

Figurative Language: A Criticism on Major Characters in 'The Bear'

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Abstract

The use of figurative language might reveal the poet's or playwright's deep-seated motives in composing the poem or the play, even if the poet or playwright is unaware of these readings. The goal of this research was to look at Anton Chekhov's one-act play "The Bear" through the lens of figurative language. According to the research, just two stylistic devices, Similes and Metaphor, were discovered in the play. Aside from that, the research was expected to explain the significance of literary approaches used in the play. The play's examination and discussion indicated that it is full of emotions such as love, hate, violence, depression, and dejection. There is also a lot of violence in the play. The play's style analysis helps to establish a rational and scholarly comprehension of the performance. Long-term consequences of the research include the following: it will benefit scholars, researchers, and students of literature and linguistics by improving their understanding of the language competency of enthusiastic learners.

Keywords: Figurative Language, Criticism, Metaphor, Simile

Introduction

The aim of this research is to identify stylistic elements such as similes and metaphors in the one-act play "The Bear" and examine their impact on the main characters, particularly the play's protagonist Popova. The research focuses on love, hatred, hypocrisy, violence, and loyalty. The researched aesthetic devices probed these issues and their impact on the characters. We mean "to carry" when we say "metaphor." Metaphor is derived from the Greek term "Metaphoric," which means "carrying." A metaphor can be used to compare two different phenomena that share some qualities. Condensed similes differ from figurative similes in that some aspects, such as the topic and resemblance markers, are removed to represent the notion connotatively rather than symbolically. This is an illustration of a condensed simile. Aristotle was the first to define metaphor, defining it as "a shift in which a term is transferred from its ordinary usage to a new one" (Richards, 1965). Figurative language is widely accepted as the figure of speech in literary translation; metaphors are employed to shift a word or phrase from its literal meaning to a new and frequently broad range of meaning. According to Shamisa (1383), the simile is the declaration of similarity between two items in at least one or two of their characteristics. "A simile is a figure of speech that requires the explicit reference to both the source and target entities, as well as the formation of a link between them" (Gibbs, 1994). To create this comparison, different resemblance markers in English, such as "as" and "like," are used. According to Thomas McLaughlin (1990), "the traditional definition of figurative language has

always involved a contrast with a word's legitimate meaning, its presumed rightful meaning". With this claim in mind, one can assert that figurative language plays a significant part in distorting the meaning of a word or a sentence in any literary work. According to Maurice Manning (2018) in his compendium on figures of speech, "figurative language is not a decoration, but rather a technique to give structure to mind, and one who deals in figures does not think according to linearity, but by leaps and analogy."

Objectives of the Study.

The study's purpose is to investigate metaphors and similes and how they affect the main characters Popova and Smirnov in Anton Chekov's play "The Bear," as well as how this language mechanism reveals the characters' hidden identities to the audience.

Research Questions

- i. What kinds of Metaphors Anton Chekhov has used in the one-act play 'The Bear'?
- ii. What kinds of Similes Anton Chekhov has used in the one-act play 'The Bear'?
- iii. What effect do the similes and metaphor exercise on Popova and Smirnov?

Introduction of the play

The play's title, The Bear, refers to Smirnov, the bear's character played by Popova. Popova thought Smirnov was a crude man who didn't know how to treat women properly. He had come to Popova's house to collect a debt owed to him by Popova's husband. Smirnov came to collect. Smirnov was there to collect. Popova's social interaction was hampered by her grief over her husband's death. She told Smirnov the next day that she couldn't pay right away but would pay the next day when her steward was available. He had no interest in any of it because he had to pay his creditors the next morning. Within minutes, the situation had escalated into a heated verbal battle between the two parties. The conflict weakened his self-control, and he let his frustration control his thoughts and actions. He made several offensive remarks, prompting him to sarcastic. Popova claimed Smirnov was disrespecting her dignity by refusing to understand or make concessions in light of her situation. She thought he had no reason to disturb their peace because he was uncaring. Smirnov eventually challenged Popova to a gun duel, ending their friendship. During the same conversation, she called him bourbon three times and a bear twice.

SMIRNOV. We'll fight it out! I'm not going to be insulted by anybody, and I don't care if you are a woman, one of the "softer sex," indeed!

POPOVA. [Trying to interrupt him] Bear! Bear! Bear!

