

STYLISTICS ANALYSIS OF THE POEM 'TO AUTUMN' BY JOHN KEATS

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze John Keats's poem "To Autumn" from the perspective of stylistic analysis. The stylistics is made under the aspects of graphological, grammatical, syntactical, phonological patterns have also find tropes and schemes that are present in the poem. This paper is helpful to analyze the structure and style of John Keats poetry and his themes, reviews and treatment of nature and beauty.

Keywords: Style, Stylistics, John Keats, Ode, Autumn, Spring, Summer, 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 various meanings in and outside of the literature .The way of doing something is style. Broadly, appearance of everything is style. Style is related to person's personality. A style reflects the thoughts of a person's mind. In literature, style is the writer's voice reflected in their choice of words, sentence structure and tone of ideas in order to "show "the reader what the writer is intending.

Objectives of the Study

1. To know about Keats's sensuousness.
2. To know about themes in Keats's poem, "To Autumn"
3. To know the purpose of writing of Keats's poetry.
4. To analyze stylistics devices of Keats's poetry through "To Autumn".

STYLISTICS

Stylistics is the study and interpretation of text from a linguistics perspective. It is branch of applied linguistics concerned with the study of style in texts. Before the 20th century it started to deal with non literary text. Example: Law, Religion, Advertisement, Newspaper etc. Katie Wales writes in a Dictionary of Stylistics,"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."

Stylistics analysis provides a commentary which is objective and scientific based on a concrete quantifiable data and application in a systematic way. It uses specialized technical terms and concepts which drive from the science of linguistics, Stylistics analysis is something different

from literary criticism. Literary criticism continues to focus on interpretation and field of linguistics had little to say about literature beyond sentence style.

Level of Stylistics Analysis

The following are the levels of stylistics, we analyze the text according to these level.

1. **Phonetic Level:** It is an examination of sounds; we study the characteristics and potential utility of sounds in phonetics level.
2. **Phonological Level;** it is the study of the sound system of a given language; the formal rules of pronunciation.
3. **Graphological Level;** It is the analogous study of a language's writing system, The formalized rules of spellings.
4. **Grammatical Level;** in this level both the syntactic and morpho-logical 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 derivation.
5. **The Lexical level;** It is the study of the way in which individual words and idioms tend to pattern in different linguistic context; on the semantics level in terms of stylistics.

Bibliography of the Poet

John Keats (1795-1821) is a well known English Poet of nineteenth century. He shines singularly out among the galaxy of such great poets of his centuries as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, Tennyson, Browning and Arnold although he got the least long age (only 25 Years) among all of them. Though that small age he was destined to live, he wrote a good number of such poems without which no anthology of English poetry is ever completed."Ode to Nightingale", " To Autumn", "Ode on a Grecian Urn and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" are known and remembered for their unmatched eloquent expression and sublimity .He writes about love and beauty in a very sweet sensuous manner.

Important Features of Keats' Poetry

He is romantic poet. Keats is generally known as a poet of beauty. For him the principle of beauty has a spiritual existence. Keats sees and visualized beauty through his five senses.

Another feature of his poetry is sensuousness. He takes sensuous delight in all focus of beauty. His Poetry is replete with sweet audio and visual, Images. He is also called Hellenist, He loves Greek Culture and Literature, and therefore he continues to spread Greek culture through poetry.

Introduction to the Poem

To Autumn has only three well knit and tightly –woven stanzas that tell about autumn and its activities. The first stanza tells about the beauty and bounty of the autumn season with its vines full of grapes, the apple ripe, the gourd fat, and hazels with sweet kernels. Then the poet tells

about the busy bees suggesting sweet honey. The whole scene is full of ripeness and each line, in itself, is like a branch of a fruit tree fully laden and hanging down due to the weight of its juicy fruit.

The second stanza depicts certain very typical scenes of autumn. It gives some of the most vivid pictures in English poetry. Keats' pictorial quality is really at its zenith in this stanza. We see autumn season as a being, personification. We see reaping, Winnowing and gleaning and the autumn itself seen doing all these seasonal activities.

The third stanza tells us about different audio of autumn season. We hear the choir of gnats, the beatings of lambs, the songs of cricket, the whistling of redbreasts, the twittering of swallows and like the first and second stanza is rich in their visual effects whereas this third stanza is rich in audio effect. There is a complete and ripe picture of autumn season in this poem.

