

## GOOD ADVICE IS RARER THAN RUBIES: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SALMAN RUSHDIE'S LITTÉRATURE ENGAGÉE

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**Abstract:** This work aims to look into the semantic construct underlying Rushdie's linguistic choices in the short story "Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies", in order to unveil the writer's commitment to the characters and the social issues brought up in the text regarding the gender, political and economic discrimination by the Western powers against both the Indian culture, in particular, and the East. Challenging the reader to take a stance on the matter, the writer's engagement echoes Sartre's literature (1966) to whom writing is to be committed, writer and reader – the latter being the constructor of meaning – to freedom, the present time, and social affairs. The study draws on Halliday's (2014) Systemic-Functional Grammar (SFG) and Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory to surface the characters' attitudinal aspects of affect, judgement, and appreciation, expressed in the mental and verbal processes that make up the story.

**Keywords:** Attitudinal Evaluation. Social Commitment. Literature.

### 1 Introduction

Storytelling is as ancient as humanity itself. Men have been telling stories about their conquests, beliefs and impressions on the world, thus spreading and perpetuating their cultural values. Polkinghorne (1991, p. 141) stated that "when stories are told or written, they are but a recapitulation of the structure of everyday experience and action". This is surely not devoid of moral concepts we embody as storytellers.

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Stories have also served as a means to escape reality or even change it. Salman Rushdie (1991, p. 21), in his book *Imaginary Homelands*, said that “it is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it”. Rushdie’s works talk mainly of religious and political issues, gender and immigration stirring up controversial reactions from the public. His short story “Good Advice Is Rarer than Rubies”, the focus of our study, gives voice to an Indian girl in a society where women are still denied fundamental rights such as carving out their own lives. The background to this defiant position taken by the girl is provided by the issue of people’s desire to emigrate to England in search of a better life. As in most of his works, Rushdie takes an ironical stance against any and all forms of discrimination.

But the use of writing as a means to express values is not recent. Since the mid 1980’s, values in literature have been under investigation – Grabes (2008), Baumbach *et al.* (2009), and Herrnstein Smith (1988) to mention a few. Baumbach *et al.* (2009, p.1), for instance, defend that although discussions of values in literature date to the 1980’s, the last two decades witnessed a renewed interest in this relationship, “culminating in what has been dubbed ‘the ethical turn’” (inverted commas in the original).

Ethics, action and value in literature is what Sartre (1966) named *littérature engagée*. This means the ‘engaged’ writer recognizes that words are action and that to reveal is to change (p. 23). To Sartre, to reveal means to reveal the world or man to other men, the latter taking full responsibility for the bare object. Thus, writing means to make people aware of and, therefore, inexcusable of what happens in the world.

From this perspective, in this work we seek to develop a reflection around Rushdie’s story, seeking to investigate the emotions, behaviour and value of things expressed by the main characters. Thus, we are anchored in the contributions of systemic-functional linguistics (Halliday; Matthiessen, 2014), by understanding language as a network of interconnected systems that the speaker uses (functional basis) to produce meanings (semantic basis) in interpersonal situations. Additionally, we grounded on Martin and White’s (2005) theory of Appraisal by “considering the lexical resources for judging behaviour and appreciating the value of things” (preface). Their theory concerns the “construction by texts of communities of shared feelings and values, and with the linguistic mechanisms for the sharing of emotions, tastes and normative assessments” (p. 1).

Based on these considerations, this work consists, in addition to the present Introduction, of three main parts: *(i)* the epistemological discussion of the premises that guide the systemic-functional perspective and the theory of appraisal; *(ii)* the methodology of how the data were selected, organized for analysis from the lens of the appraisal system; and *(iii)* the systemic perspective and the appraisal system are articulated to the data comprising how Rushdie weaves an ironic vision of gender, politics and economic discrimination into the story. Thus, we move on to discuss this semiotically-oriented perspective, in the next section.

## 2 Systemic-Functional Linguistics

Systemic-Functional Linguistics (SFL) was developed by M.A.K. Halliday as a result of his search of a kind of linguistics that was “applicable” to the social environment in order to approach issues involving both reflection and action (Matthiessen, 2012). A ground-breaking result of this process was the design of a grammar that focused on meaning rather than on form. Put differently, a systemic grammar, which is also functional, “semantically motivated” (Halliday; Matthiessen, 1999, p. 3). Halliday’s Systemic-Functional Grammar (SFG) presents three kinds of meanings particularly relevant: (1) the use of language to talk about our experience of the world, including our own minds; (2) the use of language to enact social relationships; (3) the organisation of our messages to reflect both the contexts of situation and culture (Thompson, 2014). According to Halliday and Matthiessen (1999, p. 7), these three modes of meaning are referred to as metafunctions, namely ideational, interpersonal and textual, respectively.

