

Stylistic Analysis of Robert Frost's Poem Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

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Abstract: *The main purpose of this article is to analyze the stylistic devices and techniques of the poem, at syntactical, lexical, graphological, morphological, phonological and semantical level. It is helpful for better understanding of the poem. In this symbolic poem, Robert Frost encompasses his life's achievements and his hard work by using the figurative tool (symbol, metaphor and personification). The poem is related to the appreciation of the beauty and wondering of nature. The poet is so much excited with the sight of snow falling in the fields that he stay to enjoy it. After a while, he thinks that he should move on due to his responsibilities and "miles to go before I sleep".*

Key Words: *Applied Linguistics, Stylistics, Understanding Literary Devices and Figure of speech in Literature.*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Rao Muhammad Aqeel, "Style is the particularly way in which a work is written. It consist of various linguistic features and devices common to language and which are chosen and presented by the author in his individual manner". Havelock Ellis, *The Art of writing (The Dance of Life, London 1955, p-163)* is of the view that "Style, indeed is not really a gramend but as Gourmont said, the very thought itself, It is the miraculous transubstitution of a spiritual body, given to us in the only form in which we may receive and absorb that body..."

1.2 STYLISTICS

Stylistics is the scientifically the study of style. Different scholars define style in his/her own way at different time. According to Buffon "Style is the man himself". According to Widdowson 1975,p.3) "Stylistics is the study of literary discourse from a linguistic orientation". In Stylistics point of view, Stylistics is the systematic study of style, ranging from features of language which can be identified with an individual to those which identify major occupation groups and those characteristic of speakers and writers in particular situations (for example, parliamentary style).

1.3 LEVELS

1.3.1 **GRAPHOLOGY** According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "the study of handwriting, for example as a way of learning more about somebody's character". Simply we say that graphology deals with writing system eg: uses of Capitalization, punctuation marks, bold italics etc.

1.3.2 **PHONOLOGY** According to Bloomfield, "Phonology is the organization of sounds into patterns". In more simple sense, "the study of sounds in a language is called phonology". Phonology is the study of vocal sounds and sound changes, phonemes and their variants in a particular language. What is sound? How and where it is produced from? How it received by the ears? How and why is one sound different from the other? ___ questions these are the subject-matter of phonology. Every language makes its own selection of sounds and organizes them into characteristic patterns. This selection of sounds and their agreement into patterns constitute the phonology of the language.

1.3.3 **MORPHOLOGY** Mark and Kirsten 2005, p.1) said that, "Morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation and how they are formed". Bloomfield calls it the study of the constructions in which bound forms appear among the constituents.

1.3.4 **SYNTAX** The word syntax is derived from a Greek word meaning 'ordering together', 'systematic arrangement', or 'putting together'. It is the study of sentence building, of the ways in which words are arranged together in order to make larger units. A syntactic analysis is generally concerned with sentences and the constituents of sentences. Briefly speaking, syntax is the grammar of sentences; it is the science of sentence construction. 'It is perhaps best to define syntax negatively, as the study of the combinations of such morphemes as are not bound on the levels of either inflection or derivation' (Robert A Hall, 1969 : 91). By this definition, most of the elements involved in syntactical combinations will indeed be free, but some will be phrasally or clausally bound.

1.3.5 **SEMANTICS** According to David Crystal, "Semantics is the study of meaning". Semantics is also called "semasiology". It is the branch of linguistics concerned with meaning. It deals with the study of meaning, changes in meaning, and the principles that govern the relationship between sentences or words and their meanings.

1.4 DEVICES IN STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

1.4.1 Graphological Devices include

1 **Punctuation:** Punctuation marks are used in writing that divide sentences and phrases.

2 **Paragraphing:** Paragraph contain at least one sentence or more than one sentences, usually consist on lines. The first sentence of each paragraph starts on a new line containing capital letter of the first word of the sentence.

