

An Exercise in Stylistic Analysis of "Preludes"
and "The Windhover"

SYNOPSIS

This dissertation is intended to be a small contribution to studies in the inter-disciplinary area of literary criticism and linguistic stylistics. The 20th Century has witnessed unprecedented interest not only in the study of linguistics, but also its application to various allied disciplines. One of the major areas it has sought to 'invade' is the study of literary language.

For over half a century (traditional) literary critics and students of linguistic stylistics refused to see eye to eye. It is only recently that they are willing to 'peruse' each other's work. One of the well-known scholars who has broken new ground in this area is Prof. G.N. Leech. According to Leech the role of linguistic stylistics is 'complementary' to that of literary criticism, nothing more, nothing less, and the findings of linguistic analyses of literary works are likely to corroborate impressionistic critical statements. Just as critical statements have been used, in the past, to support aesthetic statements about works of art, linguistic statements could also be used for the same purpose.

This study is an attempt to apply Leech's hypothesis to two poems - Eliot's "Preludes" and Hopkins' "The Windhover".

The dissertation falls into two chapters. In Chapter I a bird's eye view of literary criticism from the earliest times upto date is given. This chapter discuss^{es} traditional criticism, New criticism, linguistic approach, Notion of style and stylistics. In Chapter II Leech's frame-work of study is summarised and the two poems "Preludes" and "The Windhover" discussed in its light.

It appears from this study that Leech's hypothesis is largely sustained, although it must be stated that there are serious limitations in it (my study). First, it is a study of just two poems and, second, the investigator is a non-native speaker of English. Moreover the present work is a mere exercise in research methodology and, as such, the amount of rigour required for studying such thorny problem has not gone into it. More comprehensive and rigourous studies are sure to throw further light on the problem.

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