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A Stylistic Study of Rupert Brooke's poem "Blue Evening"

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<p>Keywords:</p> <p>-Stylistics -Blue Evening -Rupert Brooke</p>	<p>Abstract</p> <p>Stylistics is a linguistic description and analysis of the language of literary texts and discourses, and this paper aims to explore Rupert Brooke's (1887- 1915) poem "Blue Evening" from the perspective of stylistic analysis which is performed by inspecting graph logical, phonological, morphological, and literary analysis.</p>
<p>Article Info</p> <hr/> <p>Article history: Received: 16-4-2020 Accepted: 22-5-2020 Available online 5/7/2020</p>	<p>This study provides a new insight to the readers to visualize Rupert Brooke's Poetry in a new stylistic scrutinizing. This analysis is helpful in interpreting the underlying meanings of the poem. It is also helpful to analyze the structure and style of Rupert Brooke's poetry and his themes. It obviously brings to surface what the poet really wants to convey. The paper utilizes an MLA style of documentation, and it ends up with the conclusions and works cited.</p>

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دراسة أسلوبية لقصيدة ريوبرت بروك: "مساء أزرق"

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الخلاصة:	الكلمات الدالة:-
الأسلوبية تعني دراسة وتحليل لغة النص والخطاب الأدبي. وتهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحليل قصيدة ريوبرت بروك "مساء أزرق" تحليلاً أسلوبياً وذلك من خلا تحليل الجوانب الصوتية والصرفية والأدبية في القصيدة. إن هذه الدراسة تهىء للقارئ الفرصة لرؤية أسعار ريوبرت بروك من زاوية جديدة هي الأسلوبية. وهذه الطريقة في التحليل تساعد في تفسير المعاني العميقة لهذه القصيدة. كما أنها تساعد في تحليل بنية أسلوب ريوبرت بروك وثيماته فهي تبرز إلى السطح ما يريد الشاعر حقا قوله. تنتهي الدراسة بخاتمة تلخص ما توصل إليه البحث من نتائج.	- الأسلوبية - "مساء أزرق" - ريوبرت بروك <u>معلومات البحث</u> <u>تاريخ البحث:</u> /لاستلام: ٢٠٢٠ ٤ ١٦ القبول: ٢٠٢٠ ٥ ٢٢ التوفر على النت 2020/7/5

1. Introduction

Stylistics is regarded as a linking bridge between Linguistics and literature. Stylistics takes a close look at the text and analyzes its significant language forms for the sake of interpretation. According to a number of dictionaries, the term "stylistics" means "the study of style as a means of analyzing works of literature and their effect, such study using mathematical and statistical methods" or the "art of forming good style in writing" (Abrams 303). It is also defined as a study of the various styles that are constructed in each of a given utterance (discourse) or a written text. Furthermore, it is regarded as the way to send the message of the writer to the reader, and it simplifies the process of understanding the techniques of writing and the author's aim is conveying their own themes and ideas (Leech 51).

Stylistic 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 derived from the science of linguistics. Stylistics helps to decode the interpretation and understanding of a literary work, just as its methods help

students of literature gain the essential confidence in handling any literary work. Carter stated that

Stylistics provides students with a method of scrutinizing texts, ‘a way in’ to a text, opening up starting points for fuller interpretation. The method is detailed and explicit, it shows how you reach or begin to reach an interpretation. From a teaching point of view, students learn to open a text not only by osmosis but explicitly and consciously. A pedagogically sensitive stylistics can give students increased confidence in reading and interpretation (5).

Thus, the research is a stylistic analysis of Rupert Brooke’s poem “Blue Evening”. The graphological, phonological, lexical and morphological levels of analysis are going to form the basis of the analysis.

II. A Biographical Note

Brooke was born in 1887, the second of three boys. He was one of the British Edwardian war poets who wrote about war in a manner that emphasized the brutality of life in the trenches. He is grouped beside Sassoon, Owen, and Rosenberg. He considers a soldier’s death a sacrifice that should be offered happily for his country (Hasting 183).

He was known for his idealistic war sonnets written during the First World War. He seems to be more interested in subjective responses such as emotions, feelings and intentions. His poetry, with its unabashed patriotism and graceful lyricism, was revered in a country that was yet to feel the devastating effects of two world wars (Bloom 123). Rupert Brooke, in an ironic tone, caught the optimism of the opening months of the war with his wartime poems, published after his death, which expressed an idealism about war that contrasts strongly with poetry published later in the conflict (Johnston 77).

