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Wallace Stevens' 'Anecdote of The Jar' and 'The Snow Man': A Lexical - Semantic Interpretation

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Abstract

The present study aims at presenting a lexical-semantic interpretation of Wallace Stevens' poems 'Anecdote of the Jar' and 'The Snow Man'. The formalist approach is adopted to interpret the two poems. The formalist approach is chosen for the sake of interpreting the poems because it considers the language that is employed in literature as self-centered. The function of such a literary language is to draw the reader's attention to the formal characteristic features that working together to form the literary text. The formal features that play a significant role in the poem and help to interpret it are symbols and images. The symbols and images that are employed in the poems aid to interpret them. The paper contains a preface to Wallace Stevens and his relationship with modernism. It also refers to the usability of the formal approach in interpreting poetry, the interpretation of Stevens' 'Anecdote of the Jar' and 'The Snow Man' and a discussion of the interpretation of the two poems in terms of the formalist approach. The paper ends up with the conclusions and a list of references.

Keywords : Formal approach , semantic interpretation , poetry , symbol , image , Wallace Stevens .

1. Introduction

Wallace Stevens' poems 'Anecdote of the Jar' and 'The Snow Man' are intended to be semantically interpreted. For the sake of achieving this goal, the formalist approach is adopted. The formalist approach focuses on the role of the formal features like : symbols , images , and metaphors in the literary text and especially the poem. In Wallace Stevens'

poems that are chosen to be interpreted these formal features play a significant role in the determination of the theme of each poem . The ‘jar’ and the ‘snow man’ are introduced as central symbols and they are placed in different situations and different positions with the enhancement of affective images . The focus on the employed formal features is advantageous in achieving the objective of the study.

2. A Preface to Wallace Stevens

Wallace Stevens was born in Pennsylvania , on October 1879 . He joined Harvard University . He became a lawyer in New York until 1916. He was a friend of some of the writers and painters in New York , like : William Carols Williams , Marianne Moor , and E. E. Cummings (www.poets.org) .

Stevens’ first experience in writing poetry was in a competition that dealt with the poetry of war in 1914 , but Stevens did not win in this competition . In the same year his first poem was published . His first book of poems was published in 1923 , it was entitled ‘Harmonium’ . In his early poems , Stevens attempted to reveal the affections of both romanticism and symbolism . Stevens published new poems in 1930 . He was not a famous poet until 1954 the year before his death and he was recognized after the publication of his collected poems . Stevens’ Man with Blue Guitar 1937 , Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction 1942 , The Necessary Angel 1951 , as well as the essays on poetry that he has written (ibid).

In the early part of Stevens’ life , he worked as a lawyer that is why , some other literary commentators think that Stevens’ poetry was under the affection of his own experience in law . Judge Posner rejected those literary commentators thought and he believed that there was no relationship between law and literature in Stevens’ poetry . Stevens did not employ whatever was related to law in his poetry like the legal concepts to convey the themes and to form settings unlike what has been done by Kafka in his fictional works (Grey , 1990: 232-3).

What characterizes Stevens’ poetry is ‘duality’ as a theme in his poems . Stevens makes “a bridge between the two poles that connected his concrete reality to the surreal imagination to produce a balance equilibrium of human existence” (Zarzieki , 2008 :1) . Stevens’ father has been characterized with pragmatism while his mother was the affective source of his duality (ibid).There is a clear cut between what he achieves in work as a lawyer and the imaginative realm that he creates in poetry (ibid: 235).

Wallace Stevens employs a recognizable style in his poetry . He associated the reason with the need to reach at the depth of the being of humanity and has made his effort to explain but his explanations come unconvincing . He has presented unconvincing opinions about the basic structure of the life that he observes (Jr. , 2017 : 1).

Stevens’ poetry seems hard to be understood and his life witnessed a rejection of the seeds of the beliefs that dominates in the society and through these beliefs he attempts to highlight the lives of the modern poets . Socially , Stevens is wonderful and polite , in the same time he is characterized with having few friends and it was rare to have guests in his house . Stevens’ colleagues have no idea about his creativity in poetry and they have known

about his poetry when he has received the rewards and when he has obtained a good reputation as a poet (Wilde , 2009:1).

