beside a painting restored to its beauty. Reviewers called the story immoral; for the book of April 1891 Wilde added six chapters and a **Preface** (T2).

The Preface is a series of **aphorisms** (*aforismi*): short sentences that state a general truth, or claim to, in a memorable form. Many of Wilde's are epigrams in the wider sense (English 4, chapter 1 met the epigram as a short poem with a witty point): witty sayings that end in a surprise. Their engine is the **paradox** (English 4, chapter 2), often built on **antithesis** (English 3, chapter 8): a familiar idea turned upside down (Figura 4.3).

The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People opened on 14 February 1895. It is a comedy of manners (English 4, chapter 4) pushed to absurdity: Jack Worthing is "Ernest" in town and Jack in the country, Algernon escapes dull dinners by visiting an imaginary invalid, Bunbury, and both the women they love want to marry a man called Ernest. The title is a pun (English 3, chapter 12) on *Ernest* and *earnest*, "serious": nobody in the play is earnest, and its laughter is aimed at a society that values names, money and appearances above truth.

Weeks later came the trials. After two years in prison Wilde published *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), signed only with his prison number, "C.3.3."; his long prison letter appeared after his death as *De Profundis* (1905). He died in Paris on 30 November 1900.

Science fiction (English 4, chapter 14) also took up the age's fears. H. G. Wells (1866–1946), who had studied biology under T. H. Huxley, Darwin's great defender, sent his Time Traveller to the year 802,701 in *The Time Machine* (1895), where humanity has split into the idle Eloi and the underground Morlocks: Victorian class division and degeneration projected into the future. In *The War of the Worlds* (1898) Martians invade southern England, and the capital of the Empire learns what it is like to be conquered by a stronger technology (chapter 7).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ «Jekyll e Hyde sono due persone diverse.» → ✓ Hyde è **Jekyll trasformato** dalla pozione: un solo uomo, due aspetti. E il titolo originale è *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, senza «The».

✗ «Dorian Gray è il pittore del ritratto.» → ✓ Il pittore è **Basil Hallward**; Dorian è il modello e Lord Henry l'amico che lo corrompe.

✗ «"All art is quite useless" si trova nella versione del 1890.» → ✓ Si trova nella **Prefazione**, aggiunta per il libro del 1891.

DA RICORDARE

Five terms of the fin de siècle. the double — a second self (Hyde, the portrait) · **aestheticism** — beauty as the highest value, art judged by form (Pater, Wilde) · **decadence** — the artificial, the refined and the forbidden, at the end of a civilisation · **dandy** — life and manners as a work of art · **aphorism** — a general truth in one memorable sentence, in Wilde often an epigram built on paradox.

4.3 Texts: Two Selves, a Preface and an Interview

Three texts, three genres: a confession from a short novel, a page of aphorisms and a scene from a comedy. All three ask the same question: what is the relation between the face we show and the self we hide?

4.3.1 T1 · Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, ch. 10: "truly two"

Context. The last chapter of the novel is the statement Jekyll writes before his final transformation. Here he explains how his double life began, long before the drug.

Tabella 4.1 T1 — *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, "Henry Jekyll's Full Statement of the Case" (Project Gutenberg eBook #43)

> With every day, and from both sides of my intelligence, the moral and the intellectual, I thus drew steadily nearer to that truth, by whose partial discovery I have been doomed to such a dreadful shipwreck: that man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens. […] If each, I told myself, could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved of all that was unbearable; the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin; and the just could walk steadfastly and securely on his upward path, doing the good things in which he found his pleasure, and no longer exposed to disgrace and penitence by the hands of this extraneous evil.

Glosses. *doomed to*: condemned to · *shipwreck*: disaster (literally, the loss of a ship) · *outstrip*: go further than · *hazard the guess*: dare to suppose · *polity*: a state, a political community · *multifarious*: of many kinds · *incongruous*: not fitting together · *denizens*: inhabitants · *upright*: honest, moral · *steadfastly*: firmly · *penitence*: sorrow for one's sins · *extraneous*: coming from outside.

Analysis

A scientist's confession. Jekyll writes like a scientist reporting a discovery (*truth*, *partial discovery*, *the state of my own knowledge*), but the discovery is moral: man is *not truly one, but truly two*, an antithesis that sounds like a law of nature.

The dream of separation. The last sentence is a long conditional (*If each … could be housed in separate identities, life would be relieved…*). Its balanced clauses, *the unjust might go his way … and the just could walk*, make the plan sound rational, almost noble. The reader, who has seen Hyde trample a child and kill a man, knows how it ended.

1. Which words make Jekyll sound like a scientist? Which make him sound like a sinner?
2. What does Jekyll predict about future knowledge of the human mind? Which verb form does he use?
3. Jekyll calls his evil "extraneous". Does the novel agree?
4. Compare Jekyll's plan with Victor Frankenstein's ambition (English 4, chapter 14): what do both scientists refuse to see?

4.3.2 T2 · Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: from the Preface (1891)

Context. The Preface answered the reviewers of 1890. In the book each aphorism is a separate paragraph; this is a selection, in the original order.

Tabella 4.2 T2 — *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the Preface (Project Gutenberg eBook #174, text of the 1891 book); a selection

The artist is the creator of beautiful things. To reveal art and conceal the artist is art's aim.
[...] There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.
[...] No artist desires to prove anything. Even things that are true can be proved.
[...] Vice and virtue are to the artist materials for an art. [...]
All art is at once surface and symbol. Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril. Those who read the symbol do so at their peril.
It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors. [...]
We can forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.
All art is quite useless.

Glosses. *conceal*: hide · *aim*: purpose · *at their peril*: at their own risk · *mirrors*: reflects · *excuse*: justification.

Analysis

Against moral judgement. *There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book* replaces a moral question with a formal one, *well written, or badly written*: the creed of aestheticism, aimed at critics who had judged the novel by its subject.

Paradox as method. *All art is quite useless* sounds like an insult, but after the sentence before it, it is praise: art is made to be admired, not used, and the casual *quite* adds an elegant, almost bored tone. Yet *Those who go beneath the surface do so at their peril* warns us off a novel whose hidden picture shows exactly what lies beneath the surface. Readers still disagree whether the Preface is a theory, a defensive joke, or both.

1. Choose two aphorisms built on antithesis and underline the opposed terms.
2. What does *It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors* mean? Give an example from a film you know.
3. Is the novel "useless" in Wilde's sense? Think of its ending.

4.3.3 T3 · Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I: Lady Bracknell's interview

Context. Jack Worthing, known in town as Ernest, has just proposed to Gwendolen Fairfax. Her mother, Lady Bracknell, sends her out of the room and examines him, notebook in hand, as a candidate for her list of eligible young men.

