

**Poetic Image and Stylization of Beauty:
An approach to the Study of Shelley's Style
in "The Sensitive Plant"**

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Introduction:

The poetic image constitutes one of the most illuminating features of Shelley's style. This paper purports to investigate how Shelley's poetic images are structured as collocational shifts so as to express his philosophoical and aesthetic vision. "The Sensitive Plant" will be investigated in terms of Firth's linguistic theory.

Modern linguistic theory centers on the assumption that the poetic image is the constitutive power linguistic system.

It is not merely an ornament or an extra beauty. Rather, it is a form of expression which illustrates meaning and reveals emotion. As a linguistic feature, the poetic image extends the linguistic perspectives of language. By and through a series of images, the poet extends the potentialities of language. He transgresses the normal forms of linguistic code. Language, then, develops through such images.

Theoretical Model

The term "collocation" was first introduced in the 1930s by J. R. Firth to characterize a combination of words in a language that happens very often and more frequently than would happen by chance. (1) The term is further explored by Spenser and Gregory. They point out that "collocation is set up to account for the tendency of certain items in a language to occur close to each other, a tendency not completely explained by grammar." (2) Collocation concentrates essentially on the semantic structure of language. Robins explains that "word meanings do not exist in isolation, and they may differ according to the collocation in which they are used." (3) To illustrate this theoretical category, let us consider the following citation:

There is a fresh white lily in the park.

In terms of this linguistic category, the lexical items (fresh) and (white) are the collocates of the "nodal" item (lily). A number of collocates of the nodal item constitutes its (collocational) range; however, some nodal items have the same collocational ranges. For instance, if the lexical item (rose) were taken as the nodal item and the collocational range established for it were (fresh) and (white), there would be a considerable overlap with the range of (lily) in the illustration above. In other words, the (rose) and the (lily) share a significant number of collocates. These two nodal items could be grouped together into a (set), the second.

Theoretical category of lexis which accounts for the tendency of items to share part of their collocational overlap.(4)

Viewed as a linguistic category, collocation is of underlying significance for investigating literary style. Spencer and Gregory believe that "the creative writer often achieves some of his effects through the interaction between usual and unusual collocations, and through the creation of new, and therefore stylistically significant collocations."(5) This is clearly shown in Shakespeare's proposition.

Macbeth murders sleep

The formal expectation is to have lexical items such as (man/warrior/knight) in the span, "Macbeth murders." There is a higher probability of these collocates occurring nearby (murder) since only the human can be said to be murdered. These normal collocates, however, are contrasted with the usual use of (sleep). This leads to a sort of semantic shift. The collocational shift is the most revealing characteristic of the poetic image. Though the lexical items in the poetic image are denotatively different, they become conotatively related.

Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant": A Stylistic Analysis

Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" was written in Pisa, in March 1820.(6) The poem is divided into three parts and a conclusion. Part I describes the loveliness of an Italian garden. Part II shows a lady walking in beauty and tending the garden. She is a "ruling grace," whereas Part III depicts the death of the lady, which leads to the wreck of nature. The conclusion indicates Shelley's doctrine of beauty.

As far as metrics is concerned, the poem consists of (78) stanzas of four lines each, rhyming (aabb).

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Shelley gives freedom to the music of the poem by variation in the placing and the number of anapaestic feet in the lines. (7) For the purpose of stylistic analysis, seven stanzas are systematically selected. The chosen illustrations are as follows:

(i) Stanza 1

A sensitive plant in a garden grew, And the young wind fed it with silver dew. And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light, And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

(GTLP, 1.1-4)

(ii) Stanza 19

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower; Radiance and odor are not its dower, It loves, even like Love, Its deep heart is full. It desires what it has not the Beautiful!

(GTLP, 1.73-76)

(iii) Stanza 29

There was a Power in this sweet Place. An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace. Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream? Was as God is to the starry scheme.

(GTLP, II. 114-117)

(iv) stanza 40

In a basket, of grasses and wildflowers full, The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent, Although they did ill, was innocent.

(GTLP, II. 158-161)

(v) stanza 46

The weary sound and the heavy breath

And the silent motions of passing death. And the smel, cold, oppressive, and dank.
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank.

(GTLP, III, 182-185)

(vi) stanza 63

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid, Wept, and the tears within each lid. Of its
folded leaves, which together grew, Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

(GTLP, III. 254-257)

(vii) stanza 77

For love, and beauty, and delight, There is no death, no change. Their might Exceeds
our organs, which endure. No light, being themselves obscure.

(GTLP, Conclusion 292-295)

Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" (1.1-4) & (I. 73-76)

Investigating Shelley's The Sensitive Plant shows that the lexical items (sensitive/young/silver) are respectively the collocates of the nodal items (plant/wind/dew). Apparently, the poet describes a lovely garden where a plant grows. But as it is frequently the case with Shelley, the natural elements are soon transfigured. The Sensitive Plant in line (1) represents the poet himself. The plant, a natural element, is personified. But this is not the whole story. The (wind) and the (dew) in line (20) are personified, too. The nodal item (wind) is likely to occur

In the same linguistic environment as items such as (cold), (fresh), (slow), etc. Instead, Shelley uses the unusual collocates (young) and (silver) to occur in the environment

"And the wins fed." The first adjective denotes the age while the latter refers to the color.

