

A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE POEM “THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD TO HIS LOVE” BY CHRISTOPHER MARLOW

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze Christopher Marlow’s poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”. The poem was interpreted stylistically from the choice of words, sentence arrangements, and the poetic devices used by the writer to present his thoughts to the audience. The literary devices included in the analysis were symbolism, imagery, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and other sound devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance, and rhyme. Moreover, the study also provided an analysis of the structure and theme of the poem. By conducting this research, the researchers were able to shed light on the literary approaches, sound devices such as symbolism, imagery, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and other sound devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance, and rhyme, hidden meanings, and artistic worth of the Poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” by Christopher Marlow

Keywords: stylistic, Christopher Marlow, Passionate, Shepherd, Love.

Introduction

Khan et. al. (2014) the language, the words used, the arrangement of sentences, and the poetic devices used to present the writer’s thoughts to the readers are known as style. It means that the writers use linguistic features to represent their ideas or thoughts. Similarly, Khan and Jabeen (2015) said a style entails one’s thoughts or mind. It tells the manner of one’s speaking and writing. Therefore, style is related to a person’s thinking and the choice of the subject, and also how it is presented to the audience (Shawa, 2015; Nawar, 2018; Pedersen, 2015).

Stylistic is an approach to the analysis of literary texts using linguistic descriptions. Stylistic analysis can be from both perspectives, linguistic and literary criticism. Clark (2023) defined that stylistic analysis of a poem refers to the study of the language used in the poem, its structure, and the literary devices the author used in the poem. Similarly, Carter and Stockwell (2020) claimed that style is the author’s preference for particular structures over others in the language. The reason why stylistic analysis is critical is that most readers need help understanding the poems. Therefore, this approach can help the readers understand the lyrics easily by using stylistic tool analysis to unlock the meaning behind the verses (Camp, 2007; Husain, 2014; Kadhim et al., 2021)

The analysis looked into the poem and investigated its literary techniques, sound devices, hidden meanings, and artistic merit. The research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis that improves our understanding and appreciation of poetry by examining these characteristics. The first objective is to recognize and comprehend the literary devices used in the poem. The study will examine how the poem uses metaphors,

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similes, personification, symbolism, and other literary techniques. We can acquire insight into the poet's intentions and the deeper levels of meaning inside the poem by recognizing and understanding these techniques. The second objective of this study is to analyze the use of sound devices and patterns in the poem. The rhyme scheme, meter, alliteration, assonance, and other acoustic characteristics of the poem will be analyzed. It helps the readers to learn about the rhythmic and melodic aspects that contribute to the overall aesthetic experience of the poem by evaluating these sound devices. Third, this study sought to discover the secret meaning of the poem. The purpose of this research is to delve into the poem's underlying messages, themes, and symbols. The study uncovered the layers of meaning that may be hidden beneath the surface of the poem by evaluating the imagery, figurative language, and narrative structure. Lastly, this study aimed to value the poem as an art form.

The study aims to build an appreciation for the poem's artistic merit. It helped readers to gain a greater understanding of the poem's creativity and contribution to the literary canon by studying its craftsmanship, emotional effect, and engagement with universal human experiences.

Research Methods

The researchers used stylistic analysis to analyze the poem by exploring poetic devices used by the writer such as symbolism, imagery, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and other sound devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance, and rhyme. To understand the poem deeply, the researchers also looked at the vocabulary items used in the poem.

For the researchers to gain a better understanding of the poem, there were several steps taken. The first step in the study was to read the poem several times. Each reading immersed the researchers in the poet's world, allowing them to understand the writer's vocabulary, writing structure, and distinct style. The researchers intended to absorb the intricacies and subtleties that lay inside the lines by delving into the text with open and receptive thinking.

Second step, the researchers unveil literary devices by reading to identify the literary devices employed within the poem. Metaphors, similes, personification, symbolism, and other figurative language were carefully examined. These techniques, which are frequently used as artistic tools, enable the poet to convey complex concepts and generate vivid imagery. The scholars began to reveal the poem's underlying layers of meaning by recognizing and interpreting these literary conventions.

In the third step, the researchers decode sound devices and repetitions in the poem. The identification of sound devices and repetitions used in the poem was a critical component of the analysis. The researchers thoroughly investigated the poem's acoustic features, which included rhyme scheme, meter, alliteration, assonance, and other sound patterns. These tactics give the poem a musical character, boosting its rhythm, melody, and overall aesthetic appeal. The researchers got an insight into the poem's auditory harmony and its impact on the reader's experience by recognizing and analyzing these sound patterns.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the researchers presented the findings related to literary devices found in the poem selected. The presentation follows poetic and sound devices.

