

Stylistic Narrative of “Otherness”: A Study of Power Relations in John Steinbeck’s “The Murder” and Gabriel García Márquez’s “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the stylistic features marking powerlessness/“otherness” in fiction. To this end, this study stresses two fictional characters: Jelkain John Steinbeck’s “The Murder” (1934) and the old man in Gabriel García Márquez’s “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings” (1955). Most clauses associated with these characters exhibit a fixed set of verbs that make such characters influenced by, rather than influencing, the story’s events. Also, in other clauses they are passive participants, affected by other actors. These characters are juxtaposed with superior characters, like Jim, Elisenda, and Pelayo, whose power is foregrounded by other types of verbs.

Keywords: Power relations, otherness, stylistics, John Steinbeck, Gabriel García Márquez.

Introduction

Power relations are commonly analyzed in literary studies from cultural and theoretical perspectives. Marginalized characters and groups are usually foregrounded with certain theoretical and philosophical approaches, inspired by Marxism, feminism, postcolonialism, new historicism, and cultural materialism, to name but a few. Undoubtedly, modern literary schools of criticism (with the great variety of the “isms” that have come to permeate modern literary studies) have greatly contributed to bringing the issues of gender, race, and class to the fore (Barry, 1995). The issue of powerlessness of certain characters such as the colonized subjects, women, and lower social classes attracts the attention of theoretical approaches to show the moments of exclusions, marginalization and “otherness.”

However, rather than invoking any of these modern literary tools or movements, the present study aims at exploring such power relations by using stylistic tools and techniques. This work focuses particularly on the stylistic patterns as well as linguistic structures that underlie passivity and powerlessness of two main characters in two different short stories: Jelka Sepic in John Steinbeck’s “The Murder” (1934) and the old man in Gabriel García Márquez’s “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings”(1955). The stylistic analysis offered here, mainly based on Chris Kennedy’s (1982) essay “Systemic Grammar and Its Use in Literary Analysis,” will show how each text exhibits certain linguistic features that prove the domination and control of powerless characters by hegemonic/powerful characters. To be specific, these linguistic features can help the reader see the weaknesses of Jelka and the old man and how they are positioned in unequal power relations with other characters in the two stories. These linguistic features (explained further below) pertain principally to the types of verbs and clauses associated with these characters and the participant roles they assume therein.

Moreover, this study draws mainly upon these two stories by Steinbeck and García Márquez in particular for two main reasons. First, their scope enables the reader to examine how weak characters are stylistically exposed in the *whole* story. These stories are unique for their *consistency* in maintaining the same linguistic features characterizing the weak throughout the whole two texts. Second, these works foreground characters (namely, Jelka and the old man) who are consciously weakened due to their gender and racial differences. Because such characters are of interest to modern literary theory, externalizing the stylistic features of their ‘otherness’ can help understand better the treatment of such

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characters when examined, for example, from a feminist or postcolonial perspective. Of course, these two texts are not meant to be exclusive in illustrating otherness stylistically, but their total consistency in exposing two types of character weakness is indeed interesting.

In the following stylistic analysis, therefore, this paper contributes to the ongoing research, providing additional empirical (not just theoretical) evidence that the language of literary works reveals a conscious choice of syntactic and semantic structures of power relations. The text, along with its verbs, word choice, clause types, and semantic relations, mirrors the main roles assigned to each character in a systematic way. As will be shown below, the use of certain types of verbs and clauses describing some characters that are intended to deliver underlying morale is never accidental but rather a purpose; something that apparently and definitely yields a state of harmony between the character's role in the given story/work and the language used to delineate this character. In addition to the significant role of this harmony in creating a balance between form and content, it brings indispensable clues for the reader to fully appreciate the literary work at hand (Short, 1996). This way, the literary work becomes accessible to the reader, and hence its main themes get effortlessly crystalized.

This strong bond between the language of the literary work and accessibility might implicate the notion that the value of any literary work can be determined by, among others, how its language (i.e. style, vocabulary, and clauses) is compatible with the roles assigned to each character in it. From this point, the importance of stylistics emerges as one of the techniques through which a literary work is explored linguistically with the utmost attention paid to how language patterns are carefully selected to suit the roles assigned to each character, showing the cases of powerlessness and "otherness," two notions that represent the principal concerns of the current work. The following is the main argument supporting this line of analysis.

