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Article:	**An application of Derrida's Deconstruction Theory on a Stylistically Motivated Poem by Robert Frost**
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ABSTRACT

The current study has primarily two aims; first one is to analyze the poem "The Road Not Taken" stylistically on different linguistic levels; Morphological, Syntactical, Semantic & Phonological and the second aim is to apply Derrida's deconstruction theory on to the selected poem to decode the implicit meanings of the poem. The study will also explore the contextual and hidden meanings by working on word, sentence and meaning levels. The analysis concluded that the poem is stylistically rich and implies a lot of implicit contexts.

Keywords: Semantics, Phonological level, words, syntax, deconstruction and devices

Introduction

Robert Frost was an American poet who had written many of the poems. He was one of the best poets amongst many literary figures of his time. Robert Frost was known for his great literary artistic pieces with linguistically and stylistically rich data. Some of his great writings included Birches, After Apple Picking, Mending Wall, and The Road Not Taken. The Road Not Taken is a poem with much stylistic potential to create effect in the minds of the readers. This poem can be analyzed stylistically as poet tries his best to attract the readers aesthetically, linguistically and stylistically.

Foregrounding is a theory which creates effect in the minds of the readers and which is specifically motivated to meet the literary-aesthetic purposes (Chemodurova, 2021). It is a theory which is applied in the poems to force the attention of the readers. It violates text which refers to 'the deviation from a norm' and 'repetition' is also called 'parallelism.' The researcher will apply this theory in the poem 'The Road Not Taken' written by Robert Frost because the poem is stylistically and aesthetically flourished and will highlight many hidden motives and meanings of the writer, for the audience.

Literary devices are used by poets to make readers feel aesthetic pleasure. A known poet always uses 'a poetic license' which is an authority enjoyed by a poet who can deviate grammatically, syntactically, semantically, morphologically, and phonologically. Robert Frost also deviated from the set norms at different levels. He used the poetic license at both levels of 'parallelism' and 'deviation' in order to break the set norms and make his readers feel aesthetic pleasure. This poem has four stanzas. Each stanza has five lines. A Quintain, sometimes called a Quintet, is a poem or stanza with five lines and as is the case that the stylistic analysis is that investigates how the poem is written rather than its subject matter.

Research Questions

1. How deviation and parallelism make the writer meet his ends at phonological, grammatical, semantic and syntactic levels?
2. How the theory of deconstruction helps in deconstructing the implicit meanings of the poem?

Objectives

1. To explore the poem at phonological, grammatical, semantic and phonological levels by the use of deviation and parallelism
2. To analyze the poem in 'Deconstructionist' context

Phonological level

Rhyme Scheme

Rhyme scheme refers to an order followed by a poet to make words rhyme at the end of a line which plays a great role to make items foregrounded and attracts the attention of the

readers. In this poem Robert Frost followed a scheme called 'ABAAB' rhyme scheme e.g. he says,

A- Two roads diverged in a yellow wood

B- And sorry I could not travel both

A- And be one traveler, long I stood

A-And looked down one as far as I could

B-To where it bent in the **undergrowth**

The next three stanzas follow the same order in which words rhyme to create effect which is 'ABAAB' rhyme scheme. The words which rhyme are: 'fair/wear/there', 'claim/same', 'lay/day/way', 'black/back', 'sigh/I/By' , 'hence/difference.'

Rhythm

Rhythm is based on the equal lapse between one stressed syllable and another. There could be rhythmic versification of 'stressed-unstressed' or 'unstressed-stressed' which is constructed to create a 'beat' in order to catch the readers' attention and meet the aesthetic purposes. Here the rhythm is iambic which refers to that there is a voiceless syllable before a voiced or loud syllable e.g. **'Two roads diverged in a yellow wood'** here 'the beat' can be observed properly.

Meter

Meter is the study of versification. It refers to the sound patterns i.e. how to bring musicality in the verses. The interplay between mathematical pattern such as meter and rhythm is called versification. In this poem, each line is four 'feet' called tetrameter. Feet contain stressed and unstressed syllables, such as in this poem each line has eight syllables which follow 'unstressed-stressed' scheme which makes it '**iambic tetrameter**.' For example, **I took the one less traveled by**.'

