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## CORPUS-ASSISTED SYSTEMIC SOCIO-SEMANTIC STYLISTICS: EXPLORING 'WHITE' AND 'RED' IN JEAN RHYS' *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

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Università degli Studi di Bologna

This contribution presents a corpus-assisted analysis of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, a postcolonial prequel to *Jane Eyre*. The study is part of a research project on the role of corpus linguistics in Hasan's Systemic Socio-Semantic Stylistics (Hasan, 1989). Combining quantitative findings and qualitative considerations, I focus on the Appraisal patterns (Martin – White, 2005) involving 'white' and 'red' in Rhys' text and examine their role in 'symbolically articulating' part of its deepest meaning ('theme').

*Keywords:* Corpus stylistics, Systemic Socio-Semantic Stylistics, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Appraisal, white/red, other-ness.

### 1. Introduction

This article presents a new step in an ongoing research project<sup>1</sup> on the role of corpus linguistics (henceforth CL) in Systemic Socio-Semantic Stylistics (SSS)<sup>2</sup>: a framework for the analysis of literature rooted in Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)<sup>3</sup>. Focus in on Jean Rhys' 1966 novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (WSS)<sup>4</sup>, a postcolonial prequel to *Jane Eyre* (JE)<sup>5</sup> reconstructing the life of Bertha (Antoinette) Mason. Combining quantitative results from corpus-assisted investigation with manual qualitative analysis of select patterns, this case study aims at unveiling some of the ways in which WSS concretely links up to its ur text, re-shaping it from a postcolonial perspective.

The next section briefly summarises the main tenets of SSS, also providing a working overview of some SFL notions used in the analysis. After a short synopsis of Rhys' novel (Section 3), and description of the methodology adopted (Section 4), findings are dis-

<sup>1</sup> The research project, entitled *SSS, the corpus, and the consumer*, is carried out at the University of Bologna, LILEC Department. The project seeks to explore the 'pros' and 'cons' of using corpus techniques in the SSS analysis of verbal art, and addresses corpus-assisted SSS as an applicable pedagogical stylistics. Further information available at: <http://www.lingue.unibo.it/it/ricerca/progetto-ceslic-sss-the-corpus-and-the-consumer>.

<sup>2</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1989<sup>2</sup>; R. Hasan, *Private pleasure, public discourse: Reflections on engaging with literature*, in *Language and verbal art revisited: Linguistic Approaches to the study of literature*, D.R. Miller – M. Turci ed., Equinox, Sheffield 2007, pp. 41-67.

<sup>3</sup> M.A.K. Halliday – C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, Arnold, London 2004<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> J. Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Penguin, London 2011 (originally published by Andre Deutsch, London 1966).

<sup>5</sup> C. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Penguin, London 1996 (originally published by Smith, Elder and Co., London 1847).

cussed in Section 5. The closing section summarises the main points that have emerged, paying special attention to the advantages and limits inherent in corpus-assisted SSS, and indicates some future lines of research.

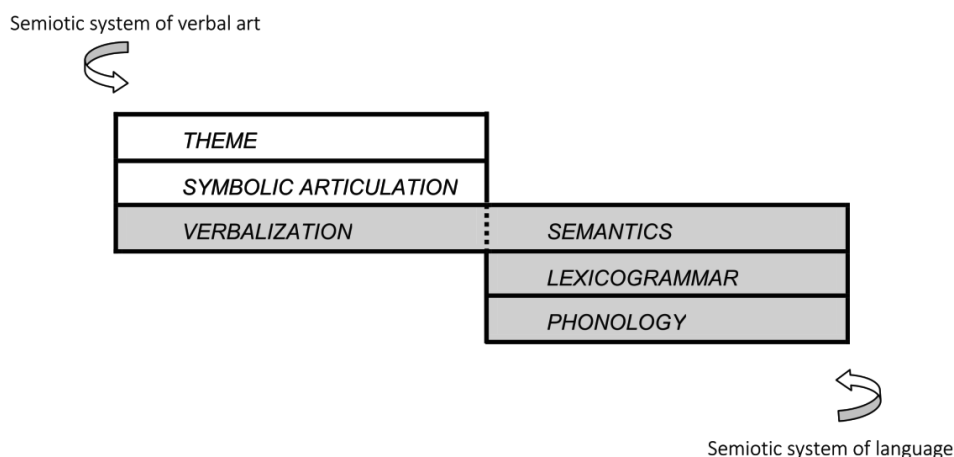
## 2. Theoretical background: SSS and SFL

The basic premise and defining trait of SSS is its recognition of literature as ‘verbal art’, i.e., “a kind of art [...] crafted with language”<sup>6</sup>, and also as a special text-type, requiring a distinctive theoretical and methodological take. The specialness of verbal art originates in the complexities inherent in both “its semiotic and its social foundations”<sup>7</sup>. We will now consider each of these aspects in turn.

### 2.1 The complex semiosis of verbal art: the ‘double-articulation’ model

Hasan makes clear that the analysis of verbal art, as with any other text-type, starts with the semiotic system of language<sup>8</sup>. What truly determines the uniqueness of verbal art, however, is the presence of a second order of semiosis: at this deeper level, first-order meanings are enriched, and the ‘art crafted with language’ becomes manifest. The resulting double-articulation model is visually represented in Figure 1<sup>9</sup>. As can be noticed, both semiotic systems show a stratal organisation, whereby each layer is realised, i.e., becomes accessible, through the ones below it.

Figure 1 - *The SSS model of ‘double-articulation’*



<sup>6</sup> R. Hasan, *Private pleasure, public discourse*, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23

<sup>8</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, pp. 90-106.

<sup>9</sup> Taken from D.R. Miller, *The Hasanian framework for the study of “verbal art” revisited... and repropoed*, in *Stylistics and Co. (unlimited): The range, methods, and applications of stylistics*, J. Douthwaite – K. Wales ed., “Textus”, 23, 2010, 1, pp. 71-94. The figure is based on R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, p. 99.

### 2.1.1 The semiosis of language

The first order of semiosis mirrors the typical SFL architecture, with semantics being realised in and by lexico-grammar, or wordings, and lexico-grammar being realised in and by sounds or graphic symbols. In SFL, 'semantics' is an umbrella term covering three interrelated areas of meaning, which in turn correspond to three basic metafunctions intrinsic to language itself: the ideational, the interpersonal, and the textual. The ideational metafunction refers to the fact that language construes patterns of experience, including the logical relations (such as time, cause, condition) holding between events; the interpersonal metafunction relates to language as a means of acting out personal and social relationships; finally, the textual metafunction has to do with the ways in which text-makers choose to organise their messages into coherent and cohesive flows of discourse<sup>10</sup>. Text-makers interact with each of these semantic strands by making choices within specific systems of options, which together make up the overall 'meaning potential' of a language: the total set of resources available for meaning-making. These are: Transitivity and Clauses in combination for ideational semantics; Mood, Modality and Appraisal for interpersonal semantics, and Cohesion for textual semantics. What we deal with when analysing language in use, including verbal art, is the output (lexico-grammatical, phonic/graphic) of those choices, i.e., "text [...] as actualized meaning potential"<sup>11</sup>. Let us stop at this point to say just a few words on the systems focussed in our analysis of WSS: Transitivity, and Attitude within Appraisal<sup>12</sup>.

The Transitivity system includes options to provide linguistic representations of events, through configurations of states or activities ('processes'), the entities involved ('grammatical participants'), and optional circumstantial details. Processes are typically construed by verbs, and fall within six main categories: physical doing and happening ('material'); thinking, feeling, perceiving and desiring ('mental'); carrying out behaviour having material/mental qualities ('behavioural'); being and having ('relational'); communicating ('verbal'), and existing ('existential'). The related participant roles are typically construed by nouns: these too fall within a limited set, although their labels change depending on the process type.

