

The Comparative Studies of the Stylistics between a Burmese Poem of Min Thu Wun and a French poem of Arthur Rambo

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Abstract

This paper is the comparative study of the stylistics between a Burmese poem, “Thu Hmar Dan” (His last words) of Min Tun Wun and a French poem, “Le Dormeur du Val” (The sleeping man in the valley) of Arthur Rambo. Both of these poems describe the cruelty and imagery of the war, which causes many people to lose their lives, their love ones, their properties, etc. . This paper is presented by using analytical method, analyzing the styles of two poets. So, the study is significant as it will help the reader to understand the two authors’ point of view stylistically on linguistic basic rather in the domain of literature.

Key words: stylistics, poet, poem, Imagery of war, metonymy, sound device, aesthetic analysis.

Introduction

In Myanmar, many of the learners of French language tell that they learn French because French literature is very beautiful. The style of the authors of different centuries, their vocabulary, choice of words, expressions, etc. are very interesting. Among various types of literature, French poetry is also famous. Victor Hugo, the most famous French writer in French literature was also a famous poet. Arthur Rambo, the French poet was also famous because of his romantic poems. Like French literature, Burmese literature is also very beautiful. It is rich in vocabulary and expression and its poems are famous in Burmese history of literature. Among Burmese poets, ZawGyi was the most famous in modern Burmese poetry. Min Thu Wun was also famous as ZawGyi. Although French and Burmese people are different in culture, attitudes and behavior, their poems are sometimes comparable. In this paper, French and Burmese poetries will be compared. A French poem “Le Dormeur du Val” (The sleeping man in the Valley) written by Arthur Rambo and a Burmese poem “Thu Hmar Dane” (His last words) are compared. Both of two poets described very well the cruelty of the war which destroys many people, separate the love ones, and kills the young people who have full of hope in their future. This paper is presented by using analytical method, analyzing the styles of two poets.

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Aims

The French and Burmese poems are compared in order to investigate the role of stylistics in Literature, to explore the themes through different poetic devices and foregrounding to understand the poem and touch the heart of the readers, to know the difference and identity of the feature of stylistic devices in two poems.

Methodology

This paper is presented by using descriptive analysis method after collecting the data from the books of Dr. Khin Aye: "Introduction to the Style of Writing" and the work of Min Thu Wun and Arthur Rambo. First of all, the two poems were translated and read during 3 months and took notes the features of the styles. After that, the differences and the similarities of the devices of the two poems were compared.

Literature Review

As both poets were very famous throughout the history of literature of their respective countries, their poems were surely tasted and commented by many readers and fans.

First of all, the poem of Min Thu Wun : "His last words" was analyzed by many other poets and fans. Among many comments, we would like to introduce a commentary of "Maung Hone Wan (Lecturer)". In his commentary, Maung Hone Wan (Lecturer) firstly mentioned the objective of the poet: to honor the soldiers who sacrificed their lives while resisting for the Independence of our country. The respective time of the poem is the days when Myanmar people were fighting with Japan soldiers. In this poem, the poet described tragically the last moment of a young soldier who passed his last words to his beloved ones. Maung Hone Wan (Lecturer) then mentioned the style of the poet, his choice of words, grammatical level, etc. He emphasized the word: "Ah Nar Thae" (felt shy) in the soldier's message to the country that is, according to him, the most significant word of the poem. The soldier felt embarrassed for leaving the battle before accomplishing the mission. It showed the sense of responsibility and accountability of the young soldier, thinking that he was not dutiful for the country.

Secondly, the analysis of Mme. Helloco will be mentioned in this literature review. First of all, Mme. Helloco studied about the style of the poem, which is a sonnet. Then she revealed the background period of the poem: it was a war "Franco-Prussian" in 1870. The poem was located at the battle of Sedan, about 20 kilometers away from Charlevilles. In this poem, a young soldier was lying dead at the middle of the nature which is very beautiful, calm, pacific and pleasant. Then, Mme. Helloco described about the verses of the poem, the choice of words of Rimbaud, who described delicately the death of the young soldier, analyzing the description of the nature that the dead soldier could not enjoy.

