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Fin de Siècle Vortex:
Using Digital Tools to Read the Early
Modernist Textual Performativity in
The Picture of Dorian Gray

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[Abstract]

Scholars in Korea interpret English novels predominantly through the thematic interpretation method of textual reading and response. This article attempts to counteract this traditional methodology and embraces a novel technique to read Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by conjoining a theoretical framework with a digital tool. Ultimately, this study aims to apply a linguistic approach that incorporates Raymond Williams's notion of "structures of feeling" to interpret *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an early modernist novel that constitutes a fin de siècle social critique of nineteenth century England. The study uses linguistics computational tools called AntConc and Voyant to achieve its academic objective and, in the final phase, reconsiders the significance of Franco Moretti's distant

reading. Lastly, it visualizes the collaborating processes of a comparative reading constructed through the organic synergy of cooperation between theory, text, reader, and digital tools.

Key Words: *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Repetitive Semantic Figures, Structures of Feeling, Comparative Reading, Digital Response, Fin de siècle Vortex

“Fin de siècle,” murmured Lord Henry.

“Fin du globe,” answered his hostess.

— *The Picture of Dorian Gray*—

1. Introduction: Reading a Novel Using a Computational Tool¹⁾

This study reads Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) through the framework of a combinational appraisal that applies digital tools along with Raymond Williams’s theory of the “structures of feeling.” This comparative reading will prove that my presumption of Wilde’s critique of fin de siècle reality is actually and semantically manifested within the text. To argue this point, I set the word “English” as a study term and analyze the frequency of the established study terms using tools such as Word List and Keyness. I also investigate negative forms such as “don’t” as well as “sentimental words” and

their relationships to the terms “English” and “England” in clusters/bundles/n-grams. Additionally, I conduct a collocation and concordance analysis by scrutinizing sentences that include the terms “English” and “England.” Further, I accomplish a contextual investigation using a series of linguistic tests to moot the possibility of labeling Wilde a “fin de siècle modernist” who employs the genre of the novel to allegorize his social critical views on late nineteenth century England and its cultural discourse. Specifically, I achieve a comparative reading via a combinational methodology that utilizes literary theory in tandem with digital tools. This technique bolsters my construal of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a novel that connects late Victorian literary aestheticism and early modernist artistic activity.

“In the past decade, the use of computer-aided automatic text analysis has grown in use” (Kyle & Crossley 757). Recently, literary analysis using computational tools has also noticeably increased. In particular, since the publication of Franco Moretti’s *Distant Reading*, the encounter of statistical indices and literature interpretation has been presented as a kind of methodology that spurs the reading of world literature. A predominant objective of this article is to confirm that the two different analytical methods, traditional theoretical reading and computational reading, can cooperate under the common goal, novel interpretation (Hwang, “AntConc” 3). Corpus linguistics can be defined as “dealing with some set of machine-readable texts, which is deemed an appropriate basis on which to study a specific set of research questions” (McEnry and Hardie 1). Michaela Mahlberg’s study of lexical bundles and clusters in Dickens’s 23 texts and Patrick Juola’s studies confirming J.K. Rowling’s linguistic signature, for example, “How a Computer Program Helped Show J.K. Rowling

write *A Cuckoo's Calling*” and “The Rowling Protocol, Steven Bannon, and Rogue POTUS staff: a Study in Computational Authorship Attribution,” are achievements within the scope of corpus linguistics and literary stylistics. Literary stylistics scholars have emphasized the effectiveness of this field as a solution to the anxiety of not being able to read all the texts that increase every day and to resolve the dissatisfaction of not being able to rely on “serendipitous discovery” obtained by going directly to the library (Craig 287; Witmore & Hope 17).

The corpus linguistics adopted for this project differs from general corpus linguistics studies which use corpora that are usually massive collections of texts or text samples (Hwang, “AntConc” 3). Instead, the present investigation focuses on one text, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (which has hitherto scarcely been read using digital tools) to attend to the manner in which Wilde’s repetitive linguistic style can be related to his transmission of metaphorical meanings to readers, allowing him to be labeled a fin de siècle modernist (Hwang, “AntConc” 3, 22).

Recent studies on Wilde have occasionally expressed views positioning him as an early modernist. Some studies have evaluated Wilde’s novel as an “early example of the obscene aesthetic modernism,” in an extension of the discussion of commonality with works of modernists such as James Joyce and D.H. Lawrence who attempted to textualize physical sensations and whose works were criticized for obscenity (Kennedy 14; Flynn 171-74). That Wilde became a celebrity during this era by misapprehending the social critical metaphor of his novel as a “corrupting influence” as he experienced situations such as lawsuits and publication prohibitions has recently become a category of academic interest for scholars who consider him a modernist (Stern 757; Goldman 2). However, most such studies adopt the perspective of including Wilde as a modernist

because of the contextual knowledge of his literature. On the other hand, Ronald Bush discovered the literary genealogy of the historical sense displayed in T.S. Eliot's early poems and essays in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (474). Noteworthy, John Paul Requelme indicated that the works of William Butler Yeats, Bob Dylan, and Wilde commonly reveal a "modernist negativity" (540). However, numerous studies of Wilde as a modernist have attempted to discover commonalities between his external circumstances and the legal scandals of other modernists rather than the modernism of the semantic dynamics of Wilde's literature.

Unlike previous studies, this article posits a new term, the "fin de siècle vortex" as the product of a reader's unique comparative reading that connects Williams's theory with digital tools and identifies *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as an early modernist text through detailed examinations of its linguistic style. The postulated term fin de siècle vortex elucidates how the repetition of certain words in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represented the reality of England at the end of the nineteenth century. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* conveys the social phenomena of the end of the 1890s to the reader through a sense of the fin de siècle grammar. This paper examines the relationship between the term "don't" and a group of "sentimental words" dominantly observed in the novel. Word groups comprising "don't" and "sentimental words" are repeatedly used in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, transmitting the fin de siècle social situation in England to the reader as a reading experience. This peculiar reading sensation portrays the social anxieties of the end of the nineteenth century that the reader's mind can visualize in the shape of a vortex.

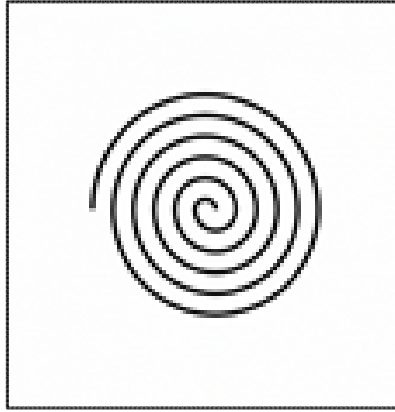


Figure 1.

The fin de siècle vortex is a structural articulation of the whirling arousal of a reader's senses by the text of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The fin de siècle vortex represents a structure of feeling that describes an era in which the indications of the early modernities formed continuously through repetitions opposed to Victorian values before modernism became fully established as the "ism" of the twentieth century. It also denotes a visualization of the reader's experience of *feeling* the changing times through the use of "don't" and "sentimental words" in the text. Put differently, the fin de siècle vortex images a social reality in which Victorian values are slowly collapsing and new "isms" are gradually being formed. This paper posits that the reader's feeling of being engulfed in this fin de siècle vortex emanates from experiencing the textual energy that is evoked by a certain group of semantic figures that reflect the structure of the feeling of a specific era, the 1890s. The vorticism presented by Ezra Pound's "affective-expressionist aesthetic" is a cultural imagism of the explosion and concentration of a radical artistic movement at the beginning of

the new century (Araujo 37). Given its importance for literary studies, the phenomena of English fin de siècle social symptoms displaying modernist vortex characteristics such as “efficiency, mechanics, or fluid force” are not actively studied in Korean academia (Pfannkuchen 63). I suggest a distinguishing *linguistic* study of vorticism, which may be viewed as the beginning of modernism. This study’s postulation of the notion of the fin de siècle vortex thus equates with the circumstance of experiencing a narrative form that can be witnessed as the beginning of a new artistic movement; modernism as sensed by the *reader*. I would like to further consolidate the statistical objectivity of this study’s arguments in all such reading processes by confirming them with the dialogic associations between the reader and digital tools, instead of relying singularly on the interpretation of a presumptive subjective feeling of the text.

2. Fin de Siècle Structure of Feeling as the Sensing of Early Modernity

According to Williams, the structures of feeling are much more easily recognizable when evolving social values are fully formalized within a community at “a later stage” (132). In other words, the processes of social formation are accomplished and fixed in a society when the principles, values, and cultures of an era are completely institutionalized. After undergoing the entire socialization process, they can finally be assigned to the past tense. Subsequent scrutiny of the embryonic stages of social phenomena reveals their

existence much more conspicuously. For instance, the relationships between the two “isms”—the earlier emergent modernism and relatively fixed modernism of later generations—are more clearly exposed after time has passed and we look back from the perspective of the twentieth century at the aspects through which modernism gradually began to emerge in the late nineteenth century. However, it is easy to regard newly emerging values or cultures as entirely private in the past era in which they evolved. Therefore, Williams defined the structure of feeling as a contemporary personal sense of the formative stage of a procedure in “the true social present” (132).

Methodologically, a structure of feeling is “a cultural hypothesis,” evidencing elements that become connections between one generation and the next, a period and the period that follows (132-33). A structure of feeling is a “more formally structured hypothesis of the social” experienced “in our present cultural process” (133). This structure evidences the experience of a “process” during which something social is actively forming (133). Ultimately, the structure of feeling conceptualizes that a certain *structure* exists even in the experience of sensing the *connectivity* between the past and the present. This study asserts the existence of Williams’s structure of feeling in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. I determine the functions discharged by the “don’ts” and “sentimental words” in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to ascertain the contentions between the old (past) and the new (present). Perhaps, my analysis of the conflict between Victorian values and the creation of twentieth century individualism advocating the respect for the freedom of individual expression will depict the tensions between these two ideologies. The examination of the unique semantic features of the novel allows me to coin the term *fin de siècle vortex* to describe the unique structure of the reader’s

feelings evoked by the reading experience of this text (Hwang, “Colonial Vortex” 225).

Williams hypothesized that the structure of feeling is especially connected to art and literature (133). “The true social content” can be labeled a structure of feeling; it encompasses elements of the “present and affective kind” in “a significant number of cases” (133). When one generation experiences phenomena such as belief systems, institutions, or explicit relationships as difficult to regard as *social*, the established *isms* of the next generation are just beginning to emerge. At this juncture, the structure of feeling entails the experience of a formative state when the present is privately sensed as an affective dimension. Therefore, in the works of writers after *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the articulated individualism of personal actions, expressions, or freedom of choice becomes part of a more-active-than-ever-before manifestation of twentieth century modernism. The structure of the experience of that new “ism” can be considered a new forming structure of feeling when modernism begins to be experienced on an individual level and is yet “uncovered or imperfectly covered” before it is formally accepted by society as a new ideology or worldview (133). Williams, in particular, defined this peculiar social feeling as “the unmistakable presence of certain elements in art” during encounters with the aesthetic of the arts or “imaginative literature” (133).

