Formality of the Style, Maturity of the Artist — Stylistic Analysis of a Poem in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

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Abstract—**The language style in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* renders no uniformity. In fact the language style varies with the growth of the novel's protagonist Stephen Dedalus. By employing the way of stylistic analysis in terms of linguistic levels of phonology, lexicology and grammar, this paper is to objectively describe, precisely interpret and reasonably evaluate those foregrounded linguistic features presented in a poem which was written by the protagonist Stephen when he was a university student in order to explore enough proof to reveal the theme of this novel: Steven, the protagonist, grows into maturity as an artist with his language style developing into formality.**

Index Terms—*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, **stylistic analysis, formality, maturity**

I. INTRODUCTION

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (which is, for convenience, mentioned as *A Portrait* for short in the rest of this paper.) is the first novel of James Joyce, a great master of modernism in Ireland, which symbolizes his first step into his literary experimentation towards modernism. Different from those traditional novels throughout which one style is employed, *A Portrait*, which consists of five episodes, employs various language styles to match with the growth of the protagonist Stephen Dedalus. From the baby-talk in the beginning to the diaries at closing, stylistic variation plays a critical role in this novel, which is also the foregrounded features of it. Therefore, by way of stylistic analysis, this paper is, from the levels of phonology, lexis and grammar, to objectively describe, precisely interpret and reasonably evaluate those foregrounded linguistic features shown in a poem written by Stephen as a young artist.

A Portrait is a novel about the growing-up of Stephen Dedalus from his infancy to young adulthood. To match with this process, Joyce adopts the growing-up of Stephen as the clue and arranges the whole novel episodically with five chapters. "Each chapter takes us through certain periods of Stephen's young life, introducing key events and focusing almost exclusively on Stephen's reactions, thoughts and feelings."(Miller, 2007, p. 63) Episode One includes four sections, depicting Stephen's infancy and childhood. Episode Two consists of five sections, which records what happens in Stephen's boyhood and adolescence. Episode Three, made up of three sections, is mainly about sermon given in the retreat and Stephen's final choice of repentance after he commits sin. Episode Four, the climax of the whole novel, is also made up of three sections which tell that Stephen sets about his spiritual and moral reformation after absolution but finally finds a new "conversion" when he sees a wading girl in the midstream. In the four sections of Episode Five Stephen is a university student who has developed his own thoughts on philosophy, aesthetics and literature. When he finally realizes that he is tired of everything in Ireland, Stephen is determined to self-exile to European Mainland to pursue his artistic goal.

In the second section of Episode Five, Stephen wakes up in the morning in a state of enchantment and poetic inspiration. His mind continues the fantasy of Emma whom he met the day before. Instinctively "he felt the rhythmic movement of a villanelle pass through" his lips from his mind:

"Are you not weary of ardent ways,
Lure of the fallen seraphim?
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze
And you have had your will of him.
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

Above the flame the smoke of praise
Goes up from ocean rim to rim.
Tell no more of enchanted days.

Our broken cries and mournful lays

Rise in one eucharistic hymn.
Are you not weary of ardent ways?

While sacrificing hands upraise
The chalice flowing to the brim,
Tell no more of enchanted days.

And still you hold our longing gaze
With languorous look and lavish limb!
Are you not weary of ardent ways?
Tell no more of enchanted days." (Joyce, 1996, p. 202)