Within Appraisal, we find options enabling speakers and writers to enact evaluations. Appraisal is best described as a network of three interrelated systems: Attitude (covering what is traditionally referred to as emotion, ethics and aesthetics), Engagement and Graduation. Engagement has to do with how speakers and writers position themselves with reference to the assessment they are making and their actual or potential audience. Graduation

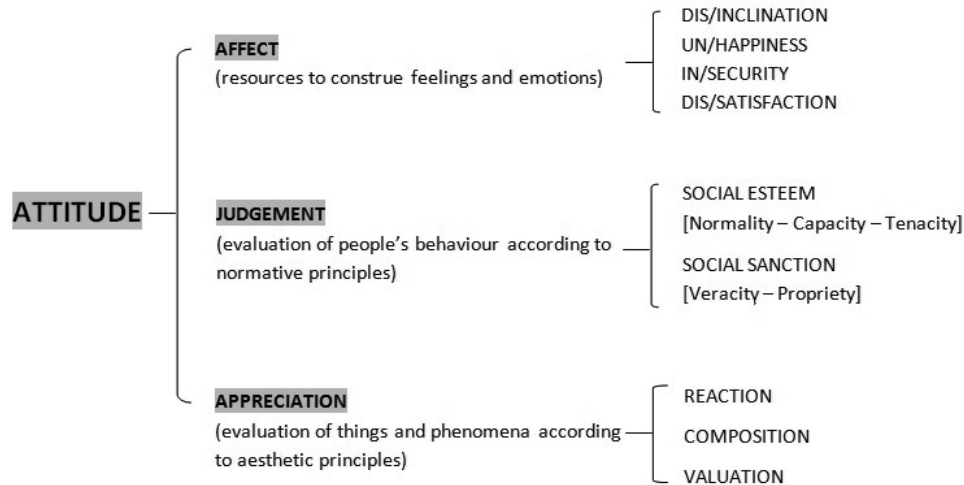
<sup>10</sup> M.A.K. Halliday – C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> M.A.K. Halliday, *Language as social semiotic: The social interpretation of language and meaning*, University Park Press, Baltimore, MD 1978, p. 109.

<sup>12</sup> Comprehensive accounts of the Transitivity system can be found in, e.g., M.A.K. Halliday – C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, pp. 168-305; G. Thompson, *Introducing Functional Grammar*, Routledge, Abingdon 2014<sup>3</sup>, pp. 91-144. For APPRAISAL, see in particular J.R. Martin – P.R.R. White, *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2005.

concerns “grading phenomena whereby feelings are amplified and categories blurred”<sup>13</sup>. A schematic representation of Attitude, which is our prime analytical focus here, is provided in Figure 2<sup>14</sup>.

Figure 2 - *The Attitude system (our representation)*



Affect is the core, as it deals with the expression of feelings and is “the expressive resource we are born with and embody physiologically from almost the moment of birth”<sup>15</sup>. Affect is then “institutionalized”<sup>16</sup> in the two other systems of Judgement and Appreciation. Judgement includes resources to evaluate human behaviour according to normative principles regulating social esteem (SE: how special, capable, or dependable someone is) and social sanction (SS: how truthful or ethical someone is). Appreciation includes resources used to assess the value of things or phenomena according to aesthetic principles, in terms of reaction, composition and valuation. Each type of evaluation can obviously be positive (+ve) or negative (-ve), but also explicit or implicit in the text (‘inscribed’ or ‘invoked’); the source and target of evaluation (‘appraiser’ and ‘appraised’, respectively) are also of key analytical importance.

### 2.1.2 The semiosis of verbal art

Moving bottom-up this time, the first stratum of the second order semiosis in Figure 1 is verbalisation: the point of connection between the two semiotic systems, embracing the entire first order, hence the broken line in the figure<sup>17</sup>. As Hasan remarks, “[a]t this level

<sup>13</sup> J.R. Martin – P.R.R. White, *The language of evaluation*, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> Based on J.R. Martin – P.R.R. White, *The language of evaluation*, pp. 42-91.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> D.R. Miller, *The Hasanian framework for the study of “verbal art” revisited... and repropoed*, pp. 39-40.



the literature text is like any other text: you need to know the language to know the meanings encoded in the text; and relevant to this stratum is the entire linguistic resource of the community<sup>18</sup>. Indeed, verbalisation was called 'linguistic execution' in previous releases of the model<sup>19</sup>. The stratum of symbolic articulation is "where the meanings of language are turned into signs having a deeper meaning"<sup>20</sup>, thus becoming art. In Hasan's view, symbolic articulation is a question of 'foregrounding', a notion that she largely derives from the work of Mukařovský<sup>21</sup>, referring to patterns of significant contrast against what the text establishes as a 'norm'. If/when it is significant, foregrounding will also be consistent, in terms of two essential conditions: stability of semantic direction and stability of textual location, meaning that "the various foregrounded patterns point towards the same general kind of meaning", and that "the significant patterns of foregrounding have a tendency to occur at a textually important point"<sup>22</sup>. In her extensive work on Hasan's framework, Miller<sup>23</sup> argues that symbolic articulation can also, equally, be seen as a question of 'pervasive parallelism' (PP)<sup>24</sup>. Through symbolic articulation, we arrive at the highest stratum: the theme. This is the verbal artefact's deepest message, what the entire second order of semiosis ultimately tends to: "[t]he subject matter of theme concerns some aspect of the human condition, a sense of what the flesh is heir to, what irks the spirit, what seems risible, what profound, what is subject to change, what immutable"<sup>25</sup>. Such a poignant reflection is linked to the artist's own experience as a social being: "while at one level, a literature text may be simply fictional – so not true in the literal sense – at another level, it embodies precisely the kind of 'truths' that most communities are deeply concerned with"<sup>26</sup>. This leads us to the second aspect of complexity in verbal art mentioned at the beginning.

## 2.2 The complex social foundations of verbal art: the literature text's multiple contexts

The intrinsic connection between language and context is one of the axioms of SFL, and verbal art is no exception. At the same time, however, literature proves once again not to be a register like any other, "[b]ecause the context-language connection in verbal art is fraught

<sup>18</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, p. 97.

<sup>19</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics and the study of literary texts*, "Études de Linguistique Appliquée", 5, 1967, pp. 106-121.

<sup>20</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, p. 98.

<sup>21</sup> J. Mukařovský, *Standard language and poetic language*, in *A Prague School reader on aesthetics, literary structure and style*, P.L. Garvin ed., Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. 1964, pp. 17-30.

<sup>22</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, p. 95.

<sup>23</sup> E.g. D.R. Miller, *Slotting Jakobson into the social semiotic approach to 'verbal art': A modest proposal*, in *A lifetime of English studies: Essays in honour of Carol Taylor Torsello*, F. Dalziel – S. Gesuato – M.T. Musacchio ed., Il Poligrafo, Padua 2012, pp. 215-226; D.R. Miller, *Jakobson's place in Hasan's social semiotic stylistics: 'Pervasive parallelism' as symbolic articulation of theme*, in *Society in language, language in society: Essays in honour of Ruqaiya Hasan*, W.L. Bowcher – J.Y. Liang ed., Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2016, pp. 59-80.

<sup>24</sup> R. Jakobson, *Grammatical parallelism and its Russian facet*, "Language", 42, 1966, 2, pp. 399-429.

<sup>25</sup> R. Hasan, *Private pleasure, public discourse*, p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, pp. 99-100.

with complexities to which other registers are simply not heir<sup>27</sup>. Here, multiple contexts come into play, calling for the analyst's attention: the fictional context created by the text; the reader's context of reception, and the author's context of creation. Probing the context of creation is essential in order to arrive at a final formulation of the theme: it means considering the author not as an individual<sup>28</sup>, but as member of a community, investigating his/her positioning *vis-à-vis* the language, world view and artistic conventions of the time and place of writing<sup>29</sup>.

All these aspects obviously impinge on the context of reception as well: “[g]enerally speaking, the greater the distance between the context of creation and reception, the more inaccessible the meanings of the text become”<sup>30</sup>. Such distance, together with the reader's individual ‘history’ which – as for the author – falls beyond the scope of a stylistic analysis, is responsible for the plurality of readings that a literature text typically allows. This, however, does not mean that the theme itself is subject to change. Language, together with the foregrounding mechanisms, or “patterning[s] of patterns”<sup>31</sup>, function as an anchor against unlimited semiosis, the assumption that texts can be interpreted in infinite ways (cf. Eco's paradigm of ‘Hermetic semiosis’<sup>32</sup>). What, then, is the role of the corpus in exploring those patterns?

