

Imagery tone and word of choice

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“ Imagery, Tone and Word Choice” An author can establish the mood of the story by either using figurative language or through using word of choice. Figurative language means the language that utilizes expressions or words with a meaning which is totally different from the literal interpretation. It can also mean different words but that have the same meaning. Word of choice is when you choose to use words that are descriptive and specific that tell your readers what you are trying to say. For example: instead of using a word like sad or unhappy the author decides to use instead a word like sorrowful or morbid.

Or instead of using a word like happy the author uses a word like overjoyed or pleasant to be specific to the readers. In the readings *Beowulf and Grendel* translated by Seamus Heaney, *Beowulf* translated by Francis B. Gummere, *Beowulf* translated by Benjamin Slade, and *Beowulf* translated by David Breeden the translators used word of choice imagery, and tone both similar and differently to be precise about what they wanted to tell the readers. There is a difference in complexity of the writing when it comes to word choice. In the reading *Beowulf and Grendel* translated by Seamus Heaney the translator chose to begin the story with: So. The Spear-Danes in days gone by and the kings who ruled them had courage and greatness. We have heard of those princes' heroic campaigns. ” (249). While in the reading *Beowulf* translated by Francis B. Gummere the translator started the story with: “ LO, praise of the prowess of people-kings of spear-armed Danes, in days long sped, we have heard, and what honor the athelings won! ” (1). Both readings *Beowulf* translated by Benjamin Slade and *Beowulf* translated by David Breeden started somehow the same.

Beowulf translated by Benjamin Slade started by: “ Listen! We—of the Spear-Danes in the days of yore, of those clan-kings—heard of their glory. how these nobles performed courageous deeds. ” (1). The translator David Breeden began his translation with: “ Listen: You have heard of the Danish Kings in the old days and how they were great warriors. Shield, the son of Sheaf, took many an enemy’s chair, terrified many a warrior, after he was found an orphan. (1). The translation by David Breeden and Benjamin Slade started with “ Listen” but they both used a different expression towards the word. Benjamin Slade used the word like in a more aggressive and possessive manner while David Breeden used the word in a more calmly and peaceful manner. Seamus Heaney and Francis B. Gummere started their translations differently from David Breeden’s and Benjamin Slade’s translations but both of their translations were written like in more of apoetryformat than the other two translations.

Imagery was also used by the translators to create visual descriptive images in the readers minds. David Breeden used imagery to create a visual image of when one of the characters died and his people carried him to the sea and his body was laid in a ship which was conducted by the sea with no destination. This part of the translations gives a briefly description of what occurred: “ Shield died at his fated hour, went to God still strong. His people carried him to the sea, which was his last request.

In the harbor stood a well-built ship, icy but ready for the sea. They laid Shield there, propped him against the mast surrounded by gold and treasure from distant lands. ” (1-2). Francis B. Gummere used imagery to give us an image of Beowulf’s life in the sea and adventures with evil monsters and

other creatures. The translator used: “ ME thus often the evil monsters thronging threatened.

With trust of my sword, the darling, I dealt them due return! Nowise had they bliss from their booty then to devour their victim, vengeful creatures, seated to banquet at bottom of sea; but at break of day, by my brand sore hurt, on the edge of the ocean up they lay, put to sleep by the sword. ” (66). David Breeden gave us an image of Shield’s last death wish. He used some words like for example: sea, ship, treasure and gold. Francis.

B Gummere gave us an image of Beowulf’s adventures with monsters and how they laid at the edge of the sea after he defeated them. Gummere used some words that point imagery like for example: evil monsters, sword, vengeful creatures, and sea. Slade’s translation used imagery to make us imagine or picture the hardships and journeys on the sea. How Beowulf’s and the other warriors lives were risked and the battles they had with monsters. He translated: “ ‘ Listen, you a great deal—Unferth, my friend Breca, told of his journey.

Truth I claim that I sea-strength greater had, hardship on the waves, than any other man; we had it agreed, being lads, and vowed--- being both then still in the years of youth—that we out on the ocean our lives would risk, and thus we did. We had naked swords when we rowed on the ocean-sound. ” (12). Benjamin Slade used words like for example: journey, hardship, waves, youth, risk, and naked swords to give imagery.

Tone was used differently by some of the translators then the others. Some used more positive tones in their translations. While other of the translators

used more negative tones. Francis B. Gummere used a negative tone in the translation. This part of the translation has a tone of negative attitude: “ With envy and anger and evil spirit endured the dole in his dark adobe, that he heard each day the din of revel high in the hall: there harps rang out, clear song of the singer..... triumphant, sun and moon for a light to lighten the land-dwellers, and braided bright the breast of earth with limbs and leaves, made life for all of mortal beings that breathe and move. ” (3). Some words that point out a negative tone are: envy, anger, triumphant and mortal.

Benjamin Slade also used a negative tone in this part of the translation: “ That was great misery for the Friend of the Scyldings, a breaking of his spirit.

Many often sat the mighty at counsel; pondered a plan..... against the sudden horror, to do; sometimes they pledged at holy temples sacred honouring, in words bid that them the demon-slayer would offer succor from the plight of the people. ” (4). Benjamin used different words that point out a negative tone, some are: misery, horror, demon-slayer and spirit.

David Breeden used a positive tone in this part of his translation: “ The words of the poet, the sounds of the harp, the joy of people echoed. The poet told how the world came to be, how God made the earth and the water surrounding, how he set the sun and the moon as lights for people and adorned the earth with limbs and leaves for everyone.

Hrothgar’s people lived in joy, happy until that wanderer of the wasteland, Grendel the demon, possessor of the moors, began his crime. ” (3). Some of the clue words that he used a positive tone are: harp, joy, sun, moon, earth and happy. Which makes it some sort of like a peaceful tone. Seamus Heaney translation used a positive tone in the following part of his

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translation: “ Beyond the whale-road had to yield to him and begin to pay tribute.

That was one good king. Afterwards a boy-child was born to Shield, a cub in the yard, a comfort sent by God to that nation.... Shield had fathered a famous son: Beowulf's name was known through the north.... behaviour that's admired is the path to power among people everywhere. ” (427.) Some clue words that Heaney used that points out tone are: tribute, famous, power, and admired .

In conclusion the translators used word of choice, imagery, and tone both similar and differently to be precise about what they wanted to tell the readers. It is like a comparing and contrasting on what in the translations was common and what was different. Primary Source: Heaney, Seamus. “ Beowulf”. Norton. Kindle Edition. (2001-02-17). Kindle Location 434. Secondary Sources: Breedon, David. “ Beowulf”. The adventures of Beowulf an Adaption from the Old English. 1-4. Print. Gummere, B. Francis. “ Beowulf”. Beowulf, 8th century. 1-66. Print. Slade, Benjamin. Beowulf. (2002-12). 1-65. Print