A corpus-stylistic approach to John Williams' *Stoner*: How does the story arouse emotion in the reader?[1]

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1. Introduction

Emotion is an important aspect of literary work, and literary studies usually include some comments on emotions. A few of them have their sole focus on emotions (Sklar, 2013). Emotion has been one of the central issues of concern to not only researchers of literature but also those from many other academic fields. Philosophers, for example, have discussed emotion and have shown an interest in 'emotion and art' or 'emotion and literature' (Matravers, 2001). Psychologists have been interested in 'emotion and fiction' (Oatley, 2011; 2012). Cognitive and corpus approaches are noticeable recent trends in stylistics. Burke (2011) examines the relations between literature and cognition, focusing on the role of emotion in literary reading.

This study aims to find out how a reader's emotional response is provoked in *Stoner* by John Williams (Williams & McGahern, 2003). The research will adopt a corpus-stylisitc approach and use semantic analyses and comparisons of the novel with the comments from its readers.

2. Emotion and corpus stylistics

With regard to approaches to applying corpus stylistics to an analysis of emotion, in his spoken presentation, Toolan (2009) expressed one of his three questions in his narrative/corpus stylistics as 'How is emotional engagement with a fictional text achieved?' Leech (2013) briefly mentioned the emotional effects of a certain part-of-speech (POS), RGQ [wh-adverb of degree (*how*)] in one of Virginia Woolf's stories:

RGQ represents the adverb *How* as a modifier, in this text especially associated with exclamations:

How readily our thoughts swarm…
How shocking, and yet how wonderful it was to discover…
How peaceful it is down here.

This construction may, indeed be another authorial favourite of Virginia Woolf, indicative of the narrator's (or a character's) characteristic **emotional** involvement in her subject matter. (p. 23) [emphasis added]

Leech aimed to 'illustrate the potential' (p. 24) or 'the future possibilities' of analyses using corpus and computers (p. 25). Balossi (2014) analysed the language of the six characters in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* and concluded that 'the characters are linguistically distinguishable' (p. 185). In this book, using a corpus analytic method, Balossi frequently mentioned 'emotion' because it is clearly an important aspect of the six different personalities.[2]

3. Depictions of emotion in fiction

In my previous studies, I analysed several works of fiction focusing on depictions of emotions (Sera, 2015 and others). In some novels, the emotions readers feel correspond to the ones shown as the most significant according to the results of the semantic analyses of those works. *Snow Country* (Kawabata & Seidensticker, 1957) written by Yasunari Kawabata, the first Japanese Nobel prize winner in Literature, is one example of such works. The heroine, Komako, a hot spring geisha, often expresses her sadness. As shown in the comments on the book cover, the story 'stirs in the reader an ache of mingled excitement and pity', or, in other words, a sad feeling.

In other cases, there seems to be little connection between the emotions expressed in the novel and those felt by the reader. *The Master of Go* (Kawabata & Seidensticker, 1976) also written by Kawabata, is an example. The result of a semantic

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[2] For example, 'Moreover, they [the lexical items concerning the natural world] represent the lexical source through which Susan conveys her positive and negative emotions and world-view in physical terms'. (Balossi, 2014, p. 116)

analysis shows that 'Worry', 'Anatomy and physiology' and 'Respected' are the most significant semantic fields in this novel. However, many readers experience loneliness and sadness. On a close examination of *The Master of Go*, feelings are described in relation to the words of such semantic categories, for example, 'eyes' and 'face' (Anatomy and physiology), and 'dignity' (Respected).

Following the divisions in Hogan (2011, p. 1), the main concern of my previous studies was the relationship between 'the ways in which stories manifest feelings on the part of authors and characters' and 'the ways stories provoke feelings in readers or listeners'. The present study shifts the focus from the author or the character to the reader, and will semantically analyse and compare *Stoner* by John Williams and its readers' reviews collected from the *Goodreads* website (Goodreads Stoner), focusing on emotions felt by the readers.

