دراسة أسلوبية معرفية لقصيدة ويليام وردزورث "نوبات غريبة من العاطفة عرفتها" من منظور نظرية عالم النص

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A Cognitive Stylistic Study of William Wordsworth's Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known in Terms of Text World Theory

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الخلاصة

قصيدة "نوبات غريبة من العاطفة عرفتها" لويليام وردزورث، وهي قطعة شعرية ملهمة ضمن سلسلة قصائد لوسي، تجذب القارئ مباشرةً إلى صراع نفسي عميق يخوضه راوٍ يتحول حبه الجارف فجأةً إلى شعور غير منطقي بالخوف من الموت. والجدير بالذكر أن لغة القصيدة تُظهر ضمنيًا بنية معرفية متطورة ترسم رحلة عاشق إلى كوخ حبيبته، حيث يُثير جمال المنظر الطبيعي تحت ضوء القمر فجأةً عالمًا قاتمًا من القلق والخوف. ومع ذلك، فإن هذه التجربة الماضية للراوي لا تنبع من أحداث خارجية فحسب، بل من انفصال قوي وعفوي في وعيه. وهذا يُظهر بوضوح تحديًا للتحليل الأدبي يدفع القارئ مباشرةً إلى رسم خريطة للحالة العاطفية والنفسية لمتحدث تنهار حقيقته فجأةً بفعل إدراك داخلي وذاتي غامض.

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية هذا التحدي بتطبيق نظرية عالم النص (المشار إليها فيما يلي بـ TWT)، وهي نموذج معرفي–أسلوبي شامل طوره ويرث (1999) ثم نقحه جافينز (2007أ، 2007ب). توفر TWT إطارًا شاملًا يتجاوز الفهم الموضوعي للنص إلى بناء المعنى النصي

نفسه، انطلاقًا من افتراض أن القراء يُنشئون تمثيلات، أو عوالم نصية، أثناء قراءة الخطاب. في حالة قصيدة وردزورث "نوبات غريبة من العاطفة عرفتها"، تُظهر الأدوات التحليلية لنظرية عالم النص ، وتحديدًا التمييز بين عالم النص المألوف، أي الرحلة المادية، والعالم الفرعي المُضمّن، أي تأملات الراوي في مخاوفه، أنها شاملة لتوجيه التشويق في القصيدة.

Abstract

Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known, is William Wordsworth's an inspiring piece within Lucy poems sequence which readily engages the reader with a deep psychological conflict that is involved in a narrator whose intense love is suddenly transformed into an unreasonable feeling of fear of death. Noteworthy, the language of the poem tacitly shows a sophisticated cognitive structure which traces a lover's journey to his beloved's cottage where the beauty of the moonlit landscape suddenly triggers a dim world of anxiety and fear. However, this past experience of the narrator is not driven by external events only, but, rather, by a powerful and spontaneous separation in his own consciousness. This strictly shows a kind of challenge of literary analysis that leads the reader directly to draw a map of emotional and mental state of a speaker whose reality is immediately broken by ambiguously internal and subjective perception.

This paper addresses that challenge by applying Text World Theory (henceforth TWT) which is a comprehensive cognitive-stylistic model developed by Werth (1999) and later refined by Gavins (2007a , 2007b). TWT provides an inclusive framework that moves further than thematic understanding of the text to the very construction of textual meaning by assuming that readers create representations, or text worlds while reading the discourse. In the case of Wordsworth's **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known**, TWT's analytical tools , specifically the distinction between the familiar Text World, i.e. the physical journey; and the embedded sub-world, i.e. the speculation of the narrator's fear, show to be exhaustive for guiding the poem's suspense.

1.Introduction

TWT combines insights from Stylistics and Cognitive Linguistics to study the way in which the readers process texts. The main principle of TWT is that as people involve with discourse, they, unconsciously, create mental models or text worlds in their minds in order to make sense of the information (Gavins, 2007a). This, in particular, makes TWT a framework within cognitive linguistics that outlines the stages of discourse understanding since cognitive linguistics shifts the study of

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language away from just formal grammar rules to focus on the meanings created by discourse components and viewing language as a product of our cognitive processes (Gavins, 2007a, 2007b).

