



SEMANTIC FOREGROUNDING OF SENSORY PERCEPTION IN JOHN KEATS'S ODE TO A NIGHTINGALE

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ABSTRACT

Romantic poems have a strong sense of perception that seeks to represent complex philosophical issues. Traditional literary criticism tends to praise John Keats's Ode to a Nightingale for its aesthetic value but has barely examined how exactly this aesthetic value is created in the poem; that is, the real linguistic mechanism that it has achieved. The present study aims to fill this methodological gap by using the method of semantic stylistics, which is a rigorous method. The goals are to find the foregrounded sensory lexical patterns and to explore the direct contribution of the patterns to the thematic construction. The analysis is qualitative descriptive-analytical in which the auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile lexemes are taken out. The gathered data are systematically analyzed in terms of semantic deviation, both synesthetic blending and selection restriction violations. Poetry has employed an extremely structured use of perceptual modalities. Keats purposely excises the visual lexemes to require an extreme use of the olfactory and abstract auditory fields and thus creates a temporary imaginative haven. The analysis offers a method of connecting the physical materiality of the works to transcendence. This study enhances the poem's comprehension by placing abstract themes into the context of explicit lexical evidence

Key words: Semantic stylistics, Foregrounding theory, Sensory perception, Ode to a Nightingale, Semantic deviation, Literary Linguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The power to evoke the reader through sensory experiences forms the basis of all Romantic poetry, which must somehow unite the material world with the philosophical one. John Keats was one of the foremost poets of the Romantic movement in England whose linguistic skills were second to none in creating sensations. Often eschewing abstract intellectualism, his poetic language is more a result of immediate physiological reactions. Ode to a Nightingale is a first-class illustration of such sensory richness. The poem was written in the spring of 1819, and evokes what may be an existential tension between mortal pain and the transcendent permanency of art; Keats explores this complex thematic space with very rich and multi-sensory imagery.

To unravel these mechanisms of texts, analytical methods are needed, and these are supplied by literary linguistics, especially stylistics. Stylistics does not only focus on subjective literary appreciation, but on the dynamic system of language choices. In this paradigm, foregrounding theory is used as a major tool in aesthetic communication. To attract the reader's attention to some meanings, writers sometimes go against the norms of language use or establish dense text patterns.

1.2 Research Problem

Ode to a Nightingale' has been appreciated by critics for its richness for a long time. The major research on Keats's ideas of death, escape, and the perpetual song of the nightingale. The poem has also been highly commended for the many images it contains, as well as for being an example of synaesthesia. But these attributes are usually considered in general terms. Previous research primarily focuses upon their emotional and aesthetic impact.



They do not pay as much attention to the language choices that underlie them. Much more research is still to be done on Keats's sensory language.

1.3 Research Objectives

The research is aimed at achieving two main objectives to solve the research problem identified:

To identify Foregrounded Sensory Lexical patterns in Ode to a Nightingale by John Keats.

RO2: To analyse the use of semantic foregrounding of sensory perception to create the theme of the poem.

1.4 Research Questions

RQ1: What type(s) of sensory lexical patterns are emphasized in Ode to a Nightingale?

RQ2: In what ways does the semantic foregrounding of sensory perception help create thematic meanings in the poem?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The thought of combining stylistic analysis and canonized literary texts is very significant from the academic perspective of both linguistic and literary scholarship. This investigation takes an approach to understanding poetic mechanics that is replicable and based on evidence, rather than impressionistic criticism. The semantic foregrounding of sensory perception provides a very precise approach to a perception of Keats's linguistic craftsmanship. The analysis illustrates that the aesthetic impact can be very deep and has roots in the particular lexical choices made, not only in abstract artistic genius.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Contemporary Directions in Keats Studies

Keats' poetry is no longer just about Romantic sensibility, but is rather an advanced and intricate system of embodied meaning-making. The poet, scholars contend, creates complex sensory worlds to which the reader will be drawn, in which they are able to enjoy language on a number of perceptual levels simultaneously (Harris, 2021; Richardson, 2022; Burke, 2023). These strategies place Keats in the fields of literary aesthetics and cognitive sciences, and show how the poetic language acts as a way of focusing attention, evoking emotion, imagination, and sensory stimulation. In recent studies, the Odes, and Ode to a Nightingale in particular, are increasingly seen as 'paragon' poems for considering the interplay between stylistically salient features, cognitive processing and affective involvement (Oldfather, 2024; Krol, 2025).

