



Title	Literary stylistics: poetry and fictional prose
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1. Introduction

What are the major differences between poetry and fictional prose? How do their literary stylistic effects appeal to the readers? This paper will discuss poetry and prose, and the comparison and contrast between them. Then, one piece of poem and one piece of fictional prose under the theme called a child being unable to put up with school life will be selected to firstly 1) analyze their stylistic effects individually, and to secondly 2), compare and contrast their different stylistic effects. A child's school life will be the main focus of this paper to discuss how difficult a child is to tolerate school life. The comparison and contrast between the poem and the fictional prose is so profound that the stylistic effects could be more prominent. How did the two writers make use of the specific stylistic effects of a particular form – poetry and fictional prose respectively, to voice out how a child goes through an intolerable school life? This essay will end up analyzing their stylistic effects in relation to the projection of the theme of a child's school life.

Poetry

Poetry is a form of literary art. It has its aesthetic literary appeal. The poet, by exercising the imagination, writes the poems by a sheer sense of sensitivity. The poem is the art or the masterpiece of the poet. Sometimes we say that poets are romantic, emotional and sentimental. They are full of fantasies and imagination. They freely express themselves emotionally and sentimentally by their sensitive use of poetic language. The stream of overwhelming feelings and emotions propel them to write poems. The aesthetic appreciation of poetry allows the readers to visualize the poem by the sophisticated, subtle and refined use of language. The poetic language enables the readers to imagine, to visualize, and to see the imaginary picture conveyed by the poem out of their minds. Poetry is an imaginative and creative form of literary art.

The history of poetry dates back to the Aristotle's time, in which rhetoric, the argument for persuasion in the form of arts, is being used. This use of speech, rhetoric, is widely used in debates, dramas, and songs. Later, certain features of poetry are concentrated on, such as repetition, verse form, and rhyme. The aesthetic appeal of the poetry has been emphasized to distinguish itself from the objective prose.

Comparatively speaking, poetry is more subjective than prose.

Poetry, as a higher form of art, makes use of poetic devices, to evoke emotional or sensational responses. Examples are assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and rhythm to achieve musical effects. Simile, metaphor, metonymy, symbolism, irony and other stylistic elements allow readers to openly interpret the figurative meanings of the poem. The figurative meanings depart from the literal meanings, when the readers interpret the poems. The poem is open for multiple interpretations.

What makes poetry distinctive is that poetry follows the rhythm and metre structure. Poetry aims to convey ideas and emotional experiences through the use of metre, rhyme and imagery in a carefully, artificial constructed metrical structure based on rhythmic patterns. Free verse is a form of poetry without fixed metrical patterns or rhymes. Poetry emphasizes the relationships between words on the basis of sounds as well as meaning. It is rhythmical and musical. Poetry is like a song so reading poetry is like singing a song. The poet tends to respond to sounds, rhythms, cadence, and structure of language by writing the poem, which has a great deal in common with music. As the stylistician Geoffrey Leech notes, the relation between

rhythm in poetry and rhythm in music has to be explored (Leech, p. 70). Poetry is the art of rhythmical composition, for exciting pleasure by beautiful, imaginative, elevated thoughts. The beautiful use of poetic language in accordance with rhythm and rhyme is incredibly adorable.

Fictional Prose as Prose

Prose is ordinary speech or writing, without metrical structure, unlike poetry. It comes from the word ‘prosa’, which means straightforward. It is a straightforward spoken and written form of language, applying ordinary grammatical structure and natural flow of speech, different from rhythmic structure in poetry. It is ordinary language which people use in writing, such as books and stories. Prose writing can be used for newspaper, magazines and novels, etc. The short story – ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson, selected in this paper was published in a famous woman’s magazine called *Mademoiselle* first, and was then published in the short story collection.

