

CORPUS STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF POSTMODERN NARRATIVE FEATURES IN MARIO VARGAS LLOSA'S *THE FEAST OF THE GOAT*

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ABSTRACT

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By deploying a computational toolkit, this paper carries out a corpus stylistic analysis to understand the postmodern narrative features in Mario Vargas Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat*. Since a novel's style is mostly determined by the authors' choice of literary techniques, a stylistic analysis would help to uncover the features of a text, particularly the language and literary techniques employed in it. It is evident Llosa employs postmodern narrative techniques to counter the prevailing narrative that Trujillo's regime was one of great economic prosperity and wellbeing for the Dominican Republic. The paper adopted a corpus methodology for uncovering, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, certain features of the postmodern narrative in *The Feast of the Goat*, features that normally get missed out in a manual analysis. AntConc corpus software was adopted for the study to explore how use of certain key words, as well as semantic domains could help to understand Llosa's narrative techniques, particularly his use of flashbacks and fragmentariness, besides character-delineation in relation to the key themes of the novel like surveillance and dictatorship. While the quantitative data provided a helpful starting point, further analysis tied the findings to the central themes of the novel, as not all words in the text have straightforward interpretations. Thus, a corpus analysis of *The Feast of the Goat* deepens our understanding of how Llosa creatively incorporates postmodern techniques to reconstruct the inner working of the dictator's mind. His ruminations serve as the narrative framework for the novel. Through an analysis of linguistic data, we unveil the writer's style in detail, to exemplify what type of reader response the authors hopes to elicit through the adoption of such stylistic devices.

Keywords: Dictatorship; n-grams; postmodernism; stylistic analysis; surveillance

1. INTRODUCTION

As per the conventions of literary aesthetics, a novel's style is primarily determined by an author's choices within a range of literary techniques like diction, tone, imagery etc. The cognitive function of reading

lies in heuristically working out the moral and political implications of the text, which the author has taken so much care to non-didactically convey to the readers. A discerning reader then seeks through a stylistic analysis to uncover the thematic aspects of literature by carefully analyzing the language and literary techniques employed in the text (Middleton, 1990). The methodology involves identifying distinctive linguistic patterns of a text as a path to interpreting their stylistic influence. The paper will discuss how corpus methodology is used to analyze some of the postmodern techniques that Mario Vargas Llosa adopts in his work, *The Feast of the Goat* (2000), a novel which was originally published in Spanish and later rendered into English by Edith Grossman.

The novel attempts to bring to light the gross violations that the dictator, Trujillo is reported to have unleashed on his subjects during his three-decade reign of terror and excessive brutality. Llosa uses postmodern narrative techniques to counter and subvert the prevailing narrative that Trujillo's regime was a period of great economic prosperity and wellbeing for the Dominican Republic. Popular accounts of Trujillo's leadership have been mostly laudatory. In their article, Winters and Derrell (2010) observe that Trujillo's characteristic predatory style propelled the Dominican Republic into an era of great economic prosperity. Lundahl and Vedovato (1989) describe how even after Trujillo's death he was remembered by large segments of the Dominican population more as the father of the country than as a ruthless dictator. Llosa's novel, however, presents Trujillo as a cruel autocrat whose brutal and oppressive regime left long-term psychological effect on the citizens of the Dominican Republic. The novel thus dwells quite extensively on the theme of totalitarianism, a recurring theme in most works of Postmodern fiction. Trujillo's dictatorial rule is explored here through a discussion of associated themes like ideological brainwashing, surveillance, paranoia, and alienation. By portraying the subjects' fear under the evil system Llosa exposes the problems associated with Trujillo's regime.

Historically, postmodernism is considered to be an era that followed modernity. As a late twentieth century aesthetic, it departs from modernism through its use of a certain self-conscious literary narrative style which involves metafiction and characteristics like the unreliable narrator. Full of paradoxes, postmodern fiction is unavoidably political, as it undermines and subverts earlier conventions and presuppositions, juxtaposing the self-reflexive and the historically grounded (Hutcheon, 2003). Hence, analyzing a text like *The Feast of the Goat* for its stylistic features can be both an interesting as well as challenging literary exercise at the same time. If attempted manually, owing to the sheer size of the text, it would be an overwhelming task for any scholar to accomplish. It is here that twentieth century advancements in computer applications can come to one's aid. Corpus linguistics has indeed been a boon to literary scholars. Thanks to software tools, now a text in its electronic version can be expediently scanned for specific linguistic elements. These new corpus tools enable comparative keyword and collocation analyses, besides helping to screen the use of point of view, verb tense etc. Results can then be investigated in a context to ascertain the impact on readers. Corpus methodology, therefore serves as an expedient tool for uncovering and analysing the use of postmodern techniques in *The Feast of the Goat*, as it reveals crucial features that tend to get missed out in the manual analysis. By deploying a software tool, one can carry out a quantitative analysis of the text's linguistic phenomena and then the resulting data could be investigated and studied to trace the underlying linguistic patterns. The literary interpretation of these themes in the text is made possible by finding keywords, N-grams, and their collocations.

In this novel, Llosa adopts a skeptical tone and narrative irony. It is through a fine blend of fictional and real events, what Linda Hutcheon (1989) refers to as 'historiographic metafiction', that the author examines the dictator's life, his ideology, values, and oppressive ways within the highly stratified and rigidly hierarchical Dominican society. Llosa often weaves real historical incidents and characters into the lives of the imaginary characters, where the multiple narratives of the key characters serve to throw light on the true nature of Trujillo's regime and the response it provoked in his subjects. By focusing on the role of the ideology that Trujillo and his cronies upheld to perpetuate their political power, Llosa expects the readers to ponder over the hegemony of the mainstream narrative that Trujillo's regime had been an era of great economic prosperity and social progress for the Dominican Republic. Our research study aimed to address the following research questions:

