A Cognitive Stylistic Analysis of Oswald Mtshali's "Men in Chains"
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Abstract

This paper presents a cognitive stylistic analysis of the poem "Men in Chains" by Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali (1968). Cognitive stylistics focuses primarily on explaining what happens during the reading process and how it influences the interpretations made by readers in understanding textual meaning. Though meaning is located in the formal structure of the literary text, readers can also approach meaning by deploying aspects of their previous background knowledge. Therefore, the study examines how a special configuration of language is used to realise a particular subject matter and a few selected figurative tropes to achieve a special aesthetic purpose. In the research, all primary data were sourced from the poem, and the secondary data were derived from related works and textbooks. The Schema Theory introduced by Richard C. Anderson (1977) and Conceptual Metaphor Theory by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1980) were used to analyse the data collected for the study. The analysis reveals that coherence among figures of speech and the use of extended and complex figurative expressions create new stylistic frameworks and metaphorical formulas that illustrate the idea of novelty and creativity in the poem. Based on the above, the work concludes that cognitive stylistics is effective in the study and interpretation of poetry. It can also be used in studying and teaching poetry to enhance better understanding and appreciation of any poetic texts.

Introduction

Language is a means of communication that is unique to humans; that is why Victoria Fromkin, Robert Rodman and Nina Hyams state that "language is the source of human life and power" (2007, p. 3) and that "we use language to convey information to others, ask questions, give commands, and express wishes" (173). Maryam Yusuf Magaji Idris adds that a people's shared history and culture shape the language they use (2017, p. 72). The above views underscore J. L. Austin's (1959) and John Searle's (1969) position in Napoleon M. Mabaquiao Jr.'s (2018) assertion in *Speech Act Theory: From Austin to Searle* that language is not only used to describe the world (constative), but also performed actions (performative), a point which John Searle expanded on and introduced the concept of "speech acts" in 1969. Searle categorised speech acts into various illocutionary acts, such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarations. He emphasised that language is

not just about conveying information but also about performing actions and having a specific effect on the listener or interlocutor. Both Austin and Searle contributed to the understanding of how language is used to perform various functions, but Searle's work on speech acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary acts expanded and formalised these concepts, providing a more comprehensive framework for analysing the functions of language in communication.

There are two specific media of using language: oral (spoken words) and written (graphic representations of words on paper). It is in the use of language that style comes in; it shows the difference between one piece of writing and the other. Writers all over the world have a different way in which they encode and disseminate their artistic messages and also achieve a formal beauty in their works and this, to some extent, depends on the individual's way of using language (style). "Style" refers to how one expresses oneself. Language use has stylistic variations, just as there are different ways to do things. The different feature of style is based on the writer's selection and arrangement of various items of language based on the genre, form, topic, or author's overall disposition (Aworo 2017). According to the current research, style is the selection and arrangement of linguistic elements that can be chosen.

The study places a particular emphasis on the role of figurative language and literary devices in shaping the cognitive and emotional responses of the readers. Metaphor, for instance, is seen as a fundamental cognitive process through which abstract concepts are understood in terms of more concrete and tangible domains. By examining the cognitive processes involved in metaphorical comprehension, cognitive stylistics sheds light on how literary texts evoke vivid imagery, convey complex emotions, and generate profound aesthetic

experiences, just as seen in the poem under study. More so, it explores the intricate relationship between language and cognition by examining the stylistic choices made by the author and the impact on the reader's cognitive experience. It also offers insight into the ways in which literature engages and affects the human mind. By implication, what cognitive stylistic does is to view and analyse styles as a cognitive process of the mind, one that goes beyond the boundaries of surface meaning to unearth the truth behind it.

Cognitive Stylistics

Ivor Armstrong Richards laid the foundations for cognitive stylistics primarily through his works in the early 20th century, particularly with 'Foundations of Aesthetics' published in 1922 and 'Practical Criticism' in 1929. It was from cognitive psychology that Richards drew upon to build a theory of literature and interpretation, which in itself prefigured cognitive stylistics. As a sub-discipline in the field of applied linguistics, cognitive stylistics is a multidisciplinary field that explores the intricate relationship between language, cognition, and literature. It combines insights from cognitive psychology, linguistics, and literary theories to analyse how the human mind processes and responds to literary texts. It is the application of cognitive science to stylistics. It enables one to examine how people think in written works such as poems or stories. Scholars have given their views on what cognitive stylistics is, and they are briefly discussed below.