Power Relations in Steinbeck's "The Murder": The Case of Jelka

In Steinbeck's "The Murder," Jelka Sepic lives in a patriarchal society where women are associated with housekeeping and obedience to masculine authority. The story establishes this image at the beginning when Jelka is introduced as someone whose existence is totally conditioned by the power of her father and her husband, Jim Moore. Her father's advice to Jim (upon his marriage to Jelka) to beat her in all circumstances provides a clear idea about Jelka's subservience and peripheral role in impacting the course of events in the story, a matter which in turn depicts Jelka as a representation of powerlessness/otherness in the story. For the most part, the emphasis of the story is laid upon Jelka's powerlessness in her relationship with Jim. She is characterized as a woman who is only concerned with her domestic duties and obeying her husband's orders. She never questions any of her husband's commands and looks thoroughly submissive.

What bears mentioning here is that this ineffective role of Jelka is evidently figured in the linguistic patterns that characterize her language when interacting with Jim. In analyzing Steinbeck's story, this study makes use of Kennedy's essay noted above, in which Kennedy elaborates on the grammatical system developed by M.A.K. Halliday in what becomes known as Systematic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1979; Halliday, 1985). Under this model of language analysis, the social groupings and relationships have impacts on the use and choice of linguistic patterns of the story characters. It should be noted here that Systematic Functional Linguistics is much utilized when ideological implications and repercussions are examined in the literary work, taking the language of the text as an important indicator of such implications and repercussions (Eggins, 2004 and Fowler, 1991). Consequently, the linguistic analysis becomes decisive in determining the ideological processes foregrounded by relationships of power and control (Halliday, 1979:195). This research paper is limited to examining how the notions of powerlessness and "otherness" are linguistically reflected, leaving ideological implications of the selected texts open for further research.

The model of stylistic tools used by Kennedy is based upon the use of different participant roles within transitivity functions and the three main types of clauses: action, mental process, and relation. Most notably, Kennedy explains that the powerless character is always depicted as an observer, or listener, whose verbs are intransitive, static, perceptive,

negative, and passive. The utterances of such characters are few, and their actors are usually “you.” On the other hand, the powerful character is always depicted as the actor or the speaker, whose verbs are transitive, dynamic, and signifying material action of intention (Kennedy 1982: 96; Leech,2008). This disparity in viewing the acts of the two types of characters, i.e. powerless vs. powerful, is indicative of the depiction of “otherness” in the given works. As it appears, it is difficult to draw on the notion of “otherness” without referring to power relations whose presence can be stylistically traced, and the way language issued to reflect on otherness relations has already been touched upon (Smith,1978;Toolan,2001).

Kennedy’s linguistic analysis of the distinction between powerless and powerful characters helps to characterize power relations in Steinbeck’s story. The most notable linguistic feature of Jelka’s powerlessness is the way her actions are reported with intransitive, perceptive, static, and negative verbs, as shown in the following representative clauses:

1. “She was so smooth and quiet and gentle, such a good housekeeper” (306). (Static verb)
2. “She never spoke first” (306). (Negative verb)
3. “She was a fine wife” (306). (Static verb)
4. “She never talked” (306). (Negative verb)
5. “sometimes she smiled too” (306). (Perceptive verb)
6. “There she sat, watching her wise hands” (306). (Intransitive/perceptive verbs)
7. “and [she] pushed the dishes close when he needed them, and filled his cup when it was empty” (306). (Transitive verbs functioning as obedience to orders)
8. “Early in the marriage he told her things that happened on the farm, but she smiled at him as a foreigner does who wishes to be agreeable even though he doesn’t understand” (306). (Perceptive verb)
9. “He felt that she knew where he was going, but she never protested nor gave any sign of disapproval” (307). (Cognitive/negative verbs)
10. “she knelt at the bedside every night” (307). (Intransitive verb)
11. “Oh—I’m thinking about the eggs under the black hen” (308). (Mental activity)

Most of the verbs in the above examples reflect Jelka’s passivity and lack of any intentional action. The types of these verbs parallel precisely her literary role in the story. Just like the static, perceptive, intransitive, and negative verbs associated with her, Jelka is soundly a static/flat observer, whose ‘action’ does not affect anyone in the story. Sentence (7) is the only one which contains transitive verbs of intention. Nevertheless, these transitive verbs are merely responses or reactions to Jim’s commands, making her the inferior, inactive participant in this dichotomy. These transitive verbs decidedly do not change the static nature of her character.

