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Stylistic Analysis of *Ode to the West Wind* by PB Shelley

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Abstract

Stylistics is concerned with the analysis of variation and characteristics of language. Stylistics has gathered imminent role in ascertaining language use, especially poetic language. In this research paper, I have explored the intentional deviation from the conventional rules in the poem Ode to West Wind by P.B Shelly. The poem is rich from a stylistic point of view because the application of deliberate misspellings, creativity in style, the irregularity in the syntax patterns, and the phonological and graphological deviations make the poem a fascinating read. I have noticed that Shelly has freed himself from the structural and traditional norms of language and has presented a new dimension in poetry. This article is the analysis done against the backdrop of deviations at syntactical, morphological, and grammatical levels.

Key Words: Stylistics Deviation, Linguistics Analysis, Figurative Language, Semantic Analysis, Syntactic Deviation

Introduction

Percy Bysshe Shelly, who was born on August 4th, 1792, and died on July 8th 1822, is regarded as one of the central English Romantic Movement poets. His craftsmanship in poetry and lyrical qualities have made him an unparalleled poet. His lyricism, intellectualism, and revolutionary ideologies are refined and well ahead of his time. Shelly's critical recognition grew with the time that he did not enjoy in his life. The interest in his poetry has risen considerably for the sweeping momentum that researchers find in his poetic imagery. His employment of free verse and disregard for capital letters make Shelly a unique poet in his contemporary poets. His genres, free versification, revolutionary ideologies, and intricate use of linguistic deviation have excelled him and earned him critical acclaim.

The emergence of Stylistics as a discipline has opened gates of new discussion in literary circles. The academicians pay more heed to the literary pieces through the lens of stylistic analysis. Since the discipline has gained an immense reception in the area of research, Shelly's poetry has so much for researchers. Ode to West Wind has fascinating material to engage on Shelly's use of poetic devices and linguistic deviation. The poem is a hymn. It is imperative to have imperative sentences in it, but interestingly the whole structure has a single imperative sentence. In addition, the interrogative sentences in the Ode are interrogative, but they are not essentially interrogative in nature because the words used in the verses are rhetorical statements.

Research Statement

PB Shelly gives birth to not only revolutionary ideals

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in his poetry but a revolution in the genre of poetry by employing deliberate spelling errors, incorporating phonetic spellings, the pattern of syntax in an irregular form, and the compounding of words. The elements are referred to as deviation that leads to sublimity in Shelly's poetry. The laymen may experience hard yards in comprehending the message. Hence, the paper makes an effort to make the laymen understand the message and meaning of the deviation.

Research Question

1. The whys of different patterning in the deviation in Shelly's Ode to the West Wind. And how the research makes an effort to help readers grasp the actual meaning and message?
2. Shelly's dependence on other stylistic devices to convey his message.

Research Objective

The focus of the paper is as follows:

1. To analyze the pattern and forms of stylistic deviation employed by Shelly in the poem Ode to the West Wind.
2. To unveil the real message and motive by going through the stylistic deviation in the poem Ode to the West Wind.
3. To explore the impact of the stylistic deviation on the overall poem Ode to the West Wind. In addition to that, the significance for the readers.
4. To objectively evaluate the poem Ode to the West Wind through the lens of Stylistics deviation.

Delimitations

The research has been carried out on stylistic deviation, primarily on one piece of remarkable poetry, Ode to the West Wind. The author is concerned with stylistic deviation in the poem Ode to the West Wind.

Methodology

The study of the poem Ode to the West Wind is analytical and critical in the context of stylistic analysis. The study tries to uncover the impact of stylistic deviation on the poem in general and on Ode

to the West Wind in particular.

The Original Ode

I

1. O wild West Wind, thou breathe of Autumn's being,
2. Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
3. Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
4. Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
5. Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou,
6. Who chariots to their dark wintry bed
7. The winged seeds, where they lie cold and low,
8. Each like a corpse within its grave, until
9. Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow
10. Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
11. (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
12. With living hues and odours plain and hill:
13. Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
14. Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh hear!

