

A Stylistic Analysis of A Village Morning: A Poem by Daud Kamal

MUHAMMAD TAHIR ANJUM

Lecturer in English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat.
Email: tahiranjum53@hotmail.com

Dr. ABDUS SAMAD

Assistant Professor/Chairman Department of English,
Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat.
Email: dr.samad@kust.edu.pk

Dr. MANSOOR ALI

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Kohat University of Science & Technology, Kohat.
Email: sorrorali@yahoo.com

Abstract

This work identifies stylistic devices - foregrounding, deviation, levels of language and other poetic devices - used in the poem, A Village Morning by Daud Kamal. The aim of this article is to explore the main idea attached to the poem. Here the researcher attempts to bring forth the hidden meanings fixed to each word and sentence of the poem. It investigates all those elements in the text that bring forth the entire picture to the surface. Furthermore, this research work is purely based on stylistic analysis which buttresses the researcher to identify the style of the poet through the text. In a nutshell, this article addresses the question that how to analyze a poem stylistically to get the concrete idea and style embedded throughout in the poem.

Keywords: Stylistic Analysis, Daud Kamal, Graphology, Phonological Level, Syntactical Level.

Introduction

Stylistics as a field of study comes from two inter-related disciplines, linguistics, which is scientific study of language, and literary criticism. The focus, in this field of study, is on style in both oral/spoken and printed/written texts scientifically and methodologically. It acknowledges the ways in which context (form) and content work together, with the help of utilizing language.

“Stylistics can sometimes look like either linguistics or literary criticism, depending upon where you are standing when looking at it” (Leech & Short, 1981). For Short, stylistics can operate in two ways and it analyzes both the language and the content of any given text, both spoken and written. In this regard, Leech and Short (1981) define the term ‘Stylistics’ as “the linguistics study of style”. For Widdowson (1975), the term ‘stylistics’ is “...the study of literary discourses from a linguistics orientation...” (p. 4). Widdowson’s (1975) emphasizes on the role of stylistics as field of study which deals with exploring both the literary aspect of a text and at the same time, it also offers to investigate the linguistic aspect from different angles such as morphology, graphology etc. It, therefore, offers not only the linguistic insight but it is also an objective method of analysis. Furthermore, Kumar (1987), states that theories which originate in language are helpful in developing objective methods of analysis and it can also interpret the literary aspects by solely focusing on the text, and not on the author (p. 40). Verdonk (2002) suggests that stylistics, as a field of study, investigates and analyzes distinctive features embedded in any spoken or written texts

(p. 4). For Wales (2011), style means a unique way of expressing thoughts and ideas both verbally or in writing (p. 397). According to Isti'annah (2017), the purpose of stylistics in a literary text is to provide the ways in which language establishes meaning and the appreciation is not just based upon on any kind of assumption.

Thus, Stylistics is concerned with the idea of 'style', with the analysis of literary texts, and with the use of linguistics.

The poem *A Village Morning* is written in three Tercets and each Tercet is followed by one line stanza. The poem has no regular rhyme scheme but the imagery, symbolism, simile, personification, alliteration, and the use of diction have dressed it musically alluring and fascinating. The poem is pretty complicated in extracting the whole idea out of it but the stylistic devices make it comprehensible to the readers. The poet, being nostalgic, struggles to recall his past and bygone days. He goes into retrospection and finds his early phase of life quite satisfying.

This research work aims to highlight the main idea and identify the stylistic tools and devices used in the poem that convey the meaning in different shades.

Literature Review

According to Leech (1969), "style is selection of linguistic medium; a sort of revolt against the norm; a repetition of linguistic forms..." meaning that is revolutionary as it goes against the established rules of analysis. Furthermore, style also gives us an idea about the author and his/her personality. For Leech (1969), clarity in diction can attained by changing the structure of the words. Short (1996) states that stylistics analysis does not only focus on the language aspect of a text. It also focuses on the meaning, hidden ideas and themes of a text. To him, "stylistics can sometime look like either linguistics or literary criticism, depending upon where you are standing and where looking at."

