Stylistics Analysis "A Dream Within a Dream" by Edgar Allan Poe

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze Edgar Allan Poe's poem entitled "A Dream within a Dream" using the four levels of stylistics analysis: phonological, morphological, graphological & lexical-syntactical. This study helps in understanding the meaning of the poem and the style of the author used in this piece. Through the use of different figures of speech, the poet creatively explains the part where it explores the significance of life and how this turned upside down. Thus, "A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM" is a poem that shows the poet's insights about life and death and its cyclical relationship, the feelings of loss and grief, and the reconciliation.

Keywords— style; stylistics; phonological level; morphological level; lexical- syntactical level

1. INTRODUCTION

Style as the basic feature used in analyzing a text gives the unique characteristics of the poet as a deviation from the norm. Thus, style makes a masterpiece unique from other poems written beforehand. This shows how a poet can make his/her piece creatively by conveying the message which depends on further interpretations of the readers.

Moreover, Murtaza & Qasmi (2013) said that style is a writer's mode of expression, a way of putting his conceptions into words. It involves a long list of choices such as the choice of lexical items, the use of tropes and figures of speech, phrasal and syntactic structures, and the shape of paragraphs. These choices make the writer an individual as clearly discernible and differentiable as he is in the frequency and quality of his voice and his behavioral idiosyncrasies.

Style chiefly refers to what kind of language a writer is using, and it is used in discussion of literature. In general terms, we express prose and poetry linguistically. What the speaker says is the style itself. In general terms, the word style is not a simple feature of the language, but rather a complex one. How one uses the language in a particular situation, is also embodied in style. Style is generally used for a specific purpose by a person (Kumar, 2022).

Further, different scholars defined stylistics as an analysis. Stylistics is an elusive and slippery topic. Every contribution to the vast and multifaceted discipline of literary studies will involve an engagement with style (Bradford, 2013). Thus, "Stylistics is a branch of linguistics which investigates the entire system of expressive resources available in a particular language", (Zhukovska, 2010).

Stylistics defines, studies, and analyses style objectively and technically applying the methodology of linguistics (Murtaza & Qasmi, 2013). Since literature is constructed through language, stylistics a branch of linguistics, acts as a link between the two complementary disciplines of linguistics and literature. Through the process of stylistically analyzing a text, it becomes easier to analyze text within a linguistic framework. It was abilities the development of critical appreciation and interpretative skills as well as reading comprehension (Rana, 2018).

2. LEVELS OF STYLISTICS ANALYSIS

Stylistics analysis contains the four levels in understanding the text. These levels are *phonological level, morphological level, graphological level, and lexical-syntactical level* of analysis.

2.1 Phonological Level

This deals with the study of sound patterns of a given language, rules of pronunciation, the rhyming scheme, and utterance of the words in the sentence. Phonological devices are rhyme elements, alliteration, consonance, and assonance (Manuel, 2017).

2.2 Graphological Level

This level focuses on the conventions of writing which include: *punctuation marks, phrasing, orthography, spacing, etc.* Graphology or handwriting analysis is based on the notion that because handwriting is unique to the individual, certain inferences can be made about a person's character and behavior from specific features (Ow et al., 2005).

2.3 Morphological Level

This deals with the word formation process by adding morphemes before or after a root word. It includes the process of affixation, compounding, and coinages.

2.4 Lexical-syntactical Level

It is the combination of two different words" Lexis" and

"syntax". Lexis means the vocabulary that is used in a language or any writing for any purpose. On the other, syntax means 'sentence construction': how words group together to make phrases and sentences (Manuel, 2017).

Further, "Lexical-Syntactic rules include open-class lexical components within varying syntactic structures. Accordingly, these rules are numerous compared to the generic rules of the previous section and have been acquired either lexicographically or automatically (e.g. paraphrases). We incorporated several sources of such rules" (Bar-Haim, 2007).

