



### Q33125 – Advanced Stylistics

**Write a 3,500-word essay developing a stylistic analysis of a literary text of your choice which incorporates a discussion of a theoretical issue or framework in the field of Stylistics and evaluates it critically in light of the stylistic analysis.**

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Considered somewhat autobiographical, D. H. Lawrence composed 'New Eve and Old Adam' in 1912. In it, he presents a simple argument between a newlywed couple, reflecting the difficulties he found in his early marriage to Frieda Lawrence: according to Frieda's letters, her husband was 'struggling to be successfully male' (Squires, 2008: 118). This is replicated in Lawrence's short story, alongside a female protagonist who is determined to maintain a sense of independence within her new marriage. Lawrence's approach to gender politics has often been challenged, and he fell under heavy critique from second-wave feminists in the 1970s – mainly for being a phallogocentric misogynist (Millett, 1970). However, many of his narratives, such as *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, centre on complex and commanding women, and this is an apt description of the central female in 'New Eve and Old Adam'. With particular consideration of his linguistic approach, this paper will challenge the notion that Lawrence consistently presents the traditional model of marriage – a domineering male and submissive female – as the most desirable. Instead, I will argue that 'New Eve and Old Adam' is an indictment of the male gaze, and a promotion of female autonomy in relationships.

To substantiate this logic, I will engage with Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics – with particular reference to, and using the terminology of, the Transitivity model. Halliday describes this as 'the set of options relating to cognitive content... whether of phenomena of the external world or of feelings, thoughts, and perceptions' (1967: 199). Thus, a linguistic analysis of Lawrence's text will demonstrate how the female character dominates the action of the narrative, whilst the male character is threatened by the space that she occupies and uses Mental and Verbal processes in order to challenge this. These patterns of Transitivity will exhibit how the male's stubborn prejudice hinders the progression of their relationship. As with Halliday's work on Golding's *The Inheritor's* (1971), this essay will feature 3 passages from Lawrence's text, and break them down into clauses as the 'fundamental units of grammar' (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004: 10). Halliday observed clauses as a metaphor for a text (1994), and thus these particular extracts will work to reflect how action and reality is constructed in the text as a whole. I will then analyse the distribution of processes between the male and female characters. Halliday distinguishes between Material, Mental, Relational, Verbal, Behavioural, and Existential processes (2004: 168-248), and these will be referenced in order to recognise how Lawrence grants agency to his characters, and to what extent. This considered, I have selected the passages which I feel to be the most heavily gendered, and also which make clear use of Transitivity processes as a means to establish the power dynamic.

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### Extract 1 Analysis<sup>1</sup>

Extract 1 is taken from the first section of the story, in which Lawrence introduces the reader to a man and wife, who at present remain unnamed – this generalisation offers them as Everyman characters, allowing Lawrence to comment more widely on how gender operates in marriage, rather than in their personal experience. The reader is later introduced to them as Peter and Paula Moest.

Extract 1 depicts the couple in the quiet moments leading up to the central argument, and many of the Material processes are qualified by adverbs. This linguistic feature allows Lawrence to evaluate the action by not only narrating what happens, but also how it is done. This is also useful because there is a striking absence of Verbal processes, meaning the Material actions are the main tool of characterisation and so need to be sufficiently detailed. For example, when the female leans against the table, she does so 'abstractedly' (l. 5). Similarly, the limbs of the man lay 'braced' (16) – these expanded Material processes are the reader's only indication of each character's mentality. The woman's adverbial descriptions are Behavioural: Paula is not consciously choosing to appear abstracted, but it is an involuntary reaction. On the other hand, Peter is actively 'braced', which suggests a Mental anticipation of the conflict. These introductory descriptions establish Paula as having the upper hand, because her distractedness signals her confidence – she is not concerned enough to be worried. It is Peter who is occupied by the troubling thoughts.

Overall, this extract includes 46 clauses: Paula is a participant in 35 of these, whilst Peter features in only 14. To firstly consider the wife, 28 of the verbs in the passage are in regard to her, and are all either Material, or Relational Attributive processes.

Table 1: Paula

ACTOR/CARRIER	MATERIAL VERBS	RELATIONAL VERBS	TOTAL %
PAULA	14	5	73%
PAULA'S BODY	4	3	27%

Lawrence displays a keen focus on the human body throughout his fiction (Poplawski, *Writing the Body in D.H. Lawrence*: 2001), and this is reflected in the extract. As shown in Table 1, over a quarter of Paula's processes feature her body as either the Actor or Carrier. For example:

- 2 'Her green eyes had...'
- 8 'Her eyes retained...'
- 18 'The cheek... had...'

