Articulating the microcosm of a short story: a functional stylistic analysis of Katherine Mansfield's 'Miss Brill'

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Abstract:- The present paper endeavours to examine the key means through which particular effects or meanings are achieved in a piece of literary discourse, in the light of the application of functional linguistic models of analysis. Our linguistic scrutiny will not look at the text, but through the text to unveil its significance, bearing in mind that a linguistic study will not diminish the literary perception of a text.
The object of our study will be a short story by the New Zealand modernist writer Katherine Mansfield. A short story suits our goals for it is complete in itself. This form was chosen by K. Mansfield as a conscious alternative from the traditional novel, motivated by her wish to express "something delicate and lovely". Also central to understanding her work is the fact that her main characters are usually women facing a world that has to be accepted on its own terms, not in theirs.The aim of this paper is to apply M.A.K. Hallidays's systemic functional grammatical to the stylistic analysis of "Miss Brill", a short story that particularly represents Mansfield's ever-present feelings, and to examine the key linguistic points which contribute to articulating the microcosm of this text.

Keywords – *"Miss Brill", Katherine Mansfield, short stories, stylistic analysis, systemic functional analysis*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the present paper I attempt to examine the key means through which particular effects or meanings are achieved in a piece of literary discourse, namely *Miss Brill* by Katherine Mansfield, in the light of the application of functional linguistic models of analysis. 'New stylists' have successfully applied techniques of modern linguistics to the analysis of literary discourse. Michael Toolan, David Birch, Ronald Carter, Michael Short or Michael O'Toole, among others, have chosen the tools of functional grammars when facing the task of studying the linguistic code in a literary text. M. Toolan (1988, 1989, 1990, 1998) [1,2,3,4] or T. Taylor (1980) [5] had emphasized the essentially negotiated quality of messages, that is, the role of our interpretation of the code, a 'pragmatic' vision: "The assumption that stylistic content is intersubjective has surfaced in every new specification..." (1980: 104). R. Fowler (1981) [6] argued that there existed a global 'textual' and 'contextual' meaning beyond mere literal meaning, what is more, he set the basis for a new pragmatic stylistic criticism: "To treat literature as discourse is to see the text as mediating relationships between language-users: not only relationships of speech, but also of consciousness, ideology, role and class. The text ceases to be an object and becomes an action or process." (1981: 80). Thus, our linguistic scrutiny will not look *at* the text, but *through* the text to its significance[1], bearing in mind that a linguistic study will not diminish the literary perception of a text[2]. As Halliday suggests: "far from damaging the object or one's perception of it, the act of close and thoughtful linguistic analysis turns out to enhance one's awareness and enjoyment" (1988: viii)[3] [9]. That language can serve different functions or communicative roles has been an oft-noted thought in linguistics. Functional models of analysis such as the one developed by M.A.K. Halliday acknowledge this fact, too, and direct their attention to the communicative and socially expressive functions of language.[4] A basic tenet of this approach is that language serves a multiplicity of functions which are simultaneous in the instantiation of the text: firstly, it represents the speaker's way of expressing his experience of the world as well as the expression of his actions, feelings, perceptions, etc., in other words, it encodes the experiential meaning. Related to this expression of experience is the expression of logical relations whereby the speaker "puts order" in this experience by means of different structures such as coordination, apposition, etc. These two subfunctions represent the *ideational* metafunction of language. Moreover, a language also encodes the speaker's way to

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[1] See Leech & Short ([1981] 2007: 15) [7].
[2] As Leo Spitzer put it, a linguistic study of a literary text does not propose to dissect the flowers of beauty but to scrutinize it, even under a microscope sometimes: "It is only a frivolous love that cannot survive intellectual definition; great love prospers with understanding". (Preface to C. Hough's *Style and Stylistics* (1969) London: Routledge) [8].
[3] He wonders "whether the property of 'being literature' is an attribute of the text itself, or of some aspect of its environment -the context of situation, perhaps, or the mental set of a particular listener or reader" (1988: vii).
[4] He sees language as a 'social semiotic' (see 1978) [10].

