



Stylistic Analysis of Ode to a Nightingale: Exposing its Modern Poetic Essence

Saira Abbas¹

Ali Hussain Bin Sadiq²

Corresponding Author: sairaabbas7212@gmail.com

Abstract

The current research delves into an extensive stylistic analysis of John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale," leveraging both stylistic and intertextual analysis frameworks. By incorporating theories proposed by Julia Kristeva and Ivor Armstrong Richards, the research explores the intricate correlation of Keats' poetic discourse with modern sensibilities. Utilizing a "Close Reading Model" for stylistic analysis, the examination scrutinizes Keats' utilization of figurative language and word choices, unveiling his connection to contemporary world. Moreover, the intertextual analysis section highlights themes and their resonance with modern discourse, exposing Keats' adeptness at weaving literary devices such as, personification, symbols, imagery, repetition, and allusion throughout the poem. This investigation unveils a remarkable amalgamation of literary elements, enriching our understanding of Keats' enduring contribution to literature.

Keywords: Ode to Nightingale, stylistic analysis, figurative language, close reading model, symbols, intertextual analysis

Introduction

Modern world fundamentally pertains to the contemporary period of time. It reveals a contrast with previous periods of time. Time is moving forward and things are getting change. Now, we are living in modern world and using modern discourse. It is within the context that "Ode to Nightingale" written by Jon Keats detains a significant place. Undoubtedly, it is a timeless piece of art. Even, after couple of centuries. This poem not only contains the characteristics of romantic age but it reveals numerous overwhelming characters of modern period of time. These features exhibit its correlation with modern world through stylistic analysis. Stylistic analysis plays a crucial role in the field of literary studies. It bestows a systematic method to explore underlying rigorous meanings and relationships in the text. It involves examining the linguistic and literary elements within a text to understand its style. This includes analyzing choices in vocabulary, sentence structure, tone, figurative language, and other stylistic devices used by the author to convey meaning and create a specific artistic effect. It helps uncover patterns, nuances, and the author's unique voice in a piece of writing (Ken, 2002).

What makes current poem significant? Why it has a rigorous correlation with modern discourse? These are the queries that have energized the current study, where researchers aim to highlight modern features especially, escapism, environmental concerns, superficiality and solitude, conducting stylistic analysis, current research aims to reveal modern themes in the poem that

¹MPhil Scholar, DLC,UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.

² PhD, Assistant Professor, DLC, UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.

contrives it a modern poem. Consequently, current study is not a synchronous research but it is a unique study, provides a novel perspective to literature and reshapes the perceptions of readers regarding this poem.

The focal point of current research is to analyze Keats' poem "Ode to Nightingale" from a stylistic perspective, highlights how literary devices and word choices employed in this poem make it a master piece of modern world. Moreover, current research uncovers the embedded modern themes and their relationship with modern discourse through intertextual analysis. Intertextual theory caters extraordinary tools for exploring correlation between texts and modern discourse. It provides deeper comprehension that how a text involves with modern discourse.

There are several reasons because of that current study is significant from other researches. Firstly, it articulates a gap in literature, which is an exploration of correlation between this poem and modern world through stylistic analysis. Secondly, current research uncovers underlying modern themes and their affinity with modern discourse through intertextual analysis.

Current research not only addresses a gap in existing literature but also bestows a novel insight to reconstruct the apprehension of the readers about this magnum opus. By investigating the symbiotic correlation between "Ode to a Nightingale" and the modern world, this study guarantees to enhance scholarly discourse and regenerate the conceptualization of the reader regarding this poem.

Research Objectives

Current study organizes few objectives to unearthed stylistic perspectives from "Ode to Nightingale". The following objectives ascertain the attention of the study:

- i. To explore figurative language that articulates Keats' affinity with modern world.
- ii. To scrutinize themes that show Keats' attachment with modern discourse.

Research Questions

Current work is ardent to explore the answers of the subsequent questions:

- i. How do the themes in "Ode to a Nightingale" serve to reflect John Keats' affinity with modern discourse ?
- ii. Does the figurative language in "Ode to a Nightingale" reflect its relevance to contemporary discussions and concerns regarding the human experience in the modern world?