4. *Stoner*

Stoner is a campus novel published in 1965. The protagonist, William Stoner, is an associate professor at a university. The story recounts his life from his childhood to his final moment. Burke (2016) explains in the following in the conference abstract of his presentation:

> In the 2003 republished version of the novel, John McGahern writes in his introduction to the novel of the " … plain prose, which seems to reflect effortlessly every shade of thought and feeling." …. In that study, following Short (1996), we have gone beyond the many impressionistic and evaluative critical responses and have focused on the descriptive linguistic elements in the text.

This novel of the '… plain prose, which seems to reflect effortlessly every shade of thought and feeling' seems to be relevant to the concern of the present research. Unlike Burke's presentation which had 'gone beyond the many impressionistic and evaluative critical responses', this study is going to focus on 'impressionistic and evaluative responses' of the readers and aims to find out how the reader's emotional response is elicited from the story using a large sample of readers' responses from the *Goodreads* website.

5. Research questions

The research questions of the present study are as follows:

1) Do the emotions expressed in *Stoner* correspond to those felt by its readers?

  The quotes on the back cover of the novel read as follows:

> '*Stoner* is a perfect novel, so well told and beautifully written, so <u>deeply moving</u>, that it takes your breath away' *New York Times*
> 'A terrific novel of echoing **sadness**' Julian Barnes
> 'A beautiful novel…a marvelous discovery for everyone who loves literature' Ian McEwan, BBC Radio 4
> 'A book for everyone, democratic in how it <u>breaks the heart</u>… Colum McCann, *Independent*
> 'A brilliant, beautiful, inexorably **sad**, wise, and elegant novel' Nick Hornby, *The Believer*.
>
> <div align="right">[emphasis added]</div>

Of these comments, two mention 'sad' or 'sadness', and one mentions 'it breaks the heart'. 'Deeply moving' could be negative or positive. Judging from these comments, overall, the readers of *Stoner* feel that it is a sad story. Does the narrator or the protagonist express sadness in this work of fiction?

2) Is *Stoner* a sad story?

  On the back cover, however, the following passage is also found:

> Yet with truthfulness … *Stoner* tells of the conflicts, defeats and victories of the human race that pass unrecorded by history, and reclaims the significance of an individual life.

Therefore, the novel mentions not only defeats but also 'victories'. Moreover, one of the comments quoted above, 'A beautiful novel…a marvelous discovery for everyone who loves literature' suggests that this is not simply a 'sad' story.

6. Analyses

Stoner and its readers' comments will be analysed quantitatively and qualitatively using corpus analysis tools such as Wmatrix (Rayson, 2008), AntConc (Anthony, 2014), and Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff, 2014).

6.1 Data collection

Readers' data, *Stoner*_Goodreads, was collected from the *Goodreads* website. The comments in the first 10 pages, which are retrievable, were collected on 26th March, 2017. The quotations from the work were deleted, unless they were part of the readers' sentences and difficult to separate. The comments in languages other than English were also excluded. The text data of *Stoner* was prepared through scanning and character recognition.

6.2 Semantic Analysis

In my previous and present studies, I used Wmatrix, a software tool for corpus analysis and comparison.[3] Wmatrix semantically tags texts using USAS Tagset[4], which comprises 21 major discourse fields, from A (general and abstract terms) to Z (name and grammar), and their subdivisions. This study put focuses on one of its major discourse fields, E (emotion).

6.2.1 *Stoner*_Goodreads and British National Corpus (BNC) Sampler Written

Table 1 shows the results of the comparison of emotional categories in *Stoner*_Goodreads and the BNC SW (Sampler Written) corpus[5]. Compared with the normative corpus, many items in emotional categories are overused in *Stoner*_Goodreads data. 'Sad' is statistically the most significant emotional field.

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[3]　See Wmatrix website for more detail: http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/wmatrix/. 'It provides a web interface to the English USAS and CLAWS corpus annotation tools, and standard corpus linguistic methodologies such as frequency lists and concordances. It also extends the keywords method to key grammatical categories and key semantic domains'.
[4]　USAS Home Page (http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/usas/)
[5]　BNC Sampler written: 968,267 words from BNC Sampler written corpus.

