



EMILY DICKENSON'S AFTER GREAT PAIN, THE FORMAL FEELING COMES: LITERARY AND STYLISTIC APPROACHES

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ABSTRACT

Emily Dickenson is widely acclaimed as one of the greatest poets in the history of American literature. Her poetic power lies in her poetic style, spiritual themes and the accuracy of diction. Her poetry is profoundly stirring as it depicts acutely the nature and challenges in lives of human beings with profound feelings. Her poem *After the Great Pain the formal feeling comes* is regarded as the greatest poem in pain and death. This paper introduces Emily Dickinson as one of the brilliant American writers. Subsequently, the paper analyzes the poem literarily as it substantiates Dickenson's craftsmanship, in which she depicted three cohesive organic stages of pain and death in three successive stanzas. Thereafter, the paper examines the most dominant stylistic levels as proposed by Geoffrey N. Leech. More accurately, the paper analyzes the graphological and semantic deviations as they are the most prevailing and ostensible levels in the poem the poem.

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INTRODUCTION

Emily Dickenson is considered as one of the most original American writers who realistically and artistically used to argue in her poems various predicaments that encounter the human beings in their lives. Her poem *After Great Pain, the Formal Feeling* she emphasizes the universal fact that the soul departure into the other world normally by great pain and death is the ultimate end. Thereby, this poem is acknowledged as the best poem on pain and death. Accordingly, this paper will analyze literary and explore stylistically the graphological and Semantic levels as they seem to be the most prevailing deviations in the poem.

After Great Pain, the Formal Feeling Comes is considered as Dickenson's most famous poem about the pain before the death. It is magnificent poem as it stresses the eternal fact about the death which ends the lives of every human being. The poem explains in three stanzas the successive stages of the departure of the soul from the body of the human being. The poem ends with the formal service of the funeral as the body becomes immovable like the stone it is going to be moved into the eternal dark room 'tomb'.

Geoffrey N. Leech was a specialist in language and linguistics who contributed significantly in the field of literary stylistics. In his book *A linguistic Guide to English Poetry* (1969) he has explored a theory of stylistic deviations in which he enlisted a

number common deviations (graphological, lexical, phonological, morphological, syntactic semantic ...etc.). However in this paper we will analyze the poem *After Great pain Formal feeling comes* through only two stylistic levels, graphological and semantic levels.

Emily Dickenson as Literary Genius

Verily, Emily Dickenson is considered as one of the most influential poets in the American history. She is often described as a biologist and also a naturalist as she devoted some of her poem to the plants and animals. She quiet often utilizes them as objects for her metaphors, similes and symbols throughout the use of ecological and spiritual language. She shared the beauty of nature and created beautiful gardens in her own poems. Dickenson is considered as brilliant American poetess who began writing in the mid of nineteenth century, during the period of expansion or the period of the American civil war. In this particular period the American literary writers abandoned romanticism and moved into realism. Thereby, realism interpreted more conspicuously the humanity and peoples' destiny. Accordingly, realism has been appreciated by reader and audience more than romanticism.

However her deep religiosity can be accounted for the environment in which she was living. In fact Dickenson lived in Amherst village which was retaining a very deep rooted American puritanical identity. Despite, Dickenson is also viewed as one of the most original writers in history of the American letters. Her poetry is well-known for its unconventional punctuation, dashes and the accurate selection

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of words. Most of her poems are written in short forms with terse verbal expressions.

Over all, reading Dickens' poems one can realize the poetic method, poetic attitude and religious themes substantiate her unique literary genius.

After Great Pain, the Formal Feeling Comes: A Literary Analysis

Wittingly, Dickinson's poem *After Great Pain, the Formal Feeling Comes* is regarded as the best poem ever written on pain and death. The poem was written two years before her death. Artistically, it underlines the theme of inevitability of pain and death for all the human beings. It explains explicitly the successive stages of death as it starts with the pain of dying before the soul departure, then the process of numbing (the human being is helpless as pain increases till the human being begins accepts the power of pain that ends with looting the human consciousness) and thereafter the soul departs and the human body becomes cold and immovable like "piece of wood or stone". The poem consists of three stanzas that adequately and organically illustrate cohesive stages of death.