For the purposes of our study, we limit our analysis to the interpersonal metafunction which concerns the social relations and the assignment of roles to participants. It is a way to “exchange meanings” (Thompson, 2014, p. 45). In this respect, Halliday (2004, p. 138, boldface in the original) affirms that “the clause takes on the form of a **proposition**. Thus, it can be argued about, doubted, contradicted, accepted, or insisted on, and so forth”. There’s also the semantic function of proposal in the case of exchange of goods-&-services.

Although it is not the aim of this study to discuss the interpersonal metafunction, this metafunction was chosen as it is the required base to carry out an appraisal of the language choices in any text. As proposed by Martin and White (2005, p. 1), it is

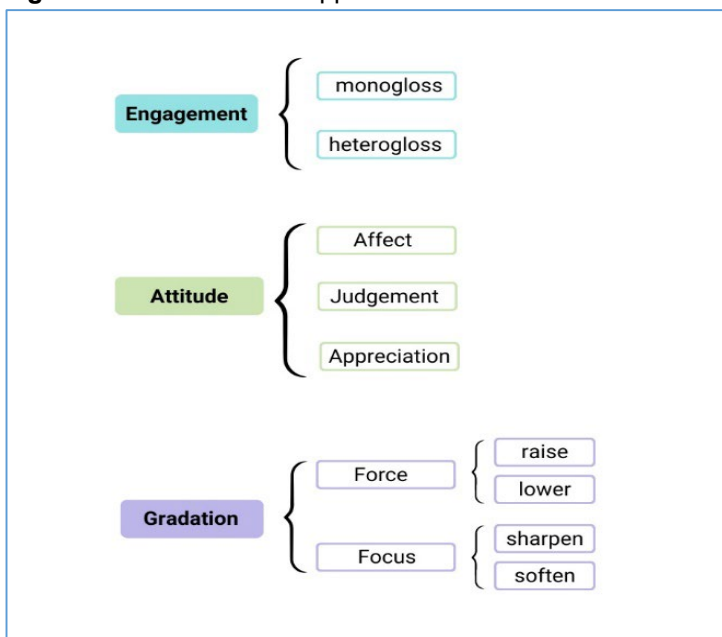
necessary to consider the inclusion of affect, judgement of behaviour and appreciation of things, to “develop and extend the SFL account of the interpersonal”.

## 2.1 Appraisal – an overview

Appraisal theory has been developed by Martin and White (2005) in an effort to present researchers within the realm of SFL an approach to the text that fosters the development of communities of shared feelings, values and positions in relation to social issues. It concerns how speakers construe their identities by means of choices that make up the text. It is focused on the rhetorical aspect of the text rather than on its logic. The aim is to negotiate relations of power and solidarity with the readers. Negotiation, a system that complements appraisal, focuses on the interactive aspect of discourse, exchange structure and speech function. One other complementary system is that of involvement, which focuses on non-tradable resources for negotiating relations (p. 33). In short, as Martin and White (2005, p.34) define it, appraisal is “one of the three major discourse semantic resources construing interpersonal meaning”.

Appraisal entails three interacting domains – attitude, engagement and graduation. Attitude concerns our feelings, emotional reactions, judgements of behaviour and evaluation of things. Engagement deals with attitudes and the voices around opinions in discourse. Lastly, graduation involves the grading of a feeling, how intense or weak it is.

Attitude, in turn, is divided into: affect, judgement and appreciation. Affect deals with resources for construing emotional reactions; judgement assesses behaviour according to normative principles; and appreciation looks at resources for construing the value of things, including natural phenomena and semiosis (Martin; White, 2005, p. 36). As the authors themselves defend, what we aim to do is to relate patterns of appraisal to context, concentrating on how evaluation is used to negotiate social relations. For matters of clearance, we present an overview of the Appraisal system in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:** An overview of appraisal resources.

**Source:** Martin and White (2005, p. 38).

From what the figure above summarizes, we direct a closer gaze to the attitudinal domain, as described in the methodology section.

### 3 The Short Story

At the surface level, “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies”, whose title is a reference to the *Wizard of Oz*, where ruby slippers allow Dorothy, the main character, to travel home, is a story about an Indian girl who goes to the British consulate to get her visa to England, where she is supposed to meet a husband she has never seen in life. As soon as she gets off the bus, she is approached by a trickster who makes money out of deceiving the women who come every Tuesday with the same aim of moving abroad. As she talks to him, the conman, getting deeply touched by her beauty, decides to really help her get her visa by advising her on what to answer at the interview. Ironically, she gets all the answers wrong in order to stay in India and avoid the arranged marriage.

At the deep level, Rushdie, as usual in his works, takes an ironical stance to discuss a series of relevant themes such as gender, tradition, political issues, international relations, emigration, and so forth. Divided in three sections, namely the girl’s arrival, dialogue with the trickster and leaving the consulate, the main point of the

story is the dialogue carried out between the two characters. This is the uttermost focus of our analysis through the theories described above and detailed in the next section.

