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Stylistic Analysis of *The Stray Dog* by Sadegh Hedayat

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ABSTRACT

Stylistic analysis is the method to check and observe how the language works in a literary text. This study is based on stylistic analysis of Sadegh Hedayat's short story The Stray Dog. It aims to analyze this story from stylistic point of view to find out the use of language and different stylistic and rhetorical devices from the text. It also aims to find the meaning that these stylistic devices convey to support the themes of the text. Sadegh Hedayat's fiction is very unique and it can easily get the attention of readers due to the versatile writing style of the writer and use of innovative features of language in sort fiction. So, this is an important methodology to learn and understand the figurative use of language in the text and what linguistic conventions are used by the author to give meaning to the story that not only convey the meaning but also support the themes and give background information. It concludes with the analysis of all these stylistic and rhetorical devices such as simile, metaphor, personification, hyperbole, imagery etc.

KEYWORDS

Stylistic Devices, Rhetorical Analysis, Language Features, Phonological Level, Semantic Level, Stylistic Analysis, The Stray Dog

HISTORY

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Stylistic analysis is the technique that is used to make reader understand the text as well as its importance. It is also important to interpret the language that is used within the text and how it works in the text. Stylistics is a discipline that studies how the knowledge and information is arranged in the body of text. Stylistic analysis also helps to analyze the text from one's own perspective. It helps to look at the use of language and diction of the text to figure out different stylistic and rhetorical devices. Stylistic analysis concerns with the introduction and identification of the language usage in writing or speech whereas literary studies focus on the semantic quality of the text. The main concern of the stylistic analysis is to seek knowledge and investigation about the language and elements of language to understand it. It requires the deep study of the text more than once and almost needs keen attention and concentration. Stylistic analysis also helps to look at a piece of text from own perspective and the analyzer can develop an argument based on literary and rhetorical terms ignoring the author's intentions (Carter, 2010).

Any text can be stylistically analyzed in many ways. Most common, simple, and easy way of stylistic analysis is to observe and analyze the grammatical structure and use of vocabulary or diction by the narrator in the literary text or speech. On the other hand, a difficult or somehow complex stylistic analysis is to judge the narrator's power of imagination and his creativity that he used in his text and that made him write a particular text. Stylistic analysis helps to dig out the different techniques of this discipline. For example, the text can be analyzed differently through different levels of stylistics like graphology, phonology, morphology, lexico-syntax and other levels of stylistics. It also helps to make observation about the style of writing with the reference of a particular genre of literature. Language deviations can also be found in the literary texts while doing stylistic analysis especially in terms of forgrounding such as semantic deviation, syntactic deviation, graphological deviation, phonological deviation and morphological deviation (Almahameed, 2020).

The writers use different choice of words, form of a sentences and innovative literary devices to convey their feelings, emotions and thoughts to the listeners and readers. Style also shows the behavior, attitude and personality of the writer. Short and Leech (1981) state that style is used by authors and writers according to a specific context and it has meaning. Lawal (2004) has views about style. He says that style is a type of different linguistic expression which covers different features of a language. Haynes (1989) states about style as a study of individuality. It is the study of linguistics which shows how the writer's way of thinking is portrayed in literary works. So, this research is to find out stylistic devices, their meaning and to apply Leech and Short's model of speech and thought on The Stray Dog by Sadegh Hedayat.

INTRODUCTION TO THE STRAY DOG

The Stray Dog is one of the interesting and moral based short story that is from Sadegh Hedayat's collection of short stories. He wrote this short story in Persian language and was later translated by Ali Salami. This story has different themes like alienation, unhappiness and meaninglessness of life. Other such themes are also depicted in this short story that are fate



that deform all, antipathy, defeat and death. The story depicts the animal, the dog, as a main character and third person pronoun is used in the story. The narrator or the writer used the figurative language in the story. The story is about the dog whose name is Pat. Pat is a Scottish dog with beautiful hazel eyes. He remembers his beautiful days when he was free to drink his mother's milk and play with his brother. He was happy with his family. He used to play with his master's son but to his misfortune, one day he goes out with his master and there a scent he smells and follows that scent but when comes back, he does not find his master there. He then finds him everywhere but fails and his mistake leads him to death and destruction.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research aims to analyze *The Stray Dog* by Sadegh Hedayat on the basis of stylistic analysis. The main objectives of this study are:

- to find out stylistic devices from the story
- to find out how the stylistic devices help the author to convey the meaning

RESEARCH OUESTIONS

This conducted research aims to answer the following questions:

- 1) Which stylistic devices are used in the story?
- 2) What meaning these devices convey?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Baharlooyan (2000), analyzes *The Stray Dog* as an oppression of human beings towards animals. In his work he does not only address those who tease Pat but also criticizes all individuals who show such negative attitudes towards animals. He also tells in his study that Hedayat ended the story with theme of death like his all other stories. This thing symbolizes his own personal feelings of life and death.

