

## Appreciation or Explication of a Poem

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**Abstract:** Literature, does that word refer to any written material or any creative writing or oral compositions such as songs , poems and the other? Why should any given work be highly regarded as a “literary” work? What, then, is poetry? Why do we teach it? And why is it based upon how literature means rather than what it means? Can the answer to those questions be that poem can be appreciated by its effect in the minds of our students when it is read or heard. This paper aims to show how literature, and specifically, poetry can be used in language teaching. Indeed, as a literary work, poem raises the pleasure produced by the poet, at this point, the very concept of a right explication is irrelevant. What is being carried out in poetry courses should be the attempts to make a proper appreciation of the human qualities, that is, the feelings that evoke in the students’ minds through a given work of poetry. In poetry courses, for this reason, studying a poem through its effect should be considered essential. The effect, to be sure, must be justifiable ones. At this point, teachers of language would take the lead to enable their students to achieve to make proper judgements. Regarding that poems mean what they say, not what we would like them to say, we, the teachers of English, would make our students take the tips for going right.

**Key words:**Literature, poetry, explication, appreciation

It appears obvious that there is the desirability and need for literature in EFL classes. It seems safe enough to assert that English literature will give help to the students to accomplish of the variety of syntax and the variations of vocabulary discrimination. Literature, by providing examples of the language employed, will serve the students as a guide.

The natural question, at this point, has been “how to use literature in classes ?” The answer to that question can directly be related to the aim of introducing literature into our classes. Yet some theoretical and practical complications would appear inevitably , however, accepting that fact and considering literature a means not an end, teachers of English will be presenting works of literature that produce the best responses in class.

No matter what the selection, a very close examination and explication of the selected work should be a must such as the principles of reading with close attention, the principles of linguistics such as connotative and semantic motives, encouraging the students to accomplish of the work of writing, and initiating the communication upon the received messages.

To enable students to develop their language skills, teachers of English should keep in their mind that the pieces of literature selected for the classroom use require individual self examination and classroom interaction. The important point in here is not to forget the fact that there will be limitation of both the target language and its cultural context. But what we should be aware of is the linguistic and emotional capacity of our students to share the concerns of the author. How then do we ,teachers of English, go about presenting literature in our classes?

### **A sample lesson**

Feeling, intuition, and sensing are the areas through which language communicates. However, teachers of English have difficulty in handling with teaching poetry, it is of surprise that non-native students enjoy poetry, find it interesting, and show credit to its subject matter (theme). For non-native students, unexpected language and cultural complexities necessitate to pay special attention, yet, when they are coped with close, detailed, precise reading there will be a solution among class members in accomplishing the concepts out of the syntax of a poem studied on.

The choice and presentation of poem are two essential points of teaching poetry. The interest of the students in the subject matter (theme) of the poem and words employed in it are inseparable parts in appreciating a piece of poetry. The presentation necessitates a more careful and detailed study of the devices used to explicate the poem. What, here, we, teachers of English, are supposed to employ is the most effective guidance with care and understanding.

Close and detailed reading is a must to explicate a poem. In order not to make the task of explication difficult, it is useful to encourage the students to dig the meaning lying beneath the words employed in the selected poem. To achieve students' linguistic and emotional capacity is suggested to be desirable. At this point, how to consult the dictionary session should be provided.

There appears to be some advice about selecting contemporary poetry for non-native students. It may be argued that contemporary poetry can be more difficult than the traditional one. Yet, classroom experiences prove that even in poems, laden with highly complicated structure and devices, such as Shelley's "*Ozymandias*" and Keats' "*On First Looking into Chapman's Homer*", the narrative element (speaker) enables the non-native students to understand the message employed.

It is preferable to appreciate poetry, or explicate it, giving information without context (not giving a separate lesson on poetic techniques). The selected poem is only suggested to touch on questions of deep human concern, perhaps the one being set into cultural context. Thus, the study will not only be dependent upon students' learning vocabulary items, but also it will initiate the need to communicate in EFL classes. The teacher of English must keep in mind that a piece of poetry is a collection of elements, that is, its meter, rhythm, rhyme, stanza form, diction, and figures of speech, all of which are of importance, in the process of explication.

Two key elements, rhyme and rhythm, should not be ignored since poetry in English is defined its regularity of rhyme and rhythm. Avoidance of them will raise questions in mind, for that reason, this technical information should be offered, without avoiding some explanation. Long lessons on, say, alliteration will be probably unhelpful. Yet what is even good is to reinforce the nature of English as a stress-timed language and indicate the common use of iambics can be marked with some lines of Shakespeare's verse.

The concept of the distinction, on the other other, between connotative and denotative elements of the word meaning is the first essential topic in teaching poetry, which will be accompanied by the poetic image: the metaphor and simile.

In terms of connotation, a list of the examples of words which mean the same thing but carry overtones of attitude may be given. Such a list will enable the non-native students to

learn the word discrimination and limitations of synonyms rather than true connotation. At this point, the overtones which are culturally tied to British or American environment would be recognized, at a deeper level.

As for the metaphor and simile, teachers of English should briefly touch on the concept of comparison, by avoiding the abstract definitions which make the obvious complicated. Again the job of the teacher is to be alerting about the similarities (common things) between two unlike things.

