

Literary Linguistics Analysis of Yun He's "Snow"

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Abstract: Stylistics is the author's linguistic study of the choice of words within a text for the reflection of authorial intent. Due to its widespread application, the aim of this research project was to stylistically analyze the poem "Snow" written by Yun He. He managed to shake off the older style and depicted the poignant aspects of life with a sophisticated set of skill in his poem. At the same time, he is also a poet with a clear self-consciousness and emphasizes the originality of the poem style. The findings revealed that "Snow" is a prose poem, which presents the author's homesickness and his unfailing seeking for identity in a natural way. This analysis helps the reader to understand the theme of the poem that the snow represents his strong love for his beloved country and his unceasing effort to seek for belongings. The poem is symbolic, with simple diction but deep thoughts. Various stylistic devices like symbolism, hyperbole and lexicon cohesion are used in this ten-line stanza poem. Although the poem is short, it contains deeper connotations.

KeyWords: Stylistic analysis, Symbolism, Yun He, Snow

Research Questions:

How the stylistic analysis will work in "Snow"?

How to analyze the poem "snow" at phonological level and semantic level?

Objectives:

To make readers know the stylistic features of "Snow".

To make readers clear about the application of stylistics devices.

To make readers able to trace the stylistic devices used by the author.

Introduction:

Stylistics is the branch of linguistics which deals with different styles, writings, books at different levels. Stylistics is dependent on literary criticism and linguistics but has no independent branch of its own. Since evolution, man needed a mode of communication in order to express his/her emotions and inner thoughts to one another. This desire to communicate and converse encouraged man to establish a method, either written or spoken, consisting of words in a structured and conventional way. The system of words and signs which man used to communicate and express his/her thoughts and feelings to one another is known as language. The poem "snow" is symbolic; the diction is simple but thought-provoking.

Introduction of the poem:

The poem "Snow" is just like a prose. It has free style in form, which is quite different from the traditional poems. The language is pretty much easy to understand but delivers a pivotal message. The information revealed through the poem is directly related to homesickness and patriotism, however, it is not directly conveyed but through a question "why with such stubbornness I love the motherland's bitter cold?" The thought-provoking question together with the image of "envelope", "letter" and direct speech "Yet one years to see a fatherland's glacial white snow" all revealed the poet's passionate love for his hometown and his country.

The theme of the poem is also crystal clear. Why the author choose snow not the other things to convey his thoughts and emotions deserves good thinking.

Introduction of the poet:

Yun He was the pseudonym of James Teng Choon Na who was born and educated in the Philippines. He belongs to the generation of poets who write with a consciousness of one's position as Chinese-Filipino. He is an excellent poet with outstanding language aptitude, conscious of poem style and strong modern awareness. Exploring techniques ranging from lyricism, to aestheticism, to contemporary, he was impressive with his ever-dynamic style. He managed to shake off the older style and depict the poignant aspects of life with a sophisticated set of skill in his then articles. His poetry confronts the loss of an imagined homeland. He is good at using metaphor to communicate sadness of overseas Chinese.

Methodology:

This section will provide the stylistic analysis of "Snow". Stylistics analysis involves six basic levels i.e. Grammatical level,

Phonological level, Lexical level, Semantic level, Morphological level, and Graphological level. But here, we are going to analyze at phonological and semantic level. Phonology is the branch of linguistics that deals with the organization of the sounds in language. It specifically emphasizes on the phonemes (single unit of sound) in language. Phonological level analyses that how and when the sound can be combined in a poem. Phonological features are presented in the form of consonance in “Snow”—the repetition of consonant sounds. This repetition is not limited to initial consonant sounds. In line one, three and four, letter T is a consonance.

I regret it completely melts when slipped into an envelope
Yet one yearns to see

Send what you haven't seen in all your life

Another phonological feature is assonance: the repetition of similar vowel sounds followed by different consonant sounds in words that are close together.

I regret it completely melts when slipped into an envelope
Seems I can **only wish**, not possibly

Send what you **haven't seen in all your life**,
why

With such stubbornness I love

The motherland's **bitter** cold?