The employment of imagery in Wallace Stevens' poetry is characterized with being unconventional or unfamiliar . However , the readers are behind apparent images that indicate the daisy land and the scenes that are associated with nature , but according to whatever employed in Stevens' poetry cement and things that are made and built from cement . Some other people intend to search for moral lessons and epigrammatic contents , instead , they find words that express a foggy scene and a vague theme (ibid: 2).

3. Wallace Stevens and Modernism

Poetry is a device used to improve the human experience and to shed light upon such experience. Poetry contains components which are 'imagination and reality'. The relationship between these two components makes Stevens able to "embrace fiction, or poetic distortion , as an aspect of true understanding" (Levin,1997:2).

William James in his "The will to believe" thinks that it is acceptable to believe in certain belief in spite of being proved as false at the end . Stevens thinks that it is necessary for people –as an aim- to adopt what they would like to believe in and he thinks that such a process is a part of our cognition. It encourages human rational thinking which leads to the ability to distinguish between the true and the false beliefs. However , Stevens has rejected the separation between the "rational and irrational processes"(ibid:3).

In spite of the importance of rational intelligence in dealing with the problems that encounter people , Stevens considers it as inapplicable . Instead , he encourages the investigation of the "imaginative dimensions of human intelligence" (ibid). Stevens' manner is peculiar because it depends on the association among certain fundamental corner-stones . He associates among the tendencies of the avant-gardist , the romantic indications , and the modern values . Stevens has roved among these dimensions. In such a way , he has associated imagination with reality through the historical events in the world as they are expressed in literature(ibid).

Stevens' poems are characterized with a special emphasis on the employment of 'imagination and reality'. He has revealed such an emphasis in a balanced way . Stevens' poems contain an attempt to investigate the uselessness of having a shift in the subject-matter for the sake of being "faithful to physical reality , which , to the perceiving mind is incessantly changing" (Silver,1972:3).

What characterizes modernism in poetry is the recurrence of 'spirit' in Stevens' poems . The modern rational point of view that has been adopted by Stevens witnessed a shift from the direct reference to God to establish a relationship between the human consciousness and the world around us. Stevens conveys such a point of view through the employment of imagery and the eccentric language that participated in making the spiritual themes in his poetry vague and sophisticated (Wilde , 1997:2).

The religious beliefs that are dominating all over the world and the self-dependence and the critical point of view towards the monotheistic religions may be seen in Stevens' literary

works whether poetry or prose . In Stevens' poetry , there is an indication of his hold of humanist beliefs , he believes that the individual trust his potentialities rather than waiting for the help from God or one of the gods. In addition , there are different critical studies concerning Stevens' poetry that certain references about his objection of believing in supernaturalism , secularity , and naturalism and the employment of these views in his poetry (Alm , 2017 : 10) .

Moreover , there is another feature that characterizes Wallace Stevens' poetry is craftsmanship through the employment of certain philosophical and aesthetic notions . In addition , Stevens' poetry presents the fusion of imagination and reality and this feature highlights his creativity in writing poetry (Jumana , 2011 : 7)

Stevens has played a significant role in the political activities through the employment of poetry . In 1930s there was the affection of Marxism and Stevens has played his rhetorical poetic language to be able to challenge the present ideological forces and movements especially in the northeastern of US (Cleghorn , 1997 : iii) .

The consideration of the language that Stevens has employed is also important . He uses a language that is characterized with being "colourful and highly mediative , suggests that the only way for mankind to realize this symbiosis , this earthly connection , is through the artistic form in Stevens' case , that form is poetry" (Beauchamp , 2013 : 1). Hence , the language that has been presented by Stevens in his poetry expresses his creativity and keenness in spite of the considerable difficulty that may make it hard to understand and to interpret his poems.

According to what has been mentioned , there are different characteristic features that can be considered as distinctive features of Stevens' poetry .

4. Methodology

According to the formalist approach the interpretation of the literary text to reach at the intended meaning may be through the significant role of the employed formal features like sounds , texture , structure , symbols , images , and the other literary devices (Bressler , 2011: 57). The formalist approach is adopted in the present study to interpret Wallace Stevens' 'Anecdote of the Jar' and 'The Snow Man' . The interpretation depends on the formal features which are employed and frequently occurred in the poems that are intended to be interpreted . The stanza by stanza interpretation is considered as a procedure to highlight the significance of the employed formal features which lead to the lexical-semantic interpretation of the poems.

