

Idiosyncratic Expression: Stylistic Analysis

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The concept of Idiosyncratic Expression shows the special characteristic that distinguishes the writer's style or way of speaking or expressing his ideas. In dealing with style and particularly the way of expressing the ideas of the person, one has directly or indirectly shown his true . personality. Idiosyncratic Expression starts from using the language in expressing any idea the person wants to elucidate. The style involves the way or method of explaining a thought to others. In order to communicate with others, language is usually the most appropriate tool of communication such as the gestures, facial expression and any other movement. Yet language remains the superior one. In order to differentiate this writer from that one, we try to elucidate Idiosyncrasy which usually expresses a special type or characteristic of writing.

Idiosyncratic expression starts from explaining a dream or stating a dream. The way of stating a dream to others is a beginning of idiosyncrasy. Then . we move to stylisticians who state that the

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stylistic analysis expresses the writer's personality. The display of different stylisticians supports the idea of idiosyncrasy , because we need more scholarship and more intelligent scholarship, centered on the main problem which arise in the study of literature both as an art **and as an** expression of culture .

In order to start the explanation of the topic, we start with Freud's understanding of dreams.

Dreams usually provide the main way to the unconscious. A dream consists of two things: the "late content" that is the raw material of the dream itself and the "manifest content" which we remember of the dream after we wake up. Freud insisted that what a person interested in the dream was the way the chaotic raw material was transformed into a coherent piece of event or events.⁽¹⁾

If we try to observe Freud's insights into modern criticism, we notice the majority of critics maintain binary divisions in the concept of "style" such as "form and content" "matter and style" "deep structure and surface structure" and so on.⁽²⁾

Most of the approaches to stylistic analysis are indebted to Freud's work on dreams and the unconscious despite the elaborate terminology of the critics.

Different stylisticians talk about stylistic analysis as reflecting the personality or the mind of the author. This is a statement of

Buffon's famous saying that says "style is the man himself"⁽³⁾ Buffon's statement means that "style is peculiarly expressive of an artist's individuality and so may provide an access to his inner life."⁽⁴⁾

The writer's individuality is expressed by the writer's language. The term "language" is too broad, but stylisticians have reduced it to mean only vocabulary, syntax and images. More often finding the irregularities in the vocabulary or syntax has become important in the stylistic analysis. J. Middleton Murry calls this irregularity "idiosyncrasy"⁽⁵⁾, other critics call it a "deviation from the norm." Recently Halliday uses the term "prominence" to refer to a linguistic feature of the text which attracts attention to itself. In spite of the differences in the different interpretations, all of them refer to the same concept: that is the study of a writer's peculiar choice of words or his individual vocabulary that reflects his mind and personality or his view. In other words, the irregularity reflects those suppressed features of the psyche or personality that surface from the deep which reflects the man behind the words.

Murry states "the style means the personal idiosyncrasy of expression by which we recognize a writer."⁽⁶⁾ It is very difficult to identify an obscure writer through his idiosyncratic expression because according to Murry a writer's vision is unique in the way he expresses himself and this vision finds the way out of the writer. Idiosyncratic expressions lead us, in fact, to the writer's inner

psyche or to his inner recesses of his mind that he does not ordinarily expose. Writers very often assume a style either for such purposes as humour or exaggeration, or for mere variation to break the monotony of a certain pattern. Accordingly, Murry is interested in the impression of the writer's style to be consistent.

Irregular or aberrant expressions occupy an importance in some philologists such as Leo Spitzer where the stylistic analysis and etymology lead to one root. The analysis of style starts usually from noting a deviant expression which points to the writer's "creative principle". The mind or personality confirms the original thesis. The method has been called the "philological circle" which is based on solid and comprehensive knowledge of philology. It is circular because the hunt journey starts from the periphery of the text to its center and then to periphery. This circularity of the method arises from taking insights about an author's mind or personality based on certain deviant expression and trying to find other data from the text to support the first insight. Other stylisticians did not conform to the same training or did not enjoy Spitzers explanation. In fact, Spitzer's method to style assumes that there is a correlation between a writer's mind or it is called the "creative energy"⁽⁸⁾. The essence corresponds to the latent content of a dream. When the essence is expressed as a coherent whole, certain details creep out of his mind into the words he chooses. Even when

he tries to erase any marks related to that essence some traces or marks appear out of his psyche and come to the surface. These marks manifest the dream . Thus, the stylistician and the psychoanalyst are able to detect the inner recesses or bents of the unconscious of any deviation in the psyche or the creative writer.