interact and communicate with other people and express his attitudes, comments, doubts, etc. The interpersonal metafunction is the one which allows the expression of *interpersonal* meaning.The expression of experiential meaning in an interpersonal context is made possible through the internal organization of language. In other words, the "pieces" are woven together so as to create a coherent text. This last task is carried out by the *textual* metafunction. My aim in this paper is to apply this grammatical system, as is currently presented in Halliday's Functional Grammar (1985, 1994, 2004, 2014) [11,12,13,14] to the stylistic analysis of the present literary text, that is, to examine some key points related to the above-mentioned three metafunctions of language which contribute to articulating the microcosm of this text.

II.   THE STORY OF "MISS BRILL"

The object of our study will be a short story by the New Zealand modernist writer Katherine Mansfield. It seems very appropriate to carry out our analysis due to its short length and its completeness in itself. As C. Kennedy (1982: 90) [15] comments:The short story as a literary form is ideally suited to such an analysis since it is complete in itself, and a short-story writer has to achieve his ends as concisely and economically as possible. We might therefore expect that he would choose to highlight certain linguistic patterns in order to achieve a certain effect to reveal particular facts about the participants in the story.   This form was chosen by K. Mansfield as a conscious alternative from the traditional novel, widely written by young writers of the time, and suited "her love for little things"[5], which in her fictional world acquired a special dimension. As she put it in her own words, her short stories were motivated by her wish to express "something delicate and lovely", and also by "an *extremely* deep sense of hopelessness, of everything doomed to disaster, almost wilfully, stupidly".[6] Also central to understanding her work is the fact that her main characters are usually women facing a world that has to be accepted on its own terms, not in theirs.   These feelings are ever-present in her short stories and, very particularly, in *Miss Brill*[7]. It is the story of a lonely old woman whose only entertainment consists of going to the park every Sunday and sitting on a bench to fill the emptiness of her life by trying to share a bit of the other people's lives:*"She had become really quite expert, she thought, at listening as though she didn't listen, at sitting in other people's lives just for a minute while they talked round her"* (l.50-53)   But they will not let her intrude upon their lives, they will not let her cross the frontier: *"They did not speak. This was disappointing, for Miss Brill always looked forward to the conversation."* (l.48-50)   People, however, stood apart rigidly cold: they were *"still as statues"* (l.67). So, she has to content herself with looking at them as they pass by:*"Never mind, there was always the crowd to watch" (l. 68) "It was a play. It was exactly like a play"* (l.36-37)   In her anxiety about feeling one member of this world that she imagined so attractive, she feels that *"even she had a part... No doubt somebody would have noticed if she hadn't been there; she was part of the performance after all"* (l. 44-7)

Nevertheless, on the only occasion when this background mass of nameless passers-by speak, she overhears them referring to her as *"that stupid old thing at the end there", "who wants her?"* (l.196-7).

A symmetric structure reveals itself as the story comes to an end: it began with a sad, though hopeful, Miss Brill leaving her lonely dark little room *("her room like a cupboard"* (l. 215); then her imagination was given free rein at the park, where her inner world was made explicit while the other people were acting about; at the end, she recedes sadly back to the dark little room.

III.   ANALYSIS OF THE STORY

3.1 EXPERIENTIAL MEANING ANALYSIS

Our study begins with an analysis of the cognitive meaning expressed in the text. It will prove highly revealing, as stylistic significance and literary effects are undoubtedly related to 'transitivity' patterns, that is, the linguistic pattern of choices that realize the ideational metafunction. This experiential metafunction is an interrelated network of systems that are a resource for meaningful choice in our cognitive representation of reality about us. Its semantic units break up the physical and social environment into abstract categories such as processes - mostly actions, events, doings- and participants in those processes, as well as circumstances present in such goings-on.

Let us show a summary of the story's expressions of the transitivity relations: processes, participants and circumstances:

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[5] Her husband, the young editor John Middleton Murry, who became one of the best known critics of his generation used the word "tiny" to describe her work, too. See the chapter on K. Mansfield in Merryn Williams, *Six Women Novelists*, London: MacMillan, 1987 [17].

