

**STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF ROBERT BROWNING'S POEMS -
MEETING AT NIGHT AND MY LAST DUCHESS****1. Dr. Sandip Prabhakar Khedkar**Department of English
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Literature is a major source of the aesthetic pleasure. It is a creation of human being for human being. To get that aesthetic pleasure the knowledge of literary study is essential. If the reader does not have the knowledge of figures of speech - simile, personification, irony the reader will remain away from aesthetic pleasure. Stylistic provides that knowledge to the person, who is enjoying literature. From Chaucer to postmodern poets, there are many poems in the world whose stylistic analysis are essential in literature. Every poem has its own features. So every poem gives different type of pleasure. Here we are going to study Robert Browning's poems - Meeting at Night and My Last Duchess.

Keywords: Stylistic, Lexical, Phonological, Syntactic, Rhetoric, Dramatic, Monologue, Rhyme**Introduction**

The study of literature is one of the complex processes. Stylistics knocked its entry in 1950. It does the analysis of the style of literary texts. There was a development of analytic methods as well as models for their practical application in Russian Formalist Stylistics. Roman Jakobson and European structuralist have given foundation for the development of stylistics. In stylistic there is the study of difference between the content and the form of text. The content is denoted in the terms such as information, messages, etc. There are phonological, syntactic, lexical, rhetorical stylistic features. In traditional analysis of style, modern

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stylistics G C Mark, Turner and Francis, Noel Thomas placed focus on the surface features of the writing. One theorist says about stylistics that it is just the study of the general characteristics of languages. Language is a medium of literary expression. Stylistic discovers the "rules" governing the process by which linguistic elements and patterns in a text accomplish their meanings and literary effects.”In the narrower mode of formal stylistics, style is identified in the traditional way, by the distinction between what is said and how it is said or between the content and the form of a text “- 1 Thus stylistic is one of the branches of the study of literature. Literature is a creation of writer. Literature provides aesthetic pleasure. The reader tries to get pleasure from it. The stylistic gives helping hand to the reader. Poetry is one of the important genres of literature. William Shakespeare, John Milton, William Wordsworth, T.S. Eliot and Robert Browning are important poets in the literature. The stylistic analysis of their poems provide a kind of aesthetic pleasure which makes human life happy and enjoyable.

Meeting at Night

Robert Browning describes the man's sailing on the sea and eagerness to meet his beloved. It is a beautiful night. Readers can sense excitement and happiness of the couples on their meeting at night. The woman who is waiting for lover has some kind of nervousness and fear. When the man returns and taps on the door she becomes happy. “Meeting at Night ,parting at morning “,is another reminiscence ,mixed up with the natural scenery of the meeting and parting ,a vivid recollection of a fleeting night of passion and then the abandonment of its isolation for a wider ,fuller life with humanity”-2 The poem tells us about deep love of this couple.

My Last Duchess

My Last Duchess is one of the dramatic lyrics published in 1842. This poem has one speaker i.e. Duke. The reader gets insight into the psychological state of the speaker. He has killed his wife. This poem represents a realistic picture of the Victorian era. He has shown a portrait of his late wife and talks about her characters. The painter has painted realistic picture of his former wife. He accuses his mistress for having a heart, which is made easily glad and

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impressed. Duke blamed his duchess for having gentle and kind heart. Duke gives the order and all her smiles stops. It expresses controlling mind of the Duke. He hates his wife who is innocent.

The main theme of this poem is power and hatred. Duke wants to control his duchess. Duke also describes the nature of his Duchess and reasons for hate. He does not have tolerance for his Duchess. His Duchess is easily attracted towards the strangers and responds them happily. Due to Duke's behavior, Duchess is no more. Duke is self-centered man. He wishes to rule on his kingdom as well as to govern the life of his close dear ones. This is the expression of human psychology.

Phonological Features

In "Meeting at night", there is use of alliteration, Eg. long - land, too - to, then - the, to - till, the - that, sea - scented, less - loud, two - to. There is a figure of speech i.e repetition. The word 'and' is repeated 8 times in the poem. This word 'and' is used to make meeting more attractive and wistful. The lover is eager to meet her. The poet makes use of end rhymes. The first stanza has the rhyme scheme - abc cba and in the second stanza rhyme scheme is ded ded. There are five end rhymes

land, sand

row, prow

leap, sleap

beach, scratch, match each

appears, fears

All these usages have made the poem beautiful and attractive. They are used to express the feelings of love.

There is use of symbolism in "My last duchess". Symbolic meaning is different from literal meanings. The description of portrait by Duke symbolizes his egoistic nature. According to him woman is a property of man. White Mule symbolizes her innocence; 'Taming a sea horse' is a symbol of Duke taming his wife, there is the use simile but in ironical tone, ex. That is my last duchess painted on the wall, looking as if she were alive". In



the title of the poem "My Last Duchess" there is use of irony because the dead mistress is not his last lady as he is going to marry again. In line 24 there is use of hyperbole, ex. "She looked on, and her looks went everywhere". There is the use of alliteration, the dropping of the daylight in the west. The sound /d/ is repeated. Then again it is in the lines, 'all the similes stopped together there she stands', in these lines the consonant sounds /s/ is repeated twice. Euphemism is a polite expression to tell harsh things. It is also used in this poem. ex. 'much the same simile? this grows. I gave command, then all her smiles stopped together. There she stands. There is use of end Rhyme - wall/ call, hands / stands, meet / repeated, etc. There are 28 heroic couplets in this poem.