This approach eventually becomes a hunt for understanding certain aspects of a writer's genius or creative impulse to his deviant expressions.

In order to support the point which elevates the languages used in prose and poetry : the prose language is usually ordinary whereas the language of poetry is vital in its twisted expressions. This is another feature of the idiosyncratic expression which familiarizes or defamiliarizes this genre from the other, in showing particular characteristics of each author. Shelley and the members of Prague circle are similar in giving certain elements in poetry not found in prose. The Prague Linguistic Circle was organized in 1926. Its members replaced the term "formalism" with "structuralism" and they combined the formalistic approach with sociological and ideological methods.⁽⁹⁾ Likewise Mukarovsky does not deal with poets but with poems. He is interested in how a poet foregrounds certain elements of the poetic text, because how includes the text. In such understanding Mukaravsky is similar to Shelley.⁽¹⁰⁾ According to Shelley prose is ordinary whereas poetry defamiliarizes the

ordinary language. The strangeness which we see in Shelley is similar to the foregrounding of Mukaravsky. Shelley is interested in elevating the status of the poet and thus he endows him with the power of visualizing language through his unfamiliar expressions and usages. Mukaravsky is also concerned to show that poetry is different from non poetry.

Finally, the most systematic and detailed treatment of the notion of idiosyncratic expression is presented by M. A. K. Halliday. He uses the term "prominence" to refer to the general name for phenomenon of linguistic highlights. According to him there are two types of prominences which refer to a departure from the norm or the idiosyncratic expression which deviates from expected pattern of frequency."⁽¹¹⁾ The first type of prominence to Halliday, is of very rare in literature. The second type is a positive one. Halliday is linking his discussion of the concept of norm with the functional theory of language which he defines as a "reference to the notion that language plays a certain part in our lives that is required to serve certain universal types of demand"⁽¹²⁾ The universality in literature is applicable when a topic is treated in a country and the same topic can be applied or treated in any other country of the world. Naturally, the language is used to convey the universal topic or demand. The selection of words and the choice of the topic express certain limitations which show the idiosyncrasy. In

order to test, his theory of how language plays a certain part in our lives, Halliday chooses three passages from William Golding's The Inheritors. The novel dealt with two tribes: pre history tribe and new people tribe respectively. Both are primitive and belong to the old age of man. But the first one is more primitive not only in the activity of man but in the use of language. Halliday proceeds to give a description of the formal features of the novel to arrive finally at their interpretations. He finds people of the first tribe use a lot of intransitive verbs because the people lack the power of making things happen or changing things. They are unable to change anything . The other tribe (second tribe) has more control, they are able to change things and thus their language reveals more transitive verbs. The use of transitivity in the novel is a state of mind. Language and mind are interrelated and each one reveals the other. They are one thing. One cannot exist without the other. "The mind expresses itself through its use of the language."⁽¹³⁾ Although many critics have disputed with Halliday yet it is interesting to present Halliday's idea of stylistic analysis that there should be a motivated importance which works from a semantic choice and evolves into a syntactic choice.

In other words, the writer's theme imposes certain limitations and endows him with choices that shape his style. According to

Halliday, the writer's vision expresses itself in certain syntactic choices such as transitive /intransitive verbs or functions.

The syntactic structure of Halliday shows great similarity to Freud's "manifest content" of a dream. The "latent content" and the "vision" of the writer are both hidden from us. We have no access to them, but one access to them is the use of the writer's language through his semantic choices. For Freud , the dream work uncovers the latent content whereas for Halliday, syntactic analysis reveals the vision through the syntactic choices in the text. Some other people have replaced the term of the "writer's vision" by "creative principle" or by the "deep structure".

