



# EXPERIENTIAL MEANING IN BAYO ADEBOWALE'S *LONELY DAYS*: FOCUS ON TWO EXTRACTS

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**Abstract:** This article is meant to point out the overall message conveyed in Bayo Adebowale's novel, *Lonely Days* (2006). Based on Systemic Functional Linguistics, the article focuses on the transitivity patterns. Examining two key extracts under such a linguistic-stylistic angle will contribute with enough scientific evidence to revealing that, indeed, as may be noticed by any reader (ordinary readers and scholars alike), the main character Yaremi's living conditions as a widow, constitute the topic of the examined excerpts as well as the whole literary artifact under consideration. From the exploration of the different process types and their attendant participants in the selected texts, one can realize that it is all about woman's compelling need for man to give her life a full sense, and, above all, the necessity of securing special interpersonal relationships with widows for their well-being.

**Keywords:** *Lonely Days*, Experiential Meaning, Transitivity, Process types, widow, living conditions.

## 1. Introduction and Literature Review

*Lonely Days* (2006) is a contemporary Anglophone African novel written by the Nigerian author Bayo Adebowale, and I strongly believe that a Systemic Functional Linguistics-based analysis can significantly contribute to grasping the ideological message conveyed in it. Set in a Nigerian (West African) rural area, the novel is a depiction of women's plight, more specifically a widow's. It has been the subject of a great deal of literary criticism, but I choose not to review that sort of criticism here, given that the present paper is rather a linguistic stylistic investigation. The angle under which I have set to make my investigation is the Hallidayan framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics; to be more specific, the grammar of experiential meaning - transitivity. Research works of this type, specifically interested in the experiential meaning, include Hasan's (1985/1989), Iwamoto's (2007), Koussouhon's (2009), Nguyen's (2012), Amoussou's (2014), Boukari's (2015), Boukari and Koussouhon's (2018), to name but a few.

Hasan (1985/1989) has examined several aspects of Les Murray's poem "Widower in the country", paying considerable attention to transitivity patterns and ending up with the impact of verbal art. At the stage of drawing the "meaning of the poem's meanings" as she put it, she contends that the poem is a statement not about an actual widower, but about "the centrality of interpersonal relationships for the preservation of a sense of humanity"(p. 54). Iwamoto's (2007) work is of interest

insofar as he combines two different – though similar – techniques of analysis to review and expand Carter's (1997) inquiry into the "Cinderella story". Using both techniques, that is, Halliday's transitivity theory and the Ergative model, he eventually confirms Carter's findings. For instance, he has found that in the story under analysis, transitive verbs are associated with male actions while intransitive verbs are associated with female actions; the main male participant "takes actions and initiatives" while the female one rather "has things done to her and is cast in a passive and helpless role".

Koussouhon's (2009) article on *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* comes to a climax, as it were, when he explains how his transitivity patterns analyses reveal foregrounding in the extracts under study. This happens in the section entitled "Foregrounding in *The Beautiful [Ones Are Not Yet Born]*" (page 138 of the article). Interestingly enough, judging from the content of the section, we can realize that this title could otherwise be "The meaning of the texts' meanings". At this stage of his analyses, after a series of arguments based on his process types identification and description, the researcher eventually writes that, on the whole, the studied passages and probably the novel itself "depict a world of ineffectuality and pessimism" reflecting "Ghana's or Africa's lot" as viewed by the author of the novel under consideration. Nguyen's (2012) study of *Heroic Mother* by Hoa Pham is of interest as well, in many respects. The main human participant of the investigated corpus is a female character facing hard social realities, as is the case in most of the literary artifacts under consideration so far, and also in *Lonely Days*. Moreover, it is Halliday's transitivity system that has been applied, using the same analytical procedure as the other linguistic stylistic investigations mentioned above, just as the one intended here in this paper.

Amoussou's (2014) work includes the following statement in his conclusion: "A proper qualitative analysis should help to validate or not the suspicions raised in the quantitative analysis". His practical analysis section clearly consists of a quantitative analysis subsection and one (a subsection) of qualitative analysis. The quantitative analysis, resulting from a heavily context-dependent labeling of process types, shows a dominance of mental and behavioural processes in the two extracts under study. His qualitative analysis has indeed helped to validate some ideas. Among others, he eventually contends that the extracts are essentially about the human condition; they portray "a human suffering from starvation, deprivation and humiliation" as a result of being "denied the basic necessities of life..." (p.30). As we shall see, the extracts chosen for the present paper do share a lot of linguistic characteristics with those examined respectively by Amoussou and most of the other researchers mentioned in this section.

Boukari's (2015) research work encompasses both interpersonal and experiential meanings. Regarding the experiential meaning, the transitivity analyses are

accompanied with the discourse semantics-based examination of lexical relations. By interpreting all the identified and discussed linguistic elements, he comes up with the assertion that the main topics in Nwapa's novels do include the effectiveness of women's quest for emancipation and the crucial issue of men's responsibility towards their wives or concubines. As for Boukari and Koussouhon (2018), it is noteworthy that they have started with a mixed literature review, that is, a review of both literary criticism (on the novel *The Voice*) and linguistic criticism (in various other literary works of fiction). A relatively detailed transitivity model is then provided before the analysis proper. The analysis does exclusively concern the transitivity patterns in two excerpts. The investigation of the different process types, including the participants and circumstances, has led the researchers to the conclusion that the novel is all about "man's perpetual need to take action, to understand the meaning of life, to set a fair society, and to reach salvation".

Without further dwelling on these few selected pioneering works, we need to have a brief look at the theoretical framework for this paper: the transitivity model.