The clauses associated with Jelka can also be classified in terms of what M.A.K. Halliday (1979, 1985) calls “the ergative function.” As Kennedy puts it, Halliday “defines this function in terms of an affected participant which is the one inherent role associated with action clauses, and which is the goal in a transitive and the actor in an intransitive clause” (Kennedy,1982: 85).As such, the ergative function marks Jelka’s role precisely: she is either the actor in an intransitive clause or the goal in a transitive one, as noted in the following examples:

1. “There she sat” (306). (Jelka is the actor in an intransitive clause)
2. “At night he stroked her straight black hair” (306). (Body part as an affected participant in a transitive clause)
3. “She got up and went to the big calendar on the wall” (308). (Actor in an intransitive clause)
4. “He went to her and patted her sleek head” (308). (Body part as an affected participant in a transitive clause)
5. “he carried Jelka over his shoulder” (312). (Goal or affected participant in a transitive clause)
6. Jim put out his hand and stroked her hair, and the back of her neck” (312). (Body part as an affected participant in a transitive clause).

The above clauses show Jelka as someone who is always affected by others’ actions. She, being always placed as a “goal” in transitive clauses, is rarely given the chance to be the actor in transitive clauses in order to reveal her powerlessness and lack of influence over her actions and surrounding. Moreover, Jelka’s marginalized role is further

stressed in the way her affected presence is displaced by parts of her body, undermining her position in this unequal power relation with her husband.

This important shift towards representing Jelka's minimal role through her body parts is not only shown in her being the affected participant but also in her role as an actor. This minimalized presence reveals her detachment from any intended activity, as illustrated in the following examples:

1. "Her great eyes followed him" (306). (Body part as an actor for a transitive verb)
2. "Her face lighted up" (5). (Body part as an actor)
3. "Her mouth smiled to itself, but her eyes watched him for the development of a wish" (307-8). (Body part as an actor)
4. "Her dusty black eyes followed him out the door" (308). (Body part as an actor)
5. "Her eyes had moved from him to the end of the rifle" (311). (Body part as an actor)
6. "Her hair was littered with bits of hay" (312). (Body part as an actor in a passive clause).
7. "Her dusty black eyes followed every move he made" (312). (Body part as an actor)
8. "Her dark eyes dwelt warmly on him for a moment" (312). (Body part as an actor)
9. "No, not now. My mouth's too sore" (312). (Body part as an actor).
10. "Her eyes darted to the closed bedroom door and then back to him" (312). (Body part as an actor)

Importantly, there are fourteen clauses in which the actor is part of Jelka's body; ten of which include "her eyes" as the actor. This emphasis laid on Jelka's eyes renders her an observer rather than active participant to the actions in the story.

Jelka speaks less than Jim, and she never initiates any conversation with him. She merely replies to his questions with short answers. This is why her husband "began to crave the company of women, the chattering exchange of small talk, the shrill pleasant insults, the shame sharpened vulgarity. He began to go again to town, to drink and to play with the noisy girls of the Three Stars" (307). Jim's behavior makes it as though Jelka does not exist in the story. Also, Jelka never initiates what is called "phatic communion," which is defined as "the kind of ritualistic linguistic behavior which characterizes the beginnings and endings of conversations" (Simpson, 1989: 42). Indeed, there can never be any "phatic communion" ascribed to Jelka in her relationship with Jim. In most of her talks with her husband, she remains isolated and passive, barely putting any feelings into words. Most of her dialogues with Jim are reported by the narrator in the following manner: "The stallion cut himself on the barbed wire," he said. And she replied, 'Yes,' with a downward inflection that held neither question nor interest." (306). Jelka's brief and meaningless responses make it seem as though her husband is speaking to himself.

