



Nazaret Serrano Simancas

“A stylistic analysis of Oscar Wilde’s *De Profundis*:  
a study of the language of emotions”

Directora: Elena Martínez Caro

Grado en Estudios Ingleses

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Convocatoria de junio de 2018

Calificación Final: 9,5 MH

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1-	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2-	THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	3
	2.1 Definition of Stylistics .....	3
	2.2 Selection and organisation of the stylistic features .....	4
	2.3. Lexical features .....	5
	2.4 Subjectivity in language .....	6
3-	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CORPUS AND METHOD .....	7
4-	ANALYSIS .....	8
	4.1 Oscar Wilde.....	9
	4.1.1 <i>Friendship and Love</i> .....	9
	4.1.2 <i>Separation</i> .....	9
	4.1.3 <i>Homosexuality</i> .....	10
	4.1.4 <i>Life and Tragedy</i> .....	10
	4.1.5 <i>Feelings of Sorrow and Pain</i> .....	11
	4.1.6 <i>Feelings of Horror and Hate</i> .....	11
	4.1.7 <i>Verbs</i> .....	12
	4.1.8 <i>Adverbs</i> .....	13
	4.2 Alfred Douglas .....	13
	4.2.1 <i>Pleasure</i> .....	14
	4.2.2 <i>Personality</i> .....	14
	4.2.3 <i>Nature and Temperament</i> .....	15
	4.2.4 <i>Silence</i> .....	15
	4.2.5 <i>Anger and Violence</i> .....	15
	4.2.6 <i>Scenes</i> .....	16
	4.2.7 <i>Verbal accusations</i> .....	16
	4.2.8 <i>Irony</i> .....	17
	4.2.9 <i>Adverbs</i> .....	17
	4.2.10 <i>Verbs</i> .....	17
	4.3 Love vs Hate .....	19
	4.3.1 <i>Love</i> .....	19
	4.3.2 <i>Hate</i> .....	20
5.	CONCLUSION .....	22
6.	REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	24
7-	APPENDICES .....	25

**Key words:** Stylistics, emotions, feelings, Oscar Wilde, Alfred Douglas, Love, Hate, subjectivity, lexical features.

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper provides a stylistic analysis of the emotions present in the letter written by Oscar Wilde known as *De Profundis*, which he wrote to his lover Alfred Douglas from Reading Gaol in 1887. To do so, the research has been framed within the study of Stylistics and Subjectivity. The purpose has been to discover how Oscar Wilde dissected his emotions in order to create the letter and how these emotions can be described from a linguistic perspective. The study has focused on the first section of the letter (55 pages). Throughout this section of the text a selection has been made of specific vocabulary (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) among other expressions, with the aim of discovering the possible semantic relationships established between these terms, so as to extract some meaning out of these connections. Some charts in which the vocabulary has been gathered into their corresponding categories are provided at the end of this paper in the appendixes as well. This corpus offers a clear insight into the data with which the research has worked.

### **RESUMEN**

Este trabajo ofrece un análisis estilístico de las emociones presentes en la carta de Oscar Wilde conocida como *De Profundis*, que escribió a su amante Lord Alfred Douglas desde la prisión de Reading en 1887. Para hacerlo, la investigación se ha enmarcado en el estudio de la Estilística y la Subjetividad. El propósito ha sido descubrir cómo Oscar Wilde diseccionó sus emociones para crear la carta y cómo estas emociones se pueden describir desde un enfoque lingüístico. El estudio se ha centrado en la primera parte de la carta (55 páginas). A lo largo de esta sección del texto se ha hecho una selección de vocabulario específico (sustantivos, verbos, adjetivos y adverbios) y otras expresiones, y se han intentado dilucidar cuáles son las relaciones semánticas establecidas entre estos términos, para extraer un significado de estas conexiones. Se aportan además unas tablas en las que se ha ido agrupando el vocabulario, clasificándolo en sus correspondientes categorías en los apéndices de este estudio. Este corpus aporta una muestra clara de los datos con los que la investigación ha trabajado.

## 1- INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to provide a stylistic analysis of the letter called *De Profundis* written by Oscar Wilde during his imprisonment in Reading Gaol from 1895 to 1897 due to his trial accusation for having had a homosexual relationship with the Marquis of Queensberry's son Alfred Douglas. This letter was written from January to March in 1897 and it is a bitter account of the relationship between Wilde and his lover and an explanation of the events which led Wilde to his financial ruin and to be sentenced to jail. In the letter Wilde accuses his friend of having neglected him during his two-year imprisonment.

To Wilde's biographer Richard Ellmann, the most relevant aspect of *De Profundis* is that it is a love letter. It can be considered an autobiographical attempt by Oscar Wilde to understand the nature of his own life and work, and also to reflect on art, love, forgiveness, humility, the significance of Christ and Wilde's self-exploration of his own character and failings. The purpose for writing this letter was to address Alfred Douglas privately, looking for answers to his silence so as to clean up the relationship between them in the future, but Oscar Wilde also conceived his letter as the justification of his life in front of society and the world, because he wanted the public to hear his side of events in an endeavour to clear his name.

Although the letter may be studied as a unit, it has been considered that a structure in three parts can be clearly distinguished in it. In the first section of the letter, Wilde analyses the details of his relationship with Alfred Douglas and the mistakes that he committed with him which brought him so much pain. In the second section, Wilde converses with himself so as to purge his conscience and purify his tormented passions in order to construct a new self out of his extreme experiences of suffering and self-understanding. In the third section, he craves again for Douglas' attention and hopes to recover their relationship on restored terms.

After Wilde's death, his executor Robert Ross gave the manuscript of the letter to the British Library in 1909 on the condition that it was not made public for fifty years. The editor Rupert-Hart Davis published a full version of the letter in 1962. However, the striking aspect that one encounters when studying *De Profundis* is the

reduced number of essays that have dealt with this letter in comparison to the amount of studies which have focused on the figure of Oscar Wilde and his works.

Some literary critics have produced some analyses on the reliability of Wilde's arguments in the letter so as to discredit him. Other scholars have disregarded the letter for not being one of Wilde's major works. Finally, other critics have been interested in the middle section of the letter because of the historical allusions as well as the literary merit of Wilde's reflection on the figure of Jesus Christ. Still, the research on this issue is far from abundant.

My motivation for writing this Degree final paper was to cast some light on the stylistics of this letter so as to enrich the current knowledge we have about the text and also to inspire further research on this topic. *De Profundis* constitutes an interesting field of study for both literature and linguistics, because of its vital importance in Wilde's life and also because of its high literary merit, its moral quality and its human worth. This contribution hopes to spread and encourage the analysis of this remarkable work which has remained almost forgotten since the 1960's.

The paper will begin with a general explanation of stylistics and the tools for its analysis, as well as some references to the concept of subjectivity. These two fields will be the theoretical framework of the study. The next section of the paper will consist of the stylistic analysis of the emotions displayed in the first section of the letter and the exploration of the mechanisms of subjectivity in language. This first part of the letter is especially suitable for the study because the main aspects of the dysfunctional relationship between Alfred Douglas and Oscar Wilde are presented and Wilde's accusation to his friend is highly emotive. A selection of specific vocabulary (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs) and other constructions will be made so as to see which are the semantic relationships established between these terms, in order to draw some meaning out of these connections. The paper will conclude with a summary of the main ideas and key points discussed. The final section provides the references used and the bibliography consulted for the study. Three appendixes will be included as well with the tables of the studied corpus of lexical units.

