

Stylistics Analysis of the Poem ‘To A Skylark’ By P.B.Shelley

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Abstract: *This paper presents a stylistic analysis of P.B. Shelley's poem "To a Skylark". The paper also analyzes the poems using the tools of linguistics with a view to make their meaning explicit. The analysis covers the different aspects as graphological, grammatical, syntactical, phonological patterns have also find tropes and schemes that are present in the poem. It is necessary to mention that stylistics is not only useful to students of linguistics, literary and cultural critics, but it is also useful to teachers of English language and literature, whether English is taught as a first, second or foreign language. The analysis is helpful in understanding the structure and style of P.B.Shelley's poetry and his themes, reviews and treatment of nature and beauty .*

Keywords: *Style, Stylistics, Shelley, Ode, Skylark, Phonological Level, Grammatical Level, Graphological Level.*

I. Introduction

The word stylistics is derived from style. It is said that style is the physiognomy of the mind, and a safer index to character than the face (Schopenhauer, 2004). It is the perfection of point of view. In its broadest definition, style is the way in which language is used. Every poet or literary author has his/her own style of writing that distinguishes him/her from other poets. Broadly speaking, style in literature centers around the way that the author uses vocabulary- the author's vocabulary choice, sentence structure, it also involves sentence length. It relates to an author's liberal or conservative use of sensory details. It also relates to the author's use of figurative language, metaphors and similes that work together to establish mood, images and meaning in text. Some authors focus on sound devices such as alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm. In brief, style is the way the author uses words, phrases and sentences. Robert Frost defined style as that which indicates how the writer takes himself and what he is saying. It is the mind skating circles around itself as it moves forward. It is important here to highlight that every author has a personal style of writing, that style is not static. The author refines it through reading a variety of writers and through his own writing experiences. So when analyzing an author's style, one should put in mind the author's point of view, his type of writing and its structure and organization, his use of figurative language and overall tone.

The aim of the present paper is to provide university students of English language and literature with the theory of stylistics and its practical application in text analysis through analyzing Shelley's "To a Skylark" in particular. The research also aims at knowing Shelley's sensuousness, his themes as manifested in his poem "To a Skylark", his purpose of writing poetry and in main analyzing stylistics devices of Shelley's poetry through "To a Skylark".

Style's Definition:

The linguistic analysis of literary language is known as stylistics. The main notion of stylistics is that of style. The concept of style has been placed by many linguists at the center of the linguistic study of literature while others equate stylistics with the linguistic study of literature. The understanding of the term style influences the characteristics given to stylistics as one of several linguistic disciplines. The word style is derived from the Latin word 'stylos' which meant a short stick sharp at one end and flat at the other used by the Romans for writing on wax tablets.

Although the term style is used very frequently in literary criticism and especially stylistics, it is very difficult to define. Style, being a versatile field, is defined depending on one's field of study. No doubt that style is the basic thing which gives uniqueness to every writer. There are many definitions of the term "style". Style is a system of interrelated language means which serves a definite aim in communication (Gal'perin: 1971). Also style was defined as pattern of linguistic features that distinguishes one work from another (Thomas S. Kane: 1983). Style as a distinctive use of language (Crystal: 1987). Style can also be defined as the variation in an individual's speech which is occasioned by the situation of use. (Yule: 1996) from the definition of style provided by Yule, style is described as the variations in language usage. In essence, style is conditioned by the manner in which an individual makes use of language. Style is seen as "any particular and somewhat distinctive way of using language" (Trask :1997). Style also was described as an aspect of language that deals with choices of diction, phrases, sentences and linguistic materials that are consistent and harmonious with the subject

matter(Lawal: 1997). Lawal added that it involves the narrative technique of a writer in terms of choice and distribution of words and character. He also added that it may be reckoned in terms of the sociolinguistic contexts and it may also be reckoned or analyzed on linguistic, semantic and even semiotic terms.

There are many different styles according to the style of the author. In literature, as in all discourse, a sense of the best way of putting something can be intuitive or conscious; the result as far as the reader is concerned will be much the same (Carter & Stockwell: 2008). J. Middleton Murray defines style as a quality of language which communicates precisely emotions or thoughts, or a system of emotions or thoughts, peculiar to the author. He adds that style in an absolute sense is the complete function of the personal and the universal. (P.V.L. NarasimhaRao: 2011)

Stylistics:

Stylistics as a word is derived from style; it is a discipline which studies different styles. Stylistics is a branch of linguistics that investigates the entire system of expressive resources available in a particular language in a scientific and systematic way concerning the manners/linguistic features of different varieties of language at different levels. It refers to the study of appropriate use of words or language in a sentence or writing. It takes a close look at the text and analyzes its significant language forms and expressions for the sake of interpretation, it comes very close to practical criticism.

