

**Саратовский государственный университет  
им. Н. Г. Чернышевского**

**И.А. БАННИКОВА, В. Ю. КАЗАКОВА,  
А.Е. ОВСЯННИКОВА**

**КНИГА ДЛЯ ЧТЕНИЯ ПО СТИЛИСТИКЕ  
И ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ТЕКСТА**

**САРАТОВ**

**2014**

**И.А. БАННИКОВА, В. Ю. КАЗАКОВА,  
А.Е. ОВСЯННИКОВА**

**КНИГА ДЛЯ ЧТЕНИЯ ПО СТИЛИСТИКЕ  
И ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИИ ТЕКСТА**

**САРАТОВ**

**2014**

Рекомендовано к печати кафедрой английской филологии института филологии и журналистики СГУ им, Н.Г. Чернышевского

Книга для чтения по стилистике и интерпретации текста: Учеб.-метод. пособие для студентов старших курсов язык. спец. -Саратов. – 86 с.

**Авторский коллектив:**

Банникова И.А., к.ф.н., Казакова В. Ю. к. ф. н., Овсянникова А.Е., к.ф.н. - доценты Саратовского государственного университета им. Н.Г. Чернышевского

**Рецензент:**

Трусов В.Е., к.ф.н., доцент кафедры английской филологии Саратовского государственного университета им. Н.Г. Чернышевского

*Пособие представляет собой сборник текстов по проблемам теории и практики стилистического анализа: фрагменты работ видных иностранных и отечественных ученых, отражающие их взгляды на фундаментальные проблемы стилистики и лингвистики текста.*

*Предлагаемые составителями вопросы осуществляют контроль за пониманием и способствуют закреплению прочитанного.*

*Для студентов старших курсов языковых специальностей, изучающих стилистику и интерпретацию текста, выполняющих курсовые и выпускные квалификационные работы в этой области, а также для всех интересующихся проблемами современной стилистики и теории текста*

## CONTENTS

<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>FUNDAMENTALS OF DECODING STYLISTICS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
I.V. ARNOLD	
<b>FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE</b> .....	<b>22</b>
A) G. LEECH; B) L. PERRINE; C) D. DAVIDSON; D) M. BLACK.	
<b>SYNTACTIC STYLISTIC DEVICES</b> .....	<b>56</b>
A) V.KUKHARENKO; B) Y. SKREBNEV; C) G. LEECH, M. SHORT.	
<b>PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES</b> .....	<b>66</b>
L. PERRINE; T. ARP.	
<b>TEXTUALITY</b> .....	<b>74</b>
A) M.A.K. HALLIDAY; B) G. LEECH, M. SHORT; C) N.E. ENKVIST; D) R. HASAN.	
<b>INTERTEXTUALITY</b> .....	<b>80</b>
I.V. ARNOLD	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>86</b>

## PREFACE

This book is compiled to meet the needs of students taking courses in Modern Stylistics, Text Interpretation or Literary Criticism which form part of the curricular of Departments of Foreign Languages of Universities or Teacher Training Institutes. It is also applicable as a source of information at the proseminars and special seminars, where students discuss essential problems of theory or practice of stylistic analysis with their tutors and supervisors.

The book is also meant as a supplement to the textbook by I.V. Arnold (И.В. Арнольд, *Стилистика современного английского языка*) and as a source of English equivalents of the terms used by the author as well as stylistic terminology in general. This accounts for the choice of reading material and the structure of the book.

The first unit of the anthology contains excerpts from the book of I.V. Arnold «Интерпретация английского художественного текста», Л. 1983. This book presents a summary of the fundamentals of decoding stylistics in English. It is hoped therefore that it will assist learners to master the terminology of the science; this is particularly important as both lectures and seminars in stylistics are conducted in this language.

Other units of the anthology include fragments from the books of prominent English, American and Russian stylisticians, lexicologists and literary critics, such as G. Leech, L. Perrine, St. Ullmann, Y.M. Skrebnev and others. All the excerpts included were published in English except an extract from the book of I. Arnold on intertextuality, which was translated by V. Kazakova and I. Bannikova.

The subject-matter of the excerpts was selected from the point of view of necessity of the material for mastering both the basics of the theory and practice of stylistic analysis.

Each unit is supplied with a list of problems for discussion and control of comprehension.

The anthology is also supplied with *Bibliography*.

The authors cannot but realize that any publication in the field that is comparatively new and, therefore, suffers from inadequate or insufficient treatment of a great number of aspects might be subjected to criticism. The authors realize that this publication is in a comparatively new field and would almost certainly therefore benefit from expert criticism. For this reason the authors will welcome informed comment that might lead to an improved version of this first edition.

## FUNDAMENTALS OF DECODING STYLISTICS

I.V.ARNOLD

(from: «Интерпретация английского художественного текста»)

My book on stylistics was written with the aim of showing the future teacher of English how the language of a poetic or prose text should be analyzed in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the relationships existing between the linguistic form and literary function. This lecture also takes its direction from decoding stylistics, applying concepts of modern linguistics and Information Theory to text analysis. Its purpose is to introduce some additional precision into the theory and practice of interpretation.

The term Decoding Stylistics, first suggested by M. Riffaterre, does not mean that we propose to exclude intuition and personal judgment and provide instead some mechanical technique of stylistic analysis. Intuition is welcome, only it must be verified by what is actually said in the text. The term 'decoding' implies that we concentrate our attention on the receiving end of Shannon's chain of communication (objective reality – transmitter/encoder – message/text – receiver/decoder – objective reality surrounding the addressee) and define our basic notions in conformity with Information Theory.

Decoding Stylistics furnishes a theoretical basis for text interpretation. It is a body of research regarding a literary text not so much as a result of its author's efforts, but as a source of impressions for the reader, with its pragmatic effect based on the understanding of language in a particular stylistic context. It is a theory of text interpretation aimed at deepening and widening the student's knowledge of language and literature, his esthetic taste and general thesaurus and at educating him as a personality. In our stylistic analysis we shall be concerned with the message and not with the individual style of the author, although traditionally style was regarded in

connection with the author's individuality in the first place. The importance of the reader's reaction was often underestimated.

In what follows attention will be concentrated on practical study of whole texts or their extracts, mostly leaving out the peculiarities of the author's individual style, or genre and period characteristic features.[...]

## FOREGROUNDING

The main concept we study in this connection is that of *foregrounding*. The term is self-explanatory – to assure the hierarchy of meanings they are given artistic emphasis which brings them to the foreground.

The idea of foregrounding appeared first in the Prague School, where the phenomenon was mostly called 'deautomatization' of the linguistic code. According to the works of that period the aesthetic use of language takes the form of denying the normally expected clues of context creating thereby a fresh awareness of linguistic means, which normally are taken for granted as an automatic medium of communication. In foregrounding the reader's attention is attracted to the formal means through which the meaning is conveyed, and the interpretation of sense demands some creative effort on the part of the reader. This attention to sense was suggested by subsequent scholars. P.L. Garvin in 1964 described foregrounding as a stimulus not culturally expected in a social situation and hence capable of provoking special attention. (P.L. Garvin, ed. and transl. *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure and Style*. – Washington, 1958). M.A.K. Halliday describes foregrounding as 'motivated prominence' (M.A.K. Halliday, *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*. London, 1964, p.112).

G. Leech (G.N. Leech and M. N. Short, *Style in Fiction. A linguistic introduction to English Fictional Prose*, London, 1981, p.139) considers foregrounding to be of vital importance for stylistic analysis and returns to it very frequently. His contribution to the study of this phenomenon is very considerable, but he gives no systematic taxonomy for its various types and keeps to the tradition of



overemphasizing the idea of deviation from the existing code as a most characteristic feature of foregrounding. His approach is different from many others as he gives a linguistic reinterpretation to the traditional distinction between schemes and tropes. He defines schemes as foregrounded repetition of expression, whereas tropes are in his opinion foregrounded irregularities of content. Thus, he does not agree with a wholly formalistic treatment of foregrounding: reserves it only for figures of speech and considers tropes as focusing attention on meaning. It is also clear that he does not notice the difference between foregrounding and stylistic devices and bases his approach on deviation from the expected norm.

From the point of view of Decoding Stylistics foregrounding comprises both additional regularities and additional irregularities and may be regarded as a level above that of tropes. The notion of foregrounding is more comprehensive than that of a stylistic device or trope. Its units may include tropes both taxonomically and syntagmatically. Foregrounding may cover bigger parts of texts containing several devices.

Foregrounding is a special contextual organization focusing the reader's attention on some elements of the contents of the message and establishing meaningful relations between juxtaposed or distant elements of the same or different levels and the text as a whole.

Various aspects of foregrounding were described under different names in different publications. They were first collected, systematized and classified in Decoding Stylistics.

Under the general heading of foregrounding we include the following phenomena: coupling, convergence, defeated expectancy, semantic repetition, salient feature and some others. They differ from expressive means known as tropes and stylistic figures because they possess a generalizing force and function and provide structural cohesion of the text and the hierarchy of its meanings and images, bringing some to the fore and shifting others to the background. They also enhance the aesthetic effect and memorability.

In what follows we shall give a brief description of some of these types of foregrounding.

## COUPLING

*Coupling* is defined as a semantically relevant appearance of equivalent elements in equivalent positions in the text. Coupling was suggested and worked out by the American scholar S. Levin (S. Levin. *Linguistic Structures in Poetry*. The Hague, 1962). R. Jakobson before him also analyzed similar structures calling them parallel constructions. Levin's contribution is valuable because he managed to show the almost universal character of coupling.

The possibilities of coupling are almost unlimited. It occurs on every level. In poetry a well studied example is the rhyme. The equivalence of the elements of the code is manifested in a certain resemblance or identity of sounds occurring in equivalent positions according to a certain scheme (mostly but not necessarily on the ends of lines). Rhymes play an important role in a poem's composition and in its segmentation into meaningful parts intensifying the aesthetic effect and memorability. They signal the ends of the lines, define the structure of the stanza and play an important part in creating the musical effect.

Coupling is especially pronounced in poetry, in proverbs, in aphorisms. Here is an example:

In the final couplet of Sonnet 18 by Shakespeare:

So long as men can breathe or eyes can see  
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

Coupling serves here to join two of Shakespeare's key themes – that of all-destroying time and the power of poetry opposing time and making beauty immortal. Its most obvious part is the anaphoric repetition: So long ... So long. This is sustained by elements whose equivalence is synonymic: can breathe, can see, live –

all these render the same notion – life, and occupy syntactically equivalent positions. Finally, anadiplosis is also a form of coupling, more sophisticated than all the others: the pronoun *this* whose referent is the whole sonnet, is the last word of the first half line and the first word in the second half-line.

Many proverbs are structured by means of coupling. E. g.: “Lend your money and lose your friend”. The patterning is quite marked. The equivalence of positions is syntactic and the equivalence of elements lexical and phonetical, it stresses the ironical idea that lending money to friends is a double loss because demanding one’s money back is futile and will make the friend angry. There are many points of similarity emphasizing the contrast and identity of situations referred to, and the logical coherence of the whole.

Coupling has many points of similarity with parallelism but parallelism is above all associated with syntactic repetition, and in coupling other types of positional equivalence are also possible.

### **DEFEATED EXPECTANCY**

The type of foregrounding we have now to consider is called *Defeated Expectancy*. Here some element of the text receives prominence due to an interruption in the pattern of predictability. An unexpected change may be created due to some combination of extra irregularity. The low predictability elements disturb the pattern which the reader has been conditioned to expect. This causes a temporary sense of disorientation compelling the reader’s attention.

Defeated expectancy is mostly characteristic of humour and satire. The following example will make this point clear: A drunken G.I. shouts to his companion: “I cannot take another minute of it! The Army is brutal, dehumanized and full of morons. It’s time something was done. When I get back to the barracks, I’ll write my mother about it.”

Defeated expectancy results from a glaring discrepancy between the decision taken and the scale of the denunciation of the state of things in the Army. The first three sentences make the reader expect that the soldier is ready for some action of revolt, and when we learn that all he is prepared to do is to complain to his mother, this is unexpected and amusingly childish. The decision is made prominent being abruptly detached from the rest of the context.

Many scholars do not see much difference between foregrounding in general and defeated expectancy and treat all foregrounding as deviation from an established probability pattern. Some others, M. Riffaterre for instance, take this deviation as characteristic of stylistic devices.

It should be remembered that not all foregrounding is always based on this interplay of probability and improbability. There are several other recognized principles of artistic expression and they are also involved in foregrounding. These are contrast, repetition, implication and some others. All these are basic not only for cognition through art but for all types of human cognition in reflecting objective reality and communicating the results.

## **CONVERGENCE**

The principles of reiteration and redundancy are at play in foregrounding called convergence. In convergence several stylistic devices converge to produce one striking effect, to create one image or to fulfill some other function together. The concept is due to M. Riffaterre. The type is very interesting because in it the relationship and difference between foregrounding and stylistic devices is most transparent.

In “A Portrait of the artist as a young man” Joyce depicts his protagonist in the state of exaltation:

‘His cheeks were aflame, his body was aglow, his limbs were trembling. On and on he strode far out over the sands singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the life that had cried to him.’

The reader feels how excited the hero is as he perceives the anaphoric parallel constructions, high-flown archaic metaphoric synonyms *aflame* and *aglow* used as epithets, but insistent repetition of *on*, rendering unstoppable energy of motion, metaphorical personification of life – all these make the reader share the hero's feelings.

The type of foregrounding to be taken next is a modification of the so-called “philological cycle” described by one of the most widely known stylistic critics of the beginning of the XX-th century Leo Spitzer. The method is based on the emphasis created by some *salient feature* of the text. Spitzer developed it as a way to concentrate on individual styles, indicative of the outlook of the writer. We shall make use of Spitzer's procedures for a different purpose, namely that of solving the basic question of all text interpretation – how can we check our intuition and prove that our understanding is correct. In Spitzer's words: “Any one outward feature, when sufficiently followed to the centre, must yield us insight into the artistic whole, whose unity will thus be respected.” (L. Spitzer. *Linguistics and Literary History*. Princeton, 1948, p. 19).

### **SALIENT FEATURE**

The metaphorical term “philological cycle” or “cycle of understanding” is justified because the procedure demands a to-and-fro movement from linguistic peculiarity to a literary explanation. Linguistic observation stimulates and checks the literary insight, and this in turn stimulates further observation in which lexical proof is especially important.