In contrast to Jelka's passivity, Jim is the one who continually initiates interaction with her. He is the one who uses expressions usually referred to as "neutral tokens" of the "phatic communion," which are defined by Paul Simpson as "references to factors concerning the context of situation, which are not personal to either the speaker or hearer" (Simpson, 1989: 44). The comment of Jelka's husband on the stallion is such a "neutral token" that refers neither to himself (speaker) nor to Jelka (hearer). It is because of this lack of such tokens that Jim "realized before long that he could not get in touch with her anyway" (306). Jim even comes to the point where he openly questions her passivity:

"Why don't you ever talk to me?" he demanded. "Don't you want to talk to me?"

"Yes," she said. "What do you want me to say?" She spoke the language of his race out of a mind that was foreign to this race. (306-7)

Jelka truly seems a passive listener, who is reluctant to speak with her husband. Such passivity empowers Jim to be the master of Jelka's existence.

Jim, on the other hand, is the superior participant who speaks more than any other character in the story. His actions are reported with transitive, dynamic, and imperative verbs. He is the active initiator of action, whose activity is always reported linguistically with expressions showing what Burton (1982) refers to as "material-action-intention processes" (205). According to Burton, characters associated with such expressions "are seen as overwhelmingly 'in control' of whatever events take place. They are presented and given as being in charge of the construction of the reality that the persona perceives and expresses" (205). Indeed, Jim is always reported to be "in charge" of the "reality" constructed in

the story. This is evident in the following examples:

1. "At last he bought a fine Guernsey bull" (305). (Transitive verb)
2. "Saturday afternoons he saddled a horse and put a rifle in the scabbard" (307). (Transitive/dynamic verbs).
3. "If I could find any fault with you, I'd call you a damn foreigner" (307). (Transitive/first person speaker).
4. "On the grassy side hill he whistled high and shrill" (308). (Dynamic verb).
5. "He threw his saddle on and cinched it tight, put his silver-bound bridle over the stiff ears, buckled the throat latch, knotted the tie-rope about the gelding's neck and fastened the neat coil-end to the saddle string" (308). (Transitive/Dynamic verbs).
6. "He pulled his rifle from its scabbard, levered a shell into the chamber, and held the gun across the pommel of his saddle" (309). (Transitive verbs)
7. "He kicked his feet reluctantly in the dust" (312). (Transitive verbs).
8. "I am going to order lumber. We'll build a new house farther down the canyon" (312). (First person speaker and transitive verbs)

Jim, as can be clearly noted in the examples provided, is always the actor (i.e. the agent) of actions, and there can scarcely be any actions shifted to any of his body parts as actors. Perhaps Jim's deliberate actions are best exemplified in the murder scene, which comes after his wife has a secret relationship with her cousin. When Jim returns home, he discovers them lying together and immediately shoots her cousin with his rifle:

Jim cocked the rifle. The steel click sounded through the house. . . .He raised the gun to his shoulder and held it tightly to keep from shaking. Over the sights he saw the little white square between the man's brows and hair. . . .The gun crash tore the air. Jim, still looking down the barrel, saw the whole bed jolt under the blow. A small, black, bloodless hole was in the man's forehead. (311)

In the above sentences, Jim is the actor with "material-action-intention processes" exactly in the same way proposed by Burton. Consider the following table that summarizes some actions performed by Jim:

Actor	Process
Jim	Cocked
He	Raised/held
He	Saw

In addition, Jim most of the time does not show any concern about politeness whenever he speaks with his wife. On the contrary, there are instances where his language denotes what Simpson calls face threatening acts," or FTAs. "Calling someone a 'damn fool' or 'silly ass,'" Simpson maintains, "clearly demonstrates an unfavorable evaluation by the speaker of the addressee's public self-image, and can thus be regarded as a threat to the latter's *positive* face. Such acts, which pose a threat to either the positive or the negative face of the addressee are known as *face threatening acts*" (Simpson, 1989: 171). It is interesting that nearly the same examples of FTAs provided by Simpson can be traced in Jim's language:

1. "You'll gabble your crazy language like ducks for a whole afternoon. You'll giggle with that big grown cousin of yours with the embarrassed face. If I could find any fault with you, I'd call you a damn foreigner" (307).
2. "But you're silly. You can't see it from that window. I thought you knew direction better than that" (308).