## 2- THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Definition of Stylistics

Stylistics is a branch of linguistics which studies the artistic and expressive effects achieved in a text through the use of different means and resources. Intention is one of the fundamental stylistic factors to determine the selection and composition of the means of expression, as well as the effect that the writer wants to communicate to the reader and the motives behind his selection of particular expressions, which normally have some affective or expressive purpose. “Stylistics can be applied to both spoken and written, both literary and non-literary varieties of a language but it is particularly associated with written literary texts” (Leech and Short 1981: 11). The term ‘style’ refers to the specific linguistic characteristics of a text which consist of the choices made from the repertoire of a language (Leech and Short 1981: 38). In a text (whether it is a whole work or an extract from a work) we can study style in more detail, and “pay attention to what words or structures are chosen in preference to others and examine the interrelations between one choice of language and another” (Leech and Short 1981: 12). Following the explanation of Leech and Short (1981: 1) “New Stylistics has applied techniques and concepts of modern linguistics to the study of literature”.

Stylisticians usually look for meaning beyond the current message being communicated. They consider if the author of a text was creating said text as an end on itself or if he or she had another purpose in mind for a further end, that is, if the text has an artistic function. Leech and Short (1981: 1) explain that “examining the language of a literary text can lead us to a fuller understanding and appreciation of the writer’s artistic achievement”. For this reason, “it is impossible to divorce the general appreciation of a literary work from the appreciation of its style” (Leech and Short 1981: 26).

However, Stylistics cannot be reduced to mechanical objectivity because one of the main factors of its analysis is the effect that the text produces on the reader. “Interpretation depends greatly on the creative imagination of the reader” (Leech and Short 1981: 39) and this refers to the intuition and personal judgement of the reader when selecting particular stylistic features for the analysis, in which insight is the final aim.

Nevertheless, the reader has to perform a task both of literary critic and linguistic observer so as to check and validate his or her intuitions by detailed analysis grounded on linguistic evidence. Taking the previous statements into consideration and acknowledging the limitations of a rigorous scientific method, the final attempt of stylistics is to provide a more objective basis for understanding language and its powerful effects (Crystal and Davy 1969: 90).

## **2.2 Selection and organisation of the stylistic features**

A stylistic analysis usually studies a text in terms of a number of interrelated levels of description which include grammar, vocabulary and semantics. “The analysis into levels is a device to help organise the material and focus attention more closely on a particular aspect of language” (Crystal and Davy 1969: 20). This will help to quantify the use of language so as to make a single linguistic picture of a text as a whole based on descriptive and explanatory statements. The conclusion must be a synthesis of the information gathered from the quantitatively based descriptive statements (Crystal and Davy 1969: 15).

“The more important stylistic features in a text will be that which appear more frequently (...) as well as the ones which display different kinds and degrees of distinctiveness in a text” (Crystal and Davy 1969: 21). However, this method of stylistic analysis must select some features and inevitably ignore others, since there is no complete list of the linguistic properties of a text. Stylisticians are encouraged to focus on specific features for a detailed analysis. Therefore the stylistician has to select what aspects of language matter depending on the purpose he or she has in mind (Leech and Short 1981: 14).

In order to organise the data stylisticians usually work with two sheets of paper or some tables with columns, one for listing the levels as we have described them and the other for listing the various dimensions of stylistic description which has been discovered. On the first sheet (or table) the information is organised linguistically and on the other one, the stylistic features noted in the text are presented, according to our intuitive feeling about their stylistic functions (Crystal and Davy 1969: 83-90). “The process of stylistic analysis is therefore one in which ordered selection and comment are carried out within parallel frameworks, one stylistic and the other linguistic” (Crystal and Davy 1969: 87).

Firstly our motivation for the study is to select a text and a set of linguistic features to describe them, and eventually the aim is to formalise intuitions by pointing to the patterns discovered.

There are two criteria of relevance for the selection of stylistic features: a literary criterion and a linguistic criterion (Leech and Short 1981: 69). This is the reason why Stylistics is an interdisciplinary field of study, since literary considerations guide the reader throughout the interesting features which deserve further investigation. Also, “stylistic choice is limited to those aspects which concern alternative ways of rendering the same subject matter” (Leech and Short 1981: 39), in the case of our study, different types of emotions. Notwithstanding, “even with a limited analysis of limited material it is possible to give an illuminating account of a writer’s style” (Leech and Short 1981: 69).

### **2.3. Lexical features**

The choice of lexical items in a text will be closely related to subject matter. On the one hand, the study of vocabulary is concerned about the way individual words tend to pattern in different linguistic contexts. On the other hand, Semantics studies the linguistic meaning of a text over and above meaning of lexical items taken singly (patterns of thematic development, distribution of concepts in a text, use of figures of speech...etc.) (Crystal and Davy 1969: 19). Vocabulary tends to be discrete, finite and localised, whereas Semantics is all-inclusive. Both perspectives are closely related and therefore, it is not advisable to separate the formal semantic aspects of the study of individual lexical items without any reference to meaning and the other way around. Observations of any grammatical-lexical interdependence should be also taken into account, because in order to obtain a complete description of a variety it is necessary to work through the grammar in some predetermined way (Crystal and Davy 1969: 18-19). The aim is to find out how different choices of words involve various types of meanings.

According to Leech and Short (1981: 75-80), the following considerations must be regarded when analysing lexical categories: a checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories should account for the general use of vocabulary (simple, complex, formal, informal, specific, emotive associations of words, the semantic fields to which words belong...).

Nouns should be discerned between abstract, concrete, proper names and what they refer to. The frequency or ratio of adjectives and the kind of attributes to which they refer. Verbs should be classified according to transitivity (mental processes, relational, material...). The frequency of adverbs and the semantic function they perform. Other considerations should pay attention to some grammatical categories such as the type of sentences used (declarative, interrogative, exclamative or imperative), the complexity of sentences and clauses (especially noun phrases and their pre-modification or post-modification), the repetition of grammatical or lexical structures (words and phrases from the same semantic field). Any reference to context such as the addresser-addressee relationship may also present the stylistic attitude of the author towards his subject.

## **2.4 Subjectivity in language**

Roman Jakobson (1958) stated that the emotive or expressive function of language is a direct expression of the speaker's attitude towards what he is saying and that it usually produces an impression of certain emotion in the reader or hearer (Weber 1996: 13). This function can be achieved through subjectivity, a property of language which enables the speaker or writer to convey his feelings, perceptions and attitudes towards what he is saying. Expressive meaning is a part of the lexical meaning of certain expressions which is closely related to subjectivity, in the sense that the expression of a personal emotion will inevitably display certain traits of personality (Löbner 2002: 31-32).

A subjective text will display connotative features which present the opinion of the speaker from his personal point of view. According to Löbner (2002: 31), connotations are considered secondary meaning in addition to the primary lexical meaning, its use being part of the personal judgement of the speaker. Subjectivity is an interpretation of reality based on emotional experiences, and as a result, it is only accessible to the person that underwent such experiences. Behind every subjective utterance there is an intention on the behalf of the writer to trigger a specific reaction or emotion in the reader. The comprehension of the message will depend on who creates it and to what kind of reader it is addressed, and in which situation the message is created.

Point of view in discourse can be manifested with two types of strategies: the way an author makes his attitude towards characters and action in his discourse by direct address (the inferences we draw from a character's words and behaviour and how characters and situations may be presented to us), and the way the author's point of view is given within the narration itself by the use of language (Leech and Short 1981: 272-275). Grammar provides with an amount of possibilities for the creation of subjective meanings and authors exploit them for their own benefits. For example, the deviant use of familiar terms between the characters is a mark of some extra emotional load distributed along a scale of familiarity (distance or closeness), the use of repetitions, rhetorical questions, irony and exaggerations work also as a personal force of the speaking voice as well as the use of exclamatory particles and expressions which convey emotional intensities of different kinds, and imperatives usually function as expressives which signal psychological states within the speaker (Vimala Herman's ideas presented in Carter and Simpson 1989: 221-225). Other devices for subjectivity can be the use of categorical affirmative and negative sentences, the use of the first person in verbs and pronouns and the use of verbs which indicate opinions or feelings, as well as qualifying adjectives and adverbs. All these grammatical features can build an affective vocabulary used by a writer as a stylistic strategy for subjectivity.

