Colette Bryce's "Once":
Love, language and uniqueness

Coral Calvo-Maturana,[1] Universidad de Granada, Spain

Abstract: This article offers a linguistic insight into the poem "Once," written in 2008 by the Northern Irish poet Colette Bryce. It addresses the explicit intertextual link between this poem and Denise Riley's "Two ambitions to remember" (1985), as well as its more implicit dialogue with Bryce's former poem "Words and Music" (2004). A close reading of the linguistic choices in "Once" seems even more necessary in this poem which precisely ponders the role of words to convey meaning, namely the poetic voice's love toward a new lover. Framed in the area of stylistics, the analysis will draw on an array of linguistic frameworks: grammetrics, modality and evaluative language, novel metaphor, deixis, and unexpected collocations, so as to understand how the concepts of "love" and "language" are portrayed in these poems. The analysis thus uncovers the careful interplay of paradigmatic and syntagmatic linguistic choices that tailor the texts. It likewise offers a new representation of the concept of "words" which arises only as a result of the poet's conversation with Riley, her own former writing, and the reader, in addition to pointing at the cognitive power of poetic language the poems celebrate.

Keywords: Colette Bryce, "Once", Intertextuality, Stylistics, Words

Introduction

This article aims at understanding how "love" is represented in Colette Bryce's poem "Once" (2008) through a close analysis of its language and its intertextual dialogue with the poem "Two ambitions to remember," by Denise Riley (1985), pointing at both similarities and divergences, and how they determine the meaning of the text. The analysis will at the same time draw on other connections to Bryce's own writing as shown in "Words and Music." The close-reading of these poems will enable the identification of some of the linguistic features that characterize these poets' writing, illustrating how, in words of the Scottish Makar Jackie Kay, "poetry is language at its most rich" (Kay 2001). Offering a stylistic insight into these interconnected poems, the study ultimately suggests the advantages of applying a linguistic insight into literary appreciation.

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[1] Corresponding Author: First Name Last Name, Work Postal Address/Physical Address, Department, Affiliated Organization, City, State, Postal Code, Country. email: address@email.edu

COMMON
GROUND

This essay adds to other critical insights into Bryce's work that take a literary criticism approach. In particular, Pryce (2013) is a pioneer study of the Contemporary Northern Irish poets Colette Bryce, Leontia Flynn, and Sinéad Morrisey, "a generation of assured female poetic voices" (Pryce 2013, 2), and their participation in re/representing tradition, bearing in mind: i) the role of critical, publisher, and poetic paratexts—including dedications, acknowledgements, and epigraphs (Genette 1997); ii) theories of influence (Bloom 2011) and detachment; and iii) a close reading of their work. In this respect, the scholar ponders on ways in which tradition in Bryce's poetry is both celebrated and subverted; references to magic tricks and miracles in her writing offer a means of detachment in a co-existing way that "influences presence and a desire for absence" (Pryce 2013, 120), and love poems with female addressers and female addressees take part in the merging of both tradition and a "subversive and feminist originality" (2013, 13). This article starts with an introductory account of the linguistic frameworks used in the analysis and the overall interpretation of "Once" and "Two ambitions to remember" so as to introduce the central poems object of study and the following detailed analysis and conclusions.

Theoretical Grounding

The analysis is framed in the area of stylistics that applies linguistic description to the interpretation of literary texts so as to reach a better understanding of the text, while at the same time identifying the role of linguistic choices in relation to meaning creation. In particular, the study will draw on the following linguistic frameworks: grammetrics (Sinclair 1988), modality and evaluative language (Carter and Nash 1998; Hidalgo-Tenorio 2002; Freeman 1997; Toolan [1998] 2009), novel metaphor (Romero and Soria 2007, 2014, and 2016; Keating and Soria 2019), deixis (Simpson 2004; Nørgaard, Montoro, and Busse 2010), and unexpected collocations (Jeffries and McIntyre 2010).

The concept of grammetrics alludes to the way in which grammar is distributed along the lines in the poem (Sinclair 1988). An analysis of the morphosyntactic choices in the poem and their position in the lines allows us to identify which ideas are foregrounded and how they shape our interpretation of the text. Sinclair distinguishes five concepts in the theory of grammetrics: "complete," "list," "arrest," "stretch," and "continue." A sentence is "complete" when it includes all the obligatory elements needed to form a grammatical structure. In this sense, at the level of clause, Leech, Deuchar, and Hoogenraat (1982, 85) distinguish the following basic or major clause patterns for English: [SP], [SPOi], [SPC], [SPA], [SPOd], [SPOiOd], [SPOdC], and [SPOdA], which could for instance be altered by adding optional adverbials or changing the order of its constituents. On the contrary, we would say that a structure "continues" when an already completed one goes on with further optional syntactic choices. A "list" is a progression of

optional paradigmatic choices that interrupts the horizontal syntagmatic building of the basic syntactic structure. For instance, we may have a list of noun phrases functioning as direct object in a list of three that may underline the meaning of the listed items. In fact, the concept of "list" is associated with the concept of "arrest" as it is one of the ways in which the syntactic structure is delayed by adding optional elements instead of the otherwise expected obligatory ones. Finally, cases of "stretch" are those in which an already arrested structure is subject to further arrest.