## **2. Literature Review (continued), Theoretical Framework and Methodological Approach**

First, let us remember that, substantially, the research topic under discussion is "Experiential meaning in *Lonely Days*". For an informed reader, the term "experiential meaning" calls other terms to mind; chief among them, "interpersonal meaning" and "textual meaning". In fact, these are the three types of meaning that language is meant to make when viewed under the angle of Systemic Functional Linguistics. Indeed, my investigation is based on this theory devised and elaborated by M.A.K. Halliday (1985) – joined by other scholars such as Eggins (1994/2011), Bloor and Bloor (1995), Matthiessen (2004), Fontaine (2013). Understanding Experiential, Interpersonal and/or Textual meaning in a text requires looking respectively into Transitivity patterns, Mood patterns and/or Theme patterns in the said text. So, in this paper, we are concerned with transitivity patterns. For a synopsis of the theory of Systemic Functional Linguistics at large and transitivity patterns in particular, the reader is referred not only to the books by the scholars that I have just named but also to the works by researchers mentioned earlier (in the literature review). The reader is more specifically referred to, among others: Hasan (1985/1989: 36-37); Iwamoto (2007: 70-78); Koussouhon (2009: 129-130); Koussouhon, Akogbeto, Koutchadé and Allagbé (2015: 147-148); Boukari (2015: 37-44); Boukari and Koussouhon (2018: 2-5). Here, I choose to succinctly review what I consider as part of the most "technical" information about the transitivity model.

Investigating experiential meaning in a text requires examining the transitivity patterns in that text, which amounts to scrutinizing the process types occurring in the text. In fact, only from the interpretation of the transitivity patterns can we reliably

infer the experiential meaning (also known as the ideational meaning) that is conveyed in the text under analysis. There are six (06) main process types: material processes, mental processes, behavioural processes, verbal processes, existential processes and relational processes.

- **Process types and their attendant participants**

- **Material processes:** They are processes of doing, somehow tangible actions or happenings in the physical world. The inherent participants in a material process are Actor (the doer of the action) and Goal (the affected person or entity, if any), respectively like "The butcher" and "the bone" in "The butcher took the bone". The reader may need to be familiar with such other terms as "Range, transitive material process, intransitive material process, Beneficiary, Receiver, Client, Action process versus Event process, Intention process versus Supervention process..."

- **Mental processes:** They are processes of minding, feeling, or sensing. In fact, there are three subcategories of them: processes related to Cognition, those related to Affection, and those related to Perception. Whatever the subcategory, the two inherent participants are Senser (the participant engaged in minding, feeling or sensing), and Phenomenon (what is mentally processed). For example, in "The dog had not seen the bone", "The dog" is Senser, "had not seen" is the process (Mental), and "the bone" is Phenomenon.

- **Behavioural processes:** They are verbs of physiological or psychological acts. The Participant involved in committing such acts of behaving is known as Behavior. When the act is directed to another Participant, the latter is called Phenomenon, or Behaviour if it is like Range (a restatement of the process). For instance, in "The girls laughed at him", "The girls" is Behavior, "him" is Phenomenon. Sometimes, behavioural processes and mental processes are very alike, and one needs to be extremely careful to tell them apart.

- **Verbal processes:** They are processes of verbal action, generally involving three Participants: Sayer (the 'doer' of the verbal action), Verbiage (that which is said), and Receiver (the one to whom saying is directed). For example, in "The policeman asked the driver a few questions", "The policeman" is Sayer, "asked" is the process (Verbal), "the driver" is Receiver, and "a few questions" is Verbiage.

- **Existential processes:** They encode meanings about states of being as entities of any kind are stated to exist. The structure of existential process clauses involves the use of the structural "there". The entity that is stated to exist is referred to as the existent, like "anyone" in "Is there anyone in the bathroom?"

- **Relational processes:** They are processes meant to relate an entity to some attribute or identity. According to Halliday (2004:215), the English system operates with three main types of relation – intensive, possessive and circumstantial; and each of these comes in two distinct modes of being – attributive and identifying. In fact, the elements that are related to each other may be Carrier and Attribute, as is the case of

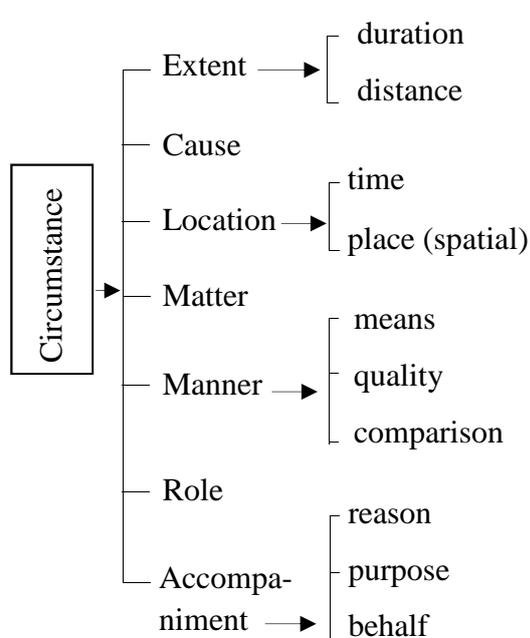
"The task" and "hard", respectively, in "The task was hard"; Token and Value, as is the case of "Linguistics" and "the hardest subject" respectively, in "Linguistics is the hardest subject".

Other sources for details about relational processes include Egging (1994: 225- 266) and Egging (2004: 239 - 249).

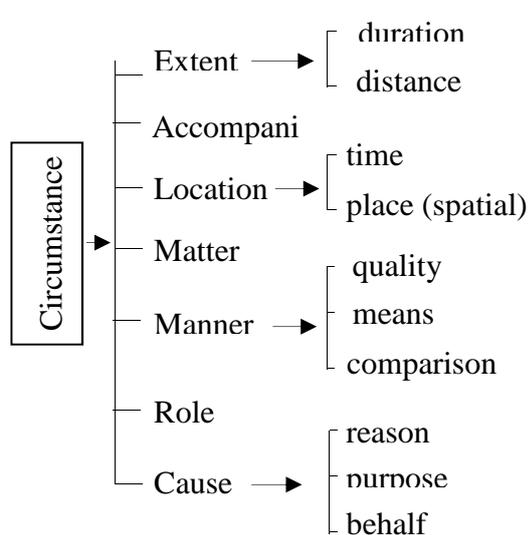
• **Circumstances**

They are meanings realized by adverbial groups or prepositional phrases to notify when, where, how and/or why (i.e. under what circumstances) the process takes place. There are seven (07) types of circumstances, respectively used to show **Extent** (duration or distance), **Cause** (reason, purpose or behalf), **Location** (time or place), **Matter**, **Manner** (means, quality, comparison), **Role** and **Accompaniment**.