Stockwell (2002, p. 4-6) observes that "cognitive stylistics provides a new way of thinking about literature involving the application of cognitive linguistics and psychology to the literary texts." The study also states that cognitive stylistics looks at people as cognitive human beings who depend on their background knowledge and experiences to understand literary texts.

Woldemariam (2015) explains that cognitive stylistics looks not only at the text but also at the mind's contribution to reading. What this entails is that cognitive stylistics explores how certain types of metaphorical images can only be understood by using the reader's knowledge, beliefs and inferences. Gavins and Steen (2003) also state that cognitive stylistics is more concerned with presenting a descriptive and detailed account of linguistic features of a text in a mechanistic and non-evaluative way in confirming the connection between literature and psychology. Cognitive stylistic, as Jeffries and Mclntyre (2010) demonstrate, takes into account the cognitive processes by which readers respond to particular aspects of texts. It attempts to capture how readers employ their real-life schematic knowledge in the interpretation of literary texts. These two scholars also confirm that literary texts contain triggers that stimulate aspects of readers' prior knowledge to allow them to construct a mental representation of the world of the text. Scholars who work in the field of cognitive stylistics have expanded the boundaries of linguistic analysis of literature by using different theories such as schema theory, conceptual metaphor theory, text-world theory, blending theory, mental space theory, etc. These theories provide frameworks to analyse the literature and focus on reading and cognition. For the purpose of this study, special focus will be given to schema theory by Anderson (1977) and conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) since they are commonly used in cognitive stylistic analysis and they offer some important analytical frameworks to be applied in the analysis section. The following part sheds light on these two theories.

Schema Theory and Conceptual Metaphor Theory

This concept was first described in the works of British psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett, who drew on the term body schema used by neurologist Henry Head in 1932. In 1957, Jean Piaget, who was credited with the first cognitive development theory schemas, popularised this ideology. By 1977, it was expanded into schema theory by educational psychologist Richard C. Anderson. Since then, other terms have been used to describe schema as a frame, script or scenario, according to Alexander and Emmott (2009), as it contains common default information that aids comprehension by allowing a reader to extrapolate details that are either not mentioned at all in a text or that are not fully specified. Authors stipulate only some elements, and readers easily comprehend such texts by uniting these elements with their appropriate generic knowledge from schemata. These elements therefore provide cognitive support for the default inferences readers make when they process language and enable a reader to fill gaps in the information given in the text, Emmott, Alexander and Marszalek 2014. Schema comprises all the experiences stored in the memory, and the human mind activates and draws upon this memory in the process of understanding or grappling with new experiences or data for the purposes of interpretation. Grasser et al. (1997) assert that the human mind actively constructs various types of cognitive representations, such as codes, features, meanings, and structured sets of elements that interpret linguistic input.

Anderson (1984, p. 5) sees schema as an individual's collection of background knowledge and experience that provides a meaningful interpretation of new information. Schema theory, as Simpson (2004, p. 89) asserts, appears to be a "significant landmark" in cognitive stylistic study. It

16

basically focuses on how knowledge mentally represented in the minds of individuals is used to interpret information. Rumelhart (1980, p. 34) defines schema as "a data structure for representing the generic concepts stored in memory." He also argues that schema theory studies the process of how people combine their world knowledge to the interpretation of texts through the process of reorganising the existing schemes to create a new perspective of the world. Schemata, as Stockwell (2002, p. 87) puts it, offers an important means to be used by readers in understanding information that is both explicit and implicit in texts. Accordingly, the idea behind the use of schema theory in the study of literature, as mentioned by Marszalek (2012, p. 119), is that interpreting any kind of literary text depends, to a great extent, on the reader's background knowledge and prior experiences. That's to say, when reading a text, people's interpretation relies on their own knowledge of the surrounding world. Schema theory is very useful within the cognitive stylistic, which drives mainly from psychology and artificial intelligence. A schema is a cognitive structure that provides information about our understanding of generic entities, events and situations and, in so doing, helps to scaffold our mental understanding of the world.

