


Image schemas in Romantic Poetry

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I. Problem and Aims

This study affords new insights into the meaning construction phenomenon and poetic language. It is a widely held view that the language of poetry and the naturally occurring language represent two different types of language, which employ different meaning construction devices and principles, and which have little in common. However, this work aims to verify that poetic language is but a mode of meaning construction, and its devices, which have long been said to be literary devices serving different rhetorical aims, are part of the general devices used in performing different mental activities, most importantly meaning production and consumption. As a way of cross-checking this hypothesis, romantic poetry was taken as the corpus of the study.




II. Overview

The paper represents an application of a major cognitive semantic theory, namely image schema, to three Romantic poems, namely Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon', Keat's 'To Autumn', and Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'.



III. Conclusions

Perhaps among the major conclusions of the study are the following: (1) It is not possible to establish a neat dividing line between literal and figurative meaning, or to enforce a clear division between the language of poetry and that of everyday use, especially with respect to meaning construction devices and techniques. (2) Romantic poetry exploits, for aesthetic purposes, cognitive processes, including linguistic, that were initially evolved for non-aesthetic purposes. The reading of poetry involves adapting cognitive processes for purposes for which they were not originally devised.



IV. Structure of the Study

Abstract

1. Introduction

2. Image Schemas in Romantic Poems

2.1 Image Schemas in Byron's 'The Prisoner of Chillon'

2.1.1 Container and Cycle Image Schemas

2.1.2 Blockage Image Schema

2.1.3 Loss of Energy, Parallelism, Emotional Quality, and Joining Image Schema

2.1.4 Unsuccessful Cognitive Strategy and Force Image Schema

2.1.5 Containment and Orientation Image Schemas



2.2 Image Schemas in Keat's 'To Autumn'

2.2.1 Spatial Image Schemas: Proximity and Circular Movement

2.2.2 Compound Image Schema: Force and Containment

2.2.3 Complex Force Image Schema: Lifting

2.2.4 Image Schemas and Their Cognitive Poetic Significance

2.2.5 Containment Image Schema and Questions with 'Where'

2.3 Image Schemas in Shelley's 'Ode to the West Wind'

2.3.1 Force Image Schemas: Simple and Complex

2.3.2 Containment Image Schemas and Conceptualisation

2.3.3 Dispersion Image Schemas

3. Conclusions

References