Significance of the Study

The literature on the poetic work of John Keats displays a remarkable research gap because it highlights Keats' unique vision and discriminated characteristics. Precursory, researches have explored various perspectives of his matchless style, especially his extraordinary creativity, inclination towards romantic style and features, subjective, and contradiction with romantic conventions (Von Bülow and Simpson, 2022; Alquraidhy, 2022; Ziouch, 2022; Al-Jumaili, 2020; Marks, 2022; Al-Jumaili, 2018). Although, despite if these rigorous researches on his work, there

is deficiency of focus is given to the contrast betwixt romanticism and realism, as focused by Lau (2022). In addition to, the essentiality of negative capability in Keats's poetic work, as accentuated by Von Bülow and Simpson (2023) needs further scrutinization. Moreover, Jin (2021) has discussed Keats's brilliance to amalgamate both approaches, romantic and realistic in his work, more attention is required in this domain. Furthermore, Saira and Aqsa (2023) have explored that "Ode to nightingale" has unbending relationship with post colonial discourse, this area of research needs more exploration.

However, in Keats' there is a research gap because there is no availability of any study on correlation between "Ode to Nightingale" and modern discourse. It can magnifies readers apprehension about Keats' notion and its contribution to modern discourse. Consequently, immediate research has potential to contribute in the fields of stylistic analysis, modern discourse and Keats studies, it also caters unseen insight and relevance of this poem with modern discourse.

Literature Review

John Keats is widely calibrated for his unsurpassed style of writing, which is an coalition of symbols, dominant themes, and figurative language in his chronicles. That is why, Zia's (2017) study claims that "Ode to Nightingale" is an unmatched marvel in the casket of John Keats and considers it is an emblem of novelty and creativity. Whereas, Zia's (2022) stylistic analysis reveals that this poem has potential to discriminates itself from Keats' initial compositions. Howbeit, in his study a scrupulous analysis of numerous levels especially, pragmatic, phonological, semantic, and graphological, provides evidence of Keats ascendancy, delineate that Keats's style of writing is different from his genre, discriminates him from his peers. Similarly, Khan's (2014) research also considers Keats distinguish from his peers because of the concept of negative capability. Conversely, Hussain's (2022) research provides evidence and categorized Keats as an embodiment of romantic age along with his typical perspective of sensuality in his compositions which is a conventional feature of romantic period. Contrary, Al-Jumaili's (2020) examination considers that literary brilliance of John Keats is noticeable because of his distinctive and unsurpassed application of symbolic investigation, significantly in the perspective of obliterating conventional notions. This feature of his work distinguish him from his contemporaries. Robinson's (2022) study vocalizes that John Keats is an incarnate romantic era, he exhibits his inclination towards romantic style and technique. Keats intentionally eludes from typical literary style and eschews themes of class difference, politics, and morality. His writings are based on the exploration of beauty that assumes as the characteristic of his era which was romantic age. Moreover, the inspection of Ziouch (2022) accentuates that the beginning of this marvel, "Ode to Nightingale" discloses the existence of vigorous themes of romanticism, including nature, mortality, and transient. Though, with the progression of the poem, poet converts these themes in his own perspective, rather than just attaching with the conventional romantic ideals. Al-Jumaili's (2018) analysis strives to contrive a relationship between Keats and romantic age. In this regard, two theories have applied, the first one is Conceptual Integration Theory and the second is Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Whereas, Alquraidhy's (2022) study repudiate this perspective and pays attention to he concept of negative capability, which highlights a rigorous contrast with romantic period because this concept had capacity to break typical conventions of romantic era. However, romantic age is a combination of imagination and idealization.

In recent scrutinization, Von Bülow and Simpson (2022) have excavated that the concept of negative capability of John Keats detaches him from glorification and develop Keats' affinity with pungent realities of life which is not an element of romanticism. Furthermore, the findings of Jin (2021) dispenses the evidence that concept of realism is also exist in the compositions of John Keats, denotes that he exposed an overwhelming coalition of romanticism and realism in his master pieces. In addition to, "Ode to Nightingale" is also a chronology because it highlights the realities and facts of human experiences. In this poem, in stead of escapism Keats stresses on the need of confronting reality, as articulated by Marks (2022).

Lau's (2022) study delineates that "Ode to Nightingale" reveals a disparity between realism and romanticism. Through this poem, he depicts a string of squabbles betwixt delusion and reality, gratification and aches, persistence and continuum, autonomy and incarceration, illusion and actuality. Similarly, in a Chinese research this dissimilarity further investigated and claimed that the poem based on two contrastive poles. One pole dark and other is white. Dark pole emblemizes tedious and dullness. On the other hand, white side typifies gratitude and excitement (Salah et al., 2022). Additionally, Keats possessed a contrastive approach with his contemporaries and uplifted novelty over traditional romantic styles of writing. This poetic marvel numerous themes and literary devices bestow newness to his work, such as the use of intricate metaphors that exhibit his unique style of writing.

