

Representing Processes in Toni Morrison's "Sula": A Critical Stylistic Analysis

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تمثیل العمليات الفعلية في رواية "سولا" لطوني موريسون:
تحليل إسلوبی نقدي

نصير جواد كاظم النجم

المديرية العامة للتربية في محافظة النجف الاشرف

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Abstract:

Ideology-impregnated language is not necessarily confined to specific types of texts, such as news articles, political debates and speeches, or even promotional advertisements; rather, it can be found in all kinds of texts, whether literary or non-literary. However, literary language has become one of the most effective tools employed by writers to convey a sublime, rhetorically oriented message or idea to readers. Based on that, the data targeted by this study is a fictional novel entitled "Sula" by Toni Morrison. Although the text was written by one of the most renowned fiction authors in today's world, only a few studies have addressed her novels from a linguistic perspective. Hence, the study aims to examine how the exploitation of linguistic resources—verbs, in particular—helps to construct certain ideologies. The study employed one of Jeffries' (2010) tools of analysis, namely 'Representing Actions/Events/States', informed by Simpson's (2004) framework of the transitivity system. The study found that the type and frequency of the

الملخص:

لا تقتصر اللغة ذات الهدف الأيديولوجي بالضرورة على أنواع معينة من النصوص مثلًا المقالات الإخبارية، أو المناظرات والخطب السياسية، أو حتى الإعلانات الترويجية؛ بل يمكن العثور عليها في جميع أنواع النصوص سواء كانت تلك النصوص أدبية أو غير أدبية. ومع ذلك، أصبحت اللغة الأدبية واحدة من أكثر الأدوات فاعلية والتي يوظفها الكتاب في إيصال رسالة أو فكرة ذات أهمية معينة إلى القراء. وبناءً على ذلك، فإن العينة التي تستهدفها هذه الدراسة هي رواية من وحي الخيال بعنوان "سولا" للكاتبة طوني موريسون. على الرغم من أن الرواية قد كُتبت على يد أحد أشهر الفُصّاص في عصرنا، إلا أن عدد يسير من الدراسات تناولت رواياتها من منظور لغوي بحت. ومن هنا، تهدف الدراسة إلى بحث كيف إن تسخير الموارد اللغوية—الأفعال—تحديدًا يساهم في تكوين أيديولوجيات معينة. مستنيرةً بالإطار النظري للتعددية الفعلية لسيمبسون (٢٠٠٤)، استخدمت الدراسة إحدى أدوات التحليل الخاصة بجيفريز (٢٠١٠)، وهي "تمثيل النشاط الجسدي / تمثيل الوقائع / تمثيل الوصف". وقد وجدت الدراسة أن نوع وعدد العمليات الفعلية مع أدوار المشتركين ذوي الصلة؛ وكذلك السياق اللغوي الذي يتم فيه إنتاج تلك العمليات قد ساهمت جميعها في إدراك الشخصية بشكل مختلف وذلك بسبب الصور المختلفة التي قد رسمتها الشخصية لنفسها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوبية النقدية؛ علم اللغة النقدي؛ تحليل الخطاب النقدي؛ العمليات الفعلية المادية؛ العمليات الفعلية الذهنية؛ العمليات

verbal processes, the participant's roles involved, as well as the linguistic context in which those processes are produced, all contributed to the character's being perceived differently due to the various pictures the character draws for herself.

Keywords: Critical stylistics; critical linguistics; critical discourse analysis; material; mental; relational; ideology; transitivity; Sula.

الفعلية العلائقية; الايدولوجيا; التعدية الفعلية;
سولا.

Introduction

Language is employed to express the intentions and/or desires of its users. The forms and content of language collaborate to produce the intended meaning and purpose of communication among people. Language is utilized for a variety of functions, such as discussing events; communicating our emotions to others; introducing facts; delivering messages; or even entertaining or enriching us, as in the case of most types and forms of literature. Language is believed to perform a variety of functions via the linguistic constructions that carry meaning potential. According to the Halliday's functional approach, there are three metafunctions of language. Those metafunctions are fundamental to the workings of grammar in the systems of language. These three metafunctions are used to express 'Experiential' or as sometimes called 'Ideational', 'Interpersonal', and 'Textual' meanings. However, the present study limits itself to exploring the ideational meaning found in a literary text that is intended to impact readers and produce various sorts of meaning. It attempts to investigate the linguistic features and techniques utilized to express the ideologies embedded in Toni Morrison's novel

"Sula" from Jeffries' (2010) critical stylistic perspective via the linguistic system of 'Transitivity'.