According to Williams, we must recognize “the specificity of these elements—specific feelings, specific rhythms—” to establish the perception of these natural but peculiar social affects (133). This specificity functions “to find ways of recognizing their specific kinds of sociality,” and marks the beginning of discourses about such personal perceptions of the specificities as social features

(133). Hence, this affective structural specific of social attributes expresses a state in thorough flux at the private level (Hwang, “Colonial Repetition” 369). How, then, can we evidence the late nineteenth century society discussions that appear personal in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? Williams stated:

The idea of a structure of feeling can be specifically related to the evidence of forms and conventions—semantic figures—which, in art and literature, are often among the very first indications that such a new structure is forming [...].

(133)

Ultimately, structures of feeling are social sensations that acknowledge the relationships between the old and the new. And these active socially private processes can be articulated and confirmed through semantic figures in art and literature. This article appears to align with the objective of confirming the structure of feeling shaped in a reader’s mind when *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is read through the term “don’t” along with emotion-related or “sentimental words.” The perception of the relationships between existing Victorian values and the new individualism and the experience of the modern style of magical realism as a new modern form of writing contrasted with the discernment of the nineteenth century. The ambiguous or open ending appeared rarely in the nineteenth century narrative structure that propagated Christian values. The modernity initiated in new artistic forms of modernist writing was sensed as structures of feeling. Such types of sensing of nascent modernism through the specific words employed in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* may be visualized in the form of a vortex, which designates textual performativity driven by the textual energy stemming from the repetition of “don’t” and “sentimental words.”

3. Method 1: Description of the Target Corpus and Word List and Keyness

3-1. Description of the Target Corpus

My target corpus is *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), Oscar Wilde's allegorically gothic and philosophically psychological novel (Requelme "Aesthetic Gothic," cf. Robinson "Classical Allusion," Clausson "Culture and Corruption," Scheible "Gothic Confrontation," and Lee "Uncanny"). The novel was criticized by nineteenth century English law as leprous literature that represented the immorality of an author who was involved in a libel case and tended to favor French Decadents (Stern 760; cf. Salamensky "Re-Presenting," Canovas "Dishing the Dirt," and Bristow "Blackmailer"). According to English literary history:

"Although Wilde was married and the father of two children, he did not hide his homosexual relationships. When he began a romance (in 1891) with the handsome young poet Lord Alfred Douglas, he set in motion the events that brought about his ruin. In 1895, Lord Alfred's father, the marquis of Queensberry, accused Wilde of homosexuality; Wilde recklessly sued for libel, lost the case, and was thereupon arrested and convicted for what was then on the statute books a serious criminal offense. The revulsion of feeling against him in England and in America was violent, and the aesthetic movement itself suffered a severe setback not only with the public but among writers as well."
(*Norton Anthology 7th 1749*)

Homosexuality was illegal in nineteenth century England. When Wilde initiated the libel case against Queensberry, the latter's attorney Edward Henry Carson (1854-1935) severely attacked Wilde's homosexuality. From 1900 to 1921, known as Sir Edward Carson, he was an Irish unionist politician, barrister and judge, who served as the Attorney General and Solicitor General for England, Wales and Ireland as well as the First Lord of the Admiralty for the British Royal Navy. He is also remembered for his open-ended cross-examination of Oscar Wilde in legal action that led to plaintiff Wilde being prosecuted, gaoled and ruined (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Carson). Carson denounced Wilde's novel in court as immoral and evincing his homosexual tendencies (Holland 87-89; 95-96; 100-102). Carson criticized this novel as obscene for more than merely the homosexual tendencies observed in the book: the anti-English allegories, Lord Henry's English critical attitude, and the stigma attached to the new freedom of expression (Hwang, "A Realistic Reading" 238-40). To punish the novel as obscene could have been a mistake that resulted from the nineteenth century citizenry's deficiency of familiarity with the modernity of the twentieth century individualism that was already being molded in England in the late nineteenth century (Stern 757).

This study's comparative reading of the novel based on the amalgamation of literary theory and digital tools is intended to contemplate why this novel was finally brought to trial. The present investigation attempts to discover whether the text contains words that can be adjudged the "dynamics of the corrupting influence" from the conservative perspective of nineteenth century England (Stern 757). The Word List and Keyness will denote the initial essential categories for the present study's interpretation of this novel's modernity, which was deemed to

represent the “terrible morals” of the fin de siècle (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* 5).

3–2. Description of Reference Corpora

I downloaded the plain texts of reference corpora from Project Gutenberg (<http://www.gutenberg.org/>). The Reference Corpora adopted for this study include:

Table 1.

1.	Jane Austen’s <i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813)
2.	Mary Shelley’s <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818)
3.	Charlotte Bronte’s <i>Jane Eyre</i> (1847)
4.	Charles Dickens’s <i>Bleak House</i> (1853)
5.	George Eliot’s <i>Middlemarch</i> (1871)
6.	Thomas Hardy’s <i>Jude the Obscure</i> (1895)
7.	Joseph Conrad’s <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1899)
8.	Rudyard Kipling’s <i>Kim</i> (1901)
9.	James Joyce’s <i>Dubliners</i> (1914)
10.	Virginia Woolf’s <i>The Voyage Out</i> (1915)

The above English novels of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were selected for the study because I assumed choosing similar types of texts as reference corpora could benefit lexical comparison. AntConc is a representative digital linguistic tool designed to collectively compare and contrast textual data in analyzing a specific text. Five works written before *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and five texts that followed this novel were selected to maximize the comparative execution of this digital tool and to enhance the ease of the above-stated

comparison and contrast. Studies of the history of English literature generally divide the Victorian period into three sections: early, middle, and late. The Reform Bill of 1832 was introduced in the early period (1830-1848), also known as “The Time of Troubles.” This bill accorded adult males the right to vote; it also yielded economic benefits and increased the political power of the middle class (*Norton Anthology 7th* 1046-1047). However, the adverse side effects of the new industrialization also became rapidly visible during this period and rendered the situation in England more hopeless and complex: child labor in coal-mining areas, the desperate poverty of the lower classes, the chaos caused by frequent rioting, and serious crop failures in 1845. The mid-Victorian period (1848-1870) represented a time of economic prosperity and witnessed the growth of the empire as Britain expanded its global dominance. Between 1853 and 1880, 2,466,000 emigrants left Britain for many of its colonies and British capitalists had invested £800 million abroad by 1870. Eventually, The British Empire was founded on the investment of the nation’s people, money, and technology (*Norton Anthology 7th* 1049). The late period (1879-1901) exemplified the decay of Victorian values and was characterized by frequent rebellions, massacres, and bungled wars in the British colonies. The issue of home rule for Ireland, even though unsuccessful, emerged as a crucial question for England, arousing significant political debate in the 1880s. British intellectuals passionately read Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel’s *Communist Manifesto* (1847), and Marx’s *Das Kapital* (1867, 1885, 1895), and “a wide variety of kinds of socialism” began to be established as a powerful political force in England (*Norton Anthology 7th* 1053). The economic prosperity attained in the middle period by Britain through the expansion of the empire fueled the collapse of Victorian values that became

sporadically evident from the 1870s. The last decade of the Victorian era, which is generally considered regarded as the fin de siècle or the end of the century, saw the gradual failure rather than consolidation of Victorian values as its prominent social phenomenon.

Britain finally won the Boer War (1899-1902) in the colonies in the 1890s and the country's global influence continued to follow the pattern set in the mid-Victorian age. However, Victorian values had already begun the process of disintegration within England. Victorian values could be described through three terms: earnestness, moral responsibility, and domestic propriety (*Norton Anthology 8th* 980). Queen Victoria birthed nine children with her husband Prince Albert; the Queen of England and the British Empire symbolized this middle class icon of the Victorian age. The present study scrutinizes the 1890s in England through digital tools to discern the *words* that can describe the structure of feeling of that era: it seeks to identify England's fin de siècle structure of feeling as sensed from the reading experience of contemporary situations that evidenced the shattering of the described Victorian values. Thus, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can be regarded as the experience of reading the structures of a situation of conflict between the two "isms" in late nineteenth century English society within which the values of earnestness, moral responsibility, and domestic propriety began to collapse and twentieth century modernity simultaneously began to emerge as a new form of individualism. This article posits the term fin de siècle vortex for the two palpable conflicts in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: first, a new freedom of expression challenges the steadfastness of existing values; second, the textual representation of the feeling of colliding social changes. Certain repeated linguistic effects in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* overturn (or

deliver to the reader a sense that they break) social values built and respected by Victorians. This new sensing of a late Victorian decadence that presaged the “terrible morals” frequently articulated in twentieth century modernism could be why late nineteenth century English society had no choice but to define this new form of textual feeling as immoral (Kennedy 2). The repetitive use of language created a specific textual image, whose burgeoning in the reader’s mind could be considered the powerful beginning of a new literary style for the next era.

3-3. Procedure and Generation of the Word List and Keyness: Discovering the Study Terms, “English” and “Sentimental Words”

Williams stated:

[I]f the social is the fixed and explicit—the known relationships, institutions, formations, positions—all that is **present and moving**, all that escapes or seems to escape from the fixed and the explicit and the known, is grasped and defined as the personal: this, here, now, alive, active, ‘subjective.’ (“Structures of Feeling” 128, emphasis added)

He argued that we habitually use the past tense when we discuss culture and society (128). However, the proper understanding of culture and society in his opinion is to grasp the structure of the continuously forming phenomena that are not yet fixed in contemporary life (128). Such features undergoing formative processes retain some elements of presentness and are vested in the dimensions of “here,” “now,” “alive,” “active,” and “subjective” (128). Therefore, to live and

feel the present amounts to facing this ephemeral situation that will soon become the past. We need new terms to more accurately describe such momentary presentness as we acknowledge the experience of this temporal yet undeniably transient present.

Williams contended that the social and personal are always easily perceived as contrasting structures; however, in fact, they are considerably correlated. Numerous facets of social phenomena exist in this ever-receding temporal procedure before being completely fixed and officially defined. These dynamic processes denote the structure of feeling on a private and present level. Therefore, we can better understand the structures of feeling in the novel by examining the semantic figures of the “sentimental words” that reveal the “presentness” of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. To achieve this objective, I first loaded the previously mentioned ten selected novels that formed the reference corpora in the “Add Files box” of AntConc and obtained the keyword list of my target corpus, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, in response.

