

A CONTRIBUTION OF CORPUS LINGUISTICS TO LITERARY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we intend to obtain a keyword list of a short story, group these words into thematic areas, and afterwards group the *hapax* words – obtained by using the WordList tool of WordSmith Tools – also in thematic areas, if possible. The objective of these procedures is to verify whether those *hapax* would reinforce the thematic areas defined by the keywords, would create new thematic areas, or would provide no contribution whatsoever.

KEYWORDS: Corpus Linguistics'; Keywords; Wordsmith Tools.

Introduction

Corpus Linguistics can be a powerful tool in the analysis of literary texts, especially when allied with non-computational approaches, to bring into light interpretations, thematic details, critically important words in a text, and other information that to other types of analysis might go unseen. By enabling the researcher to process a large quantity of data, and by giving a statistical treatment to the information obtained, Corpus Linguistics provides an ideal approach to study various characteristics of a literary text that would otherwise have gone unnoticed. This is the case of the words called *hapax legomena*, that is, words that appear only once in a text. It is easy to understand that the *hapax*, exactly because they occur only once in the text, are extremely difficult, if not impossible, to detect without computational methods. These words together represent half – and sometimes more than half – of all different words (types) used in a text. Therefore, these words, as we will see, when grouped around a theme, can make a decisive contribution to a certain semantic area.

The keywords from a text indicate the most relevant words in this text; as a corollary, in the case of a fictional work, these words can determine a theme, or themes. It has been shown elsewhere (GONÇALVES, 2008, p. 387-405) that the keywords obtained by using the software WordSmith Tools (SCOTT, 1998) – which is basically a

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comparison between the types listed for a Study Corpus and a Reference Corpus – can be grouped in thematic areas.

In this work, we intend to obtain a keyword list of a short story, group these words into thematic areas, and afterwards group the *hapax* words – obtained by using the WordList tool of WordSmith Tools – also in thematic areas, if possible. The objective of these procedures is to verify whether those *hapax* would reinforce the thematic areas defined by the keywords, would create new thematic areas, or would provide no contribution whatsoever.

1 The Definition of the Corpora

The Corpus of Study in this case will be an Australian short-story, ‘Lady Weare and the Bodhisattva’, by Kylie Tennant (1969), composed of 2,745 words (tokens). The Reference Corpus was composed after taking into consideration various aspects. Firstly, the fact that literary language differs from the general type of language, found, for instance, in the great Reference Corpora, such as the BNC (British National Corpus). The vocabulary is more elaborate, the lexical density is greater. Furthermore, the short-story as a literary form has some peculiarities (see, for instance May, 1994) which can affect our results, such as the compression of language, translated in terms of Corpus Linguistics as a higher type/token rate. So, if the two corpora being compared present the characteristics common to all short-stories, it is to be supposed that those aspects will cancel out, and we will be left with the peculiarities and style of a particular short-story, which is ultimately what we want to observe. So, our decision was to build a Reference Corpus composed by short-stories of two English writers, Virginia Woolf and D. H. Lawrence, and a New Zealander who followed the English tradition, Katherine Mansfield. By doing so, we made sure that any peculiarities of Australian English would be brought to evidence. For questions of authorship, the writers selected belonged to the first half of the twentieth century and to our judgement this was done without introducing diachronic imprecision. So, our Reference Corpus was composed by 23 short-stories by Virginia Woolf, 17 short-stories by D. H. Lawrence and 12 short-stories by Katherine Mansfield, to a total of 212.591 words.

