

Chapter-I

STYLISTICS AND LITERATURE

CHAPTER - I

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- 1.1 The Problem Of Defining Style.
- 1.2 Meaning Of Style.
- 1.3 What is Stylistics ?

CHAPTER I:DEFINING STYLE AND STYLISTICS

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1.1 The Problem Of Defining Style

The problem of defining and classifying style is very much messy and mazy. It is difficult to define style. Style is like personality and other abstract terms. As it is difficult to define 'personality' and many other abstract terms, so it is difficult to define 'style'. Personality in man is the ultimate mystery, the ultimate fascination, the ultimate justification, so is style in writer. It is the essence of aesthetic pleasure. Style is a maze. It is very difficult to tell what constitutes style and how one cultivates ~~style~~; is style a man or his work, his body, his heart, or soul, or the words he uses, an establishment, choice, personality, psyche, deviation from norm, a set of individual or collective features, or the way in which he uses the words? "The style of work is not a sort of veneer glued over the outside. On the contrary, it is like the pattern of the grain in a piece of wood. It is a pattern that goes all the way through; a manifestation of the growth and development of the structure of the tree itself."¹

2

John Middleton Murry says that⁽²⁾ "A discussion of the word 'style' if it were pursued with only a fraction of the rigour of a scientific investigation would inevitably cover

the whole of literary aesthetics and the theory of criticism.

3

The Oxford Dictionary defines 'style' as "manner of writing, speaking, or doing; collective characteristics of the writing or diction or artistic expression proper to a person or school, subject and noticeably superior quality or manner."

4

F.L.Lucas defines 'style' as "a means by which a human being gains contact with others; it is personality clothed in words, character embodied in speech."

5

Quiler Couch says, "The power to touch with ease, grace, precision, any note in the gamut of human thought and emotion. But essentially it resembles good manners." Goethe regards style as "a higher, active principle of composition by which the writer penetrates and reveals the inner form of his subject."

7

Henry Morter in his La Psychologie des styles defines style as "a disposition of existence, a way of being."

8

According to Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, "style is usually with reference to the poet's manner of choosing, ordering and arranging his words. But, of course, when one asks on what grounds certain words are chosen and ordered one is raising the whole problem of form. Style, in its larger sense, is essentially the same thing as form."

9

According to J. Marouzeau, "Language would thus

be a catalogue of linguistic symbols and of their connections with things meant, represented by the inventory furnished by the dictionary, and by the systematization that is given by grammar. It is a repertoire of possibilities, a common stock at the disposition of the users, who use it according to their needs of expressions in making the choice - that is style - within the limits granted to them by the laws of language."

10

In Shipely's view, "style consists in adding to a given thought all the circumstances calculated to produce the whole effect that the thought ought to produce.

According to Gourmont, "Style indeed, it is not really a mere invisible transparent medium, it is not really a garment but the very thought itself. It is the miraculous transubstantiation of a spiritual body, given to us in the only form in which we may receive and absorb that body" ---

11

Jeremy Warburg says, "Good style, it seems to me, consists in choosing the appropriate symbolization of the experience you wish to convey, ~~form~~ among a number of words whose meaning area is roughly, but only roughly, the same (by saying cat for example, rather than pussy),"

12

Enkvist in his essay, "On Defining Style" in Linguistics and Style, mentions six approaches to style which treats style as:

(i) an embellishment, a shell surrounding a pre-existing

core of thought or expression;

(ii) the choice between alternate expressions;

(iii) a set of individual characteristics;

(iv) deviations from norm;

(v) a set of collective characteristics and

(vi) a set of relations among linguistic entities that are statable in terms of wider spans of text than the sentence. Instances of such definitions may be found in the definitions quoted in preceding paragraphs."

13

At a conference on ' Style in Language ' held in the United States in 1958, it was suggested that the style of a person is as unique as his finger prints. Boulton's principle, "Style is the man himself", is still widely held and has been echoed by many writers and thinkers.