In illustrating the way in which the philological cycle and the salient feature are used in Decoding Stylistics it must be emphasized that a salient feature proves a convenient starting point for an analysis that is further continued on the basis of other types of foregrounding. To see this let us examine the 66 Sonnet in the first line of which Shakespeare “cries for restful death”. We shall not attempt a complete interpretation as it has been given many times. We shall only try to show how

effective the salient feature may prove. There are several salient features in this famous poem. One of the most obvious peculiarities is the polysyndeton i.e. the repetition in close succession of the conjunction 'and' in the beginning of ten lines out of fourteen.

Tired with all these for restful death I cry,  
As to behold desert a beggar born,  
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,  
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,  
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced,  
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,  
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,  
And strength by limping sway disabled,  
And art made tongue-tied by authority,  
And folly doctor-like controlling skill,  
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,  
And captive good attending captain ill;

Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,  
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

Searching for an explanation, one sees that 'and' links together object clauses to the verb 'behold' and reduces a multitude of things to unity in one vast canvas.

But a canvas of what? To explain this one pays attention to the fact that the canvas is structured as a coupling in a series of parallel constructions. Its equivalent elements – a series of nouns given prominence by the preceding 'and' have a common denominator – a strongly marked evaluative sense of ethical character, they are also semantically equivalent because they denote ethical categories (virtue, faith, perfection), a third point of equivalence is that they are marked by syncretism, they denote not only the qualities but also people personifying them. (V.K. Tarasova, O

syncretisme metafory//In: Ekspresivnye sredstva anglijskogo jazyka, Leningrad, 1975).

One more salient feature is that the sonnet is divided vertically: there is a pause after each of the noun phrases. In the right-hand side of the poem another set of parallel constructions is correlated with the first. It has a predicative force. The pattern is again clear-cut. Participle 2 of the verbs meaning 'to do great wrong to' enhanced by adverbs of the strongest negative evaluation: 'unhappily', 'shamefully', 'rudely' etc.

A third type of foregrounding present is that of contrast. Everything good is wronged and everything evil prospers. This prompts the most important step of interpretation – the canvas drawn is that of universal injustice and cruelty that makes the poet indignant. The insights thus justified the reader is stimulated for further careful interpretation of every linguistic detail. [...]

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Who is the author of the term 'Decoding Stylistics' and what aspect of interpretation of the text does it point to?
2. Does Decoding Stylistics consider the individual style of the author?
3. Is the notion of *intuition* relevant for this approach to interpretation?
4. In whose works the notion of *foregrounding* was first mentioned? Has the approach to the notion and the term changed with time?
5. How does Decoding Stylistics define and treat foregrounding? What types of foregrounding does I.V. Arnold distinguish? Dwell on each of them. Supply illustrations.

### **THEORY OF INFORMATION AS ONE OF THE CORNERSTONES OF DECODING STYLISTICS**

We have seen that the term Decoding Stylistics is convenient because it reveals the connection of text interpretation with information theory and also shows which end of the communication process the attention of that branch of stylistics is focused on, that our major interest is concentrated on the receiving end.

### **THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION**

It seems obvious enough that language is used for communication and sharing experience. The process of communication is studied not only in linguistics but also in semiotics, in the Theory of Information, and many other disciplines. Information Theory is actually a branch of mathematical physics first emerged to meet the demands of modern engineering but very soon proved to be of very general usefulness. Its principles, ideas and notions are applied in many different fields. Not only is it the basis of cybernetics but it is becoming more and more indispensable in biology and semiotics, economics and warfare, medical sciences, psychology and last but not least linguistics.

It is necessary to emphasize and remember that the decoding stylistics we discuss is not interested in the engineering possibilities of Information Theory but in its philosophical and heuristic possibilities. Moreover, this does not mean that all other critical approaches should be cast aside in embracing what is new. [...]

It may be helpful to note ... that the first to mention the importance of Information Theory for linguistics were not linguists but mathematicians – those who created Information Theory. It was Cl. Shannon and Weaver in their classical book “The Mathematic Theory of Communication”, Urbana, 1949, who pointed it out and also mentioned that N. Wiener himself believed that the analysis of communication will pave the way for a theory of meaning.[...]

We must admit that untill now Information Theory was used only in sciences where some mathematical apparatus has been already worked out. Shannon’s main achievement was finding a way to measure information mathematically. On the other hand, mathematization of science is not limited to the application of existing methods. On the contrary, history of science shows that new demands always gave a

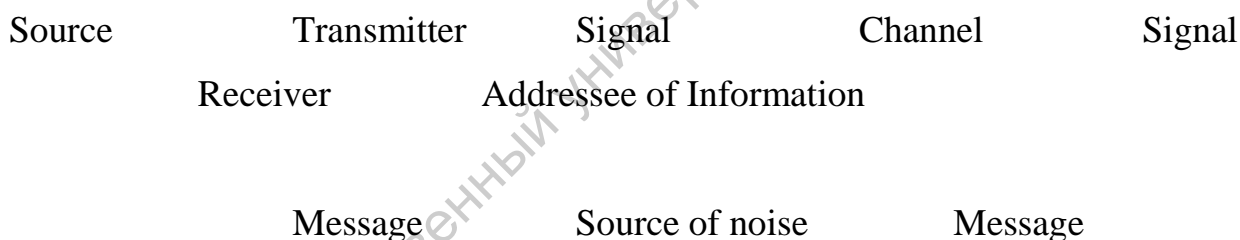


strong impetus to mathematics itself so that new branches of mathematics came into being.[...]

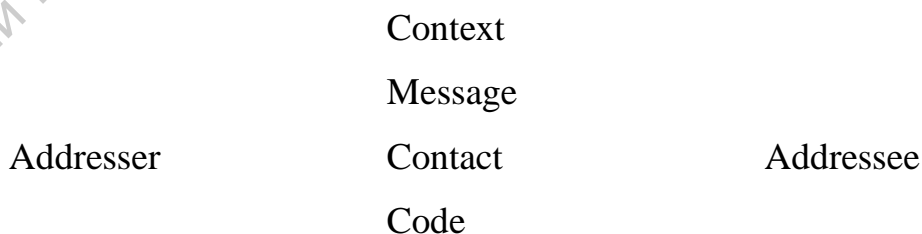
Information Theory makes use of such terms as information, message, code, communication, channel, encode, decode, feedback, redundancy and some others that are less important for our needs. We shall explain these terms by and by and see their relevance for linguistics, stylistics and text interpretation.

Their importance and value for us depends on the possibility they give to grasp common features in apparently different phenomena, make new powerful generalizations and formulate laws common to different branches of knowledge in a unified system of terms and notions. This permits very different and distant branches to cooperate in development.

As an example of this cooperation one might consider the scheme of communication offered by Claude Shannon [...] and some of the many adaptations of this scheme by linguists.



Roman Jakobson adapted this for linguistics in the following form:



Ivor Richards gave a more elaborate variant, considering not the participants or means of communication but the process itself: Source – Selection – Encoding – Transmission – Reception – Decoding – Development – Destination.

The most interesting additions being *context* with Jakobson and *development* and *destination* with Richards.

The adaptability of the scheme for the literary process from the point of view of the theory of reflection is comprehensively analyzed by I. Levy, although he emphasizes that this does not yield the whole truth about literature because in his opinion it is unable to show the historical conditioning of literary facts. It may be remarked, however, that the fact that this scheme has not been used to show this conditioning does not mean that it cannot be used.

The element of *development* introduced by Richards is of great importance because it permits to account for that distinguishing feature of literary perception – imagination based on imagery. (See I.A. Richards. *Variation Readings and Misreading.*// *Style in Language*. Th. A. Sebeok - ed., 1960).

## BASIC TERMS

Shannon gave a new interpretation to such notions as ‘information’ and ‘message’.

In the above scheme the information source is where the message to be sent is selected from an array of possible messages. The transmitter encodes the message into a signal. The signal is sent through a communication channel. The message is received and decoded by a receiver. There is a destination analogous to the source which makes use of the signal. Undesirable but inevitable variations in the signal due to the various external causes affecting transmission are called noise.

In Shannon’s definition information refers not to the meaningful content of a particular message but to the degree of freedom of choice with which the information source may choose the elements to compose a given message. This information is non-semantic but probabilistic.

On a later occasion Shannon described information as what remains invariant in all reversible operations of coding or translation. This idea seemed so attractive to many linguists that they adopted it for a definition of meaning. In my opinion,

however, the very general concept of information and the linguistic meaning should not be confused.[...]

In Decoding Stylistics we are concerned with that trace as the influence of literature on the mind and personality of the reader and on his further active position in life. The process of communication does not stop with the first decoding point but goes on.

Among the many different choices the writer has to make in the stage of selection, note the selection of genre suitable for this or that subject-matter and idea. He has to decide when he encodes it, whether he does it as a novelist, a poet, a dramatist with further subdivisions of lyrical, satirical or comical approach and further still: an elegy, a ballad, a sonnet etc. These organize and connect the message and may be regarded as very general code systems, imposing some choice of elements, and some further restrictions. The next step is the choice of images. As we read the elements of the text and their connections are gradually perceived, feedback plays a most important role because our response continuously changes, adapting to succeeding events going on as a process of retrospective patterning combined with some expectation for what is coming. The conclusion of a text is the point when the total pattern is revealed. As we read the poem, our expectations of the probable further development depend on the interaction of what we read in the text and our thesaurus, that is the contents of our memory, and these expectations are constantly readjusted in feedback.

We shall now try to see what these terms mean for us and how this general scheme works in the field of communication by the channel of literature. The process of communication starts in this case when a writer or a poet who receives a vast stream of information from the surrounding reality, selects in this mass of information something that he wants to impart to others. This stage is a complicated creative process studied in the history of literature. It results in compressing and encoding the message, i.e. choosing the necessary items from a system of codes. The codes involved are studied by linguistics, poetics, semiotics etc.

**A code** is a set of signs and rules in which they are arranged used for transmitting messages through some specific channel (i.e. suitable for some specific channel).

The term **sign** can be used to mean a discrete physical element that carries information, i.e. something material that can be distinguished by the senses and stands for something else. Thus, in each letter of the alphabet we recognize a distinct shape different from that of any other letter, and standing for some sound. As elements of a code simple signs combine into more complicated codograms, and these, in their turn, form codograms of a higher level. Finally, a complete message results. In language all units: sounds, morphemes, words, sentences etc. are defined by placing them into larger units of higher levels. The theory of signs is studied in semiotics. (See U.S. Stepanov, Semiotika, M., 1971).

The term **signal** should be distinguished from the term **sign**. A text is an arrangement of static material signs situated on a page, framed by a margin and arranged typographically in a certain way. A signal is a dynamic nerve impulse transmitting the message to the reader's mind. The transmission is simultaneously an interpretation directed by the signs of the text serving as directions.

**A message** is a sum total of the properties of the source reflected and transmitted to the addressee or in other words it is the state of one system as rendered by the elements of another system.

By **encoding** or **coding** we mean the operation of identification of symbols and groups of symbols of one kind with symbols and groups of symbols of a different kind.

**Decoding** by the receiver is the reverse operation – reconstruction of the message by knowing code combinations.

**A communication channel** serves as a medium of contact.

The transmitter encodes the message and transmits it in signals suitable for the channel serving as medium of contact. In our case we regard literature as an analogy of the channel. At the stage of transmission the signal is mixed with inevitable noise,

i.e. with various disturbances in the communication system that interfere with the reception of information.

**The source of noise** may be different. There may be for example changes that occur in one of the codes used during the time that passes between the moments of encoding and decoding. Changes may affect language or manners. Manners that were considered quite polite in the 16<sup>th</sup> century may seem revolting in the 20<sup>th</sup>. I.A. Richards thinks the codes that rule wit peculiarly variable. Jokes are apt to become tasteless or lose their point with the passage of time. (Richards, *Ib.*, p. 199).

In the original scheme as used in engineering, the source of information and the addressee may be human beings, while transmitter and receiver are technical devices. In our case it seems more appropriate to take transmitter and receiver as human, i.e. writer and reader respectively, and consider the end items, source and addressee, to be the social reality surrounding them.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is the point of applying the scheme of Claude Shannon for the purposes of stylistics? How was it transformed by linguists and literary critics?
2. Interpret the terms borrowed by stylisticians from Information Theory and say what they imply in stylistics.

# FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

GEOFFREY LEECH

(from: "A LINGUISTIC GUIDE TO ENGLISH POETRY")

## FOREGROUNDING AND INTERPRETATION

'Poetry's unnatural', said Mr Weller; 'No one ever talked poetry 'cept a beadle on a boxin' day'.

In concentrating on the abnormalities of poetic language in Chapter 3, we saw that there is truth, in a sense, in at least the first part of Mr. Weller's remark. But what we have to consider in this chapter is something beyond Mr. Weller's matter-of-fact wisdom: how the apparently unnatural, aberrant, even nonsensical, is justified by significance at some deeper level of interpretation. This question has been raised informally in earlier chapters, especially in connection with the Examples for Discussion, for to have tried to separate deviance altogether from significance would have been a very artificial exercise. But we need to give the subject more careful attention.

### FOREGROUNDING

First, however, I wish to place linguistic deviation in a wider aesthetic context, by connecting it with the general principle of *FOREGROUNDING*.

### FOREGROUNDING IN ART AND ELSEWHERE

It is a very general principle of artistic communication that a work of art in some way deviates from norms which we, as members of society, have learnt to expect in the medium used. A painting that is representational does not simply reproduce the visual stimuli an observer would receive if he were looking at the scene

it depicts: what is artistically interesting is how it deviates from photographic accuracy, from simply being a 'copy of nature'. An abstract painting, on the other hand, is interesting according to how it deviates from mass-produced regularities of pattern, from absolute symmetry, etc. Just as painting acts against a background of norms, so in music there are expected patterns - of melody, rhythm, harmonic progression, abstract form, etc., and a composer's skill lies not in mechanically reproducing these, but in introducing unexpected departures from them. As a general rule, anyone who wishes to investigate the significance and value of a work of art must concentrate on the element of interest and surprise, rather than on the automatic pattern. Such deviations from linguistic or other socially accepted norms have been given the special name of 'fore-grounding', which invokes the analogy of a figure seen against a background. The artistic deviation 'sticks out' from its background, the automatic system, like a figure in the foreground of a visual field.

