

THE ROLE OF EPITHETS IN SIMON ARMITAGE'S *I SAY I SAY I SAY AND ABOUT HIS PERSON*

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola Saymon Armitijning *I Say I Say I Say* va *About His Person* she'rlarida epitetlardan foydalanishni o'rganadi. Unda bu tasviriy vositalar qanday qilib yorqin tasvirlarni yaratishi va umidsizlik, o'zlikni anglash hamda xotira kabi murakkab mavzularni ifodalashi ko'rib chiqiladi. Lichning poetik stilistikasi, Xollidey va Mettissenning tizimli funksional lingvistikasi, Galperinning stilistikasi va Baldikning adabiy atamalarga oid tahlillaridan foydalanilgan holda, tadqiqot Armitij epitetlarining uning ijodiy ishlariga qanday qilib kuchli hissiy rezonans keltirishi va oddiy obyektlarni inson tajribasining chuqur ramzlariga aylantirishi haqida ma'lumot beradi.

Kalit so'zlar: epitetlar, poetik tasvirlar, stilistika, tizimli funksional lingvistika, hissiy rezonans, ramzchilik, tematik tahlil, tasviriy modifikatorlar, hikoya chuqurligi, mazmuniy tajriba.

Аннотация: В статье исследуется использование эпитетов в стихотворениях Саймона Армитиджа *I Say I Say I Say* и *About His Person*, с акцентом на то, как эти описательные приемы создают яркие образы и передают сложные темы отчаяния, идентичности и памяти. Основываясь на подходах поэтической стилистики Лича, системной функциональной лингвистики Холлидея и Маттиессена, стилистики Гальперина и анализа литературных терминов Балдика, исследование демонстрирует, как эпитеты Армитиджа усиливают эмоциональный отклик его произведений и превращают обычные предметы в глубокие символы человеческого опыта.

Ключевые слова: эпитеты, поэтические образы, стилистика, системная функциональная лингвистика, эмоциональный отклик, символизм,

тематический анализ, описательные модификаторы, глубина повествования, смысловой опыт.

Abstract: This article explores the use of epithets in Simon Armitage's *I Say I Say I Say* and *About His Person*, focusing on how these descriptive devices evoke vivid imagery and convey complex themes of despair, identity, and memory. Drawing on insights from Leech's poetic stylistics, Halliday and Matthiessen's systemic functional linguistics, Galperin's *Stylistics*, and Baldick's analysis of literary terms, the study demonstrates how Armitage's epithets enhance the emotional resonance of his work and transform ordinary objects into profound symbols of human experience.

Keywords: Epithets, poetic imagery, stylistics, systemic functional linguistics, emotional resonance, symbolism, thematic analysis, descriptive modifiers, narrative depth, experiential meaning.

Epithets are an essential tool in poetry, serving to add emotional depth and vividness to the imagery. Defined by Baldick (2001) as descriptive modifiers that encapsulate a subject's defining qualities, epithets are key to Armitage's ability to evoke complex emotional states. In *I Say I Say I Say* and *About His Person*, Armitage employs epithets to explore themes of despair, memory, and identity, transforming everyday objects into symbols of human fragility.

Galperin (1971) highlights the dual function of epithets: to provide an emotional evaluation of the object they describe and to imbue the narrative with a subjective perspective. This aligns with Leech's (1969) notion of linguistic foregrounding, where epithets stand out from the surrounding text to capture the reader's attention. Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) systemic functional linguistics framework further positions epithets as essential in conveying both experiential and interpersonal meanings.

This study investigates the role of epithets in *I Say I Say I Say* and *About His Person* by addressing two key questions:

1. How does Armitage use epithets to portray despair and identity?

2. What is the symbolic and emotional significance of epithets in constructing poetic narratives?

The study employs a qualitative textual analysis of *I Say I Say I Say* and *About His Person*. Specific lines containing epithets were analyzed using Galperin's (1971) insights into the emotive and stylistic functions of epithets, Leech's (1969) framework for understanding linguistic foregrounding, and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2004) systemic functional linguistics perspective on nominal modifiers. Baldick's (2001) interpretation of the symbolic role of epithets was also utilized to explore their narrative impact.

In *I Say I Say I Say*, Armitage employs epithets to evoke the physical and emotional realities of self-harm. A striking example appears in the lines:

"A crimson tidemark round the tub, / a yard of lint, white towels washed a dozen times, still pink."

