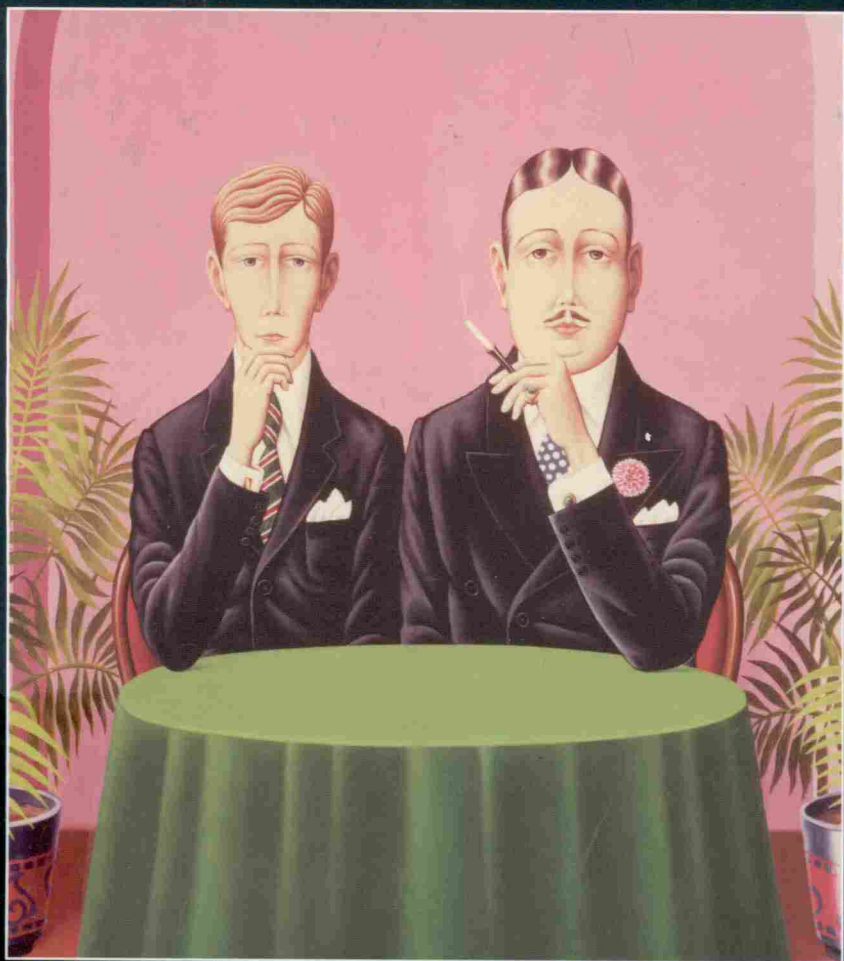


WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

De Profundis
The Ballad of Reading Gaol
& Other Writings
OSCAR WILDE



DE PROFUNDIS
THE BALLAD
OF READING GAOL

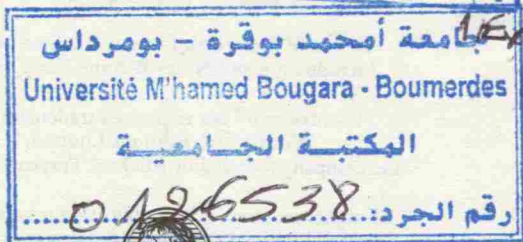
and other writings

Oscar Wilde

Notes and Introduction by

ANNE VARTY

Royal Holloway



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WORDSWORTH CLASSICS

De Profundis

The Ballad of Reading Gaol & Other Writings

OSCAR WILDE

With an Introduction and Notes by Anne Varty, Royal Holloway, University of London

De Profundis is Oscar Wilde's eloquent and bitter reproach from prison to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas ('Bosie'). In an extended letter Wilde accuses Lord Alfred of selfishness, shallowness, parasitism, greed, extravagance, tantrums, pettiness and neglect. He contrasts this behaviour towards him with the selfless devotion of his close friend, Robert Ross ('Robbie') who became Wilde's literary executor, gave the work its title (from the opening of Psalm 130) and who published a shortened version of it in 1905.

The Ballad of Reading Gaol is a deeply moving and characteristically generous poem on the horrors of prison life. It was published anonymously in 1898, signed only 'C.3.3.' Wilde's cell number in Reading Gaol. Wilde himself, released from his two-year prison sentence in 1897, was at the time living in France on the charity of friends and under the pseudonym Sebastian Melmoth.

This collection also includes the essay *The Soul of Man under Socialism*, Wilde's most outspoken defence of anarchy, and two of his Platonic dialogues, *The Decay of Lying* and *The Critic as Artist* in which he puts forward his provocatively witty ideas about art and the social role of the artist.

COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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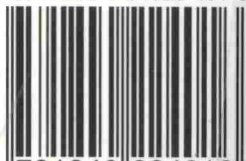
Cover Illustration *Oscar and Bosie* (oil on canvas)

By Fred Aris (b.1934, Contemporary Artist)

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