

ROBERT GRAVES'S "LANGUAGE OF THE SEASONS"

A Linguistic Approach to Poetic Analysis

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LANGUAGE OF THE SEASONS

*Living among orchards, we are ruled  
By the four seasons necessarily:  
This from unseasonable frosts we learn  
Or from usurping suns and haggard flowers-  
Legitimist our disapproval.*

*Weather we knew, not seasons, in the city  
Where, seasonless, orange and orchid shone,  
Knew it by heavy overcoat or light,  
Framed love in later terminologies  
Than here, where we report how weight of snow,  
Or weight of fruit, tears branches from the tree.*

As the subtitle indicates there is the possibility of more than one type of analysis of a poem. One must allow for various non-linguistic analyses of poems - psychological, philosophical, biographical, and evaluative to name some. *Non-linguistic*, however, should not be interpreted too narrowly. An evaluative approach, for example, may be expected to presuppose at least some linguistic analysis. But what I mean by a linguistic approach to poetic analysis is one that differs from other approaches by the kind of information that it proposes to supply. A linguistic approach is restricted to providing us with information about the language of the poem.

For the purposes of analysis language is broken down into a number of aspects or levels. Without arguing a case, I shall specify the linguistic aspects of a poetic text that need to be analysed. There are the formal aspects of a text, its grammar and lexis, and the phonological aspects. The latter, of course, are not represented directly in a written representation of a poem but have to be inferred from the writing system and the linguistic form. Phonemes, for example, are inferred from letters, while features such as stress and intonation (which are relevant to rhythm and metre) can be inferred only from the study of form since they are not directly represented in the writing system.

The analysis of a poem's context of situation is perhaps the most controversial aspect of linguistic analysis of a poem, though not necessarily for language in general. Unlike other kinds of language, a poem does not exist in a context of situation, but creates its own context of situation. The reader or critic or linguist has to propose within the poem a context of situation which is appropriate to the form. This process can be referred to as contextualization. The form-situation relations derived by con-

textualization are difficult to categorize and make explicit. Though it is inadequate, semantics is the main type of analysis relevant here.

Different theories of linguistics have provided different methods for describing these language aspects. Several of them have been used for poetic analysis. The Trager and Smith phonological analysis has been applied in the description of prosodic aspects of a poem by Seymour Chatman, Hawkes and Epstein, and others. Transformational-generative grammar has been applied by Thorne and Ohmann. Immediate constituent analysis has been applied by W. Nelson Francis; Hill has demonstrated some of the possibilities of semantic analysis.<sup>1</sup>

The approach adopted here leans heavily on the work of Halliday, McIntosh and Sinclair in grammatical and lexical analysis, and of Abercrombie in phonology.

Linguists have so far concentrated their main effort on the theoretical aspects of a linguistic analysis of poetry, and literature. There have been few papers where an analysis of a poem has been conducted. Among the more useful of these are Sinclair's analysis of Philip Larkin's *First Sight*, Halliday's of Yeats' *Leda and the Swan*, and W. Nelson Francis's of Dylan Thomas' *Altarwise by owl-light*, Samuel Levin's of Shakespeare's Sonnet 30; and Seymour Chatman's of Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. All these analyses, except that of Levin, are partial linguistic analyses, considering grammar or phonology or sometimes lexis and semantics but not usually all of these. My analysis, here, therefore will differ from others previously offered in being more comprehensive, though not necessarily as delicate in its treatment of detail, as some of the others. The emphasis will fall on phonological and formal analysis and only partially on contextual analysis.

In the linguistic description that follows I have tried to keep to a minimum any explanation of the terms and methods that I am following. I provide brief explanations only where the terms or methods are likely to be entirely strange and differ most from familiar terms and methods of analysis. Such is the case with the analysis of the metre and rhythm of the poem.

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1. The relevant articles and books by the linguists mentioned in this and the following two paragraphs are listed in the bibliography.

In Chart I you will find an analysis of the metre and rhythm of the poem.