On the other hand, conceptual metaphor theory introduced by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their work *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) is considered very important in cognitive stylistics. This theory suggests that metaphors are matters of thought and not merely of language, hence the term conceptual metaphor. It posits that we understand abstract concepts and complex ideas through metaphorical mappings into more concrete and familiar experiences. For example, the metaphor "time is money" reflects a conceptual mapping between the abstract concept of time and the more concrete concept of money. It highlights the

pervasive role of metaphor in shaping our understanding of the world and influencing language and cognition. Conceptual metaphor typically employs a more abstract concept as the target domain and a more concrete or physical concept as the source domain. Likewise, Ruekijo (2007, p. 35) admits that metaphors extend or alter the schemata by generating new ways of mapping the real world to the textual world. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) and Turner (1987) broaden the scope of conceptual metaphor; they argue that it is not limited to individual words but rather involves reconceptualization of a whole idea or experience in terms of another. They also demonstrate that metaphors in literature develop new and challenging ways to interpret the world by establishing new schemata. The invention of new conceptual metaphors in a text can produce considerable and significant changes in the way people perceive the world around them. Conceptual metaphors are useful for understanding complex ideas in simple terms and therefore are frequently used to give insight to abstract theories and models.

Simpson (2004, p. 43) asserts that writers consciously strive for novelty in literary expression, and this undoubtedly requires developing not only new conceptual mappings but also new stylistic frameworks through which these mappings can be presented. The study also observes that writers seek to adopt some stylistic strategies that can acquire prominence in drawing attention to the deviation from the normal language. They often try to awaken the reader by freeing them from the grooves of "cliché expression, to a new perceptivity" (Childs and Fowler 2006, p. 90). Hence, the employment of figures of speech, which is the concern of the following part, is one of these strategies, which seem closely associated with novelty and creativity. Figures of speech and poetic metaphor are the most applied features of this strategy.

Figures of Speech as Tool for Creativity in Language Use

Figures of speech, also known as rhetorical devices or figurative language, are expressive and creative linguistic tools used to enhance the meaning or impact of a statement. They involve the use of words or phrases in a non-literal sense, adding depth, imagery, or emphasis to the message being conveyed. Dancygier and Sweetser (2014) explain that figurative structures are far from being just decorative; rather, they are essential and pervasive in language use. Katz et al. (1998) posit that figures of speech can be seen as describing something through the use of unusual comparisons, like in stanza 4 line 19, "one man with a head shaven clean as a potato." This will create a picture of both potato and the man's head because potato is usually clean and has a smooth back with no rough edges. Figures of speech are often used to present ideas and imaginations more entertainingly to make something clear or to captivate the readers' interest. They appear in poetry and prose as well as in spoken language to generate vivid pictures or concepts in the mind of the reader or listener and stimulate a great appeal to their senses.

Similarly, Gibbs (1994) indicates that figures of speech are basic schemata by which people conceptualise their experience and external world. A figure of speech is thus a word that cannot be taken literally because it does not make sense; rather, it is a twisting of the normal meaning of words to create a new formula. That is, the literal meanings of expressions remain unchanged regardless of the context of use. Figurative meaning, on the other hand, is derived from the literal and can be detected by discovering the nature of substituting the symbolic for the literal or figurative meaning, as Dancygier and Sweetser (2014, p. 14) propose, is a process of mapping between two different domains—the target and source domains. The target domain is what the poet wants to describe

with the metaphor, while the source domain is the idea that people use to build that metaphor.

Finally, figures of speech are easy devices with a special power to generate novelty and creativity, especially in poetic writings. In addition to their power to portray great metaphorical images, they participate in increasing the poetics of any text that correctly uses them.

The data for this study were extracted from the poem "Men in Chains." The research employs descriptive and analytical methods in the analysis of the contents of the selected poem. This includes identification, discussion, and interpretation of the data identified in the poetic texts. In carrying out the analysis, schema theory by Richard C. Anderson (1977) and conceptual metaphor theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) were adopted and figures of speech as tools for creativity in language were identified and described based on how they affect psychological issues. This implies that the study is descriptive and discursive.