Background to the Study

Linguistic analysis of literary texts allows for the examination of linguistic choices for certain grammatical features of narrative discourse that impact characterization and ideologically affect the interpretation of meaning. What follows is a relatively detailed account of the three linguistic approaches that are used for textual analysis, namely Critical Linguistics (CL), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Critical Stylistics (CS). The discussion in the following paragraphs summarizes the fundamentals that distinguish each approach, comparing their methodologies to the one posited by critical stylistics and trying to introduce an argument throughout the proposed method to test its applicability to analyze fictional texts.

Linguistic analysis of literary texts allows for the examination of linguistic choices for certain grammatical features of narrative discourse that impact characterization and ideologically affect the interpretation of meaning. What follows is a relatively detailed account of the three linguistic approaches that are used for textual analysis, namely Critical Linguistics (CL), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and Critical Stylistics (CS). The discussion in the following paragraphs summarizes the fundamentals that distinguish each approach, comparing their methodologies to the one posited by critical stylistics and trying to introduce an argument throughout the proposed method to test its applicability to analyze fictional texts. Given the need for an approach that allows those interested in text analysis to undertake systematic linguistic analyses to unearth the ideology imbedded in the texts, Fowler et al. (1979); and Kress & Hodge's (1979) pivotal books establish a new and influential trend in the ideological study of language. Fowler (1991) defines this approach as "an enquiry into the relations between signs, meanings and the social and historical conditions which govern the semiotic structure of discourse, using particular kind of linguistic analysis" (p. 5). This approach is linguistic in nature since the

power of the linguistic analysis to uncover the ideologies buried in texts, as well as the inequality of power relations and control that exists within them, are the main underpinnings that underlie this approach. The term 'Critical' implies that the linguistic analysis goes beyond just a description of textual linguistic features; it is also an interpretation of the underlying ideologies that are integrated in the linguistic constructions. The principal goal of this approach is to probe the ideology that resides in language. Notwithstanding the criticism raised against this approach for lacking a comprehensive toolkit for linguistic analysis, the advent of Critical Linguistics was a "turning point in the study of the interplay between language and ideology" (Alaghbary et al., 2015,p. 5), as the analysis doesn't only offer a description of the linguistic features but also an explanation of why and how specific discourses are used (Teo,2000, p. 11).

In the years that follow, CL practitioners' attention to language as a means of creating meaning and embedding ideologies has evolved into the broad spectrum of methodologies recognized as Critical Discourse Analysis, or (CDA). Jeffries (2007) contends that "CDA began as a left-wing reaction to the hands-off objectivity of early linguistics, when there was clearly so much wrong with the world that was based in texts, and so much information about manipulation and political dishonesty that could be revealed by a few judicious uses of some fairly accessible tools of analysis"(p.195). The primary concern of CDA, as Machin & Mayr (2012) point out, is that it "typically analyses news texts, political speeches, advertisements, school books, etc."(p. 12)in such a way that is "openly committed to political intervention and social change" (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997, p. 257). However, CDA, like the approach that preceded it, has been widely criticised. Wodak (2014) describes CDA as being "a problem-oriented interdisciplinary research programme, subsuming a variety of approaches, each with different theoretical models, research methods, and agendas"(p. 2), while Jeffries (2007) explains that there is no single tradition of CDA, and as such, there is no agreed-upon analytical toolkit that should be used in this discipline (p. 12). Consequently, the heterogeneity that is observed in the new approach to linguistic analysis

resulted in three challenges for analysts: The incomprehensiveness of the tools of analysis, bias or subjectivity against or in favour of a certain political stance that the analyst adopts, and finally, the lack of a sharply defined methodological and/or theoretical framework. The functional role of language in society that CDA practitioners adopt leads to the belief that "CDA is not a formal school of thought, but rather a range of stances" (Breeze, 2011, p. 5). Among the several contributors to this approach, the 'Dialectal-Relational Approach' of Fairclough is one of the most significant contributions in the field. Fairclough, in 1989, expands the scope of textual analysis, as proposed by Critical Linguistics, by presenting his three-dimension model of discourse, in which linguistic analysis was only one of three analytical levels. Those levels are: text analysis, processing analysis, and social analysis. Fairclough believes that the social aspect of language is critical in discovering ideology and power trends in texts. He has pointed out that the discourse microstructures are determined by the social macrostructures. Fairclough's commitment to a socio-political perspective in identifying ideologies encoded in textual linguistic features has been open to criticism by a number of stylisticians. Jeffries, for example, undervalues works that adhere to the CDA approach as they embrace a particular political standpoint, such as Marxism, at the expense of the unbiased scientific method.

