STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF SHELLEY'S TO THE MOON

جامعة ميسان/ كلية التربية/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية

م.م. نماء سمير عبد الكريم

nimaasameer95@uomisan.edu.iq

ABSTRAT

Modern linguistic theory, literary criticism and cultural studies look at the figures of style differently within different visions. This study purports to scrutinize these figures, more specifically simile, metaphor and personification in P. B Shelley's fragment, *To The Moon*. It aims at analyzing the figurative forms from a purely stylistic standpoint. It is hypothesized that the figures of style are not merely embellishments or extra beauty with no functional roles in the linguistic structures. Rather, they are expressive and impressive powers that have insights into the poet's spiritual and esthetic worldviews. P. B. Shelly's fragment, *To the Moon,* is selected as linguistic data for stylistic analysis. The text will be analyzed in terms of Leech's tripartite linguistic model. The study comprises two main parts. Part I deals with the main concepts of the study, while Part II copes with the connected stages of the analysis. It is rounded up with a set of conclusions deduced from the coherent analysis.

Key concepts: style, metaphorical modes, poetic vision, tripartite model

التحليل الأسلوبي لقصيدة شيلي (الى القمر)

الملخص:

أنماط المعنى الاستعارية في مقطوعة (شلي) (إلى القمر) دراسة في أشكال الأسلوب المجازية في مقطوعة الشاعر الإنكليزي الرومانسي، والغاية منها بناء عـالم القصيدة المتخيـل. ولمقاصـد التحليل، فالدراسـة تتبنى نمـوذج (ليـچ) للوقوف على الأبنية اللسانية الاستعارية تفريقاً لها عن الأبنية المعيارية. وتظهر الدراسـة ان أنمـاط المعنـى الاستعارية في القصيدة تشـكل خرقـاً لمعـايير اللغـة العادية مما يشكل سر فرادتها في الكشف عن معاناة الشاعر. فهناك مقارنة ضمنية بين عزلة الشاعر في الأرض مثلما هي عزلة القمر في السماء.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسلوب، الأنماط المجازية، الرؤية الشعرية

Part I: Basics of the study

It is well to start with the concept that *style* is a specific form of expression in which the writer has recourse to use language according to selection or choice. Style, as Hendricks (1980: 49) has put it, is "a deferential mode of expression manifested on lexico grammatical level." The scientific field which studies style or the distinguished variations of language in literary texts is referred to as *Literary stylists*. So, literary stylistics explores "the variations characteristic of literature as a genre of the 'style' of individual authors" (Crystal, 2008:460)". It is the study of the literary style (Leech, 1969:1). The literary stylistics is the inter-between area meditative area that links linguistics to literary criticism.

In the early twentieth century and after, there was a high interest in re-exploring the figures of rhetoric or the figures of speech. This new revival led to the emergence of the theory of style. Therefore, simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, personification was no more looked at as embellishments or extra

beauty added to the style in language; but they are new powers of expression and impression. For the scope of the study, simile, metaphor and personification will be focused on. To do so, the study will generate a network among these figurative devices.

If simile is un overt comparison between two or more different entities, and metaphor is covert comparison between these forms, personification id the device that bestows human characteristics to inhuman things. Simile, in the broadest sense, is   a figure of speech whereby two concepts are imaginatively and descriptively compared (Wales, 2011: 383). In the instance, *Helen is like a lily*, there is a sort of comparison between *Helen* (human being) and *lily* (a plant). Still, the comparison is split by the preposition *like* in the linguistic structure. Metaphor, on the other hand, is "a figure of speech based on a comparison that is implied rather than directly expressed (Dictionary of literary Terms, 2007: 108). So, in the expression, Helen is a lily, there is a metaphor, where the comparison is implied, and not a driest one. Within the scope of the trope or the figurative meaning comes personification. It is the attribution of human characteristics to inanimate objects (Quinn, 2006: 318). In the example, *The wind is singing through the trees*, the human characteristic of *singing* is attributed to the *trees*.

Now, the question that comes to one's mind: what are the main characteristics shared by these topes or the figurative forms of language? The main merit is that these tropes witness the transference of meaning. In the language of literature, more specifically the imaginatively creative works of art, the diction or the literary words are not used in their literary use or meaning. Rather, they deviate from the direct senses to acquire new senses in the literary structures. This new shade or figurative meaning can be realized in tropes such as simile and metaphor. Deviation is one of the techniques used by the writers to avoid the direct expressions in literary works of art. Enkvist (1973: 15) thinks that style can be perceived as a deviation from a set of rules which have been labeled a norm (ibid).

The second characteristic of the language of literature is that these figurative devices of expression are derived from the literal one. Put simple, there is a strong connection between the figurative and the literary. So, instead of saying, Helen is beautiful, mild and tender, it is imaginatively said, Helen is a lily. Still, the meaning of the metaphorical meaning is tied up to the literal one.