Tabella 4.3 T3 — *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Act I (Project Gutenberg eBook #844); stage directions in square brackets as printed

LADY BRACKNELL	[…] Do you smoke?
JACK	Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.
LADY BRACKNELL	I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?
JACK	Twenty-nine.
LADY BRACKNELL	A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?
JACK	[*After some hesitation.*] I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.
LADY BRACKNELL	I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?
JACK	Between seven and eight thousand a year.
	[…]
LADY BRACKNELL	[…] Are your parents living?
JACK	I have lost both my parents.
LADY BRACKNELL	To lose one parent, Mr. Worthing, may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?
JACK	I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.
LADY BRACKNELL	Found!

JACK	The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.
LADY BRACKNELL	Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?
JACK	[*Gravely.*] In a hand-bag.
LADY BRACKNELL	A hand-bag?

Glosses. *idle*: without work · *tampers with*: interferes with, spoils · *bloom*: the fresh powder on a ripe fruit; freshness · *unsound*: wrong, unreliable · *Grosvenor Square*: one of the richest squares in London · *the purple of commerce*: a joke on "born in the purple", born royal: rich through trade · *the ranks*: the ordinary soldiers ("to rise from the ranks" = to become an officer from humble origins) · *disposition*: character.

Analysis

The interview as a form. Lady Bracknell asks the questions of a marriage market: habits, age, education, income, family. The comedy lies in the answers she approves: smoking is welcome as *an occupation*, ignorance is a *delicate exotic fruit* to be protected, education is dangerous because it might make the poor revolt. Each line reverses a respectable value and exposes the selfishness of her class (Figura 4.3).

Rising absurdity. The exchanges grow shorter (*Found! … In a hand-bag. … A hand-bag?*), and the stage direction *Gravely* asks the actor to play nonsense with total seriousness. That is the key to Wilde's comedy: trivial things treated seriously and serious things trivially, as the subtitle promises.

1. List Lady Bracknell's questions. What do they reveal about the values of her class?
2. Explain the joke in *the purple of commerce*.
3. How does Jack's reply about his parents imitate Lady Bracknell's style?
4. Find a clause with *would* in the speech on education. Is it future, habit or condition?

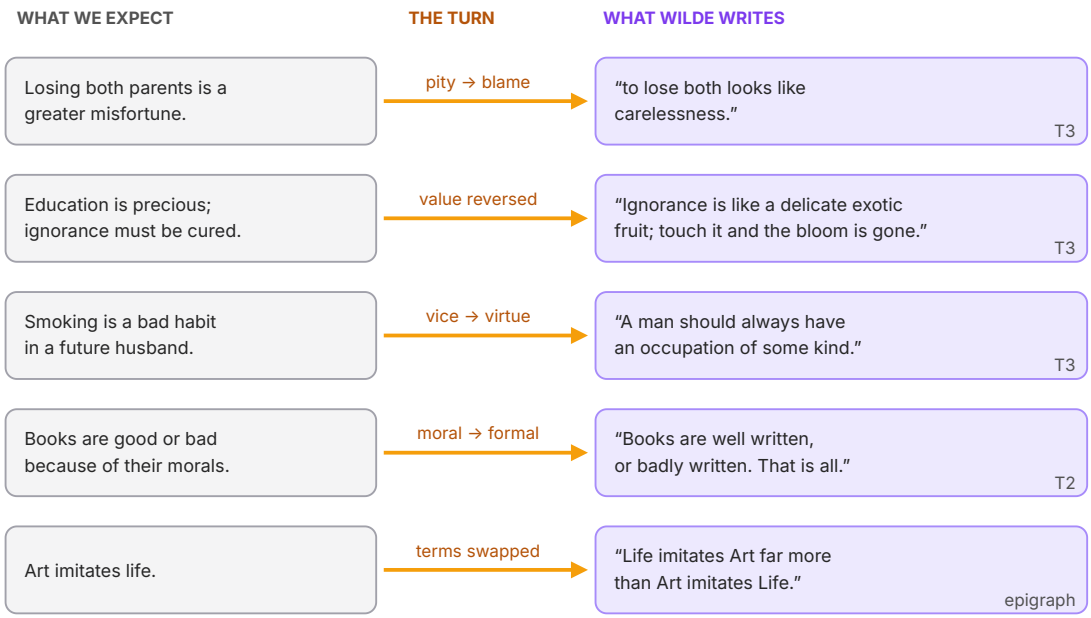


Figura 4.3 How a Wildean paradox works: an expected idea (grey) is turned upside down (amber) into an epigram (violet). Quotations from T2, T3 and the chapter's epigraph.

ESEMPIO SVOLTO

Analysing an epigram in four steps, on Lady Bracknell's line about parents.

- **Find the structure.** Two parallel clauses separated by a semicolon: *To lose one parent … may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose both looks like carelessness.*
- **Find the expected idea.** If one loss is a misfortune, two losses should be a greater misfortune.
- **Find the turn.** The second clause changes category: from bad luck (*misfortune*) to personal fault (*carelessness*). The orphan becomes responsible.
- **Say what it reveals.** Lady Bracknell cares about respectability, not grief: a man without parents has no family to show, and that, for her, is almost a crime.

Model sentence: *Through an antithesis that turns pity into blame, Wilde shows that for Lady Bracknell a family is a social qualification, not a source of affection.*

4.4 Language: *Will* and *Would* at C1

You know *will* as a future (English 3, chapter 9) and *would* in conditionals (English 2) and the future in the past (English 3, chapter 9); English 3 (chapter 12) also used both for **typical beha-**

viour, recalled in Tabella 4.4. This section adds three meanings that run through literary and scientific prose: **assumption**, **insistence** and **general truths** (Figura 4.4).