Table 1 *Stoner*_Goodreads and BNC Sampler Written[6]

	Stoner_Gr		BNC SW					
Tag	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.1-	343	0.46	979	0.10	+	440.80	354.51	Sad
E2+	267	0.36	1372	0.14	+	155.06	152.46	Like
E1	102	0.14	373	0.04	+	99.21	254.75	Emotional Actions, States And Processes General
E4.2-	55	0.07	157	0.02	+	70.67	354.46	Discontent
E4.1+	188	0.25	1370	0.14	+	47.54	78.02	Happy
E5+	37	0.05	134	0.01	+	36.43	258.20	Bravery
E4.2+	61	0.08	352	0.04	+	28.16	124.81	Content
E2++	7	0.01	384	0.04	-	23.76	-76.35	Like
E6+	40	0.05	245	0.03	+	16.16	111.80	Confident
E1-	10	0.01	24	0.00	+	15.11	440.53	Unemotional
E2-	59	0.08	453	0.05	+	12.56	68.96	Dislike
E2+++	16	0.02	74	0.01	+	11.14	180.49	Like
E3-	168	0.23	1647	0.17	+	11.09	32.33	Violent/Angry

6.2.2 *Stoner* and BNC Sampler Written

Table 2 shows the results of a comparison of the work itself and the BNC Sampler Written corpus.

Table 2 *Stoner* and BNC Sampler Written

	Stoner		BNC SW					
Tag	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.1+	309	0.37	1370	0.14	+	185.14	158.71	Happy
E3+	130	0.15	623	0.06	+	67.38	139.35	Calm
E4.1-	150	0.18	979	0.10	+	36.01	75.74	Sad
E1-	11	0.01	24	0.00	+	15.95	425.72	Unemotional

Surprisingly, in *Stoner*, E4.1 (Happy) is the most overused emotional category, when compared with the BNC Sampler Written corpus. The words belonging to this semantic subfield are listed in Table 3.

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6 Only statistically significant tags are listed in Table 1 and in the following tables.

Table 3 Examples of the words in E4.1+ (Happy) in *Stoner*

Rank	Word	Freq.	Rank	Word	Freq.	Rank	Word	Freq.
1	smiled	59	10	laugh	9	19	grin	3
2	smile	43	11	relief	7	20	gaiety	3
3	laughed	36	12	cheerful	7	21	jokes	3
4	smiling	17	13	joke	5	22	celebration	3
5	happy	16	14	humor	4	23	smiles	3
6	laughter	15	15	happiness	4	24	funny	2
7	laughing	12	16	delight	4	25	amusing	2
8	grinned	10	17	cheerfully	3	26	gaily	2
9	joy	9	18	amused	3	27	happily	2

Both 'smile' and 'laugh', and their derivatives frequently occur. Using the 'Sketch Difference'[7] feature of Sketch Engine, 'smile' and 'laugh' are compared to examine how and in what context these words are used. Looking at the subjects of these two words, Stoner smiles nine times and laughs twice, while his friend Finch, who is more successful in life than Stoner, smiles once and laughs eight times.

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[7] 'Sketch Difference: Word Sketch Difference is an extension of Sketch Engine's hallmark feature. It generates Word Sketches for two words and compares them making it a breeze to observe differences in use. The feature is especially useful for close synonyms and also antonyms'. (https://www.sketchengine.co.uk/quick-start-guide/word-sketch-difference-lesson-2/)

Sketch Engine — JW_ST

smile/laugh (verb) Alternative PoS: noun (freq: 37) JW_ST freqs = 85 | 55

smile 6.0 4.0 2.0 0 -2.0 -4.0 -6.0 laugh

Menu: Home, Search, Word list, Word sketch, Thesaurus, Sketch diff, Corpus info, Manage corpus, My jobs, User guide, Change options, Menu position

"%w" and/or ...	12	12	0.14	0.22
chat	2	0	12.1	--
bob	1	0	11.3	--
tell	1	0	11.3	--
lean	1	0	11.2	--
go	1	0	10.7	--
hold	1	1	11.0	11.0
nod	1	1	9.7	9.7
say	2	3	10.5	11.1
shake	2	3	11.7	12.3
get	0	1	--	10.9
talk	0	1	--	11.1
shout	0	1	--	11.3
ridicule	0	1	--	11.3