### CHART I

	No. of Feet.
/ x x x   / x   Δ x x   /	4
x x   /   / x   / x   / x x	4
/ x x   / x x x   / x   /	4
Δ x x x   / x   / x   / x   / x	5
Δ x   / x   / x   / x   / x	5
/ x x   /   Δ x   / x x x   / x	5
/   / x x   / x x   / x   /	5
/ x x   / x   / x x x   /	4
/   / x   / x x x   / x x	4
x   /   Δ x x x   / x   / x   /	5
x   / x   /   /   / x x x   /	5

The method is one based on that of Professor Abercrombie. The method is both the same and different from traditional analysis of these aspects of language. Like traditional scansion this method recognises two kinds of syllable, strong and weak, marked by / and x respectively. The syllable marking here represents a fairly standard reading of the poem though of course in some cases the marking is optional. Some readers would, for example, take the opening piece as

| / x x | / | / x |  
Living among orchards,

instead of

| / x x x | / x |  
Living among orchards.

Such optional readings are not very frequent and would not significantly alter the over-all analysis.

The strong and weak syllables are grouped into feet, which are the units of rhythm as in traditional analysis. However the principle on which syllables are grouped into feet differs from the traditional one. Syllables are grouped into a foot on the basis of an initial strong syllable and following optional weak syllables. The foot therefore runs from one strong syllable to the next strong syllable. A bar (|) is used to indicate a foot boundary.

In a given stretch there may be one or more weak syllables before a strong syllable is reached. These weak syllables are grouped as part of a foot but a caret ( $\Delta$ ) is included initially to indicate that the first syllable is not strong. Such proclitic feet are found after a pause or caesura e.g.

| / x x x | / x |  $\Delta$  x x | /  
 Living among orchards, we are ruled

Feet are relatively isochronous, each foot taking approximately the same length of time. This provides the basis for the claim that the foot division for the rhythm in Abercrombie's analysis is not arbitrary as it is, for example, in traditional metrical scansion.

It is the proportions of different kinds of feet that constitute the rhythm of the poem. If, for example, each foot were bisyllabic, or even most were, then the rhythm would be bisyllabic. Likewise a trisyllabic rhythm is a rhythm based on the regular use of trisyllabic feet. Rhythm which makes regular use of a particular kind of foot is *regular* rhythm; otherwise the rhythm is *irregular*. The rhythmic difference between much verse and prose is that the former tends to a regular rhythm; while the latter remains irregular. The analysis of feet-type shown in Chart II shows that the rhythm here is irregular.

CHART II

Type of Foot	Number	Percentage
monosyllabic	11	22
bisyllabic	20	40
trisyllabic	7	14
tetra-syllabic	7	14
proclitic	5	10
TOTAL	50	100%

The feet vary in number of syllables from one to four. Within any particular line no regular rhythmic pattern is established. Exceptions are lines four and five which tend towards bisyllabic rhythms e.g.

$\Delta$  x x x | / x | / x | / x | / x |  
 Or from usurping suns and haggard flowers -

$\Delta$  x | / x | / x | / x |  
 Legitimist our disapproval

Over all, the feet are well distributed into the possible syllable types with a peak being reached for bisyllabic feet as one would expect.

This distribution agrees well with distributive patterns of feet in prose. There is therefore no evidence that any attempt has been made to take advantage of rhythmic options in order to promote a pattern of rhythmic regularity.

The rhythm of this poem therefore is not a pattern operating independently of grammar and lexis and affecting the choices made at those levels. But on the contrary rhythm here follows the needs of grammar and lexis. It is not the case, as so often in verse, of an irregular grammatical patterning reinforcing a regular rhythmic patterning.

What reinforcement the rhythm does gain here comes from another aspect of phonology – phonemic repetition. Some strong syllables in close proximity are reinforced by the repetition of an initial phoneme e.g.

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| /    x    /                                |             |
| 1. u/surping / suns                        | s  repeated |
|  |             |
| /    x    x    x    / x                    |             |
| 2. / seasons in the / city                 |             |
|  |             |
| /            /    x    x                   |             |
| / Where, / seasonless                      | s  repeated |
|  |             |
| /    x            /    x    /    x         |             |
| 3. / seasons / nece/ssarily                | s  repeated |
|  |             |
| /            /    x            /    x      |             |
| 4. / love in / later                       | l  repeated |
|  |             |
| /            /    x    x    x            / |             |
| 5. / tears / branches from the / trees     | t  repeated |

Out of 45 feet with initial strong syllables 11 are thus phonemically linked in this way, a high enough correlation here to justify the description of this as a significant reinforcement.