### 2.3 SSS and the corpus

The ‘marriage’ between CL and stylistics is, of course, not new: the first steps in what has come to be known as ‘corpus stylistics’ date back to the early 1990s<sup>33</sup>; furthermore, in the last decades, several works have argued the case for deploying corpus techniques in this field, showing their potential<sup>34</sup>. This study and the research project behind it, however, take a more specific perspective, specifically addressing the role of the corpus in SSS. The difference is not negligible, especially considering the distinctive trait of Hasan's framework: the specialness of literature it advocates. Research into corpus-assisted SSS also draws on investigation into another ‘marriage’, which has sometimes been perceived as ‘tense’: that between CL and SFL. The potential connections between the two approaches have attracted scholarly attention of late<sup>35</sup>. Halliday, in particular, speaks of “a natural affinity between

<sup>27</sup> D.R. Miller, *Language as verbal art*, in *The Routledge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics*, T. Bartlett – G. O'Grady ed., Routledge, Abingdon 2017, p. 508/506-519.

<sup>28</sup> R. Barthes, *The death of the author*, in *Image, Music, Text*, S. Heath ed., Fontana Press, London 1977, pp. 142-148 (originally published in “Aspen”, 5-6, 1967).

<sup>29</sup> R. Hasan, *Linguistics, language and verbal art*, p. 102.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>32</sup> U. Eco, *I limiti dell'interpretazione*, Bompiani, Milano 1990.

<sup>33</sup> D. McIntyre, *Towards an integrated corpus stylistics*, “Topics in Linguistics”, 16, 2015, 1, pp. 59-68.

<sup>34</sup> A review is provided in D. Biber, *Corpus linguistics and the study of literature: back to the future?*, “Scientific Study of Literature”, 1, 2011, 1, pp. 15-23.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., *System and corpus: Exploring connections*, G. Thompson – S. Hunston ed., Equinox, Sheffield 2006.

systemic theory and corpus linguistics<sup>36</sup>, thus suppressing the conflict, as Miller notes<sup>37</sup>. The question is also addressed from an applied analytical perspective in other contributions<sup>38</sup>.

On one hand, 'high-level' analyses, addressing semantics and context, of which verbal art is a clear illustration, show a tendency to naturally resist automation; on the other, studies carried out so far have shown the important instrumental role played by CL. Miller uses corpus methodologies to investigate Appraisal in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, pointing out "the usefulness of CL as a remarkable quantitative tool in the service of qualitative linguistic analysis"<sup>39</sup>. Miller and Luporini<sup>40</sup> also adopt an integrated approach combining corpus data with manual scrutiny in their investigation of Coetzee's *Foe*, confirming and reinforcing this view. What all these contributions suggest is that the use of corpus techniques in SSS has inherent limitations, but also an indisputable advantage: it guarantees reliability and statistical significance, difficult to achieve manually in the case of longer and/or particularly complex texts, thus making analysis more rigorous, replicable and retrievable<sup>41</sup>.

### 3. A preliminary word on WSS and Jean Rhys

Generally acknowledged as her masterpiece, WSS was published by Rhys in 1966, after several years of silence: her previous book, *Good Morning, Midnight*, had been released in 1939. Rhys was born to a Welsh father and a Creole mother in Dominica in 1890, but already as a teenager she moved to England, where she died in 1979. Ford Madox Ford, in his preface to Rhys' collection *The Left Bank and Other Stories*, hints at the influence of her Caribbean origins on her production: "[c]oming from the Antilles, with a terrifying insight and a terrific – an almost lurid! – passion for stating the case of the underdog, she has let her pen loose on the Left Banks of the Old World"<sup>42</sup>.

Divided into three parts, WSS turns Rochester's first wife, Antoinette – a shadowy presence in Brontë's novel – into a three-dimensional character: "[t]he Creole in Charlotte

<sup>36</sup> M.A.K. Halliday, Afterwords, in *System and corpus*, p. 293.

<sup>37</sup> D.R. Miller, *On negotiating the hurdles of corpus-assisted appraisal analysis in verbal art*, in *Systemic Functional Linguistics in the digital age*, S. Gardner – S. Alsop ed., Equinox, Sheffield 2016, p. 211.

<sup>38</sup> D.R. Miller – P. Bayley – C. Bevitori – S. Fusari – A. Luporini, *Ticklish trawling: The limits of corpus-assisted meaning analysis*, in *Language in a digital age: Be not afraid of digitality. Proceedings from the 24<sup>th</sup> European Systemic Functional Linguistics Conference and Workshop*, S. Alsop – S. Gardner ed., Department of English and Languages, Coventry University, Coventry 2014, pp. 100-111; D.R. Miller, *On negotiating the hurdles of corpus-assisted appraisal analysis in verbal art*.

<sup>39</sup> D.R. Miller, *On negotiating the hurdles of corpus-assisted appraisal analysis in verbal art*, pp. 211, 228-225.

<sup>40</sup> D.R. Miller – A. Luporini, *Social Semiotic Stylistics and the corpus: How do-able is an automated analysis of verbal art?*, in A. Duguid – A. Marchi – A. Partington – C. Taylor ed., *Gentle Obsessions: Literature, Linguistics and Learning. In Honour of John Morley*, Artemide, Rome 2015, pp. 235-250.

<sup>41</sup> P. Simpson, *Stylistics*, Routledge, Abingdon 2014<sup>2</sup>, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> J. Rhys, *Tigers are better-looking. With a selection from The left bank*, Penguin, London 1972, p. 138.

Brontë's novel is a lay figure [...]. For me [...] she must be right on stage", Rhys states in one of her *Letters*<sup>43</sup>.

In Part one, Antoinette recounts her childhood as a white Creole in Jamaica. Set in the years immediately following Emancipation, a moment marked by growing tensions between former slave-owners and black labourers, it culminates in an arson attack that totally destroys Antoinette's family residence, Coulibri Estate.

Part two gives voice to Rochester – who, however, is never explicitly named – with only occasional passages narrated by Antoinette. It is dedicated to the honeymoon spent by the couple in Dominica. Here what is represented as the inevitable demise of the marriage begins.

Finally, Part three is set at Thornfield Hall. After a short introduction entrusted to Grace Pool, making the intertextual link explicit, it takes the form of a long interior monologue by Antoinette, now definitively Bertha.

#### 4. Methodology

This study was carried out using the online corpus query system SketchEngine (<http://www.sketchengine.co.uk>)<sup>44</sup>, with the plain text files of WSS and JE (approx. 47,000 and 185,000 words, respectively). Since WSS is not freely available in electronic format, we used a personally compiled .txt copy of the novel, while the full text of JE was downloaded from the Project Gutenberg repository ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)). The texts were carefully cleaned from spelling mistakes: a time-consuming but necessary task, since these can affect results<sup>45</sup>. Finally, they were uploaded to SketchEngine, where they were automatically lemmatised and part-of-speech tagged. The research steps/methods included:

- Lemmatised wordlist (a list of a text's lemmas, ranked by frequency) for WSS and JE.
- Lemmatised keywordlist (a list of lemmas whose frequency is significantly high in a focus corpus, in comparison to a reference corpus) for WSS against JE. The most common grammatical words, which tend to create 'noise' in the results, were excluded from the wordlists and keyword list using a specifically compiled 'blacklist', used as a filter by SketchEngine (including, among other elements, pronouns not functioning as subject, negations and modal verbs).
- Comparison between WSS and the British National Corpus (BNC) through SketchEngine's Keywords/Terms tool.
- Patterns of collocation (the "company" kept by certain words<sup>46</sup>) and qualitative analysis of KWIC concordances, showing search terms in their original co-text.

<sup>43</sup> J. Rhys, *Letters 1931-1966*, Andre Deutsch, London 1984, p. 156.

<sup>44</sup> A. Kilgarriff – V. Baisa – J. Bušta – M. Jakubíček – V. Kovář – J. Michelfeit – P. Rychlý – V. Suchomel, *The Sketch Engine: ten years on*, "Lexicography", 1, 2014, pp. 7-36.

<sup>45</sup> Still, not as time-consuming as, e.g., creating an e-copy of a novel from scratch. These are among the undeniable shortcomings of corpus stylistics, especially when it deals with recent or contemporary works that are still protected by copyright.

<sup>46</sup> J.R. Firth, *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1957, p. 11.

