Stylistic Analysis of Dorothy Parker's Poem "A Dream Lies Dead"

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Abstract:

This paper investigates the types of figurative and phonological features used by Dorothy Parker in her poem "A Dream Lies Dead." Based on Geophry Leech and Mick Short's (2007) framework of literary analysis, the poem employs various figurative and phonological schemes, including imagery, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, and anaphora, as well as rhyme, repetition, assonance, and consonance. The paper addresses three main questions related to the types of grammatical and lexical schemes used in the poem, the most frequent one(s) applied, and the poetess's purpose behind using them.

To accomplish the study, the heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories, presented by Leech and Short (2007), was applied. The checklist included basic levels of analysis which included lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech, context, cohesion, and semantic features. The semantic features in the framework are separated, as they could be accessed through other categories and conveyed through basic language structures. Results of the analysis showed frequent usage of various figurative and phonological devices reflecting the poetess's feelings and spiritual state that prevail through the poem. Among several linguistic features, personification, imagery and metaphor were mostly used to express all types of meanings conveyed in the poem and, at the same time, enhance the humanitarian phase with all the emotions and struggles people experience.

Keywords: Dorothy Parker, Stylistic analysis, Metaphor, Imagery, Personification.

شیکاری ستایلستی شیعری ' خەونێک مردوه' ی دۆرۆڤی پارکەر

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پوختە:

ئەم توێژینەوە جۆرەکانی ئاکاری رەوانبێژی و دەنگیەکان دەگرێتەوه که دورێ بارکەر بەکاریهێناوه له هۆنراوەکەی (خەونی مردو) که پشتی پێ دەبەستێت لە چوارچێوەی شیکاری ئەدەبی که لیش و شۆرت لە سالّی ۲۰۰۷ پێشکەشیان کرد. تێیدا هەندێ شێوازی رەوانبێژی و دەنگ خستوتەرِو وەکو وێنەی شیعری، دوبارە بونەوه، لە گەلّ قافیه و رِیکبون و ئەنفۆن لە هۆنراوه . توێژینەوەکە سێ پرسیار لە خۆ دەگری که تایبەتە بە جۆرەکانی شێوازی رِیزمان و فەرهەنگی بەکارهێنراو له هۆنراوه، زۆرترینیان دوبارەبوەتەوه ، ئامانج لە بەکارهێنانی لە لایەن شاعیر.

بۆ ئەنجامدانی توێژینەوەکە بریتیه لە لیستی پێداچونەوەی وەرگرتنی زمان و شێواز که لیش و شۆرت پێشکەشیان کرد لە ۲۰۰۷ که لیستی ئاستە سەرەکییەکانی شیکاری بون که بەشەکانی فەرهەنگ دەگرێتەوه. بەشە فەرهەنگییەکان، شێوازی رِەوابێژی ، بوار، پێوەنوسان و ئاکارە بەلگەییەکان

لە چوارچێوە جیاکرایەوه بە جۆرێک دەکرێت پێی بگەی لە رِێگەی بەشەکانی تر و گواستنەوەی لە رِێگەی پەیکەری بنچینەیی زمانەوانیەوه. ئەنجامی شیکاری بەکارهێنانی دوبارەبونەوەی شێوازی رەوانبێژی و دەنگ دەریخست که ئاوێنەی هەستی شاعره و دۆخه روحانی و سۆزەکەی ناو هۆنراوەکەیه.

لە نێوان زۆربەی ئاکارە زمانەوانیەکان دەرکەوت که دەربرین و وێنە شیعرییەکان

و وەرگرتن زۆرتر بەکارهێنراون بۆ دەربرینی هەمو جۆرەکانی مانا که لە هۆنراوەکەدا باسکراوه، لە هەمان کاتدا خۆی پشتیوانی مەوودای مرۆڤایەتی دەکات بە هەمو هەست و ململانێیەکان که رِو بەرِوی خەلّکی دەبێتەوه

کلیله وشە کان :شیکاری شێوازی، وەرگرتن، وێنە شیعریەکان و. دەربرین

1.Introduction

Dorothy Parker (1893-1967) starts by specifying a certain location, where a dream has passed away, and urges passersby to respect the holly moment and state of death when walking near the place or moving close to it. Parker describes the place as an actual cemetery where people mourn their beloved ones and cry over their losses. The readers are required to stay silent, respect the dead, and appreciate the dreams they have and hold them tight so as not to lose them.

This study investigates Parker's use of specific language structures and figurative patterns that serve, in the most effective way, the purpose of the poem and the literary goals. Various schemes and features are applied to convey the most true emotions and feelings to the readers. The main theme of the poem, death, is metaphorically described, as a dream which starts with a living petal that is full of beauty and fertility but it soon falls

from the tree and no longer looks like the others.Different figurative and phonological schemes are used in the poem to emphasize the forces of life, like beauty, dreams, life,

and death, continually attacking and defeating each other in an attempt to dominate over all creations.