Since this study is a stylistic one, it becomes necessary to provide some definitions of stylistics. Stylistics as a term is easy to be defined in comparison with the word "style". Freeman (1971) describes stylistics as a sub-discipline which started in the second half of the 20th century. Taylor (1970) mentions that Charles Bally believes that Stylistics studies the elements of a language organized from the point of view of their affective content; that is, the expression of emotion by language as well as the effect of language on the emotions. Turner (1975) describes stylistics as that part of linguistics which concentrates on variation in the most conscious and complex uses of language in literature". Also Widdowson, H.G.(1975) defines stylistics as the "study of literary discourse that has a linguistic orientation." He (1975) says that the link between literary criticism and linguistics is stylistics. Style has different meanings for different people. David Crystal (1981) illustrates that "Linguistics is the academic discipline that studies language scientifically, and stylistics, as a part of this discipline, studies certain aspects of language variation". According to Leech and Short (1981) the main objective of stylistics is to discover the meanings and appreciate the linguistic characteristics of the text. Carter (1989) has of same view that stylistics is a bridge discipline between linguistics and literature. Stylistics is the study of those devices used in language such as rhetorical terms and syntactical devices that are used to create expressive or literary style. According to Short (1996) stylistics can look like either linguistics or literary criticism, depending upon where we are looking at it. Bradford (1997) says that stylistics is "an elusive and slippery topic every contribution to the vast multifaceted discipline of literary studies will involve an engagement with style". According to Katie Wales in *A Dictionary of Stylistics*, 2nd ed. (Pearson, 2001), "The goal of most stylistics is not simply to describe the formal features of texts for their own sake, but in order to show their functional significance for the interpretation of the text; or in order to relate literary effects to linguistic 'causes' where these are felt to be relevant." Verdonk(2002) defines stylistics as "the analysis of distinctive expression in language and the description of its purpose and effect".

It is easy to detect from the previous different definitions that every critic defined the term stylistics according to his own beliefs and ideas. This leads us to decide that stylistics is a branch of study that is growing and developing rapidly. Its main concern is the way cognitive and communicative effects are achieved by means of linguistic choices. It acts as means of linking linguistics and literary criticism. It, therefore, encompasses literary studies and linguistics as well as discourse studies. That's why students cannot ignore this branch of study for the great benefits they can gain from studying the literary text by doing stylistics. That's why literary critics do not always separate stylistic study from a wider theory of literature.

All the critics recognized stylistics as a science, a branch of general linguistics, that investigates principles and the results of selection and use of lexical, grammatical, phonetic and other language means for the transfer of thoughts and emotions under different circumstances of communication. Michael Riffaterese sees that Stylistics will be a linguistics of the effects of the message, of the output of the act of communication, of its attention-compelling function upon the receiver.

Doing Stylistics: Why?

Doing stylistics for any given literary text is of great value for those who are interested in mainly learning English language and in particular for both teachers and learners. It enriches learner's ways of thinking about the studied language and improves its skills in order to be competent. It enables the learner to extract the importance of any literary text by analyzing the interrelations between its linguistics items. Short (1996) affirms that stylistic analysis, unlike more traditional forms of practical criticism, is not interested primarily in coming up with new and startling interpretations of the texts it examines. Rather, its main aim is to explicate how our

understanding of a text is achieved, by examining in detail the linguistic organization of the text and how a reader needs to interact with that linguistic organization to make sense of it. Doing stylistics means exploring the language and its creativity in language use. It reveals new aspects and dimensions of interpretation. In addition, doing stylistics develops the skills and approach of analyzing any given language to improve receptive skills of the target language. It also helpful in identifying the limitations as ESL or EFL learners.

Levels of stylistic analysis

The levels of stylistics analysis are identified as:

- **Phonetic level:**This level is concerned with the examination of sounds and its characteristics and its potential utility in phonetic level.
- **Phonological level:**This level is interested in studying the sound system of any given language. It is concerned with the formal rules of pronunciation. Phonological devices include rhyme elements, alliteration, consonance and assonance.
- **Graphological level:**It studies the writing system of a language. It discusses the formalized rules of spellings, capitalization, the systematic formation, structure and punctuation in the sentence.
- **Grammatical level:**It discusses both the syntactic and morphological levels. It analyzes the internal structure of sentences in any given language and how they function in sequences. It distinguishes clauses, phrases, words, nouns, verbs, etc.
- **The lexical level:**This level examines the way in which individual words and idioms tend to pattern in different linguistic context; on the semantic level in terms of stylistics. It studies words in relation to inner expressiveness. these words are with emotive and referential. It is related to figurative language.

Biography of the Poet

Percy Bysshe Shelly (1792-1822) was born in Sussex with scoliosis. Shelley was one of the most prominent English Romantic poets. He is critically regarded among the finest lyric poets in the English language literature, yet he achieved fame posthumously, with many works suppressed in his lifetime and little financial gain from his writing. He was the son of an Member of Parliament and a wealthy landowner. Shelley was tempestuous a revolutionary who flouted the conventional views of his society. He went to University College, Oxford in 1810, but in March of the following year he was expelled for the suspected authorship of a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. This caused a big trouble between him and his father, so instead of going home, Shelly went to London. In 1811 he met and eloped to Edinburgh with Harriet Westbrook whom he got married to in the same year. However, by 1814, and with the birth of two children, their marriage had collapsed and Shelley eloped once again, this time with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, daughter of William Godwin, the radical philosopher, and of Mary Wollstonecraft, author of 'A Vindication of Rights of Women'. In 1816 Shelley spent the summer on Lake Geneva with Byron and Mary who had begun work on her *Frankenstein*. Shelley married Mary Godwin shortly after drowned herself in the Serpentine in Hyde Park. Shelley himself drowned in a sailing accident in 1822.