## 5. *Analytical findings*

### 5.1 Going in through CL: wordlists, keywords, collocates

The top 30 lines (lemmas with frequency >75, or 1.6‰) of the wordlist for WSS are shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - *WSS wordlist*

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Lemma</i>
1	2202	I	16	140	frenchpatois
2	979	she	17	133	get
3	875	you	18	113	time (n)
4	759	it	19	100	house (n) / Christophine
5	604	say (v)	20	98	hear
6	459	he	21	95	white (adj)
7	282	they	22	93	man
8	256	go (v)	23	92	leave (v)
9	250	see	24	91	room (n)
10	229	know	25	86	woman
11	197	look (v)	26	85	mother (n)
12	179	come	27	84	eye (n) / girl
13	178	tell	28	83	laugh (v) / want
14	166	think	29	78	Antoinette
15	164	we	30	77	take (v)

As can be noticed, all the subject pronouns are concentrated at the top, between lines 1 and 7, except for the most 'inclusive' of all, 'we', ranking 15<sup>th</sup>; in line 5, unsurprisingly, we also find 'say', a verbal process in SFL Transitivity (see Section 2.1.1 above), mainly functioning to introduce dialogue turns, as a look at the related concordances confirms. The remaining verbs can be mainly ascribed to other two process categories: mental, including cognition ('know', 'think'), perception ('see', 'hear') and desire ('want'), and material, with several verbs of motion ('go', 'come', 'leave') plus 'get', generally showing a material value in the related concordances, and 'take'. There are, in addition, two behavioural processes, 'look'<sup>47</sup> and 'laugh', and another verbal process, 'tell'. Turning to the nominal and adjectival components, possibly noteworthy elements include: (i) 'frenchpatois', an ad-hoc lemma specifically created to capture instances of languages other than English in the novel, which also mirror the composite sociolinguistic nature of the fictional context; (ii) 'Christophine',

<sup>47</sup> Despite being close to the category of mental processes, 'look', like other verbs construing intentional perception, is classified as a behavioural process in SFL, belonging to a set of "processes of consciousness represented as forms of behaviour" (M.A.K. Halliday – C.M.I.M. Matthiessen, *Introduction to Functional Grammar*, p. 251).

Antoinette's Martinican nurse, never mentioned in JE, but prominent, frequency-wise, in WSS; (iii) also thinking of the numerous feminist readings offered by literary critics of both JE and WSS<sup>48</sup>, the binomial 'man'/'woman', plus 'mother', almost invariably referring to Antoinette's mother, Annette; (iv) finally, especially in view of WSS as an instance of postcolonial literature set in Emancipated Jamaica, the adjective 'white'.

Let us now consider the top 30 lines (lemmas with frequency  $\geq 250$ , or 1.3%) in the wordlist for JE, reported in Table 2.

Table 2 - *JE wordlist*

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Freq</i>	<i>Lemma</i>
1	7193	I	16	371	Rochester
2	2991	you	17	353	well
3	2399	it	18	341	Jane
4	1894	he	19	311	Miss
5	1477	she	20	310	we
6	832	say (v)	21	301	eye (n) / good
7	564	see	22	292	sir
8	543	Mr.	23	283	give
9	532	go (v)	24	282	hear
10	509	they	25	281	day
11	462	think	26	267	feel
12	455	come	27	264	little
13	411	look (v)	28	262	seem
14	388	know	29	259	leave (v)
15	372	take (v)	30	255	hand (n) / time (n)

The topmost sections (lines 1-7) of the two wordlists appear closely related, though with slightly different distributions in the subject pronouns: 'she', in particular, comes in 5<sup>th</sup> in JE, while it ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> in WSS, where it is even more frequent than 'you'; this is probably a consequence of the shift between Antoinette and Rochester as first person narrators in WSS, but perhaps also a sign of the space given to female characters in Rhys' novel. Considering process types, Table 2 shows the main categories already identified in Table 1 (mental and material), with striking correspondences also in the verbs instantiating them. Differently from WSS, however, the wordlist for JE shows evidence of a mental process of emotion ('feel') within the top 30 lines<sup>49</sup>; conversely, a possibly meaningful 'absentee', ranking

<sup>48</sup> E.g., G.C. Spivak, *Three Women's texts and a critique of imperialism*, "Critical Inquiry", 12, 1985, 1, pp. 243-261.

<sup>49</sup> Although 'feel' can also construe perception, as in "I *felt* him grasp my hair and my shoulder" (JE: 17), analysis of the related concordances shows that most of the occurrences in JE (approx. 77%) construe an emotive response.

27<sup>th</sup> in WSS, is the behavioural process 'laugh'. Nominal and adjectival constituents call for the analyst's attention as well. Firstly, the status of the main characters in the two novels appears overturned. On one hand, the 'visible' presence of the surname 'Rochester' in JE contrasts with WSS, where – as noted in Section 3 – this character is never explicitly named; on the other, the frequency values seem to point up 'Antoinette' and 'Christophine' as the real protagonists in WSS (even without considering the occurrences of the pronoun 'I' referring to either of the two, and despite the fact that Christophine goes offstage towards the end of Part two). The proper name 'Jane' does not appear in WSS<sup>50</sup>. Secondly, items like 'man', 'woman', 'mother' and 'white' – noted as potentially relevant in Table 1 above – do not figure in Table 2, where, incidentally, the abundance of formal address forms like 'Mr.', 'Miss' and 'sir' (all rare in WSS) might itself be a clue to the rather different cultural and social setting of Brontë's novel.

In order to better highlight the peculiarities of WSS against its canonical urtext, let us now turn to the top 25 lines of a keywordlist (items with  $\text{keyness} \geq 4$ )<sup>51</sup> generated with JE as reference corpus: these are provided in Table 3. Brontë's text was deemed appropriate for the task also considering its size, as it is almost four times larger than WSS in terms of words<sup>52</sup>.

Table 3 - *Keywordlist*

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Keyness</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Keyness</i>
1	Christophine	18.4	14	tree	4.7
2	Antoinette	14.6	15	mother (n)	4.7
3	Cora	7.8	16	white	4.7
4	Baptiste	7.3	17	Jamaica	4.7
5	veranda	6.2	18	money	4.6

<sup>50</sup> In a well-known passage from Part three, however, Bertha catches a glimpse of a girl "humming to herself" (WSS: 145) who may be Jane Eyre, as a passage from one of Rhys' *Letters* also seems to confirm: "[i]t [WSS] has no connection with any play film or adaptation of "Jane Eyre" who does not appear at all – once perhaps" (p. 153; see also Section 5.2.2).

<sup>51</sup> In place of more common statistical measures like Chi-square or Log-likelihood, SketchEngine deploys a method called *Simple maths* to identify keywords. *Simple maths* requires that the user set a parameter N for keyword extraction: this ranges from 0.01 to 1.000.000, with lower values tending towards rarer words. For this study, the value of N was set to 100. See also A. Kilgarriff, *Simple maths for keywords*, in *Proceedings of the Corpus Linguistics Conference CL2009*, M. Mahlberg – V. González Díaz – C. Smith ed., online 2009, <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/publications/cl2009/> (last accessed May 22, 2018).

<sup>52</sup> On the practice of using reference corpora that are larger than the focus corpus, or at least of equal size, in keyword analysis see, e.g., P. Baker – A. Hardie – T. McEnery, *A Glossary of Corpus Linguistics*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 2006, p. 97. See also the review of keyword analysis applications in J. Culpeper – J. Demmen, *Keywords*, in *The Cambridge Handbook of English Corpus Linguistics*, D. Biber – R. Reppen ed., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2015, pp. 90-105. In addition to size, Culpeper and Demmen stress the importance of the reference corpus contents, when investigation addresses just one text-type. On the use of keyword analysis in corpus-assisted literature studies – to identify, e.g., textual features specific of a particular author/text – see again D. Biber, *Corpus linguistics and the study of literature*.

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Keyness</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Keyness</i>
6	rum	6.0	19	stare (v)	4.6
7	laugh (v)	5.8	20	Hilda	4.5
8	Aunt	5.7	21	red	4.4
9	Coulibri	5.7	22	drink (v)	4.4
10	Amélie	5.3	23	island	4.1
11	Pierre	5.0	24	Martinique	4.0
12	dress (n)	5.0	25	bottle (n)	4.0
13	boy	4.7			

As expected, the upper part of the keywordlist includes names of characters specific to WSS (Christophine, Cora, Baptiste, Amélie, Pierre, Hilda), and elements that point to geographical and cultural features of the novel's fictional context ('veranda', 'rum', 'Coulibri', 'Jamaica', 'island', 'Martinique'). However, some of the elements that have already been singled out in discussing the wordlists above recur: 'laugh' (line 7), 'white' (line 16, possibly linked to the closely-allied adjective 'red', line 21) and 'mother' (line 15).