objects of "%w"	2	1	0.02	0.02
smile	1	0	10.7	--
face	1	0	9.6	--
deal	0	1	--	11.7

subjects of "%w"	23	18	0.27	0.33
master	1	0	10.2	--
gordon	1	0	10.0	--
lip	1	0	9.9	--
grace	2	0	9.7	--
masters	1	0	9.6	--
mother	1	0	9.5	--
face	2	0	9.5	--
walker	2	0	9.2	--
stoner	9	2	8.9	6.8
lomax	1	1	7.8	7.9
edith	1	3	7.2	8.8
finch	1	8	7.5	10.5
william	0	1	--	8.4
katherine	0	1	--	9.5
someone	0	1	--	9.9
world	0	1	--	10.5

particles after "%w"	1	1	0.01	0.02
down	1	0	9.8	--
out	0	1	--	8.1

pronominal subjects of "%w"	33	19	0.39	0.35
themselves	1	0	9.7	--
her	1	0	9.2	--
he	18	7	7.7	6.4
she	12	7	8.8	8.1
they	1	4	6.2	8.2
them	0	1	--	9.0

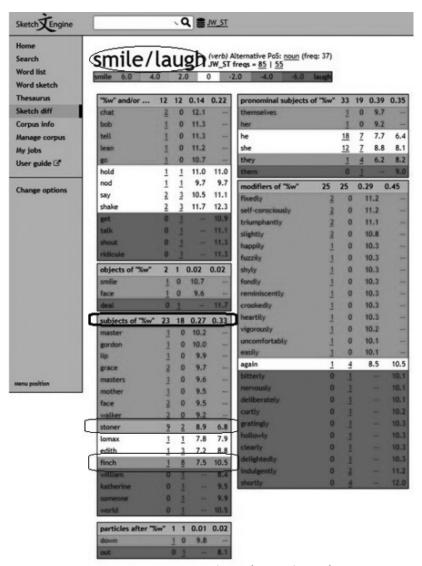| modifiers of "%w"	25	25	0.29	0.45
fixedly	2	0	11.2	--
self-consciously	2	0	11.2	--
triumphantly	2	0	11.1	--
slightly	2	0	10.8	--
happily	1	0	10.3	--
fuzzily	1	0	10.3	--
shyly	1	0	10.3	--
fondly	1	0	10.3	--
reminiscently	1	0	10.3	--
crookedly	1	0	10.3	--
heartily	1	0	10.3	--
vigorously	1	0	10.2	--
uncomfortably	1	0	10.1	--
easily	1	0	10.1	--
again	1	4	8.5	10.5
bitterly	0	1	--	10.1
nervously	0	1	--	10.1
deliberately	0	1	--	10.1
curtly	0	1	--	10.2
gratingly	0	1	--	10.3
hollowly	0	1	--	10.3
clearly	0	1	--	10.3
delightedly	0	1	--	10.3
indulgently	0	2	--	11.2
shortly	0	4	--	12.0

Figure 1. Sketch Difference of 'smile' and 'laugh' in *Stoner*.

6.2.3 *Stoner_*Goodreads and *Stoner*

When *Stoner_*Goodreads and *Stoner* are compared, the readers' comments clearly show more emotion than the work itself; in particular their comments are much sadder.

Table 4 *Stoner*_Goodreads and *Stoner*

Tag	*Stoner*_Gr Freq.	%	*Stoner* Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.1-	343	0.46	150	0.18	+	103.24	158.62	Sad
E2+	267	0.36	111	0.13	+	86.98	172.05	Like
E5+	37	0.05	6	0.01	+	28.84	597.44	Bravery
E1	102	0.14	47	0.06	+	28.12	145.45	Emotional Actions, States And Processes General
E4.2-	55	0.07	16	0.02	+	27.73	288.78	Discontent
E4.1+	188	0.25	309	0.37	-	16.74	-31.19	Happy
E3+	65	0.09	130	0.15	-	14.82	-43.45	Calm

6.2.4 *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads and BNC Sampler Written

As seen in the semantic analysis of *Stoner* and its readers' data, the readers seem more emotional than the author of or the characters in the novel. For comparison, *The Remains of the Day* and the data from its readers' reviews are also semantically analysed. Compared with the BNC Sampler Written corpus, like in *Stoner*_Goodreads data, in *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads data, words in many emotional fields are statistically overused. Again, 'sad' is the most significant semantic field.