I	Unstressed
Took	Stressed
The	Unstressed
One	Stressed
Less	Unstressed
Tra	Stressed
Veled	Unstressed
By	Stressed

Alliteration

Alliteration is a device which deals at phonological level of a poem in relation to stylistics. Alliteration is a device used by poets when they deviate from the phonological set norms of the language. It is a device where words begin with the letters belong to the same sounds group. In this poem 'alliteration' is used as a device to force the attention of the readers. There are some examples where the usage of this device can be seen e.g. in second stanza of this poem, line 3; we can see the repetition of consonant sounds: 'Because it was grassy and **wanted wear.'** Similarly we can again see the usage of same device in the third stanza of poem, line 3; when a poet says: 'Oh I kept the **first for** another day.' He uses a consonant sound 'F' in the beginning of words twice.

Assonance

Assonance is a device where the vowels words are repeated. It is also a kind of alliteration but it just focuses on the repetition of vowel sounds and not consonant sounds. A repetition of vowels occurs in stressed syllables. We can also analyze the usage of this device in this poem as well. In first stanza, line 3-5; poet repeated the vowels again and again e.g. '**A**nd be one tr**a**veler'/ 'And l**oo**ked down one as far as I c**ou**ld'/ 'To wh**e**re it b**e**nt…..' In second stanza, line1-4; '**A**s just **a**s…'/ 'It w**a**s grassy and w**a**nted wear'/ '**a**s for th**a**t p**a**ssing there.' In third stanza poet again uses this device in line 4; when he says, '**I** doubted if **I** should ever come back.' In last stanza of a poem poet says in line 2; 'Somewhere **a**ges and **a**ges hence.' In the line 4; poets depicts, '**A**nd that h**a**s made all the difference.'

Cacophony

Cacophony is when some harsh sounds are used by some poet. Robert Frost also used some sounds to depict harshly e.g. In first stanza, line 3; 'And be one **t**raveler…' / 'And having perhaps the be**tt**er claim / I **t**ook the one less **t**ravelled by.'

Consonance

Consonance refers to the repetition of consonants sounds in the line which makes poem rhythmic. This device is used in this poem as well e.g. the first stanza, line 1-2; 'Two **r**oads dive**r**ged in a yello**w w**ood'/ and sorry I could no**t t**ravel both.' In second stanza poet uses this device while he says, '**T**hen **t**ook the other/ '**w**anted **w**ear'/ **Th**ough as far **th**at the passing **th**ere.' In the first line of third stanza poet uses again this device saying, 'And bo**th th**at morning'/ line 3-4; 'I kept the **f**irst **f**or…'/ 'Yet kno**w**ing ho**w w**ay leads on to **w**ay.' In the last stanza, line 1; poet says, 'I shall be telling **th**is wi**th** a sigh' and repeats consonants.

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia refers to the 'words sounds' which are closely related to the noise or the pronunciation of actual sounds of an object a poet means to depict or represent. As we know that the **'sigh'** does sound like poet is meant to depict or describe as a sigh is breath pushed by our lungs. He says, '**I shall be telling this with a sigh.'**

Semantic level

Simile

Simile is a comparison of two things unrelated to each other. The comparison between two unrelated things has significance because of a meaning to a great degree, understanding and the foregrounded aspects as well. Simile is a semantic device which makes use of 'like', 'as' and 'such as' in order to do a comparison. Robert Frost also makes use of this device e.g. when a poet looks at second road as a second choice he says, 'Then took the other, **as just as fair**' he makes use of 'as just as' to employ a device of simile. Though two roads are not too dissimilar but narrator describes their difference in such a way seems he is making a choice. He says, '**two roads diverged in a yellow wood**' but he has to take one of them. While doing a comparison between two roads or two choices he makes use of **'as just as.'**

Metaphor

Metaphor refers to the comparison between the objects which are not related to one another but have something in common. In other words two different objects having something similar refer to a metaphor. This is related to the semantic potential of the words to create effect in the minds of the readers i.e. one subject is implied to be another to draw a comparison. The four stanzas of this poem have metaphoric expressions when poet says '**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood**' actually compares the choices to take or decide one of them. The comparison is when he says that one road is '**grassy and wanted wear**' and another one is which he says, ''**I took the less travelled by.**' By doing comparison he wants to tell the readers that he is going to adopt the way not followed by the majority of the people and then he makes his readers aware of that less traveled way, '**That has made all the difference.**' Nature is also used as a metaphor as in the beginning the woods are yellow when he says, '**Yellow wood**'

Metonymy

Metonymy is a figure of speech that consists of things or names which represent something or someone else with which it has associations e.g. the white house for US president. In this poem Frost makes use of this device when he has two roads and he has to go through one of them. The roads actually represent the choices. As he says '**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood**' so these two roads represent the two choices which he says, '**I took the one less travelled by**' when he says that he has taken the road less traveled, he actually represents to the path or choice which is usually not taken by the majority of the people.