#### 4 Methodology

Our analysis of Rushdie's story draws on the theoretical principles described in Martin and White's Appraisal Theory (2005) regarding the domain of attitude, namely affect, judgement and appreciation. The choice of this domain was based on our primary interest in investigating the emotions, behaviour and the value attributed to things expressed by Rushdie's characters, which, in turn, would channel the writer's ironical and contemptuous view of issues of gender, political, and economic discrimination.

As the theory of Appraisal "evolved within the general theoretical framework of SFL." (p. 7), we found it essential to turn to SFL, more specifically the ideational metafunction, in order to identify how the attitudinal categories of affect, judgement, and appreciation are mapped onto the mental and verbal processes carried out by the characters as well as those described by the narrator so as to reflect the writer's criticism.

Attempting to make it easier for the reader to follow the procedures and categories used in our analysis, as well as the development of the events, we followed the story's original division of sections, mentioned above, and, as in the analysis developed in Martin and White (2005), opted for a *bottom-up* approach, i.e., starting with the realisations and moving back to the "mood" of the text. Besides, we used a table (sample below) similar to that presented in Martin and White (2005, p. 71), making not only the categories clearly distinguishable but also "the lexicogrammatical items construing them" (p. 71), which will help the reader in the semantic composition of the text.

**Table 1:** Example Attitude Analysis.

Appraising items	Appraiser	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
a cloud of dust good advice becoming young again	Narrator" Miss Rehana" N/Ali'			t,-react t,+val +react	bus Ali's advice her eyes

**Source:** Designed by the authors, based on Martin and White (2005).

In those cases in which the narrator projects the characters' words or thoughts, we used the *N/character'* notation for the mental projections and *N/character"*, for the

verbal ones, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 444). In addition, for each of the three categories of the attitudinal domain, we used the abbreviation that corresponds to the positive/negative attitude shown by the appraiser, as proposed in Martin and White (2005, p.71), Table 2, to help the reader on his journey down the story.

**Table 2:** Abbreviations used for Attitude Analysis.

+	'positive attitude'
	'negative attitude'
des	'affect: desire'
hap	'affect: un/happiness'
sec	'affect: in/security'
sat	'affect: dis/satisfaction'
norm	'judgement: normality'
cap	'judgement: capacity'
ten	'judgement: tenacity'
ver	'judgement: veracity'
prop	'judgement: propriety'
react	'appreciation: reaction'
comp	'appreciation: composition'
val	'appreciation: valuation'

**Source:** Martin and White (2005).

## 5 Analysis

In this section, we seek to map how appraisal system is distributed throughout the corpus. Thus, it is organized in three sections of the story: Section I : Miss Rehana's arrival at the consulate; section II: Dialogue between Miss Rehana and Mr. Ali; and section III: Leaving the Consulate.

### 5.1 Section I - Miss Rehana's arrival at the consulate

The first section of the story deals with Miss Rehana's arrival at the gates of the British consulate. It extends up to Muhammad Ali's, the other main character in the story, approach to her in an effort to talk her into accepting his advice on how to answer the officer's questions to get a visa to England. It corresponds to the abstract step in the narrative structure (Goatly, 2000) as it introduces the characters involved in the social interaction, the environment where they meet and what is about to come. The attitudinal instances in this section are described in Table 2.

**Table 3:** Appraisal Analysis of Section I.

Appraising items	Appraiser	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
a cloud of dust	Narrator"			t,-react	bus
beauty	Narrator"	+hap			Miss Rehana
brightly painted	Narrator"			+comp	bus
Multicoloured	Narrator"			+comp	bus
arabesque	Narrator"			+react	bus
beautiful	driver			+react	her comment
bowing theatrically	Narrator"		+cap		Rehana's eyes
large...not need	Narrator"		-cap		Muhammad
advice expert	N/Ali'			+react	her eyes
becoming young	Narrator"			+comp	guard
again	Narrator"		-prop		guard
gold button khaki	Narrator"		+norm		applicants
usually so rude	Narrator"			t,+react	sahib
Tuesday women	Narrator"	-sat			sahib
... like courtesy	Narrator"			-react	Consulate area
gruffly	Narrator"	-sec			women
dusty compound	Narrator"	+sec			family
all looked frightened	Narrator"	+sec			Rehana
tried to look confident	Narrator"	-sec			women
not seem at all					
alarmed	Narrator"	-sec			women
vulnerable-looking	Narrator"	+sec			girl (Rehana)
weekly supplicants					
independent					

**Source:** Designed by the authors, based on Martin and White (2005).

As can be seen from Table 3, the attitudinal evaluations in this introduction are practically assigned to the narrator, an observer in the story. The evaluations are positive when they refer to Miss Rehana, but negative when referring to the guards and the women. Inscriptions such as *not seem at all alarmed* and *independent* foreground one of the story's themes - women as a self-assured gender in a male-dominant society.

