

Stylistic Analysis of Poem “Decomposition” by” Zulfiqar Ghose”

Dr. Anser Mahmood¹,

Huma Iqbal²,

Sadaf Ahmad³

Aqsa Kanwal⁴

^{1, 2, 3, 4} Department of English, Sargodha Campus, University of Lahore, Pakistan

ABSTRACT: *The present study focuses on the poem “Decomposition” by Zulfiqar Ghose. It is one of the most touching and thought provoking poems of Zulfiqar Ghose, narrated in first person. This study presents an integrative stylistics analysis of the poem, approaches to three main levels of stylistic analysis i.e., Phonological level, Semantic level and Morphological level. It will help the readers to understand the literal and underlying meanings of the poem.*

Key Words: *Phonological level, Semantic level, Morphological level, Decomposition.*

Introduction:

This poem has been written by Zulfiqar Ghose, he is a Pakistan born American national. He is a novelist, short story writer, literary critic, essayist and a poet. He had written this poem when he visited Bombay, there he saw a beggar in poor condition. “Decomposition”, the title of the poem conveys dismal and depressing meaning. The poet specifically identifies this beggar with common Indian man” how typical it was of India” and in general he portrays the picture of common man of South East Asia, and third world countries. He also gives us glimpses of uncouth, uncaring, uncompassionate behaviors of society towards its fellow beings.

Objectives:

- 1-To understand how stylistics devices work in the poem.
- 2-To analyze the poem at Semantic level.
- 3-To analyze the poem at Phonological level.
- 4-To analyze the poem at Morphological level.

Research Questions:

- 1-How do stylistics devices work in “Poem”?

2-How to analyze the poem at Semantic level?

3- How to explore the poem at Phonological level?

4-How to access the poem at Morphological level?

Theme of the poem

The main theme of the poem is deterioration and break down, this rotting has been presented at individual and collective level of society. On surface level, it is putridity of a person, an individual, a beggar, but at deeper level it is the festering of society, break down of social norms and decomposition of human values of empathy, sympathy, and compassion. The poet delineates that marginalization of common man results in debarment of significant contribution to society and reduces them to “routes for the ants Journey “and “the flies’ descents”.

Foregrounding of theme

The theme is fore grounded through lexical items. The theme of decomposition is to emphasize with different words, like “exhaustion “and “a fossil man”, then he relates it to common man, whom he calls “ man in street” .He uses this phrase twice in this poem to emphasize the poor pledge of Common man in street. In first stanza the attitude of society de- humanizes the “man” to the level of an object, “pavement sticker”. In the fourth stanza poet considers “it” “good composition”. This style of poet represents the thoughtless, insensitive, and callous attitude of society towards the suffering of fellow human beings. In the last stanza, the beggar was humanized as the poet felt it wrong to compose his affliction as piece of art.

Tone:

The tone of the poet in this poem is doleful. The title of the poem “Decomposition” suggests decadence, disintegration and degeneration, not only of an individual but of a system, society, community and human ideals. Especially in first four stanzas, the tone is quite depressing, a sense of helplessness prevails.

The diction of the poem presents a grim picture; the pen sketch of beggar himself propounds miseries and sense of helplessness of a common man.

Phonological Analysis

Phonology is a branch of linguistics which is concerned with the organization of sounds in language. Its main focus is on the study of phonemes in a language. Phonological level of analysis involves how and when the particular sounds can be combined. In phonology we discuss two type devices e.g. sound devices and literary devices.

Sound devices

Sound devices refer to the resources which the poets use to convey the meaning of poetry through the apt use of sounds. Sound devices such as accent, alliteration, assonance, consonance, cacophony, dissonance, euphony, internal rhyme, modulation, near rhyme, phonetic symbolism, resonance, rhyme and rhythm are few examples. Sound devices which are used in “Decomposition” areas follows;

Alliteration	Assonance	Consonance
<i>Sh</i> orts, <i>sh</i> irts	As <i>i</i> de, l <i>i</i> ke D <i>i</i> rt <i>y</i> , sh <i>i</i> rt Shad <i>o</i> w, thr <i>o</i> wn W <i>a</i> shed, exh <i>a</i> ustion	Shor <i>t</i> s, shir <i>t</i> Arm <i>s</i> , leg <i>s</i> Rout <i>s</i> , ant <i>s</i> , descen <i>t</i> Journ <i>e</i> ys, fl <i>e</i> s Brai <i>n</i> , sun <i>n</i> , exhaustio <i>n</i> Behin <i>d</i> , crow <i>d</i>

Semantic Analysis

Semantics is related to the meanings of the text. The meanings are divided into literal and non-literal meanings. Non literal meanings are the hidden meanings of the text; certain linguistic and literary devices are used for it. In this poem the poet has used several figures of speech to convey his intended message across. The poem is without rhyme and meter, it is free verse, written in Quatrain.

In the first stanza, in fourth line, the poet has used “shadow” as simile “shadow thrown aside like a blanket”, which explains the pitiable condition of the man.

In second stanza, the poet has used visual imagery, to present a clear picture before his readers that how people like the beggar, used to live in abject poverty, without any hope for future.

In the second and third stanza, he has used metaphors “cracks in the stone” and “pavement sticker” to intensify the agony of a person who has been reduced to non-entity due to selfish, thoughtless, inconsiderate attitudes of society and the state. We can also identify an interior monologue keep on working throughout the poem. The poet has also mapped between “decomposition” and “composition” by using the device of parallelism.

