

A Stylistic Analysis of William Henry Davies' Leisure

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze William Henry Davies' poem Leisure from the perspective of stylistic analysis. The analysis made under the level of graphological, syntactical, semantic and phonological patterns. This analysis is helpful in understanding the basic concept of poem that how modern man has made himself the slave of worldly pursuits, ignoring the beautiful objects of nature and making his life miserable.

Keywords: Style, Stylistics, Leisure, Phonological level, Graphological level, Morphological level, Lexico-syntactical level

INTRODUCTION

Every writer's works can have a great influence on fore coming literary works. Even though their purpose is the same, i.e. revelation of truth about life and human nature, the ways they express ideas differ from author to author. That means, all authors put works together uniquely to fit the specific conditions in specific words. Therefore, stylistic analysis may contribute to any one in literature: authors, critics, literature teachers, and students in identifying those uniquely put works of a certain author. The writer's strength can be adopted and his weakness can be a lesson learned. Thus, stylistic analysis of Leisure by William Henry Davies is the main focus of study in this regard. According to Simpson (2004), the development of stylistics has begun from the classical period. To find a model of language in a discourse and the way text communicates has been the continued interest among scholars. Some stylistic work is very much modern and recent incarnation of traditional woodcraft. This domain partly covers two mutual or reciprocal movements in linguistics accepted as Russian formalist and Prague school of structuralism. According to Coyle (1993), most of the early work in stylistics was on poetry because (1) short texts were most amenable to the detailed treatment demanded, (2) the formalist and structuralist work on poetry was relatively easy to build on and (3) the emphasis in linguistics at that time was on phonetic and grammatical structure, the results of which were relatively easy to apply to poetry. Given its emphasis on the language of the text, it is hardly surprising that early stylistics was formalist in orientations, and this label, in spite of later reader-oriented developments, is unfortunately still applied to the discipline by those outside it.

Now, the aim of present paper is to discuss the stylistic analysis a poem by William Henry Davies. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the poem, Leisure using stylistic analysis and to show how meaning is constructed through interplay of different textual features. I shall try to show how the poet makes use of all component parts to convey to his readers the message of the poem.

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. A particular procedure by which something is done, a manner or a way is style. In a broad appearance of everything is style. The way of living and doing something is also style.

Generally speaking, in Leech (1969) describes that style may be regarded as a choice of linguistic means; as deviation from a norm; as recurrence of linguistic forms; and as comparison. Style is also related to a personality of a person. Style reflects the thoughts of a person's mind. According to Leech (1969) the basic purpose of achieving lucidity in diction and formality is to change the structure of word. Style in our view is the language which is used in a given background and by a specific person for a particular purpose. Leech and Short (1981)

describe that style is the cover of our imagination and feelings. This is applicable to the written and spoken, and literary and non literary principles.

Davy and Crystal (1969) points out that stylistics is the one part of applied linguistics which presents scientific study of style by applying linguistic principles and theories. Stylistics however mainly concerns with the literary variety, mainly writing. Stylistics as we understand it today with its being armed with the qualities of linguistics. Galperin (1971) puts that the structure of mutual language which is used in communication. In Widdowson's (1975) opinion style is the study of literary texts from linguistic perspective. He puts his view as that the connection between literary criticism and linguistics is style.

The term style is used occasionally in literary criticism and it is defined according to one's own field of study. So, there are many interpretations of word style. Leech and Short (1981), style is the cover of our feelings and it is the tool of the writer to transfer the message to readers. Again in (1981) the word style has an uncontroversial meaning. Another point is that choice of words from linguistic concepts. Thomas S. Kane (1983), the model of linguistic traits which differentiate one piece from other. Here is Carter (1989) view about style is that it is based on linguistic levels. That's why style is the primary thing which gives newness to every writer. Birch (1989) says that language and style cannot moves beyond a boundary on the greatness of words. He believes that words have specific meanings which distinguish ate it from ordinary language.

Haynes (1989) defines it as; the study of style is the study of differences. It can also be called as diversity. Another different opinion is that style is a doubtful term (Adejare: 1992). Changes in language according to use (Yule: 1996). He gives much importance to manners in which one is using it in language. Trask (1997) is of the same view as Yule has by defining that particular or different way of using language by an individual. Lawal (1997) described the features that deal with choices of diction, phrases, sentences and linguistic substance that are consistent with the subject matter. Lawal also added that the narrative skill that the author use in the matter of choice and in the division of words and characters.

Stylistics is a critical approach which uses the findings of science of linguistics in the study of literary discourse. British linguist in 1930's presented a different type of tradition but with similar concept and known to be as British Contextualism. According to Roger Fowler linguistic stylistics or new stylistics thus provides for the first time a technical base for the study of style. Without a sound theory, the fundamental concepts and categories cannot be established. Before the 20th century stylistics dealt with literary text. But from 20th century it started to deal with non literary text. The very first aim of Stylistics is to understand the intentions of author or writer. Stylistics involves the study of grammar, lexis, semantics, as well as phonological attributes and discursive devices. It is more in the importance of intention and purpose.

