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**STYLISTIC SIMILITUDE IN THE POETRY OF JOHN KEATS<sup>1</sup>  
AND RASOOL MIR<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>English Romantic Poet, <sup>2</sup> Kashmiri Romantic Poet

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**Abstract :** Style is the writing technique of an author which itself is the combination of several elements like syntax, word choice, and tone. Usually there are four basic literary styles used in writing namely expository, descriptive, persuasive, and narrative which are among the contributors to mark a distinction from writer to writer. However, there are some avant-grade poets whose topography of thought relates them with each other irrespective of the fact from which social, political, and cultural background they came from. The research paper will concentrate on the stylistic approach of John Keats and Rasool Mir via poetic language.

Key words: - Style, Alliteration, Allusion, Simile, and Metaphor.

**Introduction**

From time to time, the definition of poetry has changed its interpretation. Some have praised it in terms of imagination; some have realized its emotional aspect, while others have focussed on the stylistic features of poetry. Therefore, it is all because of the vague nature of its definition that several questions are being posed regarding its distinction from other literary genres like novel and short story. However, one among the founding figures of the Romantic Revival 1798 namely S. T. Coleridge has given answer to some questions on the subject of the nature and function of poetry and its distinction from another literary genres like prose in his most famous discourse *Biographia Literaria* 1817. He differentiates the two in terms of word combination, sounds and the qualities that drives pleasure. He explains the concept as:

A legitimate poem is a composition in which the rhyme and the metre bear an organic relation to the total work in it, the parts mutually support and explain each other, all in their proportion harmonizing with, and supporting the purpose and known influences of, metrical arrangement.(Daiches 102)

From the above definition, it is obvious that S. T. Coleridge mainly focussed on the stylistic feature of poetry. But on the other hand his contemporary poet who is generally acknowledged as poet of nature and father of romantic poetry namely William Wordsworth, is of the view that poetic composition is solely based on the expression of emotions and thought when he says:

Poetry takes its origin from emotions recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears and emotion kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced and does itself actually exist in the mind. (Wordsworth 73)

Therefore, from the two interpretations it is clear that poetic composition is the assortment of emotions, ideas, and style as well, to which Sigmund Freud quotes as: "Poetry is boned with ideas, nerved and blooded with emotions, all held together by the delicate, tough skin of words."(Woodward 45). It is worth noting that language hardly influences the syntactic structure of a poetic composition. There are poets who came from different backgrounds and have written in different languages, but have stylistic resemblance in their poetry. Same is true when we analyse the poetry of English poet John Keats and the Kashmiri poet Rasool Mir. Though, the two; came from different social, political, cultural ambience, but there is a particular stylistic similitude in their poetry. The former was one of the main figures of the second generation romantic poets while as the latter was the leading poet of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and was true romantic in his essence. It was he, who brought the concept of 'Gazal' to Kashmiri poetry and it is because of the romantic approach of his poetry that he is being commonly known as Keats of Kashmir. It is believed that Rasool Mir was just one year old when Keats passed away in 1821. Like Keats, Mir also died early at the age of fifty.

### Defining Style

Literary style refers to the elements that describe the ways that author puts his/her thoughts in words means the author's word choice, sentence structure, and figurative language. Therefore, style describes how the author describes events, objects, and idea. Generally speaking there are four writing styles viz expository writing, descriptive writing, persuasive writing, and creative writing. Expository style is a subject-oriented writing style, in which authors focus on telling you about a given topic or subject without voicing their personal opinions while as in persuasive writing, writer uses his /her opinions to support a central idea. The writer tries to persuade you to see his or her point-of-view. An opinion-based editorial in the newspaper is an example of persuasive writing style. On the other hand in descriptive writing style, the author tries to paint a picture for the readers and this style of writing focuses on describing a character, an event, or a place in great detail. It is often poetic in nature but there are also descriptive passages in fiction as well. Likewise the main purpose of narrative writing is to tell a story. In this style, author creates different characters and tells you what happens to them. This writing style gives answer to the question: "What happened then? Novels, short stories, novellas, and biographies are good examples of narrative writing style. So far as the writing style of the two famous romantic poets viz John Keats and Rasool Mir is concern, they used the diction which is highly connotative They used descriptive and sensual poetic style which contains poetic devices such as Allusion, Alliteration, Personification, and Metaphor to a large extend.

### Use of Allusion in their Poetry

Allusion as defined in *Dictionary of Literary Terms* by Coles is a figure of speech making casual reference to a famous historical or literary figure or event (Coles 6). On analysing the term in Keats', poetry there is a great deal of mythological and Biblical references. For an example, let us quote few. In his famous poem 'Ode to Nightingale', it is obvious he provides an example of allusion when he uses 'Lethe-wards'. Lethe is the mythological river in Hades whose water caused forgetfulness of the past in those who drank of it. It also refers to the river from which one has to pass through after death He explains the whole statement as:

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains  
My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,  
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains  
One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:  
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot. (Keats 107-12)

Allusion can also be traced in the same poem when he uses the word 'Ruth' which refers to the Biblical

story of Ruth who married to a guy and moved to a new country. Then her husband died, and Ruth's mother-in-law told her to return home and get married again. Keats tells the story as:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for  
home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
(Keats 107-12)

Another reference of allusion can be seen in the poem 'Ode on Melancholy' by Keats When he talks about Proserpine: An ancient Greek goddess of spring, daughter of Demeter, and queen of the underworld as:

*Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kiss'd  
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;  
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,*  
(Keats 140-42)

On another occasion in the same poem Keats uses the word 'Beetle' which is a possible reference to the scarab beetle of ancient Egyptian mythology in the following lines:

*Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be  
your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl.*  
(Keats 140-42)

Another good example of allusion can also be analysed in the most famous poem of John Keats 'Ode to a Grecian Urn' in which the temple is an allusion to the Vale of Tempe, where the gods gathered. This shows his utmost respect for the urn as in the lines:

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express  
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:  
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy  
shape of deities or mortals, or of both,  
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady. (Keats 1137-16)

Likewise Keats, Rasool Mir also employed the term 'Allusion' to great extend in his poetry to enhance its beauty. Mostly his Allusion like Keats refers to the mythical hero heroines of love who perished the being for their mates. References are also taken from various historical and the religious books. As in the poem 'Ha yaar Mukhtar'

Chue yousfoun anhar kar bozi zulaikha  
Meach neari dar bazaar  
Lash pardhai chatai loo (Taing 165)

Another mythical allusion used by Rasool Mir can be analysed in the famous poem 'Tie Bouz Sunder Malie' where he refers to the fictious characters viz Neagrai, laala, and Majloon who perished their being for their earthly love. He used the same as:

Neag rai Ha hemalai  
mujloon khanani laalie  
sanea si lagi bo gopali  
tie bouz sunder malie.(Taing 174)

Rasool Mir also used allusion by the name of the holly story of Mansur Al Hallaj (Mystic) who had utmost friendship with God. He tells the story as “Tun soor gasith zakiri anal haq, Mansur banith kuin pari Dil”(97).

#### Use of Alliteration

As per the definition of alliteration in Merriam Webster’s definition, it is the repetition of usually initial consonant sounds in two or more adjacent words or syllables (such as wild and woolly, *threatening throngs*). Like the word allusion, there an ample use of the term ‘Alliteration’ in Keats’ poetry. His mastery of using alliteration could be seen in the poem ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ by the words ‘self-same’, ‘song’, ‘sad’, ‘sick’, and ‘same’. The entire scene is created like this:

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path  
through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for  
home,  
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;  
the same that oft-times hath. (Keats 107-12)

Besides the poem, his another famous poem ‘Ode to Autumn’ provides some glimpse of the term alliteration in the pile up of ‘S’ sound in words ‘summer’, ‘swell’, ‘shells’, ‘sweet’, ‘seen’, ‘store’ ‘sometimes’, ‘seeks’, ‘sitting’, ‘soft’, ‘sound’, and ‘swath’ etc.

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness.....  
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells  
with a sweet kernel; to set budding more.....  
Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?  
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find  
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,  
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind....  
Spares the next swath and all its twined  
flowers..... (Keats 137)

On the other hand, Rasool Mir’s style of writing poetry especially his use of the term alliteration shows a strong resemblance with the style of John Keats. It seems to the readers that they had chatted to each other which track to be taken for writing such an inspirational poetry. Like Keats, Rasool Mir’s poetry provides ample examples of the term ‘Alliteration’. He used alliteration in the poem ‘Doori Doorie prai mai taraw’ in this way:

Bar kamanday tari zulfich ashiquan goo bastai dil  
Mar naweth mari zulfan mari matai lati-ai  
(Taing 158)

Another example of alliteration used by Rasool Mir can be examined in the poem ‘Harya thayakh na kun wan th Lo’. In the poem, Mir pile up of ‘S’ sound in the words ‘seem-ab’, ‘seem’, ‘seena’, and ‘sonih’ as:

Zulf cheas jeem tai meem dahan  
Seem khai seem tan tai loo loo

Seani mai kournam kaam dewani  
Sonai cheani pamai dewan ti loo loo  
(147)

#### Use of Metaphor and Simile

Apart from allusion and alliteration, both the Romantic poets have used several implicit and explicit comparisons and associations between things to increase lyric quality of their poetry. Keats’ ‘Ode upon a Grecian Urn’, ‘Ode to Autumn’, and ‘Ode to a nightingale’ and Mir’s ‘Roosh Mai Roosh’, ‘Bai Tab Kurthus’, and ‘Durdani Asthai Baykhabar’ are the poems where the poets grab readers attention by their brilliant use of figurative language especially simile and metaphor. In the second stanza of the poem ‘Ode to autumn’ Keats uses literary simile as “And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep/ Steady thy laden head across a brook ((Keats 137). Mir also brilliantly used the literary term simile in the poem ‘Roosh Mai Roosh’ when he says, “Qand khout ka meathi chee wouth cheain/ leli yaman ya goat romani”( Taing 141). While as in the poem ‘Bai Tab Kurthus’, Mir uses metaphor to enrich the quality of his verse as “rukhs chain bargi gulab/ suaru-gaich posh gondhi”(144). Likewise Rasool Mir, John Keats in the poem ‘Ode to a nightingale’ indulges himself in fantasy when he compares moon and the star to a queen surrounded by her female attendants when he says, “And happy the queen- moon is on her throne/ cluster’d around by her stray fays” (Keats 107-12).

#### Conclusion

In the conclusion we may say that John Keats’s and Rasool Mir’s poetic style in one way or other shows some resemblance irrespective of the fact that they were the products of an incomparable social, political, and cultural background. It is actually their approach towards love both divine and earthy portrayed in the lap of nature that Rasool Mir is being comprehended as Keats of Kashmir.

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