

Analysis of Shelley's Poetry from the Perspective of Foregrounding

LA PERSPECTIVE DU PREMIER PLAN DE L'ANALYSE DE LA POESIE DE SHELLEY

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Abstract

This paper explores Shelly's poetry Ode to the West Wind from the perspective of foregrounding. Through the framework of the new model, it finds out that the poetry involves various kinds of foregrounding. For this, the poetry can be more understandable. From the analysis of deviation and overregularity, the deviation involves many kinds and the overregularity involves many kinds, either. Through these foregrounding, we analyze them with the social context. Therefore we can relatively be objective about the poem through the study of analysis.

Key words: The model; Ode to the West Wind; Analysis of the poetry

Résumé

Cet article explore la poésie Ode Shelly au vent d'ouest dans la perspective de mise en avant. Grâce au cadre du nouveau modèle, il découvre que la poésie implique différents types de mise en avant. Pour cela, la poésie peut être plus compréhensible. De l'analyse de l'écart et overregularity, l'écart implique de nombreux types, que ce soit. Grâce à ces mise en avant, nous les analysons avec le contexte social. Par conséquent, nous pouvons relativement être objectif à propos du poème à travers l'étude de l'analyse.

Mots clés: Le modèle; D'Ode pour; L'analyse de la poésie du vent d'ouest

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INTRODUCTION

Shelley is a great poet in the English literature. His poetry reveals a revolutionary, radical, tempestuous cast of mind. Much of his poetry combines romantic idealism and emotionalism: one of his best poetry is Ode to the West Wind (Liu & Luo, 2006, p.311).

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "foregrounding" is borrowed by stylisticians from visual art, which distinguishes the foreground and the back ground of a painting. Specifically speaking, foregrounding refers to that part of the composition that appears to be closest to the viewer. Foregrounding theory is originated from thoughts of Russian Formalism. The structuralism tries to explain the artistry and deviation of poetic language. Later, Jan Mukarovsky in the Prague School further illustrates this concept, and uses the Czech term "aktualisace" to represent it. Then, Paul L Garvin translates it into English as "foregrounding". Foregrounding also attracts functionalist, Halliday distinguishes the difference between "foregrounding" and "prominence". His definition about "foregrounding" and "prominence" has been developed further by British linguists Geoffrey N Leech who also presents the classification of foregrounding which is the main theoretical basis. The study of Ode to the West wind has produced many papers. In the CNKI, it has 76 papers. The

study of Ode to the West Wind varies from many fields. There are five postgraduate papers. Chen Dongping, 2009, A cohesive study of Percy Bysshe Shelly's ode to the West Wind finds out the aesthetic value of cohesive device. Lian Juan, 2011 A Comparative study Of Three Chinese versions of Shelley's Ode to the West Wind in Light of Rewriting Theory shows that the style is influenced by ideology and poetics to certain degree. Lin Wencai 2009 On poetry Translation from the perspective of relevance theory: A case study of four Chinese versions of Shelley's Ode to the West Wind indicates that the corresponding transference of relevance is achieved in terms of form, rhyme and meaning between the original. He Xiaorong 2004 Relevance theory and poetry translation-A comparative study of the Chinese version of ode to the West Wind has a finding that transferring the original author's intention is the basis of poetry translation, and aesthetic effect is another essential aspect to consider. In poetry translation, the best faithfulness is to achieve closeness first in artistic conception and content, and then in poetic form. Zhu Linjia 2005 Translator Autonomy in Systems manifests 1) There are 25 translators who translated the "Ode" during the 82-year period from 1923, when Guo Moruo published the first version, all the way down to 2004. Some translators produced more than one version. Some versions were republished time and again. 2) Altogether 47 publishers over 20 provinces, municipalities, etc in Mainland China once published the Chinese "Ode" in different forms. Most of them are situated in East China, especially in the religions that are relatively advanced in culture and economics; 3) Each of the four phases is possessed with distinctive characteristics of the time. Poetry translation involves much humanism. (Zhu, 2005, p.20) Luyan 2007 On the subjectivity of translator from the perspective of deconstructive paradigm point outs that from deconstructive perspective, it is not only the version but also the translator who should be read and interpreted by the audience. Although deconstructionism has its defects, what it provides for translation studies such as the enhancement of translator's status and the extension of the horizon in this area of research should never be ignored, And the study shows that the poetry has not been studied from the perspective of foregrounding. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to study it from the perspective of foregrounding.