Though an extended discussion of point of view is not intended here, we find it timely to draw attention to how the use of free indirect speech (FIS) fudges the distinction between the narrator's and Mr. Muhammad Ali's speech. This happens in different instances and with different characters throughout the story. Naturally, "evaluation is one of the main narrative resources used to indicate whose voice a writer is narrating from" (Martin; White, 2005, p. 72).

Attitudinal lexis, however, is not always inscribed in the text prompting evaluation. In many cases ideational meanings provoke our response to the text, determining, thus, our position as readers. In these cases, a further reading down the text is required to "draw us to an attitudinal reading" (Martin; White, 2005, p. 64).



One example from Section One is *Tuesday women*. At first, it may not denote anything rather than a pre-modified noun suggesting a specific group of women, those who are a natural sight at the Consulate every Tuesday. We only come to realise the negative judgement behind these ideational choices after going further down the text. In this case, the narrator seems to describe them as a pitiful group of women who come to the British Consulate to try their luck to get a passport to escape the misfortune of having been born in a poor country where they can't be heard and have opportunities. The run-down conditions of the place and the women's anxiety to leave the country can be inferred from the expressions *the dawn bus, its headlamps still shining* and *it arrived pushing a cloud of dust*, and *the dusty compound*. Evaluation invoked by these ideational meanings invites us to share these women's eagerness to follow their dream by travelling all night to arrive at the consulate still in the early hours to be the first in line and the poor conditions of the road and place where they most likely come from. Another grammatical structure to realise attitude as a discourse semantic system is Halliday's (2004) grammatical metaphors. These include processes and nominalised realisations of qualities (Martin; White, 2005 p. 46) as in 'veiling her *beauty*,' and '*a cloud of dust*'.

One of the main ingredients in Salman Rushdie's works, irony is generated by a conceptual contrast, a lexical ambiguity in the author's use of words that can evoke opposing meanings (Busetto; Delmonte, 2019, p. 1). The intention is to cause a humorous or emphatic effect. In our *corpus*, irony is the flagship for attaining the author's purpose of speaking against gender discrimination. One example in this section is *advice expert*. While *expert* is a word that denotes a positive trait, in the story it is evaluated negatively to refer to Mr. Muhammad Ali's deceitful nature and promptness to fool someone, in this case Ms. Rehana.

## 5.2 Section II - Dialogue between Miss Rehana and Mr. Ali

The analysis below – Table 4 – will provide us with further examples of ideational choices that inscribe and evoke attitudinal evaluation in the dialogue developed by both Miss Rehana and Mr. Muhammad Ali. Again, the narrator's omniscience about the characters is of crucial importance to inform us of their feelings and thoughts during their interpersonal exchange, though, as in Section I, it is not an easy task to identify whose viewpoint is being expressed.

**Table 4:** Appraisal Analysis of Section II.

Appraising items	Appraiser	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
little shanty-town	Narrator"			-comp	village
contentedly	Narrator"	+hap			Miss Rehana
bad things	N/Ali'			-react	Rehana's eyes
good advice...	Miss Rehana"			t, +val	Ali's advice
orphan	Miss Rehana"		t, -cap		herself
not one...your ladies	Miss Rehana"		t, +cap		Ali's clients
grey hairs	Muhammad"		t, +cap		Ali's experience
well tempered ...	Muhammad"			t, +val	Ali's advice
you will find it good	Ali" Rehana'			+val	his advice
poor potato	Miss Rehana"		t, -cap		herself
earning good wages	Miss Rehana"		+cap		Tuesday women
good advice should...	Miss Rehana"			t, +val	Ali's advice
...going crazy	Muhammad'	t, -sat			insistence
written	Muhammad"			t, +val	meeting
drawn by Fate	Muhammad"			t, +val	meeting
poor	Muhammad"		-cap		himself
comes free	Muhammad"			+val	his advice
smiled	Miss Rehana	+hap			Muhammad
must surely listen	Miss Rehana"		+prop		his advice
good fortune...	Miss Rehana"			t, +val	his advice
special corner	N/Ali'			+val	Ali's place
newspaper packet	Narrator"			-comp	food wrapping
dusty	Narrator"			-react	ground
enviously	N" Ali'	-sat			town men
ogling	N" Ali'	-sat			town men
latest young lovely	N" Ali'	+sat			Miss Rehana
old grey-haired fraud	N" Ali'		-ver		Muhammad
gently	Narrator"	+hap			Muhammad
great nation	Muhammad"			+val	England
gravely	Miss Rehana"	+sat			Ali's comment
unsure	Muhammad'	-sec			Rehana
neatly folded envelope	Narrator"			+comp	application form
a note of anxiety	N/Ali'	-sec			Rehana's voice
tip-top	Muhammad"			t,+comp	Rehana's papers
will go now...	Miss Rehana"		+tem		
cried loudly	Muhammad"	-sat			her departing
smitting...forehead	Muhammad"	-sat			her departing
easy business	Muhammad"	-sat			interview
worse place	Muhammad"			-comp	Consulate
had done the trick	N/Ali'			t,+react	his oratory
captive audience	N/Ali'	+sat			Miss Rehana
able to look at her	N/Ali'		+cap		Miss Rehana
set speech	Narrator			-val	Ali's talk
came on Tuesdays	Ali" Sahibs'		-prop		women
claiming ...dependents	Ali" Sahibs'		-prop		women
chartered accountants	Ali" Sahibs'		-prop		women
crooks and liars	Ali" Sahibs'		-prop		women
will simply tell them	Miss Rehana"		+ten		herself
no such a thing	Miss Rehana"		+ver		herself
made him shiver..fear	N/Ali'	-sec			Miss Rehana
she was a sparrow	Muhammad"		t, -cap		Miss Rehana

