



## Blue without My Green: A Corpus Analysis on Colours of Grief and Emotive Expressions of Amy Winehouse's Compositions

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**Abstract**

*Singers and songwriters use their music as a platform for communication, using lyrics to express intimate sentiments - often caused by the pressures of the music industry as well as personal matters such as mental health. In this study, we analysed Amy Winehouse's songs, exploring the explicit and subliminal affective messages using linguistic techniques i.e., metaphors and colour symbolism. Grounded on corpus analysis and stages of grief theory, we looked at linguistic patterns and intensity of word choice related to Amy's choices of colours and emotive expressions. The findings show that sadness was the most prevalent emotion in her lyrics and its correlation to her mental health issues; the transition of positive sentiments developing into negative emotions was also evident in the data. Her complex relationships and experiences were also infused into her deliberate self-portrayal of catalytic mental deterioration, self-destruction, and torment. This study offers new insights into corpus analysis research on psycholinguistics and mental health in pop culture.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

*"But I'm not like, some messed up person. There are a lot of people that suffer from depression that doesn't have an outlet. They can't pick up a guitar for an hour and feel better"*

(Amy, NME News Desk, 2015).

These words came from the esteemed artist herself, Amy Winehouse, who was known to be suffering from mental health issues that were catalysed from the beginning of her career (Salahi, 2011; Hearsum, 2012; Hawkins, 2021). The language in this statement describes her sheer low self-esteem and psychological problems (Barton, 2011; Hoque, 2018). While Amy often put on a façade, concealing her mental health concerns, they were made apparent when she turned to alcohol and drugs, which led to her untimely death. In this study, we analysed how Amy Winehouse used metaphors and colours to describe her feelings using historiography (cf Napier, 2020) of her life and corpus discourse analysis of the song lyrics grounded on the stages and colours of grief framework. Although the research topic is outside the conventional socio-political scope, Fairclough's approach to critical theory (2001) provided this study a model to follow (cf. Poole, 2010). Additionally, Hunt and Brookes' (2020) work on critical

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discourse analysis in examining the psychology of linguistics as it is communicated by people with mental illnesses (see also Yeh & Trang, 2022). A few studies examined whether mental health sufferers are rejecting support (White, 2023; Staudt, 2008), as is frequently believed, or whether they are pleading for salvation, as is further demonstrated by Kübler's 5 stages of grief (Kübler-Ross & Kessler, 2005). Although some publications were discovered, there is little research addressing how Winehouse's mental health is portrayed in her songs using corpus analysis. This study may serve as a springboard for further research into the song lyrics of living artists who are known to be suffering from mental health issues.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the theoretical underpinnings reflecting scholars' approach to emotion within linguistics will be outlined.

Hancock and Dunham's 2001 study suggests that communicators, often those suffering from mental illness, use new mediums to escape anxieties caused by face-to-face communication. However, there may be a polarisation between recognition and denial in the language used by victims of mental illness (Yeo, 2021; Grinker, 2021). Lexis can also provide information about social ties and mental emotions (Hamilton & Chou, 2014), for example, one can infer from the song lyrics and a singer's *communication* style insights into one's behaviour and feelings of lack of belonging (Siroka, 2013). Soliz and Giles (2010) state that language is a fundamental method of communication, allowing artists to express their emotions for the audience and the media to both empathise and sympathise with them. Emotional expressions are communicated through figurative language and colour symbolism, including mental deterioration, depression, self-destruction, and torment (Philip, 2011, Knowles & Moon, 2004).

This study is influenced by Kübler-Ross and Kessler's (2005) framing of the 5 stages of grief which include *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance* (see Figure 1). Kübler-Ross (2005) maintains that the 5 emotions are not linear, and that grief may be experienced in different stages. Grief is a strong emotional reaction caused by death, loss, and changes in circumstances. He suggests that denial helps grievers cope with loss by dissociating themselves from reality. *Anger* is an essential stage that may feel endless and uncontrollable, grievers often experience intense anger, which is a reflection of their love and concern towards a situation or person. The more anger they feel, the more they can heal (Ellis, 2019). *Bargaining* is a stage of grief where the griever seeks a different outcome despite the change or devastation, reflecting their inner thoughts and anxieties. Following *bargaining* comes *depression* which Kubler-Ross (2005) highlights as a significant element of the grief stage, which is difficult to overcome, as it encourages the griever to explore their own emotions and questions the significance of life. It can also be a catalyst for emotional deterioration. *Acceptance* is the final stage of grief, when the griever has acknowledged the new reality. Grief can be experienced multiple times due to the griever not being aware of their sentiments and unable to articulate their feelings and communicate with others (Ratcliffe, 2023). Kübler- Ross (2005) found that people are constantly trying to escape each stage of grief, possibly yearning to break free from their inner emotions.

Figure 1. Colour and 5 Stages of Grief



This research does not aim to confront whether Amy Winehouse was suicidal, there are references to cognitive knowledge and acceptance of fate due to the emotive expression in her lyrics, which could be viewed as forewarnings. Markowitz and Hancock's (2017) was also

used to validate this hypothesis; they explore how song lyrics reflect the distress of artists, so they use songwriting and singing as a form of creative outlet. The music they produced is also autobiographical, which suggests that they could reflect relevant pivotal periods in their life creating a memoir (Polaschek, 2018; Schulkind, Hennis, & Rubin, 1999).

**2.1. Corpus Analysis**

Semantic allusions and lexis are also essential for understanding the information communicated through language (Burnley, 1992; Lupyan & Lewis, 2019), emphasising how artists express themselves through social situations and social media (Pozzi et al, 2016). Beyond the semantic meaning of the words, corpus analysis (CA) sheds light on linguistic applications and users' pragmatic intentions. As a critical theory of language, corpus-based discourse analysis views language as a social practice (Weiss & Wodak, 2003; Janks, 1997). Social behaviour can be used to reproduce or challenge existing issues (Wodak, 2006). CDA proposes three correlated processes linked to unified domains of discourse: analysing a subject involves description, methods, and socio-contexts (Fairclough, 2001). Corpus-based CDA analyses a large number of texts stored in a database (Baker, 2006, 2010). Fairclough (2009) posits that CDA is transdisciplinary, combining multiple branches and theories of academic fields into one. Poole (2010) argues that Fairclough's CDA model can be used to analyse polarised views. He adds that categorization of CDA criteria can be used to address social issues such as addiction and mental health. This study therefore seeks to use this as a foundation for our investigation.