Prose was at one time synonymous with dull, “labored” writing, and the word ‘prosaic’ has developed to mean anything boring. Now the word prose tends to be well-reserved for particular well-written pieces of literature. It is often considered to be representative of normal speech, with the purpose of writing. Rhetorical devices

are used in prose writing to effectively communicate with the readers.

Prose writing is simple and loose. It lacks the more formal, rigid metrical structure that is always found in poetry. It is rather flexible and free. Prose as a literary medium distinguishes from poetry by its irregularity and variety of rhythm and its close correspondence to everyday speech. The unit of this ordinary form of language is sentence, not line in poetry. Prose comprises complete grammatical sentences, which constitute paragraphs and overlook aesthetic appeal.

There are two types of prose: narrative prose and expository prose. Narrative prose is narrated in the form of a story, whereas expository prose is non-fictional. Narrative prose is a fictional prose, as the narrative prose is a prose that is fictional.

Fictional prose, by the word itself, means prose that is fictional. It has the prosaic narrative that features fiction. It deals with imaginary events invented by the author, rather than factual information. It takes the form of story either to convey the author's point of view or to entertain. It has the features of fiction that include character, plot, setting, theme and style (which shall be discussed when analyzing the texts). Fictional prose can flourish and take on many forms. Examples of fictional

prose are short stories and novels. A skilled, great author has the ability to manipulate prose, and even invent their own prose style, to effectively communicate what they wish to say. In this paper, a short story has been chosen to compare and contrast with the poem. A short story is a brief fictional prose narrative that deals with a few characters. It is concerned with a single effect in one or a few episodes. It encourages economy of setting and concise narrative. Character is disclosed in action and dramatic encounter but is seldom fully developed. It would be strikingly interesting to compare and contrast a short story with a poem to examine their similar and different stylistic effects under the same theme of a child incapable of coping with school life.

Comparison and contrast between Poetry and Prose

Poetry refers to poems, with or without rhyme schemes. Prose is writing a story, either a fiction or a non-fiction. Both belong to forms in the expression of writings.

In earlier days, much literature is written in poetry. Prose is restricted to mundane, everyday uses, such as documents and records. Poetry is regarded as a higher form of literature to prose. Later development of novels and short stories

offers competing and superior examples of prose.

Prose usually has a fewer structural guidelines, which in some ways makes poetry a higher form of art. In other words, poetry is a higher form of art that follows fewer structural guidelines. The poet could express his feelings freely through the poem. However, it is more difficult to master poetry than prose, since the poet has to express images and thoughts in fewer words, and the poet has to choose the words to create images more carefully. The poem is more artificially refined, compared with the prose which is more loose, and simpler.

Poetry has rhythm, cadence, and rhyme. It follows a set pattern, rhyme scheme and meter. It is an art form in which human being uses language for its aesthetic qualities. Prose is simply regular writing, such as stories, letters or speeches. It has no patterns. It just has sentences and paragraphs, unlike the lines that are divided into stanzas in poetry. Prose is written in paragraphs, whereas poetry is written more linearly.

Prose writing usually follows standard rules in grammar, punctuation, capitalization and sentence structure. By contrast, poetry does not follow these rules

for expressive reasons. Every word is carefully chosen in poetry. The least words are used to say the most. As Coleridge says, poetry is defined as “the right word in the right order” (http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_difference_between_poetry_and_prose cited from Coleridge).

Prose is the language of everyday speech. It is the writing that mimics the natural ordinary speech. But, poetry is more refined, or structured or rhythmic. Poetry is more subtle, sophisticated, musical, and imaginary, compared with prose which bears close resemblance to ordinary or everyday speech. Poetry is more artificially developed, whereas prose is less constructed and more reflective of ordinary speech.

1)

A. Analysis of the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson (Appendix 1)

This poem, ‘Our New Teacher’ is written by David Bateson, an accomplished Australian children’s writer. This poem, as the title suggested, is about the coming of the new teacher, and how the students respond to him. The possessive pronoun ‘Our’ in the title ‘Our New Teacher’ invites the readers to get attention to the

new teacher by aligning with the students in the poem. The poetic devices and the effects of which will be analyzed to stylistically study the poem. Foregrounding, which means highlighting or emphasizing or focusing on (Douthwite, p. 32), is achieved by the poetic devices.