- 1) What postmodern features does Llosa adopt to imaginatively reconstruct the dictator, Trujillo's regime in the Dominican Republic?
- 2) How could corpus stylistics contribute to the study of a text in terms of its artistic function?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In 2005, Stubbs specified in his article that the ideas expressed in the text through language can be identified by software tools, which highlight textual features that are of literary importance (Stubbs, 2005). Fischer-Starcke (2009) in her research article, determines the keywords tied to the thematic aspects of a text as the reason for their frequent occurrence. Also, as Biber (2011) explains, corpus-stylistic studies dwell on the

distribution of lexical items to identify the features of a text or its stylistic devices which are often characteristic of an author or of a given genre of a text. He also stated that computational analysis helps in identifying the patterns in choice of lexis. Mahlberg and McIntyre (2011) argue that keywords suggest elements of the fictional world such as characters and settings as well as thematic signals. In another article Mahlberg (2012) argues corpus stylistics combines corpus linguistics with literary stylistics methodologies. Mahlberg (2013) also explains corpus stylistic analysis as a means of combining literary and linguistic studies. Stockwell and Mahlberg (2015) proposes a novel approach to literary discourse by using corpus linguistic methodologies to cognitive poetics research concerns. They focus on how readers engage in mind-modeling during the characterization process. Thus, the literature review suggests that most corpus stylistics studies have so far not touched on postmodern narrative features. This research is carried out to fill the research gap of applying corpus methodology to uncover the narrative technique of a postmodern work of fiction and how it can aid in the study of the qualities of a text in terms of its artistic function.

3. METHODOLOGY

The complete text of the novel was exported into a text file and reviewed for accuracy. Laurence Anthony's corpus linguistics tool TagAnt (2014) was used to tag the text for part of speech and grammatical information. The tool AntConc (Anthony, 2012) was used to extract data on keywords and tense in the text, and the tool AntGram (Anthony, 2018) extracted n-grams. For this study, a keyword was a word determined to be central to the novel's theme. The researchers created semantic lists associated with totalitarian systems, paranoia, and psychological control and searched for these word families to observe where these themes appeared explicitly in the text. While this approach was researcher-directed, the n-gram search was text-directed. An n-gram is a repeated string of words of n length. The tool AntGram identified all n-grams from 2-grams through 8-grams that appeared three or more times in the text. The researchers then conducted a qualitative analysis of the n-grams, seeking themes in the most commonly repeated word strings.

For the study, the researchers employed AntConc corpus software to evaluate the use of the literary techniques adopted by Llosa in his work. AntConc is a free software toolkit designed by Laurence Anthony for extracting keywords, n-grams etc., from corpora (2012). Also, this kind of quantitative analysis relies on observation of the repetitions of language, which in turn helps to unravel the corresponding relation between patterns and meaning of the text. To enable the identification of patterns, a concordance could be sorted in several ways. During this study, the software is deployed to identify and analyse the key elements of the text, which in turn enables the readers to arrive at a better understanding of the challenge that the text seeks ideologically to pose. The linguistic information extracted from the text does indeed provide interesting insights.

The narrative in the novel is polyphonic, fragmented, and discontinuous. There is no single authorial perspective, as reality is presented to the reader in the form of multiple perspectives, as an omniscient narrator guides the reader through the several micro-narratives of the individuals who conspired to assassinate Trujillo. In the first section, the paper will discuss how postmodern techniques of flashbacks, fragmentariness, and nonlinear timeline can be tracked and analyzed by Parts of Speech (PoS) tagging and contrasting the author's use of past and present tense, and analysis of grammatical aspects like use of (ed) past tense. Flash forward describes a scene, which in turn helps to build the narrative momentum, aiding the narration to move forward in time from the current point in the story. It is deployed to represent events, whether expected, projected, or imagined into the future, thereby helping in foreshadowing something that would happen. In other words, flash forward technique is the story narrated from a point of view of the future (Pisters, 2011). Britton and Graesser (2014) in their book stated that authors may deviate from the norm of narrating the story in a chronological order: they may report events later (flashback) or earlier (flash forward) than they actually occurred in the story. In this way, postmodern techniques of polyphonic narration, metafiction and ambiguity in the narrative voice can be analyzed by tracking the switches between first- and third-person narration throughout the novel.

While this numerical data provides a helpful starting point, the second section ties the findings to the novel's themes. Many of the keywords carry thematic meaning, and not all the words in the text have straightforward interpretations. Postmodern themes of surveillance, paranoia, alienation, and dictatorship can be tracked via n-grams and their significance to the novel and their connections to each other, as these repeated sequences of words are vital in fostering rich interpretation of the text. By incorporating linguistic data, we unveil the writer's style in detail, pointing to the type of reader response the author hopes to elicit through such stylistic devices.

4. COMPUTATIONAL ANALYSIS OF LLOSA'S NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES

Computational analysis involves a varied and extensive use of computer tools for both automatic as well as interactive techniques. Through a quantitative or qualitative analysis of the data secured (Biber, 2011), the technique enables the identification of patterns in choice of lexis. The method provides valuable data on collocational patterns of the text, which often get missed in a traditional analysis of the literary text. The method thus yields a statistical analysis of the text's structural features, which are dependent on the specific lexical items that occur within it.

Corpus stylistic analysis of Llosa's *The Feast of the Goat* illustrates the literary value of quantitative data. Using the narrative technique of self-reflexivity, which is central to the postmodern method, Llosa makes his characters Urania, Trujillo and the four assassins ruminate over their past deeds. The author weaves the three strands of the narrative, that of Urania, the dictator, and the assassins. Memories of recollected events are used to speculate on, recreate, and represent history, which serves Llosa's design of providing an alternate account that counters the official accounts recorded in the annals of world history. The ideas expressed in the text through language can be identified by the software tool, which highlights textual features that are of literary importance (Stubbs, 2005). Llosa's skillful use of the postmodern narrative techniques of flashbacks, fragmentariness and non-linear timeline in *The Feast of the Goat* can thus be analyzed.

4.1 PoS tagging for flashbacks, non-linear timeline and fragmentariness:

A PoS tag (part-of-speech tag) is a software tool that labels each token or lexical item in a novel to highlight the parts of speech and other grammatical elements like the tense, number (whether plural/singular), case etc. The following is an extract from the novel that illustrates what a basic PoS tagged text may look like (Figure 1).