Jim's impolite expressions—"a damn foreigner" and "silly"—designate indeed his unfavorable evaluation of Jelka, but what is more noteworthy is the fact that such FTAs mark Jim superior in power. Simpson explains further that "there are some situations in which speakers use bald, non-redressive FTAs. One is where a speaker holds a position of high relative power over the addressee and fears no serious interactive consequences from using such a strategy" (Simpson 1989: 173). It is Jim's superiority that makes him use such verbally harsh expressions without worrying about possible reactions from Jelka.

However, Jim does not use similar expressions with other people in the story. When he accidentally meets his friend, George, he becomes careful about using expressions of politeness:

"That you, Jim?"
 "Yes. Oh, hello, George."
 "I was just riding up to your place. I want to tell you—you know the spring-head at the upper end of my land?"
 ...
 "Well; I guess I better go up and look. I was going to town too. But if there are thieves working, I don't want to lose any more stock. I'll cut up through your land if you don't mind, George."
 "I'd go with you, but I've got to go to town. You got a gun with you?"
 "Oh yes, sure. Here under my leg. Thanks for telling me."
 "That's all right. Cut through any place you want. Good night." (309)

Jim never uses a polite request as "if you don't mind" with his wife, nor thanks her for anything she does for his sake. If he ever wants to express his thankfulness, he does so with a sense of dehumanization, for Jelka "was so much like an animal that sometimes Jim patted her head and neck under the same impulse that made him stroke a horse" (306). In other words, he only "pats her head" if he wants to thank her just as he treats an animal.

Power Relations in García Márquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings": The Case of the Old Man

García Márquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" recounts the alarming arrival of a weird old man having enormous wings in a coastal town whose people are not accustomed to such phenomenon. Spotted in the backyard of Pelayo and Elisenda (the two main characters in the story) amid stormy weather, the old man comes eventually into sight with a miserable outer appearance that "had taken away any sense of grandeur he might have had" (105). This is because the astounded Pelayo and Elisenda are told by their neighbor woman that the intruder is an angel, but the physical condition of the old man shows no characteristic that could match the typical image of angels cherished among the people of the town, opening thereby an endless series of speculations about his true nature.

Modern scholarship has focused on analyzing García Márquez's "A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings" from magic realism vantage, stressing the significance of people's reaction to the old man (Faris, 2004; McFarland, 1992). To bridge the gap, this study aims at using the stylistic approach to examine the different linguistic patterns used to signify the powerful (Elisenda and Pelayo) and weak (the old man and the spider woman) characters. However, for us (the readers) to proceed in probing textually people's reaction, there emerges a setback, or a compelling question, that should make us pose for a moment: what is that exactly in the old man to which people's reaction is meant to be foregrounded? In other words, what does the old man represent? Unless the readers conceptualize what correctly and accurately they make of the old man, the cultural facets exhibited by the tale are destined to be misinterpreted. The present study suggests mainly that part of the symbolic signification emblemized by the old man can *stylistically* be reconstructed within the boundaries of the text. By this stylistic analysis, this study offers by no means a unitary interpretation of the old man's functionality but rather a possible one, which is his *weakness*. It could be objected that the stylistic interpretation offered below ignores the function of the wings, making it merely a redundancy. Again, the present study's assumption is basically that the old man is defamiliarized as such to accentuate people's reaction, among other reasons that can be pursued in other studies. Therefore, certain aspects of the text's style can truly enable the reader to see *one* position, among others, that the old man is made to occupy and understand more properly how people's reaction is represented.