Egging (1994) has devised a system of circumstance including all the types of Circumstance that I have just listed; see the system on the left side below. However, considering the relevance of Koussouhon's (2012) examination of editing errors (editing matters...), a careful and critical reader may recognize that there is a slight careless mistake (surely an editing matter) somewhere in that drawn system. In fact, reason, purpose and behalf are not expressions of Accompaniment as shown on that system; they are rather expressions of cause as specified by the linguist herself (Egging 1994, p. 238 / 2004, p. 222). Therefore, were I allowed to humbly draw the reader's attention to that slight editing mistake which might mislead a learner, hoping that it is not and it will not be taken as a pretentious act to rectify it, I would take this opportunity to do so by redrawing the system as follows; see the system on the right side.



**System of circumstance**  
(Egging: 1994, p. 237 / 2004, p.223)



**System of circumstance: slightly reviewed**  
(from Egging's 1994, p. 237 / 2004, p.223)

In addition, within this Hallidayan transitivity theory presented so far by way of reminder, Hasan (1989) has coined the term '-ER ROLE' to refer to Actor, Senser, Behaver, Sayer, Carrier, etc. on the one hand, and the term '-ED ROLE' to refer to Goal, Phenomenon, Receiver, etc. on the other hand. Both roles can be explored in a text.

Regarding the methodological approach, my application of the transitivity model that has just been described, focuses on two excerpts culled from the novel under study. The two excerpts are presented in the appendix, with verbal phrases numbered, underlined and assigned process types (which are put in brackets). Given that the process is the nucleus of a clause, the process numbers stand for clause numbers. The identification of the other transitivity-based clause constituents (Participants and Circumstances) has also been done, but that is not shown in the texts in the appendix. The statistics of all the identified elements are presented and described, explained by way of quantitative analysis (in the following section). Then follows the discussion, say, the detailed interpretation, of those statistics for the sake of qualitative analysis.

### 3. Data analysis

#### 3.1. Data presentation from the extracts

The identification of process types, participants and circumstances in both extracts from *Lonely Days*, results in the following table of statistics.

**Table 1.** Process type distribution in both excerpts

Process types		Excerpt 1		Excerpt 2	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Material processes		33	60%	18	36.73%
Mental processes		05	09.09 %	09	18.37%
Behavioural processes		03	05.45 %	05	10.20%
Verbal processes		03	05.45 %	06	12.24%
Existential processes		00	00%	04	08.16%
Relational processes	Intensive Attributive	08	20%	05	14.28 %
	Intensive Identifying	01		01	
	Possessive	02		00	
	Causative	00		01	
	Circumstantial	00		00	
<b>Total</b>		<b>55</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>100%</b>

As this first table shows, fifty-five (55) processes have been identified in the first extract and forty-nine (49) in the second. Various processes occur in each text, but in remarkably different proportions.

Extract 1 ( $E_1$ ) presents more than 50% – exactly 60% as can be seen in the table – of material processes. This suggests that the extract is predominantly concerned with concrete and tangible actions. Next comes the proportion of relational processes in this extract: 20%. So, we can assume that a relatively high proportion of the processes is devoted to relating entities to some attributes or identities. If we continue reading the column of process type percentages (still in  $E_1$ ), we can notice that 09.09% are mental processes; this indicates in what ratio the text is concerned with providing information about things going on in somebody's or some people's mind(s) and what they feel (perception), say, mental actions. The rates of behavioural and verbal processes are quite low: respectively 05.45%. We can, a priori, assume that the text is hardly concerned with any participant's psychological or physiological moods, nor with verbal expression of facts. There is no existential process at all (00%); i.e. no process is specifically meant to express the existence of any entity throughout this excerpt.

Extract 2 ( $E_2$ ) also contains material processes in the highest proportion: 36.73%. This means, at least presumably, that the text is concerned with concrete and tangible actions in such a proportion. The percentage of mental processes follows: 18.37%, suggesting to what extent the text is concerned with mental actions. Here, the relational processes rank third with 14.28%, followed by verbal processes which make 12.24%. Thus it can be said that, to some extent, the text is devoted to showing the relation between entities and some attributes or identities, and also to expressing verbal actions. Behavioural and existential processes occur respectively at 10.20% and 08.16%. This indicates that in a somewhat significant proportion, the excerpt is concerned with psychological or physiological acts as well as the statement of the existence of some entities.

From the statistical data that have just been briefly described by way of quantitative analysis, it essentially appears, on the one hand, that  $E_1$  is predominantly about concrete and tangible actions first, then relational actions, and, decreasingly, somewhat about mental, behavioural and verbal actions as well. On the other hand, in order of priority as it were,  $E_2$  also presumably deals a lot with concrete and tangible actions (substantially more than  $E_1$  does), with psychological and / or physiological and verbal actions (more significantly than is the case in  $E_1$ ). However, it takes a careful exploration of the Participants and even the Circumstances, say, a qualitative analysis – as Amoussou (2014) would rightly emphasize – to prove how valid the quantitative analysis-based assumptions made so far are. For this purpose, let us examine what Hasan (1985/1989) calls the -er roles in the different process types.

### 3.2. Discussion

This subsection is meant to provide critical answers to the fundamental question *Who does what to whom, when, where, why and how?* recalled by Koussouhon (2009:129). I believe the question amounts to *What happens and under what circumstances?* in the extracts under study. The task requires examining the "-er roles" and the "-ed roles" in Hasan's terms (Actor, Senser, Behaver, etc. on the one hand; Goal, Phenomenon, Identity, etc. on the other) in the different identified process types. I do that here, and I will refer to the Circumstances as frequently as necessary. Nevertheless, I want to draw only the table of -er roles in each extract.

#### 3.2.1. Excerpt 1 data discussion

I start by drawing the table of -er roles in that excerpt.

**Table 2a.** The -er roles in Extract 1

-er roles	Yaremi	other human beings (women)	God	animals	object(s)	time	the pain	event(s)	total
Actor	24	4	1	2	2	-	-	-	33
Senser	3	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	5
Behave	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Sayer	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Carrier	1	-	-	-	2	1	-	4	8
Token	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Possessor	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Total	35	5	1	2	5	1	2	4	55

The role of Actor is distributed among five (classes of) participants: Yaremi, other human beings (women), God, animals, and objects. However, it is noteworthy that the distribution is not balanced at all. Yaremi is assigned most of this role: 24 out of 33, that is almost 73% of it. This suggests that she is by far the most active of all the participants.