5. The Formalist Approach in Interpreting Poetry

Among the different approaches that can be adopted in analyzing the literary text is the formal approach . The formal approach has been gained popularity on the part of the readers because it supplies them with the ability to analyze and to read with pleasure any given literary work depending on the deep rooted and essential values of that work (Dobie , 2012 : 33) .

According to the name , formalism deals basically with form . But , formalism concerns itself with providing the analysis of how the meaning of the literary text is conveyed rather than focusing on the interpretation of the literary text and what that text means (Grudzina , 2010 : 297) .

For the sake of giving an interpretation of a literary text depending on the formal approach , the focus should be on the language which is employed in that text because it considers the language which is employed in literature as being different from the everyday language , this is called ‘literariness’ . The other process of employing language is called ‘defamiliarization ’ which means how to make the familiar as strange and to present the old with a new look , as it is described by Shklovsky “a sphere of new perception of every words or objects , forcing the listener or reader to re-examine the image” (Bressler, 2011: 49-50).

The approach depends on two dimensions which are ‘literariness’ and ‘defamiliarization’ . The first emphasis of the formalists interest is the ordinary language which is employed and the way it is made strange or unfamiliar through the use of certain devices like : rhyme , meter , and repetition or even the way of dividing the poem into stanzas . For the formalists , according to the process of defamiliarization , language draws the attention to the way it says what it intends to say (Bertens , 2001:34)(See also Mokhuwa , 2018:17).

The important role of form to interpret the literary text , especially poetry comes from the assumption that has been stated by Roman Jakobson that “poetry is a form of language characterized by orientation towards its own (ibid). In addition , the formalists believe that there is no clear cut between form and content of the literary text . Furthermore , the interpretation of the literary text to maintain the intended meaning may be through the focus on the role of the employed “sounds , texture , structure , rhetoric , and a host of other literary devices” which are interwoven in the text (Bressler , 2011 : 57) .

The focus on the role of form in interpreting a poem results from the significance of different formal features more than the pattern of the sentence to include the association among the stanzas of the poem and the interrelationships between the octave and the sestet in the sonnet . It also includes “the tone or mood that the text builds , and possibly the shifting and alternating of mood ...” (Guerin et al , 2005 : 94). According to the formal approach , it is necessary to start with examining the words , that are employed in the text . To examine the employed words , it means to focus on the denotation and the connotation of the words to provide the beneficial clues to determine what the text says (ibid) .

The formalist approach is used to determine the intended meaning of certain text . It is done through emphasizing on knowing the meaning of the words starting with the way in which these words are used passing through examining the relationships among the structural patterns arriving at the aim behind the employment of the symbols and the symbolic values in the text which is intended to be interpreted . In addition to that , image has a significant role in the formal analysis since it is noted that there are different types of images that express colours , time , and place that may describe the setting in the literary text . Thus , distinguishing the development of these images will lead to observe the way in which the theme is formed gradually (Guerin et al , 2005 : 94) .

Adopting the formalist approach to interpret a literary text means making especial emphasis on the text itself without having much dependence on the social , religious , and political indications and thoughts (Dobie , 2012 : 33) . Hence , in analyzing a literary work , the focus will be upon how the author has arranged the words , the images , and the symbols . The purpose behind such a focus is to trace the internal relationships that aid to expose the form . Therefore , when it is aimed at analyzing a literary text to maintain its theme , it is significant to emphasize on the relationships among the used “ words , phrases , metaphors , images , and symbols” (Guerin et al , 2005 : 95) .

The formalists deal with particular features in the text with special consideration of the recurrence of these features . It is important for the formalist to examine the repetition as well as motifs . They do not neglect the minute details with respect to the whole entity of the text (Grudzina , 2010 : 300) . Hence , the form is expressive and can indicate the meaning of the text . So , when the form is absent that is purposeful and it has a particular meaning . The intended meaning - like absurdity – can be conveyed .

There are three means of studying a text according to the formalist approach :

- 1.form and unity
- 2.diction
3. incongruities or inconsistencies

1. Form and Unity

Form and unity include cadence and repetition . Cadence means the examination of the language that is used whether it is formal or informal and the sound devices which are used like : rhythm , rhyme alliteration , and onomatopoeia . Form and unity also include repetition and recurrence which means the purposeful repetition of certain words or phrases is for the sake of expressing and emphasizing a particular idea . The structures which are used in the text are considered of great significance according to the formalists (Grudzina , 2010 : 308) .

2. Diction

Diction includes denotation , etymology , connotation , ambiguity , symbols , and allusions .