The poet's images (such as sensitive plant/young wind/silver dew/kisses of light) are structured as collocational shifts. The linguistic basis of Shelley's images, here and elsewhere

is this "juxtaposition of semantic incompatibility." This is, of course, not without a stylistic impact. Shelley observes the natural objects, but the natural description is not given for its own sake. Here, the landscape is symbolic. When he describes the natural resources of the garden, the poet is also speaking of the "spirit" of nature. In describing the natural beauty, he discerns the very springs of poetic inspiration. Things of beauty fill him with deep feelings. The intellectual scope is united with purity and emotion. Viewed as collocational shifts reflect Shelley's poetic images

his intellectual and emotional content. These images are wholly descriptive. They are the sort of "animistic" images.

Exploring the images of Shelley's poem (lines 73-76) more closely reveals the poet's philosophical and aesthetic ideas. The lines represent the sensitive plant as a lover of beauty. It is the soul which thirsts for the ideal. The lexes (loves) and (desires) unusually occur in the linguistic spans, "It even like Love / Its deep heart is full / It what it has not, the Beautiful" (75-76). The peculiar co-occurrence of (loves / desires) in the spans results in collocational shifts. The sensitive plant, a natural object, is given human characteristics.

Shelley's rosy images have several roots. Of these roots is Plato's philosophical hierarchy. Raine concedes that "Shelley is a platonist" and "in his poetry platonism is

informed with imaginative life clothed in beauty." (8) Hamilton sums up the Platonic doctrine of beauty. He maintains that:

(1) that love... implies the existence of an object loved: (2) that Love (or at least that form of love which the Greeks called "Eros") desires his object: (3) that desire is not felt for what is already possessed: (4) that since the object of love... is beauty, Love cannot be beautiful. (9)

Looking into the lines (73-74) once more reveals that the lover, i.e., the sensitive plant, has neither (bright flower) nor (radiance or odor). Shelley's plant, in Hamilton's words, cannot be beautiful. The selection of the item "desire" is of significance. That is to say, the lover desires his object. Love, represented by the plant, is the "consciousness of need" for the beautiful, though Love itself is not beautiful (Ibid.). Accordingly, the poetic image of Part is the vehicle of Shelley's Platonic aesthetic ideals

Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" (II.114-117) & (158-161)

Shelley's poetic images in Part II are still descriptive. "The whole elements of nature in the garden bathe in gladness." They rejoice to see an "Eve in this Eden." "There is a power in this sweet place" (114). This power symbolizes the Spirit of Beauty. The essence of a symbol, as Bowra states, is that "it expresses in a concrete particular form matters which are otherwise almost beyond our grasp." (10). He adds that "a symbol is almost indispensable when dealing with anything that belongs to some transcendental

order of being. It makes it visible to the mind and evokes its character by hint and suggestion and allusive reference." (Ibid.) (11) The whole scene is symbolic. The nodal item (Grace) is attributed with animation when the collocate (ruling) is figuratively used. The item (flowers) which is referred to by the pronoun (they) is also given. consciousness by the items (waken) and (dream). One more collocational shift, here, is (scheme) in the linguistic environment, " as God to the starry scheme."

All these images are not devised to add grace or clearness. Rather, they build up the poet's ideal picture of reality. The lady, to Shelley, is the "Form of beauty". It is to be noted that the concept of beauty is an integral part of Plato's whole philosophical system For Plato, the spiritual beauty is" that vision of the Form of beauty itself which gives complete and unifying knowledge of truth concerning the whole universe."(12)

To Shelley's aesthetic conception, the lady is " as God to the starry scheme "The lexical options, (God / Grace /scheme) are derived from the religious heritage to emphasize the divinity of the world she lives by. So Shelley's cognitive content is sorted out in the semantic structures he uses, that is, his poetic images. The function of Shelley's linguistic structure is to put an abstract experience in concrete terms. Moreover, Shelley's images such as, ruling grace ", " they (flowers) waken or dream" and "the starry scheme surprisingly extend the expressive possibilities of the poet's language.

Relevant to these poetic ideas are the ones expressed in the lines (158-161) which show the lady's acts of kindness.

Stylistically, the (poor) and the (banished) constitute a collocational set to the nodal item (insects) Such

collocates help specify the various aspects of the object described.

The object (insects) in the span is personified by the use of (poor) and (banished) That is to say personification charges abstractions or inanimate objects with human qualities The function of personification is to stir the emotions.