Deictic markers will be considered in the poems so as to understand the voices' viewpoints and how they relate to their environment both physically and emotionally. The physical framing of participants and circumstances will thus be analyzed through personal and spatio-temporal deictic markers. Moreover, the choices of emphatic and social deixis will allow us to consider the poetic voices' psychological positioning (Simpson 2004, Nørgaard, Montoro, and Busse 2010). The former expresses the emotional proximity or distance of the speaker in relation to the people, object, or circumstances mentioned, and it is normally phrased through place deixis indicators like "this" vs. "that"; the later shows the social viewpoint and type of relationship that exists between participants in the discourse situation and it is linguistically encoded in the use of terms of address (Nørgaard, Montoro, and Busse 2010).

Intertextuality is key in the framing and interpretation of "Once." Following Riffaterre, intertextuality involves "an operation of the reader's mind,…an obligatory one, necessary to any textual decoding. Intertextuality necessarily complements our experience of textuality…the text does not signify unless as a function of a complementary or contradictory intertextual homologue" (1984, 142). Kristeva ([1969] 1981), in line with Bakhtin, explains that every text results from a mosaic of quotes, embracing and transforming another text, acknowledging addresser and addressee as well as context. Finally, Miola (2004) establishes a taxonomy of seven types of intertextuality under three major categories: books or texts, which are directly mediated through the author, including the author's earlier work (revision, translation, quotation, and sources), traditions and borrowed expectations (conventions and configurations, as well as genres), and the role of the audience and cultural discourses (paralogues). The discussion of intertextuality in this essay will focus on Bryce's direct mediation through Riley's "Two ambitions to remember" and her previous poem "Words and Music," making use of quotation and sources that determine the poem's content, form, and style.

The Repetitive and Unique Nature of Love and Language: Bryce's "Once"

In "Once," the poetic voice talks precisely about language, about words and their potential to convey meaning; more specifically, the poem focuses on those words

we choose to address our lovers. The poetic voice talks with certain sadness when she realizes that the words with which she used to address her first lover no longer carry meaning. They have somehow lost their communicative function, as this meaning would always be inherently associated with or be encapsulated in the conversations between herself and her former lover. Words are then just signifiers with an absent signified.

In relation to the potential of words to express our feelings of "love," Brady (2017) highlights the meaning potential of "I love you" which paradoxically seems to precisely convey a speaker's love toward the addressee of the message, while at the same time standing as a worn away expression, due to the fact that it is used worldwide by different lovers, as well as repeatedly by the same speaker to an array of addressees:

> "I love you" is simultaneously the most powerful and direct expression of love, and its most adequate shadow; it is necessary, singular, and powerful, but also repetitive—not only of all the times you've said it yourself, to different people, in different situations, but also of the whole history of human love (Brady 2017, 291)

The poem "Once" thus touches on these love and language paradoxes, portraying a vulnerable speaker noticing the absence of their former lover in the lack of words to address a second lover.

A silent explosion of senses: Riley's *Two ambitions to remember*

In Colette Bryce's poem, words are present and celebrated. They accompany the poetic voice, but they are deprived of meaning; they are just traces of a former lover. In Denise Riley's poem, this lack of meaning is portrayed through silence, which at the same time contrasts with the sound of nature mentioned in one of the intertwined voices. Dowson and Entwistle contend that the poem is structured in the shape of a duet through two "harmonising rather than conversing voices" (2005, 165–66). They define the voice of ambition (A) as featuring a speech which is neatly distributed in complete sentences, but at the same time ponders on its own undermining nature. The voice of ambition (B) is described in turn through its sensorial remarks and lack of precision. Although the speech of ambition (B) is highly characterized by the visual description of their close environment with no specific reference to inner thoughts, in big contrast to ambition (A), the presence or lack of senses, and the co-occurrence of elements of nature, air, water, and fire, are relevant to the depiction of both voices' experiences. There are several references to silence throughout the lines in the speech of the two voices that frame the text:

(1) [A] The shapes of faces stiff with joy
         stir in my mind but *do not speak* (lines 1 and 2)
(2) [A] I see my *deafened* future come (line 5)

(3) [A] while those true words that *have no mouth* (line 6)
(4) [A] and leap and dazzle *silently* (line 7)
(5) [B] To sail into the lit tunnel
   a rush of orange, *quietly* (lines 14 and 15)
  (*emphasis added*)

