

◎ 山东省艺术科学重点课题阶段性成果

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诗歌语篇相似性的

文体功能研究

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诗歌语篇相似性的文体功能研究

A Study on the Stylistic Functions of Iconicity in Poetic Discourse

赵 卫 著



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前 言

文体学作为研究语言表达效果的学问古已有之，而运用现代语言学理论和方法进行研究又为文体学的发展提供了许多新的可能性。语言文体学是连接语言学与文学批评的桥梁，它旨在凭借现代语言学的理论和方法探索诗人如何通过对语言的选择来表达和加强主题意义和美学效果，以期改进某些语言学理论模式，使其在应用中日臻完善。

本研究以语言学和文体学为基础，以埃斯伯顿“形式是内容的模拟”理论为理论框架，通过对威廉·布莱克四首抒情短诗的详尽分析，充分论证了诗歌这一文学最高形式的形式和内容是如何完美地融合为一体的，并进而尝试提出了一个多层面分析诗歌形式与内容结合的语言学模式，来作为埃斯伯顿理论的一个有益的补充。

本书共分五章：

第一章简述诗歌的本质和对诗歌语言进行文体学研究的三个



代表人物,同时阐明了本研究的主旨所在。

第二章扼要综述了文体与文体学的基本理论。明确了文体学的定义、目标和步骤,列举了关于文体风格的各种范式,及其在诗歌各个层面的体现形式,展现了文体学所涵盖的丰富内容。

第三章对语言文体学的基本理论模式进行了条分缕析地爬梳,并分析其不同特征、优势及局限性。

第四章运用埃斯伯顿的“形式是内容的模拟”理论及其分析方法,结合诗歌的特点、本质,对威廉·布莱克的四首抒情短诗进行实例分析,并在此基础上对埃斯伯顿的理论作出尝试性的补充,提出了多层面的分析方法。本章着重论证了这样一个观点,即诗歌是形式和内容的完美结合,内容决定诗歌的形式,形式承载诗歌的内容。简言之,诗歌语篇的形式与内容具有相似性。

第五章是结论。

总之,本研究以语言文体学的宗旨为出发点,运用形式和内容合二为一的理论,对四首抒情短诗的语言形式与诗歌语篇主题相似性的文体功能进行了全面、细致的剖析,从而为诗歌的鉴赏分析作出了一些初步的尝试。另外,读者可以通过对诗歌语篇内容与形式的相似性解读,更深刻地理解布莱克的诗歌,对于文学及外语教学,以及提高英语及非英语专业大学生的英语能力均有着一定帮助。

赵 卫
2013年6月

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Chapter One Introduction

Literature can be specified as “language as art” (Halliday, 1978, p. 11), which is all too often treated as if it was something separated from and even opposed to language. In fact, the distinction between them is a perfectly meaningful one between two different emphases or orientations, one in which the center of attention is the literary study and the other focusing on the linguistic system. Literature can hardly be taken seriously without taking language seriously.

“Literature moves in language as a medium, but that medium comprises two layers, the latent content of language—our intuitive record of experience and the particular conformation of a given language—the specific how of our record of experience”



(Sapir, 1949, p. 223).

As the highest form of literature, poetry lies at the very center of the literary experience because it is the form that most clearly asserts the specificity of literature. Briefly speaking, a poem is an aesthetic object composed of language, which comprises at least the cognitive and aesthetic dimension of language. The relationship of language with poetry can be compared to that between fire and furnace. It is the heat-giving characteristic of fire that makes it be utilized for cooking and ceramics. The understanding and critical analysis of a furnace would perhaps be incomplete without an awareness of the nature of fire. Ted Hughes has succinctly described a poem thus below:

An assembly of living parts is moved by a single spirit. The living parts are the words, the images, the rhythms. The spirit is the life which inhabits them when they all work together. It is impossible to say which comes first, parts or spirit.

(Hughes, 1967, p. 18)

The living parts in this remark correspond with the two fundamental stylistic elements of poetry-figurative expression, using, for example, metaphor and metonymy, and schemes of



formal organization such as parallelism, meter, rhyme, and alliteration whereas the spirit is indicative of the content poems convey. The mutual relationships of the two components constitute the texture of poetry, a dynamic texture including both convergence and divergence and one that constitutes an indissociable artistic whole, since either of them has its value in terms of its relation to the totality.

The specification of this dynamic system can be undertaken in the domain of stylistics, “a meeting-ground of linguistics and literary study” (Leech, 1969, p. 11). As regards the stylistic study of poetic language, we cannot ignore the major contributions made by three influential figures, that is, Russian formalist Viktor Sklovskij, the Prague scholar Jan Mukarovsky, Roman Jakobson. The function of art, in Viktor Sklovskij’s view, is to make people aware of the world from a fresh perspective. The device whereby this is achieved is defamiliarization, or “making strange”. Sklovskij’s theory of literature is a functional one. The task of the poet is to divert the routine of the reader’s expectation to clichés, stock responses and automatised perception, by cutting the familiar objects and events out of their habitual context, and delineating them as if they were



seen for the first time, hence bringing forth a heightened awareness of the world. Thus Sklovskij opposes automatization to perceptibility. It is the latter quality that the poet pursues. What Sklovskij mainly focuses on in his work is in consequence geared at the devices that activate these processes when readers are confronted with literary works of art.

