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## Frustration and Abandoned Hope in Section 7 of "Out of the Blue" by Simon Armitage

In Section 7 of *Out of the Blue*, Armitage builds the tragic tension, this section describes the panic experienced by the workers in the Tower after the plane struck and commemorates the experience of those in the Towers, making the reader contemplate its legacy. Graphically, the section appears solid, but within the prose the shattering impact of the plane upon the building is portrayed. The end to this section creates a cut off as the English Trades is trapped with now possibility of escape, setting the tone of hopelessness that explains the Trades actions with the last section, whilst dealing with inevitable death.

The structure of this Section is a continual stanza, composed of many imperative sentences. Armitage, like Shakespeare before him, uses prose to illustrate the powerlessness of the realist characters. It can be interpreted that the form represents the Towers prior to the plane collision, with each sentence arguably mirroring in miniature the individual floors. As the stanza is unbroken there is the sense of solidity which is comparable to the image of the global success of capitalism symbolised by the Twin Towers. The personas experience is written in first person, enabling the experience of the English Trader to reflect the wider experience of the victims. The continuous use of short sentences within a prose poem, such as "Call home. No way" creates a frenzied pace, which when read aloud sounds disjointed. This is reflective of the sudden nature of the attack, which elevates the mood from the haunted feel of Section 6, to the panic and despair that comes with the realisation of entrapment. It can be interpreted that mirroring is used to foreshadow the second attack. In Section 9 the word "mirror" is used to describe the attack on the North Tower and the structure of Section 7 is an inverted reflection, the likes of which could be produced by a mirror, which connects the result of the first attack with the second attack. At the end of Section 7 there is an additional repetition of two sentences- "sit tight for now. Go up. Go down"- creating the sense that the personas options are narrowing, emphasising the panic as the persona is unable to think rationally. In restating the same choice, it suggests he is unwilling to give in. The phrase "Go up. Go down" is oxymoronic, which heightens the sense of disorder as the conflict within the lexis almost cancels each other out. The end stop after "Go up" is not apparent in other repetitions which adds to the sense of the personas frustration. This creates a peak in the poem that contrasts to the thoughtful tone of Section 8 and 13. The reflection creates an image of the Section folding in on itself; much like the tower did, which creates a sense of universal upheaval. The international scale of disorder is present through Armitage's use of international pronouns and place names, such as "Abdoul" in Section 6, as well as the image of "Brighton" in Section 4 which develops the image of the terrorist attack as one on global capitalism and not merely an attack on America.

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In Section 7 the voice progresses from passive hope to frustrated bleakness. The voice's use of black humour portrays the abandoned hope; the horrified joke "What with? With what – with a magic carpet?" illustrates his frustration. The humour of a "magic carpet" portrays the hope of escape as a fantasy. The use of an image from a child's film creates a brutal contrast between fairy tales and reality. The repetition of the alliterative "w" produces a whispering tone that conveys a sense of wistfulness, this is emphasised by the midline break creating the sense that the persona struggled to complete the thought admitting his defeat. Armitage also uses chiasmus creating an interline reflection as though the confusion is taking over the persona. This conveys the change in the persona from the optimism of Section 6, where he states that a colleague "is too be married in a month". The fact that he says "is" instead of "was" portrays his now fruitless belief that they will live, which progress' to the realisation that their fates are sealed.

Another key theme of this section is division, which Armitage uses linguistic choices to convey. The phrase "use a skirt, use a shirt", creates an inner line rhyme between "skirt" and "shirt", linking the two pieces of clothing which are symbolic of the office environment and the genders. Skirts are symbols of femininity which oppose the male shirt, the removal of these items creates a sense of the frantic shedding of their office personas. The link between the two genders creates equality, showing that in tragedy and death divisions are unimportant. This comes in contrast to the inequality created in Section 4, as the male persona speaks of "my wife" who is at home; creating the sense of patriarchy. Section 7 progresses the poem from the inequality of work, to the equality of death, enabling the reader to connect with the events. The theme of divisions is furthered by Armitage's personification of a telephone claiming it is "dead". The word "dead" creates the sense of loss, which portrays the power of the telephone and the connection it provides to the outside world. It can also be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the many lives that would be lost because of the attack and the war it led to, since Armitage is writing with hindsight. Armitage uses end stops to create separation, ending this section with one "Go down." the literary cut off reflects the way individuals became separated from those on the ground by the physical and emotional separation the tragedy created. Which is reflective of the final divide created by death. This sense of loss for those that survived is epitomised by Section 13, which is set 5 years after the attack. This loss created a significant division both through the time that has passed and the divide between death and life.

One of the implicit themes in *Out of the Blue* is amoral capitalism and its influences on society, in Section 7 this theme is greatly criticised. The oxymoron used in this section "Move. Don't move" to reflect the panicked internal conflict of the speaker and those around him, which critique's authority as the contradictory instructions are useless. As authority cannot find a solution to the problem it can be interpreted represent its failures, as despite its attempts to provide for all, capitalism fails many citizens, just as the instructions fail to save lives. This critique of capitalism opposes the pedestal upon which the persona holds capitalism, in Section

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3 he triumphs when “selling sand to the desert” the alliteration of “s” emphasises the pride he takes in capitalism’s corruption. The view of capitalism progress’ in Section 7 as it displays how capitalism has led to chaos, which is crucial to the conclusion of Section 13 in which there is a haunting reflection of the physical and emotional isolation caused by the growth of greed.

In conclusion, Section 7 is a climactic point of the poem as the form, language and structure used heighten the tension. The purpose of this section is to replay the historical horror of the events and convey the agony of attempts to escape through the turmoil of the passage, which ends in the “end stop” preventing the weariness of the “Go up. Go down”, signifying the death of the Traders hope of escape. The structure creates disorder which contrasts with the sections that come both before and after, isolating this section. Armitage uses the language to portray the global scale of the events as well as the suffering and helplessness. This section enable those who would watch the documentary or read the poem to connect with the events of 9/11 as it both globalises the events and personalises it.

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