A simile can be found in Line 1 and Line 2 – ‘This teacher has such scary teeth, they look just like a shark’s.’ The teacher has scary teeth like what the shark has. The word ‘like’ links the teacher’s scary teeth to the shark’s scary teeth, constituting the horrible and scary image of the teacher. The alliteration of ‘s’ in the words ‘such’ ‘scary’ denotes that the shark is tremendously scary and threatening.

The next simile can be found in Line 3 and Line 4 – ‘His eyes gleam in the sunlight like a pair of purple sparks.’ The new teacher’s eyes gleam like a pair of purple sparks. The word ‘like’ links the new teacher’s eyes to a pair of purple sparks, suggesting how eye-catching and bright the new teacher’s eyes are. The gleaming eyes are comparable to the pair of purple sparks.

Another simile can be found in Line 5 and 6 – ‘His voice is just as booming as the roar from some big gun.’ His booming voice is comparable to the roar from

some big gun. The phrase, 'as...as', links the teacher's voice to the loud roar from the big gun.

The first three pairs of lines in the poem are similes that depict different body parts of the new teacher: from teeth to eyes, from eyes to voice. The similes constitute foregrounding effects, highlighting the horrible and scary image of the new teacher to the students. As John Douthwaite notes, 'foregrounding is the deployment of a set of techniques to draw the reader's attention to a certain part of the text so the reader will pay special to it (Douthwaite, p. 37).' In this case, it is the new teacher whom both the students in the poem and the readers pay special attention to, through the similes that have achieved foregrounding effects. Foregrounding is understood as the dynamic interaction between author, text and reader (Peer, p. 20). On one hand, the readers will be guided by the foregrounding devices; on the other hand, the readers will look for devices to satisfy their *aesthetic* needs in reading a literary text (Peer, p. 20). The terrifying image of the new teacher is dramatic. The readers can see his scary teeth and gleaming eyes, and even hear his booming voice, by the aesthetic appreciation of the poem.

What is more interesting is that his voice is so loud that he can imitate a

thunderstorm for a gruesome bit of fun. The teacher manipulates some tricks to try to get the attention from the students. However, what happens to the poor Billy is that he does his tables, writes his spellings, and hides his comic book away to kill the time during class. As shown in Line 13, ‘every lesson lasts a life time.’ The alliteration of ‘l’ in ‘lesson’, ‘lasts’, and ‘life’ suggests it takes such a long time to stand a lesson, as if a lesson lasts for the whole life time. The students have no freedom at all, and they feel like that they are in a prison. The image of ‘the classroom seems a cage’, as constructed by the metaphor, in Line 16, suggests that students are imprisoned when they are having a class of the new teacher. They do not enjoy the lesson at all, and feel like that they are behind bars. The classroom that looks like a prison or a cage, in which they are situated, is too suffocating, to them.

The last stanza is about students calling Miss Forthergill to come back to replace the new teacher. Miss Forthergill serves as a contrast to the new teacher. The pronoun ‘you’ in Line 18 identifies with the readers and Miss Forthergill. The readers and Miss Forthergill would not believe it is true that they all love Miss Forthergill as their teacher, simply because they are all fond of her.

There are some rhymes in the poem, such as ‘shark’s’ and ‘sparks’, ‘gun’ and

'fun', 'day' and away', 'page' and 'cage' and 'true' and 'you' in an attempt to stir up the liveliness of students in the classroom. This phonetic analysis of poetry, according to the stylistician Mick Short, is dangerous, as there is a tendency to 'over-milk' the significance of phonetic patterns (Short, p. 114). This is called sound symbolism. Linguists generally agree that most words are arbitrary (Short, p. 114). There is no 'intrinsic' relation between the meaning and the phonetic make-up (Short, p. 114). But I think that sound symbolism helps to create meanings for sounds in the study of literature. In this case, the rhymes in the poem signify the liveliness of students that has been suppressed in the institutionalized school life.