*the fact that the main protagonists of critical discourse analysis
largely adhere to a particular form of
Marxist/socialist politics
made me wonder whether I wished to also abandon
some of
linguistics' hard-won scientific credibility by giving up
on all
attempts at objectivity, rigour and replicability. I was
not – and
am not – convinced that the gains achieved by
abandoning the*

*aim of rationality and scientific methods for a more
discursive an
open-ended approach were worthwhile. (Jeffries, 2014,
p. 408)*

Critical stylistics has emerged to address the issues that have been observed in CL and then CDA. Jeffries' (2010) book *Critical Stylistics: The Power of English* has formally marked the establishment of this approach. In her 2014 co-authored book, she demonstrates that the emergence of CS came to address "a feeling of frustration in the face of critical discourse analysis's deliberate lack of methodology or framework and its apparent abandonment of many of the achievements of linguistics in its scientific phase of development" (Jeffries 2014, pp. 408–409). Jeffries argues that the emergence of CS is to "bridge the gap between... (CDA) and stylistics"(Coffey, 2013,p. 30), as CDA and stylistics have gotten increasingly distant from one another in the past few decades (Jeffries, 2016, p. 159). According to Jeffries and McIntyre (2010), CS strives to combine the ideological awareness that CDA has with the textual analysis of stylistics(p.194). Jeffries (2014)develops a "method of finding the ideology in texts whether or not you agree with it" through a set of ten tools that she calls the Textual-Conceptual Functions, TCFs (p.410). What makes CS different from other approaches to text analysis, such as CL and CDA, is that the types of texts it embraces are not restricted to literary ones but rather texts of any type and purpose. In addition, CS believes in text centrality as the inescapable basis for all stylistics (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2010, p.1). Jeffries' (2010) set of tools is: "*Naming and Describing, Representing Actions/Events/States, Equating and Contrasting, Exemplifying and Enumerating, Prioritizing, Assuming and Implying, Negating, Hypothesizing, Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants, and Representing Time, Space and Society*". By examining these verbal processes and the roles in which the character in hand plays, this study seeks to uncover the ideology that may result from such construction of the character's identity.

Critical Stylistics and Ideology

Critical stylistics, or CS, contends that all texts are ideologically centred, whether such ideologies are consciously or unconsciously planted in a text. CS employs a set of analytical tools to reveal the ideologies hidden in the text, which saves the researcher from subjectivity in an attempt to confirm preconceived assumptions (Olaluwoye, 2015, p. 88). The question here is, what's the origin of the term 'ideology', and what does it refer to? According to van Dijk (2000), the word 'Ideology' can be traced all the way back to Destutt de Tracy's eighteenth-century term "idéologie." Since the 1970s, this contentious term has piqued the interest of researchers, scholars, and even philosophers. That unprecedented interest in the term has led to the development of numerous studies in fields such as critical linguistics, critical discourse science, critical stylistics, and others (pp. 1-2). As van Dijk contends, in such studies, approaches to ideology concentrate on three facets, namely the *sociological*, *psychological*, and *linguistic* aspects. Different evaluations and definitions are given to ideology, though all these approaches agree that ideology is fundamentally social (p.6). Weber (1992) states that ideology is "a system of knowledge and beliefs or a set of assumptions used in the inferential processing of text" (p.12).

Tool of Analysis

As some linguistic approaches to text analysis, such as critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis, are accused of subjectivity and fall short of providing analytical devices that are coherent to expose the ideology a text may have (Jeffries, 2010, p.6), Jeffries (2010) presents "a set of tools, which, whilst not complete, are nevertheless more comprehensive than any provided in the literature on CDA and other similarly politically motivated linguistic studies" (p. 1). This study is concerned with *how ideologies are established in texts through the function of the verb, that is, "what is being done (actions), what is happening (events), or what simply is (states)"* (Jeffries, 2010, p. 38). What follows is a detailed account of the tool that will be applied to unveil

the ideology implanted through the verbal choice and, consequently, the role attached to the participants.