THE_DT FEAST_NN OF_IN THE_DT GOAT_NP

Urania_NP . _SENT Her_PP\$ parents_NNS had_VHD done_VVN her_PP no_RB favor_VVP ;_: her_PP\$ name_NN suggested_VVD a_DT planet_NN ,_, dark_JJ ,_, rather_RB sad_JJ eyes_NNS who_WP looked_VVD back_RB at_IN her_PP from_IN the_DT mirror_NN . _SENT Urania_NP ! _SENT What_VBD it_PP his_PP\$ idea_NN or_CC hers_PP ? _SENT Too_RB late_JJ to_TO find_VV out_RP ,_, my_PP\$ girl_NN ;_: your_PP\$ mother_NN She_PP waits_VVZ for_IN the_DT sea_NN to_TO become_VV visible_JJ through_IN the_DT win- _NN . _SENT down_VV of_IN her_PP\$ room_NN on_IN the_DT ninth_JJ floor_NN of_IN the_DT Hotel_NP Jaragua_NP ,_, and_CC at_IN last_JJ she_T palms_NNS and_CC almond_NN trees_NNS that_WDT line_VVP it_PP . _SENT Back_RB then_RB ,_, the_DT Hotel_NP Jaragua_NP faced_VVD the_DT

Figure 1: POS Tagged Text

Through discovering the tense forms in the novel, the author's use of the flashback technique was identified. After the text was tagged by the freeware TagAnt, a tagging tool based on the TreeTagger engine (Anthony, 2014), the verb tense was identified. The author's use of verb tenses in the narration of the story is tabulated below:

Table 1: Verb Tenses of *The Feast of the Goat*

Tense Category	Specific Tense	# of verbs
Past tense	Simple Past	9,842
	Past Continuous	501
	Past Perfect	1,031
Total		11,374
Present tense	Simple Present	4,161
	Present Continuous	215
	Present Perfect	521
Total		4,897
Future tense	Simple Future with 'will'	410
	Simple Future with 'going to'	105
Total		515

Table 1 shows the total number of verb forms analysed is 16786 and the percentage of each tense categories found are: past tense 68%, present tense 29% and future tense 3%. Disrupting the convention of the traditional linear narrative, Llosa chooses to switch back and forth in time. This nonlinear narrative technique helps to portray events in a fragmented manner in the story, with the effect that the relationship among events does not follow any causality sequence (Kim et al., 2018). Through an adroit use of flashback and flash-forward, the novel traces the story as revealed through the thoughts and recollections of the characters. It starts with the story of Urania Cabral's relocating, after more than three and a half decades of self-exile, to the Dominican Republic. The purpose of her return is gradually revealed as the novel progresses. It becomes evident that Urania's character is almost entirely overshadowed by Trujillo's towering personality.

The novel also traces the flashbacks of the four assassins' stories through their thoughts and memories as they dwell on the reasons for wanting Trujillo to be killed, an attempt to justify their actions in the present, to again switch over into flash-forwards leading to the day of the tyrant's assassination, while they wait fretfully in the car to ambush Trujillo's vehicle on the highway. Figure 2 shows the line chart of non-linear narrative from the data collected on the verb tenses of the novel.

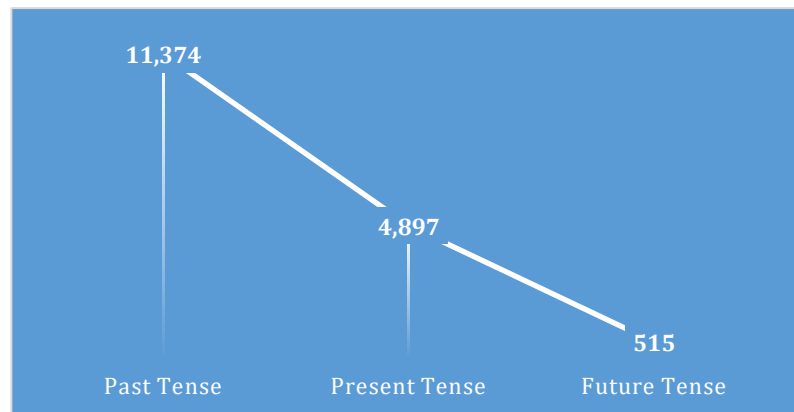


Figure 2: Line Chart of Non-Linear Narrative

Figure 2 shows the difference among the tenses, which is statistically significant, as it informs the readers of the author's style, i.e., of resorting to temporal shifts, which is a characteristic feature of most postmodern narratives. This alternating between the use of flashback or flashforward, as the concordance plot here (Figure 3) proves that the narrative technique used by Llosa was not the conventional linear method of storytelling.