2.4 About the Author

Edgar Allan Poe wrote "A Dream Within a Dream" to understand his own life after having been exposed to great losses and being addicted to alcohol. This is to suppress his feelings of hopelessness and being left alone. Thus, he wrote this piece to reflect the reality of life in understanding its drawbacks.

2.5 About the Poem

The poem is a bitter reality for the author—that the reality of life is more painful than what his past let him feel before. It is an awakening from a dream—a dream inside a painful dream. It speaks of the significance of understanding life despite of the deep feeling of loss.

3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to analyze the poem written by Edgar Allan Poe entitled "A Dream Within a Dream" using the four levels of stylistic analysis: Phonological, Graphological, Morphological, and Lexical-syntactical levels.

4. METHODOLOGY

This study used content analysis to determine the underlying features of the poem. The sub-categories reveal the unique style of the author as to be seen in the poem "A Dream within a Dream.

5. ANALYSIS OF THE POEM

After a thorough analysis, the researcher has used the different levels of stylistics analysis, presenting each sub-field to establish a meaningful understanding of the author's unique style. Thus, the levels to be analyzed are the following: 1) phonological level; 2) graphological level; 3) morphological level; and, 4) lexical-syntactical level.

5.1 ON PHONOLOGICAL LEVEL

3.1.a. Couplet

> *You are not wrong, who deem*
> *That my days have been a dream;*

A couplet is a literary device which contains rhyming 2 lines. Most of the lines in the poem end with rhyming words except for *lines 1-3 lines 16-18.*

3.1.b. Tercet

> *Take this kiss upon the brow! (Line 1)*
> *And, in parting from you now, (Line 2)*
> *Thus much let me avow — (Line 3)*

> *How few! yet how they creep (Line 16)*
> *Through my fingers to the deep, (Line 17)*
> *While I weep — while I weep! (Line 18)*

Tercet is a poetry unit that contains 3 lines rhyming together or connected with rhymes. Lines 1-3 & lines 16-18 of the poem use *tercet* as a poetic unit to emphasize rhymes.

3.1.c. Rhyme

Rhyme is a device with a correspondence of like sounds of words. This poem always ends with rhyming words as they sound alike. Rhymes in the poem as follows: [1] *brow-now- avow,* [2] *deem-dream,* [3] *away-day,* [4] *none-gone,* [5] *seem-dream,* [6] *roar-shore,* [7] *hand-sand,* [8] *creep-deep-weep,* [9] *grasp-clasp,* [10] *save-wave,* and [11] *seem-dream.* The rhyming pair *seem-dream* is repeated twice in the poem—*Lines 10-11 & Lines 23-24.*

3.1.d. Rhyme Scheme

AAA BB CC DD EE FF GG HHH II is the rhyme scheme of the poem; where both lines— containing 2 & 3 in the stanza end with rhyming words. For example, [1] *brow-now-avow,* & [2] *deem-dream* in the tercet and couplet patterns have words that sound alike.

3.1.e. Assonance

Take this kiss upon the brow! (Line 1)
And, in parting from you now, (Line 2)
Thus, much let me avow — (Line 3)
You are not wrong, who deem (Line 4)
That my days have been a dream; (Line 5)

Yet if hope has flown away (Line 6)
In a night, or in a day, (Line 7)
In a vision, or in none, (Line 8)
Is it therefore the less *gone*? (Line 9)
All that we see or seem (Line 10)
Is but a dream within a dream (Line 11)

I stand amid the roar (Line 12)
Of a surf-tormented shore, (Line 13)
And I hold within my hand (Line 14)
Grains of the golden sand — (Line 15)
How few! yet how they creep (Line 16)
Through my fingers to the deep, (Line 17)
While I weep — while I weep! (Line 18)
O God! Can I not grasp (Line 19)
Them with a tighter clasp? (Line 20)
O God! can I not save (Line 21)
One from the pitiless wave? (Line 22)
Is *all* that we see or seem (Line 23)
But a dream within a dream? (Line 24)

Assonance is a literary device that deals with the repetition of vowels—enclosed within the lines of a literary piece. The poem contains assonance as highlighted above. All lines except for *Lines 1, 3, 6, 14, 15, 17 & 20.*

3.1.f. Alliteration

Take this kiss upon the brow! (Line 1)
While I weep—while I weep! (Line 18)

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words. Line 1 contains the words *take, this, and the,* which have **t** sounds. Further, in Line 18, the words start with **w** sounds: **w**hile & **w**eep.