[6] In C.A. Hankin (ed.), *Letters of Katherine Mansfield to John Middleton Murry*, 1988, pp. 578-579 [18].

[7] "Miss Brill" is one of the short-stories included in the volume *The Garden Party and Other Stories,* 1922 [16]. All references to page follow the Penguin edition.

PROCESSES	MAIN PARTICIPANTS			
	Miss Brill	People	Objects	Facts
Material	24	66	13		103
Mental	28	9	1		38
Relational	15	23	14	6	58
Behavioural	4	4	1		9
Verbal	1	8	1		10
Existential	-	5	6		11
TOTAL	72	115	36	6	
	229				

Fig.1. Total distribution of processes and participants

If we look at the table of processes, we should note that there is a great amount of material processes. Most of them corresponding to actions performed by the crowd of people: a 64% of the instances (66); they are *actors*, they walk, they sit, they run... In sum, they are described in terms of what they externally do, while little is told about their thoughts or feelings. In fact, only in nine occasions they are the *sensers* of mental processes.   Miss Brill, however, appears to be more of a senser than an actor. When she leaves her room for the park and when she returns home she is mainly an actor (just 10 instances in the first paragraph, and 10 instances in the last one). While she stares at the outer world of *"moving statues"* letting her imagination flow, she is actually a senser of as many as 28 instances: 9 affective processes, 3 perceptive processes and 16 cognitive processes. Briefly, 74% of the mental processes in the whole story are ascribed to her.

What the narrator is concerned with, then, is the neat description of her inner thoughts and feelings, since she is not able to speak, even if she looks forward to joining the others' conversation. Out of 10 verbal processes, just one has Miss Brill as sayer:

*"And Miss Brill smoothed the newspaper as though it were the manuscript of her part and **said** gently: 'Yes, I have been an actress for a long time'"* (l.165-8)

We would dare say that even this last instance is a projection of her thoughts to herself expressed by wording, which means that she is thinking aloud, maybe whispering or murmuring to herself.The other 8 verbal processes correspond to the dialogue exchanged by a boyfriend and a girlfriend, part of the crowd of people passing by. The fact that it is not *reported* but *quoted* with the exact wording seems quite relevant in the present context, mainly because, unlike the rest of the information provided in the story, these are not ideas reported by Miss Brill after going through the crucible of her sensitive and idealistic mind, but rather, they are the accurate words expressed by "real" people. They come out to be not *"the hero and heroine"* she expects, but the insensitive, inhuman beings who destroy her illusion of human solidarity and friendliness. For them she is *"that stupid old thing at the end there"* (l.195). This is most probably the reason why, through her intimate perceptions, we also feel that these human beings are not so human after all, and that inanimate beings may seem more human than people: inanimate beings are actors on 13 occasions, and sensers, behavers or even speakers on one occasion. Of course, we must read this just as a projection, a reflection of her feelings. Curiously enough, apart from Miss Brill, the other "character" that arouses tenderness and moves the reader is her fur:"Miss Brill put up her hand and touched her fur. Dear little thing! It was so nice to feel it again. She had taken it out of its box that afternoon, shaken out the moth-powder, given it a good brush, and rubbed the life back into the dim little eyes. `What has been happening to me?' **said** the sad little eyes". (l.9-14)   Besides, further below we read: "*Little rogue! Yes... Little rogue **biting** its tail just by her left ear!*" (l. 20-22)   In fact, it is this inhumanity of human beings which makes Miss Brill endow such inanimate objects with life, for they correspond to her feelings in the way people do not. There is a passage when this is clearly apparent, namely, when she comes home depressed by people's cruelty and insensitiveness and takes off her fur:

"*She unclasped the necklet quickly; quickly, without looking, laid it inside. But when she put the lid on she thought she heard something crying*". (l.217-220)   Relational processes are the second more numerous after material ones. There are 58 instances out of which 35 are intensive attributive: 8 circumstantial attributive, 4 possessive attributive and 11 intensive identifying. When used for characterizing people, attributes tend to reflect the external appearance or status: *"He was tall, stiff, dignified..."* (l.105), *"they were in love"* (l.190), etc. However, when used for describing Miss Brill, attributes express her inner feelings or attitudes: *"Miss Brill was glad..."*(l.4), *"she had become really quite expert..."* (l.50).