To be sure, the old man's weakness becomes most visible in the linguistic characteristics of sentences featuring the power relations between him and the people of the story. When stylistically examined, these sentences reveal the old man to be utterly powerless, inferior, manipulated, and subordinated to people's control. The verbs connected with his actions are intransitive, perceptive, passive, static and negative:

1. "it was an old man, a very old man" (105). (Static verb)
2. He was "impeded by his enormous wings" (105). (Passive verb)
3. "a flesh-and-blood angel was held captive in Pelayo's house" (106). (Passive verb)
4. "He was lying in a corner" (107). (Intransitive verb)

5. “he did not understand the language of God” (107). (Negative verb)
6. “The angel was the only one who took no part in his own act” (108). (Negative verb)
7. “befuddled by the hellish heat of the oil lamps and sacramental candles” (108). (Passive verb)
8. “many thought that his reaction had been one not of rage but of pain” (109). (Static verb)
9. “The angel was no less standoffish” (111). (Negative static verb)
10. “he must have known the reason for those changes” (112). (Perceptive verb)
11. “he had been motionless for so many hours that they thought he was dead” (109). (Static verb)

Importantly, the majority of the clauses associated with the old man have verbs that are mostly either negative or passive, making him the powerless character that does not influence the events but rather remains influenced by them, and the effect of the old man’s “action” thus, does not extend to anyone. Interestingly, the character of the old man is represented with exactly the same features characterizing the verbs linked to him: just like these verbs, he is *passive* and *static*, and his involvement in the events around him is always *negative*.

Moreover, within these clauses associated with the old man, one can easily trace the presence of the “ergative function” noted above, for he is either the actor in intransitive clauses or the affected participant in transitive clauses:

1. “he dragged him out of the mud and locked him up with the hens in the wire chicken coop” (106). (Affected participant in a transitive clause).
2. “they felt magnanimous and decided to put the angel on a raft with fresh water and provisions for three days and leave him to his fate on the high seas” (106). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
3. “when the hens pecked at him” (108). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
4. “and even the most merciful threw stones at him, trying to get him to rise so they could see him standing” (108-9). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
5. “The only time they succeeded in arousing him was when they burned his side with an iron for branding steers” (109). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
6. “They would drive him out of the bedroom with a broom and a moment later find him in the kitchen” (111). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
7. “He seemed to be in so many places” (111). (Actor in an intransitive clause)
8. “He remained motionless for several days” (111). (Actor in an intransitive clause)

Being the affected participant in a large number of transitive clauses makes the old man completely under the control of Elisenda, Pelayo, and the crowds of visitors. The above clauses also show the weakness of the old man not only as a result of being the affected participant in transitive clauses but also through the semantic denotations of the verbs within these clauses. The old man is literally physically (and sometimes violently) controlled by the people (and even the hens) around him. This is evident, for example, in actions like “dragging” him, “locking” him up, “pecking at” him, and “throwing stones” at him.

Even when the old man is made the actor of some transitive and dynamic verbs of intention, his action is reported as mere reaction to the cruel treatment of people, trying to escape humans’ cruelty against him. These transitive verbs do not include Pelayo, Elisenda, or any visitor as goals or affected participants but rather include the angel. Moreover, such verbs include parts of the old man’s body as affected goals:

1. “He was lying in a corner drying his open wings” (447). (Transitive verb with the angel’s body part as a goal)
2. “he only lifted his antiquarian eyes” (107). (Transitive verb with the angel’s body part as a goal)
3. “he flapped his wings a couple of times” (109). (Transitive verb with the angel’s body part as a goal)
4. “his fingernails opened a furrow in the vegetable patch” (112). (Body part as an actor for a transitive verb)
5. “he was on the point of knocking the shed down with the ungainly flapping” (112). (Transitive verb as a reaction)

The above examples show that if the powerless old man has any intentional control, such control can only be seen over himself, not anyone else in the story, even the hens within the chicken coop.