Saha's (2022) analysis vocalizes that this poem unveils a consolidation of conventional and postmodern elements. Transience and morality depicting conventional themes whereas, immortality and negative capabilities highlight postmodern perspectives. Likewise, a contemporary study has unearthed that "Ode to nightingale is not only a poem which is belonged to romantic era but it is also a post colonial marvel. This poem is an emblem of post colonial period of time because it is constantly annihilating convention notions of romantic age and emphasizing numerous features of post colonial period (Saira & Aqsa, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Stylistic analysis bestows a theoretical framework to gain complete comprehension about text through analyzing the formal and linguistics elements of the discourse. It also provides apprehension about literary and figurative impacts of the text. The focus of this approach revolves around stylistic device including, repetition, imagery, irony, allusion, symbols, metaphors. Moreover, it also highlights hidden diligent meanings and encourages the vocalization of the text. With the help of this perspective, it is quite easily to identify aesthetic elements of the discourse. Specifically, stylistic analysis supplies a systematic method for the examination of intricacies of discourse and textual forms, and accelerates our comprehension about its artistic and expressive significance.

Close Reading framework is a widely acknowledged perspective to scrutinizing stylistic features of discourse. Fundamentally, this approach is related to methodology that is employed to analyze text. It explores all underlying aspects whether related to the structure or content of the text. It provides readers in depth comprehension of the text, pays attention to patterns, along with nuances, and subtleties that might not be instantly apparent. In this process, multiple readings of the text are required to unveil the embedded layers of meaning and to encourage craftsmanship

of the author. Close reading emphasizes readers to explore numerous queries regarding text, focus on its cultural as well as historical context in which it was written, and it also highlights the ways in which different elements of the text interact with and influence each other. Through close reading, the researchers can investigate the textual features, language choices, literary devices, and themes from a text. Moreover, it bestows readers a richer comprehension about significance and implications of the text. It is not only about the interpretation of words on the page, but also about the deep indulgence with the text to expose its rigorous embedded meanings and perspective. It engages deeply with the text to uncover its deeper meanings and insights.

Research Methodology

In the paradigm of qualitative research, descriptive research aims to scrutinize the stylistic features, figurative language, intertextual features, and themes from "Ode to Nightingale". In this regard, online resources were picked up to coalesce in the study. The transcription of the poem was collected from Wikipedia. For the purpose of data collection, the researchers anticipated to directly copy the transcriptions of poem. Additionally, they pasted the transcription in the word's document and analyzed.

Analysis and Discussion

Current study presents an exploration of John Keats' "Ode to a Nightingale" in two sections. The first section, "Close Reading Model" examines themes and symbols that reveal Keats' attachment with modern discourse. Whereas, the second section highlights figurative language that reflects Keats' engagement in modern world through intertextual analysis.

Themes in "Ode to a Nightingale" serve to reflect John Keats' affinity with modern discourse

Keats caters the concept of escaping from the bitter realities of life with the help of imagination and nature. These themes contrive a correlation between Ode to Nightingale and modern discourse, which is enriched with the concerns of mental health, mindfulness and inner peace between chaos. Keats delineates his anticipation to get rid from the bitter realities of life and identifies a solution in this regard which is imaginative flight. As he asserts,

*"Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not charioted by Bacchus and his pards,"*

Theme of nature plays a rigorous role in this poem and fabricates an attachment between the "Ode to Nightingale" and modern discourse. This theme articulates modern environmentalist movements that stress on the significance of natural world that is essential for the nourishment of emotions and spirit. Keats appreciates the constant beauty of nature, paying attention to its power and strength against human trespass. As he claims,

*"Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;"*

Moreover, he highlights the nature of human existence that is ephemeral. This theme fabricates affinity with mortality, essence and impermanence of life that are the features of modern discourse. As he describes,

"Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;"

In addition to, "Ode to Nightingale" scrutinizes the metaphorical themes of intoxication and consciousness. To highlight this theme Keats employs imagery of 'wine', which is elucidated metaphorically. This theme reverberates with modern discourse because it highlights the usage of substance, shuffled state of mind and strives for transcendental experiences. As he delineates:

"That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,"

However, Keats highlights human condition of adversities and turmoil, that can be elucidated in the perspective of modern environmental worries especially, pollution and climate change.