Obviously, it is a poem without a title. Even so, it is a symbol which shows that Steven, as a university student at that time, has developed his own qualities of language and literature, has formed his own style of art and aesthetics, and has thus reflected his own physiology and psychology. This is because it is actually a typical verse form of French origin called villanelle. A villanelle, which firstly appeared in English poetry in the 1800s, is a type of poem imitating French models. "The villanelle is a contrived verse form of five three-lined stanza and a final four-lined one that uses only two rhymes throughout." (Blamires, 1987, p. 70) A villanelle consists of only two rhymes. In each tercet or every three-lined stanza, one rhyme is employed in the first and third lines while the other rhyme appears in the second line of each tercet. In the last quatrain or four-lined stanza the former rhyme recurs in the first, third and fourth lines and the latter in the second one. What is more, a villanelle consists of two refrains. The first and third lines of the first tercet recur alternatively in the last line of the rest four tercets and form a couplet in the last two lines of the last quatrain. In other words, a villanelle is fairly musical and strictly metrical. Though ten years ago Stephen once wrote a poem *To E- C-*, it is the first time for readers to read his poem which is such a classical one with recherché rule and form. No matter whether it is appreciated at the phonological level, the lexical level, or the grammatical level, this poem is undoubtedly of great importance and significance because it is the climax of this episode, symbolizing the summit of all the poems occurring in the whole novel, and also because it is an indication that Stephen is mature in both physiology and psychology.

II.   THEORETICAL BASE

A.   Style and Formality

Theoretically, the definition of style varies in terms of different respects. However, to apply stylistic analysis to a text, it is, first of all, necessary to be clear about what it is in a literary text that should be described and analyzed because it is the theoretical base in this paper. In the history of defining what style is, there are numerous definitions which focus on one aspect or another. Liu Shisheng (1998) in his book *Outlines of Western Stylistics* lists 31 definitions. Here are some of them:

1) Style as form (Aristotle)
2) Style as personal idiosyncrasy (Murry)
3) Saying the right thing in the most effective way (Enkvist)
4) Style as the choice between alternative expressions (Enkvist)
5) Style as foregrounding (Leech and Short, Mukařovský)
6) Style as deviation (Mukařovský & Spitzer)
7) Style as prominence (Halliday)
(Liu Shisheng, 1998, ps. 9-10)

These views prove to have their advantages and disadvantages by other linguists and stylisticians. The advantageous viewpoints will be adopted as theoretical base for the paper. The revised edition of *A Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Cuddon, 1979, p. 663) says that "style is the characteristic manner of expression in prose or verse or how a particular writer says things. The analysis and assessment of style involves examination of a writer's choice of words, his figure of speech, the devices (rhetorical and otherwise), the shape of sentences (whether they be loose or periodic), the shape of his paragraphs — indeed of every conceivable aspect of his language and the way in which he uses it." To sum up, style in this paper refers to the way in which language is used in a context, by a given person for a given purpose; or it refers to variation in language use, occasioned by conscious choice from the range of phonological and lexical resources of language in order to achieve some effects.

Peter Trudgill (1992) holds that styles are characterized as varieties of language viewed from the point of view of formality. Formality, which in return refers to the way that the style of language will vary in appropriateness according to the social context such as the occasion and the relationship between addresser and addressee(s), can be divided into five levels according to Martin Joos (1962): frozen, formal, consultative, casual and intimate.

A frozen style, often containing archaisms, is seen in the language which is not allowed to change casually such as Biblical quotations.

A formal style, whose language is filled with technical vocabulary, "fussy semantics" or exact definitions, presents the characteristics of one-way participation and no interruption. Technical theses, introductions between strangers, and

so on are of such a style.

A consultative style involves two-way participation in which background information is necessary. In its language unintentional pauses caused by such interjections as "uh huh", "I see" or "you know" are possible so interruptions are allowed.

A casual style usually happens between friends and acquaintances without background information. Ellipsis and slang are often seen in its language. A large number of interruptions, intentional or unintentional, are common.

An intimate style usually refers to the non-public language style in which intonation plays a more important role than wording or grammar does and private vocabulary occurs frequently.

However, there is little agreement as to how the levels of formality should be divided. Different linguists have different standards. Therefore, it is difficult for learners to grasp the differences between those levels. Despite such disagreement or difficulty, Martin Joos' theory at least provides learners with a comparatively practical theoretical base. It can at least be generally divided into two: formal style and informal style. They are quite distinctive because each has foregrounded features at the phonological, lexical and grammatical levels.