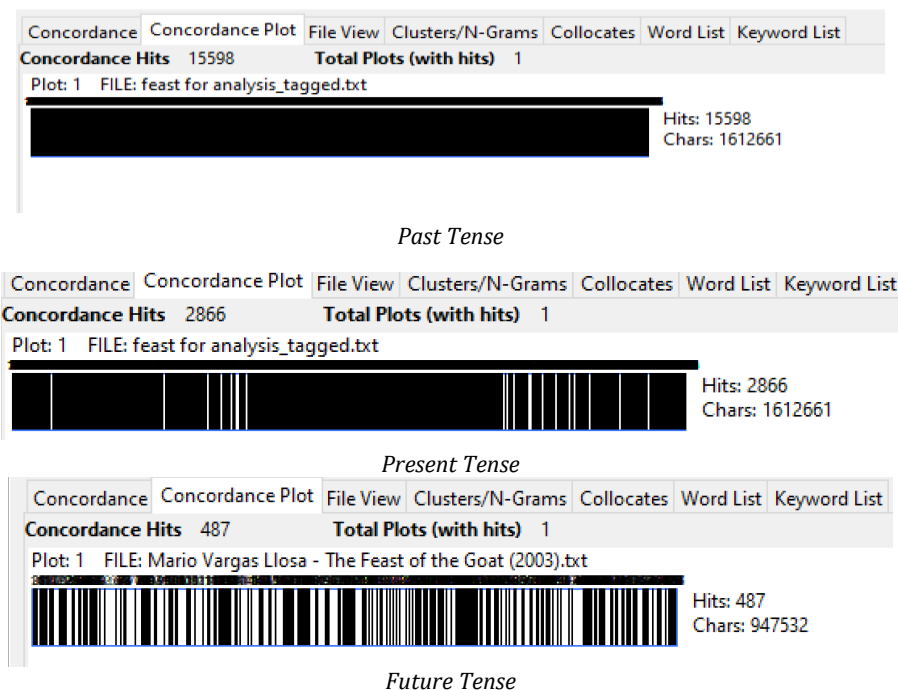


Figure 3: Concordance Plot for Non-linear Storytelling

The novel has a complex structure that relies on temporal jumps and constantly shifts the action from the present into the past and then the future. Corpus stylistic analysis reveals the literary meaning of the data. Verb tense is the linguistic feature that contributes semantically, albeit ironically (much against the postmodern grain), to the temporal embeddedness of events. Figure 3 highlights this aspect of temporal blurring, as the past tense and the present tense are found to blend together on almost every page of the novel, while the future tense is sprinkled throughout the text. It is evident that Llosa departs from the conventional narrative method to deploy the postmodern technique of weaving a story through multiple yarns and deliberately presents the narrative as a fragmented one (Feng, 2016). The following excerpt from the text serves to illustrate Llosa's use of non-linear narration:

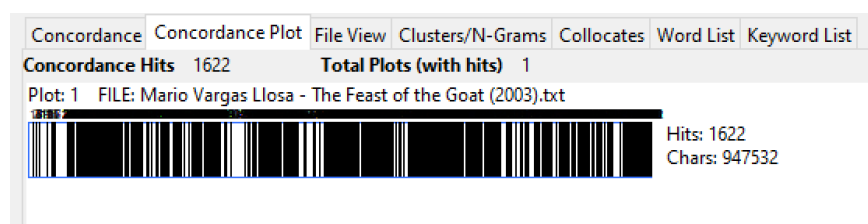
Her parents had done her no favor; her name suggested a planet, a mineral, anything but the slender, fine-featured woman with burnished skin and large, dark, rather sad eyes who looked back at her from the mirror... She waits for the sea to become visible through the window of her room on the ninth floor of the Hotel Jaragua, and at last she sees it. The darkness fades in a few seconds and the brilliant blue of the horizon quickly intensifies, beginning the spectacle she has been anticipating since she woke at four in spite of the pill she had taken, breaking her rule against sedatives. (Llosa, 2002, p. 1)

The above excerpt is from the first chapter which begins with Urania, the protagonist who comes back to the Dominican Republic after 35 years of exile. She is most likely telling the story in the year 1996. The very next chapter describes the events of 1961, when the tyrant was assassinated.

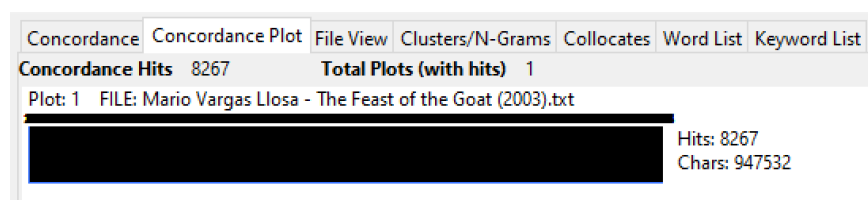
He woke, paralyzed by a sense of catastrophe. He blinked in the dark, immobilized, imprisoned in a web, about to be devoured by a hairy insect covered with eyes. At last he managed to stretch his hand toward the bedside table where he kept the revolver and the loaded sub machine gun. But instead of a weapon he grasped the alarm clock: ten to four. He exhaled. Now, at last, he was fully awake. Nightmares again? He still had a few minutes: he was obsessive about punctuality and did not get out of bed before four o'clock. Not a minute before, not a minute after. (Llosa, 2002, p. 16)

4.2 Polyphonic narration and metafiction

The polyphonic narrative style uses multiple narrators to tell the story in a literary text. An important goal of the polyphonic narrative is to portray character identity and subjectivity. Common to all postmodern literary texts is the intense self-reflexivity of the narrator. It is a key element of metafiction (Mahlberg, 2012). In the novel, we find Urania revisiting her memories of the city, her childhood, and the events that had compelled her to flee the Dominican Republic. The readers follow her stream of consciousness over the course of a day, as she visits her aunt, cousins, and her father, who is now incapacitated by a stroke. Every place she visits at times evokes poignant and at other times chilling memories. In another narrative thread, we have the assassins' anticipation of their encounter with Trujillo, as they privately ruminate over the events that brought them to this vengeful mood. Deploying the concordance plot, the postmodern technique is tracked by tracing the shifts between the first person and third person narratives.



First person Narration I, "we," "me," "us," "my," "mine," or "ours" as pronouns



Third person Narration "he," "she," "it," "they," "him," "hers," "them," "their," "his," "its," or "theirs" as pronouns

Figure 4: Concordance Plot for Polyphonic Narration

Figure 4 here indicates that the first-person narrative runs throughout the novel. However, the use of third person narrative strand in the novel is considerably higher.

Table 2: Personal Pronouns for Finding Polyphonic Narration

Person	Personal Pronoun	Number of Times Appeared
First person	I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, ourselves, our	1622
Third person	<i>he, him, his, himself, she, her, hers, herself, it, its, itself, they, them, their, theirs, themselves</i>	8267

Table 2 indicates that though Llosa's characters do speak in the first person, their narrative, more often than not, is mediated by the third person neutral narrator. Though it provides only an indirect access to the characters' psyche, nevertheless the readers get an insight into the characters' minds, because Llosa differentiates their speech by providing a detailed and seamless description of both their physical environment as well as their inner worlds.