In (1), we may wonder if these are the faces of the lovers, faces deprived of sound as the words with which they used to address each other are no longer meaningful or present. In (2), a future devoid of sound equally emphasizes the absence of those meaningful words described as "true words" (line 6) and "full words" (line 24). The phrase "full words" could be said to be an unexpected co-occurrence as the adjective "full" does not usually qualify "words"; a foregrounded word that finds an answer in Bryce's poem. This "deafened future" is portrayed as coming toward the poetic voice. Here, the deictic verb "comes" underlines the viewpoint of the poetic voice, and the reader merges with this viewpoint to witness her future. Words are likewise personified in a face without mouth (3) and actively moving but still silent (4), as the poetic voice (5). We may argue that there is only a sound in the poem, the sound of nature, and this is suggested in a list of NPs (6), in lines 3, 4, and lines 9 and 10. These are sort of pictures, fragments of the poetic voice's experience. Here, the idea of "pale branches," branches deprived of color, colorless/lifeless branches, might echo the feeling of loneliness of the poetic voice.

(6) [B] The drive out of town [NP]
   the fans of pale branches [NP]
   (lines 3 and 4)

   The crush of trees' thin
   limbs inward and inward [NP]
   (lines 9 and 10)

Although there might not be any sound, except for the crush of trees, there is on the contrary an emphasis on the senses of vision and touch in both speeches. In terms of vision, this sense is portrayed in three ways: i) the specific mention to the poetic voice as sensor of the mental process of perception "see" (8) which highlights her viewpoint; ii) the reference to verbs of movement: stir (7), leap (9), dazzle (9); and iii) the specific mention of color: orange and lit (11) or to bright natural elements: fiery (10) and sun (12). In general, there is an emphasis on light and bright, orange or yellow colors, so we may think that the poetic voice drives during either dawn or sunset. So words are silent, but at the same time they leap, jump into the air, and shine. The fact that all these elements are quite visual makes evident the contradiction of being clearly there, while at the same time moving away from the poetic voice. This contrast is achieved through

the co-occurrence of both sensory lexical sets: lack of sound/silence and vision, as can be noticed in (7) stir vs. do not speak, (8) see vs. deafened, (9) leap and dazzle vs. no mouth and silently, and (11) lit and orange vs. quietly. This co-occurrence foregrounds the frustration of the poetic voice that experiences the vivid and silent memories of her/his lover's words; memories in which colors are shaded by silence. The "fiery" air can also allude to something burning or full of flames, burning out the words that depart from the poetic voice.

(7) [A] The shapes of faces stiff with joy
          stir in my mind but do not speak (lines 1 & 2)
(8) [A] I *see* my deafened future come (line 5)
(9) [A] while those true words that have no mouth
          leap and *dazzle* silently (lines 6 & 7)
(10) [A] go streaming down the *fiery* air (line 8)
(11) [B] To sail into the *lit* tunnel
          a rush of *orange*, quietly (lines 14 & 15)
(12) [B] A square of *sun*
          slides on the roughened wall (lines 20 & 21)
          (*emphasis added*)

In relation to nature, which has already been described through sound, the elements of air and water likewise frame the sensory element of touch in the following lines from the poem. The word "air," which gives title to Riley's poetic collection, *Dry Air*, (1985), is repeated in (15) and (17), but it is also alluded to in (13) through the contrast of the hot air versus a windy tree and in (14), as the verb leap adds the idea of jumping into the air. However, water transforms the texture of the air in (15) and (16) in which both "words" and poetic voice slide through a liquid atmosphere, which might stand as well for the poetic voice's tears.

(13) [B] The *fans* of pale branches (line 4)
(14) [A] while those true words that have no mouth
          and *leap* and dazzle silently (lines 6 & 7)
(15) [A] [those true words] go *streaming down* the fiery *air*. (line 8)
(16) [B] To *sail* into the lit tunnel (line 14)
(17) [A] Insane with loneliness I *wring*
          the tissues of the *air* to force
          the full words that would answer me. (lines 22 & 24)
          (*emphasis added*)

The idea of tears is likewise reinforced in the last stanza of the poem (17). By using the verb "wring," words are understood as drops of water. Here, the air is liquid and at the same time, in a sort of synaesthesia and mixing of sensory

domains, has the texture of a tissue that the poetic voice twists and squeezes in a desperate attempt to water her/his world again with the words of the missing lover; the full words that would answer the poetic voice; i.e. those words that would bring her/him back to a meaningful existence. The verb "answer" likewise underscores in its literal sense that the poetic voice is calling out for these words. Both figurative and literal meanings are thus valid here, adding layers of meaning.