B.   Stylistic Analysis

Stylistic analysis is an approach to the analysis of (literary) texts using linguistic description. By stylistic analysis, anyone, no matter whether he is professional or not, can handle the data that any text presents in a scientific and systematic way. The process of such an analysis is rigorous because it is completely based on the linguistic description of the text itself. Therefore, items of stylistic significance in each level of the language are sure to be checked out exhaustively. It replaces a sporadic approach with a systematic one and seeks to avoid over-reliance on intuitive ability in some traditional analysis of a text. It takes the description of the linguistic facts in a text as the first step, then bases some reasonable interpretation on the description, and finally explores the proper artistic or aesthetic value that the text may imply. To sum up, what stylistic analysis tries to achieve is not merely to describe those significant linguistic features a text may display, but also to reason out what functional significance its linguistic choice may present through the interpretation of those features, and finally to dig deeper in the text so that the proper literary effects or aesthetic significance that the author attempts to acquire can equally be comprehended by common readers. It lays stress on the study of language functions and the different structures dictated by these functions.

Then how to put it into practice? Short (1997, p. 3) provides a three-phase approach: description → interpretation → evaluation. The steps in sequence will be: taking a text as the object of study, working through the text thoroughly, and marking out those foregrounded linguistic features; discussing those features from different levels of language and inferring the function those linguistic choices may bring; relating them to the literary effect or theme the text may generate. To put it in detail, description means describing and classifying the particular features at various linguistic levels: phonology, lexis, syntax, etc. Interpretation means providing some semantic explanation and illustration of the described features according to their linguistic context. Evaluation refers to providing some assessment of their stylistic or aesthetic effects of those linguistic facts. By describing and interpreting some specific linguistic features of a certain text, readers are more likely to understand the text better; by evaluating those features, readers are in a better position to appreciate the stylistic or aesthetic effects of a text. Therefore, stylistic analysis is generally believed to be systematic, objective and practical.

III.   STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

A.   Phonological Patterns

Firstly, as mentioned above, its rhyme-scheme is "5 aba+ 1 abaa": the alternation of /eiz/ and /im/. "The general function of rhymes is to get the text more organized and to bestow 'music' to the text. Like alliteration, it may also be used to achieve more significant effects." (Wang Shouyuan, 2000, p. 100) In fact, the rhyme /eiz/ refers to "the rays from the rose that was her willful heart." (Joyce, 1996, p. 197) And based on it, other rhymed words are inspired, like "ways", "days", "ablaze", "praise", "raise", "gaze", etc. Each of them produces an image: "ardent ways", "enchanted days", "heart ablaze", "the smoke of praise", "longing gaze", etc. Through the rhyming, these images compose a vivid and lively scene, full of ardor. Therefore, the rhyme-scheme of this poem plays an important part in its emotional effect.

Secondly, assonance, such as /a:/ in words "are", "ardent", "enchant", and "heart";   /ɔ:/ in "fallen", "more", "your", and "mournful"; /əu/ in "smoke", "goes", "ocean", "no", "broken", "flowing", and "hold"; /æ/ in "have", "and", "had", "sacrificing", "hands", "chalice", "languorous", and "lavish", pervades the whole poem from the first stanza to the last, producing strong and harmonious rhythms of music. At the same time, these vowels /a:/, /ɔ:/, /əu/, /æ/ are so resounding that they cause empathy, making readers associate them with an appetence for love.

Lastly, alliteration /l/ continuously occurs in words "*l*onging", "*l*anguorous", "*l*ook", "*l*avish", and "*l*imb" of the last stanza, vividly depicting a figure of a beautiful charming girl who makes Stephen crazy about. "Languorous look" and "lavish limb", together with "longing gaze", make the girl lively and fascinating. And the /l/ sound symbolizes tenderness, making her more amorous. Therefore, though he doesn't directly mention the name of Emma, Stephen has treasured her deeply in his heart for a long time.

Through the unique phonological patterns, the deflection of rhymes, assonance and alliteration, Stephen successfully composes a poem of villanelle, such an old French poetry model, elaborately observing its verse form, which suggests

something formal, cerebral and professional.