2 ‘Lady Weare and the Bodhisattva’: keywords and *hapax*

In this story, we find a middle-aged woman, Lady Weare, who has flown from Sydney to Melbourne on business, deeply imbued of the certainty that something will

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go wrong in her trip, for whenever she comes to Melbourne, some misfortune is bound to happen. It was her “hoodoo city”. Because she has some free time, she goes into a Museum and comes face to face with the statue of the goddess Bodhisattva, whose hand Lady Weare touches, although it is strictly forbidden. Coming out of the museum, she sees a woman who looks like herself, wearing identical clothes and carrying an identical handbag, attempting to cross the same street she herself was trying to cross. While Lady Weare is reluctant to cross, the other woman moves forward and is run over. She makes a gesture toward the lying woman, in an attempt to hold her hand, but is stopped by a passer-by, as this is now a crime scene. Lady Weare returns to her friends’ house, where she is staying. That same night, her host hits his head on a wardrobe and faints. The lady concludes her business in Melbourne and leaves. In a hotel in Adelaide she realizes that nothing wrong happened to her, and wonders what will happen the next time she goes to Melbourne. It is left to the reader to infer that the goddess had freed her from the evil spell and that other people would, from then on, suffer in her place.

By using the tool KeyWord, available in the software WordSmith Tools, version 3, taking $P=0,001^1$, we obtain a list of 64 keywords²:

N	WORD	FREQ.	LWEARE.TXT %	FREQ. REFCOR.	LST %	KEYNESS
1	WEARE	40	1,46	0		350,7
2	LADY	39	1,42	72	0,03	199,8
3	MELBOURNE	18	0,66	0		157,7
4	BODHISATTVA	10	0,36	0		87,6
5	S	6	0,22	5		37,5
6	RAIN	7	0,26	13		35,7
7	BRIEFCASE	4	0,15	0		35,0
8	ADELAIDE	4	0,15	0		35,0
9	HANDBAG	4	0,15	0		35,0
10	PLANE	5	0,18	3		33,3
11	ART	6	0,22	9		32,6
12	CITY	5	0,18	6		28,8
13	SHOES	7	0,26	26	0,01	27,8
14	TRAFFIC	4	0,15	2		27,4
15	HURT	7	0,26	29	0,01	26,6
16	RAINCOAT	3	0,11	0		26,3
17	HOSTESS	3	0,11	0		26,3

¹ P is a statistic variable related to the accuracy of the results: ‘The *p* value is that used in standard chi-square and other statistical tests. This value ranges from 0 to 1. A value of .01 suggests a 1% danger of being wrong in claiming a result’ (Scott, 1998, WordSmith Tools Manual).

² The last three words in the list are ‘negative’ keywords, that is, words that are considerably more common in the Reference Corpus.

18	ELEGANT	4	0,15	3		25,5
19	ICY	3	0,11	1		21,8
20	SYDNEY	3	0,11	1		21,8
21	COMMITTEE	3	0,11	1		21,8
22	HOST	3	0,11	2		19,6
23	KNITTED	3	0,11	2		19,6
24	NEXT	7	0,26	53	0,02	19,4
25	AROUND	4	0,15	9		19,2
26	WOMAN	13	0,47	231	0,11	18,1
27	HER	79	2,88	3.697	1,71	18,1
28	VICTORIA	3	0,11	3		18,0
29	BRONZE	3	0,11	3		18,0
30	REPRESENTING	2	0,07	0		17,5
31	HOODOO	2	0,07	0		17,5
32	VIENNESE	2	0,07	0		17,5
33	AIRPORT	2	0,07	0		17,5
34	DON	2	0,07	0		17,5
35	CONFERENCE	2	0,07	0		17,5