"The weariness, the fever, and the fret"

Furthermore, he demonstrates the sense of melancholy, revealing the deprivation and loss of natural beauty. This theme resonates him with modern discourse. Keats articulates,

"Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget"

Figurative language in "Ode to a Nightingale" reflect its relevance to contemporary discussions and concerns regarding the human experience in the modern world

Figurative devices in "Ode to a Nightingale" demonstrate its coalition with modern world. Fundamentally, In this composition nightingale symbolizes as an idealized type of beauty, which is evoking a contrast with superficial perspectives of modern world. It is metaphorically depicted as immortal, contrasting mortality, exposing the perspective of modern world. As he elucidate,

"Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!"

After applying "personification" he bestows human attributes to the bird or other natural characteristics to encourages the contrast between the originality of nature and superficiality of modern world . As he highlights,

*"Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"*

The application of repetition in phrases such as "forlorn" and "fade away" indicating towards sense of melancholy and longing for the speaker. This repetition develops a correlation with modern world.

Moreover, the repetition of "aches" and "pains" stresses articulator`s emotional and physical distress, reflecting the experience of anxiety and stress of modern world. As he demonstrate,

*"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk"*

Whereas, repetition of "away" creates a sense of urgency and longing, reflecting the modern desire to escape from the pressures of daily life and find solace in nature or imagination. He vocalizes,

"Away! away! for I will fly to thee"

Alluding to immortality, Keats invokes timeless themes that contrast with the ephemeral nature of modern discourse.

After applying " personification" he bestows human attributes to the bird or other natural characteristics to encourages the contrast between the natural originality and superficiality of modern world . As he narrates,

*"Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"*

Likewise, the repetition of "Where" encourages the contrast betwixt youth and old age, also, pays attention to the inexorability of mortality. He elucidates,

*"Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;"*

Similarly, repetition of "Forlorn" and "toll" focuses speaker's perception of insulation and disconnection, articulating modern sentiments about isolation and existential angst. As Keats delineates,

*"Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"*

After applying " irony" Keats is striving to highlight existence of stress that progress towards detached emotional state, despite apparent presence rich with vitality. As he describes,

*"My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk"*

In the contemporary world, social media prefer to flaunt sharpen images of prosperity and pleasure because people listen groans of other human beings in ironic manners. It reveals the underlying struggles and pressure of modern man. Keats vocalizes,

*"The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;"*

In addition to, Keats ironically demonstrates in the context of modern world, where technological developments and social relatedness usually leads towards solitude and disconnection between one another. As he articulates,

*'Forlorn! the very word is like a bell,
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!"*

Similarly, Keats employed "irony" to display superficial forms of interaction in modern world. People frequently prefer virtual communication because they have not time to sit with each other and contrive a rigorous bond with each other. He demonstrates,

"Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;"

Comparably, repetition of "sit" and "hear" emphasizes monotony and dejection related to human life, anticipating the modern experience of human suffering, suggesting the modern experience of emotional exhaustion and sympathy.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, "Ode to Nightingale," is a multidimensional poetic work of John Keats that travels beyond the time and has relevance with modern world. Through the utilization of modern theme, he highlights his affinity with modern discourse. Moreover, his utilization of figurative language including, symbols, repetition, imagery, irony, personification, and metaphor reveal his engagement with modern world. Consequently, Keats' attachment with modern world highlights the significance of this poem in contemporary literature. Additionally, this poem works as an example that how discourse can be employed to examine complex concepts and contribute to our comprehension about modern world.

For future researchers, current study bestows a framework for investigating the intricacies of Romantic poetry and its involvement with modern world as well as discourse. Future researchers may continue to examine the rhetorical devices and concepts embedded in this poem and employ different models for analysis that sharpen readers comprehension about modern world. Additionally, the use of several theoretical frameworks, such as critical discourse analysis or feminist theory, it could offer novel aspects into the poem and its affiliation with immense cultural, political and social issues. Overall, "Ode to a Nightingale" leaves affluent and significant work for literature, provides insights to peep into the perplexities of the human beings and contribute to literature in reconstructing readers comprehension about contemporary world