II

15. Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
16. Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
17. Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,
18. Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
19. On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
20. Like the bright hair uplifted from the head
21. Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
22. Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
23. The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge
24. Of the dying year, to which this closing night
25. Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
26. Vaulted with all thy congregated might
27. Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
28. Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh hear!

III

29. Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams

30. The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
31. Lull'd by the coil of his crystalline streams,
32. Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
33. And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
34. Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
35. All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
36. So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
37. For whose path the Atlantic's level powers
38. Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
39. The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
40. The sapless foliage of the ocean, know
41. Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
42. And tremble and despoil themselves: oh hear!

IV

43. If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
44. If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
45. A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share
46. The impulse of thy strength, only less free
47. Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
48. I were as in my boyhood, and could be
49. The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
50. As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
51. Scarce seem'd a vision; I would ne'er have striven
52. As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
53. Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
54. I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!
55. A heavy weight of hours has chain'd and bow'd
56. One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

57. Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
58. What if my leaves are falling like its own!
59. The tumult of thy mighty harmonies
60. Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
61. Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
62. My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!
63. Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
64. Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!
65. And, by the incantation of this verse,
66. Scatter, as from an unextinguish'd hearth

67. Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
68. Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth
69. The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
70. If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Impact of Shelly's Rebellious Nature on Deviation in Ode to the West Wind

Shelly held an iconoclastic ideology that challenged the beliefs that were held close to the chest by not only the clergy or politicians but equally, they remained unchallengeable in the eyes of a layman. As a student at Oxford, the lecturer and his intuition led him to set up a room for scientific experiments. His inclination towards occult and science kept him charging on challenging the beliefs and tyrannical political policies. He got under the influence of Dr James Lind, who made him asquint to liberal and revolutionary ideals. He started reading radical writers and their works redefined his political and religious ideology. In the later years, Shelley had earned a rank of scholarship and was a person with unconventional behaviour.

He was firmly provoked by the continuous injustice spree in his society, and he had to refuse to abide by it, but the society was not relinquished. The Church came under his fierce criticism, and so did the legal and political set-up of the time. The people, the political system, the clergy, and other various spheres of his ideological evolution, the weird incident he experienced in his life brought about his rebel poet in him.

Shelly had to undergo fierce criticism and adverse implications for his rebellious views or reviews, but he held his ground and did not succumb to adversity. He had triumphed in integrating his ideology so that society could see betterment. The revolutionary person in Shelly was budding when he took to writing and pamphleteered "*The Necessity of Atheism (1811)*", which resulted in Shelly's educational career getting expelled from Oxford. His family tried to force him to render a public apology so that his admission could be retained, but Shelly never did that despite apparently woeful implications. It set the context for his rebellious conventions. He had to flee to Ireland and distribute the pamphlets and urge political reforms. He had to face the law in the wake of subversive pamphlets.

Although he could not get convicted in Ireland for not affixing the publisher's name on pamphlets, yet it made him apprehensive about the incident. It made him migrate to Wales, keeping his ground to go forward with his ideology. His ideology turned his amicable relations into hostility. His ideals were poignant in his poems and took on society along with its institutions. He was a radical prose writer, and his prose works were dedicated to political reformation. Since childhood, his ideas forged a person who took a road lesser taken, if not the least taken road. He would ponder how he could smash the disciplines that jeopardized one's freedom or choices.

In the *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelly's truest rebellious and revolutionary inspiration could be seen. He longed for social change, and the deviation from conventional rules in *Ode to the West Wind* could be seen as a symbolic change or defiance. The Ode was written amid the political turmoil, and regeneration appeared a probable solution to the woes prevailing at that time. The ecstasy pops out of his passionate conviction in the inevitable regeneration of mankind, and it would put an end to all woes. The Ode plays the role of driving force to change and rejuvenate the human world. He called on the wind to take away the rotted system and beget a system that spells the beans for harmony in all shades and all forms. He urged the wind:

Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!