Readers are able to follow Trujillo's stream of thought as follows:

If Johnny Abbes had handed things better and the bomb had blown off the head of that faggot Romolo, there wouldn't be any sanctions and the asshole gringos wouldn't be handing him bullshit about sovereignty, democracy and human rights (Llosa, 2002, p. 17)

A few chapters later, the narrator narrates on Antonio de la Maza, one of the assassins:

In spite of everything, this was a beautiful country, damn it. It would be even more beautiful after they had killed the devil who in thirty-one years had violated and poisoned it more than anything else it had suffered in its history [...] More than anything else, what he could not forgive was that just as he had corrupted and brutalized this country, the Goat had also corrupted and brutalized Antonio de la Maza. (Llosa, 2002, p. 89).

The polyphonic narrative frame thus enables the victims to discuss openly and publicly the traumatic and terrible events of their past. In the course of articulating their thoughts and examining their feelings, the victims relive their painful past and experience a release, a kind of emotional catharsis, which helps them make personal sense of their sufferings (Goldwyn, 1983).

4.3 Keywords act as thematic signals

Corpus stylistics is concerned not only with what is said or written, i.e., where, when and by whom, but also with how often the specific forms are used (Lewis, 1990). Keywords denote the themes of a text as the chief reason for their distribution and frequent recurrence, suggesting their importance both for the content of the data as well as its structure. An important function of keywords is to point to the 'aboutness' of the data (Fischer-Starcke, 2009). Many of these keywords are hence carriers of thematic meaning. For example, the lexemes representing the totalitarian systems such as *kill, killed, killing, murder, torture, tortures, tortured, prison, arrested, arrest, and tormented* occur 164 times in the novel.

from com\xAD mitting a serious error, General. Killing a bishop would not have resolved your problems. pharmacist in Moca, who thought it was for killing a wild dog that had been wreaking havoc , Tuntin Sanchez, informed him that he was under arrest, ac\xAD cused of complicity with the assassins on my face." "General Roman ordered the Chief killed?" Again, in his nose and mouth, the colonel' , his friends-Turk, his dearest friend-had been killed, along with three poor guards who provided the inhom Caribbean dictator would dare to abduct and murder an Amer\xAD ican citizen on American soil. nder a huge headline: "Killers Sought in Trujillo Murder," and, below that, the photograph of General Roma power, headed by Ramfis, that continued to kill, torture, and disappear people with the same impunity as 't have phoned; he would have had him arrested and he'd be in La Cuarenta now, for poor Guaro: to be ar\xAD rested, tortured, and interrogated because of something he knew no used by him and Ramfis in 1959, when they tortured and killed the invaders of Constanza, Maiman, and Maiman, and Estero Hondo, and in 1961, when they tortured and killed the people involved in the events mfis, Rad\xAD hames, the Trujillistas. They began killing and locking up people left and right. Well, ble for countless abductions, acts of extortion, tortures, and mur\xAD ders ordered by Trujillo, and came up they were taken out of the prison and put into the Dogcatcher again. There was risk having their doctors and nurses go to prison. And so, pretty soon, the SIM would be Garcia, who also killed before he could be killed, and the mob's looting and destruction of Domini\xAD cans-were either dead or in prison, and the regime discov\xAD ered, in January 1960, us, Roberto." As the two vehicles left the prison and took the coastal highway, a storm broke, the chalet that had been converted into a prison and torture center for the SIM, near the . He had him arrested, sent to the military prison at the mouth of the Nigua River, and me subordinate, perhaps Colonel Abbes Garcia, has arrested Bishop Reilly after taking him by force from was Abbes Garcia doing, ordering the callis to arrest Bishop Reilly? Was this bloodthirsty degenerate s didn't get any sleep that night either, tormented by apprehension, fatigue, despair, and doubt. At o, the Dominican consul. Trujillo saved him from prison by claiming he had diplomatic immunity and ordere seemed to fill his stomach. But he was tormented by soli\xAD tude, boredom, lack of news.

Figure 5: Thematic Signals

Figure 5 here shows the search terms (which can be either a single word, derivatives of the word or even thematically clustered words) in the center of the display window. Four sets of words representing the four themes of totalitarian systems, paranoia, surveillance, and alienation were identified in the novel. In addition to the 164 occurrences of words related to totalitarian systems, words representing paranoia and psychological control of human mind such as *trembling*, *frightened*, *fear*, and *afraid* occurs 79 times throughout the novel. Also, words signifying surveillance, like *silent*, *silence* and *suspected* occur 68 times in the novel. Finally, words reflecting the postmodern theme of alienation such as *lone*, *alone*, *isolated*, and *isolation* occur 29 times throughout the novel (Table 3).

Table 3: Keywords Grouped Thematically

Occurrence of Keywords	Words Included
164 times words represented totalitarian systems	<i>kill, killed, killing, murder, torture, tortures, tortured, prison, arrested, arrest, and tormented</i>
79 times words represented paranoia and psychological control of human mind	<i>trembling, frightened, fear, and afraid</i>
68 times words represented surveillance	<i>silent, silence and suspected</i>
29 times words represented alienation	<i>lone, alone, isolated, and isolation</i>

These repeated keywords influence the text's reception by the readers. They become part of the text's stylistic mechanisms, through which the reader responds and interprets the narrative devices. These keywords, thereby serve to reify the schematic interpretation on a higher and abstract level, rather than the conventional responses to the narrative structure. Reader response criticism thus stresses the function of the reader as an active creator of meaning (Whiteley & Canning, 2017). Thus, the terms would be relevant to and affect the reader's experience. Baker's review, an authentic reader's review shows how the narrator's writing style makes him "frightened" or "anxious."

The stories of the individual conspirators are not always easy to follow or to keep separate [...] and the overall plot of the novel holds few surprises. None the less, it makes compelling and often anxious reading, partly because you keep hoping that things are not going to be as bad as they could be. Almost inevitably, they are. (Baker, 2002, para. 3)

The keywords depict the struggle and isolation of the people of Dominican Republic. The subjects felt emptied and controlled, and experienced a lack of communication and loss of identity. They experienced torture, fear, suspicion, constant surveillance, and the absence of freedom of thought and action. These lead to a feeling of alienation and isolation. Thus, the repetition of these reader centered keywords reinforces the novel's theme of dictatorship.