Karimi (2001), compares Hedayat's *Stray Dog* with that of Anton Chekov's short story, The drunken Carpenter. Kashtanka is a dog in Chekov's story. Karimi compares them because both stories have same theme of isolation and destruction. Pat was left behind by his master and similarly Kashtanka was left behind by his master. He also tells that both stories end differently. Katuzian (2007), analyzes *The Stray Dog* as a biography of Hedayat's life. He says that Hedayat compares himself with an unclean dog who is beaten and teased by the society or the sacred religious people. Further he ends the story with the death of dog when three crows come to see whether he is dead or not and look in his eyes. These lines portray the picture of his own life that how the politicians the Shah, the religious people and the intellectuals were waiting for his death.

Zeiny (2011), in his article entitled The resonance of post-colonialism in Hedayat's *Stray Dog*, analyzes this short story as an allegorical story, which means that the story oscillates between two locations that are East and West. This short story is the allegory of Hedayat's life. In his study, he analyzes and depicts the story from the postcolonial aspects. Iranian people were mostly renounced by their own society and same thing is depicted in the story when dog is teased and beaten by all individuals of his own homeland. The writer uses the dog as protagonist because it is considered the most unclean animal in Islamic society and human beings are treated in the same way by colonizers in the society. By using the character of dog Sadegh Hedayat is depicting the picture of his own life. Esamail says that the human beings in the colonized countries are unhomed in their own home. Although they are not homeless but they are not at homes inside while living in their own homeland. Sadegh Hedayat compares the dog with humans when we read on the very first page of the story:

"Two intelligent human eyes shone from his shaggy forehead; from the depth of those eyes shone a human soul with a message as impenetrable as the darkness that shrouded his whole being... Not only did his eyes resemble those of a human being—they had the same expression... filled with the pain, suffering." (Hedayat, 1995, p.1)

Sedaqat Rostami (2012), compares *Stray Dog* with White Fang by different perspectives. He says that both stories have same third person point of view and both stories start with the description of the setting. Both have almost same themes of hatred and oppression with animals. The desire for sexual satisfaction is also mentioned in both stories. These are the similar features or points of these two stories that Sedaqat analyzes in his study. Chaharmahali and Sharifi Voldani (2014), analyze the story, *The Stray Dog*, in the perspective of Oedipus complex. He does not say that Pat hates his father or kills him unconsciously but tells his affection towards his mother and hoe Pat remembers that he was breastfed by his mother. This element of Oedipal complex, "striving towards the mother" can be observed in Pat's perspective.

Roozbeh (2017), in his study, Metapor and its existential origin in *The Stray Dog*, analyzes the title used by the author is itself a metaphor. Its infrastructure can be, a dog is stray just like a human being. The writer uses animal, the dog as a metaphor in his story. Actually he is depicting the real picture of unkind and selfish human beings. For their selfishness they tease innocent creatures and the innocent people suffer a lot and experience absurdity, loneliness, coldness, destruction and antipathy. Roozbeh also explains the use of metaphorical language and different words that symbolizes the life of a human being in his study of *The Stray Dog*.

Khoshhal Yasin (2020), studies the idiomatic expressions from Persian to English in *The Stray Dog*. He uses the framework of Mona Baker to translate Hedayat's short story. According to him when a work is translated from one language

to another there are many things that influence the language, most importantly the culture. Khoshhal explains the complete procedure of translation of literary text with respect to *The Stray Dog* using Mona Baker's framework.

Esmaeil (2022), in his research study analyzes the post-colonialism in the story. His postcolonial study of The Stray Dog helps the readers and researchers to understand the story in this context as well. He tells about the two locations mentioned in the story that are the homeland of the protagonist, that is dog, and the other one is the land of his master, the West that is Europe. His study tells the confused state of protagonist's mind who because of displacement got destruction and isolation. He further tells that throughout the story the position of individuals of fully colonized or partially colonized countries like Iran is depicted by Sadegh Hedayat using the character of dog. The researcher also analyzes the significance of using dog as the main character. He says that the dog is not given any worth and it has to follow what his master utters or commands and same is the condition of a colonized individual who just moves tail like dog when commanded by the master or the colonizer.