The third characteristic is that there is a ground of meaning transfer. In his 1936 book, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Richards introduces the two main components of metaphor, i.e. tenor and vehicle. The 'tenor' of the metaphor is its principal subject, the topic addressed. The 'vehicle' is the equivalent or the subject carried over from another field of reference to that of the subject. He proposes that the entire meaning of a metaphor is the formation of a difficult communication between the tenor and vehicle (Bradford,1997:22-23). In another expression, the tenor is the subject in which something is being compared, whereas the vehicle is the image or the idea used to make that comparison (Taylor and Francis, 2025). This elucidation may pave the path to discuss Leech's linguistic modes for the stylistic analysis.

Part II: *Shelley's To The Moon*

Part II is divided into two subdivisions. While the first sub-division deals with the theoretical framework, the second sub-division explores the stylistic analysis in terms of the stylistic model. Part two, on the whole, will refer to certain forms of the figurative language in Shelley's fragment, *To the Moon.*

2.1 Leech's stylistic model

In his 1969 book, A Linguistic Guide to English Poetry, Leech introduces a theoretical framework where metaphor can be identified as a transference of meaning. The tripartite model consists of a sequence of stages. Language, in general, produces two modes of meaning: the literal or the direct and the metaphorical or the indirect. Leech's first stage is concerned with

the separation of the literal from the metaphorical use. The process of separation is made by setting them out one different lines. The two modes are labelled as L, for the literal, and F, for the metaphorical (Leech, 1969: 154).

Based on Richard's formula comes Leech's second stage. The stage is construct Tenor and *Vehicle* by postulating semantic elements to fill in the gaps of the literal and the figurative interpretations. So, the top line now represents the tenor ("TEN") and the bottom-line the vehicle ("VEH") (ibid). The merit of this stage is to show clearly the tenor and the vehicle, i.e. the things compared in the metaphor, are not usually identified with the literal or figurative senses of particular words: often one whole clause is placed in opposition to another (ibid). Leech proceeds to say that the tenor is the literal part of the expression with its reconstructed literal context, and the vehicle is the figurative part of the expression, together with its reconstructed context(ibid).

The third stage concerns the *ground of the metaphor* (ibid: 155). Having separated the tenor from the vehicle, it is possible to seize the similarity between the two components. This depends on the researcher's intuition in the stylistic interpretation. But before going a step further, it is of importance to uncover the typology of metaphors according to Leech's paradigm. Metaphors can be classified into three sub-categories. They are as follows.

Extended metaphor

An extended metaphor is a metaphor which is developed by a number of different figurative expressions, extending perhaps over several lines of poetry (p. 159). This is clearly shown in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (Act 5, Scene 3) where Romeo describes Juliet's beauty, even in the omnipresence of death (my Shakespeare 2025)

> **O my love, my wife,**
> **Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,**
> **Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty.**
> **Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet**

Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advanced there.

Compound metaphor

A compound metaphor, in Leech's phraseology, consists in the overlapping of two or more individual metaphors. It is by no means confined to highly concentrated and elliptical styles of poetic writing, but occurs even in passages of verse which fairly easy to follow and understand. An example of the compound metaphor is Lord Byron's lines of verse in (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, IV*)

Unchangeable, save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle in thine azure brow;
**Such as creation's dawn behold, thou rollest**
now(ibid:160).

Still, leech thinks that the simplest kind of metaphor is the one based on a clause structure with the verb *to be, as in Shakespeare's Macbeth, V.v.* (Leech, ibid.: 151)

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor plyer
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage.

These illustrations serve as an introductory note to the poetic text analysis.

2.2: A stylistic analysis

From an applicable standpoint, it is well to start with the separation of the literal from the figurative use. This is clearly shown in fig.1.

L. And, like _____

F.. "   "   a lady lean and pale

L. The moon arose in the _____   east
F.. "   "   "   "   "
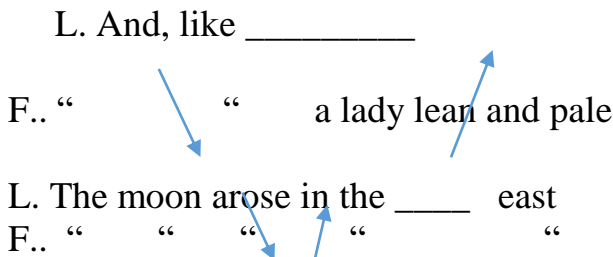
murky

L. Art thou _____

 F. "   "   Pale for weariness

L. Of _____   heaven, and _____on earth

F. "   climbing   "   " gazing

L. Wandering _____

  F. "   compassionless

L. Among the stars that having a different _____

F. "   "   "   "   "   "   "
  Birth

Flowing Leech's model, the ditto marks are placed beneath words which belong equally to the literal as to the figurative interpretation. One point here to be indicated. The "moon arose . . .< serves as an introductory context to the figurative context, "like a lady lean and pale . . ."

The next step is to indicate the tenor and the vehicle in Shelley's poetic fragment. This is obviously stated in the following stylistic interpretation (Figure 2).