A few passages from the text serve to illustrate how people felt tortured, terrorised, suspected, surveilled and deprived of their freedom of thought and behaviour. Trujillo's cruelty is evident from the Parsley Massacre which happened in 1937, where any individual who failed to pronounce the "r" in the Spanish word for parsley, perejil, was ordered to be shot down by the dictator's army. His xenophobia and nationalist propaganda were directed at black Haitians, whom he regarded as inferior. Urania recounts:

The Chief found a small country barbarized by wars among the caudillos, a country without law and order, impoverished, losing its identity, invaded by its starving, ferocious neighbours [...] Great ills demand great remedies! He not only justified the massacre of Haitians in 1937; he considered it a great accomplishment of the regime. (Llosa, 2002, p. 7)

Juan Tomas Diaz, a three-star general who had been much favored by the regime and entrusted with the command of the military region was equally horrified at the excesses of the dictator. Juan Tomas confessed to Antonio the atmosphere of disintegration that was visible everywhere:

[...] when he (Juan Tomas) was sure nobody could hear him [...] he confessed to Antonio that everything mortified him — the assassinations, the disappearances, the tortures, the precariousness of life, the corruption, the surrender of body, soul, and conscience by millions of Dominicans to a single man [...] (Llosa, 2002, pp. 94–95)

4.4 N-grams

Corpus stylistic analyses also cover collocations, the manner in which a particular word associates with other words, as illustrated empirically through their tendency to co-occur with higher frequency than would be expected by chance. In certain cases, a target word may co-occur with a larger set of collocates (Biber, 2011). Moving beyond the level of searching for single words i.e., keywords, one can start by looking at two-word units (2-grams), three-word-units (3-grams), etc. 4- and 5-gram analysis led to the same thematic results as the 3-

gram analysis. 6- and 7-grams contained the same items found in 8-gram analysis. Hence, 8-grams and 3-grams are discussed in detail here.

4.5 8-Grams analysis represents main characters

Mahlberg observes that the longer the clusters, the lesser their frequency (Mahlberg, 2012). The 8-grams are clearly associated with main characters, and Mahlberg's conclusion that longer clusters are usually specific to a text, and reveal features of certain characters is found true in *The Feast of the Goat*. This linguistic pattern tends to go unrecognized in the traditional approach.

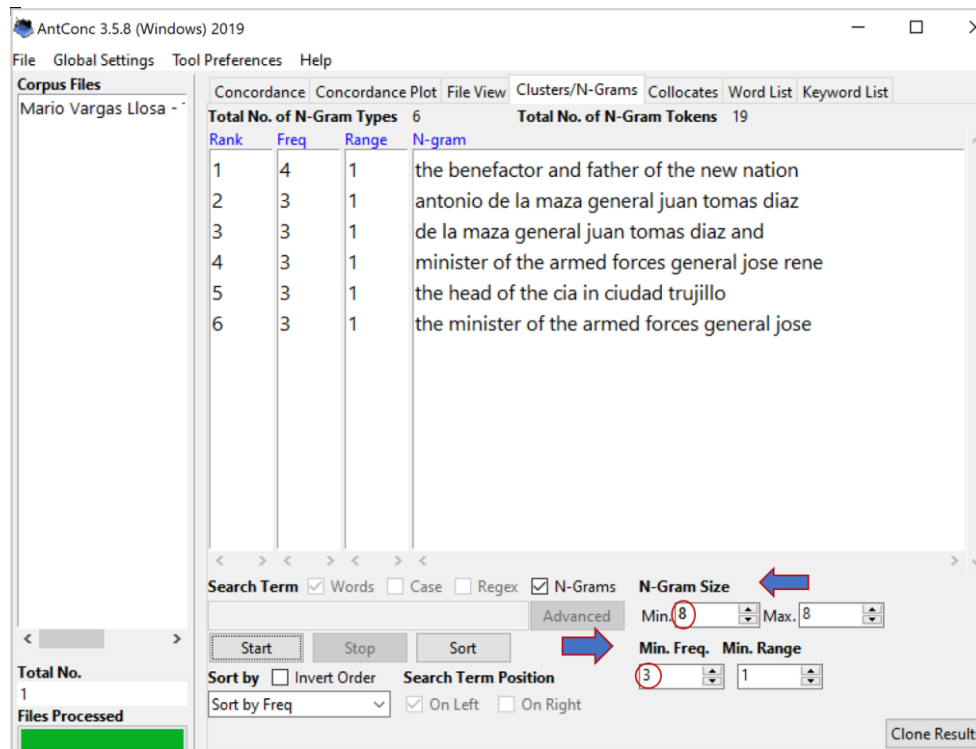


Figure 6: 8-Gram Analysis

Figure 6 shows the finding of 8-grams with minimum frequency of 4 and 3 and there were 6 types of 8-grams. In that, the clusters '*the benefactor and father of the new nation*', and '*the head of the CIA in ciudad Trujillo*' represents the principal character, the dictator Trujillo. The clusters '*Antonio de la maza general juan tomaz diaz*' and '*de la maza general juan tomas diaz*' denotes one of the assassins. He was one of the personal guards of Trujillo, whose brother was killed as a part of government cover-up, for which he swears to take revenge against the dictator. The group of words '*minister of the armed forces general jose rene*' and '*the minister of the armed forces general jose*' denote minister of armed forces, the regime's second man in command, a frequent target of Trujillo's humiliations. Though the personal guard and the minister are close to the dictator, they are mistreated by Trujillo. These three characters' long, ceremonial titles, the repeated 8-grams also prove the theme of dictatorship. From this analysis, it is evident that the 8-grams are associated with important, formal characters in the novel who care deeply about their official titles.

