

PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology

INVESTIGATING GRAPHOLOGICAL PARALLELISM: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ROBERT BROWNING'S MY LAST DUCHESS (1993)

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Investigating Graphological Parallelism: A Stylistic Analysis of Robert Browning's My
Last Duchess (1993) -- PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt/Egyptology 19(2),
1254-1262. ISSN 1567-214x**

**Key Words: Graphological Level, Parallelism, Social Issues, Linguistics Pattern, My
Last Duchess.**

ABSTRACT

The chief objective of the study is to analyze the stylistic features of the poem My Last Duchess by Robert Browning. The poem has multilayered meaning which is investigated through different tools of analysis. Graphological Parallelism is being applied to the poem to find out the themes. The poem is interpreted through parallelism to find out the themes. Moreover, the study focuses on the male supremacy in the Victorian age in Robert Browning My Last Duchess by using the theory of foregrounding to highlight the prominent and foregrounded element in the text. The thesis portrayed the main controversy of the Victorian age that is male supremacy and found that graphic patterns of the poem corresponded to social problems. The model of stylistic element of the same pattern and form of the words, as well as other markings of the poetry, are described in detail. This research explored the suggestivity through punctuations, commas, exclamation, and questions marks. It found that graphic and typographic patterns of the poem corresponded to the social problems of the Victorian era. The thesis attempts to explore the ways Robert Browning uses graphological patterns in his poem, My Last Duchess.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The poem My Last Duchess has been interpreted by a number of critics and scholars from different perspectives, though it still awaits an objective analysis. For this purpose, a stylistics analysis will be followed in the present study by exploring graphological levels in My Last Duchess (1993). The poem My Last Duchess by Robert Browning portrays the patriarchal society in the Victorian

age where Women were maltreated and male were considered superior to women. Moreover, this male supremacy is still observed in the whole world through which injustice is to be done with every women of the male dominating society. Besides, Women are still considered inferior to men, so for the tortured women, this study will give courage and strength to female. Furthermore, such male dominating society still exists in many parts of the world where women are still badly treated. This study aims to determine the cause of patriarchal society in the Victorian age and identify the factors or reasons of Male supremacy. Through literature the society can be indirectly formed, especially through objective analysis so that it could appeal to many. The present research is also a small contribution to the reformation of the society. Hence, it is precisely in this context that the researcher aim to examine the male dominancy over women, and stylistic is the only platform that provides tools to explore such implicit meanings in a literary piece of work. In this regard, stylistics can provide better tools for analysis. According to Geoffrey N. Leech (2014), stylistic defines the relation between language and art. It is a linguistic approach to literature. On the other hand, Leech (1968, 57) also claimed that foregrounding is basically to leave a normal way of use of language or break the socially accepted rules or norms. Stylistic effects occur in literature through foregrounding at the phonological, semantic, graphological and syntactic levels. Foregrounding can be realized in two forms either through parallelism or through deviation. Parallelism refers to some sorts of linguistic repetition. While deviation refers to encounter with something different what is expected. This study is more focused on the parallelism; in particular, graphological levels of parallelism are examined in the selected poem.

Parallelism may be defined as the resemblance of characteristics in successive lines of poetry. It is important to note, however, that parallelism applies not only to poetic writings, but to any works in which language resources are deliberately used to generate beauty and transmit meaning (Leech & Short 2007)). Thus, parallelism may be seen in everyday communication, advertising, public speaking, such as political speeches, nursery songs, oral storytelling, and so on. Because parallel parts have a high pattern of recurrence, they capture people's attention and generate a valued impact. In this sense, Leech (1967) contends that a talented artist may choose to utilize words that not only share their meaning but also share certain sounds, therefore producing a musical pattern via parallelism. This study examined that the poet has employed pattering of various language elements to emphasize specific thoughts or sentiments in order to connect directly with the reader. As a result, the poet employs recurrent pattering to highlight the issue that needs to be highlighted. Thus, parallelism happens at several language levels, and one item may appear at multiple levels at the same moment. Because this work focuses on graphic devices, greater emphasis is placed on parallelisms caused by graphological structure.

GRAPHOLOGICAL LEVEL

This level is defined as the investigation of linguistic patterns in print. Khan and Jabeen (2015) see this as a study of a language's writing system and established spelling standards. According to Leech (1969), graphology transcends orthography since it pertains to the entire writing system. Similarly, it is referred to as a level of linguistic analysis that focuses on the arrangement of texts, the

size or form of words, and any other graphical element (Yeibo and Akerele, 2015). The purpose of graphology in a text is to catch the reader's attention. Graphology gives the reader a strong impression by revealing the writer's exact thoughts. Punctuation (comma, full stop, colon, semi-colon, and quotation marks, for example), paragraphing, spacing, foregrounding of structures, and so on are examples of graphological devices. All of these technologies have stylistic implications.