The dog tries many times to correct his mistake that he strayed himself but he is always welcomed by the stoning or kicking by the individuals of underdeveloped nation. And those who treat him kindly, they misuse him as one man throws a piece of bread to open his collar. The man then put the bread on the olatform of the shop and fearfully and cautiously petted Pat on the head using both hands, he unfastened Pat's collar. (Hedayat, 1995, p.4).

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS

Stylistics is the branch of linguistics which deals with the study of style of language used in the text. Style is actually the way of saying something. Stylistic analysis is an important methodology to learn and understand the figurative use of language in the text and what linguistic conventions are used by the author to give meaning to the story that not only convey the meaning but also support the themes and give background information and references as well. Writer's writing style gives complete overview of the era to which the author belongs and the proper context that made him write a story. These things are analyzed through diction or use of language that is the part of stylistic analysis.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITER

Sadegh Hedayat is recognized as an important figure for his literary works and for bringing Persian language and the Persian literature in the contemporary world of writing. He is considered to be the most modern literary figure of Iran among all his contemporary Iranian writers. He was born in Tehran in 1903. He belonged to an aristocratic family and got education from Dar al-funun and went for his higher studies to Europe. He used to study the literature of Guy de Maupassant, Rainer Maria Rilke, Anton Chekov, Franz Kafka, and Edgar Allan Poe. He published his many short stories, a collection of sketches and parodies, two historical dramas, a travelogue, a play and number of novelettes. His works are mainly in Persian language that are translated to English. He also criticized some literary works. His most important and most enduring work is his short novel The Blind Owl.Sadegh Hedayat committed suicide in 1951 and buried in Paris.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study involves the stylistic analysis of a short story The Stray Dog by Sadegh Hedayat with the aim of looking at the writer's choice of language. The analysis is carried out following the heuristic checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories presented by Leech and Short (2007). The checklist provides a 'systematic basis' for the collection of relevant linguistic data from the text for the purpose of stylistic evaluation and offers four levels for analyzing the linguistic choices made by the writer, in terms of style. These levels include the lexical categories, grammatical categories, figures of speech and context and cohesion. Leech and Short (2007) point out that while the list itself is selective one, leaving out a lot of detail but it allows the reader to reach the significant and relevant features of the text through linguistic survey. This study is focused on the level of figures of speech, taking into consideration the grammatical, lexical and phonological schemes but main focus is on stylistic devises deployed in text. The grammatical and lexical schemes are searched in form of parallelism, anaphora and lexical repetitions. The phonological patterns of rhyme such as alliteration, consonance, assonance and rhyming words will be discussed under the heading of phonological schemes. In order to show the literary relevance of the linguistic choices made by the writer, the discussion is winded up discussing the story in terms of metaphor, allegory and personification.

DATA ANALYSIS

The story is stylistically analyzed and number of stylistic devices are found that are given below;

Simile: The comparison between two things which are basically quite different by using the words such as 'like' and 'as'. In the story, *The Stray Dog*, examples of simile are;

1) "He had drooping ears, a pointed tail, dirty fuzzy hair and a pair of human-like clever eyes in the depths of which could be seen a human soul."

The comparison is made between the eyes of dog and human being by using word 'like' in this sentence.

2) "Although the people resembled his master, it appeared that his feelings and demeanors were as different as chalk and cheese from theirs."

Here the dog's feelings and the cruel people are compared that how they are different. This difference is shown with a simile 'as different as chalk and cheese'.

3) "He went as far as the ruins outside the village."

Here is used a simile 'as far as the ruins outside village' for showing a long distance that dog covered in order to find his master.

4) "It was neither light nor color but something incredible just like what can be seen in the eyes of a wounded gazelle." A comparison is shown between the eyes of dog and that of gazelle.

Metaphor: The direct comparison between two things which are basically quite different without using the word 'like' and 'as'.

In the story, examples of metaphor are;

- 1) "Not only was there some sort of similarity between his eyes and those of a man but some kind of equality between them."
- 2) "But it seemed as though nobody could observe or understand his eyes which were charged with pain and supplication."

These are metaphorical sentence as there is direct comparison without using the words 'like' and 'as'. In the first sentence a direct comparison is shown by saying that the dog's eyes were not similar to that of man's eyes but were equal to them. Actually Sadegh Hedayat portrays his own character in the story so he compares the dog with human being or man. Further he says that the pain and supplication in the eyes of dog could not be observed by the people just like his pain was not valued by the society.