Representing Processes (Transitivity)

One of the linguistic frameworks that writers use to convey various types of experiences is the 'transitivity' system. This grammatical system, which is based on Halliday's experiential metafunction of language, sees language in terms of processes realised by verbal groups. Each of these processes involves a distinct group of participants, which is typically represented by one or more noun phrase(s), as well as a circumstance related to the process. Unlike the two essential elements of a clause, that is, the 'process' and the 'participant(s)' of that process, the clause element that unfolds a certain circumstance during which a process occurs, whether that circumstance is of place, time, manner, cause, or any other type, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) is not "directly involved in the process; rather they are attendants on it" (p.170). The unique characteristic of the transitivity system provides a valuable means of investigating how a reader's or listener's perception of the meaning of a text is influenced by the choice of certain processes and their participants. As Simpson (1993) avers, those processes "can be classified according to whether they represent actions, speech, states of mind, or simply states of being" (p. 82). As such, the present study seeks to explore, through the system of transitivity, who/what does what to whom. This helps to explore how participants in a clause are constructed through the verbal group attached to them. Simpson (2004) classifies verbal processes into 6 categories: Material process, Mental process, Relational process, Verbal process, Behavioural process and the Existential process. Each of these categories has a distinct type and number of participants, in which each participant has a different role in the process attached to him/her. Let's consider Table (1) below.

Table 1

Types of process, their meaning and participant roles attached to each process

Type of Category	Subcategory		Category Meaning	Participants
Material Process	-Action Intention -Supervision -Events		-doing -happening -happening	Actor/ Goal Client
Mental Process	-Cognition -Perception -Reaction		-thinking -sensing -feeling	Senser/ Phenomenon
Relational Process	Identifying	Intensive	-Identifying -Attributing	Identified/ Identifier
	Attributive	Possessive Circumstantial		Carrier/ Attribute
Verbalization Process	-----		saying	Sayer/ Receiver/Verbiage
Existential Process	-----		existing	Existent
Behavioural Process	-----		behaving	Behaver/Behaviour

Note. Adapted from Simpson (2004)

The first category is the material clause, which is a process of happening and doing; scilicet, it is concerned with the physical world in which we experience reality. It defines what one entity does to some other entities. Material Action presents two subtypes of processes. It is an 'intention' process if the action is performed intentionally, otherwise it is a 'Supervision'. Typically, the source of the energy causing the change is a participant — the 'Actor' which is an obligatory role in the clause, while the entity affected by such energy is labeled as the 'Goal' which may/may not be used. As the 'Actor' and the 'Goal' are directly involved participants in the process, there are other participants such as 'Client', which is found to be less directly involved in the verbal process (Halliday & Matthiessen,

2004, p. 260). Given the necessity of such a role and its absence in Simpson's (2004) model of transitivity, the role of a 'Client' has been taken from Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004). Mental process is the second category that is concerned with "our experience of the world of our own consciousness" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 197). Simpson (2004) demonstrates that in contrast to material processes, which originate in the physical world, the world of consciousness is inhabited and reflected by mental processes (p.23). Three subtypes of processes are involved with this category: 'Cognition' (encoded through verbs of thinking), 'Reception' (encoded through verbs of sensing), and 'Reaction' (encoded through verbs of feeling). The 'Senser' who should be a conscious being and the 'Phenomenon' are the participant roles that are attached to this category. According to Simpson(2004), the 'Relational' process, is the third category of transitivity (p.26). This type of process that holds for *being* and *having* is thought to be a misleadingly high-complex category. Although there are several ways to present this category, however, there is broad consensus on three major types of relational processes: 'Intensive', 'Possessive', and 'Circumstantial' where each subtype of these three comes in two modes of being, viz., the 'Attributive' and the 'Identifying'. Two participant roles are attached to each mode. In the 'Attributive' mode, the 'Carrier' is the entity being described whilst the 'Attribute' is the value that is ascribed to that entity. In the 'Identifying' mode, one participant role is identified by referring to another, so the two halves of the clause mostly refer to the same thing. These two roles are, 'Identified', and 'Identifier'. The fourth type is the 'process of saying referred to as 'Verbalization' process, which has three participants: a 'Sayer', a 'Receiver', and a 'Verbiage'. This type of process bridges the divide between the 'Mental' the 'Relational' category. The 'Behavioural' category is the fifth category of the Transitivity system. It is thought to be a very perplexing process as it shades into the boundary between 'Material' and 'Mental' categories. The processes in this category depict the outside manifestations of internal workings, the enacting of physiological states that occur consciously, such as sleeping or laughing. The 'Behaver' is the principal participant in this process, though the role of the 'Behaviour' may be found as well. The last type of processes is the