III. Stylistic Analysis of “Blue Evening”

Blue is the color of the bluebell, of the oceans, and of a particular strain of melancholy. In the present poem the word ‘blue’ denote a feeling of melancholy. This poem is everlasting acrimony for a lover, which then turns into a painful memory.

According to Crystal and Davy (15), levels of stylistic analysis include phonetic/graphetic, phonological/graphological, grammatical, lexical, and semantic levels.

1. Graphological Levels

Graphology is the entire writing scheme: punctuation, spacing and paragraphing (Leech 39).

Graphology deals with the systematic arrangement. Graphological arrangements play an important role in the analysis of poetry. It “exerts a psycholinguistic influence on the reading process” (Simpson 28). Graphology needs to

be looked into as they foreground the various parts of the poems and also devised to bring in the connotations, and beauty of the poem.

This section is a graphological analysis of the chosen poem to investigate the contributions of graphology to the process of the interpretation of 'Blue Evening'. This poem consists of eight stanzas. In each of them graphology plays an important element. Different punctuation marks are being used and certain graphological features are noticeable to the reader because they are foregrounded:

1.1 Capitalization:

Each line of these stanzas starts with capital letters. There are some words within the stanzas and within the lines which are also capitalized, for example, in 1st stanza, line 3 the word "April" is in capital letters which shows the significance of this word by the poet, and in the 4th stanza line 3, the word "I" is in capital letters, first person singular pronouns suggest attention on the self. In stanza 8th, line 4, the word "Hush" is also capitalized for foregrounding and highlighting purpose by the poet.

1.2 . Full Stops (.)

In this poem the writer used nine full stops at the end of each sentence. Five of them are at the end of the stanzas and the rest are internal full stops. Full stop, came as the second frequent punctuation mark. It is used to end declarative sentences. Most of these sentences were long and complex. However, he used simple and short sentences, when he tried to explain his beloved passing, and the effect of her passing: "Her passing left no leaf a-quiver./Pale flowers wreathed her white, white brows" (ll. 30-31). This might reflect that these ideas need to be foregrounded, not to be complex. Moreover, short sentences also add tension in the poem, since short sentences could build the feeling of haste.

1.3. Comma (,)

A comma indicates a pause in a sentence or separate items in a list. It is also used to join two independent clauses. In this poem commas are used to add a certain perception of thought. Brooke has used commas, twenty four times in this poem.

Comma, is the most frequent punctuation mark in the poem. It has a great value as it holds several uses. This punctuation mark, is usually used in complex and elaborately detailed sentences. Throughout the poem, some complex sentences were used by the poet to describe his feeling: Such complex actions describe what goes on in the mind of the writer. They reveal the two struggled sides, love and the pain that comes with. Commas are also present in order to increase the tension and evoke emotion within the reader: "The straight grey buildings, richly dimmer, The fiery windows, and the stream..." (ll. 7-8)

The comma, more generally, was used to give much more details about what he felt, did, and saw. Many phrases, adjectives, and repeated words were included by adding this punctuation mark: "Knowing that always, exquisitely...,(1, 2) Pale flowers wreathed her white, white brows..."(l. 31). Such continuous detailed and repetitive language might reflect the suffering of the writer.

1.4. Semi-colon (;)

The poet used semi-colons four times in the poem. Semi-colons are used to indicate a major division between two clauses of a compound sentence. This punctuation device is highly related to the connected speech, in which more than one

sentence is mixed into a longer one. Using compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences, they are related to the flow of ideas which usually mix between what happens and what he felt. In addition, they might reflect the continuity of his grief as in (line18): "My agony made the willows quiver" and (line32): "Her feet were silence on the river".

This punctuation mark is also an effective method for telling multiple contradicted things in one sentence as in line17: "Shaken with love; and laugh; and cry." It allows the writer to leave out the unimportant details, and simply focus on the main events. Another interesting element about this line is that the author performs verbal economy. Verbal economy, as a stylistic strategy, functions so as to "explain or describe more by using less words". This may point at the probability that the writer pays special attention to the ideas hidden in this sentence since he clearly performed verbal economy.

1.5. Quotation Marks (“ ”)

Quotation marks are used in this poem to denote someone else’s words. It is used one time and for foregrounding purpose.

Line33: And "Hush!" she said, between the boughs.

