

Analysis of Gwendolyn Brooks' Poem "We Real Cool"

"We Real Cool" was written by Gwendolyn Brooks in 1959. During that period, movements for civil rights in the United States raised ethnicity equality issues. Brooks successfully uses unique form and profound content to describe how the seven boys choose to give up their future by doing passive activities. On one hand, Brooks reveals the inequality during that period makes young African American people hopeless, while on the other hand, Brooks uses the poem to encourage the young people to break through the social inequality.

The content of the poem portrays the daily activities of the seven youths who choose to leave school. Brooks successfully illustrates how these activities gradually destroy the boys' future. First, Brooks uses simple but profound content to illustrate that the seven boys are sabotaging themselves by doing meaningless activities. The reason why Brooks mentions the name of the pool hall, The Golden Shovel, is to associate the shovel with graves. This connection implies that because the seven boys spend their school time in the pool hall. They are digging their own graves. In the third stanza, Brooks uses the phrases "lurk late" and "strike straight" to further explain how these boys waste their lives by engaging in crime and illegal activities. On the surface, the word "lurk late" tells us that the seven youths stay out late. This word also implies the illegal activities that these boys conduct late at night. The word "strike straight" is associated with violence, which implies the youths might commit crimes like robbery.

Brooks uses herself as an example of breaking through traditional boundaries in order to encourage the fallen youths that the future is still positive as long as you are willing to change it. She does so by not following the traditional form of a poem. First, this poem only has four

stanzas, and each stanza has two sentences. Its short and brief features match the standard of lyric poems. However, according to the prosody, lyric poems are usually used to express personal emotions (Gross, 2014). This poem is not an expression of Brooks's personal emotions since she uses "we" instead of "I". On one hand, the word "we" not only represents the seven youths, but also speaks for all the African American kids who suffered from inequality during the Civil Right Movement. On the other hand, this expression implies we should not be constrained by the social norms and rules. Second, the rhyme of a traditional poem appears at the end of each line. Brooks uses an unconventional form by arranging the rhyme in the middle. The rhymed words including "cool", "school", "late" and "straight" are all placed in the middle of each sentence. Brooks intentionally puts the word "We" at the end of each line, which not only emphasizes the subject "we", but also makes the form of the poem more unique. Brooks successfully uses this poem as an example of how to jump out of the boundaries.

Racial segregation during the Civil Rights Movement creates a huge racial inequality, which makes many African American youths feel hopeless about their futures. "We real cool" reveals the contemporary social problem and leaves space for people to think.

Analysis of William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"

"A Rose for Emily" was written by William Faulkner in 1930. During that period, class system created by Southern society becomes an invisible wall that constrains people's freedom. Faulkner uses organized form and thoughtful content to develop a miserable character · which critiques the inhumanity of the class system.

Faulkner successfully develops Emily as a mysterious woman who deserves sympathy. He does so by developing an ingenious form, which unites readers with Emily's experience. The

story is divided into five sections. Faulkner neither does not arrange the sections in a chronological order nor a reverse chronological order. The reason is because both choices will expose the truth which is Emily kills Barron earlier to readers. Faulkner intentionally organizes Emily's tragic experience prior to her hideous behaviors, which effectively illustrates Emily's commiseration. Faulkner has successfully considered that readers will not sympathize with Emily if their first impression of Emily is an insane killer. Instead, Emily's death is introduced at the beginning of the story. This arrangement not only creates a mysterious atmosphere to the story but also unit readers together with the narrator in order to gradually discover who Emily is. In the section two, Faulkner initially introduces Emily's misfortune. According to the story, "That was two years after her father's death and a short time after her sweetheart--the one we believed would marry her --had deserted her (Faulkner, p.185)." This setting successfully illustrates Emily's miserable history. Additionally, the author magically changes the timeline back to Emily's father's funeral, and describes the inseparable relationship between Emily and her father. At the end of the story, Faulkner naturally reveals the truth behind the cryptic house. At this moment, readers completely sympathize with Emily due to Faulkner's brilliant organizing.

The content successfully explains that Emily's commiseration is caused by the class system of Southern Society. A caste system is a social system based on ascribed statuses, which are traits or characteristics that people possess as a result of their birth (Modern Stratification Systems). Within the society of strong class segregation, the father becomes the symbol of power and rules. Under father's protection and manipulation, Emily becomes less independent. According to Faulkner, "Miss Emily a slender figure in white in the background, her father a spraddled silhouette in the foreground, his back to her and clutching a horsewhip, the two of

them framed by the back-flung front door (Faulkner p.185, 186).” Emily’s “slender figure” contrast with her father’s “spraddled silhouette”, which successfully shows that Emily heavily relies on her father. The unnecessary protection becomes the limitation toward her, which prevent her from the outside world. Therefore, she could not accept his father’s death. She locks herself up like what her father does to her.

