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IB Literature 11 HL

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Inconsistency of Techniques in Shu Ting's "O Motherland, Dear Motherland"

- I. Shu Ting's poem "O Motherland, Dear Motherland" establishes a pleading, emotional mood using structure, syntax, and formality of word choice to argue that China's country has sacrificed itself for the benefit of its people.
- II. The poem's purpose is to argue that China's country has sacrificed itself for the benefit of its people for centuries.
 - A. The people abuse China's resources for their benefit.
 1. "As the tow rope cuts deeply into your shoulder" (1)
 2. Ting personifies China by describing damage to its *shoulder* and other various body parts throughout the poem. A body is vulnerable, as is China. The object hurting the body is the *tow rope*, which represents tools and modern technology.
 - B. The people are flawed.
 1. "I am poverty, / I'm sorrow, / I'm bitterly painful hope" (10)
 2. Ting uses negative diction to establish a negative mood when describing the citizens of China through words like *poverty*, *sorrow*, and *bitterly painful*.
 - C. Ting is proud of her country, China.

1. “Your nine million square kilometers ... / Your prosperity, your glory, and your freedom / —O Motherland” (31)
2. The *your* refers to the country (*O Motherland*). China has nine million square kilometers. So, the poem must be to the country, China. The narrator feels pride towards her country, as shown when she uses parallel structure with positive attributes of a country. The parallel structure makes use of the repeated prefix *your*, suggesting that the country always shows the attributes; that it’s constant, and it has been that way for a long time.

III. Ting uses structure and a formal writing style to establish an emotional mood.

A. Ting uses parallel structure and a pattern of formality to change the speed at which the poem should be read.

1. “I am ... I’m ... I’m” (1, 10, 17)
2. Ting uses the same pattern of parallel structure in all stanzas but the last. For the first three stanzas, there is a line starting with *I am* once followed by two lines starting with *I’m*. The former, *I am*, is more formal than the latter. Formal language is less personal, while informal language is spontaneous and more quickly written or spoken as it requires fewer syllables. The pattern of switching from formal to informal language in every stanza but the last suggests that in each stanza, the narrator starts by thinking logically and clearly, but speeds up and moves to an emotional outpouring.

B. Ting uses the repetition of an archaic term to build an emotional mood.

1. “O Motherland” (9, 16, 23, 32)
2. Ting repeats “O Motherland” at the very end of every stanza except the last. The word *O* is an archaic word from the 15th century used as an exclamation to express emotion.

IV. Ting breaks the patterns of the techniques for the final stanza because the rest of the poem is supposed to be an outpouring of emotions, but the final stanza, rather than explaining the ways that the country sacrifices itself, it describes the positive attributes of the country.

A. The last stanza does not build an emotional mood.

1. “I am” (24)
2. The last stanza is not a part of the emotional outpouring, and hence continues to use formal language throughout it; it is supposed to be read more slowly.

B. The purpose of the last stanza is different than the others.

1. “My dear Motherland” (33)
2. Ting ends the last stanza differently because it shows appreciation of the country using the word *dear* after describing its positive attributes.

C. Ting uses punctuation (syntax) to control the speed at which the poem should be read.

1. “Your prosperity, your glory, and your freedom” (31)
2. The number of punctuation characters in the final stanza nearly doubles compared to the other stanza, and the final stanza also has the highest

number of end stops. The other stanzas have a relatively similar number of punctuation characters and end stops. Punctuation slows down the pace of the stanza.

V. Conclusion

- A. Restate the thesis
- B. Summarize each of the body points
- C. Recite poem again, if necessary