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Abdulbari

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

Romana Aziz

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

**Muhammad Zeeshan Akram
Malik**

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

Sobia Manzoor

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

Muhammad Kamran Asif

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

Stylistic Analysis of “Daffodil by William Wordsworth”

Abdulbari, Romana Aziz, Muhammad Zeeshan Akram Malik, Sobia Manzoor, Muhammad Kamran Asif

Abstract

This paper aims to analyze Wordsworth’s poem “Daffodils” from the perspective of stylistic analysis. The analysis is made under the aspects of Graphological, Grammatical, Syntactical, and Phonological patterns. We have also found tropes and schemes that are present in the poem. This research is helpful to analyze the structure and style of Wordsworth’s poetry, and his themes, views, and treatment of nature.

Keywords: Style, stylistics, Wordsworth, loneliness, nature, faith, phonological level, grammatical level, graphological level.

Introduction

“Style” is a word derived from Latin word “elocution” which means style and means “lexis” in Greek. Style is a broader term. It has several meanings in and outside of the literary text. A particular procedure by which something is done, a manner or a way is style. Broadly, appearance of everything is style. The way of doing something or the way of living is also style. Style is also related to a personality of a person. A style reflects the thoughts of a person’s mind. It describes the way of person’s speaking and writing.

In sociolinguistics, a style is a set of linguistic variants with specific social meanings. In this context, social meanings can include group membership, personal attributes, or beliefs. Linguistic variation is at the heart of the concept of linguistic style—without variation there is no basis for distinguishing social meanings. Variation can occur syntactically, lexically and phonologically

Many approaches to interpreting and defining style incorporate the concepts of indexicality, indexical order, stance-taking, and linguistic ideology. Note that a style is not a fixed attribute of a speaker. Rather, a speaker may use different styles depending on context. Additionally, speakers often incorporate elements of multiple styles into their speech, either consciously or subconsciously, thereby creating a new style.

Pedagogical Implications

The ultimate aim of this work is to explore ways in which language use has been integrated in the poem. It is also aimed at analyzing some of the specific characteristics that give the poem its identity. This refers to the recurrent features of stylistics employed by the writer. In other words, this work will be concerned with striking and marked use of words in the poem in order to enhance effective transfer of message. The effects and functions of the stylistic elements as regards the poem will be looked at in the analysis.

Scope of the Study

This work shall be exclusively stylistic, and analysis will be conducted through the use of the following levels of analysis: lexico-syntactic patterns and choices, phonology, graphology and morphology. Analysis will be conducted using the stylistic elements in each of the above mentioned levels of analysis, such that it could provide a guide and be relevant to future researchers in a related field.

Limitations of the Study

The time is too short to deal properly with the analysis of the poem. The material is not as much as it should be.

Correspondence

Abdulbari

University of Lahore
Sargodha Campus

Literature Review

Stylistics

A branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of style in texts, especially (but not exclusively) in literary works. Before the 20th century stylistics only deals with literary text. But from 20th century it started to deal with non-literary text. Example: law, religion, advertisement, newspaper etc. Katie Wales in A Dictionary of Stylistics writes: "The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake but in order to show their interpretation of the text, or in order to relate literary effects to linguistics causes where there are felt to be relevant".

Stylistic Analysis

Stylistics analysis provides a commentary which is objective and scientific based on a concrete quantifiable data and applied in a systematic way. It uses specialized technical terms and concepts which derive from the science of linguistics. Stylistics analysis is something different from literary criticism. Literary criticism continues to focus on interpretation and the field of linguistics had little to say about literature beyond the sentence level.

Levels of Stylistic Analysis

The following are the levels of stylistics. We analyze the text according to these levels.

Phonetics level

Phonetics is a branch of linguistics that comprises the study of the sounds of human speech, or in the case of sign languages the equivalent aspects of sign. It is concerned with the physical properties of speech sounds or signs (phones): their physiological production, acoustic properties, auditory perception, and neurophysiologic status. So, It is an examination of sounds; we study the characteristics and potential utility of sounds in phonetic level.