Although there are many criticisms and analysis for each poem, the comparison of these poems has not been found.

Summary

The Poem of Min Thu Wun

The first paragraph has the description of the battlefield where a young soldier was going to die because of a mine bomb set by the enemies while withdrawing. In the second, third and fourth stanzas were composed with the style of questions and answers. Around the dying soldier, the villagers were sad and they asked him to leave the last words to his beloved ones: his wife, his parents and his country. He passed his words to his wife that he forgave her. He left his message to his parents that he had paid homage to them before he died. Finally, he left the message to the country that he felt embarrassed that he went away leaving all duties for the independence at halfway.

The Poem of Arthur Rimbaud

The poem starts from the sky view to the green valley, first of all, the poet composed the beautiful nature with green trees and grasses. There is a stream and at the edge of it, a young soldier was lying, he seemed asleep smiling like a sick child. The poet asked the nature to cradle him warmly because he seemed cold. Finally, he saw two red holes on his bust.

Discussion

1. Theme of the poems

The themes of the two poems are as follows:

A. Death and life

(a) In “His Last Words (Thu Hmar Dan), the poet Min Thu Wun described the battle field clearly. By reading the poem, the reader can see that the battle had just finished and the explosion of the bomb can be imagined because the smoke from the explosion can still be seen.

In the first stanza, the reader can feel the danger of the deadly bomb which can destroy the life and the properties and separate the love ones.

The scene of the battle field is quiet, still and immobile except the smoke scudding across the sky.

After that, the reader can see some people around a dying soldier who was the victim of the explosion. The tragic scene is revealing the bad consequence of the war to the readers.

(b) In “Le Dormeur du Val”, the poet describes the place which is calm and full of beauty of nature. Generally, by reading this poem, the lectures can feel on one side, the death, i.e, the choice of word “bouche ouverte (open mouth)” (line 5), “tête nue (bareheaded)” (line 5), étendu dans l’herbe (lying in the grass)” (line 7)”, “il dort (he sleeps)”(line 9), “la main sur sa poitrine (the hand on his chest)” (line 13), “tranquille (calm)” (line 14), and “il a deux trous rouges (he has two red holes)” (line 14), and on the other side, the life, i.e, the nature is alive : “chante une

riviere (sings a river)” (line 1), and “un petit val qui mousse de rayons (a small valley that radiates foam)”(line 4).

The words such as “bouche ouverte” (open mouth)” and “tête nue” (bareheaded)” (line 5), are described him (a young soldier) as a defenseless person and not breathing, so he is dead.

B. Good and evil

(a) In the first stanza of Min Thu Wun’s poem, the poet combined delicately good and evil. This situation let us know not only the consideration and attachment of the villagers to the young soldier, but also the cruelty and brutality of the enemies leaving the deadly thing while withdrawing. We can feel the loss of many lives because of the war.

(b) In the poem of Arthur Rambo, the poet combined delicately good and evil. First of all, the poet described the beauty of the nature, and then he said to the nature to cradle the young soldier, which shows the good deed of the poet. After that, he let us know the death of the young soldier: two red holes on his bust which caused the death of the soldier. It reveals the cruel and evil of the war. The tragic message is that the young soldier could not see any more the incredible beauty of the nature because he was already dead. How cruel is the situation and the war!

2. Poetic device

The poem “His Last Words” is divided into 5 stanzas and “Le Dormeur du Val” has 4 stanzas. These poems are described about the death and life and also good and evil. This poem can be analyzed symbolism, imagery, metaphor and sound devices: assonance, rhyme scheme.

Symbolism

(a) In Myanmar poem, the poet used the word “ အနောက်ကုန်း (the west ridge)” (line 19) and “နေလုံးကွယ် (the sunset)” (line 20) as the symbol of death.