Freeman (1971) explains it as the sub-discipline which began in the second half of the 20th century. According to Widdowson (1975) the study of literary text which shows linguistic orientation is stylistics. Turner (1975) describes stylistics as a field of linguistics which puts emphasis on the changes in complex uses of language. Bradford (1997), in his view stylistics is a fallacious topic. Crystal (1981) puts that linguistics is a discipline that discovers language on scientific grounds and stylistics as share of this discipline present features of language change. Carter (1988) has the same view as Widdowson (1975) has that it is working like pull between linguistics and literature. He has subcategorized stylistics into five parts: literary stylistics, linguistic stylistics, style and discourse, pedagogical stylistics, stylistics and foreign language learner. Short and Candlin (1989) is of the view that to read a text in a linguistic perspective is stylistics.

The study of style is not confined to the analysis of literature; it can be imposed to the expository prose, advertisement and political speeches. It shows that language of literature is not essential on the contrary; literary language can be studied like any other kind to reveal precisely how effects are created.

THE LEVELS OF STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

The levels of stylistic analysis are defined as:

Graphology: It is the parallel study of the language's writing system; the rules of spellings. Leech (1969) also describes that graphology surpasses orthography.

Phonology: This level deals with the sound system of any given language. It also discusses the rules of pronunciation, rhyming scheme and utterance of the words in the sentence. Ofuya(2007), states that phonology suggests the way in which sounds are arranged in English

Morphology: It studies how the words are formed, where they originate from, what their grammatical forms are, what the function of prefixes and suffixes in the formation of words are, how system of gender, number, plural etc.

Lexicon –Syntax: It is the combination of two words Lexis and Syntax. Lexis means vocabulary which is used in language. Syntax means sentence construction. According to Taller man (1998), Lexico -Syntactic choices are obtained through devices such as collocates, particular part of speech, simile and metaphor.

ELEMENTS IN STYLITIC ANALYSIS

Elements of stylistic analysis are discussed here briefly:

Graphological Devices Include:

Punctuation: It includes comma, semi colon, question mark, exclamation mark, hyphen, ellipsis and brackets.

Paragraphing: Means a separate part which contains information. The first sentence of a paragraph starts on a new line.

Phonological Devices Include:

Alliteration: At the beginning of words use of same letters or sounds.

Consonance: The use of the repetition on consonants as a rhyming device or in other words similarity between consonants not between vowels.

Rhyme elements: The stressed pattern the rhyme scheme followed in the poetry.

Assonance: Words that are closed together have the same vowel sound but different consonants.

Morphological Devices Include:

Affixes: It is process of forming new words by putting morphemes putting some words.

Coinages: It is the process of forming new words by existing ones.

Lexico- Syntactic Devices Include:

Anastrophe: It is the inversion of natural or usual word order.

Anaphora: The use of words that refers to or replaces another word used earlier in the sentence.

INTRODUCTION OF THE POEM:

William Henry Davies, a Georgian poet, realized mankind's rapid transformation from quaint little farmers to massive cities of industrialization in the year 1911 with his eye opening poem "Leisure." It is a thought provoking poem. The structure of the poem is very simple. It is very clear to understand and interpret it in different ways. This is about man's materialistic nature in the modern world.

THEME

The poet criticizes the life of modern man. We are so involved in the dull routine of daily life that we have no time to enjoy the beauty of nature that exists all around us. If we want to lead a happy and rich life, we are required to return to the world of nature. The poet criticized the modern man due to his materialistic nature and permanent aloofness from nature.

The main theme is that we should abandon our material pursuits and establish a firm contact with nature to lead a rich and diverse life. The poem starts with a rhetorical question, i.e. the author is sure you will agree with him that it's important to have free time. The idea of "stand and stare" has been focused all through the poem.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter will provide a stylistic analysis of the poem "Leisure" of W.H.Davies. The syntactic pattern and choices, phonological, graphological and morphological levels of analysis are going to form the basis of the analysis.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE POEM LEISURE

GRAPHOLOGICAL LEVEL

In this poem graphological level consists of "full stops", "commas" and "apostrophe". There is beautiful division of couplets. There is the use of punctuation.

Full stop: It is used seven times in this poem. Each full stop shows the completion of one sense.

We have no time to stand and stare.
And stare as long as sheep or cows.
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.
Like skies at night.
How they can dance.
Enrich that smile her eyes began.
We have no time to stand and stare.

Comma: It is used eleven times in this poem. The frequent use of comma reflects the sense of wandering. They emphasize the pauses for thought and reflection.