Personification: Personification is when an animal, object or an idea is given human characteristics by the author.

- 1) In this short story, there are many examples of personification. Dog itself is personified in the whole story. The writer uses the third person pronoun, 'he, him, his' for the dog because he depicts his own character through the stray dog.
- 2) "The square and the inhabitants were half-baked and half-grilled in the heat of tyrannical sun and passionately longed for the first breeze of evening and shades of night." Here sun is personified as being tyrannical that is a human attribute.
- 3) "All his muscles, body and senses were disobedient to him." Here the dog's body parts are personified as being disobedient that is again a human quality.
- 4) "The smell of kebab forced itself to his nostrils. A feeling of hunger tortured his innards so oppressively that he forgot his helplessness and agonies." Smell is personified that can force itself to reach certain point.
- 5) "All at once, he felt his limbs were not obedient to him." The body parts of dog are disobedient, this is again a human quality.
- 6) "He would have been welcomed by the heavy kicks of the driver's spiked shoes." Here Shoes are personified that are welcoming dog.

Rhetorical questions: Rhetorical questions are the questions that author asks but are not answered by anyone, their answers are obvious. In this short story there are some rhetorical questions that are;

- 1) "But how could another person pat him?"
- 2) "Was it possible that he might have found a new master?"
- 3) "Did these people seek the scent of their females?"
- 4) "Was it really his voice? Or just an echo of it?"

All these are rhetorical questions because their answers are obvious.

Paradox: Paradox is an absurd and contradictory statement that can be true. In this short story, the writer uses some paradoxical sentences such as:

1) "He would be ready to die if someone stroked a loving hand on his head."

It is paradoxical sentence because loving hand can pat a dog not stroked. There is contradiction between loving and stroke.

2) "A delicious feeling of fear and anxiety took possession of him."

The feelings of fear are never delicious so here is the contradiction between these two words.

- 3) "When everybody ceased to torment him, it was the urchin's turn to derive a fantastic delight in torturing him." The torture cannot delight us so it is a contradictory statement.
 - 4) "It appeared that they were his sworn enemies and derived a wondrous delight in torturing him."

Alliteration: Alliteration is repetition of same consonant sound with less distance between them. In this story there are few examples of alliteration that are following.

1) "A bakery, a butcher's shop, a grocery, a barber's shop and two tea-houses all of which were conductive to satisfy the very basic human needs constituted the Varamin Square."

The sound of 'b' is repeated and then sound of 'w' is repeating.

- 2) "The square and its inhabitants were half-baked and half-grilled in the heat of ther tyrannical sun and a passionately longed for the first breeze of evening and the shades of night." The sound of 'h' is repeating.
- 3) "An intense heat heavily hung over their heads and a pall of dust waved in the sky, which grew thicker due to the traffic of cars."

The sound of 'h' is repeating in this sentence.

Anaphora: Anaphora is the stylistic device which is the repetition of words or phrases at the beginning of phrase or clause or the sentences. In this story writer uses this pattern.

1) "The people, the shops, the trees, and the animals were dead still."

The word 'the' is repeating in the beginning of successive phrases.

Flashback: flashback is the technique used by the writer to take readers back into the past. This technique is used in the story at many places, few examples are given below.

- 1) "In the past, he had diverse bounds and needs. He felt bound to be at his master's beck and call, to turn a stranger or an outsider dog out of his master's house and frolic with his master's son. He had learnt how to behave toward known and unknown people. He had learned to eat on time and expect caressing at a certain time."
- 2) "He used to be plucky, neat and sprightly. But now he was cowardly and oppressed."
- 3) "He remembered his wooden kennel and his romping about with his brother in that green gardenlet."
- 4) "Amidst the smells that reached his nostrils and stupefied his most of all was the smell of rice pudding in front of the urchin-the white liquid which was much so similar to his mother's milk and summoned up memories of his puppyhood."

Ellipses: Ellipses is a punctuation mark that is composed of three dots. It indicates the fluency of speech. This is used in the story only when someone addresses the dog.

- 1) "Then the old servant would come and call him: "Pat... Pat..."."
- 2) "The sound of his master fell upon his ears twice. "Pat... Pat..."."

Imagery: Imagery is the figure of speech that a writer uses to appeal five senses and to create images in the mind of reader. This technique is used in the short story when writer narrates the description of setting.