Statement of the problem

Stylistics is a subfield of applied linguistics that studies style in texts by focusing on linguistic features. This study investigates the linguistic graphological features of parallelism as a graphic resource used by English the English poet in his poems. A literary work is written in a language, and in order to fully comprehend the work, there must be a remedy for language in all of its aspects. As a result, studying a text's language through stylistics and parallelism is an important point for literary interpretation and meaning production. Hence this study aims at investigating what linguistic choices are used as parallelism in My Last Duchess and what meanings the devices arise.

LITERATURE REVIEW

My Last Duchess (1993) by Robert Browning is a classic poem which has been a center of interest for many literary and linguistic scholars. The poem, according to Aboud (2020), contradicts Grice's maxims. He analyzed the material using textual analysis and saw it through the lens of Grice's dictum. Most of the time, the maxims of quantity and quality have been broken. On the other hand, Farajallah et al (2015) claim that women were treated as slaves in the Victorian era, as evidenced by the poem My Last Duchess s. Robert Browning wrote this poem. In this poem, they demonstrated the supremacy of Victorian males over women. Jehjoo et al (2018) have thrown light on the parallelism and its kinds like Morphological, syntactic, semantic and phonological in a "Parallelism as a stylistic device. Azhar et al (2014) have detected the theme of love in the poem "In the rain" by E.E Cumming and the style of the poet by applying different levels of foregrounding such as Graphological level, grammatical level, syntactic level, lexical level, Phonological level and semantic level. Moreover, the traces of deviations are also perceived in the poem to show the style of the writer as well as features of the poem. Khan et al. (2021) conducted a stylistic analysis of Ali's novel "Twilight in Delhi." They highlight such situations to depict the novel's paternalistic approach. Furthermore, they believe that the element remorse can be revealed in the novel through foregrounding. Al Halhooli (2017) used stylistic tools to examine the linguistic technique of parallelism in the poetry of Al-Ahwas and Al-Ansari. They also looked at the Epanaphora and Epanalepsis in this poem to determine the text's depth or dominant idea. Furthermore, they identified musicality in the poetry through parallelism. The studies show how multiple researchers examined this poem from various angles during their investigation. The foregrounding theory is thus applied to this poem. From this vantage point, it has received little attention previously. As a result, the primary goal of this research is to investigate graphological features in order to determine how they communicate various ideas to readers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is theoretical and analytical in nature, and it makes extensive use of library resources. As a result, a stylistic approach is used as an analysis technique in this study to further examine the selected poem. The linguistic technique, i.e. graphological was used in this study, and it was primarily focused on a stylistic analysis of graphic resources (capitalization, punctuation) using parallelism structure as a tool for data analysis and discussion.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section of the study presents data analysis resulting from graphological foregrounding elements. Parallelism is the rhetorical structural pattern or technique that deals with the phonetic union that exists between two or more lexical elements in a text that have a paradigmatic or syntagmatic link, as explored in the literature review. It is frequently used in the sense that the author frequently employs graphological modes of expression to demonstrate parallelism in the poetry. The parallelism in the following lines of My Last Duchess (1993) is clearly demonstrated in the following analysis of My Last Duchess (1993).

Punctuations

Question Mark (?) is an important sign which foregrounds the meaning, in this poem, questions marks have frequently been used which attract the reader's attention. It is a punctuation mark which indicates a question that is an uncertainty or doubt about something. The “?” question mark occurs five times in the aforementioned poem, My Last Duchess. However, the “?” mark is being repeated five times in the poem to foreground the situation or to capture the reader attention towards the women living in darkness. So, the poet has pointed out the ages of all time. Moreover, the poet seemed very aggressive at that time because it was normally believed that women were more suffered and tortured than men. Furthermore, the question mark “?” has come after sentences of “will't please you sit and look at her?, A heart how shall I say?, This sort of trifling?, much the same smile? And will't please you rise?” Which clearly shows that the poet is indicating the situation of women and wants to catch our mind towards the sentences? Moreover, he asserts that women are treated badly and considered unimportant in the society “This sort of trifling?” Lastly, in the question, “will't please you rise?” the poet himself is raising his voice against this brutality and used a satire to mock us by asking a motivational question.

Comma (,)

A comma is a punctuation mark that represents a short pause and is used to separate the parts of a sentence. It also represents the continuity between the events in a text. The comma has been detected 40 times in this poem that denotes the continuity in ages. So, here the poet has taken our mind to the different ages that are famous for male dominancy over females. However, the repeated occurrence of comma has been compared to the repeatedly unsolved issue of male supremacy of every age which is still very common. So, it has clearly been shown from the 40 times occurrence of comma in this poem that it is now the

biggest problem of every age which is still going on and will be continued till the dooms day.