Symbolism

Symbols are used in the poem to create effect that the implied or concealed meanings have more significance than the words lexically or literally oriented. Symbols refer to an object or education. For example, in this poem Frost symbolizes the two roads. They are not just two concrete paths to walk through but they are the choice, a poet has to take one of the. Roads symbolize the choices. As he says, '**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.**' At the end poet says, '**I took the less travelled by**'/ '**That has made all the difference**' symbolizes that he wanted to take a choice which is correct morally and travelled by very few people.

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is used in the poems by the poets to create an emphasis in order to catch the attention of the readers. Robert Frost also emphasizes when he says **'because it was grassy and wanted wear.'** This is an example of hyperbole because poet is trying to put an emphasis to catch the readers' attention. As we know that a person can't wear a road but still poet is trying to give exaggerated effect in order to make readers attentive and create stylistic impact.

Imagery

Imagery refers to the creation of the mental images in the minds of the readers through the usage of the words by a poet. Imagery is not limited to the sense of sight but it also includes sense of touch, smell, taste, and hearing. Imagery is very important in this poem. The major focus of a poet seems to be visual i.e. to visualize the readers by telling them the sceneries e.g. the path or road in forest is yellow, grassy, and fair when he says, 'Two roads diverged in a **yellow** wood'/ 'Then took the other as just as **fair**'/ 'Because it was **grassy** and wanted wear. There is also an attempt of a poet to make sense of auditory sensation as well when he sighs as 'I shall be telling this truth with a **sigh**.' The words used like '**Forest**', '**Path**' also depict the imagery.

Irony

Irony is when there is a contradiction between the actual words and implied meaning i.e. the word and lexical meaning are contradictory. Irony is used by the poets to emphasize and attract the readers' attention. In this poem Robert Frost, being ironic, attempts to attract the readers. Irony can be seen when poet depicts a literary piece in a way when there is a multiple importance of the roads. As he says, **'Two roads diverged in a yellow wood'/ And sorry I could not travel both'** Poet doesn't consider the roads as just a concrete way to go through but the roads are actually the matter of choices. Poet goes the way less travelled by is also ironic as he says, **'I took the less travelled by'.**

Paradox

Paradox is the usage of contradictory concepts together by a poet. These concepts seek the importance when they are placed together, a reader can't understand the implied meaning at first glance but feels the significance of the paradox when comes to know what a poet expects a reader to infer. In this poem there are two roads equally fair e.g. '**Two roads diverged in a yellow wood.'** but the situation becomes paradoxical when It comes to the choice of a poet and he chooses a road which is less travelled by e.g. **'I took the one less travelled by'** / **'And that has made all the difference.'**

Personification

Personification refers to attributing the animate qualities to inanimate things or objects. As the road is '**grassy**' and which refers to an inanimate object but when a poet says that it has '**the better claim**' actually refers to the choice and attention of an animate object, a poet. We can consider it as an example of personification.

Grammatical level

Morphological level

Study of words and its structure is known as morphology. Morphological deviation is to deviate from a set norm morphologically. As we know that words are formed from the words. Inflection is when the grammatical category of words changes e.g. teacher is a noun and becomes verb 'teach' just because of the slight change of 'er' to 'es.' Various morphemes used in the given poem are listed below:

FREE	BOUND	ROOT	PREFIX	SUFFIX
Two	Road**s**	**Road**s	**Under**growth	Road**s**
In	Diverg**ed**	**Diverg**ed	**Some**where	Diverg**ed**
A	Travel**er**	**Travel**er		Travel**er**
Yellow	Look**ed**	**Look**ed		Look**ed**
Wood	Want**ed**	**Want**ed		Want**ed**
And	Leav**es**	**Leav**es		Leav**es**
Sorry	Trodd**en**	**Trodd**en		trodd**en**
I	Lead**s**	**Lead**s		Lead**s**
Could	doubt**ed**	**Doubt**ed		Doubt**ed**
Not	Tell**ing**	**Tell**ing		Tell**ing**
Travel	Know**ing**	**Know**ing		Know**ing**
Both	Travel**ed**	**Travel**ed		Travel**ed**
And				
Be				
One				
Long				
Stood				
And				
Down				
One				
As				
Far				
To				
Where				
It				
Bent				
In				
The				
Then				
Took				
The				
Other				