3.2 SPEECH FUNCTIONS AND ATTITUDE

As a result of the genre conventions, this piece of narrative discourse, we may note, shows an overwhelming predominance of indicative declarative sentences. The straightforward meaning realized by such formal pattern is typically that of statements. The past tense is the primary tense which charaterizes this narration and it relates the propositions to the context in the speech event.

This short story by Mansfield is also characterized by the extensive use of **modality** by means of finite modal operators and modal adjuncts, or even both at the same time. This allows the writer to provide us with the information as filtered, as it were, through Miss Brill's consciousness. This devise is understandable enough, since her intimate perceptions and thoughts are our only guide to discovering her experience.

Let us see a summary of the expression of MODALITY:

MODALIZATION:	Probability: 15	12 statements
		3 questions
	Frequency: -	-
MODULATION:	Obligation: 1	1 statement
	Inclination: -	-

Fig.2. Total distribution of Modality

There is a total of 16 finite modal processes; 15 serve to modalize propositions, and one represents a modulated proposal (command). Almost all the finite modal operators show indeterminacy in the degree of probability: in the 12 cases of modalized statements we are provided with an expression of the speaker's opinion, in this case Miss Brill's.   As an example of this, when referring to the old couple sitting by her side, she thought: *"**Perhaps** they **would** go soon"* (l.55); when talking about people in general: *"**No doubt** somebody **would** have noticed if she hadn't been there"* (l. 145-6); when she found an almond in her slice of cake: *"...it was like carrying home a tiny present -a surprise- something that **might** very well not have been there"* (l.208-10).

Apart from these 16 finite modal verbs there are as many as 67 mood adjuncts:

MOOD ADJUNCTS		
Probability:	2	(e.g. *perhaps*)
Presumption:	4	(e.g. *somehow*)
Degree:	10	(e.g. *exactly*)
Usuality:	15	(e.g. *sometimes*)
Time:	7	(e.g. *suddenly*)
Intensity:	29	(e.g. *just, really*)
TOTAL	67	

Fig.3. Total distribution of Modal adjuncts

This high proportion of "indeterminacy" in the degree of probability in *Miss Brill*'s story confirms again our arguments put forward above, namely, that information has here a distinctive subjective character, since it is provided to the reader through Miss Brill's personal perspective. Hence, her attitude towards others is far from being objectively expressed. Rather, we are told about her desire to express what she would really like to happen, not the exact real facts of which she is not actually certain about.

Her desire to feel integrated in this "rejecting" mass of people is highlighted when she thinks:

*"...it seemed to Miss Brill that in another moment all of them, all the whole company, **would** begin singing. The young ones, the laughing ones... they **would** begin, and the men's voices, very resolute and brave, **would** join them. And then she too, she too, and the others on the benches -they **would** come in with a kind of accompaniment - something low, that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautilful -moving...* (l.174-183)

3.3 EPITHETS AND MODIFIERS

The protagonist's affective character is enhanced by the use of affective epithets. In her descriptions there is a remarkable predominance of adjectives which denote a sensitive soul. Let us illustrate this point with a few examples:

a) Her feelings are always described in a subtle and tender manner:
"something light and sad -no, not sad, exactly- something gentle seemed to move in her bosom..." (l. 26-7);
"it was nice to feel it again" (l.10);
"oh, how sweet it was to see them snap at her again" (l.15);
"the day was so charming..." (l.115);
"oh, how fascinating it was!" (l.135);
"something low that scarcely rose or fell, something so beautiful -moving..." (l.183), etc.

b) Her perceptions of things and people are frequently characterized by the use of adjectives suggesting a little size:
"a little flutey bit -very pretty!- a little chain of bright drops" (l.40-1);
"little children ran among them; little boys..., little girls, little French dolls..." (l.73-5);
"a tiny staggerer" (l.76) and *"its small high-stepping mother like a young hen"*(l.79-80);

"a little brown dog" (l.139).

