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Document A

"The soul is a terrible reality. It can be bought, and sold, and bartered away. It can be poisoned, or made perfect. There is a soul in each one of us. I know it."

"Do you feel quite sure of that, Dorian?"

"Quite sure."

5 "Ah! then it must be an illusion. The things one feels absolutely certain about are never true. That is the fatality of Faith, and the lesson of Romance. How grave you are! Don't be so serious. What have you or I to do with the superstitions of our age? No: we have given up our belief in the soul. Play me something. Play me a nocturne, Dorian, and, as you play, tell me, in a low voice, how you have
10 kept your youth. You must have some secret. I am only ten years older than you are, and I am wrinkled, and worn, and yellow. You are really wonderful, Dorian. You have never looked more charming than you do tonight. You remind me of the day I saw you first. You were rather cheeky, very shy, and absolutely extraordinary. You have changed, of course, but not in appearance. I wish you
15 would tell me your secret. To get back my youth I would do anything in the world, except take exercise, get up early, or be respectable. Youth! There is nothing like it. It's absurd to talk of the ignorance of youth. The only people to whose opinions I listen now with any respect are people much younger than myself. They seem in front of me. Life has revealed to them her latest wonder.
20 As for the aged, I always contradict the aged. I do it on principle. If you ask them their opinion on something that happened yesterday, they solemnly give you the opinions current in 1820, when people wore high stocks, believed in everything, and knew absolutely nothing. How lovely that thing you are playing is! I wonder did Chopin write it at Majorca, with the sea weeping round the villa,
25 and the salt spray dashing against the panes? It is marvellously romantic. What a blessing it is that there is one art left to us that is not imitative! Don't stop. I want music tonight. It seems to me that you are the young Apollo, and that I am Marsyas listening to you. I have sorrows, Dorian, of my own, that even you know nothing of. The tragedy of old age is not that one is old, but that one is young.
30 I am amazed sometimes at my own sincerity. Ah, Dorian, how happy you are! What an exquisite life you have had! You have drunk deeply into everything. You have crushed the grapes against your palate. Nothing has been hidden from you. And it has all been to you no more than the sound of music. It has not marred you. You are still the same."

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35 "I am not the same, Harry."

"Yes you are the same. I wonder what the rest of your life will be. Don't spoil it by renunciations. At present you are a perfect type. Don't make yourself incomplete. You are quite flawless now. You need not shake your head: you know you are. Besides, Dorian, don't deceive yourself. Life is not governed by
40 will or intention. Life is a question of nerves, and fibres, and slowly built-up cells in which thought hides itself and passion has its dreams. You may fancy yourself safe, and think yourself strong. But a chance tone of colour in a room or a morning sky, a particular perfume that you once loved and that brings subtle memories with it, a line from a forgotten poem that you had come across again,
45 a cadence from a piece of music that you had ceased to play -I tell you, Dorian, that it is on things like these that our lives depend. Browning writes about that somewhere; but our own senses will imagine them for us. There are moments when the odour of *lilas blanc* passes suddenly across me, and I have to live the strangest month of my life over again. I wish I could change places with you,
50 Dorian. The world has cried out against us both, but it has always worshipped you. It always will worship you. You are the type of what the age is searching for, and what it is afraid it has found. I am so glad that you have never done anything, never carved a statue, or painted a picture, or produced anything outside of yourself! Life has been your art. You have set yourself to music. Your
55 days are your sonnets." Dorian rose up from the piano, and passed his hand through his hair. "Yes, life has been exquisite," he murmured, "but I am not going to have the same life, Harry. And you must not say these extravagant things to me. You don't know everything about me. I think that if you did, even you would turn from me. You laugh. Don't laugh."

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

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As I travel round the country and talk to people, again and again they say to me "Oh, things are so uncertain. Life is changing so fast. No-one knows what is going to happen next." Well, there is one thing that will surely happen to most of us. We shall grow old. And when we do, we shall find ourselves in a new, and
5 sadly, sometimes a less friendly world.