Tabella 4.4 *Will* and *would* for behaviour: a recap of English 3, chapter 12

Use	Example
typical behaviour, present (*will*) and past (*would*, actions only)	*Dorian will sit for hours in front of the mirror. · As a student, Wilde would talk until dawn.*
annoying habit: stressed *WILL / WOULD*	*He WILL quote Pater at breakfast! · She WOULD say that: she always defends him.*
refusal: *won't / wouldn't* (people and things)	*Utterson won't give up. · The cabinet door wouldn't open.*
preference: *would rather* (English 3, chapter 7)	*I'd rather read the play than see the film.*

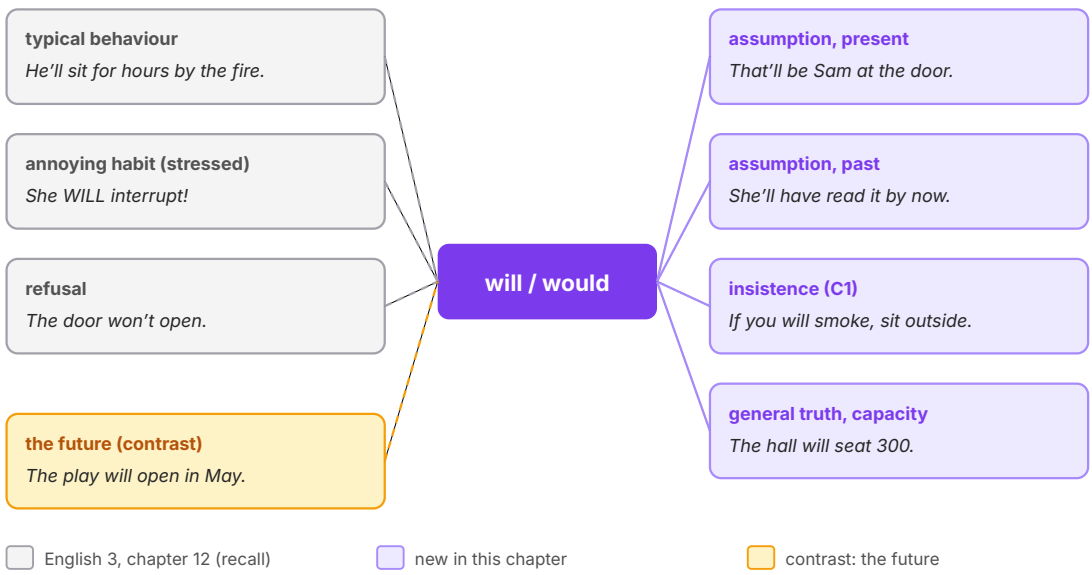


Figura 4.4 The meanings of *will* and *would*: uses recalled from English 3 (grey), new uses of this chapter (violet), and the future (amber), with which they are easily confused.

4.4.1 Assumption: *That'll be Hyde*

Will can express a confident **assumption about the present**, based on what we know rather than on what we see: hearing steps in the cabinet, Poole might say *That'll be the master*. **Will have + past participle** makes the assumption about the **past**: *Utterson will have received the letter by now. Would* is more tentative, or refers to a past moment: *That would have been in 1895, the year of the trials.*

Tabella 4.5 Assumption, insistence and general truths: form and use

Use	Form	Examples
assumption, present	*will* + base form / be + *-ing*	*Don't phone Sam now: he'll be in a seminar. · You'll be Giulia's friend from Turin.*
assumption, past	*will have* + past participle	*Most of the audience will have read the play at school.*
tentative assumption	*would (have)* + verb	*The portrait would be about life-size. · That would have been his first novel.*
insistence (criticism)	*will / would insist on* + *-ing*; stressed *would*	*He would insist on wearing a green carnation.*
insistence in an *if*-clause	*if* + subject + *will*	*If you will stay up all night, you can't complain that you're tired.*
politeness in an *if*-clause	*if you will / would*	*If you will wait here, I'll tell the doctor.*
strong refusal, formal	*will not* + passive; *won't have* + object + *-ing*	*She will not be told what to read. · I won't have you smoking in here.*
general truth, property, capacity	*will* + base form	*Silver chloride will darken in sunlight. · The theatre will seat four hundred. · Accidents will happen.*

4.4.2 Insistence and refusal

In an *if*-clause *will* normally does not appear (✗ *If it will rain, we'll stay in*), but it is correct when it means **willingness** or **insistence** rather than future. *If you will wait here* is a polite request; *If you WILL stay up all night…* is a criticism ("since you insist on doing it"). In the past, stressed *would* carries the same exasperation: *Wilde was warned, but he **would** sue Queensberry.* Formal refusals use *will not*, often with a passive (*Lady Bracknell will not be contradicted*), and *I won't have* + object + *-ing* means "I will not allow".

4.4.3 General truths and capacity

In scientific and technical English *will* describes what a substance or a system always does, or can do: *Light will darken silver halides*; *The hall will hold 400 people*. The meaning is close to the present simple, with the stress on predictability; proverbs use it too (*Accidents will happen*).

GRAMMAR IN ITALIANO

***Will* e *would* oltre il futuro. 1. Supposizione:** *That'll be Sam* = sarà Sam (il futuro epistemico italiano: «sarà a lezione», «avrà già letto la lettera» = *he'll be in class, he'll have read the letter*). **2. Insistenza:** *He would insist on going* = si ostinava ad andare; *If you will smoke…* = se proprio vuoi fumare / visto che continui a fumare. **3. Verità generali e capacità:** *The hall will seat 400* = la sala può contenere 400 persone. **4. Rifiuto formale:** *She will not be told* = non accetta consigli; *I won't have it* = non lo permetterò.

Confronto con l'italiano. L'italiano usa il **futuro** per supporre esattamente come l'inglese usa *will*: «Chi bussa? Sarà il postino» = *That'll be the postman*. Per l'insistenza usa invece verbi lessicali: *continuare a, ostinarsi a, non volerne sapere* (*he won't listen* = non vuole saperne di ascoltare).

ERRORE FREQUENTE

✗ *If the play will be good, I'll recommend it.* → ✓ *If the play **is** good, I'll recommend it.* (condizione futura: presente dopo *if*; *will* solo per volontà o insistenza)

✗ *Someone's at the door. It must to be Sam.* / ✗ *It will be Sam probably.* → ✓ *That'll be Sam.* / ✓ *It'll probably be Sam.* (l'avverbio va dopo *will*)

✗ *She will be arrived by now.* → ✓ *She **will have arrived** by now.* (calco di «sarà arrivata»: in inglese la supposizione sul passato è sempre *will have* + participio, anche con i verbi di movimento)

✗ *As a child, Wilde would have long hair.* → ✓ *Wilde used to have long hair.* (*would* abituale solo per azioni, mai per stati: English 3, chapter 12)

4.5 Skills: Identity and the Mask

4.5.1 Vocabulary: identity, beauty and the mask

The key words of this chapter's texts concern the self, its appearance and the judgement of others (Tabella 4.6).