According to Birch (1989), "language and style are allowed to move in a fix boundary on the greatness of words. He says that words have special meanings which create distinction between them." According to Haynes (1989), "style is studied in terms of differences. It can be called variety or diversity." According to H.G Widdowson, "stylistics represents connectivity between linguistics and literature." In other words, for Widdowson, it is a multidisciplinary field of study which focuses both on linguistics as well as literature. Carter describes: "stylistics works like pull between linguistics and literature." Carter divides stylistics into five different field of study i.e., i) pedagogical stylistics, ii) linguistic stylistic, iii) style and discourse, iv) literary stylistics, and v) stylistics and foreign language learner.

Davy and Crystal (1969) state that the field of stylistics is primarily more concerned with applied linguistics which analyzes style methodologically and scientifically, by employing linguistic rules, principles, and theoretical base. Stylistics, as a field, initially was thought to be more concerned with the way a person writing style but more recently is deeply associated stylistic with linguistics.

For Crystal (2008), linguistics is a field of study which provides an opportunity to study language in scientific manner and stylistics, as a discipline, assists in illuminating different aspects of language and the change in it.

Research Methodology

This research work carries out on account of stylistic analysis. This section provides a stylistic analysis of Daud Kamal's poem 'A Village Morning'. Stylistics analysis aims to bring forward the intended and hidden meaning of the poet. The poet has employed figurative language, the imagery is sensuous, and the poem contains different sound patterns. Furthermore, the poem's structure makes it an admirable piece of art to

be read and enjoyed. In this regard, the researcher intends to investigate and dissect various devices which the poet has used for emotive and pictorial reason. Thus, the study focuses on the graphological, morphological, semantic, phonological, and syntactical levels of the analysis.

Text of the Poem:

By morning
 rain had stopped
 and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun
 A breeze now ruffles the hair on my chest,
 The silversmith's wife makes buttermilk
 While her children rush out to see
 A hawker selling birdcages,
 The village well is as crowded as ever...
 These scars in the mind
 are as necessary as blisters
 on a stonebreaker's hands,
 There are no vultures underground,
 See how I've struggled
 to trap yesterday's sunlight
 in a handful of water

Daud Kamal

Stylistic Features for the In-depth Analysis of the Poem A *Village Morning*

Stylistic analysis can be done in an organized manner by focusing on certain aspects of text which can yield desired results. Language is not a random entity. It is rather a combination of very complex layers and links which can be studied systematically.

Graphological Level

At graphological, the focus of the study is on the ways in which words are arranged, and the manner in the which text is written/printed on a page. For instance, using capitalization or the lack of it, or the excessive focus on punctuation etc.

The poem *A Village Morning* is written in three tercets and each tercet is followed by one line stanza. A three lines stanza is called tercet. Each sentence starts with a capital letter and ends with a full stop. The poem is written in fragments. The sentence structure is simple and easy to comprehend and decipher.

There is graphological parallelism in this poem. Each stanza has three lines and the whole stanza is in the form of a complete sentence. There are incomplete sentences which show the incomplete thoughts of the poet.

"By morning
 rain had stopped
 and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun..."
 "The village well is as crowded as ever..."

Semantic Level

Semantics is a field of linguistics which studies the meaning aspect in language. Poets use different forms to convey different meanings to create a particular situation. Daud Kamal has used dramatic monologue to

show his personal feelings and sentiments through different shades of meanings assigned to each word. He used different words connotatively and metaphorically. For instance, the word ‘morning’ conveys the meaning of ‘bygone days, past, Youth’. Though, he could use ‘A Village Life’ if he wanted to glorify the village and rural life but he used the word “morning” instead, to convey a particular meaning attached to this word. The word ‘Morning’ is thematized in the whole poem.

Syntactic Level

In syntactical level, our focus is to study the ways in which words are properly arranged. Furthermore, it also concerns itself with the functions of different words in a sentence. It also attempts to describe how these elements function in a sentence. It involves rules of positioning of elements in a sentence, such as noun, verbs, adverbs etc.

For instance,

“By Morning

rain had stopped
 and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun...”

Here, *By morning* has been foregrounded and placed at the beginning to catch the attention of readers and to create a particular effect.

Morphological Level:

The study of the smallest grammatical units of language and their formation into words is called Morphology. It studies the formation of different words. “Morphology is an investigation which analyzes all those basis ‘elements’ which are used in a language. These elements in the form of a linguistic message are more technically known as morphemes” (Yule, ,1996).

Morpheme is a minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function.

We can clarify this definition with some examples from the poem A Village Morning.

E.g. **Cornfield**, **sunlight**, **scars**, **stonebreaker’s**, **hands**, **handful**, *etc.*

The poet has used these particular morphemes to create a linguistic effect.