The linguistic model presented by Hunt and Brookes (2020) in their study "Corpus, Discourse, and Mental Health" serves as the framework for this research. They investigated the relationship between language and mental health issues and evaluated the specific language that those in mental distress use to express their emotions, whether consciously or unconsciously. Hunt and Brookes offer a compelling insight into how one's psyche can affect discourse. They examined the naturalness of language from the corpus, including linguistics and connotations of emotions, and first-person narratives of mental health patients. They suggest that language is an essential tool for conveying cognitive attitudes.

**3. METHODOLOGY**

To identify recurring patterns of language use, the researchers used a corpus-based approach (cf Baker, 2006, 2010). This strategy is pertinent to the study's objectives since linguistic analysis of the corpus will be used to assess the emotions that are being expressed in the songs following Hunt & Brookes (2020) framework. The initial step was to find an online archive of song lyrics. For this study, we used Genius.com (2022). Amy Winehouse's three albums, which span her career from 2003 to 2011 and include one posthumous album (Table 1), were chosen to be included in the collection of lyrics. It was crucial to make clear if the songs were original compositions by her or covers because this could affect how emotion is perceived. Based on our investigation, we discovered that Winehouse contributed to the majority of her songs. The researchers analysed 40 songs from the artist's 3 albums over her 8-year career using a corpus analysis program, Voyant tools (Sinclair & Rockwell, 2022).

*Frank* (Released in 2003)

*Back to Black* (Released in 2006)

*Lioness: Hidden Treasures* (Released 2011)

Table 1. Posthumous album by Amy Winehouse (*Lioness: Hidden Treasures* 2011)

	<b>Song Name</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>1</b>	Our Day Will Come	Fate, Hope, Destiny
<b>2</b>	Between The Cheats	Infidelity, Heartbreak, Love
<b>3</b>	Tears Dry	Positivity, Boundaries, Acceptance Vs <u>Rejection</u>
<b>4</b>	Will You Still Love Me Tomorrow?	Broken Hearts, Longing For Love

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5	Like Smoke	Addiction, Relationships, Love Vs Hate
6	Valerie	Reflection, Longing For Love,
7	Girl From Ipanema	Sadness, Love
8	Half Time	Joy Of Music, Passion, Comfort
9	Wake Up Alone	Infatuation, Obsession, Addiction, Loneliness
10	Best Friends, right?	Friendship, Tension, Boundaries
11	Body And Soul	Loneliness, consumed by depression
12	A Song for You	Suffering, love

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Psychobiographical background

Amy Jade Winehouse was a singer-songwriter renowned for her poignant songs and unique, soulful voice. Her career took off when she was signed by Island Records in 2002, whose parent label is Universal Music Group (Biography, 2017). She released her first album *Frank* in 2003, which was nominated for two BRIT Awards in 2004 for British Solo Artist and British Urban Act. Her songs were filled with emotion, capturing the hearts of her fans. Later that year, she was nominated for the Mercury Music Prize (Streader, 2019). Winehouse's most common themes are *heartbreak, immaturity, love, attraction, and infidelity* (Appendix 1).

Winehouse was self-critical, from the beginning of her career she endured anxiety, eating disorders, and a plethora of other emotions which can be observed in Appendix 2. Her success led to a sinister cycle of mental and physical health decline, which is evident in her second album *Back to Black*, released in 2006. She married Blake Civil-Fielder in 2007, but their relationship was on-and-off due to his infidelity and incarceration. Her relationship with Blake was toxic and co-dependent, inspiring many of her songs. Heartbreak caused her mental health to progressively decline, which is also evident in her work (Smooth Radio 2019). Table 2 shows a shift in themes from romantic relationships to more intense sentiments such as *addiction, heartbreak, relationships, anger, and depression*, reflecting the impact of her relationship with her ex-husband. Winehouse's transparency about her mental illness allowed her music to be raw, honest and original, fueling her songwriting (NME News Desk, 2015). Her album earned her three Grammys, including Best New Artist and Song of the Year, due to songs such as 'Rehab' and 'Tears Dry on Their Own' (Agbai, 2020).

Table 2: Musical Themes

<b><i>Musical Themes</i></b>		
<i>Freedom</i>	<i>Goodbyes</i>	<i>Breakup</i>
<i>Affection/ Fondness</i>	<i>Longing</i>	<i>Feeling Blue</i>
<i>Girls Night Out</i>	<i>Maverick</i>	<i>Heartache</i>
<i>Sex</i>	<i>Late night</i>	<i>Loss and Grief</i>
<i>Cool and Cocky</i>	<i>Drinking</i>	<i>Pain</i>
<i>Biographical</i>	<i>Drugs</i>	<i>Sorrow</i>

Winehouse's career was short-lived, as she succumbed to addiction. Her posthumous album contains songs written by her and some produced by fellow artists. The songs have strong undertones of her inner demons (Petridis 2011), as seen in Table 1. Such themes include *love, addiction, boundaries, loneliness and longing*. Her depression and desperation is reflected in her themes, creating a sense of empathy.