1.6. Ellipsis dots

The writer used this tool to emphasize his point and bring in a more human voice to the piece. He purposely wants to omit parts of a sentence, and substituted an ellipsis for the missing parts. It allows the writer to leave out the details, and focus on the main events. Brooke used this punctuation mark one time.

Line 10: "The still ecstatic fading skies . . ."

1.7 Exclamation mark

It indicates strong feelings, for example, fear, anger or passion. It also could be used to accentuate the feeling of a written spoken word. (Experts, 2005,187)

Exclamation mark is used at the end of the poem just for one time at the point of highest tension. This is when the poet loses his beloved completely and is torn between his own delusion and reality.

2. Lexical Level

In this section the distribution of each content word in the selected poem is investigated separately for the purpose of analysis and comparison. Open class words and closed class words are studied in the below table. Open class words carry the majority of meaning in a language and include all the nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as compared to closed class (grammatical) words such as pronouns, prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and auxiliary verbs. Closed class words join together open class words in meaningful arrangements in sentences.

Line No.	Noun	Pronoun	Verb	Adjective	Adverb	Determiner	Conjunction	Prep.
1	Blood	My	lies	Restless, a-quiver	Now			
2			knowing		Always,	that		

					Exquisitel y			
3	April, twilight , river,					This, the		on
4	Anguis h, heart	Me	stirs			the		In, of
5	World, Glimm er			Fast, rare		the, that		For, in
6	Witcher y, dream		puts			The, a		On, of
7	buildin gs			Straight, gray, dimmer	Richly	The		
8	Windo ws, stream			Fiery		The , the	An d	
9	Willow s,		learning		Quietly			With, over
10	Skies			Ecstatic, fading	Still	The		
11	Lover		waiting			All, these, a	An d	like
12	Murmu r, gleam, lift, eyes			lustrous			An d	
13	blendin g	me	drift	close	sideways		An d	to
14	Words		whisper	delicious				
15		I					but	
16	Hands		stretch	Terrible, uncompr ehending				
17	Love,		Shaken, laugh, cry				An d, and	with
18	Agony, willows	my	Made, quiver			the		
19	Heart	I , my	Heard, knocking			the		Of
20	River		Die	Loudly, ,windless		the		down
21	Skies	I	Heard, fall	pale	Apart	the		

22	Stars, laughter			Shrill, unmeanin g		the	and	
23	Voice, tree	my		vocal		the	and	with
24	Weepin g, hatred		Followed				and	after
25	Shrillin g, breeze			madly		the		down
26	Peace, heart, clamou r			wild		the		In, from , of
27	Flower, moonli ght	she	Was		There	A		In
28	Ways, glamou r		Was, rippling	White				Down , of
29	Wave , air		Laid		Quietly		An d	On
30	Passing , leaf, a- quiver	her	left			no		
31	Flowers ,brows	her	wreathed	Pale, white , white				
32	Feet , silence, river	Her	Were			the		on
33	Boughs	She	Hush , said			The	An d	Between
	55	14	28	27	10	27	12	26

Table1. Distributing Content Words in the “Blue Evening”

The total number of content words in the selected English poem is (199) words. The total number and the frequency rate of the open class words are (117, %58.8) word.

The open class words in this poem consist mainly of nouns, adjectives and verbs. The nouns are mostly abstract that is, they refer to mental objects, but a few are concrete nouns. This shows that the poet is no longer thinking of this physical world. The number of the adjectives is marked positively and this shows how the poet has opened the door widely in front of the reader’s imagination to live the feeling which he experienced. The majority of adjectives are prenominal adjectives. This demonstrates the great tendency of the poet to pre-modify the names he uses (Quirk et al. 417).The verbs in

this poem which are marked for tense (finite verbs) are in the present simple, present continuous and past simple tense. The narrator starts in the present simple tense, mainly because what is written refers to a general truth in his point of view. It is known that the simple present tense is used when “the information is a general truth” or “the information is not dependent upon time” (Myers Shaffer 262-263) and present continues to indicate the ongoing depressed feeling that he is passing through. Hence, the narrator expresses his personal feeling through his use of grammar. At the end of the poem, Brooke switched to the use of past simple tense for recalling his memories with his beloved.