What is this life if, full of care,

No time to see, when woods we pass,
No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars,
A poor life this if, full of care,
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

And watch her feet,

Apostrophe

This is used only one time in this poem in the second last couplet. The capital B of Beauty shows the focusing message of the poet to modern man to turn towards nature.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,

Phonological level

On phonological level this poem has the qualities of proper rhyme scheme pattern, alliteration, consonance, repetition of same sounds. Two types of devices are included, sound devices and literary devices. Musical devices the poet uses to make his poetry a special from other.

Rhyme scheme:

The end rhyme scheme in the first couplet of the poem is "aa". End rhyme scheme in the second couplet is "bb". In the third couplet is "cc". In the fourth is "dd". In the fifth couplet is "ee" etc. This can be observed with examples from the poem.

Care, stare
Boughs, cows
Light, night
Glance, dance
Can, began

Alliteration:

The same sound in the beginning of the words in a line is alliteration. The sound of 's' in the start of words produces a beautiful effect on readers.

Stand and stare

The use of alliteration is in second couplet in the form of "b" sound.

Beneath the boughs

Other alliteration of "s", "h", "w" sounds in this poem are as under:

Stare- sheep

Her-how

When-woods

Enrich- eyes

Streams- stars- skies

Stand- stare

Assonance

The repetition of vowel sound in poetry is assonance. The assonance gives a rhythm to the poem. For example, what is this life, in this line 'I' sound is repeated as assonance.

Consonance

W'S'T are repeated consonants which shows the limitedness of the poet.

Repetition: It is a literary device which shows the same words a few times to make a thought visible. There is repetition of No time to sound seven times. The poet again and again puts focus of the reader on particular word. There are seven couplets and all these have repetition of No time to sound.

Metrical Composition:

The meter is iambic tetrameter i.e. most lines have four strong beats (tetra meter) and start with a weak (iambic) one.

For example: And STARE as LONG as SHEEP or COWS

Morphological level:

The structure of words in the poem is very simple. All the words in the poem are almost monosyllabic, except four disyllabic words.

Monosyllabic words:

This, what, care, stare, sheep, dance, boughs, full, wait etc.

Disyllabic words:

Beneath, squirrels, daylight, beauty.

What's more every line of the poem almost has the several numbers of words. It is:

8,8,7,8,8,7,7,8,7,8,8, in each line etc.

Lexico- Syntactic level:

Lexical item belongs to the distinctive language user and language use in this poem. The poem is divided into multiple lexical features.

Nouns: All nouns are common. E.g. Life, time, boughs, sheep, woods, skies, cows.

Verbs: Care, stand, stare, see, pass.

Adverbs: Beneath, where, when.

Adjectives: Full, broad, poor.

In most part of this poem are fragments, except two full sentences, and the middle four stanzas can be looked as the continuous parts of the continuous adverbial clause. So, in this way it can bring emphasis to this part, and also make a deep impression on readers of what we have lost if we care too much but do not stand and stare.

Semantic features:

Synonyms:

Words

Synonyms

Leisure spare time, free time, liberty, ease

Stare gaze, gape, gawk, glare, gawp

Beneath under, underneath

Simile: Poet uses simile in the 4th and 8th line of the poem. For example,

And stare as long as sheep or cows
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

Diction: The diction of this poem is very simple. The lines are mostly short and easy to understand.

Language and style:

Personification: It is the giving of human attributes to non living things. In this poem Beauty has been personified and presented as a girl who is dancing smiling.

Imagery: In this poem a lot of examples of visual imagery.
Someone standing beneath the bough (line 1, couplet 2)
Cows and sheep grazing and enjoying the beauty around them (line2, couplet 2)

Anaphora: The scheme in which the same words or phrases is repeated at the beginning of clause or sentences. For Example, here in this poem there is the repetition of No time to at the beginning of new line.

No time to see, when wood we pass,

No time to see, in broad daylight,

No time to turn at beauty's glance,

Rhetorical questions: It is a trope in which the leading questions are asked is called rhetorical question. For Example:

What is this life, if full of cares

Findings of the poem:

William Henry Davies uses very simple language in his poem. That's why it is easily understandable to everyone. With the use of the rhyme scheme, alliteration and repetition, he makes his poem straight forwardly logical. He raises a very good point in his simple structured poem that we have no time for our own self and the materialistic nature made our life difficult and boring. That's why we are unable to enjoy the beauty of life.

CONCLUSION

Leisure is one the beautiful work of all time. The theme of the poem is to enjoy nature after leaving mechanical life. The poem shows the poet's love of nature. W.H.Davies uses beautiful stylistic and literary devices. The statistical analysis of Leisure has shown that when we define literature there is an absolute difference between poetic and non-poetic language. This analysis helps the reader to understand the message the poet is trying to pass on. The poet uses beautiful rhyme pattern in his poem to convey his thoughts.

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APPENDIX

“Leisure”

W.H.Davies

What is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

No time to stand beneath the boughs
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this is if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.