Themes:

There are five main themes of the poem "To Autumn".

1. Man and the Natural World
2. Time
3. Awe and Amazement
4. Transformation
5. Mortality

Man and the Natural World

There's a lot more to say about this poem besides the fact that it's a "nature poem." By itself, the term "nature poem" does not tell us much. "To Autumn" contains very specific natural landscapes and images. The first stanza offers images of the interaction between humans and the plants that surround them. The second describes the production of agriculture, a natural process that is controlled by people. The third stanza moves outside of the human perspective to include things that are not used or consumed by humans, such as gnats and swallows. This third section captures some of the "wildness" and unpredictability of the world.

Time

We don't think it's a coincidence that "To Autumn" mentions autumn and spring, but not winter. Keats doesn't want to dwell on the cold days to come. To appreciate autumn, we need to forget about how each passing day seems a little shorter and chillier. For the most part, the speaker stays focused on the present moment, just like the personified figure of autumn, who doesn't seem to have a care in the world. Nonetheless, the poem moves forward in subtle ways. The natural world is at the peak of sunlight and ripeness in the first stanza, and by the third stanza the sun is setting.

Awe and Amazement

This ode is almost like a pep talk delivered to autumn. The speaker knows that autumn often gets short shrift in the catalogue of seasons, so he reminds her (and, maybe, himself) of its many wonders: the bounty of the harvest, the dropping of seeds that will become next year's flowers, and the symphony of sights and sounds at sunset. Strangely, autumn herself seems blissfully unaware of any need to be praised or appreciated by anyone. She wanders through the scenery and examines her work without concern or urgency.

Transformation

Autumn is the time of transformation between the growth of summer and the dormancy of winter. Things are winding down, and once the harvest is complete, there is nothing left to do but wait until the next season. Much of the transformation in the poem occurs between stanzas. For example, in the first stanza fruits and gourds are swelling outward before they will be picked for food. By the second stanza, the harvest is already complete, or mostly complete, and the ripe apples have been turned into rich, delicious cider. The third stanza focuses only on one transformative event, the setting of sun.

Mortality

Autumn is frequently used as a symbol in literature for old age, the time before death, symbolized by winter. "To Autumn" avoids any super-obvious references to death, but we do get some subtle ones, like the oblivious bees that think the summer will last forever, or the "hook" that spares the poppy flowers from their inevitable end. As the day begins to "die" in the final section, the entire landscape contributes to the song of mourning.

METHODOLOGY

This section will provide a stylistic analysis of the poem 'To Autumn of John Keats'. The syntactic patterns and choices, phonological, graphological and morphological levels of analysis are going to form the basis of the analysis.

Stylistics Analysis of the Poem

What's up With the Title?

"To Autumn" seems to be missing a key word when compared to Keats's other Great Odes: the word "ode." You would expect the title to be, "Ode to Autumn," but maybe Keats felt confident that he had this whole ode thing down and could just use a shorthand. However, "To Autumn" seems to change the meaning, "To Autumn." Or Keats could merely be helping us understand whom the speaker is addressing. Whatever your explanation, "To Autumn" stands out as a title among Keats's odes.

“Ode”

An ode is a kind of poem, usually praising something. It is a form of lyric poetry-expressing emotion and it is usually addressed to someone or something or it represents the poet’s message on that person or thing, as Keats ‘ode’ tells us what he thought about autumn. The word ‘ode’ comes from a Greek word for “song” and like a song; an ode is made up of verses and can have a complex meter.

There are three types of Ode:

1. Pindaric Ode

Pindaric Ode is named after Pindar. They were performed with dances and chows and sometimes celebrated the Olympics games.

2. Horatian Ode

The Horatian Ode was named after the Roman poet, Horace. It was usually calmer and less formal than Pindaric Ode and was more personal enjoyment than a stage performance.

3. Irregular Ode

Author of the irregular Ode will retain some of the elements of an Ode, but have the freedom of experiment. Ode to autumn is an irregular Ode.

Graphological Level

- i. It has three well knit and tightly woven stanzas.
- ii. The poem is rich in imaginary.
- iii. It is an Ode.
- iv. There is usual capitalization.
- v. We can see the use of punctuation in the poem.