In the first stanza the speaker is talking about the serious pain which comes before the departure of the soul. It is painful moment as the soul will be extract from the human body and taken into the other world. This type of pain after a while makes the nerves of the human being "ceremonious" artificial and immovable like a "tomb" or "stone". Even the heart if the human beings become "stiff" i.e. senseless of pain and time. Dickenson, used the capitalized "He" to refer to Jesus Christ. It indicates here that even Jesus Christ could not escape the pain of death which he encountered during His crucifixion. Consequently, the excessive pain made the nerves and heart senseless and as a result the dying person begins to lose the conscious state of mind as the speaker lost the sense of time and became unable to know whether the pain is recent or was there since a century ago. Ultimately the speaker lost the sense of the self and begins to feel isolated from him/herself.

Thereafter, in the second stanza the speaker portrays how the dying person after being subjected to sever pain has lost the conscious state of mind. He begins feeling like floating on the air. The speaker feels that he neither belongs neither to the earth nor the world. The severe pain consequentially forces the dying person to lose control over his body parts and thereby begins free movements and moving around himself helplessly. Just for a while then the movements cease, the soul departs and the body of the dying person becomes like a piece of wood (immovable and senseless). Metaphorically, the speaker compared the dying body with the stone-both are senseless and immovable. In this stage the dying person accepted the excessive pain since there is no more pain like that anymore.

The Third stanza begins metaphorically by describing the human body after death as something heavy and immovable which is waiting to be moved "for leading" into the tomb. It the moment the body is carried by friends and relatives from the previous home into the dark eternal home. The speaker obliged here if he/she is going to survive after this pain he/she will he experience of dying. But it is rare because such pain brings the ultimate end of the human beings. The last line sums up the successive experience of dying as it first begins with pain, then stupor (state of unconscious due to the excessive pain) and thereafter chill (extreme cold, after the departure of

the soul). It ends with the formal service of burial and the journey to the eternal dark room for the human being.

Exploring the Graphological and Semantic Deviations

The present section makes an attempt to explore two types of linguistic deviations in the poem "after great pain, the formal feeling comes" and the reasons for the usage of linguistic deviations by Emily Dickinson. In fact, linguistic deviations embody stylistic beauty to the writing. The poem has been analyzed based on the theory of linguistic deviations which has been proposed by Leech in 1969. Undoubtedly, literary works always contain linguistic deviations and foregrounding. The linguistic deviation theory revolves around eight types of deviations. These types of deviations are lexical, graphological, phonological, semantic, grammatical, historical period, dialectal and deviation of registrar. The poets usually use these deviations for certain purposes which can be abrogating the regular norms of grammar, enhancing the aesthetic sense of the poems, showing certain emotions, creation of new words, enhancing the rhyming schemes in the poem and to make readers interpret certain phrases, sentences beyond the surface meanings. This section of the study provides a detailed analysis of two linguistic deviations supported by examples that have been extracted from the poem. Amongst the eight types of linguistic deviations proposed by Leech in his theory (1969), graphological and semantic deviations are discussed as they prevail in this poem.