Rhythm is concerned with the syllables in the feet; metre with feet within the line. We have to make clear what we mean by line here. There is the obvious written line but this does not necessarily coincide with a phonological line of complete feet. Metre is measured by the number of feet per written line but where the written line ending does not correspond with a foot boundary we have to make some arbitrary arrangement. As you see from Chart I most written line ends coincide with foot boundaries. But exceptions are lines 1 and 2:

| Δ x x | /  
we are ruled

x x | /    | / x |  
By the four seasons . . .

9 and 10:

x | / x x x | / x x  
 in later terminologies

x | /  
 Than here

10 and 11:

x x | / x | / x | /  
 we report how weight of snow,

x | / x | /  
 Or weight of fruit . . .

The line breaks here coincide with grammatical boundaries and not with phonological foot boundaries.

For convenience I count a line-divided foot as a foot of the first line and not of the second. Proclitic feet are counted as feet along with non-proclitic feet. Following this arrangement it can be seen by looking at Chart I that the lines are distributed into six pentameters and five tetrameters. Though there is thus only a small metrical range the lack of regularity means that metre is not one of the determinants of the written line - a conclusion reinforced by the non-coincidence of foot and line boundaries.

In the phonological aspects of this poem there is a pattern then. The pattern is a negative one, lying in the avoidance of regularity in both rhythm and metre. These are made to have a minimum autonomy in their patterning, being subordinated, as in language at large, to their role of representing grammatical and lexical contrasts.

As with the phonological analysis I shall not be concerned with the grammatical analyses of successive sentences as they occur in the text. I presuppose this preliminary analysis and concentrate instead on synthesizing the results of such analysis and presenting them in such a way as to high-light and isolate the more significant results.

The preliminary grammatical analysis includes an exhaustive bracketing of items to indicate their rank status as sentence, clause, group or rank-shifted items. This analysis is shown below (Chart III). The conventions of bracketing are explained above the chart.

### CHART III

#### Analysis by Bracketing

Sentence Clause and Group Analysis (boundaries of such items are shown as follows:

- ||| = sentence boundary;
- || = clause boundary;
- | = group boundary;

[ ] and [ ] respectively indicate rankshifted clause and group borders.)

||| Living | among orchards, || we | are ruled |  
 By the four seasons | necessarily: |||  
 This | from unseasonable frosts | we | learn |  
 Or from usurping suns and haggard flowers - |||  
 Legitimist | our disapproval. |||

||| Weather | we | knew, | not seasons, | in the city ||  
 Where, | seasonless, | orange and orchid | shone, ||  
 Knew | it | by heavy overcoat or light, ||  
 Framed | love | in later terminologies  
 [Than here], || where | we | report || how | weight of snow, |  
 Or weight of fruit, | tears | branches | from the trees. |||

The first use of this analysis is to enable us to examine the correlation between grammatical units and the line in this poem. It will be seen that of the 11 lines, 4 coincide with sentence boundaries, 3 coincide with clause boundaries, and 3 with group boundaries. The other line ending coincides with the break between a head word and the rankshifted group that submodifies its modifier 'later'. In all other instances the line division represents at least a group division. In general the line break occurs where our grammatical expectancies are minimal. Only at the ends of 9 and 10 are there strong grammatical expectancies - at the end of line 9 because the comparative form often enjoys later submodification of the type supplied here; and at the end of 10 because we are given a part of a Subject which in turn demands its Predicator.

We have already shown that lines are not organised by any principle of metrical regularity; rather, as the analysis reveals, they are organized by a principle of grammatical regularity. Breaks in general coincide with points where grammatical expectancies tend to be least strong.

Grammatically, the poem consists of four sentences, with the first three coinciding with the first stanza. The sentence structures are represented in Chart IV:

## CHART IV

## Sentence Structure and Clause Classification

Sentence	Item	Element of Sentence	Clause Classification
1	Living among orchards we are ruled by the four seasons necessarily	$\beta$	dependent
		$\alpha$	independent
2	This from unseasonable frosts ...haggard flowers	$\alpha$	independent
3	Legitimist our disapproval	$\alpha$	independent
4	Weather we knew ... in the city	$\alpha$	independent
	Where ... shone	$\beta$	dependent
	knew it ... or light	& $\alpha$	coordinated independent
	Framed love ... than here	& $\alpha$	coordinated independent
	where we report	$\beta$	dependent
	how weight ... from the trees	$\gamma$	dependent

The only feature here is the relatively greater complexity of the last sentence over the first three.

There are three places where sentence and clause division calls for comment.