Synopsis of the Poem

"Men in Chains" is a poem written by Oswald Mtshali in 1968 during the apartheid regime in South Africa. The narrator observes six men who are prisoners through his sleepy eyes. They were being transported to an unknown destination and were being subjected to inhumane treatment; they were deprived of human dignity and respect; they were seen as animals and treated as such. They were crying and pleading against the blistering wind; now, this cold wind represents the apartheid regime that abused the people for no logical reason. One of the six men is crying and giving a sad and cold wintry tone that makes the reader feel sympathy for the men in their environment. This implies that the man is asking if the regime can't see that they have been stripped

of their rights already. They may be heading towards death, which is why they are pleading against the possibility of death. These men in chains that got onto the train are being compared to sheep that are being moved into a slaughterhouse to be slaughtered. The poet's concern focuses on the men who may be travelling towards death. This shows that their life has no meaning in this era of the apartheid regime. The men/prisoners are whispering to the morning rising sun to have pity on them as they are travelling towards the end of their journey. They want hope and love in their hearts, as their end is not promising.

The poem forms part of a body of anti-apartheid poetry. It was written as part of the struggles of the people of South Africa during the apartheid regime. The poet creates a feeling of restraint by the realities at that time, which obscure one's vision, creating a struggle to see the future. Therefore, the poet sees life as a moving train, and as the train moves, so does the struggle to be free. In addition, the struggle is not just about one person but about all those affected by the abuse and restraint of the regime of the day.

The poem is written in the first-person narrative. The 'I' in line 4 indicates that the poet is the speaker, the voice narrating his story to his listener/reader of what he observes when the train stopped at a 'country station'. By using very explicit imagery, the narrator takes his reader/listener through the outer journey of reality and the inner journey of the soul. The poem portrays an image of a real-life event taking place at that moment in time and how people try to cope with their realities. The exact location where the train stopped is not revealed, so here he is generalising, for it could be anywhere in South Africa.

"Men in Chains" is one of Mtshali's notable poems from his collection with the same title in 1968. In this poem, he addresses the dehumanising effects of apartheid, depicting the oppression and hardships faced by black individuals. He has other collections such as "Sounds of a Cowhide Drum" (1971)", "Fireflames" (1980), and several singles to his credit. His work resonates globally, as other scholars from across the globe took an interest in studying it. Barine Saana Ngaaga (2021) worked on Irony in Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's "Sounds of Cowhide Drum." The essay argues that the poem presents two opposing worlds, divided mainly in the lack of proportion in resources. With colour as the "wall" separating these racial worlds, they clearly have no balance between them; few poems were selected to illustrate this separation. The analysis, which is carried out from the standpoint of irony, reveals that the wall of racial separation is psychological, a problem that has outlived apartheid. In a similar way, Nesther Albert Alu (2011) scrutinises the effects and consequences of South Africa's institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and dominion by the white minority in Mtsali's poems. The paper presents a select few of Mtshali's themes strung on a tartlet and evocative imagery which inflicts highly infectious feelings on his readers. The analysis shows that some of his inscriptions are seemingly borne on the beheaded sweats and split blood of the victims of one of the unfortunate accidents of history. Povey John (1973), in Mtshali's Sounds of Cowhide Drum, looks at the themes of Mtshali's poetry derived inevitably from the deepest and bitterest personal experience of his life as a messenger in Johannesburg. But the events provoke not the anticipated rage of immediate resentment; they are absorbed into poetry, distilled in his lines into moods of wry irony, and a curiously sustained tender awareness that persists through the anger. These works reviewed are similar to the current study because they all point to the works of Mtshali bringing out the evils of Apartheid. Cognitive stylistics tries to view and analyse style as a cognitive

19

process of mind that goes beyond the boundaries of surface meaning to unearth the true meaning of any literary text. However, this study is a bit different from others as it examines how a special configuration of language is used in order to realise a particular subject matter in Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's "Men in Chains." Focusing on using all the figurative means to achieve a special aesthetic purpose is the gap this research seeks to fill.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, no work has been taken on this topic, "A Cognitive stylistic analysis of Oswald Mbuyiseni Mtshali's "Men in Chain.". The poem under study contains a hefty amount of evocative imagery, and its confident and unexpected similes have a rich emotional impact that depicts real-life experiences because, inevitably, it reflects a harsh experience under the Apartheid regime. The poet observes with a bitter and sarcastic eye, the grimy beer halls, the crowded trains, the slum housing, and the harsh working conditions that make up a lot of black Africans in South Africa. This is why the poem is suitable and chosen for the study.