Table 2. Word List of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

# Word Types: 6,530		
# Word Tokens: 81,222		
# Search Hits: 0		
Rank	Frequency	Word
1	3,794	the
2	2,279	and
[...]	[...]	[...]
655	13	England
1357	5	British
4447	1	Englishman

Table 3. Keyword List of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (emphasis added)

# Keyword Types: 276				
#Keyword Tokens: 22110				
#Search Hits: 0				
Rank	Frequency	Keyness	Effect	Keyword
1	450	+2723.51	0.011	dorian
2	249	+1252.01	0.0061	henry
3	225	+1159.21	0.0055	gray
22	48	+152.3	0.0012	horrible
32	34	+123.03	0.0008	hideous
33	31	+116.09	0.0008	sins
34	45	+107.84	0.0011	dreadful
35	70	+106.33	0.0017	afraid
41	27	+96.57	0.0007	monstrous
44	22	+94.29	0.0005	horribly
45	42	+93.96	0.001	terrible
47	74	+90.08	0.0018	soul
58	28	+73.26	0.0007	senses
67	31	+68.64	0.0008	terror
75	42	+62.33	0.001	secret
106	14	+45.99	0.0003	gilt
107	18	+45.92	0.0004	horrid
126	15	+37.88	0.0004	vulgar
136	13	+36.35	0.0003	tedious
145	14	+33.98	0.0003	terribly
162	7	+30.41	0.0002	dominated
168	5	+30.24	0.0001	terrifies
169	12	+29.85	0.0003	tragic
188	21	+26.44	0.0005	horror
201	9	+25.03	0.0002	corruption
202	9	+25.03	0.0002	mask

231	6	+23.22	0.0001	nineteenth
254	5	+22.06	0.0001	tragedies
271	7	+20.29	0.0002	grotesque
274	7	+20.29	0.0002	ugliness
276	6	+20.24	0.0001	wilful

3–4. Word List and Keyness Analysis: Reading the “Aboutness” in “English” and “Sentimental Words”

According to Costas Gabrielatos, “the notion of keyness is closely related to the notion of aboutness” (225). Gabrielatos elucidated how Phillips and Scott defined the relationship between keyness and aboutness, asserting,

[Aboutness] is the understanding of the main concepts, topics, or attitudes discussed in a text or corpus. Phillips argues that “aboutness stems from the reader’s appreciation of the large-scale organization of text.” (7)

The notion of aboutness informs the scholarship on keyness (Scott 110) and many researchers have influenced its development because a keyness analysis is a means of establishing aboutness (Scott 71). The discovery of a text’s core themes is a benefit of keyness investigations. What, then, forms the essential content of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? Table 2 reveals that the frequencies of the terms “England” (Rank #655), “British” (Rank #1357), and “Englishman” (Rank #4447) are not noticeably high compared to the other words on the list. The words “English” and “England” are not even included in the list of 276 keywords presented in Table 3. It could thus be construed that these words are

not linguistically dominant in the text. Why, then, did nineteenth century readers feel that the novel represented a commentary on fin de siècle English society? The present study's keyness investigation failed to discover the linguistic effect of "English" and "England" in the text. It did, however, confirm that the group of "sentimental words" expressing negativity and anxiety highlighted in bold, for instance, such as "horrible," "dreadful," and "terrible" could serve as clues for the scrutiny of the negative context of England and help scholars determine how these words could correlate.

4. Method 2: Concordance Hits With AntConc Along With Frequency and Link Test With Voyant

4.1 Concordance Hits on "English" and "England" with AntConc

Table 4. Concordance Hits: 7 on "English" (emphasis added)

1. The inherited stupidity of the race—sound English common sense he jovially termed it—was shown to	Ch.15
2. I quite sympathize with the rage of the English democracy against what they call the vices of the	Ch.1
3. and has established her in Paris as an English dressmaker . Anglomania is very fashionable over	Ch.12
4. have read it. The man knew more than enough English for that. Perhaps he had read it and had	Ch.10
5. be like having a meat-tea, or reading an English novel . It must be seven. No gentleman dines before	Ch.4

6. the question. England is bad enough I know, and English society is all wrong. That is the reason why	Ch.12
7. leather boot with a tasselled ebony cane. “How English you are Basil! That is the second time you	Ch.1

Table 5. Concordance Hits: 13 on “England” (emphasis added)

1. he could not endure to be long out of England, and gave up the villa that he had shared	Ch.11
2. set you far above all the young men in England, and make the old men quite jealous, if old	Ch.1
3. they say of us? “That Tartuffe has emigrated to England and opened a shop.” “Is that yours, Harry?”	Ch.17
4. ain’t they? Even those that are born in England become foreigners after a time, don’t they?	Ch.4
5. speak to me now.” “I thought you had left England.” “Darlington is not going to do anything.	Ch.16
6. him. What if Alan Campbell should be out of England? Days would elapse before he could come back.	Ch.14
7. soon?” “No: I am going to be out of England for six months. I intend to take a studio	Ch.12
8. year—every month, almost— men were strangled in England for what he had done. There had been	Ch.13
9. rubies that threw out a great light. Charles of England had ridden in stirrups hung with four hundred and	Ch.11
10. cried Hallward, “that is not the question. England is bad enough I know, and English society is	Ch.12
11. I his keeper? I know how people chatter in England. The middle classes air their moral prejudices	Ch.12
12. Bible, and the seven deadly virtues have made our England what she is.” “You don’t like your country,	Ch.17
13. There was Sir Henry Ashton, who had to leave England with a tarnished name. You and he were inseparable	Ch.12

4.2 Concordance Analysis on “English” and “England”: Identifying the Relationship Between “English” and “Lord Henry”

The term “English” encompasses great linguistic complexity and variety, incorporating diverse linguistic, cultural, and national-identity-related implications. This section reads the contexts in which the word “English” is used in my target corpus to note the type of fin de siècle criticism of English society that can be detected and attributed to Wilde. The data this study obtained from AntConc suggested that traditional reading conjectures affected by readers are demonstrable through digital linguistic research.

The information displayed in Table 4 illuminates that readers are likely to invest the term “English” with negative meanings through its textual association with words such as “stupidity,” “rage,” “against,” “bad,” and “wrong.” Readers could receive the signification of the author’s critical tone toward England especially when such negative influential words occur in the vicinity of statements containing the term “English.”

A similar linguistic phenomenon is observed in the statements presented in Table 5: several of them were identified as conveying a negative context, with words such as “bad,” “strangled,” “prejudices,” “deadly,” and “tarnished” generating a negative atmosphere apropos England. Table 5 further illuminates that Lord Henry, who utters many of the statements presented in Tables 4 and 5, mentions leaving England: Lord Henry thinks of “leaving” England rather than “staying” in the country. Like the previously mentioned negative terms, the intention of leaving can be interpreted as a negative influential metaphorical

progressive verb that evinces Lord Henry's disappointment with England and his urge to abandon his national identity.

The more we read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the more we tend to be engulfed in the above-cited anxious feelings generated by the negative energy of the text, whether allegorical or direct, or a combination of the two styles. In particular, the "sentimental words" imply responses stemming from the homosexual relationship between the male protagonists that the reader can surmise intrinsically. That the keyword test yielded so many "sentimental words" suggests that the text was dominated by such terms conveying unhappy emotions; thus, readers are whirled into sensing a more complex but obviously substantial feeling of anxiety.

In this novel, Lord Henry is titled and represents the nobility; he should thus be viewed as a moral exemplar of England's upper classes. Instead, he is an individualist and a self-proclaimed dandy. The concordance test results displayed above evidence that Lord Henry speaks in terms that oppose the gentleman who defends the English values of early- and mid-nineteenth century society. He gifts Dorian a yellow book to spread homosexuality, and his married life with his wife is hypocritical. Lord Henry is also skeptical about Christianity and does not show due compassion to the people around him. Consequently, Lord Henry represents a problematic English upper class and the text depicts him as appropriately dominating. His words and conduct could have appeared terrible to late nineteenth century English society even if the terms English or England are not expressly mentioned too many times. The information traced through the AntConc test implies that the "sentimental words" in the text that may be noted as linguistic branches of "terrible" or "horrible" are probably generated by Lord

Term	Count
dorian	409
said	262
don't	255
lord	248
life	229
henry	223
like	213
gray	188
know	176
harry	174
man	171
basil	153

Figure 3.

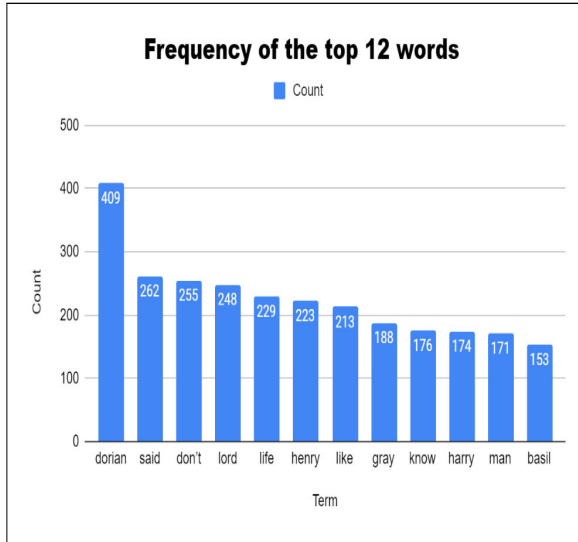


Figure 4.

The Voyant tests allow the visual representation of the frequency of words and the following results are extracted:

Dorian 409 + Gray 188 = 597
Lord 248 + Henry 223 + Harry 171 = 652
Basil = 153

Figure 5.

Lord Henry is often called Harry in the novel by his acquaintances and his figure conspicuously dominates the frequency results (Figure 5). The term Dorian stands out in the Voyant frequency test outcomes displayed above (Figures 2–5). A

re-inspection through the Voyant link test allows us to ascertain the words with which the main character, Dorian, is most intensively connected.

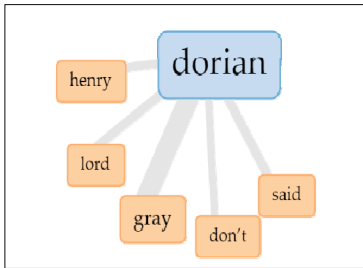


Figure 6.

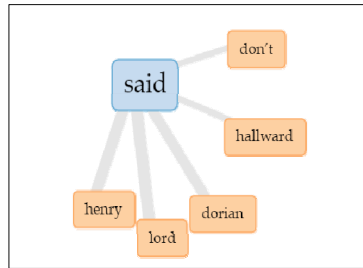


Figure 7.

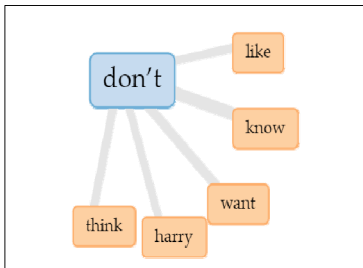


Figure 8.