'Existential' category, in which only one participant, that is, the 'Existent' is involved. This process implies the existence, happening, or being of something this why it is used in conjunction with the expletive 'There', which has no semantic meaning, that is to say, it only fills a syntactic role. After all is said and done, the accessibility of all of these many types of processes, by all the odds, offers a *network* of possibilities for expressing various experiences, such as those from the outside *material* world or the person's interior ideas (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p.170).

The Data

The novel, "Sula", the African-American world-famous writer's second novel, was published by Vintage in 1973. The chapters of the novel are organized chronologically, in which each chapter represents the year in which the events of that chapter occurred. The novel begins in 1919 (after the end of World War I), and ends in 1965. The plot centers on a young black girl named 'Sula,' who grows into a strong and determined woman in the midst of overwhelming odds, as well as the black society's skepticism, if not disdain, of her. The story's events occurred in the "Bottom" (the name of a barren land up in the hills). Black feminism, death, racism, war, motherhood, and other issues are all addressed in the story (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2015, Sula novel). It is worth noting that all of the extracts examined are from the second part of the story, namely Chapter No. 1940. A very dramatic events take place in that chapter. Sula gets critically sick, and her soul mate, Nel, who hasn't met Sula for three years, comes by. One of the most crucial questions Nel had was why her lifetime friend Sula had sex with her husband, Jude. What makes it even worse for Nel is that Sula, who doesn't seem to be either contrite or apologetic, informs her that Jude only "filled up the space." Sula states to Nel that the distinction between good and evil is really difficult for her to draw. At the end of the chapter, Sula dies quietly.

Methodology

The data for the study in question is limited to the direct speech of the character, Sula, found in the final 10,000 words of the novel, that is, from the beginning of chapter 1940 to the end of the novel. The rationale

for such a sampling of data is that the targeted part of the novel includes the climax, represented by the death of the protagonist, Sula, and the catastrophic collapse of a tunnel that was under construction, resulting in the deaths of many members of the 'Bottom' community. It should be noted that because the study seeks to explore how the given character's identity is constructed from the character's own perspective through the transitivity system, only quotes that are narrated in the first person pronoun are selected. That is to say, only the quotes in which the speaker is the character Sula, are targeted for the analysis. As a result, the total number of quotes targeted by the study based on the aforementioned parameters is 22. However, as the predicator is an essential element for the analysis, the study unit of the analysis is not the quote but the independent clause. Only independent clauses are examined, while all phrases, and fragments of incomplete sentences found within the quotations are ignored.

Analysis and Discussion of Results

The transitivity choices brought to the forefront for the main character of Toni Morrison's "Sula" narrative are examined and compared in this study. A rudimentary statistical examination may highlight the processes and participant roles attached to the character, Sula. The frequency of occurrences for each sort of clause for given character is shown in Table (2). It has been demonstrated that the 'Relational' category is the most predominant type of process (about 15 clauses out of 36), whilst 'Material' comes second with 13 occurrences. The 'Mental' category ranks third in terms of Sula's most frequently used type of verbal process, with 6 occurrences. Only 2 'Existential' clauses in which Sula is involved are found in the data under scrutiny.

Table 2

The type, number, percentage of processes and the roles attached to the character Sula

The Character	Material			Mental		Relational				Verbalization		Behavioural	Existential	Total of All processes
	Roles	Actor	Goal	Other Roles	Senser	Phenomenon	Carrier	Attribute	Identified	Identifier	Sayer	Receiver	Behavior	
Sula	10	1	2	4	2	10	5	0	0	0	0	0	2	36
Total of Each process	13			6		15				0		0	2	
Percentage	36%			17%		42%				00%		00%	06%	

The examination of the processes attached to Sula reveals that the relatively heavier employment of the attributive mode in the 'Relational' category is a direct reflection of the main theme of the novel, that is, Sula's endeavor to find and then reshape her lost identity. The identity that has been taken over by the hegemony of societal norms and customs, the sense of superiority of the Whites over the Blacks, or the dominance of man over woman. As shown in Table (2), Relational process is the highest transitivity choice in terms of occurrences. Sula plays the role of a 'Carrier' in 10 instances. Intensive Relational and Possessive Relational are the subcategories with the highest number of occurrences, with 4 clauses for each. Through the Intensive Relational category, an 'X is Y' relationship is established where predicative adjectives or nouns are used to describe Sula herself, a perspective of her life, or a situation she got into, for example:

1-"I *look* bad."