Intertextual analysis: Conversations about love and language

The intertextual analysis of "Once" and "Two ambitions to remember" is presented in the following four sections: a) the ephemeral nature of love and language, focusing on generic sentences and unexpected collocations; b) the ideas of community, time, loss, and affection, as expressed through deixis; c) the conceptualization of the world by means of poetic licenses foregrounded in the strategic distribution of grammar in the lines: grammetrics; and, d) a linguistic analysis of "Words and Music," noticing further shared discursive patterns between Colette Bryce's and Denise Riley's writing.

The Ephemeral Nature of Love and Language: Generic Sentences and Collocations

This section explains how love and language are portrayed as ephemeral by means of the discursive patterns adopted between "Once" and "Two ambitions to remember," through the use of (limited) generic sentences as well as the unexpected co-occurrence of words. The poem "Once" initiates with an intertextual link, graphologically foregrounded in italics, to Denise Riley's poem "Two ambitions to remember." We can see that the opening stanza in "Once" (18), exactly corresponds to the core stanza in "Two ambitions to remember," placed right in the center of Riley's poem.

> (18) *Some words you may use only once*
> *Repeat them to some newer heart*
> *and all your accuracy is gone.*

A step beyond the text, that Leech labels as a "flight from the text" (Leech 2008, 180), is thus established from the very beginning through the simple repetition of the stanza. The connection is likewise stated in a footnote that specifies the source text. These repeated lines embrace the essence of the poem "Once": the transient nature of language in matters of love. They seem to be the seed or origin that inspires the poetic voice's thoughts and answer to it. The quote is phrased as a generic sentence that makes its content "transportable and valid to

different narratives" (Toolan [1998] 2009, 64), both poems in this case, transmitting the poetic voices' stance or attitude and assumptions:

> Generic sentences are sentences which assert something to be a general truth, typically timelessly true […] And the 'truth' asserted is predicted not of a specific individual, but of a whole set of things (Toolan, 2009 [1998], 59-60)

So as to illustrate the meaning of generic sentences, Toolan ([1998] 2009) presents the following generic truths about pandas, in which (19) is phrased in the present simple tense "is," the tense normally used to encode universal truths; and rephrased in (20) and (21) to highlight its applicability across the set of pandas. This is a universal truth of probably a scientific nature.

> (19) The panda's preferred diet is bamboo shoots.
> (20) "Among the open set of pandas, including those long dead and those yet to be born, it is the case that their preferred diet is bamboo shoots"
> (21) It is always the case that panda's preferred diet is bamboo shoots.

However, when trying to apply this universality to the opening stanza in "Once" (18), we notice that this is more a case of what Toolan ([1998] 2009) would label as a "limited generic"; i.e., not so much a total universal but restricted in some ways. This is likewise a generic allusion to a more personal insight in comparison to an allusion to a scientific aspect or even a stereotype. In this sense, we could grammatically mention sentence (22), in which the present simple tense pinpoints the timeless character of the statement; however, when trying to rephrase the sentence as a universal, we face the problem that we could not say that (23) is a valid rephrased sentence as the statement only applies to some words: "Some words you may use only once." This is the same reason why (24) does not seem adequate either. Moreover, the epistemic modal auxiliary verb "may" somehow lowers the veracity and universality of the statement by shading it with a low-medium certainty value, which highlights the inherent uncertainty of love. Although it is close to a generic statement, it is not one phrased as a complete universal, and it is further restricted to the context of a specific addresser and addressee in a love relationship. In this way, Colette Bryce's poem could be understood as an answer, a test, to this potential generic.

> (22) [Some words you may use only once/repeat them to some newer heart] and all your accuracy is gone

(23) [?] Among the open set of words, including those long dead and those yet to be born, it is the case that you may use some of them only once.

(24) [?] It is always the case you may use some words only once.

There are likewise other instances of subtle intertextual links featuring throughout the lines of Bryce's poem that partly depart from the opening stanza in (18). This is the case of the adjective "newer," which later finds answer in Bryce's poem antonym "older" (line 4). The adjective "new" is here foregrounded by being used in a comparative way adding the inflectional morpheme "er." This process of word-formation could even be rated as ungrammatical as "new" is an example of an absolute adjective, which could be understood in the extreme sense of an imaginary absolute cline of values ranging between "new" and "old" in both poles of the scale.This is why the reader might ponder if something or someone that was "new," could be "newer." The unexpected collocation "newer heart" (25), in which the word "heart" metonymically stands for the lover, seems to suggest a long list of new lovers coming up, followed by a decline of lost words. By using the antonym "old" (27) in line 2 and the same strategy of word-formation in "older" in line 4 (26), Bryce's poem participates in the drawing of the imaginary cline that is created in the dialogue between both poems so as to define the passing of time (26), lovers (25)and words (27), and which could be represented as in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Imaginary cline of 'older' vs. 'new'
Source: Calvo-Maturana 2020