A misogynistic focus on the female body would be that it exists for male consumption. Instead, though Peter wishes that Paula's body would submit to him, Lawrence makes it active. The fact that her bodily action is autonomous is a condemnation of female objectification, emphasising the notion that the female physicality has worth unrelated to its desirability to a man.

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<sup>1</sup> The three extracts analysed are reproduced in the appendix. Quotes not referenced with line numbers are from elsewhere in the text (Lawrence, 1934).

The face as a direct reflection of the character is a motif in the narrative. In Extract 1, it repeatedly undertakes the role of Carrier in Relational processes, as demonstrated in the following:

- 2        '[Paula had] a face borne up by a fierce, native vitality.'
- 17       'His face was set and expressionless.'

This use of 'vitality' suggests Paula's desire to live, and this juxtaposes the emptiness in her husband, and the 'set' stubbornness that is at the core of their troubles. Further, Halliday (1994) foregrounds how authors make specific decisions in regard to their use of independent clauses. The description of Paula is lifted from a complex sentence with multiple clauses, whereas Lawrence utilises a simple construction in his reference to Peter. More detail is granted to Paula's characterisation, and thus she becomes much more familiar to the reader. By contrast, the simple sentences make Peter mysterious, and so the less the reader trusts him. Such a short and abrupt clause serves to create tension by moving the narrative along more quickly, and forcing the reader to become expectant of a crisis. This suggests that Peter is the one to be wary of.

Lawrence's symbolic use of colour is another motif in the passage. Paula's character is frequently aligned with the colour green, stereotypically connoting life and renewal. By contrast, Paul sits 'by the fire', introducing a recurring aspect of his characterisation:

- 'his head went molten'
- '[his] inflamed pulse'
- '[his] triumph flickered'

Peter becomes synonymous with the colour red, and it is a dangerous 'rage' which flows through him 'like flame'. The couple's respective colours engage with each other in the following process:

- 4        'Her green dress reflected... against the red of the firelight.'

This plainly establishes the two as in conflict against one another, and the use of the green dress as Actor, and the firelight as the Goal, confirms that Paula's Material processes are her main tool to thwart her husband's internal fire.

In both these examples of recurring symbolism, Lawrence grants agency to Paula through the Transitivity patterns:

Table 2: Active/Passive Processes

CHARACTER	MOTIF	PROCESS
Her	face borne up by... vitality. (face)	Actor/Goal Active
His	face was set and expressionless. (face)	Carrier/Attributing Relational Passive
Her	green dress reflected... (colour)	Actor/Action Active
He	sat by the fire. (colour)	Action/Circumstantial Element Passive

As Table 2 outlines, Paula is consistently referenced through active language. Her face and her green dress are both Actors in their respective processes. By contrast, Peter passively

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'sat' during his only Material clause, and is otherwise suggested to be completely absent. This counters the notion that Lawrence's women have 'want to sacrifice themselves [...] to compensate for less authentic intellects' (Williams, 1992: 155) because whilst Peter remains stationary, Paula only becomes more vibrant.

As Table 1 demonstrates, the Material processes in the extract far outweigh the Relational, and it is notable that none of them feature a goal: the action is never done to, or directed at, each other. Clearly, they do not wish to interact, and this is another way in which Lawrence grants Paula power through action. Peter can only occupy himself with Mental processes, such as:

'He felt furious and dead against her.'

Consumed by obsessive thoughts, Peter becomes increasingly destructive, because they are all he has to focus on. Paula, on the other hand, continues in Material processes regardless of her husband. She engages in mindless tasks, such as braiding flowers, and spinning her wedding ring around the stalk. This reinforces the notion that Paula governs her own body, and does not need a man to help her make use of it. Rather than objectifying Paula's physicality, Lawrence creates it as a tool for her own entertainment, and emphasises the importance of female bodily autonomy.

### Extract 2 Analysis

Extract 1 ascertains that the textual reality of the female is comprised mainly of Material processes. In Extract 2, Lawrence introduces to Peter's Mental existence.

The narrative begins to distinguish between reality and Peter's construction of it, and this is a notable feature of Extract 2. Here, Lawrence's established use of Material process to grant power to Paula is continued, alongside an emerging focus on her dialogue. Meanwhile, Peter is becoming increasingly absorbed in his warped understanding of their marriage. Whilst he maintains that he is unhappy because of Paula's refusal to submit, Paula plays up to his idealised version of her in order to dismiss it as a solution. Whilst in Extract 1 there was a striking lack of interaction between the two characters, here they come together both physically and verbally. In both instances, Paula leads the action.