Data Analysis and Discussion

Mshtali 1968 employs various figures of speech; there are metaphor, simile, personification, imagery, apostrophe, etc. These literary devices are important elements in the process of interpreting and approaching the meaning conveyed by the poem. The following part of this paper is concerned with giving more details on the use of figures of speech as features of creativity and novelty in this study.

The poem "Men in Chains" consists 26 lines. It has four stanzas that contain one main idea. The author arranges them in such a way that beautifies his work. This explains why Leech (1969, p. 23) states that a poet is nothing if not creative, and since language is his

medium, he endeavours to create new communicative possibilities that are not already in the language. In the poem, Mtshali highlights that for a black man in South Africa to survive during the apartheid regime, his or her daily life was a contest for survival both physically and mentally. These men in chains plead and hope for survival every day of their lives. The poet achieves his creative potential through the deployment of literary and linguistic elements that articulate his intended message. These literary linguistic tools are listed and discussed below.

Enjambment: From stanza one down to stanza four of the poem is a typical example of enjambment. One meaning is linked to another in the lines of each stanza, so this goes on to let the reader know that there is more to get from the text as he/she continues to the end to understand properly the message of the poet.

> 'The train stopped
> at a country station.
> Through sleep curtained eyes
> I peered through the frosty window'

Simile: It is common knowledge that writers always seek to create and develop new conceptual images in their works as they consciously strive for novelty and creativity in literary expressions, and this undoubtedly requires developing not only new conceptual mappings but also new stylistic frameworks through which these mappings can be presented. In stanza two (line 8), Mtshali employs simile to compare men with sheep when he says "like sheep after hearing." The source domain 'sheep' and the target domain, which is 'men', provide a highly negative evaluation of men. They are described as animals that have no control over their lives. The new metaphorical formula captured here is that black men were treated like sheep during the apartheid regime. In stanza 3 (line 16), the poet creates another image of this

inhumane treatment with the words "with steel rings like cattle at the abattoirs." Usually, the rings found on cattle are for identification, which the reader will begin to picture and imagine the same used on humans. This means that these men are of no value; they are deprived of human dignity and respect as their ankles are tied together and they are all kept in a place and being guarded. The image of the men chained and forced to walk in a straight line brings up the image of sheep that are moved into a slaughterhouse. The reader by this time understands that "slaughter house" here means that the men are waiting for when they will all die.

In stanza 4, line 19, "Shaven clean as a potato." Mtshali creates a new stylistic framework and is shown clearly in line 19, where a man's head is shaven clean and smooth, compared to a potato. Potato is a common food known everywhere that has a soft and smooth body, so this will help the reader to understand how severe the case of these men is with a smoothly shaven head. They are not just shorn of all human honour, but they are being treated as animals, "ankles been tight with steel rings and heads shaven completely," so that there will be nothing good left of them. The author captures all these mental pictures of events as they unfold during the hardship of apartheid. With the vivid description and mental pictures, the reader is made aware of how bad the situation is for these men.

Personification: The poet foregrounds this concept in stanza 2 (line 10-11). He writes:

'Go away! Cold wind! Go away!
Can't you see we are naked?'