(Morrison, 1973,p.116)

2-"I'm *not* proud."

(Morrison, 1973,p.117)

3-"You say I'm a woman and colored."

(Morrison, 1973,p. 117)

4- "If we *were* such good friends, how come you couldn't get over it?"

(Morrison, 1973, p.120)

Examples 1,2 characterize how Sula feels at a specific period of time. Sula displays negative feelings of fear, dissatisfaction and insecurity in three out of four examples. Possessive Relational, on the other hand, projects "X has Y" relations in which Sula is X while Sula's entity, a part of her body, or an object is Y. Let's consider the following examples:

1- "I *got* a prescription." (Morrison, 1973,p. 115)

2- "Why? I can do it all, why can't I *have* it all?" (Morrison, 1973,p. 117)

3- "I *got* my mind.... Which is to say, I *got* me." (Morrison, 1973,p.118)

4- "But my lonely *is* mine."
(Morrison, 1973,p.118)

The analysis reveals that three out of four examples use the verb have/got followed by the object/possessive pronoun to project a possessive relation, while the copula to be is found in only one example, that is, example number (4). Sula's repeated use of terms suggesting ownership reflects her yearning for her lost identity as a black woman. She expresses her opposition to her community's traditions in an open way. She equates parts of her body (her mind) with the entirety of what she is. She attempts to convey to the readers the notion that 'a free mind means a free body.' She continually emphasizes her right to self-determination as a black woman. As shown in the example that follows, circumstantial relationships have one occurrence:

5- "I'd rather *be here*, Nellie." (Morrison, 1973,p. 117)

The 'Material' process, on the other hand, presents either an action or an event, and the action can be of 'intention', when the 'Actor' performs the action intentionally, or of 'supervision' when the 'Actor' performs the action involuntarily. The investigation of the material clauses attached to the character Sula reveals that out of 10 material processes, Sula is the 'Actor' in six material action processes that are performed intentionally. At first glance, this may lead one to believe that Sula is a powerful and actional person. However, the 'Goal' or the entity affected by Sula's actions are mostly inanimate or trivial objects (except for example 9, in which the

'Goal' is a person), which might portray an opposing picture of her. In addition to that, the use of the modal auxiliary verbs in examples 1 and 2 may weaken the intentionality of those verbs and reinforce a sense of uncertainty and lack of confidence in what these modal expressions add to the overall meaning. The following examples demonstrate Sula's verbal choice of material verbs:

6- "Why? I *can do* it all, why can't I have it all?" (Morrison, 1973,p. 117)

7- "Then I really *would act* like what you call a man." (Morrison, 1973,p. 118)

8- "I don't know everything, I just *do* everything." (Morrison, 1973, p. 118)

9- "What you mean take him away? I *didn't kill* him, I just *fucked* him."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 120)

In another 4 clauses, the material processes seem to be performed unintentionally and tangentially by the 'Actor' Sula. As such, those processes are characterized as 'Supervision' rather than as 'Intention', for example:

10- "You think I don't know what your life is like just because I *ain't living* it."

(Morrison, 1973,p.118)

11- "I'm *going down* like one of those redwoods. I sure *did live* in this world."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 118)

12- "Is that what I'm supposed to do? *Spend* my life keeping a man?"

(Morrison, 1973, p. 119)

The verb *live* in examples 10 and 11; and *spend* in example 12; construe material action processes, though these actions are beyond the control of the 'Actor'. That is, these processes are not performed voluntarily by Sula. It is worth noting that although all material processes are realised by transitive verbs with two or more participants, allowing for active or passive structures to be interchangeably used, the passive structure has

been suppressed. In 2 examples, Sula is seen to be involved in Material processes not as an 'Actor' but as a 'Client' (the person or entity for whom the process is said to occur) of others' acts, as shown in sentences number 13, 14:

13- "Nathan usually goes *for me* but he...school don't let out till three."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 115)

14- "Work's good for you, Nellie. It don't do nothing *for me*."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 117)

The 'Client' role that Sula plays in the previous two examples reflects her deteriorating health. Sula was so ill that she couldn't move and needed someone to look after her. That is why she plays the entity benefiting from acts performed by others rather than herself performing the actions.