A. Denotation

Understanding the meaning of the words that are used by the author is important to understand a given text . Understanding a text is impossible without knowing the meaning of the words in that text (ibid : 314) .

B. Etymology

Etymology means knowing about the words . The origin of the words that are used in the text (ibid) .

C. Connotation

Close attention is played by the formalists to the alteration of the meaning of the words and phrases that are contained in certain context (ibid : 317). The metaphoric use of the words can be considered as a part of the connotation of these words “the metaphorical expressions help the listeners to visualize and better understand the presented strategies and the analysis of these metaphorical expressions is a good way of understanding the underlying ideologies” (Abood and Hussein, 2020:306).

D. Ambiguity

Some authors aim at making the meaning of the text ambiguous and implied and that leads to a variety of interpretations . The formalists try to investigate the reason behind such ambiguity (ibid : 318).

E. Symbols

In dealing with symbols , the main aim of the formalist is to decide the way the devoted symbol works in a text and what it adds to the whole meaning of the work regardless what that symbol means even (ibid : 320) . “The term ‘symbol’ is applied to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something or suggests a reference beyond itself” (Radhi and Abed , 2016:69).

F. Allusions

One of the recognizable procedures that the formalist follows is the good reading and the thoughtful interpretation to disambiguate the ambiguity of the components of the text (ibid).

3. Incongruities or Inconsistencies

Incongruities or inconsistencies includes irony and paradox . Irony means a word that is used as opposite of what is really meant while paradox means the use of two sentences which are in contrast to each other . The use of irony and paradox helps to drive the work according to the formalists (ibid : 324) .

The classification of the work is not the responsibility of the formalist instead , he/she is engaged with paying attention to the author’s intentional violation of the classification of the work . However , the formalists focus on the author’s unwilling to use forms like : anachronisms , the violation of the chronological arrangement in the work and the changeability of the point of view and the mood (ibid : 332).

To conclude , in interpreting the literary work like a poem according to the formalist approach there should be a special emphasis on the language used in the text , since language is considered as the backbone of literature . The language which is used should be examined with special consideration of the “relationships between the form and the meaning of the text . The meaning conveyed by a text places the text in a particular locale as well as situates it in a particular literary form” (Akinbode , 2013 : 237).

6.1. The Interpretation of Wallace Stevens' 'Anecdote of the Jar'

First Stanza

I placed a jar in Tennessee ,
And round it was , upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill .

Staring with the title of the poem which may indicate the intended meaning of the poem , 'jar' seems to have a central role in the poem . The 'jar' is described as being 'Anecdote' . The narration starts with the placement of the 'jar' in Tennessee . The narrator does not enrich the 'jar' with the sufficient description , instead , he intends to emphasize its significance . In addition to the importance of the 'jar' as a symbol , the stanza also includes the following important indications that help to interpret the stanza in particular and lead to interpret the whole poem in general . These indications are : (a) the structure of the stanza as an introduction (b) the focus on the concept of place (c) the employment of certain words that help to focus the concept of place (d) the description of the place to criticize the damaged nature by industry and the man-made structures.

The dioxies that have been mentioned can be represented as the following :

1. The symbolic indication of the 'jar' . The 'jar' is used symbolically to play a central role in the poem . It lacks for the detailed description that seems restricted to its shape as 'round' but it has a particular significance because it causes the damage of the surrounding nature on the 'hill'. Smith (2018 : 1) states that "this 'jar' could represent the progress into more industrial era from the more natural world that once existed , and the falling away of 'wilderness' as the world strove to follow this industrial pattern is revealed through the statement that "the slovenly wilderness" moved to "[s]urround that hill" . While the 'jar' represents the industry in contrast to nature it is selected to play such a symbolic role because of the relationship between the 'jar' as an object and "the moment of early history in industry" (ibid). The 'jar' is a reference to the food that is sold in jars and America is the origin of the capital consuming and the 'jar' may indicate such a process .

The employment of the 'jar' as a symbol to stand for the association between imagination and reality that can be considered as the main theme of the poem . Nature is damaged through the man-made objects , the 'jar' as a part of the human creation and the product of imagination . The 'jar' is seen to be "as an extension of the poet own drive to order , but it achieves , dominion over the chaotic wilderness precisely because it is inanimate"(Jumana , 2011 : 7). The 'jar' may be interpreted as "a medium through which we as human try to understand the natural world we're part of . The more we know the more the innocence of the environment is corrupted." (Spacy, 2017 : 2).