### 3- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CORPUS AND METHOD

The corpus selected includes the first 55 pages of the letter. The semantic analysis will be based on the emotions related to some contents of the letter: Wilde's emotions, Alfred's personality, Love and Hate<sup>1</sup>. The type of analysis is manual, since words have been selected according to the purpose of the analysis, which is to find terms denoting emotions on different subjects. Different colours (blue, red, orange and green) have been used so as to classify words in different categories (nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs, mainly). The data has been organised in tables, according to the thematic subject they refer to and the grammatical category they belong to. To do so, other colours have been used to organise the lexical topics in their corresponding semantic fields.

---

<sup>1</sup> Due to the limited scope of the paper, two other tables on Wilde's emotions toward his Imprisonment and Alfred's dealing with Money could not be included.

<sup>2</sup> There is a whole table devoted to the repercussion of Alfred's pleasures on Wilde's financial situation, which eventually led him to bankruptcy and made it impossible for him to pay the cost of the trial and the

#### 4- ANALYSIS

Following the method of Leech and Short (1981: 75-82) the procedure for the analysis will begin with some general impression of the passage, followed by the display of the most significant style markers by making selective use of the checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories. The practical purpose of this analysis is to show how the tools of linguistic description can be used in analysing the style of a prose text. In the appendixes of this paper the tables of quantitative data are included to show the evidence on which the analysis is based.

In general, the vocabulary of this letter is highly rich and complex, literary rather than colloquial and remarkably evaluative, especially with emotions. The writer makes use of the emotive associations of words so as to explain his current psychological states and thoughts, which makes the text highly subjective. Complex noun phrases are noteworthy due to their profuse pre-modification and post-modification by adjectives, other nouns, prepositional phrases and relative clauses. These nouns are usually abstract, referring to perceptions, moral entities, social qualities and psychological processes which mainly belong to the semantic field of emotions. Other nouns refer to concrete physical entities, events and situations. A noun may be repeated several times, but rarely is accompanied by the same adjective. Pre-modification and post-modification are always original in order to enrich the descriptions. Adjectives are remarkably frequent and they refer to both abstract psychological attributes and physical referential attributes. Verbs also carry an important part of the meaning; they are mainly stative (referring to perceptions and mental states and activities) although some are also dynamic (referring to actions and events). Adverbs are not very frequent and the main semantic functions they perform are of manner and degree.

Leaving behind the lexical category, a short description of the grammatical category can be made regarding sentence types: most of the sentences used by the writer are declaratives, but some commands and questions appealing to the addressee of the letter are significant, as well as occasional exclamations.

The words in the tables have been collected as they appeared in the text, but later they have been grouped according to the semantic field they belong to (marked in capital letters in the title of each sub-section of the analysis). The aim was to simplify the analysis so as to make it readable and easy to scan.

#### 4.1 Oscar Wilde

We will start with the analysis of Oscar Wilde's personality and emotions, which is presented in Appendix 1. Lexical categories will be thoroughly described so as to find out how the choice of words involves various types of meanings.

##### 4.1.1 *Friendship and Love*

The key word we find when scanning this table is *Friendship* (x33), qualified with the following plesionyms: *ill-fated*, *unfortunate*, and *fatal* which relate to the superordinate terms *Destiny* and *Doom* (x3), used by Wilde later, as well as *lamentable*, *appalling*, *distressing*, *(entirely) destructive*, and *ruinous* included within the superordinate *Ruin* (x13). Another two adjectives (*unintellectual and intellectually degrading*) relate to the superordinate *Failure*.

This friendship was nurtured with the best intentions of Oscar Wilde and his *love* (x7), which did not receive its deserving appreciation from Alfred Douglas, the addressee of the letter. *Dear Bosie* is the only direct and emotive reference to his name, placed at the very beginning. Wilde describes such love of his personality as *my own proverbial good-nature*, *my incapacity to bear resentment* and *my deepest sympathy*, which are abstract moral qualities, and also with the plesionyms (*kindness* (x3) and *generosity*, *pity* (x5) and *forgiveness* (x2), *affection* (x7) and *care*). These feelings developed his *illusions* and put him under the *influence of great emotion* which made him have *great pity for your defects of temper and temperament* and allowing *my excuse for consenting* Alfred's desires. *My yielding to your demands*, *my fatal yielding to you* made this *private friendship* and *private friend fatal to my happiness*, because *weakness* (x4) became a *habit* (x2), and since, it flouted *my willpower* (x5).

##### 4.1.2 *Separation*

These feelings did not receive the correct caring and led to *much protested love* and *ill-requited kindness* on the behalf of Wilde. Consequently, such disproportionate

relationship became abusive and made it necessary for Wilde to confront *an irrevocable (x2) parting* and *a complete separation*. To save his life and Alfred's from society's contempt, *the duty of separating from you* resulted in *incessant attempts to break off*. These attempts were never accomplished by any of them.

#### 4.1.3 Homosexuality

The results of Wilde's love were the trial and his later imprisonment, which brought about the rejection of his homosexuality. His *ancient/old affection* becomes *a deep and misplaced affection* which have elicited *public infamy* and *a terrible, revolting scandal*. Society forces Wilde to observe his homosexuality as *a pathological phenomenon* that causes him *a curious perversity of passion and desire*, and his *entire ethical degradation* has been fostered by Alfred. A notorious occurrence in the letter is the listing of adjectives, especially when Wilde asks Alfred to make the effort of changing *the grotesque, venomous, absurd and dishonouring version of our friendship* that the world now have of them. As we can see, meaning connections are reinforced by repetition of words and phrases, and by repeatedly using words from the same semantic field.

#### 4.1.4 Life and Tragedy

Wilde writes from jail, where he has had the time to reflect on his own *Life (x21)* and *Tragedy (x3)*, trying to keep faithful to the *absolute truth* and the *actual fact* in his explanation to Alfred. The temporal references firstly allude to his *long and fruitless waiting* for news of Alfred. His abandonment triggers his reflection on the past: *the dull and dreadful days* turned into *tragic, bitter and sinister days*; these *troubled days* became *ill-starred years* of friendship until the coming of *the critical moment of all my life* when Wilde faced the accusation of the Marquess of Queensberry and loomed *the sinister occasion of the great catastrophe*. As we can see, Wilde uses adjectives of a similar nature according to the topic developed, and with the analysis of his life and past he is especially rich and accurate.

It is also noticeable that Wilde tends to use two adjectives in the pre-modification of noun phrases, drawing a parallelism, and at the same time, a comparison between past and present situations. This is a marker of his witty style. Many of these adjectives are not perfect synonyms, but rather, conspicuous plesionyms whose function is emphatic: *the grotesque and tragic position* in which Alfred used to

place him was the cause of his *sterile and uncreative life* when they were together. Wilde acknowledges then the mistakes he committed with Alfred, who persuaded him to take the *lamentable step of beginning my absurd action* of demanding the Marquess, which Wilde laments to be *a gigantic psychological error* and the reason for the Marquess' *hideous hunt for my life*. Wilde fell in the *hideous trap*, and consequently, his life was tainted as a *revolting (x2) and repellent, hideous and terrible tragedy*. From prison, Wilde's analysis of the whole experience makes him feel *a nausea of life* as the *impossible, terrible, (utterly) wrong state my life had got into* was the one of a *broken life*. As we can see, adjectives become harsher as the crudity of the topics develop, and nouns change from referring to external qualities to present the intimacy of his inner voice.

#### 4.1.5 *Feelings of Sorrow and Pain*

A variety of feelings are set off after these reflections: feelings of *Sorrow (x10): an absolute nervous prostration, a sense of sadness, infinite pity, the most poignant disappointment*; and abundant feelings of *Pain (x10) (real grief (x4), misery, shame, blame, despair, anguish, the very deepest pain, incommunicable woe, terrible sufferings (x4), dulled, not healed wound, infinite distress, infinite pain and grief without end or limit)*. We can see that these descriptions of abstract entities present a quality of infinitude in their length and a sense of complete psychological depth. There is also a material association with poison in "*the most poignant disappointment*", trying to express with a concrete element the feelings which in essence belong to the realm of abstractions, as well as a materialization of the internal feeling in the form of a physical injury in "*dulled not healed wound*".