2.2 Foregrounding Theory and Linguistic Deviation in Literary Discourse

Foregrounding is one of the most important concepts of stylistics and literary linguistics. Foregrounding is a technique developed in Russian Formalism with Shklovsky's concept of *ostranenie* – "defamiliarization" – and further developed by the Prague School, which involves disrupting the language norms to capture the attention of the reader and to heighten aesthetic experience (Mukařovský, 1964; Leech, 1969; Short, 2020; Simpson, 2022). Foregrounding remains an important means of creating salience and cognitive engagement in literary texts, and it has continued to be a core element of stylistic scholarship in the present day, both by itself and in combination with other foregrounding devices (Burke, 2021; Stockwell, 2020; Jeffries & McIntyre, 2023).

The research conducted in the last five years, from 2020 to 2026, has confirmed that the foregrounding mechanism is mainly based on deviation and parallelism. With deviation, the deviation of the text from linguistic norms at the lexical, semantic, grammatical, graphological, and phonological levels, and parallelism is based on the repetition of a pattern, which creates text prominence (Simpson, 2022; McIntyre & Walker, 2023). According to



Siddiqui (2022), foregrounding is the basic law of literary creativity as it “thwarts the taken-for-granted modes of perception, forcing the reader to be more active in his/her dealing with the language.” From this point of view, the literary meaning is not just the matter that is communicated, but the way language is manipulated to create the perception.

2.3 Semantic Stylistics and the Construction of Meaning

Lexical selection, lexical association of ideas, and contextualization of meaning in terms of the language used provide a very important analytical tool for understanding how meaning is created (Leech, 1969; Simpson, 2022; Jeffries & McIntyre, 2023). Semantic stylistics does not simply focus on the grammatical or phonological structure but on how language choices contribute to a conceptual effect and to the (mis)understanding of the reader when dealing with literary texts (Short, 2020; Gavins & Steen, 2021).

One of the main issues in semantic stylistics is semantic deviation that happens when an author violates the conventional selection restrictions and combines the words in unexpected and seemingly incompatible ways (Leech, 1969; McIntyre & Walker, 2023). Semantic foregrounding is a primary means of achieving the effect of metaphor, personification, synesthesia, oxymoron, and unusual collocations are prominent examples, as they violate certain habitual patterns of meaning and entice interpretative activity (Semino, 2022; Verhagen, 2023). Furthermore, modern studies emphasize how semantically related words and lexical networks are crucial to Keats's poetry (Harris, 2021; Oldfather, 2024).

2.4 Multisensory Perception, Synesthesia, and Embodied Reading

How the senses relate to the meaning of a poem has become a major consideration in current studies of Keats (Harris 2021, Richardson 2022, Oldfather 2024, Tsur 2023). Based on the theory of 'embodied cognition', it is suggested that literary language triggers sensations in the reader's mind which elicit experiences that resemble perception in the real world (Gibbs, 2021; Burke, 2021; Semino, 2022).

In this context, the experience of synesthesia plays a special role. While synesthesia was classically defined as a perception of one sense (taste/sound or smell/sound, for these are the common types of synesthesia) through another, it is more recently seen as a creative and cognitive rather than a neurological error (Tsur, 2023; Richardson, 2022). Keats's poetry keeps using auditory and visual imagery, as well as tactile, olfactory, and gustatory imagery in order to create multi-dimensional sensory experiences. This mapping between modalities will prompt the readers to create well-formed and integrated mental representations that go beyond the limits of ordinary perceptual modalities.