2.The structure of the stanza as an introduction of the narration is worthy to be dealt with . The four-lines stanza initiates the speaker's tale about the 'jar' as it is placed in 'Tennessee' . The stanza contains a simple description of the 'jar' that expresses the shape

of the 'jar' and the position in which it is placed "upon a hill" and the affection on the place in which it is and the surrounding . The stanza is an introduction to the nature of the poem that will be developed in the next stanzas.

3.The focus on the concept of place is a significant dimension in the first stanza . The conflict that appears in the poem is between imagination and reality . The conflict is denoted through the 'jar' which is made by man and placed upon the 'hill' . The 'jar' is placed upon the hill which means a dominating position upon the whole neighborhood. In addition , the mentioning of 'Tennessee' is another reference to 'place' , the poet refers to 'Tennessee' to show the affection of industry upon nature and that causes the corruption of the pure nature . It causes the "slovenly wilderness" , so the concept of place has been focused on and this focus is significant in the revelation of the theme of the poem.

4.The employment of certain words that helps to express the heavy emphasis on the concept of place. In the first stanza of the poem there are some words related to the description of the place like "Tennessee , upon, hill, wilderness, surround, and hill". The mentioned words have been used to describe the circumstance in which the 'jar' has been placed to associate between imagination and reality on one hand and between industrial institution and the natural world on the other hand.

5. According to what is mentioned , the factors are interwoven and they in turn represent the poet's intention. The poet intends to criticize the widening disastrous impacts of the industry upon nature. The 'jar' which is –the representative of the man-made creation-dominants in the place through the use of "upon a hill" causes "slovenly wilderness" in other words , the man-made structures cause the heap of ravages on nature. So , it is the call to criticize such a phenomenon and such a call will be developed in the second stanza of the poem.

Second Stanza

The Wilderness rose up to it ,

And sprawled around , no longer wild .

The jar was round upon the ground

And tall and of a port in air .

The second stanza contains the development of the theme of the poem. The wide spread of the man-made structures , buildings , and factories covered the world of nature and this certifies that the world of nature has shrunk under the impact of industry . The 'jar' has a central role to play in this stanza , too. "The jar was round upon the ground", it is a clear representation of the dominance of the 'jar' which is the man production that affects the 'wilderness' , wilderness that represents the world of nature. The impact of occupying the top of the hill by the 'jar' increases the sway of industry and the role of technology and decreases the green areas or the 'wilderness' which is threatened . Then, "the jar is described as tall and impressive as it stands on the hill . The jar takes over everything , despite being grey and bare (and presumably empty).It does not care for the nature around it , and is like nothing else in the whole Tennessee" (Tearle , 2020: 2). The relationship

between the 'jar' and 'wilderness' is an action and a reaction as it is seen by Lentricchia (1988) who suggests that such an association , since the placed 'jar' takes while the 'wilderness' gives , so the employed verbs are opposite to each other.

Moreover, all the words in the stanza have been employed to focus on the theme of dominance of the industry and the man-made structures and the shrink of the green areas. The adjectives are used to describe the 'jar' , and the use of these adjectives is for the sake of expressing the dominance of the 'jar' which is described as "round" and "tall" , these features of the 'jar' give it the capability of overtaking the "wilderness" to the extent that it has "surrounded" the "hill" and "wilderness" and "rose" became tame and "sprawled". According to the description of the authoritative role of the 'jar' , nature has been shrunk and the green areas decreased "no longer wild" The employed words serve to convey the intended theme. Then, the theme of the poem has been considered as "the power game between the jar and the wilderness, that is , the one between culture and nature , or art and nature" (MacLeod and Mahoney , 2004 : 322).

Third Stanza

It took dominion everywhere .

The jar was gray and bare .

It did not give of bird or bush,

Like nothing else in Tennessee.

In the third stanza of Stevens' 'Anecdote of the Jar' , the speaker concludes that 'industry' influences 'nature' negatively . The stanza starts with a clear reference to the authority of the 'jar' all over the place even the areas far from the 'hill' which refers , in turn , to the wide spread of industry against nature. The poet criticizes such development of industry , to do so , the poet describes the 'jar' as being 'gray' and 'bare' which are the features of 'cement' that is used in buildings . He tries to describe the negative interference of industry in sweeping away all the elements of the world of nature . The poet criticizes the substitution of a vital world of nature with a dead and solid or "gray and bare" structures. The poet's consideration of the negative secretion of industry and the destructive affection against nature is enhanced with the sterility of the 'jar' or industry to give of "bird or bush"(Smith : 2018:3).