The study aims at depicting the poetess's choice of linguistic structures and their impact on the overall message of the poem. It explores the types of figurative and phonological features used, the most frequent ones, and the influence of these devices on forming, enhancing, and clarifying the actual and precise images drawn in the poem and messages sent through its lines.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Stylistic Analysis

This type of analysis is basically related to the use of specific language structures in written texts. Grammatical, phonological, and lexical elements in addition to semantic ones usually create the meaningful and well-formed linguistic sequences that are used by writers of various types of texts. Several educators and linguists state that a primary function of stylistic analysis is to depict the impact of using linguistic elements in expressing and reflecting meaningful interaction that evokes readers' reactions and prompt responses (Simpson, 2004;Leech&Short, 2007). Figurative language, as Lakoff and Johnson (1980) state, fosters comprehension through connecting complicated concepts with real life experiences and its analysis is a key factor in revealing the symbolic significance and emotional depth of written texts.

Another phase of linguistic analysis is its significance in clarifying the writers' perspectives and opinions regarding significant notions and issues in life which, eventually affects the general images created by authors and the way readers perceive them. The specific use of certain language elements in a certain sequence and order, throughout the different parts of a literary text, refer to the writers' techniques and tools in generating human feelings, identities, and personalities. This, no doubt, contributes to the overall atmosphere, pace, and theme of the literary text and permits a comprehensive knowledge of how the writing style shapes and conveys the whole meaning of a text (Chatman, 1990). Some linguists focused on the role of syntactic schemes and analysis in enhancing logical coherence and cohesion of different texts. Such schemes may reveal the authors' techniques and criteria of selecting specific syntactic selections to achieve literary goals and themes Huddleston and Pullum (2002).

2.2 Leech and Shorts' Model

Leech and Short (2007) present a checklist that includes various grammatical, phonological, and lexical features, subdivided into figurative, contextual, and cohesive schemes.Scholars and researchers can choose from the constituents of this checklist to conduct stylistic analysis of literary texts.

Stylistics, as Leech and Short (2007) state, is the "the relation between the writer's artistic achievement, and how it is achieved through language ….The relation between the significance of a text, and the linguistic characteristics in which they are manifested" (pp. 55-56). In this stylistic framework,the authors have identified the most essential style markers that enable researchers, readers, or educators to carry out their studies searching for the most significant linguistic features and schemes in a literary text.The checklist or framework is what makes any stylistic analysis "very selective indeed: some studies concentrate on just one feature, and others on a mere handful of features" (ibid., p. 55). In this study, figurative features, namely some grammatical and lexical schemes are examined and depicted in the poem in addition to phonological features, like rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and consonance.

2.3 Relevant studies

Based on Leech and Short's stylistic checklist, Khan, et al. (2015) examine Tabassum's short novel "*The Last Word*." Their study aims at investigating the impact of linguistic structures on the coherent flow of novel and logical connectivity of language elements. Various grammatical and lexical schemes are traced and the results reveals that the use of these figurative features enhances the thematic element of the story and fosters literary characteristics. In a related study by Malik (2017), he observes the usage of different linguistic devices in literary texts and states that "Linguistic resources and a language-based approach can be utilized to analyze poetry by applying specific linguistic resources, including lexical, syntactic, and phonological analyses" (p. 73). The study investigates the occurrence of various phonological schemes and semantic features, such as, lexical choices and thematic elements and their role in achieving literary purposes.

Mahmood (2013), highlights the role of language structures in different contexts. The study was based on Halliday's transitivity framework and addressed shaping meaning in literary works through grammatical choices. Results of the study indicated the clear contribution of using specific linguistic elements to the general meaning, message, and theme of a literary text. In another study, the same author investigated the use of reference, substitution, ellipsis, and conjunction as a form and function process in EFL written discourses (Mahmood,2015).

In a latter study, Mahmood examined the syntactic and semantic recognition of hedging in linguistic and literary introductions.The results of the study revealed "the fact that a variety of hedging expressions with different functions and frequency is present in all examined texts though writers of linguistics tend to be less personal and more objective than those of literary criticism who are more personal and subjective" (Mahmood, 2018; p. 23).

In 1969, David Crystal and Derek Davy studied the connection between linguistic patterns and their social contexts. Their findings showed that stylistic features vary across different

genres and influence how readers interpret and understand texts. Leo Spitzer (1996), explored the link between stylistic elements and the writer's psychology. His results indicate that a writer's emotions and intentions can be expressed through stylistic choices, which can enhance the reader's understanding of the work. The current study is an attempt to reveal the use of certain figurative and phonological features in the poem "A dream lies dead" with emphasis on predominant ones and the literary purposes they serve.

