



Ain Shams University
Faculty of Education
Department of English

A Pragma - Stylistic Study of Figures of Speech in
Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre and Emily Bronte's
Wuthering Heights with special reference to Simile and
Metaphor.

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Introduction

This thesis is divided into four chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is divided into two main parts: biographical studies and critical studies. The part entitled biographical studies reviews what critics such as Phyllis Bentley, Maggie Berg, and W. A. Craik wrote about the Brontes' personal life, and the personal factors that shaped Charlotte, and Emily Bronte, the great writers. The part entitled critical studies deals with critics' reception of the literary achievements of both Charlotte, and Emily Bronte. Most critics think of the use of figures of speech as one of the major factors behind the uniqueness of their works.

Chapter two discusses the origin and definition of the term "figures of speech" as treated by the most prominent figures in philosophy and linguistics, classification of figures of speech a survey of the most dominant definitions given by critics, rhetoricians and philosophers to every figure of speech, and the functions commonly performed by the use of figures of speech.

Chapter three presents an intensive study of figures of speech and the images they create in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. Figures of speech that are responsible for the creation of slavery imagery, animal and bird imagery, war imagery, and nature imagery are selected and analyzed. The role of these figures of speech in character as well as theme presentation and their relationship to the context of situation in which they are used are also discussed.

Chapter four presents an investigation of the figures of speech, especially metaphor and simile, which are used in Wuthering Heights. Emily Bronte relied heavily on the use of figures of speech to define her characters and to express the competing ideologies of the Victorian age. Animal and bird

imagery, weather imagery, plant imagery, and window imagery are the main illustrations of Emily Bronte's use of figures of speech in Wuthering Heights.

Though Charlotte and Emily Bronte lived within identical personal as well as social context, they still show points of disparity that were due to their personal endowments and priorities. Such differences made themselves concrete in the writings of both writers. Each of them expressed herself in a literary manner that was different from the other, but simultaneously, it was not devoid of some common features. So the conclusion is devoted to the discussion of the differences and similarities between Charlotte and Emily Bronte in their use of figures of speech in Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights.

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Summary

Chapter One

A Review of the Literature on Charlotte and Emily Bronte

Owing to their exceptional mental talents, Charlotte and Emily Bronte come to occupy a highly distinguished position in the annals of English literature. Such unique, admirable status rests mainly on the merits of their literary achievements, which prove their writers to be well-versed artists. They followed an extraordinary writing career that dealt mainly with suppressed passions and tortured love. The factors that have stimulated the genius of the Brontes have always been a controversial issue to which many critics have dedicated many studies.

Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre and Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights were considered as an eminent feature of the English literary canon. These works are still widely read as they treated very human issues such as liberty, independence, love, and self fulfillment. Both of them reflect the competing ideologies of the Victorian age.

The first part of this chapter will discuss the formative factors and the shaping influences on the lives of Charlotte and Emily Bronte. A review of the domestic, social, educational and sentimental influences that contributed to the talents of Charlotte and Emily Bronte and made them flourish is elementary to a comprehensive understanding of their mentality. The second part of the chapter is dedicated to critics' reception of the works written by Charlotte and Emily Bronte. The various approaches adopted by critics while discussing the works of Charlotte and Emily Bronte, will be the main concern of the second part of this chapter.

Part One: Biographical Studies

Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) was born at Thornton in Yorkshire on 21 April 1816, third of the six children of Patrick Bronte and Maria Branwell, whereas Emily Jane Bronte (1818-1848) was born on 30 July 1818, the fifth of those children. Two years later, their father was appointed perpetual curate of Haworth which was a small, isolated hill village surrounded by the moors.

Original, fascinating, and distinguished as they were, the Brontes were always thought of as a legend. In her book Charlotte and Emily Bronte (1955), Laura L. Hinkley writes, "They have become a legend. In their lives and after, some persons spread injurious fables about them; others decked their names with fancies no less false."(248)

The elements that have woven such a legend were various and symmetrically integrated. In her book The Brontes (1966:9), Phyllis Eleanor Bentley writes:

"This originality which gives them a just claim to be considered major English writers is definitely traceable to circumstances of their lives, of which elements are perhaps not unusual in themselves, but highly singular as regards their combination. A study of these circumstances as the source of their equipment is an essential preliminary to any true understanding of the Brontes' works."

The Brontes were brought up under some special circumstances that had their own impact upon them. Natasha Walter, in "The Passionate Governess" (1995), writes:

"The lives of great writers tend to warp under the pressure that final success brings to bear on the past. And that is particularly true of the Brontes. Their biographies cannot escape from ready-made images of harsh schools, wild moors, lonely governesses and thwarted love. In them, Emily is always more than a little like Cathy, and Charlotte more than a little like Jane, and the sisters' tentative steps through life as they search for their voices and their subjects cannot be recreated."

Critics have agreed upon some biographical elements to be the main reasons behind the special tang of the literature written by Charlotte and Emily Bronte. The most outstanding of these elements are the Brontes' heredity, the way they were brought up, the solitary place where they spent most of their life, the type of education they received, the social context of the Victorian society and the successive pains that broke their hearts. In her book The Bronte Sisters, Phyllis Eleanor Bentley (1950:11) writes:

"An important point about the Bronte parents is that they had no relatives near at hand, with the exception of Mrs. Bronte's cousin, in whose house the children stayed in early life. Soon however she died and the children were left isolated; they never formed part of a family group and had no kin near by with whom to visit."

The Bronte parents had some sort of literary orientation which they, whether by heredity or by creating literary habits, transmitted to their children. Bentley (1966:90) writes:

"Mr. Bronte and Miss Branwell fell in love and after a decorous courtship enlivened by charming letters from Maria, married in 1812, Mr. Bronte being at that time curate of Heartshead. Six children were born of the marriage in rapid succession: in Heartshead Maria (1813) and Elizabeth (1815); in Thornton.... Charlotte (1816), Patrick Branwell (1817), Emily Jane (1818) and Anne (1820). In 1820 Mr. Bronte became incumbent of Haworth. In 1821 Mrs. Bronte died and her sister Elizabeth Branewell, from Cornwall stayed in Haworth to look after the motherless children."