2.5 Sensory Estrangement and the Particularity of Sense in *Ode to a Nightingale*

Ode to a Nightingale has garnered significant scholarly interest, as it is highly complex in the issues of perception and imagination, mortality and transcendence (Vendler 1983; Bate 1963; Krol 2025; Oldfather 2024). Most criticism focused on the thematic poles of reality and escapism of the poem; more recent research delves into sensory structures of the poem and what roles these play in the poem's philosophical concerns.

One of the most influential reinterpretations of the poem is by Oldfather (2024) in her book on sensory particularity. She suggests that Keats "abbreviates this aspect of certainty" with the visual in favor of the auditory. While sight usually offers consistent spatial orientation and cognitive control, sound offers ambiguity, transience, and instability. The poem induces a form of sensory alienation by forcing the audience to engage with it in a different way—to listen—in order to make it clear to the audience how little imaginative knowledge is available.



This argument further adds to the work of Krol (2025), who has been thinking about the nightingale's song: "Song of the Nightingale is often thought of as the thing that's propelling us on, as the thing that moves us forward; but it can be just as much the thing that slows us down and is a block on us." The song of the bird symbolically makes possible an imaginative transcendence for the speaker, and it simultaneously situates him in the empirical. We hear and see what we hear and see in order to eventually fall under the limitations of the human. The result is that the auditory imagery is not just a device for adding color but a means of structuring

2.6 Research Gap

Though there have been recent developments in the fields of cognitive poetics, embodied cognition, conceptual metaphor, and the perception of senses in Keats's poetry, some flaws still exist. While there are discussions on various sensory experiences that relate to the poem, including synesthesia, metaphor, melancholy, and affective response (e.g., Harris, 2021; Al-Jumaili, 2022; Oldfather, 2024), these tend to be isolated segments of the poem's sensory experiences without any systematic stylistic analysis of how the sensory language functions together. Likewise, significant theoretical work has been done in foregrounding theory; however, not as much work has been done in a unified analytical framework between semantic deviation, sensory perception, and semantic cohesion in the foreground.

Furthermore, many of today's studies are concerned with the thematic or cognitive significance of a text, rather than with examining in detail the ways in which this significance is conveyed, in terms of certain patterns of lexical choice. This is why systematic categorization of sensory lexemes, semantic deviations as well as analysis of sensory foregrounding as an integrated stylistic approach, are still unexplored. This deficit may help to provide a more complete account of the ways in which Keats' language contributes to the aesthetic intensity, emotional resonance and embodied reading experience of his poetry.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The present study has a theoretical background consisting of an integrated theoretical framework that combines Geoffrey Leech's Foregrounding Theory (1969), Semantic Stylistics, and Cognitive Poetics. These strategies will form a complete platform to investigate the employment of sensory appeals in Ode to a Nightingale. The study is not based on one and only one stylistic point of view, as it additionally considers the explanations of stylistics, semantics, and cognitive approaches to the explanation of how the language choices contribute to indicating meaning and reader response.

Foregrounding Theory is used as the main analytical approach. The theory is based on the idea by Leech (1969) and explains the salience of certain language features due to their deviation from normal structures of language. Leech (1969) has proposed that foregrounding is mostly done by deviation and parallelism. In recent stylistic research, such mechanisms are still highlighted as an important component in literary analysis (Short, 2020; Simpson, 2022). In the current work, a special focus is on "semantic foregrounding". This encompasses semantic deviation, lexical creativity, unusual combinations of words, metaphors of words, and synesthetic expressions. These do not correspond to the way in which language is normally used and thus draw readers' attention to them. They also add to the individual beauty or meaning of literary texts (Simpson, 2022).

Semantic Stylistics is added as further support for the framework. It is concerned with lexical choice – meaning construction. In this method, known as semantic stylistics, words interact in a text through semantic relations, conceptual links, and cohesive patterns that



contribute to the meaning (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2023). It helps researchers to move beyond lexical units and probe the semantic level of semantic units. Based on the present study, the sensory vocabulary can be categorized into five broad domains, namely auditory, visual, tactile, olfactory, and gustatory domains. This classification allows us to pinpoint common semantic areas and look at the relationship between these areas as they're used throughout the poem. Yet such an approach can give a deeper, more systematic idea of the connection between sensory imagery and theme.