The processes in which Yaremi is involved for the role of Actor can be ranged in two categories, according to whether they relate to activities done at home with a few short-distance goings and comings or, on the other hand, to activities done at a significant distance from home, requiring long-distance movements, especially from home to the forest / book / farm. Calling these categories (A) and (B), respectively, we can have the sets of material processes as follows:

(A)

- to stitch her old quilts (Pr n°6)
- to separate palmnuts, husks and straw (n°7)
- retire to her dyeing yard (Pr n°14)
- roasting the earth (Pr n°16)
- burning the chaff and the grass (Pr n°18)
- to produce the lye (Pr n°19)
- extracting the dye (Pr n°20)
- withdraw in her small anteroom (Pr n° 21)
- fluff her cotton-wool pillow (Pr n°27)
- nestling her head and armpits (Pr n°28)

(B)

- to grapple with her daily itinerary (Pr n°1)
- amble through the deep forest (Pr n°11)
- to gather fuel wood (Pr n°12)
- carried fuel wood (Pr n°13)
- beat the young women of the village (Pr n°35)
- overtake the girls (Pr n°40)
- hurtling downhill (Pr n°41)
- run (Pr n°51)
- fly (Pr n°52)

- begin her daily round of duty (Pr n°30)

This categorization shows almost the same number of processes on either side: ten in (A) and nine in (B). Process n°30 does belong on both sides at a time. This suggests that the Actor (Yaremi) is as busy, say, active at home as in the farm. Then what kind of entities do her actions affect, and in what circumstances?

Considering the -ed role in (A), we have: her old quilts; her palmnuts, husks and straw; the earth; the chaff and the grass; the lye; the dye; her cotton-wool pillow; her head and arm. Judging from the wide range and the nature of the entities carrying the -ed role, especially from "her old quilts" down to "the dye", we can arguably say that the one in the -er role touches and seeks to transform many different things. We know this happens at home, but the Circumstances of location "to her dyeing yard" and "in her small anteroom" inform us about the two specific places she is confined to all day long when she works at home. This seems to be a hint of isolation about Yaremi, which is further suggested by the lack of other human beings in the -er role here.

Category (B) includes processes of movements from a place to another, in some of which the circumstance of location is specified: "to grapple with..." (Process n°1), "amble through..." (n°11), "hurtling" (n°41), run (n°51), "fly" (n°52). Such circumstances of location as "through the deep forest" and "downhill" contribute to showing not only how active the Actor is, but also the transfer of her dynamism from home to the farmland. So does the occurrence of the processes of running and flying which, though intransitive, imply an urgent movement of the Actor-role carrier from

a place to another. This characteristic of the Actor is further shown by the occurrence of transitive processes of gathering and carrying (n°12 and 13), beating (n°35), overtaking (n°40), which in themselves do incontestably encode some dynamism. Besides, "fuel wood" carrying the -ed role in Processes n°12 and 13 adds to the diversification of the nature of the objects directly affected by the Actor's physical movements. Regarding the -ed role carrier diversification, the Participants "young women of the village" and "the girls" (respectively in Processes n°35 and n°40) are of particular interest insofar as their involvement in this role enables to show that the main Actor does interact with other human beings, even though the extent of the interaction might be insignificant. All this suggests that the text aims at putting the spotlight on a particular participant who is not just active and dynamic but worth considering as a hyperactive and hyperdynamic woman.

The other human participants (other women of the village) are ascribed the Actor role only four times (4x), including a repeated process – getting out of Yaremi's way (Processes n°45 and 54) – which is just in the imperative mood; we don't see them much in action. However, those village women and girls' presence and the little action they take, rather invalidate or at least contribute to reducing the sense of isolation announced above about Yaremi. On the other hand, God's carrying the role of Actor (in Process n°32) indicates a divine source of Yaremi's will-power and physical strength. This can be taken as an insinuation meaning Yaremi is naturally endowed with a great deal of energy, suggesting there is no wonder that she is so active and dynamic as shown above. Next, we have the role of Actor assigned to sparrow: never perching (Process n°53). It appears only within a phrase that constitutes a Circumstance of manner (expressing comparison) in a second-level rankshifted clause. This makes it clear that the animal is not Actor as such; the way it is mentioned rather contributes to expressing the vividness of Yaremi's movements, her vigour and tirelessness.

Her (Yaremi's) daily itinerary and a window of buckled wood, are the two objects, say, inanimates assigned the Actor role. The daily itinerary plays the role of Actor just by "stretching" (Process n°2). Such a process seems not worth considering when it comes to counting processes of tangible action or movements. Still, it seems important as a material process meant to announce Yaremi's everyday hard walking chore. Regarding the window, which is the second inanimate Actor, it is the intransitive use of "open" that makes it Actor, giving the impression that it (the window) opens itself. Actually, it is opened by a human participant: Yaremi. It seems reasonable to assume that this human participant has almost been denied the role of Actor here, certainly because she already has too much of it. And if that is admitted, it only contributes to confirming that the text is about a physically hyper-busy woman. Now, let us see whether the woman is also so busy mentally.

There are two Senser role carriers: Yaremi and the pain. Yaremi carries the role three times and the pain twice. In two cases, Yaremi is Senser and the pain carries the -ed role, say, Phenomenon: "... would not feel the pain" (Process n°24) and "to drive away the smarting pain" (Process 29). Needless to say, these belong in the perceptive subtype of mental process. The two cases where the pain carries the -er role are: "... would the pain come around" (Process 25) and "[the pain] stretching from her back" (Process 26). The pain is Senser just grammatically; the real Senser is the one feeling the pain, and that is Yaremi. Thus we can say that Yaremi is actually the only participant involved in mental processes here. However, four of the five processes (the just mentioned Processes 24, 25, 26 and 29) are of the perceptive subtype. No cognition and hardly any affection. This suggests that there is no room for affection and cognition in Yaremi's mind as far as this excerpt is concerned.