According to the works of Werth (1999) and Gavins (2007a, 2007b), TWT works to explain the way through which the readers construct mental representations barely by using the language in the text. Consequently, TWT is extremely useful for narrative interpretation because it progresses from the surface level of the textual details to the deeper structure of these mental text worlds and accordingly it works to clarify the layers of the text and guide the reader to a convenient understanding (ibid). The present study proceeds TWT as its theoretical framework to achieve a cognitive stylistic analysis and understanding of William Wordsworth's **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known** whose target is to uncover the mental models which are constructed by the text and the resulting interpretation of the discourse.

2.Literature Review

2.1. Cognitive Stylistics

Cognitive stylistics incorporates the accurate and detailed linguistic examination of literary texts characteristic of traditional stylistics with a systematic and theory-based consideration of the mental structures and processes involved in language production and interpretation (Semino & Culpeper, 2003, P. ix). Stylistic analysis often relies on linguistic theories or models to explain or anticipate interpretation. What distinguishes cognitive stylistics is its systematic grounding of linguistic analysis in theories that connect language choices to cognitive structures and processes. This approach offers a more organized and explicit explanation of the relationship between texts and readers' responses and interpretations (Ibid).

Cognitive stylistics extends beyond traditional stylistic approaches that rely only on linguistic models to explain literary meaning. It searches for the parallel aspects of reading experiences through a cognitive-scientific perspective that examines the relationship between the mind, language, and the world. A key challenge for cognitive stylistics researchers today is to explain how readers interpret literary texts by identifying and bridging the gap between their own worldview and that of the author. Werth (1999), however, attempts to explain the conceptual space that links the communicative worlds of author and reader within the interpretive process. This approach introduces a new and significant way of understanding writing and reading as interrelated cognitive.

What sets cognitive stylistics apart is its close connection to cognitive science. Specifically, it draws on the cognitive theory of language and the

cognitive psychology of reading—two disciplines that directly inform its approach. The study of reading and cognition has become an important area of interest for those interested in stylistics. By incorporating the workings of the human mind, cognitive stylistics introduces a new dimension to literary analysis, emphasizing mental processes during interpretation. Although cognitive stylistics is designed to complement rather than replace traditional analytical methods, it seeks to shift attention from text-centered and compositional models toward those that explicitly link the human mind to the act of reading (Simpson, 2004, p. 39).

2.2. Text World Theory

TWT appears outstandingly in cognitive stylistics simply because it is built in essence to analyze language as it occurs in real world contexts (Fauconnier, 1985, p. 42). Consequently, the main function of TWT is to analyze the cognitive processes involved in nearly all types of human communication. Fundamentally, the theory proposes that people create internal mental constructs that are called the text worlds when they are engaged with communication and they use these constructs to understand the discourse. TWT mainly focuses on the way the participants negotiate and conceptually build discourse to allow the readers to make sense of the text and this is particularly significant because it works to fill the gap between the formal properties of a text and the experiential nature of human cognition. That is, it suggests that meaning is not static on the page but is it is rather a dynamic process of world construction. According to Werth (1995, p. 49), the term world never refer to the physical planet but rather it refers to imaginary states of affairs that exist mentally, i.e. all the existing worlds are mainly the product of the mental processes (ibid) .

Such worlds that are mental in nature are actively created by people, namely the speakers and the listeners; and the writers, and the readers, during both the production and the comprehension of discourse. Moreover, it can be said that such mental structures are heavily grounded in real world interactions and in the past experiences. Consequently, the mental maps are not built up only from what people can perceive on any single occasion, but also from their memory of previous occasions and experiences (Werth, 1999, p. 7).

On the other hand, the world of discourse is evenly a representation of the actual situational context in which language is used and the communication event persists (ibid, p. 83). This world exists as soon as

the participants intentionally start communicating. Thus, it includes the physical surroundings specifically the time, the place, and the participants along with their immediate perceptions namely the smell, the sound, and the temperature and their inferences about such external surroundings (Gavins, 2007, p. 161). According to TWT, the participants are viewed as a whole, i.e. including their hopes, intentions, beliefs, memories, and imagination (Werth, 1995, p. 52) and the discourses are seen as a collaborative effort to have a common understanding of all these entities (ibid).

On the level of language, the text world is the conceptual domain or mental space that language users construct in their minds as they process and understand discourse. In other words, their internal representation is based on the memory of the participants and their imagination of the occasions in which they used such discourse (Werth, 1999). However, people use deictic terms, i.e. words such as the *I*, the *here*, and the *now*, to communicate their embodied experience and conceptual system. Roughly , these are the world building elements that form the foundation of the mental representation in TWT (Gavins, 2007, p. 162).

