

Antidote: Putting the Basics to work

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Does the poem hit or miss these elements? How?

This poem is a completely free verse, and uses traditional poetic devices with a very modern twist. I will go through the list of the basics one point at a time, and express my opinion:

Goal: according to me, the poem's goal is to personalise life as a snake and describe how even though poison is fatal, we can still find a cure for it in the poison itself.

Cliché: the poem more or less completely avoids clichés. It's a modern style poem, and is more like a rant about life, and though there are clichéd devices like symbolism, they have been used in fairly surprising ways.

Imagery: The one place where I thought the poet was trying to use imagery was when he talked about how the tongue was similar to the Excalibur (though this is not pure imagery, it also serves as a metaphor).

Metaphor and simile: the poet definitely uses a lot of metaphors (e.g.: Excalibur)

Abstract words: the poet is very straight to the point, and is very transparent in some of the stanzas. I touch upon this briefly in one of the following answers.

Rhyming: the poem has little to no rhyming patterns.

Theme: one of the main themes of the poem is symbolising life with a snake, and how poison holds the cure to itself many a times. But there are also many other small themes of the poem: like briefly touching upon a few social issues.

Does it include any other techniques that capture your attention?

There were three other techniques in the poem which caught my attention:

Firstly, instead of using vague imagery or metaphors to talk about things (as is usually the norm in poems), the poet states what's on his mind in a very blatant and outright manner. The lines where he's talking about rewriting common proverbs is an example of this, as is the line "to have and to hold in sickness and in health until divorce do us part".

Secondly, he often makes use of alternating long and short stanzas. Usually, after a long paragraph where he had been trying to prove a point, he uses a one-line stanza to strengthen this point.

Thirdly, the poet has repeated the lines including the words "sword" and "word" multiple times throughout the poem, to highlight and remind the reader about the poem's theme over and over again.

What social issues, if any, does the poem address?

In my interpretation of the poem, I think the poet highlights mainly one social issue elaborately, and touches upon multiple other issues very briefly.

According to me, the main highlight of the poem is where the poet uses a snake to personalise life, but in my opinion the snake also serves a second purpose. I think the snake is also supposed to subtly refer to people who are either our friends, or a part of our society, who act like snakes - a poisonous presence amongst us all, always out to get us.

The social issues he briefly touches upon are: gender inequality ("behind every great man...credit"), and unhappy relationships, marriages, and resulting divorces ("to have and to hold...part"), and about humankind's greed, conceited self-interest, and complete disregard for nature.

What stands out in the performance of the poem that doesn't in the text version?

The tone and the mood of the way the poet recited the poem stood out to me. This is so, because I read the poem very differently in my head. I had read the poem in a very melancholy tone, like poet was a wise, old man, who had seen a lot in life, and was talking about his observations of life, occasionally accompanied with rants about things he felt very strongly about. But the performance turned out to be a polar opposite. Its tone was

that of a young, rebellious youth, and the poem was more like a partly passionate and partly angry rant about how the poet viewed life.

Also, the presence of the snake in the video keeps the listeners in a very wary mindset: at the edge of their seats all through the performance.

What social issues are you passionate about?

A social issue I'm passionate about is the right to abortion.

Regarding abortions, I am very pro-choice. One of the most common arguments that people who are pro-life make is: a woman's body is, well, her body, but the foetus inside her is another person's body, and hence, she has no right to decide to kill it. But my counter argument is: agreed that the foetus is someone else's body, but it still is *inside* the mother's body. It might grow as a separate person some day in the future, but as long as it's inside the mother, it is not a separate entity, it's a part of the mother's body. Hence the pregnant woman should be at full liberty to decide what she does to her body. It is inhuman to force someone to become a mother, and also, sometimes the reasons for abortions are genuine: like a baby that will be born with severe birth defects and will never be able to lead a normal, healthy life. In cases like those, abortions are a necessity, not a choice.

The only scenario where I am wholly against abortions is if a woman uses them as a regular contraceptive method. Regular abortions which are done only because a woman can't be bothered or doesn't want to use contraceptives, in my opinion, is sort of immoral.