The Carrier role proportion, which is 8/55 or 14.54%, also deserves a special attention. It is shared among four entities: Yaremi (1x), objects (2x), time (1x), events (4x). First, we have "I am a busy woman" (Process n°47), "I" referring to Yaremi. So, this serves to attribute Yaremi the quality of a busy woman, which is an overt confirmation of the inference made earlier from the analysis of the Actor role. Yaremi's bean seeds and her boiling cocoyam are the two objects ascribed the role of Carrier, respectively in Processes n°4 and 5 ("were always ready"). This helps to express, if not confirm, Yaremi's readiness to achieve her daily activities at home, and the occurrence of the Circumstance of extent "always" does contribute to that expression of readiness. As we know that in "time is precious to me" (Process 48), the Beneficiary "me" refers to Yaremi, we can also consider this clause as another overt confirmation of the partial conclusion drawn from the Actor role analysis - about Yaremi.

Events are ascribed Carrier role in these four clauses: "All these were no interruption [of Yaremi's everyday life] (Process n°8); "as they would seem to casual observers" (Process n°9); "but [they / all these were] an integral part of Yaremi's everyday life" (Process n°10); "It had become a routine" (Process 31). Given that "All these" (which carries the Carrier role here) refers to Yaremi's diverse activities at home, those clauses containing the relational processes under analysis can be considered as a recapitulative expression of the significance of Yaremi's movements and action at work. Likewise, in "It had become a routine", "It" refers to Yaremi's daily round of duty or Yaremi beginning her daily round of duty afresh in the morning (the last material process overlapping columns (A) and (B) at the beginning of this section). This definitely suggests that the whole text is essentially meant to show Yaremi's determination to work hard and only work, all day long and every day indeed since it had become a routine.

### **3.2.2. Excerpt 2 data discussion**

I start by drawing the table of -er roles in that excerpt.

**Table 2b.** The -er roles in Extract 2

-er roles	Yaremi	(a/her) Man	nobody	animate (animal)	past events	objects	other inanimate participants	Total
Actor	6	4	2	2	-	4	-	18
Senser	6	1	-	-	1	-	1	9
Behaver	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	5
Sayer	5	-	1	-	-	-	-	6
Carrier	3	-	-	-	-	1	1	5
Token	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Agent	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Total	26	6	3	2	1	5	2	45

Note: Counting the structural "There" (which occurs 4 times in existential processes), the total should be 45+4 = 49.

The role of Actor is distributed among five (classes of) participants: Yaremi, man, nobody, an animal, and objects. The figures in the table suggest that the first two participants and the last (in this list) are more active than the others.

Yaremi is involved in the role of Actor in these five clauses followed each by my bracketed indication of the process number: "and Yaremi lay quietly on her bed" (Process 12); "She retired to bed" (Process 19); "on what should be done" (Process 25); "or what should not be done" (Process 26); "to lean on all the time" (Process 36). Taking seriously the context into account (as we always do, of course), and also by paying a clause attention to the variation of tense and mood selections in these five clauses, the reader can notice that the process of "lying quietly in her bed" is an event or a fact that really takes/ or took place. In the clause pair "She retired to bed when she liked", the fundamental information is not her retiring to bed as such, but her not being compelled to do so at a specific moment. Sharing such understanding of this clause pair implies admitting that the Actor role in "She retired to bed" may, to a great extent, rightly be overlooked in this analysis.

Processes n °25 and n°26 are in rank-shifted clauses replacing a noun phrase that would be the circumstance of matter for "to give lectures". I mean, as rephrasing seems a bit necessary here, that the clause combination "Nobody sat her down anymore to give lectures to; on what should be done or what should not be done" obviously amounts to "Nobody sat her down to give her lectures on / about her duties (and her limits)". So Yaremi is not shown doing or not doing anything here,

but we just have the phrases "what should be done" and "what should not be done". This clarification implies that, for a seriously context-bound analysis, the Actor role can also be overlooked in the two clauses in question. In the same way, regarding the process of leaning (Process 36), it is actually expressed in terms of need (Yaremi's need for some man to lean on), and I believe that it would be reasonable to skip it when it comes to enumerating the cases where Yaremi really achieves concrete actions or movements.

To recapitulate my development made so far about the five clauses in which Yaremi carries the roles of Actor, one can say that only the process of lying quietly in her bed is a fact that really takes place. Now, even this process is not an action as such. It merely indicates a state (the state of lying); the so-called Actor just lay. This suggests that, physically, Yaremi is not active at all in this extract. Nor is her man who "had quietly left her" (Process 48), who "had disappeared" (Process 49). The man's leaving and disappearing does not imply any movement but death. Even if it is directly said nowhere in the text that the man had died, the Circumstance of manner "like a puff of tobacco smoke inside an old man's pipe" added to the process "had disappeared", contributes to conveying the idea of death. A puff of tobacco smoke inside an old man's pipe vanishes completely and is not retrievable; so the man is no longer retrievable in this world. That is also suggested by the occurrence of the Circumstances of Accompaniment and Location "alone in this world" used earlier regarding Yaremi (beside Process 43).

The processes of "checking her excesses" (Process 29) and "taking over the absolute control of the matrimonial house" (process 41) express no real actions but wishes; Yaremi wishes her man (husband) were alive to take those actions. And that is how the indefinite pronoun "nobody" comes to be Actor role carrier in Processes 18 and 23: "Nobody governed her anymore on anything", "Nobody sat her down". All this should be her man's actions on her. So, the occurrence of those material processes with "man" or "nobody" in the -er role suggests, in some respect, woman's absolute need for man's forceful and authoritative actions on her. No matter one's opinion about that, it seems to be a natural requirement here, willingly accepted and even wished by Yaremi, as we shall further realize by looking into other process types later.

The moth is the only non-human animate ascribed Actor role (in Processes 9 and 10) where the -ed role is carried by the light of the hurricane, on a fixed place without any movement from a place to another. Regarding the objects involved in Actor role, interestingly, the hurricane lantern is ascribed the role twice, so is the light from this lantern. However, none of the material processes, here, involves any actions or movements as such: the lantern is just hanging (Process n°3), it sends out a drab light (Process n°4), the light burns away slowly (Process n°5) and it finally goes off (Process n°11). All this suggests a scene of stillness, no ordinary stillness but one that

conjures up something dismal as may be reflected by the darkness resulting from the going off (Process n°11) of the light.