(1) It might perhaps be possible to analyse the first two sentences as only one, especially if the semi-colon at the end of line two is not taken to indicate a sentence boundary. The reason that this semi-colon here has to be taken as a sentence boundary is that there is no orthodox clause relation operating here to indicate that the clauses on either side of the break are cohered as elements of the same sentence. In cases like this structural relations are more important than punctuation.

(2) The division between sentences 2 and 3 overrides the punctuation because there is no orthodox interclause relation here to bind the following clause to the previous one as elements of the same sentence. Though the clause of sentence 3 is a predicatorless one, its predicator is not implied from the preceding clause. There is thus no co-ordinative relation between this clause and the preceding one; nor any dependence relation. Therefore grammatically they are separate sentences. There are of course cohesive relations here but they are lexical depending on the use of a word *legitimist* from the same set as words used in preceding clauses.

(3) The second clause of sentence 4 has been analysed as dependent i.e. as a non-defining clause. Ordinarily, in the absence of a comma after *city*, one would have to regard the following clause as defining hence rankshifted but here the coincidence of line boundary with clause boundary loosens the dependence relation between the head



noun and the following clause even in the absence of punctuation, making the following clause non-defining rather than defining.

The clause structures are set out in the following chart (V).

**CHART V**  
**Clause Structures**

Sentence	Clause		Structure	Clause
Number	Independent	Dependent		Number
1	$\alpha$	$\beta$	PA SPA A	1 2
2	$\alpha$		CASP A	3
3	$\alpha$		CS	4
4	$\alpha$	$\beta$	C-S P-C A AASP	5 6
	$\alpha$		PCA	7
	$\alpha$		PCA	8
		$\beta$	ASP	9
		$\gamma$	ASPCA	10

(S = Subject; P = Predicator; C = Complement; A = Adjunct)

The clause patterns here are on the whole orthodox ones. There are only two which call for special comment at this stage:

(1) Clause 4 has been analysed as CS. Normally before one can define complement and subject elements one must have a Predicator since these elements are differentiated by their relations of concord, interdependence, and sequence with the Predicator. Often, one can still decide, given two nominal groups, which is S and which is C by referring to a preceding presupposed Predicator e.g.

S            P            C            A    S            C  
||| Peter | watched | the cricket, || but | John | the girls |||

In the poem's text, however, there is no preceding presupposed Predicator but the Predicator can be inferred from a presupposed underlying normal form e.g.

S            P            C  
||| Our disapproval | is | Legitimetist |||

C            P            S  
||| Legitimetist | is | our disapproval |||

C                            S  
||| Legitimetist | our disapproval |||

One has to assume that there has been a switch in sequence of S and C here since normally in the language the attribute (i.e. *Legitimetist*) follows its attribuant (i.e. *our disapproval*) and realises the complement element.

(2) Clause five has been analysed as

C-        S        P        - C                    A  
||| Weather | we | knew, | not seasons, | in the city ||

*Weather, not seasons* is a discontinuous complement which consists of two simple nominal groups. The separation of the two groups here presents us with emphatic contrast. Though I have shown it as C-S P-C the occurrence of two C symbols does not imply that there are two complements; the attached bars are meant to indicate that there is only one, but its parts are discontinuous.

The only other points of clause structure analysis are the identification of *this* in line 3 as Complement since its clause can be related to an assumed underlying

S        P        C                    A  
We | learn | this | from unseasonable frosts ...;

and the identification of

| how | weight of snow, | Or weight of fruit,  
| tears | branches | from the trees. |

as A S P C A. It is not uncommon for co-ordinated nominal group items as here to represent one Subject.

Of the 6 independent clauses, five are predicated and affirmative (i.e. have SP sequence). The only exception is, as we have seen, the clause:

Legitimetist our disapproval.

5 of these clauses are transitive (i.e. have a complement). Of these transitive clauses four have Complement in normal position after the Predicator. Three have an unusual element sequence, thus promoting either cohesion or contrast. These clauses are as follows:

## (1) This from unseasonable frosts we learn

Here the Complement has been displaced to initial position. Now since the initial and final positions in a clause are emphatic, this displacement emphasises the cohesive function of the item, *this*.

## (2) Weather we knew, not seasons . . .

Again, part of a compound Complement has been displaced to initial position to emphasize the contrast between the items (*weather and seasons*).