The title of this play, The Bear, accurately reflected the conclusion of the fight, which was ironically given the fact that both Popova and Smirnov eventually fell in love with each other. In theatre, location is exploited to position the action in a specific time and place while also contributing to the construction of a proper mood for the audience to experience. It is described in words in the text of a play, most frequently in the stage direction for its first act, that describes the place of the play. A production, on the other hand, brings the site to life through the use of lighting, props, and scenic design components to bring it to life. In the same manner that characters can be realistic or non-realistic, so can the location. For realistic landscapes, a considerable amount of scenery and stage equipment is required; the goal is to create an environment that is as true to reality as possible while maintaining within budget. A setting that is symbolic or representational is known as a nonrealistic setting, and it is typically done through

the use of unit sets, which are a single sequence of platforms, staircases, and playing areas that serve as the backdrop for the entire play's scenery and surroundings. In the play, the action takes place in the drawing-room of Elena Ivanovna Popova's estate, exactly seven months after the death of her husband, Ivan Popova. Elena Ivanovna Popova is the primary character. Since her husband's death, Popova has been confined to her home to grieve in seclusion and solitude. The Bear is a tragedy masquerading as a comedy, and if one takes the time to consider what might happen to these two individuals when the curtain falls on this brief point in their lives, one would conclude that it is also a tragedy. Furthermore, it is unavoidable that it is accomplished in this manner. If the events that transpired during the brief period allotted in this short play were played straight and dramatically, even if it was unintentionally, Smirnov's strange, comedic odyssey from a cold, heartless debt collector to the overwhelmed object of love would garner even more laughs, even if it was unintentionally, it would be even more amusing. It is the comedy that the author employs to highlight the folly of Smirnov's circumstance and by extension the foolishness of how any two individuals come to fall in love with one another. "By utilising this approach every time they fall in love, the audience is prevented from knowing that they are also characters in a real-life comedy," explains the author. Even if Mrs Popov and Smirnov did not conceive this age-old issue, their confrontation in "The Brute" adds fresh complexity to it. Despite the widow's best attempts, Smirnov, her unfaithful husband's creditor, is determined to harass her for the repayment of his loan. In a fit of rage, Smirnov challenges the 'grieving' widow to a duel, which she accepts. Mrs Popov and her husband start to get a little tense, but not out of derision. Despite her defiance, Smirnov feels a strong attraction to her that he cannot resist. As the play ends, a marriage proposal replaces a desire to fight. Towards the end of the play, Mr Smirnov challenges Mrs Popov to an implausible and absurd outcome, which serves as the play's climax. "Even though the activities are unlikely, they are not impossible because they represent actual internal wants of the major actors. The Bear was so captivating that it even won over Chekhov's close friend Tolstoy, who had previously disliked some of his later plays. He burst out laughing at the humorous and romantic ending, joining the chorus of laughter that has rung down through the generations.

About the Playwright

Many of his stories have been translated into other languages. Anton Pavlovich Chekhov (1860-1904) was born in Novgorod, Russia. Although he has written some amusing and hilarious one-act plays, it is his tragic stories that have earned him the title of one of the world's leading dramatists. He is a master of the modern short story and one of the world's greatest living authors. During his medical studies at Moscow's University, he began writing short stories to pass the time. Early in his career, he mastered the one-act play and produced some excellent works in this genre. His works include *The Seagull*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Bear*, *The Steppe*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, *Easter Eve*, *The Bet*, and *The Black Monk*. He is also a poet. His writings were mostly about serfdom, the rise of the middle class, and the end of feudalism. The Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, which still exists today, awarded him the Pushkin Prize in 1888. In a ceremony in Moscow, Chekhov married Olga Knipper, an actress who had appeared in one of his plays as early as 1901. He died of TB in Germany, where he lived.

Literature Review

According to McIntyre (2008), stylistic studies in drama have traditionally focused on dramatic texts rather than dramatic performances. As a result, we believe that no two performances of the

same text are alike, and that accurate critical discussion requires that everyone involved has seen the specific performance in question (Short, 1981). While some theatrical productions appear to significantly contribute to the original play script and even guide our understanding of the play, others do not. In such cases, a stylistic analysis lacking these production components may be deemed inadequate. There appears to be a conflict here between the need for methodological rigour and the need for a thorough stylistic study of a play's production and performance. Because the film version of the play under study serves as a permanent record of a specific production, this methodological challenge can be avoided in most cases. In this essay, I use a soliloquy scene from Ian McKellen's film adaptation of Shakespeare's *Richard III* to demonstrate the importance of multimodal theatre. To provide a multimodal analysis of the play comparable to traditional stylistic analysis, I contend that a transcript must include linguistic, paralinguistic, and non-linguistic elements. My research has led me to believe that the multimodal components of the production are just as important in interpreting the play as the linguistic elements.