Insights from Conceptual Metaphor Theory, which highlights the understanding of abstract concepts via more concrete ones in real life (Kövecses, 2020), have also been added. Such a theory maintains that human beings tend to think complex emotions and/or philosophical concepts in familiar sensory and bodily terms. The use of sensory experience and bodily perception in *Ode to a Nightingale* allows for an understanding of the themes, including mortality, imagination, melancholy, suffering, and transcendence. Conceptual metaphors thus offer a crucial bridge between language and thinking and can partially explain how abstract meanings can be conveyed using tangible, concrete images (Kövecses, 2020).

The study's theoretical underpinning is, therefore, at three interrelated levels. The first is offered by Foregrounding Theory, in the sense of being one of the first theories to identify stylistically significant features that have deviance and prominence (Leech, 1969; Short, 2020). The next level is provided by Semantic Stylistics, which will supply the answer as to how these foregrounded features relate to creating meaning, through lexical relations and semantic organization (Jeffries & McIntyre, 2023). The third level can be provided by Cognitive Poetics, which explains the emotion, perception, or embodied reactions generated by such linguistic constructions (Stockwell, 2020; Semino, 2022).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research method used in this study is qualitative research with a descriptive analytical paradigm, where the principle of this research is literary stylistic and semantic analysis. Qualitative research is especially suitable for analysis of literary text, as it allows a comprehensive look at the processes of meaning-making, language use and patterns, and choices of language processing and presentation within the context of the text (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2021). A qualitative study on style is not dominated by quantitative measures and statistical patterns of language behavior but attempts to grasp the aesthetic and semantic operations of language in that they are used to create poetic effects and influence readers' interpretation.

This current research falls under the discipline of stylistics, which entails the synergy between linguistic analysis and literary interpretation to explore how particular language features help shape the meaning (Leech & Short, 2007; Simpson, 2022). Specifically, semantic stylistics and foregrounding theory are the two main approaches adopted to analyze the study. These are used to explore the way sensory language, semantic deviation, and lexical patterning function in *Ode to a Nightingale* to produce aesthetic prominence and thematic significance.

3.2 Data Source

This study emphasizes mainly on the *Ode to a Nightingale* by John Keats, a celebrated poem of English Romantic literature, in this study. Written in 1819, considered by some to be an *annus mirabilis* for Keats, it comprises eight stanzas of 10 lines each and is noted as being extremely rich in sensory images, emotional complexities, and philosophical speculations on mortality and imagination.



3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was performed and carried out through a Systematic Process of Close Reading (SPCR), Textual Observation (TO), and Data Extraction (DE). One of the key ways that close reading works for literary analysis is in terms of detailed engagement with the linguistic structures and identification of subtle semantic patterns that help to suggest literary meaning (Stockwell, 2020; Simpson, 2022).

The process of collection started with several readings of the poem Ode to a Nightingale, in order to get an insight into its themes and style. The later readings then only touched on sensory perception lexical items. At this point, all words and phrases that represented words or phrases which indicated experience of the senses were carefully marked and recorded.

Special consideration was given to such words as nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs which entailed literal or implied sensory responses. These terms consisted of words relating to sound, sight, touch, taste, smell, or to a blend of those fancy senses, or to some transfer in fancy sensations. In addition, metaphoric sensory expression was added to the extraction process, in which perception is expressed indirectly via figurative language.

3.4 Data Classification

After collecting, the lexical items were systematically categorized based on their semantic points so as to ease the detailed analysis. Classification plays a fundamental part in stylistic study in that it helps to determine patterns and relationships, making the raw textual data more organized and structured.