(25) *Repeat them to some* newer *heart* (emphasis added)
(26) *Older*, in our second chance, (*emphasis added*)
(27) how the *old* terms fail (*emphasis added*)

Finally, meaning associations are also built through antonymy in lines 6 and 7 (29) and 16 (30) by means of the binary opposition of the words "accuracy" and "inaccurate," reinforcing as a result the idea of words being merely signifiers. Example (29) emphasizes the paradox of a passion felt for a second lover but unable to be phrased due to the lack of meaningful words. (30) stands as the closing line in "Once" as well as in the opening stanza (28), drawing a kind of cycle amongst them, and reinforcing the lack of accuracy. The term "accuracy" is defined by Macmillan Dictionary as "the ability to do something in an accurate

way": "correct or true in every detail." The poetic voices in both poems thus lament how the truthiness or correctness of the love expressed to a second lover is diminished.

> (28) and all your accuracy is gone
> (29) in hands, inaccurate/ and passionate, in love's/ late, unfurnished rooms,
> (30) all our accuracy gone

Community, Time, Loss and Affection: Deixis

Personal, spatio-temporal, emphatic, and social deixis play a major role in delineating how the poetic voices relate physically and emotionally with the entities and participants in their close or distant environment. Words in "Once" are depicted as emotionally distant from the poetic voice. Deixis, "the orientational function of language" (Simpson 2004: 7), is essential in the framing of both poems, since they both tell us about a loss—the loss of words, the loss of your first lover. This absence is also represented through the distance between the poetic voice and those entities that are lost. The poetic voices in both poems are the deictic centers, the "origo" or origin, from which the world is conceived in relation to their own spatio-temporal situation; and that is why those things that are lost are portrayed as far away from them, either in time, or space, or psychologically, signposting the idea of the camera shot, or lens, and the viewpoint from which the reader is entering the text world. There is however a difference in terms of personal deixis, since in "Once" the poetic voice uses an inclusive "we" first person plural pronoun or possessive "our" that places her as part of a community sharing the experience toward love (31), (32), (33), (34), (35), and (36). In contrast, in "Two ambitions to remember," ambition (A) makes use of the first personal pronoun "I" throughout, placing herself/himself in a sort of isolated individuality, which is reinforced in the final explicit reference to an "insane loneliness" (line 22). Moreover, Ambition (B) keeps the vagueness of her/his speech with no use of personal pronouns.

> (31) words that *we* loved with, once (line 3)
> (32) Older, on *our* second chance, (line 4)
> (33) *We* stand […] (line 5)
> (34) full of the words *we* cannot use; (line 12)
> (35) words, those *we* may use only once,
> (36) all *our* accuracy gone (line 16)
> (*emphasis added)*

This discursive difference is foregrounded in the stanza that "Once" takes from "Two Ambitions to remember." In this way, even though the opening lines in "Once" are exactly the same as the original stanza from Riley's poem, the concluding lines, replace the generic "you" in "Two ambitions to remember" (37) by the inclusive use of pronoun "we" (38). This change again generalizes and extends the experience to the reader, while at the same time draws the content as being closer to the poetic voice's own experience.

> (37) Some words *you* may use only once
>   Repeat them to some newer heart
>   and all your accuracy is gone
>   (*Two ambitions to remember,* lines 11-13, *emphasis added*)

> (38) words, those *we* my use only once
>   all *our* accuracy gone
>   (*Once*, lines 15 & 16, *emphasis added*)

As for time deixis, a temporal semantic field can be identified in Once, which delineates a temporal framework in words or phrases such as years on (line 1), old (line 2), older (line 4), and second (line 4). These temporal references are represented in a chronological fashion from the first moment expressed through the repeated term "once," which gives title to the poem, and is likewise found in the intertextual quotation, and in lines 3 and 15. The term "once" is defined by the Macmillan Dictionary as having two senses: the first one, sense1, is phrased as "on one occasion only"; the second one, sense2, is described as being "used for saying that a particular situation existed at a time in the past, but it does not exist any longer." Even though these are close senses, the nuances of meaning are essential in this poem. The former definition would be too narrow, and therefore—repeating the essence of the poem "inaccurate," since it is not simply the case of a word been limited to just one use, but a word been subjected to a "particular situation," in which it could indeed be repeated on many occasions, but only to address that first lover.