N	WORD	FREQ.	LWEARE.TXT %	FREQ.	REFCOR.LST %	KEYNESS
36	PRAYED	3	0,11	4		16,8
37	CENTRE	4	0,15	13		16,8
38	FRIENDS	5	0,18	33	0,02	15,0
39	GROUP	3	0,11	6		15,0
40	T	3	0,11	6		15,0
41	FEET	7	0,26	79	0,04	14,8
42	EXACTLY	4	0,15	18		14,6
43	CAR	4	0,15	19		14,2
44	MIGHT	8	0,29	115	0,05	13,8
45	HURTING	2	0,07	1		13,7
46	JILL	2	0,07	1		13,7
47	DRIVER	3	0,11	9		13,0
48	SHE	86	3,13	4.493	2,08	12,7
49	WOULD	18	0,66	537	0,25	12,4
50	TILTED	2	0,07	2		12,0
51	PROVIDED	2	0,07	2		12,0
52	DETAILS	2	0,07	2		12,0
53	ARRIVING	2	0,07	2		12,0
54	RAINING	2	0,07	2		12,0
55	PAINTING	2	0,07	2		12,0
56	PRINCIPLE	2	0,07	2		12,0
57	MEETING	3	0,11	11		12,0
58	CLOSELY	3	0,11	11		12,0
59	SOMEONE	4	0,15	28	0,01	11,6
60	MAID	3	0,11	13		11,1
61	TRAMS	2	0,07	3		10,9
62	AUSTRALIAN	2	0,07	3		10,9
63	TRAM	2	0,07	3		10,9
64	DISASTER	2	0,07	3		10,9
65	SAID	4	0,15	1.551	0,72	18,6
66	HIS	5	0,18	2.207	1,02	28,9
67	HE	6	0,22	3.774	1,75	59,3

From this list we are able to group some of them in thematic areas, as shown below, with the number of occurrence and *keyness*³ in parentheses:

Area of cities (or places) and urban elements: Melbourne (18-157.7); Adelaide (4-35.0); plane (5-33.3); city (5-28.8); traffic (4-27.4); Sydney (3-21.8); Victoria (3-18.0); airport (2-17.5); centre (4-16.8); car (4-14.2); driver (3-13.0); arriving (2-12.0); trams (2-10.9); Australian (2-10.9); tram (2-10.9).

Area of business and reasoning: briefcase (4-35.0); exactly (4-14.6); committee (3-21.8); conference (2-17.5); meeting (3-12.0).

Area of fashion: handbag (4-35.0); shoes (7-27.8); raincoat (3-26.3); elegant (4-25.5); knitted (3-19.6).

Area of mystic words: Bodhisattva (10-87.6); bronze (3-18.0); representing (2-17.5); hoodoo (2-17.5); prayed (3-16.8).

By observing the list of all different words in the Study Corpus, as provided by the tool WordList, we find that, from a total of 887 types, 558 are *hapax legomena*, which is a larger number than usually find in texts in general, which goes to show the importance of the *hapax* here. As a hypothesis, we have assumed that the areas defined by the keywords would be reinforced by correspondent groups within the *hapax*, which would constitute a corpus-based form of research. And this really happens. We have the following words in the areas defined previously:

Area of cities (or places) and urban elements: aboard; ambulance; amorys; arcade; asiatic; aztec; departing; dash; darted; crowds; country; dutch; eastern; filthy; flight; flights; flowerlike; fog; gallery; garbage; garden; italian; kitchen; lights; line; littered; Papuan; park; passengers; Persian; planes; restaurant; roadway; scene; soot; strolled; strolling; suburb; terrace; tramcar; tramstop; university; western. (48 words)

Area of business and reasoning: admit; asked; asking; assured; attentively; booking; bought; business; buy; capable; catalogue; chaired; committees; connections; convention; decided; dollars; examine; exchange; excuse; expensive; figures; finding; forgot; forty; government; hard; idea; imaginable; important; indicated; indispensable; inquisitive; intently; interested; introduced; knowledge; known; list; listening; managed; matched; mistake; mistook; noticed; notices; observed; ordered; peered; propitiate; read; reading; realise; realizing; regarded; remember; reminded; rich; saw; say; saying; sense; sensible; simple; speak; speech; statistics; studying; success; sure; talked; tell; thinking; transacting; try; unconscious; understandingly; unintelligible; want; wanted; word. (82 words)

³ We may say that *keyness* is a measure of how prominent the word is in the studied text; to compute *keyness* of an item, the programme computes its frequency and the number of words both in the smaller text and in the reference corpus (Scott, 1998, WordSmith Tools Manual).
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Area of fashion: bag; buckled; cloth; clothes; clothing; colours; crocodile; decorative; hairdresser's; headdress; shabby; turban; wearing. (13 words)