In the lines above, Mtshali ascribes human-like qualities to the frigid wind, thereby bestowing the elemental force with human characteristics. This is undoubtedly one of the personification's positive features to make the narrative interesting and vivid. Therefore, addressing the wind as animate conveys more than one meaning; on the one hand, there is no one to talk with, or rather no one to listen to him. It is thus an indication of the gap among people. By personifying the cold wind, Mtshali tries to alter the readers' perception of the notion of wind. He transfers features from the source domain "go away" to recontextualise them in the target domain "wind." Mtshali stresses and reinforces the form of personification because hearing is a human trait. As a consequence, it is perhaps clear to be understood that the personification of wind is derived from the need to talk. The man wants to express his feelings and convey his message to anyone or even anything that he sees. Since the wind is the only thing that he can reach out to, he unleashes his imagination and thoughts to the cold wind. Again, in stanza 4 (line 21-22), the poet says: "a red eye wiped by a tattered// handkerchief of clouds"

In the lines, "a red eye wiped by a tattered handkerchief of clouds," the poet employs personification to imbue natural elements with human-like attributes, thereby evoking a vivid and emotionally resonant image. The lines attributes human qualities to natural elements. The term "a red eye" is personified. The sun, often symbolically referred to as an "eye" in literature, is seen to possess human characteristics. The act of wiping, associated with humans using a handkerchief, is ascribed to the sun, which is then portrayed as if it were a person wiping his eyes. The use of sensory imagery not only adds a layer of vividness to the description but also engages the reader's senses. The image of the "red eye" being wiped by a "tattered handkerchief of clouds" conjures a sensory experience. Readers can almost feel the texture of the tattered clouds and visualise the sun as a sentient being wiping its eye. Critical upon the lines above is the emotional resonance. (Personification often introduces an

emotional dimension to the description). In this case, the personification of the sun's "red eye" being wiped evokes a sense of tenderness, as if the sun were a person experiencing a moment of vulnerability or fatigue. Through personification, the lines transform a simple sunset scene into a rich, emotionally charged tableau that engages the reader's imagination and senses while imbuing the natural world with human-like qualities.

Alliteration: Alliteration creates rhythmic patterns in a literary text. Examples seen in stanza 2 (lines 7-9) are:

> of all human honour
> like sheep after shearing,
> bleating at the blistering wind

Mtshali is a god in his world of creation. Aside from the mental pictures he creates in the minds of his readers, he also creates a rhythmic beat in a few lines of the poem. This ensures that the reader enjoys the use of words in uniform order. The reader will get to understand the arrangement of words to form meaningful sentences, like human beings degraded, compared to sheep, and they are crying and pleading with the blistering wind that may be the apartheid regime under which people are abused for no just cause. The poet intentionally creates these lines for aesthetic purposes to draw his reader's attention to the happenings at that time.

Metaphor: This is when one thing is directly compared to another for rhetorical effect, e.g.,

> 'Can't you see that we are naked?'

'Naked' here is not used literally but metaphorically. The reader will begin to think, how naked are these people? But with the already existing knowledge of what is taking place at the time the poem was written, he/she will begin to understand that

these men are exposed to the world, their dignity invaded and taken away. This also implies that the apartheid regime has stripped them of their rights. The poet employs metaphor to convey complex ideas and emotions. While the word "naked" typically denotes a literal lack of clothing, in this context, it is used metaphorically to convey a profound sense of vulnerability and exposure. The metaphor suggests that the individuals in question have been laid bare, their true selves and their suffering made evident to the world. It implies that their dignity and privacy have been infringed upon, and their rights have been unjustly taken away. The metaphor "naked" becomes a powerful symbol for the loss of personal agency and dignity under the oppressive apartheid regime. By using "naked" metaphorically, the poet deepens the reader's understanding of the emotional and political consequences of apartheid. This figurative language prompts readers to consider the profound impact of this violation on the individuals and their community, going beyond a mere physical state of undress.

Metaphors often evoke vivid imagery, and in this case, the metaphor of being "naked" conjures a visual image of people in a state of vulnerability, their essential selves exposed and defenceless. This visual imagery engages the reader's imagination and helps them connect emotionally with the themes of the poem. The metaphor also serves as a means of social commentary, highlighting the dehumanising effects of apartheid and the violation of fundamental human rights. It conveys a sense of protest and resistance against the oppressive regime by emphasising the loss of dignity and rights. The use of metaphor in this line enriches the poem's meaning by conveying complex emotional and political ideas through a simple, evocative image. It invites readers to engage with the text at a deeper, symbolic level and consider the broader implications of the situation

being described, this happens with the help of schemata.