Tabella 4.6 Identity, beauty and the mask: key words

Word	Meaning	Example
appearance (n.)	the way someone or something looks; also the act of appearing	*Dorian's appearance never changes.*
reputation (n.)	what people generally think of someone	*Jekyll fears for his reputation.*
conscience (n.)	the inner sense of right and wrong	*The portrait is Dorian's visible conscience.*
vice (n.)	an immoral habit; also a minor bad habit	*Hyde indulges every vice Jekyll hides.*
corrupt (v., adj.)	to make someone morally bad; morally bad, dishonest	*Lord Henry corrupts Dorian with words.*
mask (n., v.)	a covering for the face; something that hides the truth	*Respectability is Jekyll's mask.*
double life (n.)	a life with a secret side unknown to others	*Both Jack and Algernon lead double lives.*
vanity (n.)	too much pride in one's appearance or achievements	*Vanity makes Dorian wish to stay young.*
youth (n.)	the time of being young; a young man	*Lord Henry tells Dorian that "youth is the one thing worth having".*
hypocrite (n.)	a person who pretends to have virtues they do not have	*Jekyll insists he is not a hypocrite.*

Word formation: *-esque*, *-ish* and *-like*

Three suffixes form adjectives meaning "similar to" (Tabella 4.7). *-esque* (compare Italian *-esco*) means "in the style of"; *-ish* means "somewhat", or "like" with a negative colour for adults; *-like* is neutral or positive: *a childlike wonder* is innocent, *a childish reaction* immature.

Tabella 4.7 Adjectives of similarity

Suffix	Meaning	Examples
-esque	in the style of (art, a person)	*picturesque, grotesque, statuesque, Kafkaesque*
-ish	somewhat; like (often negative for people); approximately	*boyish, childish, foolish, reddish, thirtyish*
-like	having the good qualities of; similar to (neutral)	*childlike, dreamlike, lifelike, gem-like, businesslike*

4.5.2 Reading: “A Handbag in the Students’ Union”

Before you read. Have you ever seen a play performed by students? What makes a comedy work on stage? Read Sam’s post on “The Link, Year Five” and do the INVALSI-style tasks at the end of the chapter.

Tabella 4.8 Reading text — Sam’s post on “The Link, Year Five”

A Handbag in the Students’ Union (not a review, honestly)
Prof.ssa Rossi has asked Giulia’s class to read *The Importance of Being Earnest* this month, and Giulia asked me whether it is really funny or just “historically funny”. By coincidence our drama society put it on last week, in the studio theatre at the Students’ Union, so I can answer from a seat in the third row. This is not a review: my flatmate Hassan writes those for the student paper, and he will insist on giving everything three stars. It’s a report on reading a play and then seeing it.
I had read Act I for a seminar the week before, and I thought I knew where the laughs were. I was wrong about half of them. On the page, Lady Bracknell’s line about losing both parents is clever. On stage it is a weapon. The actor waited, looked at Jack over a pair of tiny glasses, and said “carelessness” as if she were diagnosing a disease. The audience laughed for so long that Jack had to wait before he could answer. You can’t learn that from a footnote.
The most interesting choice was the casting. Lady Bracknell was played by Rupert, a postgraduate who is about two metres tall, in a purple dress and a hat with what looked like a whole pheasant on it. Some people near me thought it was a cheap trick, but the programme pointed out that professional companies have done the same, and it worked: Rupert never played her as a joke. He played her as a general. The more seriously he took her, the funnier she became, which is exactly what the stage direction “*Gravely*” asks for.
Not everything worked. The second act is set in a garden, and the set was three plastic plants and a deckchair, so the actors had to work very hard to make us believe in a country house. Algernon spoke so fast in his first scene that I lost several jokes, and I had read them. The cucumber sandwiches, on the other hand, were real, and he ate eleven of them. I counted.
What surprised me most was how modern it felt. Everyone in the play has a double life: Jack invents a wicked brother, Algernon invents a sick friend, and the women invent their own versions of the men they want to marry. In my seminar we talked about Wilde’s trial, and it is hard not to hear something darker behind all the lying, but the audience was not thinking about 1895. They were laughing at people who curate the version of themselves they show the world, and I’d say most of us recognised ourselves.
So, Giulia: yes, it is really funny, but only if it’s played seriously. Read it aloud with Marta and Elena before you study the notes. If you will read stage directions as if they were optional, you’ll miss half the comedy. And if your class ever stages it, that’ll be the best evening of the year. I want photos.
Sam

After reading. a) Find two examples of *will* or *’ll* that do not refer to the future, and say what each one means. b) Find the sentence that expresses the paradox of acting Wilde. c) Do you agree with Sam’s last paragraph?

4.5.3 Speaking: playing devil's advocate

To **play devil's advocate** (*fare l'avvocato del diavolo*) is to defend on purpose a view you may not hold, so that a discussion tests its arguments; the *advocatus diaboli* was the Church official who argued against a candidate for sainthood. Announce the role, give real reasons, and step out of it at the end (Tabella 4.9).

Tabella 4.9 Useful language — playing devil's advocate

Function	Phrases
announcing the role	*Let me play devil's advocate for a moment. · Just for the sake of argument… · I don't necessarily believe this, but…*
presenting the opposite view	*Couldn't you argue that…? · What if we looked at it the other way round? · Someone might say that…*
pushing an argument further	*But doesn't that mean…? · If that's true, then surely… · Where would you draw the line?*
conceding a point	*Fair enough, I'll give you that. · That's a good answer. · OK, you've convinced me on that one.*
stepping out of the role	*Speaking for myself, though… · Now, what I actually think is… · Devil's advocate aside,…*

1. **In pairs.** One student defends the statement *All art is quite useless*, the other plays devil's advocate against it for two minutes. Then change roles with the statement *Science should only study what is useful*.
2. **In groups of four.** Discuss: *Social media turn us all into Dorian Grays: our profiles stay young and perfect while we change.* One student in each group is secretly the devil's advocate; at the end, the others guess who it was and why.

4.5.4 Writing: a manifesto in aphorisms

A **manifesto** (*manifesto*) is a public declaration of the principles of a group or movement; Wilde's Preface is one, written in aphorisms. Yours will be 10–14 aphorisms and a paragraph that explains them (200–250 words). Here is the model Giulia and Elena wrote for their class's physics lab notebook.

Tabella 4.10 Model text — a manifesto in aphorisms (207 words, title excluded)

The Laboratory: a Preface
The experimenter is the servant of the result. To reveal nature and conceal the experimenter is the aim of a report.
There is no such thing as a beautiful or an ugly measurement. Measurements are careful, or careless. That is all.
A graph without units is a picture.
The error bar is the most honest line on the page.
Every instrument will lie a little. The good experimenter knows by how much.
An experiment that fails is a question that has been answered badly, not a question that has been asked badly.
Those who copy the expected result do so at their peril.
Nature is never wrong. Notebooks often are.
We can forgive a student for making a mistake as long as she writes it down.
All data are useful, except the data we invented.
Why we wrote it. In our first lab sessions we treated experiments as rituals: we knew the answer and waited for the numbers to agree. Wilde's Preface gave us the form for a different idea. Each aphorism reverses a habit we had: decorating graphs instead of labelling them, hiding the errors, "correcting" results. We kept his structures on purpose, so that the reader recognises the model and notices the change of subject.