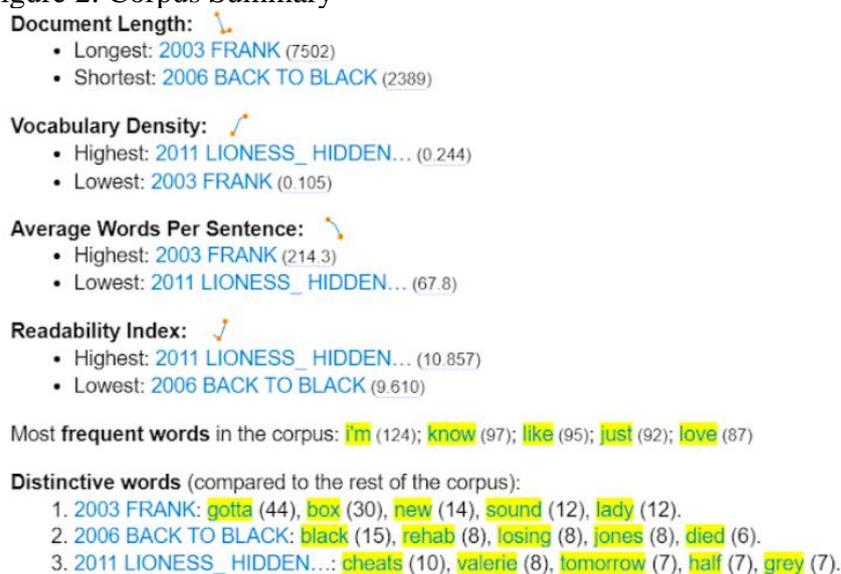
It is worth noting a striking correlation between the narrative of Amy Winehouse's songs and the story of her precarious lifestyle. Her personality became dissonant as her narcotics addiction, self-criticism, and mental degradation worsened (Brooks, 2010). In Tables 2 and 3, the musical themes associated with Winehouse's songs convey a mixture of negative, positive, and neutral tones. The more positive themes can be observed in the left column starting with *freedom*, *affection* and *fondness*. They gradually intensify as the list carries on, ultimately ending in *pain* and *sorrow*. Additionally, in Table 2, it can be inferred that there is roughly the same amount of negative and positive moods (the positive starting from confident and ending in rhapsodic as well as the negative starting with rebellious and ending in restrained). In Table 3, one can also infer that Winehouse's positive artistic moods often start as positive emotions but are ultimately overridden by the negative i.e., warmth and passion leading to yearning.

Table 3: Artistic Moods

Artistic Moods			
Confident	Laid-back/mellow	Nostalgic	Wry
Warm	Sensual	Poignant	Hedonistic
Playful	Soothing	Provocative	Brooding
Romantic	Stylish	brassy	Yearning
Passionate	Reassuring/consoling	Melodic	Bittersweet
Carefree	Intimate	Introspective	Wistful
Sexy	Seductive	Melancholy	Nocturnal
Cosmopolitan	Rhapsodic	Dramatic	Sad
Sophisticated	Rebellious	Tender	Intense
Witty	Reflective	Strong	Restrained
Smooth	Confessional	Sentimental	

The corpus has a total of 12,874 words (Figure 2). *I'm*, *know*, *like*, *just*, *love* are the most frequently used words.

Figure 2: Corpus Summary



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The longest document is the artist's first album that was released in 2003, *Frank*, which contains 7502 words; however, it is not a prominent album. In this album, she expresses emotions such as heartbreak and lust. The favoured album *Back to Black* is the document that contains the shortest number of words, however, the weight of the emotion conveyed in the lyrics is distinct, containing renowned songs including *Rehab*, *Valerie*, and *Back to Black* which all convey themes of anguish, and addiction (to both people and narcotics). The vocabulary density and average words per sentence are highest in the first two albums, whereas the lowest density was rather varied between all free albums. The emotional turmoil that Winehouse faced is evident in the second album, *Back to Black* which was released in 2006. The distinctive words are *black*, *rehab*, *losing*, *Jones*, and *died* (Figure 2). These express the feeling of inner darkness and suffering, which can be corroborated by events in her life such as heartbreak and addiction. Two of the frequent verbs listed above suggest that Winehouse was the driver of her downfall, this is signified through the linguistic techniques; the repetition of the active verb *losing* creates a strong tone as it foreshadows Winehouse's downfall, hinting that she manifested her fate. Additionally, the use of the intransitive verb *died* also signifies that she had forced this fate upon herself, Winehouse did not use passive/transitive verbs as frequently in her songs which therefore indicates that as she was in control, she desperately needed intervention from someone. Colour symbolism surrounding the word black was also observed and discussed below. In the posthumous album, one can observe the emotional turmoil that Winehouse endured. The word 'cheats' symbolises betrayal, and 'tomorrow' signifies hope as it refers to the future rather than pondering over the past, however, the nouns 'half' and 'grey' set the tone of depression, as it suggests a lack of completeness, particularly Winehouse being entrapped in a state of limbo. Although we cannot be certain about who the subject is/was, it can be inferred that 'Valerie' references the one who got away, symbolising heartbreak and yearning for support, which resonated with Winehouse.

The sub-corpus illustrates that the longest document was the song *Like Smoke* from the posthumous album *Lioness: Hidden Treasures* which consists of 548 words. The shortest document within the sub-corpus was the *Outro* which is a monologue that contains 47 words. Compared to the songs within the album, this text was not as articulate. The sub-corpus contains 40 documents, 9,016 tokens, and 1,393 unique word forms.

Subsequently, it is interesting to observe the trends in which the usage of the words changes. A line graph indicating the distribution of a word's occurrence across a corpus or document is displayed by the trends tool (Figure 3). Each series in the graph is coloured according to the word it represents, and a legend at the top of the graph shows which words are related to which colours. One can infer that Winehouse's emotional turmoil was prevalent during the middle of her career as the terms 'I'm', 'know' and 'just' were at their highest in the 2006 album and they decreased in Winehouse's posthumous album which suggests that while she is less self-critical, she is also less aware which is (indicated by know), indicating that she is losing herself to *love* or the yearning for *love*. The word *love* increases with time however the connotations of the words become increasingly desperate. It also indicates that Winehouse becomes increasingly desperate for *love* as her mental state deteriorates. While the *I'm* (which is the most frequent word in *Back to Black*) suggests a subliminal tone, naturally highlighting her desperation through the intentional use of the term *just* and the connotations of low self-image.