Not only because of the resemblances between the mental and the behavioural process, but also because of the way they co-occur and function in this text, I am going to analyse them almost simultaneously. In other words, I look into Senser and Behaver roles together here. Prior to this simultaneous analysis, we need a very brief discussion about the -er role carrier in two specific mental process clauses: "past events kept on tugging Yaremi's mind" (Process n°1) and "Later, her eyes caught a moth..." (Process n°8).

In the physical world, "tugged" ought to be counted as a material process; it is considered mental here because the verb is in the figurative use encoding a process that does not happen in the physical world. As "mind" is the -ed role carrier, that helps to further classify the process as a cognitive one. However, "Past events" carries the Senser role, and this is a problem because we know on principle, as stated by Eggins (1994: 242), that only a conscious human being can perform a mental process. Since Yaremi's mind is the -ed role carrier, and given that Yaremi is actually the (human) participant who undergoes the mental action in question, it seems perfectly reasonable to rather ascribe her the -er role, that is, Phenomenon. Regarding the clause "her eyes caught a moth...", almost the same problem raises but this case seems a bit less problematic. We know the figurative use of "catch", here, literally amounts to "catch sight of" or "see". Moreover, by implication, the -er role of "her eyes" involves Yaremi in this role. Thus, we can contend that Yaremi is the actual -er role carrier, say Senser, for Processes n°1 and 8. It follows from this attempt of clarification, that Yaremi actually carries the role of Senser eight times (8x) rather than six times (6x).

For the exploration of Senser and Behaver roles, we may focus on such parts as the seven clauses containing Processes n°1, 8, 14, 34, 42, 45, 47 (which are mental), and the three clauses containing Processes n°6, 7, 13 (which are behavioural). Of the seven processes, only one (Process n°8) is of the perceptive subtype and one also (Process n°34) is of the affective subtype; all the other five are of the Cognitive subtype. This suggests that the Senser (Yaremi) is mentally busy, especially in terms of cognition. The fact that "past events" carries the -ed role in Process n°1 (as resolved above), suggests that Yaremi is mentally absorbed, not just by one thing related to the present, but by many past-related things. And the said past events may be things she used to do with her man (husband), it could be the man's death, it can be many other imaginable things. Of Process n°14 ("turning over"), which I have resolved to call Mental though one might rightly consider it as behavioural, the -ed role is carried by "the predicaments facing her in the execution of her numerous daily life activities". This shows that Yaremi's thoughts are not stuck only to the indeterminate past events, but they swing between the past and her present life.

Even the process combination "wanted to feel loved" (Process 34), which is of the affective subtype, contributes among others, to creating the same meaning effect as the cognitive ones. In fact, the Senser knows her man who should be there by her side to show love, is no longer alive and cannot be there to do so. Then, she fancies being loved, she thinks about it, and that has rather become a sheer desire or a dream that is part of the cognitive mental processes going on in her mind.

Considering the behavioural processes now with an eye still on the mentals, we can notice that the -ed role is ascribed to "her (Yaremi's) eyes" (for Process n°6), "the wooden rafters" (for Process 7), "a moth..." (for Process n°8), "the echoes of her memory" (for Process 13). This Phenomenon of role carrier variation evidences attention focus shift both in time (from past events to present activities, as I have pointed out above) and in space (from the ceiling with wooden rafters to the wall showing the lantern and the moth). However, from the spatial angle, the fact of having "the echoes of her memory" in -ed role for Process 13, suggests that the whole mental and psychological process gets concentrated back again in the Senser's own mind. This is quite normal, for most of the processes under analysis so far – even the non-mental ones – are actually internal, taking place in Yaremi's mind. These various observations imply that the text concerns a woman who is overwhelmed by mental and psychological activity.

The role of Sayer is indirectly assigned to Yaremi and that of Receiver explicitly to man in: "a man to pester with demands" (Process 37), "(a man) to urge with requests" (Process 38), "a man to provoke with expensive jokes" (Process 39), "(a man) to issue threats and ultimatums to" (Process 40). If we come back to the clause containing Process 35 and ask the question "Why should there really be some man close by?" (meaning "What...for?"), we can find that all those clauses (containing Processes n°37, 38, 39, and 40) are part of the answer. So, those clauses, being rankshifted, stand in the place of Circumstance of cause for the existential process in "There really should be some man". There actually are no verbal actions taking place; instead, Yaremi wishes there were a man, especially her man / husband close by to have verbal actions with. That is also somehow confirmed by the occurrence of the indefinite pronoun "nobody" carrying Sayer or Receiver role in such other verbal process clauses as "nobody to give lectures to Yaremi" (Process 24), "with no one experienced enough to share them (Yaremi's daily problems) with" (Process 46).

In the relational processes, the -er role is clearly carried by Yaremi in four processes out of seven: "had become" (Process 16), and "was" (Processes 31, 32 and 43). By implication, she is also somewhat involved in this role in such processes as "remained" (n°2) and "was" (n°17), where the respective direct carriers of the role are her sleeping room and her liberty. Thus, she is nearly the exclusive -er role carrier for relational processes in the whole text. This privilege, as it were, seems to be given to her in order to have enough room to relate her to some attributes or identities so as to

show her state while she undergoes these three facts revealed by my analyses so far: the lack of physical actions and movements, the high intensity of her mental actions, and the lack of verbal actions.

#### **4. Recapitulation of the main findings and Conclusion**

The very first statistical data table has shown a remarkably high proportion of material processes in the first extract (E<sub>1</sub>), and this has led to the assumption that the extract is certainly concerned with a lot of concrete actions and movements. This assumption has proved valid thanks to the exploration of the -er role, especially the role of Actor, in this extract. Indeed, Yaremi has been revealed as a hyperactive and hyperdynamic woman here. Physically, she is extremely busy. Mentally, however, she is not that busy. It has even been inferred from the analyses that there seems to be no room for affection and cognition in her mind. The table has also shown a relatively high proportion of material processes in the second extract (E<sub>2</sub>), suggesting that probably, the text is considerably concerned with tangible actions too. But the detailed analyses have proved this assumption wrong. Here, the main "Actor" (the same Yaremi) is not physically active at all: no concrete actions with change-significant effect. Yet, she does need physical actions jointly with a man. Without achieving those physical actions and movements, she is reduced to dreaming of them, and dreaming (thinking seriously) about many other things. Thus the analyses have shown her mentally busy.