In addition to the types of verbs and clauses associated with the old man, the way the old man’s identity is reported

is another important stylistic feature that truly shows his powerless and submissive position. Unlike the identity of Pelayo and Elisenda, who are the superiors, the old man's identity is unstable and manipulated by others in a multiplicity of ways. His identity is devalued by humans with a number of *hyponymic* variations, where *hyponymy* here means a semantic relationship based on "the 'inclusion' of a more specific term in a more general term" (Lyons, 1968:453). In other words, the old man is continually dubbed many nicknames (or hyponymic variations) that pertain only to the same person. He is, for example, referred to as "castaway" (106), "a very old man" (105), "fallen body" (105), "drenched great-grandfather" (105), "an angel" (106), "a flesh-and-blood angel" (106), "a circus animal" (106), "mayor of the world" (107), "a huge decrepit hen" (107), "imposter" (107), "the devil" (107), "the captive angel" (107-8), "the prisoner" (109), "a ghost" (110), "a senile vulture" (112) and "dot on the horizon" (112). Instead of having a stable character conditioned by his presence and active role, the old man's identity is shaped and created by the multiple perspectives of others in the story. Labelling his identity with this large number of epithets and names is one way of exerting power over him. In short, the old man does not exist as an independent participant but is always affected by others' interpretations and lack of discernment.

On the other hand, the verbs connected with Pelayo, Elisenda and all other human characters like Father Gonzaga, are transitive, dynamic, positive and intentional:

1. "they had killed so many crabs" (105). (Transitive verb)
2. "his wife, who was putting compresses on the sick child, and he took her to the rear of the courtyard" (105). (Transitive, dynamic and positive verb)
3. "Pelayo and Elisenda very soon overcame their surprise and in the end found him familiar" (106). (Transitive verbs)
4. "they skipped over the inconvenience of the wings" (106). (Transitive verb)
5. "he [Father Gonzaga] reviewed his catechism in an instant and asked them to open the door (107). (Imperative verb)
6. "Then he [Father Gonzaga] . . . warned the curious against the risks of being ingenuous" (107). (Transitive verb)

It goes without saying that the examples of transitive verbs shown above make their actors in full control of their existence, and this stylistic feature marks how the old man's case is different, for he is never in full control of his own existence, which is rather created by others.

The present study has suggested (above) that this stylistic analysis of the old man aims at establishing his functional weakness, paving the way for other studies to deal with the reception of such weakness in the world of the story. What seems to confirm such stylistic findings is the characterization of another magical character in the story—namely, the spider woman. For she is represented precisely with the same "ergative function" marking the clauses associated with the old man:

1. "there arrived in town the traveling show of the woman who had been changed into a spider for having disobeyed her parents" (109). (Passive/transitive verbs)
2. "The admission to see her was not only less than the admission to see the angel, but people were permitted to ask her all manner of questions about her absurd state and to examine her up and down" (109). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
3. "She was a frightful tarantula the size of a ram and with the head of a sad maiden" (109). (Static verb)
4. "she recounted the details of her misfortune" (Transitive verb)
5. "she had sneaked out of her parents' house to go to a dance" (109-10). (Intransitive verbs)
6. "while she was coming back through the woods after having danced all night without permission" (110). (Intransitive verbs)
7. "a fearful thunderclap rent the sky in two and through the crack came the lightning bolt of brimstone that changed her into a spider" (110). (Affected participant in a transitive clause)
8. "Her only nourishment came from the meatballs that charitable souls chose to toss into her mouth" (110). (Body part as affected participant in a transitive clause)
9. "the woman who had been changed into a spider finally crushed him completely" (110). (Passive/transitive verbs)

In all of the above clauses, the spider woman is either the actor in intransitive clauses or the affected participant in transitive ones, and the verbs associated with her are either intransitive or static. Based on this stylistic characterization, the spider woman is represented with the same weakness characterizing the old man: she is helpless and controlled by other characters. However, there are only three exceptions where she is the actor of transitive verbs. In the first clause, she is the actor of the transitive verb “disobeyed,” but this is the action for which she is punished, denying her any free will or agency. In the fourth clause, the goal of her action is “her misfortune,” which pertains to her character. Most importantly, in the last clause the affected participant of her “crushing” is the old man, the *weakest* character in the whole story. Unlike the spider woman, the old man lacks language as a means of power, a quality that makes the spider woman’s reputation surpass his. Thus, it can be concluded that both the old man and the spider woman, the two magical figures, symbolize the concept of *weakness* in the story. But one may notice that although the spider woman is a weak character, she is not the weakest; she is *not precisely* as weak as the old man because she is given some limited degree of power, reflected stylistically in the transitive verbs of action ascribed to her. Her control extends only over her parents and the old man, and this explains why her show eventually ‘crushes’ that of the old man, who is not associated with any such transitive verbs of action, and who is thus the weakest.

