

Forensic Stylistic Analysis on Per Ohlin's Suicide Note

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Abstrak

Ilmu forensik merupakan penerapan berbagai ilmu untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan penting dalam suatu sistem hukum yang mungkin berkaitan dengan tindak pidana. Cabang ilmu linguistik ini telah membantu beberapa penyelidikan dengan berperan penting dalam mengkaji teks-teks hukum seperti catatan bunuh diri. Oleh karena itu, tulisan ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi beberapa aspek dalam catatan bunuh diri penyanyi Swedia, Per Ohlin, seperti: emosi positif, negatif, dan kognisi yang ditemukan, penerapan analisis semantik forensik, dan struktur utama dari catatan itu sendiri. Kesimpulannya, dominasi emosi negatif yang terdapat pada tulisan terakhirnya membuktikan bahwa ia selalu mengasosiasikan dirinya dengan kematian dan hal itu dilakukan atas kemauannya sendiri melalui berbagai perbuatan jahat yang dilakukannya terhadap dirinya sendiri. Hasil analisis ini mengidentifikasi rincian catatan yang ditinggalkannya dan kebebasan yang diklaimnya setara dengan kematian.

Kata Kunci: *Forensik, Stilistika, Catatan Bunuh Diri, Linguistik*

Abstract

Forensic science is the application of various sciences to answer questions that are important to a legal system which may be related to criminal acts. This branch of linguistics has helped several investigations by playing an important role in examining legal texts such as suicide note. Hence, this paper aims to identify several aspects in the suicide note of Swedish singer, Per Ohlin, such as: the positive, negative, and cognition emotions discovered, application of namely forensic semantic analysis, and the main structure of the note itself. In conclusion, the dominance of negative emotion found in his last writing proved that he had always associated himself into the death and it was done by his own will by several harms he did on himself. The result of this analysis identified the details of the note he left and the freedom he claimed equals to death.

Keywords : *Forensic, Stylistic, Suicide Notes, Linguisti*

INTRODUCTION

Forensics (derived from the Latin word "forensis" which means "from outside", and is cognate with the word forum which means "public place") is a field of science that is used to assist the process of upholding justice through the process of applying knowledge or science. Forensic science (usually abbreviated to forensics) is the application of various sciences to answer questions that are important to a legal system which may be related to criminal acts. Forensic linguistics is a field of applied linguistics trying to scientifically analyze the linguistic evidence of something crime for law enforcement purposes; or in simple terms, forensic linguistics is the application of the principles and methods of linguistic studies in legal and law enforcement matters (McMenamin, 2002).

Application of linguistic principles and methods in legal matters contains the meaning of an application of knowledge in various ways linguistic theory that can be used to analyze samples language under investigation. Therefore, forensic linguists can utilize the results of

analyzes carried out in various linguistic fields. Forensic linguistic work spans everything from plagiarism, insurance contracts, trademarks and court procedures to obtaining patents, confessions, suicide notes, sound recordings, verbal crimes/ speech, and murder. Forensic linguistics enlarges legal analysis through the careful application of agreed upon scientific principles of linguistic analysis to legal evidence (Andrew & Volume, 2005).

Forensic stylistics is used to analyze the language for the purpose of resolving questions mainly in relation to authorship. Forensic stylistics has been used on numerous occasions to find out the identity of the author of the document (McMenamin, 1993). In forensic stylistics, writing style is examined for the express purpose of resolving litigated questions related to disputed authorship or meaning. Forensic stylistics focus on the linguistic pattern of the author which are always unique to the writer and the patterns can be empirically described for identification of the author. Why writer chooses a specific form and another writer opts for another form to express the same thing is based on various factors such as linguistic capability. It is also considered that a writer's choice is determined by their external environment and it becomes a subconscious habit as a result of which the stylistics can be helpful in identification of a writer.