Apostrophe: This is evident in the last stanza of the poem.

'Oh! Dear Sun!
Won't you warm my heart
with hope?'

Here, the reader is deep into the problems at hand, imagining a particular man among the six men who is whispering to the rising sun, "with eyes red from the scorching sun rays," asking that the sun should warm his heart with hope. This shows clearly that these men are silenced, deprived of speaking, and the only way for them to speak is to carry out their frustration on anything around them; unfortunately, the sun can't hear or speak back, but the man hopes he can be heard and that something can be done to his hopeless situation. This gives an insight to the reader that the men want to talk, but they are denied that right, and so they leave their situation to fate. In this regard, the sun is given human qualities; therefore, a new metaphorical meaning is created, and the author intentionally uses it to create beauty in his work.

Imagery: Imagery is a powerful literary device used by writers to create mental and sensory impressions for readers. Mtshali effectively utilises imagery to vividly convey the physical and emotional suffering faced by the individuals in this oppressive environment where men undergo "mental and physical suffering" in lines 6–11. In this section, the poet employs vivid imagery to paint a bleak picture of the mental and physical suffering endured by black South Africans. The word "frosty" in line 4, introduces the idea of a cold and harsh environment, setting the stage for the following descriptions. The phrase "Men shorn of all human honour" in lines 6-7

employs visual imagery to depict individuals stripped of their dignity and human rights. The word "shorn" invokes an image of individuals being ruthlessly deprived of their essential human attributes. The alliteration in "like sheep after shearing" enhances the auditory aspect of the imagery. It underscores the dehumanising treatment of these individuals and draws the reader's attention to their plights. The term "shearing" emphasises the exposure and lack of privacy, reinforcing the notion of the prisoners being deprived of their dignity.

Furthermore, the use of "physical restraints" in lines 12–17 is evident, and the imagery continues to intensify as the poet describes the physical restraints placed on these individuals. The words "Bare feet and wrists handcuffed" in lines 13–14 create a stark mental picture of the prisoners' physical confinement; by picturing all of these while reading and getting the meaning, the reader does not need to be told what is going on because this physical abuse might have created a kind of hatred and bitterness for the ill treatment mated on these men. The handcuffs symbolise the loss of freedom and personal agency. "Ankles manacled" in line 15 extends the theme of physical restraint, emphasising the oppressive force used to limit the men's freedom. The imagery employed when the men board the train evokes a profound sense of hopelessness. "Men hobble onto the train" in line 12 creates visual imagery that depicts individuals who are physically constrained and powerless. The word "hobble" suggests difficulty and pain in their movement. Furthermore, the phrase "on its way to nowhere" in line 26 employs both visual and conceptual imagery. It not only describes the physical destination but also conveys the sense of futility and purposelessness that these men face. The reader by now may be imagining where these men will be taken and what will possibly be their fate. Understanding this part will not

23

be difficult because of the background knowledge of the reader.

In fact, the poet effectively uses imagery to convey the harsh realities of life for black South Africans during the apartheid era. The imagery creates a powerful and visceral impact on the reader, allowing them to visualise and emotionally connect with the suffering, deprivation, and hopelessness experienced by the individuals described in the poem. Through these vivid mental and sensory images, the poet engages the reader in a profound exploration of the human condition in a deeply oppressive and dehumanising environment.

Repetition: This is a deliberate action by the author to draw the reader's attention. Mtshali uses this device not only to achieve realism but also as a tool to add aesthetic effect to the poem by intensifying the meaning of the repeated phrase. The reader here knows that apartheid is the centre of discussion in the poem, and so the men repeatedly saying "go away, go away" (line 10) signifies that they do not like the regime and that they are trying to send the political leaders away from them completely; therefore, the cold wind here stands for the regime.

Rhetorical Question
The poet employs rhetorical questions throughout the text to engage the reader and to emphasise the profound sense of uncertainty and struggle experienced by the people under the apartheid regime when he asks in lines 23–25.

  'Oh! Dear Sun!
   Won't you warm my heart
   with hope?'