The classroom is a cage. The source domain of a cage has been mapped onto the target domain of the classroom, to conceptually create an effective metaphor, which is the classroom that is a cage. It is similar to the metaphor 'life is a journey' which is a mapping of the structure of the journey schema onto the domain of life (Lakeoff and Turner, p. 62). Classroom as a cage is a metaphor, which is a mapping of the structure of the cage schema onto the domain of classroom. As George Lakeoff and Mark Johnson state, metaphor is principally 'a way of conceiving of one thing in terms of another' and its primary function is understanding (Lakeoff and Johnson, p. 36) Metaphor is not a mere matter of language, but is something

conceptual (Crisp cited from Lakeoff and Johnson, p. 99)

The whole poem follows rhythm and metre, attempting to make the classroom so much fun. For example, this (X)teacher (◡) has (X) such (◡) scary (◡) teeth (◡). The stress is based on each word in the tone unit. The poem begins with iambic pentameter – a line that consists of ‘off’ beat followed by ‘on’ beat alternatively. As Christiana Gregoriou says, rhythm in the poem is essentially a pattern of stresses, the perception human beings have of ‘on’ and ‘off’ beats (Gregoriou, p. 9).

B. Analysis of the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson (Appendix 2)

This fictional prose, ‘Charles’, is written by an American writer Shirley Jackson. It is about Laurie’s mother recalling Laurie’s school days in kindergarten to express her concerns about Laurie’s school life. From Laurie, she has found out that Charles misbehaves in class, like hitting his teacher, and being spanked. At the PTA meeting, Laurie’s mother is so eager to find out the secret of Charles. When she asks the teacher about whether Charles has influenced Laurie, the teacher replies that there is no Charles in the kindergarten. Actually, Laurie has cheated his mother by lying

to her that it is Charles who misbehaves in class. The story ends at there that there is no Charles in class. It implies that all the troubles are caused by Laurie instead. Charles does not exist, and is only a fictional scapegoat, at which Laurie points, to escape from his misdeeds.

This fictional prose begins with the first person narrator of Laurie's mother. She recalls the time her son starts kindergarten. The beginning of the fictional prose starts with 'the day my son Laurie started kindergarten...' The deictic word 'the day' specifies the day her son Laurie started kindergarten, the temporal-spatial relation of starting kindergarten that day. The pronoun 'my son Laurie' implies the mother as the narrator telling the story of her son. The mother as the first-person narrator is also fictional. She is part of the fictional story. As the stylistician Mick Short notices, 'the person who tells the story may also be a character in the fictional word of the story (Short, p. 257).' The mother as the narrator is prominent at the beginning of the prose. The first-person-narrator is limited and internally restricted. As the stylistician Mick Short states, first person narrators are often said to be 'limited' or 'unreliable' (Short, p. 257). She tells the story of her son from her limited point of view.

Then, the mother tells the story of her son by very loose sentences. She says, ‘I watched him go off the first morning, with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet voiced nursery to be replaced by a long-trousered, swaggering character who forgot to stop at the corner and wave good bye to me.’ The whole sentence is a complex sentence, with prepositional phrase. It is also a dependent clause, with ‘ing’ clauses being added onto the main clause. The loose sentence structure indicates how the mother perceives her son in a detailed, complex manner. The narrative of the mother telling the story of her son is fictional. As Peter Stockwell says, this discourse world is the imaginary world which is conjured up by reading of the text (Stockwell, p. 94). Yet, the stylisticians Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short note, the mock or the faked reality of fiction has its points of overlap with our model of the real world (Leech and Short, p. 102).