The application of this concept to poetry is obvious. The foregrounded figure is the linguistic deviation, and the background is the language - the system taken for granted in any talk of 'deviation'. Just as the eye picks out the figure as the important and meaningful element in its field of vision, so the reader of poetry picks out the linguistic deviation in such a phrase as 'a grief ago' as the most arresting and significant part of the message, and interprets it by measuring it against the background of the expected pattern. It should be added, however, that the rules of the English language as a unity are not the only standard of normality: as we saw in Chapter I, the English of poetry has its own set of norms, so that 'routine licences' which are odd in the context of English as a whole are not foregrounded, but rather expected, when they occur in a poem.

The unique creative innovations of poetry, not the routine deviations, are what we must chiefly have in mind in this discussion of foregrounding.

Deliberate linguistic foregrounding is not confined to poetry, but is found, for example, in joking speech and in children's games. Literature is distinguished, as the Czech scholar Mukarovsky says, by the 'consistency and systematic character of foregrounding', but even so, in some non-literary writing, such as comic 'nonsense

prose', foregrounding may be just as pervasive and as violent (if not more so) as it is in most poetry:

Henry was his father's son and it were time for him to go into his father's business of Brummer Striving. It wert a farst dying trade which was fast dying.

Even in this short passage from *John Lennon in his Own Write* there are several instances of orthographic, grammatical, and semantic deviation. If a longer passage were considered, it would be seen that the linguistic foregrounding is far from being spasmodic or random - it follows a certain rationale of its own. It is difficult to analyse what is meant by foregrounding being 'systematic', but the notion is intuitively clear in the feeling we have that there is some method in a poet's (and even in John Lennon's) 'madness'.

#### AN EXAMPLE

A convincing illustration of the power of foregrounding to suggest latent significance is furnished by those modern poets (especially Pound and Eliot) who make use of the stylistic device of transposing pieces of ordinary, non-poetic language into a poetic context. A famous example of this kind of register-borrowing is the bar-parlour monologue in 'A Game of Chess' [*The Waste Land*, III]:

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said –  
I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,  
Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.  
He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you  
To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there ...

The very fact that this passage occurs in a poem, incongruously rubbing shoulders with other, more respectably literary types of English, causes us to pay it



the compliment of unusual scrutiny. Here it is foregrounded, whereas if it had been overheard in a pub or on a bus, it would not have been. We find ourselves not paying heed to its meaning *qua* casual gossip, but rather asking what is the point of its inclusion at this place in the poem? What is its relevance to its context? What is its artistic significance, in the light of what we have understood of the rest of the poem? This method of composition recalls the painter's technique of collage; in particular, the gumming of bits of newspaper, advertisements, etc., on to the surface of a painting. Because a piece of newspaper, whatever its content, appears in the unwonted setting of a painting, we look at it with more attention, and with a different kind of attention, from that of the careless eye we would cast upon it in a customary situation. The same applies to Eliot's literary collage.

## **INTERPRETATION**

Poetic foregrounding presupposes some motivation on the part of the writer and some explanation on the part of the reader. A question-mark accompanies each foregrounded feature; consciously or unconsciously, we ask: 'What is the point?' Of course, there may be no point at all; but the appreciative reader, by act of faith, assumes that there is one, or at least tends to give the poet the benefit of the doubt. On the other hand, we must not forget the Mr Wellers of this world, who shrug their shoulders at each question-mark, and take poetry to be a kind of outlandish nonsense. The problem we now have to consider is the problem which stands astride the gap between linguistic analysis and literary appreciation: When is a linguistic deviation (artistically) significant?

### **THE SUBJECTIVITY OF INTERPRETATION**

To the foregoing question I wish to consider three answers.

**ANSWER 1:** *When it (i.e. the deviation) communicates something.* According to this definition of significance, practically all deviation is significant. Consider the following three cases:

[a] My aunt suffers from terrible *authoritis*.

[b] Like you plays?

[c] The Houwe of Commons [Houses of Parliament].

The linguistic abnormalities in these examples are most likely to be taken as errors, as trivial hindrances to communication. But unintentionally, they may convey quite a bit of information. The first, if we take it to be an example of malapropism (*authoritis* for *arthritis*), at least tells us something about the education, character, etc., of its perpetrator. In the second example, the ungrammaticality probably suggests that its author is a foreigner with an imperfect command of English. The third example, occurring in a printed text, informs us that the printer has made a mistake, that the author is a careless proof-reader, etc. Such mistakes may, of course, be deliberately imitated for artistic or comic effect, as in the case of Mrs Malaprop herself:

An aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend anything in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue and a nice derangement of epitaphs.

[Sheridan, *The Rivals*, III.iii]

However, it is clear that even the most trivial and unmotivated deviation may communicate information of a kind.

**ANSWER 2:** *When it communicates what was intended by its author.* This definition of 'significant' narrows the first one to exclude solecisms, malapropisms, and other sorts of linguistic blunder. It insists that a deviation is significant only when deliberate. But the one main difficulty about this answer is that the intention of the author is in practice inaccessible. If he is dead, his intention must remain for ever unknown, unless he happens to have recorded it; and even a living poet is usually shy of explaining 'what he meant' when he wrote a given poem. There is, moreover, a

widely held view that what a poem signifies lies within itself and cannot be added to by extraneous commentary. In any case, must a poet's own explanation be treated as oracular? An interesting case of conflicting interpretations is reported in Tindall's *A Reader's Guide to Dylan Thomas*. In Thomas's *A Grief Ago* there occurs a puzzling compound *country-handed*:

The country-handed grave boxed into love.

Edith Sitwell discerned in the compound a 'rural picture of a farmer growing flowers and corn', whereas Thomas himself said that this was quite contrary to his intention, and that he had envisaged the grave in the likeness of a boxer with fists as big as countries. Should we accept Thomas's 'correction' as the last word on the subject? Or should we not rather accept Edith Sitwell's interpretation as being valid and artistically significant in its own right?

**ANSWER 3:** *When it is judged or felt by the reader to be significant.* This answer, anticipated above, is on the face of it the most unsatisfactory of all: it merely says that the significance of a poem lies ultimately in the mind of the reader, just as beauty is said to lie in the eye of the beholder. Yet I think we are forced back on this definition by the failure of the other two to circumscribe what people in practice take to be significant in a poem. We may go further, and say that not only whether a deviation has a sensible interpretation, but what interpretation it is to be given, is a subjective matter. Not that I am advocating the critical anarchy of every man's opinion being as good as his neighbour's: there is such a thing as a consensus of interpretative judgment, in which certain experts (critics) have a bigger voice than lay-men, and in which the voice of the poet, if heard, is probably the most authoritative of all.

This conclusion, however much of an anticlimax it may seem, is salutary if it teaches us the difference between the objectivity (at least in spirit) of linguistic analysis, and the subjectivity (in the last resort) of critical interpretation. It should also teach us that linguistics and literary criticism, in so far as they both deal with

poetic language, are complementary not competing activities. Where the two meet is above all in the study of foregrounding.

## COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How the notions of deviation and foregrounding are connected, according to G.Leech? Is deviation always deliberate and systematic? What are the examples of it?
2. What are the roles of the author and the reader in foregrounding? When is it artistically significant?

**L.PERRINE, T.R. ARP**

### FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

(from: "SOUND AND SENSE")

METAPHOR • PERSONIFICATION • METONYMY

Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another. – ROBERT FROST

Let us assume that your roommate has just come in out of a rainstorm and you say to him, "Well, you're a pretty sight! Got slightly wet, didn't you?" And he replies, "Wet? I'm drowned! It's raining cats and dogs outside, and my raincoat's just like a sieve!" It is likely that you and your roommate understand each other well enough, and yet if you examine this conversation literally, that is to say unimaginatively, you will find that you have been speaking nonsense. Actually you have been speaking figuratively. You have been saying less than what you mean, or more than what you mean, or the opposite of what you mean, or something else than what you mean. You

did not mean that your roommate was a pretty sight but that he was a wretched sight. You did not mean that he got slightly wet but that he got very wet. Your roommate did not mean that he got drowned but that he got drenched. It was not raining cats and dogs; it was raining water. And your roommate's raincoat is so unlike a sieve that not even a baby would confuse them.

METAPHOR and SIMILE are both comparisons between things essentially unlike. The only distinction is that in simile the comparison is expressed, by the use of some word such as like, as, than, similar to, or resembles. In metaphor the comparison is implied; that is, the figurative term is substituted for or identified with the literal term. When Shakespeare writes in "Spring" (page 11) that "merry larks are ploughmen's clocks," he is using a metaphor, for he identifies larks with clocks. When Tennyson writes that the eagle "clasps the crag with crooked hands" (page 5), he is using a metaphor, for he substitutes crooked hands for claws. But when, in the same poem, the eagle falls "like a thunderbolt," a simile is being used.

## **PRESENTIMENT**

Presentiment is that long shadow on the lawn

Indicative that suns go down;

The notice to the startled grass

That darkness is about to pass.

*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

PERSONIFICATION i.e. ANTHROPOMORPHISM consists in giving the attributes of a human being to an animal, an object, or an idea. It is really a subtype of metaphor, an implied comparison in which the figurative term of the comparison is always a human being. When Wordsworth writes of the "Sea that bares her bosom to the moon" (page 33), he is personifying an object.<sup>1</sup> When Keats describes Autumn as a harvester "sitting careless on a granary floor" or "on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep" (page 46), he is personifying an idea. Personifications differ in the degree to which they ask the reader actually to visualize the literal term in human form. In

Keats's comparison we are asked to make a complete identification of Autumn with a human being. In Wordsworth's, the identification is much less complete. And in Emily Dickinson's mention of the "startled grass," a personification is just suggested; we should make a mistake if we tried to visualize the grass in human form. Closely related to personification is APOSTROPHE, which consists in addressing someone absent or something nonhuman as if it were alive and present and could reply to what is being said. William Blake apostrophizes the tiger throughout his famous poem (page 237), and Rupert Brooke, at the end of "The Great Lover," apostrophizes as well as personifies the sights and sounds that he has loved (page 45). Personification and apostrophe are both ways of giving "life" and immediacy to one's language, but since neither, especially apostrophe, requires great imaginative power on the part of the poet, they may degenerate into mere mannerisms and are to be found as often in bad and mediocre poetry as in good. We need to distinguish between their effective use and their merely conventional use.

The various figures of speech blend into each other, and it is sometimes difficult to classify a specific example as definitely metaphor or symbol, symbolism or allegory, understatement or irony, irony or paradox. I have thus been arbitrary in classifying "crooked hands" as a metaphor and "bares her bosom" as personification. The important consideration is not that we classify figures definitively but that we construe them correctly.

### **DEATH STANDS ABOVE ME**

Death stands above me, whispering low  
I know not what into my ear;  
Of his strange language all I know  
Is, there is not a word of fear.

*Walter Savage Landor (1776-1864)*

### **THE SEA-GULL**

Hark to the whimper of the sea-gull;  
He weeps because he's not an ea-gull.  
Suppose you were, you silly sea-gull,  
Could you explain it to your she-gull?

*Ogden Nash (1905)*

SYNECDOCHE (the use of the part for the whole) and METONYMY (the use of a closely related idea for the idea itself) are so much alike that it is hardly worth while to distinguish between them, and the latter term is increasingly coming to be used for both. In both some significant detail or aspect of an experience is substituted for the experience itself. Thus when Shakespeare says that the cuckoo's song is unpleasing to a "married ear," he means to a married man, and when he says that the yellow cuckoo-buds "paint the meadow with delight," he means with bright color. Similarly, in Alfred Noyes's "The Highwayman" the "black cascade of perfume" that tumbles over the highwayman's breast is really hair, and "death at every window" is literally a gun at every window. But in each case the metonymy implies its literal equivalent and something more. Many metonymies, like many metaphors, have become so much a part of the language that they no longer strike us as figurative: such is the case with redskin for Indian, paleface for white man, and salt and tar for sailor. Such figures are referred to as dead metaphors or dead figures. A fresh use of metonymy, however, can be both pleasing to the imagination and economical by directing the imagination to the significant aspect of the experience.

## **TO FISH**

You strange, astonished-looking, angle-faced,  
Dreary-mouthed, gaping wretches of the sea,  
Gulping salt-water everlastingly,  
Cold-blooded, though with red your blood be graced,

And mute, though dwellers in the roaring waste;  
And you, all shapes beside, that fishy be,—  
Some round, some flat, some long, all devilry,  
Legless, unloving, infamously chaste:—  
O scaly, slippery, wet, swift, staring wights,  
What is't ye do? what life lead? eh, dull goggles?  
How do ye vary your vile days and nights?  
How pass your Sundays? Are ye still but joggles  
In ceaseless wash? Still nought but gapes, and bites,  
And drinks, and stares, diversified with boggles?

*Leigh Hunt (1784-1859)*

We said at the beginning of this chapter that figurative language often provides a more effective means of saying what we mean than does direct statement. What are some of the reasons for that effectiveness?

First, figurative language affords us imaginative pleasure. Imagination, in one sense, might be described as that faculty or ability of the mind that proceeds by sudden leaps from one point to another, which goes up a stair by leaping in one jump from the bottom to the top rather than by climbing up one step at a time. The mind takes delight in these sudden leaps, in seeing likenesses between unlike things. We have all taken pleasure in staring into a fire and seeing castles and cities and armies in it, or in looking into the clouds and shaping them into animals or faces, or in seeing a man in the moon. We name our plants and flowers after fancied resemblances: jack-in-the-pulpit, babies'-breath, Queen Anne's lace. Figures of speech are therefore satisfying in themselves, providing us a source of pleasure in the exercise of the imagination.

Second, figures of speech are a way of bringing additional imagery into verse, of making the abstract concrete, of making poetry more sensuous. When Emily Dickinson compares presentiment to a shadow on the lawn, she has brought in an image where previously there was none. And when Browning compares the crisping



waves to "fiery ringlets" he has transformed one image into three. Figurative language is a way of multiplying the sense appeal of poetry.

Third, figures of speech are a way of adding emotional intensity to otherwise merely informative statements and of conveying attitudes along with information. If we say, "So-and-so is a rat," or "My feet are killing me," our meaning is as much emotional as informative. When Rupert Brooke addresses sights and sounds and smells as "loves," he indicates an emotional attitude toward them, and when Wilfred Owen compares a soldier caught in a gas attack to a man drowning under a green sea, he conveys to us a feeling of despair as well as a visual image.