The sensory lexemes that were found in the poem were classified into one of five main perceptual modalities defined in cognitive linguistics and sensory studies:

Each word was investigated regarding its context and categorized into the most suitable sensory category. When such a word (or phrase) excited more than one perceptual system, it was considered to be a synesthetic expression and was marked for transfer in the appropriate categories. Such instances were attended to specifically because they are often important instances of foregrounding of meaning in the poetic language.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data were analyzed using an iterative interpretative method which drew inspiration from Foregrounding Theory (Leech, 1969), Semantic Stylistics (Leech & Short, 2007) and current approaches to Cognitive Poetics (Stockwell, 2020; Burke, 2021). An analytical process has been planned to gradually develop from the identification of individual linguistic features to the interpretation of their literary importance.

Finally, the results were seen in the general framework of today's stylistics and cognitive poetics. This conceptualization allowed the study to account for how, as well as why, the sensory language works at the text level and how it affects the reader's sense of their emotional involvement in and construction of meaning, while also enabling the study to move beyond a foreground description of the sensory language to understand the significance of such language within objective and subjective frameworks. Thematic interpretation is done with care and rigor based on systematically identified pieces of linguistic evidence, which renders the analysis of the text in question transparent and framed with good interpretive validity.

4-DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Identification and Classification of Sensory Lexemes

In the first phase of analysis, sensory expressions were identified systematically in the poem. After repeated close readings of the poem, it was noted that Keats is always using



words related to the senses of hearing, sight, smell, taste, and touch. These senses operate in conjunction with each other. In the process, they communicate through the shift of each other's perceptual structures to produce an integrated perceptual space in which the reader is placed inside the “psycho-space” of the speaker.

Table 4.1 Classification of Sensory Lexemes

Sensory Category	Examples from the Poem
Auditory	singest, song, hear, requiem, anthem, music
Visual	shadows, moon, stars, darkness, fade
Olfactory	musk-rose, incense, eglantine, sweet peas
Gustatory	vintage, draught, beaker, tasting
Tactile	numbness, ache, warm, cool-rooted, pain

4.2 Dominance of Auditory Imagery

What the analysis reveals is that one of the significant features brought into the foreground by the analysis is a predominance of auditory imagery. The poem's title comes from the nightingale, which appears in ways mostly sounds and, to a lesser degree, in sight. Ode to a Nightingale does not emphasize visual description like many Romantic poems.

According to foregrounding analysis, full-throated ease is one of the features that can be interpreted as semantic deviation when the physiological aspect is used to portray a symbolic expression of spiritual liberation. The phrase "double-opportunity" refers to the act of singing, or speaking, and the free expression of thought, pushing the word's semantics outside the literal frontier.

Table 4.2 Auditory Lexical Network

Lexical Item	Contextual Function
Singest	Establishes acoustic presence
Full-throated ease	Symbolizes freedom
Song	Represents immortality
Hear	Connects listener and bird
Requiem	Suggests mortality
Anthem	Signals transcendence

4.3 Visual Negation and Sensory Estrangement

Visual pictures occur throughout the poem but are not used in the traditional Romantic sense. The analysis does not work towards a visual sense of certainty, but rather continually questions the sense of sight and sighting on the micro-level of lexical choices and macro-level of thematic frames. However, the focus is on semantic deviation, unconventional collocations, metaphorical extensions, and synesthetic constructions, as these are important devices that enable Keats to enhance the senses.

Table 4.3 Visual Foregrounding Patterns

Expression	Stylistic Function
Viewless wings of Poesy	Visual negation
I cannot see	Sensory deprivation



Expression	Stylistic Function
Embalmed darkness	Semantic deviation
Shadows numberless	Indeterminacy
Fade	Dissolution
Dissolve	Impermanence

4.4 Olfactory Foregrounding and Environmental Immersion

The fifth stanza is one of the most elaborate zest-for-heavy-scented-snappey snippets in all Romantic poetry. When fingers are unable to provide visual clues, the speaker uses scent to create scenes of the environment around them.