Being Brought from Africa to America Analysis

Phyllis Wheatley’s slavery experience allows her to create a representative poem, “Being Brought from Africa to America”. The thoughtful content matches the diverse form, which illustrates the idea of revolution.

The first two lines of the poem describe how Wheatley is brought from Africa to America. Wheatley intentionally uses meaningful words in order to illustrate the idea of revolution. The word “Mercy” usually indicates the meaning of benevolence. In this case, this word shows Wheatley’s appreciation for this journey. By using the word “benighted” which can be treated as “be nighted”, which indicates darkness. In this poem, the dark might be associated with Wheatley’s skin since her skin is dark. Furthermore, the dark also points that Wheatley’s past experience of slavery is painful.

The form is shifted from restrained to liberal, which illustrates how Wheatley’s life is transferred from constrained to liberal. The form of the first line of the poem is restrained. First, the rhyme of the poem is orderly. According to the first two lines, “land” and “stand” are rhymed. Additionally, the first two lines are also in iambic pentameter since they both contain five iambs. However, after the first stanza, the poem loses its original form. The lines “That there's a God, that there's a Saviour too:” is not in iambic pentameter. The first two lines still talks about

African. Wheatley's past experience in African makes her write the first stanza in a restrained way. However, after the first stanza, the form shifts from constrained to free. Since the content is more focused on the experience in America, the free form is associated with America's liberty. The line "Remember, Christians, Negros, black as Cain" is even used in parallel structure.

Both form and content successfully illustrate the ideas of change and revolution. The poem was written in 1768, which happened during the revolutionary period of American history. Wheatley plainly address both slaves and Christianity. From being a slave to a liberal poet, Wheatley's dramatic change illustrates her strong ability of adapting new things. And this explains why Wheatley has become a revolutionary.

Existence of Literature

As technology grows and becomes innovative, newer tools such as social media, blogs and Smartphone gradually are replacing traditional books. This change shapes the interpretation from thoughtful to intuitive. The reason is text messages and articles have been digitized, so people pay less attention to the form of the work when they interpret the message through these technology tools. On the surface, it seems that the most representative and antique way of interpretation is disappearing along with the fast growth of information technology. However, by seeking deeper into the modern way of interpretation, I fortunately find the methods of interpretation we studied in class as indispensable parts of our education in both ontological and epistemological perspectives.

The interpretation that we learned in class is an indispensable part of our education since it exists specifically within the field of our education. Formal analysis is one of the most representative ways of interpretation that we practiced in class. Proving that the formal analysis exists in our education enables us to explain how and why the interpretation exists in our education. The relationship between the formal analysis and education is inseparable because formal analysis is the subject that we learn. The formal analysis is an interpretation skill that is used to analyze how works are written. As the objective of education, formal analysis represents the skill and knowledge that we learn. According to the definition of “Education”, “Education is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research (Britannica, 2008). Therefore, education cannot exist without the subjects of learning.

According to the class, form and content analysis is another representative and useful way of interpretation that we have practiced. By comparing the contemporary way of

interpretation with the form and content analysis, I find a close association between these two methods. The connection illustrates that the interpretation that we practiced in class is closely related to our life. First, the analysis of form adds value to the interpretation. In Shakespeare's work, each character has a different form of his/her speech. These forms illustrate the credibility of characters' speeches. For example, speaking in prose is less credible than speaking in verse. Additionally, by switching forms of speeches, authors are able to successfully portray character's mental activities. The idea of applying forms into interpreting becomes one of the most crucial element of success in contemporary society as well. Along with the rapid development of technology, websites have become one of the major information sharing tools. The form of web pages decides the characteristics of the information that is shared. Twitter has successfully applied the function of form into the tweet by limiting its message size to 140-character text. Informal, fast and short became the form of tweet's characteristics. These characteristics match people's communication styles in the 21st century, which is one of the major elements that leads to Twitter's success.

The interpretation skills that we learned in class closely connect to our own lives. As we practiced in class, we have learned that a good story is able to inject a spirit behind the words. For example, in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, instead of truthfully interpreting the war experience, Kurt Vonnegut successful pieces his war experiences into a connotative story by adding his imagination. The fragments of Vonnegut's memory become a vivid story, which adds personalities and spirit on both characters and the story itself. Advertising is the most common way of interpreting social media. Successful advertisement always gives the product a spirit or symbol like Vonnegut uses his creativity to vividly express his war experiences. Instead of

presenting the good features of products, successful advertisers attach impressive stories to products, which gives products spirits.

Despite how fast the world is changing, the way of interpretation that we studied in class has been profoundly embedded in our lives. As both interpreters and writers, it is important for us to be aware of that, because that will make our life colorful.

Citation

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