

侯维瑞 编

LITERARY
STYLISTICS

文学文体学

 上海外语教育出版社
外教社 SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

LITERARY SYMBOLS

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文学文体学

图书在版编目(CIP)数据

文学文体学 / 侯维瑞编. —上海:上海外语教育出版社, 2008
ISBN 978-7-81095-988-9

I. 文… II 侯… III 文学-英语-文体论
IV. H315

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字(2006)第 009095 号

出版发行: 上海外语教育出版社

(上海外国语大学内) 邮编: 200083

电 话: 021-65425300 (总机)

电子邮箱 bookinfo@sflep.com.cn

网 址 <http://www.sflep.com.cn> <http://www.sflep.com>

责任编辑: 张春明

印 刷: 上海信老印刷厂

经 销: 新华书店上海发行所

开 本: 850×1168 1/32 印张 10.25 字数 283千字

版 次: 2008年9月第1版 2008年9月第1次印刷

印 数: 3 100 册

书 号: ISBN 978-7-81095-988-9 / H · 384

定 价: 26.00 元

本版图书如有印装质量问题,可向本社调换

整理出版说明

20世纪语言学的发展极大地促进了文学研究的发展,文学批评家们开始发现,文本的文体特征对文学研究与文学批评具有极其重要的价值。在国外的英语文学研究界,较早地把文体学的研究成果应用于文学研究,并通过对文学文本的语言信息来阐释和评论文学文本的,当属 L. Spitzer 的著作 *Linguistics and Literary History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948) 和 M. A. K. Halliday 的论文“Descriptive Linguistics in Literary Studies”(载 *English Studies Today*, 1964)。^[1] 在国内的英语文学研究界,侯维瑞先生较早地进行了这方面的探索与研究。1981年起,他在上海外国语学院英语系独立开设了“文学作品语言风格研究”的课程,这在国内外语院系中当属开拓之举。1984年,他在资料匮乏的情况下,独立编写了校内使用的油印教材《英语文学作品语言风格》。同年,他参加了香港中文大学举办的“应用语言学国际研讨会”,并提交论文“Linguistic Analysis and Literary Appreciation: A Linguistic Approach to Literature”。在此后的十余年中,他陆续在《外国语》、《外语教学与研究》等刊物上发表了数十篇相关学术论文。1996年,他根据多年的教学经验和研究成果,在《英语文学作品语言风格》的基础上编写了油印教材《文学文体学》,作为上海外国语大学英语学院研究生的教材。1997年,他还应邀参加在悉尼大学举办的“泛太平洋跨文化美学国际研讨会”,并提交了论文“Bamboo or Mushroom: Imagery in Poetry and Its Translation”。

现在出版的这本著作就是以1996年的油印教材为蓝本的,个别地方作了一些细微的调整,同时还附上了三篇他公开发表过的学术论文。本著作中的大部分内容是他本人的研究成果,其中不少章节

[1] 参见: Michael T. *The Stylistics of Fiction: A Literary Linguistic Approach*. London & New York: Routledge, 1990: 14.

曾以论文的形式发表过,具有很大的原创性与前瞻性。我们原本想将署名方式从油印教材上的“侯维瑞编”改成“侯维瑞编著”,但考虑到本书引用了大量的文学作品,而且第二部分有2节主要以编选为主,因此我们还是保留了原来的署名方式。

侯维瑞教授是我国英语研究界的一位著名学者。2001年春节前夕,病魔夺走了他58岁的生命,我们深感悲痛。他的去世不仅让我们失去了一位可敬可亲的好师长,而且也让英语研究界失去了一位勤奋执著的好学者。他走了,带着对家人、对朋友、对学生以及对这个世界的留恋走了;他走了,带着学术上心愿未了的无限遗憾走了。我们整理出版他的遗作《文学文体学》一书,以表达我们对他的追忆与思念,以及对他的学识的钦佩与景仰。但愿我们的努力能化作一柱缅怀与纪念的心香,永久地存留人间。