Amare (2002) takes attempts to analyse certain selected English poetry by authors such as TsegayeG /Meehan, Solomon Deressa, and Eyasu Gorfu, among others, within the context of a formalised framework of stylistic analysis. A primary purpose of her thesis, according to the author, is to analyse the poets' use of language, to determine how the poets' language communicated meanings in each poem, and to uncover the themes that recurred in each poet's performance. In addition, Amare explains that the second purpose is to demonstrate the usefulness of the stylistic analysis approach in revealing the meaning of the poems to arrive at a reliable explanation of literary texts. The updated technique provided by Geoffrey Leech (1969) in his book *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry* is the method she uses in her research, although she also consults a variety of other resources.

Despite the fact that the novel has 16 chapters, Adane (2012) chooses to focus on three specific chapters (1, 7, and 16) that are considered to be the work's stylistically head chapters. Many lexical groups and figures of speech are part of the theoretical framework he uses to organise his research. This study and the current one are interesting in that they both approach their studies from a stylistic standpoint and use figures of speech in their presentations.

Diribu (2012) examines the aesthetic features of four short stories by Edgar Allen Poe, all of which are set in the United States, with the goal of examining the aesthetic features of the *Shadow*, *The Black Cat*, *The Atale of Jerusalem*, and *Three Sundays in a Week* (all of which are included in his thesis). He only uses *Foregrounding* as a theoretical framework for his research, and that is all. This study and the current one are similar in that they both included 'foregrounding' in their analyses; however, this study differs from the current one in that this study only uses foregrounding in a larger space, whereas the current study also includes other stylistic devices.

Li and Shi (2015) thoroughly examine Cumming's poetry, which is widely regarded as a pioneer of experimental poetry, in their comprehensive study. They use a stylistic approach to accomplish this. Some of the world's most eminent linguists have taken an interest in his work in recent years, attempting to analyse the stylistic features and uniqueness of his poems. In particular, this study attempted to discover the patterns of foregrounding and forms of deviation that emerge in his poetry, as well as the primary themes of death, life, nature, and love that appear in some of his chosen poems.

Ahmed (2021) examines a poem from both a linguistic and a critical standpoint using stylistic analysis. When compared to the former, the latter allows for a more in-depth understanding of the techniques and structure of the poem, as well as a critical approach to the poetry. Overall, the poem paints a detailed portrait of the author's personality. In terms of stylistics, a poem can be viewed through the lenses of graphology, morphology, phonology, and lexico-syntactic level, among others. The poet D. H. Lawrence's poem "The Snake" is evaluated in this study in terms of stylistic characteristics, which are discussed in depth. The exercise not only aids the reader in detecting distinguishing features of the poetry that might otherwise go unnoticed, but it also aids the reader in gaining a better understanding of the poem.

Syed, A.F., and Shahid M.A. (2021) look at Maya Angelou's poem "When Great Trees Fall" from the standpoint of stylistic analysis to better understand it. It was feasible to deduce the stylistic degrees of graphological and phonological analysis from the poem's structure. It was also intended to describe the relevance of literary techniques that were used in the poem, which was one of the goals of this research. According to the findings of the study and discussion of the poetry, the poem is packed with feelings of death, sadness, violence, depression, and dejection, among other things. We can have a more logical and scholarly understanding of the poetry as a result of the stylistic analysis of the poem in this instance. These are the long-term implications of the research: it will be valuable to scholars, researchers, and students in the fields of literature and linguistics since it will increase their comprehension of the linguistic competency of the enthusiastic learners.

Research Design

The current study used a qualitative research design to uncover the inner intent of the show of Popova and Smirnov, the primary characters in Anton Chekhov's play "The Bear," employing metaphors and similes as artistic devices. The Researcher read the play from start to finish, as well as metaphors and similes from the play, which he then organised into categories before examining the devices about the characters.

Data Analysis

Metaphors

The title of the play 'The Bear'

There is no doubt that the title of the play, "The Bear," carries metaphorical connotations in its meaning. He was overjoyed and pleased not only with the familiarity of his play but also with the money he received because of the performance. The director himself gave the nickname "milk cow" the play. Just as a cow produces milk and a dairy farmer rejoices when he receives payment, so is it with Anton Chekhov's play, which has provided him with a substantial sum of cash.

SMIRNOV: [To LUKA] You fool, you're too fond of talking.... Ass!

Smirnov is enraged with Luke, who proves to be a stumbling block on the road to Popova. When Luka inquires about Smirnov's intentions and then fails to show up, Smirnov becomes enraged, and he vents his frustration on Luka by calling him a fool and an ass, among other things. Ass is a very foolish and stubborn animal who, despite being beaten severely, refuses to obey his

master's commands and commands. Luke is referred to as an ass because of his stupidity in trying to stop Smirnov.