Figure 3: Trends



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with *grown*, *just*, *you're*, and *day*. Scholars such as Hunt and Brookes (2020) have emphasised that the first-person narrative is an indicator of suffering, thus revealing how both conscious and subconscious linguistic choices reflect Winehouse's mental deterioration, as she was constantly reflecting on herself. These words convey a feeling of iniquitousness, lack of hope, self-reflection, and a lack of confidence which is hinted at by the repeated self-reflection. The word 'know' is associated with *got*, *meet*, *come*, and *you're*. The feelings conveyed by these terms evoke a sense of emotional stability in conjunction with the recognition of her suffering. This term becomes less frequent in the second album and even less in the last, insinuating that towards the end of her life, Winehouse became disassociated. Another term is *like* which is connected with *say*, *can't*, *love*, *she's*, and *mind*. Within the songs, *like* occurs both informally, as a conjunction, as a preposition, as well as an adverb. The contexts reflect themes such as reminiscence, reflection, and heartbreak. Finally, the term *love* can be linked to *got*, *like*, and *know*.

Figure 5: Termsberry

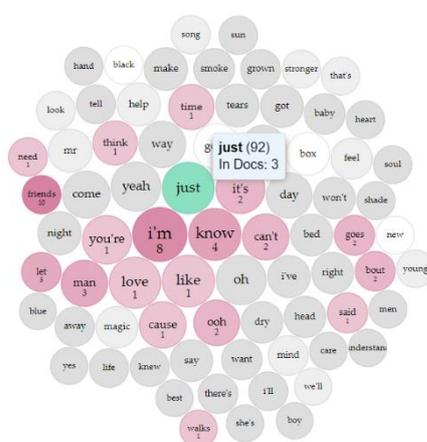
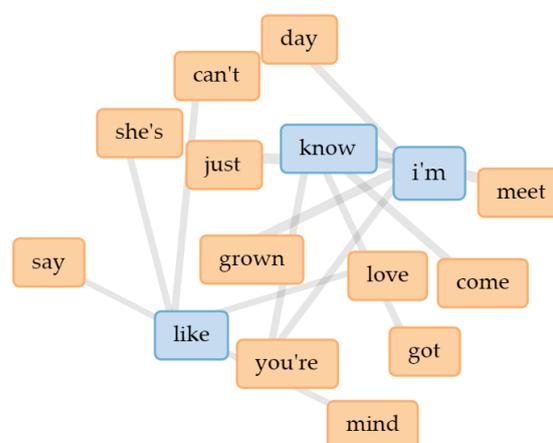


Figure 6: Links Graph (Collocates)



The context feature allows one to gain a greater understanding of the associations of words within sentences. The context tool was useful when evaluating how emotions were conveyed. The *@negative* and *@positive* keywords allow the user to appraise how emotion is conveyed through specific linguistic choices. The overall outcome and analysis were interesting as the data differed from the results we were expecting. The positive terms obtained on the automated database were more frequent than the negative terms. From the data below it can be observed that the human eye would identify several positive terms as negative; this includes the repetition of the phrase 'never safe', 'can't win' and 'I'm no good' which both confirm Winehouse's cognitive knowledge and reflects the self-critical narrative thus reflecting her low self-esteem and anguish, which is related to Siroka's (2013) notion that songs may reveal an artist's character and emotions. The term 'never' occurs frequently which reflects a lack of hope. In the corpus, positive terms increase with each album released (the first containing 5 terms, followed by the second containing 7 terms, and the last album containing 11 positive terms). The majority of the positive terms are associated with emotions that are caused by her loved ones, suggesting that relies on exterior factors to make her feel emotionally positive, rather than achieving this herself. There are however references to Winehouse's mental state improving which can be observed as in the figure above, the only word linked to 'grown' is 'I'm' therefore indicating progress. Furthermore, there is an apparent sense of temporary positivity in her lyrics which can be conveyed through the word 'fun'. Having said this, the verb 'hope' is constant which implies that she is seeking a different reality thus, emphasising her struggles, it is frequent in the last album which elucidates that by this time, Winehouse had not given up, however she was at her lowest mental-state. In the first two albums, the adjectives

‘good’ and ‘safe’ appear more than in the latter albums which suggests that her mental health deteriorated, however, ‘hope’ appears in the posthumous album. Although the word ‘good’ has positive connotations, the positive tone is not intense, as the word is not descriptive and specific; the lack of the use of the adjective ‘safe’ again warns us of her troubled life. Interestingly, 5 out of the 10 times ‘good’ was used, it is used in a negative manner rather than what Voyant discovered. Winehouse explores the idea of 'I'm no good', which has negative connotations, juxtaposed with Voyant's analysis. Additionally, the word ‘good’ cannot be used to describe emotions as it does not relate to one’s emotional or physical well-being but morality which thus implies that Winehouse is critical of herself, which could pose as a warning to Winehouse’s audience through her exposed self-criticism and inability to recognise her positive attributes as she is constantly mentioning her incompetence and worthlessness. However, when this phrase is misused, as Winehouse may have been, it may imply suffering. This is further emphasised by the phrase "I cheated myself," which, despite Winehouse acknowledging the repercussions of her actions, shows that she is still in a depressive condition and unable to get past her self-betrayal. Winehouse uses the phrase "you make me feel so good" to demonstrate how dependent she is on other people. This contrasts with her idolised portrayal of her ex-husband, whom she holds in high regard, although her opinion on him has evolved over time (Leslie, 2011). Through subliminal messages in her songwriting, such as "it's never safe," Winehouse was also attempting to appeal for salvation. This supports Markowitz and Hancock's (2007) contention that artists use the arts as a platform to express emotion by alluding to the dangers they have exposed themselves to.

Moreover, there were much fewer negative terms compared to positive ones. All of the negative terms detected derived from Winehouse’s last album, thus contending that the negative emotions were not explicitly conveyed in the first two. Negative terms from Winehouse's last album evoked a feeling of yearning and desolation, as indicated by the lyrics 'my heart is sad and lonely for you' (Figure 7). Winehouse's sentence 'you want me to suffer' evokes a feeling of egotism and victimisation, suggesting she blames her ex-husband or the music industry for her psychological anguish (cf. Markowitz and Hancock, 2007). The phrases she chooses to criticise herself are not particularly poignant, but the general sense of self-victimisation shows how she was engulfed by her ego.