张和龙

Introduction

LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS AND LITERARY APPRECIATION: A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO LITERATURE

Literature-based Approach Re-evaluated

At a time when there is a considerable decline in the prestige of English literature study as part of foreign language teaching, Chinese higher education is now witnessing an increasing interest in foreign literature teaching in its language departments and institutes. Never has there been such a constant deluge of literary texts and such a continuing inflow of literature teachers from abroad. History of English Literature and History of American Literature have, in most English departments, become core courses at the third- and fourth-year levels, and many departments are now offering optional courses in English poetry, American poetry, modern drama, the Victorian novel, Romantic poetry, twentieth-century fiction and even courses in Canadian and Australian literature. Following this break-through in syllabus design, a fundamental change in teaching approach is also taking shape.

The approach which used to dominate the teaching of English literature in China can be summarized as a historical survey of English literature accompanied by selected readings from the major authors, or, if the emphasis inclines towards the reading skills, selected readings of the representative authors arranged in

a historical frame. The actual teaching process includes three basic steps: 1) a brief (but not always very brief) account of the author's life and other background information; 2) a summary of the author's major works and their significance, usually a highly social and historical evaluation of the works; and 3) reading of an extract as an illustration of the author's basic theme, with some explanations of textual difficulties. The approach is commendable in that it offers a sketch map and helps to clarify, although sometimes dogmatically, what can be a very confusing picture for Chinese students. This kind of literature-based approach has, however, its deficiencies. Its main concern is to stuff the students' head with background information and critical conclusions. The academic cycle of monologue-lecture, memorizing of lecture notes, formal examination on the given information and then forgetting most of it, if not all of it, marks the mode of literature study which was predominant in the past and is still influential at present. There is not enough exposure on the student's part to complete original texts, there is not enough detailed analysis of the linguistic form and stylistic effects. It is doubtful, therefore, whether this approach can efficiently help the student to develop his language sensitivity and linguistic skills on the basis of his own reading. "It has been correctly pointed out that all too often emphasis on literary knowledge disguises poor language attainments — 'the maxi-coat of literature hiding the mini-skirt of language.'"^[1]

[1] C.J. Brumfit, ed., *Teaching Literature Overseas* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983)1.

Linguistic Approach as a Supplement

Teaching English literature to foreign students has the dual purpose of language attainment and literary appreciation. It should help the student to improve his ability to comprehend the text as well as to develop his critical faculty. Above all, it should train the student to make his own interpretation on the basis of a fine analysis of the linguistic form instead of merely memorizing evaluations offered by critical authorities. This dual purpose can be best achieved by a language-based approach to literature. It can be recommended as a necessary supplement or accompaniment to go hand in hand with an improved literature-based approach.

The linguistic approach, also known as literary stylistics, has been in existence for nearly twenty years with its various modified applications. It is now beginning to make its influence felt in Chinese teaching of English literature. Some fairly substantial papers have been published in the leading journals of foreign language teaching and, as far as I know, there are teachers in both Beijing and Shanghai who are experimenting on this approach. It will not be long before these efforts bear fruit.

The linguistic approach to literature is an application of linguistic theory and methodology to literary texts. It establishes an intimate relationship between language study and literary appreciation. Pure linguistics aims to make fine analysis of the linguistic form of a text, often neglecting its aesthetic effect or artistic value. Traditional literary criticism concerns itself with social, moral or political evaluations of a literary work, often neglecting its linguistic form. The linguistic approach to literature is the meeting ground of linguistics and literary criticism. It is part of applied linguistics and a type of practical criticism. Its general process can be represented in the following cycle as suggested by Geoffrey N.