Important Features of Shelley's Poetry

Shelley's poetry reveals a person who devoted his mind, soul, and life to the improvement of his native society as a voice for the people who lacked the courage or intelligence to challenge authority themselves. Shelley wrote about all the romantic themes; his romantic thrill and wonder in the presence of majestic and beautiful objects and forces of nature, his intensely biased passion of joy, melancholy, despondence, hope, escapism and despair dominated and colored his poetry. Shelly's poetic style swings between adolescent immaturity characterized by self-pity and exaggerated artificiality, and elevated lyrical beauty, mature mysticism and a calm philosophy of life which affirms the immortality of the human spirit. His poetry was characterized by unrestrained passion and exalted imagination. Imagination was his passion through which he explored the whole universe to bring together impressions and associations indicative of his ideals and aspirations. Shelley's style of poetry is colorful and full of sensuous. His lyricism was hailed by other romantic poets. Spontaneity and musical beauty marked his verses. Nature was highly elevated by Shelley where one notices that the forces and objects of nature act as vehicles of his new ideas. His poetry was a revolutionist and it tends to use nature as expression, personification, and radical thought to provoke a sense of revolution. It is prompted by zeal of reform and frequently sounds a prophetic attitude. This unhappy and far too imperfect world is to be transformed into a blessed land of freedom, love and absolute joy and he passionately voices his belief that the glorious transformation would come through his poetry.

Introduction to the Poem

Shelley's poem "To a Skylark" was written in 1820. It is about the flight of a real skylark. It is one of the glories of English literature which celebrated many poems about birds that can be considered as signifiers of

Romanticism. This poem is an ode to a skylark. It is a lyrical poem where the poet has elevated beauty and sweetness of a skylark and the song it sings. The bird embodies both the purity and simplicity of nature. In the poem, Shelley praises the skylark for its beauty and its exquisite song. He concedes that human nature prevents him from expressing such joy and asks the skylark to teach him gladness.

The skylark flies into the sky singing happily. As it flies upward, the clouds of evening make it unseen, but the poet still hears its song which filled both the earth and air. The poet compares the invisible skylark to a poet. The poet says that the songs sung in praise of love or wine or music played for a wedding or a celebration cannot be compared to the loveliness of the skylark's song. The poet wonders about the causes of the skylark's happiness and he came up with the conclusion that the skylark is free from all that gives pain to man. It knows what lies beyond death and has no fear. Even if man freed himself from hate, pride, and fear, man's joy would not equal the skylark's. The secret of its capacity to sing so happily would be an incomparable gift for the poet. If the skylark could communicate to Shelley half its happiness, then he would write poetry that the world would read as joyfully as he is listening to the song of the bird.

To a Skylark's Themes: Shelley's ode "To a Skylark" discusses several important themes that dominated the romantic period. Among these themes are:

Man and the Natural Beauty: In this poem it is evident that Shelley exposes a great adoration for the beauty of nature, and he feels intimately connected to nature's power. The poem reflects Shelley's desire to know the secrets of nature, to know how birds feel when they sing. Because there is a contact gap between mankind and the world, the poet is enchanted by all the ways in which human beings interact with the natural world. There is a glamorous relationship between the bird and nature which creates fabulous feeling in the skylark.

Art and Culture: "To a Skylark" conveys the limitations of art, and the impossibility of our songs or poems ever measuring up to the beauty that is all around us. Shelley compares the song of the bird with human creativity to find at the end the second sadly wanting. This comparison between Shelley's own writing and the skylark and its song is one of the key ideas in To a Skylark. Repeatedly, the speaker imagines the skylark as a kind of natural artist, and thinks of his own work as being like the bird's song. The inefficiency of human poetry not only expresses its general failure to match the expressiveness of the bird, but also marks the failure of this particular poem to achieve its object.

Sadness: Throughout the lyric, the poet feels things really deeply. Shelley establishes sadness as the necessary condition for joy, concern with the sadness of To a Skylark does not make it a less joyous poem. The sadness that the poet feels is a general and normal sadness that fills all of human life. It's never the prevailing theme in "To a Skylark." Shelley mentions sadness only when he talks about human beings and their feelings, but this is not the case when he mentions nature because nature itself doesn't feel that same sadness.

Happiness: The skylark in "To a Skylark" is a creature of pure joy. It inspires Shelley to feel a agitated, delightful joy that has no part of pain or suffering. The bird doesn't know anything about feeling old or tired or lonely. It is full of "delight" all the time, and its song is an expression of that happiness. Unlike people, it doesn't have to think about the past or the future, or lost love, or any of the other things that make us miserable.

Awe and Amazement: Pure awe and amazement runs through "To a Skylark." the speaker is just so alive to everything around him. He's so fascinated by feelings and images and sounds that he can barely hold it in.

Freedom: Shelley, the revolutionist, envies the skylark for its boundless freedom to roam the skies.

Unnoticed and Unappreciated Poetry: Shelley believed his poetry—like the song of the skylark—deserved attention. Shelley's poetry, as the song of the bird, also soars, but he is not sure whether the public pays much notice to it.

Stylistics Analysis of the Poem

The Title's Implications

The title of the poem is the key to its understanding. It reflects the main idea of the poem. This lyric, as indicated in the title, is an ode about a skylark. An ode is a poem composed to praise a particular person or thing. The romantic poets admired odes and used it as avenue to voice out their minds' thoughts in form of a praise while incorporating their own surge of emotions. Shelley, the poet, was no exception. He liked to write the odes simply because it gave him a brilliant chance to talk about the issues that he felt urgent and big while still focusing on his own feelings and the world around him. The subject for the ode is a bird called a skylark which is just a natural being that the majority of people do not even give importance to. It is this intrinsic

characteristic of the bird that necessitated Shelley to offer an ode because it knows no one will be able to know the secret he wants to share with the creature. No doubt that the ode gives the poet a chance to reflect on the relationship between humans and the universe. The bird also signifies freedom and liberty.

What is an Ode?