Morphological Analysis

Morphology is the study of word formation that how words are built up from smaller units.

Morpheme is the smallest fragment of a word that contributes its meaning. Different morphemes used in the poem are categorized below:

Morphological Analysis

Morphology is the study of word formation that how words are built up from smaller units.

Morpheme is the smallest fragment of a word that contributes its meaning. Different morphemes used in the poem are categorized below:

A	Washed	Wearing		Wearing
Picture	Exhaustion	Washed		Exhaustion
It	Veined	Exhaustion		Veined
In	Passing-ly	Veined		Bemused
Bombay	Bemused	Passing-ly		Remarking
Of	Trickster	Bemused		Lived
Grey	Remarking	Trickster		Weeping
Shadow	Lived	Remarking		Presumption
Blanket	Weeping	Lived		Attempting
Arm	Presumption	Weeping		
Leg	Attempting	Presumption		
Stone		Attempting		
Sun				
Man				
Fossil				
Crowed				
Quite				
Common				
Sight				

Word formational process

Word class to which inflection applies	Inflectional category	Affix used
Noun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers Possessives(ants',flies') 	-s,-es.e.garms,cracks ,legs,ants ,journeys ,flies
Verb	3 rd person singular present	Lie-s, chide-s
Past tense	-ed,(called,lived)	
Indefinite aspects	Ist form of verb(,lies,chides)	

Word derivational process

Word class to which derivation applies	Derivational category	Affix used
Noun	-ment	Pavement
	-tion	Composition
	-tion	Presumption
	-tion	Exhaustion
	-ly	Passingly

Use of Parts of speech

Noun O.C	Pronoun	Verb O.C	Adverb O.C	Adjective O.C	Preposition	Conjunction	Article
Picture	I	Have	Aside	Grey	In	And	A ,an
Bombay	He	Took	Veined	Dirty	Of	Then	The
Shorts	Him	Thrown	Behind	Fossil	On	That	
Shirts	It	Could be	Glibly	Trickster	For		
Shadow	Me	Descends	There	Quite	By		
Blanket		Lies	Now	Indifferent	Into		
Cracks		Veined	Passingly	This	To		
Arms		Is		Very	At		
Legs		Bemused		Common			
Stone		Thought		Old			
Routes		Called		Good			
Ant		Was		His			
Journey		Lived		My			
Fly		Chides		Asleep			
Sun		Compose		Typical			
Exhaustion							
Man							
Crowd							
Pavement							
Sight							
Composition							
Street							
India							
Head							
Posture							

Pillow							
Presumption							
Art							
Hunger							
Solitude							

Conclusion:

This study is by no means a final verdict .It is an attempt to understand the poem from three different angles of stylistics. It is an effort to understand the poem in various perspectives and inculcate empathy among readers, which might be neglected by them. The analysis of the poem delineates Ghose's versatile use of words and phrases, mastery in the art of portraying the vivid picture of a beggar, make him alive for his readers. He has successfully fulfilled the job of an expert artist, and detached observer. The poem is charged with realism and symbolism.

References:

- 1.George, F. (1988). *How to Study Linguistics*. London: Macmillan.
2. George, F. (2000). *Linguistic Terms and Concepts*. London: Macmillan.
- 3.Hall, D. (1981). (ed). *The Oxford Book of American Literacy Anecdotes*. New York: OUP.
- 4.Joanna Thornborrow& Shan Wareing. (2002). *Patterns in Language: Stylistics for Students of Language and Literature Foreign Language*. Teaching and Research Press.
- 5.Geoffrey, L. (2000). *A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry Foreign Language*. Teaching and Research Press.
6. Geoffrey, L. (1969). *A linguistic guide to English Poetry*. London: Longman.
7. Coupland, N. (2007). *Style: Language Variation and Identity*. Cambridge University Press.
- 8.Bradford, R. (1997). *Stylistics*. London: Routledge.
- 9.Thomas, S. (1966). *Style in Language*. Cambridge, Mass: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.1966.print
- 10.Mike, S. (1966). *Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and Prose*. London: Longman.
- 11.Simpson, Paul. (2004). "Stylistics: A resource book for students". London: Routledge.2004.print.
- 12.Wales, Katie."A Dictionary of Stylistics". London: Longman.1989.print.
- 13.Widdowson, H.G. "Stylistics and the teaching of literature". London: Longman.1975.print.

APPENDIX

DECOMPOSITION

Zulfikar Ghose

*I have a picture I took in Bombay
of a beggar asleep on the pavement:
grey-haired, wearing shorts and a dirty shirt,
his shadow thrown aside like a blanket.*

*His arms and legs could be cracks in the stone,
routes for the ants' journeys, the flies' descents,
Brain-washed by the sun into exhaustion,
he lies veined into stone, a fossil man.*

*Behind him there is a crowd passingly
bemused by a pavement trickster and quite
indifferent to this very common sight
of an old man asleep on the pavement.*

*I thought it then a good composition
and glibly called it "The Man in the Street,"
remarking how typical it was of
India that the man in the street lived there.*

*His head in the posture of one weeping
into a pillow chides me now for my
presumption at attempting to compose
art of his hunger and solitude*