The 'Mental' category is the third pattern that is used by the character Sula. The stylistic choice of this category opens a window into the character's consciousness. As actions resulting from the 'Material' process necessitate "some input of energy" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 197), that quantum of change is not a prerequisite to the 'Mental' process because it takes place internally inside our own consciousness. As shown in Table (2), six mental processes are attached to the character Sula. Out of these six instances, Sula plays the role of the 'Sensor' in two mental processes of 'Emotion', as in:

15- "What you talking about? I *like* my own dirt, Nellie." (Morrison, 1973, p. 117)

16- "And besides, I *never loved* no man because he was worth it."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 119)

In both of these examples, Sula is depicted negatively as a person who doesn't value anyone but herself. In other examples, mental cognition realised by the verb *know* is used.

17- "I *don't know* everything, I just do everything."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 118)

18- "I *know* what every colored woman in this country is doing."

(Morrison, 1973, p. 118)

In example number 17, the role of the 'Phenomenon' is realised by the pronoun *everything*, in which Sula creates a metaphorical contrast

between *not knowing* and *doing*. In instance 18, the text depicts Sula as an omniscient person, which is a seemingly self-contradictory statement to the one that preceded it. In another occurrences of 'Mental' category, the character Sula plays the role of an affected entity, that is to say a 'Phenomenon' in two verbs of emotion, as in the following example:

19- "They'*ll love me* all right... but they'*ll love me*." (Morrison, 1973, p. 120)

Sula, in both clauses, is realised by the object pronoun *me* functioning as the 'Phenomenon' to mental verbs of emotion. It should be noted that the process of love performed by the 'Sensor' does not occur in the past or present but will occur in the future. This suggests that these men (referred to by the pronoun 'they') had heretofore disliked Sula. This might explain Sula's solitude, although she desperately needs someone to look after her. The 'Existential' process is the last category that is addressed here as no instances of the other types of verbal processes are detected in the data in hand. (Simpson 2004, 26) emphasizes the stylistic effect of 'Existential' clause is in the possibility of avoiding material processes and, as a result, the need for an explicit 'Actor'. As mentioned above, only one participant, that is, the 'Existent' is usually used in this type of process, while the process itself is nominalised by turning the verb into a noun. In the data under scrutiny, two 'Existential' clauses in which the character Sula is involved are found. They are as follows:

20- "Well, *there was* this space in front of me, behind me, in my head... And Jude filled it up." (Morrison, 1973, p. 119)

21- "...then *there'll be* a little love left over for me." (Morrison, 1973, p. 121)

One of the ideological repercussions of this process is the way the direct reference to an affecting entity is avoided by nominalizing the process. In the first example, instead of saying:

-I had a space.... , for example, she uses

-There was a space...

Here, we the 'Existential' process replaces a 'Possessive Relational' process in which the 'Carrier' is the entity that has been avoided. In the second

example, the use of the 'Existential' process followed by a modifying subordinate clause in the passive form shows that Sula may be reluctant or afraid to share the identity of the person who loves her though that person might be in love with someone else other than Sula to the extent that Sula feels quite satisfied with a small amount of love someone has for her.

Conclusion

The present study examined how the linguistic system of 'Transitivity' is utilized to discover the ideology that shapes Sula's identity via verbal processes and the roles in which she is involved. From the 22 extracts that are analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively, it can be concluded that the 'Relational', 'Material', and 'Mental' categories are the most dominant categories that the participant, Sula, uses to represent her verbal processes. In most cases, Relational categories are used to either describe an aspect of or to reinforce the sense of possession of herself. The Material category portrays Sula as a powerless, lonely person whose actions affect no one but trivial things. The type of lexical words Sula uses and the linguistic context in which such processes are used is a direct reflection of Sula's physical condition. The subcategories of 'Mental Reaction' and 'Mental cognition', portray Sula as a selfish, rebellious person who values no one but herself. Other categories have very limited or no role in constructing Sula's identity. The research also demonstrates that the linguistic context is an important factor in determining how intentional a material process is. The analysis also demonstrates the applicability of the transitivity system not only to standard, formal languages but rather to literary and dialectal forms of language, where poor grammar and vernacular English are dominant features.

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