Exhaustively, every text establishes its world through two main linguistic mechanisms: First, the world builders or the world building propositions which refer to the text components that establish the scene or the background and the boundaries of the text world. The defining elements of such mechanism include the time involved in verb tense, time adverbs, and temporal clauses; and the place involved in the locative adverbs, phrases, and clauses; entities involved in concrete and abstract noun phrases; and grammatical markers involved in demonstratives, definite articles, personal pronouns, tense variations, and verbs of motion. However, World-building propositions are either attributive or identifying (ibid, pp. 35-52; Werth, 1999, p. 187). Second, function advancers or function advancing propositions which refer to the components that push the action and events forward (ibid).

In TWT, Werth (1999. P. 214) establishes a clear distinction between the people involved in a conversation and the characters within a story. Thus, the discourse participants can be identified as the actual people, i.e. the people in flesh and blood namely the writer and the reader or the speaker and the listener who really exist in the physical world whereas the enactors refer to the versions of people or characters that exist only within the text world. Hence, even if a story is autobiographical the "I" in the

text is considered to be an enactor which distinct from the real person who wrote the story. Moreover, he (ibid, p. 82) refers to the entities within the mental space as characters whereas Gavins (2007b, p. 42) refer to them as enactors. At the level of the text world, these enactors are functionally the same as the participants in the discourse world which means that they possess their internal cognitive elements such as hopes, dreams, and memories.

According to Werth (1999, p. 163), the modal sub-world is the third level of TWT. It arises within the text world by a briefly deviating transformation from the text world of familiar chief common restrictions. Werth roughly categorizes modal sub worlds into two main types; first, the participant accessible sub worlds which are created by the participants, i.e. the readers; and therefore maintain the basic restrictions of the original text world; and second, character accessible sub worlds which are the spaces where the character is responsible for the departure from the previous restrictions of the text world. This, in turn, creates a shift which is considered unpredictable and irrecoverable from the perspective of reader (Werth, 1999, p. 214-215).

3.Analysis and Discussion

In order to access the worlds of Wordsworth's poem **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known** , it is worthy saying that TWT has been an exhaustive means to study the way in which the poem creates and navigates the mental spaces of the reader so as to reach at the unique unreasonable and intense emotional experience of the speaker. However, TWT as a cognitive model of discourse processing suggests that the readers, once the reading experience starts, they construct a text world which is primarily signified by the mental representation of the situation of the text and based mainly on the world building elements namely the elements that set the scene specifically the characters, time, and place on the one hand and function advancing propositions which are strictly the narrating of the story and the events on the other. Nevertheless, the poem is particularly curiosity evoking simply because it develops a powerful transformation from the main text world of the journey of the speaker to the cottage of his beloved to the sudden sub world of fear of death.

3.1.The Discourse World of Story Telling

The discourse world in TWT is the highest level of context which represents the common ground knowledge that is shared by the speaker/writer and the listener/reader. However, in William Wordsworth's **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known**, let's have first the main

elements of the discourse world which are specifically the addresser, i.e. the speaker, and the addressee, i.e. the lover. As far as the addresser/speaker is concerned, the *I* of the poem is notably responsible on narrating a past personal experience of strong emotion called in the poem as a *strange fits of passion*. The addressee/the lover, on the other hand, is explicitly whom the poem addresses. Strikingly, *"But in the Lover's ear alone"* excludes the general reader and roughly selects the caring ones, i.e. those who can understand the unreasonableness of deep love. However, this is really important because it raises the tone of intimacy which the reader can overhear and , consequently, justifies the extreme and inevitable fear which follows.

Moreover, temporally , the story itself is a past event. This is evident in *"What once to me befell"*, where the adverb *once* and the past tense *befell* sketch out that the story is part of the past of the addresser/speaker. Nonetheless the utterance itself is happening in the present moment of the speaking/writing of the poem. This is explicitly indicated in *"I will dare to tell,"* and *"I have known"*. Consequently, it is obvious that the past experience that represents the text world is, deep structurally, framed by the act of confession that represents the discourse world.