3.1.g. Consonance

Like *alliteration, consonance* is the repetition of consonant sounds within phrases or sentences. The only difference is that consonance deals with the sounds in the middle or end of the word, and not in the beginning. Line 1 contains *this* and *kiss* which both end with **s** sounds. In lines 11 and 24, there is the use of the same word, *dream* which was repeated twice in the phrase—ending with the consonant sound of **m**. Also, Line 14 contains words such as: *and, hold & hand* which end with **d** consonant sound. Finally, in Line 18, the word *weep* was repeated twice ending with **p** sound.

3.1.h. Repetition

Is but a dream within a dream. (Line 11)
While I weep — while I weep! (Line 18)
But a dream within a dream? (Line 24)

The word **dream** in Lines 11 & 24 was repeated twice. Thus, contains the literary device of *repetition.* In Line 18,

the phrase **while I weep** was also repeated in just 1 line in the poem.

3.1.h. Rhythm

This poem is written in rhyming patterns in *iambic tetrameter. Iamb* is a metrical foot that contains one unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. *Trimeter* contains three metrical feet in one line.

5.2 On Graphological Level

3.2.a. Exclamation Point (!)

Take this kiss upon the brow! (Line 1)
While I weep — while I weep! (Line 18)

An exclamation mark is used to express strong feelings. In the poem, the author uses *exclamation points* to emphasize the message of the excerpt. It is shown at the end of *Lines 1 & 18.*

3.2.b. Comma (,)

And, in parting from you now, (Line 2)
In a night, or in a day, (Line 7)
In a vision, or in none, (Line 8)
Of a surf-tormented shore, (Line 13)
Through my fingers to the deep, (Line 17)

In the poem, the author uses a comma to indicate a pause or to emphasize that the line is a continuation of the next. It can be seen from Lines 2, 7, 8, 13 to Line 17.

3.2.c. Dash (-)

Thus much let me avow — (Line 3)
Grains of the golden sand — (Line 15)
While I weep — while I weep! (Line 18)

Dash can be used to mark the end and beginning of a series or mark an interruption pattern in a passage. The poem has 3 lines that contain *dash* marks, and these are the following: *Line 3, 15 & 18.*

3.2.d. Semi-colon (;)

That my days have been a dream; (Line 5)

In the poem, only one line highlights the use of the semicolon to link it to the other clause—presenting some other thoughts about the line. *Line 5* as can be seen above used a semicolon to link the line to the next line.

3.2.e. Question mark (?)

Is it therefore the less gone? (Line 9)
Them with a tighter clasp? (Line 20)
One from the pitiless wave? (Line 22)
But a dream within a dream? (Line 24)

Question marks to deal with posting queries and uncertainty about a certain thing. The poem has used these punctuation marks 4 times in the texts. It was shown at the end of Lines *9, 20, 22 & 23.*

3.2.e. Period/Full stop (.)

Is but a dream within a dream. (Line 11)

Full stop/period is the commonly used mark to conclude or end the sentence. This poem uses only one period in the first stanza to indicate that the first passage has ended—*Line 11.*

3.2.f. Italicization

Is it therefore the less *gone*? (Line 9)
All that we see or seem (Line 10)
One from the pitiless wave? (Line 22)
Is *all* that we see or seem (Line 23)

Italicization is another way of emphasizing a word or phrase in a sentence. The words in the poem were italicized to indicate that the word should be marked or highlighted in the poem. This includes *gone (Line 9), all (Line 10), one (Line 22) & all (Line 24.*

3.2.g. Paragraphing

"*A Dream Within a Dream"* by Edgar Allan Poe is a poem containing 24 lines divided into 2 stanzas. The first stanza is composed of 11 lines which encapsulates the thought of parting ways. On the other hand, the second stanza is composed of 13 lines which is about having this question of life's purpose.