In the second paragraph, the pronoun ‘he’ is used to substitute for Laurie. The third-person narrator begins. A number of noun clauses follow ‘he came running home the same way’ – the front door, the cap, and the voice. Direct speech (DS) is used to ask if there is not any other character here in an interrogative way to make the character Laurie more prominent. The word ‘here’ in the direct

speech ‘Isn’t anybody *here?*’ has been in Italic for the purpose of foregrounding. The deictic word ‘here’ is also a pointer to a place. Laurie is so concerned whether there isn’t anybody here.

In the third paragraph, the deictic word ‘at lunch’ signals lunch time. The third person narrative ‘he’ continues. Laurie behaves badly. He speaks rudely to his father, spills his baby sister’s milk, and remarks that his teacher says they are not to take the name of the Lord in vain. This is told by the narrator in indirect speech (IDS). The character Laurie is more prominent than the narrator. The verbs ‘speaks’, ‘spills’ and ‘remarks’ in the balanced sentence structure denote the naughty actions of Laurie.

The mother then asks Laurie how his school day is in direct speech (DS). The word ‘was’ of the direct speech ‘How *was* school today?’ is in Italic form for the purpose of foregrounding, suggesting his mother’s major concern of his school’s performance. Next, the father asks if he has learnt anything in direct speech (DS). Laurie replies to him coldly, saying that he doesn’t learn anything in direct speech (DS). The direct reply to his father ‘I didn’t learn nothing’ is a grammatical deviation that constitutes foregrounding. As Christina Gregoriou

points out, this syntactic deviation breaks the syntactic rule of English language (Gregoriou, p. 31). The mother later corrects this error by saying ‘anything’, ‘didn’t learn anything.’ This reveals that the child Laurie has limited and restricted use of language, since he is young as a kindergarten kid, and his mother as an adult has to correct his error in teaching him. Laurie then takes the initiative to tell his mother his own story in school. He says the teacher spanks a boy for being fresh, in direct speech (DS). The mother then asks what he does, and who he is, out of curiosity, in direct speech (DS). Laurie says it is Charles, in direct speech (DS). He repetitively says Charles is fresh, highlighting that he is spanked for being fresh in direct speech (DS). The adjective ‘awfully’ in the line ‘he was awfully fresh’ emphasizes the degree of his freshness - he is fresh dreadfully. The mother asks what Charles does again in school in direct speech (DS) to continue the conversation. But Laurie slides off his chair, takes a cookie, and leaves. The verbs in balanced structure ‘slid off’, ‘took’, ‘left’ state his actions in a progressive way. The whole sentence is about the subject Laurie, with two verbs followed by objects – ‘slid off his chair, took a cookie’, and one intransitive verb ‘left’. The sentence is embedded that it has become so loose to describe Laurie’s actions. The direct speeches (DS) make the characters more prominent when speaking in conversations.

The fourth paragraph begins with ‘the next day Laurie remarked at lunch’, the time. Laurie tells his mother that Charles is bad again in direct speech (DS) because Charles hits the teacher. The mother feels sorry for him, and asks Laurie if Charles has got spanked in direct speech (DS). Laurie says for sure in direct speech (DS). He asks his father to look up in direct speech (DS). His father asks him ‘what’ in direct speech (DS), looking up. Laurie asks him to look down, and laughs insanely in direct speech (DS). The mother then asks Laurie quickly why Charles hits the teacher in direct speech (DS). Laurie replies that Charles wants to color with green crayons so he hits the teacher and she spanks him in direct speech (DS). The direct speeches (DS) make the characters – Laurie, his mother and father more prominent.

The fifth paragraph marks ‘the third day’, ‘Thursday’. And ‘Friday’ deictically in balanced sentence structures. The third day is a Wednesday of the first week, the day Charles bounces a see-saw on to the head of a little girl, and makes her bleed. The teacher makes him stay inside all during recess. On Thursday, he has to stand in a corner during story time. On Friday, Charles is deprived of black-board privileges because he throws chalk. All the misbehaviors of Charles can be seen on three different days.