## (3) Legitimist our disapproval

Here the reverse sequence emphasizes the cohesive function of *Legitimist* bringing it as close as possible to the item in the previous clause with which it has closest lexical relation i.e. *usurping*.

Five of these clauses have one or more Adjunct or optional element. In two of these an Adjunct has been displaced from its normal or expected place in sequence.

## (1) "We are ruled by the four seasons necessarily"

instead of the likelier

"we are necessarily ruled by" ...

or

"we are ruled necessarily by" ...

This last option follows the usual sequence in English for Adjuncts. If there is a simple adverbial group and a prepositional group then the prepositional group comes second. The displacement gains for *necessarily* the prominent final clause position, indicating to the reader that he is to give added weight to this word.

## (2) This from unseasonable frosts we

learn Or from . . .

Instead of

We learn this from unseasonable

frosts Or from . . .

This displacement gives greater prominence to the prepositional group and brings *unseasonable* into closer proximity with *seasons* for contrast and cohesiveness.

Of the 4 dependent clauses, one is non-finite, the others are finite. Only one of the clauses is transitive and since its Complement has its usual place in sequence it does not call for comment. Three of the clauses have Adjuncts but in only one of these is the place in sequence of the Adjunct of interest. The one affected is

Where, seasonless, orange and orchid shone

Such Adjuncts as *seasonless* have a choice of two positions in the clause – pre-S as above or post-P e.g.

Where orange and orchid shone *seasonless*

The choice of the former brings *seasonless* closer to *seasons* and thus promotes contrast and cohesion.

The nominal groups are remarkable for their extreme simplicity.<sup>2</sup> Of the 11 nominal group items that uniquely expound an element, only one shows modification e.g. *our country*. The others consist of a single item: *we, love, this, legitimist*, etc. There are three elements which have compounded groups but in two of these cases the compounded nominal groups are simple:

weather . . . not seasons

orange and orchid

and only in one case are the compounded groups qualified e.g.

weight of snow or weight of fruit

This extreme simplicity in nominal group choices contrasts with the more complex prepositional group structures. There are eight prepositional groups, two of which are compounded, though discontinuous e.g.

from unseasonable frosts . . . or from

usurping suns and haggard flowers.

Only one of these prepositional groups is minimally simple i.e. consists of preposition and head e.g. *among orchards*. The remainder exhibit varying degrees of complexity, ranging from

in the city            )  
                                  ) prep + determiner + noun  
from the trees        )

to the double-headed prepositional group:

from usurping suns and haggard flowers.

Two of these prepositional groups call for particular comment:

(1) 'by later terminologies than here'

Though this is not an unusual kind of group it contains an instance of a modifier being submodified by a post-head prepositional group i.e. *later* is submodified by *than here*.

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2. I here use *simplicity* in the technical grammatical sense. Simplicity consists in using only one member of the unit next below to represent a given unit. A simple nominal group therefore consists of one word, a complex one consists of two or more words.

- (2) 'by heavy overcoat or light'  
 instead of the expected  
 by heavy or light overcoat.

Here a co-ordinated modifier has been displaced from pre-head position to post-head. This puts *light* into the prominent final place in the clause, thus exaggerating the contrast of the items *heavy* and *light*.

The verbal groups are on the whole simple. There is tense contrast between the verbs in the first four lines of the second stanza and the remaining verbs. There is a single passive verbal group, *are ruled*. The use of the passive has the effect of bringing into prominence the ruled whereas the corresponding active would emphasize the ruler.

The use of formal and not semantic methods to describe lexis is a comparatively recent development of linguistics. There are two important lexical aspects: the study of the probabilities of co-occurrence of words (collocations) and the study of word sets. The criterion for grouping words into sets is the assumed similarity in their probabilities of collocating with a given lexical environment.

Collocations are either usual or unusual and it is only the second type that turns out to be of interest in poetic analysis. Unusual collocations are points of creativity and require careful attention in contextualization of a poem. The collocations

ruled	seasons
usurping	suns
haggard	flowers

are unusual enough to require particular attention in analysis.

Methods for further lexical description of such items are as yet tentative so I pass over any further lexical consideration of them.