Shelley's " The Sensitive Plant" (GTLP, III. 182-185) & (GTLP, III. 254-257)

Par III opens with the death of the lady. The whole setting, unlike Part II is overwhelmed with desolation decay and death. In the lines (182-183), the lexes (weary) and (heavy) are respectively the collocates of the nodal items (soul) and (death). The items (cold/ oppressive /dank) in the line (184) constitute the collocational range of the nodal item (smell). As it is frequently the case with Shelley in his poetic style, the nodal items are personified. As a semantic structure, Shelley's imagery of Part III is characterized by silence, obscurity and wilderness. The poet's "macabre "vision dominates the whole landscape. Compared with the imagery of Part III, the images of Part II are full of radiance, colour and beauty. The collocational shifts, here, like" weary sound","heavy death", ** cold oppressive and dank smell serve to reflect the poet's 44 feelings and emotions. These images, organically 1 are bound with the central theme of this part, i.e. forlornness and death. So, stylistically, the unusual use of the linguistic elements in" The Sensitive Plant" leads to the collocational shifts. One more characteristic of Shelley's images is that they are brilliantly sensual. This is best shown in (weary sound/silent motion/cold, oppressive and dank smell).

Relevant to the gruesome imagery in analysis are the images scattered throughout the lines (254-257). The image of the sensitive plant is extraordinarily presistent in these lines. The plant is given human features in the following linguistic environment:

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid, Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its faded leaves, which together grew, Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

The bold juxtaposition of the items (plant) and (wept) produces a violent clash which has the effect of an authentic image Shelley selects an item which lies outside the normal

range of choices of a particular place in the structure. Through the lexes (plant) and (wept), the poet acheives some of his emotional impact. He formulates the desolation of the dream-like world by the use of such images. The items (tears) and (lid) are of the very semantic field. The chosen constituents form the sad scene of the deserted garden By and through these unfamiliar options, Shelley goes beyond the stablized or the static pattern to create his own language.

Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant" (GTLP, Conclusion 202-205)

As previously illustrated, Shelley's The Sensitive Plant describes the loveliness of an Italian garden. Among the flowers is the Sensitive Plant which represents the compationless soul (the poet himself). Viewed as a philosophical poet, Shelley is dominated by Platonism

Harmon & Harmon shed more light on the hierarchy of Platonic love by stating that there are "two kinds of love and beauty, a lower and a higher. The soul or lover of beauty in its quest for perfect beauty ascends gradually from the sensual to the spiritual and thereby develops all the virtues both of thought and action Beauty and virtue become identified. (13)

The final lines of the poem (202-295) reveal, poetically.

the Shelleyan-Platonic doctrine of Beauty. The poet asks whether the supreme value of Beauty has gone forever; he cannot believe it has, and in a world where there is so much that seems and is not, he reaches the conclusion that death itself may well be "like all the rest" without any reality." a mockery":

For Love, and Beauty, and Delight, There is no death nor change.

Away from the elaborate rhetorical language, Shelley elucidates his idealism, but there is straightforwardness in Such elucidation, as in " There is no death nor change their might / Exceeds our organs, which endure / No light... (293-295). The lexes (exceed) and (endure) are endowed with an animate sense. So in Shelley's poetics, there is the fusion of the imaginative details and the philosophical theme and the images are the vehicle of the poetic vision Shelley, in other words uses the language of philosophy to express his ideals.

Concluding Remarks

This approach has tried to show that the poetic image is the salient feature of Shelley's style in *The Sensitive Plant*. The poet's aesthetic content is reflected by and through a series of images. The lexical items are unusually selected in these semantic structures. Viewed as collocational shifts these images serve to express the poet's intellectual and emotional patterns of experience. They are the means by which Shelley expresses an abstract experience in concrete terms. The collocational shifts basically build up the poet's aesthetic universe.

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الشعرية و أسلبة الجمال : دراسة اسلوبية الصورة

في قصيدة الشاعر الرومانسي (شلي)

" النبتة مرهفة الحس "

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الملخص:

تعد الصورة الشعرية السمة المائزة الأسلوب (شلي) الشعري.

فالصورة هي الحامل النسائي لرؤية الشاعر إلى العالم ، وتأتي الصورة الشعرية عند (شلي) على شكل تحولات في القرائن الدلالية ، ومن شأن هذه التحولات أن تسبغ على الصور فرادتها الإسلوبية.

لذا تتخذ هذه الدراسة من مفهوم (التجاور النسائي) إطاراً نظرياً لتحديد الصورة الشعرية في قصيدة (النبتة مرهفة الحس) ، والتأويل القراني الصورة شلي الشعرية يبين أن هذه الوسيلة الإسلوبية تستثني بالروية الفلسفية والجمالية للشاعر الرومانسي والتي تتجذر بصورة جوهرية في الفكر الفلسفي الإفلاطوني.

لقد وجدت الأفكار والتصورات الجمالية التي قال بها (إفلاطون) تجسيدا لها في متواليات الصور التي تشكل الصورة المفترضة للعالم عن (علي) و تلخص الدراسة إلى أن (إستعارة الجمال) هي السمة الأسلوبية المهيمنة في (القصيدة مرهفة الحس) التي بها ومن خلالها يعبر الشاعر الرومانسي عن تجربته الجمالية مثلما تعبر التجاورات اللسانية عن تلك التجربة .