The sixth paragraph is about the ‘PTA meeting’ that the mother attends - the deictic time and space. Deixis, borrowed from the Greek word, means pointing or indicating (Levinson, p. 54). The PTA meeting is the time and space being pointed at or indicated. As Stephen Levinson says, ‘place deixis’ concerns the encoding of spatial location relative to the location of the participants in the speech event (Levinson, p. 62). The PTA meeting is the ‘place deixis’ relative to Laurie’s mother. Place or space deixis concerns the specification of locations (Levinson, p. 79). In the meeting, Laurie’s mother is determined to find out the secret of Charles. Three sentences begin with negative senses “no” repetitively, to emphasize nobody knows about Charles – ‘None of them looked to me haggard enough. No one stood up in the meeting and apologized for the way her son had been acting. No one mentioned Charles.’

The seventh paragraph is about ‘after the meeting.’ After the meeting, Laurie’s mother identifies and seeks out Laurie’s kindergarten teacher. Parallelism occurs in the balance structure of the sentence – ‘she had a plate with a cup of tea and piece of chocolate cake; I had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of marshmallow cake.’ As the stylistician Mick Short says, when readers come across parallel structure, they try to find an appropriate semantic relationship between the parallel parts (Short, p. 67).

Although both Laurie's mother and Laurie's kindergarten teacher have something to eat in common, what they eat is different. Perhaps what they eat reveals their different identities and choices. The pronoun 'we' suggests their initiative to maneuver up to one another cautiously. Naturally, dialogues turn up. Laurie's mother says to her that she has been so anxious to meet her in direct speech (DS). Then, the teacher replies they are all so interested in Laurie in direct speech (DS). The mother responds to her by saying that Laurie likes kindergarten, and talks about it all the time in direct speech (DS). The teacher then reports to his mother they have trouble adjusting Laurie in the first week or so, but now he is a fine helper, with occasional lapse, to speak the truth, in direct speech (DS). Following up this report, the mother anxiously asks the teacher if Charles has influenced Laurie, despite the fact that Laurie adjusts very quickly in direct speech (DS). The teacher repeats 'Charles' in question forms, hoping to get more information in direct speech (DS). The mother laughs, saying to the teacher that she must have her hands full in that kindergarten, with Charles, in direct speech (DS). The teacher finally replies they don't have any Charles in the kindergarten, in direct speech (DS). This implies that Laurie's mother is cheated by Laurie who lies to her all about Charles. The direct speeches make the characters – Laurie's mother, and Laurie's kindergarten teacher more prominent.

2)

Overview of the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson and the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson

The most dominant elements in the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson are similes, the metaphor of classroom as the cage, and the contrast between the new teacher and Miss Forthergill, while the most dominant elements in the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson are dialogues in direct speeches, the twist in the plot development, repetition and parallelism.

Compare and contrast between the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson and the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson

The poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson and the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson can be compared and contrasted in terms of theme, setting, characters, plot, and style.

Theme

‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson is a poem, but ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson is a fictional prose. Despite the differences of the nature of writing, both pieces of writings deal with school life that kids have to cope with. To the kids, the school life is monotonous and boring. It seems like that the kids are being imprisoned in the classroom. The school life is chaotic and disorderly.

In the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson, lessons last for a whole life time. The classroom is a cage. Billy has no way but to do tables, write spellings, hide the comic books away to come to terms with the intolerable school life. Similar to Billy in the poem ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson, Charles in the fictional prose ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson, as retold by Laurie, often hits the teacher, and gets spanked in school all the time. The fictional kid Charles, as narrated by Laurie, behaves badly in the school life in kindergarten. It is possible that both Charles and Laurie is identically the same person. It just happens that Laurie resorts to Charles as an excuse to cheat his mother.