One of the most interesting characteristic features of the first stanza is the way it intercollocates members of what are usually mutually exclusive sets. On the one hand we have members of what can be labelled, for convenience, a political set: *ruled*, *usurping* and *legitimidist*; on the other, members of a nature set: *orchards*, *seasons*, *suns*, *flowers*, *frosts*. These items mutually reinforce the other members of their sets e.g. *ruled* provides a political lexical context for *usurping*, leading on to *legitimidist* since a legitimidist is one who disapproves of a usurper. The interplay of lexical sets here provides the clue to appropriate contextualization in situation.

Often lexical analysis turns out to be most interesting when it is simultaneously related to analyses of other levels. Our lexical analysis will reveal to us that

unseasonable . . . frosts
usurping . . . . . suns

are parallel collocationally since the second collocate in each case is a member of the same lexical set. This lexical parallelity is itself paralleled by a grammatical parallelity since the items represent the same prepositional group structure of preposition +

adjective + noun. These lexical and grammatical parallels converge to support a semantic relation of parallelity of meaning between *unseasonable* and *usurping*. In normal contexts there would be, of course, no actual parallel but the formal parallels actualize a potential or latent semantic parallelity.

The lexical patterning in the second stanza is less remarkable. But we should note for example that potentially *orange* and *orchid* belong to two different sets - one a colour set, the other a flora set. Here both lexical possibilities are actualized by collocation. On the one hand the collocation with *shone* actualizes their colour membership, on the other hand their collocation with *seasonless* actualizes their flora-membership. The items are thus lexically ambivalent, with presumably a corresponding semantic ambivalence.

Perhaps the only other collocation that requires comment is that of

Framed . . . love . . . terminologies.

What is unusual here is the occurrence of *love* in this collocational environment. Presumably the collocation *framed . . . terminologies* is an extension of that part of *frame's* collocational range which includes items such as *words, answer, reply*, etc. *Love* on the other hand within the poem is a unique member of a set. There are no other items to which it obviously relates as a member of a set. In itself *love* is a lexically weak word - that is, it collocates freely with other items. The puzzle which has to be resolved for contextualization is why is such a lexically weak item, lexically otherwise unrelated to other items in the poem, made to collocate with *framed . . . terminologies*? The answer to this puzzle can be gleaned by noticing that *framed* and *report* are both grammatically and lexically parallel: they are both transitive verbs, both members of the same lexical set. Their Complements *love* and *how weight of snow Or weight of fruit, tears branches from the tree* which are thus identical in grammatical and lexical context are made parallel and contrasting. Lexically therefore any weak item, such as *love*, would have provided a contrast to the stronger lexical items collocated within the clause.

In a recent essay Mr Roger Fowler has pointed out how analysis first results in a fragmentation of a text into understood but unrelated parts; these fragments must then be used "as elements in a synthesis".<sup>3</sup> So far in my analysis I have been relating only elements of the same kind. But it is important also to look for patterns whose elements are of different kinds. There are two main patterns of this kind that I wish to draw attention to: the use of bipartite grammatical and lexical schemes; and the use of grammatical displacement.

The bipartite schemes used in grammar involve features of clause, group and word rank. Such features are of course more prominent when they receive reinforcement from some other language aspect simultaneously. The main instances are as follows:

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3. Fowler 1966: 21.

## (a) same clause structure repeated:

"knew it by heavy overcoat or light  
 Framed love in later terminologies  
 Than here . . ."

(both instances of P C A clause structure)

## (b) same nominal group structure repeated:

weight of snow  
 weight of fruit

(both instances of h q structure; the parallel is reinforced by  
 repetition of the same item as exponent of head)

## (c) same prepositional group structure repeated:

from unseasonable frosts  
 from usurping suns

(both have same sequence of preposition + adjective + noun)

## (d) nouns repeated:

orange and orchid (as Subject)  
 weather not seasons (as Complement)

## (e) adjectives repeated:

heavy . . . or light

(both modifiers of *overcoat*.)

This pairing of items with the same grammatical relation or structure is paralleled by the use of pairs of lexical items which semantically are antonyms:

legitimet	-	usurping
frosts	-	suns
weather	-	(seasons )
		(seasonless)
heavy	-	light
city	-	here

Repetitions of this kind are important for two reasons. They are firstly cohesive in function since they are patterns of the whole text. Secondly they provide an important clue in one area of contextualization, in the statement of theme. The latter in part can only be a restatement of the prominent antonyms. The poem is built on a series of contrasts between natural and unnatural order, natural and artificial language, and town and country - all these being interrelated, as they are lexically, within the poem.