B.   Attitudinal and Experiential Epithets

The epithet, as Halliday said, indicates some quality of the subset, e.g. *old, long, blue, fast*. (2000, p. 184) The epithet may be an objective property of the thing itself which is experiential in function; or it may be an expression of the speaker's subjective attitude towards it which represents an interpersonal element in the meaning of the nominal group. There is, however, no hard and fast line between these two, so most epithets are both attitudinal and experiential ones.

In this poem, 10 epithets are used as pre-modifiers of the nominal group repeatedly occurring 16 times. They are "ardent", "fallen", "enchanted", "broken", "mournful", "eucharistic", "sacrificing", "longing", "languorous", "lavish", all of which are both attitudinal and experiential epithets except "eucharistic". Therefore, they are words of great emotion, by which the writer, namely, Stephen himself, directly shows his attitude towards the one in his fantasy, the love in his dream, and the longing for her love, for example, the nominal group "ardent ways", which repeats four times in the whole poem, shows Stephen's jealousness or anger when he saw Emma flirting foolishly with Father Moran while the nominal group "enchanted days", which similarly repeats four times, suggests that "however he might revile and mock her image, his anger was also a form of homage." (Joyce, 1996, p. 199) The two types of emotion are sharply inconsistent at the very beginning but they fuse together harmoniously at last because "*you still hold our longing gaze with languorous look and lavish limb!*"

Judging from the lexical fields, these epithets can be classified into two: one which is related to love, like "ardent", "fallen", "enchanted", "broken", "mournful", "longing", "languorous", "lavish", the other to religion, such as "eucharistic", "sacrificing". The former classification refers to something common in one's life while the latter suggests something solemn in one's life. By employing the words of the two classifications, Stephen creates two scenes vividly: one is how she conquers "him" which is described as "*Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze And you have had your will of him.*", the other is how Eucharistic rite is going which is depicted as "*While sacrificing hands upraise The chalice flowing to the brim, Tell no more of enchanted days.*" The two scenes are interwoven together which, on the one hand, produces sharp contrast, and on the other hand, unites harmoniously together. It shows that in Stephen's heart, love to him is as solemn as religion to other people, and contrarily, religion to him is as common as love to other people which can explain why he at last refuses to believe in Catholicism.

C.   The Implications of "the Fallen Seraphim"

In fact, before he intones the poem, Stephen awakes towards dawn, not so clear-headed. Subconsciously, he is inspired. "A spirit filled him, pure as the purest water, sweet as dew, moving as music. But how faintly it was inbreathed, how passionlessly, as if the seraphim themselves were breathing upon him!" (Joyce, 1996, p. 196) Here he mentions "the seraphim" because he feels as if they were introjecting in his spirit. Therefore, he employs "the seraphim" in the poem, but adds a pre-modifier "fallen", combining a phrase of particular significance. Considering the situation and process of his versification, the phrase "the fallen seraphim" have several implications in it.

Firstly, it is an allusion. According to the *Bible*, seraph is one of the angels that protect the seat of god. It is firstly mentioned once in *Isaiah* of the Hebrew *Bible*. Later the Jewish religious image perceives seraph as having the form of a human, and such an image is accepted and adopted by the Christianity and becomes one part of the Christian angelic hierarchy. In the ranks of Christian angels, seraph appears on the highest known rank. And seraph literally means "burning" in the Hebrew, something connected with "ardent", "ablaze", "flame" and "smoke", all of which occur in the stanzas of the poem. They together produce a splendid scene which is full of fire and passion. Therefore, as Harry Blamires put, it "results in a private orgy of sex-in-the-head." (1987, p. 70)

Secondly, it is also regarded as a symbol of charity, the virtue of love which is at the very beginning expressed towards God and then towards oneself and one's neighbors because humans are what God loves. Stephen worships and knows Aquinas so well that he is sure to be familiar with Aquinas' description of the nature of Seraphim:

"The name 'Seraphim' does not come from charity only, but from the excess of charity, expressed by the word ardor or fire. Hence Dionysius (Coel. Hier. vii) expounds the name 'Seraphim' according to the properties of fire, containing an excess of heat. Now in fire we may consider three things.