One prominent figure of speech used here is pun, which means a play on the multiple meanings of a word, or two different words that sound alike but have different meanings. In the last line of the poem, bitter not only means a chilly cold literally but also indicate a distressed author's mental state of mind. Moreover, we can touch the deliberate mixing of the senses from the physical feeling to mental thoughts.

The motherland's **bitter** cold?

Stylistics Devices:

There are many stylistics devices present in a poem, understatement is used at the start of the poem. An envelope emerges as if there is a conversation between the author himself and a far-away close friend or relative. He deliberately represents snow as less important than it really is. Actually, the snow is meaningful. Since snow is typical and common in China but not possibly to see in Philippines, the choice of snow represents the author's purpose and intention. It conceals the author's special love for his beloved country. The hopeless act of 'mailing' snowflakes, or the sheer foolishness of it, does not deter the poet from enacting a figurative performance. This is his mode of unleashing the depth of his sorrow and the strength of his desire. Next stylistic device is symbolism. Snow is a symbol of the author's pure and innocent love and 'envelope' 'letter' is a symbol of devoted connection to his motherland. 'glacial white snow' symbolizes his bitterness of missing the place where he rooted and come from.

The entire poem “Snow” is short, condensed, polished, pointed phrases that ending in surprising or evocative turns of thought. The end of the poem is a thought-provoking question, which arouse our medication. But the author knows the answer well and there is no anticipation of solutions.

Why

With such stubbornness I love

The motherland's bitter cold?

As we have seen, literary texts are particularly likely to exhibit cohesion at levels beyond the basic logic of the sentence, cohesion among content morphemes is especially important. In

this poem, the 'snow', 'melt', 'glacial white snow' and 'bitter cold' these content morphemes are all associated in the text through shared semantic features. Snow is a symbolic of the author's love for his motherland. It arouses us a sense of empathy and compassionate feeling towards overseas Chinese. 'Envelope' and 'letter' indicate far-away gloomy and sadness. Lexical cohesion is also created by repeated use of content words whose semantic description involves our country: “fatherland” and “motherland”. The poem begins with regret and ends with the bitter cold. In the opening stanza we find a concentration of terms with depressed mood. The whole poem uses two paragraphs to present the author's deep sorrow.

Yet one yearns to see

A fatherland's glacial white snow

Why

With such stubbornness I love

The motherland's bitter cold?

Lexicon can often reveal sources of cohesion that we might not otherwise notice and can help us discover the recurrent themes and images of a text. Sometimes, however, this approach may seem singularly unrevealing. In any discourse, lexical choice is intimately associated with, and partly limited by, choice of subject matter. Lexical choices which result most directly from choice of subject matter are likely to be the least striking stylistically. What is of more basic interest in “Snow,” then, is the choice of subject matter itself, rather than the vocabulary associated with it. The tone of the poem is very simple and casual, but the underlying message is very serious.

Conclusion:

The poem “Snow” is different from the traditional poems in form and style. However, it contains deep meanings under various figures of speech. Sentiments are evoked in the poem “snow” because of its imagery. A feeling of sadness and loss lingers in mind. Besides its free and new style, the underlying profound message needs to be noted. The poem set a good example of Chinese-Filipino poets with a heart for home. The choice of words plays a significant role in building the inner concept of poem. At the end of the poem the author leaves readers a thought-provoking question, which strongly arouses our compassion as a native Chinese speaker.

References:

- [1] Geoffrey N. Leech A linguistic Guide to English Poetry Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2000. <http://www.poetrysky.com/quarterly/quarterly-7-yunhe.html>.

Appendix:

Snow

I regret it completely melts when slipped into an envelope

Seems I can only wish, not possibly

Send what you haven't seen in all your life

Yet one yearns to see

A fatherland's glacial white snow

After I read your letter, the sun

With a knowing gaze

Reads me and wonders, why

With such stubbornness I love

The motherland's bitter cold?

(Yun He: 2002)