Zooming in on these lemmas, Table 4 offers a snapshot of their 'preferred' company in the text, providing their top collocates (with T-Score >2) in the range from 2 words to the left to 2 words to the right (2L-2R).

Table 4 - Top 2L-2R collocates for 'laugh', 'mother' and 'white' in WSS

<i>Laugh</i>				<i>Mother</i>				<i>White</i>			
	Co-occur freq	Can-didate freq	T-score		Co-occur freq	Can-didate freq	T-score		Co-occur freq	Can-didate freq	T-score
and	23	1699	4.284	my	51	430	7.052	a	18	919	3.885
she	18	979	3.909					the	21	2039	3.848
at	15	317	3.754	her	16	691	3.744	and	20	1699	3.845
you	12	875	3.099					people	11	67	3.432
he	9	459	2.779	and	17	1699	3.514	cockroach	9	12	2.993
me	8	538	2.554					nigger	9	14	2.992
I	12	2202	2.547	be	17	1976	3.415	with	8	258	2.677
to	7	596	2.320					black	6	49	2.416
they	5	282	2.054	your	10	137	3.098	dress	5	62	2.190
be	9	1976	2.050					like	5	169	2.111
								of	6	646	2.014



The collocate lists for 'laugh' and 'mother' feature mostly grammatical words, which cannot be removed from the final output in SketchEngine's collocation function<sup>53</sup>. The results for 'white', however, are particularly thought-provoking. Focusing on the lexical words, 'people', 'cockroach' and 'nigger' – these last two, in particular, with strong negative connotations – emerge as the most relevant collocates, closely followed by 'black' (occurring in a tri-gram, 'black' and 'white'), and 'dress'. The textual relevance of these constructions is confirmed by the list of multiword keywords obtained by comparing WSS with the BNC through SketchEngine's Keywords/terms tool: 'white cockroach', 'white nigger' and 'white dress' (plus 'red dress') appear within the top ten bi-grams.

The corpus tools used so far have definitely proved to be expedient and robust allies in picking out patterns of potential interest, which could hardly be discovered manually. Still, SSS requires that those patterns be analysed at the semiotic system of language, and probed at the semiotic system of verbal art. Manual or "armchair" scrutiny, as Fillmore would put it<sup>54</sup>, at this point, becomes essential.

## 5.2 Sinking into the armchair: qualitative analysis of select items

### 5.2.1 Appraising 'white'

As already noted, Appraisal concerns interpersonal resources whereby different kinds of evaluation are enacted in/by a text. This analytical focus seems particularly appropriate in the case of 'white' in WSS, in view of the clearly evaluative patterns of collocation identified above. To avoid the risk of overlooking less statistically significant, but still relevant instances, all 95 concordances with 'white' as node were manually examined. Analysis often required going beyond the boundaries of already extended (sentence-length) concordances, because of the 'cumulative' nature of evaluation in language, and the fact that it "tends to be found throughout a text rather than being confined to one particular part of it"<sup>55</sup>. Appraisal analysis was also, where necessary, combined with consideration of co-occurring ideational semantics instantiated in Transitivity, since often "the selection of ideational meanings is enough to invoke evaluation, even in the absence of attitudinal lexis that tells us directly how to feel"<sup>56</sup>.

Table 5 summarises findings in terms of the types of Attitude enacted in, by, and sometimes also 'around' *white*<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Interestingly, however, the association between 'laugh' and 'at' highlights a recurring phrasal construction of the verb, in the sense of 'ridiculing'. Investigation of this potentially meaningful pattern is on the agenda.

<sup>54</sup> C.J. Fillmore, *Corpus linguistics or computer-aided armchair linguistics*, in *Directions in corpus linguistics*, J. Svartvik ed., Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin 1985, pp. 13-38.

<sup>55</sup> G. Thompson – S. Hunston, *Evaluation: an introduction*, in *Evaluation in text*, G. Thompson – S. Hunston ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford 2000, pp. 1-27, p. 19.

<sup>56</sup> J.R. Martin – P.R.R. White, *The language of evaluation*, p. 62.

<sup>57</sup> With reference to Judgement, it should be noted that the sub-categories SE: Tenacity and SS: Veracity (cf. Figure 2) are not enacted in the concordances under investigation; therefore, they are not included in the table. It should also be noted that a certain amount of fuzziness between Attitude categories is usually the norm, also linked to what Thompson calls the "Russian doll syndrome": "the way in which an expression of one category of Attitude may function as a token (an indirect expression) of a different category; and that token

Table 5 - *Attitude in white concordances*

<i>Non-Evaluative</i>	<i>Appreciation</i>		<i>Judgement</i>			<i>Affect</i>
	Reaction: Quality	Reaction: Impact	Social Esteem: Normality	Social Esteem: Capacity	Social Sanction: Propriety	Unhap- piness: Antipathy
38/95 [40%]	11	2	17	1	25	1
	Tot. 13/95 [13.7%]		Tot. 43/95 [45.3%]			Tot. 1/95[1%]

The concordances can be divided into three main groups: (i) those in which the node ‘white’ does not, strictly speaking, play an evaluative function, but expresses objective qualities (colour) of things, as in “[s]he was sitting on a box[...], smoking a *white* clay pipe” (WSS: 81); (ii) those in which ‘white’, generally in combination with other adjectives, enacts inscribed or invoked Appreciation (especially Reaction: Quality) of things, as in “[t]he water was so clear that you could see the pebbles [...]. Blue and *white* and striped red. *Very pretty*” (WSS: 8); and, finally, (iii) those in which ‘white’ forms part of structures assessing the status or moral qualities of people, thus enacting Judgement: SE/SS. There is, in addition, one isolated instance of Affect, which is enacted by the verb ‘hate’, with ‘white people’ as appraised and a ‘coloured’ character<sup>58</sup> as appraiser (Daniel Cosway, Antoinette’s alleged half-brother).

The concordances in groups (i) and (ii), taken together due to their common target (things rather than people), amount to a total 53.7% (51 out of 95). These occurrences would surely be worth further investigation, not least because they are in line with other studies stressing the importance of colour terms in literature<sup>59</sup>. However, from the viewpoint of the postcolonial discourse permeating WSS, which is our analytical focus here, the instances of ‘white’ enacting Judgement, with 43 concordances out of 95 (45.3%), can

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may itself function as an indirect expression of yet another category, and so on” (G. Thompson, *AFFECT and emotion, target-value mismatches, and Russian dolls: Refining the APPRAISAL model*, in *Evaluation in Context*, G. Thompson – L. Alba-Juez ed., Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2014, pp. 47-66, 49). The data in Table 5 refer to the ‘outer shell’ of such ‘dolls’, i.e., to the type of Attitude emerging as primary from analysis, without considering further categories indirectly triggered by the expression under investigation. The data presented here were also checked for inter-rater reliability through collaboration between the author and a second rater. The two coders agreed in approx. 90% of the cases; in the remaining 10% of the instances, final agreement was reached through discussion. On inter-rater reliability, see M. Taboada – M. Carretero, *Contrastive analyses of evaluation in text: Key issues in the design of an annotation system for Attitude applicable to consumer reviews in English and Spanish*, “Linguistics and the Human Sciences”, 6, 2012, pp. 275-295.

<sup>58</sup> The term ‘coloured’ is never used in an offensive way in WSS; as in many other former colonial territories, it refers to mixed-race people: not black, but not belonging to the privileged group of white people either.