3. The Poem (Overview)

"A Dream Lies Dead" is about the importance of dreams and the pain of not fulfilling them.The poetess starts by informing us that a dream is dead and lying on the ground ,therefore everyone should stay silent and respect this moment of loss. The death of a dream reflects the imperfectness of the world we live in for it is part of the beauty that brings balance to the world. Losing dreams, as represented in the poem, fosters imperfectness and decreases beauty, therefore, people should always appreciate their dreams and try to protect them.

4. Research Questions

This paper addresses the following questions:

1.What grammatical, lexical, and phonological schemes, are used in the poem 'A Dream Lies Dead'?

2.What features were mostly used in the poem?

3. How did the use of specific grammatical and lexical schemes serve the literary purposes?

5. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative approach, following Leech & Short's 2007 method of stylistic analysis, to explore the figures of speech in Dorothy Parker's poem "A Dream Lies

Dead." It examines the grammatical and phonological structures used in the poem and identifies the most prominent ones. It also presents interpretations of the poetess's purpose behind using these figurative elements in the text.

5.1 Data Collection

All the data is taken from the poem "A Dream Lies Dead." After reading the poem ,figures of speech in addition to phonological features are examined throughout the lines and stanzas. Particular observation is devoted to types of linguistic elements used, frequent ones and their influence and impact on the meaning, message, and themes of the poem.

5.2 Linguistic Schemes

The study analyzes "A Dream Lies Dead" in terms of the usage of certain linguistic features and schemes, based on Leech and Shorts' approach of stylistic analysis (2007). Their framework includes a checklist of four headings: lexical categories, grammatical categories, speech forms, coherence and context. As for the semantic part, they isolate it from other categories, claiming that it is approachable in all other parts, as meaning cannot be separated from language structures (ibid.) Various grammatical and lexical schemes are chosen from the framework to explore their existence and the purpose behind their usage in the poem. From grammatical and lexical schemes, which are part of figures of speech, imagery, personification, hyperbole, metaphor, and anaphora are investigated. As for the phonological schemes, rhyme, alliteration, assonance, consonance are depicted.

6.Analysis

6.1 Figurative Features

6.1.1 Figurative and Lexical Schemes

6.1.1.1 Imagery

Visual imagery is used more than once in the poem, allowing readers to picture
the objects and things mentioned and imagine the way they look.
Examples of imagery are:

1. *"With words of hope and Spring and tenderer skies."*

2. "O*ne drifted petal leaves the tree-Though white of bloom as it had ."*

6.1.1.2 Personification

The poem is based on this scheme as the title indicates.The author represents a dream,
a non-living thing, as a human being who lies dead and people should mourn him.

Examples of this feature in the poem are the following lines:

1. *"A dream lies dead here."*
2. *"A dream lies dead; and this all mourners*
know." 3."Because a dream has joined the
wistful dead!"

6.1.1.3 Metaphor

The basic idea of the poem is based on a metaphor concerning the death of
dreams.The second stanza vividly represents this feature, where the process of death
is visualized as a dream and outlined as follows:

"Whenever one drifted petal leaves the tree ...And so must Beauty bow her
imperfect head ..Because a dream has joined the wistful dead!"
6.1.1.4 Hyperbole

Hyperbole,which refers to the use of exaggeration that is not supposed to be taken literally,is used by the poetess through the following examples:

1."*A dream lies dead here. May you softly go and turn away your eyes.*" 2.*"A dream has joined the wistful dead."*

She talks sorrowfully to those passing by about the lost dream, as if it were a beloved person who had passed away, suggesting that they should show respect by quietly walking away and avoiding looking at it.

6.1.1.5 Anaphora
This feature represents the use of words referring back to what was mentioned before. Some examples of anaphora in "A Dream Lies Dead" are:

1."A dream."

2."One drifted petal."

6.1.2 Phonological Schemes

6.1.2.1 Rhyme

The poem conforms to a specific rhyming pattern starting with the pattern of (abbaabba), and ending with the pattern of (cdcdee).