Fourth, figures of speech are a means of concentration, a way of saying much in brief compass. Like words, they may be multidimensional. Consider, for instance, the merits of comparing life to a candle, as Shakespeare does in a passage from *Macbeth*. Life is like a candle in that it begins and ends in darkness; in that while it burns, it gives off light and energy, is active and colorful; in that it gradually consumes itself, gets shorter and shorter; in that it can be snuffed out at any moment; in that it is brief at best, burns only for a short duration. Possibly your imagination can suggest other similarities. But at any rate, *Macbeth's* compact metaphorical description of life as a "brief candle" suggests certain truths about life that would require dozens of words to state in literal language. At the same time it makes the abstract concrete, provides imaginative pleasure, and adds a degree of emotional intensity.

Obviously one of the necessary abilities for reading poetry is the ability to interpret figurative language. Every use of figurative language involves a risk of misinterpretation, though the risk is well worth taking. For the person who can translate the figure, the dividends are immense. Fortunately all people have imagination to some degree, and imagination can be cultivated. By practice one's ability to interpret figures of speech can be strengthened and increased.

## **EXERCISE**

Identify each of the following quotations as literal or figurative. If figurative, explain what is being compared to what, and explain the appropriateness of the comparison. EXAMPLE: "Talent is a cistern; genius is a fountain." ANSWER: A metaphor. Talent = cistern; genius = fountain. Talent exists in finite supply; it can be used up. Genius is inexhaustible, ever-renewing.

1. O tenderly the haughty day

Fills his blue urn with fire.—*Emerson*

2. It is with words as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed, the deeper they bum.—*Robert Southey*

3. Joy and Temperance and Repose

Slam the door on the doctor's nose.—*Anonymous*

4. The pen is mightier than the sword.—*Edward Bulwer-Lytton*

5. The Cambridge ladies . . . live in furnished souls.—*E. E. Cummings*

6. The green lizard and the golden snake,

' - Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.—*Shelley*

7. Dorothy's eyes, with their long brown lashes, looked very much like her mother's.—*Laetitia Johnson*

8. Is this the face that launched a thousand ships? — *Marlowe*

9. Great poetry cannot be shrivelled to an aphorism. — *E. M. W. Tillyard*

10. Love's feeling is more soft and sensible

Than are the tender horns of cockled snails. — *Shakespeare*

11. ... Let us sit upon the ground  
And tell sad stories of the death of kings. — *Shakespeare*

12. Now half [of the departing guests] to the setting sun are gone,  
And half to the rising day. — *Tennyson*

13. I do not know whether my present poems are better than the earlier ones. But this  
is certain: they are much sadder and sweeter, like pain dipped in honey.— *Heinrich  
Heine*

14. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die. — *Isaiah 22:13*

15. Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we may die.  
— *Common misquotation of the above.*

## THE NET

I made you many and many a song  
Yet never one told all you are —  
It was as though a net of words  
    Were flung to catch a star;  
It was as though I curved my hand  
And dipped sea-water eagerly,  
Only to find it lost the blue  
Dark splendor of the sea.

*Sara Teasdale (1884-1933)*

## COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do we resort to a figurative statement instead of using a literal one?
2. What is a figure of speech?
3. What are distinctions and similarities between metaphor and simile?
4. How can we define personification? What are its peculiarities?
5. Why is apostrophe considered to be closely related to personification?
6. What makes figurative language effective?
7. Why is it important to develop one's ability to interpret figures of speech?

## PARADOX - OVERSTATEMENT - UNDERSTATEMENT - IRONY

Aesop tells the tale of a traveller who sought refuge with a Satyr on a bitter winter night. On entering the Satyr's lodging, he blew on his fingers, and was asked by the Satyr what he did it for. "To warm them up," he explained. Later, on being served with a piping hot bowl of porridge, he blew also on it, and again was asked what he did it for. "To cool it off," he explained. The Satyr there-upon thrust him out of doors, for he would have nothing to do with a man who could blow hot and cold with the same breath.

A PARADOX is an apparent contradiction which is nevertheless somehow true. It may be either a situation or a statement. Aesop's tale of the traveler illustrates a paradoxical situation. As a figure of speech, paradox is a statement. When Alexander Pope wrote that a literary critic of his time would "damn with faint praise," he was using a verbal paradox, for how can a man damn by praising?

When we understand all the conditions and circumstances involved in a paradox, we find that what at first seemed impossible is actually entirely plausible and not strange at all. The paradox of the cold hands and hot porridge is not strange

to a man who knows that a stream of air directed upon an object of different temperature will tend to bring that object closer to its own temperature. And Pope's paradox is not strange when we realize that damn is being used figuratively, and that Pope means only that a too reserved praise may damage an author with the public almost as much as adverse criticism. In a paradoxical statement the contradiction usually stems from one of the words being used figuratively or in more than one sense.

The value of paradox is its shock value. Its seeming impossibility startles the reader into attention, and thus, by the fact of its apparent absurdity, it underscores the truth of what is being said.

### MY LIFE CLOSED TWICE

My life closed twice before its close;  
It yet remains to see  
If Immortality unveil  
A third event to me,  
    So huge, so hopeless to conceive,  
    As these that twice befell.  
Parting is all we know of heaven,  
And all we need of hell.

*Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)*

Overstatement, understatement, and verbal irony form a continuous series, for they consist, respectively, of saying more, saying less, and saying the opposite of what one really means.

OVERSTATEMENT, or *hyperbole*, is simply an exaggeration, but exaggeration in the service of truth. It is not the same as a fish story. If you say, "I'm starved!" or "You could have knocked me over with a feather!" or "I'll die if I don't pass this course!" you do not expect to be believed; you are merely adding emphasis

to what you really mean. (And if you say, "There were literally millions of people at the dance!" you are merely piling one overstatement on top of another, for you really mean that "There were figuratively millions of people at the dance," or, literally, "The dance hall was very crowded.")

It is paradoxical that one can emphasize a truth either by overstating it or by understating it. UNDERSTATEMENT, or saying less than one means, may exist in what one says or merely in how one says it. If, for instance, upon sitting down to a loaded dinner plate, you say, "This looks like a good bite," you are actually stating less than the truth; but if you say, with Artemus Ward, that a man who holds his hand for half an hour in a lighted fire will experience "a sensation of excessive and disagreeable warmth," you are stating what is literally true but with a good deal less force than the situation might seem to warrant.

### **A RED, RED ROSE**

O, my luvie is like a red, red rose,  
That's newly sprung in June.  
O my luvie is like the melodie  
That's sweetly played in tune.

5 As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,  
So deep in luvie am I,  
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,  
And the rocks melt wi' the sun!  
And I will luvie thee still, my dear,  
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luvie,

And fare thee weel awhile!  
And I will come again, my luve,  
Though it were ten thousand mile!

*Robert Burns (1769-1796)*

## **THE ROSE FAMILY**

The rose is a rose,  
And was always a rose.  
But the theory now goes  
That the apple's a rose,  
And the pear is, and so's  
The plum, I suppose.  
The dear only knows  
What will next prove a rose.  
You, of course, are a rose-  
But were always a rose.

*Robert Frost (1874- )*

Like paradox, irony has meanings which extend beyond its use merely as a figure of speech.

VERBAL IRONY, saying the opposite of what one means, is often confused with sarcasm and with satire, and for that reason it may be well to look at the meanings of all three terms. SARCASM and SATIRE both imply ridicule, one on the colloquial level, the other on the literary level. Sarcasm is simply bitter or cutting speech, intended to wound the feelings (it comes from a Greek word meaning to tear flesh). Satire is a more formal term, applied usually to written literature rather than to speech, and ordinarily implying a higher motive: it is ridicule (either bitter or gentle) of human folly or vice, with the purpose of bringing about reform, or at least of keeping other people from falling into similar folly or vice. Irony, on the other hand, is a literary device or figure which may be used in the service of sarcasm or ridicule

or may not. It is popularly confused with sarcasm and satire because it is so often used as their tool: but irony may be used without either sarcastic or satirical intent, and sarcasm and satire may exist (though they do not usually) without irony. If, for instance, one of the members of your class raises his hand on the discussion of this point and says, "I don't understand," and your instructor replies, with a tone of heavy disgust in his voice, "Well, I wouldn't expect you to," he is being sarcastic but not ironical; he means exactly what he says. But if, after you have done particularly well on an examination, your instructor brings your test papers into the classroom saying, "Here's some bad news for you: you all got A's and B's!" he is being ironical but not sarcastic. Sarcasm, we may say, is cruel, as a bully is cruel: it intends to give hurt. Satire is both cruel and kind, as a surgeon is cruel and kind: it gives hurt in the interest of the patient or of society. Irony is neither cruel nor kind: it is simply a device, like a surgeon's scalpel, for performing any operation more skillfully.

Like all figures of speech, verbal irony runs the danger of being misunderstood. With irony the risks are perhaps greater than with other figures, for if metaphor is misunderstood, the result may be simply bewilderment; but if irony is misunderstood, the reader goes away with exactly the opposite idea from what the user meant to convey. The results of misunderstanding if, for instance, you ironically called someone a villain, might be calamitous. For this reason the user of irony must be very skilful in its use, conveying by an altered tone or "by a wink of the eye or pen that he is speaking ironically; and the reader of literature must be always alert to recognize the subtle signs that irony is intended.

No matter how broad or obvious the irony, there will always be, in any large audience, a number who will misunderstand. The humorist Artemus Ward used to protect himself against these people by writing at the bottom of his newspaper column, "This is writ ironical." But irony is most delightful and most effective, for the good reader, when it is subtlest. It sets up a special understanding between writer and reader that may add either grace or force. If irony is too obvious, it sometimes seems merely crude. But if effectively used, it, like all figurative language, is capable of adding extra dimensions to meaning.



## OF ALPHUS

No egg on Friday Alph will eat,  
But drunken he will be  
On Friday still. Oh, what a pure  
Religious man is he!

*Anonymous (16th century)*

The term *irony* always implies some sort of discrepancy or incongruity. In verbal irony the discrepancy is between what is said and what is meant. In other forms the discrepancy may be between appearance and reality, or between expectation and fulfillment. These other forms of irony are, on the whole, more important resources for the poet than is verbal irony. Two types, especially, are important for the beginning student to know.

In DRAMATIC IRONY the discrepancy is not between what the speaker says and what he means but between what the speaker says and what the author means. The speaker's words may be perfectly straightforward, but the author, by putting these words in a particular speaker's mouth, may be indicating to the reader ideas or attitudes quite opposed to those the speaker is voicing. This form of irony is more complex than is verbal irony, and demands a more complex response from the reader. It may be used not only to convey attitudes but also to illuminate character, for the author who uses it is indirectly commenting not only upon the value of the ideas uttered but also upon the nature of the person who utters them. Such comment may be harsh, gently mocking, or sympathetic.

## THE CHIMNEY SWEEPER

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue

Could scarcely cry "'weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head, 5  
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved; so I said,  
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare,  
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, and that very night,  
As Tom was asleep, he had such a sight! 10  
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned, and Jack,  
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.  
And by came an Angel who had a bright key,  
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;  
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run, 15  
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,  
They rise upon clouds and sport with the wind;  
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,  
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy. 20

And so Tom awoke, and we rose in the dark,  
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.  
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and warm;  
So if all do their duty they need not fear harm.

*William Blake (1767-1887)*

A third type of irony is IRONY OF SITUATION. This occurs when there is a discrepancy between the actual circumstances and those that would seem appropriate,

or between what one anticipates and what actually comes to pass. If a man and his second wife, on the first night of their honeymoon, are accidentally seated at the theatre next to the man's first wife, we should call the situation ironical. When, in O. Henry's famous short story "The Gift of the Magi" a poor young husband pawns his most prized possession, a gold watch, in order to buy his wife a set of combs for her hair for Christmas, and his wife sells her most prized possession, her long brown hair, in order to buy a fob for her husband's watch, we call the situation ironical. When King Midas, in the famous fable, is granted his fondest wish, that anything he touches turn to gold, and then finds that he cannot eat because even his food turns to gold, we call the situation ironical. When Coleridge's Ancient Mariner finds himself in the middle of the ocean with "Water, water, everywhere" but not a "drop to drink," we call the situation ironical. In each case the circumstances are not what would seem appropriate or what we would expect.

Dramatic irony and irony of situation are powerful devices for the poet, for, like symbol, they enable him to suggest meanings without stating them—to communicate a great deal more than he says. We have seen one effective use of irony of situation in "Richard Cory" (page 36). Another is "Ozymandias," which follows.

Irony and paradox may be trivial or powerful devices, depending on their use. At their worst they may degenerate into mere mannerism and mental habit. At their best they may greatly extend the dimensions of meaning in a work of literature. Because they are devices that demand an exercise of critical intelligence, they are particularly valuable as safeguards against sentimentality.

## **OZYMANDIAS**

I met a traveler from an antique land

Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,

Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,

And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,

Tell that its sculptor well those passions read

5

Which yet survive (stamped on these lifeless things),

The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed;

And on the pedestal these words appear:

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings;

10

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"

Nothing beside remains. Round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

*Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822)*

Identify each of the following quotations as literal or figurative. If figurative, identify the figure as paradox, overstatement, understatement, or irony, and explain the use to which it is put (emotional emphasis, humour, satire, etc.):

1. Poetry is a language that tells us, through a more or less emotional reaction, something that cannot be said.—*Edwin Arlington Robinson*

2. Have not the Indians 'been kindly and justly treated? Have not the temporal things, the vain baubles and filthy lucre of this world, which were too apt to engage their worldly and selfish thoughts, been benevolently taken from them? And have they not instead thereof, been taught to set their affections on things above? -*Washington Irving*

3. A man who could make so vile a pun would not scruple to pick a pocket.—*John Dennis*

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What is a paradox? How does a paradoxical situation differ from a verbal paradox?

2. What are the common features and distinctions between overstatement, understatement and verbal irony?
3. What is verbal irony and why is it confused with sarcasm and satire? How can we differentiate between them?
4. Why is it important to be skilful in the use of irony?
5. How does dramatic irony differ from verbal irony and what are its potentialities?
6. When does irony of situation occur?
7. Why irony and paradox are called ‘safeguard against sentiment’?