Even though words seem to accompany the poetic voice in "Once," we could argue that the demonstrative "those" establishes a "distal" deictic relationship between the speaker and "those words"—as opposed to the proximal "these" (39). The same distance is established in "Two ambitions to remember" (40) through the same choice of demonstrative markers. In the example, the reader can see the opposing directions of "words" vanishing in the distance as opposed to a feared silent future approaching the poetic voice. We could argue that the demonstrative "those" here is a case of "emphatic" deixis, which as Nørgaard, Montoro, and Busse explain, "encodes psychological and emotional closeness or

distance towards the persona, object, events or circumstances referred to" (2010, 78–79). In this way, words are portrayed as something which is unreachable, something that the poetic voice was emotionally attached to but it is now nostalgically anchored to a distal moment, conveyed by the adverb "once." Moreover, it is not any kind of word that the poetic voice in "Once" is referring to, but words are defined in (39) through apposition and parallelism, using the definite article "the" preceding an adjective to categorize those words in groups: as "the known," "the beautiful outworn," "those we may use only once." The pattern of definite article and adjective is likewise used in line 12, in which the poetic voice is stirring around "the gone," while driving, leading the reader to associate this inexplicit gone element with "those words." Emphatic deixis is likewise used in "Two ambitions to remember," although on this occasion it includes a proximal use:"this." Thus, in the rhetorical question in (41), the proximal demonstrative "this" is drawing closer to the poetic voice the feeling of anxiety derived from her loss and the hopeless anticipation of his/her future.

(39) words, *the known*
     words, *the beautiful outworn*
     words, *those we may use only once*
     all our accuracy gone.
     (*Once*, lines 16-19, *emphasis added*)

(40) I see my deafened future come
     while *those* true words that have no mouth
     and leap and dazzle silently
     go streaming down the fiery air
     (*Two ambitions to remember*, lines 5-8, *emphasis added*)

(41) Is happiness *this* anxious then?
     (*Two ambitions to remember*, line 16, *emphasis added*)

Simpson explains how vocatives are "terms of address…[that] serve a deictic function by pointing out the intended addressee of a particular utterance" (2004, 84); however, when reading the first stanza in "Once" (42), the terms of address "sweetheart" and "darling" (line 1) are pointing nowhere, since the addressee is no longer there, so the participant that the speaker aimed to refer to, is absent. These terms of address are cases of social deixis (Nørgaard, Montoro, and Busse 2010) that show that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is one of love. However, on our second chance to love, these terms of address somehow, as the poetic voice explains, "fail" (42). They are somehow unable to establish a link between the poetic voice and her new intended addressee, her new lover.

(42) *Sweetheart*, *Darling*. Years on,
  how the old terms *fail*;
  words that we loved with, once.
  (*Once,* lines 1-3, *emphasis added*)

Conceptualizing and Framing the Poetic Voice World: Grammetrics and Metaphor

The distribution of grammar along the lines of the poem "Once" plays a key role in underlining the ideas of vulnerability and hope, embraced in the conceptual metaphor in (43). This section exemplifies the power of creative language to shape our world with a detailed analysis of how grammetrics (Sinclair 1988) and defamiliarization devices are used in (43) to underline the feelings of the poetic voice toward a second lover. In this sense, Freeman highlights the value of poetic licenses to outline the poet's and the reader's viewpoint: "Poetic license is not freedom from the constraints of grammars but freedom to construct grammars that conceptualise the poet's worldview and, through it, our own" (1997, 8). This fragment (43), which stands as a whole sentence, is likewise presented in Figure 2, in which the different boxes and color patterns aim at visually favoring the discussion of how grammar is distributed along the lines, contributing to frame the message.

(43) 4 Older, on our second chance,
   5 we stand, faltering hearts
   6 in hands, inaccurate

   7 and passionate, in love's
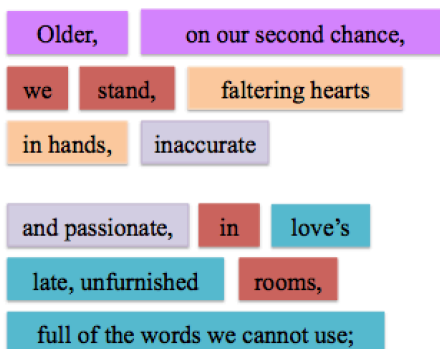   8 late, unfurnished rooms,
   9 full of the words we cannot use;

Figure 2: Grammetrics in *Once* (lines 4-9)
Source: Calvo-Maturana 2020

In (43), the clause would be complete and grammatical just by adding the subject (S) "we" (line 5), predicator (P) "stand" (line 5), and adverbial of location (A) "in rooms" (lines 7 and 8), in a SPA basic clause pattern. However, the main subject is arrested in line 4 with an optional adverbial of manner realized by an adjectival phrase headed by the comparative adjective "older" discussed in an earlier section. Most importantly, the subject is further arrested by the optional adverbial of time "on our second chance," in which a love relationship is labelled as a "chance," and therefore suggests ideas such as [+ opportunity, + something desired, + difficult to obtain, + something you should make the most of or try your best, + something that may not be repeated very often].