References

- Abbas, S., & Atta, A. (2023). Deconstructing Dualities and Challenging Conventions: A Critical Discourse Analysis of John Keats' "Ode to Nightingale" as a Postmodernist Manifesto on Art, Nature, Mortality and Existential Consciousness. *TAHQEEQI JAREEDA*, 7(1), 1-23. Retrieved from <https://scholar.google.com/scholar>
- Al-Jumaili, Y. A. (2018). *The Representation of Negative Mental States in the Poetry of John Keats: A Cognitive Approach to His Metaphors of Depression* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield).
- Al-Jumaili, Y. A. (2020). The representations of nothingness as a place in Keats's poetry. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 59-62. <https://doi.org/10.14500/kujhss.v3n1y2020.pp59-62>
- Allen, G. (2011). *Intertextuality*. Routledge. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203829455>

- Ayça, V. M. (2019). Radical landscapes of RF Langley's poetry: a stylistic analysis of "To a Nightingale". *Dil Dergisi*, 170(2), 54-71. DOI: 10.33690/dilder.580756
- Beg, M. S. (2022). Passion with Profession: Exploring John Keats as a Poet-Physician. *The Creative Launcher*, 7(6), 100-109. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.53032/tcl.2022.7.6.11>
- Hussain, S. (2022). How Does He Develop His Themes? A Sensuous Analysis of John Keats' Selected Poems. *Strength for Today and Bright Hope for Tomorrow Volume 22: 6 June 2022 ISSN 1930-2940*, 120.
- Jin, L. (2021). *Romanticism and Presentness: A Study of Keats, Hazlitt, and Schlegel*. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong).
- Keats, J. (1899). *The complete poetical works of John Keats*. Houghton, Mifflin Company. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.pk/books/content?id=1uRaAAAAMAAJ&pg=PR15&img=1&zoom=3&hl=en&sig=ACfU3U1uQt9tFPesBAOqU9mPEWE6dPa3Mg&w=1025>
- Keats, N. C. W. R. (2019). that strong excepted soul. *Keats's Negative Capability: New Origins and Afterlives*, 60(6), Retrieved from <https://books.google.com.pk/books/publisher/content?id=yMmEAAAQBAJ&pg=PA60&img=1&zoom=3&hl=en&ots=xP1E89oEtr&sig=ACfU3U0r2qVjquWopawyTtoyXODq3uMcsg&w=1280>
- Khan, A. B., Zehra, I., & Hafsa, G. (2014). Stylistic analysis of the poem "Ode to Nightingale" by John Keats. *International Journal of Research*, 1(9), 1101-1114.
- Lau, B. (2022). Keats, the Novel, and the 1820 Volume: Romance vs. Reality, Facts vs. Imagination. *European Romantic Review*, 33(2), 195-212. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10509585.2022.2043581>
- Poetry. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 59-62. Retrieved from <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3441-8037>
- Robinson, J. C. (2022). Modern Experimental Poets Reading Keats: "Misers of Sound and Syllable". In *Keats's Reading/Reading Keats: Essays in Memory of Jack Stillinger* (pp. 273-298). Cham: Springer International Publishing. Retrieved from <http://erdman.blakearchive.org/#470>
- Roe, N. (2021). John Keats, medicine, and poetry. *The Lancet*, 397(10278), 962-963. Retrieved from [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)00450-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)00450-5)
- Sikka, S. (1998). On the truth of beauty: Nietzsche, Heidegger, Keats. *The Heythrop Journal*, 39(3), 243-263. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2265.00076>
- Stephenson, K. (2002). *What to listen for in rock: A stylistic analysis*. Yale University Press. <https://books.google.com.pk/books?id=NZQVpFzLQAUC&lpg=PR5&ots=YWLjQIJO0K&dq=stylistic%20analysis&lr&pg=PR5#v=onepage&q=stylistic%20analysis&f=false>



- Tariq, M. (2018). Style, stylistics and stylistic analysis: A re-evaluation of the modern-day rhetorics of literary discourse. *International Journal of English Research*, 4(2), 46-50. <http://www.englishjournals.com/>
- Von Bülow, C., & Simpson, P. (2022). *Negative Capability in Leadership Practice: Implications for Working in Uncertainty*. Springer Nature. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-95768-1>
- Zia, H., & Zia, M. S. (2017). A stylistic analysis of “Ode to A Nightingale” by John Keats. *International journal of scientific and research publications*, 7(8), 694-704.
- Ziouch, A. D. (2022). John Keats’“Ode to a Nightingale” & “To Autumn”: An Ecocritical Inquiry. Retrieved from <http://dspace.univ-guelma.dz/jspui/handle/123456789/13605>