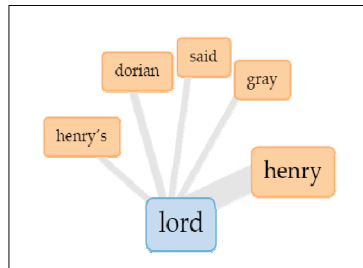


Figure 9.

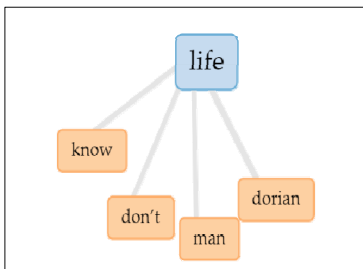


Figure 10.

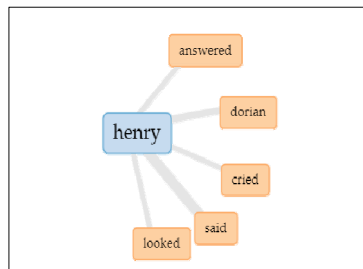


Figure 11.

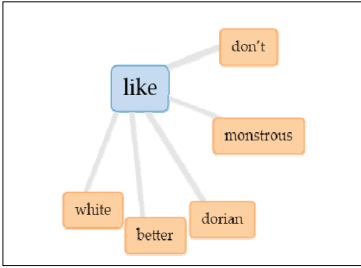


Figure 12.

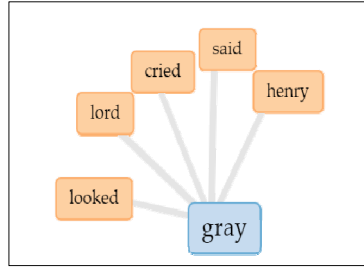


Figure 13.

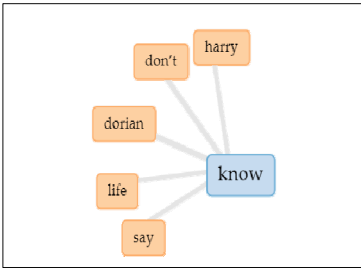


Figure 14.

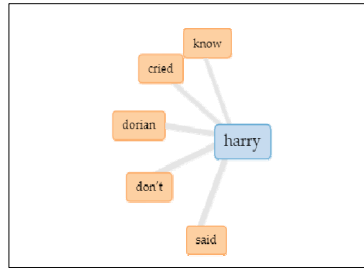


Figure 15.

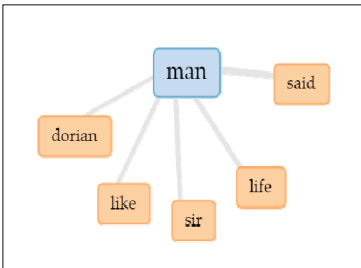


Figure 16.

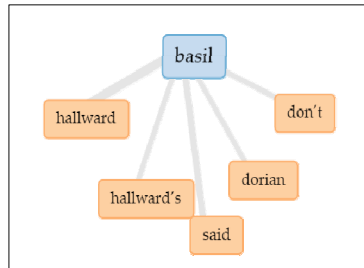


Figure 17.

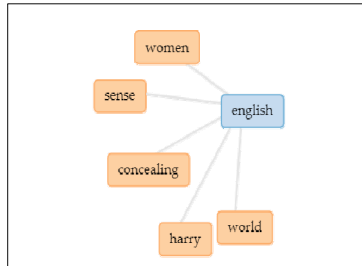


Figure 18.

The Voyant link test outcomes for both “Dorian” and “Gray” demonstrate that Dorian is related to Lord Henry (Figures 6 and 13). The relationship between the two upper-class English gentlemen Lord Henry and Dorian Gray is also revealed through the words “Lord,” “Henry,” and “Harry” in the dialogs specified by the word, “said” (Figures 7, 9, 11, and 15). As a result, the association between Dorian and Lord Henry is woven by the interactions indicated by the word “said,” which contain messages that ask the reader to pay attention to the rhetoric exchanged between the two characters. Also noteworthy is that “Harry” is the character connected with the negative rhetoric in the link results for the term “don’t” (Figures 8 and 15). Even more notably, both “don’t” and “English” were found to be associated with “Harry” (Figures 8, 15, and 18). The Voyant link test confirmed the obviousness of the intimacy between the protagonists Dorian Gray and Lord Henry. It further verified that Lord Henry is the “English” who wields the most influence on Dorian, and we are given a hint for close reading: we must attend more to the negative energy (“don’t”) we can find in the dialogs (“said”) between these two English upperclassmen.

In such an instance, what is the relationship between “English” identified as

“Lord Henry” and the “sentimental words”? A comparative reading accomplished through an amalgamation of AntConc, Voyant, and physical close reading outcomes confirmed that the character of Lord Henry dominates this novel and that his words and attitudes make readers more acutely and dramatically feel the sentimental words used in the novel. However, the reader’s novel experience of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* entails the feeling of a new yet mysterious morality that differs from the values advocated by existing nineteenth century narratives. This fin de siècle structure of feeling, the “terrible moral” in Lord Henry’s terms, signifies the new moral code that demands the rights of people to live their lives according to their desires, free from the constraints of class or the prevailing social order. Lord Henry’s homosexual allusions, of course, plunged nineteenth century readers into feeling “terrible.” Most of Lord Henry’s words advocate the deconstruction of nineteenth century English hierarchy even though he is a Lord who represents England’s upper classes and is supposed to protect the morals of his rank. In a sense, he is also supposed to function socially to strengthen the boundaries between classes; however, in the novel, he is the one who promotes the collapse of the class hierarchy by drawing readers into the chaotic emotions of the textual vortex. However, his contemporary conservative British Victorians would have been horrified by the “terrible moral” extracted in them through the feeling of this text of slowly falling into the fin de siècle vortex. At the same time, the text’s fin de siècle sentimentality could only be recognized as an obvious fact from within the reality of that time.

4.3 The File View Analysis from the AntConc Concordance Test: Discussing the “Proletariat” as Linguistic Evidence of Fin de Siècle English Modernity

I quite sympathize with **the rage of the English democracy** against what they call the vices of the upper orders. The masses feel that drunkenness, stupidity, and immorality should be their own special property, and that if any one of us makes an ass of himself, he is poaching on their preserves. When poor Southwark got into the Divorce Court, their indignation was quite magnificent. And yet I don't suppose that ten per cent. of the **proletariat** live correctly.”
(*The Picture of Dorian Gray* 23, emphasis added)

As the above-cited File View paragraph from the AntConc concordance test demonstrates, no substantial difference is noted between the upper class and the “proletariat” in their attitude toward life. The upper-class English Lord Henry living at the end of the nineteenth century exchanges jokes about English society with his acquaintances that could sound fairly subversive to the people at the time. “Dorian is the product of a class-transcending liaison” in the novel; therefore, his remarks nullifying the distinctions between the classes could represent his most dangerous allegory (Kennedy 10). Wilde's nineteenth century Victorian readers may have responded with “sentimental words” of shock when confronted with the contemporary social critique embedded in Lord Henry's jokes. Sentimental words encompass a *presentness* that represents temporal feelings generated at every moment. The structure of feeling that exists in the fluid phase of the social-containing contemporality of the 1890s English is represented by these individual semantic figures. Lord Henry's existence is itself

the cruel morality of this novel. Lord Henry regards his rank-unsuitable rhetoric as a kind of fin de siècle modernity and believes in this shaping of end-century ideas as a new individualism.

According to Williams, semantic figures that specify class-related fluctuations, conflicts, and movements are also connected to a structure of feeling. For example, the word “proletariat” is never mentioned in the ten reference corpora selected for the present study but finds a place in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Is this a semantic figure like the “terrible moral” that reveals the type of early modernist Oscar Wilde represented? Lord Henry conveys contemporary reality to readers through allegories that incorporate his flamboyant wordplay and reflect the crisis circumstances confronted by English upper-class norms and Victorian values. What did the sociocritical joke about the disappearing differences between the life attitudes of the “proletariat” and the upper classes mean to the English at the time? What is signified by the fact that the word “proletariat,” which does not appear in the other ten comparative texts, is mentioned only in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*? What does this anomaly tell us about the kind of political unconscious or (consciousness) of Oscar Wilde?

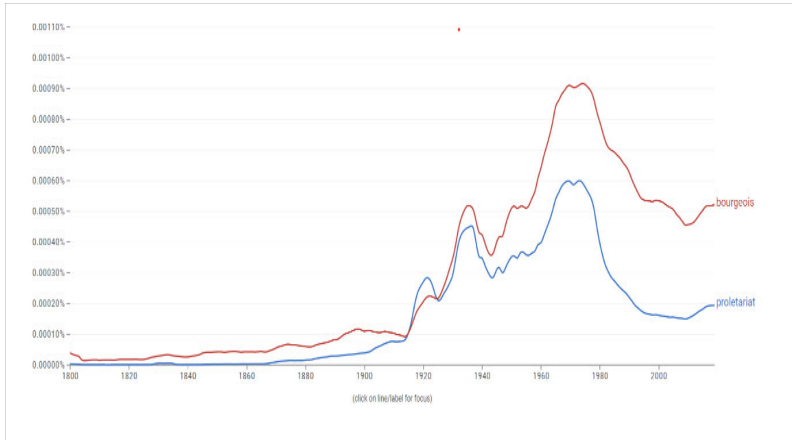


Figure 19.

The Google Books Ngram Viewer visually demonstrates that the use of words such as *bourgeois* and *proletariat* spread actively after the end of the nineteenth century (Figure 19). The use of the word “proletariat” possibly reflected Wilde’s socialist views.

Lord Henry witnessed the social changes through which the existing diverse social classes in England were fast divided into rich and poor in the nineteenth century as Britain underwent the processes of rapid industrialization and experienced enormous capital influx from the colonies. Remarks confronting these social phenomena promoted a discomfoting atmosphere in the text. For instance, one critic of Wilde’s manifested his libertarian socialist worldview in his essay, “The Soul of Man Under Socialism,”(1891) contended that “Art is individualism and individualism is a disturbing and disintegrating force,” “these allusions were seemingly enough to provoke outrage and disgust in its contemporary [English] readers” (Kenndy 12). Lord Henry’s very existence in the novel and the “terrible

moral” attached to his unique socially critical semantic figure that could provoke “a disturbing and disintegrating force” can be imaged as a vortex. This vortex swirls powerfully in the mind of the reader of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which functions as a social mirror reflecting fin de siècle English society.