For example: Full stop, Comma, Colon, Semi-Colon, Hyphen, Sign of question mark is used in the poem.

Lexical Level

Noun	Pro Noun	Common Noun	Proper Noun	Collective Noun
Autumn Sun , Lilly Bourn Apples, Cricket Fruit,Red breast Flower,Swallow Trees, Sky Ground, Wind Bees Wind Summer Furrow Floor Wind, Gleaner Poppies ,Vines Brook, Thatch Spring, Eves Clouds, Kernel Grants ,Wind River ,Muistor	Him They Who Thee Them Thy	Fruits Vines Trees Cottage Days Flower Floor Brook Wind Garden Bees Press Hill Granites Clouds Glance	The Gourd The River Swallows The Red Breast Summer Spring Autumn Sky Sun Light Wind Rosy, hue Winnowing	Bees Swath Claming,Cells
Verb	Gerund	Adjective	Adverb	
Load, Bless, Twined Round, Watches Swell, Bloom Plump, Bared Set, Think, Mourn Cease, Sink Maturing, Live Conspiring, Die Loading, Bleat Seek, Whistles Soft, Lifted, Twitter Winnowing, Drowsed	Maturing Conspiring Winnowing Oozing Sinking	Sweet More Warm Mellow Close Bosom Maturing Ripeness Patient Look Warm day Winnowing wind Barred Clouds Soft Dying Day Wailful Choir	Aboard Careless A lot Loud	

Grammatical Level

Use of Punctuation, Use of Question Mark and Question Mark is used in 2nd and 3rd Stanza .It shows that the poet suggests the people who want to see autumn season. They can see the reaping, Winnowing and gleaning. In the third stanza, Question Mark is also used. It shows wonder and suspense of the poet. The poet is wondered about the disappearance of spring and its beauty and surprised that autumn has maintained the beauty of Earth.

Use of full stop: Poet uses stop four times in the poem. Each full stop shows completion.

1-Firstly, the poet describes about the maturing of the season in the first line of the poem. Keats sees it as still pause in time when everything has reached fruition and ripeness is all.

2- Secondly, the poet uses full stop at the end of the first stanza. It shows completion of activities of autumn season. Honey bees fill their clammy cells.

3- Thirdly, in the last line of second stanzas the use of full stop shows completion of second stanza as well as completion of activities of human being in autumn season.

4- Fourthly, at the end of the poem, the use of full stop shows that the poem is ended here.

Phonological Level

“To Autumn” is written in a three stanza structure with a variable rhyme scheme. Each stanza is eleven lines long and each is metered in relatively precise iambic pentameter. In terms of both thematic organization and rhyme scheme. Each stanza is divided roughly into 2 parts. In each stanza, the first part is made up of the first 4 lines of stanza and 2nd part is made up of the last seven lines. The first part of each stanza follows an ABAB rhyme scheme, the first line rhyming with the third and the second line rhyming with the fourth.

The second part of each stanza is longer and varies in rhyme scheme: The first stanza is arranged CDE DCCE and the second and third stanza are arranged CDECDDE.

Alliteration

Repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of at least two words in line poetry is called alliteration. Examples: mist, mellow, songs, spring, full, fruit, hour by hours, winnowing wind.

Stylistics devices in the poem

“To Autumn”

A stylistic device is a particular characteristic of a text that makes it distinctive in some way. Stylistics devices include such things as imagery ,diction, sound devices includes such things as imagery, dictations, sound devices, symbol, tone, mood personification, schemes, tropes, form or theme. Literary devices are divided into two groups: Schemes and Tropes.

Schemes: Schemes are literary devices that deal with letters, words syntax and sounds rather than meaning of the word.

Tropes: Tropes are literary devices having meaning different from their literal meanings.

Antithesis: A scheme in which contrasting words, phrases, sentences or ideas are used for emphasis. For example: lives and dies.

Metaphor: A trope in which a word or phrase is transfused from its literal meaning to stand for something else. A metaphor compares two objects or things without using the words like “like” or “as”. For Example: close bosom friend, soft dying day.

Simile: A trope in which comparison is introduced by using the words “like” or “as”. “Like a gleaner”, “as the light wind.”

Symbol: An object that stands for points to and shares in a significant reality over and beyond it. For Example: “Seasons of mists and mellow fruitfulness”.