**STEPHEN ULLMANN**

### **TWO APPROACHES TO STYLE**

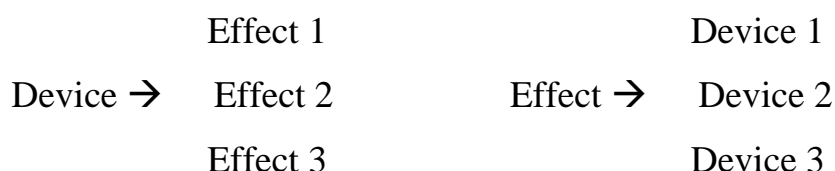
(from: “PATTERNS OF LITERARY STYLE”)

A quarter of a century ago, Leonard Bloomfield declared: “In all study of language we must start from forms and not from meanings.” This statement is far too categorical. Whenever we have to do with meaningful elements – morphemes, words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or even higher units of discourse – we may take either the form or the meaning, either *the signifiant* or *the signifie* as our starting point. As one linguist has put it, “ in the first case we take the sound (of a word or some other part of a linguistic expression) and then inquire into the meaning attached to it; in the second case we start from the signification and ask ourselves what formal expression it has found in the particular language we are dealing with. If we denote the outward form by the letter O, and the inner meaning by the letter I, we may represent the two ways as O -> I and I ->O respectively.”

In stylistics – one of whose founders, Charles Bally, was an advocate of the I -> O method – there exists a similar choice between two approaches; the terms of the problem are, however, rather different. Here we have to do, not with form and meaning, *signifiant* and *signifie*, expression and content, but with stylistic devices and the effects they produce. Moreover, stylistic phenomena are usually polyvalent: the

same device may give rise to several effects and, conversely, the same effect may be obtained from several different devices.

It is clear, then, that there are two alternative approaches to style. Bearing in mind the polyvalence of stylistic phenomena, the two methods may be represented as shown below.



The question now arises as to how the two methods work in practice and what their respective advantages are. The answer will depend on the nature and scope of any particular inquiry. If it is concerned with the stylistic resources of an entire language, then Method 2 will be clearly inappropriate. Effects of style *in vacuo*, divorced from the devices in which they are normally located, are too vague and general, and also too numerous and diverse, to provide an orderly framework for description and analysis. On the other hand, certain effects are sufficiently precise to be approached by Method 2; in this way monographs have been published on the various ways in which symmetry can be achieved in Modern French, and on the devices available for emphasizing an idea in seventeenth-century French and in the contemporary idiom. Other problems, such as, possibly, irony, could be attacked from the same angle. On the whole, however, this type of stylistic study lends itself better to Method 1, firmly anchored in linguistic devices – phonological, lexical, or grammatical – around which the effects which they subserve can be grouped.

The position is radically changed where the critic deals with a finite corpus, in particular with a single work or with the writings of an author as a whole, which are the two most popular forms of this kind of stylistic enquiry. Within the compass of a single work, which provides in many ways the ideal context for stylistic analysis, major effects of style are easily identifiable and highly significant because they are closely bound up with the thematic structure of the book. To take the one example,

several critics have shown how, in Camus's *L'Étranger*, a number of seemingly disparate devices concur to endow the narrator, Meursault, with a language of his own. Meursault is the embodiment of a peculiar human type, that of the "absurd" man and the various features of his language have to be in keeping with his psychology and outlook. Short, staccato sentences, with a bare minimum of causal links; simple, concrete vocabulary; avoidance of images except in one crucial scene, the murder on the beach, where they reflect the narrator's confused and semi-hallucinatory state of mind; a peculiar choice of tense, replacing the traditional Past Historic by the more direct, inconclusive, and conversational Past Indefinite: these and other idiosyncrasies form a kind of linguistic syndrome of the absurd man; without them, the novel would not exist. Such an approach is certainly more interesting and more rewarding than the study of the various effects produced by tenses, sentence-structure, imagery, and other devices *L'Étranger*.

Where the enquiry transcends the limits of single works and covers the writings of an author as a whole, it can be profitably focused on major effects of style rather than on the devices which help to realize them. These effects will be identified and interpreted as expressions of some fundamental quality, general attitude, or abiding preoccupation of the writer.

Most students of literary style tend, in fact, to take the linguistic data as their starting point, whether they concentrate on a single device, a group of devices, or the entire system of stylistic resources in a particular work or writer. Some may aim even higher and investigate the style of a group of authors, a school, movement, period, or literary genre.

There is one highly important stylistic element which raises special problems as regards the two approaches discussed so far. Imagery – metaphor, simile, metonymy, and allied figures – may be regarded a device of style which fits into the alternative models described above. Under Method 1, it can, and often does, serve as a focal point around which various effects produced by images can be grouped: they may give symbolic expression to some major theme or motif; they may transcribe highly complex abstract experiences in concrete terms; they may, as we have seen,

serve as a vehicle for irony, imply other valued judgements, play their part in the linguistic portrayal of a character, and have all kinds of other functions.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why does St.Ullmann find the approach of L.Bloomfield to the study of language too categorical? What approach does he propose?
2. How does the O -> I method work in stylistics? Describe the two methods.
3. Why is Method 2 inappropriate if the inquiry is concerned with the stylistic resources of an entire language?
4. What are the reasons explaining why Method 2 doesn't work for the research of an entire language?
5. What stylistic resources of an entire language can be approached by Method 2?
6. What method is more appropriate for stylistic analysis of a single work? Why?
7. How do various features of language converge to create the image of Meursault, the narrator in Camus's *L'Étranger*?
8. What method is more profitable when the inquiry transcends the limits of single works, and why?
9. How do most students of literary style tend to research literary texts?
10. Why does imagery raise special problems as regards the two approaches discussed so far?

**DONALD DAVIDSON**

### **WHAT METAPHORS MEAN**

(from: Reference, Truth and Reality. Boston, 1980 – p.238-254)

Metaphor is the dreamwork of language, and like all dreamwork its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator. The interpretation of dreams requires collaboration between a dreamer and a waker, even



if they be the same person; and the act of interpretation is itself a work of the imagination. So to understanding a metaphor is as much a creative endeavor as making a metaphor, and as little guided by rules.

It is no help (I shall argue) in explaining how words work in metaphor to posit metaphorical or figurative meanings, or special kinds of poetic or metaphorical truth. These ideas don't explain metaphor; metaphor explains them. Once we understand a metaphor we can call what we grasp the 'metaphorical truth' and (up to a point) say what the 'metaphorical meaning' is. But simply to lodge this meaning in the metaphor is like explaining why a pill puts you to sleep by saying it has a dormative power.

The idea, then, is that in metaphor certain words take on new, or what are often called 'extended', meanings. When we read that 'the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters', for example, we are to regard the word 'face' as having an extended meaning (I disregard further metaphor in the passage). The extension applies, as it happens, to what philosophers call the extension of the word, that is, the class of entities to which it refers. Here the word 'face' applies to ordinary faces, and to waters in addition.

Perhaps, then, we can explain metaphor as a kind of ambiguity: in the context of a metaphor, certain words have either a new meaning or an original meaning, and the force of the metaphor depends on our uncertainty as we waver between the two meanings. Thus when Melville writes that 'Christ was a chronometer', the effect of metaphor is produced by our taking 'chronometer' first in its ordinary sense and then in some extraordinary or metaphorical sense.

We can learn much about what metaphors mean by comparing them with similes, for a simile tells us, in part, what a metaphor merely nudges us into noting. Suppose Goneril had said, thinking of Lear, 'Old fools are like babes again': then she would have used the words to assert a similarity between old fools and babes. What she did say, of course, was 'Old fools are babes again', thus using the words to intimate what the simile declared. Thinking along these lines may inspire another theory of the figurative or special meaning of metaphors: the figurative meaning of a metaphor

is the literal meaning of the corresponding simile. Thus 'Christ was a chronometer' in its figurative sense is synonymous with 'Christ was like a chronometer', and the metaphorical meaning once locked up in 'He was burned up' is released in 'He was like someone who was burned up' (or perhaps 'He was like burned up').

Metaphor and simile are merely two among endless devices that serve to alert us aspects of the world by inviting us to make comparisons. I quote a few stanzas of

***'The Hippopotamus':***

The broad-backed hippopotamus  
Rests on his belly in the mud;  
Although he seems so firm to us  
He is merely flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood is weak and frail,  
Susceptible to nervous shock;  
While the True Church can never fail  
For it is based upon a rock.  
The hippo's feeble steps may err  
In compassing material ends,  
While the Church need never stir  
To gather in its dividends.

The 'potamus can never reach  
The mango on the mango-tree:  
But fruits of pomegranate and peach  
Refresh the Church from over sea.

*T.S. Eliot*

Here we are neither told that the Church resembles a hippopotamus (as in simile) nor bullied into making the comparison (as in metaphor), but there can be no doubt the words are being used to direct our attention to similarities between the two.

Metaphor does lead us to notice what might not otherwise be noticed, and there is no reason, I suppose, not to say these visions, thoughts and feelings inspired by the metaphor are true or false.

If a sentence used metaphorically is true or false in the ordinary sense, then it is clear that it is usually false. The most obvious semantic difference between simile and metaphor is that all similes are true and most metaphors are false. The earth is like a floor, the Assyrian did come down like a wolf on the fold, because everything is like everything. But turn these sentences into metaphors, and you turn them false; the earth is like a floor, but it is not a floor; Tolstoy, grown up, was like an infant, but he wasn't one.

Generally it is only when a sentence is taken to be false that we accept it as a metaphor and start to hunt out the hidden implication. It is probably for this reason that most metaphorical sentences are *patently* false, just as all similes are trivially true. Absurdity or contradiction in a metaphorical sentence guarantees we won't believe it, and invites us, under proper circumstances, to take the sentence metaphorically.

What makes the difference between a lie and a metaphor is not a difference in the words used or what they mean (in any strict sense of meaning) but in how the words are used. Using a sentence to tell a lie and using it to make a metaphor are, of course, totally different uses, so different that they do not interfere with one another as, say, acting and lying do.

Metaphor makes us see one thing as another by making some literal statement that inspires or prompts the insight. Since in most cases what the metaphor prompts or inspires is not entirely, or even at all, recognition of some truth or fact, the attempt to give literal expression to the content of the metaphor is simply misguided.

## COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do you understand the statement of D. Davidson “Metaphor is the dreamwork of language”? In what way does Davidson use it?
2. What is the “metaphorical truth”, according to Davidson? Can it be explained?
3. What kind of extended meaning does a word acquire in a metaphor?
4. What does the force of metaphor depend on? How does Davidson explain it through the example with “Christ was a chronometer”?
5. In what respect are the two devices of simile and metaphor different?
6. What idea does Davidson try to prove including into the article stanzas from T.S.Eliot’s “The Hippopotamus”? Read the poem attentively and explain the stylistic devices used in it.
7. What is the difference between simile and metaphor?
8. How is metaphor analyzed by Davidson from the point of view of its falsehood?
9. What is the role of absurdity and contradiction in a metaphor?
10. Can metaphor be called a lie?
11. How does metaphor inspire an insight in a reader?

**MAX BLACK**

### **METAPHOR**

(From: “MODELS AND METAPHORS”)

"The chairman plowed through the discussion". In calling this sentence a case of metaphor, we are implying that at least one word (here, the word "plowed") is being used metaphorically in the sentence, and that at least one of the remaining words is being used literally. Let us call the word "plowed" the *focus* of the metaphor, and the remainder of the sentence in which that word occurs the *frame*.

Suppose somebody says, “I like to plow my memories regularly.” Shall we say he is using the same metaphor as in the case already discussed, or not? Our answer

will depend upon the degree of similarity we are prepared to affirm on comparing the two “frames” (for we have the same focus each time). Differences in the two frames will produce *some* differences in the interplay between focus and frame in the two cases. Whether we regard the differences as sufficiently striking to warrant calling the sentences *two* metaphors is a matter for arbitrary decision.

The rules of our language determine that some expressions must count as metaphors; and a speaker can no more change this than he can legislate that "cow" shall mean the same as "sheep". But we must also recognize that the established rules of language leave wide latitude for variation, initiative, and creation. There are indefinitely many contexts (including nearly all the interesting ones) where the meaning of a metaphorical expression has to be reconstructed from the speaker's intentions (and other clues) because the broad rules of standard usage are too general to supply the information needed. When Churchill, in a famous phrase, called Mussolini "that *utensil*", the tone of voice, the verbal setting, the historical background, helped to make clear *what* metaphor was being used. (Yet, even here, it is hard to see how the phrase "that *utensil*" could ever be applied to a man except as an insult. Here, as elsewhere, the general rules of usage function as limitations upon the speaker's freedom to mean whatever he pleases.). This is an example, though still a simple one, of how recognition and interpretation of a metaphor may require attention to the *particular circumstances* of its utterance.

Metaphorical statement is not a substitute for a formal comparison or any other kind of literal statement, but has its own distinctive capacities and achievements. Often we say, "X is M", evoking some imputed connection between M an imputed L (or, rather, to an indefinite system,  $L_1, L_2, L_3\dots$ ) in cases where, prior to the construction of the metaphor, we would have been hard put to it to find any literal resemblance between M and L. It would be more illuminating in some of these cases to say that the metaphor creates the similarity than to say that it formulates some similarity antecedently existing.

Let us try, for instance, to think of a metaphor as a filter. Consider the statement, "Man is a wolf". Here, we may say, are *two* subjects – the principal

subject, Man (or: men) and the subsidiary subject, Wolf (or: wolves). Now the metaphorical sentence in question will not convey its intended meaning to a reader sufficiently ignorant about wolves. What is needed is not so much that the reader shall know the standard dictionary meaning of "wolf" – or be able to use that word in literal senses – as that he shall know what I will call the *system of associated commonplaces*.

If the man is a wolf, he preys upon other animals, is fierce, hungry, engaged in constant struggle, a scavenger, and so on. Each of these implied assertions has now to be made to fit the principal subject (the man) either in normal or in abnormal senses. If the metaphor is at all appropriate, this can be done – up to a point at least. A suitable hearer will be led by the wolf-system of implications to construct a corresponding system of implications about the principal subject. But these implications will *not* be those comprised in the commonplaces *normally* implied by literal uses of "man". The new implications must be determined by the pattern of implications associated with literal uses of the word "wolf". Any human traits that can without undue strain be talked about in "wolf-language" will be rendered prominent, and any that cannot, will be pushed into the background. The wolf-metaphor suppresses some details, emphasizes others – in short, *organizes* our view of man.