Analysis. A **title** announces the genre; ten **aphorisms**, each a separate paragraph, echo Wilde's structures (*There is no such thing as…*, *at their peril*) and use **antithesis** (*careful, or careless*); a **rationale** in continuous prose explains the occasion and the method.

Checklist. ✓ a title and a clear subject · ✓ 10–14 aphorisms, each complete in one or two sentences · ✓ at least three antitheses or paradoxes · ✓ present simple and *will* for general truths · ✓ no aphorism that only states the obvious · ✓ a rationale paragraph (60–90 words) · ✓ 200–250 words in all.

LEARNING TO LEARN

Reading a play. A play is written to be performed, so read it as a director would. Before you analyse a scene, answer four questions.

- **Who is on stage?** List the characters present and who enters or leaves. Power often changes with an entrance.
- **What does each one want?** Lady Bracknell wants a suitable husband for her daughter; Jack wants to pass the test.
- **Where is the laugh, or the shock?** Mark the last word of each epigram: Wilde puts the surprise at the end.
- **What do the stage directions add?** *Gravely* or *After some hesitation* tell the actor how to say a line.

Transfer. The same four questions work for Goldoni's *La locandiera* or for Pirandello's *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore* in Italian. For the exam, a scene read this way gives you a short, clear answer about character and theme.

4.6 Connections: Wilde and D'Annunzio; the Portrait and the Photograph

4.6.1 Two aesthetes: Dorian Gray and Andrea Sperelli

One year before Dorian Gray, Italy had its own aesthete hero. Gabriele D'Annunzio (1863–1938) published his first novel, *Il piacere*, in 1889. It follows Count Andrea Sperelli, a young Roman aristocrat, poet and collector, through two love affairs. Early in the novel the narrator reports the rule Andrea learned from his father:

> *Bisogna fare la propria vita, come si fa un'opera d'arte.*
>
> — Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Il piacere* (1889), libro I, cap. II (as transcribed on Wikisource)

"One must make one's life as one makes a work of art." (Translation by the editors.) Both heroes are formed by a mentor's maxims, Andrea by his father and Dorian by Lord Henry; both treat beauty as the highest value and other people as material; both end alone. But Wilde writes a moral fable around a supernatural portrait, with an ironic narrator, while D'Annunzio writes a realistic novel of Roman high society whose narrator is often fascinated by what he criticises. Italian criticism calls this European current *decadentismo*, with D'Annunzio as its leading Italian voice.

4.6.2 Screen, music and art: *Ophelia* and Hyde on screen

John Everett Millais's *Ophelia* (1851–52, Tate Britain) shows Shakespeare's heroine floating in a stream, singing, just before she drowns, as Gertrude describes in *Hamlet* (IV.7). Millais painted the riverbank from nature, on the Hogsmill River in Surrey, with almost botanical precision; the model, Elizabeth Siddal, posed in a bath in his studio. Exact observation, a literary subject and a beauty inseparable from death: the painting joins the Pre-Raphaelites to the decadents who came after.

Jekyll and Hyde reached the stage in Boston in 1887, the year after publication, and then the cinema: John Barrymore's silent film (1920) is the best known, and Fredric March won an Academy Award for the 1931 version. Each adaptation must show what the book hides, the transformation.

4.6.3 The portrait and the photograph

Dorian's portrait is painted, but he lived in the first age of photography. In 1839 Louis Daguerre announced in Paris the **daguerreotype** (*dagherrotipo*), a single, very sharp image on a silvered copper plate; in England William Henry Fox Talbot developed by 1841 the **calotype** (*calotipia*), a paper **negative** (*negativo*) from which many positive prints could be made. Both used a **camera obscura** (*camera oscura*), a dark box in which a lens forms an inverted image (Figura 4.5).

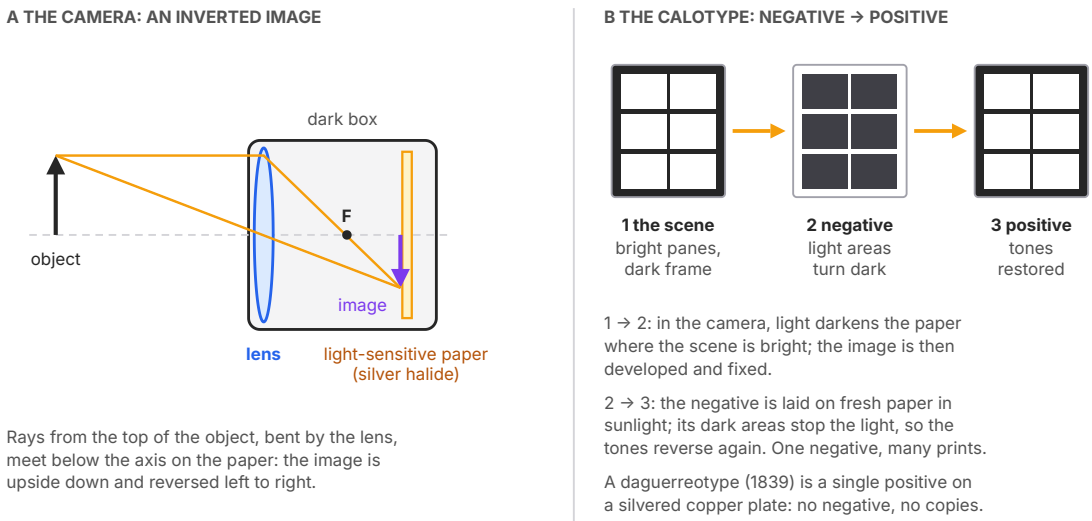


Figura 4.5 Simplified. A: a converging lens (F: its focal point) forms a real, inverted image of an object on light-sensitive paper; in the diagram the object is 2.5 focal lengths from the lens, so the image forms at 1.67 focal lengths and is two thirds of the object's height. B: the negative–positive principle of Talbot's calotype.