5.3 On Morphological Level

3.3.a. Affixation

Affixation is a word-formation process where other morpheme/s are added at the beginning or end of a word. The suffix is a process under affixation in which the morpheme is only added at the end of the word. *Derivational morphemes* are those morphemes that change the form and use of the word when added to a word. In the poem, derivational morphemes such as *parting and pitiless* were shown. On the other hand, *inflectional morphemes* are those which do not change the form and function of the word—just inflect. The words *days, flown, surf-tormented, golden, fingers, and tighter* are categorized under inflectional morphemes.

5.4 On Lexical-syntactical Level

3.4.a. Metaphor

All that we see or seem (Line 10)
Is but a dream within a dream. (Line 11)

In the poem, the author uses metaphor to compare or describe something using figures of speech that aren't true but can help in the visualization of its meaning. It can be seen in lines *10 & 11.*

3.4.b. Personification

*Yet if **hope has flown away** (Line 6)*
*How few! **yet how they creep** (Line 16)*
*One from the **pitiless wave**? (Line 22)*

Personification deals with the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects. Instead of stating or addressing people, the author has used other things as a symbol of that person. In *Line 6,* the word *hope* is used as a symbol; like in *Line 22* which uses *a wave* to cater to the description of being *pitiless.* While in *Line 16,* the *creeping* was used to characterize the word *sand* in Line 15.

3.4.c. Diction

Thus, much let me **avow** — (Line 3)
Of a **surf-tormented** shore, (Line 13)
One from the **pitiless** wave? (Line 22)

Diction refers to words that are not commonly used in today's language. It refers back to the early years when the author wrote this piece. The word *avow* is used as an old term for confession. While *surf- tormented* in Line 13 aims to help the reader visualize the beaches' torment. Finally, in Line 22, the use of *pitiless waves* shows how ruthless the wave could be.

3.4.d. Diction

*Take this **kiss upon the brow**! (Line 1)*
*I stand amid the **roar** (Line 12)*
***Of a surf-tormented shore**, (Line 13)*
*Grains of the **golden sand** — (Line 15)*
*How few! yet **how they creep** (Line 16)*
***Through my fingers** to the deep, (Line 17)*
*One from the **pitiless wave**? (Line 22)*

Imagery deals with the use of figurative terms to describe a word in the phrase or phrase within a sentence. Figuratively, in Lines 1, 15 & 22, the author has used the terms "***kiss upon the brow", "golden sand"** & "**pitiless wave".*** While in *Lines 12-13 and 16-17* are examples of imagery that appears to the sense of hearing and sight— also called *auditory* and *visual* imagery.

3.4.e. Metonymy

*Through my fingers to the **deep**, (Line 17)*

In the poem, *deep* was used to represent the ocean; since the use of metonymy is to name a concept by replacing the word with a word that is closely related to it.

3.4.f. Apostrophe

O God! Can I not grasp (Line 19)

The apostrophe is a figurative language used to address something to someone. In the poem, the author directly spoke to God in *Line 19.*

3.4.g. Onomatopoeia

*I stand amid the **roar** (Line 12)*
Of a surf-tormented shore, (Line 13)

The poem uses the word *roar* to describe the shore instead of using direct words. Using the sound of an object in describing something is the use of a figurative language called "*onomatopoeia*".

6. CONCLUSION

The poet uses descriptive words in the lines to descriptively compare the dream and reality. Through the use of different figures of speech, the poet creatively explains the part where it explores the significance of life and how this turned upside down. Thus, "A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM" is a poem that shows the poet's insights about life and death and its cyclical relationship, the feelings of loss and grief, and the reconciliation. Therefore, analysis of the perception of stylistics in this poem has been illustrated in the four levels of analysis: *phonological, graphological, morphological, and lexical-syntactic levels.* Further, by this analysis, the style of the author was revealed upon writing the piece.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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