The total number of close class words is (82, %41.2) words. This analysis reveals that the function words are used at surprisingly high rates in comparison to the normal use of close class words in normal situation. A good number of prepositions, determiner and pronouns, especially personal pronoun are used in this poem. Functional words have a powerful impact on the readers and reflect a great deal about the speaker/writer. Among (14) personal pronouns, the poet uses (9) times first person singular pronouns. First person singular pronouns suggest attention on the self and much attention to the self is associated with highly negative emotional states such as depression. The ways people use functional words reflects their linguistic style. Across multiple studies, it is found that use of first person singular is associated with negative affective states (Weintraub, 1989). Stirman & Pennebaker, (2001) found that “In the analysis of the poetry of suicidal versus non-suicidal poets, poets who eventually committed suicide used first person singular pronouns at higher rates than those who did not commit suicide. Overall, suicidal poets’ language use showed that they were focused more on the self and were less socially integrated than non-suicidal poets” (quoted at Chung and Pennebaker ,351).

3. Phonological Level

In terms of both thematic organization and rhyme scheme “Blue Evening” is written in eight stanzas with a variable rhyme scheme. Seven stanzas are four lines long, the first part of each stanza follows an a-b-a-b rhyme scheme. The first line is rhymed with the third and the second line is rhymed with the fourth. Only one of these stanzas, stanza number four, is of five lines, the first and second part is made up of two lines and these two parts are integrated by a conjunction. The rhyme scheme of this stanza is a-b-c-a-c.

4. Morphological Levels

Another stage in the stylistic analysis is Morphology. “Morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed” (Aronoff and Fudeman 1). Morphological level studies the construction of new words by adding prefixes and suffixes to the root words. The main purpose of morphological analysis is to evaluate the internal structure of the words in a language to unfold foregrounding and deviation within it.

4.1 Affixes

Affix is the formation of new words by means of adding prefixes and suffixes. It consists of free morphemes and bound morphemes.

Suffixes

Lies	Lie + s
Knowing	Know + ing
Exquisitely	Exquisite + ly
Glimmer	Glim + er
Puts	Put + s
Witchery	witch + ery
Buildings	Building + s
Richly	Rich +ly
Dimmer	Dim+ er
Fiery	Fire + y
Windows	Window + s
Willows	Willow + s
Quietly	Quiet + ly
Skies	Sky + s
Lover	Love + r
Willows	Willow + s
Loudly	Loud + ly
Laughter	Laugh+ er
Hatred	Hate + ed
Followed	Follow +ed
Madly	Mad +ly
Clamour	Clam +our
Glamour	Glam +our
Flowers	Flower + s
Brows	Brow + s
Boughs	Bough + s

4.2 Pre-fixes

Unmeaning	Un + meaning
Uncomprehending	Un + comprehending

4.3 Compounding

The compounding used in this poem are as the following:
Sideways, moonlight, Restless, Windless

According to the morphological analysis of the words in this poem, there are no unusual words in the poem -- no neologisms, for example, and no unconventional affixation, which is often used in some other poems by other poets. However, some of the words are arranged in the poem in a strange way. "A-quiver", for example, the poet deliberately separates it by hyphens to be asymmetric in structure with the other line and to achieve the reunification of form. "A-quiver" also runs across two lines and as a consequence is highly foregrounded.

5. Literary Appreciation of the poem

The feeling of falling in love and the pain that comes with heartbreak are two opposite feelings that many experience during their lives. A small number of poets are gifted of capturing such experience as simple and genuinely as Rupert Brooke does in "Blue Evening". In this poem, he skillfully uses words together to create simple, beautifully stitched poetry filled with grief. "Blue Evening" reveals the significance of words in expressing our feelings. "Blue Evening" is a great poem written by Rupert Brooke. It seems more a romantic poem in which the poet recalls his memories and time that he spent in thinking about his beloved and her beauty.

Brooke's writing style is focused on simplicity with rich meaning. The poem is short but must be read slowly and intentionally. It requires careful reading to feel the emotion behind every single word. Brooke has an ability for portraying heartbreak in brief, fanciful sentences. The most obvious technique which Rupert Brooke has used in his poem is **interior monologue**, which is used for representing the processes of the speaker (mainly), and psychic content, partly or entirely unuttered, and he draws his own condition and how it changed in accordance with the description of his words with his movements, such as "I heard the knocking", "cry", "murmur", "whisper", "delicious words....".

He has also used a variation of **imagery from nature**. He has used images such as: sky, trees, stream, breeze, moonlight, flowers, and rivers to create a feeling of his primitive emotions and tries to depict the setting of his poem so plainly. Further, he shapes **metaphorical** images widely in his poem like "fading skies, white brows, and vocal trees...". Rupert Brooke uses **Abstraction**, he expresses feelings and thoughts through abstract language, and the use of **abstract language** makes a serious issue (like death) into a less threading issues, and hopelessness will be less affecting to both the poet and the reader.