SMIRNOV: What the devil, excuse my saying so, have I to do with your steward!

Smirnov comes to Popova to recover the money owed to him by Popova's husband because of a loan. She expresses unequivocally that she does not have enough money to give him at this time. She claims that her Steward is unavailable now, but that he will arrive the following day to clear the accounts. As Smirnov puts it, "what in the devil do I have to do with your steward?" Specifically, he wishes to emphasise that he has nothing to do with Popova's steward and that he has come to meet Popova herself, not her steward. Why should he wait for Popova's steward when she is already present?

Not one of the swine wants to pay me! Just because I'm too gentle with them because I'm a rag, just weak wax in their hands!

He implores Popova angrily and informs her that he is unable to wait any longer because he is personally in debt, which he must pay. He had loaned money to several people, and he had returned to them to recover the money he had loaned. They refused to repay the money based on one or more justifications. Smirnov refers to these individuals as swine because of their inhumane and spiteful behaviour. He goes on to say that because he was gentle with them and behaved manly, they mistakenly believed that his scrap, which was only a rag and weak wax that melts very quickly, was worth returning the money. I cannot even see one of these poetic creatures from a distance without breaking out into a cold sweat out of sheer anger. When Smirnov is arguing with Popova and asks him to pay back the money of debt that her husband owes him, he uses the ironic metaphor of 'Poetic Creatures' to refer to crafty women ironically. She is delaying the matter until the next day, and this has enraged Smirnov, who refers to Popova as a poetic creature who is outwardly beautiful but who is on the inside cunning and fraud. Popova has stated that when he sees such types of women from a distance, he becomes enraged, by the way, they appear.

As Popova is paying the debt and deferring the matter until the next day, the situation is tense. Smirnov begs Popova not to treat him as if he is a bandit who has come to steal her possessions. The man is genuine, with only one small request: that her husband repays the loan that he has taken out from her.

SMIRNOV: You'll meet a cat with a horn or a white woodcock sooner than a constant woman!

As Smirnov and Popova are arguing, Popova is taunting her by claiming that all women with rosy and dimpled cheeks, as well as red lips, cheat, and are unfaithful. In his words, she will not meet any women, but will instead come across a cat or a woodcock. These vicious animals tear their prey to pieces. He refers to these types of women as "fierce animals."

I don't want to talk to impudent scoundrels!

The impudent scoundrels with whom Smirnov deals are rude and cynic people who are villains of society whom polite and respectable people do not want to come into contact with. Smirnov refers to Popova as one of these impudent scoundrels because of his bad manners.

POPOVA: [Clenches her fists and stamps her foot] You're a boor! A coarse bear! A Bourbon! A monster!

This is the most important line in the entire play because it demonstrates that the theme of the play and the title of the play are both justified. The moment Smirnov is not reconciled and does not agree with Popova's arguments, the latter loses all control of his emotions and calls him names such as "bear," "bourbon," and "monster" simply because of his uncivil, inhuman, and brutal stubbornness. When Smirnov learns that Popova is in the mood to mourn her husband's death, he should have acted humanely and waited for the steward to arrive the following day to settle his debts. Instead of understanding the complexity of the situation, he chooses to tease Popova and argue with her for no reason at all. This is why he deserves the names "bear" and "bourbon," or, in more euphemistic terminology, "monster."

SMIRNOV: We'll fight it out! I'm not going to be insulted by anybody, and I don't care if you are a woman, one of the "softer sex," indeed!

When Smirnov is countered by Popova, he feels that he has been insulted and that his prestige has been diminished. He will not be able to pocket the insult, even though she may be softer sex. He appears to be interested in Popova based on his use of metaphor. He appears to be impudent on the surface, but he is secretly attracted to Popova's beauty, as evidenced by the fact that he is being insulted and praised in metaphorical terms.

SMIRNOV: I'll bring her down like a chicken!

This is the pinnacle of rudeness on the part of Smirnov, who believes he is being brave by labelling Popova as a chicken. The fact that he is male and should respect female sexuality should not be lost on him. However, despite his respect for her, he is challenging her to a chicken-crushing competition. Popova appears to be weak and dreadful, like a chicken to her.

SMIRNOV: I'm not a little boy or a sentimental puppy;

Smirnov's hypocrisy is demonstrated by the metaphorical phrases "little boy" and "sentimental puppy," respectively. As she fights and praises Norma in the previous line, she is constantly battling and praising her. His position has now changed, and he claims that he is no longer a little boy or a sentimental puppy who is enamoured with Popova's love. Even though he is publicly showing disrespect for the fair sex, he is secretly head over heels in love with Popova.