Table 5 *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads and BNC Sampler Written

Tag	*The Remains of the Day*_Gr Freq.	%	BNC SW Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.1-	288	0.45	979	0.10	+	369.93	346.34	Sad
E1	177	0.28	373	0.04	+	341.85	619.98	Emotional Actions, States And Processes General
E2+	261	0.41	1372	0.14	+	193.00	188.63	Like
E2+++	29	0.05	74	0.01	+	48.43	494.60	Like
E4.2+	51	0.08	352	0.04	+	22.73	119.83	Content
E4.1+	138	0.22	1370	0.14	+	20.12	52.83	Happy
E4.2-	25	0.04	157	0.02	+	13.55	141.60	Discontent
E4.1---	4	0.01	5	0.00	+	10.54	1113.80	Sad

6.2.5 *The Remains of the Day* and BNC Sampler Written

Compared with the BNC Sampler Written corpus, like *Stoner*, several emotional categories are overused in *The Remains of the Day*.

Table 6 *The Remains of the Day* and BNC Sampler Written

	The Remains of the Day		BNC SW					
Tag	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.2+	81	0.11	352	0.04	+	66.66	212.18	Content
E4.1+	173	0.24	1370	0.14	+	38.76	71.31	Happy
E1	65	0.09	373	0.04	+	33.43	136.41	Emotional Actions, States And Processes General
E6-	114	0.16	961	0.10	+	20.38	60.93	Worry
E2++	8	0.01	384	0.04	-	19.38	-71.74	Like
E4.1-	113	0.16	979	0.10	+	18.11	56.59	Sad
E3-	81	0.11	1647	0.17	-	14.32	-33.28	Violent/Angry

6.2.6 *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads and *The Remains of the Day*

As in the case of *Stoner* and its readers, the readers of *The Remains of the Day* seem to be more emotional, in particular, much sadder, than Stevens, its protagonist.

Table 7 *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads and *The Remains of the Day*

	The Remains of the Day_Gr		The Remains of the Day					
Tag	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	+/-	LL	%DIFF	Field
E4.1-	288	0.45	113	0.16	+	99.84	185.04	Sad
E2+	261	0.41	114	0.16	+	76.82	156.05	Like
E1	177	0.28	65	0.09	+	67.15	204.55	Emotional Actions, States And Processes General
E2+++	29	0.05	0.00	0.00	+	43.54		Like

6.3 A closer look at 'sad'

As mentioned above, in the case of not only *Stoner*, but also with *The Remains of the Day,* their readers seem to feel sad when they read these stories. Using AntConc, a free corpus analysis toolkit, 'sad' and its derivatives are closely examined in *Stoner* and its readers' data.

6.3.1 Sad* in *Stoner*_Goodreads

'Sad' and its derivatives appear in the readers' data 65 times: sad (31), sadness (21), sadly (8), saddest (3), saddo (1), saditude (1). (see details in Appendix). The concordance lines of 'sad' are shown below. The word 'sad' is mainly used as a modifier of 'life' or 'story'. In some examples, it is used in negative contexts (lines 4 and 27, for example). Overall, it is clear that many readers consider this is a sad story.

Figure 2. Concordance lines of 'sad' in *Stoner*_Goodreads data.

6.3.2 Sad* in *Stoner*

On the contrary, in *Stoner*, 'sad' appears only once (line 18). Most instances related to 'sad'* appear as 'sadness' (15). A more detailed analysis is needed but in 'The old sadness came over him' (line 1) or 'a small, not unpleasant sadness briefly caught at his throat', the expression of 'sadness' seems to be a little detached from the protagonist.

Figure 3. Concordance lines of 'sad'* in *Stoner*.

6.4 Kinds of sadness as per the reasons behind them

People feel sad for various reasons and hence, there could be several kinds of sadness. Julian Burns (The Guardian, 2013) explains this as follows:

> The sadness of *Stoner* is of its own particular kind. It is not, say, the operatic sadness of *The Good Soldier*, or the grindingly sociological sadness of *New Grub Street*. It feels a purer, less literary kind, closer to life's true sadness. As a reader, you can see it coming in the way you can often see life's sadness coming, knowing there is little you can do about it.