Wilde’s use of the term “proletariat” reflected Frederic Jameson’s conception of a “socially symbolic act” stemming from the author’s “political unconscious.” The usage of “proletariat” relates to the 1890s reality of the English upper classes marrying daughters of wealthy American businessmen, following French fashion, and transforming gradually into a social stratum that subscribed to capitalist rule. The word proletariat represents a linguistic marker that reads the structure of feeling of that time and can serve as a glimpse of the collapse (or at least the “crisis ordinariness”) of the English upper-class order (Berlant 10). Was the publication of this novel banned in England for decades because of its descriptions of upper-class Dorian wearing commoner attire and visiting opium dens in the docks on many nights to hang out with sailors, foreigners, or Sirs, all drunk on something poisonous? Was the novel prohibited because it depicted the fin de siècle reality of England shamefully *vividly*? Was Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* an obviously subversive novelistic social action taken by an Irish writer? When Dorian meets Hetty and leaves her so she can remain uncorrupted, averring to Lord Henry that he will begin a good life, Lord Henry tells him that she will never again be satisfied with her own peasant class because she has now experienced a different class as represented by Dorian. Dorian did not wrong Hetty, but Lord Henry mocks him for making the mistake of ruining the village girl’s grounding in her class values and exposing her to another way of life.

Lord, Duke, Victoria, Lady, James, Sybil, Hetty, Dorian, Henry, Basil, Alan Campbel, Sailor, and the “proletariat” are terms and names that represent the different classes of nineteenth century Victorian society. The different classes should follow distinct modes of life and follow distinctive norms appropriate to their statures. However, they all meet at a certain mysterious point of contact in the novel and are collectively referred to as “English” in an extension of the negative context. The textual anxiety radiated by each character is integrated with the negative energy produced by semantic figures such as “terrible,” “horrible,” and “don’t,” maximizing the visualization of the vortex in the reader’s mind as a fin de siècle structure of feeling. In this manner, the style of new realism that Riquelme would call, the “modernist negativity” that conveys the subject through textual performativity caused by linguistic totality is one aspect of twentieth century modernity (540). This textual performativity is a literary style rarely seen before Wilde. However, it is distinctively visible as a modernist literary technique in the works of later generations of modern writers such as James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and T.S. Eliot. The modernity of the twentieth century had already begun in nineteenth century fin de siècle playwright Wilde’s novella, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

According to Lord Henry, a man who owns the standards of his time is a man of pretense who also lacks individualism. The “standards of the times” are already socially accepted and fixed; thus, a person leading a lifestyle that satisfies contemporary standards is aligned with that which has already become the past, and such a person cannot achieve any real individual aim. Lord Henry hence asserts, “medieval art is charming, but medieval emotions are out of date” (97). This notion is reminiscent of the dominant conception of later twentieth century

modernists that modern novels should be alive so they may reflect contemporary feelings.

Lord Henry highlights the need for a new style in modern art to evoke emotion; this idea overlaps with Williams's explanation of the element of the structure of feeling that exists in "the undeniable power of two great modern ideological systems,—the 'aesthetic' and the 'psychological' dimension" (129). Modernists similarly endeavored to faithfully archive the present through an artistic mode that expressed individual feelings and consciousness.

The existence of fin de siècle modernity is revealed in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through the process of real, actively lived relationships. It manifests as a social consciousness attached to the minds of characters, especially the aspects of imagination, psyche, and unconscious ("Structures of Feeling" 130). Eventually, this new formulation of individualism transforms into twentieth century modernity. Therefore, the negative semantic energy produced by the "sentimental words" in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* may be apprehended as early modernism, which exists as a type of tension that emerges from practical experience. The negative feeling conveyed by such words concerns the sensing of social realities that were not yet fully formed or accepted in the late years of the nineteenth century. Thus, late Victorian mindsets would have sensed emotions such as unease, stress, displacement, and latency through the novel's "sentimental words" ("Structures of Feeling" 130).

As the structure of feeling of his time, Lord Henry's rhetoric is late Victorian—early modernism in the scope of the practical consciousness of individual feeling and thinking ("Structures of Feeling" 130). This is fin de siècle modernity as a social event attached to the semantic figure of an individual in a progressive and

formative state: a still-embryonic phase of an ethos that is yet to become fully articulated and defined (“Structures of Feeling” 131).

If Lord Henry’s thoughts and actions are terrible, horrible, hideous, and mysterious for nineteenth century ideology because they predict twentieth century individualism and do not conform to the official consciousness of the social forms of the articulated Victorian ideology of societal values. However, this practical consciousness of fin de siècle early modernity involves the feeling and expression of a new and different phenomenon that is nevertheless connected to the old hegemonic culture system, initiating the procedure through which twentieth century modernism began to germinate in England.

5. Method 3: AntConc Clusters/Bundles/N-Grams Test and Voyant Trend Test

5.1 Procedure and Generation of the List of Clusters/Bundles/N-Grams: Discovering the Study Term “Don’t”

As I stated at the outset of this article, nineteenth century English law censured the novel as representative of the immorality of a writer who was referred to a libel case. This study used digital tools to reinterpret and reconsider why this novel was brought to trial. I investigated the novel’s text to ascertain whether it actually encompasses *words* that can be judged “immoral” from the conservative

perspective of nineteenth century England. Clusters/Bundles/N-grams represented the essential linguistic functions for this aspect of the scrutiny of the novel’s text.

Method 3 was applied to interpret Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* through a lexical bundle and collocation analysis. This technique evaluated the novel by groups of words and not merely singular terms. According to the BYU Corpora, “the tendency of words to co-occur in a patterned way is known as collocation” (Kwon 115). In summary, Method 3 was intended to infer whether the collocations and lexical bundles could influence the experiences of the novel’s readers.

The following calculation established my ideal minimum frequency (Min. Freq.) as 3: $81222 \text{ (words in the corpus)} \times 0.00004 = 3.24888$. However, I modified the frequency to 9 to obtain evidence of a more irrefutable argument. Method 3 involved an extension study of Methods 1 and 2. I divided *The Picture of Dorian Gray* into 20 Chapters to attain the normed frequency settings that yielded my 17 lexical bundles: minimum (Min) 4, maximum (Max) 4, minimum frequency (Min. Freq.) 9, minimum range (Min. Ran.) 5.

Table 6. Result of Clusters/Bundles/N-Grams (emphasis added)

Words in Corpus: 81222					
Documents in Corpus: 20					
Rank	Frequency	Normalize Frequency	Range	Normalized Range	Bundle
1	25	307.7984	12	60	i don't know
2	21	258.5506	12	60	don't know what
3	18	221.6148	13	65	i don't want
4	14	172.3671	8	40	i don't think
5	14	172.3671	11	55	it seemed to him

6	14	172.3671	8	40	seemed to him to
7	12	147.7432	9	45	there was something in
8	11	135.4313	9	45	don't want to
9	11	135.4313	6	30	i am going to
10	11	135.4313	8	40	is one of the
11	10	123.1194	6	30	i want you to
12	9	110.8074	8	40	but i don't
13	9	110.8074	7	35	for the first time
14	9	110.8074	6	30	from time to time
15	9	110.8074	5	25	in front of the
16	9	110.8074	7	35	to him to be
17	9	110.8074	8	40	you don't know

5.2 Analysis of Clusters/Bundles/N-Grams: Discussing the Correlations Between “English,” “Don’t,” and “Sentimental Words”

The list in Table 6 evinces the negative form as a prominent linguistic phenomenon. I mentioned at the beginning, one objective of this study entailed a linguistic investigation to determine why *The Picture of Dorian Gray* was adjudged obscene by nineteenth century English society. The linguistic facts elucidated by the lexical bundle investigation suggested that I should substantively scrutinize the novel’s negative statements. The societal conservatism of the nineteenth century probably desired to stop the publication of the novel rather than to acknowledge the freedom of expression of art because the novel persisted in describing English society negatively. In fact, the jury’s surrender to Carson’s persuasive and passionate advocacy of the novel’s immoral nature could

be interpreted as a result of the linguistic influence of the repeated negative lexical bundles formed in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Biber et al. defined lexical bundles as [also] “personal, expressing speaker’s attitude toward the actions or events” (20) and explained that bundles express “the speaker’s own intention to perform some future action” and “many of these are expressions of intention or desire,” after all, they are the linguistic criteria of the speaker’s “mental lexicon” (21).

Negative lexical bundles are listed with relatively high frequency in Table 6, for instance, “I don’t know,” “I don’t think,” “don’t want to,” and “don’t know what.” These negative formulations of words allow us to consider the adverse perspective of the speaker (Lord Henry) apropos English society. It also becomes possible to interpret the negative bundles as the author’s intention to claim his desired sociocritical stance.

The previous AntConc and Voyant lexical investigation disclosed the following information. First, Lord Henry represents the English in the novel, and it was thus necessary to attend to the negative energy of “sentimental words” appearing in tandem with Lord Henry’s utterances about England and the English of his time. Second, Method 3 of this study’s linguistic scrutiny confirmed the possibility of the profoundly significant connections between “don’t” and “sentimental words.” What, then, do the three elements, “Lord Henry(English),” “don’t,” and “sentimental words” share?

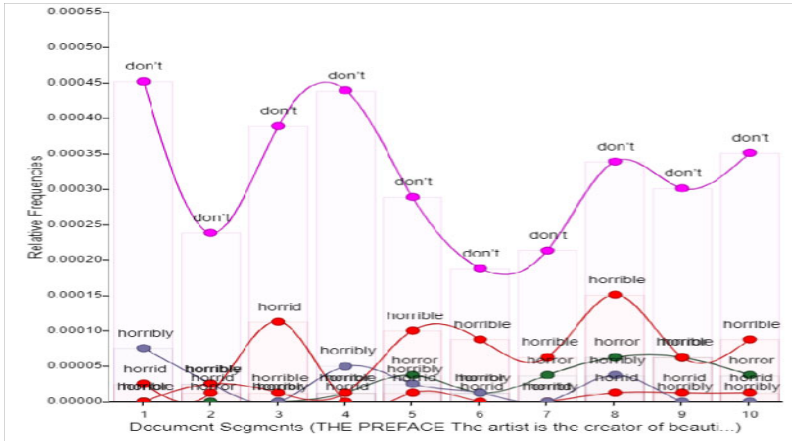


Figure 20. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and Horrible, Horror, Horribly, Horrid

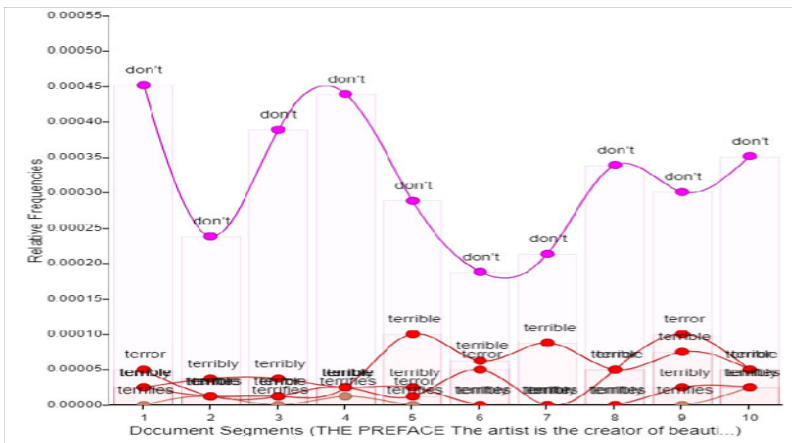


Figure 21. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and Terrible, Terribly, Terror, Terrifies