Setting

Both stories are set in schools. In ‘Our New Teacher’ by David Bateson, the

classroom is a cage. The students find the imprisoned life in the classroom stifling. In the fictional prose 'Charles' by Shirley Jackson, the story is told in 3 levels of discourse: the narrator (- Laurie's mother) and narratee level, the character (- e.g. Laurie's mother and father) and character (- e.g. Laurie and Laurie's kindergarten teacher) level, and the writer (-Shirley Jackson) and reader level (**Appendix 3**). The layers of the discourse structure of fictional prose have been discussed by the stylistician Mick Short (Short, p. 256-7). The setting of kindergarten school life allows these layers of the discourse structure to interact dynamically.

Characters

There are different characters in the poem 'Our New Teacher' by David Bateson, and in the fictional prose 'Charles' by Shirley Jackson. In the poem 'Our New Teacher' by David Bateson, the characters include the new teacher, students, and Miss Forthegill. In the fictional prose 'Charles' by Shirley Jackson, the characters include Charles, Laurie, Laurie's mother, Laurie's father and Laurie's kindergarten teacher. What the poem 'Our New Teacher' by David Bateson, and the fictional prose 'Charles' by Shirley Jackson in common are the characters - teachers and students in the setting of school.

Plot

The plot development in the poem 'Our New Teacher' by David Bateson is more direct and straightforward. It is about the emergence of the new teacher. The students do not like the new teacher at all. The new teacher looks scary. They all want their old teacher-Miss Forthergill back, as they are all so fond of her.

Unlike the straight forward plot in the poem 'Our New Teacher' by David Bateson, the plot development of the fictional prose 'Charles' by Shirley Jackson is less straightforward, and more indirect and more subverted. The readers have limited access to the narrator – the mother, since the mother also relies on the information told by her son Laurie. It is found out that her son Laurie is unreliable and untrustworthy, when the kindergarten teacher reveals at the end there is no Charles in school. The twist of the story or the pun of the story at the disclosure of truth at the end reveals how untrustworthy and unreliable Laurie is as the third person narrator. Irony or sarcasm is suggested. The title 'Charlie' indicates that Charles has become a central or a core issue during the conversations between Laurie and his mother.

Style

The writing style of the poet David Bateson is poetic, lively, energetic, and robust, as shown in his poem 'Our New Teacher'. The images are prominent, producing a heightened sense of foregrounding. Perhaps the Australian style of the poem reveals the carefree, relaxing attitude of Australian life style.

While the poetic style of David Bateson is Australian, the prosaic style of Shirley Jackson is American. Shirley Jackson, a female American writer, manipulates the mother as the narrator in recalling the school life of Laurie. The twist of the story suggests the story is not as straightforward as it seems to be. Probably the American style of the writer is indirect, sarcastic, ironic, cunning and sly.

To conclude, poetry and prose are different forms of writings. The poem and the prose have been selected to discuss their stylistic effects in projecting the intolerable school life. There are similarities and differences in theme, setting, characters, plot and style. Both the poem and the prose show different *styles* in writings in understanding how a child copes with the suffocating school life.

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Appendix 1

Our New Teacher by David Bateson

This teacher has such scary teeth,

they look just like a shark's;

His eye gleam in the sunlight

Like a pair of purple sparks.

Is voice is just a booming

as the roar from some big gun;

He can imitate a thunderstorm

for a gruesome bit of fun.

And now Billy who was silly

Almost every other day

Does his tables, write his spellings,

Hides his comic book away.

Every lesson lasts a lifetime...

Literary Stylistics: Poetry and Fictional Prose

With our noses to each page,

We imagine bars on windows

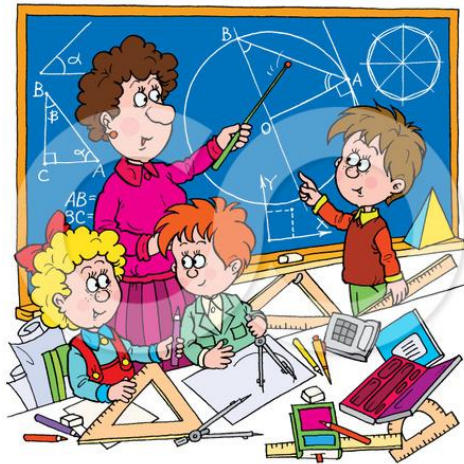
And the classroom seems a cage.