2. THE FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

Leech's Theory on Foregrounding

Foregrounding is realized by linguistic deviation and linguistic parallelism.

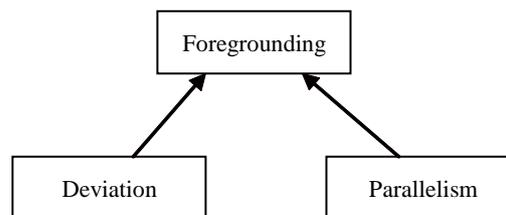


Figure 1
The Realization of Foregrounding (Leech)

This is the Leech's classification of foregrounding and another model.

The Hallidayan context is classified into three categories: Cultural context, Situational context and inter-textual context (Xun, 2004). I use these context to reconstruct Leech's theory as follows:

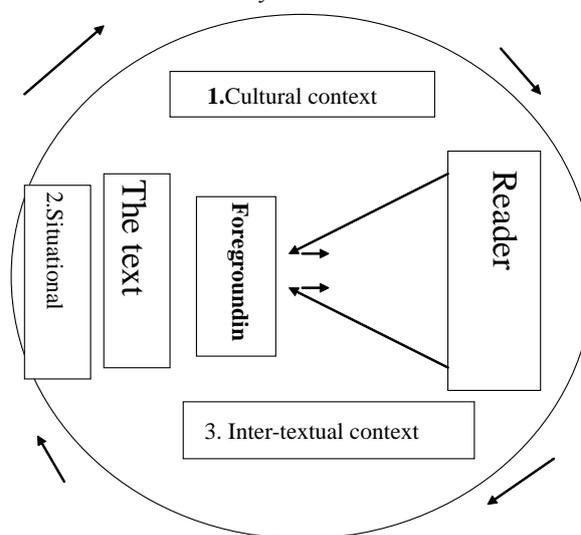


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a new model is based on the Halliday's theory of context. The number 3 represents the most inner part of the context. The number 2 represents the second inner part of the context. The number 1 represents the biggest context of the theory. For this, the foregrounding is the human's perception of the "prominence" of the text. For example, the Graphology of the poem can leave the reader the impression of deviation, however, that graphology of the poem forms in the reader's mind is more important than the form of the poem.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

The ode is a lyric poem typically of elaborate or irregular metrical form and expressive of exalted or enthusiastic emotion (original) a poem intended to be sung.

The background of the poem: Shelley wrote the poem in a wood near Florence. He was inspired by a tempestuous wind which was messenger of the coming autumn rain. Florence was the home of Dante Alighieri, creator of terza rima, the form of his Divine Comedy. It is not only a political poem but also a very lyrical one, in form and content. According to the poet, when he met the storm near the River Arno in Florence, Italy, he was deeply moved by this vehement natural force, which he associated with the revolutionary storms of the human world.

Ode to the West Wind

by Percy Bysshe Shelley

1

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes thou
Who charitest to their dark wintry bed
The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odors plain and hill:
Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!
(Liu Bingshan & Luo Yiming, 2006, p.311)

The first stanza: Phonological overregularity: alliteration: wild west wind in the first stanza the initial word is the same. In the stanza, "I" in the "wind" is pronounced as "waind", the author's attention is that, on the hand, it is going to describe the form of the wind, it twists. On the other hand, it together with wild has the same vowel to create an aesthetic feeling.