Millett describes Lawrence as a 'ruthless user of women' (1970: 49) in how his male characters manipulate the females, but the action in Extract 2 contradicts this. Paula appears to become submissive as Lawrence details how she crouches 'at his feet' (3), placing Peter above her: a visual of the power dynamic. This weakened female is exactly what Lawrence has been criticised for writing, but actually this scene is demonstrative of his feminist leanings. He depicts a woman who acknowledges the male desire to dominate, and cleverly utilises it to her advantage, rather than one who is passive as a natural state. As in the earlier passage, Paula is significantly more active than Peter, participating in 11 out of 14 Material processes (79%). Halliday defines these processes as having the Actor as 'the one doing the material deed', and the Goal as 'the one done to or with' (1994: 103). By these definitions, the Actor of a Material action commands the power – of the Material processes which involve both characters, Paula is the Actor 100% of the time. This highlights her leading role, and how regardless of whether she appears submissive, she is still in charge.

Lawrence establishes Paula's character as an actress by describing how she appears 'in costume'. Paula is consciously performing, which is suggested in how her action comes exclusively from Material Intention processes – nothing is by chance. Further, Lawrence describes how Paula moves 'as if drawn by her husband' (1). This use of 'as if' is key to the illusion – Paula consciously chose the Material act 'to turn' for herself, but made it appear as

though it was done in response to Peter. By playing the submissive, Paula is free to physically dominate Peter in a way that he would otherwise emasculate him:

- 3 'laying her head on his knee'  
 9 'she put her arms round his waist'  
 10 'drawing him to her'

In these examples, Peter's body is submissive to Paula's. The gentle transitive verbs such as 'laying' and 'drawing' reinforce the subtlety of her manipulation, and she is able to physically restrain him in what seems like an embrace. If Lawrence believed that men should exist as domineering individuals (Millett, 1970: 244), one would expect to find the female body acting as the goal, but this is clearly not the case. In fact, Lawrence habitually subverts gender stereotypes, with Peter protesting against feeling degraded by his wife:

'You treat me as if I were a piece of cake, to eat when you wanted.'

This type of objectification is what Peter wishes his wife would submit to. With this comment, Lawrence demonstrates Peter's hypocrisy: when the roles are reversed, he feels deserving of sympathy. Lawrence does not allow Paula to succumb to a misogynistic perspective, and he instead focuses on the female vision. In Extract 2, only two clauses reference sight:

- 14 'She looked up at him.'  
 17 'She looked away into the fire.'

As Masters does in 'The Lang Women' (Hanh, 2018), Lawrence rejects the male gaze by linguistically depicting how the female protagonist is able to indulge in her own version of it. In another subversion of gender expectations, this use of the Behavioural process 'to look at' is exclusively granted to the female.

Overall, Extract 2 features 8 examples of Verbal processes. 7 of these are performed by Paula, and 1 by Peter. Accordingly, in 88% of the dialogue Peter exists as the Target, and Paula uses her speech to invalidate his Mental existence.

Table 3: Paula's Dialogue

QUOTE	PURPOSE
Don't be horrid with me!	Command
You know you love me	Statement
Don't you?	Question
You are always trying to deny it	Statement
It's no good, my love, is it?	Question

As demonstrated in Table 3, Lawrence splits Paula's dialogue between stative utterances and feeble questions. The use of question suggests weakness to a character, because it appears to imply a need for reassurance from a more powerful figure, but this is part of Paula's ruse. She only asks what she knows Peter will not be brave enough to answer, proving his cowardice, but this is not accounted for in Transitivity analysis. Statistically, question accounts for 40% of Paula's Verbal processes, and so according to the numbers, she is the weaker character. The limitation of such numerical analysis, such as Halliday's model, is that it does not account for the complexities of an action. Whether it is done sincerely, in jest, or in deception. The inclusion of Paula's performative processes in her statistics could lead to inaccurate conclusions about her character.

The absence of Verbal response from Peter reflects his inability to seize power in the relationship. In Peter's only example of a Verbal process, he says:

11 'I have never denied it.' [In response to Paula's claim that he loves her.]

Peter's use of negation is an illogical and unnecessarily complex response. With this, Lawrence reinforces how Peter goes to great lengths to avoid confronting their difficulties, conveying him as the primary obstruction to both his and his wife's happiness.