hooded eyes like hawks	Muhammad"		t, -prop		sahibs
personal	Ali" Sahibs"			-comp	questions
as a lady's...too shy	Ali" Sahibs"			-comp	questions
was a virgin	Ali" Sahibs"			-comp	questions
love-making habits	Ali" Sahibs"			-comp	questions
secret nicknames	Ali" Sahibs"			-comp	questions
spoke brutally	Narrator"	-hap			Muhammad
shock...feel	N/ Rehana'	-sec			interview
something like it	Narrator"			-comp	interview
remained steady	Narrator"	-sec			her eyes
begin to flutter	Narrator"	-sec			her hands
old man	Miss Rehana"		+cap		Muhammad
usually whisper urgently	Narrator"		-ver		Muhammad
very good type	Muhammad"		t,-ver		a man
necessary	Muhammad"			+val	papers
could be delivered	Muhammad"		+cap		a man
proper authenticating	Muhammad"			+val	seals
good	N/Ali'			+val	business
five hundred rupees	N" women'			+val	payment
golden bracelet	N" women'			+val	payment
came... miles away	Narrator"		+ten		Tuesday women
made sure of this	Narrator"		t, -ver		Muhammad
trick them	Narrator"		-ver		Muhammad
swindled	Narrator"		-ver		Muhammad
unlikely to return	Narrator"		-cap		Tuesday women
gulled	Narrator"		-ver		Tuesday women
too-late a point	Narrator"		t, -cap		return
hard	Narrator"			-val	life
his wits	Narrator"		t, -ver		Muhammad
compassion	Narrator"		-prop		Muhammad
betrayed	Narrator"	-sec			his voice
greatest secret	N/Ali'	-sec			about the
rare person	Muhammad"	t, +hap			passport
jewel	Muhammad"	t, +hap			Miss Rehana
I will do what...	Muhammad"		-prop		Miss Rehana
solve all ... worries	Muhammad"			t, +val	offer document
sorcerer's papers	Miss Rehana"			t, +val	document
unquestionably laughing	Narrator"	t, +hap			document
British passport	Muhammad"			+val	her eyes
pukka goods	Muhammad"			t, +val	document
hey presto	Muhammad"			t, +val	document
had said it!	N/Ali'		t, +ver		passport
free-gratis	N/Ali'		t, +ver		real intention
kick ... afterwards	N/Ali'		t, -cap		give passport
old fool	N/Ali'		-cap		regret
bewitched	N/Ali'	t, -sat			himself
commit a crime	Miss Rehana"			-react	himself
facilitation	Muhammad"		-prop		accept his offer
low opinion ...	Miss" sahibs'		-prop		accept his offer
old babuji	Miss Rehana"		+cap		Indian women
not good	Miss Rehana"			-val	Muhammad
in such a spirit	Muhammad"	t, -sat			Ali's advice
poor fellow	Muhammad"		-cap		Miss Rehana
beautiful	Muhammad"	+hap			himself
do not spit	Muhammad"	t, -sat			Rehana
lose your dignity	Muhammad"	-sat			Miss Rehana

swearing to be patient	lala”		-prop		Miss Rehana
be a fool	Muhammad”	-sat			Tuesday women
shouted after her	Muhammad”	-sat			Miss Rehana
the curse of our people	Muhammad”	t, -sat			Miss Rehana
ignorant	Muhammad”	t, -hap			Miss Rehana
refuse to learn	Muhammad”		-ten		Miss Rehana
too bad... likes them	Woman”	t, -sat			Miss Rehana
					Miss Rehana

**Source:** Designed by the authors, based on Martin and White (2005).

This part of the story concerns the dialogue between Muhammad Ali, the conman, and Miss Rehana. A lot could be said, for example, about the presence of a speaker “ethos”, as defined in Aczel (1998), in the persons of narrator and characters, however, we limited ourselves to identifying their speeches and thoughts as they make up material enough for evaluation.