Syntactic Overregularity: Parallelism: small-scale parallelism: the first stanza and the second stanza form small-scale parallelism. These two stanzas are not only form small-scale parallelism, but also form a contrast between "being" and "dead". That indicates the formidable air of the wind.

The deep-structure deviation: The third stanza, the wind is compared to the enchanter. This is the most important type of meaning transference in literature is metaphor. "Wind" is kind of natural phenomenon. It has no forms. It can hardly be associated with the enchanter. However, the poet uses such a metaphor. The wind is not wind, it like an enchanter, even the ghosts are feared to escape when they encounter him. The figurative meaning of this metaphor is that the wind is so powerful that it can destroy the wackiest force.

Simile and irony: The fourth stanza and the fifth stanza, the "yellow and black, and pale and the hectic red" refers to everything in the world. Pestilence-stricken multitudes refer to the antiforms in that time. In the poet's eyes, these forces are wick and vulnerable. For this, the fifth stanza is also an irony. It fervently satires the

tyrannical, degenerated regime. Meanwhile it adores the courage of the wind and determines to win.

Deep-structure deviation: The seventh stanza "The winged seeds" is an overstatement. For this, the author tries to invoke the readers' wild imagination. The seed likes a corpse within its grave. This is a peculiar metaphor. It tells us that the seed is dead and without life. It needs someone to help the seed to regain life. This metaphor gives a vivid description of the state of the seeds that eager to change. The eighth stanza Thine azure sister of the Spring is a personification. The wind has a sister, like human being. Perhaps the wind has a big family. The wind embodies the revolutionary force, and he is not alone when his sister has come to his course. Such a vivid personification reminds s the revolutionary forces like brother and sister. It indicates the revolutionary people in that time are so well united and energetic.

Surface-structure deviation: In the ninth stanza, the word "over" involves omission. The poet omits such a word "v" in the middle of the word. The omission is conventional licenses of verse composition. They change the pronunciation of the original words so that the poet can achieve more aesthetic value of the poem. The eleventh stanza is the contrast between destroyer and preserver. It is called Oxymoron. It shows that the author regards the west wind is a destroyer and preserver. At the first glance, it might hard to understand it, however, the destroyer who destroys the wicked regime and preserver the "winged seeds". How magnificent the west wind is! The last stanza of the first Canto hear, oh, hear is a repetition. The repetition of the word "hear" express the poet's heated emotion.

Rhythmic Patterning: Metrical variation: 1. the meter: iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme: abab cdcdcd fdfd. Therefore it can be concluded as A B A. The Rhythmic pattern, on the one hand, imitates the whirl of the west wind, on another hand, it increase the poem's readability.

2

Thou on whose stream, 'mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine airy surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the Zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might
Of vapors, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst :oh, hear!

Surface-structure deviation: In the first stanza, the word "amid" loses the "a". The poet aims to adapt the iambic pentameter.

Syntactic Overregularity: Large-scale parallelism: The first word in the first canto is the same as that of the

second.

Deep-structure deviation: In the second stanza, Loose clouds like the decaying leaves, the poet regards those loose clouds as decaying leaves, showing that the end day of the tyrannical party is soon to come. Deception: Overstatement: In the stanza three and four, the west wind shakes from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean, angles of rain and lighting, these two stanzas which the poet uses the overstatement, it manifests the mighty of the west wind. The sixth and seventh stanza describes the west wind as the head of some fierce Maenad. This is an unusual metaphor. The west wind is just like a Maenad's hair. The poet intends to express one concrete image of what is the west wind really is. The metaphor: the black rain is an unusual metaphor. It greatly increases the gruesome of the context of the poem.

Syntactic overregularity: intermittent repetition: the end word of the second Canto is the repetition of the first Canto. It serves as a connection of the first Canto and the second canto.