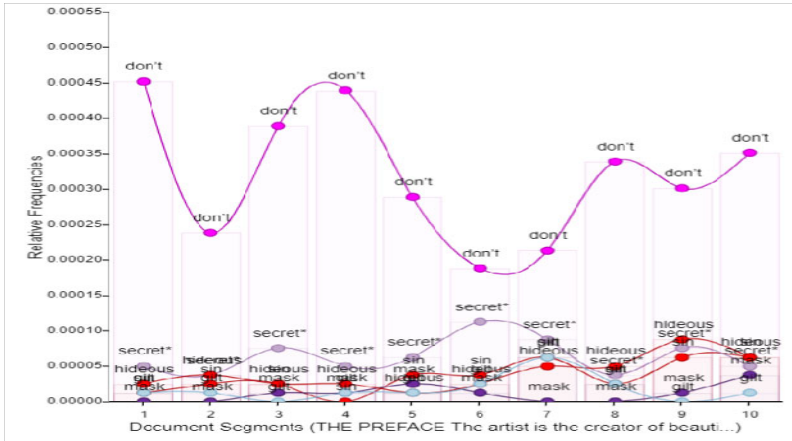


Figure 22. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and Secret, Hideous, Sin, Mask, Gilt

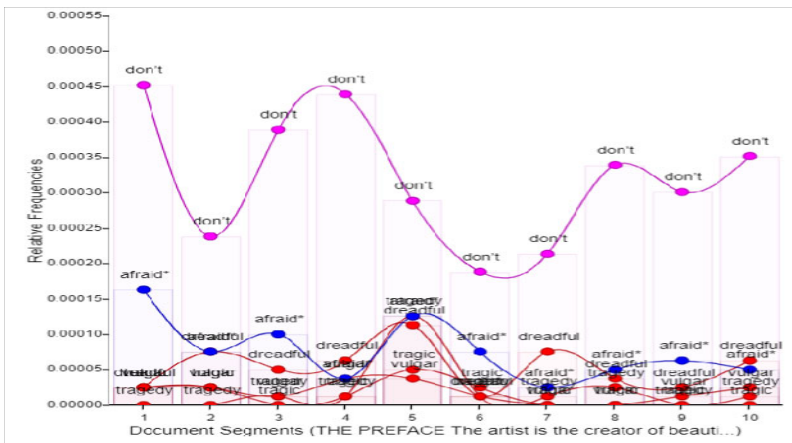


Figure 23. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and Tragedy, Dreadful, Afraid, Vulgar, Tragic

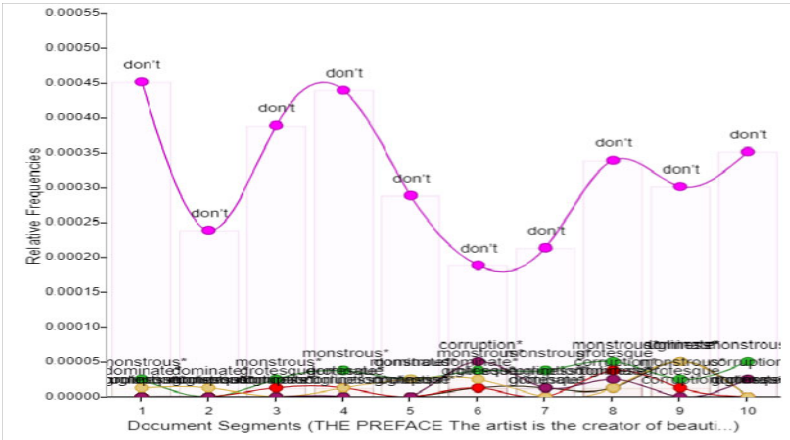


Figure 24. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and Corruption, Monstrous, Dominated, Grotesque, Ugliness

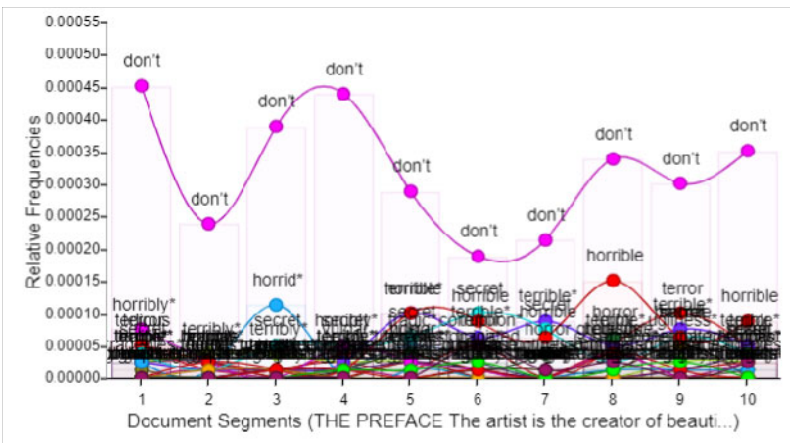


Figure 25. Voyant Trend Test of Don't and All Sentimental Words: Horrible, Horror, Horribly, Horrid, Terrible, Terribly, Terror, Terrifies, Secret, Hideous, Sin, Mask, Guilt, Tragedy, Dreadful, Afraid, Vulgar, Tragic, Corruption, Monstrous, Dominated, Grotesque, Ugliness

“Lord Henry(English),” “don’t,” and “sentimental words” denote fin de siècle terms in the text that promote anxiety and negative feelings in readers. The complex interrelation of the predominance of “don’t” and “sentimental words” appears throughout the text (Figures 20–25). The terms “don’t,” “Lord Henry,” and “sentimental words” principally share the attribute of containing the essential prerequisite of Williams’s structure of feeling: *a presentness connected to the past*. Lord Henry is an upper-class Englishman who lives in the present and word groups represented by “don’t” describe the current state of the speaker: for instance, “don’t like,” “don’t know,” “don’t think,” and “don’t want.” “Sentimental words” are associated with feelings actively transpiring in the mind of the speaker. These two types of semantic figures primarily represent groups of words we use to describe our astonishment upon encountering something new that counteracts our existing values. If Lord Henry is himself an exemplar of turn-of-the-century Englishness, a character typifying the “terrible moral” of the 90s, what kind of fin de siècle structure of feeling do his uttered “sentimental words” accompany?

5.3 From Distant to Close Reading: The Fin de Siècle Structure of Feeling as Early Modernist Textual Performativity in the Relationships Between “English,” “Don’t,” and “Sentimental Words”

The following excerpt denotes a conversation at the beginning of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* between Lord Henry and Basil, a painter overjoyed by his discovery of the driving force of his art. The interaction occurs as the two

characters appreciate the portrait of Dorian Gray. The dialogs allow readers to reconfirm through physical close reading this study's verification of the amplifying linguistic energy caused by the combination of Lord Henry, the representative of "English," "sentimental words," and "don't" through digital tools.

"Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something **horrid**. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly **hideous** they are! Except, of course, in the Church. But then in the Church they **don't think**. [...] "**Don't** flatter yourself, Basil: you are not in the least like him." "You **don't** understand me, Harry," answered the artist. [...] "Your rank and wealth, Harry; my brains, such as they are—my art, whatever it may be worth; Dorian Gray's good looks—we shall all suffer for what the gods have given us, suffer **terribly**." [...] "When our eyes met, I felt that I was growing pale. A curious sensation of **terror** came over me. [...] but I **don't** know how to explain it to you. [...] I **don't** believe that, Harry, and I **don't** believe you do either. [...] How **horribly** unjust of you! cried Lord Henry. [...] Oh, brothers! I **don't** care for brothers. [...] And yet I **don't** suppose that ten per cent. of the proletariat live correctly. [...] I **don't** agree with a single word that you have said, and what is more, Harry, I feel sure you **don't** either. [...] "How **English** you are, Basil! **Englishman**... right or wrong... However, I **don't** propose to discuss politics, sociology, or metaphysics with you. I like persons better than principles, and I like persons with no principles better than anything else in the world. (17–24 emphasis added)

Varied types of AntConc and Voyant tests confirmed the high frequency of the term "don't" in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. What textual feelings are produced in the minds of readers by the above-cited examples evincing connections

between “don’t,” “sentimental words,” and “English” (Lord Henry) that occur repeatedly throughout the novel? What reproduces the negative linguistic energy created by “sentimental words” in conjunction with “don’t,” which are particularly prominent in Lord Henry’s conversations with other characters?

As previously stated, the above extract describes a conversation between Lord Henry and Basil Hallward. The former gazes admiringly at Dorian’s painting and praises Basil, forecasting that the painting would bring him tremendous fame. Basil asserts that he put “too much of the hidden and mysterious” things in Dorian’s portrait. Basil states there exists a secret about the painting without revealing the mystery. In this manner, the novel evokes amplified anxiety in readers, who wish to discover this secret throughout the novel. Meanwhile, the use of “sentimental words” such as hideous and terrible further heighten the anxiety of readers, and “don’t” implies the suppression, denial, or rejection of the anxiety (Figures 20–25). Such mysterious negative emotions overflow from the text in congruence with the repetitive energy previously radiated by the “sentimental words.” Ultimately, the combined force of these linguistic elements added to the anxiety vitality of the repetition of the negative word “don’t” can cause readers to feel a whirlwind of intense sentiments, the fin de siècle vortex.

Why does Lord Henry tell Basil that the portrait of a handsome young man like Dorian will make him famous among young men and earn him the jealousy of old men in England (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* 17)? An expression consistent with Victorian values would require the term “young men” to be altered to “young women,” considering the conservative social context of the Victorian age that deemed homosexuality illegal.

However, “this curious artistic idolatry” contained in the portrait with “subtle

influence” is a metaphor for homosexuality described as an ambiguous allegory (*The Picture of Dorian Gray* 25). The conservative English courts tendered the same argument as they sought to prevent the novel’s influence on homosexuality, which was illegal at the time. However, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* encompasses themes other than so-called obscenity: these other topics are represented in many of the novel’s dialogs through words such as modern, new, art, nowadays, style, mode, and realism. The complex combination of the semantic energy of words used throughout this novel also showcases fin de siècle sentimentality as the foreshadowing of a certain modern style of art.