Graphological deviations

This type of deviation is comparatively small and superficial portion of style. It concentrates and concerns linguistics problems such as spelling, capitalization, hyphenation, dash, italization and paragraphing. These problems are determined by syntax and are noticed in expressions when a graphological choice is made by a writer that is to come extent marked or unconventional, example can be intentional misspelling (Leech and Short, 1981). Graphological deviations are getting evolved since they are seen in different ways that people use to express : emphasis using, spacing and special symbols. Capitalization of different sizes is used for emphasis, irony, satire and other literacy purposes. Hyphen is used for two types of word separation: a break at the end of a line, and the parts of a compound word (green-eyed). It is also used to produce a contrast in meaning which is delivered (crystal, 2003). Dash is employed to exhibit a comment or after thought at the end of a sentence, or simply an incomplete utterance. Sometimes it is used to signal a missing word or letter. Graphological deviation is the most superficial level that is the easiest type to identify. It deals with the entire writing system. It is 'the characteristic line- by -line arrangement of poetry on the printed page', with irregular right-hand margins." The typographical line of poetry, like the typographical stanza, is a unit which is not paralleled in non-poetic varieties of English: it is independent of and capable of interacting with, the standard unit of punctuation. This interaction is a special communicative resource of poetry (Leech 1969). In brief, graphological deviation refers to the kind of print, grammatics, punctuation, indentation, etc. Graphology is the process which encodes meaning in visual symbols (Abbas, 2017). Examples of graphological deviations used and employed by Emily Dickinson in her poem "after great pain, the formal feeling comes' are as follows:

Capitalization

Emily Dickinson has employed this type of graphological deviation in many places throughout the poem. The capitalization occurs in lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 13. It disappears on lines 1, 8, 11. Below Look at the poem and looks how the capitalization occurs in many situations throughout the poem:

After great pain, a formal feeling comes-
 The Nerves sit ceremonious, like Tombs-
 The stiff Heart questions ‘was it He, that bore,’
 And ‘Yesterday, or Centuries before’?
 The Feet , mechanical, go round-
 A Wooden way
 Of Ground , or Air, or Ought-
 Regardless grown,
 A Quartz contentment, like a stone-
 This is the Hour of Lead-
 Remembered, if outlived,
 As Freezing persons , recollect the Snow-
 First- Chill- then Stupor – then the letting go-

From the above lines , we discover that the graphological deviation (capitalization) occurs in 18 words inside the lines through the whole poem. All these words form the linguistic deviations’ in the poem. Infact, Capitalization in writing intensifies the effect of the words and feelings. All these capitalized words are supposed to be decapitalized. Emily Dickinson deviates in these situations to draw the attention of the readers and to emphasize her meanings, emotions, feelings and meaningful messages.

Dash

Dash is one type of graphological deviations that is employed by Emily Dickinson in many lines through this poem. It occurs at the end of the lines 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, and 13.

Comes -	Line 1
Tombs -	Line 2
round -	Line 5
ought -	Line 7
Stone -	Line 9
Lead -	Line 10
Snow -	Line 12
go -	Line 13

This type of deviation also occurs in the middle of the last line to separate different words.

First -Chill- then Stupor – then the letting go

From the above examples, we find out that Emily Dickinson has used dash as a substitute for some punctuation marks which shows stronger effects or difference in meaning. In fact, dash at the end of a verse conveys that the sentence has not ended. Emily Dickinson has also employed the dash in the middle of the last line to indicate pauses, thinking and contemplations .By using the dash many times through this line, the line looks deviant in comparing with the other lines given above.

Punctuation

Being one of the most important elements in writing, punctuation includes the use of all the necessary marks such as a comma, colon, semicolon, period, dash, hyphen, ellipsis, blank, parenthesis, question mark and exclamation marks. In

this poem, Emily Dickinson has employed commas in many positions. Through the whole poem, commas are used 13 times i.e. 3 times at the end of lines and 10 times inside the lines. Generally speaking, Emily Dickinson has employed commas in many positions. Through the whole poem, commas are used 13 times i.e. 3 times at the end of lines and 10 times inside the lines. Generally speaking, Emily Dickinson has employed the comma frequently to indicate the pauses, caesuras and deeply thinking regarding the poem’s events and experiences. She has used question mark once at the end of the first stanza. There are three commas break the construction of this question that extend from the middle of the previous lines. The function of punctuation in poetry lies in the following aspects: Primarily from the conventional perspective, it is used to clarify meanings and avoid ambiguities by separating or joining together words, phrases, clauses, sentences or units of meaning. On the other hands, the unconventional way of using punctuation is capable of dragging the readers into and having the readers engrossed in the usually mysterious and imaginative literary world built by the poets (Li & Shi., 2015)