4.6 3-Grams analysis exhibits main characters and themes

3-grams are grouped according to the functions they perform to explore whether corpus tools could aid in stylistic analysis of the text. They showcase features of an author's style and highlight the novel's general tendencies. This in turn, helps to understand the novel's general tone and tenor. The 3-gram analysis here also identifies the main characters and themes of the novel.

antgram 3-grams - Notepad

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rank	gram	frequency	range
1	de la maza	113	1
2	i don t	94	1
3	antonio de la	87	1
4	head of the	87	1
5	the united states	81	1
6	the head of	78	1
7	one of the	68	1
8	he had been	57	1
9	he did not	54	1
10	the armed forces	46	1
11	of the sim	45	1
12	out of the	45	1
13	he didn t	43	1
14	president of the	43	1
15	it was a	42	1
16	don t know	41	1
17	as soon as	40	1
18	of the republic	39	1
19	the dominican republic	39	1
20	you don t	39	1
21	he was a	38	1
22	juan tomas diaz	38	1
23	when he was	35	1
24	general juan tomas	33	1
25	the national palace	33	1

Figure 7: 3-Gram Analysis

Figure 7 shows the top 25 3-grams that were reviewed for the analysis. The analysis identified four important thematic features, i.e., the characters' lives, the supremacy of the dictator, a sense of urgency and the unusual usage of negatives. Firstly, the frequent occurrence of 3-grams helped to identify the main characters like Trujillo with his self-imposed fancy titles; Antonio de la Maza, one of the assassins; General Jose Rene, Minister of armed Forces; and Salvador Estrella Sadhala, one of the conspirators. The dominance of certain characters' names in the table of 3-grams coincides with the findings secured from an analysis of the 8-grams, that the Llosa's novel is indeed written in the postmodern vein in the manner in which it dwells on the micronarratives of individual characters' lives. *The Feast of the Goat* thus pans out as a personal and not as a panoramic narrative, i.e., it is structured as an intimate, local and a character-focused tale rather than as a conscious historical enterprise. The incidents surrounding Trujillo's assassination are presented from multiple perspectives that challenge the established version available in the annals of history.

Secondly, the high frequency of Trujillo's titles in the text are reviewed, like "*the Generalissimo*", "*Father of the New Nation*", "*the Chief*", "*the President*" etc., which the dictator used for referring to himself, while the same were also used by the people to refer to him ironically and very often bitterly. An excerpt from the text demonstrates how Urania, the central protagonist, refers to Trujillo when speaking with her father, Trujillo's senator.

...By the time I discovered why the Generalissimo paid visits to their wives, ministers could no longer do what Henriquez Ureia did. Like Don Froilan, they had to resign themselves to wearing horns. And gain something from it since they had no alternative. Did you? Did the Chief visit my mother? Before I was born? When I was too little to remember? He visited them when the wives were beautiful. My mother was beautiful, wasn't she? I don't remember him coming here, but he might have before I was born. What did my mother do? Did she accept it? Did she feel happy, proud of the honor? That was the norm, wasn't it? Good Dominican women were grateful when the Chief deigned to fuck them. You think that's vulgar? But that was the verb your beloved Chief used. (Llosa, 2002, p. 59)

Trujillo, it can be inferred, regularly mistreated those around him and humiliated his officials by giving them strange nicknames. Trujillo addressed Augustin Cabral (Urania's father), a former Secretary and former President of the Senate, as "*Egg head*". He renames General Jose Rene, the Minister of the Armed Forces as "*Pupo Roman*". And Trujillo mocks at Henry Chirinos, his advisor and a senator, as "*the Walking Turd*" and "*the Constitutional Sot*," which occur 42 times; these titles confirm the findings in the novel that the dictator maintained high-handed and autocratic behavior. Figure 8 shows the bar chart of characters and thematic signals of 3-gram analysis.

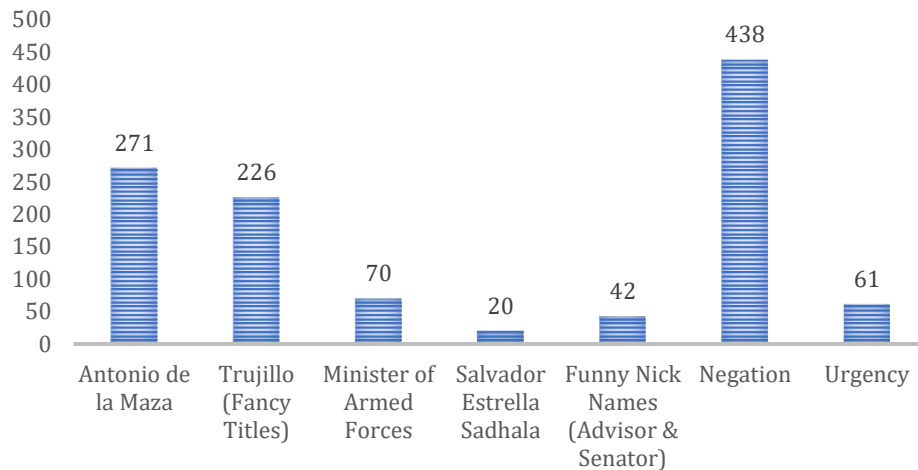


Figure 8: Bar Chart of Characters and Thematic Signals of 3-Gram Analysis

Thirdly, the clusters “*as soon as*” and “*soon as he*” occur 61 times in the novel, contributing to a sense of urgency in the author’s style, again characteristic of most postmodern writing, which Llosa deploys to capture and sustain reader’s attention and interest.

The Walking Turd smiled with relief. But as soon as he began telling him that the talk of Ciudad Trujillo right now was the beating the German consul gave his wife because he thought she was cheating on him, the Benefactor became distracted. (Llosa, 2002, p. 145)

At one point Antonio de la Maza turned on the radio, but as soon as he heard the honeyed voice on the Voice of the Tropics announcing a program on spiritualism, he turned it off. (Llosa, 2002, p. 155)

Finally, a dominant feature of the novel’s theme is the occurrence of the grammatical negation, as these 3-grams occur 438 times in the novel. Lexical chunks and phrases, ‘*I don’t*’, ‘*he didn’t*’, ‘*I didn’t*’, ‘*he wouldn’t*’, ‘*he could not*’, ‘*he hadn’t*’, ‘*he doesn’t*’ etc., indicate the ambivalent mood of the narrators. The usage of such negations signals that agents under Trujillo’s regime who utter them are perhaps resorting to self-censure, aware of the inappropriacy of their thoughts and utterances or they might be troubled about their actions. It reflects their unhappiness while making them appear uncertain or insecure. It resonates with their disappointments under the dictatorial regime, and the way in which the regime hindered their freedoms of action, thought and expression.