Williams contended the variability of language, stating that “no generation uses the language of its predecessors without any change.” A radically novel style does not suddenly appear; new modes are fashioned when supplemental changes are affected to existing models (131). Williams’s definition of style can be applied to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as follows. Readers of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* experience a novel that maintains the old form of nineteenth century realism and simultaneously also encounter a new literary style as a fin de siècle structure of feeling that conveys the theme through the complexity of the linguistic energy transmitted collaboratively by the term “don’t” and “sentimental words.” The unique linguistic complexity of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* makes readers sense a new literary style vested in the textual tension when Lord Henry talks about a new style of life, literature, and perspective. This new style is demonstrated as the textual feeling that contains textual subject matter and is understood by readers through the sensing of a new reading experience. The novel’s readers experience fin de siècle modernism in this manner in concordance with linguistic performativity: as a new literary style that more strongly connects

readers with the text than ever before. Therefore, “specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships,” which exist as “textual feeling—characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone” are evoked in readers by the relationship of “don’t,” “sentimental words,” and the problematic character of the “English” Lord Henry. Lord Henry embodies “a living and interrelating continuity” that exists as a semantic figure, making readers aware of a new style created by the fin de siècle modernist literary technique (“Structures of Feeling” 132). The use of “sentimental words” in conjunction with “don’t” represents his thoughts and actions; in so doing Wilde presents a new literary style that conveys to his readers a social experience through a process that further solidifies during the experience of reading the text of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. The perception of social change as a personal reading experience can be regarded as private, idiosyncratic, and not social sensing. Nevertheless, the structure of feeling contained in the “thought as felt and feeling as thought” dimension and the structural visualization of this reading experience as the fin de siècle vortex resembles an early modernist element in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (“Structures of Feeling” 132).

5.4 Reading the Fin de Siècle Vortex in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Merry-Go-Round*

The affective elements of consciousness of the two social values, Victorian ideology and nineteenth century individualism as early modernity, are interrelated. Their relationship can usually be recognized as entirely private, as if the emergent modern individualism was private, idiosyncratic and even

isolating in the 1890s before it became completely socially fixed in the twentieth century (“Structures of Feeling” 132). The individualism advocated by Lord Henry is early modernity as a social principle that became more fixed and generalized as the twentieth century came to pass. Expressions that affectively convey the collision of the two values of old Victorian social principles and the 1890s individualism afford researchers affective evidence of the emergent elements of forthcoming modernism. Wilde would find it difficult to describe the nascent structure of feeling through traditional realist literary techniques. The fin de siècle vortex as textual performativity denotes the methodology of new realism that conveys late nineteenth century structures of feeling that Wilde recognized to the readers of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Williams also considered the structure of feeling as a structure of experience. However, “as living processes are much more widely experienced” by the collective in a solution that is dissolved, this feeling is generally different from “other social semantic formations” (133). This sensing is distinguished from the feeling that is obviously and more immediately available because it is “not a completely solidified state” yet. Williams argued that the structure of feeling is very gradual and incorporates a certain formative progressive aspect: “a contemporary structure of feeling” is never an instantaneous, overt flux (134). Rather, it is a gradual, progressive, and formative empirical feeling, just like the fin de siècle textual performativity of the fin de siècle vortex, which readers can increasingly experience through their increasing fascination for Lord Henry’s rhetoric the more they read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

Thus, the social evidence of the artistic desire for modernism was already occurring at the end of the nineteenth century before the movement was firmly

named in the twentieth century. The embryonic phase of modernism expressed in the use of “don’t,” “sentimental words,” or “English” as symbolized by Lord Henry “at the very edge of semantic availability, has many of the characteristics of a pre-formation, until specific articulations—new semantic figures—are discovered in material practice” (“Structure of Feeling” 134). The collectively felt affect of this end-of-the-century artistic social phenomenon can be regarded as the fin de siècle structure of feeling and can be visualized as the fin de siècle vortex. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represented a new form of art that described a new mode of life. It thus denoted a new way of looking at new forms of modernities that would settle into many types of new twentieth century “isms” but would remain in a pre-formative state for a decade at the edge of the term “don’t” and “sentimental words.” Phenomena attached to the present but in the process of being fixed into a new prospective ethos are more evident to later generations. It can nevertheless be felt in a specific structure of the sensing of the connections between the old and the new through a feeling of the emphases, tensions, and pressures of their links. Ultimately, “don’t” and “sentimental words” articulate the recognition of phenomena such as homosexuality, freedom of expression, collapsing class-hierarchies, legalization of divorce, emergent modernism, epiphany, and stream of consciousness. The tensions of the fin de siècle structure of feeling would attain a concluding state and disappear once these new twentieth century modernities became definitively labeled at the semantic, institutional, or systematic levels.

The alternative ideology attached to semantic figures settled becomes established in later generations as a socially accepted artistic order and in due course achieves a particular title and position, in this case, twentieth century

modernism. The tensions between worldviews diminish at this juncture because all explanations have been offered and attributes are admitted and hence, “the intensity of experienced fear and shame [are] dispersed and generalized” (“Structures of Feeling” 134). The present-day readers of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represent a later generation that has already experienced twentieth century European modernism; thus, they may not feel as shocked as their nineteenth century Victorian counterparts.



Figure 26. Mark Gertler (English, 1891–1939). *Merry-Go-Round*, 1916.

Oil on canvas, Image: 74.5 × 56.0 in. (189.2 × 142.2 cm). Photograph

© Tate Britain, London.

This study presents Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a novel that represents the late Victorian age but simultaneously evinces the characteristics of an early modernist work. This fin de siècle modernity manifests in readers of the novel as a kind of textual sensing of Wilde's artistic techniques and the experience of a literary phenomenon that generally appears to later modernists; readers hence feel the novel's textual performativity. The history of twentieth century English literature is said to begin in 1916 with Mark Gertler's (1891–1939) painting titled *Merry-Go-Round* (Figure 26). What does the vortex clearly visible in this painting signify? Perhaps, this painting was adopted as a representative artwork announcing the beginning of twentieth century art because “its circularity describes one of the most popular topics in modernism, ‘the frustration of the deadlock on the Western Front [...] [and] the sense of psychological menace pervading civilian society’” (*Norton Anthology 8th* C18). Wilde, Williams, and Gertler share the idea that understanding that it is erroneous to regard social norms as a fixed form. Instead, they must be apprehended as ever-moving and ever-developing forms of human existence and must be grasped as they appear momentarily in the present. Our reality must be contained in the form of art that describes the contemporary here and now. The theme of reading “presentness” in the early modernist textual performativity of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can also be visualized in the vortex of Gertler's *Merry-Go-Round*. D.H. Lawrence wrote a letter to Gertler in 1916, praising his painting as possibly the best modern picture he had ever seen, containing the art of “the terrible and soul-tearing obscenity” in “a violent maelstrom of destruction” of wartime reality (<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/gertler-merry-go-round-t03846>). Do we sense the shared textual feeling of the twentieth

century modernist catchphrase “The Horror! The Horror!” of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Merry-Go-Round*?

The above question could be reframed in the following manner. Did the works of James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Joseph Conrad, T.S. Eliot, and others who also represent English modernism start suddenly as if beginning a new chapter of English literature at the turn of the twentieth century? If not, can *The Picture of Dorian Gray* be presented as a literary work displaying a progressive artform that can connect the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries?

Gertler’s *Merry-Go-Round* appears to have visualized the fin de siècle theme posited in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Viewers can intuit from this modern painting that a strong aspect of the modernist technique concerns attempts to communicate with the reader through textual feelings. The visual expression of modernity that causes this textual feeling can be understood as a kind of textual performativity, a modernist technique that conveys the theme of the text to the reader as a dynamic aspect. The reader then feels as if the text is **moving and becomes engulfed in swirling emotions**. The present study confirmed by combining digital and theoretical reading that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* conveys the theme of an end-of-the-century phenomenon through the feeling of early modernity labeled fin de siècle textual performativity. An element of the decision-making about the characteristics that define modern texts is based on expressions of modernity through which readers can see specific images implying specific themes as they read a text. The present study’s combinational reading included quantitative evidence as well as qualitative analysis in the interpretation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. This amalgamated scrutiny confirmed that the novel conveys a fin de siècle sentimentality to readers by constantly exposing

them to “sentimental words” such as horror, terror, horrible, terrible, and their related derivatives. This paper examines how terms commonly labeled “sentimental words,” for instance, horror or its derivatives, combine with the negative linguistic energy produced by “don’t” to maximize in readers the feeling of being engulfed in the textual performativity of the time and allows them to judge the “situation tragedy” of fin de siècle England (Berlant 6). This textual feeling denotes the new expression of the fin de siècle sense of the times and readers can sense the novel as an exemplar of the structure of feeling posited by Williams. Wilde’s artistic skill of visualizing the feeling of the times as textual performativity was further developed in the works of many modernists after two to three decades. Wilde’s new artistic attempts can be witnessed as becoming socially accepted and validated as a certain type of modernity in Gertler’s 1916 painting reproduced above. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* read through the combination of digital tools and theory foresees the modernist chant of “The Horror! The Horror!” defined by Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*. This horror expressed the modern tragedy of the twentieth century as a concentration of modernist textual energy.

6. Conclusion: Interpretation Through the Collaboration of Readers and Digital Tools

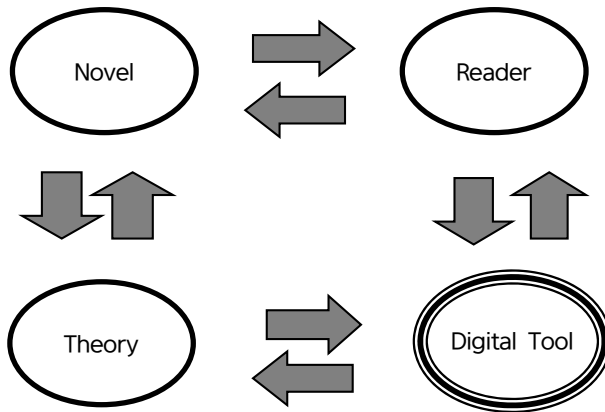
“English” is a very complicated term that primarily encompasses three representative semantic domains: a language, a person or people, and a culture. This study’s collocation tests revealed that one of my study words, “English” did

not display a high frequency in the novel in terms of signifying a language. Instead, it was generally used to refer to the English culture of a specific time. The context checks from both the concordance and file views revealed that contexts including the word “English” in the novel implied significantly negative connotations of fin de siècle English culture by radiating linguistic energy through “don’ts” and “sentimental words.” Therefore, the linguistic tests I conducted using Methods 1, 2, and 3 indicate the text’s sociopolitical formalism by representing the fin de siècle vortex as early modernist textual performativity. This outcome also causes us to encounter statistical speculation that allows us to deduce that the novel would probably be unacceptable for nineteenth century English conservatism and to appreciate why *The Picture of Dorian Gray* could be denounced as immoral by late Victorian society.