Firstly, a look at Table 4 shows a certain balance between the three attitudinal categories - affect, judgement and appreciation. In the case of affect, the subcategories cover basically *dis/satisfaction*, *in/security* and *un/happiness*. The latter refers positively to Miss Rehana, while *in/security* refers mostly to Mr. Muhammad, denoting his uncertainty whether his plan would thrive or not with such a “beautiful” girl. As to the former, the only few cases in which *satisfaction* is negative towards Miss Rehana are felt by a frustrated Mr. Ali who saw his ‘victim’ refute participation in what she considered illegal.

Attitudinal lexis such as *contentedly*, *orphan*, *no such a thing*, *jewel and rare person* may lead us to read Miss Rehana as a vulnerable, naive and weak character. However, this view proves distorted when we analyse inscriptions such as *not at all alarmed*, *independent* (Table 4) and *commit a crime*, *low opinion* and *not good* (table 3), all of which evoke our evaluation of Miss Rehana as a self-assured person who knows her way around and resists being taken in by Mr. Ali’s sweet talk.

Judgement occurs in its two subcategories - social esteem and social sanction. In the first case *capacity* is more frequent, used negatively to defend the speaker’s position, that is, Miss Rehana’s argument that she’s unable to afford to pay for Muhammad’s advice - *I’m not one of your rich ladies; I’m poor* - and Mr. Ali’s insistence that although he is poor himself, he would give it to her free - *poor; comes for free*. He also used it to refer to Miss Rehana’s inexperience and naivety - *she was a sparrow*. Negative capacity is used by the narrator, too, to refer to how late the girls usually find

they had been gulled to be able to get back to the trickster, Mr. Muhammad Ali: *too late a point*.

Conversely, capacity is used positively when Miss Rehana plays the role of appraiser to refer to the other ladies' financial conditions and Mr. Ali's experience. All this foregrounds how gender inequality is commonly accepted in that part of the world. Social sanction - propriety/*ethics* and veracity/*truth* - is used in Ali's assessment of the consulate officials and by the narrator in reference to Ali's character. Propriety expresses Ali's acquaintance with the consulate process, whether through the report by past interviewees or closeness to some of the guards. Veracity reflects the narrator's negative opinion of Mr Ali's habit of fooling young girls as well as his friend at the consulate. It, nonetheless, refers positively to his intention to give the passport out to Miss Rehana free of charge.

As for appreciation, the last attitudinal category, *valuation* is the most common item used positively by Mr Ali while bragging about his advice and how much other women would be willing to pay for it - *well tempered; you'll find it good; solve all your worries; five hundred rupees*. Naturally, this feeling is not shared by Miss Rehana, who considers the suggestion of law breaking an outrage - *commit a crime; not good*.

In addition to *valuation*, *composition* comes as the second most important aspect. It makes negative reference both (1) to the town and Miss Rehana's sandwich wrapping, foregrounding the place's precarity and lack of options by the narrator - *little shantytown; newspaper packet* - and (2) to the questions asked by the sahibs at the interview by Mr Ali, an attempt to scare Miss Rehana so as to make her accept his offer - *personal questions; love-making habits; secret nicknames*. The only two positive evaluations in *composition* come in regard to Miss Rehana's documents - *neatly folded; envelope; tip top*.

Now, adding to these inscribed instances of evaluation, there is a high frequency of invoked attitude noted as 't, +/- category', defined in Martin and White (2005, p. 75) as *ideational tokens*, e.g. 't,-cap for I'm an orphan', to covertly express Miss Rehana's incapacity to afford Mr. Ali's advice. Although the analysis of evaluation invoked by ideational choices may seem rather subjective, it is not conceivable that such analysis should not be carried out and that such ideational items might be chosen without respect to their attitudes (Martin; White, 2005 p. 62). It's crucial that we as readers "deploy" (quotations in the original) a text for social purposes, and that we define our position as readers in regard to ideational variables such as gender, generation, class,

ethnicity, and in/capacity. However, as Macken-Horarik (2003, p. 299) defines the analysis, considering the issue of covert attitudes embodied in narrative semiosis is to leave “the (relatively) firm territory of stance studies and move into a discursive equivalent of a swamp” (brackets in the original).

Evaluation of the tokens on Table 4 reveals that while Miss Rehana uses ideational invocations to avoid Mr. Ali’s advances - *I’m an orphan; I’m not one of your wealthy ladies; I’m a poor potato; Good advice should find good money*, he does so in an attempt to convince Miss Rehana that this is the best way for her to get the intended passport - *My advice is well tempered by experience; our meeting was written; hey-presto; his oratory had done the trick; she was captive audience now. Miss, I have been drawn to you by Fate*; Still, invoked choices are employed by Mr. Ali to refer positively to Miss Rehana’s documents (above mentioned) and personality - *tip-top; rare person; a jewel*, but negatively to her decision to turn down his proposal - *do not spit on my generosity; do not go into that building and lose your dignity*. While these inscriptions of attitude reflect Mr. Ali’s typical soft talk whenever someone he considers vulnerable comes into sight, as omnisciently stated by the narrator, Miss Rehana’s speech evokes a rather ironic tone as she plays along with Mr. Ali’s tricking game - *sorcerer’s papers; then I must surely listen*.