The epithet "*crimson tidemark*" encapsulates the aftermath of self-harm, blending the domestic familiarity of a bathtub with the starkness of violence. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), epithets in the nominal group often modify meaning by adding an evaluative layer that amplifies the experiential depth of the text. Similarly, Galperin (1971) suggests that such emotionally charged epithets guide the reader's interpretation, creating a subjective perspective on the scene.

Another example of epithets as symbols of concealment appears in:

"A passion then for watches, bangles, cuffs."

Here, "*watches, bangles, cuffs*" symbolize the physical and emotional scars that the speaker seeks to hide. As Leech (1969) observes, such foregrounded details capture the reader's attention and emphasize the unspoken pain behind seemingly ordinary objects.

The dark humor of the poem is also reinforced through epithets, as seen in:

"Lashed by brambles picking berries from the woods."

The epithet “*lashed by brambles*” trivializes the gravity of self-inflicted wounds, reflecting societal discomfort with addressing such topics. Baldick (2001) argues that such language serves to bridge the personal and universal, inviting readers to confront difficult themes while maintaining accessibility.

In *About His Person*, Armitage uses epithets to construct a fragmented narrative through an inventory of the deceased man’s belongings. Each epithet carries symbolic significance, as illustrated in:

“*A library card on its date of expiry.*”

The epithet “*on its date of expiry*” serves as a metaphor for the man’s life reaching its conclusion. Galperin (1971) explains that epithets often carry connotative meaning, transforming mundane descriptions into symbols of greater emotional and thematic resonance.

Another evocative example appears in:

“*A rolled-up note of explanation / planted there like a spray carnation / but beheaded, in his fist.*”

The epithet “*spray carnation*” invokes floral imagery associated with mourning, while “*beheaded*” disrupts this softness with a jarring note of violence. This duality reflects the tension between beauty and despair. Leech (1969) notes that such juxtapositions heighten emotional impact by creating moments of surprise and reflection.

The closing lines further highlight the emotional weight of epithets:

“*No gold or silver, / but crowning one finger / a ring of white unweathered skin.*”

The phrase “*white unweathered skin*” signifies absence, hinting at unfulfilled relationships or solitude. Baldick (2001) describes this use of epithets as a way to evoke the “*invisible traces of human loss*,” transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary (p. 104).

The analysis reveals that Armitage’s use of epithets enhances both the emotional and thematic complexity of his poetry. In *I Say I Say I Say*, epithets such

as “*crimson tidemark*” and “*still pink*” confront the reader with the visceral realities of self-harm, evoking powerful visual and emotional imagery. In *About His Person*, phrases like “*spray carnation*” and “*white unweathered skin*” transform mundane items into profound symbols of absence and memory, demonstrating how simple descriptive modifiers can encapsulate universal human experiences.

Galperin’s (1971) emphasis on the emotive power of epithets is particularly relevant in this context, as Armitage’s language invites readers to engage deeply with the text’s themes. Leech’s (1969) concept of linguistic foregrounding further underscores the significance of epithets in capturing the reader’s attention and emphasizing key moments of emotional resonance. According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), epithets contribute to the experiential function of language, combining descriptive and evaluative elements to deepen the meaning of the text.

Ashurova (2020) expands on this by emphasizing the interplay between culture and language, noting that linguistic elements such as epithets not only reflect individual emotions but also embody culturally significant experiences. Armitage’s use of epithets aligns with this perspective, as his descriptions transcend the personal and connect with broader cultural notions of loss, identity, and memory. The vivid imagery created by epithets like “*spray carnation*” taps into a shared cultural understanding of mourning and remembrance, making his work resonate across diverse audiences.

By integrating emotional, cultural, and linguistic dimensions, Armitage’s epithets serve as a bridge between the personal and universal, inviting readers to explore the deeper meanings behind ordinary objects. This multifaceted approach underscores the importance of epithets not only as descriptive tools but also as carriers of cultural and emotional depth.

Simon Armitage’s use of epithets in *I Say I Say I Say* and *About His Person* demonstrates his mastery of transforming ordinary objects into profound symbols of human experience. Through vivid imagery and emotional depth, Armitage

constructs narratives that resonate universally while remaining deeply personal. Future research could explore his use of epithets across a broader range of his work or compare his approach to other contemporary poets.

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