Table 4.4 Olfactory Semantic Field

Lexeme	Associated Meaning
Incense	Spiritual elevation
Musk-rose	Sensory richness
Sweet peas	Natural vitality
Eglantine	Organic beauty
Embalmed	Mortality

In the olfactory expressions, there is even an immersive sensory atmosphere created by the concentration of expressions. Smells demand physical intimacy with an object, as opposed to photos, which still leave space between them. Thus, the olfactory language would flatten out the dichotomy of perceiver and environment.

An example of this is soft incense hangs upon the boughs.

Table 4.5 Synesthetic Construction

Component	Sensory Domain
Soft	Tactile
Incense	Olfactory
Hangs	Spatial

All of these [touch, smell, spatial orientation] are expressed in one linguistic expression. This cross-modal interaction is an example of synesthesia and illustrates how foregrounding can take place in the blending of senses. The reader also smells; he or she does not only smell a smell but is smelt by a smell; the smell is a flesh, a presence that inhabits a physical space.

4.5 Gustatory Imagery and the Desire for Escape

Perhaps the most noticeable feature of the second stanza is the gustatory imagery that emerges as the speaker considers wine not only as a tool for forgetfulness and anesthesia of the human condition, but even as a potential solution to all the problems of the world. This sensory synesthesia gives greater effects of vividness and makes readers imagine the scene more vividly. The sense of smell gets its spatiality; the reader can smell around him, as if the olfactory experience is placed in a space, and can be felt in relation to the physical effects on the reader. The act of taking one abstract sense and making it tangible adds to the poem's sensuality, and is characteristic of Keats' tendency to break down barriers between the senses. In the foregrounded synesthetic construction, the poet brings nature closer in an immersive way so that the readers not only sense but also can perceive nature as a whole and not as several separated sensory perceptions.



Table 4.6 Gustatory Lexical Network

Lexeme	Semantic Function
Draught	Escape
Vintage	Pleasure
Beaker	Intoxication
Tasting	Sensory immersion
Purple-stained mouth	Physical embodiment

Some big deviations from ordinary selection restrictions are reflected by the expressions tasting of Flora and the country green.

Table 4.7 Selection Restriction Violation

Verb	Expected Object	Actual Object
Taste	Food	Flora
Taste	Drink	Country green

4.6 Tactile Imagery and the Embodiment of Mortality

While auditory imagery offers imaginative transcendence, tactile imagery repeatedly returns the speaker to bodily reality.

Table 4.8 Tactile Semantic Network

Expression	Meaning
Ache	Physical suffering
Numbness	Emotional paralysis
Lead-en-eyed despairs	Psychological burden
Pain	Mortality
Cool-rooted flowers	Renewal
Warm South	Vitality

4.7 Semantic Deviation as a Foregrounding Strategy

Table 4.9 Major Instances of Semantic Deviation

Expression	Type of Deviation
Embalmed darkness	Semantic deviation
Full-throated ease	Physiological metaphor
Viewless wings	Semantic paradox
Soft incense	Synesthesia
Lead-en-eyed despairs	Conceptual metaphor
Purple-stained mouth	Sensory intensification

Such expressions defy normal predictions about language and force the reader's deeper interaction with the text. These kinds of deviations create foregrounding in Leech's view as they move away from the accepted semantic norms. This mental work adds much to the aesthetic effect of the poem.

4.8 Sensory Foregrounding and Thematic Construction

The results suggest that sensory imagery was the main structural mechanism that the poem uses to articulate the main themes. The poetic use of these images intensifies the



aesthetic appeal of the poem and fosters the themes of death, imagination, nature, and artistic transcendence. The results reveal that sensory words are essential in building meaning and bring the poem a unique emotional/philosophical dimension. The overall results indicate that sensory imagery is the dominant structural technique supported by the inclusion of the central themes of the poem. Thus, the sense of sensory imagery becomes an important factor contributing to the emotions and beauty of the art of Ode to a Nightingale. Sensual foregrounding is the dominant factor resulting in the shaping of "Ode to a Nightingale". Through the use of various senses, Keats diligently expresses what he means and directs the reader on how to think about it. Poetically, through sensory imagery, semantic deviation, and synesthetic blending, he creates a poetic world where beauty, imagination, mortality, and artistic transcendence cobble their themes.