The most influential figure in shaping the concept of foregrounding has been the Prague scholar Jan Mukarovsky. According to Mukarovsky, the essence of poetic language lies in the violations of the norms of the standard language, and this relationship is seen as essential for the very existence of poetry, while at the same time the violations of the standard found in poetry enrich the standard language itself: “its systematic violation is what makes possible the poetic utilization of language; without this possibility there would be no poetry.” (Mukarovsky, 1964, pp. 51-54) Mukarovsky argues that the function of poetic language consists in the maximum of foregrounding of the utterance. The maximum of foregrounding is a result of two forces. One of these resides in the relational character of foregrounding, the other in its consistent and systematic character. A tension arises from the structure of the



literary work of art, which is seen as a complex yet unified aesthetic structure, defined by the interrelationships between those items that are foregrounded and those elements in the work that remain in the background. By the very fact of foregrounding, poetry increases and refines the ability to handle language in general; it gives the language the ability to adjust more flexibly to new requirements and it gives it a richer differentiation of its means of expression. However, starting from a different angle, Roman Jakobson stresses yet another aspect subsumed under the general concept of foregrounding, i. e. , that of parallelism. He distinguishes six different basic functions of language according to the six variables in the act of communication, i. e. , emotive, referential, phatic, metalingual, conative, and poetic. The poetic function is characterized by its concentration on the message per se, drawing attention to itself and to its own properties. The basic characteristic that Jakobson finds in the poetic function lies in the fact that the poetic use of language “projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination” (Jakobson, 1960, p. 358). In other words, while one would expect different kinds of elements that have been selected at different points in the syntagmatic chain, poetic



language typically shows repeated combinations of the same kind of elements.

The above three scholars' theories have laid a solid foundation for the further study of stylistics, and in practice their theories have been widely testified and elaborated by many instances. Therefore I decide not to repeat the same way others have walked. Instead, I will choose one path less people tread.

The present thesis, oriented as a stylistic one, is intended to make a study of poetic language, especially poetry's formal dimension, for the purpose of showing how it is related to the internal organization of a poem, how a poem is made to cohere into one unity and how the elements of this unity are brought to one's notice. For instance, each formal variety in a poem must be accordingly given some kind of value. Moreover, the present study mainly aims to illustrate how a poem is approached by taking poetic form as iconicity, and in order to evaluate and justify this device, four lyric poems written by William Blake will be analyzed from a formal standpoint. And an attempt will be made to clarify how the formal analysis is closely related to what the poem is about. In so doing, a conclusion will manifest itself that Espstein's strategy of applying iconicity to the analysis of the



style of poetry is, though not separated from interpretative experience, intuition and insight, still viable and effective approach evidenced by linguistic features.

To sum up, the present study does not set out to be a survey of either linguistics or literary criticism but rather to suggest the kind of investigation which may be helpful to both disciplines. The present one, limited as it is in breadth of scope and depth of detail, will be, I hope, a step in this direction.

Chapter Two Theoretical Preliminaries: Style and Stylistics

“A linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unversant with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms.” (Jakobson, 1960, pp. 350-377) This famous pronouncement by Jakobson will serve to introduce our present research. All too often it is felt that the studies of language and literature pursue divergent paths, each under its own momentum, fail to cohere within a single discipline. The problem of integration has for long perplexed those dedicated to this enterprise. Stylistics is posed as a particular line of approach to



this controversial problem.

2.1 Definition of Stylistics

Since the main concern of the present research is with a literary variety—poetry, it can be assumed that the nature of stylistics can be captured more accurately and concisely in the following two definitions. One is maintained by Widdowson: “By stylistics, I mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is essentially a means of linking the two.” (1975, p. 8) The other is made by Leech who regards the linguistic and critical aspects of literary studies complementary, the first being a tool of the second. “I mean by ‘stylistics’ simply the study of literary style, or, to make matters even more explicit, the study of the use of language in literature.” He further defines that “Stylistics is a meeting-ground of linguistics and literary study.” (1985, p. 13) In his point of view, there is no incompatibility between linguistic studies and literary criticism. They are, ought to be, different phases of the same analytic



process—complementary, not hostile. Just as Raymond Chapman has claimed, “the two disciplines can illuminate each other in many ways; that linguistic analysis can give literary criticism a theoretical foundation as necessary to that undertaking as mathematics is to physics, and that literature provides a rich and varied field for linguistic study that does not in any way reduce linguistics itself to a mere technology or service station.” (1987, p. 25)

Nevertheless the relationship between linguistics and literature is usually conceived of as unilinear, insights from linguistics being deployed to illuminate the nature of literary discourses or serving as a descriptive base from which interpretations can be constructed.

2.2 Goals and Procedure of Stylistic Inquiry

As for the goals, M. A. K. Halliday has asserted that, “The more immediate goal is to why and how the discourse means what it does.” In attaining the goal it is necessary to describe and interpret the discourse. The second goal Halliday identifies is to show why the discourse is valued as it is to attain this goal, we