

Invisible Words

Jess H. Brewer

Abstract

By highlighting proper nouns, nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs in different colors and then removing some of them completely, this study of three excerpts from distinguished literary figures attempts to ascertain which types of words form the most important grammatical/lexical tools in each author's "craft of letters". The hypothesis is that each author privileges one type of word over all the others, so that such words constitute the "invisible forces" binding and energizing their literary creations.

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1 Excerpt from Borges

On the burning February morning Beatriz Viterbo died, after braving an agony that never for a single moment gave way to self-pity or fear, I noticed that the sidewalk billboards around Constitution Plaza were advertising some new brand or other of American cigarettes. The fact pained me, for I realized that the wide and ceaseless universe was already slipping away from her and that this slight change was the first of an endless series. The universe may change but not me, I thought with a certain sad vanity. I knew that at times my fruitless devotion had annoyed her; now that she was dead, I could devote myself to her memory, without hope but also without humiliation. I recalled that the thirtieth of April was her birthday; on that day to visit her house on Garay Street and pay my respects to her father and to Carlos Argentino Daneri, her first cousin, would be an irreproachable and perhaps unavoidable act of politeness. Once again I would wait in the twilight of the small, cluttered drawing room, once again I would study the details of her many photographs: Beatriz Viterbo in profile and in full colour; Beatriz wearing a mask, during the Carnival of 1921; Beatriz at her First Communion; Beatriz on the day of her wedding to Roberto Alessandri; Beatriz soon after her divorce, at a luncheon at the Turf Club; Beatriz at a seaside resort in Quilmes with Dalia San Marco Porcel and Carlos Argentino; Beatriz with the Pekingese lapdog given her by Villegas Haedo; Beatriz, front and three-quarter views, smiling, hand on her chin. . . I would not be forced, as in the past, to justify my presence with modest offerings of books — books whose pages I finally learned to cut beforehand, so as not to find out, months later, that they lay around unopened.

1.1 Borges without nouns or pronouns

On the **burning** died, after braving an
that never for a **single** gave way to or , noticed
that the around were advertising some
new or of . The pained , for real-
ized that the **wide** and **ceaseless** was **already** slipping away from
and that this **slight** was the of an **endless** . The
may change but not , **thought** with a **certain sad** . knew that at
fruitless had annoyed ; now that was **dead**, could
devote to , without but also without .
recalled that the of was ; on that to visit
on and pay to and to
, **first** , would be an **irreproachable** and **perhaps**
unavoidable of . Once again would wait in the of
the **small, cluttered** , once again would study the of
many : in and in **full** ;
wearing a , during the of ; at
; on the of her to ; soon
after , at a at the ; at a **seaside**
in with and ; with
the given by ; , **front** and **three-**
quarter , **smiling**, on ... would not be forced, as in the
, to justify with **modest** of — whose
finally learned to cut **beforehand**, so as not to find out, **later**,
that lay around **unopened**.

1.2 Borges without verbs

On the burning February morning Beatriz Viterbo, after an agony that never for a single moment to self-pity or fear, I that the sidewalk billboards around Constitution Plaza some new brand or other of American cigarettes. The fact me, for I that the wide and ceaseless universe already away from her and that this slight change was the first of an endless series. The universe may but not me, I with a certain sad vanity. I that at times my fruitless devotion her; now that she dead, I myself to her memory, without hope but also without humiliation. I that the thirtieth of April her birthday; on that day to her house on Garay Street and my respects to her father and to Carlos Argentino Daneri, her first cousin, an irreproachable and perhaps unavoidable act of politeness. Once again I in the twilight of the small, cluttered drawing room, once again I the details of her many photographs: Beatriz Viterbo in profile and in full colour; Beatriz a mask, during the Carnival of 1921; Beatriz at her First Communion; Beatriz on the day of her wedding to Roberto Alessandri; Beatriz soon after her divorce, at a luncheon at the Turf Club; Beatriz at a seaside resort in Quilmes with Dalia San Marco Porcel and Carlos Argentino; Beatriz with the Pekingese lapdog her by Villegas Haedo; Beatriz, front and three-quarter views, smiling, hand on her chin... I, as in the past, to my presence with modest offerings of books — books whose pages I finally to beforehand, so as, months later, that they around unopened.