Figure 7: Context- Negative Terms

Document	Left ↑	Term	Right
3) 2011 ...	you got And take a	bad	beat to ooh to boat
3) 2011 ...	AND SOUL My heart is	sad	and lonely For you I
3) 2011 ...	of songs, I've made some	bad	rhyme I've acted out my
3) 2011 ...	blame You want me to	suffer	just cause you were born

Winehouse was aware of the attention she attracted through her self-portraiture and suffering (Rytmeister, 2016), highlighted by her frequent references to narcotics, which is the central trigger of her downfall. The bleak connotations of her song lyrics in Back to Black emphasise how she rejected any rumours of mental deterioration while still acknowledging that she was depressed. As one can observe below, Winehouse does not use figurative language to express her emotions, the use of the simple adjectives ‘sad’ and ‘bad’ which are mentioned twice infers that Winehouse was suffering so much towards the end of her life that she had lost inspiration for her art, additionally, the transparency of these adjectives allows the audience to infer how desperate Winehouse was for salvation.

The use of the present tense, as well as first-person narrative, suggests that Winehouse is defying the constraints of the past ‘you want me to suffer’, the tone of ‘you’ here suggesting defiance and new-found empowerment as it contrasts with the frequent use of self-blaming through the use of the first person ‘I’ which reflects diffidence; therefore propositioning that Winehouse’s has been enlightened, and it also implies that she has seen what was coming and

realised how her relationship with Blake Fielder-Civil was unhealthy. This may also be a reference to her past self, thus the use of the second person is personifying her subconscious thoughts. The use of the second person 'you want me to be sad' which can be observed in Figure 9 and thus applied a less veiled tone to her final album as it is implied that she does not want to feel the same way, therefore whether she is referring to Fielder-civil or her past self here, it is quite cathartic as the use of othering by using 'you' suggests that Winehouse recognises that her emotions are not an intrinsic part of her, is aiming to escape this state of suffering, which is similar to what Hancock and Dunham's (2001) suppositions about artists finding ways to express and escape their anxieties.

#### 4.2.Emotive Expression Through Colour

Winehouse uses symbolism in her songs, a poignant theme is colour psychology. The colour to represent the first stage of grief is red which only appears in the first album. In this context, one may infer that Winehouse is simply foreshadowing the start of her addiction to narcotics as her reference to the cigarettes 'you downstairs with a Marlboro red' (the brand name being Marlboro red) hints at her reliance on substances from an early stage and highly influenced by others, as the use of the second person 'you' also signifies that she is shifting the blame on the other, and she is frustrated by the tempter. The emotional connotations of red are anxiety, frustration and irritation which are all sub-emotions of the first stage of grief- *anger*. However, rather than explicitly expressing *anger*, Winehouse is alluding to it through the use of distressing by smoking, as it is often suggested that smoking relieves anger. Additionally, the exclamation 'uh-huh' here evokes a sarcastic tone, which again alludes to the anger Winehouse experienced through her suffering. Red is used subtly here, however, the context of the word exemplifies this emotion, the minimal use of it also implies that Winehouse herself was not an angry person and that it was the other stages of grief that ultimately led to her demise.

*Black* can suggest ideas such as control or force as well as death which is since the shade *black* is the absence of colour, Winehouse is using *black* as a metaphor for the abyss of her mental illness and subconsciousness which is caused by the loss of a relationship. These themes are prevalent in her song Back to Black which alludes to when one ends a relationship, and they must return to what is comfortable for them which in Amy's circumstance refers to drinking and troublesome times in which she was increasingly confused and fearful, thus it is metaphorical for Winehouse's state of *denial*. Although Winehouse is being transparent, it could be suggested that she is acknowledging her troubled state of *denial* when she refused help from loved ones. *Black* also symbolises the lack of consciousness and ambiguity, though the sense of cognitive knowledge purports that she is warning Fielder-Civil of the consequences as she has not yet returned to *black*. The sentences that stand out from the context are 'yes, I've been *black* but when I come back, you'll *know*' and 'I could go back to *black*'. The sense of ambiguity elucidates that Amy is fearful of what is to come, though it is a place of familiarity, thus alluding back to *denial* as at her darkest time, Winehouse was completely consumed by her psyche and arguably stripped herself of her consciousness, showed signs of avoidance, elation, and shock. Winehouse may be using *black* as a metaphor, a colloquial term for narcotics, specifically heroin. This song derives from her second album which shares the same name and was released during the period in which the artist's mental health was at its worst. Additionally, Winehouse uses the word *black* 7 times consecutively in one sentence; 'and I go back to *Black Black Black Black Black Black Black*' (Figure 8). The use of first-person 'I' signifies that Winehouse is in control of her actions, while also suggesting that she is so excruciatingly distraught by this change, that she is highly egotistical and self-destructive. The heaviness of this word is apparent due to the connotations of the colour, however by repeating this word multiple times, Winehouse's use of the phrase 'you go back to her and I go back to *black*' suggests that Blake-Fielder Civil is ultimately to blame for her downfall. This stage of

grief, specifically the loss of her husband, alludes to Winehouse's disbelief that she can live without her husband, as she is posing him as responsible for her demise. Ultimately, colour symbolism is highly foreboding, particularly in Winehouse's song *Back to Black*, which is a dark, grief-stricken portrayal of the emotions caused by her ex-husband at that time using the term *black* as a metaphor for the depths of sadness, which led to her delusions and thus a state of denial. *Black* also symbolises nothingness/emptiness thus Winehouse's mention of *black* signifies that her life has nothing left without her husband. Regardless of whether she is alluding to spiralling mental health or narcotics, Winehouse is nevertheless warning and pleading with her ex-husband as she believes that only he could rescue her.