Grassy				
Wear				
And				
Both				
That				
Morning				

Syntactic deviation

Syntactic deviation is when a poet deviates from a set and structured syntactic norm set by the natives. Here we can see that Robert Frost uses a poetic license and breaks the set and structured pattern of English which is S.V.O when he says, **long I stood** as normally be said as **I stood long.**

Application of 'Deconstruction' theory coined by Derrida

Deconstruction is a theory which emphasizes on the focused reading to assess or evaluate that text has multiple and contradictory meanings which differ rather than a unity or a whole (Norris, 2003). Meanings could be different but they have potential to condition other meanings in the text. A philosopher named as Derrida contributed to create this theory and it is profoundly influenced by him. Derrida argued that thoughts are created in terms of binary oppositions (Ahmad, 2020), e.g. black/white, male/female, girl/boy and cause/effect. He further argues that these binaries are created to have an effect of superiority and inferiority. He doesn't favor to make boundaries between these natural binary oppositions.

Derrida rejects the stance of structuralism that signs create a role in literature rather he focuses on the role of multiple meanings in a text (Fox, 2014). It is a poststructuralist theory based on the 'key notes' of Derrida. Structuralism largely believes on the structures in a text (Darkins, 2017), which argues that text is interpreted by experienced readers through structures. It believes in the rules of literature which is called 'grammar of literature.' Derrida is well known for his development of a theory 'Deconstruction' in 1960s. Deconstruction believes that language is inadequate to convey a message of one who wants to communicate therefore, there is a need to deconstruct a language to know where and how the confusions are created (Spivak, 2012). It focuses on to find the intended or hidden meanings in the text. It argues that meanings can be understood in terms of metaphysics (Biesta, 2009), which is to prefer the presence over the absence. It further argues that speech is primary and essential to language and not writing because written words represent spoken language or speech. Metaphysics is preferred which refers to the assumption that binary opposition make sense to get the intended meanings. As we know that Saussure splits the language and writing as different systems (McNamara, 2012). Derrida disagrees and says that speech and writing are not two different systems but writing is a true representation of a speech (Powell, 2000). He says that speech is essential to language (Dastur, 2006). Derrida argues that the meanings can be inferred synchronically within the language and diachronically between the contemporary and historical definitions of language (Strozier, 2012).

Deconstruction views language as ambiguous (Figal, 2005), where ideologies are programmed without the core understandings of them. Similarly, language is ambiguous in the poem 'The Road Not Taken' written by Robert Frost. It mainly focuses on the theme and idea that it is not good to take always the '**Path**' taken by the majority of the people. This is similar to as if many of the people are ready to jump into the ocean, but one is not willing to do so. But the only real way is to take risks and not to care about the consequences. In this poem Robert Frost is not so able to convince the readers in terms of his decisions, choices and opinions. There is a lot of confusion created by the language. He is not so sure about his decisions. He seems to be lacking decision making power e.g. he says, **'Two roads diverged in yellow wood/ And sorry I could not travel both'**, seems like he has choices but he is unable to choose. When he looks at the other road sets the reason that it is '**Grassy and wanted wear'**. He then considers it '**perhaps the better claim'**. But soon he is conflicted with his decision when he says **'Yet knowing how way leads on to way/I doubted if I should ever come back.'** It seems that he is still not sure about the making of a decision. In the poem the word **'Diverged'** has been used twice which also refers to **'disagreement'**, or '**to differ in opinion**.' Except for the deconstructive point of view of having no assurance because of the ambiguity of a language, we can also see the '**Binary Oppositions'** in the poem which also deconstruct the language to make sense, infer implied meanings and understand the hidden settings. Binary oppositions which contribute to a poem are **stood, bent, sigh** and **hence** deal greatly with double meanings, ambiguity, and obscurity.

Double meanings, ambiguity and multiplicity lead Robert Frost to confusion. He is still in a fix and not sure about his decisions. He seems not to believe in taking the risks. He is still unable to have belief in his decision making power when he says, **'I shall be telling this with a sigh/ Somewhere ages and ages hence.'** Furthermore he has taken the path which is traveled less by the people as he says, **'I took the one less traveled by.'** If to take less traveled road is his wise choice so why he feels regret by saying, 'And that has made all the difference.' Finally, we can view a poem in deconstructionist context because poem have words with double meanings, ambiguity, lack of decision making, regret and binary oppositions.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the poem stylistically on certain linguistic levels and to deconstruct it by applying a famous theory. This poem is linguistically rich and stylistically flourished which has much stylistic potential to create an effect and meet aesthetic purposes. Robert Frost enjoyed his authority by using a poetic license very effectively. This poem has much elevated effects which surround the attention and interests of the readers.

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