1.4.2 Phonological Devices Include:

3 **Rhyme Elements** (It consist on Rhythm, Rhyme (masculine, feminine and triple), Internal Rhyme, Rhyme Royal, End Rhyme)

- a. **Rhythm** A regular pattern of sound, time intervals, or events occurring in writing.
- b. **Rhyme:** A word that has the same sound or ends with the same sound as another word.
- c. **Internal Rhyme:** Rhyme that occurs within a single line of verse.

4 **Alliteration:** The repetition of initial consonant sounds. Usually poets use this device to imitate sounds. Specially to create musical effects.

5 **Consonance:** A near rhyme that consists of identical consant sounds proceeded by different vowel sounds such as with “stuff and off”.

6 **Assonance:** The repetition of similar vowel sounds in poetry.

7 **Onomatopoeia:** Onomatopeia is the use of words that imitate sounds.

1.4.3 Morphological Devices Includes

8 **Affixes:** If we put morphemes bfore the words; which also forms new words, this procedure is called affixcation. It furhter Divides:-

a. **Prefixes:** The process of putting morphemes to change its meaning, to the beginning of a word such as unhappy.

b. **Suffixes:** The process of putting morphemes to make another word, at the end of the word, such as quickly.

1.4.4 Lexical Devices include

9 **Ellipsis:** Ellipsis is very similar to subsutition, it is omission of noun, verb, or a clause, on the assumption that it is understand from the linguistic context for example:

A: Where are you doing?

B: To town.

10 **Anaphoric:** It occurs when the writer refers back to someone or something that has been previously identified, to avoid repetition. For example; 'the taxi driver' with the pronoun 'he' or 'two girls' with 'they'.

11 **Cataphoric:** It is the opposite of anaphoric.

12. **Exophoric:** In contrast to anaphora and cataphora, eg; rather than introduce a concept, the writer refer to it by a genetic word, such as "everything".

1.5.1 Semantic Devices include

13 **Symbolism** A stylistic device/term used in literature, specially used in poetry, when an object is used to represent something abstract.

2.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE POEM

The Poem is written by Robert Lee Frost. It moves us as unobtrusively as it conveys to us the profundity of its thought. "The lyric", says William O Connor, "like Milton's sonnet On His Blindness and Arnold's Dove Beach, seems to have established itself permanently in anthologies and textbooks of poetry. It is one of Frost's best known poems, and we might discover, if we had the means, that it is one of the best poems of the twentieth century." It is this lyric that appealed to the late Pandit Jawhar Lal Nehru and guided and inspired him to be constantly on the move, adhering to his duties.

The poem presents nature as standard of beauty. But no words to convey the beauty of nature have been used except the word 'lovely'. This word simply states the whole idea of the poem. Then the idea of darkness is also very important. It is mentioned twice in the poem. And this highlight the connection between beauty and mystery. Some reviewer associates the words 'darkness and sleep' which the desire for death. But the poet discounts darkness by using the word 'light'.

2.2 BIOGRAPHY OF THE POET

Robert Frost was a famous American Poet, born in San Francisco on March 26,1874. He saw an internationally acclaimed poet who won the famous Pulitzer prize for four times. His poetry focused on themes of nature in which he embedded the contemporary and philosophical issues of his time. His style of poetry is very simple and easy and straightforward. He died in boston on January 29, 1963.

The poem points out at the attractive and exciting beauty of nature and simultaneously thinks at the need to carry on with the daily affairs of life. The world of fantasy is very inviting. But one must maintain balance between the world of reality and imagination.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides stylistic analysis of the poem. The poem consists of four stanzas, each with four lines. The poem is written in iambic pentameter. The rhyme scheme of first stanza is aaba. Unstressed syllable is represented by {x} and stressed syllable is represented by { / }. Iambic pattern is { x / }

Whose woods these are I think I know.	A
x/ x/ x/ x/	
His house is in the village though;	B
x/ x/ x/ x/	
He will not see me stopping here	B
x/ x/ x/ x/	
To watch his woods fill up with snow.	A
x/ x/ x/ x/	

The poem portrays the natural scene of frozen lake and falling of snow on the trees, woods and houses. The poet listen the inaudible sound of the wind falling on the woods. These dark woods symbolize death- the ultimate reality.