In the past, when old, we could count on our families to be at our side. Many of us still can today. But too often you hear people say: "It's the State's responsibility". Preserve me from the State when I'm young and fit! Preserve me still more when I'm old and frail!

.10 That is why we owe such a debt of gratitude to organisations such as Help the Aged. That is why I am pleased to be with you today, speaking at your Annual General Meeting, after your successful and impressive year. May you be as active and successful in—still—a good many years time ... when I come to draw my old age pension!

.15 The world of the elderly can be, as I have said, sometimes a less friendly world. And few of us in our youth or in middle age give much thought to it. I wonder how many people outside this hall today know; that over two-thirds of the budgets of our Social Service Departments are spent on caring for the elderly; that the vast majority of the chronically sick and disabled are also elderly; that,
20 on top of all this, the number of elderly people in our population is rising dramatically! Whereas population projections regarding numbers of children are suspect and constantly have to be revised, projections about the numbers of the elderly are much more reliable because the people are already living.

Let me give you one example. Over the next twelve years in Warwickshire those
25 aged 75 or over will increase by a third. This is the age group that needs most help! I tell you that a lot more can be done to make the lives of these people easier—and happier. And it is not being done. I shall be specific.

Housing in our country seems to be one of our shared miseries, for old and young alike. I have been told that, in Britain, we have more square footage of
30 housing per head than most European countries ... and more homelessness! Too many communities are uprooted by town planners, and the families 'decanted'—what a truly horrible, but typical word—into new homes. (They would call them 'housing units', I suspect). But for the elderly? All too little purpose-built housing. The vast majority of the elderly live in their own house. But their families have
35 grown up. Their house or flat is too big. Many don't want to move into Old People's Homes. These are, incidentally, increasingly expensive. They would dearly love to move to specially built houses or flats, perhaps where there will be a warden; at least the surroundings will be friendly. But can they? All too

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40 seldom. They find themselves stuck in too big a house. Down the street young families in one room are desperate.

Let me add here that I know of the work done by Help the Aged last year. A record, with 979 flats finished and £20 million worth of building starts planned for 1975. But I would ask more planners—and Housing Associations—to follow your example: To build more houses and flats specially designed for old people.

45 We all know that elderly people often need help. And here I would say how much I admire the work done by the Home Help Service. Now the Home Help Service has grown through the efforts of devoted workers. All sorts of interesting things are happening in the Home Help field. But they are patchy. The more exciting ideas must be made known and available to all. Meals on Wheels bring great
50 comfort to many old people. But if they live in some parts of our country, well, there just aren't any meals on wheels! Let me tell you that it costs a lot more, in upheaval as well as in cash, to admit an old person into residential care, than to make sure that they have meals on wheels.

55 There is something else that the elderly also need. (Indeed we all do). This is enough money for their needs. But the case of the elderly is, by nature, different. The old person often can't earn a living. And, even when he or she might want to earn something, there is the problem of the earnings rule.

There are several issues involved in this. All of them have been known, here and there, to raise the temperature. So let me take them one at a time: Let me
60 speak first of the impact of inflation on all of us, but especially on the elderly. Inflation is moving towards the 25 per cent mark. And as it does so, we move into uncharted seas. No-one knows what pressures this will bring on all of us, on our families and our plans. What we do know is that any savings we may have put away for our old age are melting away like snow in the sunlight. What we do
65 know is that the rates bill and the water bill and the heating bill and the food bill bring a shudder to most of us.

When I do the shopping for my family and think how much I spend in a week, and compare it with how much I spent a year ago, it's a relief that my [Denis Thatcher] husband is working and earning a salary. And I actually get paid too!
70 But what about those who are not earning? What about those on fixed incomes? The one-parent families, the out-of-work, the sick? What about the pensioners? With this unchecked inflation, they are the ones at risk, the ones that truly suffer

Margaret Thatcher, *Speech at Help the Aged Annual General Meeting (1975)*

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Aug. 19, 2007

Flag bearers bow their heads in prayer during a burial at sea ceremony aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln.

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class James R. Evans