Hence , the description of the scene in 'Tennessee' with the authoritative role of the 'jar' seems to be dual and despondent . On the 'hill' in 'Tennessee' and 'everywhere' there is a competition between industry and nature and in such a competition if the dominance was of 'industry' , nature will be distorted . To reveal such a theme the poet employs words like : the 'jar' on a hand and the absence or the lack of "giving of bird or bush" or the beauty of nature . The generalization of such a theme can be regarded through the employment of 'everywhere' and 'Tennessee' . The description of the hatred nature starts from Tennessee and ends in Tennessee , but 'everywhere' refers to the consideration of the impacts of industry upon nature as a global issue.

To conclude , the poem can be considered as the tale of criticizing the development of industry in front of an expensive cost like the ravage of nature .

6.2. The Interpretation of Wallace Stevens' 'The Snow Man'

First Stanza

One must have a mind of winter

To regard the frost and the boughs

Of the pine trees crusted with snow;

The speaker in the first stanza determines the significant point of view that he would like to introduce as a general case that belongs to the whole humanity . Accordingly , the speaker uses 'one' in the first line instead of 'I' for instance , to tell that this experience can be experienced by the human beings everywhere in the world . Then he uses 'must' to certify that the human being should have the ability to be a good observer in the life that he lives (Spacy , 2018 :2).

The speaker in 'The Snow Man' tries to interrelate the human imagination to the surrounding nature for the sake of exposing the intended rational point of view in reacting , evaluating , and deciding about the different crises in life around. The speaker in the first stanza suggests that man must be able to react to the crises that he may face in life with ' a mind of winter' , he employs words that refer to nature in winter like 'winter , frost , snow' and the description of the "winter landscape, the boughs" and the "pine-trees" as being covered with the snow. Hence , the focus in the first line is upon the role of the rational thinking in looking at nature around.

Stevens presents the features that characterize the person who is able to be in harmony with the cold winter which are the same features of the snow man that has been mentioned in the title of the poem . The heavy emphasis that is made in the first stanza upon being acclimatized with the hard conditions in the cold winter. Similarly , "it should be taken to mean that one's mind must be immune to the dramas , emotions , and chaos of the world . One must not be affected by the winter , but become part of it . One must be able to set all these things aside , and more , to fully understand the world as it truly is" (Baldwin , 2022 : 1) .

According to the words that have been employed , the climatic description can be seen through the focus upon 'winter' . The poet employs the word 'winter' itself and words like: 'frost and snow' to describe the landscape. In addition to that , he has given people some pieces of advice to get rid of their suffering , problems , crises and to enjoy looking at nature in winter with a positive mind to be able to appreciate the beauty of nature in terms of silence , tranquility , and peacefulness . In the same time it is a chance for people to learn how to overcome the problems since 'winter' is the season that is characterized with harshness and challenging .

Second Stanza

And have been cold along time

To behold the junipers shagged with ice,

The spruces rough in distant glitter

In the second stanza there is a completion of the theme that has been initiated in the first stanza and the words that have been employed can be considered as the evidence . Man must have the positive mind to look at the beauty of nature in spite of the harshness during winter which is the piece of advice that the poet would like to present. The ability of man to challenge whether the ‘coldness of winter’ or ‘the problems in life’ is intended , but in this stanza , it is illimitable to time “along time” and the employment of the verb “behold” is more expressive than verbs like ‘see or observe’ , since “behold” can be related to the meaning of ‘revelation’ so , it is used to motivate ‘Man’ to be able to stand against the problems and to be the winner at the end . what enhances such interpretation is the description of the “junipers and spruces” , they are ever green in spite of being covered with “ice” and they seem “glitter”. Thus, the speaker encourages the reader to be positive and hopeful in order to be able to face the problems in the real life and to get rid of.

Third Stanza

Of the January sun; and not to think

Of any misery in the sound of the world,

In the sound of a few leaves,

Stevens keeps employing words that are associated with the climate and related to winter like: “January , sun , wind , and few leaves”. The reason behind the employment of these words is to serve conveying the theme of the poem that the poet has begun which is the necessity of challenging and overcoming the obstructions that Man may encounter in the real life. The third stanza of the poem includes the development of the piece of advice that the speaker has issued in the beginning of the poem. So, “the speaker clearly advising the reader not to think/ Of any misery in sound of the wind , that is , not to project human emotion out into and onto nature” (Spacey , 2018:3).