An Ode is a literary device that originated in Ancient Greece and it is a lyric poem. It usually addresses a particular person or thing. There are three different kinds of odes:

- **Pindaric Ode:** The Pindaric ode is named after Pindar. It is a ceremonious poem with specific meter and rhyme. It is characterized by three triads: the strophe and the antistrophe being of the same stanza form and an epode as the final which is different.
- **Horatian Ode:** It was named after the Roman poet, Horace. It is considered as a short lyric poem written in stanzas of two or four lines that are structured in the same pattern at the discretion of the poet. It is usually less formal than the Pindaric Ode, and is more for personal enjoyment than a stage performance.
- **Irregular Ode:** It is a rhymed ode but has no specific pattern. Authors of the irregular ode will retain some of the elements of an ode, but have the freedom to experiment.

Stylistic analysis:

In the following section, stylistics analysis will be presented of Shelley's "To a Skylark". The lexico-syntactic patterns and choices, phonological, graphological and morphological levels of analysis are going to form the basis of the analysis. "To a Skylark" by Percy Bysshe Shelley is also a Horatian ode, but differs in its rhyme scheme: ABABB, and stanza length, 5 lines.

Graphological Level:

"To a Skylark" is an ode that has twenty-one well-knit and tightly woven stanzas. The lyric poem is rich in imaginary and music. The ode contains usual punctuation and significant capitalization.

Punctuation in Shelley's "To a Skylark":

Shelley's punctuation is of great value as an index to his metrical, or at times, it may be, to his rhetorical intention--for, in Shelley's hands, punctuation serves rather to mark the rhythmical pause and on flow of the verse, or to secure some declamatory effect, than to indicate the structure or elucidate the sense. For this reason the original pointing has been retained, save where it tends to obscure or pervert the poet's meaning. In his To a Skylark, Shelley used usual punctuation.

Capitalization in Shelley's "To a Skylark":

It is significant to note that capitalization actually is an important matter. It is because "Spirit" is something of a very important being which could be expounded further on as the poem fluxes that Shelley wrote it in capital letter in the first line of the poem:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit (1)

There is another word that is capitalized in the third line of the poem. In this line Shelley embodies the skylark into a being from Heaven. The word "Heaven" is capitalized to give a hint to the skylark of being sacred, or being a supernatural bird:

That from Heaven, or near it, (3)

The same word "Heaven" is also capitalized for the second time in third line of the fourth stanza for the same purpose:

Like a star of Heaven (18)

The capitalization of heaven is manifested again in the fifth line of the sixth stanza:

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd (30)

Also capitalization is manifested in the first line of eighth stanza when the poet talks about the "Poet" and this signals its importance, and this simile shows Shelley's egotism.

Like a Poet hidden (36)

Grammatical level

Question mark

All the questions in the lyric are rhetorical ones that expect no answer except one question which is:

What ignorance of pain? (75)

In this question Shelley construes the skylark's joy as inhuman or extra-human, born of freedom from 'languor', 'annoyance', 'sad satiety'. The poet used signs of question mark seven times in the poem as follows:

What thou art we know not;

What is most like thee? (2)

In fact, the song of this bird is so amazing, so magical and so secretive that the poet can't find anything to compare it to. The poet after this question keeps trying to describe the bird through using several similes and metaphors, but he still finds himself searching around for the right image of the bird and what the bird is like?. He adds more questions to investigate the bird's nature:

What objects are the fountains
Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain?(Lines 71-75)

The speaker keeps investigating into the bird's nature and its secrets. He wants to unveil the origins of his happiness. By asking such questions, the poet is trying to understand the meaning behind the beauty of nature, to use comparisons to try to get at the truth of the perfect art the speaker sees all around him. The poet wants to know the secrets of the bird's melodies. He questions if it is other things on earth or at sea or in the air that inspires the bird to be in continuous joy and happiness. The poet also wonders if it is the feelings of the skylark that causes its wonderful singing. The poet is curious to know if the bird's song is a reflection of love relationship with another skylark. The poet says that the bird maybe singing its song with joy because it has known what pain looks like.

The last question in the lyric is the following one:

Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream? (Line 85)

The poet here questions why he thinks that the skylark can see beyond all human perception. This is actually a great question because it reflects the romantic search for truth and link to nature.

Exclamation mark

Shelley used exclamation mark twice in the poem. This mark is used to indicate strong feelings. Shelley used it when he says:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!(1)

This exclamatory opening has both a caesura and end-stop line. The caesura here allows for readers to pause and reflect on why this songbird might be of worthy praise in the poem. The exclamatory end-stop line creates the impression for the readers that this ordinary songbird is looked upon as a superior being. Shelley used the exclamation mark again in :

Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of the ground! (100)

It shows here an exclamation where the poet says that the his writing will never be as good as the bird's song A little bird can make music beyond his description, beyond his power.

Semi-colon

The poet used the semi-colon seven times:

- In Line 8 (Like a cloud of fire;) . A period could be used instead of the semicolon. But the clauses, even though grammatically independent, are so closely related that a period makes too sharp separation.
- In line 14 (Thou dost float and run;). In another version of the same line, the line ended with a comma instead of semicolon. Anyway the semicolon here provides a more emphatic separation than the comma; it affords an easier transition between the statements than the period; it is, therefore, the most appropriate punctuation.
- In line 17 (Melts around thy flight;)The semicolon here provides a more emphatic separation than the comma; it affords an easier transition between the statements than the period; it is, therefore, the most appropriate punctuation.
- In line 31 (What thou art we know not;) I think here it is preferable if the poet used a question mark instead of the semicolon, but maybe Shelley preferred using the semicolon to emphasize the idea conveyed by the next question.
- In line 89 (With some pain is fraught;) the use of the semicolon here is justifiable for it relates to the next sentence.
- In line 92 (Hate, and pride, and fear;)In another version of the same line, the line ended with a comma instead of semicolon.
- In line 102 (That thy brain must know;). the use of the semicolon here is justifiable for it relates to the next sentence.