The sentence "we stand" necessarily needs an adverbial of location to be complete and grammatical, i.e. a specification of the place where we stand. This adverbial is nonetheless delayed—"arrested" or even "stretched" using Sinclair (1988)'s terminology, by a list of other optional adverbials of manner that are in this way emphasized: "faltering hearts in hands," "inaccurate and passionate." The noun phrase, "faltering hearts in hands," underscores the vulnerability of the poetic voice. The heart symbolizes the poetic voice's love and feelings, but it is at the same time a body organ that is physically taken from the poetic voice's body, held and offered to the lover. The enjambment along the lines, the continuation of the phrase with the optional post-modifier "in hands," as well as the alliteration of "hearts" and "hands" highlights the offer. The co-occurrence "faltering hearts" describes "hearts" as hesitant, underlining the vulnerability with which the poetic voice is depicted. The same enjambment strategy, this time across stanzas, is found in the coordinated adjective phrase "inaccurate and passionate." The paradoxical association of the adjectives in this phrase foregrounds the poetic voice's frustration for not finding the words to address this second lover, to phrase their love, repeating the key word "accurate." It could be argued that the conflict between the fragmented heart of a former lover and the resulting insecurity of the poetic voice, but still his/her willingness to love again, is likewise typographically represented in the fragmented lines through the distribution of commas and the constant enjambment of phrases.

The adverbial that would be necessary so as to complete the SPA basic structure starts in the middle of line 7 and is then extended, displayed in a long prepositional phrase finishing in line 9. This adverbial accentuates the description of those rooms in which poetic voice and readers metaphorically stand. Here, the choices of optional pre-modifiers ("love's late unfurnished") and post-modifiers ("full of the words we cannot use") surround and specify the head of the noun phrase, the word "rooms," which is part of the source domain used to define the concept of LOVE.

The essence of the semantic value in this adverbial is embraced in a novel metaphor (Romero and Soria 2007, 2014, and 2016), which could be phrased as:

LOVE IS A HOUSE/HOME; LOVE IS A CONTAINER WITH ROOMS. The source domain ROOM, the concept we are using so as to describe the target, the concept of LOVE is not any kind of room, but it is, as Romero and Soria (2016) and Keating and Soria (2019) highlight, an ad hoc concept of a room, ROOM,* created for this particular metaphor; i.e. an unfurnished one which is paradoxically full of words. The simple repetition of the word "full" in both "Two ambitions to remember" (44) and "Once" (45) adds to the dialogue amongst the poetic voices. In the former, displayed in the poem's closing line, it qualifies those words that would give meaning (and sound) to the poetic voice's life; in the later, it defines the ad hoc ROOM* used to describe the poetic voice's love.

> (44) the *full* words that would answer me.
>   (*Two ambitions to remember,* line 24, *emphasis added*)
> (45) late, unfurnished rooms,
>   *full* of the words we cannot use;
>   (*Once,* lines 8-9, *emphasis added*)

As such, we would normally understand the concept ROOM as complying with the following structural constraints: [1s] a part of a building; [2s] delimited, enclosed space; [3s] with a floor, walls and a ceiling; [4s] part of a home, hotel, institutional building, college; [5s] a place we inhabit, a place in which we live, in which we dwell; [6s] providing privacy, intimacy. However, in the poem, some more features are added to the definition of the source domain through optional modifiers, delineating an ad hoc source domain. In this way, rooms are redefined in the poem, adding the following structural constraints: [7s] unfurnished; [8s] late; [9s] full of words we cannot use. The structural constraint [9s] could also be phrased as a secondary metaphor: MEANINGFUL ("TRUE," "FULL") WORDS ARE PIECES OF FURNITURE. The adjective "late," constraint [8s], seems to suggest that the poetic voice has surpassed an adequate temporal deadline to be in love. In fact, the adjective is defined by Macmillan Dictionary as follows: "if you are late, you arrive somewhere after the correct or usual time." We may wonder if this could be a criticism to a deadline imposed by non-inclusive societal patterns. The fact that these rooms are unfurnished, seem to imply that they are [+ not inhabited], [+ not ready to be inhabited], yet with the potential to be decorated and furnished.

"Words and music": Further Discursive Patterns

"Once" likewise establishes an intertextual connection with a former poem by Colette Bryce, entitled "Words and Music" (2008). In this poem, the poetic voice describes her lover while observing her in the intimate scenario of the poetic