First, the movement which is upwards and continuous. This signifies that they are borne inflexibly towards God.

Secondly, the active force which is 'heat', which is not found in fire simply, but exists with a certain sharpness, as being of most penetrating action, and reaching even to the smallest things, and as it were, with superabundant fervor; whereby is signified the action of these angels, exercised powerfully upon those who are subject to them, rousing them to a like fervor, and cleansing them wholly by their heat.

Thirdly we consider in fire the quality of clarity, or brightness; which signifies that these angels have in themselves an inextinguishable light, and that they also perfectly enlighten others." (wikipedia)

According to Aquinas's description, Stephen knows that seraphim should stand for both purification and love. And he feels that his love to Emma is that irresistible, excess and pure so that "Your eyes have set man's heart ablaze And you have had your will of him."

Lastly, it performs of course as a metaphor. Stephen considers himself as one of "the fallen seraphim". Especially the pre-modifier "fallen" makes the metaphor produce a unique literary significance and artistic effect. The word "fallen" makes readers associate it with another allusion also from the *Bible*, the fallen angel Lucifer that is especially mentioned

in the sermon of Father Arnall in episode three, and who is the archangel cast from heaven for leading the revolt of the angels and later in a shape of serpent that lures Eve and Adam to eat the apple from the forbidden tree and thus causes the original sin of all human beings. Coincidently the same spelling of the word "seraph" in the Hebrew is also used of snakes, or serpents. Therefore, the phrase of "the fallen seraphim" is a metaphor of Stephen himself, that is, he is like the fallen angel and then becomes the serpent, which suggests that he has then intertwined spirituality, beauty and lust in his passions.

D.   Deviation of Normal Short Sentences

Generally, there is the poetic license in the language of poetry. In order to emphasize the phonological, perceptual, allegoric, and imagery beauty, poets often violate the grammatical convention of the language, employing such foregrounded devices as inversion, ellipsis, illogical collocation, etc. however, in this poem, there are 15 sentences with an average number of 8 words per sentence, which is quite short. And there are not any of those foregrounded devices in those sentences. In other words, they are all normal short sentences but deviation from a poem.

Sentences of such a type often function well in expressing one's meaning explicitly, and showing one's emotion directly. They are such affective language that "He spoke the verses aloud from the first lines till the music and rhythm suffused his mind, turning it to quiet indulgence." (Joyce, 1996, p. 200) "A glow of desire kindled again his soul and fired and fulfilled all his body." (Joyce, 1996, p. 201) Since it is a poem of villanelle, there two refrains occur in each stanza. Similarly, the two lines are two normal short sentences which form a rhetorical question. On the one hand, they make the whole poem coherent naturally, on the other hand, the deflection of them once again implies Stephen's great anger to "you", but his anger is the exact reflection of his deep love to "you".

IV.   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, formal style refers to a variety of language often used publicly or officially for some serious purpose. It is generally marked in phonology by skillful use of various types of sound patterning, in lexis by academic use of long words of Latin or Greek origin with complicated implications, and in grammar by deviated use of normal short sentences with special purpose. Judging from the phonological, lexical, or grammatical level, the poem of villanelle without a title is a symbol of Stephen's maturity as an artist. No matter whether it is appreciated from its elegant phonological patterns, its implications of metaphor, affective attitudinal epithet, or the imagery it produces, this poem can be considered to be a perfect art of him through which Stephen successfully expresses his aesthetic idea of "wholeness, harmony and radiance." Compared with those little poems and songs in his childhood, this fully proves that Stephen at this stage develops an very formal style as an artist. The poem also proves that he has achieved great attainment in literature and aesthetics as well as his truehearted yearning for human love but not the love from God. All those vividly reflect the complicated inner world of Stephen as an young adult, which finally represents readers a portrait of the artist as a young man, and thus the theme of the whole novel gets strengthened and sublimed.

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