Suppose I am set the task of describing a battle in words drawn as largely as possible from the vocabulary of chess. These latter terms determine a system of implications which will proceed to control my description of the battle. The enforced choice of the chess vocabulary will lead some aspects of the battle to be emphasized, others to be neglected, and all to be organized in a way that would cause much more strain in other models of description. The chess vocabulary filters and transforms: it not only selects, it brings forward aspects of the battle that might not be seen at all through another medium.

Nor must we neglect the shifts in attitude that regularly result from the use of metaphorical language. A wolf is (conventionally) a hateful and alarming object; so, to call a man a wolf is to imply that he too is hateful and alarming (and thus to

support and reinforce dyslogistic attitudes). Again, the vocabulary of chess has its primary uses in a highly artificial setting, where all expression of feeling is formally excluded: to describe a battle as if it were a game of chess is accordingly to exclude, by the choice of language, all the more emotionally disturbing aspects of warfare.

Reference to “associated commonplaces” will fit the commonest cases where the author simply plays upon the stock of common knowledge (and common misinformation) presumably shared by the reader and himself. But in a poem, or a piece of sustained prose, the writer can establish a novel pattern of implications for the literal uses of the key expressions, prior to using them as vehicles for his metaphors. (As author can do much to suppress unwanted implications of the word “contract”, by explicit discussion of its extended meaning, before he proceeds to develop a contract theory of sovereignty. Or a naturalist who really knows wolves may tell us so much about them that his description of man as a wolf diverges quite markedly from the stock uses of that figure.) Metaphors can be supported by specially constructed systems of implications, as well as by accepted commonplaces; they can be made to measure and need not to be reach-me-downs.

If to call a man a wolf is to put him in a special light, we must not forget that the metaphor makes the wolf seem more human than he otherwise would.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What are a focus and a frame of a metaphor?
2. Are we dealing with the same two metaphors in the two expressions: “The chairman plough through the discussion” and “I like to plow my memories regularly”?
3. How is the meaning of a metaphorical expression reconstructed? What is the role of the circumstances in which a metaphorical expression is used?
4. Why is a metaphor not a substitute for a comparison, but something different?

5. How do you understand the statement “the metaphor creates the similarity” rather than “formulates some similarities antecedently existing”? How does the example with “Man is a wolf” explain this idea?
6. What is “the system of associated commonplaces”? Explain this term using the examples from the article.
7. How does a metaphor filter, transform and organize our view of the world? Explain, using the examples from the text?
8. What shifts of emotional attitude result from the use of metaphorical language?
9. How is the use of metaphors in a poem different from other uses of metaphor? In what way are metaphors specially constructed systems of implications?

## SYNTACTIC STYLISTIC DEVICES

GEOFFRY LEECH

(From: A LINGUISTIC GUIDE TO ENGLISH POETRY)

### FORMAL REPETITIONS

We identify schemes (foregrounded repetitions of expression) at different levels: i.e. a scheme may be identified as a phonological, a graphological, or a formal (i.e. grammatical/or lexical) pattern. Formal repetition often presupposes phonological repetition. To see the correctness of this, one need merely reflect that to repeat a word is to repeat the sounds of which it is composed. The following extract contains, on a formal level, the repetition of the word *farewell*; on the phonological level the actual *sound* of the word *farewell* is echoed at irregular intervals, and itself constitutes a kind of phonological foregrounding. We listen to it as to the tolling of a bell, an audible signal of Othello’s surrender of worldly pleasure and achievement:

O now for ever

Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell content!

Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars

That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!



Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,  
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,  
The royal banner, and all quality,  
Pride, pomp and circumstance of glorious war!

Certain nineteenth-century poets, amongst them Gerard Manley Hopkins, have a tendency to use exact verbal repetition, which goes hand in hand with a tendency to ‘orchestrate’ their poetry with various kinds of phonological echo – consonance, alliteration, assonance, etc:

My aspens dear, whose airy cages *quelled*,  
*Quelled* or *quenched* in leaves the *leaping* sun,  
All *felled*, *felled*, are all *felled*.

These opening lines of Hopkins’s ‘Binsey Poplars’ exemplify both features, and show that in effect, they are one. The lexical repetitions of *quelled* and *felled* are part of the general symphony of phonological schemes. But notice that the relationship does not hold in the opposite direction: the initial repetitions of sound in ‘*quenched...quelled*’ and ‘*leaves...leaping*’ have nothing to do with any formal, lexical correspondences.<...>

Language allows for a great abundance of types of lexical and grammatical repetition, and my task now is to illustrate this variety of schemes, at the same time considering what artistic purposes they can serve. I shall focus attention in this chapter on formal schemes which, like that of Othello’s ‘farewell’ speech, contain verbal iterations, and hence repetitions of sound. My first point, however, is that not all repetitions of this kind take place within the framework of a parallelism: there is also a type of irregular repetition, or *free repetition*, which nevertheless strikes the reader as having a deliberate rhetorical effect. My definition of ‘schemes’ is wide enough to include both parallelism and this free repetition.

The passage from Othello is actually on the border between these two categories. It starts off with a regular pattern consisting in the recurrence of the structure *Farewell X*, where X is a noun phrase. In a more general notation for symbolizing types of parallelism, we may let a stand for the unvarying element



[Richard II, II.i]

Immediate repetition is predominant in the following extract from the Authorized Version of the Bible [Samuel 2], a passage in which David laments the death of his son:

O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God had died for thee,  
O Absalom, my son, my son!

In a similar vein, but in a very different style, the irregular reiteration of the name *Lycidas*, together with other repetitions, seems to contribute to the elegiac pomp of Milton's poem of that name:

For *Lycidas* is *dead*, *dead* ere his prime,  
Young *Lycidas*, and hath not left his peer.  
Who would not *sing* for *Lycidas*? He know  
Himself to *sing*, and build the lofty rhyme.

The superfluity of expression in these passages runs counter to one strongly held tenet of poetic composition: that to compress, to say much in little, is the means to poetic intensity, and the mark of great poetry. And yet, if we turn to the ordinary emotive use of language, we see that repetition is a fundamental if primitive device of intensification. To call it a 'device', indeed is to mislead, for repetition is almost involuntary to a person in a state of extreme emotional excitation. A tragi-comic realization of this in drama is Shylock's outburst over the elopement of his daughter:

My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!  
Fled with a Christian! O my Christian ducats!

[The Merchant of Venice, II. viii]

The powerful effect of repetition in David's lament, as in Milton's lament over *Lycidas*, seems to lie in the implication that the grief is too great for expression in few words: so deep a sorrow requires manifold utterance. Not that sorrow is the only emotion capable of expression in this way; few poetic rhapsodies can match the naked vigour of the Song of Deborah and Barak, another piece of Old Testament lyricism:

At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down: at her feet he bowed, he fell;

Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.

[Judges 5]

...Although repetition sometimes indicates poverty of linguistic resource, it can, as we see, have its own kind of eloquence. By underlining rather than elaborating the message, it presents a simple emotion with force. It may further suggest a suppressed intensity of feeling...In a way, saying the same thing over and over is a reflection on the inadequacy of language to express what you have to express 'in one go'...

### ***Types of verbal parallelism***

The figures of speech we have now to consider take the form of exact verbal repetitions in equivalent positions. The commonest place for such repetitions is at the beginning of the relevant unit of text, like the repetition of *farewell* in Othello's speech. What is meant by 'relevant unit of text' varies from one text to another. It may be a grammatical unit, such as a clause of sentence, or a sequence of grammatical units, for example a noun phrase followed by a prepositional phrase. It may be on the other hand a prosodic unit – a line or stanza of verse; or a dramatic unit – a speech. Furthermore, it may simultaneously lie within two or more of these categories. The exact nature of this unit is irrelevant; what is important, if this is to constitute a parallelism, is that the repetition should be felt to occur at the beginning of equivalent pieces of language, within which there is an invariant part (the verbal repetition itself) and a variant part (the rest of the unit).

In both the well-known quotations that follow, different criteria coincide in isolating the parallel segments, or phrases of the pattern. In [a], the repetition comes at the beginning of a dramatic speech, which also happens to consist of a single sentence. In [b], it constitutes the opening line of a stanza which is also a sequence of two sentences:

[a]

LORENZO... *in such a night*

Troilus methinks mounted the Troyan walls,  
And sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents

Where Cressid lay that night.

JESSICA: *In such a night*

Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertip the dew,  
And saw the lion shadow ere himself,  
And ran dismayed away.

LORENZO: *In such a night*

Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild-sea banks, and waft her love  
To come again to Carthage.

[*The Merchant of Venice*, V. i]

[b]

*O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*  
Alone and palely loitering?  
The sedge has wither'd from the lake,  
And no birds sing.

*O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,*  
So haggard and so woebegone?  
The squirrel's granary is full,  
And the harvest's done.

[Keats, *La belle Dame sans Merci*]

Despite dissimilarities of structural detail, both these examples can be represented by the single formula (a...)(a...), etc., with *a* symbolizing again the constant element, and brackets enclosing sections of text which in some structural sense can be taken as equivalent. By the 'etc'. I mean to convey that the parallelism may contain two, or more than two equivalent units.

In the rhetorical manuals of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, verbal parallelisms were carefully distinguished according to their position.

For example, the term ANAPHORA was applied to initial repetitions of the kind just illustrated... Despite a tendency towards pedantry and arbitrariness in these rhetorical distinctions, it would be wrong to dismiss them as of merely historical interest, for the features they analyze belong to poetry of all ages...

In almost all the examples of verbal parallelism given so far, the repetition of individual words is accompanied by some degree of repetition of syntactic structure... Indeed, so closely are verbal and syntactic parallelism interconnected that the attempt to deal with the one in isolation from the other, as in the conventional treatment of these schemes, is a slightly artificial undertaking. Anaphora, epistrophe, etc., should always be related where possible, to a context of syntactic parallelism.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS.**

1. What do syntactical stylistic devices deal with?
2. Why don't we consider some syntactical structures of oral speech stylistic devices, while the same units used in fiction are thought of as special figures of speech?
3. What is the main function of such structures in fiction?
4. How are repetitions and parallelism related?

**Y.M. SKREBNEV**

### **PARALLELISM**

(From: "FUNDAMENTALS OF ENGLISH STYLISTICS")

Assimilation or even identity of two or more neighbouring sentences (or verse lines) is called "parallelism" ("parallel constructions"). As a matter of fact, parallelism is a variety of repetition, but not a repetition of lexically identical sentences, only a repetition of syntactical constructions. Parallelism contributes to rhythmic and melodic unification of adjacent sentences. But not only that. As

everywhere in language, semantics is the predominant factor. It is only with regard to lexical meanings that the constructive function of parallelism can be defined. It serves either to emphasize the repeated element, or to create a contrast, or else underlines the semantic connection between sentences.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the difference between parallelism and repetition?
2. What is the main contribution of parallelism to a literary text?
3. Can you define any other functions of parallelism?

### **REPETITION**

Purely syntactical repetition, with which we have classed parallelism, should be distinguished from lexico-syntactical repetitions. In these the lexical identity of certain parts of neighbouring sentences is not an optional occurrence (as it is in the case of parallelism), but quite obligatory.

Repetition is recurrence of the same element (word or phrase) within the sentence. This kind of repetition is the most recognizable; its obvious purpose is visible intensification. To be sure, repetition (with its numerous varieties) is not confined to one sentence, but may be recurrence of words in neighbouring sentences or even recurrence of whole sentences.

Examples of repetition are abundant in colloquial speech, as well as in poetry, imaginative prose, and emotional public speeches. On the contrary such repetition hardly ever occurs in scientific, technological or legal texts.

Repetition within phrases (parts of the sentence) typical of colloquial speech, concerns mostly qualifying words, adverbs and adjectives: *very; very good; forever and ever; a little, little girl, etc.*

The elements (or element) repeated attracts the reader's (hearer's) attention as being the most important; in a way they impart additional sense to the whole of the utterance.

### COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why should we distinguish purely syntactical repetition (parallelism) from lexicosyntactical one?
2. What is repetition according to the extract?
3. Why is this kind of repetition the most recognizable?

**Anaphora.** This term implies identity of beginnings, of one or several initial elements in adjacent sentences (verse lines, stanzas, paragraphs). This device, often met with, serves the purpose of strengthening that recurs.

Anaphoric recurrence of words or word combinations helps the reader (hearer) to fix the recurring segment in his memory. It also imparts a certain rhythmical regularity to the prosodic system of the text.

Anaphoric function may be fulfilled not only by a word or word-group, but also by whole sentences, paragraphs, or even greater units.

Hence, the most general definition could read thus: anaphora is identity of the initial parts of two or more autonomous syntactical segments, adjacent or at a distance in the text, yet obviously connected semantically.

**Epiphora.** This stylistic figure is the opposite of anaphora. It is recurrence of one or several elements concluding two (or more) syntactical units (utterances, verse lines, sentences, paragraphs, chapters).

Epiphora, to a still greater extent than anaphora, regularizes the rhythm of the text, and makes prose resemble poetry.

**Framing.** This term is used here to denote the recurrence of the initial segment at the very end of a syntactic unit (sentence, paragraph, stanza).



**Anadiplosis.** Here the final element (or elements) of a sentence (paragraph, stanza) recur at the very beginning of the next sentence (paragraph, stanza). The concluding part of this preceding syntactic unit serves the starting point of the next.

**Chiasmus means “crossing”.** The term denotes what is sometimes characterized as “parallelism reversed”: two syntactical constructions (sentences or phrases) are parallel, but their members (words) change places, their syntactical positions. What is the subject in the first becomes an object or a predicative of the second; a head-word and its attribute change places and function likewise.

The segments that change places enter opposite logical relations, which fact produces various stylistic effects (depending on the meanings of words and the forms of chiasmatic members).

### COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is the main function of anaphora?
2. What stylistic figure is opposite to anaphora? What is its main effect?
3. What are the characteristic features of framing, anadiplosis and chiasmus?

**Polysyndeton.** The term means excessive use (repetition) of conjunctions – the conjunction *and* in most cases. These conjunctions may connect separate words, parts of a sentence (phrases), clauses, simple and composite sentences, and even more prolonged segments of text.

In poetry and fiction the repetition of *and* either underlines the simultaneity of actions, or close connection of properties enumerated.

On the other hand, excessive use of the conjunction *and* often betrays the poverty of the speaker's syntax, showing the primitiveness of the character – just as in the case with the Russian conjunction *a*.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What does the term “polysyndeton” mean?
2. What does this kind of excessive repetition of conjunctions underline in poetry and fiction?
3. What is the opposite effect of such repetition?