Some adjectives working as attributive of the speaking voice are *loyal (to the bitter extreme)* and *frank*, referring to Wilde's virtues; while others describe the quality of the friendship (*wearisome, bored to death and monotonous*) and a significant part emphasises the feelings of *Sorrow (sad, ashamed (x2), (absolutely) astounded, unattended and alone)* and the feelings of *Pain (I was deceived (x2), polluted, ruined (x5), outraged (x2) and wounded)*.

#### 4.1.6 *Feelings of Horror and Hate*

The same happens with the feelings of *Terror (x2)* and *Fear* unleashed after the outburst of *Sorrow* and *Pain*: a first subtle *sense of horror* becomes a *feeling of*

(utter) horror (x2) later on, when Wilde realised of the *terrible danger* he was in in his relationship. Alfred's abandonment and behaviour changes Terror and Fear into Hate (*loathing, bitterness* (x4) and *contempt of you* (x5), *scorn of you* (x5) and *disgust*) reasonable enough, since Wilde's rejection stems from his perception of betrayal by Alfred (*my sense of outrage* and *dishonour*) which eventually has cost him *my fall* and *the ruin of my house*.

#### 4.1.7 Verbs

Regarding verbs, they most frequently refer to mental and material processes, with the exception of a few relational processes. Material processes denote dynamic movement or actions in the world, in this case they mainly have to do with the physical action of breaking off contact between Wilde and Douglas, expressed with different synonyms: (*end* (x3) / *get rid of* / *break off my friendship with you; I should have shaken you out of my life; have no more to do with you; get rid of you* (x2), *escape from you* (x2), *forced* (x2) *to run away, to abandon*). Other material processes allude to the situation in the friendship (*We were spoiling each other's lives; you dominated me; I had given you my life; the thousands acts of unrequited-kindness I had showered on you; I must take the burden; I put up with you; I ruined myself*).

Also, with the use of material verbs Wilde tries to materialize his decisions, as if he was willing to turn his thoughts into actions, as we may see in these metaphorical uses when dealing with abstractions: (*my judgement forsook me; my willpower failed me; I lost my head; I reassert my willpower*). There are also direct references to verbal processes that took place between Douglas and Wilde (*You accused me of selfishness; I am taunted and spurred by your taunts; I begged* (x2); *I declined to see you*) which produced changes in the course of actions (*I consent to meet you; I give up to you* (x4); *I consent to renew* (x2) and *repair our friendship* and *I let you come back*).

Relational processes present the resulting situation: (*I was fond of you; I let you be with me* (x2), although *I required rest and freedom*).

From prison, Wilde carries out the material action of *writing* (x6) his letter and uses again verbal processes to express his disapproval of their behaviour (*I regret to say,*

*I confess, I must say, I talk to myself, I have spoken to you*) and this serves as his basis for his following reflections, expressed with mental processes. Many of them refer to cognition, with a double use for two different purposes: his revision of the past (*I remember* (x12), *I recall/recreate, I reminded myself, I used to fancy, I failed to understand, I thought* (x7), *I accepted* (x2) *I determined* (x3), *I knew* (x9) *I make up my mind* (x2) and *I forgot*), and his analysis and understanding of his present (*I think* (x5), *I believe* (x3), *I know* (x17), *I recognise* (x2), *I admit* (x3) and *I discern*). *I saw* (x9) is an interesting verb in the sense that it performs both the role of perception as observance and cognition as understanding. The cognitive verb *I suppose* (x3) has the special function of projection of the speaker's attitudes towards the addressee, from whom he expects to have the same shared feelings, as in this example: *You feel that now, I suppose*. This strategy of subjectivity will be clearly illustrated in the table of Douglas.

The second large group of mental processes are of affection, expressing Wilde's feelings towards Alfred: (*to quit or amuse you, I longed to console you, to please you* (x4), *I felt* (x7), *I forgave* (x3), *I underrate you, it displeased me*) and expressing the current emotions he experiences in jail: (*I blame myself* (x7), *I feel* (x4) *I must/have to forgive you* (x3), *not to hate you, I fear* (x2) and *I trust*).

#### 4.1.8 Adverbs

The use of adverbs is not remarkable in this letter as I have previously mentioned. Wilde avoids too much rhetorical elaboration because his focus of interest is in actions, events, feelings and descriptions, and the use of adverbs would probably prevent him from being straightforward. Most adverbs are of manner, formed from adjectives denoting negative feelings (*unwisely, tragically, blindly, insensibly, sadly*), others reflect certainty (*surely, frankly, merely* (x2), *seriously, actually*) and others a sense of completion (*supremely, completely, perfectly* and *always*).

#### 4.2 Alfred Douglas

As a second part of the analysis, I will cover the analysis of Alfred Douglas's personality and behaviour, presented in Appendix 2. Wilde makes an effort in describing in detail Alfred's character towards life and towards him as a friend.

#### 4.2.1 *Pleasure*

Alfred's attitude towards life was one of luxury and excesses. *A life of reckless profusion* as Wilde terms it. He creates strong associations of meaning with different key words related to *Pleasure* (x5) repeated throughout the passage, such as *desires* (x4), *interests* (x2), *motives* (x4) and *appetites* (x5): Alfred was led by *destructive desires and interests in Life, not in Art*. He had *no motives in life, but appetites* exclusively. The nature of these vices is described with superlatives: *meanest motive, lowest appetite, most common passion* and *the most petty* (sic) *aims*, which evinces Wilde's rejection of this kind of life. The ideas of superficiality and hypocrisy are presented in the following concepts: Alfred's *absurd extravagances in eating and drinking* made him wear *a mask of joy and pleasure*, which only hid behind *meagre interests*. Wilde warns Alfred of the dangers of being dragged by *terrible pleasure*: although they were (*terribly*) *fascinating* (x2) for him, Alfred's whims grew *more and more unreasonable* and were *fatal* and (*utterly*) *ruinous both to yourself and to others*. This way of life had made him *idle, proud* and *irresponsible*. The emotions distilled are summarized in one crucial sentence repeated frequently by Wilde: "*The supreme vice is shallowness*" addressed directly to Alfred's *Vanity*<sup>2</sup> (x10).

#### 4.2.2 *Personality*

Wilde's overview of Alfred Douglas's character as a whole is described at the very beginning as *self-complacency and conceit*. Three words are crucial for the understanding of this personality type: *Defects* (x5), *Faults* (x3) and *Lack of* (x3). These words are related to the absence of what is desirable in a person; and also, what Wilde missed in Alfred as his friend: *lack of any power of sustained and intellectual concentration, lack of any control over your emotions, incapacity of being alone* and *an entire lack of imagination* (x3). Alfred's *terrible defects* and *ugly faults* were manifested in an *absolute pride, scorn* and a *terrible handiwork*, especially evinced after Wilde was taken into custody, when Alfred, being *the responsible person for my imprisonment*, showed a *careless want of appreciation* of the situation and different forms of *callousness* (x2) and *indifference*, and even

---

<sup>2</sup> There is a whole table devoted to the repercussion of Alfred's pleasures on Wilde's financial situation, which eventually led him to bankruptcy and made it impossible for him to pay the cost of the trial and the bonds in jail, which was not included (see previous note).

*cowardice*, mainly displayed in his abandonment of Wilde in jail. *The one really fatal defect of your character* (x3), on which Wilde insists repeatedly, was Alfred's incapacity to feel empathy. Alfred's *defects of temper and temperament* were mostly an indication of the *alchemy of egotism* that operated within him, which resulted in a key element in this analysis: *blind and exaggerated vanity*.