In Myanmar culture, when someone died or a criminal was executed, his death body was taken out from the palace through western gate to bury. And the sunset is the end of the day so it is the symbol of the end of the life. Therefore, the poet compared the west ridge and sunset to the end of the life or the death of a person.

In the fourth stanza, the young soldier left the message “အားနာ /ànā/ (apology)” (line 15), to his beloved country by apologizing for incompleteness of his duty for the independence of the country by leaving at the midway. He felt sorry for it.

The word “လမ်းခုလပ် (midway)” is presented as the symbol of unattainable destination: that is the independence of Myanmar that everyone desired with great expectation at that time.

(b) In French poem, the poet chose the words “il dort (he sleeps)”(line 9) and “Deux trous rouges (two red holes)”(line 14). In the Myanmar culture, rouge (the red) is symbol of the blood and the “verdure (greenery)” (line 1) is symbol of the alive.

Moreover “la montagne (the mountain)” (line 3) and “les rayons (the rays)” (line 4) give a symbol of the life. So, this little corner or place looks like a paradise, an Eden.

Immobility and horizontality symbolize death, and besides, “la lumière pleut (the light rains) (line 8)” can be understood as “la lumière pleure (the light weeps)” for this dead soldier.

Imagery

Image can be identified the representation of sense experience through language.

(a) In the first stanza of Myanmar poem, visual imagery is shown through each verse. By reading the first stanza, the reader can see the scene of the battle field that is quiet, still and immobile except the smoke scudding across the sky.

The poet gave the message of the battle field describing the people around a dying soldier who was the victim of the explosion. The tragic scene is revealing the bad consequence of the war to the readers.

In the last stanza, we can catch the reflection of the last moment of the young soldier’s life and the last moment of the day.

(b) In the first stanza of French poem, visual imagery of little valley is shown by describing the beauty of the nature. The poet used the lexical field of nature such as “verdure (greenery)”, “rivière (river)”, “herbes (herbs)”, “soleil (sun)”, “montagne (mountain)”, “rayons (rays)”, and “un trou de verdure (a hole of greenery)”. So, this place seems isolated and pacific.

The adjectives epithets can be seen such as: “fière (proud)” that reinforces noun “montagne (mountain)” and “petit (small)” which qualifies “val (val)”, the complements of the noun “de verdure (greenery)” which specifies “le trou (the hole)” and “de la montagne fière (proud mountain)”, “soleil (sun)” and the relative subordinates “où chante une rivière (where sings a river)”, “qui mousse de rayon (which foam of rays)”, “où le soleil de la montagne fière luit (where the sun of the mountain proud shines)”.

The words such as “soleil (the sun)”, and “rayons (rays)” give a luminous and warm aspect to the landscape. By reading the poem, the readers have the impression of the living nature.

The death of the young soldier was described as follows: “bouche ouverte”, “étendu” in the second stanza, “il dort” in the third stanza, and “la main sur sa poitrine”, “deux trous rouges” in the fourth stanza.

Metaphor

(a) It is the comparison of two different things. It is an implied simile without using words such as like, as or so.

According to the stylistics rules, the sunset on the west ridge was compared with the death of the young soldier. “အနောက်ကုန်းတွင် နေလုံးကွယ် (The sun set in the west ridge)” (line 19 and 20) which is literary meaning.

(b) In the third stanza, the author compared the green grass to a green bed where the soldier was lying dead and where the light is shining as if it is raining, saying: “Son lit vert où la lumière pleut (His green bed where the light is shining) (line 8)”.

Color terms and some expressions

(a) In Myanmar poem, no colour terms were found. However, the darkness which covered the world at the sunset shows the last minutes of the young soldier.