Colon

A **colon** means "that is to say" or "here's what I mean." The poet used the colon seven times in order to clarify what the poet means:

Example One:

To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not:

Like a high-born maiden (40-41)

Example Two:

With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower:

Like a glow-worm golden(45-46)

Example Three:

Among the flowers and grass, which screen it from the view:

Like a rose embower'd (50-51)

Example Four:

Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves:

Sound of vernal showers (55-56)

Example Five:

What sweet thoughts are thine:

I have never heard (62-63)

Example Six: (two colons)

With thy clear keen joyance

Languor cannot be:

Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee:

Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. (76-80)

Example seven:

We look before and after,

And pine for what is not:

Our sincerest laughter (86-88)

Full Stops

Full stops are used to mark the end of a sentence that is a complete statement. The poet used the full stop fourteen times at the end of the stanzas in order to show completion of ideas. There is no internal full stops. But if we have a look on the following lines:

From one lonely cloud

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd. (29-30)

We will notice that this stanza ends with a full stop, but each following stanza ends with a colon. These lines are followed by other stanzas that each one ends with colon that have no ends and full of images. The subsequent stanzas are brought to a conclusion by means of a turn in the poem's direction.

Lexical level

Noun	Pronoun	Common noun	Proper noun	Collective noun
Higher, praise, shadow, half, Spirit, heaven, heart, art, cloud, fire, race, flight, star, daylight, delight, arrows, sphere, lamp, white, air, dawn, voice, night, beams, rainbow, presence, rain, melody, light, thought, hymns, , sympathy, hopes, fears, maiden, palace, The Earth The Sun, strains The Even (evening) Moon, World tower, soul, hour, music, love, bower, dell, dew, annoyance, satiety, death, things, notes, stream, laughter, songs, hate, pride, fear, things, tear, joy, measures, sound, treasures, books, skill, poet, scorners, ground, gladness, brain, madness, lips, hue, flowers, grass, view, view, rose, leaves, winds,	Thee, thou, that, it, thy, I, we, there, her, its, those, us, thine, me, my, then	Spirit, heaven, heart, art, cloud, fire, race, flight, star, daylight, delight, arrows, sphere, lamp, white, air, dawn, voice, night, beams, rainbow, presence, rain, melody, light, thought, hymns, , sympathy, hopes, fears, maiden, palace, tower, soul, hour, music, love, bower, dell, dew, annoyance, satiety, death, things, notes, stream, laughter, songs, hate, pride, fear, things, tear, joy, measures, sound, treasures, books, skill, poet, scorners, ground, gladness, brain, madness, lips, hue, flowers, grass, view, rose, leaves, winds, scent, faint, thieves, showers, sound, grass, flowers, sprite, bird, thoughts, praise, wine,	The Earth The Sun The Even (evening) Moon World	strains

scent, faint, thieves, showers, sound, grass, flowers, sprite, bird, thoughts, praise, wine, flood, rapture, chorus, chant, vaunt, want, objects, fountains, strain, fields, waves, mountains, shapes, sky, plain, kind, ignorance, pain, joyance, languor, shadow		flood, rapture, chorus, chant, vaunt, want, objects, fountains, strain, fields, waves, mountains, shapes, sky, plain, kind, ignorance, pain, joyance, languor, shadow		
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Verb	Adjective	Gerund	Adverb
hail, wert, pourest, springest, wingest, dost soar, singest, are bright'ning, dost float, run, is, begun, melts, art, hear, are, narrows, sees, feel, rains, is match'd know, flow, showers, wrought, heeded, overflows, un beholden, screen, deflower'd, gives, makes, was, surpass, teach, have, heard, panted, match'd, would, be, feel, cannot be, came, dream, could, flow, look, pine, is not, fraught, tell, could, scorn, hate, pride, fear, born, shed, found, teach, flow, listen, are listening.	Blithe, full, profuse, unpremeditated, blue, deep, golden, sunken, unbodied, pale, broad, unseen, shrill, keen, silver, intense, white, clear, loud, bare, lonely, overflow'd, bright, hidden, unbidden, high-born, secret, sweet, golden, un beholden, real, green, warm, faint, sweet, heavy-winged, vernal, twinkling, rain-awaken'd, joyous, clear, fresh, divine, triumphal, empty, hidden, happy, own, clear, keen, sad, asleep, true, deep, crystal, sincerest, sweetest, saddest, harmonious, still, just.	Singing, soaring, lightening, soothing, scattering, waking.	Around, hardly, yet, before, now, near, as, so, too, ever, never, forth, wherein, how

It is because Shelley's poem is about the skylark, the poet had chosen a collection of brilliant and meaningful nature words. Shelley's choice of his words reflects the purity and simplicity of nature. Indeed the poem is a celebration of nature words. No doubt that the poet's treatment of nature in his lyric is one of the most attractive elements. He used nature as the prime inspiration for writing this poem. Shelley uses objects in nature as a catalyst for both inspiration and introspection as to what his own purpose is as poet. The stanzas use a lot of words of nature like the bird, cloud, sun, star, air, earth, flowers, grass, fire, the sea, the spring, roses, rain, fields, waves, mountains, green leaves and the sky as forms of emphasizing the emotions present in the stanzas. The forces and objects of nature act as vehicles of his new ideas. But the beauty lies in their legendary treatment – not only are the cloud and the wind vibrantly alive, but they feel and act in a manner closely resembling human beings. It is the unique romantic expression of love and deep understanding of nature.