#### 4.2.3 *Nature and Temperament*

Wilde realised what Alfred's *real nature* was during his imprisonment, through reflection of his friendship in the past and acknowledging Alfred's indifference at his present. He makes an exploration of Alfred's self from the inside (*Nature* x7) to the outside (the *Temperament* (x3) manifested): his *exigent and persistent nature* is described as if it had savage instincts: *less cultivated, undisciplined and untutored* (nature) which may explain why it ended up being a *dead unimaginative nature* for feelings and emotions. The display of this nature in the world was a *hideous temper* and an *intemperate mood*, what Wilde also calls a *callous and common temperament* and familiarises as *the fatal Douglas temperament*.

#### 4.2.4 *Silence*

Wilde appears in this letter obsessed with the worst consequence of Alfred's blindness towards him and his emotions: his *silence* (x7). Wilde remembers his friend's *long resentful moods of sullen silence* when he was irritated or hurt, but he is unable to understand his *strange silence* in not writing to him when he is in prison at his expense. Wilde surreptitiously interprets this action as a form of punishment and expresses this emotion of pain in language with the use of repetition as a mark of intensity: *horrible silence; a silence of weeks, of months, of years; a silence without excuse; a silence without palliation*.

#### 4.2.5 *Anger and Violence*

Other dominant traits in Alfred's temperament were his outbursts of *Rage* (x5). The descriptions which Wilde gives of his memories with Alfred are related to cruelty and other forms of *Violence* (x2): Alfred was used to get (*extremely*) *angry* and he suffered attacks of *dreadful mania* and *epileptic rage* which were manifested in a *madness of moods of rage*, specifically with physical *brutality of laughter* and *hysteria of rage*, which made him verbally express *violence of opinion* or make

*violent assertions* and even getting to carry out actions with *violent hands*. These were forms of physical violence, but there were examples of emotional abuse as well: *efforts at domination* and a *tyranny of the weak over the strong*, which contributed to Wilde's emotional draining. The adjectives in these descriptions of violence are related to the idea of anger as a mental illness, which also links directly to the idea of Vanity and the concept of Hate explained afterwards. Alfred's *moods* were a sign of his tormented psyche, which Wilde begins to perceive as an illness or a mental *degeneration (ethically) destructive* for everybody surrounding Alfred. Wilde depicts this exhibition of anger as *vulgar violence*, some low and dark passion qualified as *coarseness of fibre* or a *revolting coarseness and crudity* in character which was below Wilde's moral status.

#### 4.2.6 *Scenes*

The consequences of this violence enable us to understand why another key word in this analysis is *Scene* (x11). Wilde remembers especially the scandals that Alfred was used to make in public and private: *hideous, coarse, revolting* (x3), *unpleasant, so dreadful, so distressing scenes* were common in his company. Wilde laments that there was no end for such *incessant* and *new scenes*, which made him feel utterly uncomfortable and mentally unbalanced.

#### 4.2.7 *Verbal accusations*

Regarding the emotional abuse mentioned before, there were other examples of this topic within the corpus of words on verbal accusations: Alfred was used to *claim on the attention and time of others* (concretely of Wilde) to benefit from him. Using some *pretty phrase, expression of affection* or a *word of sorrow*, he was able to gain Wilde's trust with the clear purpose of manipulating him to fulfil his narcissistic aims. Alfred created mental and emotional dissonance in Wilde because his apparent softness was a *false excuse* for getting again into Wilde's life after every scene or scandal. Wilde remembers vividly the *ugly words, the irritable voice, the ungracious manner, every hideous word, every bitter word* and *every poisonous phrase*, which clearly linger in him as an emotional trauma. Wilde explains to Alfred that his consent to his demands were *bad (for you)* because *it intensified your vanity*. Any attempt of Wilde to cancel or rebel against such abuse was responded with *pretence of bravado, claims* (x2), *exactions, excuses* (x2) or *the most pathetic*

*appeal* from Alfred to be allowed back. Alfred even used *personal insults and attacks* and what Wilde senses to be *a threat of suicide* to ask for forgiveness, which are clear examples of psychological violence.

#### 4.2.8 Irony

The use of irony is essential to understand Wilde's mechanism of projection in this letter, which is one of the various ways of expressing subjectivity. Wilde frequently endows Alfred with personality traits which in essence belong to Wilde but he wishes Alfred to partake of them: Alfred was the *intimate friend of an artist* who claimed their *eternal friendship* and defended the *chivalry of friendship*. These are clear examples of bitter irony, bearing in mind the content and tone of the letter. Wilde also presupposes that when Alfred will read this letter he may feel (*morbidly*) *sad*, (*absolutely*) *responsible* or (*callously*) *indifferent*, or even experience *grief*, *passion* (x2), *remorse or shame*. After having described Alfred's character, these words can be clearly interpreted as Wilde's projections of his own feelings on Alfred. These projections are the hallmark of subjectivity, because Wilde's presuppositions of what is desirable are projected from the speaker's mind into the reader's possible thoughts. Since there was a clash between their two different opinions, Wilde calls Alfred *my enemy*.

#### 4.2.9 Adverbs

Adverbs are tightly tied to the nature of the adjectives describing Alfred they accompany: they are mainly adverbs of manner (*sweetly*, *immoderately*, *ethically*, *terribly*, *callously* and *morbidly*) which enrich the descriptions of personality and adverbs of degree marking the quality of completeness (*extremely*, *absolutely* (x2) and *utterly*) or absence (*hardly*, *simply* and *merely*).

#### 4.2.10 Verbs

Regarding the analysis of verbs, it is striking to note the high number of mental processes of cognition appealing to Alfred's understanding (*remember* (x5), *I remind you* (x2), *think* (x14), *recollect*, *know* (x5), *see* (x5), *understand* (x4) *not realise* (x4), *forget* and *conceive*) usually accompanied by modal verbs of deontic modality (*must/have to realise* (x2), *must see*, *must admit* (x2), *you should be made to see*, *to recognise*, *to realise*) emphasizing the obligation on the part of Alfred and

of epistemic modality, remarking his inability to comprehend the damage he has done (*couldn't know, couldn't understand* (x4), *couldn't appreciate, could not believe*). The examples of verbs of affection are relatively scarce, probably because of Alfred's manifested callousness: *enjoy* refer to his attitude towards pleasure, *devote (yourself to me), laughed (at me)* (x4) and *despise* towards Wilde as a friend, and *feel* (x4) and *forgive* (x2) are again examples of subjectivity through projection on the behalf of Wilde.

The second largest group of verbs correspond to verbal processes: most of them refer to Alfred's exactions from Wilde (*demand, require, insist, induce, beg* (x8), *ask me* (x2), *receive, refuse to discuss*); others describe the quality of Alfred's statements (*mock (at me), promise* (x2) and *threaten*); and the interaction between the two of them (*I need not tell you* (x3), *you cannot say*). There is an interesting nuance in the nature of certain verbs belonging to this group referring to Alfred's behaviour such as *flatter* (x2), *soothe, pride yourself* and *boast*, because despite the fact that they are verbs of saying, they also imply an emotional and affective connotation towards the speaker, once again, an expression of vanity.

Material processes or action verbs deal with the idea of Wilde's waiting for Alfred to *write* (x12) to him during his imprisonment and also with the composition of this letter which Alfred *must read* (x2) imperatively. Wilde deems that the act of reading the letter would make Alfred *weep*, and this would *save* him from being *lost* as he currently is; which are again projected feelings. Other material verbs refer to past experiences and memories with Alfred: *you follow (me); you fell on me; I allow* (x7) *you back/to return; you leave (me alone); you neglect (me); you ruined (me); rage master (you)* and *you wore one out*.

Furthermore, there are some witty constructions with verbs and their complements which bring us back to the main semantic fields of this section, such as Pleasure (*to gratify the lowest and most contemptible of all human passions; it pleased your vanity; it flattered your self-importance; you gambled with my life; to deprive you of your pleasures*); the idea of Vanity as an illness in his Personality (*wound your vanity; kill your vanity*); Violence as destruction of Wilde's emotional state (*you sap my strength of character; you were (absolutely) ruining my life* (x2); *you were wrecking your life; the ruin you were bringing on my life; bringing me to utter*

*destruction; having ruined a man like me (x2)*); verbal accusations as enticing strategies (*you imputed cowardice to me; you sought consolation and help*); a reminder of Alfred's behaviour in public (*repeat the same scene*) and towards Wilde (*you remain silent; you were wrong (x2)*) finally, some instances of subjectivity as projection (*you will feel in your heart and bring tears to your eyes*).