For Miss Brill her fur is her *"Dear little thing!", "the dim little eyes", "the sad little eyes", "little rogue!"*... (l. 10-20). This again stands in sharp contrast with the words of the representatives of the mass of people in the story, words with a complete lack of sensitivity.

c) Whilst Miss Brill tends to treat things as human, these young people bring these object back to the cruelest reality:

"Why doesn't she keep her silly old mug at home?",

"It's her fu-fur which is so funny. It's exactly like a fried whiting" (l. 197-200).

What is more, they also reify Miss Brill, as if the old woman were useless trush: *"that stupid old thing at the end there"* (l.195-6).

3.4 PROJECTION

Everything the reader is told, except for the final dialogue between the boy and the girl, is not a direct representation of experience, but the representation of Miss Brill's representation. Projection in this story is the tool to represent Miss Brill's inner world.

As Halliday ([1985] 2004: 227) noted: "Projection is the logico-semantic relationship whereby a clause comes to function not as a direct representation of (non-linguistic) experience but as a representation of a (linguistic) representation".

TYPES OF PROJECTION			
	REPORTING (hypotaxis)	REPORTING (parataxis)	QUOTING (parataxis)
VERBAL (locution)	-	2	9
MENTAL (idea)	13	12	2
	"Indirect speech"	"Free indirect speech"	"Direct speech"
TOTAL	13	14	11

Fig.4. Total distribution of Projection

As can be seen, the projection of meaning through a mental process prevails along the short story. It is the typical way to represent "thinking", in this case Miss Brill's thinking, for, in 23 out of 27 instances, she is the conscious *senser* of the projected thoughts. Miss Brill is a *senser*, rather than a *speaker*, as just one out of the 11 projected wordings correspond to her; 6 correspond to the cruel boy and girl, and surprisingly enough, the other two direct quotations are ascribed to two material objects, the fur and a drum: *"The drum beat 'The Brute! The Brute'"* (l.123-4). As typical for the representation of thinking, the 'hypotactic' clause relation is the unmarked choice selected in the dependency system (hypotactic reporting idea: 13 out of 27)

> *"She was sure it was new..."* (l.36-7)
> *"She was sure it would be repeated."* (l.42)
> *"She rather thought they were going to meet that afternoon"* (l.112-3)
> *"She knew she was having the paper read to him by an actress"* (l.162-3), etc.

Free Indirect Speech/Thought is also recurrent. Although it is formally reported, the fact that it shares the directness of parataxis brings forward the protagonist's feelings and thoughts with more vividness. Besides, it permits the thematization of the projected clause: *"she had become really quite expert, she thought.."* (l.50-1). Let us add that, on a great number of occasions, the narrator is an intruder into Miss Brill's mind, thus conflating her "I" with the "she" of the protagonist:

> *"Dear little thing!"* (l.10)
> *"It was nice to feel it again"* (l.10)
> *"Now there came a flutey bit -very pretty!-"* (l.40-1)
> *"Perhaps they would go soon."* (l.55)
> *"Never mind, there was always the crowd to watch"* (l.68)
> *"Oh, how fascinating it was!..."* (l.135)
> *"...a something, what was it -not sadness -no, not sadness a something that..."* (l.171-2)

The relevance of the projection of thoughts in the story is such an outstanding feature that the author goes to the extreme of making it manifest through the representation of thought, as if it were wording: *"`Yes, we understand, we understand', she thought"* (l.185-6).

3.5 EXPANSION

If projection is the lexico-grammatical resource used by the author to reflect Miss Brill's inner world, expansion is a resource to characterize the outer world in a logical way. Expansion is the other logico-semantic system of relation between clauses; hence, the analysis of this should give us further clues about the configuration of the outer world our protagonist is contemplating and describing. As expansion is basically the same kind of relation as those under the name of CONJUNCTION, this will also help us envisage the cohesive linking elements in this text.