Area of mystic words: ancestors; dancing; deathmasks; electric; energy; goddess; gods; halo; hindu; jinx; limbo; religious; spirit; spiritual; statue. (15 words)

What we really did not expect, and this is a corpus-driven type of research, is for a completely different area to emerge, which is an area of emotion and feelings:

Area of emotions/feelings: aching; admired; affection's; afraid; ah; amused; animated; appalling; appreciated; astonishingly; atmosphere; bearable; beautiful; bravado; bright; careless; caressing; caution; cautiously; cheerful; cheerfulness; chilly; comic; congratulated; crazy; crying; defensive; deference; despair; dignified; disgusted; drawn; elated; enjoyment; excitedly; exclaimed; exclamation; excruciating; exhausted; expression; failing; failure; faint; feel; flinty; frightened; gay; gimmicky; glad; glorious; good; haughty; hearted; heavenly; hellish; hoped; hostility; humiliation; immovable; laughed; leered; liked; loved; lovely; magnificent; menacing; mowed; nerve; nice; nightmares; pain; painful; pleasanter; prayers; praying; punishing; receiving; refusing; relieved; repulsive; right; rudeness; sardonically; shaken; shock; shrugged; sinking; sparkling; squalor; sternly; suffered; suffering; surprised; suspicious; threateningly; undesirable; undignified; vicious; warmly; weary; weeping; welcomed; wept; willing; wistfully; wondered; worried; worse; wretchedness; writhing; wrong (111 words)

It should be noted that the words which admit more than one interpretation were studied in context, so that the meaning they assumed in the text will define the area they belong to. So these words, such as 'mowed', for instance, were observed by using the tool Concord:

N	Concordance
1	nly seen in nightmares, mowed and leered at each other, read newspaper and smoked filthy s

A careful reading of the story will show that there are two plots running along each other. One, realistic, telling about a mature business woman in Melbourne going about her chores; the other, about an encounter between a human and a goddess, a magic touch and the suggestion of the transfer of bad luck to other people, as a result of the expunge performed by the Bodhisattva. The point which would connect the two plots would be the hands, their touch, their mute appeal. So, a reinforcement on the words composing the area of mysticism was to be expected, but not necessarily the inclusion of the emotional aspects. This, although coming as a surprise, can be understood because of the non-rational aspect of the second plot, which sets, in a way,

rationality against mysticism, which can also be interpreted as rationalism versus emotionality.

The number of the *hapax* related to the area of emotions/feelings, 111 words, represent 12.51 per cent of all the different words used in the short story (887 types), which is relevant in establishing a mood. And because these words appear only once in the text, this mood involves the story in a very subtle way.

Conclusion

We began the research with the intention of verifying whether the *hapax* in the short story ‘Lady Weare and the Bodhisattva’ would confirm and reinforce (or not) the thematic areas defined by use of the keywords. The result confirmed the hypothesis. It was a corpus-based type of inquiry. But a close observation of the 558 *hapax* of the text, showed that about one-fifth of these words were related to emotions, which, in turn, pointed to an undercurrent of emotion in the text, showing that the *hapax* may be used by an author to include a subliminal effect in the text. This last step was an example of a corpus-driven type of research.

1 Appendix: the text

Lady Weare and the Bodhisattva

On any flight between Sydney and Melbourne there would be at least one Australian woman exactly like Lady Weare. She was half a stone overweight, and her knitted woollen suit, which she wore because she expected Melbourne to be cold, did nothing for her figure. Her hair was going grey and she couldn’t waste time at the hairdresser’s. Her husband and children loved her anyway. Her immovable face, which made her look like Queen Victoria, was more haughty than usual because her new shoes were giving her hell. She had bought them yesterday especially for this trip and they were too tight. She would continue to wear them because they were expensive and elegant. They exactly matched her off-white handbag. She also carried a shabby briefcase full of papers which she needed for her speech at the conference in Melbourne, and other papers for the committee meeting in Adelaide.