Phonological overregularity: 1. the meter: iambic pentameters. 2. the rhyme: abab cdcdcd fdfd, therefore it can be written as C D C. The Rhythmic pattern, on the one hand, imitates the whirl of the west wind, on another hand, it increase the poem's readability.

3

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams
Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and Towers
Quivering within the eave's intenser day,
All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

Syntactic overregularity: The Large-scale Parallelism. The third Canto also begins with the word "Thou", which echoes the previous two. "Thou" in the first stanza is as the as that of the eighth stanza. It forms a parallelism.

Graphonological deviation is not only means that the deviate forms of the words, but also the deviate configuration of the image. This part finds the poet showing the power of the wind in controlling the waves of the sea, from tranquil Mediterranean to the turbulent Atlantic. The foregrounding is the blue color of the Mediterranean. As Halliday said:, "Foregrounding is the prominence that is motivated." The first sentence gives us the basic tone of this Canto. In the next, the poet chooses the main landscapes of the sea, the pumice isle, palace and towers, Atlantic. These prominent images form the picture of this Canto. It sends the readers the impression that the west wind has controlled everything in that area.

Phonological Overregularity: Alliteration: grow gray. It increases the beauty of the music of the poem.

For the above three Cantos, there are some connections: For phonological overregularity, the poet uses the same word to begin and the same word to end. For this, these three cantos are seen as the Large-scale of parallelism. The reader can easily perceive the characteristics of the poem.

Metrical variation: the meter: iambic pentameter. The rhyme: ababab acac dadd, we can conclude A B B.

For the semantic cohesion: the above three poems have the same semantic coherence. the above three mainly talks about the the power of the west wind. The first is that poet describes the wind's power and its role as both 'destroyer and preserver". As a destroyer, the west wind sweeps away the dead leaves; as a preserver, it plows the seeds deep into the earth to bloom when spring comes. In the second part of the poetry, with the images of clouds, rain, lightning, etc, the poet delineates the power of the west wind to its extreme when it derives the clouds in the sky. The third part tells that the power of the west wind has controlled. The semantic cohesion of the above sentences is the destroyer and the preserver.

4

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee:
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be
The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven
As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

Grammatical overregularity: the first stanza is a subjunctive mood as well as the second stanza. The two stanzas vividly express that the west wind has followers. If we relate it with the background of the poet, we can clearly find that the west wind as a changing force. They influence another people to join with them. The background is that there is a movement to overhaul the decayed government. The west wind is not alone. The subjunctive mood subtly implies the followers are not only willing to become the west wind, but also willing to become as strong as the west wind. Therefore, the west wind becomes the leader of the historical tide. In this point, the west wind is described as a hero, a leader and a changer.

Deep-structure deviation: A wave to pant beneath thy power. In this stanza, the wave can pant, so the sentence uses the technique of personification. You know the wave can not breathe. The wave is so amazed by the West wind. In the third Canto, the west wind has controlled and

conquered the sea. Now the wave is eager to pant with the west wind. The waves are so loyal to the west wind. In this sense, the west wind is the savior of their lives. The third stanza, the poet makes a personification that the west wind has the impulse, the impulse is so vigorous. His or her energy is so powerful that it can not be controlled.

The sixth stanza is also a subjunctive mood, the poet is eager to be the west wind's boyhood. For this point, the emotion that the poet is eager to be the west wind has been intensified. For this point, the poet is fused with the west wind. For this, the poet clearly shows his determination to back up the course of the revolution. The poet's emotion is heated and passionate. Although it is called the subjunctive "I were", in fact, the poet really likes to be the west wind. "Could be" is also the subjective mood, the poet likes to wander over heaven with the west wind. The author is eager to see the bright future of tomorrow.

Deep-structure deviation: deception: overstatement: as then, when to outstrip thy sky speed. The poet imagines that he can fly like a wind speed. The poet is eager to fly as quickly as the west wind.