Semicolon (;)

Semicolon is a punctuation mark that links between two independent closely related clauses in a sentence. The semicolon has been mentioned nine times in the poem that represents the rights of both male and female. Furthermore, the poet is throwing light on the rights of female that the rights should be equally given to both male and female. In connection to this, the poet is demanding an independency or freedom for female from male supremacy. The poet repeated the semicolon nine times in the poem stresses the idea that women should be independently separated from men like the semicolon separates the two independent clauses in a sentence.

Dash (_)

It is a punctuation mark used in a sentence to set off an idea which means to start a journey of an idea about something. The dash punctuation mark has been repeated 10 times in the poem through which the poet clearly indicates to initiate the idea of protest against such big issues of male supremacy. Besides, the male supremacy is not only the issue but the women in the society were dragging down as much as they could and it is still happening. So, the 10 times used of dash punctuation mark only aim to start a moment which is only for women welfare and their rights, In addition, the poet is basically of the opinion about an organization for women that not to go anywhere else and bow their heads in front of their men.

Hyphen (-)

It is a punctuation mark used to join words in a sentence or parts of words. It can also be used to separate the syllables of a single word. The process of hyphenated word is called hyphenation. However, it is mostly used in a compound words or compound modifiers before a noun. Similarly, compound modifiers are also called phrasal adjective such as “a dog-friendly hotel”. A compound modifiers basically modify a noun like the “dog-friendly modify a noun “hotel”. So, the hyphen has been seen 5 times in this poem My Last Duchess by Robert Browning who is trying to modify or bring partial or minor changes in the behavior of male of the Victorian age as well as the present age because the hyphen is mostly used in the compound modifier that modify a noun. Similarly, According to the poet, the duke did not like her blushing on everything which was actually a common courtesy for him but it would bring laughter on her face so here it reveals that Victorian era was full of pride and class consciousness. Besides, the second hyphenated word “My gift of a nine-hundred-year-old name with anybody’s gift” here the compound modifier modifies the noun that is his name in the Victorian age. However, the poet through this hyphenated word, presented the class of the men in the Victorian era because here the speaker, the duke in this poem was not sensitive about her but was of his name which was somehow hundred years ago. He didn’t want her to compare his name with anybody’s gift because it would have a great

impact on his status, name. Moreover, the third hyphenated word “Notice Neptune, though, Taming a sea_ horse thought a rarity, which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me” also modified a noun bronze which was a statue, a statue of Neptune. So, here the poet compares the duke with Neptune (a roman god of sea) to show his class, pride and superiority.

In addition, the hyphenated word also modified a noun (Bronze of Neptune) which was a symbol of Power. That is how it suggests that the poet wanted to bring minor changes in the behavior of the duke because he was considered himself as a” God figure”. Now after analyzing each hyphenated word, it can be concluded that the men in the Victorian era was full of pride and class based society while the poet through his poetry and by using the hyphenated words indicated a change in the men as behaviours in the Victorian age.

Similarly, such characters of both male and female too exist in our nowadays society like the pride, status etc. but mostly class based society if you belong to a lower class then you will be treated accordingly by the upper class. Besides, females in our society may also carry such traits due to which they become a threatened for their own society so the poet basically also gives indication towards the nowadays society that they should also firstly change themselves and then others.

Full stop (.)

It is a punctuation mark used to indicate the end of a statement or declarative sentence. It is used to express the completion of an idea. The full stop appears 14 times in the poem” My Last Duchess” by Robert Browning. So, here it suggests the end of an idea of having informal behavior of the Victorian women towards their men because it would not only harm that time society but also the consequences would be faced by the present age. Moreover, the full stop used in the poem understudy after the sentences also gave the idea to finish or stop the cordial behavior of women towards the men in the Victorian age.

In addition, a group of words “Looking as if she were alive” in My Last Duchess also proclaimed that the wife of the duke was not alive and the duke didn’t want his wife alive so here this line is being presented as an ironical statement because the duke was happy that she was not alive but he just pretended to be sad and said in a way that he was not happy with her death but the poet basically also wanted that women of the Victorian age should stop such behavior otherwise they would get killed like the wife of the Duke. Furthermore, the line “and there she stands.” With a full stop in the poem also revealed that the words suggest not to stand in front of anyone or stop facing and Standing in front of everybody. The lines “Are you turn and ask thus.” “Paint must never hope to reproduce the faint Half-flush that dies along her throat.” So here the painted was very joyous not only because of her husband but also due to the presence of painter that is why the poet here again stopped the women by using the punctuation mark full stop of Victorian age not to blush because of and in front of anyone. In this connection, the lines “For calling up that spot of joy. She looked on, and her looks went everywhere. Or blush, at least. “With anybody’s gift. Never to stoop ,Then all smiles stopped together. As if alive , The company