The briefcase didn’t match anything except Lady Weare who was worn with lifetime of work. It was much part of her personality as the glasses she wore when she was reading, something indispensable which must not be mislaid.

The passengers tramped aboard the plane into an atmosphere something like plunging into a warm feather pillow. They looked about them as their ancestors must have done when transported, a look of bravado mixed with caution and the dreadful knowledge that they would be sitting next to strangers and might be expected to speak to them. Lady Weare took her seat and gave her companion an icy glance which crossed one

even more icy. The man buried himself in his paper. Lady Weare took out a clip of statistics from her briefcase and bent her head over them. Shutting her eyes as the plane prepared to take off she ran through her accustomed prayers. She had been on so many flights she couldn't remember them all and this was only a bus run. But she prayed nevertheless that if anything happened someone would look after Jim and the children. She then went on to pray from force of habit for the long list of friends, connections and some undesirable characters who needed help. They would have been very surprised to know this praying was going on. Others she prayed for from old affection's sake. Lady Weare prayed the way other women knitted. She filled in odd moments and kept herself busy. She did not pray for herself because that might have been undignified.

She merely hoped that whatever hellish thing Melbourne had in store she might meet it without failing. She never refused to go to Melbourne, but it was her hoodoo city, a black jinx. Every time she went there something appalling happened, some bad luck, some disaster. She had gone to work in Melbourne when she was eighteen and suffered every humiliation and misery imaginable for someone young and poor. Now that she was old and rich Melbourne still lay in wait for her like a trap. On one visit, a year ago, she had stayed there for a week and congratulated herself that nothing had happened. But she reached the airport to come home to find that fog prevented her plane from leaving. The scene at the airport became more and more crazy - thickened with noise, crying children, crowds milling desperately as planes piled up. Lady Weare was there for six hours trying to get away and being met by rudeness; at last like a refugee refusing to struggle, sitting in despair, then listening to the unintelligible roar of the loudspeaker, realizing finally that she was being called.

And what about the time she had been lost in a strange suburb after midnight and all the houses were dark; there was no-one to tell her the way? And the other time when the hotel made a mistake in her booking and she could not even find any of her friends and was given a couch in a stranger's living room? Other people might find Melbourne charming. To Lady Weare it was a disaster city. But she never refused to go there; that would be to admit a failure of nerve.

She eased her feet out of the tight shoes. The man next to her stirred and turned his flinty, suspicious face towards her. "Excuse me," he said. " Aren't you Jill Weare? We met at the Amorys'. Did you ever find out what happened to Ernest?"

His face split into a smile so friendly that Lady Weare immediately stopped looking like Queen Victoria and became Jill Weare. They talked warmly and almost excitedly all the way to Melbourne because they were interested in the same committees. Lady Weare forgot she was going to her hoodoo city until she came down from the plane into the middle of a heat-wave wearing a woollen suit.

'Lovely weather it's been for the Festival'. The driver of the government car thought he might as well be nice to the old bag, because she might be important if a car was sent to meet her. 'The whole fortnight it's been like this, sunshiny and glad to be alive.'

Lady Weare said, 'I am willing to place a small bet that tomorrow it will be raining heavily.'

'Ah, don't say that.' The driver was of a cheerfulness to match the weather. 'Why would that be, then?'

'I am here,' Lady Weare said sardonically. 'It never fails.'

‘From Sydney, then?’ The driver nodded understandingly. He knew about Sydney people.

The house where Lady Weare was to stay for the two nights of her visit was old and had a friendly garden. The sunlight came through windows as though into a Dutch painting. Apples in baskets, pears in baskets, were lying on the marble table by the back door. The terrace had a grapevine just losing its leaves. Her host and hostess, when she had changed into summer clothing, introduced her to friends who came fluttering in; the wine cellar and the Western Australian plants; and the children of the doctor who lived next door. There was a Persian cat and an old mastiff. When evening came and they all drove into the city in the bigger of the two cars, Lady Weare’s host even found a place to park outside the restaurant where they dined before the conference.