According to one linguist, " Two utterances in the same language which convey approximately the same information, but which are different in their linguistic structure, can be said to differ in style. Another critic would consider deviation from a 'contextually related norm' as fundamental to the concept of style; some of these critics would merely note and interpret deviations whereas others would try to state them in statistical terms.

A recent article on the subject suggests that a complex factor which may be described as 'general purport' lies at the root of style. Perhaps the most neutral of all

definitions is the one which equates style with 'expressiveness' as distinct from cognitive meaning. Stylistics is not a mere branch of linguistics but a parallel discipline which investigates the same phenomena from its own point of view.

15

According to Gleason, "style is the patterning of choices made within the options presented by the conventions of the language and of the literary form. The key phrases here are,

1. Patterning of choices and
2. Presented by the conventions.

Perhaps the familiar kind of style that fits most obviously into this definition is the one sometimes called "diction". The flexibility makes it possible for a speaker or writer to rise above the level of mere message framing and to use the choices in languages and to add other qualities to his discourse. He can make it lucid, confused, precise, vague, or ambiguous, perhaps as he desires and thinks appropriate, perhaps only as his personal limitations restrict his full use of the apparatus. All these ways in which a speaker or writer vary his language, keeping his basic message unchanged, may often be called as style.

Style is one of the most controversial and elusive terms of linguistics and literary studies and yet this term is most commonly and generally used both by ~~linguists~~ and

critics alike. It is seen that the most rigorous of its definitions either show some kind of conceptual looseness or allow some sort of flexibility in its use. In literature the technical connotation of style either absorbs the concept of 'tone' or gets dissolved in the notion of 'rhetoric'. Similarly, in linguistics, its significance either gets submerged into the notion of 'variation' and 'variability' or gets confined to those features of the discourse which refers to the relations among its participants.

In classical Latin the word 'Stilus' was extended to mean first, a man's way of writing, then more generally, his way of expressing himself in speech as well as writing. In French, it has been narrowed to signify 'a good way of expressing oneself.'

There are some definitions of style that regard style as an addition to a central core of thought or expression. De Quincey¹⁶ insisted that style may have an independent value apart from the context and asserts its importance by saying that "style or the management of language ranks amongst the fine arts and is able therefore to yield a separate intellectual pleasure quite apart from the interest of the subject treated."

In the book "Understanding Fiction" by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren¹⁷, style is used only to refer to the selection and ordering of language.

Charles Hockett impressively put his own view that "two utterances in the same language which convey approximately the same information, but which are different in their linguistic structure, can be said to differ in style."

In order to get a fairly comprehensive idea of style we should consider the views of Enkvist. According to him¹⁹, "The style of a text is the aggregate of the contextual probabilities of its linguistic items." He insisted on the study of style which must not be restricted to phonological or morphological or syntactic or lexical observations, it must be built up on observations made at various levels.

Prof. A.A. Hill defines stylistics, which concerns with "all those relations among linguistic entities which are storable or may be storable, in terms of wider spans than those which fall within the limits of sentence."

The true nature of style is elusive and will need subtler nets to catch it. A very basic objection to it is that the opinions vary as to what constitutes style.

It will be seen from the definitions of "style" given so far that most of them are subjective ones. They together cover the following features: style is like "personality, a maze, a set of individual or collective features, patterns, manner of writing, speaking, doing; a higher, active principle, a disposition of existence, a repertoire of possibilities, the miraculous transsubstantiation of a

spiritual body, appropriate symbolization of the experience, a choice, deviation from a contextually related norm, pattern of choice, an addition to a central core of thought, the management of language, selection and ordering of language, the aggregate of the contextual probabilities of its linguistic items. It will be seen that most of these expressions are abstract and vague and do not help us to understand the concept of style clearly.

However, some of the features such as style is a patterning of choice between alternate expressions, deviation from contextually related norm, a set of relations among linguistic entities that are stable, an addition to the core of thought, management of language selection and ordering of language, observation to be made at various levels, are quite helpful and they gradually take us from subjectivity on way to objectivity in our approach to the study of language of literature.