Then comes a poem. For initial comprehension, an oral reading by the teacher is the best way. This will provide tone and meaning, and be followed by another reading. Then, the students' reading along the text silently will follow. In this way, the students will be developing their reading skills as well as reinforcing the meaning of the text before starting to examine it line by line. The next stage is asking questions about the use of language (the specifically selected vocabulary items) and the devices used in the text. Now it is at this stage that discussion will be conducted to draw out the thematic implications of the poem.

If we assume the students are adult learners in their age and intellectual development, and at an advanced level in their linguistic preparation, we can use W.B. Keats's poem filled with the cultural difficulties deriving from its extreme involvement with the required knowledge about George Chapman, an Elizabethan-Sheakespeare's contemporary.

On the linguistic level Keats' words have at least a surface simplicity that helps the non-native students to have an initial comprehension of his words. By no means does simplicity remain still. Even at an introductory level the non-native students have to encounter the complicated issues that derive from this paradox.

At the purely technical novel, this poem has a narrative chronological order which enables the non-native students to understand what is tried to be told by the poet, and thus, makes a beginning for the first level of comprehension. The story of this poem can be visualized before the students are encouraged to have awareness of the complicated level of symbolic explication.

We should begin with the immediate difficulties to be found in the vocabulary. Yet, in this poem not the vocabulary items, but the connotations of some specific names are essential to talk about..i.e., Chapman-his being known for his translations from the Greek of Homer's *Odyssey* and *The Iliad*; stout Cortez staring at the Pacific.

There are a few oddities of syntax in the poem. Keats plays tricks with the phrase and clause position for emphasis. 'Much have I traveled in the realms of gold, and many goodly states and kingdoms seen'. However, these lines are easily rearranged into a conventional order and immediately clarified for the intended meaning.

The title, on the other hand, has a semantic force that is developed throughout the poem. It precisely helps comprehension by supplying the essential information. It is the 'realm' of the feelings that Keats wants to reflect by means of the metaphors in the minds. His stylizing of what he aims to say has the effect of enlarging intimate, figurative, and aesthetic inspirations.

Begin by reading the poem through. Read at least twice, and aloud slowly, in that way, some impact will arise and the poet's language will sound more sensuous than ordinary language, when read aloud, through sound elements like rhymes, assonance and alliteration, poem will be appealing to the students' senses and would create a mental picture in mind's

eye. The poem continues to establish the informational level of description. At this stage, “the realms of gold” in the first line is drawn attention by the teacher to return to the narrative of the poem : How and why does the poet feel about “them” ?What do they stand for?’ Round ‘what’ western islands?’ What about ‘Apollo and deep-browed Homer?’ What relationship lies between ‘Chapman’s Homer’ and an astronomer’s discovering a new planet and the discovery of the ‘Pacific’ by Cortez ? How about Keats’ having been impressed by Chapman’s Homer and his expressing his feelings about it ?

The order of the discussion of the poem is important. It is for this reason that the students should be made ascertained about the key vocabulary items by the teacher. At this point, the questions that provide the theme of this poem start an ongoing discussion that will yield the conclusion.

It is this approach that stresses the presentation of literature in EFL classes. In other words, beginning with the understanding of the denotative properties of language, but not stopping at that level of clarification, going on with the connotative meanings of them into a solution will be providing a desired interaction in classes. Before the end of the lesson, read the poem through at least once more ; Each reading after the discovery session will add a little more to the students’ appreciation that may again encourage them to contribute much more responses to the present discovery. Then, here , if desired , the class may be told to have a rest and thus, ongoing readings may follow : Encourage them , in this way , further thoughts may have come to their mind. Let us agree, then, simply because the poem is what it is , that is, it is poetic, it evokes different feelings in different minds freely and goes on yielding for appreciation.

To get back to my title, appreciation of a piece of poetry requires the presence of an observer with a voice. *On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer* evokes the feelings in the minds of our students through Keats’ voice:

Much have I traveled in the realms of gold  
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;  
Round many western islands have I been  
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.

In that opening description of the poem, much is owed to the associations of the words such as ‘realms of gold’ ‘western islands’ ‘Apollo’... Later in the poem Keats adds his most distinguishing personal experience with the line ‘Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold’. Here, Chapman’s speaking out loud and bold, having been perceived and recorded in the minds’ eyes of the students without necessitating any controlling impulse by the teacher will show us how appreciation and explication may go hand in hand.

With this point in view, we can once again have glimpses of what Keats observed and wanted to share of what he experienced with his readers: Keats’ identifying his own feelings after his discovery of Chapman’s Homer with the very feelings of an astronomer’s after the discovery of a new planet, and a stout’s discovery of a new land-celebrate the students’ discovery of their own appreciation and explication of the poem. So far as it is possible, this paper concludes at suggesting how appreciation and explication of a piece of poetry would complete each other without interfering with each other.

Then felt I like some watcher of the skies  
When a new planet swims into his ken  
Or like stout Cortez-when his eagle eyes

He stared at the Pacific-and all his men  
Looked at each other with a wild surmise.

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