CONJUNCTION			Parataxis	Hypotaxis	Embedding
Elaboration (=)	apposition	exposition	12	1	
		exemplification	1		10
	clarification		4		
Extension (+)	addition	positive	**62**		
		adversative	12		
	variation		2		
Enhancement (x)	*spatio-temporal* (**55+49**)				
	causal-conditional			12	2
	quality		2	2	2
	manner				
	Comparison (**28**)				
	matter			1	
	TOTAL		95	16	14

Fig. 5 Total distribution of Conjunction

Parataxis is the prevailing interdependency system between the clauses. It has been chosen as the narration provides a sequence, a chain of scenes like "flashes". The reader gains the impression of being presented with fluid descriptions of people entering the scene, who are moreover briefly described through their appearance and external actions and then leave the scene as quickly as they entered. This is reinforced by the huge amount of addition (74 instances), out of which 62 are realized by "and". A typical instance would be:

Two young girls in red came by and two young soldiers in blue met them, and they laughed and paired and went off arm-in-arm. Two pleasant women with funny straw hats passed, gravely, leading beautiful smoke-coloured donkeys. A cold, pale nun hurried by. A beautiful woman came along and dropped her bunch of violets , and a little boy ran after to hand them to her, and she took them and threw them away as if they'd been poisoned. (l.94-102)

Special attention has to be paid to spatio-temporal enhancement, for we can find as many as 55 expressions referring to time and 49 referring to space. In the description of this somewhat dizzy picture of people who come and go in a constant flux, we find interspersed here and there a high number of references to time and place deixis. Many of them are often indetermined:

"now and again a leaf came drifting -from nowhere, from the sky" (l.18)
"...just for a minute while they talked round her" (l.52-3)
"And sometimes a tiny staggerer came suddenly rocking into the open from under the trees..." (l.76)
"She sat there for a long time" (l.216)
"...as though she'd seen someone else, much nicer, just over there" (l.127-128)

Besides, the implicit narrator makes us see things and events in the form of "subjectless subjectivity" by using the time and place deixis of the speaker/thinker:

TIME: *"Now they started again"* (l.139)
"Perhaps they would go soon" (l. 55)
PLACE: *"She sat there for a long time"* (l.216)
"...where she'd been -everywhere, here, there."(l.113-114)

Comparisons are also prominent. We find 28 instances which show Miss Brill's personal sensations about what she sees around:

"spots of light like white wine splashed over" (l.23)
"(the conductor) flapped his arms like a rooster about to crow" (l. 38)
"(the people) still as statues" (l.67)
the staggerer's mother rushed to its rescue *"like a young hen"* (l.80)
"(they) looked as though they'd just come from dark little rooms or even -even cupboards!" (l.86-87)

3.6 REFERENCE

Once we have analysed circumstantial reference, we are now concerned with reference as a semantic choice that has the purpose of identifying participants in this piece of narrative fiction. Reference at large is realized by **endo**phoric and **exo**phoric phoricity (contrast of in-text and out-text), the first splitting into **ana**phoric and **cata**phoric (or reference back and forward in the text):

REFERENCE	Anaphoric	Cataphoric	Exo/homophoric
Personal	193		1
Demonstrative	45	17	60
Comparative	20	5	
TOTAL	258	22	61

Fig.6 Total distribution of Reference

a) Personal: More than one third of the personal reference corresponds to Miss Brill whose name serves as the title for the story:

Personal reference: 194	Miss Brill	34%
	her fur	7%
	rest of participants	61%

The rest of the participants in the story share a 61% of the referential expressions; they are 21 people, a group of little boys, a group of little girls and 5 animals, apart from other forces like the sky, the trees, the sea, etc. This means that this mass of nameless participants is not important individually, but as a whole. They are the background moving choir in the scene; people who pass by and are spotlighted for just one moment, hence no further personal reference is required for them: (*"all the whole company"* (l.176)) and that is why they just deserve one or two clauses in order to be superficially described.