Another feature of Sketch Engine, 'Thesaurus', seems to be helpful for a more qualitative analysis although it can be used effectively when the corpus is large enough[8]. In the Goodreads data from both *Stoner* and *The Remains of the Day*, the most statistically significant emotional field is 'sad'; in particular, the word 'sad' itself is used most frequently. However, as 'sad' may have various shades, the 'thesaurus' could highlight

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[8] Thesaurus: 'Unlike classic hand-made thesauruses with limited coverage, the thesaurus in Sketch Engine is automatically generated by ingenious algorithms analysing multi-billion text corpora which means a thesaurus can be generated for almost any word in the language (provided the corpus is large enough)'. (https://www.sketchengine.co.uk/quick-start-guide/thesaurus/)

the different aspects of 'sad' in various literary works and their readers' reviews.

Figure 4. The thesaurus of 'sad' in *Stoner*_Goodreads data.

Figure 5. The thesaurus of 'sad' in *The Remains of the Day*_Goodreads data.

Each thesaurus indicates completely different words as being similar to the word 'sad'. In the readers' data from *Stoner*, 'perfect, simple, brilliant' are found, and in that of *The Remains of the Day*', 'different, funny, much, wonderful'. Although more detailed examination is necessary to interpret these differences, 'simple' in *Stoner* and 'funny' in *The Remains of the Day*, for example, seem to explain some aspects of sadness in each story.

7. Discussion

In section 5, two research questions were presented and in section 6, concentrating on the aspect of 'emotion', semantic analyses were carried out, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

7.1 First research question: Do the emotions expressed in *Stoner* correspond to those felt by its readers?

According to the results of analyses from the previous section, the answer to this question seems negative. When compared with the normative corpus, statistically, the most significant emotional field in *Stoner*_Goodreads data is 'Sad', while in *Stoner*, it is 'Happy'. A direct comparison of the readers' data and the novel shows that the readers express much more 'sadness' than the narrator or the characters in the story.

7.2 Second research question: Is *Stoner* a sad story?

Considering its readers' comments, the answer is clearly affirmative. However, the author, John Williams, thought differently. Julian Barnes introduced the words of John Williams as follows:

> Though he is allowed small victories towards the end of the novel, they are pyrrhic ones. The pains of lost and thwarted love have tested Stoner's reserves of stoicism to the full; and you might well conclude that his life must be accounted pretty much a failure. But, if so, you would not have Williams on your side. In one of his rare interviews, he commented of his protagonist: "I think he's a real hero. A lot of people who have read the novel think that Stoner had such a sad and bad life. I think he had a very good life. He had a better life than most people do, certainly. He was doing what he wanted to do, he had some feeling for what he was doing, he had some sense of the importance of the job he was doing … The important thing in the novel to me is Stoner's sense of a job … a job in the good and honourable sense of the word. His job gave him a particular kind of identity and made him what he was."

Writers often disagree with readers about the emphasis of their work. Even so,

it's a surprise that Williams seems surprised that others might find Stoner's life "sad".

(Barnes, 2013)

In fact, in *Stoner*_Goodreads data, 10 people quoted the following passage:

The love of literature, of language, of the mystery of the mind and heart showing themselves in the minute, strange, and unexpected combinations of letters and words, in the blackest and coldest print - the love which he had hidden as if it were illicit and dangerous, he began to display, tentatively at first, and then boldly, and then proudly.

(Williams & McGahern, 2003, p. 115)

Many readers may have shared this love of literature and language, thinking that Stoner was lucky, because he found this love and he was unbending, and had been true to his beliefs until the end. In that case, why do so many people consider it a sad story?

7.3 'My Grandfather's clock' and *The Emotional Brain*

This story and its readers' responses seems to have something in common with 'My Grandfather's clock', an old American popular song. This could be a song of a happy man who had 'a blooming and beautiful bride' and lived to be 90 and passed away peacefully surrounded by his family. However, in the YouTube comments[9], many people claim this to be a sad song. Some of them connected this song with the memory of their own grandfather or some other loved ones.