To sum up, all the previous reorientation of the interpretations of the stylistic analysis concerning the idiosyncratic expression actually present an elaboration of fundamental views by different people of interests such as a critic, psychoanalyst and a linguist. These people are concerned with language and literature . Since language and literature are interrelated with each other, it is interesting to deal with idiosyncrasy using the language which is considered the superior filter of expressing one's ideas and views through his style and selection of words. Idiosyncratic expression appears to be the special trend of his mind and personality.

NOTES

1. Sigmund Freud, Interpretations of Dreams in A. Brill The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud. (New York: Modern Lib., 1966), p.ii.
2. Roger Fowler, Linguistics and the Novel (London: Methuen, 1977), p. ix.
3. G. Louis Buffon is a notable stylist. His dictum is set out in his "Discourse sur Le Style" in 1753 which is delivered to the French Academy, in Oxford Companion to English Literature ed. M. Drabble (Oxford: OUP, 1985), p. 143.
4. Howard Babb, ed. Essays in Stylistic Analysis (N.Y: Harcourt Brace, 1972), p.ii.
5. J. Middleton Murry The Problem of Style (London: O.U.P., 1922), p.4.
6. Ibid., p.4.
7. Leo Spitzer "Linguistic and Literary History" in C. Freeman, ed., Linguistics and Literary Style (N.Y.: Holt Rinehart, 1979), p. 22.
8. Ibid.,p.23.

9. Rene Wellek *Concepts of Criticism* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 42-49.
10. P.B. Shelley "Defence of Poetry" in *Criticism : The Major Texts*, ed., W. Jackson Bate (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich, 1970), p. 432.
11. M. A. K. Halliday "Linguistic Function and Literary Style: An Inquiry into the Language of William Golding's "The Inheritors" in Essays in Modern Stylistics, ed., Donald Freeman (London: Methuen, 1981). p. 325-360.
12. Ibid, pp.335-341.
13. Ibid, p. 336.

ملخص

خصوصية التعبير

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تنطلق خصوصية التعبير عن استخدام الكاتب لأسلوبه في التعبير عن أفكاره. وان الأسلوب يعبر عن شخصية الكاتب بطريقة مباشرة أو غير مباشرة. ويعتبر استخدام اللغة الطريقة الأولى للتوضيح عن الأفكار للآخرين. في الحقيقة هناك طرقاً أخرى للتعبير لكن تبقى اللغة هي الأفضل. ان تعبير الشخص في شرح الأحلام هو دلالة على شخصية المتكلم وبما ان الأحلام تشكل المصدر الرئيس للاوعي إذ يتكون من "المحتوى الأخير" و "محتوى الحلم العام" وان النقد الحديث يركز على مادة الحلم الخام غير المرتبة وكيفية تحول مشاهد الحلم إلى شكل قطعة أدبية متماسكة. فأن الشكل والمضمون والبناء العميق من الضحل يركز ان على التحليل الأسلوبى في عكس شخصية الكاتب وان كثير من الأسلوبيين والناس المهتمين بالأسلوب يؤمنون بان "الأسلوب هو الشخص" كما جاء على لسان بوفين.

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ان استخدام اللغة في مجالها العام غير مطلوب في إعطاء "الخصوصية" المعنى الصحيح ولكن الشواذ والبناء اللغوي والصور التي يعبر بها كاتبها هي ما يسمى "بالخصوصية". وان اختلف الكتاب بتسمية ه ذه الطرق الغريبة وغير المتفق عليها فان دراسة استخدام الكاتب للأسلوب هي انعكاس لشخصيته ورأيه كما هي تعكس شخصيته من الداخل والتي تشكل خصوصيته وان لكل كاتب خصوصيته وعليه ان يكون ثابتاً وغير متذبذب في طريقة التعبير.

ان كل التحليلات والدراسات في الأسلوب من ناحية خصوصية التعبير هي بتقديم مختلف الآراء للناس: كالناقد واللغوي وعالم النفس. وبما ان اللغة والأدب متداخلان فمن المستحسن التعامل بها حيث تعتبر المصفي الأفضل للتعبير عن آراء وأفكار الكتاب بأسلوبهم واختيارهم للمفردات التي تعكس أفكارهم وشخصياتهم .