Phonological Level

Phonology is a subfield of linguistics and it focuses on speech sound and the way these sounds are formed into speech in an organized manner. There are some aspects of it such as tone which contributes to the meaning of an utterance. Cuddon (2013) states that there is repetition of consonant sounds, which are identical, after a vowel sound (p. 153).

For instance:

Alliteration, consonance, assonance, deliberate selection of sounds, and repetition in the poem A Village Mornings such as:

“rain had stopped	(Consonance ‘d’ sound)
and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun...”	(Consonance ‘d’ sound)
“A b reeze now r uffles the h air on my chest.”	(Consonance ‘r’ sound)
“The s ilversmith’s wife makes b uttermilk”	(Consonance ‘s’ sound)
while h er ch ildren r ush out to see	(Consonance ‘r’ sound)
a h awker s elling b irdcages.	(Consonance ‘r’ sound)

to trap yesterday's sunlight" (Consonance 't' sound)
 "and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun..." (Assonance 'ə' schwa sound)
 "The village well is as crowded as ever..." (Assonance 'ə' schwa sound)
 "See how I've struggled (Alliteration 's' sound)
 The poet has used all these sounds repeatedly to create a music in the poem.

Lexical Level

Table 1: Lexical Level Analysis of *A Village Morning*

Nouns/Pronouns/Noun Phrase	Adjectives	Verbs	Adverbs
Morning Rain Cornfields Sun Breeze Hair Chest Buttermilk Children Hawker Birdcages These Scars Mind Blisters Vultures Water Village morning Silversmith's wife Village well Stonebreaker's hand	Crowded Handful Terraced	Stopped Glittered Ruffles Makes Rush out See Selling Struggled Trap	How (adverb of frequency) Ever

Discourse Level

A linked is established at inter-sentential level which forming a connective or cohesive text. It means the relationship between the sentences. For example, employing different kinds of connectives such as: using articles, or the use of 'though', or repeating the pronouns, etc.

By morning
 rain had stopped
 and terraced cornfields glittered in the sun...
The silversmith's wife makes buttermilk
 while her children rush out to see
 a hawker selling birdcages.
The village well is as crowded as ever...
These scars in the mind
 are as necessary as blisters
 on a stonebreaker's hands.

Poetic Devices

Simile

Poets employ different kinds of figures of speech and simile is one such type. In simile, two altogether different things are compared for a quality. Simile is different than a metaphor, as it employs the use of the words 'like' or 'as' to point out the quality. It directly compares two things.

E.g.

"These scars in the mind
 are **as** necessary **as** blisters
 on a stonebreaker's hands."

The poet has used the words 'scars in the mind' as a simile. He compared scars in the mind with the blisters on a stonebreaker's hand. Here the poet conveys the idea that these memories of bygone days are inevitable as the blisters on the hand of a stonebreaker. It makes us feel that how the poet literally suffers while recollecting his youth.

Fresh Metaphor

With a frequent use of fresh metaphor, the poet gives a very beautiful description that can be fairly unforgettable. Fresh metaphors are like fresh vegetables. The fresh ones have the most flavors. A fresh metaphor is one that we haven't read before, but that immediately clarifies a situation. The poet made use of such metaphors which convey layers of meanings encapsulated with his personal profound feelings.

The very subject of the poem is metaphoric. The poet used *Village morning* which can represent the purity and simplicity of his early phase of life. He glorifies the early days of his life which were free from the element of materialism and artificiality.

In the second stanza the poet says,

"A breeze now ruffles the **hair on my chest**."

This line is again metaphoric in which the grass on a grave has been described as 'the hair on chest'. This is a very beautiful and crafty description of a grave upon which the grass is grown and now it ruffles with the blow of wind.

In the last stanza we have another best example of fresh metaphor such as:

"See how I've struggled
 to trap yesterday's sunlight
 in a **handful of water**"

The *handful of water* can represent the *later phase of life / short span of life* or can be *this small poem which showcases the pleasant memories of the poet*. He becomes nostalgic that how I have strived to recall and absorb my pleasant memories though tormenting and agonizing in the present last moment of life or in this small piece of work. The speaker attempts to recollect the pleasant memories of his youth which cannot stay for a long time as we cannot capture the sunlight in a cup of water for a long time. Such kind of metaphor has not been used before.