LeDoux (1996, p. 209) explains, 'we remember best (or better) those things that are important to us – those things that elicit emotions in us'. This song might remind the listeners of their past experiences and emotions. LeDoux also states that 'an emotion is a subjective experience' (p. 267). Hence some people feel sad when listening to 'My Grandfather's clock' and some people do not. The same thing could be said about *Stoner*. Many readers feel sad because they have connected their own experiences and memories with Stoner's failures, disappointment and his final battle in which he suc-

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[9] My Grandfather's Clock: YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZrJZLs5zUtU) retrieved on 2017/06/19.

cumbs to cancer.

8. Conclusion

This study, focusing on emotion, semantically analysed and compared *Stoner* and its readers' reviews and found that the emotions depicted in the novel do not necessarily correspond to the ones felt by its readers. The result of analyses showed that the most statistically significant emotion according to the readers' data is 'sad', while in the novel it is 'happy'. As many reviewers and readers consider this is a sad story, *Stoner* could be said to be a 'sad' story although the author himself disagrees.

If so, how does the story develop 'sadness' in the reader's mind? As Hogan (2011) pointed out that 'the structure of stories and even the definition of the constituents of stories are inseparable from passion' (p. 1), it is probably because of the structure of the story, which contains a series of disappointments, failures and losses of the protagonist. These unhappy events could constitute what Eliot (1928) called 'objective correlatives' of 'sad' feelings, in the following lines;

> The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative"; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked. (p. 100)

The formula, however, cannot be something rigid. It is impossible that the same formula always evokes the exact same emotion. Considering that 'an emotion is a subjective experience' (LeDoux, 1996, p. 267), the same objects, situations and events would sometimes elicit different emotions from different readers. Not only events and situations but also a subtle use of language also could constitute a yarn of emotional fabric. For example, 'Stoner smiles, while Finch laughs' (Figure 1), or 'sadness' instead of 'sad' (Figure 3) are inconspicuous but delicate, firm yarns woven into the readers' emotional fabric. There must surely be many other yarns to be unravelled in future studies.

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Appendix

Sad* in *Stoner*_Goodreads

Concordance Results 1:

Concordance Hits 65

Hit	KWIC		File
1	of misery. All in all, it's a	sad life: it's his life. However, through all	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 1
2	, never bearing a grudge, trying his best. So	sad, and yet curiously inspirational. TIMEAND PLA	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 2
3	rice that manifests itself in different ways; the	saddest outcome is for Grace, Stoner's daughter. W	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 3
4	use and manipulation of children is ghastly - but	sadly credible. Edith is a victim who inflicts eve	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 4
5	ut from memory and consciousness easily. There is	sadness here - boundless in depth and overwhelming	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 5
6	, mine as well. The US does not have	sadness on its agenda. Its psyche is a constant	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 6
7	of the American people been forced to view	sadness as something other than an error to be	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 7
8	something other than an error to be fixed.	Sadness is the result of tragedy, grief, a lightni	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 8
9	century later you're still lying. You think	sadness is a pitfall, an abnormality, a mistake th	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 9
10	you can. Likewise, you believe you know what	sadness is, hold true that all its cures lie	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 10
11	his creations, and cares deeply for every one.	Sad, is it not? When the usual panderings at	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 11
12	with another woman. But there was also great	sadness and frustration in Stoner's life. His marr	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 12
13	the same. I didn't find this as	sad or sorrowful as it's often said to	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 13
14	toner is born, grows up, has several experiences,	sad and joyous alike ? and dies. This could be	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 14
15	through your book, I feel a sense of	sadness but also joy. I often wonder if your	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 15
16	. And yet, while the book contains an immense	sadness, it isn't depressing. As a friend pointed	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 16
17	and full of so much feeling. ?There is	sadness but it is written so gracefully that it	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 17
18	Barnes, who calls it "one of those purely	sad, sadly pure novels that deserves to be redisco	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 18
19	, who calls it "one of those purely sad,	sadly pure novels that deserves to be rediscovered	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 19
20	pays for his academic beliefs. I found that	sad. Now that I have gotten all of my	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 20
21	remarkable book. It is quiet, deeply moving and	sad, but completely absorbing. If you love liter	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 21
22	library to seal his fate . As I said ,	sadly this didn't work for me . This book	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 22
23	xt 40 plus years. Williams presents a portrait of	sad or sorry for him. We're supposed to	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 23
24	his predicament. Instead, we're supposed to feel	sad or sorry for him. We're supposed to	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 24
25	fortable to read. Delicate and passionate, deeply	sad but with an underlying love for life. Stoner	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 25
26	past few days, it is with a certain	sadness that I gaze upon the closed covers of	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 26
27	Stoner responds, we can try. I was somewhat	sad when I finished this book, not only because	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 27
28	love and loss, pain and joy, happiness and	sadness, tragedy and fortune, the same as every li	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 28
29	more or less cautioned that this is a	sad story about a forgettable and unremarkable pro	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 29
30	had been able or willing to communicate , but	sadly it is not to be and on he	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 30
31	life that Williams says Stoner led is rather	sad and noxious in many ways. This novel made	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 31
32	an amalgamation of Grapes of Wrath, Edge of	Sadness and Revolutionary Road but stands on its o	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 32
33	if not the Memorial Union. This is a	sad little story that covers so much ground. It	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 33
34	and rigid, their honeymoon is cringe-worthy and	sad ? Stoner attempts to make things better by get	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 34
35	reading this chapter I was laughing at unbearable	sadness. Of course! More death, more melancholy! I	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 35
36	's conniving nemesis, as they come to the	sad conclusion that "..we are of the world after	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 36
37	r when I eventually reread it. A brilliantly	sad and cruelly honest story! Ordinarily I av	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 37
38	coat of remorse. In context, this is the	saddest, hardest truth of being. Stoner is marvel	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 38
39	, then promptly watch him die. It's indescribably	sad, but I relish it, and find a warped	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 39
40	. He turns his back on his farm - with	sadness for his parents and their painful disappoi	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 40
41	parents or his enemies. It's all just	sad. But it's told in a way that	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 41
42	recommend Stoner to everyone. I'm a little	sad that I'm finished, but at some point	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 42
43	and depressing with some exceptions and you feel	sad for the characters. But it is certainly a	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 43
44	stop after every thirty pages or so, before	sadness ate my soul whole. My sadness, I soon	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 44
45	so, before sadness ate my soul whole. My	sadness, I soon realized, had however that cathart	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 45
46	psyche". How am I overcome the deluge of	sadness this book has wrought upon me? Terrific a	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 46
47	quagmire of low-level academe. I see myself,	sadly, as Stoneresque: unremarkable, wishing for s	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 47
48	professional and personal disappointment, is both	sad and noble. Quiet meditative read, very sati	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 48
49	to define this book the words would be	sadness,loneliness ,integrity and melancholy;is on	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 49
50	,integrity and melancholy;is one of the most	sad books i have read ,with a hearbreaking end.	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 50
51	's because the American public in general (and	sadly true-to-form) does not take kindly to	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 51
52	it's a really fascinating portrayal of a	sad professor's life. Which is truly a feat,	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 52
53	is death. Ultimately people failed him. Poignant,	sad, but ultimately normal. Life is what it is.	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 53
54	the novel think that Stoner had such a	sad and bad life. I think he had a	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 54
55	course might be seen by some as a	sad story, but I see a beauty in Stoner'	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 55
56	parents farming. Though Stoner is one of the	saddest, most tragic novels I have read, it reveal	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 56
57	me. Reading Stoner,I was in turn desperately	sad, impotently angry, utterly despondent and then	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 57
58	the world in which Stoner works. A beautiful,	sad, tender account of the still moments that we	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 58
59	(tautologically) pathetic. Its hard to make your	saddo likeable, and to make your story little more	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 59
60	to all this Remains of the Day-esque	saditude is the early-to-mid 20thC world of	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 60
61	the pages. Everyone loves a good wallow in	sadness, and Williams tries to give us what we	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 61
62	life, to try and build up reservoir of	sad in me, then the last few pages, meant	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 62
63	me dissolve into weepy tears or strike me	sadly or well, do much anything to me. This	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 63
64	s engaging those blasted Frenchies. (As an aside,	sadly the "Greatest Novel you'll never read" schti	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 64
65	are parts of the book that made me	sad, made me feel for the character and so	Stoner_gr (text).txt 0 65