He never got over your treating him like that. I’m sorry, I don’t know why I’m telling you this, I don’t want to interfere in your life, Urania (Llosa, 2002, p. 173) ... I don’t know how Uncle Agustin stopped them from burning his house. But sometimes they threw stones at him” (Llosa, 2002, p. 176) ... “I don’t know why you talk about monstrous crimes,” she murmurs in astonishment. “Maybe my uncle was wrong to be a Trujillista. (Llosa, 2002, p. 184)

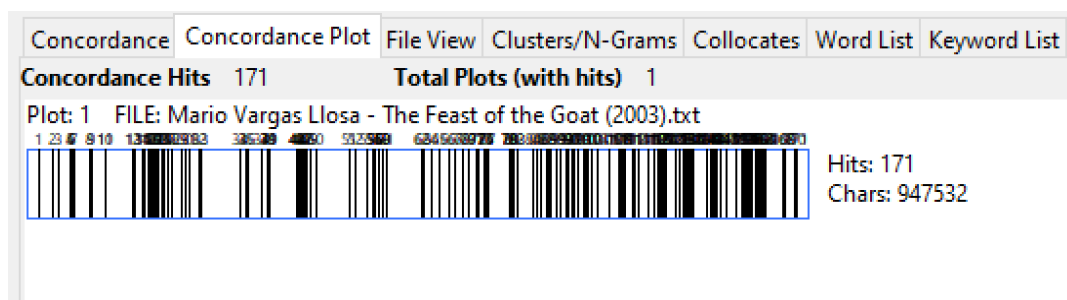


Figure 9: Concordance Plot of Negation

Figure 9 shows the concordance plot of negation, which affirms that the characters are self-conflicted, as they are unsure of their emotions. The themes of insecurity, uncertainty, and misfortune are thus central to the novel. Analyses through frequent multi-word sequences of N-grams clearly reveal that the author has made

extensive use of the postmodern literary devices in depicting the perceptions and inner turmoil of each character in the novel.

The following excerpts further exemplify that the novel's key concerns include insecurity, uncertainty, and misfortune. The narrative suggests that many people even those close to the regime disappeared, were sexually abused, or physically tortured or killed:

[...] the abuses, the murders, the corruption, the fear [...] people were killed and beaten and tortured, people disappeared. Even the people closest to the regime. His son, for instance, the handsome Ramfis, he committed endless abuses. (Llosa, 2002, p. 95)

Ramfis Trujillo, the son of Trujillo along with some of his friends brutally rapes "one of the most beautiful girls" of high society, the daughter of an Army Colonel, "the radiant" Rosalina Perdomo. The protagonist, Urania who is a schoolmate of Rosalina bitterly narrates:

[...] this time the victim of his papa's [Trujillo's] darling boy is one of the most beautiful girls in Dominican society, the daughter of an Army colonel [...] He is not alone. Papa's darling boy is never alone, he is always accompanied by two or three friends who celebrate him, adulate him, serve him, and prosper at his expense [...] Later they conduct themselves as gentlemen, but first they rape her [...] And at the height of their fun, the last thing they expect, a hemorrhage [...] [Rosalina's father] never recovers from the shock of knowing that Ramfis Trujillo and his friends happily violated his beloved daughter, between lunch and supper, as if they were killing time watching a movie (Llosa, 2002, pp. 100–101).

5. DISCUSSION

The paper, thus argues how corpus stylistic analysis could help in identifying and analyzing postmodern narrative techniques in a literary text. Like literary stylistics, corpus stylistics can enable us to focus on and study the qualities of a single text in terms of their artistic function. The corpus stylistic analysis undertaken on *The Feast of the Goat* sheds light on how Llosa attempts in a nuanced manner to move the readers to empathize with the plight of the characters, who were subjected to immense torment under Trujillo's tyrannical regime. By using different features of AntConc software such as PoS tagging, concordance plot, keywords, and N-gram analysis, the paper discussed the postmodern narrative techniques and themes in substantial detail. This analysis enhances the understanding of the readers, helping them to see how the author has phenomenologically recreated the world of the victims, to provide an insight into the reality of the characters' lives under Trujillo's rule of the Dominican Republic.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Linguistic features in the text are discussed in relation to the effects they might have and the interpretations that readers could arrive at. It can be inferred then that the reader-centered keywords are most likely to trigger a schematic interpretation at a higher abstract level than merely the text-centered keywords. We can thereby distinguish and conclude which keywords represent names and titles of characters and which words signify the aboutness of the text. While the lengthier N-grams like 8-grams suggest to be character-specific and exclusive to a particular novel under consideration, shorter clusters, like the 3-grams, are partly character specific and partly thematic, signaling that they can be grouped based on the functions they perform.

The Feast of the Goat transports the readers to imaginatively inhabit the worlds of the characters through a depiction of the atrocities perpetrated by Trujillo. The narrative techniques deployed by Llosa are effectively postmodern in the manner in which they aim to heighten reader awareness of the machinations of a dictatorial regime and perhaps caution readers to safeguard their basic rights and liberties.

Thus, a corpus stylistic analysis of *The Feast of the Goat* deepens our understanding of how Llosa creatively incorporates postmodern narrative techniques to reconstruct and present one of the most brutal dictators of last century. The limitation of this research lies in that, the text under consideration here is a translation, and the stylistic choices made by Edith Grossman, the translator like the use of time references or word-collocations could to some extent have been constrained by the language of both the source text as well as the conventions of the target language. A comparative analysis of the original and the translated version of the text could provide scope for future research. However, literary critics accustomed to carrying out a qualitative interpretation of a text's features may object to the adoption of such quantitative methods of stylistic analysis.

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