Shelley used inflections such as “wingest”, “pourest”, “springest”, “singest”, “awaken'd”, “match'd”, “overflow'd” and other archaic lexis, like “thou art”, “Thee”, “thy” and “thine” which lend the poem a solemn and almost Biblical tone. The poet used contractions for the sake of meter as in line 13:
O'er which clouds are bright'ning

Stylistic Analysis at the Phonological Level:

Phonology is concerned with system of sounds in language. It fulfills the communicative functions of language by organizing the material and vocal noises arranged into sound pattern. “To a Skylark” consists of twenty-one stanzas that follow the same pattern: the first four lines are metered in trochaic trimeter while the fifth line is in iambic hexameter (a line which can also be called an Alexandrine). The rhyme scheme of each stanza is extremely simple: ABABB.

At the phonological level, two types of devices are studied. These devices are sound devices and literary devices.

Sound Devices

Sound devices, musical devices, are resources which the poet uses to make his/her poetry a special form of art. By using sound or musical devices, a poet creates auditory imagery that include alliteration, assonance, consonance, rhyme, onomatopoeia, and repetition. In "To a Skylark", Shelley used sound devices as follow:

Meter

The poem has twenty one stanzas of five lines each. The lines are alternating between rhymed tetrameter of a trochee stress and a hexameter of an iamb stress. The meter of the poem varies, but there is a

pattern. Each stanza starts with four short lines, and then ends with a long one. "To a Skylark" is super-regular. The stanzas never change length, and the rhyme and meter of each one is pretty much exactly the same. The feet in the poem are generally trochaic or iambic, the last line is iambic heptameter with an incomplete final foot which is also called ascatalexis. The second stanza demonstrates the overall pattern.

1 2 3
HIGH er..|.STILL and..|.HIGHer.....trochaic trimeter
1 23
FROM the..|.EARTHthou..|.SPRING est.....trochaic trimeter
1 2 3
LIKE a..|.CLOUD of..|.FIre.....trochaic trimeter
1 2 3
THE Blue..|.DEEPthou..|.WING est.....trochaic trimeter
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
And SING..|.ingSTILL..|.dostSOAR..|.and SOAR..|.ing EV..|.Er SING..|.est.....iambic heptameter

Rhyme scheme:

At the phonological level, there are many examples of rhyme, end rhyme and internal rhyme.. The poem has twenty one stanzas chunked into five lines each. The rhyme scheme ultimately falls into ABABB.

End Rhyme: The end rhyme in each stanza follows this pattern: ABABB. The first and second stanzas demonstrate the pattern.

Hail to thee, blithe **Spirit!** (A)
still dost soar, and soaring ever **singest.**(B)

Internal Rhyme: The poem also contains internal rhyme, as in the following lines:

- Bird** thou never **wert** (line 2)
- Thou art unseen, but yet **I** hear **thy** shrill delight (line 20)
- Until we hardly **see**, **wefeel** that it is there (line 25)
- From **rainbow** clouds there **flow** not (line 33)
- Like a **glow**-worm **golden** (line 46)
- Rain**-awaken'd flowers (line 58)
- Our **sweetest** songs are those that tell of **saddest** thought (line 90)

Alliteration

Alliteration is the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of at least two words in line poetry is called alliteration. The poem contains qualities of calm and serenading music, emphasized by the use of its strong words, as well as colorful alliteration to suggest the romantic beauty of such poetry and to reinforce its meaning. Alliteration in the following lines show a high quality one specially in line 12.

Examples of alliteration from Shelley's "To a Skylark":

- And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest (10)
- Of the sunken sun (12)
- pale purple (16)
- What thou art we know not (31)
- Soothing her love-laden
- Soul in secret hour (43-44)
- Like a glow-worm golden
- In a dell of dew (46-47)
- By warm wind deflower'd (53)
- That planted forth a flood of rapture so divine (75)
- Thy clear keen joyance (76)
- Ne'er knew love's sad satiety (80)

Repetition

Repetition is a literary device that repeats the same words or phrases a few times to make an idea clearer. As a rhetorical device, it could be a word, a phrase or a full sentence or a poetical line repeated to emphasize its significance in the entire text.

- And, **Higher** still and **higher** (6)
- Better than all** measures (96)
- Better than all** treasures (98)

Also Shelley repeated the word 'like' seven times in seven different stanzas for figurative purposes. Also there is a repetition of the conjunction 'and' (14 times) which gives rise to the rhyme.

Schemes and tropes in the poem

Schemes and tropes are figure of speech used to create a particular style of writing.

Scheme: Schemes are figures of speech that deal with letters, word order, syntax and sounds rather than meaning of the word.

Tropes: A Trope is a figure of speech that has a different meaning from its literal meaning.

Schemes in "To a Skylark":

Anaphora: It is a scheme. It means the Repetition of the same word or group of words at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences. In Shelley's "To a Skylark" there are many examples as follow:

What objects are the fountains Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? what ignorance of pain? (71-75)
Better than all measures Of delightful sound,
Better than all treasures
That in books are found (96-99)

Apostrophe is a scheme in which an absent person, an abstract concept, or an important object is directly addressed. For example:

Hail to thee, blithe spirit! (1)

Here Shelley apostrophizes and praises the skylark through the entire poem, but the skylark is not expected to respond. Shelley personifies the bird and thus this apostrophe works in a way like personifying metaphor. Apostrophe sometimes involves the use of an archaic second person pronoun and its associated verb form. Hail to thee is a salutation recalling classical hymns addressed to a divine being.

