

Emotional Signification of Poetry from Expression Theory's Point of View: The case of Da'bal's Taeiah

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Received 11 November 2014

Accepted 21 August 2015

Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The present article is an attempt to analyze the emotional signification of poems; 1) does a poem exert emotional signification by itself just like a text produced within the language network, independent of the poet's emotional experiences and audience's comprehension? 2) does it reflect the signification of the poet's emotions?, or 3) does it find emotional signification with respect to the emotional state of audience?

2. Theoretical Framework

The theory through which the analysis is conducted is 'expression theory', which among aesthetic theories, stresses emotion and expression thereof in artworks and holds that anything expressing emotion is art. Of all the different interpretations of the theory, its basic one defined by Tolstoy (2009) has been chosen for the purpose of the study. This version considers art as a human action in which the individual consciously and with the help of external clues transmits the emotions they have experienced. The audience is thereby affected by these emotions and undergoes the same emotional experiences. The three main elements of this theory, including external clues, transmission of emotion by the artist, and reception of the emotion by the audience directly deal with the three questions posed above and provide positive answers to them.

3. Methodology

An analysis of the role and influence of these three elements opens a semantic horizon to the poem and gives an account of how a poem gains emotional characteristics in its signification on the basis of these elements. From this perspective, viewing the poem as a linguistic work from the intralingual and extralingual significations respectively proves the signification of the poem within and outside the language network and confirms its relations with the poet's and the audience's experiences.

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The intralinguistic signification is emotionally analyzed by its poetic elements, that is, the words in the poem signify within the language network and in relation to the other words. Given the relations between the words within the language network, it could be expected that the closeness of the words used in the poem to those bearing emotional significations makes these words capable of becoming emotionally loaded. This closeness of the words within the language network could be semantically analyzed through ‘collocations’. So, any of the words used in the poem could be analyzed to see which of the words emotionally loaded is more frequently used within the language network. This frequency could be used to see that a particular word as used within a linguistic community commonly signifies a special word which designates a particular emotion.

The extralinguistic signification of a poem from an emotional perspective is analyzed with respect to the emotional experiences of the poet in his past on the one hand, and those of the audiences based on their mental atmospheres on the other. A review of the biography of the poet sheds light on how his/her life events direct the emotional significations of the words and how the verses gain emotional load based on these events. A study of the mental and cultural space of the audience shows how the diversity and variety of the spaces allow for various emotional effects they experience or how they fail to feel a particular emotional effect for not grasping the mental and cultural background of the poem.

4. Results and Discussion

The theory has been used to analyze 45 lines of a qasida titled “Taeiah” by Da’balKhazaei (148-264 AD), the great Shiite poet who lived in Imam Reza’s period (the 8th Shiite Imam).

The emotional significations of these lines are viewed with regard to eight emotions, including devotion, fear, happiness, anger, and their opposite namely, hatred, bravery, sadness, and kindness. To analyze the emotional significations of Taeiah along the intralinguistic axis, these eight emotions are treated as eight words. Then, the denotative or connotative meaning of each word is viewed given its collocation in the line and each meaning is treated as a word again. Then it will be clear that the meaning reached for each line collocates with which of the eight emotions in the intralinguistic network. The results of the analysis show the following frequencies: devotion (25), fear (2), happiness (11), anger (5) hatred (6), bravery (2), sadness (25), and kindness (1).

Then the extralinguistic signification of Taeiah is analyzed on two axes: emotion transmission by the poet and emotion reception by the audience. Firstly, reference to Da’bal’s biological space shows that the emotional experiences of the poet in the context in which the poem was composed unites the emotional significations of the linguistic elements in the poem. Secondly, with respect to Da’bal’s emotional experiences in his life, these elements find extralinguistic significations, which are not explicated by mere focus on intralinguistic significations of the poem. Thirdly, Da’bal’s experiences direct

the emotional signification of the poem, forming a dominant emotional state. Fourthly, the signification of Taeiah within the context of its formation can load the poem with emotional significations.

In the second axis, it is shown that the significations of the poem are interpreted based on the audience's viewpoints on the external context of Taeiah. Therefore, if the audience has a similar conception of the external contexts with the poet, his/her emotional experience of the extralinguistic significations of the poem can be expected to be in line with the emotional experiences of the poet. On the other hand, it is possible for the audience to find the poem with particular expressions, but does not sympathize with them, or else he/she may have a different emotional experience than the poet as for the different approach he or she adopts to the external context in comparison to the poet.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

In this way, the sense signification of the poem is the outlet of the manifestation of emotions in the poem, independent of the poet and the audience. On the other hand, the reference signification of the poem is the outlet of the manifestation of emotion in the line of transmission of emotion on the poet's side as well as the line of receiving the emotion on the audience's side.

Key Words: Da'balKhazaei , Expression Theory, Poetic Emotion, Taeiah.

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