- 1) "On one side of the square stood an old plane tree whose trunk had withered and dried up but which had spread its awry gouty branches with an indomitable preservance."
 - The writer creates an image of the surroundings.
- 2) "The only building that can catch your sight was the famous Varamin Tower with its cracked cylindrical trunk and its conical top. In the chinks of its fallen bricks, the sparrows had built their nests. Silent, they had dropped off in shelter of fiery heat. Only the whimpering of dog broke the silence in succession."
 - Complete picture is portrayed of the tree, the nest and the fallen bricks.
- 3) "The smell of kebab forced itself to his nostrils."

 Imagery can be used in different ways and especially through those words that appeal to our five senses. Here the smell of kebab is used to create an image.
- 4) "The smell of rice pudding in front of the urchin-the white liquid which was much similar to his mother's milk." Here is again the smell of rice creates image.
- 5) "When the evening was drawing to its close, the sound of his master's voice fell upon his ears twice. "Pat...Pat..."."
 Here the imagery of sound is used.
- 6) "There he rested his head on his pasterns, stuck his tongue out and watched the grand fields waving before him in a state of sleeping and wakefulness."
- 7) "As he returned to the square, the smell of diverse eatables reached his nostrils; the smell of left-over meat, of fresh bread and yoghurt mingled together."
- 8) "Various smells of half-dead verdure, a moist old shoe and living and non-living objects revived in his muzzle distant confused memories."

Hyperbole: Hyperbole is also known as overstatement. It is the figure of speech used for exaggeration to give a different taste to the writing or the sentence. Mostly it is used for giving humorous effect. It is used in the short story.

- 1) "The square and its inhabitants were half-baked and half-grilled in the heat of the tyrannical sun and passionately longed for the first breeze of evening and the shades of night." The inhabitants were not baked and grilled but here is used a hyperbole by the writer to show the intensity of heat that can bake the humans as well.
- 2) "The people, the shops, the trees and the animals were dead still." All were not dead but an overstatement is used by the writer to show the stillness.
- 3) "Even his own voice frightened him." One's own voice never afraid him so the writer is exaggerating the fear of dog.
- 4) "He would have been welcomed by the heavy kicks of driver's spiked shoes." No one welcomes someone with shoes so the writer is exaggerating this expression.

DISCUSSION

The Stray Dog is one of the interesting and moral based short story that is from Sadegh Hedayat's collection of short stories. He wrote this short story in Persian language and was later translated by Ali Salami. This story has different themes like alienation, unhappiness and meaninglessness of life. Other such themes are also depicted in this short story that are fate that deform all, antipathy, defeat and death. The story depicts the animal, the dog, as a main character and third person pronoun is used in the story. The narrator or the writer used the figurative language in the story.

The story is about the dog whose name is Pat. Pat is a Scottish dog with beautiful hazel eyes. He remembers his beautiful days when he was free to drink his mother's milk and play with his brother. He was happy with his family. He used to play with his master's son but to his misfortune, one day he goes out with his master and there a scent he smells and follows that scent but when comes back, he does not find his master there. He then finds him everywhere but fails and his mistake leads him to death and destruction. It also exposes the use of different stylistic and rhetorical devices to understand and analyze the figurative language. It intends to provide useful information for further studies and research. It is significant to those who are related to this field. This research studies the story from stylistic point of view and therefore guides the future researchers from the related field for further study. Analysis is conducted through the use of stylistic and rhetorical devices. The meaning these devices add to the understanding of the story and the language used in it so it intends to be useful for the next researchers.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, Sadegh Hedayat has used number of stylistic and rhetorical devices in his short story *The Stray Dog*. These are simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, imagery, paradox etc. These devices give an excellent understanding and meaning to the story. All these stylistic devices are figured out and well explained along with their hidden meaning that they convey. Rhetorical devices make the story meaningful and powerful. Sadegh Hedayat uses many references in the story from his personal life. So the close examination of these devices give a relevance to his life. This study looks at the great detail and observation of various parts of the story and functions that are performed by different stylistic and rhetorical devices.

CREDIT AUTHOR STATEMENT

Sana Saddiqi: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data analysis, Writing- Reviewing and Editing., Dr. **Muhammad Ajmal**: Suprvising, Editing- Reviewing. **Dr. Ambreen Shahnaz**: Investigation, Validation.

COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL STANDARDS

It is declare that all authors don't have any conflict of interest. Furthermore, informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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