### 4.3 Love vs Hate

As a final section on the discussion of results, I will focus on the feelings of Love and Hate presented in Appendix 3, which are fundamental to understand *De Profundis*. Wilde devotes a significant part of the letter to make a dialectical opposition between these two feelings, which were dominant in his relationship with Alfred. Wilde identifies himself with Love and Alfred with Hate. He uses capital letters to describe these two feelings in accurate detail, as if they were personifications in themselves, and establishes quite interesting relations between the natures of these emotions.

#### 4.3.1 Love

*Love* as a noun with initial capital letter is used a total number of 23 times. There is an insistence in making Love the predominant subject of the descriptions as if it were a living object or a personification rather than an abstract feeling without volition or physical entity of any kind. An example of this use is presented in material processes: (*Love is fed by the imagination; only what is fine and finely conceived can feed Love; Love would have fostered your faculty*). In these examples Love is seen as a living organism which needs feeding to survive. Other material processes identify Love as a physical entity which can carry out actions or even feel (*Sorrow is a wound that bleeds when any hand but that of Love touches it; your heart Love and only Love finds it cold*); an entity which can be awakened (*is it beginning to dawn on you what Love is?*) or an entity which may occupy a physical space (*Love might dwell in my body*) or which can be 'stored' (*at all cost I must keep Love in my heart (x2); keep Love as the dominant note of my nature; I store (Love) in the treasure-house of my heart: I was trying to keep alive the very spirit and soul of Love*). From the cognitive perspective, these examples can be interpreted as metaphorical uses because of the transfer from the physical domain to the mental domain. The previously underlined parts of the sentences are clear instances of the

metaphorical use of the heart as a physical place for the dwelling of all emotions since the heart as a physical object becomes a space for storing abstract things.

Love is also used as a verb in mental processes of affection regarding Wilde's projection of what he thought Alfred felt for him: (*you loved me; at heart you really loved me; you really did love me; you loved me far better than you loved anybody else*). The insistence emphasises Wilde's desperate need for confirming such feeling, and it is a mark of subjectivity. Other processes of affection are related to Wilde (*I have to love you*) and the manifestation of Love's qualities (*The aim of Love is to love; its joy is to feel alive*).

As a process of cognition, *the perfect wisdom of Love* triggers some effects in the mind: *We become wiser than we know, better than we feel, nobler than we are*. The comparative is used to present a contrast between the new state that Love brings us into and an undesirable state we leave behind. (*We can see Life as a whole; we can understand others*) reflect the ability of Love to bring about other emotions such as empathy. Since Love is an emotion that Wilde knows best, he thinks he has to *teach* it to Alfred, who has to *learn* it so as to improve his life dominated by Hate.

#### 4.3.2 Hate

A huge variety of emotions and associations are created around the feeling of *Hate* (x21) in Alfred Douglas. The first characteristic which Wilde remarks is its Size and Strength, since the conflict between the Marquess of Queensberry and his son ended up tainting Wilde as well: (*In you Hate was always stronger than Love; your hatred of your father entirely outstripped, overthrew and overshadowed your love of me; your Hatred of such monstrous growth; you grew to see nothing*). The use of mental processes of cognition and perception to express understanding will be remarkable in this section. We will also see that Wilde associates Hate with Blindness as the inability of the mind to comprehend, feel or understand oneself and others.

As it happened with Love, Hate is also presented as a living organism able to carry out material processes: Hate can be fed (*Anything will feed Hate; feed your Hate and make it fat*), but its growing ends up becoming a Poison to the person (*Hate gnawed at your nature; Hate poisoned and paralysed your faculty*) and the stagnant permanence of Hate becomes an Illness (*From the point of view of emotions, it is a*

*form of Atrophy and kills everything but itself; it is a secret and shameful malady; a hereditary disease; a destructive Atrophy, a real psychological fact).*

Wilde creates the same metaphor as with Love to refer to the heart and the soul as the places for the dwelling of Hate as a physical entity: *Hate lived in you; you did not realise that there is no room for both passions in the same soul. They cannot live together in that fair carven house.*

We must also pay attention to the metaphorical use of Blindness as a limitation of understanding. As we have seen in other sections, for Wilde ‘to understand’ is ‘to see’, but here he creates interesting lexical associations of Hate with the opposite situation, the lack of sight: *Hate blinds people (x2); you could not be made to see this; Hate blinded you (x5); you could see nothing; your long-blinded eyes; slow to see; Hate so blinded you that you could see no further than the narrow, walled-in and already lust-withered garden of your common desires*). As it can be observed, the adjectives contribute to the description of the narrow scope of Hate. Wilde continues with the statement: *There was something a little contemptible in your complete and wilful blindness*; the adjectives in this case emphasising the magnitude and the quality of this blindness. Later on, Wilde addresses direct questions to Alfred in an attempt to attract his attention on this topic: *“Do you realise now what Hate blinding a person is? Am I right in saying that Hate blinds people? Do you see it now? If you don’t, try to see it”*. The results of this blindness are clear examples of failed processes of cognition: *you did not realise; not aware; realised nothing*. Finally, there is also a direct link to an important feeling which has been explained before: Vanity: *“If Hate blinded your eyes, Vanity sewed your eyelids together with threads of iron”*. This sentence has an incredible emotional load, and it is very useful to appreciate the connection that Wilde creates between both feelings.

*Hatred (x4)* is also related to *Greed*, which was as intensified as the blindness that *your narrow egotism had blunted*.

The reasons for Alfred’s accentuated lack of empathy mentioned in the previous sections find an explanation in this section as the consequence of Hate, which triggered his Insensitivity: *“The faculty ‘by which and by which alone, we can understand others in their real and in their ideal relations’ (x2) was dead in you”* because *“Hate hardened your heart and make it insensate”* and since *“there is a*

*tact in love you were not sensitive to*". Alfred's *lack of imagination* was so lacking in all sensitiveness, so dull in the apprehension of what is rare, delicate and beautiful as the result of Hate.

Wilde again resorts to a metaphor when he tries to explain what Hate is to Alfred, in this case, he uses the concept of 'prison' as the locking up of the mind for imagination and Vanity as the personification of the warder: "*Your imagination was as much in prison as I was*"; "*Vanity had barren up the windows*". After his efforts at explaining, Wilde addresses a new question to Alfred: "*Is your imagination wakening from the long lethargy in which it has lain?*" The association here is related to resurrection or reawakening, trying to rouse this imagination. However, the *long disuse* of this capacity prompts that *the soul may be dead*, since "*blindness becomes a grotesque and unimaginative nature, petrified into absolute insensibility*".

## 5. CONCLUSION

The stylistic analysis of *De Profundis* is extremely complex, especially regarding the semantic fields of emotions. The purpose of this study has been to show how the tools of linguistics can be used to analyse the style of a prose text. This paper has attempted to cast some light into the main emotions displayed in this letter which reflect the psychological introspection that the author had to make so as to understand his life and tragedy. Consequently, this study has also revealed the subjectivity encoded in the linguistic expressions used by the writer in the creation of the letter. The tables gathered in the appendices represent a varied and rich corpus of study from which a number of topics have been extracted and the analysis of its components have showed the lexical relations established between the concepts, which have contributed to the explanation of emotive meaning.

