**A LOVE SONG FOR LUCINDA – TEXTUAL ANLYSIS**

titolo

The object of the present work is to discuss and analyse the poem “A Love Song for Lucinda” by Langston Hughes.

introduzione

The poem focuses the reader's attention thanks to its regular pattern, that creates an effect of balance and elegance. Indeed there is a symmetrical layout, which results from an anaphoric structure due to the initial line of every stanza that opens with the word “Love”. The intelligent reader, therefore, understands that “Love” is really the keyword and the theme of the whole text. In addition, it recalls the title.

tesi

The text is a song addressed to Lucinda and once more it underscores a reflection of love. The poem has a lyrical metre and invites reflection. To tell the truth, the intelligent reader may be curious to find out the identity of the addressee and the reason why the speaking voice is writing to Lucinda, whose name suggests the idea of light and therefore something that may provide a sense of direction or a guide. It follows that the analysis of the poem is meant to discover the message the speaking voice wants to send to Lucinda and what relationship he might have with her.

ampliamento

tesi

dichiarazione

intenzioni

In order to reach the goal the present work will develop a structural analysis first, and on a second moment will consider how connotative choices add to the meaning.

Just considering the layout, the reader realizes the text is arranged into three sestets that exhibit the same structure as well as the same anaphora meant to make the reader aware that what it has been discussed is the nature of love.

argomentazione

From a structural point of view, punctuation reveals to be essential to understand the reason why the poet has organized the sestets into tercets. To tell the truth, in each stanza the tercets play the same role: the first one relies on a metaphor that hints at some qualities of love, while the second tercet conveys the possible consequences of that particular feature of love, anticipated by the previous metaphor.

argomentazione

Before tackling with the different metaphors for love and its effects, it's worth considering also line length in the song. The investigation immediately makes clear that every stanza starts the second tercet with a very short line or at least one shorter than any other. What's more, the fourth line of the last stanza consists of two words, among which the personal subject pronoun “you” comes to the forefront. Thus giving Lucinda a central and therefore the core position. In so doing, the speaker not only focuses the reader's attention on “you”, but it also gives Lucinda a privileged position and no intelligent reader can escape noticing this. What's more, the intelligent reader should speculate on the nature of that subject pronoun, because it may refer to Lucinda as well as to the reader, or last but not least acquires an impersonal meaning and therefore being meaningful to everybody. This will result from the next steps of analysis.

argomentazione

Now, moving forward with the analysis of the metaphoric structure of the text, the reader realises that all the metaphorical choices that cover the second line of each sestet provide a highly positive connotation of love, as well as being expressed with an assertive tone that admits no reply, “Love Is”, “Love Is” and “Love is”. The speaker sounds totally sure of his statements, that are made up according to the structure adjective plus noun: “ripe plum”, “bright star” and “high mountain”. In addition, the expressions are the result of long open vowel sounds, that widen both the perspective of love and the phonological effect on the reader, who might understand something more than the simple metaphorical meaning that relies on the language of sense impression (taste, sight and so on). Indeed, love is an experience that requires a dynamic opening and welcome to someone different from the subject who experiences it. It follows that all the stylistic choices illustrated so far contribute to make meaning more lively. Also, they add a sense of fullness to the message sent: you certainly feel satisfied once you live a love experience.

argomentazione

Syntax too contributes, together with the semantic choice, to add to the idea of love as a dynamic process. You can see it if you compare the structure of line three in the first two sestets. They both rely on a progressive aspect of the verb. Indeed “growing on a purple tree” and “glowing in far Southern skies” both convey the idea of the pleasure one can feel when he or she is in love. The use of the progressive aspect hints at love as a transforming experience. In the third sestet, on the contrary, the speaker does not use the progressive aspect, but adds qualities to the metaphor of love. In particular, the adjective “stark” underlines a feature of love as an experience that asks for a commitment. Therefore the last sestet seems to play a warning function, which comes to the forefront at the end of the text.

argomentazione

If you carry on with the analysis of the second tercet in the different stanzas, you will soon realise that each one shows the consequences or the effects of the specific idea of love expressed in the previous metaphor.

In the first sestet the effect underlined by the speaker is a form of “enchantment”, a feeling that recalls the word “song” of the title, but the speaking voice warns both Lucinda and the reader that once you experience love, you will no longer be as you were before the experience, because you are under a “spell” and the speaking voice’s warning is that in a way or another you become addicted. The use of the verb “taste” in the imperative not only underlines the bodily aspect of love, it also lets the reader understand the feeling of loss you experience when your love is gone. It follows that the key idea developed in the first sestet is the one of love being a magic formula able to turn one’s life upside down.

argomentazione