As far as the context of the poem is concerned and since the poem is a ballad, that is a four-line stanza narrative poem (Cudden, 1998, P. 175); and it is simultaneously romantic, that is overloaded with emotion and shows a great deal of union of man and nature (Wordsworth, 1802, PP, 73 - 74), then it can be said that such background knowledge allows the main incident of the poem, i.e. the sudden fear of death, to be understood not just as a personal event, but as an attempt to explore the universality of fear accompanying love. This, in turn, shows that the poem can be considered as an example of universal texts that outline human nature as far as love is concerned.

3.2.**The Main Text World of the Journey towards the Cottage of Lucy**

This world is fully occupied with objects such as the horse, the cottage, the moon, and the orchard; and enactors who are confined to the speaker and Lucy. These are responsible on creating a sense of quiet and persistent movement. However, the language of the discourse world suggests the world building elements namely the characters, the time, and the place. These construct the text world. In fact, Lucy as an enactor offers almost a limited role, but the speaker, *I*, represents the steady center of the perception on the moving horse which establishes an

embodied experience. On the background of such scene, the reader is invited to mentally simulate the slow and steady ride. Further, spatial/temporal elements such as *"Beneath an evening-moon," "All over the wide lea,"* and *"Those paths so dear to me"* create a familiar, comforting, and predictable space on the one hand and minimize the cognitive effort on the behalf of the reader on the other. Hence, since the journey is an act of love, then, the text world predicts emotional positive anticipation.

As far as the function advancers, i.e. action and narrating, are concerned, *"My horse moved on; hoof after hoof / He raised, and never stopp'd"* make obvious that the repetition and negation strictly reinforce the steady, and unstoppable progress towards the cottage of Lucy. Noteworthy, this regular movement is important to establish a sense of natural order, reasonability, and safety and, at the same time, makes the anticipated joy of meeting Lucy seem inevitable. However, the same previous reasons make the subsequent break more shocking.

As the reading process progresses, another influential enactor strongly appear . As such, it is noteworthy that the attention of the speaker is fixed on the moon: "*Upon the moon I fix'd my eye"* and *"all the while my eyes I kept / On the descending moon."* The moon acts as a crucial world builder element that connect the real journey to the inner state of the speaker. Accordingly, as the real distance to the cottage decreases, the supposed distance of the moon also seems to decrease. This is deliberately dramatized to drag the reader into the interconnected two movements and paves the way to the following central turning point, i.e. emotional fit to disturb the peace of the journey.

3.3.**The Modal Sub World of Fear: The Emotional Fit**

Nevertheless, the climax of the poem comprises a severe cognitive break from the reasonable and steady reality of the main text world. Precisely, an event triggers the creation of the modal sub world, and as such embodies the function advancer. Thus as the journey persists peacefully, it happened unexpectedly that *"When down behind the cottage roof, / At once, the bright moon dropp'd."* The sudden disappearance of the guiding light of the moon brutally breaks the continuity and the peace of the journey's expected path and switches the reader to the modal sub world of fear and rising suspense. Grammatically, the conjunction *When* marks the time based combination, and *At once* emphasizes the suddenness and quickness that set forth the atmosphere of the climax of suspense and anticipation. Accordingly, it is evident that the immediate disappearance

of the moon creates a cognitive gap or break in the expected storyline of the journey.

The exclamation *"O mercy!"* of stanza 7 is a function advancer that expresses the emotional state of the speaker where it becomes an independent narrative event in the modal sub world which is based on the operator *if* that implies uncertainty. Strikingly, the final stanza includes no function builder elements and no setting. Instead , there is only a function advancing proposition, i.e. the speaker's cry. It is obvious that such brevity is deliberate in order emphasize the brief and non-narrative nature of fear. In other words, the entire thought connect the sudden disappearance of the moon with the death of Lucy exists only in the mind of the speaker; i.e. it has no proof in the physical text world because the horse is still moving. Nevertheless, the intense fear quickly changes the main anticipation of the text world into fear which strictly indicates the instability of the stable reality under the pressure of passion. That is, the passion of the sudden projection of a terrifying possibility namely *"Lucy is dead"* totally changes the reality of the ongoing journey specifically Lucy is alive and awaiting. In this part in particular, TWT shows that the fear of loss which is absolutely never mentioned previously in world builder elements suddenly flows over the mental space to break the carefully built reality of the pleasant ride.