With this stylistic analysis in hand, establishing the value marking the magical function of the old man as one of weakness, one can pursue further the treatment of this value in the world of the story. It seems as though the people of the story deal with weakness as a sin; weak characters are punished for their lack of power. The old man and the spider woman are humiliated, subjugated, and caged like animals. The people of the town even want to kill the old man, but “they did not have the heart to club him to death” (106), as if it is a defected aspect of their behavior that they have such weak hearts. Weakness, analyzed stylistically, reveals the agonies of the weak and marginalized characters and draws the readers’ sympathy to their victimization.

In conclusion, Halliday’s model of Systematic Functional Linguistics provides an alternative analytical method of approaching the language of literary works. The stylistic analysis of this study has shown that power relations can be approached with tools drawn from linguistics. In the two stories studied above, the characters of Jelka and the old man have some common stylistic features. Their actions are always reported with intransitive, perceptive, static, negative and passive verbs, which render them powerless and incapable of influencing their realities. Their very few utterances also show another stylistic feature of their weakness, for these utterances make them only observers of the social environment created for them by others. The above stories draw the readers’ attention to juxtapose such stylistic features with different, parallel characteristics marking the roles of other characters like Jim, Elisenda, and Pelayo. These characters are superior by virtue of their active roles, reported with transitive, dynamic, imperative, and material-action-intention verbs. Their superiority is also evident in the way the effect of their actions is extended to influence the others, mostly the weak.

While the relation between language and power relations is already well known (this is clear, for example, in Kennedy’s study noted above), exploring this relation in whole literary works is quite lacking. As this study has shown, the aim here is not to provide further evidence for the link between language and power relations; rather, the aim is to show how such relation is used and maintained by authors in whole fictional works. In the two stories analyzed in this paper, power relations become better understood when analyzed stylistically: in Steinbeck’s story, Jelka is positioned within an unequal relationship with her husband, and this inequality is of interest to feminist studies. In García Márquez’s story, the old man is shown stylistically to be overpowered and objectified by the town people, who do not accept his racial difference, and this conclusion is important for postcolonial and cultural studies. Weakness in the two stories pertains, therefore, to those who are racially and gender-wise different. This is how the stylistic analysis of weakness/otherness becomes important: it helps other critical approaches explain the authors’ criticism of how the “other” is treated and discriminated against.

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الأسلوبية في سرد الآخر: دراسة علاقات القوة في قصة "الجريمة" للكاتب جون شتاينبك و "رجل عجوز ذو جناحين عظيمين" للكاتب غابرييل غارثيا ماركيز

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ملخص

تبحث الدراسة الخصائص الأسلوبية التي تميز الضعف / "الآخر" في الخيال الأدبي. ولتحقيق هذه الغاية، تركز هذه الدراسة على تحليل شخصيتين أدبيتين وهما جلجا سيبك في قصة "الجريمة" (1934) للكاتب جون شتاينبك والرجل العجوز في قصة "رجل عجوز ذو جناحين عظيمين" (1955) للكاتب غابرييل غارثيا ماركيز. تعرض معظم الجمل المرتبطة بهاتين الشخصيتين مجموعة ثابتة من الأفعال التي تجعل الشخصيتين تتأثران بأحداث القصة بدلاً من التأثير فيها. وفي مجموعة أخرى من الجمل أيضاً، تظهر هاتان الشخصيتان بوصفهما مشاركتين سلبيين متأثرين بلاعبين آخرين. هاتان الشخصيتان تمت مقارنتهما بشخصيات أخرى توقعهما قوة، مثل جيم واليزاندا وببلايو، الذين تتجلى قوتهم من خلال أنواع أخرى من الأفعال.

الكلمات الدالة: علاقات القوة، سرد الآخر، الأسلوبية، جون شتاينبك، غابرييل غارثيا ماركيز.

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