6.1.2.2 Alliteration
This feature, which refers to the repeated sounds or letters within closely connected words, is represented in the following examples:

1."*A dream lies dead.May you softly go.*"

2."*Importuning life for life.Walk not in woe.*"

6.1.2.2.3 Assonance
Assonance or the rhyming of more than one vowel and the resemblance of close syllables is seen in the examples below:

1. *"One little loveliness can be no more."*

2.*"And so must Beauty bow her imperfect head."*

6.1.2.2.4 Consonance
While Assonance refers to similar vowels within closely related words, Consonance refers to repeated consonants within adjacent structures. Examples of consonance in the poem are:

1.*"Butfor a little let your step be slow."*

2.*"Though white of bloom as it had been before."*

7. Findings & Discussion

The results of the analysis revealed answers to the research questions, identifying the poetess' careful choice of specific features, other than others, to convey her message and intended meaning in the most expressive and effective way. The schemes that were noticeable in the poem were some of the figurative language features, like personification, imagery, hyperbole, metaphor, and anaphora. The most frequently used ones were basically personification, metaphor, and imagery. Parker tries to visualize losing a dream as death, which ends a period of time that if full of life, dreams, and events.

The poetess uses the metaphor of representing the death of a dream like the falling of new petals from a tree in a process that is too fast and depressing. Once the petals touch the ground, they lose all the brightness and fertility of life. A dead dream is personified as a human being who has lost his life and now lying dead on the street. The location is a physical context where people are moving around and she asks whoever is approaching near the dead to respect the dead dream and mourn it with silence. The poetess tries, through this metaphor, to evoke the feeling and emotions of the passersby and make them think of their own dreams and how important it is to appreciate and protect them. One of the most notable aspects of "A Dream Lies Dead" is Parker's skillful use of metaphor and imagery to express the speaker's feelings of loss and sorrow. The metaphor of a dream is depicted as a process that begins with beauty, brightness, and fertility, but inevitably ends in death. This transition is symbolized by a beautiful white

petal falling from a tree. Upon touching the ground, the petal transforms into a withered and dry leaf, signifying the inevitable decay and decline that follows the initial vibrancy.

The poetess also enhances the poem's emotional depth through repetition and rhyme. Repeating the phrase "dream lies dead" throughout the poem reinforces the sense of finality and grief, while the rhyming couplets contribute to a somber and melancholic mood.Additionally,the lines are often interrupted unexpectedly, creating a feeling of instability and uncertainty that mirrors the speaker's emotional turmoil.

Later,Parker uses imagery in a poetic sense to reflect on the emotional and philosophical sides of life. She urges the readers to picture the movement of the 'petals' as the leave the tree in a quick movement to the ground .It is a beautiful thing to observe ,as the petals are still white,bright and fertile, representing the cycle of life. But life is short and soon, everything will fade away and what was full of life will soon be dead. So, in spite of the beauty the petals have, they will eventually fall on the ground and never be restored.

The poem employs a range of phonological schemes, incorporating various rhythmic patterns alongside instances of alliteration, assonance, and consonance. These

phonological devices, in conjunction with the grammatical and lexical elements, serve to amplify the underlying message and profound lesson embedded within the poetic language. The deliberate repetition of specific sounds and the emphasis on particular letter sequences contribute to the thematic development of the poem, effectively mirroring the emotional and psychological states of the speaker. Through the strategic use of these phonological schemes, the poetess creates a rhythmic atmosphere that underscores the intense struggle and emotional turmoil she is experiencing. These elements function not only as aesthetic features but also as expressive tools that evoke the physical and mental suffering central to the poem's narrative.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the poem 'A Dream Lies Dead' shows that the poetess has used various stylistic devices to serve the poetic purposes and enhance the thematic content in the poem. Specific devices were used more than the others to allow the readers to visualize, imagine, picture, and feel the different phases of; life and death, happiness and sorrow, earning and losing, and struggle to survive. Readers are enabled, by the help of theses figurative schemes, to examine and understand human conflict and agony. Repetitive usage of metaphor, personification, imagery, in addition to less occurrence of other devices, conveyed to the reader a true reflection of human fears and suffering when losing dreams, hopes, wishes, and expectations in life.

Dorothy Parker's "A Dream Lies Dead" offers a poignant exploration of loss, mourning, and the transient nature of dreams. Through vivid imagery and emotive language, the poem delves into themes of impermanence, acceptance, and the complex emotions that accompany grief. It prompts readers to reflect on the fragility of dreams and the inevitable cycle of hope and disappointment in life. The poetess invites readers into a poignant reflection on loss and mourning. Through evocative and heartfelt language, the poetess delves into the dissolution of a dream and its profound resonance within the human condition.

Impermanence, acceptance, and the complex emotions entwined with grief are delicately woven throughout the poem. With its eloquent prose and deep insights, "A Dream Lies Dead" encourages contemplation of the fragile essence of dreams and the inevitable rhythm of hope and disillusionment in life. Finally, the poem is a deeply moving reflection on the death of a dream and the end of happy moments. Using striking figurative language, it conveys the sorrow and anguish associated with losing a dream. It also contrasts the dream with reality, emphasizing the sharp divide between the two.

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