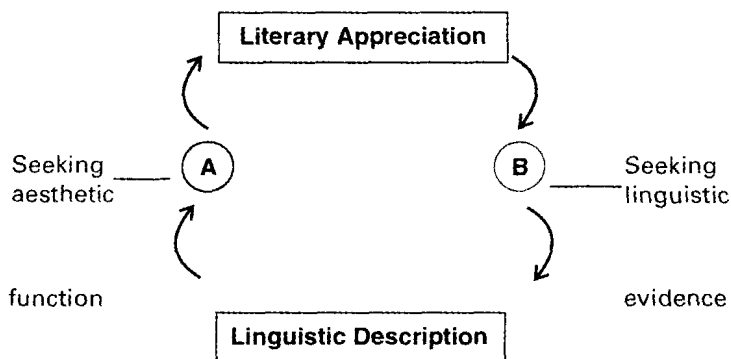
Leech: ^[1]

Figure 1

The aim of this approach is to explore the relationship between linguistic form and literary effects and it can be achieved either by the A process or the B process. This is to say, when we are conscious that a certain passage has a certain impact on the reader, our task is to discover by what linguistic means the author has achieved this effect (the B process). Or when we are aware of a recurrent linguistic pattern, our task is to find out what effect this pattern is to produce (the A process). The text is always the focus and the key to success is a close, sometimes ruthless study of lexical, syntactic, rhetorical and stylistic traits. The approach is not limited to just one resource. It draws on the theory and methodology of linguistics, grammar, rhetoric, stylistics, literary criticism and other areas. But, of course, linguistic analysis of language is not a panacea which can offer complete explanation of literary texts, but rather a useful tool that can provide some of

[1] See Geoffrey N. Leech & Michael H. Short, *Style in Fiction* (London: Longman, 1981) 14.

the things that the critic looks for to confirm his judgements. A marriage of linguistics and literature will benefit both language study and literary study.

Nature of Literary Language: the Central Issue

There can be different starting places in the pursuit of this approach. A natural starting point in the study of the language of literature is, in my opinion, the discussion of the nature of literary language. The language of literature is not a different language from the language of other genres, but the typical type of literary language functions in a different manner. Again a figure can be used to illustrate the point:

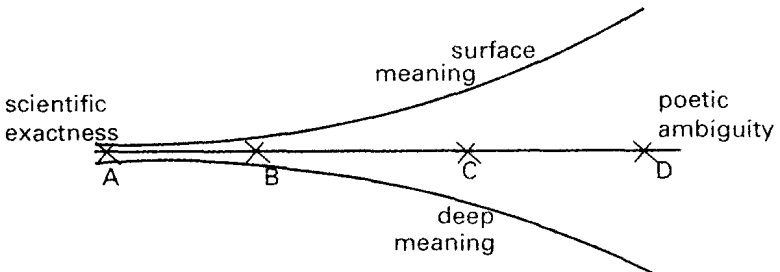


Figure 2

A fundamental feature of the language of literature is the divergence between what I term the surface meaning and deep meaning. We may place the language of different genres at different points on the spectrum. The divergence becomes greater as it moves to the right end. Towards the left extreme we may place a sentence such as the following taken from a science textbook:

- (1) Pure nitrogen gas is colourless, odourless and tasteless. It has slight solubility in water, has no action on litmus and does not turn lime water milky.

This description of the physical properties of nitrogen gas is objective, explicit and accurate. The surface meaning and deep meaning tend to merge into one level, leaving no room for ambiguity or different interpretations. Sharing the same quality is the language of law which also works towards exactness and extreme precision although it is almost incomprehensible to the layman. In comparison, the language of news reporting moves to the right, approaching the B point. It is basically factual and objective, but sometimes capable of double meanings. The language of literature may work differently. A divergence might be discerned between what is said and what is meant as in the opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* :

- (2) It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a large fortune must be in want of a wife.