So please come back, Miss Fothergill:

Though you won't believe it' true,

We all loved you as our teacher;

We were oh, so fond of you!



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Appendix 2

Charles by Shirley Jackson

(Paragraph 1) The day my son Laurie started kindergarten he renounced corduroy overalls with bibs and began wearing blue jeans with a belt I watched him go off the first morning with the older girl next door, seeing clearly that an era of my life was ended, my sweet voice at the corner and wave good-bye to me.

(Paragraph 2) He came running home the same way, the front door slamming open, his cp on the floor, and the voice suddenly became raucous shouting, "Isn't anybody *here*?"

(Paragraph 3) At lunch he spoke insolently to his father, spilled his baby sister's milk, and remarked that his teacher said we were not to take the name of the Lord in vain.

"How *was* school today?" I asked, elaborately casual.

"All right," he said.

"Did you learn anything?" his father asked.

Laurie regarded his father coldly. "I didn't learn nothing," he said.

"Anything," I said. "Didn't learn anything."

"The teacher spanked a boy, though," Laurie said, addressing his bread and butter. "For being fresh," he added, with his mouth full.

"What did he do?" I asked. "Who was it?"

Laurie thought. "It was Charles," he said. "He was fresh. The teacher spanked him and made him stand in the corner. He was awfully fresh."

"What did he do?". I asked again, but Laurie slid off his chair, took a cookie, and

while his father was still saying, “See here, young man,”

(Paragraph 4) The next day Laurie remarked at lunch, as soon as he sat down, “ell, Charles was bad again today.” He grinned enormously and said, “Today Charles hit the teacher.”

“Good heavens,” I said, mindful of the Lord’s name, “I suppose he got spanked again?”

“He sure did,” Laurie said. “Look up,” he said to his father.

“What?” his father said, looking up.

“Look down,” Laurie said. “Look at my thumb. Gee, you’re dumb.” He began insanely.

“Why did Charles hit the teacher” I asked quickly.

“Because she tried to make him color with red crayons,” Laurie said. “Charles anted to colour with green crayons so he hit the teacher and she spanked him and said nobody play with Charles but everybody did.

(Paragraph 5) The third day – it was a Wednesday of the first week – Charles bounced a see-saw on to the head of a little girl and made her bleed, and the teacher made him stay inside all during recess. Thursday, Charles had to stand in a corner during story-time because he kept pounding his feet on the floor. Friday, Charles was deprived of black-board privileges because he threw chalk.

(Paragraph 6) At the PTA meeting I sat restlessly, scanning each comfortable matronly face, trying to determine which one hid the secret of Charles. None of them looked to me haggard enough. No one stood up in the meeting and apologized for the way her son had been acting. No one mentioned Charles.

(Paragraph 7) After the meeting I identified and sought out Laurie’s kindergarten teacher. She had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of chocolate cake; I had a plate with a cup of tea and a piece of marshmallow cake maneuvered up t one another cautiously, and smiled.

“I’ve been so anxious to meet you,” I said. “I’m Laurie’s mother.”

“We’re all so interested in Laurie,” she said.

“Well, he certainly likes kindergarten,” I said. “He talks about it all the time.”

“We had a little trouble adjusting, the first w or so,” she said primly, “but now he’s a fine helper. With occasional lapses, of course.”

“Laurie usually adjusts very quickly,” I said. “I suppose this time it’s Charles’s influence.”

“Charles?”

“Yes,” I said, laughing, “you must have your hands full in that kindergarten, with Charles.”

“Charles?” she said. “We don’t have any Charles in the kindergarten.”

Appendix 3

The discourse structure of fictional prose – ‘Charles’ by Shirley Jackson