Shelley also addresses directly the bird in line 61 when he says:

Teach us, Sprite or Bird, (61)

Shelley's petitions the skylark to "Teach us, Sprite or Bird, /What sweet thoughts are thine" and then narrows the field to, "Teach me half the gladness/ that thy brain must know". These requests reveal Shelley's realization of his own lacking as a poet. The skylark possesses a quality of thought and feeling that escapes the orientation of the mortal auditor. They also reveal, though, the possibility that, in keeping with Shelley's fantasy, the skylark desires the mortal poet.

Thou scorner of the ground.(100)

The skylark's expression exceeds everything, he is also scorner of the ground, he needs others through which to constitute itself in the mortal world of reality. One of the consequences of this archaism is that it elevates the thing being apostrophized, partly because of the association of this pronoun and verb form with the Bible and with the mode of addressing God in Christian prayer.

Anastrophe: A scheme in which normal word order is changed for emphasis.

From the earth thou springest (7)
The blue deep thou wingest (9)
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see As from thy presence showers a rain of melody (33-35)

Tropes

Hyperbole is a trope that is composed of exaggerated words used for emphasis. Shelley used this trope in his poem in the following line:

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd (30)

The word "Heaven" here might be a more generic poetic reference to present the "sky." The sky can't really overflow, but the poet feels like it can overflow.

Allusion is a trope that is composed to refer to a person, event, or place, real or fictitious, or to a work of art. Shelley used such a trope in the following stanza:

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear
Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there (21-25)

The "silver sphere" in line 22 is an allusion to the planet Venus. Venus is visible to all as a bright object in the heavens, and it really stands out at dusk and at dawn.

Synecdoche is a trope that adds to the visual imagery of the poem and enhance the reader's experience. In "To a Skylark" Shelley used the word "cloud" in lines 8 , 13, 29 and 33 where it is a synecdoche because it represents the sky and other planetary objects as a whole that are considered heavenly, divine and transcendental

Metaphor: A trope in which a word or phrase is applied to something which is not literally applicable in order to suggest resemblance. A metaphor compares two objects or things without using the words "like" or "as". In "To a Skylark", Shelley used many metaphors to decorate his lyric as in the following:

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun,
O'er which clouds are bright'ning
Thou dost float and run;
Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun. (11-15)

In these lines Shelley sets the scene for the bird's flight. "Golden lightning" here refers to a sunset, but it also makes us think of crackling electricity and intense, almost scary power. Shelley blends in this stanza a pulchritudinous imagery as "in the golden lightning of the sunken sun, O'er which clouds are brightening" with the aesthetically supreme metaphor of the bird as "an unbodied joy whose race is just begun".

In the following stanza, Shelley used metaphors to convey his image of the bird. In Line 21-22 Shelley compares the shrill sound of the skylark's voice to the light that comes from a "silver sphere" in the sky. The poet here uses a metaphor which represents the light as "keen" (sharp) arrows. Shelley conveys the idea to us that the skylark isn't just a calm little songbird. He used a metaphor to convey his idea by saying that the bird's voice shoots out like blazing sharp arrows of light or like beams from an intense lamp.

Keen as are the arrows
Of that silver sphere,
Whose intense lamp narrows
In the white dawn clear Until we hardly see, we feel that it is there. (21-25)

Shelley used another metaphor in the following line when he says that the thought has light as if thought is a star or electricity.

In the light of thought (37)

Another metaphor used by Shelley is "flood of rapture" in the following lines:

I have never heard
Praise of love or wine
That panted forth a flood of rapture so divine (63-65)

Shelley wants to say that the skylark's song is always overflowing and flooding and sloshing all over the place. Metaphors decorates Shelley's lyric in an amazing way where in the following line the poet compares moonlight to rain. The light turns into a kind of liquid, and the sky overflows with it.

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd (30)

Also he used metaphor in the following line:

As from thy presence showers a rain of melody. (35)

Shelley depicted nature in his poem and allowed us to see colors and hear music. Here's the "rain of melody" that comes down from the bird's "presence" is more beautiful and more wonderful than any actual rain ever existed. Melody here isn't really a rain. Shelley in using such images wanted to make us feel excited, confused and amazed by this skylark's song.

Personification is a trope in which human qualities or abilities are assigned to abstraction or inanimate object. In "To a Skylark", there are many examples of personification, the following is an example:

Pourest thy full heart
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art. (4-5)

Shelley personifies the skylark that it has feelings to pour as a human being. The bird in these lines is personified with emotions which is an important part of the romantic trend. Its emotions flow and flow together with its singing creating an art which is natural. Also Shelley uses personification in the following lines to show how his feelings are connected to the world. No doubt that the cloud has no emotions and cannot be lonely. Here Shelley personifies the cloud by giving it a human emotion.

From one lonely cloud

The moon rains out her beams, and Heaven is overflow'd (29-30)

Personification can be found also in Shelley's poem in the following line:

Makes faint with too much sweet those heavy-winged thieves: (55)

Shelley personifies the winds. He called the winds "thieves." Another personification can be found when Shelley says:

Rain-awaken'd flowers, (58)

The poet personifies flowers by making them wake up in the rain. Flowers don't actually sleep in order to wake up. Shelley proceeds in personifying the bird by making it feel love but not sad satiety that comes with being full of love.

Thou lovest: but ne'er knew love's sad satiety. (80)

Oxymoron is a trope that connects two contradictory terms. The poet used this trope in the following line which contains a crafty linguistic oxymoron with the inclusion of "still":

Higher still and higher (6)

In the last stanza of the poem, Shelley used a distinguished phrase "harmonious madness" which is also an oxymoron in which Shelley connects between madness and harmony. Shelley used the phrase "harmonious madness" referring to the beauty of the skylark's song. One will think how madness will be harmonious. Shelley feels that if he had half the gladness within himself that the skylark must have to sing its song, it would produce an ecstasy he calls "harmonious madness." With this harmonious madness the poet would be able to create such beautiful poetry that the world would listen in awe in the same way that the persona is listening to the skylark.