Graphical features

There is a beautiful sequence of scene. The first scene is on the sea. It has described gray sea long black land, yellow half-moon. Then there is a description of bay with sand. The last scene is related to home of his beloved. The readers have feeling of active participation in the situation and enjoying the portrait of meeting at night.

Duke of Ferrara is showing the pictures of his last duchess. This is a dramatic monologue. So Duke is speaking in this poem one agent has come with proposal for marriage. There is just a painting of his last duchess. He expresses about himself and his last duchess. Fra Pandol has used his skill to paint a picture of last duchess. There is a curtain on that painting, he removes it for the sake of that agent. The duke has explained innocent nature of the duchess. There is purity in the eyes of duchess. Her mind tried to find happiness in the small things. Duchess was very beautiful. Duchess beauty has been described in the poem. The Duke could not explain the behavior of duchess. Duchess has a smiling face. Duke is not interested in dowry but for the sake (Fair daughter), the father-in-law will give dowry to him. This is the expectation by Duke.

Lexical features

The poem "Meeting at night" is very short, simple words. There are many adjectives and nouns. The narration in the poem is gentle and casual. There are 4 names of colors - gray, black, yellow and blue. These words are adjectives. It made night scene beautiful. The



beautiful scene of night describes the wonderful mood of the couple. In line no 6 there is the use of alliteration. There are words like speed, slushy, sand, etc. There is use compound word - sea- horse, daylight half flash. Robert Browning used dramatic monologue in the poem.

There are words which express the beauty of duchess i.e. glance, wonder, spot of joy on the cheeks, gland, heart, alike nature, smile, wistful nature, thank, etc. on the other hand, words like command, dowry, my object gift, etc. shows the selfishness of the Duke. This poem has used verbs, which are related to past tense-were, worked, durst, was, chanced, etc. There are also verbs, which are related to present tense-call, stands, like, have drawn, dies, etc. There are many words which tells richness of Duke i.e. curtain, nine hundred years old gift, etc. Duke has also selfish nature which reflects from the expressions like 'who is taming a sea-horse', 'it is very rare thing which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me'. Duke has used adjective i.e. last for Duchess. There is also use of apostrophe – anybody`s, who`d, Even, when're will't, master`s, daughter's, etc. These are some lexical items.

Syntactic Features

All the sentences are very long. They are linked by using co-ordination with the usage of and all the sentences are very long like dramatic monologue. These are five sentences which begins with 'and'. Due to co-ordination the poem has become systematic and reader friendly. It gives a reader peaceful mood.

In this poem, there are eleven sentences. All the sentences are very long. This poem is dramatic monologue. There are five question marks. Some questions are very small. Ex- 'who`d stoop to blame? This sort of trifling', 'How shall I say?' 'There are three exclamatory sentences'. This poem ends with exclamatory sentences. In that last sentence of poem, the Duke has expressed his desire for dowry through the statue of nature. It also expresses his wish to control his new duchess. All the sentences are very long by using co-ordination like – But, and, or, as, if, that, too, etc. many phrases have been brought together by using hyphen in the poem. There is also use brackets to give more important information and this is a rare technique, which is used by Robert Browning in 'My Last Duchess'.



Semantic Features

In the first stanza, Robert Browning has used the word ‘startled and fiery’ instead of ‘surprising and hot’. There is the use of personification. The human feelings have been given to the inhuman objects i.e. waves and ringlets. In second stanza, there is the word-tap, scratch and spurt, etc. which are short and gentle. Instead of knock, scrape and spring, there is use of tap scratch, spurt. These words have been used to describe the feelings of the couple. The man has just arrived at outside of the house and taps the glass. He has also strong love for her. He as well as his beloved is nervous and upset. After hearing the tap, she lights a match to light the place and feels happy. She has also a fear to meet her lover.

In the beginning of the dramatic monologue, there is the description of Dukes and last duchess. It has been painted by Fra Pandolf. The painter has shown depth and passion on the face of that duchess.

Fra Pandolf worked busily a day. There is a word-busily. Here is use of ambiguity. It also suggests jealousy for Fra Pandolf. There is one sentence.

‘Sir, twas not her husband’s presence only’. The word ‘twas’ shows archaic diction evocative of characters. It is clearly dating the speaker as a distant figure. There is a key sentence.

‘Half flush that dies along her throat’

Duke has chosen the word from obviously violent field.

Thus these are semantic features of Robert Browning Poem – My Last Duchess and Meeting at Night

Conclusion

Robert Browning is famous for his poetic creation. His poems are based on love. The meeting at night is a realistic poem. Love unites two minds. When lover and beloved comes together. There is just happiness in their life. To meet his beloved, he has to travel on the sea. He comes on the beach and then returns home. Beloved becomes happy. The second poem is "My Last Duchess" It tells about male dominance. The Duke is self-centered and did not take care of his innocent Duchess. It is realistic poem, which is related to modern time also. Many women are passing day by day due to dowry system. The Duchess was physically beautiful.



She does not discriminate in her life. But she has a good nature. She was killed by Duke mercilessly. Here the reader understand superiority complex of male dominated society. The stylistic analysis of this poem made it more beautiful. It provides artistic pleasure to the researcher as well as to learner of the poetry.

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