Personification

Personification is when we give human qualities or traits to an object or animal. It is a figure of speech that adds interest and fun to a poem. In personification, inanimate things are depicted in a manner that they

behave and acts like normal human beings. Poet gives the same human attributes to the sunlight that gets trapped

As he says in the following stanzas:
 “See how I’ve struggled
 to *trap yesterday’s sunlight*
 in a handful of water.”

In another occasion the poet gives the quality of human to a breeze to gather the hair on the chest that creates a sound.

“A *breeze* now *ruffles* the hair on my chest.”

Imagery

It is the poet’s use of technique in a manner that has an appealing effect on our senses. The poet creates a scene in such a way that we can feel, smell, taste etc. the poem of Daud Kamal is full of imageries. He used these imageries to add beauty and depth to his poem. He used visual imagery, taste imagery, death imagery etc.

Visual imagery:

The speaker tries to dazzle the eyes of the readers as the cornfields glitter with water in the sunlight.

“By morning

rain had stopped
 and *terraced cornfields glittered in the sun...*”

The poet goes on and portrays the picture of people gathered near the village well.

“*The village well is as crowded as ever...*”

In the next stanza the poet makes us see and feel the blisters on the hand of a stonebreaker. This appeal to our sense of sight which accordingly makes us feel the pain and suffering of the poet.

“These *scars* in the mind
 are as necessary as *blisters*
 on a stonebreaker’s hands.”

Similarly, in the last stanza we have the visual imagery as he presents the image of sunlight in a handful of water. It appeals to the sense of sight and makes us see the reflection of sunrays in a small amount of water.

“See how I’ve struggled
 to trap yesterday’s *sunlight*
 in a handful of water.”

Taste imagery

Taste imagery is related to sensory aspects i.e., the sense of taste. In other terms, we can call it gustatory imagery. This kind of imagery describes images, different words, or detailed descriptions in a person’s brain which leads to think and remind of taste. The image of buttermilk has been presented which appeals to the sense of taste but the sense of sight at the same time.

“The silversmith’s wife *makes buttermilk*”

Death imagery

The poem is also furnished with the death imagery. The speaker takes us to the graveyard and makes us realize and feel the death and decay of human beings. He gives the image of grass on a grave that ruffles with the blowing of breeze. He gives the image of death in a very fresh use of imagery which has not been used before. With the use of death imagery, we empathies with the poet and find ourselves the part of that very experience and pain.

“A breeze now ruffles the hair on my chest..”

Symbolism

In symbolism, there are symbols which are used to emphasize and signify an idea or a quality. In this process, symbolic meanings are given to the ideas and these meaning are quite different than their literal meaning. Daud Kamal has used odd and unique symbols to convey his idea in a more beautiful way. Each word and sentence used in the poem by Daud Kamal is symbolic. For instance, the Village Morning symbolizes the purity and simplicity of his early phase of life. Hair on the chest symbolizes the old age. Furthermore, the handful of water can symbolize this very poem or short span of his life. In such a way most of his symbols are fresh and odd to communicate his experiences.

Theme

Central idea of the poem is retrospection, reminiscence and nostalgia or longing for sweet memories of the bygone days which become agonizing and tormenting when the poet recollects it in the later phase of life. The theme of the poem can be nostalgia and retrospection.

Conclusion

Through the application of stylistic lens on the poem *A Village Morning*, the researcher concludes that the poet has got a peculiar style, beautiful selection of words, and a novel way of in-depth expressions. It demonstrates from the stylistic analysis of the poem that Daud Kamal portrayed the pleasant and sweet memories of his youth. The poet glorifies his youth when he creates the scene of children rush out to see a hawker selling birdcages-which were offered to them to catch birds-which perhaps reminds him of his youth when he was full of zest and energy to control everything. But now he is looking fragile and helpless to control anything as he says, “see how I have struggled to trap yesterday’s sunlight in a handful of water”. The poet has made use of stylistic techniques such as imagery, metaphor, symbolism, foregrounding, personification etc., to showcase his vibrant flow of thoughts and sentiments that are scintillating throughout the poem. Stylistic analysis is a useful way to understand any literary text. It is recommended for other research scholars to investigate literary texts from stylistic perspective. Daud Kamal, as a poet, is yet to be fully appreciated for his contribution to the English poetry. It is, therefore, recommended to study Daud Kamal’s other poems.

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