Surface-structure Deviation: Omission: I would never have striven, the word never omits the middle letter "v" in order to adapt the iambic pentameter. In the usual use, this can not be written like that, however, in the poem, it can be used like that. It is not the poet's mistake because of the poet knows how to write the word correctly. It is written by means. It is this mean will be perceived by the readers when they read the poem. They would find that the poem is full of music lyrics. Once Beethoven said: "In order to achieve the beauty of the art, the artist should crack down the frameworks and be creative."

The stanza eleventh, It is a metaphor, the poet is so eager to be a leaf, a wave, and a cloud. A leaf means it has no weight. A wave is free. A cloud has no boundaries. The west wind can help him to achieve that goal. Therefore, we can understand that the west wind is the hero in the poet's mind. He is so fond of the West wind. The west wind can do a great help to achieve his ideal. These three metaphors have expressed his romanticism. The leaf, he wants his people to leave all the burdens of the government. A wave, the people can live happily and have more rights. A cloud, the people can own an open and democratic government.

The twelfth stanza is the thematic sentence of the whole poem. It involves a wonderful metaphor. "Thorns of life" refers to the hardships of the life. This metaphor intends to give us the impressive picture of the difficulties that he met. "Thorn" is a kind of points which can hurt and kill people. And the following sentence "I bleed" which intensifies the effects of thorn. It is a shocking metaphor and it is a classical metaphor. This metaphor intends to show the poet met so many hardships and setbacks in the life.

The last two stanzas indicate the poet finds that the lives of others are also like the life of the west wind. This

is also a metaphor. The poet also implies that though life is hard, but his life is as the same as the west wind's tameless, swift and proud.

Phonological overregularity: In this canto: the meter is iambic pentameter. the rhyme: A B C B D B D F D F F F F F It sounds like a music.

5

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leavers are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,
Scatter, is from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth
The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

The shift of the narrative perspective: in the above three, they all begin at the word "thou". However, in the Canto, the narrative perspective has been shifted into "I". This shift means that the different mindsets.

Deep-Structure Deviation: The first stanza: make me thy lyre, the word "lyre" refer the poet himself. The lyre referred to in line 57 might be Eolian lyre and harp, its name derived from Eolus, god of the winds. This lyre is a box with strings stretched across an opening. When the winds move through it, the Eolian harp emits musical sounds. The poet likes to be part of the west wind. The lyre can sing when the west wind blows. The poet aims to tell us that he is so eager that the west wind could help him. Even if the leaves of tree are going to fall down, poet is also eager to accompany with the west wind.

The overstatement: the tumult and mighty, these words express that the great company of the west wind. However, for such a reason, the poet are willing to be part of the harmonies.

Deep-structure deviation: Contradiction: Sweet though in sadness. This sentence is a contradiction. It is sweet however it is also bitter. This contradiction further intensifies that the poet follow and join the west wind. At that time, the poet's emotion is very complicated. It is sweet but it involves the bitterness.

Syntactic overregularity: the stanza five and six forms a Parallelism.

Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

The repetition: Be thou, spirit. These two sentences express the strong emotion of the poet.

Grammatical overregularity: the last sentence is "rhetoric question". The poet has the answer, however the poets still ask readers. But in this poem, "winter" and "spring" stand for "the difficulties" and "the bright future of tomorrow". What is more interesting is that the season

is to go to winter to spring. How wonderful it is. The poet at last discovers the natural law, though the reality is full of depressions and frustrations, you can have the bright future when you persist and the bright is sure to come after the wicked reality.

At the end, the whole poem reaches the climax. From "I fall upon thorns of life, I bleed!" to "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" the poet's emotion reaches the climax.

At the end, the poet already becomes the west wind---tameless, swift and proud.

Phonological overregularity: the meter: the meter is iambic pentameter. The rhyme: A B A B C B C D C D F D F F.

CONCLUSION

Through the study of the poem, I analyze the poem from the linguistic foregrounding together with the background information. From this analysis, we can know the deep meaning of the poem objectively.

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