Personification: Trope in which human qualities or abilities are assigned to abstraction or inanimate object is called personification. In this poem, author has personified the autumn under four forms of the season.

- 1-Firstly, as a harvester sitting carelessly on the granary floor during winnowing.
- 2-Secondly, as a tired reaper fallen asleep in the very midst of his reaping.
- 3-Thirdly, as a gleaner following his work home across a brook in the evening with a load of sheaves on his head.
- 4- Lastly, as it represented as a cyder press watching intently the press squeezes juice out of fruits. Imagery:

Imagery

Imagery is a figure of speech or vivid description which appeals to the 5 senses. There are 2 types of imagery.

1-Visual

2- Auditory

“To Autumn” is a masterpiece of the imagery. Here I find one image coming after the other in quick secession, and every image is sublime, super and unique. I can feel and see all what Keats sees and feels. Keats uses both audio and visual images.

Visual Images

“To Autumn” ‘the maturing’, the vines that round the thatch eves sun”, “the mossed cottage-trees”. lending fully with the load of “Apples”, the swelling “gourd”, ”the hazal shells” becoming “plumps” with a sweet kernel “the later flowers” assuring the bees that “warm days will never cease “because “summer has over brimmed their clammy cells” such beautiful and live images are found in the very first stanza.

In the 2nd stanza the poet takes a leap forward and personified the autumn through different images in person doing different things. Sometimes we see the autumn, “sitting careless on granary floor” with hair soft lifted by the winnowing wind “.At other times we see her” on a half-reaped” furrow sound “asleep” because she is “drowsed” with the fume of poppies” and her sicks is sparing,” the next swath and its entwined flowers”. Sometimes we see her in the shape of “gleaner” keeping steady her “laden head across a brook”. And a very –alluring picture ends the stanza when we see autumn standing “by a ayder –press, with patient book” watching “the lastoozings hours by hours”.

Audial Imagery

In the 3rd stanza we hear the songs and music of autumn. We hear the “barred clouds bloom the soft dying day. And touch the stubble-plains with rosy line” “we hear the “willful choir” of the small gnats, mourning “. We hear “full grown lambs loud least from hilly bourn”. Similarly we hear as “hedge-crickets sing” and gathering swallows twitter”. And mind you, this is all the images of one master pieces of Keats i.e. to autumn.

Diction

The word choices made by a writer can be described as

- ❖ Formal
- ❖ Semiformal
- ❖ Ornate
- ❖ Informal
- ❖ Technical
- ❖ Slang

Keats's diction is medieval, archaic and classic.

Tone

Tone is the poet's attitude towards his or her subject or readers. It is similar to tone of voice but should not be confused with mood or atmosphere. An author's tone might be sarcastic, sincere, humorous, melancholic etc.

In this poem the author's tone is romantic. His choice of words shows his love of nature, love of beauty, imagination, love of past and wearied sadness. Keats's attitude is quite optimistic and positive.

Atmosphere

The overall feeling of a work which is related to tone and mood. In the Ode to autumn, everything here is simple, direct and clear. The poem is pervaded throughout by a mood of serene tranquility.

CONCLUSION

"To Autumn" is most objective and impersonal. The theme of the poem is fulfillment and through the richness of images, the poet has prolonged its fulfillment. It is most satisfying in thought and expression. The first line of the ode shows autumn in the abstract but the second reveals the germ of personification which is amplified in the beautiful pictures and convey to us the ripeness of autumn. In the second stanza we find different pictures of the season harvester, the reaper, the gleaner and the aider marks. All personify autumn. The third stanza reproduces symphony the season sounds. This poem shows that Keats posses all the romantic traits-love of nature, beauty and imagination. This poem is rich in sensuous imagery.

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APPENDIX

Poem "To Autumn by John Keats"

1.

SEASON of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
 Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
 Conspiring with him how to load and bless
 With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
 To bend with apples the moss'd cottage-trees, 5
 And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
 To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
 With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
 And still more, later flowers for the bees,
 Until they think warm days will never cease, 10
 For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells.

2.

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
 Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
 Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
 Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind; 15
 Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,
 Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
 Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers:
 And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep

Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

20

3.

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?

Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—

While barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day,

And touch the stubble plains with rosy hue;

Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn

Among the river sallow's, borne aloft

Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;

And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;

Hedge-cricket sing; and now with treble soft

The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;

And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

25

30