Figure 8: Context of the term *Black*

Document	Left	Term	Right
2) 2006 BAC...	no, no Yes I've been	black	but when I come back
2) 2006 BAC...	no, no Yes I've been	black	but when I come back
2) 2006 BAC...	no, no Yes I've been	black	but when I come back
2) 2006 BAC...	no, no Yes I've been	black	but when I come back
2) 2006 BAC...	you get yours BACK TO	black	He left no time to
2) 2006 BAC...	stacked I'll go back to	black	We only said goodbye with
2) 2006 BAC...	And I go back to	black	Black Black Black Black Black
2) 2006 BAC...	I go back to Black	black	Black Black Black Black Black
2) 2006 BAC...	go back to Black Black	black	Black Black Black Black I
2) 2006 BAC...	back to Black Black Black	black	Black Black Black I go
2) 2006 BAC...	to Black Black Black Black	black	Black Black I go back
2) 2006 BAC...	Black Black Black Black Black	black	Black I go back to
2) 2006 BAC...	Black Black Black Black Black	black	I go back to I
2) 2006 BAC...	And I go back to	black	HE CAN ONLY HOLD HER
2) 2006 BAC...	from Sammy, you're my best	black	Jew But I could swear

Additionally, the term *grey* appears much less than *black* however the emotive immensity is still prevalent. Similar to *black*, *grey* is a shade that is absent of colour, along with absence there is a lack of emotion, hollowness, indecision, loss, and *depression*. One can allude that Winehouse was seeking to warn her audience and the music industry of these emotions as she felt hopeless. This song refers to a toxic relationship where the love is not reciprocated, indicating that she regrets the relationship which is a shift in tone to the song *Back to Black*. Winehouse points to her ex-husband by saying 'in your cool *grey*' which can be observed in Figure 9. The context of the colour *grey*, which creates an accusatory tone signifies that Winehouse is at a stage so deep within her grieving that she cannot escape as she recognises how much she has progressed 'I'm grown and in your *grey*, in this cool shade...', while acknowledging the extent to which she is entrapped by the figurative spell that she is in (this again referencing her narcotics addiction and infatuation with her husband). Therefore the term *grey* references how Winehouse is constrained to her lover whom she still loves, implying that she is stuck in limbo. Additionally, the use of the 1<sup>st</sup> person I'm implies that Winehouse's mental health is suffering as it reflects her excessive overthinking and toxic ego and inability to get out of her mind. Interestingly, a key characteristic of depression is loneliness which is also apparent in the lyrics when observing the use of the colour *grey*, particularly when Winehouse sings 'My tears dry on their own, in your *grey*, in this cool shade' as she feels completely isolated from the world and is desperately in need of salvation. Depression may feel like the most intense stage, it can appear in waves over long periods, however, in Figure 8, one can observe that it is only featured in the last album. As mentioned above, Soliz and Giles (2010) signify the significance of language as a tool of communication which is evident through her powerful lyrics which were intended to communicate Winehouse's feelings as the

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emotion stands out without a doubt here. It may be inferred that this is one of the emotional stages Winehouse had not overcome.

Figure 9: Context of the term *Grey*

Document	Left	Term	Right
36) 3. Li...	I'm grown And in your	grey	In this cool shade My
36) 3. Li...	I'm grown And in your	grey	In this cool shade My
36) 3. Li...	I'm grown And in your	grey	In this cool shade My
36) 3. Li...	I'm grown Baby, in your	grey	In this cool shade My
36) 3. Li...	their own) Yeah, leave your	grey	to shade My tears dry
36) 3. Li...	on their own) In your	grey	In this cool shade My
36) 3. Li...	on their own) In your	grey	In this cool shade My

Consequently, Winehouse does not mention the shade *white* as a metaphor for her emotion; nevertheless, this absence is significant as *white* can allude to newness, implying that this is absent from Winehouse's life, thus the lack of this exhorts that she is therefore trapped in a cycle of her destructive habits, which can be corroborated by the song *Back to Black*. Winehouse articulates her emotions in her songs; it is fascinating how these emotions alter as different events in her life unfold. This absence, therefore, exemplifies the emotional weight of the other colours.

Winehouse frequently uses metaphors and colour personification to express her loneliness; one song in particular makes powerful use of the blue colour that symbolises her suffering. In *Mr Magic*, one could infer that Winehouse is in her *bargaining* stage (the 3rd stage of the 5 stages of grief) as it is suggested that she is struggling to find meaning from within herself; she is reaching out to others, although at this time she was not acquainted with Blake-Fielder Civil. However, this sense of *bargaining* intensified in 2006 as she was almost pleading with her ex-husband, suggesting that she was codependent on him. When one experiences bargaining, it is common to find oneself pondering over the events of the past, wishing things can change to be like they once were. Consequently, Winehouse's 'bathing in my blue light' suggests that she is bargaining with Blake Fielder-Civil as there is a filter placed on the reality of her relationship with him, this blue light being what is causing her to perhaps reconcile with her husband. By using blue as a metaphor 'this blue shade' conjointly uses the informal adjectives 'blue without my green' and 'bathe under blue light' which all give the viewer the impression that Winehouse is desperate for salvation from others (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Context of the term *Blue*

1) 2003 ...	smoke Without you I'm misery	blue	without my green All the
1) 2003 ...	above you In the clear	blue	sky, how I worry bout
1) 2003 ...	Gone to find her big	blue	jay Starlight before she took
1) 2003 ...	smoke Without you I'm misery	blue	without my green All the
1) 2003 ...	above you In the clear	blue	sky, how I worry bout
1) 2003 ...	Gone to find her big	blue	jay Starlight before she took
2) 2006 ...	in your way In this	blue	shade My tears dry on
2) 2006 ...	in your way In this	blue	shade My tears dry on
2) 2006 ...	in your way In this	blue	shade My tears dry on
2) 2006 ...	And in your way My	blue	shade My tears dry on
2) 2006 ...	in me, we bathe under	blue	light He's fierce in my
3) 2011 ...	in me, we bathe under	blue	light His face in my
1) 2003 ...	while I sing out my	blues	I could be crying and
1) 2003 ...	while I sing out my	blues	I could be crying and