1.2 Meaning of Style

The study of meaning of style will have to bring back what grammar leaves out. These studies will not work in opposition to grammar, however, nor be independent of it, since it is grammar that will define their starting point. The grammarian isolates the forms and constructions to which meaning can be attached, the norms established against which variations can be clearly marked. Stylistics as a branch of

linguistics can aim ultimately to be more soundly based than those discussions of style which trace a web of stylistic effects, that is in our view, a series of departures, without a coherent theory of what is departed from.

A stylistic choice cannot by definition be said to be determined in the way that agreement between a plural subject and a plural verb is determined by the rules of the English language. Explanation in stylistics depends on examining the circumstances of language, the situations in which it is used. Variations in style are measured against variations in setting, and where the two appear to be interdependent, style is to that extent explained. In this view style is not a matter of free, unfettered choice, but it is at least partly controlled by setting. Ullmann²¹ usefully points out that stylistics has the same divisions as linguistics and that there are phonological, lexical and syntactic levels in the study of style. The meaning of style can be viewed from many different angles. Both linguists and the literary critics look at it differently. According to linguists, style investigates scientific description of certain types and sets of linguistic structures that occur in a given text, and of their distribution, and on the other hand, the literary scholar must be more preoccupied with matters outside text.

22

John Middleton Murry wants to include the whole of

literary aesthetics and the theory of criticism when he conveys the meaning of style.

23

According to Charles Bally , "stylistics studies the features of organized languages from the point of view of their affective content, that is the expression of sensibility through language and the effect of language on sensibility".

So we conclude that style goes through four phases, i.e. mode of expression, design, construction and execution. And the characteristics of style such as originality, and excellence depend upon the choice of words and their arrangement to create most effective and impressive literary work.

1.3 What is stylistics ?

When we consider stylistics as part of linguistics we notice that there are many linguists who tried to define and describe stylistics in various way. One of the linguists says that Linguistics is the science of describing language and it concentrates on variations in the use of language.

The growing relationship between linguistics and literature in recent times is an example of the way in which interdisciplin~~ery~~ studies can provide highly useful perspectives and insights. Stylistics is one such

interdisciplinary subject placed at a point between language and literature. Stylistics provides systematic methods and procedures for the analysis of literary texts .

Literature shows a highly individual special patterning of language. Linguistics is a systematic study of language in terms of phonology, lexis, syntax and discourse. It also studies language in its aspects of use and the users. Procedures used by the study of linguistics in these areas enhance our understanding of language. Here stylistics comes into the picture. Literary language itself can be described as a register because in creating a literary work the author plays a distinct social role. The user has at his disposal a fairly wide range of registers characterised by the features of grammar, lexis, etc. ✓

24

H.G. Widdowson makes clear the relationship between linguistics, stylistics and literary criticism. "By 'stylistics we mean the study of literary discourse from a linguistics orientation and I shall take the view that what distinguishes stylistics from literary criticism on the one hand and linguistics on the other is that it is essentially a means of linking the two and has (as yet at least) no autonomous domain of its own.

"He further says that linguistics contributes something to literary criticism, just as literary criticism contributes something to linguistics. But stylistics

for the nature and function of language than has hitherto been available. It seems certain that this claim will be good and the literary critic will benefit enormously from the new and much more accurate terminology of linguistic analysis and description."

26

Halliday's concern is not with the interpretation or the aesthetic evaluation of the literary passage, but he illustrates how the methods and categories of descriptive linguistics can be applied in the analysis of literary texts in Yeats' "Leda and the Swan" but draws no conclusions as to the relevance of his findings to the interpretation of the poem as a whole.

27

Anne Clusyenar think/stylistics as an extension of practical criticism. She insisted on the contextualization of linguistic features with the total microcosm of the work. She does not believe in the mere linguistic description of a text. She has in mind, more expressive term for stylistics which is 'exploration'. This term is more appropriate than analysis in her point of view. Linguistic theories, techniques and descriptions are best responsible material for new awareness of literary work. The criteria of selection cannot be solely linguistic, but it depends upon the receiver of communication.

