Effects Of Narration In The Laboratory And Havisham

In the poem, ‘Havisham’ by Carol Ann Duffy written in 1993 and the poem, ‘The Laboratory’ by Robert Browning written in 1844. In ‘The Laboratory’, the speaker is portrayed as insane. Meanwhile, this is evident in the use of imagery, adjectives and rhyming. In ‘Havisham’, the speaker is conveyed as insane. This is apparent in the use of juxtaposition, metaphors, onomatopoeia and the use of the title.

In the poem, ‘The Laboratory’, the speaker uses imagery of murder to convey the narrator’s insanity. The line, “she would fall shrivelled” suggests that she fantasizes of what she can imagine the woman’s death will be like. This makes the narrator sound insane as she is dreaming of murderous thoughts. The use of “would” suggests that the narrator is thinking ahead in the future and is already planning for the poisoning to occur. The use of “shrivelled” suggests that she wants to make the woman completely lifeless and wants to make her weak so the speaker can have power over her. In addition, the line “her breasts and her arms and her hands, should drop dead!” suggests she is wanting this death to eventually happen to whoever is with the taken man who she loves. The use of “should” suggests that she is very sure of how powerful the poison will be and that the speaker wants this to happen with a passion. It’s almost as if she is too sure of herself. The use of alliteration in “drop dead” emphasizes the fact that the narrator wants the woman dead. The use of the plosives in the “d” sound creates a harsh tone, conveying violence and therefore, emphasizing how badly she wants the women dead. Lastly, the use of the “!” suggests her excitement over the death which is extremely gruesome. This makes the speaker sound insane as she is fantasizing ways for her to kill somebody in order to desperately get with the man she wants to be with. Also, Browning makes the speaker sound insane as she uses adjectives with positive connotations to display how fascinated she is by the poison. She describes it as a magical treasure and wants to ensure it is as beautiful as it can be. The line, “the exquisite blue” suggests that she holds respect for something so dangerous.

The use of “exquisite” suggests that she thinks highly of this poison. Something this deadly is not supposed to sound as if it is delicate and beautiful. The speaker suggests the poison withholds the same qualities as something extremely expensive such as gold or treasures. The fact that she is trying to beautify the poison conveys her insanity. Furthermore, the line “sure to taste so sweetly” suggests that she is going completely insane as the poison is supposedly tasty. The use of “so sweetly” suggests that she is saying the poison is supposed to be similar to candy and because she is so fascinated by it, she makes it sound enticing – as if she is convincing herself the woman’s death might treat for herself. Also, the fact that she uses the word “sure” suggests that she is so intrigued by it, that she might possibly want to try it or she has already fantasied about it a lot, that she can imagine what it tastes like. This makes her sound insane because it is unusual for someone to convince themselves that a killing weapon could be like a treat.

Lastly, in ‘The Laboratory’, the use if rhyming suggests the poet is trying to convey the insanity of the narrator by creating a song or a chant for her wish upon someone’s death which draws attention to the narrator’s insanity. For example, the words ‘head’ and ‘dead’ are emphasized as they are used to rhyme and therefore impact the reader the most, portraying her insanity.

Additionally, ‘pain’ and ‘remain’ leave a great impact on the reader as they have murderous connotations showing the narrator’s insanity. In the poem, ‘Havisham’, the speaker is presented as insane because of her own feelings juxtaposing one another. In the poem, a semantic field of love is created using the words, “beloved sweetheart” “honeymoon” and ‘veil’. The use of “beloved sweetheart” suggests that she thinks deeply and is longing for him because the speaker utilizes such heartfelt words to describe him, however, he left her. The use of “honeymoon” suggests that she wanted their love to be continuous and for them to stay together forever. The use of “veil” symbolizes the wedding and therefore connotes love. This also suggests that since she still has the veil on from a long time ago, that she still holds these loving feelings for him which makes her insane as she has not gotten over the event. These words in the semantic field make her sound insane because she juxtaposes her own feelings. She has conflicting feelings which create a semantic field of hate. These words, “wished him dead”, “strangle”, “curses” all convey the hate which she also withholds when thinking of him. The words “strangle” and “curses” suggest her hatred, however, they also hold connotations of murder. The use of them could suggest she has gone so oblivious to how insane she has become, that she wants to possibly kill the man for what he has done to her. This is then proven when the speaker says “wished him dead”, to suggest the severity of how much she fantasizes over her hate and her possible revenge. It could be a way for her to cope, so that she could make herself believe that he died so she could never be with him. The idea of her hating but loving the man which left her, suggests that she has gone insane. Additionally, metaphors and onomatopoeia are used in the poem Havisham portray insanity. The phrase, “red balloon bursting” could be a metaphor to represent her love life. The use of the colour “Red” connotes love or anger which could also represent her contrasting feelings about the man. The balloon could symbolize her heart or represents how her love was almost carefree and floating – like how a child would feel and think. Moreover, the “balloon” could suggest that there was a party (the wedding) and could hint that the decorations have still not been taken down. The use “bursting” could suggest that suddenly, it was all taken away from her; the man leaving her could have been this shock. It does not suggest how the balloon burst however, if it were her it could evoke the idea that she believes she destroyed and broke her heart because of herself. As if it was herself to blame. Also, it represents her heart, and how it was broken. In addition, the line following this, “Bang. I stabbed at a wedding cake” also conveys that the speaker has gone insane. The use of the onomatopoeia in “bang” is emphasized because she uses it as a one-word sentence. This suggests how the sudden it was for her ex-fiancé to leave. The “wedding cake” could symbolize the event and the party and the fact that she used the word “stabbed” to describe it, suggests how much she now despises it. This makes her insane because it is odd for someone to stab something withholding such positive and joyous connotations. Also, the use of “I” is used as if she was talking about herself in the third person, and as if she is recalling this event of what happened. This makes the speaker sound insane because it is not normal for one to talk about themselves in this perspective. The poem ‘Havisham’ was created from the book Great Expectations. The fact that it does not include the word ‘Miss’ hides her gender and emphasizes on the fact that she does not have a husband for her to replace her maiden name. This shows that the reader feels sorrow for her constantly, as she was not loved therefore leading her to her insanity.

To conclude, Duffy is arguably conveying the severity of how one event in your life can alter your life to such a great extent that is almost uncontrollable. Additionally, Browning is trying to critique how love can take over and control your life no matter the consequence involved when getting your way.