<sup>59</sup> See, e.g., I.C. McManus, *Basic colour terms in literature*, “Language and Speech”, 26, 1983, 3, pp. 247-252; Chapter 16 in S. Wyler, *Colour and language: Colour terms in English*, Narr, Tübingen 1992; M. Turci, *The meaning of dark\* in Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness*, in *Language and verbal art revisited*, pp. 97-114; X. Luo, *Metaphor and metonymy of colors in Lawrence’s Fictional Works*, “Canadian Social Science”, 10, 2014, 3, pp. 58-63.

be hypothesised as being particularly relevant, also recalling how in this case the target of evaluation changes, from things to people's behaviour. Furthermore, in most of the concordances from this sub-set (31/43, or 72.1%), 'white' co-occurs with one of the collocates singled out in Table 4 above: 'people', 'cockroach', 'nigger' and 'black'. More specifically, 'white' in combination with 'cockroach' and 'nigger' was always analysed as enacting Judgement; 'white' in combination with 'people' was found to enact Judgement in 10 of its 11 occurrences, with the exception of the instance of Affect mentioned above; 'white' + 'black' was analysed as judgemental in 3 of its 6 occurrences, and as non-evaluative in the other 3. In the remaining 12 concordances from the same sub-set, judgemental white co-occurs occasionally with a number of different lexical units ('Creoles', 'jumbie', 'face', 'pappy', one instance each; 'girl', 'man', 'inspector', two instances each). The only collocate pair from Table 4 where 'white' either has no evaluative function, or enacts Appreciation, is 'white dress': therefore, the related concordances fall exclusively within groups (i) and (ii). The quantitative and statistical data generated by the corpus tools seem to have identified a potentially relevant textual pattern, supported by the qualitative analysis carried out so far: the remainder of this section is thus dedicated to a more detailed examination of the four collocates 'white people', 'white cockroach', 'white nigger', and 'black and white', while we shall come back to 'white dress' in Section 5.2.2.

Table 6 provides details re the sub-types of Judgement involving, or enacted by, 'white people', 'white cockroach', 'white nigger', and 'black and white', and also re appraisers and appraisees as sources and targets of evaluation. The main distinction highlighted in the table is that between SE and SS within Judgement, recalling that these represent two different ways of assessing human behaviour in a social context (cf. Section 2.1.1): while the former enacts evaluation of a person's status, or capabilities (Normality: is the appraised in any way special? Capacity: is s/he talented or competent? Tenacity: is s/he dependable?), the latter is more directly linked to morality and ethics (Veracity: is the appraised truthful? Propriety: is s/he, broadly speaking, beyond reproach?). As the table shows, SE in the concordances under investigation mainly takes the form of the sub-category of Normality, with just one instance of Capacity (as we noted with reference to Table 5, there are no instances of Tenacity in this sub-set). As for SS, the only sub-category emerging from analysis is Propriety, mainly in connection with Antoinette and her family as appraisees. Another important distinction accounted for by the table is that between inscribed and invoked evaluation. Inscribed evaluation is encoded in discourse through the use of explicit attitudinal lexis, as in "Daniel was *a very superior man*" (WSS: 92). Invoked evaluation, by contrast, is implicit and can only be inferred by considering the wider co-text (in particular co-occurring choices in ideational meanings), as well as the socio-cultural context in which the text is embedded, as in "he (Daniel) lived *like white people*" (WSS: 92), meaning that this character was particularly refined, but also – at the same time – implying the superiority of 'white people' as the touchstone for status (see also Note 57 on the so-called "Russian doll syndrome" in Appraisal analysis). The inscribed/invoked dichotomy is significant in

that it can give us an idea of the “polyphony” of evaluative voices found in a text<sup>60</sup>; realisations of invoked Attitude, in particular – being subtler, indirect, and so also open to different interpretive responses – are “crucial to analysis of evaluation in narrative and other literary genres”<sup>61</sup>. There are, however, more delicate distinctions to take into account, as these are also instantiated in the concordances under scrutiny. On the one hand, lexical metaphors do more than just invoking an attitudinal response: as Martin and White put it, they ‘provoke’ it<sup>62</sup>. We shall come back to this point below, when discussing the dehumanising effect of the ‘white cockroach’ metaphor. On the other hand, irony and sarcasm are instances of what Martin and White call ‘flagging’, i.e., invocation of an attitudinal orientation via counter expectation<sup>63</sup>.

Overall, the evaluative patterns seem to enact a deep cleavage in the fictional context’s society, sharply divided between black and ‘coloured’ people, on one hand, and white people, on the other, with Antoinette and her family falling in between. The concordances display a shift between +ve and -ve Attitude, depending on the appraiser’s and the appraised’s social background, adding to the sense of fragmentation.

Table 6 - *Judgement in concordances with ‘white people’, ‘white cockroach’, ‘white nigger’, ‘black and white’ as node*

<i>Collocate Pair</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Judgement: Sub-Types</i>	<i>Appraiser</i>	<i>Appraised</i>
White people	Appraised	Invoked +ve SE: Normality (6 concordances)	Black/‘coloured’ characters	--
		Invoked +ve SE: Normality (1 concordance)	Rochester	--
		Inscribed -ve SE: Normality (1 concordance)	Tia	--
		Inscribed -ve SE: Capacity (1 concordance)	Author of book on obeah (voodoo)	--
		Invoked -ve SS: Propriety (1 concordance)	Antoinette	--
White cockroach	Evaluative item	<i>Provoked</i> (metaphorical) -ve SS: Propriety (9 concordances)	Black/‘coloured’ characters	Antoinette and family

<sup>60</sup> M. Bednarek, *Polyphony in Appraisal: Typological and topological perspectives*, “Linguistics and the Human Sciences”, 3, 2007, 2, pp. 107-136.

<sup>61</sup> M. Macken-Horarik – A. Isaac, *Appraising Appraisal*, in *Evaluation in Context*, pp. 67-92, 70.

<sup>62</sup> J.R. Martin – P.R.R. White, *The language of evaluation*, p. 64.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<i>Collocate Pair</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Judgement: Sub-Types</i>	<i>Appraiser</i>	<i>Appraised</i>
White nigger	Evaluative item	Inscribed -ve SE: Normality/ SS: Propriety (6 concordances)	Black/'coloured' characters	Antoinette and family
		Inscribed -ve SE: Normality/ SS: Propriety (3 concordances)	White characters	Antoinette and family
Black and white	Appraised	<i>Flagged</i> (sarcastic) -ve SE: Normality (1 concordance)	Black/'coloured' characters	--
		Invoked -ve SS: Propriety (2 concordances)	Black/'coloured' characters	--

'White people' always functions as appraised in the concordances in which it occurs; Judgement here is mostly invoked, with the 'coupling' between interpersonal and ideational semantics playing a key role. Considering SE, white people are generally evaluated positively by both black/'coloured' characters as rich, powerful, refined, and by Rochester, who implicitly recognises them as his peers. One apparent exception is the evaluation expressed by a black child named Tia, which, however, concerns one specific 'sub-type' of white people: we shall come back to this below, while discussing the collocate pair 'white nigger'. Another exception is the author of a book on *obeah* (a form of voodoo) quoted by Rochester in Part two, who evaluates white people negatively in terms of SE: Capacity, but the instance is not central to the novel's meanings. In the following example, from Part two, Amélie (one of the servants at Antoinette's estate in Dominica) tells Rochester about Daniel Cosway, suggesting that part of his being 'superior' derives from his lifestyle, which is modelled on that of white people:

(1) She added thoughtfully that Daniel was a very superior man, always reading the Bible and that he lived like *white people* [...] he had a house like *white people*, with one room only for sitting in. (WSS: 92)

The only appraiser who judges the members of this group negatively in terms of SS (morality, rather than status) is Antoinette. Her evaluation is located at a textually significant point: the novel's opening.

(2) They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the *white people* did. But we were not in their ranks. The Jamaican ladies had never approved of my mother, 'because she pretty like pretty self', Christophine said. (WSS: 3)

Antoinette immediately qualifies herself as an outsider and, in so doing, implicitly highlights the reproachable behaviour of "the white people", who not only "close ranks" in

view of the “trouble” approaching (the tensions following Emancipation), but do so selectively and selfishly. In addition, a second evaluative thread focuses on the narrow-mindedness of the white “Jamaican ladies” who, it is implied, are simply envious of Antoinette’s beauty.

‘Black and white’ also functions as appraised in the related concordances, all located in Part one, and showing evidence of both SE (1 occurrence) and SS (2 occurrences). The appraisers in this case belong exclusively to the black/‘coloured’ group: a servant (Godfrey), and a ‘coloured’ man involved in the arson attack at Coulibri Estate. When Antoinette and her family run out of the house, he tries to stop them saying:

(3) So black and white, they burned the same, eh? (WSS: 26)

This abrasive sarcasm *flags-ve* Judgement: SE: Normality of the white people, stressing their vulnerability, despite their purported ‘superiority’, while also invoking – at a deeper level – a strongly negative Affect on the speaker’s part. The sharp social division emerges with force here, perhaps ultimately also casting doubt on the Veracity of the +ve evaluations of ‘white people’ expressed by black/‘coloured’ characters in general, discussed above.