The evening was a great success and on the way home, in the warm caressing night with the lights velvety and flowerlike, they laughed as though they were young and careless. As they sat in the kitchen having a last drink together Lady Weare’s hostess exclaimed that it was raining.

In the morning, the Melbourne Lady Weare had known, the Melbourne of misery and wretchedness, was weeping with the grey skies that wept as though the rain was a loss to them. Lady Weare spent the morning transacting business for her husband. She felt gay - relieved - what could happen? She was to lunch with a professor at the University, who brought two friends to meet her. They asked what she was doing that afternoon. She told them she would be leaving early next morning for Adelaide, but that afternoon was for enjoyment. ‘I thought I would seize the chance to go to the Art Centre. My daughter will be quite disgusted if I don’t see it.’ She assured them that she was quite capable of finding her way by tram across the city, and they drove her to a tramstop.

The rain was now being discharged as a vicious barrage, missing nothing. Lady Weare felt quite cheerful in her raincoat and knitted suit. Her feet were hurting her, the rain splattered into the tramcar. Well, if this was all there was to Melbourne this time, it was quite bearable. The Art Centre amused her with its neo-Aztec heaviness. There was nothing pleasanter than walking - even with aching feet - around an art gallery by yourself. You could stop to examine something you liked and were not hurried on to look at something you didn’t want to see.

Lady Weare decided she would look at the Eastern art. You couldn’t look at everything. She had never appreciated the Hindu convention - as simple really as comic-strip balloons - whereby gods with as many arms as a spider sat in the middle of this halo of limbs. It reminded her of the Italian picture of a man walking his dog and the dog had a whole blur of legs. What was the word? - ‘gimmicky’.

She strolled from one magnificent scroll painting to the next. They were old, faded, brown, with intimate details of houses appearing when you looked closely. And strolling thus, dignified and not thinking about anything in particular except the pain in her feet, Lady Weare with her catalogue and her handbag, her cream-coloured raincoat, her glasses - for looking at the details closely - her sensible cloth turban - for rain, Melbourne rain - came upon the Bodhisattva.

She had noticed a number of these female Bodhisattva figures in the Asiatic paintings she had been studying. What these spirit-women were doing besides being decorative she had not the slightest idea. They posed around the edges of whatever heavenly or religious action was going on, representing some principle, perhaps. She would never

know. But Lady Weare's Bodhisattva was quite different. A bronze statue about life-size, she came writhing up like a flame of goddess, dancing-girl, narrow-waisted, all dark energy.

Lady Weare peered at the Bodhisattva's face under its curved headdress. The eyelids were tilted, the narrow curved mouth was tilted in a smile at once menacing and unearthly. Perhaps she was representing some principle, but the hands that were holding a hammer and gong looked like just a beautiful woman's hands. Lady Weare felt drawn towards the Bodhisattva. Here was the embodiment, she felt, of all that she was not. This Bodhisattva had never sat on a committee or chaired one. She would not be worried or elated or try too hard.

Lady Weare admired the Bodhisattva a little wistfully and walked away. She walked back. She gazed intently at the figure of the spiritual being. Something was trying to get through to her. She looked again more closely. The clenched hand of the figure showed a worn place where people had touched it on the bronze knuckles. There were notices asking people not to touch anything. Nevertheless Lady Weare cautiously put out her ungloved hand and touched the hand of the Bodhisattva. She felt that the Bodhisattva would like that. It might make her feel, in this strange place, that she was receiving the deference to which she was accustomed.

Touching that worn bronze was like touching one of those electric machines in a penny arcade. A current of force prickled through Lady Weare so astonishingly that she touched the hand again to make sure. Then she hurried away - rather shaken. She found herself gazing at some Papuan deathmasks. Upstairs, the day darkened around her as she looked at a Raising of Lazarus and then a Vision of Hell. Even the portraits looked very dead. I must go, she thought desperately, beginning to be afraid. But she hesitated, stumbled on with those painful feet more excruciating now, until at last, exhausted, she found herself outside in the rain.