AntConc’s quantitative evidence is subjected to Voyant’s link and trend tests using this study’s methods 1, 2, and 3. This comparative action is collaboratively performed through human literacy and digital responses and generates an explanatory power that was first acknowledged by Itamar Even-Zohar and was reiterated by Moretti: “forms are the abstract of specific social relationships” (*Distant Reading* 58).

The more I read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the more I felt engulfed by a certain emotion. I was initially instigated by an academic desire to discover that elicited feeling, the feeling of a vortex. However, feeling is prejudiced as being extremely subjective. Therefore, I thought about the need to objectify this feeling. Williams suggested that my subjective sensing could result from the reading of social feelings about the end-of-the-century situation in England. His theoretical proposal developed into this study’s principal argument that the structure of my

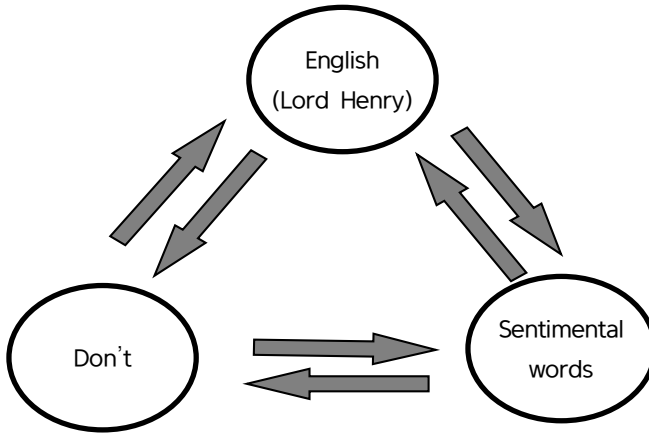
private feeling is connected to a social phenomenon. Moretti, the author of *Distant Reading*, notes that literary critics have been accustomed for centuries to answering, and not questioning, their relationships with texts (165) According to him, “distant reading” is akin to asking a machine a question and expecting a response. Thus, distant reading is a dialog between a machine and a literary critic. When I asked AntConc and Voyant about the identity of the vortex that was drawn in my mind when I read *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the two machines responded by asking me to more closely scrutinize the associations between “English,” “don’t,” and “sentimental words.” Therefore, the research processes of the present study can be visualized as follows.



Step1: Dialogical Relationship Between Text, Theory, Reader, and Digital Tool

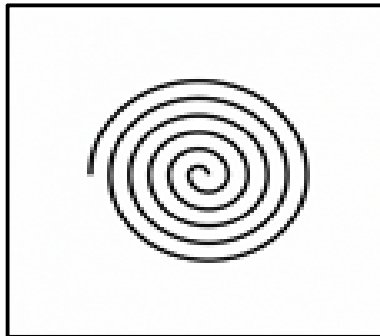
Figure 27.





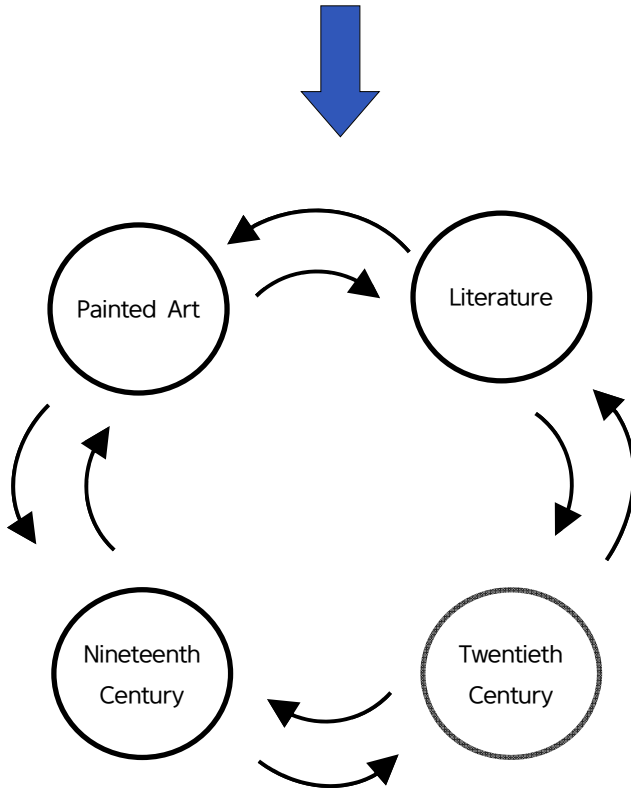
Step 2: Relationship Between “English (Lord Henry),” “Don’t,” and “Sentimental Words”

Figure 28.



Step 3: Textual Performativity that Drives Readers into the Powerful Emotions of a Vortex

Figure 29.



Step 4: Comparative Reading Between the Art and Literature of the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries

Figure 30.

In Step 1, I contemplated the dialogical relationship between the text, theory, reader, and digital tools (Figure 27), which led me to focus in Step 2 on the strong organicity of the three word groups: “English (Lord Henry),” “don’t,” and “sentimental words” in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Figure 28). A close reading of the organic relationships between the words brought into focus in Step 2

resulted in the suggestion of textual performativity that drives readers of this novella into the powerful emotions of the vortex, which denotes an artistic activity called *fin de siècle* modernity, which represents a kind of structure of feeling of the era as we can observe in Step 3 (Figure 29).

The attempt to disassemble the text into small units and reread the text based on the obtained data indicates that distant reading is not opposed to close reading; rather, the two reading methodologies are correlated with “and” rather than “or.” Therefore, quantitative and qualitative readings are not necessarily competing choices; they can serve as collaborative processes.

The associations between the three word groups cause the vortex to form in the minds of readers and suggest that textual performativity is a representative modernist literary technique. As Williams highlighted, such textual performativity is not limited to the dimension of literature; it also generally applies to painted art. Step 4 describes the final stage of this study and confirms the connections between art and literature, and between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, indicating a means of holistically elucidating culture through the theory of the structures of feeling (Figure 30). This organic continuity further consolidates Williams’s argument as a broader conception that can explain society at large. This result aligns with the advantage of distant reading, which Moretti describes as “all literary history becomes a long chain of related experiments” (54). Moretti’s concerns about the academic world’s habit of focusing only on close reading can be summarized in two points. First, how can we read all the texts in this world? Second, close reading, especially in U.S. academia, inevitably limits our research to a very small cannon. It is physically difficult “to look beyond the cannon” solely through close reading. In Moretti’s view, research based on

distant reading is far more advantageous because it offers the opportunity to study the characteristics of World Literature by comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences between every text. I agree actively with his assertion, and I propose in the present study that several digital tools can also be used in collaboration with literary theory for the reading of a single text. In the present instance, this peculiar collaboration produced a “condition of knowledge,” the textual performativity, and rendered the fin de siècle vortex more distinctly visible to readers (Moretti 48). In addition, the discovery of the vortex in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* allowed the finding that the connections between literature, art, and society exist in forms of gradual and ever-changing organic fluidity. The outcomes of this study validate Moretti’s assertion, “less is more,” and illuminate the reader’s role in expanding small units into bigger dimensions (requote from Moretti 49). Simultaneously, this study represented an exciting journey undertaken to confirm the truth of Williams’s belief that “a book is completed only when it is read” (*Keywords* xxxvi).

Notes

- 1) This article was conceived from my final essay called “Reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* as a Realist Fiction with AntConc,” which I wrote while taking a Yonsei graduate school seminar entitled *Methods in Corpus Linguistics* in 2019 (Email: Hwang, Junghyun. “Re: JungHyun Hwang’s Final Essay from Introduction to Methods in Corpus Linguistics.” Received by Kristopher Kyle, 26 August 2019). In this term paper, I argued that the methodology of identifying the genre of a text by attempting a combinational way of close reading and distant reading while investigating on the data obtained in the process of interpreting a “single novel.” This reader-oriented genre identification idea grew into my project called “Reading *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with AntConc,” and was presented to an AntConc workshop on 18 May 2022 hosted by Yonsei University Department of English Language and Literature.

http://yenglishbk21.yonsei.ac.kr/bbs/board.php?tbl=bbs32&mode=VIEW&num=59&category=&findType=&findWord=&sort1=&sort2=&it_id=&shop_flag=&mobile_flag=&language=&page=2

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국문초록

세기말 소용돌이: 디지털 기기로 『도리안 그레이의 초상』의 초기 모더니스트 텍스트 활동성 읽기

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현재까지 진행된 소설의 해석방식은 비평가가 물리적 읽기를 통해 주제를 파악하는 것이 지배적이다. 이 논문은 이러한 전통적 소설 읽기법을 탈피하여 이론과 디지털 기기의 협업이 독자의 문학 읽기에 새로운 지평을 열수있는 가능성을 논하기 위해 오스카 와일드의 『도리안 그레이의 초상』을 그 예시로 제시한다. 이러한 목표성에 도달하는 첫번째 과정으로 본 논문은 레이먼드 윌리엄스의 “감정의 구조”가 『도리안 그레이의 초상』에 적용될 수 있음을 논한다. 소설을 이론과 디지털기기의 복합적 협업으로 분석할 때, 독자는 소설에서 특정 주제를 불러일으키는 단어군들에 대한 인식을 얻게 되고, 이 특정 단어군들은 『도리안 그레이의 초상』을 초기 모더니스트 텍스트로 규명하는 단서가 된다. 초기 모더니스트 텍스트의 성격이라는 것은 이 논문이 ‘세기말 소용돌이’라 명명한 텍스트의 활동성으로 특정 그룹의 단어군들의 반복성이 독자의 마음속에 일으키는 사회적 감정과 경험이다. 특히, 논문은 결론에서 영국 화가 마크 거틀리의 1916년 작품 「회전목마」에 나타난 소용돌이의 이미지와 『도리안 그레이의 초상』을 비교 분석하며, 20세기 초반에 예술의 전반에서 본격적으로 나타나기 시작하는 소용돌이주의(Vorticism)의 가능성을 세기말 영소설 『도리안 그레이의 초상』이 이미 잉태하고 있었음에 대해 논한다. 이 논문의 가장 중요한 목표는 독자의 주관적 느낌을 디지털기기를 통해 데이터를 시각화하는 과정에서 성취되는 주관성의

객관성을 증명하는 것이다. 소설 읽기에 있어 독자, 이론, 텍스트, 디지털기기와의 면밀한 ‘유기적’ 협업은 기존의 비평에서 발견하기 힘들었던 새로운 차원의 해석을 가능하게한다.

주제어: 『도리안 그레이의 초상』, 반복적 어휘, 감정의 구조, 비교적 읽기, 디지털 반응, 세기말 소용돌이

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