Phonological level

Phonology is a branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic organization of sounds in languages. It has traditionally focused largely on the study of the systems of phonemes in particular languages (and therefore used to be also called *phonemics*), but it may also cover any linguistic analysis either at a level beneath the word including syllable, onset and rime, articulatory, gestures, articulatory features, mora, etc. or at all levels of language where sound is considered to be structured for conveying linguistic meaning. Phonology also includes the study of equivalent organizational systems in sign languages.

The word *phonology* (as in *the phonology of English*) can also refer to the phonological system (sound system) of a given language. This is one of the fundamental systems which a language is considered to comprise, like its syntax and its vocabulary. Lodge is of the view that phonology is the study of linguistic systems. Specifically the way in which sound represents, differences of meaning in a language. Ofuya believes that phonology describes the ways in which speech sounds are organized in English into a system. Phonology basically deals with the sound patterns, the rhyming scheme and utterance of the word in the sentence. Phonological devices are: rhyme elements, alliteration, consonance and assonance

Graphology

Leech claims that graphology exceeds orthography. It refers to the whole writing system: punctuation and paragraphing as

well as spacing. According to Crystal and Davy Graphology is the analogous study of a languages writing system or orthography as seen in the various kinds of handwriting or topography. These are the formalized rules of writing. Alabi added that "a graphological discussion of style among other features entails the foregrounding of quotation marks, ellipses periods, hyphens, contracted forms, special structures, the full stop, the colon, the comma, the semicolon, the question mark, the dash, lower case letters, gothic and bold prints, capitalization, small print, spacing, italics etc". In other words, it deals with the systematic formation, structure and punctuation in the sentence.

Grammatical level

In this level both the syntactic and morphological levels are discussed. The aim is to analyze the internal structure of sentences in a language and the way they function in sequences. Clauses, phrases, words, nouns, verbs, etc. need to be distinguished and put through an analysis to find out the foregrounding and the deviation

Lexico-Syntax

It is the combination of two different words Lexis and syntax. Lexis means the vocabulary which is used in a language or in any writing for any purpose. Syntax means Sentence construction: how words group together to make phrases and sentences. So, it is used in the construction of the sentence as stylistics is used in literary style. Lexico-Syntactic patterns may be obtained through various means which include unusual or inverted word order, omission of words and repetition.

According to Tallerman, "Lexico-Syntactic choices are obtained through devices such as piling of usual collocates, unusual collocates, archaic words, particular parts of speech, metaphor, simile, oxymoron etc".

Biography of the Poet

Wordsworth is very famous for his nature poems. According to him, man's inner feelings can better polished and strengthened by nature. He also thinks that man is near to the nature. Man gets real satisfaction, knowledge and pleasure through nature. He lives near the beautiful Lake District where he spends almost all his life. He wrote many poems on nature. Nature inspires him a lot. In his nature poems, we find deep descriptions of land, rivers, mountains, flowers and birds etc. which are full of beauty, colors and imaginations. His nature poems also reveal his immense feelings of happiness and thoughts in visualizing and listens the creatures of nature. Although he loves nature very much but is unsatisfied by the human society.

Wordsworth's concepts of Romanticism and nature are well described in the poem "Daffodils". The poet sits calmly in a forest, enjoying birds, trees, and flowers. These elements of nature are the source of pleasure of "human soul". He compares the human's disharmony with the harmony of the nature. In the preface of Lyrical Ballad, Wordsworth defined the poetry as the spontaneous overflow of powerful feeling arising from emotions recollected in tranquility. He wrote this poem after inspiring by the charm and beauty of the nature. He describes his feelings recollected in the spring scenarios. He describes the clear and graphic and beautiful picture of early spring: flowers, birds, new green branches of trees and the cool breeze. In the poem, he shows the great contrast between the pleasures and joys of the natural world and the materialistic world. In fact Wordsworth's use of language and

rhythm help to construct such contrast which reveals the poet's spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings".