‘White cockroach’ and ‘white nigger’ are evaluative items, used exclusively to address Antoinette, and occasionally extending to her family. ‘White cockroach’, which only occurs in the discourse of black/‘coloured’ characters as appraisers, is a lexical metaphor: in terms of Conceptual Metaphor Theory<sup>64</sup>, it instantiates a general category of conceptual metaphors linking human beings to non-human animals, i.e., MAN IS ANIMAL<sup>65</sup>. ‘Dehumanisation’ is among the main effects of these metaphors: an animal’s prototypical features are projected onto human beings, making them appear more ‘animal-like’. MAN IS ANIMAL metaphors are typically deployed to stigmatise ethnic or racial groups<sup>66</sup>. In WSS, ‘white cockroach’ enacts *provoked-ve* Judgement: SS: Propriety, portraying Antoinette and her family not only as inhuman, but also as dirty/infesting animals. This complex metaphor works on two implicit and interrelated planes. On one hand, Antoinette is a ‘cockroach’ because she is ‘white’ (opposition between white colonisers – as plague – and black/‘coloured’); on the other, she is a ‘cockroach’ because she is not ‘really’ ‘white’, as the issue of intermarriage between a Martinican woman and an Englishman (opposition between white people and Creoles). The two perspectives synergistically merge into a view of the ‘white cockroach’ as a disturbing outsider. Antoinette is aware of the social significance of her condition already as a child, as shown by this example from Part one:

(4) I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us *white cockroaches*. (WSS: 8)

<sup>64</sup> G. Lakoff – M. Johnson, *Metaphors we live by*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL 1980.

<sup>65</sup> See A. Goatly, *Humans, animals, and metaphors*, “Society and Animals”, 14, 2006, 1, pp. 15-37. Conceptual metaphors are conventionally indicated in italics.

<sup>66</sup> C. Volpato, *La negazione dell’umanità: i percorsi della deumanizzazione*, “Rivista internazionale di filosofia e psicologia”, 3, 2012, 1, pp. 96-109.

To be noted here is the co-occurrence of -ve Judgement and -ve Affect towards Antoinette and her family ("They hated us"), and Antoinette's own -ve evaluation, in terms of Judgement: SE: Normality, of the black population ("I never looked at any strange negro"), once again enacting the social cleavage previously mentioned.

'White nigger' was analysed as enacting inscribed (because of the co-textually explicit negative connotation of the word 'nigger') -ve Judgement, with SE: Normality shading into SS: Propriety: the boundary between the two is particularly 'permeable' in this case. This evaluative item, differently from 'white cockroach', is used by both black/'coloured' and white appraisers. In (5) below – another good illustration of the "cumulative groove"<sup>67</sup> built up by Appraisal resources – the appraiser is Tia, a black girl, Antoinette's only friend at Coulibri Estate. The question of Antoinette not being 'really' white comes up again.

(5) Plenty white people in Jamaica. Real white people, they got gold money [...] nobody see them come near us. Old time white people nothing but *white nigger* now, and black nigger better than *white nigger*. (WSS: 9)

Tia draws a clear distinction between "real white people" (+ve Judgement: SE: Normality) – who are truly rich ("they got gold money") and despise Antoinette's family ("nobody see them come near us") – and "old time white people" who, like Antoinette's father, engaged in intermarriage, thus becoming "nothing but white nigger" (-ve Judgement: SE: Normality/SS: Propriety)<sup>68</sup>. Antoinette is thus placed at the bottom of a social hierarchy in which "black nigger(s) (are) better than white nigger(s)", also enacting +ve Judgement: SE: Normality/SS: Propriety of black niggers<sup>69</sup>. The construal of Antoinette's marginalisation, cumulatively built up by the patterns discussed so far, culminates in the following passage, from Part two, in which she is talking to Rochester:

(6) Did you hear what that girl [= Amélie] was singing?' [...] It was a song about a *white cockroach*. That's me. [...] And I've heard English women call us *white niggers*. So [...] I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all. (WSS: 76-77)

The deep connection between the two derogatory epithets 'white cockroach' and 'white nigger', with their respective appraisers, sharply emerges here, pointing to Antoinette's hybrid – and so, undesirable – condition and its emotive/psychological consequences.

<sup>67</sup> C.J. Coffin – K. O'Halloran, *Finding the global groove: Theorising and analysing dynamic reader positioning using APPRAISAL, corpus and a concordancer*, "Critical Discourse Studies", 2, 2005, 2, pp. 143-163.

<sup>68</sup> Indeed, during the arson attack at Coulibri, in which Tia herself takes part, Antoinette hears somebody yelling "But look the black Englishman!", referring to Mr. Mason (WSS: 25).

<sup>69</sup> This much-quoted example is also noteworthy for Tia's socio-linguistic characterisation, brought about by her non-standard English, and Rhys' creative use of free indirect speech; on these aspects, see, e.g., F. Cavagnoli, *Il proprio e l'estraneo nella traduzione letteraria di lingua inglese*, Polimetrica, Milano 2010, pp. 71-83.

### 5.2.2 'White' and 'red'

The Appraisal analysis reported in the previous section showed all instances of 'white' enacting Judgement to be concentrated in Parts one and two, with no occurrence at all in Part three. We thus decided to take a closer look at this *sui generis* part of the novel, which is also the only one set at Thornfield Hall. A wordlist specifically generated for Part three (4,179 words) shows that 'white' is here replaced by 'red' as the predominant colour (ranking 19<sup>th</sup>, with 13 occurrences); indeed, of the total 95 occurrences of 'white' as adjective, only 4 are located in this section. Thus, 'red' – already featuring among the keywords for WSS against JE as a whole (see Table 3) – emerges as particularly relevant in this part of the novel<sup>70</sup>. Another eye-catching feature of the wordlist for Part three is the presence, among the top items, of the noun 'dress' (ranking 14<sup>th</sup>, with 17 occurrences), recalling that this also figures among the collocates of 'white' (Table 4). Furthermore, a search for the collocational patterns involving 'red' in Part three, in the 2L-2R range, shows 'dress' as its top collocate (6 co-occurrences, T-score 2.431). These admittedly serendipitous findings – which nonetheless testify to the potential of corpus techniques to guide the analyst, as a magnifying glass – were the primary reason for deciding to zoom in on the patterns involving 'white dress' and 'red dress', and to further investigate the relationship between the two bi-grams in Rhys' novel<sup>71</sup>. This new stage of research would also complement the analysis presented in the previous section, by focusing on the collocate pair 'white dress', which – as noted above in discussing Table 5 – falls outside the judgemental uses of 'white'.

There are 5 occurrences of 'white dress' in WSS: 1 in Part one, 3 in Part two, and 1 in Part three. In Parts one and two, dressing in white is a feature of various characters, including Antoinette, for whom, however, it seems to have a particular significance<sup>72</sup>. She is wearing a white dress in a recurring dream prefiguring her ill-fated marriage to Rochester; furthermore, towards the end of Part two, a white dress marks her mental and physical decay – a consequence of the mounting tension with her husband:

(7) 'Why do you hate me?' she said. [...] She was wearing the *white dress* I had admired, but it had slipped untidily over one shoulder and seemed too large for her. (WSS: 97)

The appraiser is Rochester, who had praised this dress at the beginning of the honeymoon, but now evaluates it negatively in terms of Appreciation: Reaction: Quality ("untidily", "too large"), also implying -ve Appreciation of Antoinette's physical appearance and -ve Judgement of her untidiness.

<sup>70</sup> The colour 'red' is obviously also symbolically relevant in JE, despite its lower lexico-grammatical frequency, as illustrated by, e.g., the red-room episode in Jane's early childhood.

<sup>71</sup> The symbolism of 'white' and 'red dress' in WSS has, however, been previously addressed in the literature, though not specifically from a CL perspective: see J. Robinson, *Gender, Myth and the White West Indian: Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea and Drayton's Christopher*, "Commonwealth Essays and Studies", 13, 1991, 2, pp. 22-30.