VEH: And, like [a sick woman]

"   "   a lady lean and pale
TEN: The moon arose in the [desolate] east
 . "   "   "   "   "   "
                          murky

TEN: Art thou[ill and tired] _____

 VEH: "   "   Pale for weariness

Of [reaching]heaven, and [be shining]
  _____on earth

  "   climbing   "   " gazing
Wandering [withy no feeling]

   "   compassionless
Among the stars that having a different [rising]

   "   "   "   "   "   "   "
Birth
The literal interpretation of the metaphorical or the figurative forms shows that the metaphorical sense is derived from the literal one; there is a strong connection between the figurative and the literal use. This interpretation may lead to identify the ground of the set of metaphors in the poetic text. This covers the third step of the stylistic analysis.

Literary stylistics, as stated earlier, is the creative area that lies between the linguistic analysis and the critical interpretation.

  As a poetic text, *To the Moon* is a fragment consisting two stanzasr, rhyming aabbcd for the first selected stanza, while *ababcd* for the second stanza.

I
And,   like   a   dying   lady   lean   and   pale,
Who   totters   forth,   wrapp'd   in   a   gauzy   veil,
Out   of   her   chamber,   led   by   the   insane
And   feeble   wanderings   of   her   fading   brain,
The   mood   arose   up   in   the   murky   east,
A white and shapeless mass.
II

> Art   thou   pale   for   weariness
> Of   climbing   heaven   and   gazing   on   the   earth,
>   Wandering   companionless
> Among   the   stars   that   have   a   different   birth,
> And   ever   changing,   like   a   joyless   eye
> That finds no object worth its constancy? (English Verse
> 2025)

Having read Fig.1 plainly shows the prominence of the figurative forms, especially metaphor, personification and simile. The whole poetic fragment becomes an extended metaphor. The idea of variability and loneliness is highly expressed by a sequential set of figurative figures of style. So, the whole setting becomes symbolic. Here, the moon (a natural phenomenon) is personified. It is   *a dying lady lean and pale* (a human phenomenon). In one interpretation

In this poem P. B. Shelley reflects on the timeless journey of the moon, a symbol of great contradiction, variability and loneliness, represented here by a lady in search of constancy in love. She is very pale because she has grown tired of travelling in the sky, and of looking upon the earth continuously, and she is sad because she is companionless, having to wander among the stars which are different from her in nature and origin. Struggling with weariness and loneliness, with a hint of madness, so alone and without friends, she may also represent the poet who stands alone and without companion even if in the middle of the crowd. Constantly changing in shape and size, her waxing and waning is likened to joyless, unsteady eyes of a man in search of something pleasant to look at, which may deserve his constancy. She is lake that, too: she is never the same even in two consecutive nights because she can't find anyone she can love faithfully.

Despite being so inconstant, she is looking for constancy (Wordpress 2025)

The moon, here, represents the poet himself in his loneliness and despair. The poem personifies the moon, drawing parallels between her solitude and the poet's own sense of alienation, while also exploring themes of weariness, beauty, and the fleeting of existence. (ibid). *To the Moon*, being a poetic text explores the concepts of solitude, detachment and changeability by recording to the natural planet, the moon, as a poetic symbol. By the use of these figurative devices, the language of the whole text becomes deviant from the norms of the ordinary language. There is an aesthetic violation of the norms of the language in use. And this aesthetic value exists only in the realm of art. In addition, the metaphorical modes of meaning, in Shelley's *To the moon* are functional, in the sense, that they uncover the psychological traits of the poet who feels the burden of solitude on his own soul These devices have their role or function, i.e. to unblock the spiritual and the aesthetic traits of the poet who believes that he is, like the moon, living in that space of solitude with no companion. He is, the spirit of solitude.

Concluding remarks

Literary stylistics is that fruitful area of study that correlates linguistic analysis to the critical interpretation. The analysis of the poetic structure of Shelly's *To the Moon* , in terms of Leech's stylistic model, has indicated the prominence the figurative figures of style. This predominance has proven that the poet thinks of the existential problems, like, detachment, changeable beauty and fleeting of time, nor in a rational way bur in a figurative style which is more expressive and impressive of the poet's world views. The critical interpretation has brilliantly shown that the symbol of the lonely moon is to represent the poet's existential crisis where the bright planet (the moon) moves silently. but nobody realizes her suffering and variability.

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Appendix
P. B. Shelly
To the Moon
  I
And,   like   a   dying   lady   lean   and   pale,
Who   totters   forth,   wrapp'd   in   a   gauzy   veil,
Out   of   her   chamber,   led   by   the   insane
And   feeble   wanderings   of   her   fading   brain,
The   mood   arose   up   in   the   murky   east,
A white and shapeless mass.
II
    Art   thou   pale   for   weariness
Of   climbing   heaven   and   gazing   on   the   earth,
 Wandering   companionless
Among   the   stars   that   have   a   different   birth,
And   ever   changing,   like   a   joyless   eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?
The Pragmatic Aspects of the Narratives in the Friday
Religious Sermon of Declaring the Fatwa of the Sufficient
Jihad