Following the idea posed by Hunt and Brookes (2020), similar to people who suffer from mental health, Winehouse recognises her suffering as a separate power to her characteristics, she later refers to it as ‘my blue’ thus hinting that she is trapped in this state of suffering. In addition to this, a sense of entrapment is exemplified through the use of the possessive ‘my’ in ‘my blue’ as well as ‘sing out my blues’, there is an explicit sense of sadness and suffering. Here one can also refer back to the concept that music is an escape mechanism as Winehouse is expressing her emotion through her music (Markowitz and Hancock). Not only does Winehouse openly express that her songs express her emotional state, thus seeming as an autobiography or diary, which should have stood out as a warning for her audience, but Winehouse may also have been foreshadowing her fate. ‘Blue light’ may also be referring to the light of police cars and ambulances, thus perhaps Winehouse is signifying that she is in extreme danger; thus, here the use of the lyrics ‘bathing in my blue light’ is highly emotive as it nods to Winehouse’s helplessness and forebodes her fate that was to come promptly. Winehouse uses an equal amount of second and first-person narratives and pronouns ‘I’m’, ‘My’ and ‘you’. Interestingly, ‘we’ which signifies cooperation is only used once ‘we bathe under blue light’. Therefore, the use of the verbs combined with the colour symbolism exemplifies the emotional distress that Winehouse is suffering. Ultimately, the use of the blue is an evident call out for help which was sadly overlooked.

Consequently, the narcotics that Winehouse references are known to make people feel at ease and secure. One can observe that as Amy’s mental health degenerates, her drug addiction intensifies which is displayed across the three albums. In the first album, it can be inferred that the absence of narcotics causes her to feel solitary. In the second album, this is heightened as she pleads for the ‘green man’ as she is tense which is emphasised in the context. In the last album, she depicts the drug as being liberating which is highlighted by the lyric ‘swimming in his green eyes. The use of the active verb ‘swimming’ indicates liberation due to smoking cannabis (Potter, 2009); it reflects her sense of playfulness as well as lack of stress, she is simply letting herself live in the moment and is allowing her body and mind to relax. Unlike some verbs Winehouse has used in her lyrics, this active verb indicates that she is still in control rather than being utterly consumed by the narcotic, therefore as she is in control of her thoughts and life, she too is free. As mentioned above, acceptance does not necessarily mean accepting a loss or overcoming grief, instead, it is more the recognition of one’s changed situation. There is a contrast between suffering and liberation in the song Mr Magic (Through the Smoke) in which Winehouse personifies drugs by discussing the enchanting effects of Mr Magic - or *green* - which is a vernacular term for cannabis (Nuessel, 2014). The combination of the colours blue and green delivers a bittersweet feeling with a sense of catharsis when Winehouse references the colour green as on the one hand, she states that it comforts her, though, on the other hand, this addiction is a cycle that intensifies. The repeated use of the colour green references Winehouse’s drug addiction, particularly as she calls upon the ‘green man who is she so heavily reliant on as ‘you got to call the green man’ and ‘make sure...’, the use of the active verb as well as imperative further highlight Winehouse's dependence. The narcotic enables her to not only relieve her inner emotions through musical expression as well as calming her down and allowing Winehouse to escape and focus on the present. The use of the noun ‘green man’ suggests that Winehouse idolises him as a god as he is portrayed as a figure who rescues her when she’s at her lowest moments. The dependence on narcotics and colour symbolism is emotive as it reflects Winehouse’s intense loneliness, particularly as Winehouse uses the colours as nouns. Additionally, Winehouse uses the figurative term ‘tighter than airport security to reflect her tense character when she lacks her ‘green’ which for Winehouse symbolises clarity, it is a calming colour and therefore may be reflective of Winehouse’s recognition, consciousness and thus *acceptance*, of her state of being, however not a newness as green symbolises a cycle. Since the colour green is cathartic (Clark & Costall,

2008), it might be assumed that Winehouse never embraced change but instead finds ways to reshape her reality.

Following the arguments proposed by Polaschek (2018) who highlights that artists' songs are their memoirs, it supposes that Winehouse was using emotion in her songs to convey her suffering while keeping the subliminal tone in her songs. Perhaps Winehouse had already accepted her reality, that being her constant reliance on narcotics which is ironic as the colour green symbolises liberation, implying that she is free of constraints or suffering, this yearning for liberation is what drives her addiction. As aforementioned, this may seem bittersweet as at first it is implied that Winehouse is entrapped by the enchanting 'green', however, it is not a key contributor to her ultimate downfall, instead, this is the tool that enabled her to articulate her emotions, communicate with others as well as delve into her feelings as 'all the songs sound better when you come to me; it can also be implied that the 'green' is enabling Winehouse to escape her suffering as she is letting go of constraints, just like *acceptance*. Reflecting on Kubler-Ross' 5 stages of grief, one can deduce that although Winehouse is not okay with the trauma that she has suffered in the past, she has acknowledged that it is a part of her story, therefore by recognising that she is embracing her new beginning. Perhaps here, Winehouse is indicating that in fact, she has not accepted her grief, however, she has learnt to deal with it with the help of cannabis, which is reflected through the symbolism of the colour green.

Although songwriting is a creative art, therefore emotive expression is important which indicates that Winehouse does not suppress her emotions. This concept is relevant when analysing the patterns in Winehouse's mental health; as, when her psychological state deteriorated, she withdrew herself from her loved ones, became increasingly in denial, the narrative of her music intensifies (Gross & Musgrave, 2020), and there is a shift in the themes and moods that her songs can be categorised into (Table 2 and 3). Through the use of emotive expression through colour symbolism, which is correlated with the 5 stages of grief, Winehouse highlights the toxicity of her aforementioned factors such as self-image, pressures from the music industry, addiction and love can drastically impact one's morale (Fosbraey, 2022). Winehouse was craving attention and the thrill of it all, ultimately indicating that she was extremely weak without the attention of her ex-husband, as well as without drugs (Hearsum, 2012). The lyrics also convey a sense of irritation towards herself as she did not want to rely on anyone or anything however it was thrust upon her, and it ultimately led to her unfortunate fate. Ultimately, although one never fully heals from loss, the pain is slightly eased by accepting the reality, the *green* is therefore helping her battle her inner demons.