In this instance of irony there are sufficient clues, tone of voice being one of them, suggesting that what the author intends is quite different from what catches the reader's ear. Lying beneath the open message is its secret antithesis. The sentence can be placed somewhere near the C point where different interpretations might be made possible through use of rhetorical or stylistic devices. In forms even more marked for their "literality", for example, in poetry, and especially in modernist poetry, the divergence is even greater and there might be multiple levels of meaning. Thus Ezra Pound's well-known modern classic is ambiguous and open to diverse interpretations:

(3)

In a Station of the Metro

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

At a pessimistic level the poem suggests the spectral aspect of the faces glimpsed in the unnatural gloom of an underground railway

station. But as a more optimistic vision, the poem implies that even in the worst and seemingly least probable circumstances beauty can still startle people with unusual force.^[1] What is the implication of the word “apparition”? What is the logical relationship between “faces” and “petals”? Even on the surface level, the language of literature may lose its lucidity, thus creating more chances for multiple interpretations. The divergence is so great that sentences of this type may be placed at the D point. As the reader wavers between diverse interpretations, he might see more and deeper layers of meanings. Within a self-contained literary context, lexical choice and syntactic arrangement may acquire special symbolic meanings. In this way, “The sea is calm tonight” (Matthew Arnold, “Dover Beach”), “so much depends upon a red wheel barrow” (William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”) ... may all have multiple levels of interpretation. In his “Literature as a Use of Language”, Professor H. G. Widdowson of London University suggests three modes of meaning of a literary text; denotative, referential and representational. Although different terminology and criteria are used for classification, there is agreement on the plurality of interpretation for the same text. The divergence between meanings on the explicit and implicit levels is the distinguishing feature of the language of literature.^[2] The examination of various linguistic devices which cre-

[1] See Alex Roger, “Language for Literature”, *Teaching Literature Overseas* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983)61.

[2] The complication here is that the language in literature is a complex of many different varieties of language use, literary or non-literary. It can embrace all the modifying degrees from A to D on the spectrum. In this paper the term “language of literature” is used in its narrow sense, referring to language of fairly high literary quality.

ate this divergence, the investigation of various aesthetic effects such a divergence might produce is, to my mind, the central issue of the study of literary language and style.

This is where a Chinese learner of English literature needs help. Growing up in a different cultural tradition and lacking in the intuitive grasp of the target language, a Chinese student finds it a most demanding and challenging task to discern and appreciate what is lying beneath the surface. The linguistic approach to literature can help him out where a literature-based approach might fail. Paradoxically the Chinese student has one advantage over his English counterpart. Through persistent training in grammar he is in a way more motivated and better equipped to cope with the detailed technicality of linguistic analysis and stylistic description.

An Experimental Example

Linguistic theory and methodology have offered much food for thought to Chinese teachers of English literature. In several Chinese universities and colleges experimentation has been under way with regard to course design and teaching methodology. The preparation of a textbook on stylistics by the English Department of Beijing Foreign Languages Institute is a significant demonstration of this growing effort. In my own institute, Shanghai Foreign Languages Institute, a course was started two years ago to try out some of the above-discussed ideas under the modest title of Language in Literature. Here, in a paper of this length, I can only offer the sketchiest account of it.

The course is divided into three parts. The first part is called "Aspects of Language in Literature," under which are grouped six seminars/lectures on sound and rhythm, syntax, register, irony,

image and evidence. Some theoretical considerations are set out in this part, on the basis of which literary texts are going to be studied. The second part, using a borrowed term, Explication of Text, is a small-scale application of some of the theories and methods discussed in the first part. Short passages are selected as specimens and students are shown how to make fine and systematic studies of the phonological, lexical, grammatical and stylistic features. In this respect, the most valuable models, I think, are offered by G. N. Leech and M. H. Short in the third chapter of their *Style in Fiction* and by Ronald Carter in his "Style and Interpretation in Hemingway's 'Cat in the Rain.'" The third part of the course, Studies of Authors and Their Works, carries on the study on a larger scale, taking a complete novel as an object for analysis. *Pride and Prejudice* is studied for its irony and dramatic syntax in both dialogue and the narrative language, and *The Catcher in the Rye* examined for its use of a social dialect and its function in terms of characterization.

The chief merit of the course is, in the students' own comment, that they are led, gradually and cumulatively, to discover for themselves what a text is about and what its impact is likely to be. They agree that reading literature in this way does in the long run sharpen their language sensitivity and improve their linguistic skill. There are problems to be solved, but the initial results have offered convincing evidence that this is a worthwhile course to pursue.

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