(b) In French poem, the nature seems cold, the warm colors of the first stanza are replaced by cold colors “vert (green)”(line 8), “bleu (blue)” (line 6), “d’argent (silver) (line 3), and by the expressions: “frais (fresh)”(line 6) and “la lumière pleut (the light rains)”(line 8) and it is compared to “un lit (a bed)”, “dans son lit (in his bed)”(line 8) that it is described as his deathbed, the water is stagnant that “dans un cresson bleu (in the fresh blue watercress)”(line 6), this aquatic plant can live only in a water “immobile”.

Personification

(a) No personification was found in Myanmar poem.

(b) The French author composed using personification. Some examples of the poem are “où chante une rivière (where a river sings)” (line 1), “accrochant follement (hanging madly) (line 2)”, “la montagne fière (the proud mountain) (line 3)”, “c’est un petit val qui mousse de rayon (it is a small valley which foams the rays) (line 4)”, “Nature, berce-le chaudement (Nature, cradle him warmly) (line 11).

3. Sound Devices

The poet uses many sound devices such as assonance, and rhyme scheme.

Assonance

(a) Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in words or syllables. In this poem, the poet had repeated the sound “ $\text{ou-ou} / \bar{u} \bar{u}$ ” (line 4 of first stanza), he repeated that sound again at the first line of the last stanza. “ $\text{ou-ou} / \bar{u} \bar{u}$ ” is a grammatical deviation which means the smoke of the explosion of bomb appeared and went up in the sky. The sound of “ $\text{ou-ou} / \bar{u} \bar{u}$ ” itself is not pleasant to hear.

(b) Assonance is the repetition of similar vowel sounds in words off syllables. The sonority participates in this poem such as the assonance in “/en/”: “chante (sings)”, “accrochant (hanging)”, “follement (wildly)”, the assonance in “/ou/”: “trou (hole)”, “où (where)”, “où (where)”, “mousse (moss)”.

Alliteration

The repetition of initial consonant sounds is called alliteration. In this poem alliterations are such as /f/: les parfums ne font pas frissonner sa narine” (the perfumes do not make his nostrils quiver” (line 12).

4. Rhyme Scheme

(a) The poem consists of twenty lines and it is divided in five stanzas.

The poet Min Thu Wun had composed with the style of 4-3-2. Second, third and fourth stanzas were composed with the style of questions and answers. In the first stanza, the style of 4-3-2 can be found as: ဆုတ် /s^houʔ/, မြှုပ် /mjouʔ/, ငုတ် /hŋouʔ/ and မှား /hmà/, ကျား /tɕà/, သား /θà/, and သူ/θū/, မြူ /mjū/, အူ /ū/. In last stanza, အူ /ū/, လူ /lū/, မြူ /mjū/, တုန့် /tòʔ/, ကုန့် /kòʔ/, and လုံး /lòʔ/ are rhymed.

(b) This poem is a sonnet: it is composed of 14 alexandrines divided into 2 quadrangles with crossed rhymes as: ABABCD, followed by 2 tercets whose rhyming arrangement is as follows: flat rhymes followed by embraced rhymes as: EFGGH.

Conclusion

In these two poems, although the rhyme schemes are different, the themes are the same: the cruelty and bad consequences of the war. Both poets had described their character as a young soldier who died because of the war. They composed their poems by decorating with the symbolism, figures of speech. Although Myanmar and French people have different culture, we can see that they hate wars. They feel sorry for the death of the young soldiers, angry with the war, feel pity for their early departure.

As historical background, Myanmar poem based on the colonial period when Japanese soldiers hid the mine bomb while withdrawing and the young soldier became one of the victims. French poem based on the period of Franco-Persian war in 1870. In the poem, the young soldier died from a fight, the soldier was too young that his face was like a sleeping child.

These two poems gave the readers various feelings in which the most evident ones are anger and sorrow because both poets could describe very well and clearly the bad consequences of the war even though they were not from the same century nor from neighboring countries.