Per Yngve Ohlin (16 January 1969 – 8 April 1991) was a Swedish singer, primarily in the Norwegian black metal group Mayhem. He has the stage name Dead and is also the singer in the Swedish black/thrash metal band Morbid on a demo tape entitled December Moon. Per Ohlin was known for his morbid personality and obsession with death. Per Ohlin is known for his bizarre stage acts. For example, he buries his clothes a few weeks before a concert and digs them up again before going on stage. In this way, he said, he could feel "the essence of death"; with torn, dirty, mossy and insect-eaten clothes. On a tour with Mayhem, he found a dead crow which he put in a plastic bag. Before starting a performance, he often smelled the contents of the bag to "inhale the smell of death." Several times he injured himself with broken glass and a hunting knife. During a concert in Sarpsborg, Norway in 1990, he injured himself so badly that he had to be taken to hospital due to blood loss. Per Ohlin was also part of the "inner circle" or "the Black Circle", a group of Norwegian black metal musicians with members such as Øystein 'Euronymous' Aarseth, Varg Vikernes (Burzum), and Faust (Emperor) who were associated with Øystein's record shop Helvete.

On April 8, 1991, his bandmate, Øystein 'Euronymous' Aarseth, found Per Ohlin dead by suicide by cutting his own wrists and a gunshot to the head. The note he wrote before he died was "Excuse all the blood. Cheers." Hellhammer said that Per Ohlin also apologized for using a gun in the house, but that the knife was not sharp enough to kill himself. Euronymous then quickly bought a recycled camera and made a photo of Per Ohlin 's corpse, which was later used on the cover of the bootleg album Dawn of the Black Hearts. Aarseth was also said to have eaten part of Per Ohlin's brain, and made a necklace from fragments of his skull, although Aarseth denied the former in interviews. This necklace was later stolen during a tour. He also supposedly sent some skull fragments to bands he deemed "worthy", for example the Swiss band Samael and Morgan S. Håkansson of Marduk. An image of his dead body was used as the cover of the bootleg live album The Dawn of the Black Hearts (1995). Per Ohlin's death marked a turning point in the history of the Norwegian black metal scene, leading to a wave of irrational behavior within the scene.

METHOD

The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this paper. Creswell (1994) defines qualitative research as an unfolding model that occurs in a natural context and allows the researcher to generate a level of depth through great involvement in the actual experiences. There is observation data collection strategies used in this investigation. Observations are made by paying great attention to the suicide notes Per Ohlin left in 1991 and now it's shared on the internet. These following steps are applied in researching the problem; (1) finding the positive, negative and cognitive emotions by highlighting each word or sentence on the suicide note, (2) analysing the suicide note by using semantic analysis, (3) addressing the structures

found on the suicide note such as date, greetings, content (first sentence, body, purpose, final) and closing, (4) drawing the conclusion is the final point of this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Finding Positive, Negative, and Cognitive Emotions

Excuse the blood, but I have slit my wrists and neck. It was the intention that I would die in the woods so that it would take a few days before I was possibly found. I belong in the woods and have always done so. No one will understand the reason for this anyway. To give some semblance of an explanation I'm not a human, this is just a dream and soon I will awake. It was too cold and the blood was coagulating all the time, plus my new knife is too dull. If I don't succeed dying to the knife I will blow all the shit out of my skull. Yet I do not know. I left all my lyrics by "Let the good times roll" -- plus the rest of the money. Whoever finds it gets the fucking thing. As a last salutation may I present "Life Eternal". Do whatever you want with the fucking thing. / Pelle.

Blue = Positive emotions (2)

Red = Negative emotions (4)

Yellow = Cognitive emotion (1)

Forensic Semantic Analysis

Researchers will furthermore analyze Per Ohlin's suicide note to delve deeper into the real meaning behind it. Researchers have divided each line on the note into several sections as follows:

1. On his first suicide attempt, we may assume that Per Ohlin failed to end his life by slitting his wrists and his throat. We can see from the translated version of his suicide note that says *"If I don't succeed dying to the knife I will blow all the shit out of my skull."* He also continued with *"plus my new knife is too dull"*. Apparently, the cuts didn't kill him that he had to shoot himself in the head with a shotgun.
2. As said from the note *"It was the intention that I would die in the woods so that it would take a few days before I was possibly found"*, the musician have planned on the way his death going to be. He then was found dead in the woods with blood all over him and a scratch on his wrists from a deep knife.
3. *"I'm not a human, this is just a dream and soon I will awake."* The musician was, in fact, an extremely unstable individual with serious mental problems. Along with his obsession with death, Per Ohlin even made his stage name as 'Dead'. This line represents his longing thoughts and how he always wanted to live in another world in a calm state of mind but could only be achieved by breaking the trance through an act of violence.
4. In the line *"I left all my lyrics by "Let the good times roll" -- plus the rest of the money. Whoever finds it gets the fucking thing."* He indicated that anyone who finds them can do whatever they want with it, as he emphasized it again in *"Do whatever you want with the fucking thing."*
5. The letter ends with *"As a last salutation may I present "Life Eternal"'*. Per Yngve "Pelle" Ohlin wrote a song called "Life Eternal" before he committed suicide.

The structure of Per Ohlin's suicide note

1. Date

The writer did not write the date or the day of the letter is written.

2. Greetings

The writer also didn't write any greetings as the letter isn't specifically send to particular person, because the letter is sent to whoever found the writer's dead body. However, the writer begins the letter with a direct and disturbing statement regarding the presence of blood and the act of self-harm.

3. Content

a. The first sentence

"Excuse the blood, but I have slit my wrists and neck."

In the suicide notes, the writer really wrote the first sentence very straightforward about disturbing content such as blood, slitting his wrist and neck. As it said, in a

statement, the first sentence is the very important part. Because the first sentence showed how the letter is going to be, and from Per Ohlin's first sentence, it's very clear that he's writing a very unsettling letter about his struggle and death.

b. The Body

"It was the intention that I would die in the woods so that it would take a few days before I was possibly found. I belong in the woods and have always done so. No one will understand the reason for this anyway. To give some semblance of an explanation I'm not a human, this is just a dream and soon I will awake. It was too cold and the blood was coagulating all the time, plus my new knife is too dull. If I don't succeed dying to the knife I will blow all the shit out of my skull."

In the body of a letter, the writer typically discusses their feelings and the events that have happened. From the first sentence of the body, the writer talked about his plan to locate his dead body in the forest. The writer states his intention to die there as a connection to nature when he wrote *"I belong in the wood sand have always done so."* The selection of this location suggests a deeper psychological and emotional context by indicating a yearning for isolation and a return to nature. The writer also talks about his feeling where the note conveys *"I'm not a human, this is just a dream"* imply a deep sense of alienation and separation from mankind. This suggests that existential or identity issues may have been on the author's mind. The writer adds a sense of anxiety and desperation to the account of the challenges he faced during the self-inflicted injuries, including the chilly weather and problems with their knife.

c. Purpose

"Yet I do not know. I left all my lyrics by 'Let the good times roll'—plus the rest of the money. Whoever finds it gets the fucking thing."

People also write about their future plans and the reason behind writing a letter in their personal correspondence. The writer arranges their possessions, specifically addressing music and money, and includes a hint to *"Let the good times roll."* This can be interpreted as his last act of letting go of his material belongings. As the writer himself also wrote as if he didn't care about his belongings anymore because he didn't think about the future plans.

d. Final

"As a last salutation may I present 'Life Eternal'. Do whatever you want with the fucking thing."

With the words *"Life Eternal"* and a disclaimer that leaves the reader to determine what to do with the items, the suicide note closes in an ambiguous and scary way. It seems like the writer intend to leave freely without thinking of what could happened after he died as he wrote do whatever you want.

4. Closing

The writer ended his note with his nickname, Pelle

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, forensic stylistics is a branch of linguistics to examine the evidences of law enforcement purpose. In this paper, the writers intend to apply this theory into the suicide note of Swedish singer, Per Ohlin. The analyses result explanations of the last note semantically, further explanation of structural suicide note he left, and the findings of emotions in it. The emotions discovered were domineered by negativity before positivity and cognitive came along, this proved the semantic analysis on several lines highlighted that Per Ohlin had been associating himself tightly with death to the extent it was called an obsession. In other words, his choice in ending his life was a form of righteous act he considered a fate. Moreover, the structural result showed several aspects such as: greeting, content (first sentence, the body, purpose, finale), and closure with simply his name.

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