below, then, at starting, is my object, Together down, sir” are with full stops which clearly proved one thing that the poet didn't allow the women of the Victorian age to have blush or smile on their face because of anybody instead of their husbands. Moreover, he was of the opinion to stop that informal idea of being friendly with anyone except their husbands because it would become a reason for their death. Likewise, it is presented in the above poetic lines of the poem that the wife of the duke was friendly to everyone and would look everywhere that is why the duchess was being killed by her husband thus the poem also gives lesson to the present age not to follow the Victorian women otherwise they will also follow the same consequences.

Exclamation Mark (!)

It is a punctuation mark that is basically used to express the strong feelings or to emphasize an idea or something. The exclamation mark has been repeated thrice in the poem through which the poet is showing an emphasis, stress, or strong feelings about the materialistic men and women of the Victorian era. The lines, “Sir, 'twas all one! My favor at her breast, The dropping of the daylight in the West, The bough of cherries some officious fool Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule She rode with round the terrace” suggest the Victorian era as a materialistic era because here in these lines these materialistic things like bough of cherries brought smile and happiness on her face of the Duke's wife. Moreover, the exclamation mark with this line “She thanked men—good!” also showed a stress or emphasis on the materialistic approach towards the men of the Victorian women in a sense that she was feeling very happy at that time whenever she got a gift from anybody not only her husband so the poet here also proved the Victorian era as materialistic era.

On the other hand, men are presented as materialistic through the line “Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!” also gave an indication towards the statue (bronze), a statue of Neptune roman God of the sea. So here the exclamation mark also showed the stress on pride or status which was everything for the Victorian men at that time. Besides, emotions and feelings had no value in front of them. Moreover, men were always in search of power or prestige or status while the women were always looking for wealthy and precious things. So, after analyzing each and every sentence with an exclamation mark, it has been concluded that by emphasizing and expressing a strong feelings about the big issue of materialism of the era, the poem only suggests to unmask the materialistic approach of men and women of the Victorian that is why it has been repeated only thrice in the poem.

Quotation Marks

Inverted commas actually show where the speech or quotation begins or ends. It is also sometimes used around the word, phrase, sentence that is being discussed in the text. So, the point of view of the poem is kept changing to foreground the situation or to attract the reader attention. Similarly, he changes the person of pronoun from 1st person to 2nd person and then 3rd. Moreover, the words, sentences and phrases “Fra Pandolf”, “Her mantle laps Over my lady's wrist too much,” or “Paint Must never hope to reproduce the faint Half-

flush that dies along her throat.” and “Just this Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss, Or there exceed the mark”. So, the above quoted phrase or sentences clearly targeted the persona of the Duke.

CONCLUSION

Based on Leech's (1969) theory, this study examines the graphological parallelism in Robert Browning's poem, *My Last Duchess*. The use of parallelism in the chosen poem is important. Moreover, Graphology refers to a language's writing system, as manifested in handwriting and typography, as well as other related features such as capitalization and punctuation. The question mark (?) is an important sign that accentuates the meaning. A question mark is a punctuation mark that represents the act of women living in darkness, and a comma is a pause that represents a brief pause in a text. As a result, Shakespeare has identified the ages of all time by analyzing the punctuation marks in his works. The comma appears 40 times in this poem, indicating the continuity in time taken to the male dominance over females, which remains an unresolved issue. The semicolon appears nine times in the poem, which represents both male and female rights. Furthermore, the hyphen (-) is a punctuation mark used to join words, and hyphenated words indicate partial or minor changes in Victorian male behaviour. Furthermore, the hyphenated word (*Bronze of Neptune*) represents Power. A full stop (.) marks the end of the idea of Victorian women's informal behaviour toward their men. Exclamation The man's feelings about the materialistic Victorian era are expressed by Mark (!) Furthermore, men were always looking for power, prestige, or both. Shakespeare has identified the ages of all time by analyzing the punctuation marks in his works. The question mark, comma, semicolon and hyphenated words are used to represent Victorian male behaviour. Furthermore, the study examined that men were always looking for power, prestige, or status, whereas women were always looking for wealthy and valuable things. So, after examining each sentence with an exclamation mark, it has been concluded that by emphasizing and expressing strong feelings about the big issue of materialism of the era, the poem only suggests unmasking the materialistic approach of Victorian men and women, which is why it has only been repeated three times in the poem. Inverted commas underscore the male persona, such as Duke.

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