Rimbaud denounces the horror of the war that kills innocent and harmless people, destroys young people and their lives. Min Thu Wun, too, described well about the victims of the war. In both poems, the readers could assume that the soldiers in their poems died in their young age while they could contribute very well for the development of their countries, however, they died uselessly because of the war.

By comparing these two poems, the French specializing students and the learners of French language, who studied this paper will be able to appreciate the Myanmar and French

poems and they may start interested in Myanmar and French poems, and little by little, they may adore the literature. Therefore, this comparison contributes the language teaching and learning to the French specializing students of YUFL.

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Appendix 1

သုမာတမ်း

သူတို့အဆုတ်၊ ထားခဲ့မြှုပ်သည့်
ပုံးငုတ်တိုက်မှာ၊ မောင်ပြောက်ကျားကို
ရွာသားရွာသူ၊ မေးကြမြူသည်
အူအူယမ်းငွေ ထတုန်းတည်း။

အမောင်ပြောက်ကျား၊ ချစ်သူအားကို
ဘာများ မှာခဲ့လိုသနည်း။
ငယ်ကကြင်မြတ်၊ မိသက်မှတ်ကို
ခွင့်လွှတ်ခဲ့ကြောင်းပြောပါလေ။

အမောင်ပြောက်ကျား၊ မိဘအားကို
ဘာများ မှာခဲ့လိုသနည်း။
မွေးသည့် မိခင်၊ မွေးဖခင်ကို
ဦးတင်ခဲ့ကြောင်း ပြောပါလေ။
ခွင့်လွှတ်ခဲ့ကြောင်းပြောပါလေ။

အမောင်ပြောက်ကျား၊ တိုင်းပြည်အားကို
ဘာများ မှာခဲ့လိုသနည်း။
ခရီးမတ်တတ်၊ လမ်းခုလပ်တွင်
ကိုယ်လွတ်ရှောင်ခွာ၊ ခွဲရပါ၊
အားနာခဲ့ကြောင်း ပြောပါလေ။
ယမ်းငွေအူအူ၊ တလူလူနှင့်
မေးမြူကြတုန်း၊ အနောက်ကုန်းတွင်
နေလုံးကွယ်လေပြီတကား။

(ဆရာကြီး မင်းသုဝဏ်)

Appendix 2

The Poem « Le Dormeur du Val »

C'est un trou de verdure où chante une rivière	1	A
Accrochant follement aux herbes des haillons		B
D'argent ; où le soleil, de la montagne fière,		A
Luit : c'est un petit val qui mousse de rayons.	4	B
Un soldat jeune, bouche ouverte, tête nue,		C
Et la nuque baignant dans le frais cresson bleu,		D
Dort, il est étendu dans l'herbe, sous la nue,		C
Pâle dans son lit vert où la lumière pleut.	8	D
Les pieds dans les glaïeuls, il dort. Souriant comme		E
Sourirait un enfant malade, il fait un somme :		E
Nature, berce-le chaudement : il a froid.	11	F
Les parfums ne font pas frissonner sa narine,		G
Il dort dans le soleil, la main sur sa poitrine		G
Tranquille. Il a deux tous rouges au côté droit.	14	H

Arthur Rimbaud October 1870

The Sleeper in the Valley

It is a green hollow where a river sings,
 Its silver tatters clinging madly to the grass;
 Where the sun, of the proud mountain,
 Shines: it is a little valley frothing with sunbeams.

A young soldier, mouth open, head bare,
 And his neck bathing in the cool blue cuckooflower,
 Is sleeping; he is stretched out upon the grass, under the sky,
 Pale in his green bed where the light rains upon him.

His feet among the flags, he is sleeping. Smiling as
 A sick child would smile, he is dozing:
 Nature, hold him close and rock him: he is cold.

Scents do not make his nostrils quiver.
 He is sleeping in the sun, his hand on his calm
 Chest. In his right side, he has two red holes. (Translated by David Bowles. March 13, 2014)