The semantic fields which have been researched in this paper have been Oscar Wilde's emotions, Alfred Douglas's Personality and the dichotomy between Love and Hate. We have seen that subject-specific language around the topic of emotions is highly rich and complex, and utterly detailed and accurate. The more emotive the topics that Wilde discusses, the greater the emotional load he invests in the language he uses and the stronger are the connotations in words. In *De Profundis*, subjectivity

in language appeals to abstract thoughts and emotions that are not quantifiable. Wilde is always asking for an emotion in Alfred, as if projecting his own feelings on him. We have also seen the importance of repetition as a mark of insistence and as a manifestation of pain and excruciating urgency addressed to the reader.

Furthermore, we have analysed the positive and negative connotations of the abundant adjectives working as pre-modifiers of noun phrases and the way they are connected to the nature of the nouns they complement. Many of these noun phrases are usually formed by two or more adjectives plus one or two nouns which are plesionyms between them.

Notwithstanding, there are other topics which are worthy of further investigation in this letter such as the semantic networks created around the topic of Money and the emotions associated with Imprisonment, among others. Other studies may be focused on the use of interrogatives and exclamatives in more detail and the repetitive use of personal pronouns (You/I), which highlight the bond between recipient and sender, the use of rhetorical questions or the very frequent meta-reference to the concept 'letter' used by Wilde. We cannot forget that there are two other structural parts in the body of this letter which the scope of this paper has not addressed, and which deserve further exploration.

## 6. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Carter, Roland and Simpson, Paul, eds. (1989). *Language, Discourse and Literature: An Introductory Reader in Discourse Stylistics*. London: Unwin Hyman LTD.
- Crystal, David and Davy, Derek (1969). *Investigating English Style*. Essex: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Leech N. Geoffrey and Short H. Michael (1981). *Style in Fiction*. Essex: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Löbner, Sebastian (2002). *Understanding Semantics*. London: Arnold (Hodder Headline Group).
- Wales, Katie (1989). *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. Essex: Longman Group UK Limited.
- Weber J. Jean (1996). *The Stylistics Reader: From Roman Jakobson to the Present*. London: Arnold (Hodder Headline Group).
- Wilde, Oscar (2002). *De Profundis. The Ballad of Reading Gaol and Other Writings*. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited.

Consulted bibliography on Wilde's *De profundis*:

- Bashford, Bruce (1985). Oscar Wilde as Theorist: The Case of *De Profundis*. *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 28.4: 395-406.
- Buckler E. William (1989). Oscar Wilde's Aesthetic of the Self: Art as Imaginative Self-Realization in *De Profundis*. *Biography* 12.2: 95-115.
- Foster, David (2001). Oscar Wilde, *De Profundis*, and the Rhetoric of Agency. *Papers on Language & Literature* 37.1: 86-110.
- Guy M. Josephine (2012). Wilde's *De Profundis* and Book History: Mute Manuscripts. *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 55.4: 419-440.
- Guy M. Josephine and Small, Ian (2006). Reading *De Profundis*. *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 49.2: 123-149.
- Kelly R. Molly. (2016). Reading Oscar Wilde's Spirituality in *De Profundis*. *Renascence* 68.3: 210-227.

## APPENDIX 1

## TABLE FOR WILDE

ADJECTIVE	NOUN/S	POST-MODIFIER
Dear	Bosie	
Long and fruitless	waiting	
Ill-fated and lamentable	friendship	
Ancient	affection	
Public	infamy	
Unintellectual	friendship	
Absolute	truth	
Actual	fact	
Sterile and uncreative	life	
Grotesque and tragic	position	
	friendship (x32)	
Appalling	results	of my friendship
(intellectually) degrading	friendship	
Fatal to	my happiness	
	my yielding	to your demands
Entire ethical	degradation	
(My) fatal	yielding	to you
Deep and misplaced	affection	for you
Great	pity	for your defects of temper and temperament
My own proverbial	good-nature	
	Incapacity	to bear resentment
Critical	moment	of all my life
Lamentable	step	of beginning my absurd action
Gigantic psychological	error	
Hideous	trap	
Irrevocable	parting	
Complete	separation	
Impossible, terrible, (utterly) wrong	state	(my life had got into)
(entirely) destructive	friendship	
	influence	of great emotion

My unfortunate	friendship	
Old	affection	for you (x2)
	my excuse	for consenting
	the duty	of separating from you
Tragic, bitter, sinister	days	
Dull and dreadful	days	
	sense	of horror
Absolute nervous	prostration	
Irrevocable	separation	
	sense	of sadness
	a feeling	of utter horror
	a feeling	of horror
Infinite	pity	
My deepest	sympathy	
Fatal	friendship	
Revolting and repellent	tragedy	
Sinister	occasion	of the great catastrophe
Ill-starred	years	
Terrible	danger	
Troubled	days	
Private	friend	
Private	friendship	
Hideous	tragedy	
Real	grief	
Curious	perversity	of passion and desire
Pathological	phenomenon	
Hideous	hunt	for my life
Incessant	attempts	(to break off)
Ruinous	friendship	
Grotesque, venomous, absurd and dishonouring	version	of our friendship
The very deepest	pain	
The most poignant	disappointment	
Incommunicable	woe	
Broken	life	
	nausea	Of life
A terrible, a revolting	tragedy	
A terrible, a revolting	scandal	
Terrible	sufferings (x4)	
	the ruin	of my house
	my sense	of outrage

Much-proteted	love	
Ill-requited	kindness	
Dulled, not healed	wound	
Infinite	distress	
Infinite	pain	
	grief	without end or limit

NOUNS
Pain (x10)
Ruin (x13)
Loathing
Love (x7)
Scorn (of you) (x5)
Kindness (x3)
Misery
Shame (x2)
Blame
Weakness (x4)
Terror (x3)
My habit (x2)
My willpower (x5)
Failure
Fear
Pity (x5)
disgust
dishonour
Bitterness (x4)
Affection (x7)
Destiny
Doom (x3)
My illusions
Grief (x4)
Despair
Generosity
Care
Anguish
Contempt (for you) (x5)
My fall
My forgiveness (x2)
Sorrow (x10)
Life (x21)

VERBS
Think (x5) / thought (x7)
Write (x6)
Blame (myself) (x7)
Dominate
Regret to say
Feel (x4) / felt (x7)
Remember (x12)
Give up to you (x4)
(My willpower) failed me
(My judgment) forsook me
Get rid of you (x2)
Determined (x3)
Consent (to meet you)
Be with me
To please (you) (x4)
Be fond (of you)
Let (you) come back
Forgive (x3) / forgave (x3)
Saw (x9)
Accepted (x2)
Put up with you
Let you be with me
I confess (x2)
Escape (from you) (x2)
Make up my mind (x2)
Beg (begged x2)
Forced (x2) to run away
(absolutely) declined (to see you)
Quiet or amuse you
I know (x17) / I knew (x9)
I recognised (x2)
I underrate (you)
forgot
To abandon
I discern
Believe (x3)
Talk to myself
Recall =recreate

I reminded (myself)
Not hate you (x2)
I used to fancy
I longed to console you
I failed to understand
It displeased (me)
I admit (x3)
I fear (x2)
I trust
I have spoken to you
You feel that now, I suppose (x3)
I must take (the burden)
I must say (to myself)
I ruined (myself)

ADJECTIVES
Sad
Ashamed (x2)
Wearisome
Bored to death
monotonous
(absolutely) astounded
Unattended
alone
(I was) deceived (x2)
Polluted
Loyal (to the bitter extreme)
Frank
Ruined (x5)
(deeply) wounded and outraged (x2)

ADVERBS
unwisely
Surely
Merely (x2)
always
Supremely
tragically
frankly
blindly
completely
insensibly
sadly
seriously
Perfectly
Actually

VERBS	COMPLEMENT
I lost	My head
Reassert	My willpower
End	My friendship with you
(We) were spoiling	Each other's lives
I should have shaken you out	Of my life
I required	Rest and freedom
To end	The fatal friendship without bitterness
Get rid of	A friendship
I settled to have	No more to do with you
Repair or renew	My (unfortunate) friendship with you
Consent to renew	Our friendship
You accused me	Of selfishness
I am taunted and spurred	By your taunts
I had given you	My life
Break off	A ruinous friendship
My desire, nay, my determination to end	A friendship so fatal
(The thousand acts of unrequited kindness) I had showered	On you