The details of grammatical displacement have been described earlier where they were relevant. Such displacement involves items of different rank: group items (*necessarily, this*) or word items (*light*); displaced group items represent either Subject or Complement elements of clause structure; items may be displaced from a usual non-terminal place to an initial or final place in the clause. Since such displacement takes place in four clauses and in another two there is reordering of elements to enhance cohesion, departures from normal sequence are a significant aspect of this text.

Unusual sequence and bipartite schemes are the most prominent cohesive devices in this text. They are not the only ones. Pronouns and repeated lexical items are also important. See, for example, *seasons* and *unseasonable* in successive lines; and *seasons* and *seasonless* also in successive lines.

Also important for the phonological cohesion of at least part of the text is the frequent repetition of the sibilants |s| and |z|. In an ordinary sample it has been established that these should occur as 4.81% and 2.46% of the total number of phonemes respectively. In lines 2-5 of this poem their percentages are respectively 10.2% and 6.1%. While perhaps 4 lines is too small a sample to draw firm conclusions from, it would seem here that these phonemes are occurring more frequently than normal and provide a cohesive sound thread for part of the text.

I must now attempt to sum up the implications of the linguistic method that I have demonstrated here. For those accustomed to the statements of literary critics, the result may seem curiously disappointing. *So what?* may be a reaction.

The reader of a poem normally has one purpose in reading, to contextualize the written event that provides the representation of the grammatical and lexical forms of the poem. He normally does this in his own personal private subjective fashion. He does not usually bring into consciousness the linguistic form of the poem as such but by a simultaneous and usually unconscious process passes straight from the written representation to the grammatical and lexical forms and through them to an appropriate context of situation.

For the literary critic the process is more complicated. He has not only to go through this subjective process but also to describe the result of the process. He describes the poem's context of situation sometimes with description of those aspects of a poem's linguistic form and phonology which he considers help illuminate the contextual description.

What the reader or critic receives, then, when he takes up a poem is a written representation of grammatical and lexical forms. From these he has to infer the appropriate phonology, if he is to respond to the poem's rhythm, and to infer the poem's context of situation, if he is to understand the poem.

Viewed in this perspective some of the linguistic description that I have provided in my analysis is not relevant. Numerical description of clause classes, for example, does not bear directly on contextualization. What it does bear on is comparative stylistics. It is of crucial importance only when one is examining the question of how this writer's linguistic choices compare with the linguistic choices usually made in the lang-



uage at large. The information about the poem's phonology and about the relations between the phonology and the grammar, and some of the numerical grammatical information belongs here. Though from the point of view of contextualization linguistic description of this sort may not be relevant, yet such information cannot be neglected. The comparative stylistics of literary works is an important area of literary studies. Such studies are becoming more prominent, replacing the older impressionistic stylistic studies.

Much of the linguistic description of this poem is directly relevant to its contextualization. The aspects that are relevant are those which describe unusual grammatical and lexical forms. The reason why this should be so is simple enough.

Contextualization always involves two things. On the one hand it involves linguistic form; on the other it involves the appropriate situations for the forms. The process of contextualization therefore can break down for the contextualizer in two ways:

- (a) he is not able to identify adequately the linguistic form
- (b) he does not have stored in his memory the appropriate situation for the form.

Failure in either or both of these respects renders contextualization impossible. When a reader is unable to contextualize because he cannot identify the form, simply to supply a description of the appropriate situation may not be enough. It will resolve the unintelligibility of the appropriate situation but not that of the form.

Obviously where problems of contextualization arise from unintelligible form, they do so when the form is unusual. All instances of unusual linguistic form demand specific attention in contextualization. In this study I have highlighted such instances of unusual grammatical form and indicated their implications for contextualization where appropriate. Though I have noted unusual lexical collocations I have not given a complete formal description of these. Formal methods of lexical description have not yet been fully developed though I believe they will be, and when they are the description they will make available will be of major importance in contextualization.

For the literary critic and reader, descriptions of linguistic form can be some of the most important information that he has at his disposal though, of course, not the only important information. He has to select from the total possible linguistic information what is most directly relevant to his needs. The linguist on the other hand does not select from the linguistic description, or if he does select, he is not guided by the principle of contextualization. A linguistic description of a poem such as this adds to his knowledge of the poetic and literary registers of language. It provides him with additional information about the way that language adapts itself to unique situations and confirms the general validity of his methods and categories of description.

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