Semantic deviations

Semantic deviation is regarded as the most significant level of linguistic deviation since figurative language is the heart of the poetry. Semantic deviation exhibits a transfer in the meaning of words. It can be a phrase that contains a word whose meaning flouts the anticipation that is produced by the words which surround it. Semantic deviation refers to ‘nonsense’ or ‘absurdity’, but the sense in which the word or phrase has been used has a literal meaning that can be inconsistent logically or paradoxically in nature. Poets use semantic deviations to evoke psychological impressions. This kind of deviation is mostly used to prompt the reader to seek the underlying meanings of the words in order to interpret the text, following are the examples of semantic deviations which have been used by Emily Dickinson in her poem “ after great pain, a formal feeling comes.”

Metaphor

A metaphor is a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains. The different domains are known as the target domain and the source domain. The target domain is the concept that you draw upon in order to create the metaphorical construction (Simpson, 2004) .In this poem, Emily Dickinson has employed metaphors in some lines such as lines 2,3, 5, 6, 9 and 10. The collocations of words in these lines are logically and semantically incompatible. The collocations of words in these lines are “herves + sit”, “heart + questions”, “Feet + mechanical”, “Wooden + way”, “Quartz + contentment” and “Hour + lead”.

Personification

Wales (2014) defines personification as a figure of speech or trope in which an inanimate object, animate non-human, or abstract quality is given human attributes: a kind of metaphor. Emily Dickinson has employed personification in lines 2 and 3, i.e. in the beginning of these following two lines:

The Nerves sit ceremonious Line 2
 The Stiff Heart questions..... Line 3

Simile

Simile is one of the stylistic devices used to reinforce a certain feature of a thing. It is an important instrument for comparing

two objects by using the formal elements of the simile in its framework; the connective words such as 'like', 'as', 'such as', 'as if', 'seem', etc. are used. Abrams (1980) asserts that "in a simile a comparison between two distinctly different things is indicated by the word 'like' or 'as'". Galperin (1977) defines simile as one. Object is brought into contact with another object that is belonging to a different class of things. Emily Dickinson has used simile in some lines such as line 2 with the marker (like), in line 9 with the marker (like) and in line 12 with the marker (as). In these positions, Emily Dickinson likens some things with other things.

Epithet

According to Lehtsalu et al. (1973), epithet is a figure of speech denoting a permanent or temporary quality of a person, thing, idea or phenomenon and characterizing it from the point of view of subjective perception. An epithet can be expressed by an attributive word, phrase, combination of words or sometimes by a whole sentence. An epithet has always an emotional meaning or connotation. The emotional meaning may either accompany the denotational meaning or it may exist independently. In this poem, epithets may appear in some noun phrases such as great pain, formal feeling, stiff heart, wooden way and freezing persons.

CONCLUSION

Emily Dickenson is a real genius poet whose faculty was not nurtured by constant travel, nor by official educational training, but rather by the humanness with the small creatures which the Americans don't routinely realize and rarely appreciate. This paper testifies the craftsmanship of the Dickenson as a literary genius and a realistic poet who describes the predicaments that challenge the human beings accurately and tersely. The literary analysis of the poem substantiates Dickinson's brilliance as a poet. Subsequently, the poem was examined stylistically just through the semantic and graphological levels, as they were seen the most prevailing in the poem. However, the poem was constructed artistically and arranged psychologically and scientifically. It consists of three stanzas that depict successive and interrelated stages of pain and death as if the poetess died once and described her experience. Therefore, the poem is considered as the best poem ever written on pain and death.

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