I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed

One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

Ode to the West Wind is written in the backdrop of all these developments, and the events coupled with his personal radicalism made him shy away from those conventions that had to have been observed. The governing rules and tradition in the process of composing poetry are taken into account because Shelley was born to defy the conventions. The defiance is now evaluated in the form of Stylistic Deviation. It is the deviation that made his Ode to West Wind stand tall in the Romantic Movement and it set the tone for the later poets the likes of Eliots or others who idealized Shelley as their ideological father.

Literature Review

Stylistics

The term Stylistics refers to analyzing the discourse

of any given literary piece from a linguistic perspective. It assists the readers in how a particular language carries out an artistic purpose inside a text. It can also be said that Stylistics studies the manner and method of language use in written form. It tries to give dissection based on systematical and objective analyses by employing Stylistics as a medium. It is for this reason that the researchers and academicians are much interested in Stylistics, and it has gained a critical position in the studies of literature and linguistics.

Style can be applied to both spoken and written, both literary and non-literary varieties of language, but by tradition, it is particularly associated with written literary texts. However, the definition of stylistics may vary from person to person, but it can be said the hat above definitions suit from time to time and place to place as they clear the context and meanings.

Stylistic Analysis of the Poem

The poem has substantial use of Alliteration, which makes the poem musical and flows in a beautiful rhythm. Consider this: the sound pattern in consonants such as the sound of /w/ in "O wild West Wind, thou breathe of Autumn's being" and /g/ sound in "thy voice, and suddenly grow gray" or the /s/ sound in the lines "thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, Sweet thou consonant sounds in the same line such as the sound of /w/ in "O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being" and /g/ sound in "Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear" Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion, Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce.

The poem has absorbed figurative devices in abundance. The presence of Simile, Symbolism, Imagery, and Personification is just to name a few. For example, "*Are Driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,*" should be treated as Simile. Symbolism is used to signify ideas. Here we have "West Wind," symbolizing the mighty power of nature. Imagery can never stay far behind when there is a Romantic Poet of Shelly's stature. For instance, "dark wintry bed" and "yellow, and black and pale and hectic red" are prime examples of the imagery. Similarly, with romantic poets, we ought to expect a good application of personification. "The blue

Mediterranean, where he lay", "Destroyer and Preserver", and "Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams" qualify for personifications.

Linguistic Analysis of the Poem

The poet has employed paradox, where he has put together two antonyms in the same place. "Destroyer and Preserver", such a paradoxical coinage, makes the reader wonder how can a thing be Destroyed and at the same time it is Preserved. But such is the audacity of Wind that when destroys, it preserves too. There is another paradox in lines:

1. *Drive my dead thoughts over the universe*
2. *Like wither'd leaves to quicken a new birth!*

In the lines, the poet, although knowing dead seeds never germinate but has his hopes of re-awakening. In addition, the next paradoxical thing is Autumn is treated to offer "sweetness," while in English poetry, no such thing is there as Autumn is always ascribed to sadness and melancholy.

The poem has rhetorical questions as well, thanks to the poem being a hymn. The poem has imperative sentences. O Wind! If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?_The conventional rule is disobeyed because Shelly does not seek an answer to his query, but he is certain of his words.

Stylistic Deviation

Primary Deviation

The term refers to the departure from the primary or the generally attributed linguistic meaning of words or expressions. The deviation is a common practice in poetry which is often termed "poetic license", the license that frees the poet to violate the norm and conventions of using linguistic expression as Leech (2008) indicates three layers of deviation: primary, secondary, and tertiary deviation. The first deviation allows the poet to go outside the generally accepted range of words, and the next deviation is the phenomenon when there is an allowance for the poet to choose, but the poet turns down the allowance and does not prefer to employ the same term repeatedly, this deviation is in great harmony with Jakonson's benchmark when he deals the matter of Poetic Function of Language.

The primary deviation is illustrated in lines 6-7, where Shelly has been in defiance of lexical deviation to adopt the unusual verb, chariotest. Additionally,

there is a collocational deviation in the mentioned lines i.e. the wind as Subject, chariot as Verb, the seed as Object, and to their bed as Adverb. Leech points to the collocational oddity that it is how formal deviation leads to semantic deviation, which is also recognized as a poetic metaphor.