1.3 Borges without nouns, pronouns or verbs

On the **burning** , after an
that never for a **single** to or ,
that the around some
new or of . The , for
that the **wide** and **ceaseless** **already** away from
and that this **slight** was the of an **endless** . The
may but not , with a **certain sad** . that at
fruitless ; now that **dead**,
to , without but also without .
that the of ; on that to
on and to and to
 , **first** , an **irreproachable** and **perhaps**
unavoidable of . Once again in the of
the **small, cluttered** , once again the of
many : in and in **full** ;
a , during the of ; at
 ; on the of her to ; soon
after , at a at the ; at a **seaside**
in with and ; with
the by ; , **front** and **three-**
quarter , **smiling**, on ... , as in the
 , to with **modest** of — whose
 finally to **beforehand**, so as , **later**,
that **around unopened**.

1.4 Borges without nouns, pronouns, verbs or modifiers

On the , after an
that never for a to or ,
that the around some
or of . The , for
that the and away from
and that this was the of an . The
may but not , with a . that at
; now that ,
to , without but also without .
that the of ; on that to
on and to and to
, an and
of . Once again in the of
the , , once again the of
: in and in ;
a , during the of ; at
; on the of her to ; soon
after , at a at the ; at a
in with and ; with
the by ; , and
, to , on ... , as in the
, with of — whose
to , so as ,
that .

2 “The Second Coming” – W.B. Yeats

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

2.1 Yeats without nouns or pronouns

Turning and turning in the widening
The cannot hear the ;
 fall apart; the cannot hold;
Mere is loosed upon the ,
The blood-dimmed is loosed, and everywhere
The is drowned;
The best lack all , while the worst
Are full of passionate .

Surely some is at hand;
Surely the is at hand.
The ! Hardly are those out
When a vast out of
Troubles : in of the
A with and the of a ,
A blank and pitiless as the ,
Is moving slow , while all about it
Reel of the indignant .
The drops again; but now know
That of stony
Were vexed to by a rocking ,
And what rough , come round at last,
Slouches towards to be born?

2.2 Yeats without verbs

and in the widening gyre
The falcon the falconer;
Things ; the centre ;
Mere anarchy upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide , and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence ;
The best all conviction, while the worst
full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation ;
Surely the Second Coming .
The Second Coming! Hardly those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
its slow thighs, while all about it
shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness again; but now I
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour at last,
towards Bethlehem to born?

2.3 Yeats without nouns, pronouns or verbs

The and in the widening
The the ;
; the ;
Mere upon the ,
The blood-dimmed , and everywhere
The ;
The best all , while the worst
full of passionate .

Surely some ;
Surely the .
The ! Hardly those out
When a vast out of
A with : in of the
A blank and pitiless as the of a ,
slow , while all about it
of the indignant .
The again; but now
That of stony
to by a rocking ,
And what rough , at last,
towards to born?

2.4 Yeats without verbs, nouns, pronouns or modifiers

The and in the
The the ;
; the ;
The the ,
The , and
The ;
The , while the
of .
the ;
The the !
When a out of
A with : in of the
A and and the of a ,
as the ,
, while
of the .
The ; but now
That of
to by a ,
And what , at last,
to ?

Excerpt from Hemingway

“Forget your personal tragedy. We are all bitched from the start and you especially have to hurt like hell before you can write seriously. But when you get the damned hurt use it — don’t cheat with it. Be as faithful to it as a scientist — but don’t think anything is of any importance because it happens to you or anyone belonging to you.”

— *Letter to Scott Fitzgerald, dated 28 May 1934.*

2.5 Hemingway without nouns or pronouns

“Forget **personal** . **are all bitched** from
the **and especially** have to hurt like **before**
can write **seriously**. But when **get the damned**
use — don’t cheat with . Be as **faithful** to **as a**
— but don’t think **is of any importance**
because **happens to** or **belonging to** .”

2.6 Hemingway without verbs

“ your personal tragedy. We all bitched from
the start and you especially like hell before
you seriously. But when you the damned
hurt it — with it. as faithful to it as a
scientist — but anything of any importance
because it you or anyone belonging to you.”

2.8 Hemingway without nouns, pronouns, verbs or modifiers

“ . from
the and
— But when the
— but with . as to as a
because or .”