<sup>72</sup> It may also be worth noting that Bertha is wearing a white dress when Jane Eyre meets her, after the 'failed wedding' scene, in Brontë's novel.



In Part three, the picture changes. Now it is a girl seen by Bertha during one of her night escapes from the attic (Jane Eyre?) who is wearing a *white dress*. Bertha's dress, by contrast, is unmistakably *red*. In 5 of its 6 occurrences, the collocate pair 'red dress' is pre-modified by a possessive having Bertha as referent. Ideational meanings also point towards a strong connection between Bertha and her dress. In particular, the *red dress* is associated with two key mental processes of cognition:

(8) I said, 'If I had been wearing my *red dress* Richard would have known me.' [...] I looked at the dress on the floor and it was as if the fire had spread across the room. It was beautiful and it reminded me of something I must do. (WSS: 149)

First, Bertha tells Grace Pool that Richard Mason (whom she had previously attacked with a knife, as in JE) "would have known" her if she'd been wearing it (*red dress* as central to Bertha's identity); she then looks at the dress and, in describing her reaction, clearly alludes to JE's tragic finale ("it reminded me of something I must do", with a causative mental construction). Also to be noted is the +ve Appreciation of "it" – referring to the dress and, metaphorically, to its spreading like a fire across the room.

It is perhaps no coincidence that, in Brontë's novel, Bertha Mason is more than once associated with the colour red: e.g., she is described by Jane as a "purple" ghost, having "red", "bloodshot eyes" (JE: 317). The following occurrence of 'red dress' in WSS is particularly revealing, as the co-text makes the intertextual link with JE explicit:

(9) I took the *red dress* down and put it against myself. 'Does it make me look intemperate and unchaste?' I said. That man told me so. [...] 'Infamous daughter of an infamous mother', he said to me. (WSS: 148-149)

Bertha's recollection, triggered by the dress, is a faithful transcription of Rochester's original words in JE ("Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the [...] agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste"; p. 345). The approximation to Brontë's character also brings with it the question of insanity: the red dress – with its link to sensuality, intemperance, and fire (examples (8) and (9) above) – possibly also hints at this.

### 5.3 Symbolic articulation and a formulation of the theme

The patterns discussed in Sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 above arguably qualify as instances of foregrounding, playing a key role in the symbolic articulation of the novel's theme. As far as 'white' is concerned, the 'white + collocate' structures analysed above, enacting Judgement, stand out against a 'background' (i.e., non-evaluative/Appreciation uses of 'white' in the novel), and are characterised by stability of semantic direction, in that they cumulatively construe Antoinette's marginalisation and 'other-ness', and stability of textual location, being concentrated in Parts one and two, before Antoinette is definitively

transformed into Bertha<sup>73</sup>. As for ‘red’, we may even speak of an instance of ‘foregrounding within foregrounding’ in this case. ‘White’, predominant in Parts one and two, gives way to ‘red’ as the most frequent colour in Part three: a significant textual location in itself, as this is Bertha’s part. This shift is accompanied by a change from ‘white dress’ to ‘red dress’ as a key collocate pair. The PP (see Section 2.1.2 above) of ‘possessive + thing’ structures qualifying the red dress as Bertha’s, and of Transitivity structures pointing to an intrinsic connection between the two, is arguably one of the elements functioning in this part of the novel to construe Rhys’ Bertha as eventually getting close to her namesake in JE: getting close, i.e., to her strong feelings and states, including insanity.

A tentative formulation of the theme can be put forward on the basis of the analysis presented above: ‘the conflicts inherent in cross-cultural encounter as a cause of suffering, alienation, and, ultimately, insanity’. Investigation into the context of creation (see Section 2.2 above), which can only be touched upon here, supports this hypothesis. Re language, we have already noted, albeit in passing, Rhys’ creative use of code-mixing and non-standard English to construe socio-cultural differences among the characters. Code-mixing is also frequently found in JE, but here the languages involved are English and French – both prestigious; one of Rhys’ innovations consists in the introduction of Patois in the discourse of black/‘coloured’ characters. Furthermore, even in the absence of a thorough contrastive investigation, a comparison with a much larger general corpus (BNC), as we have seen, points to the unusual frequency in the novel of ‘white cockroach’, ‘white nigger’, ‘white dress’ and ‘red dress’ – all subsequently probed through qualitative analysis. Re artistic conventions, Rhys links up to JE, a canonical text, but does so contratextually<sup>74</sup>: her commitment to re-shape Brontë’s novel by giving voice to the outsider, Antoinette – reiterated both in her *Letters* and in several interviews released after the publication of WSS – fits into postcolonial literature’s commitment to “writing back to the centre of empire”<sup>75</sup>. Re world view, her concern with, and personal experience of, the racial strife afflicting her birthplace, a former British colony, recurs in her production: from short stories such as *Fishy Waters* and *Again the Antilles* to her unfinished autobiography, *Smile Please* (published posthumously in 1979). Finally, overall, insanity emerges as a multifaceted and delicate topic from WSS – i.e., not just a question of physical/physiological predisposition, but rather a condition that can be motivated by an individual’s experiences<sup>76</sup>; this fits in intertextually with the sociological approach to mental illness developed in the second half of the XX<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>73</sup> On the complex question of identity, and the relationship between self and other, in WSS see also S.S. Friedman, *Mappings: Feminism and the Cultural Geographies of Encounter*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 1998, pp. 28-29; 138-139.

<sup>74</sup> J.R. Martin, *Grammaticalising ecology: The politics of baby seals and kangaroos*, in *Semiotics, Ideology, Language*, T. Threadgold – E.A. Grosz – G. Kress – M.A.K. Halliday ed., Pathfinder Press, Sydney 1986, pp. 225-267.

<sup>75</sup> B. Ashcroft – G. Griffiths – H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*, Routledge, London/New York 2002<sup>2</sup>, p. 96.

<sup>76</sup> On Rhys’ complex approach to female madness in WSS, see also S. de Villiers, *Remembering the future: The temporal relationship between Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre and Jean Rhys’s Wide Sargasso Sea*, “Journal of Literary Studies”, 34, 2018, 4, pp. 48-61.

## 6. Conclusions

This paper has attempted to shed further light on the feasibility of a corpus-assisted SSS, focusing on the topic of 'other-ness' as it emerges from quantitative and qualitative analysis of select aspects of WSS, considered also against JE.

Overall, the findings are in line with previous studies carried out within this research project: the use of corpus techniques in SSS emerges as having both clear advantages and shortcomings. More specifically, corpus tools were essential to explore the lexicogrammatical 'texture' of WSS and JE, taken singularly (wordlists), but also comparatively (keywordlist for WSS against JE as reference), leading to the statistically motivated selection of 'white' and, subsequently, 'red' as items worth deeper scrutiny. The collocational trends involving these lexical units, also of key analytical importance, would have been equally impossible to identify manually; investigation of 'white dress' vs. 'red dress' was itself, ultimately, driven by automatically generated corpus data. On the other hand, qualitative analysis, necessarily manual, was indispensable to fully probe emerging patterns at the semiotic levels of language and verbal art, as prescribed by SSS. Appraisal analysis of KWIC concordances for 'white people', 'white cockroach', 'white nigger', and 'black and white' – taking into account not just the realisations of Attitude, but also the appraisers and appraisals involved – highlighted the construal of a cleavage in the fictional context's society, sharply divided between black and 'coloured' people, on one hand, and white people, on the other, with Antoinette and her family falling in between, as outsiders. Based on the analytical findings, a link was finally hypothesised between such undesirable condition of 'other-ness' – emerging from Parts one and two of Rhys' novel – and Part three, where Antoinette is linguistically construed as getting close to Bertha, not least through the shift from *white* to *red* as the predominant colour.

Much more emerged from corpus investigation of Rhys' intriguing version of Bertha's story. Among the most thought-provoking items, whose scrutiny is on the immediate agenda, are the *ad-hoc* lemma 'french patois' (in connection with the characters' linguistic behaviour and social positioning), the binomial 'man'/'woman', but also 'mother', and 'laugh', possibly linked to Bertha's "preternatural" and "demonic" laughs in JE.

After all, in postcolonial literature, foregrounding may also take the form of a motivated and consisted contrast against the 'norm' represented by another text: a canonical urtext. In this respect, corpus techniques can truly function as a magnifying tool: a robust point of departure before the analyst can comfortably sink into his/her armchair.