The way the poet has employed the words in the third stanza is expressive and indicative to serve his target as he is giving the advice . The employment of ‘January sun’ for instance , is a reference to warmth in such a cold weather , it is associated to hope that he would like to spread . The “sound of wind” which is a reference to the problems that Man may face. Thus, the speaker gives the reader such a piece of advice which is stop thinking of such problems and there is hope in life . In spite of being cold in winter but there are “few leaves” which is another reference to hope and enjoyment in spite of the misery in life.

What is worthy to be noticed is the employment of words that refer to ‘time’ and ‘climate’ to describe the landscape . The description of the landscape indicates the features of the suggested ‘snow man’ . Man should be able to appreciate the coldness of ‘January’ and should not be affected with “misery” because he has the “mind of winter”. In other words , Man should be able to cope with the conditions of life in order to be a winner.

Fourth Stanza

Which is the sound of the land

Full of the same wind

That is blowing in the same bare place

This last stanza but one includes the re-mentioning of the idea that has been introduced in the previous stanza . The employment of words like: “sound” and “the same” enhances the still blowing wind and the gloomy atmosphere . The speaker demands from the reader to be a vital part of the snowy landscape (Spacey , 2018:4).

The description of the “wind” and the “sound” of the wind while it is blowing . The reference to the action of blowing of the “wind” while it is accompanied by the “sound” refers to the misery of life and the “sound” of the land that describes the repeated action. It refers to the role of man in life in spite of the misery and suffering in life. The speaker “believes that the projection of human emotions will disrupt one’s understanding of the world. A snow man must not project human misery onto the sounds of the world, but must observe if for what it is , that of “the sound of the land””(Baldwin, 2022 : 4).

According to the employment of the word “sound” in the first line of the stanza as it is related with “land” to refer to “Man” as the observer in nature regardless the emotions , misery ,and suffering. The second employment of the word “sound” in the second line of the stanza is associated with the “wind” to encourage Man to be adjusted with life even if the “place” is a waste land.

Fifth Stanza

For the listener , who listens in the snow ,

And , nothing himself , beholds

Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is .

The last stanza in Stevens’ ‘The Snow Man’ is characterized with being peculiar in terms of the employment of words like “listener and listens” , and the repetition of “nothing” . The heavy emphasis has been made on the “listener” which is preceded by “for” , then the poet would like to tell the “listener” about the philosophy that he believes in . It seems that “the poet remakes the sound is not human cries or the pains of the world , it is , as the last line describes , “Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.””(Baldwin , 2022 :4). Accordingly , the “listener” may be considered as either “the snow man” that appears in the title of the poem or the speaker in the poem. According to Spacey (2018:5), the speaker may be :

1. a person who has been out for a long time to the extent that he is unable to “think and feel –hence the nothing himself”.
2. the speaker himself as a representative of “the snow man , becoming an imagined voice for this crystalline , unfeeling creature”.

In the end of the stanza as it is the end of the poem altogether , the climax or the anti-climax can be maintained through the paradox which is used . The “listener” , listens purely and clearly to the expressive language which is characterized with the lack of the emotional language . The language used leads to “perspectivism” that calls for beholding the world through the individual’s own conditions . What the poem ends with is the capability of approaching reality in life as it is being far from subjectivity which seems unachievable (see www.gradesaver.com , 2018).

Finally , it can be said that “The Snow Man” by Stevens gives the opportunity to the reader to think about reality in life and what is considered as real and to which extent it is right to be considered as real.