Poetic Devices

Symbolism

According to MacMahan et al (1886), symbolism plays an important role because symbolism is one of the most crucial elements in truly imaginative literature. Furthermore, Morrison (2002) stated that symbol is "the phenomenon into the idea and the idea into an image, but does this in such a way that the idea in the image has infinite repercussions, and remains intangible, even when expressed in every language it will always remain unexpressed." As Marlow's poem "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" is a pastoral poem, several symbols are presented such as *nature*, *shepherd*, *flowers* and *water*, *desire*, and the fleeting nature of *pleasure*. It is explained as follows:

1. Nature: In the poem, nature itself functions as a symbol, depicting an idyllic and idealized world. The shepherd displays a lovely natural landscape, complete with valleys, woods, hills, meadows, and rivers. These features signify an escape from the complications of city life and a more straightforward, more peaceful way of life.
2. Shepherd and Flocks: A simple and peaceful way of life is symbolized by the shepherds and the animals they raise. They embody the pastoral concept of coexisting peacefully with nature and its cycles. The nymph accepts the shepherd's invitation to join part in this peaceful existence.
3. Roses and posies: The poem uses roses and posies as symbols of beauty and love. These flowers are connected to courting and amorous gestures, responding to the nymph's needs for love and pleasure.
4. Rivers and falls: The poem uses rivers and falls as a symbol of time passing by and the ephemeral nature of joy. The idea of small rivers and falling water alludes to how fleeting both love and the pleasures the shepherd offers are. It implies that the shepherd's joys and pleasures are transitory and vulnerable to change.
5. Time: The poem uses indirect symbols to represent time. The invitation extended by the shepherd to the nymph symbolizes a wish to live free from the limitations of time in an eternal present where their love and joy will never fade. However, the reader is reminded of the underlying symbolism of the time of the transience of such joys and the inevitable nature of change.

Imagery

According to Clark (2023), The use of sensory-rich, vivid language to paint a picture in the reader's head is referred to as imagery. This device has the power to arouse feelings and establish a sense of atmosphere. Christopher Marlowe's poem "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" beautifully captures pastoral images and creates a magnificent atmosphere of tranquil countryside. Here are a few illustrations of the images from the poem.

1. *Valleys, groves, hills, and fields*: To paint a picture of an idealized rural setting, these natural settings are described. They arouse feelings of calmness and the beauty of nature.
2. *Woods and steepy mountains*: The mention of trees and mountains deepens and diversifies the natural settings. Within the pastoral landscape, it offers a spirit of adventure and discovery.

3. *Melodious birds*: The picture of birds singing madrigals evokes natural noises and lends an audio depth to the poetry. It generates feelings of amazement and serenity.
4. *Bed of roses*: The image of rose beds represents passion, love, and romance. As the reader imagines the vivid colors and wonderful fragrance of the flowers, it produces a sensory experience that appeals to both the eye and the smell.
5. *Lambs*: The use of lambs in the poem gives a pastoral touch and emphasizes the rural surroundings. They convey a sense of simplicity, innocence, and closeness to nature.

These are only a few of the colourful images used in "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love." The rich descriptions of landscapes, objects, and experiences in the poem allow readers to fully immerse themselves in the pastoral world created by Marlowe.

Simile

Khan and Jabeen (2015) describe a simile as a comparison in which the terms "like" or "as" are used to establish a comparison. As the mild wind, "like a gleaner." In Christopher Marlowe's poem, although there are no clear similes in the poem, it makes up for this with intricate descriptions and vivid imagery that evoke romantic feelings in the reader (Mtumane & Tabu 2021).

*"Come live with me and be my love,
And we will all the pleasures prove,
That Valleys, groves, hills, and fields,
Woods, or steep mountain yields."*

In these lines, Marlowe (the author) describes various natural places where he and his love can enjoy their beautiful life. Although there is no direct simile, the description draws a magnificent landscape and appeals to the beauty.

Metaphor

According to Terms (1980) Metaphor is a figure of speech in which one item is explained in terms of another. Furthermore, Lakoff (1980, p.13) defines that Metaphor as a tool that helps us understand language and mind as well as how we view the world.

*"And we will all the pleasures prove "
"That hills and valleys, groves and fields"*

The speaker employs the metaphor of hills, valleys, groves, and fields in this phrase to describe the various pleasures and experiences he pledges to share with his sweetheart. The natural landscape becomes a metaphor for the richness and delight of their shared lives.