Opposite the Art Centre, beyond three streams of traffic, trams were arriving and departing almost empty at a strip of grass, while outside the Art Centre a group of people waited to run across to the trams, looking for a break in the line of cars.

If I were not so faint-hearted, Lady Weare thought, I would take a chance - dash across. The woman beside her took a break in the traffic and darted forward, and Lady Weare hesitated, almost went with her. The woman was about her age, had the same cream-coloured raincoat. Her grey hair was showing under just such a head covering as Lady Weare wore. If she could do it, Lady Weare thought, looking up the rushing traffic for next break, can't I?

There was an exclamation from someone in the group and a thud. Lady Weare turned back to see the woman's handbag - so exactly like her own - lying in the wet roadway. The woman herself - where was she? Lady Weare looked in the wrong place because the woman had been flung forward by the car that had hit her such a long way beyond her handbag. Lady Weare felt a dreadful sinking. The traffic was still flashing past. No-one stopped. She could not get across the road. Finally she managed to struggle over and ran towards the woman who was lying in the rain and the dirt.

'Don't touch her!' A man ordered. He was standing sternly, saying nothing, with a group forming a kind of defensive ring. They had their lips tight shut, they had sent someone for an ambulance, they were waiting for the police, they were keeping off inquisitive people, doing the 'right things'.

The woman had her hand flung out, her fingers were clenched. Lady Weare wanted very much to take that hand in her own. Where the woman's face had scraped the road it was dirty and broken. As Lady Weare stooped down, the man said again, 'Don't touch her,' quite threateningly. The outflung hand shivered a little like the wing of a frightened bird. Then the fingers opened, stiffened, lay limp.

Lady Weare under the hostility of the men from the car that had smashed into the woman, turned away. When she sat in the tram going home the hand of the woman kept quivering and then lying still. Around Lady Weare the kind of squalor that Melbourne provided especially for her darkened the dirty carriage. People with faces that are only seen in nightmares, mowed and leered at each other, read newspaper and smoked filthy stubs of tobacco. The floor was littered with repulsive garbage. An empty beer can clattered across the carriage. The colours ranged from deep soot to mid-mud. The landscape outside the windows could have been limbo.

The charming house, her warm friends, welcomed her. 'I saw an accident', was all she told her hostess. 'It gave me rather a shock'. That night her host walked into the sharp corner of a wardrobe and was knocked unconscious. He was not badly hurt, but he lay on the floor with his hand flung out.

Next morning as she walked towards the plane for Adelaide, her rather chilly face set in its Queen Victoria repose, her feet hurt her worse than ever. The sun was shining in a cloudless sky and it was going to be a glorious day in Melbourne.

Arriving at the hotel in Adelaide she felt that even if it made her late for her meeting she would have a bath and change all her clothes. There was a Viennese maid of about her own age flicking about the bedroom. 'My shoes hurt me,' Lady Weare observed to the maid. 'If I had any sense I wouldn't wear them.'

'But madame, they are so elegant!' The woman had a bright sparkling look. 'Oh how I know the shoes that are elegant and hurt one's feet! When I come to this country I think: "One will not get good things there", and I buy for forty dollars a pair of crocodile-skin shoes. Think of it! And they hurt me so I can hardly walk onto the boat. They hurt me for years. They never wear out. At last I throw them away.'

Lady Weare sat down on the side of the bed. She regarded her elegant buckled shoes attentively while another maid came in and engaged in an animated exchange with the Viennese. I wonder if I am punishing myself, she thought. If so, I wonder what for?

Was it that the shoes hurt this might propitiate whatever provided the bad luck in Melbourne? That they would realise she didn't need more suffering? Ridiculous! Then she thought, I wonder if they mistook that woman for me? Ridiculous! She wondered what would happen next time she went to Melbourne, and shrugged. Then, with icy expression which indicated her feet were hurting she took up her briefcase and set out, exactly on time for her committee meeting.

In three month's time, she knew, she would again be going to Melbourne.

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