So, E<sub>1</sub> reveals a woman completely absorbed in physical actions and movements in daytime, so much so that there seems to be some hint of alienation about her. It seems she concentrates so much on work in order to escape the remembrance of her deceased husband. By contrast, E<sub>2</sub> shows her overwhelmed rather by mental and psychological activity at night. She is mentally so busy at night as she muses on her daytime physical activities, on her deceased husband, on the actions the latter - if alive - would have with and/or on her. In daytime, she fights and succeeds in hiding the signs of a widow's sorrow. But at night, that sorrow, though not directly expressed, seems unavoidable; it is revealed to the reader by the intensity of her mental activity. Now as a widow, she finds herself in the grip of loneliness. Enough analytical evidence seems to have been provided about Yaremi being physically overworked in daytime and mentally overworked at night. To some extent, one is tempted to compare the extracts under analysis with Murray's poem 'Widower in the country' (analysed by Hasan - 1989). Then the titles that come to mind for these extracts are "A widow in daytime" for E<sub>1</sub>, and "A widow at night" for E<sub>2</sub>. Were the two excerpts to be considered together, one could rightly think about such a title as "A widow's life".

One might claim that a poem is a poem and extracts from a novel are just extracts, and that they should not be compared. Maybe. But in mentioning Murray's poem,

what the researcher is driving at is that the ideology encoded in the extracts is almost the same as in that poem, at least to a certain extent. In fact, the analyses carried out so far have shown a sense of alienation (E<sub>1</sub>), loneliness and passivity (E<sub>2</sub>). It appears that man is indispensable to give a full sense to woman's life. Now, we can remember that it is the other way round from Hasan's analysis of 'Widower in the country': woman is indispensable to give a full sense to man's life. Moreover, Hasan (1989: 54), in her attempt to draw what she has called the meaning of the poem's meanings, has written that 'Widower in the country' is about the centrality of interpersonal relationships for the preservation of humanity; to a large extent, the same goes for the excerpts analysed in this paper, and, in general, for the whole novel *LonelyDays*.

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## Appendix: The Extracts under Analysis

### Note

- The square brackets [ ] are mine, for the author's ellipsed words.
- The processes are underlined and immediately followed by the labelling (*done with bold, italicized and bracketed abbreviations*).
- **Key:** Mat = Material process; Men = Mental process; Beh = Behavioural process; Ver = Verbal process; Exi = Existential process; Rel = Relational process.

### Excerpt 1

Yaremi now <sup>1</sup>had learnt to grapple (*Mat*<sub>1</sub>) with her daily itinerary, <sup>2</sup>stretching out (*Mat*<sub>2</sub>) before her like a long row of black ants <sup>3</sup>crossing (*Mat*<sub>3</sub>) the country path. No complaints. Her bean-seeds <sup>4</sup>were (*Rel*<sub>1</sub>) always ready for threshing and her boiling cocoyam [<sup>5</sup>was (*Rel*<sub>2</sub>) always ready] for tending. She <sup>6</sup>had her old quilts to stitch (*Mat*<sub>4</sub>) and [<sup>7</sup>had] her palmnuts, husks and straw, to separate (*Mat*<sub>5</sub>). All these <sup>8</sup>were (*Rel*<sub>3</sub>) no interruptions as they <sup>9</sup>would seem (*Rel*<sub>4</sub>) to observers, but [they <sup>10</sup>were (*Rel*<sub>5</sub>)] an integral part of Yaremi's everyday life.

She <sup>11</sup>must amble (*Mat*<sub>6</sub>) through the deep forest <sup>12</sup>to gather (*Mat*<sub>7</sub>) fuel wood which she often <sup>13</sup>carried (*Mat*<sub>8</sub>) in enormous bundles on her sinking head and bent supple back. She <sup>14</sup>must retire (*Mat*<sub>9</sub>), late in the afternoon, to her dyeing yard, <sup>15</sup>sweating (*Beh*<sub>1</sub>), <sup>16</sup>roasting (*Mat*<sub>10</sub>) the earth which <sup>17</sup>contained (*Rel*<sub>6</sub>) ash and lime, <sup>18</sup>burning (*Mat*<sub>11</sub>) the chaff and the grass <sup>19</sup>to produce (*Mat*<sub>12</sub>) the Iye, finally <sup>20</sup>extracting (*Mat*<sub>13</sub>) the dye... a long day's work... at night, she <sup>21</sup>must withdraw (*Mat*<sub>14</sub>) with a loud yawn - <sup>22</sup>veiling (*Beh*<sub>2</sub>) all worries of the day in her small anteroom; an anteroom with a window of buckled wood which <sup>23</sup>opened (*Mat*<sub>15</sub>) only briefly, in the daytime, during her search for needles and threads, match sticks; misplaced pen knife, kerosene lamp and coconut-shell ladle.

Most of the time, Yaremi <sup>24</sup>would not feel (*Men*<sub>1</sub>) the pain of hard work. Only occasionally <sup>25</sup>would the pain come (*Men*<sub>2</sub>) around the joints, <sup>26</sup>stretching (*Men*<sub>3</sub>) from her back to her back to her hips, down to her thighs. And the time, she <sup>27</sup>would fluff (*Mat*<sub>16</sub>) her cotton-wool pillow, gingerly <sup>28</sup>nestling (*Mat*<sub>17</sub>) her head and armpits on it, <sup>29</sup>to drive away (*Men*<sub>4</sub>) her smarting pain.

In the morning, Yaremi <sup>30</sup>would begin (*Mat*<sub>18</sub>) her daily round of duty afresh. It <sup>31</sup>had become (*Rel*<sub>7</sub>) a routine. God <sup>32</sup>had given (*Mat*<sub>19</sub>) her the will-power and the physical strength, which most women of Kufi <sup>33</sup>lacked (*Rel*<sub>8</sub>). She <sup>34</sup>could challenge (*Ver*<sub>1</sub>) and <sup>35</sup>beat (*Mat*<sub>20</sub>) the young women of the village in the game of <sup>36</sup>hurrying (*Mat*<sub>21</sub>) to the brook <sup>37</sup>to fetch (*Mat*<sub>22</sub>) water, and <sup>38</sup>scrambling (*Mat*<sub>23</sub>) to the farm <sup>39</sup>to collect (*Mat*<sub>24</sub>) banana leaves and kolanut droppings. She <sup>40</sup>could overtake (*Mat*<sub>25</sub>) the girls along the dry country road on sunny days, <sup>41</sup>hurtling (*Mat*<sub>26</sub>) downhill in giant, strides. She <sup>42</sup>had, several times, laughed (*Beh*<sub>3</sub>) <sup>43</sup>to scorn (*Men*<sub>5</sub>) the lazy maidens <sup>44</sup>lumbering (*Mat*<sub>27</sub>) under heavy loads of fuel wood.