SMIRNOV: She is a woman! That's the sort I can understand! A real woman! Not a sour-faced jellybag, but fire, gunpowder, a rocket!

In Smirnov's words, she is not delicate and fair sex, but rather a real woman with manly powers who can explode like a rocket. He is attempting to convey that he will not intimidate her. She cannot be moulded in the same way that jelly can, but she can be as dangerous as fire, gunpowder, or a rocket.

SMIRNOV: God, what a woman! I've never in my life seen one like her! I'm lost! Done for! Fallen into a mousetrap, like a mouse!

It is the phrase "fallen into a mousetrap like a mouse" that expresses Smirnov's inner thoughts, which are now exposed, and categorically admits that he is weak and timid, just like the mouse. He has become entrapped by his feelings for Popova. He had previously been at war with Popova. In reality, he was taking the time to spend time with her and become more intimate with her. We can infer from the lines that he was both fighting and complimenting her on her beauty.

SMIRNOV: Fire, then! You can't understand what happiness it would be to die before those beautiful eyes, to be shot by a revolver held in that little, velvet hand.

Popova has accepted Smirnov's challenge to a lethal fight, which he has graciously accepted. It is clear that he recognises his helplessness and is prepared to die, and he will be pleased to be killed by the velvety soft hands of Popova. There is nothing more to be concealed at this point. He is unmistakably confessing his feelings for Popova, but he is keeping his words to himself. He is a master at manipulating metaphorical phrases to convey his hidden emotions to the audience.

Similes

SMIRNOV: I'm off my head, I'm in love like a boy, like a fool!

Because of the similes "like a boy" and "like a fool," the Pandora box is opened, and the readers realise that what they had been imagining was correct: Smirnov is having an adventurous love affair with Popova. Using similes to express his admission that he has become consumed by his feelings for Popova is the pinnacle of his admission.

SMIRNOV: I'm weak, I'm wax, I've melted

He admits that he is weak and delicate like wax and that this weakness has been melted to acknowledge his feelings for Popova.

SMIRNOV; I'd taken a vow, and now all of a sudden I'm in love, like a fish out of water!

Popova is the object of his true affection, and he does not attempt to hide it. Affirmatively, he states that he has never experienced the same level of love for any other woman as he has experienced for Popova. He is so restless and anxious for her that he feels like he is swimming in a sea of confusion. It implies that if he succeeds in winning her heart, he will die soon after.

SMIRNOV: I'm in love like a student

Smirnov confesses to Popova after the play that he is head over heels in love with her and that he feels immature and helpless in his feelings for her. Now, he has transformed into a passionate lover, a character created by William Shakespeare.

Discussion

Li and Shi (2015) investigate the patterns of foregrounding and forms of deviation that emerge in his poetry, as well as the primary themes of death, life, nature, and love that appear in some of his chosen poems, through the lens of stylistic analysis. Ahmed (2021) identified distinguishing features of the poetry that would otherwise go unnoticed, but it also helps the reader gain a better

understanding of the poem. Syed, A.F., and Shahid M.A. (2021) discovered that the poem contains feelings such as death, sadness, violence, depression, and dejection, among others. By utilising the stylistic devices metaphors and similes, the current study revealed the hidden reality of the main characters Popova and Smirnov. Popova, who has confined herself to the four walls in order to remain faithful to her disloyal husband secretly, falls in love with Smirnov. Smirnov, on the other hand, claims that he would rather sit on a barrel of gunpowder than talk to a woman, and it is revealed that he is madly in love with Popova. According to Harold Brighthouse, both Popova and Smirnov conceal their true identities behind 'Smoke Screens.'

Conclusion

The purpose of this article, as stated in the abstract, was to determine the impact of using Metaphors and Similes on the writer's style as well as the audience's understanding of the addressee. The researcher conveyed his message of the one-act play "The Bear" implicitly and indirectly, he has examined Metaphors and Similes in the aforementioned play to make the characters' As a result of the usage of these figures of speech, the addressee does not explicitly perceive the meaning of the storey and must refer to the metaphorical dimension of the play to uncover its underlying concept. Figurative language has been explored exclusively in two main characters, Popova and Smirnov, who are the only two figurative language techniques. If more stylistic elements are used on the whole play, this subject can be expanded to a full-length thesis. This will give the reader a vivid and graphic representation of the characters as well as an explicit interpretation of the play.

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