b) Demonstrative: Another point to deal with is the fact that the most common resource for identifying participants is the opposition definite/indefinite determiner: the identity of a participant may be seen as explicitly recoverable from the context or not recoverable, in Halliday's ([1985] 2014) terms, GIVEN or NEW information respectively in the discourse sequential message. There are 108 definite deictics and 69 indefinite pronouns in this text. It is obvious that when a new participant has already been introduced its reference becomes definite but what is amazing is the huge number of definite deictics which are used for participants the first time they are introduced. There are, moreover, 60 instances of exophoric and homophoric determiners (57 'the', 3 'that'), some of which refer to unique things like the sky, the sun, etc., but many of them point to participants who, although not known by the reader, are so well known by Miss Brill that the narrator, by virtue of her total identification with her character, makes use of a definite deictic. For instance, since *"the band", "the conductor", "the old beggar"* are always there one Sunday after another, they are the "habitual" in that context. That is why they do not need any extra reference by modifiers, epithets, etc. On the other hand, the "crowd", the "passers-by", when focused on, will need extra reference.

3.7 EPITHETS AND OTHER MODIFIERS

The rest of participants are referred to by *generic names:* "man, woman, children, boys, girls, gentleman...".

The epithets that are attached to this class of individuals are conventional and quite shallow: "old, big, beautiful...". Most of them tell us about superficial physical appearance, age... and the like. Postmodifiers commonly refer to the clothes and their colours:

The crowd:
"a fine old man in a velvet coat"
"a big old woman (sitting upright)"
"an Englishman and his wife"
"little children/little boys/little girls, little French dolls..."
"a tiny staggerer/ its small high-stepping mother"
"two young girls in red"
"two soldiers in blue"
"two pleasant women with funny straw hats"
"two beautiful smoke-coloured donkeys"
"a little boy"
"an ermine toque" (metonymy)
"four girls walking abreast"

"a boy and a girl"

Some details, interspersed here and there, reveal the protagonist's sensitive nature:

"the blue sky powdered with gold and great spots of light like white wine splashed over..." (l.1-3)
"the slen der trees with yellow leaves down drooping, and through them a line of sea, and beyond the blue sky with gold-veined clouds"(l.88-91)

As noted above when we dealt with mood, most of the clauses in this work of narrative fiction are declarative. Also, theme is conflated with subject in an unmarked way on the majority of occasions. However, it is worth stressing a remarkable construction which appears recurrently throughout the story, namely, the predicated theme by means of anticipatory 'it' (the so called it-cleft):

"It was nice to feel it again" (l.10)
"How sweet it was to see them...." (l.14-15)
"It was like someone playing...; it didn't matter how it   played" (l.33-34)

Let us show illustrate this with the analysis of a typical instance, showing an embedding of the Theme structure:

THEME		RHEME
Theme	Rheme	
It	is her *fu-fur*	which is so funny

This marked variant postponing the subject to the end of the clause moves it to the *new information* focus position.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

All this adds to our first intuitions as readers of this story: we are here presented with the recall of our old heroine's experiences and perceptions rather than the telling of an objective story of events. Everything flows through Miss Brill's stream of consciousness, both as a projection of her inner feelings and thoughts and as her perceptions of an unfriendly outer world inhabited by a mass of nameless participants. As a concluding remark we think that it is worth pursuing the values of stylistic analysis as a means of unveiling some of the mysteries of the literary work. Likewise, we would like to argue that far from being a disrespectful assault to a sacred object, to submit a work to the vivisection of a detailed linguistic analysis should help us be more aware of its value as an artifact. This view has also been maintained by Halliday (1988: Preface):The more immediate the goal, as I see it, and one that is unquestionably attainable, is to show why and how the text means what it does. Note that this already requires both analysis and interpretation: and in the process you may, especially with a literary work, find that you have done more than simply show why it means what you knew it meant already. You may have discovered new meanings you had not previously been aware of -at least not onsciously aware of, though you might have been reacting to them unconsciously.

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