TWT through its multi layered worlds and its practical application the journey of the speaker towards the cottage of his beloved in Wordsworth's **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known** can be sketched briefly in the below diagram

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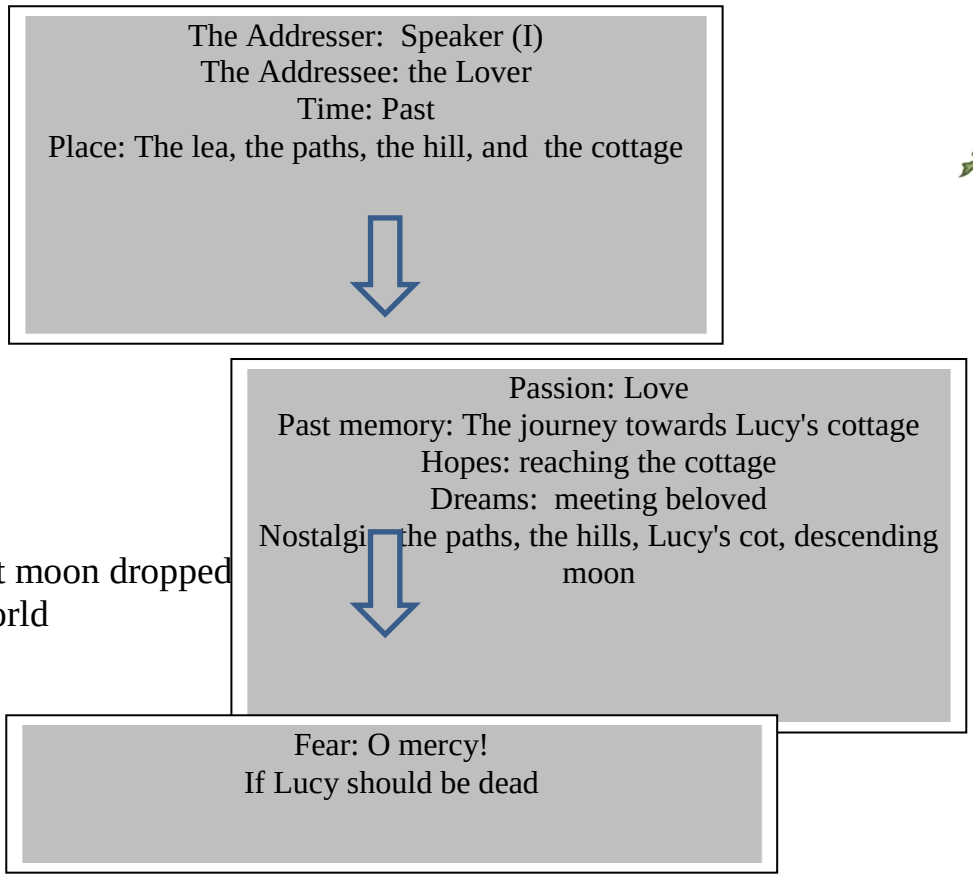


Diagram No (1): Text World Theory in Wordsworth's Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known

4.Conclusions

Throughout the above analysis and discussion, it is obvious that applying TWT to Wordsworth's **Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known** is perfectly exhaustive to explain the emotional shift which results from the creation and, then, the dramatic fall of a narrative world of love journey that is suddenly broken by an imaginary world of fear. Thus, the cognitive stylistic analysis of the poem using TWT shows the construction and interaction of different mental spaces and text worlds on the behalf of the reader to explain the sudden and irrational emotional shift. Hence, it is obvious that the *strange fit of passion* is not only the cognitive experience of the speaker of this world switch only but also the reader's too. Moreover, it is practically confirmed that Wordsworth's poetic genius lies in the use of a simple setting to bring into existence a complex internal process. Thus, *the descent of the moon* is not merely an

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indirect reference of death, but also a deictic sign that triggers a preexisting anxiety about the collapse that associates with love, and therefore, it creates the startling sub world.

Besides, the simple and direct language of the poem highlights the genius of Wordsworth once again when he professionally achieves a maximum cognitive effect out of a minimum linguistic use. Nevertheless, the style of the poem never strange or complex though, yet, the conceptual space that it creates is unstable and emotionally shaking. Literally the analysis of the poem reveals the way that simple deictic shifts, i.e. the moon's movement, can generate a deep emotional image of love that was intimately linked to the fear of loss. Likewise, the sudden *drop* of the moon metaphorically equates to the sudden *drop* of the heart of the speaker and the terrifying realization of Lucy's possible death.

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