COLLEGAMENTI

Chemistry and physics: how light makes a picture. In both early processes the light-sensitive substance is a **silver halide**, a compound of silver with a halogen (iodine, bromine or chlorine). Light breaks down some of the compound and leaves tiny grains of metallic silver, which look dark: for silver chloride, $2AgCl \rightarrow 2Ag + Cl_2$. The first exposure leaves an invisible **latent image**, which a chemical developer makes visible; a fixer then removes the unexposed halide so that the picture stops changing in the light. The lens obeys the thin-lens law of physics, $1/f = 1/d_o + 1/d_i$: with the object at $2.5\,f$, the image forms at $5f/3$.

Art and truth. Victorians often called the photograph a "truthful" image, since no hand had drawn it. Wilde reverses the idea: the painted portrait shows the truth of Dorian's soul, while his face, like a flattering photograph, lies. In an age of filters, the question has not gone away.

DA RICORDARE

For the exam. *Starting point:* a description, "a portrait in a locked room that grows old and cruel while the young man it represents stays beautiful". *Three links:* **English** — Stevenson's Jekyll and Hyde: the double as the hidden self of a respectable man · **Italian** — D'Annunzio's Andrea Sperelli, who makes his life a work of art, or Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904), whose hero lives a second life under another name · **Science** — the chemistry of the photograph: silver halides and the negative.

SINTESI

- The **Second** (1867) and **Third** (1884) **Reform Acts** and the **Ballot Act** (1872) widened and protected the male vote; women remained excluded.
- Victoria's **Golden** (1887) and **Diamond** (1897) **Jubilees** celebrated the monarchy and the Empire; she died on **22 January 1901**.
- The 1890s mixed confidence with anxiety: urban crime, theories of **degeneration** (Lombroso, Nordau), the **New Woman** and the **fin de siècle** mood.
- Under the **Labouchere Amendment** (1885) Oscar Wilde was sentenced in May 1895 to two years' hard labour.
- **Robert Louis Stevenson** (1850–1894) wrote *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), the classic story of **the double**, told through Utterson's investigation and two final documents.
- **Walter Pater**'s *Renaissance* (1873) inspired **aestheticism**, "art for art's sake"; in the 1890s it shaded into **decadence**.
- **Oscar Wilde** (1854–1900) wrote *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890; book with Preface 1891) and *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), a comedy of double lives.
- Wilde's style rests on **aphorisms** and epigrams built on **paradox** and antithesis: an expected idea turned upside down.
- **H. G. Wells** used science fiction to project Victorian fears into the future (*The Time Machine*, 1895).
- *Will* and *would* also express **assumption** (*That'll be Sam*; *She'll have read it*), **insistence** (*If you will smoke…*) and **general truths** (*The hall will seat 400*).
- D'Annunzio's Andrea Sperelli (*Il piacere*, 1889) is Italy's aesthete hero: "Bisogna fare la propria vita, come si fa un'opera d'arte."
- Photography (**daguerreotype** and **calotype**, 1839–41) uses light-sensitive silver halides; the calotype's negative allows many prints.

ESERCIZI

History and Literature

1. • What did the Ballot Act of 1872 introduce?
   - **A.** the vote for women householders
   - **B.** the secret ballot
   - **C.** the vote for agricultural labourers
   - **D.** annual elections

2. ● Which statement about *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* is correct?
   - **A.** Hyde is Jekyll's younger brother.
   - **B.** The whole novel is told by Jekyll in the first person.
   - **C.** Utterson finally understands the case by reading two documents.
   - **D.** It was published after Stevenson's death.

3. ● In which work does the sentence "All art is quite useless." appear?
   - **A.** the 1890 magazine version of *Dorian Gray*
   - **B.** Pater's Conclusion to *The Renaissance*
   - **C.** *The Importance of Being Earnest*
   - **D.** the Preface to the 1891 book of *Dorian Gray*

4. ● Match each author with a work and a date: Pater · Stevenson · Wilde · Wells — *The Time Machine* · *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* · *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* · *The Importance of Being Earnest* — 1873 · 1886 · 1895 · 1895.

5. ●● True or false? Correct the false statements. a The phrase "New Woman" was the name of a suffrage society. b Victoria died in January 1901. c Wilde was convicted of libel against the Marquess of Queensberry. d The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood was founded in 1848. e In *The Time Machine* humanity has split into two species.

6. ●● Explain each term in one or two sentences, with an example from the chapter: a the double · b aestheticism · c decadence · d dandy · e aphorism.

7. ●●● Short answer (100–130 words, 10–12 lines): How do Stevenson and Wilde use the theme of the double to explore Victorian respectability? Give a definition, an example from each writer and a link to the history of the period.

Text Analysis

8. ●● In T1, the phrase "a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens" suggests that…
   - **A.** the human mind may contain many different selves, not just two.
   - **B.** Jekyll wants to found a new political party.
   - **C.** Hyde has many friends in London.
   - **D.** Jekyll's scientific colleagues disagree with him.

9. ●● T1: Find the metaphor Jekyll uses for the result of his discovery. Why does he place it at the beginning of his explanation?

10. ●● T1: Paraphrase into modern, everyday English: "the unjust might go his way, delivered from the aspirations and remorse of his more upright twin".

11. ●● T2: Choose three aphorisms and, for each, write the expected idea that Wilde reverses (follow the model in Figura 4.3).

12. ●● T3: What qualities does Lady Bracknell look for in a son-in-law? Quote three of her lines and explain what each reveals about her values.

13. ●●● Compare T2 with D'Annunzio's maxim from *Il piacere* (80–100 words): do the two texts express the same idea of art and life? Write a PEE paragraph (Point, Evidence, Explanation).

Language

14. ● What does *will* or *would* express in each sentence? Choose: future · assumption · insistence · general truth / capacity · typical behaviour · refusal. a *Don't ring him now: he'll be at rehearsal.* b *This paper will darken in sunlight.* c *The play will open next Thursday.* d *Wilde would talk for hours at dinner.* e *The key won't turn.* f *If you will leave your notes everywhere, don't blame me when you lose them.*

15. ● Complete with *will*, *won't*, *would* or *wouldn't* and, where necessary, the correct form of the verb in brackets. a *Somebody's knocking. That* _____ *(be) the drama society with the tickets.* b *Don't worry about Sam: he* _____ *(arrive) home by now.* c *I told him the play was long, but he* _____ *insist on seeing both performances.* d *The new studio* _____ *seat about a hundred people.* e *Lady Bracknell* _____ *be contradicted by anyone.* f *The man in the photograph* _____ *be about forty, I think.*

16. ●● Rewrite each sentence using *will* or *would*, keeping the meaning. a *I'm sure that's Giulia on the phone.* b *I expect she has finished the novel by now.* c *He kept insisting on reading Pater aloud, which annoyed everyone.* d *This hall has room for 300 people.* e *Since you insist on arriving late, you'll have to stand.* f *She refuses to let anyone tell her what to do.*

17. ●● Find and correct the mistake in each sentence. a *If the film will be good, I'll go and see it.* b *That will be Sam probably.* c *She will be arrived by now.* d *As a young man, Stevenson would have weak lungs.* e *I won't have you to speak like that.*

18. ●● Key-word transformations (2–5 words, key word unchanged). a *I'm sure the parcel is the new edition.* (WILL) *The parcel* _____ *new edition.* b *I expect they have read the Preface by now.* (HAVE) *They* _____ *the Preface by now.* c *He always insisted on wearing a flower in his buttonhole.* (WOULD) *He* _____ *a flower in his buttonhole.* d *The theatre can hold five hundred people.* (SEAT) *The theatre* _____ *people.*

19. ●●● Write three sentences about the characters of this chapter: one with *will* for assumption, one with stressed *would* for insistence, one with *if* + *will*.