voice's home, admiring her beauty, her body, and movements as she goes naturally through the poetic voice's possessions, making them hers. The use of a list of adverbials realized by an "-ING" clause highlights the continuity of the actions and the description of the scene: "fixing this" (line 3), "watering that" (line 3), "mixing the books up" (line 4), "wearing my shirt" (line 4); in a progression of different errands that keep the lover busy and engaged with the pleasant everyday tasks, and to the admiration of the poetic voice. At the same time, the use of the present simple to describe a sequence of completed actions, in substitution of an expected past tense, foregrounds all the processes as if they were always present, portrayed as vivid in the memory of the poetic voice: moves (line 1), dials (line 5), finds (line 8), moves (line 9), basks (line 11), asks (line 13). Naming her lover a "goddess" (line 2) and contemplating her shape framed by the morning sun (line 10), her divine nature contrasts, or perfectly manages to merge, with the everyday character of the household objects she touches: the "books" (line 4), the "shirt" (line 4), the "radio" (line 5), "a chair" (line 9), or "the window sill" (line 12). Moreover, the adjectives "tiny" (line 1) and "little" (line 5), which are used respectively to describe the "flat" and the "radio" contrast with the "long strides" (line 2) and "the full length of herself" (line 11). The lover thus seems to occupy every corner of a not explicitly mentioned room, which is, as opposed to the rooms in "Once," full of the lover and full of her words, as put forward in the simple repetition of a list of three ending in an exclamation mark: "words, words, words!" (line 7). The "hidden symphony" (line 8) that the lover manages to find seem to stand for the "full words that would answer" the poetic voice in "Two ambitions to remember" as the adjective "hidden" may suggest something special or unique, something that only the lover can uncover. The title of the poem likewise reinforces the key means of communication in this love poem: "words and music." The final stanza foregrounds the discourse situation in the poem, in which the poetic voice makes use of indirect speech to tell us about her lover's words, filtering her words through hers, making them her own: "she asks me/ if I love her." The enjambment in these lines helps to represent the exchange of voices while at the same time foregrounding the parallelism between the two conditional sentences starting in line 14 and line 16, rephrasing the lover's question and associating "love" with the possibility of been left, and its potential fragile nature. The first person pronoun foregrounds the "I" voice and the concluding remark: "I'm done for."

Conclusion

Linguistic analysis has identified the ways in which discursive patterns amongst both poems are established, as well as the lexico-semantic connections that result from them, shaping the readers' understanding of "love" and "language." Bryce's poem "Once" is an answer to one of the inner thoughts of the poetic

voice of Ambition (A), right in the heart of Riley's poem, phrased as a limited generic statement. The poetic voice in "Once" thus establishes a dialogue with Ambition (A) to ponder the universality of the statement, creatively extending the depiction of those lost words as pieces of furniture. The intertextual connection is established through an exact quote in the opening stanza, though it is likewise later reinforced in a lexico-semantic dialogue with the original poem, creating a word net of simple repetition, antonyms, or repetition of strategies for word creation or the representation of viewpoint. An imaginary meaningful net is thus created between both poems, defining for instance "love" in a cline ranging from "newer" to "older." Cases of simple repetition likewise result in layers of meaning: "the full words that would answer" Ambition A, and vanish in the air, are then the ones that fill rooms, "full of the words we cannot use," to the frustration of the poetic voice in "Once."

"Love" is described through time, its paradoxically ephemeral and permanent nature, longing, beauty, vulnerability, offer, uniqueness, and, very importantly, through language. The intertextual link between both poems pondering the nature of words to phrase our love results in a redefinition of the concept "words," which shows the power of (creative) language to shape our understanding of the world. As such, "words" are determined by time and able to deteriorate ("old," "outworn," "the known," "once"). This temporal decline is marked by the loss of our lovers and the resulting loss of those words with which we addressed them and managed to convey our feelings. The loss is thus represented by the paradoxical presence of these same words as mere pieces of furniture unable to furnish the emptiness of our heart but at the same time clearly there as eternal testimonies of our former love. They are as vibrant in the past, as they are vacant in the present. The sorrow of the poetic voices in the poems is strengthened by the frustration of the meaningless or out of reach presence of these words. The voices are surrounded by signifiers that "leap" and "dazzle" and take different shapes, such as the watery nature of the poetic voice's tears. These signifiers are either empty or vanishing signs reminding them of the plenitude they felt towards their (first) lover. Deictic markers proved to be key to convey both the poetic voices' paradoxical closeness and detachment to the missing lover, delineated in terms of time, space and psychological attachment. Words are then forever anchored to those past loving memories, to those lovers that frame the voices' identity, to those moments in which they were the climax of meaning: "beautiful," "full," and "true." This word sketch of "words" is only drawn as a result of the linguistic insight into these poems, illustrating the advantages of applying a linguistic analysis to the interpretation of the literary text, as a core tool of literary criticism. The analysis has likewise identified other intertextual connections to Bryce's former writing. In this way, "Once" could be understood as the continuation to the scenario depicted in "Words and Music," with a room full of her lover, and her "words, words, words!" and the anticipated

fears of being abandoned. The "hidden symphony" in "Words and Music" should likewise be part of the word sketch delineated in the former poems, as the symphony is as much result of the lover's existence as those true words.

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