Teach me half the gladness

That thy brain must know,

Such harmonious madness

From my lips would flow

The world should listen then, as I am listening now. (101-105)

Simile is a trope in which comparison is introduced by using the words "like" or "as". For example:

From the earth thou springest

Like a cloud of fire (7-8)

In the poem "To a Skylark", Shelley compares the skylark to a cloud lit up by the rays of the setting sun at twilight. The purpose of this simile is to emphasize the bird's abstract existence as a quality having the power to purify the human mind.

The poet decorates his poem by using several similes including the following when he says:

Thou dost float and run ;

Like an unbodied joy whose race is just begun (114-15)

Here he compares the skylark to joy. Shelley aims to convey the idea that the bird has found a new life when flying, a life of abstract delight which is possible only by transcending the body and becoming a spirit.

Another simile is when he compares the skylark to the arrows. The skylark is seen momentarily before its swift arrow-like disappearance in the sky. However, its presence can be felt from its song.

Keen as are the arrows (21)

Shelley also compares the skylark to a star in the morning which is present but cannot be seen. The following lines illustrate the idea:

Like a star of Heaven, In the broad day-light Thou art unseen (18-20)

Shelley compares the skylark to a high-born maiden in a tower:

Like a high-born maiden

In a palace-tower,

Soothing her love-laden

Soul in secret hour

With music sweet as love, which overflows her bower: (41-45)

The bird's song is compared to a "high-born maiden" singing far up in her palace tower. The maiden is narcissistically self-pleasing in a protected tower. Just as an aristocratic maiden sings in her secret chamber at midnight to soothe her love-sick mind from high above the ground, the bird, it seems to the poet, is similarly pouring out music. Shelley connects the skylark with sweet love songs.

Shelley also connect the bird with a poet hidden in the light of thought in the following line:

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought (36-37)

In this poem as a poet remains physically absent yet spiritually present in a poem, the skylark remains hidden in the sky while singing. Another line compares the skylark to a hidden natural beauty which is a rose:

Like a rose embower'd
In its own green leaves, (51-52)

The flower's loveliness is cradled and covered up by its leaves. We can't see it, but its beauty still finds a way to reach us.

Imagery: It is an author's use of vivid and descriptive language to add depth to their work. It appeals to human senses to deepen the reader's understanding of the work. In this poem the use of imagery emphasizes the overall personification of nature that the author wishes to create. The poet used several images of light in the poem as the following lines illustrate:

In the golden lightning
Of the sunken sun
O'er which clouds are bright'ning (11-13)
Like a star of Heaven,
In the broad day-light Thou art unseen. . . . (l 18-20)
The moon rains out her beams (30)
From rainbow clouds there flow not
Drops so bright to see
As from thy presence showers a rain of melody (33-35)
Like a Poet hidden
In the light of thought (36-37)
Like a glow-worm golden
In a dell of dew (46-47)

Symbolism

In "To a Skylark" Shelley symbolizes the Skylark as "blithe spirit". He compares the skylark to several things; the skylark is compared to a poet composing, a maiden in love, a glow-worm throwing out its beams of light, a rose in bloom diffusing its scent, and the sound of rain on twinkling grass. Shelley finds the Skylark as the embodiment of all these qualities which can never be found in a single human being. Shelley also symbolizes the human song as "an empty vaunt" comparing it with Skylark's joyful songs. Human beings also sing songs in praise of love to celebrate a wedding or a victory but compared with the Skylark's singing, all human songs would seem to be meaningless. Shelley makes the bird Skylark a symbol of pure, unalloyed and unrestricted happiness. The skylark is a symbol of exultation and spiritual desire.

Tone:

In "To a Skylark" the tone is Romantic and colored with longing and sadness. The poem dives into the longing of the poet's happiness and his enviousness towards the skylark. The poem as well can be indicative of Shelley's life because of his downfalls. Primarily, Shelley was sad because of the bullying he received and he laments how can he achieve happiness without all these rascal comments. Secondly, he asks the guidance of the skylark to teach him to fully achieve happiness in his love for philosophy, even though his ideals are strongly opposed by the clergy in that time. Shelley's choice of words shows his love of nature, love of beauty, imagination, and wearied sadness.

Rhetorical question is a trope in which the leading questions are asked is called rhetorical question. For example:

What objects are the fountains Of thy happy strain?
What fields, or waves, or mountains?
What shapes of sky or plain?
What love of thine own kind? (71-75)

II. Conclusion

"To a Skylark" is one of the greatest works of all time. The theme of the poem is fulfillment and through the richness of images, the poet has prolonged its fulfillment. It is most satisfying in thought and expression. This poem is rich in sensuous imagery. Shelly uses the excellent imagery, literary devices, and wonderful writing skill that he is known for. Shelly first explains with great detail, metaphors, and imagery the

scene which he is experiencing. Then he attempts to compare, using parallelism, metaphors, and similes, the skylark to other beautiful creations upon the earth. Next, Shelly asks the bird for insight to his eternal bliss and superior knowledge, that he may tell the world of it. Then, Shelly explains a fault in man, using the "things more true and deep" that the skylark has. Finally, Shelly praises the skylark again, and pleads that it teach him some of its gladness, that he may pass it on to humanity. This poem shows that Shelley possesses all the romantic traits-love of nature, beauty and imagination. This poem is rich in sensuous imagery..

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