Peter's Verbal process is the only clause in the extract to feature the nominative pronoun 'I', whereas Paula speaks exclusively in terms of 'me' and 'you'. This exemplifies how his thoughts extend only as far as himself. Lawrence substantiates this through the Material processes relating to Peter.

6 'his lips parted slightly'  
10 'flames of fire were running under his skin'  
16 'his heart ran hot'  
17 'his will remained set and hard'

Here, Lawrence repeats his use of the body as an independent agent, suggesting Peter's retreat into his Mental existence. Whilst his body remains tangible enough to engage in action, Peter himself is not sufficiently present to take on the role of Actor. His 'lips' move, and his 'skin' changes colour, but 'Peter' does not do anything. Peter never translates his thoughts into Material action, and consequently he becomes powerless against Paula who is thus completely liberated – she leaves to meet with another man simply because she knows she can. Lawrence depicts this in how she later mocks Peter's Mental Cognition process, 'to believe':

"Then I simply don't believe you," he said coldly.  
"Oh — don't you believe me!" she jeered, mocking the touch of sententiousness in his voice.  
"What a calamity. The poor man doesn't believe!"

This encapsulates their power dynamic: though Peter is Mentally strong, it remains useless against Paula's drive for action.

### Extract 3 Analysis

Extract 3 opens with a commanding Verbal process, which is unusual for Peter. He orders:

1 'Don't bite your finger-nails'.

Paula obeys him. Of the entire text, this is the single occasion on which Peter engages in a Verbal process unprompted by Paula's dialogue. Paula responds 'obediently' (1), and this submission has a transitive effect: all of a sudden, the room is 'changing' (3). Peter's belief that his marriage would be cured once Paula learnt to submit is proven false, because he remains deeply unhappy. In depicting this, Lawrence proves that this pursuit of toxic masculinity is not the key to a happy marriage.

Because he is mostly characterised through Mental processes, Lawrence relies on interior monologue to characterise Peter, who is now in turmoil. In Extract 3, there are 39 clauses of private thought, as told by the omniscient narrator. 10 (25%) of these clauses are used to form questions, for example:

8 'was his way wrong?'  
13 'What did she mean?'  
15 'What did she care about him...?'

As previously referenced, the use of question is associated with less powerful characters. Throughout the narrative, Peter's unwavering confidence in the validity of his Mental processes has been his salvation, but here he is not only questioning Paula, but also himself. This implies his fragility, because he has lost his self-belief.

The Mental processes in Extract 3 are as follows:

Table 4: Mental Processes in Extract 3

CHARACTER	PROCESS	FREQUENCY
Peter	Mental Cognition	7
Peter	Mental Perception	1
Peter	Mental Reaction	3
Paula	Mental (any)	1

As demonstrated, 58% of Mental processes in the extract are Peter's Cognition processes, and this is reflective of the distribution in the wider narrative. Of these, 5 (71%) are now met with difficulty, for example:

- 7, 14 'he could not understand' (repeated twice)
- 8 'he thought, struggling'
- 10 'He did not want to believe'

If his Cognitive ability 'to know' something is the source of Peter's power, Lawrence derails it here. By negating the process, Lawrence strips Peter of his only weapon.

Millett argues that 'Lawrence uses the words "sexual" and "phallic" interchangeably, so that the celebration of sexual passion [...] is largely a celebration of the penis' (1970: 239). In 'New Eve and Old Adam' the penis is actually the suppressor of Paula's vibrant sexuality. Earlier in the narrative, Paula calls him 'too paltry to take a woman', and it becomes a recurring gripe. His inability to perform sexually is the culmination of Peter's consistent inactivity, as demonstrated throughout the narrative by Lawrence's striking lack of use of Peter as an animate actor in his own Material processes. In Extract 3, as with the previous passages, it is Peter's body that performs most of the action:

- 2 'his heart was beating'
- 6 'his heart beat'
- 14 'his heart flashed hot'

Beauvoir claims that Lawrence presents marriage as something which must be 'radically phallic' in order to be 'bound lastingly' (1949: 246), but this exclusive reference to Peter's heart as an inanimate Actor suggests that Peter is driven by his emotion, rather than his physicality.

Lawrence goes on to revisit to the earlier accusation, saying:

- 16 'she could taunt him with not being able to take a light woman'

Paula totally emasculates Peter in her claim that not only does he not want to have sex with her, but he does not even seek a prostitute to satisfy himself. In contradiction to Millett's argument, Lawrence does not use male sexuality as a means of granting power in this narrative, as shown by the absence of male Material process. It is the emotional disconnect

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which troubles Peter and prevents him from being able to satisfy his wife. With this, Lawrence is presenting female sexuality as a healthy balance between the Mental and the Material, whilst his men struggle to find the harmony between the two.