In another view, **expressionism** attempts to display emotions rather than to dramatize conflicts. It expresses reality and subjectively by using different literary devices such as distortion, repetition, symbolism, and it endeavors man's inner struggle to achieve his spiritual transformation of visionary or dreamlike scenes like "April twilight", "windless river", "richly dimmer".

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), the British novelist, elaborates on Brooke's style that he wrote freely, but not entirely without self-consciousness and it is obvious that his familiarity have not cared to publish the more familiar passages in his letters to them. In an ironic tone, she also states that "whether or not it was for the good of his poetry he would be in the thick of things and one fancy... a subtle analytic poetry or prose perhaps, full of intellect and full of his keen unsentimental curiosity" (23).

The basic idea of the poem is the unhappy lover relieving by the nature around him, but the poet's treatment shows a definite purification, he introduces element of fantasy. In the poem Brooke sketches a more accurate setting of "April twilight on the river" (l. 3). The combination of his restless state and the "rare glimmer" of twilight displays imagination as the setting becomes the witchery of a dream" The dim gray buildings have "fiery windows," (reflecting the sunset), and the willows over the stream against the "still ecstatic fading skies" (perhaps "ecstatic" to describe the sunset) seem like "a waiting lover."

The end of the poem attains a more unusual effect than simply a personal response to nature would have given him. One could also hypothesize that there never was a "she" to act as impetus, but that the whole experience was a personal one formed in a poetic way by a person over-sensitive to natural surroundings. As in "Blue Evening", Brooke uses verbal repetition in line twenty-five of this poem, not so much for emphasis as to create definite pause, for the reader to feel, just as the poet did at that moment, almost as if he were holding his breath and waiting for that "little lonely wind" to find him (Kahn 73).

Brooke was an artisan who was trained in the classical traditions of literature. He was not an inventor of new poetic forms, but chose rather to express himself within traditional verse. Harold Bloom (1930-2019), the American literary critic, asserts that Brooke comprehends the aim of art and leads his readers to reality via using stylistic methods he gains art of consciousness. He further adds that the best approaches for understanding the poetry of Brooke are to discover the ideas and sentiment that overcome his works and to realize the absorbing wall in which he merges structural honesty and expressiveness (78).

VI. Conclusions

The conclusions could be summarized as:

1. Rupert Brooke employs practical images shaped through lines that include mainly both (Nouns and Adjectives) with some certain affixes to draw the scenes, mostly via illustrations of natural tools that form non-dynamic conditions clearly.
2. In terms of graphological devices, he uses commas, semi-colon, and periods more to create brief pauses so as to bridge the ideas and keep continuity to the images aiming at achieving it without having ruptures in his inner feeling.
3. He thoroughly used literary devices such as metaphor, interior monologue, abstraction, etc. to perform lucid themes and tangible scenes.
4. Brooke has set a vivid example of achieving the intricate unison between the language and his own artistic and literary views, and to illustrate this poem which may give readers a new angle to deepen more to realize his unique style.

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Appendix

Rupert Brooke's Blue Evening

My restless blood now lies a-quiver,
Knowing that always, exquisitely,
This April twilight on the river
Stirs anguish in the heart of me.

For the fast world in that rare glimmer
Puts on the witchery of a dream,
The straight grey buildings, richly dimmer,
The fiery windows, and the stream

With willows leaning quietly over,
The still ecstatic fading skies . . .
And all these, like a waiting lover,
Murmur and gleam, lift lustrous eyes,

Drift close to me, and sideways bending
Whisper delicious words.
But I
Stretch terrible hands, uncomprehending,

Shaken with love; and laugh; and cry.

My agony made the willows quiver;
I heard the knocking of my heart
Die loudly down the windless river,
I heard the pale skies fall apart,

And the shrill stars' unmeaning laughter,
And my voice with the vocal trees
Weeping. And Hatred followed after,
Shrilling madly down the breeze.

In peace from the wild heart of clamour,
A flower in moonlight, she was there,
Was rippling down white ways of glamour
Quietly laid on wave and air.

Her passing left no leaf a-quiver.
Pale flowers wreathed her white, white brows.
Her feet were silence on the river;
And "Hush!" she said, between the boughs.

May 1909.