*"And I will make thee beds of roses"
"And a thousand fragrant posies"*

The speaker compares the beds he makes for the beloved to beds of roses and fragrant posies, signifying the beauty and comfort he hopes to bring. The metaphor reinforces the speaker's romantic and affluent setting.

*"The shepherd swains shall dance and sing"
"For thy delight each May morning"*

These lines show the shepherds as swains metaphorically, stressing their joyous and celebratory nature. The image of the shepherds dancing and singing metaphorically becomes a representation of the happiness and joy that will surround the beloved.

Hyperbole

According to Ruzimbaevna et al. (2022), Hyperbole is an idiom and literary device used to enhance effect through deliberate exaggeration.

"Melodious birds sing Madrigals."

In this line, the author describes that the bird sings madrigals. Birds certainly sing, but to compare their melodies to madrigals—compositions for vocal harmony and complexity are exaggerated for poetic effect.

Sound Devices

Alliteration

According to Meliyevna (2022), Alliteration is a literary technique that shows initial consonant sound repetition in two or more nearby words. Instead of referring to the repeat of consonant letters at the start of words, alliteration refers to the repetition of the consonant sound. For example, in Marlow's poem, there are several alliterations applied:

*"Come live with me and be my love, (line 1)
And we will all the pleasures prove (line 2)
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks (line 6)"*

*"The Shepherds' Swains shall dance and sing
For thy delight each May morning:
If these delights thy mind may move,
Then live with me, and be my love."*

The repetition of the letter "s" in the words "shepherd," "swains," "shall," and "feed and flocks" and others in these lines produce an alliterative effect. The repeating "s" sound gives the language a calming, flowing aspect that ups the poem's melody. The poem's great melodic melody is enhanced by alliteration, which is also very effective.

Consonance

Swallow (2021) stated that Consonance is a state of relaxation or normalcy that is typically represented by the first note in a composition, whereas dissonance causes tension in opposition to this consonance.

*"By shallow Rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals."*

The repetition of the "l" sound in the words "shallow," "rivers," "falls," "melodious," and "madrigals" in these lines creates consonance. The poetry is made more musical by the repeated "l" sound, which produces a gentle and melodious effect.

*“And I will make thee beds of Roses
And a thousand fragrant posies,”*

The consonant "s" sound is repeated in the words "make," "thee," "beds," "roses," "thousand," and "posies" to produce harmony.

Assonance

Clark (2023) stated that Contrarily, assonance refers to the repeating of vowel sounds at the beginning or end of syllables. This technique can give the poetry a melodic quality and a sense of coherence.

*“By shallow Rivers to whose falls
Melodious birds sing Madrigals.”*

*“And we will sit upon the Rocks,
Seeing the Shepherds feed their flocks,”*

Rhyme scheme

According to Simmons and Smith (2010), rhyme describes the similarity in sound between words or syllables that are typically seen at the end of lines or stanzas. Similarly, Reddy et al. (2011), a rhyme scheme is represented as a string corresponding to the sequence of lines that comprise the stanza, in which rhyming lines are denoted by the same letter. For example, the limerick’s rhyme scheme is AABB, indicating that the 1st, 2nd, and 5th lines rhyme, as do the 3rd and 4th. The rhyme scheme in this poem is AABBCDD, EEFFGGHH, IIJJ. It is also found two types of rhyme in this poem as shown below.

Table 1. Rhyme Scheme

Rhyming patterns	Examples	Description
End rhyme	love/prove fields /yields Rocks/Flocks Roses/posies Kirtle/Myrtle cold/gold buds/studs move/love sing/morning move /love	The lines' endings contain the rhyming words.
Half-rhyme	wool/pull Falls - madrigals	While the stressed vowel sound and the beginning consonant sounds are different, the final consonant sounds are the same.

Conclusion

By conducting this research, the researchers were able to shed light on the literary approaches, sound devices such as symbolism, imagery, simile, metaphor, hyperbole, and other sound devices like alliteration, consonance, assonance, and rhyme, hidden meanings, and artistic worth of the Poem “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” by Christopher Marlow. The findings showed that the poem displays pastoral romanticism's strength and attractiveness, as well as the longing for an idyllic, romanticized way of existence by using nature to express one's love or feelings. The analysis also revealed an escapism and idealistic undertone where the shepherd promises a life full of bountiful natural blessings, including lovely flowers, lovely music, and peaceful surroundings, however, the shepherd's assurances can come out as somewhat unrealistic and detached from the harsher realities of life. Therefore, in this poem, the conflict exists between the desire for a simpler life and the unavoidable complexities and flaws of the real world. The study also helped us better understand and appreciate this poem, increasing our interaction with the art form and providing new views on its significance in the larger literary world.

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