20. ●●● Translate into English. a *Chi suona alla porta a quest'ora? Sarà Utterson.* b *Gli avevano consigliato di partire, ma lui si ostinava a restare a Londra.* c *Se proprio vuoi leggere Wilde a colazione, almeno non leggerlo ad alta voce.*

Vocabulary

21. ● Complete with a word from Tabella 4.6. a *Jekyll is terrified of losing his* _____ *as a respected doctor.* b *Lord Henry tells Dorian that* _____ *is the only thing worth having.* c *A* _____ *says one thing and does another.* d *The portrait becomes a picture of Dorian's* _____*, showing every sin.* e *Jack and Algernon both lead a* _____ .

22. ●● Choose the right adjective. a *Her joy at the first snow was (childlike / childish) and touching.* b *Stop being so (childlike / childish) and apologise.* c *The waxwork was so (lifelike / lifeish) that visitors spoke to it.* d *The villa stood in a (picturesque / picturelike) valley.* e *The mask had a (grotesque / grotish) smile.* f *He arrived at about seven, or (sevenish / sevenesque).*

23. ●● Collocations: match the verbs with the nouns, then use three pairs in sentences about the chapter. lead · ruin · wear · examine · pay — a mask · a double life · someone's reputation · one's conscience · the price

Writing and Speaking

24. ●●● Write a manifesto in aphorisms (200–250 words): 10–14 aphorisms and a rationale paragraph. Choose a subject: *The Reader*, *The Scientist*, *The Student in the Exam Year* or *The Social Media User*. Follow the checklist in the Writing section.

25. ●● Speaking. Play devil's advocate against this statement for two minutes, then say what you really think: *A writer's private life has nothing to do with the value of his or her work.*

Towards INVALSI

26. ● (B1) Sam saw the play…
    - **A.** in a studio theatre at the Students' Union.
    - **B.** in a professional London theatre.
    - **C.** on a video in his seminar.
    - **D.** at Giulia's school in Turin.

27. ●● (B2) What does Sam mean when he says that on stage the line about parents "is a weapon"?
    - **A.** The actor threatened Jack physically.
    - **B.** The line was cut from the production.
    - **C.** The audience did not understand it.
    - **D.** The actor's timing made it hit the audience with great force.

28. ●● (B1) Answer in a maximum of four words. a Who writes reviews for the student paper? b What was Rupert wearing on his head? c How many cucumber sandwiches did Algernon eat? d Who should Giulia read the play aloud with?

29. ●● (B2) True, false or not given? a Sam had studied Act I in a seminar before he saw the play. b Some members of the audience disliked the casting of Lady Bracknell. c The second-act set was elaborate and realistic. d Rupert has played Lady Bracknell before. e Sam thinks the play is funny only if the actors take it seriously.

Towards the Exam

30. ●●● Starting point: a quotation, “man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson, 1886). Talk for 3 minutes and link it to two other subjects.

PER APPROFONDIRE

- [SAN] A. Sanders, *The Short Oxford History of English Literature*: the chapter on late Victorian and Edwardian literature, with Stevenson and Wilde.
- [NOR] S. Greenblatt (ed.), *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol. E: the introduction to the late Victorian years and the selections from Pater, Stevenson and Wilde.
- [ABR] M. H. Abrams, G. G. Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*: the entries “Aestheticism”, “Decadence” and “comedy of manners”.
- [WIL] R. Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950*: the chapter on the end of the century, with Pater and Wilde on art and society.
- [BRA] M. Bradbury, *The Modern British Novel*: the opening chapter, on the novel at the turn of the century.
- [SWA] M. Swan, *Practical English Usage*: the entries on *will* and *would*.
- [HEW] M. Hewings, *Advanced Grammar in Use*: the units on *will* and *would*.

Glossario del capitolo

Aestheticism
estetismo — the belief that beauty is the highest value and that art should be judged by its form, not by its moral or social use.

Aphorism
aforisma — a short sentence that states a general truth, or claims to, in a memorable form.

Art for art's sake
l'arte per l'arte — the slogan of aestheticism (from the French *l'art pour l'art*): art needs no purpose beyond itself.

Calotype
calotipia — Talbot's photographic process (patented 1841): a paper negative from which many positive prints can be made.

Camera obscura
camera oscura — a dark box or room in which a lens or small hole projects an inverted image of the outside world.

Daguerreotype
dagherrotipo — Daguerre's photographic process (1839): a single, very sharp positive image on a silvered copper plate.

Dandy
dandy — a man who makes his dress, manners and conversation into a work of art.

Decadence
decadentismo — a late-19th-century current that cultivated the artificial, the refined and the forbidden, with a sense of a civilisation's end.

Degeneration
degenerazione — the late-Victorian fear, now rejected by science, that a people could decline physically and morally.

Devil's advocate
avvocato del diavolo — someone who argues against a view on purpose, to test it.

Doppelgänger
doppio, sosia — a German word for the double: a person's exact likeness or second self.

Double
il doppio — in literature, a second self who shares a character's identity (a twin, a reflection, a portrait, a hidden personality).

Fin de siècle
fine secolo — a French label for the refined, anxious mood of the 1890s.

Hypocrite
ipocrita — a person who pretends to have virtues or beliefs that they do not have.

Manifesto
manifesto — a public declaration of the principles of a group, a movement or a person.

Negative
negativo — in photography, an image in which light and dark are reversed, used to make positive prints.

New Woman
la "donna nuova" — a label of the 1890s for the educated, independent woman who questioned marriage as her only future.

Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood
Confraternita dei Preraffaelliti — a group of English painters founded in 1848 (Rossetti, Millais, Holman Hunt) who sought bright colour and precise detail.