6.3. Wallace Stevens’ ‘Anecdote of the Jar’ and ‘The Snow Man’: A Discussion of the interpretation in Terms of Formalism

The comparison between Stevens’ both pomes “Anecdote of the Jar” and “The Snow Man” shows the following :

1. In “Anecdote of the Jar” , the employment of symbols can be seen through the employment of the “jar” . The ‘jar’ has a central role with the consideration of its significant as well as authoritative position that it occupies . Its position is affective on the scene around it . It is put in “Tennessee” according to the description which is introduced to enhance the idea of the negative impact of industry on nature .
2. The employment of imagery is a vital element that aids the reader to imagine the described scene in “Tennessee” after the placement of the “jar” . Hence, the emphasis has been made on the visual images that help to illustrate the shape of the “jar” , it is described as “round” twice in the first stanza and the second stanza , “tall” , “gray”, and “bare”. The shape and the colour that has been expressed through these visual images describe the increase of the areas that have affected with the development of industry and the structures that are made of cement . On the other hand , there are visual images like “wilderness” and “rose” that refer to the virgin lands before the ravage.
3. The employment of the words is a helpful factor in interpreting Stevens’ “Anecdote of the Jar” . The poet has employed words that indicate the concept of ‘place’ . The place has been described after the placement of the ‘jar’. The words like : “Tennessee”, “upon a hill” , “wilderness” , “surround” , “up” , “around”, “upon”, “ground” , “port” , “everywhere” , and “Tennessee”. According to the words that have been already mentioned , it seems that the speaker in the poem would like to criticize the change that took place in the place that has been damaged by industrial development . He tries to focus on the struggle between reality and imagination and between the real circumstance and nature.
4. In Stevens’ “The Snow Man” , the employment of symbols can be seen through the employment of the “snow man” itself. The “snow man” in the poem has a central role with the regard of the abstract attendance in spite of its absence as a concrete object . The integration of the man to both reality and imagination is through the description of the features of the “snow man”.

5. The employment of imagery is decisive and important while the emphasis was upon the visual as well as the thermal images while in the third stanza till the end of the poem there is a shift towards the aural images . The shift can be justified as the shift in the technique which is adopted by the poet to advise man to be in harmony with his own circumstance .

6. The employment of the words is another factor that helps to interpret the poem . The poet has employed words that refer to the concept of time like : “winter” , “frost” , “snow” , “cold” , “January” , “few leaves” , and “snow”. The words that have been mentioned indicate the concept of time . All of these words are associated with “winter” which is characterized with harshness to be a satisfactory device to persuade the reader to adopt the poet’s advice in order to get rid of the problems and crises that encounter him in his life and to cope with life as it is.

7. Conclusions

The researcher has arrived at the following :

1. The poet employs symbolism. A single central symbol in each of the two poems the ‘jar’ and the ‘snow man’ respectively.
2. There is a variation according to the employment of imagery while the focus is on the visual images in the “Anecdote of the Jar” , the images are thermal , visual , then aural in “The Snow Man” . Such a variation is justified to study the subject matter in each poem .
3. The words have been employed in a different way in each poem to obtain the intended target. The words employed to focus upon the description of ‘place’ in “Anecdote of the Jar” while they are employed to make special emphasis upon ‘time’ in “The Snow Man”.
4. There is a revelation of the association and duality in Stevens’ consideration of reality and imagination . Through the emphasis upon the real life and the surrounding nature.

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قصيدتي "حكاية الجرة" و "الإنسان الثلجي" للشاعر والاس ستيفنز : تأويل مفرداتي- دلالي

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المستخلص

تهدف الدراسة الحالية لتقديم تأويل مفرداتي-دلالي لقصيدتي (حكاية الجرة) و (الإنسان الثلجي) للشاعر والاس ستيفنز و قد تم تبني المنهج الشكلي منهجاً لتأويل القصيدتين كونه يعد اللغة الموظفة في الادب لغةً مستقلةً و أنّ وظيفة هذه اللغة الادبية هي جلب الانتباه للخصائص و الصفات الشكلية التي تعمل سويًا لتشكيل النص الادبي . ومن تلك الصفات الشكلية التي تؤدي دوراً مهماً في القصيدة و تساعد في تأويلها هي الرموز و الصور . حيث أنّ الرموز و الصور الموظفة في القصيدتين تساعد في تأويلهما . يحتوي البحث مقدمة عن الشاعر والاس ستيفنز و عن علاقته بالحدث . في حين تضمنت اجراءات البحث ماهية استعمال المنهج الشكلي في تأويل الشعر و تأويل قصيدتي الشاعر والاس ستيفنز (حكاية الجرة) و (الإنسان الثلجي) تأويلاً مفرداتياً- دلالياً و مناقشة لذلك التأويل في ضوء المنهج الشكلي. و ختم البحث بالاستنتاجات و قائمة بالمصادر.

الكلمات المفتاحية : المنهج الشكلي ، التأويل الدلالي ، الشعر ، الرمز ، الصورة ، والاس ستيفنز.