## **PHONETIC STYLISTIC DEVICES**

**LAURENCE PERRINE, THOMAS ARP**

### **SOUND AND MEANING**

(From: “SOUND AND SENSE” by Laurence Perrine, Thomas R. Arp.)

Rhythm and sound cooperate to produce what we call the music of poetry. This music, as we have pointed out, may serve two general functions: it may be enjoyable in itself, or it may be used to reinforce meaning and intensify the communication.

Pure pleasure in sound and rhythm exists from a very early age in the human being – probably from the age the baby first starts cooing in its cradle, certainly from

the age that children begin chanting nursery rimes and skipping rope. The appeal of the following verse, for instance, depends almost entirely on its "music":

Pease por-ridge hot,  
Pease por-ridge cold,  
Pease por-ridge in the pot  
Nine days old.

There is very little sense here; the attraction comes from the emphatic rhythm, the emphatic rhymes (with a strong contrast between the short vowel and short final consonant of *hot-pot* and the long vowel and long final consonant combination of *cold-old*), and the heavy alliteration (exactly half the words begin with *p*). From nonsense rhymes such as this, many of us graduate to a love of more meaningful poems whose appeal resides largely in the sound they make.

The peculiar function of poetry as distinguished from music, however, is to convey not sounds but meaning or experience *through* sounds. In third- and fourth-rate poetry, sound and rhythm sometimes distract attention from sense. In first-rate poetry the sound exists not for its own sake nor for mere decoration, but as a medium of meaning. Its function is to support the leading player, not to steal the scene.

. The poet may reinforce meaning through sound in numerous ways. Without claiming to exhaust them, perhaps we can include most of the chief means under four general headings.

First, the poet can choose words whose sound in some degree suggests their meaning. In its narrowest sense this is called onomatopoeia. **Onomatopoeia**, strictly defined, means the use of words which, at least supposedly, sound like what they mean, such as *hiss*, *snap*, and *bang*.

***Song: Come unto these yellow sands***

Come unto these yellow sands,

And then take hands.  
Curtsied when you have and kissed,  
The wild waves whist,  
Foot it featly here and there,  
And, sweet sprites, the burden bear.  
Hark, hark!  
Bow-wow.  
The watch-dogs bark!  
Bow-wow.  
Hark, hark! I hear  
The strain of strutting chanticleer  
Cry, "Cock-a-doodle-doo!"

*William Shakespeare (1564-1616)*

In these lines, “bark”, “bow-wow”, and “cock-a-doodle-doo” are onomatopoeic words. In addition, Shakespeare has reinforced the onomatopoeic effect with the repeated use of “hark”, which sounds like “bark”. The usefulness of onomatopoeia, of course, is strictly limited, because it can be used only where the poet is describing sound, and most poems do not describe sound. And the use of pure onomatopoeia, as in the preceding example, is likely to be fairly trivial except as it forms an incidental part of a more complex poem. But by combining onomatopoeia with other devices that help convey meaning, the poet can achieve subtle and beautiful effects whose recognition is one of the keenest pleasures in reading poetry.

In addition to onomatopoeic words there is another group of words, sometimes called **phonetic intensives**, whose sound, by a process as yet obscure, to some degree connects with their meaning. An initial *fl*-sound, for instance, is often associated with the idea of moving light, as in *flame, flare, flash, flicker, flimmer*. An initial *gl*- also frequently accompanies the idea of light, usually unmoving, as in *glare, gleam, glint, glow, glisten*. An initial *sl*- often introduces words meaning “smoothly wet”, as in *slippery, slik, slide, slime, slop, slosh, slobber, slushy*. An initial *st*- often suggests

strength, as in *staunch, stalwart, stout, sturdy, stable, steady, stocky, stern, strong, stubborn, steel*. Short *-i-* often goes with the idea of smallness, as in *inch, imp, thin, slim, little, bit, chip, sliver, chink, slit, sip, whit, tittle, snip, wink, glint, glimmer, flicker, pigmy, midge, chick, kid, kitten, minikin, miniature*. Long *-o-* or *-oo-* may suggest melancholy or sorrow, as in *moan, groan, woe, mourn, forlorn, toll, doom, gloom, moody*. Final *-are* sometimes goes with the idea of a big light or noise, as *flare, glare, stare, blare*. Medial *-att-* suggests some kind of particled movement, as in *spatter, scatter, shatter, chatter, rattle, prattle, clatter, batter*. Final *-er* and *-le* indicate repetition, as in *glitter, flutter, shimmer, whisper, jabber, chatter, clatter, sputter, flicker, twitter, mutter*, and *ripple, bubble, twinkle, sparkle, rattle, rumble, jingle*. None of these various sounds is invariably associated with the idea that it seems to suggest, and, in fact, a short *-i-* is found in *thick* as well as *thin*, in *big* as well as *little*. Language is a complex phenomenon. But there is enough association between these sounds and ideas to suggest some sort of intrinsic if obscure relationship. A word like *flicker*, though not onomatopoeic (for it does not refer to sound) would seem somehow to suggest its sense, with the *fl-* suggesting moving light, the *-i-* suggesting smallness, the *-ck-* suggesting sudden cessation of movement (as in *crack, peck, pick, hack*, and *flick*), and the *-er* suggesting repetition. The above list of sound-idea correspondences is only a very partial one. A complete list, though it would involve only a small proportion of words in the language, would probably be a longer list than that of the more strictly onomatopoeic words, to which they are related.

### SPLINTER

The voice of the last cricket  
across the first frost  
in one kind of good-by.  
It is so thin a splinter of singing.

*Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)*

### QUESTIONS

1. Why is “so thin a splinter” a better choice of metaphor than *so small an atom or so meager a morsel*?
2. How does the poet intensify the effect of the two phonetic intensives in line 4?
3. A second way that the poet can reinforce meaning through sound is to choose sounds and group them so that the effect is smooth and pleasant sounding (*euphonious*) or rough and harsh sounding (*cacophonous*). The vowels are in general more pleasing than the consonants, for the vowels are musical tones, whereas the consonants are merely noises. A line with a high percentage of vowel sounds in proportion to consonant sounds will therefore tend to be more melodious than one in which the proportion is low. The vowels and consonants themselves differ considerably in quality. The "long" vowels, such as those in *fate, reed, rime, coat, food, and dune* are fuller and more resonant than the "short" vowels, as in *fat, red, rim, cot, foot, and dun*. Of the consonants, some are fairly mellifluous, such as the "liquids", *l, m, n,* and *r*; the soft *v* and *f* sounds; the semivowels *w* and *y*; and such combinations as *th* and *wh*. Others, such as the "plosives", *b, d, g, k, p,* and *t,* are harsher and sharper in their effect. These differences in sound are the poet's materials. Good poets, however, will not necessarily seek out the sounds that are pleasing and attempt to combine them in melodious combinations. Rather, they will use **euphony** and **cacophony** as they are appropriate to content. Consider, for instance, the following poem.

#### UPON JULIA'S VOICE

So smooth, so sweet, so silvery is thy voice,  
As, could they hear, the Damned would make no noise,  
But listen to thee (walking in thy chamber)  
Melting melodious words to Lutes of Amber.

*Robert Herrick (1591-1674)*

#### QUESTION

Literally, an amber lute is as nonsensical as a silver voice. What connotations do "Amber" and "silvery" have that contribute to the meaning of this poem?

There are no strictly onomatopoeic words in this poem, and yet the sound seems marvelously adapted to the sense. Especially remarkable are the first and last lines, those most directly concerned with Julia's voice. In the first line the sounds that most strike the ear are the unvoiced *s*'s and the soft *v*'s supported by voiced *th*: So smooth, so sweet, so silvery is *thy* voice." (A voice consonant sound is accompanied by vibration of the vocal cords – *then* is voiced, *thin* is not. Notice that the terminal *-ce* in "voice" is an example of the unvoiced *s* sound: as with alliteration, spelling is irrelevant.) In the fourth line the predominating sounds are the liquid consonants *m*, *l*, and *r*, supported by a *w*: Melting *melodious words* to *Lutes of Amber*." The least euphonious line in the poem, on the other hand, is the second, where the subject is the tormented in hell, not Julia's voice. Here the prominent sounds are the *d*'s, supported by a voiced *s* (a voiced *s* buzzes, unlike the sibilant unvoiced *s*'s in line 1), and two *k* sounds: "As, could they hear, the *Damned* would make no noise." Throughout the poem there is a remarkable correspondence between the pleasant-sounding and the pleasant in idea, the unpleasant-sounding and the unpleasant in idea.

A third way in which a poet can reinforce meaning through sound is by controlling the speed and movement of the lines by the choice and use of meter, by the choice and arrangement of vowel and consonant sounds, and by the disposition of pauses. In meter the unaccented syllables usually go faster than the accented syllables; hence the triple meters are swifter than the duple. But the poet can vary the tempo of any meter by the use of substitute feet. Generally, whenever two or more unaccented syllables come together, the effect will be to speed up the pace of the line; when two or more accented syllables come together, the effect will be to slow it down. This pace will also be affected by the vowel lengths and by whether the sounds are easily run together. The long vowels take longer to pronounce than the short ones. Some words are easily run together, while others demand that the position of the mouth be reformed before the next word is uttered. It takes much longer, for instance, to say, "Watch dogs catch much meat" than to say, "My aunt is away," though the number of syllables is the same. And finally the poet can slow down the speed of a line through

the introduction of grammatical and rhetorical pauses. Consider lines 54-56 from Tennyson's "Ulysses" (No. 67):

The lights be-gin to twinkle from the rocks;  
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep  
Moans round with man-y voices...

In these lines Tennyson wished the movement to be slow, in accordance with the slow waning of the long day and the slow climbing of the moon. His meter is iambic pentameter. This is not a swift meter, but in lines 55-56 he slows it down further, (1) by introducing three spondaic feet, thus bringing three accented syllables together in three separate places; (2) by choosing for his accented syllables words that have long vowel sounds or diphthongs that the voice hangs on to: "long", "day", "wanes", "slow", "moon", "climbs", "deep", "moans", "round"; (3) by choosing words that are not easily run together (except for "day" and "slow", each of these words begins and ends with consonant sounds that require varying degrees of readjustment of the mouth before pronunciation can continue); and (4) by introducing two grammatical pauses, after "wanes" and "climbs", and a rhetorical pause after "deep." The result is an extremely effective use of the movement of the verse to accord with the movement suggested by the words.

A fourth way for a poet to fit sound to sense is to control both sound and meter in such a way as to emphasize words that are important in meaning. This can be done by highlighting such words through alliteration, assonance, consonance, or rime; by placing them before a pause; or by skillfully placing or displacing them in the metrical scheme.

Tennyson, in the concluding line of "Ulysses", uses marked regularity, plus skillful use of grammatical pauses, to achieve the same effect:

We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heav-en, that which we are, we are:



One e-qual tem-per of he-ro-ic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

The blank verse rhythm throughout “Ulysses” is remarkably subtle and varied, but the line is not only regular in its scansion but heavily regular, for a number of reasons. First, all the words are monosyllables: no words cross over the divisions between feet. Second, the unaccented syllables are all very small and unimportant words – four “to’s” and one “and”, whereas the accented syllables consist of four important verbs and very important “not”. Third, each of the verbs is followed by a grammatical pause pointed off by a mark of punctuation. The result to cause a pronounced alternation between light and heavy syllables that brings the accent down on the four verbs and the “not” with sledgehammer blows. The line rings out like a challenge, which it is.

### COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What two general functions do rhythm and sound in poetry serve?
2. What does the attraction come from in nursery rhymes like *Pease Porridge Hot*?
3. What is the peculiar function of poetry as distinguished from music? How does first-rate poetry differ from third-rate poetry from the point of view of its sound and rhythm?
4. What is *onomatopoeia*? What puts the limit to its use? How does Shakespeare reinforce the onomatopoeic effect in *Song: Come unto These Yellow Sands*?
5. What group of words are phonetic intensives? Can the mechanism of such words be explained? Give examples of phonetic intensives. Read the poem *Splinter* by Carl Sandburg and answer the questions to it given in the text of the article.

6. What is the second way to reinforce meaning through sound? Give examples. Read *Upon Julia's Voice* by Robert Herrick and answer the question to the poem given in the article.

7. There are no strictly onomatopoeic words in the poem. What makes the sound seem marvelously adapted to the sense?

8. What is the third way of adapting sound to sense? Explain and give examples. How does Tennyson achieve the effect of movement in lines 54-56 of "Ulysses"?

9. What is the fourth way of fitting sound to sense? How does Tennyson use this fourth way to achieve the needed effect? Why do the lines sound like a challenge?

## TEXTUALITY

M.A.K. HALLIDAY

### TEXT AS A METAFUNCTIONAL CONSTRUCT

(From: "LANGUAGE, CONTEXT AND TEXT: ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE IN A SOCIAL-SEMIOTIC PERSPECTIVE")

What do we mean by text? We can define text in the simplest way, perhaps, by saying that it is language that is functional. By functional we simply mean language that is doing some job in some context, as opposed to isolated words or sentences. So any instances of living language that is playing some part in a context of situation, we shall call a text. It may be either spoken or written, or indeed in any other medium of expression that we like to think of.

The important thing about the nature of a text is that, although when we write it down it looks as though it is made of words and sentences, it is really made of meanings. Of course the meanings have to be expressed, or coded, in words and structures. A text, more than any other linguistic units, has to be considered from two perspective at once, both as a product and as a process.

One method of describing a text is by exegesis, or explication de texte, a kind of running commentary on the product that reveals something of its dynamic unfolding as a process.

To be able to read a text, or listen to it, effectively and with understanding, we have to be able to interpret it in terms of metafunctions. In other words, anyone who is learning by listening to a teacher, or reading a textbook, has to:

1 a. understand the processes being referred to, the participants in these processes, and the circumstances – time, cause, etc. – associated with them [EXPERIENTIAL];

1 b. understand the relationship between one process and another, or one participant and another, that share the same position in the text [LOGICAL];

2. recognise the speech function, the type of offer, command, statement, or question, the attitudes and judgments embodied in it, and the rhetorical features that constitute it as a symbolic act [INTERPERSONAL]; and

3. grasp the news value and topicality of the message, and the coherence between one part of the text and every other part [TEXTUAL].

