

SLAY PAPER

comparing "MEMORY, A POEM" by LAETITIA PILKINGTON and "POETRY FAILURE" by MARK HALLIDAY

Text a) ("Memory, a Poem" by Laetitia Pilkington) and text e) ("Poetry Failure" by Mark Halliday) both feature memory as a prominent theme. Comparative in terms of the use of lexis and imagery to convey meaning, but strikingly different in tone and form, the two poems take ~~quite~~ contrasting ^{views} on the elusive, mysterious and complex human utility: memory.

Pilkington effectively employs a wide variety of lexical choices to admire and revere the strength and versatility of memory. Imagery is used to emphasize the capacity of the human mind, exemplified by the quotations "Surprising storehouse!" and "all things find ample space, and large and mighty room". The repetition of the conjunction "and" highlights the volume that the memory can retain and further emphasizes the adjectives "large" and "mighty". Similarly the objectification of the memory as a "storehouse" ~~has~~ has connotations of great security and space which, when combined with "surprising", implies to the reader that not only does the human memory act as a stronghold for knowledge but also that its strength is great - further evidenced by the quotation "which time, or accident, may ne'er destroy".

Rhetorical questions can be found in ~~both~~ both texts and act successfully in both as a hook ~~propose~~ to involve the reader. In "Poetry Failure", Halliday combines both rhetorical questions and 1st person pronouns "I" to directly involve and engage the reader which has the effect of evoking sympathy when he describes through imagery the fragmentation of memory. Repetition is used greatly in this poem to emphasise key points. ~~For~~ For example "not your mother. My mother" is a powerful ~~is~~ pairing of repetition and minor sentences which expresses to the reader the deep level of connection and individuality the narrator has with his memories. Consequently it conveys just how unique his mother was. Colloquial language is used in "Poetry Failure" also - a stark contrast to the colloquial and formal language of "Memory, a Poem". Perhaps this is a reflection of the times in which the

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(one being 18th century and the other 21st).

two poems were written, and in "Poetry Failure", the use of colloquial language such as "Yeah" and informal domestic scenes such as "pre potatoes to peel for mashing" brings to the forefront of the poem the personality and tangibility of memory which again is another contrast to "Memory, a Poem"'s formal and estranged - albeit detailed - descriptions.

One of the largest differences between the two texts is the stance each writer takes regarding memory. Halliday appears to describe the fickleness and unreliability of memory through a slightly pessimistic but fond tone. Created by personal musings and patchy detail, the lack of depth and consistency of memory is described, and particularly arises in the quotations "the phrase rang slightly false... the "ound" and "one" sounds sounded profound". Here, the fact that memory can be weak and false is demonstrated by the ~~near~~ half rhyme of "ound" and "one". ~~Despite this~~ This is further emphasised when the narrator questions his own reliability with the phrase "Wasn't that more something I did fifteen years earlier?" Despite this, the tone of the poem appears to be sincere as Halliday ~~reflects on~~ fondly reflects on aspects of his mother "Saying in her Bev way" odd phrases; perhaps symbolising the resulting preciousness of the remaining parts of his memory. Where "Poetry Failure" ultimately sees memory as unreliable and uncooperative, "Memory, a Poem" describes it in a religious reverence and repeatedly marvels at its supposed ~~of~~ fortitude. Pilkington creates a semantic field of strength gradually throughout the poem using phrases such as "wond'rous treasure", "amazing power" and "sacred stores of learning". In the 10th stanza, an appeal is directly made to "Lord" which ~~is~~ is a religious reference and, when considered ~~with~~ in conjunction with the use of archaic pronouns such as "thee" and "thou" gives a religious and ~~and~~ awe astounding tone to the poem. This implication that the memory is a divine "gift" comes from the repetition of these phrases and cement the message that Pilkington expresses - that memory is strong, absolute and lasting.

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Aside from tone, the structures of the two poems are almost polar, and each of these aspects relate to the sentiment of the poems. In "Memory, a Poem", the text is composed of 11 stanzas of which ~~each is written~~ ~~in the second~~ all but the first stanza are written in iambic pentameter with an AAA rhyme scheme. The effect of this on the poem is not only to create a flowing and connected piece, but ~~that~~ it also reflects the supposed reliability and consistency of memory. This is greatly contrasted in "Poetry Failure" where the free verse and enjambed lines of the 3 stanzas (each of varying length) gives the sense of a stream of consciousness. The use of caesura and heavily punctuated lines quite literally fragments the poem which - like "Memory, a Poem" - is a reflection of Halliday's message; the ~~unreliability~~ and broken nature of memory.

To conclude, whilst the two texts (a and e) both focus on the importance of memory, ~~and~~ the two take very contrasting stands on its power and strength. To convey this ~~mess~~ these messages - the weakness of memory in "Poetry Failure" and its almost divine strength in "Memory, a Poem" - the authors employ carefully selected lexical choices and literary techniques (e.g. repetition) but ultimately, the poems have their largest difference in terms of the rhyme structure (rigid and precise in "Pilkington's" and not present and enjambed in Halliday's) which reflects both their messages and the varied time of writing.

I am no expert, but I'd put this too in band below the top, I think.

I really like the
what brings them together,
what puts them apart approach.

Really works. I will steal it!

You too are v. strong on comparison, excellent on technique (of writer), remember to connect always to meaning -> where you are in the text & what is being said or implied.

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