## APPENDIX 2

### CHARTS FOR ALFRED

ADJECTIVES	NOUN/S	POST-MODIFIER
false	excuse	
intimate	friend	of an artist
exigent and persistent	nature	
destructive	desires and interests	in Life not in Art
	self-complacency and conceit	
	no motives	in life
	appetites	
	defect	
	incapacity	of being alone
	claim	on the attention and time of others
	lack	of any power of sustained and intellectual concentration
	violence	of opinion
real	nature	
	a life	of reckless profusion
dreadful	mania	
	lack	of any control over your emotions
long resentful	moods	of sullen silence
epileptic	rage	
	tyranny	of the weak over the strong
coarse	scenes	
ugly	words	
	efforts	at domination
meanest	motive	
lowest	appetite	
most common	passion	
vulgar	violence	
shameful	reason	
revolting	scene (x3)	
so dreadful, so distressing	scene	
hideous	temper	
less cultivated	nature	
absurd	extravagances	in eating and drinking
unpleasant	scenes	

terrible	defects	
blind, exaggerated	vanity	
the fatal Douglas	temperament	
most pathetic	appeal	
	threat	of suicide
ugly	faults	
incessant	scenes	
new	scenes	
irritable	voice	
ungracious	manner	
hideous	word	
intemperate	mood	
undisciplined and untutored	nature	
	alchemy	of egotism
violent	assertion	
	brutality	of laughter
	hysteria	of rage
pretty	phrase	
	an expression	of affection
	word	of sorrow
	scenes (x11)	
personal	insult or attack	
	coarseness	of fibre
an entire	lack	of imagination (x3)
callous and common	temperament	
strange	silence	
revolting	coarseness and crudity	
violent	hands	
eternal	friendship	
	chivalry	of friendship
	pretence	of bravado
	mask	of joy and pleasure
every bitter	word	
every poisonous	phrase	
the one really fatal	defect	of your character (x3)
	defects	of temper and temperament
meagre	interests	
the most petty	aims	
responsible	person	for my imprisonment
dead unimaginative	nature	
absolute	pride	
terrible	handiwork	
careless	want	of appreciation
	madness	of moods of rage

hideous	scenes	
terrible	pleasure	
horrible	silence	
	a silence	of weeks, of months, of years
	a silence	without excuse
	a silence	without palliation
	your silence	

NOUNS
moods
desires (x4)
pleasures (x5)
motives (x4)
interests (x2)
appetites (x5)
faults (x3)
claims (x2)
exactions
degeneration
grief
passion (x2)
remorse
rage (x5)
excuses (x2)
shame
my enemy
scorn
cowardice
callousness (x2)
indifference
Vanity (x10)
defects (x5)
lack of (x3)

VERBS
write (x12)
feel (x4)
weep
save
flatter (x2)
soothe
to be lost
must read (x2)
remember (x5)
enjoy
must realise (x2)
must see
couldn't know
couldn't understand (x4)
couldn't appreciate
Not realise (x4)
(I) remind (you) (x2)
demand
receive
forget
you wore one out
require
insist
refuse to discuss
induce (me) to allow you back
beg (x8) (me) to forgive (x2)
allow (x7) you to return
threaten
despise
could not believe
must admit (x2)
(I) need not (hardly) remind/tell (you) (x3)
promise (x2)
leave (me alone)
you fell on me
neglect (me)
mock (at me)
ask (me) (x2)
think (x14)
recollect

devote (yourself to me)
follow (me)
know (x5)
have to realise
see (x5)
ruined (me)
(rage) master (you)
you will be able to understand (x4)
pride yourself
boast
you should be made to see, to recognise, to realise (a little of what you had done)
you remain (silent)
you cannot say
conceive
you laughed (x4)
you were wrong (x2)

ADJECTIVES
idle
proud
fatal
bad (for you)
more and more unreasonable
irresponsible
(ethically) destructive
(terribly) fascinating (x2)
(extremely) angry
(utterly) ruinous (both to yourself and to others)
(absolutely) responsible
(callously) indifferent
(morbidly) sad

VERBS	COMPLEMENT
feel	in your heart
wound	Your vanity
kill	Your vanity
bring	Tears to your eyes
sap	My strength of character
(you) Imputed	Cowardice to me
(you were absolutely) ruining	My life (x2)
you were wrecking	Your life
the supreme vice is	shallowness
deprive you	Of your pleasures
repeat	The same scene
you sought	Consolation and help
you gambled	With my life
it pleased	Your vanity
it flattered	Your self-importance
to gratify	The lowest and most contemptible of all human passions
the ruin you were bringing	on my life
bringing me	To utter destruction
having ruined	A man like me (x2)
(your friendship with me) intensified	Your vanity

ADVERBS
sweetly
immoderately
ethically
terribly
callously
morbidly
dimplly
merely
hardly
absolutely (x2)
extremely
utterly

### APPENDIX 3

### LOVE vs HATE

LOVE (x23)
You loved me
You really loved me
<u>At heart</u> (you really did love me)
Fascinate (you)
You loved me (far better than you loved anybody else)
Love is fed by the imagination
We become wiser than we know, better than we feel, nobler than we are.
We can see Life as a whole
We can understand others ( <i>empathy</i> )
Only what is fine and finely conceived, can feed Love
Love would have fostered your faculty
At all costs I must keep Love <u>in my heart</u>
Keep Love as the dominant note of my nature
Its joy is to feel alive
The aim of Love is to love
To love you
Is it beginning to dawn on you what Love is, and what is the nature of Love?
Teach (you)/learn
I must keep Love in my heart
(Your heart) Love and

only Love, finds it cold
I was trying to keep alive the very spirit and soul of Love
(Love) might dwell <u>in</u> <u>my body</u>
(Sorrow) is a wound that bleeds when any hand but that of Love touches it
I store it (that silent act of Love) <u>in the</u> <u>treasure-house of my</u> <u>heart</u>
The perfect wisdom of Love

HATE (x21)
In you Hate was always stronger than Love
Your hatred of your father entirely outstripped, overthrew and overshadowed your love of me
You Hatred of such monstrous growth
You did not realise that there is no room for both passions in the same soul. They cannot live together in that fair carven house (metaphor-metonymy)
Anything will feed Hate
Feed your Hate and make it fat
Hate blinds people (x2)
Not aware
Hate so blinded you that you could see no further than the narrow, walled-in and already lust-withered garden of your common desires

Lack of imagination ( <i>empathy</i> )
Hate lived in you
Hate gnawed at your nature
You grew to see nothing
Hate poisoned and paralysed your faculty
You could not be made to see this
Hate blinded you (x5)
You could see nothing
The faculty 'by which, and by which alone, we can understand others in their real and in their ideal relations' (x2 was dead in you
Realised nothing
Hate hardened your heart and make it insensate
There was something a little contemptible in your complete and wilful blindness
From the point of view of the emotions, it is a form of Atrophy and kills everything but itself.
It is a secret and shameful malady
Hereditary disease
Do you realise now what Hate blinding a person is?
Destructive Atrophy
A real psychological fact
Am I right in saying that Hate blinds people? Do you see it now? If you don't, try to see it.
Hatred, Vanity and

Greed
Long-blinded eyes
(Your heart) Hate and Hate alone can warm
War of hate
Slow to see
So lacking in all sensitiveness
So dull in the apprehension of what is rare, delicate and beautiful
If Hate blinded your eyes, Vanity sewed your eyelids together with threads of iron
Your narrow egotism had blunted
(Your) imagination was as much in prison as I was
Long disuse
Vanity had barren up the windows
There is a tact in love you were not sensitive to
Blindness becomes a grotesque and unimaginative nature, petrified into absolute insensibility
To rouse it (the imagination)
The soul may be dead
Is your imagination wakening from the long lethargy in which it has lain?