Secondary Deviation

[Mukarovsky \(1958\)](#) postulates that this kind of deviation is from the conventions of literary compositions. It has been referred to as a conventional deviation by Leech. Shelly, in the poem, is found practising metrical deviation where the Ode's vague iambic pentameter. There is less focus on constructing run-on lines, which are certainly a mismatch between metrical and syntactic limits.

Tertiary Deviation

It has been argued that tertiary deviation is deviation within the structure of the poem. [Levin \(1965\)](#) explained it as internal deviation as well, and it is a kind of 'defeated expectancy'. Notice the lines in the Stanza I-III. The verses would begin on multiple *if-clauses* with a series of *if-clauses*, 'If I were a dead leaf... If I were a swift cloud...'. But there are no resulting clauses after that. The resulting clauses appear in Stanza IV 11 and 12. But even after that, the complex sentences are followed by two lines: Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed! The lines elucidate a form of syntactic expectancy.

Syntactic Deviation

In Syntactic Deviation, the poet usually defies the hard-and-fast rules of grammar. Here the poem in hand has the sentence, The blue Mediterranean, where he lay; the underlined structure is incorrect on two grounds. First, the Blue Mediterranean can never be replaced with Personal Pronoun, i.e., "he," and, when there is the use of "he," the verb must agree in Singular Form, which we have not in the given line.

Semantic Deviation

In such scenarios, the poet exercises his license to deviate from the fixed or the associated meaning of the word and make the word appear in a new meaning. Shelly is found doing such practice in the

poem in such words as the tumult of thy mighty harmonies. Here the tumult is taken to behave harmoniously, which is contrary to the very nature of the word Tumult.

Morphological Deviation

Metaphors tremendously magnify the meaning and structure of the poem. As [Lan \(2003\)](#) states, "Metaphorical mappings are grounded in bodily experience." However, Shelly has given it a unique texture through the Use of Metaphors. He has used it entirely different from the conventional use of Metaphors are employed for. The deviation where the suffix or affixation is unusual than the general method *when to outstrip thy skiey speed*.

Graphological Deviation

Dealing with graphological deviation, it should be maintained that stylistics is inclined towards how the poets employ graphic material in language to multiply the meaning and ideas in language. The deviation at the graphological level in the Ode to the West Wind is in the patterns of Punctuations, Capitalization or putting simply suggesting the poem in an unconventional manner. The word "mightest", "gray", and "unawaken'd" is the breaking of spelling rules which should have been "mightiest", "grey", and unawakened, respectively. Apart from that, the first line of the poem is contrary to Punctuation, where once a direct address is given, there must have been a sign of exclamation.

Table 1. Distribution to Graphological Deviation

Spellings	Punctuation	Capitalization
Mightest in line 61 is capitalized.	No sign of exclamation instead of coma in line 1 of the poem	"Spirit" incorrectly
Gray in line 69 is Unawaken'd capitalized.	Inappropriate sign of exclamation in line 36	"Wind" incorrectly
Skiey line 70 is Intenser capitalized	Line 58 ends with "!" instead of "?"	"Winter" in incorrectly
chariotest thine	Inappropriate "," instead of "!" in line 69	

Conclusion

Stylistic deviations should not be taken as to have poets get mistaken; rather, stylistic deviations have their purpose. Poets usually employ or switch to these deviations to achieve some artistic objectives and impacts. The true triumph of the poem Ode to the West Wind remains in the fact that Shelly has disrupted syntax and foregrounding to make his ideas achieve their purpose effectively. Shelly has treated the stylistic deviations tremendously to

depict his ideas. He has made his ideas appear in visual arts through the unconventional and often improper use of linguistic and stylistic deviations, for example, the use of punctuations, misspellings, and block letters. All of these serve as signposts for the reader to either pause or pace up reading. The uniqueness and authenticity in the Ode to West Wind make the poem read a delightful experience, and additionally, it opens up brand new dimensions in meaning and new vistas in comprehension for the reader.

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