Introduction of the Poet

"Daffodils" is a lyric poem by William Wordsworth. It is Wordsworth's most famous work. The poem was inspired by an event on 15 April 1802, in which Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy came across a "long belt" of daffodils. Written some time between 1804 and 1807 (in 1804 by Wordsworth's own account), it was first published in 1807 in *Poems in Two Volumes*, and a revised version was published in 1815. Wordsworth revised the poem in 1815. He replaced "dancing" with "golden"; "along" with "beside"; and "ten thousand" with "fluttering and". He then added a stanza between the first and second, and changed "laughing" to "jocund". The last stanza was left untouched. The plot of the poem is simple. In the 1815 revision, Wordsworth described it as "rather an elementary feeling and simple impression (approaching to the nature of an ocular spectrum) upon the imaginative faculty, rather than an exertion of it.

Title and theme of the Poem

The title, "Daffodils" is a simple word that reminds us about the arrival of the spring season, when the field is full of daffodils. Daffodils are yellow flowers, having an amazing shapes and beautiful fragrance. A bunch of daffodils symbolize the joys and happiness of life. The theme of the poem "Daffodils" is a collection of human emotion inspired by nature that we may have neglected due to our busy lives. The daffodils imply beginning or rebirth for human beings, blessed with the grace of nature. The arrival of daffodils in the month of the March is welcome and an enjoyable time to appreciate them. Like many of Wordsworth's poems, the central idea of "Daffodils" is the beauty of nature. The speaker encounters a field full of daffodils waving in the breeze and is overcome with delight watching them. After leaving the field, he often thinks of the flowers when he is bored or melancholy and the memory of their beauty and cheer once again brings him joy.

At the beginning of the poem, the speaker is feeling lonely and sad. As he walks along, he sees a large area of daffodils along the side of a lake, blowing in the breeze with bright yellow flowers reflected in the water in spite of the waves due to the wind. The sight of the flowers on the shore and their reflection cheers him greatly. To the poet, these flowers are not just pretty, but cheerful and joyous company that brings him out of his loneliness. Best of all, the poet finds that the memory of the sight of the daffodils stays with him, giving him companionship and joy when he is "in vacant or in pensive mood."

The central idea of the poem is the expression of the comfort and cheering the author finds in the beauty of observing the daffodils.

Daffodils

Final Version (1815)

By William Wordsworth

1

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.....6

Summary, Stanza 1

While wandering like a cloud, the speaker happens upon daffodils fluttering in a breeze on the shore of a lake, beneath trees. Daffodils are plants in the lily family with yellow flowers and a crown shaped like a trumpet.

2

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.....12

Summary, Stanza 2

The daffodils stretch all along the shore. Because there are so many of them, they remind the speaker of the Milky Way, the galaxy that scientists say contains about one trillion stars, including the sun. The speaker humanizes the daffodils when he says they are engaging in a dance.

3

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:.....18

Summary, Stanza 3

In their gleeful fluttering and dancing, the daffodils outdo the rippling waves of the lake. But the poet does not at this moment fully appreciate the happy sight before him. In the last line of the stanza, Wordsworth uses anastrophe, writing *the show to me had brought* instead of *the show brought to me*. Anastrophe is an inversion of the normal word order.

4

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.....24

Summary, Stanza 4

Not until the poet later muses about what he saw does he fully appreciate the cheerful sight of the dancing daffodils. Wordsworth again uses anastrophe, writing *when on my couch I lie* and *my heart with pleasure fills*.

Findings

The poem Daffodils is written by William Wordsworth and is basically a lyric, having four quatrains, each quatrain contains six lines. The basic pattern of rhythm is iambic tetrameter. According to Leech, the rules are made to be broken and if the poem has the same rhythm till the end than it becomes deadly. The poem is not monotonous or deadly. Even a new reader can easily understand this that rhythm is changing at some places. The change in the rhythmic pattern causes the effectiveness in the poem. The stress on the words attracts the reader's attention. The word on which stressed is laid, has some significance for example in the forth stanza stressed is put on the 'daffodils' "which is the personification of human nature. In the book, Linguistic Guild to English Poetry', Leech differentiates poetic language with common language. He writes poetic language may violate or deviate

from the generally observed rules of the language in many different ways, some obvious, some subtle.