28

Rene Wellek , who tends to take a more balanced and tolerant view of the claims of modern linguistics vis-a-vis

literature, points out that there are certain features of a work of art which cannot be accounted for in terms of its language formulations. Certain problems raised in poetics are the problems of general aesthetics which elude a linguistic or stylistic approach.

The approach of Geoffrey Leech²⁹ (1969) to stylistic analysis differs essentially from that of Halliday and Sinclair in that it aims at relating linguistic description with critical interpretation, showing how the latter can benefit from the former. He discusses three features of literary expressions representing different dimensions of meaning which are not covered by the normal categories of linguistic description, and illustrates them by giving an analysis of a poem by Dylan Thomas. He believes that traditional literary categories can be reestablished by placing them in linguistic framework. He gives analysis of Dylan Thomas's 'This Break I Break' to point out that cohesion is not a unique property of poetry, it blends separate linguistic units to make meaningful discourse. To form intratextual pattern, cohesion of foregrounding is important and he speaks about it, in what manner deviations in a text are related to each other. Leech pointed out the coherence of foregrounding when he tried to analyse 'Ode to the west wind'. He conveys his opinions after observing the metaphorical structure of Poem, and concludes that stylistics extends linguistics beyond the sentence, to the

description of structures or recurrent feature which span sentence sequences, or whole texts. He put the idea of stylistics in one sentence i.e. stylistics can teach us a great deal about it when we once accepted text as literature.

30

Donald Freeman chooses to analyse three poems by Dylan Thomas and presents his syntactic observation in terms of transformational generative grammar. It provides of structures Freeman wants to describe. According to him Dylan Thomas tries to arrest the reader having written with unacceptable but not 'ungrammatical way'. Freeman tends to explain the style by saying that style is in part a characteristic way of deploying the transformational apparatus of a language.

31

Linguists, like Ohmann, Halle and Keyser, take help of transformational grammar for stylistic analysis. According to them the deep structure of a grammar is the source of semantics or content of the utterance, whereas the surface structure contains syntax and phonology. Out of the general transformational possibilities offered by the deep structure, the author chooses one suiting his design, his "cognitive orientation."

Literary stylistics provides us basic approach for fuller understanding, appreciation and interpretation of literary texts. The procedures of literary stylistics remain traditional inspite of the developments in literary theory

which challenge assumptions about the role of language in depicting literary realities. Stylisticians are now much less assertive in their claims for more objective analysis. A stylistician provides a precise and rigorous linguistic description. From linguistic description he proceeds to interpretation. He thus says, "Stylistics is an attempt to put criticism on a scientific basic."

Stylistics is also a dialogue between literary reader and linguistic observer. The goal of linguistic analysis is not mere objectivity but also an insight. It prompts, directs and shapes reader's intuition into an understanding. Some stylisticians have seen the features providing an insight into the way in which the organisation of the language of poetry differs from that of prose. Deviant expressions occur more frequently in poetry than in prose. In poetry grammar rules are violated. The "irregularities" are regular in the context of a poem. Stylistician discusses the grammar of the poem which provides a way to interpret it. The linguistic asserts these areas of advantage in literary studies. The first and the most important is that how knowledge of literary study demand close engagement with the mechanics of language; linguistics provides specific information and analytic technique and the third claim is that linguistics is an advanced theoretical discipline which provides certain insights into the nature of literature and criticism. It has now been proved that the discipline

linguistics helps us in appreciating and understanding a given text. It either supports or contradicts the intuition which one gets after reading the text. The methodology of descriptive the linguistics is controlled by the text in the sense the linguistic form of the text. There is no other method of analysing a text. The parameters to be explained would vary from text to text depending upon what to look for and what is having proved in the text. In my analysis of Paradise Lost Book I, I am going to delimit my analysis to the following important features:

- 1.) Diction / Lexis
- 2.) Syntactic forms including words, syntactic inversions, parallelisms, and repetition.
- 3.) The use of Homeric Similies and the imagery realised through them in the poem. The model of analysis is going to be eclectic and open ended. Before that is done a brief survey of Milton's criticism appears in the next chapter.

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