The reader has background knowledge that the sun cannot speak or hear, and so the question serves as a symbolic representation of the hopes and aspirations of not only the individual speaker but also the entire South African population. The use of a rhetorical question in this context creates an emotional connection with the reader. The sun, often associated with light, warmth, and hope, becomes a symbol of freedom and a brighter future. By posing this question to the sun, the speaker highlights the longing for a better future and the uncertainty of when that future will arrive.

The rhetorical questions asked by the speaker entail when they will be free and when the struggle and suffering will end; this echoes the collective questions of a nation enduring oppression. These questions are not meant to be answered within the text but serve to emphasise the enduring hardships and uncertainties faced by the people. Rhetorical questions in this study serve to create a mental picture of the harsh and uncertain events that took place during this period. They elicit emotions in the reader, as the questions prompt contemplation of the suffering and struggle endured by the people. The concept of life being compared to a train journey reinforces the notion of an ongoing struggle. The mention of the train going "on its way to nowhere" encapsulates the idea that the destination, or the moment of freedom, remains elusive and unknown. The use of a rhetorical question in this context emphasises the uncertainty of when, or even if, freedom will be attained. The poet uses rhetorical questions strategically to elicit an emotional response and to underline the pervasive sense of uncertainty and struggle that characterised the lives of those under apartheid in South Africa. The questions create a mental and emotional imagery of the hardships faced by the people and underscore the theme of an uncertain and unrevealed future.

Discussion of Findings
The findings in "Men in Chains" provide valuable insights into the poem's themes, the

poet's personal experiences, and the use of figurative language to convey a powerful message.

The poem is a reflection of the poet's harsh experiences under the apartheid regime. The poet's observations of the deplorable living conditions, crowded trains, and challenging working environments in South Africa reveal the bitterness and suffering and many others endured during that period. The analysis underscores the deep, personal sentiment within the poem. It highlights the speaker's urgency to communicate an important message, even in the face of a seemingly grim future. This aspect of the poem emphasises the universal human experience of facing adversity and striving for a better future, which readers can relate to regardless of their background knowledge.

The analysis highlights the poet's skilful use of figurative language as a central element of the poem. Figurative language, such as metaphors, similes, personification, apostrophes, rhetorical questions and imagery, is used to convey a deeper and more emotional message to the audience. The discussion notes the evocative imagery within the poem. It acknowledges that the poet's confident and unexpected similes create a rich emotional impact when reading, creating a kind of meaning and understanding of events as they unfold to the reader. This imagery allows readers to vividly visualise the harsh conditions and suffering experienced by the people, enhancing the reader's connection to the poem.

In summary, the findings suggest that "Men in Chains" is a powerful and emotionally charged poem that delves into personal and collective experiences under apartheid. The use of figurative language and vivid imagery serves as a poignant vehicle for the poet to convey the bitterness, suffering, and resilience of those living in those challenging circumstances. The poem's ability to tap into common human experiences and emotions makes it a compelling piece of literature that continues to resonate with readers who picture themselves there witnessing the event as it takes place.

Conclusion
This study emphasises the importance of stylistics as a discipline that bridges the gap between intuition and interpretative skills in the analysis of literary texts. Stylisticians aim to maintain clarity and objectivity in their assessment by drawing on established linguistic models. This approach, in combination with insight from cognitive psychology, linguistics, and literary theory, offers a comprehensive framework for unravelling the intricate cognitive processes involved in reading and interpreting literature.

In the case of Mtshali's poetry, it is evident that his command of language and adept use of rhetorical devices yield innovative and engaging metaphorical imagery. The poem "Men in Chains" is a prime example of how these figures of speech serve to convey profound psychological themes. Notably, the utilisation of personification stands out, as it enables readers to draw connections between inanimate entities and the realities of human society, thus fostering a deeper understanding of the poem's overarching concepts and themes.

This interdisciplinary approach, interwoven with linguistic and cognitive interpretation, exemplifies how stylistics enriches our comprehension of the multifaceted relationship between language and literature. It also underscores the capacity of poetry, as a medium, to transcend the ordinary and provoke profound contemplation, making it a valuable tool for exploring and understanding the intricate workings of the human mind and society.

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