My little horse must think it queer	B
x/ x/ x/ x/	
To stop without a farmhouse near	B
x/ x/ x/ x/	
Between the woods and frozen lake	C
x/ x/ x/ x/	
The darkest evening of the year.	B
x/ x/ x/ x/	

In these lines, the horse of the poet stands the role of a foil and stayed between the woods and frozen lake for a little bit. He asked from his horse whether they stop there, in the cold weather, the darkest and the longest night of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake	C
x/ x/ x/ x/	
To ask if there is some mistake.	C
x/ x/ x/ x/	
The only other sound's the sweep	D

Metaphor is found in this poem line no 9-10.

PERSONIFICATION

Personification is found in line no 5 in this poem.

RHYME SCHEME

First stanza, **aaba** Second stanza, **bbcb** Third stanza, **ccdc** Fourth stanza, **dddd** In each line the poet use four feet in such a way that each fot has an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed one. And without any doubt, we say that, the poem is written in iambic tetrameter.

INTERNAL RHYME

This is found in the poem in line no 3,5,6,7 and 8. {**He see me** (line 3), **little it** (line 5), **without house** (line 6), **Between frozen** (line 7) and **evening year** (line 8).

This is a lyric poem. It was first published in the *New Republic* on March 7, 1923, and republished later entitled *New Hampshire*. This collection won Frost a Pulitzer Prize. The poet realizes that his responsibility/duty are more important than his desire for rest. And the last line of the poem lies in the darker images that are hinted at throughout the poem. To conclude we say that most of the words are monosyllables and direct narrative. And the poem is tightly constructed, imbued with multiple layers of meaning, and theoretically important in its treatment.

SYMBOLISM

In this poem, the poet uses symbolism to show the co-relation between the woods and village with Heaven in line no 1 and line no 2. Further without any doubt, Mythological Symbolism is also seen clearly in line no 7, when the speaker talks about the lake. It is a reference to Hell in Norse Mythology. And this is located in the frozen region of Niflheim.

POETIC FORM AND STRUCTURE

The form of the poem is completely poetic. It consists of four stanzas containing four line of each stanza written in iambic pentameter.

3.1 FINDINGS

The poem presents one person's momentary encounter with nature. The poet use simple language in simple way about the woods, fields snow and nature. Through this poem the writer describe the lovely scene of nature for enjoyment, but the last line of the poem "And miles to go before I sleep" remember him that he yet to be traveled before he can rest for the night. Here

night mean his last residence ie; eternal place, the place after death. So, the writer choose simple diction but his theme is very much deeper.

5. CONCLUSION

The rhythm of the poem, the word music of stanza three, the expressive phrases of stanza four, the distinctive rhymes scheme of the poem, the efficacy of the repetitions of the last line continue to make it one of those poems that combine popular appeal with true artistic merit. These qualities make the poem get a certain place in honoured, treasured lyrics of English.

The poem points out the attractive, charming, and exciting scene of nature and beauty. And also carry on with the routine affairs of life. The world is very fantastic and inviting. But the teme of the poem gives us moral lesson that we must maintain balance between the world of reality and imagination. After reading the poem, we get ready to face te challenges of life. And this is the main theme of te poem.

5.1 PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATURE

The ample of this study is to explore broad avenue and open ways in which language has been used in the poem. The uses of effects and the stylistics elements and figurative devices regards the poem will be looked at in the analysis for the readers own satisfaction.

5.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study is based on stylistic and scientific analysis on linguistic levels for example; phonology, morphology, graphology, syntax and semantics. This stylistic and scientific analysis will be elpful for the readers, specially poetry readers, about to know and understand the literary devices and figure of speech used by the poets in their own way to enahnce their ideas through poetry. And also helpful for further researchers of this field.

5.3 LIMITATIONS

Due to shortage of time the analysis of the poem is deal properly short. And the material is not as much as it should be because the researcher agree that though it is a short poemsuffused with meaning, open to varied interpretaions.

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APPENDIX

Stopping by Woods On A Snowy Evening

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His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.
My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.
He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.
The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.