“<sup>45</sup>Get out (*Mat*<sub>28</sub>) of my way!” she <sup>46</sup>had always teased (*Ver*<sub>2</sub>) them. “I <sup>47</sup>am (*Rel*<sub>9</sub>) a busy woman; time <sup>48</sup>is (*Rel*<sub>10</sub>) precious to me. I <sup>49</sup>’ve (*Rel*<sub>11</sub>) no time <sup>50</sup>to plod (*Mat*<sub>29</sub>) awkwardly, like you, along the footpath. I <sup>51</sup>run (*Mat*<sub>30</sub>), all the time, like a fleet-footed antelope in the bush, and <sup>52</sup>fly (*Mat*<sub>31</sub>) like a sparrow that <sup>53</sup>would never perch (*Mat*<sub>32</sub>)... <sup>54</sup>Get out (*Mat*<sub>33</sub>) of my way I <sup>55</sup>say (*Ver*<sub>3</sub>)!”

From *Lonely Days*, pp.16-18

## Excerpt 2

All through night and day, past events <sup>1</sup>kept on tugging (*Men*<sub>1</sub>) at Yaremi’s mind. Her sleeping room <sup>2</sup>remained (*Rel*<sub>1</sub>) still in the dead of the night. The hurricane lantern that <sup>3</sup>was hanging (*Mat*<sub>1</sub>) on the wall <sup>4</sup>sent out (*Mat*<sub>2</sub>) a drab light, now slowly <sup>5</sup>burning away (*Mat*<sub>3</sub>). Yaremi <sup>6</sup>opened (*Beh*<sub>1</sub>) her eyes and <sup>7</sup>began to count (*Beh*<sub>2</sub>) the wooden rafters one after the other. Altogether thirty-nine. No, forty-two rafters! Later, her eyes <sup>8</sup>caught (*Men*<sub>2</sub>) a moth <sup>9</sup>challenging (*Mat*<sub>4</sub>) the light of her hurricane lantern, <sup>10</sup>making futile attempts to put the light out (*Mat*<sub>5</sub>).

The light in the room finally <sup>11</sup>went of (*Mat*<sub>6</sub>), and Yaremi <sup>12</sup>lay (*Mat*<sub>7</sub>) quietly on her bed <sup>13</sup>listening (*Beh*<sub>3</sub>), with closed eyes, to the echoes of her memory, <sup>14</sup>turning (*Men*<sub>3</sub>) over in her mind, the predicaments <sup>15</sup>facing (*Beh*<sub>4</sub>) her in the execution of her numerous daily life activities.

Yaremi <sup>16</sup>had become (*Rel*<sub>2</sub>) the beginning and the end of all issues, in her own private little world. Her liberty <sup>17</sup>was (*Rel*<sub>3</sub>) perfectly intact. Nobody <sup>18</sup>governed (*Mat*<sub>8</sub>) her anymore on anything. She <sup>19</sup>retired (*Mat*<sub>9</sub>) to bed when she <sup>20</sup>liked (*Men*<sub>4</sub>), and <sup>21</sup>needed (*Beh*<sub>5</sub>) no hurry again <sup>22</sup>to return (*Mat*<sub>10</sub>) to the village from the brook. Nobody <sup>23</sup>sat her down (*Mat*<sub>11</sub>) anymore <sup>24</sup>to give (*Ver*<sub>1</sub>) lectures to on what <sup>25</sup>should be done (*Mat*<sub>12</sub>) or what <sup>26</sup>should not be done (*Mat*<sub>13</sub>). There <sup>27</sup>was (*Exi*<sub>1</sub>) no more that strong-arm rule of the man <sup>28</sup>to keep (*Rel*<sub>4</sub>) her on her toes, <sup>29</sup>to check (*Mat*<sub>14</sub>) her excesses, and <sup>30</sup>to enforce (*Men*<sub>5</sub>) obedience. Yaremi <sup>31</sup>was (*Rel*<sub>5</sub>) now completely on her own, and she <sup>32</sup>was (*Rel*<sub>6</sub>) so unhappy about it! There <sup>33</sup>seemed to be (*Exi*<sub>2</sub>) no sweetness and no comfort in this her position of a woman almighty! She, very much, <sup>34</sup>wanted to feel loved (*Men*<sub>6</sub>) again; to feel supported, protected and looked after. There really <sup>35</sup>should be (*Exi*<sub>3</sub>) some man close by <sup>36</sup>to lean on (*Mat*<sub>15</sub>) all the time; a man <sup>37</sup>to pester (*Ver*<sub>2</sub>) with demands, <sup>38</sup>to urge (*Ver*<sub>3</sub>) with requests, <sup>39</sup>to provoke (*Ver*<sub>4</sub>) with expensive jokes and <sup>40</sup>to issue (*Ver*<sub>5</sub>) threats and ultimatums to, a man who <sup>41</sup>would forcefully take over (*Mat*<sub>16</sub>) the absolute control of the matrimonial home.

But there <sup>42</sup>was (*Exi*<sub>4</sub>) no such man anymore, and here now <sup>43</sup>was (*Rel*<sub>7</sub>) Yaremi, alone in this world, <sup>44</sup>making resolutions and taking decisions (*Men*<sub>7</sub>), without reference to anybody. On daily basis she <sup>45</sup>faced (*Men*<sub>8</sub>) the problems of life, with no one experienced enough <sup>46</sup>to share (*Ver*<sub>6</sub>) them with. And she <sup>47</sup>had to put

up with (*Men*<sub>9</sub>) the agony of the constant remembrance of her man who <sup>48</sup>had quietly left (*Mat*<sub>17</sub>) her, who <sup>49</sup>had disappeared (*Mat*<sub>18</sub>) like a puff of tobacco smoke inside an old man's pipe.

From *Lonely Days*, pp.47- 48