One can observe how these emotions change in different periods of Winehouse's life particularly through the colour used in her second and third albums as 2006 was a catalyst for her mental deterioration. Interestingly, although most of the stages are in a pattern, some stages are rather sporadic (such as anger), therefore suggesting that rather than being a single journey of grief, Winehouse is experiencing grief multiple times, however, is not fully recovering from it or going through all of the stages in order, some emotions more frequently than others due to the sporadic events that she had encountered. It could be implied that Winehouse's stages of grief are slightly different in order as at the beginning she is not aware of her emotions and, therefore cannot express them through her music. Winehouse presents *anger*, *bargaining* and *acceptance* in her first album (2003) however she does not indicate denial or *depression*, thus adhering to the 5 Stages of Grief concept by Kübler-Ross.

This study is not doubting the emotions Winehouse experiences, but instead, corroborates the idea that Winehouse was ultimately emotionally damaged as she never truly dealt with her emotions, thus causing her to be trapped in a cycle of turmoil. Having said this, *anger* is not demonstrated later on in her other two albums. It is indicated that her 2006 album expresses Winehouse's emotions more intensely Winehouse's *denial* being the most prevalent as this was a time in which she was faced with the most tragedies, the other emotions expressed in her 2006 album *Back To Black* are *bargaining* through the colour blue, as well as *acceptance*

through the use of the colour green. Ultimately, we are given some indications that Winehouse has finally surpassed the first 2 stages of grief in her third album as only the last ternary stages are expressed: *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance*. *Depression* (grey) is expressed the most in the last album, yet this is due to the emotional weight that it carries, which contrasts with the cathartic use of the colour green symbolising acceptance.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Winehouse's songs reveal her emotional heft and shift of sentiments, highlighted by Hunt and Brookes' research on corpus discourse and mental health. The findings suggest that Winehouse makes intertextual references to her suffering, as songwriting was her outlet. Through the data, one can observe the patterns of the themes and emotions throughout the three albums which although they don't change much, the emotive heft intensifies; this is portrayed by the linguistic techniques including the use of first- and second-person narrative. The linguistic technique (2<sup>nd</sup> person narrative) sets an accusatory tone through the constant reference to 'you', thus blaming others for her downfall while subtly calling out for help from said subjects. This is contrasted by the 1<sup>st</sup> person narrative as we can see above, it symbolises self-blame and anagnorisis of one's actions. Additionally, Winehouse uses past, present and future tense as stated; past tense referencing Winehouses' suffering, the present suggesting liberation and the future implying change. The main linguistic indicator is colour symbolism and how colour is utilised as a metaphor for Winehouse's suffering. The main colours applied throughout the songs have references to various emotions, particularly emotions similar to the 5 stages of Grief such as anger (*red*), denial (*black*), depression (*grey*), bargaining (*blue*) and acceptance (*green*). Sentiments evoked by colour symbolism are enhanced by the context of specific words, and specific linguistic features are used which gives weight to the emotions Winehouse wanted to evoke in her songs; the use of active/intransitive vs passive/transitive verbs and the colours as nouns rather than adjectives highlights how Winehouse was embedding clues of her suffering and ultimately desired salvation. The active verbs allow one to notice when Winehouse was in control of her actions, or perhaps even emotions, in contrast to when she used passive verbs which signified that she is being oppressed and controlled by other factors. Winehouse's songs are cathartic, but her calls for help were not heard by the media and music industry. Her lyrics express the depths of her suffering, hinting that she needed saving and yearning for salvation from someone else.

This research has contributed to the field of mental health in discourse analysis, with regards to artists' mental health reflected through lyrics. A limitation of this research is the small collection of songs from the three main albums although they were all relevant to my research, it would be quite interesting to observe the contrast in the music Winehouse wrote before her career lifted off. Additionally, it would also be interesting to delve deeper into the connotations of the effects that drug addiction has on one's psyche.

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Appendix 1: First released studio album by Amy Winehouse (Frank, 2003)

	<b>Song Name</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>1</b>	Stronger Than Me	Objectification, Gender Roles, Relationships
<b>2</b>	You Sent Me Flying	Immaturity, Strength Vs Weakness, Attraction
<b>3</b>	Cherry	Conflict, Belonging, Expression Through Music
<b>4</b>	Know You Know	Relationships, Compatible
<b>5</b>	Fuck Me Pumps	One Night Stand, Money
<b>6</b>	I Heard Love Is Blind	Infidelity, Heartbreak, Immorality
<b>7</b>	Moody's Moody For Love/ Teo Licks	Love, Fidelity, Heartbreak
<b>8</b>	(There Is) No Greater Love	Love, Contentment
<b>9</b>	In My Bed	Lovers, Boundaries, Heartbreak
<b>10</b>	Take The Box	Lovers, Solace, Heartbreak
<b>11</b>	October Song	Heartbreak, Solace, Loss
<b>12</b>	What Is It About Men	Infidelity, Fate, Oppression
<b>13</b>	Help Yourself	Frustration, Unjust Immaturity
<b>14</b>	Amy Amy Amy	Irresistible Attraction, Immaturity, Infatuation
<b>15</b>	Outro	Gratitude, Safety
<b>16</b>	Brother	Siblings' Love, Responsibility, Priorities
<b>17</b>	Mr Magic	Addiction, Vices, Narcotics

Appendix 2: Second, released studio album by Amy Winehouse (Back to Black 2006)

	<b>Song Name</b>	<b>Themes</b>
<b>1</b>	Rehab	Addiction, Optimism

<b>2</b>	You Know I'm No Good	Infidelity, Addiction, Forgiveness
<b>3</b>	Me And Mr Jones	Relationships, Friendship, Anger
<b>4</b>	Just Friends	The Ambiguity Of Relationships, Friendship, Boundaries
<b>5</b>	Back To Black	Addiction, Heartbreak, Psyche, Depression
<b>6</b>	Love Is a Losing Game	Loneliness, Confusion, Heartbreak
<b>7</b>	Tears Dry Up on Their Own	Anagnorisis, Relationship, Dealing With Reality
<b>8</b>	Wake Up Alone	Depression, Addiction, Desire
<b>9</b>	Some Unholy War	Co-Dependency, Love, Addiction
<b>10</b>	He Can Only Hold Her	Loss Vs Belonging, Heartbreak, Relationships
<b>11</b>	Addicted	Anger, Addiction, Psychoactive Narcotics

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