Though the traditional definition of irony is stated as “what one means using language that normally signifies the opposite, typically for humorous or emphatic effect” (Busetto; Dermont, 2019, p. 1), the lines above are better explained within the limits of Milanowicz’s (2019) view, who claims that irony goes well beyond opposite meanings to include attitude and emotion and in Partington’s (2007, p. 1548), who defends that the traditional view does not account for situations of ironical understatements and ironical quotations and interjections. These two views are mirrored not only in the lines mentioned, but also in others, such as *good advice is rarer than rubies*, explained in the section about the story - The Short Story.

Internal focalization is another recurrent strategy used by Rushdie in the story. Simpson (2005, p. 26) states that the stylistic significance of free indirect discourse (FID) is “the impression it gives of character and narrator speaking or thinking simultaneously.” Our focus here is on the narration of the characters’ thoughts, precisely the categorization Leech and Short (2007, p.271) name free indirect thought (FIT). Hence the notations such as *N/Ali*’ to imply an omniscient account by the narrator of Mr. Ali’s thoughts.

A close look at Table 4 makes it possible to conclude that the narrator chooses to be omniscient about Mr. Ali, with the exception of one instance when this privilege is extended towards Miss Rehana. The narrator invites us to be witnesses to Mr. Ali's plot to deceive the Indian girl by sharing with us the trickster's deepest feelings and thoughts he is well acquainted with - *It was at this point that Muhammad Ali usually began to whisper urgently*. From the moment Mr. Ali meets the girl - *those eyes did bad things to his digestive tract* - to the moment she departs - *so be a fool* - nothing escapes his grasp. By sharing his access to Mr. Ali's inner world we not only learn how Mr. Ali plots his plan to approach Miss Rehana - *his oratory had done the trick* - but also the power her beauty exerts upon him, to the point that he decides to change the plan and give her not just his advice but a British passport free of charge - *those eyes did bad things to his digestive tract*, already used above.

Section II of the story is the result of the exploitation of speech and thought strategies (direct and free indirect discourse, for instance), alongside the narrator's knowledge of Mr Ali's inner world - his perceptions, feelings and intentions. All this scenario foregrounds the social problems that pervades the Indian culture, which Rushdie aims to bring up to attention and criticises.

### 5.3 Section III - Leaving the Consulate

In this last section of the story, Miss Rehana leaves the Consulate after her interview, to find Mr. Ali waiting for her outside. Rushdie brings the story to an end by surprising the readers with a turning point in the sequence of the events, foregrounding, again, his criticism of gender discrimination by using the same discursive and attitudinal content presented in the previous sections.

**Table 5:** Appraisal Analysis of Section III.

Appraising items	Appraiser	Affect	Judgement	Appreciation	Appraised
Scolded	N/Ali'	-sat			himself
advice walla	Rehana"		+cap		Muhammad
seemed calm	Narrator	+sec			Miss Rehana
pulled it off	N/Ali'		+cap		Miss Rehana
drowning	N/Ali'	desire			Sahibs
smiled hopefully	N/Ali'	desire			Muhammad
no trouble	Narrator	+sat			Miss Rehana
hour of triumph	Muhammad"	+hap			Miss Rehana
impulsively	Narrator"	+react			Miss Rehana
apologize	Rehana"		+prop		her attitude
dust	Narrator"			-comp	compound
cured unhappiness	Narrator"			+val	vendor's items

happy	Narrator"	+hap			Muhammad
old .. expert	Narrator"		+cap		Muhammad
softly	Narrator "	+hap			Muhammad
arranged	Rehana"	-sat			engagement
fixed it	Rehana"	-sat			her parents
look after me	Rehana"	-sat			groom
solid type	Rehana/dad		+cap	+val	Mustafa
stranger	ehana"	-hap			Mustafa
surprised	N/Ali'	-sat			Muhammad
like wisdom	N/Ali'		t,+cap		Muhammad
best interest	Muhammad"		+prop		parents
good and honest	Muhammad"		+ver		Mustafa
have a lifetime	Muhammad"		+cap		Miss Rehana
puzzed	Narrator	-sec			Muhammad
bitter smile	N/Ali'	-hap			Miss Rehana
shocked	N/Ali'	-hap			Muhammad
looked happy	Muhammad"	+hap			Miss Rehana
got...wrong	Rehana"		+ten		interview
topsy turvy	Rehana"	+hap			interview
great house	Rehana"	+hap			house in India
have been sad	MR"children'	-hap			her departure
tragedy	N/Ali"	-hap			her decision
it's spoilt	N/Ali"	-hap			situation
the happiest thing	N/Ali'	+hap			her smile
dust cloud	N/Ali'			-comp	compound

**Source:** Designed by the authors, based on Martin and White (2005).

This closing section of the story follows the same *plane of narration* (Hasan, 1989) presented in the previous sections, namely an outside narrator who, for being closer to one of the characters, gives access to the reader to whatever is essential in the story.