### Conclusion

This analysis of Lawrence's distribution of transitive processes reveals how he uses language to subvert traditional gender stereotypes, and grant power to his female characters. The high frequency of female Material processes forces the male to become a passive observer and retreat into a Mental existence. By not translating his thoughts into action, Peter fails to become a threat to this dynamic. Through his use of Verbal processes, Lawrence depicts both Paula's strength, and her performative attempts at submission. In doing so, Lawrence proves that the success of a marriage is not based on an idealised power structure, but rather a genuine emotion that remains absent in this narrative.

Word Count: 3499

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AppendixExtract 1

She was a beautiful woman of about thirty, fair, luxuriant, with proud shoulders and a face borne up by a fierce, native vitality. Her green eyes had a curiously puzzled contraction just now. She sat leaning on the table against the tea-tray, absorbed. It was as if she battled with herself in him. Her green dress reflected in the silver, against the red of the firelight. Leaning abstractedly forward, she pulled some primroses from the bowl, and threaded them at intervals in the plait which bound round her head in the peasant fashion. So, with her little starred fillet of flowers, there was something of the Gretchen about her. But her eyes retained the curious half-smile.

Suddenly her face lowered gloomily. She sank her beautiful arms, laying them on the table. Then she sat almost sullenly, as if she would not give in. He was looking away out of the window. With a quick movement she glanced down at her hands. She took off her wedding-ring, reached to the bowl for a long flower-stalk, and shook the ring glittering round and round upon it, regarding the spinning gold, and spinning it as if she would spurn it. Yet there was something about her of a fretful, naughty child as she did so.

The man sat by the fire, tired, but tense. His body seemed so utterly still because of the tension in which it was held. His limbs, thin and vigorous, lay braced like a listening thing, always vivid for action, yet held perfectly still. His face was set and expressionless. The wife was all the time, in spite of herself, conscious of him, as if the cheek that was turned towards him had a sense which perceived him. They were both rendered elemental, like impersonal forces, by the battle and the suffering.

Extract 2

Then she turned hesitating from the window, as if drawn by her husband. He was sitting still motionless, and detached from her, hard; held absolutely away from her by his will. She wavered, then went and crouched on the hearth-rug at his feet, laying her head on his knee. "Don't be horrid with me!" she pleaded, in a caressing, languid, impersonal voice. He shut his teeth hard, and his lips parted slightly with pain.

"You know you love me," she continued, in the same heavy, sing-song way. He breathed hard, but kept still.

"Don't you?" she said, slowly, and she put her arms round his waist, under his coat, drawing him to her. It was as if flames of fire were running under his skin.

"I have never denied it," he said woodenly.

"Yes," she pleaded, in the same heavy, toneless voice. "Yes. You are always trying to deny it." She was rubbing her cheek against his knee, softly. Then she gave a little laugh, and shook her head. "But it's no good." She looked up at him. There was a curious light in his eyes, of subtle victory. "It's no good, my love, is it?"

His heart ran hot. He knew it was no good trying to deny he loved her. But he saw her eyes, and his will remained set and hard. She looked away into the fire.

Extract 3

"Don't bite your finger-nails," he said quietly, and, obediently, she took her hand from her mouth. His heart was beating quickly. He could feel the atmosphere of the room changing. It had stood aloof, the room, like something placed round him, like a great box. Now everything got softer, as if it partook of the atmosphere, of which he partook himself, and they were all one.

His mind reverted to her accusations, and his heart beat like a caged thing against what he could not understand. She said he did not love her. But he knew that in his way, he did. In his way — but was his way wrong? His way was himself, he thought, struggling. Was there something wrong, something missing in his nature, that he could not love? He struggled, as if he were in a mesh, and could not get out. He did not want to believe that he was deficient in his nature. Wherein was he deficient? It was nothing physical. She said he would not come out of himself, that he was no good to her, because he could not get outside himself. What did she mean? Not outside himself! It seemed like some acrobatic feat, some slippery,

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15 contortionist trick. No, he could not understand. His heart flashed hot with resentment. She did nothing but find fault with him. What did she care about him, really, when she could taunt him with not being able to take a light woman when he was in Paris? Though his heart, forced to do her justice, knew that for this she loved him, really.