The 'textual' features enable the discourse to cohere not only with itself but also with its context of situation:

1. field of discourse: the 'play' – the kind of activity, as recognised in the culture, within which the language is playing some part [predicts experiential meanings];

2. tenor of discourse: the 'players' – the actors, or rather the interacting roles, that are involved in the creation of the text [predicts interpersonal meanings]; and

3. mode of discourse: the 'parts' – the particular functions that are assigned to language in this situation, and the rhetorical channel that is therefore allotted to it [predicts textual meanings].

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. How is the text defined?

2. In what terms should we approach a text for better understanding?
3. What textual features enable the discourse to cohere with its context of situation?

**G.N. LEECH, M.H. SHORT**

### **THE LINEARITY OF TEXT**

(From: "STYLE IN FICTION")

Texts are communications seen as physical transactions between addressers and addressees. By 'physical' we mean occurring in an auditory (speech) or visual (writing) medium. The overriding property of texts is linearity: speech occurs linearly in time, and writing, imitating speech, occurs linearly in space. The 'tyranny of succession' is most dominant in the ephemeral medium of speech, since a sound, a word, a sentence which has once been uttered cannot be erased or recalled: the speaker is bound to encode, and the hearer to decode, in ongoing time. In writing, the permanence of the text allows re-editing by the writer and rereading by the reader; but a reader, like a hearer, must decode in a fixed order – the text, for both, is not a static object, but a dynamic phenomenon, something which is EXPERIENCED IN TIME. In this respect, as in others (see 4.3.4) we shall find that the dynamics of speech are a necessary background to the study of written texts.

Linearity is such an obvious characteristic of texts that it is easy to overlook its important implications for language and for style. Since speech is acoustically 'ongoing', it is necessary for the hearer, in decoding the stream of sound, to segment it into units. A message has to be broken down into 'parcels of information', and the key unit for this purpose in speech is the TONE UNIT, or unit of intonation. Tone units are subdivided into smaller units (rhythm units, syllables, phonemes), and form part of larger, less clearly defined units which we may think of as the speech equivalent of paragraphs. So linearity entails segmentation, and segmentation involves a hierarchy of units. Hierarchization in turn means that certain parts of the text are perceived as more salient, or highlighted, than others. From the point of view of phonology,

therefore, three important factors in the dynamics of text are sequence, segmentation, and salience.

We shall find that these three factors are also basic to the form of written texts. For example, although writing has no units corresponding precisely to tone units, an analogous segmenting function is performed in written texts by punctuation. The pieces of text which are separated by punctuation (eg the pieces of language occurring between commas) may be called GRAPHIC UNITS.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is the overriding property of a text?
2. How is 'Linearity' represented in oral/auditory and in written discourse?
3. What are the most important factors in the dynamics of the text?

**N.E. ENKVIST**

### **TEXT AND DISCOURSE LINGUISTICS, RHETORIC AND STYLISTICS**

(From: "DISCOURSE AND LITERATURE")

To bring order into a comparison of rhetoric, stylistics, and text and discourse linguistics, it is convenient to view the latter in terms of four major types of text theories.

The first text linguists tried to describe the cohesive ties that cement sentences into texts, often by extending traditional grammatical methods. Their works could therefore be characterized as intersentence grammars (as in Halliday and Hasan 1976), and they studied texts as they were; their theory can be called sentence-based because they could not manipulate or alter the sentence division of the text

. But such manipulation was necessary to reveal the relations between texts. The second might be called predication-based because the text atoms must contain predications of some kind.

The question, where do predications, and thus also texts and sentences come from? Could not, however, be answered with sentence-based or predication-based text models. For this, a third kind of model, a cognitive one, was indicated ... Once we have an adequate cognitive model we can extract predications from it by following a certain path.

But there is yet another question – namely why does a certain person in a certain situation choose to extract certain definite predication for textualization? – which cognitive models cannot answer. To explain why people behave the way they do we must set up models reckoning with principles of human interaction. Such interactional text models pay attention to the sender, the receptor, and their relations, and to all those situational factors that affect their communicative behaviour.

How, then, do these areas and models of the linguistics relate to different types and areas of rhetoric and stylistics? And vice versa: Which of the text-linguistic models are capable of capturing problems from different areas of rhetoric and stylistics?

Roughly speaking, sentence-based models stop at intersentential cohesion. Insofar as certain types of communication and certain types of text make use of specific cohesion patterns, sentence-based text models can provide rhetoricians and students of style with new means of defining style markers.

Other types, certain types of scholarly or scientific agreements for instance, contain a higher proportion of links between sentence final, thematic elements and following sentence-initial, thematic ones.

Thus a certain style can be characterized by a high frequency of another.

In modern text linguistics there has arisen a mode of viewing the syntactic and semantic operations of text concentration and text delution in a macrostructural perspective closely related to that of the rhetoricians. One way of approaching textual

coherence is to look for such textual macrostructures as reveal a unified theme linking sentences to each other.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What text theories does the author point to?
2. What can you say of the sentence-based theory?
3. How can you explain a predication-based approach? A cognitive model?
4. What do the interactional text models pay attention to?

**R. HASAN**

### **CONTEXT, GENRE AND TEXT STRUCTURE**

(From: "LANGUAGE, CONTEXT and TEXT:  
ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE IN A SOCIAL-SEMIOTIC ASPECT")

The text is a unit of meaning; it is language that is functional in some context. The elements of the structure of the text will have to be defined by the job they do in that specific contextual configuration, which is logically related to the text structure. And this implies (1) that the realisational criteria need not be identical across genres, and (2) that the element's realisational criteria might be stated most clearly in terms of some semantic property.

On the other hand one learns to make texts by making texts in much the same way as one learns to speak a language by speaking that language. Familiarity with different genres does not grow automatically with growing age, just as language does not simply happen because you are two or three or five years old. For both you need social experience.

A child may not experience at home the genres that the system of education particularly requires.

Children need to be exposed to a wide range of genres—particularly those that are actively required in the educational process—for example, resume, report, expository essay, and so on. It is a mistaken view of both text and learning to imagine that one can get children to write an essay on the relationship between climate and vegetation by simply talking about it; and it is worse still to imagine that one can do this without talking about it at all.

Talk prepares the way into the written mode. But it would be a mistake to think that writing something down is simply a matter of putting down graphically what you could have said phonically.

An important aspect of the text is its texture, which is manifested by certain kinds of semantic relations between its individual messages. The identity of text is a way to its interpretation. Thus a text has many models of existence and so it can be analysed on many different levels, with each contributing to one understanding of the phenomena involved.

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What is a way to define elements of textual structure?
2. Is familiarity with the genres of the text an important matter of social experience?
3. How is the texture manifested?

### **INTERTEXTUALITY**

**I.V. ARNOLD**

### **DIALOGISM AND INTERTEXTUALITY**

(From: “The PROBLEMS OF DIALOGISM, INTERTEXTUALITY AND HERMENUTICS” by I.V. Arnold. Translated by V. Kazakova and I. Bannikova)



Dialogism and intertextuality, though very close to the so called literary influences and traditions, cannot be identified with them. They have common basis in the succession of culture and human cognition of the world, but according to the approach of classical literary criticism it is the creative genealogy of a writer and his method of writing that should be established first. His literary predecessors should be also studied as well as those who were influenced by his creative activity. Thus the general literary-historical context is created. It is mainly referred to the highest levels: to the aesthetic approach to the material, to the plots' and characters' similarity, to the characters' interpretation, their aesthetic evaluation and world perception.

Bakhtin's dialogism considers and includes all this into *semiospheres*, but he approaches them through the verbalized traces of the so called "another voice", that occupy certain positions in certain texts. [...]

The reader compares not authors and their creative method, but texts and their meaning. This approach is closer to the reader's than to the writer's one.

A novel, as any other work of art, reflects not only the result of knowledge, observations, emotions of its author, but his strategy of conversing with the reader. In this strategy it is the way the "other voice" is presented in the text that is important, as it should guarantee its prominence in the text. If the author is not sure that the phrase he quotes is familiar and recognizable, various methods of making hints can be used.

It's not enough to notice the "other voice": to understand and interpret the text you should compare the contexts, consider the temporal distance between the quoted, and the quoting texts and the present moment; the historic context is of special importance here for all the three, as not only the time should be considered, but the place, in other words – national peculiarities.

In this section we'll attempt to study intertextuality from the point of view of decoding stylistics inasmuch as it is connected with philological education and training future foreign language teachers and research workers in this field. The very term "decoding stylistics" points at the fact that text here, first and foremost, is regarded as a message, addressed to the reader in a dialogue with the writer, as a

source of information and a means of influence. The value of such approach cannot be underestimated, as the level of culture is defined by the ability of the person to listen and understand, rather than by his speaking skills. This thesis can be found in the works of Bakhtin and Likhatchov. In our case we're speaking not about a reader, but about the reader, that should not only demonstrate a profound understanding of a foreign text, but should learn to accumulate from it the new knowledge of the studied foreign language, prove his guesses and intuition concerning the contents of the text with the help of separate language elements by means of a thorough linguistic analysis. This theory should teach the reader to be motivated in his interpretation of his understanding of a text, which later will enable him to pass this knowledge and analyzing skills to his students and help them work out a culture of reading – the so called “talent of being a reader”.

Combining this approach with that of hermeneutics, it's important to remember that the experience of hermeneutics is the experience of something said by others, although understanding (and this should be stressed) might go beyond the limits of the message originally created by the author. Including a quotation into a text, the author can use it ironically or interpret it in accordance with the given situation. Understanding is not only comprehension, but also revision of the material perceived. [...]

The theory of intertextuality that was originally based on Bakhtin's ideas nowadays falls into a variety of, sometimes, opposing branches. We're not going to look deeply into this matter. We'll make an attempt to present a general model of intertextuality that combines Bakhtin's dialogism and the classical postulates of hermeneutics. At the same time this model will be focused on the interpreting skills and personality development in the process of reading. [...]

Let's pass over to the schematic classification of the intexts. We will systematize their distinctive features, proceeding mainly from their formal characteristics, but at the same time we'll aim our analysis at the interpreting of the role of these inclusions on those levels of a novel or a poetic text that are studied by literary criticism. Application of the suggested scheme may come in useful both for

developing reading skills and training reflexive habits. Let's start with the most general features of intexts, and then pass over to their more detailed classification with the help of illustrations.

1. Intexts may be linguistic, or code, and textual.

Linguistic or code intexts are those of specific vocabulary and grammar structures that are associated with concrete situations and come in contrast with the accepting context.

2. Textual intexts differ in their length. They can represent novels, letters, diaries, or, which is more common, quotations and separate allusions.

3. "Another voice" may really belong to another author, as it happens in epigraphs and quotations. It may be fictitious, i.e. belong to the same author, but be given under a different name. In this case it is possible to speak about inner and outer intertextuality.

4. The presence of an intext is noticed by the reader as it violates the succession, cohesion and style unity of the text. It is also noticeable by means of special markers that may be of different character. If the author believes in the reader's erudition and wit, the original source of the quotation is not named. He can make various hints, involving the reader into a certain game, thus increasing his interest. In other cases the source is mentioned in this or that way.

5. Texts, which are the most frequently referred to in literature, we'll call precedential texts (the term of Y. Karaulov). The easier the quotation is recognized, the better it serves its stylistic function. These most common sources of such quotations and allusions are The Bible, the works of the world famous writers: W. Shakespeare, Dante, Servantez and Goethe. In Russian literature – Pushkin, Gogol, Griboyedov and Dostoyevsky.

6. The function and the meaning of an intext depend upon the place they occupy in the text. Even the title may be a quotation. In this case it influences the interpretation of the whole text. The same is true about the epigraph. Such intexts reflect the topic of the text, the evaluation of the described events and characters. Inside the text inclusions may be of episodic character.

7. The functions of intexts are in many respects similar to those of foregrounding, as described by decoding stylistics. They focus the reader's attention on the key points of the narration, increase the expressiveness, and perform some other functions, i.e. emotive, satirical and evaluative.

8. The relationship with the initial text is of special importance. It may be quoted with piety thus giving the text a more high-flown character. It may be, on the contrary, refuted, parodied, quoted ironically. Associations with the initial context may be of suggestive character, and at the same time may depend upon the reader's thesaurus, his general knowledge.

9. Quotations differ in the degree and character of formal and semantic transformation. To understand the role of a quotation in a text, the reader compares its form and meaning in the initial and the accepting texts, thus defining the character of its transformation.

10. The meaning and the functions of an inclusion may be influenced by the genres of the initial and the accepting texts. The inclusion of the letters, diaries, songs and poems may be important for the composition, but it may perform some other functions as well.

11. The inclusion of texts from other semiotic systems (verbal descriptions of the works of art: paintings, music, etc.) presents a specific kind of intertextuality.

12. Linguistic or code intertextuality may consist in the usage of foreign words in quotations as well as in the speech of the characters. Quotations may be given in the original.

We should be mainly focused on the identification of the inclusion, establishing its source and regarding the intext as a dual phenomenon, in which the initial and the accepting contexts coexist and cooperate. [...]

### **COMPREHENSION AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What are the verbal traces of another voice in a literary text?
2. What intexts can be identified?

3. What is a precedental text?
4. What are the functions of intexts?
5. What is a linguistic or code intertextuality?

Саратовский государственный университет имени Н. Г. Чернышевского

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Арнольд И.В. Интерпретация английского художественного текста. (Лекция) – Л., 1983.
2. Арнольд И. В. Проблемы диалогизма, интертекстуальности и герменевтики. – Спб., 1997.
3. Арнольд И.В. Семантика. Стилистика. Интертекстуальность: Сборник статей. – Спб., 1999.
4. Арнольд И.В. Стилистика. Современный английский язык. – М., 2002.
5. Kukhareno V.A. Seminars in Style. – M., 1971.
6. Skrebnev Y.M. Fundamentals of English Stylistics. – M., 1994.
7. Black M. Models and Metaphors. Ithaca. – New York, 1962.
8. Enkvist N.E. Discourse and Literature. – Amsterdam, 1985.
9. Davidson D. Reference, Truth and Reality. – Boston, 1980.
10. Halliday M.A.K. and Hasan Ruqaya. Language, context and text: Aspects of language in a social semiotic perspective. Oxford, 1989.
11. Leech G. A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry. – L., 1969.
12. Leech G., Short M. “Style in Fiction”. – L., 1980.
13. Perrine L., Arp. T. Sound and Sense. – Southern Methodist University, 1992.