Soluzioni

1. B (before 1872 votes were declared in public).

2. C (Lanyon's narrative and Jekyll's statement, read in the last two chapters; Hyde is Jekyll transformed; most of the novel follows Utterson in the third person; it appeared in January 1886).

3. D (the Preface was added for the book of April 1891; Pater's Conclusion is from 1873).

4. Pater — *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* — 1873 · Stevenson — *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* — 1886 · Wilde — *The Importance of Being Earnest* — 1895 · Wells — *The Time Machine* — 1895.

5. a F: it was a label used in magazine debates from 1894, not an organisation. b T (22 January 1901). c F: Wilde sued Queensberry for libel; the case collapsed and Wilde was then convicted of "gross indecency" under the Labouchere Amendment. d T. e T (the Eloi and the Morlocks).

6. a **the double**: a second self that shares a character's identity (Hyde for Jekyll; the portrait for Dorian). b **aestheticism**: beauty as the highest value; art judged by form, not morality (Pater's Conclusion; Wilde's Preface). c **decadence**: a taste for the artificial, refined and forbidden, with a sense of a civilisation's end (Huysmans, *The Yellow Book*). d **dandy**: a man who makes his dress, manners and conversation a work of art (Lord Henry, Wilde himself). e **aphorism**: a short sentence stating a general truth memorably ("All art is quite useless.").

7. *Traccia* (c. 120 words): The double is a second self that shares a character's identity. Late-Victorian society valued respectability, and men like Jekyll hid their desires behind it. Stevenson makes the double literal: Jekyll's drug releases Hyde, who enjoys the pleasures Jekyll denies himself, until Hyde takes over; the horror is that evil comes from within the respectable man. Wilde places Dorian's double in a portrait that records his sins while his face stays innocent, and in *Earnest* turns double lives into comedy. Both writers worked in a decade of urban fear and scandal (the Whitechapel murders, the Wilde trials), when the gap between public face and private life was a political issue as well as a literary theme.

8. A.

9. The **shipwreck** ("such a dreadful shipwreck"). Placed at the start, it tells the reader that the story ends in disaster before the explanation begins: the confession is written from the ruins, so every reasonable argument that follows sounds tragic.

10. Model: "the bad side of him could do what it liked, free from the ideals and the guilt of his better, more honest half."

11. Model answers: *There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book* — expected: books are good or bad because of their morals → judged by style. *Even things that are true can be proved* — expected: only true things can be proved, and proof gives value → proof is ordinary, art aims higher. *All art is quite useless* — expected: art should teach or serve → its value is that it serves nothing. (Also accepted: *It is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors* — expected: art mirrors life.)

12. She approves of a habit as an "occupation" ("A man should always have an occupation of some kind"): idleness worries her more than vice. She praises ignorance ("Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit"): education might threaten the upper classes. She asks straight away about his income: money counts as much as character. She treats the loss of both parents as "carelessness": what counts is a respectable family, not grief.

13. *Traccia*: Point: both texts make art the highest value, but in different ways. Evidence: Wilde writes "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book" and "All art is quite useless"; D'Annunzio's maxim says "Bisogna fare la propria vita, come si fa

un'opera d'arte." Explanation: Wilde separates art from morality and usefulness, while D'Annunzio extends art to life itself, turning the self into an artwork. Dorian, who tries to live like that, shows the danger of D'Annunzio's rule; the Preface, read with the novel, is perhaps less sure of itself than it sounds.

14. a assumption b general truth / capacity c future d typical behaviour (past) e refusal (of a thing) f insistence (criticism).

15. a 'll be / will be b will have arrived c would d will e won't / will not f would (also accepted: will).

16. a *That'll be Giulia on the phone.* b *She'll have finished the novel by now.* c *He WOULD insist on reading Pater aloud. / He would insist on…* d *This hall will seat / hold 300 people.* e *If you will arrive late, you'll have to stand.* f *She won't be told what to do.*

17. a *If the film is good…* b *That'll probably be Sam. / That will probably be Sam.* c *She will have arrived by now. / She'll have arrived by now.* d *Stevenson had / used to have weak lungs.* (state, not action) e *I won't have you speaking like that.*

18. a *will be the* b *will have read* c *would insist on wearing* d *will seat five hundred*.

19. Model answers: *The visitor at this hour will be Utterson; nobody else has a key.* · *Jekyll was warned, but he WOULD take the drug again.* · *If you will write epigrams at dinner, people will expect you to be witty all the time.*

20. a *Who's ringing at the door at this time? That'll be Utterson.* (or *It'll be Utterson.*) b *They had advised him to leave, but he would insist on staying in London.* (also: *he insisted on staying*) c *If you will read Wilde at breakfast, at least don't read it aloud.*

21. a reputation b youth c hypocrite d conscience e double life.

22. a childlike b childish c lifelike d picturesque e grotesque f sevenish.

23. lead a double life · ruin someone's reputation · wear a mask · examine one's conscience · pay the price. Model sentences: *Jack leads a double life in town and country.* · *The trials ruined Wilde's reputation.* · *Dorian pays the price for his vanity.*

24. Assessment: 10–14 aphorisms, each complete and separate · at least three antitheses or paradoxes · a title · a rationale of 60–90 words explaining the occasion and the method · 200–250 words · accurate use of present simple and *will* for general truths.

25. Model: "Let me play devil's advocate: a work of art is a public object, and it should be judged on the page or on the stage. If we judged books by their authors' lives, we would lose half the libraries of the world. Wilde's comedies are no less funny because he was imprisoned, and a scientist's theory is not less true if he was unpleasant. Speaking for myself, though, I think a life can help us understand a work, as Wilde's trials help us hear the darkness in *Earnest*; it just shouldn't replace our judgement of it."

26. A.

27. D.

28. a (his flatmate) Hassan b a hat (with a pheasant on it) c eleven d Marta and Elena.

29. a T ("I had read Act I for a seminar the week before"). b T ("Some people near me thought it was a cheap trick"). c F: three plastic plants and a deckchair. d NG. e T.

30. *Traccia*: Define the double and Jekyll's claim (the divided self; T1). **English**: Wilde's *Dorian Gray* — the portrait as the hidden self; Victorian respectability and its masks. **Italian**: Pirandello's *Il fu Mattia Pascal* (1904) — a second identity — or D'Annunzio's aesthete. **History / science**: degeneration theories (Lombroso, Nordau) and the fear of the criminal hidden in the respectable city; or chemistry and the doctor's drug, from the laboratory to modern pharmacology. Close by returning to the quotation: Jekyll's guess about "many denizens" anticipates the psychology of the 20th century.