The poem *Daffodils* describes the beauty and charm of the nature. Wordsworth points out the beauty of the nature through *Daffodils*. Wordsworth explains this through his style by the variations in rhythm, by the stressed pattern he followed, and by playing through words, he beautifully describes the contrast in the real natural world and the materialistic world of man.

The choice of words by the writer or the poet plays a very important role in meaning making. It helps the reader to understand the message the poet is trying to pass on. Stylistics, by this analysis has shown that there is a distinction between poetic and non-poetic language as a means of defining literature.

Examples of Figures of Speech

Alliteration: It is the use of same letters or sounds at the beginning of words that are close together. e.g

lonely as a cloud (line 1).

high o'er vales and Hills (line 2).

When all at once (line 3). (Note that the *w* and *o* have the same consonant sound.) :

Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,

Simile: It expresses the resemblance of one thing to another of a different category. e.g.

Comparison (using *as*) of the speaker's solitariness to that of a cloud (line 1).

Personification/Metaphor: The attribution of human characteristic to things, abstract idea, etc.

Comparison of the cloud to a lonely human. (line 1)

Comparison of daffodils to a crowd of people (lines 3-4).

Comparison of daffodils to dancing humans (lines 4, 6).

Apostrophe:

“I saw a crowd, A host, of golden daffodils;” The poet apostrophizes the daffodils and describes them in their large number as a crowd of people. Also, “In such a jocund company “The poets addresses the flowers as human beings and describes them as a happy company of good friends.

Some Other Musical devices

Consonance: wandered and cloud / that and floats

Assonance: fluttering, dancing / such and jocund

Structure and Rhyme Scheme

The poem contains four stanzas of six lines each. In each stanza, the first line rhymes with the third and the second with the fourth. The stanza then ends with a rhyming couplet. Wordsworth unifies the content of the poem by focusing the first three stanzas on the experience at the lake and the last stanza on the memory of that experience.

Meter

The lines in the poem are in iambic tetrameter, as demonstrated in the third stanza:

.....1.....2.....3.....4

The WAVES|.be SIDE|.them DANCED;|.but THEY

.....1.....2.....3.....4

Out-DID|.the SPARK|.ling WAVES|.in GLEE:—

.....1.....2.....3.....4

A PO|.et COULD|.not BUT|.be GAY

.....1.....2.....3.....4

In SUCH|.a JOC|.und COM|.pa NY:

.....1.....2.....3.....4

I GAZED—|.and GAZED—|.but LIT|.tle THOUGHT

.....1.....2.....3.....4

What WEALTH|.the SHOW|.to ME|.had BROUGHT:

In the first stanza, line 6 appears to veer from the metrical format. However, Wordsworth likely intended *fluttering* to be read as two syllables (flut' 'RING) instead of three so that the line maintains iambic tetrameter.

Graphological level

(i) The poem is written as a whole. It is lyrical.

(ii) There is usual capitalization.

(iii) We can see the use of punctuation in the poem.

For example: full stop, comma, colon and apostrophe is used in this poem.

Nouns	Pronouns	Common nouns	Collective noun	Proper noun
Hill, Crowd, Clouds, Lake, God, Daffodils, Trees, Breeze, Stars, Heads, Waves, Eye, Heart	I and Me.	Hill, Cloud, Lake, Trees, Breeze, Waves.	Crowd, Company	God, Daffodils, Eye, Heart

Verb	Adverb	Adjective
Wandered, Floats, Saw, Fluttering, Dancing, Shine, Twinkle, Stretched, Tossing, Gazed, Thought, Brought,	Lonely, Sprightly,	Golden, Milky, Sparkling, Jocund, Little, Vacant, Inward

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