Affect is the prevalent attitudinal category, showing two opposing situations - positive affect expressed by Miss Rehana regarding the outcome of the interview, what in Mr. Ali's view should be considered negative - *topsy turvy* and *great house* - and negative evaluation by Miss Rehana when she spoke of her parents' wedding arrangement - *arranged; fixed it; stranger; and look after me*.

The choice to whom omniscience is expressed provides the reader with a comprehensive view of who Mr. Ali is and why he decided to change his initial plot. Following the narrator down the story as he accompanies Mr. Ali in his endeavour leaves the impression that the latter is indeed a good character, who was trying to help a lost, naive girl to accomplish her goal of getting a pass to England. Also, his assumption that Miss Rehana had followed his advice to the letter is expressed by *seemed calm; pulled it off; and smiled hopefully*. Only when she tells him how she really did at the interview – *got... wrong*, does reality sink in - *tragedy; it's spoilt*. This



is another episode through which Rushdie's irony is served to the reader as the main course in a *tour de force* of situations.

Judgement, another attitudinal category expressed, is limited to *capacity* and *propriety*, mainly. In the first case, it refers to both participants in different regards: Mr. Ali's experience and Miss Rehana's future. *Propriety* shows Miss Rehana's sincerity in apologising for her rudeness and Mr. Ali's patronising effort to convince her that her parents wanted the best for her, since parents always know better - *best interest*.

Lastly, Rushdie makes use of repetition as a resource to express his negative evaluation of the compound - *dust-cloud*. The expression opens and closes the story. In the opening section it conceals Rehana's beauty while in the closing one it fades her smile out. It is Rushdie's irony at work again, contrasting the ugly and the beautiful, the future and the present. Besides, repetition of this context of situation (Halliday; Hasan, 1989) foregrounds the unequal economic and political conditions between east and west.

## 6 Conclusion

Firth in his linguistic analysis of meaning stated that the human being is a "field of experience in which the life process is being maintained in the social process" (Firth, 1968, p. 14). There is an urge to communicate experiences in order to nurture our sense of belonging. To this end, storytelling has been used as an extraordinarily enticing means. Salman Rushdie suggested that memory is fragmented as a broken glass, pieces of which, as with fragments in Archaeology, are symbols of past experiences that reveal a lot in the present. It follows that, as participants in social contexts, we tend to evaluate ourselves and the others, attributing to our experiences values of affect, judgement, and appreciation.

The combination of Halliday's SFG and Martin and White's Theory of Evaluation, used to carry out this evaluation in Rushdie's story, has proved crucial in helping us understand the author's engagement with the social issues of the time of writing and with the reader's freedom to construe the meanings which will lead him to take a position to commit to. Also, this framework gave us an internal reading of the participants, through free indirect discourse (FID), allowing us to choose the character to empathise with or distance from. Precisely, the narrative axiology led us to side with Miss Rehana, a character who has fallen victim to different kinds of discrimination.

As it happens in the other works of Salman Rushdie, irony is the forerunner of his criticism of the subjection of the Eastern countries by the Western culture. In our investigation of the text, it played an important role in clearing out the author's evocative hints of a corrupt and sexist context of culture.

Finally, though it is far from our intention to discuss all the possibilities of addressing those issues in Rushdie's story, the present approach is an outstanding way to bring to surface the deep semantic relations that make up the text.

## **BONS CONSELHOS SÃO MAIS RAROS QUE RUBIS: UMA ANÁLISE LINGUÍSTICA DA LITERATURA ENGAJADA DE SALMAN RUSHDIE**

**Resumo:** Este trabalho objetiva lançar o olhar para o construto semântico que subjaz às escolhas linguísticas realizadas no conto de Salman Rushdie – “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” – buscando compreender o engajamento do autor com as personagens e questões sociais trazidas pelo texto de discriminação de gênero, política e econômica na cultura indiana e oriental impostas pelas forças ocidentais, desafiando o leitor a se posicionar em relação às mesmas. Tal engajamento encontra ressonância na literatura de Sartre (1966) para o qual escrever é se comprometer com a liberdade, com o tempo presente e as questões sociais do momento, a partir do engajamento do autor e, principalmente, do leitor como construtor dos significados. O estudo ancora-se nas bases da Gramática Sistêmico-Funcional (GSF) (Halliday, 2014) e na teoria da Avaliatividade de Martin e White (2005) para trazer à superfície aspectos atitudinais dos personagens, como afeto, julgamento e apreciação, expressos nos processos mentais e verbais que tecem o conto.

**Palavras-chave:** Avaliação Atitudinal. Compromisso Social. Literatura.

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