4.9 Findings

When we investigate an analysis of Ode to A Nightingale, we can see that Keats skillfully and carefully uses sensory language in his poems. The images of the senses, used throughout the poem, suggest more than just a fancy decorative technique used in Romantic poetry. It rather serves as the base that allows the poem to develop in its feelings, philosophy, and imagination. The results indicate that the sense of the Himalayan landscape and states of suffering and longing, the sense of sight, of smell, of taste, and of touch combine to form a complex network of meanings that takes the speaker from suffering towards a temporary transcendence, and back towards human reality.

The song of the nightingale is mentioned several times, which is a reminder of eternity, freedom of imagination and artistic immortality. Tactile imagery, however, always reminds the speaker of the stark fact of bodily pain, emotional exhaustion, and human mortality. As these two elements of the senses create a sense of tension, they draw the poem into the dichotomy of a need to transcend and an inevitability to be human-limited.

The results also show that there is a deliberate minimization of visual imagery throughout the poem. Words like viewless wings of Poesy, I cannot see, and embalmed darkness, present a challenge to visual perception and prompt readers to use other senses. As a person's vision becomes blurry, the sense of smell becomes more pronounced. The use of language such as musk-rose, incense, sweet peas and eglantine creates an immersive natural environment so that the speaker can smell the natural surroundings as they explore it. Likewise, gustatory imagery (vintage, draught, beaker) indicates the speaker's transient yearning for pain to be withdrawn from his body and substitute physical enjoyment for an eventual transcendence in imagination.

A second important discovery is that of Keats's constant employment of semantic deviations and synesthetic expressions. Words like embalmed darkness, full-throated ease, and soft incense invert their regular, obvious meanings to supercharge the reading process with a suspension of normal expectation, forcing the reader to attend to the foreground. The differences in style help to further enunciate the meaning of the recreated symbolism in the poem and to enhance the sensuality of the performance.

The poem doesn't give each sense separately; rather, it gives them together, and together it is unified and harmonious. This foregrounded use of synesthesia allowed for nature to be visualized more vividly and imaginatively for readers and called for them to enjoy nature as a whole and different parts of it working in unison with each other. In Ode to a Nightingale. Instead, it is a "measuring rod" that lends meaning and expression to philosophical issues. It is argued that the success of Keats's poetry is based on the careful disposition of sensory and semantic patterns as well as thematic depth. The study aims to gain



a systematic understanding of the effect created by the language based on foregrounding theory and semantic stylistics.

5. Conclusion

The present study represents efforts to prove that the use of sensory language stands high in the artistic and thematic organization of *Ode to a Nightingale* by John Keats. The analysis shows that sensory images are not used simply as an ornamental device to deepen the poet in describing things or simply for the sake of beauty. Instead, it is a means that, above all, Keats uses to investigate philosophical issues of death, imagination, pain, beauty, and art's heroic transcendence. The analysis of the poem has highlighted its multiple layers of meaning through the systematic application of the tools of Semantic Stylistics and Foregrounding theory; it has been demonstrated how the carefully selected sensory expressions in the poem elicit and facilitate the deeper layers of meaning.

The results show that Keats uses the use of an involved auditory, visual, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile sensory fields to create the poem. One such important contribution in this study is the analysis of semantic deviation and foregrounding. This work has demonstrated that Keats continually disrupts conventional norms of language usage by employing awkward combinations, metaphors, and synesthesia. The phrases embalmed darkness, soft incense, viewless wings of Poesy and tasting of Flora and the country green break from commonplace expectations of the language and call for active participation [from the reader] as a meaning maker. These stylistic devices enhance the sensory impression of the poem, and help to shape its unique emotional and aesthetic appeal.

The results also indicate how the use of synesthesia is an important stylistic feature of the ode. Keats always merges the distinctive senses, and sounds, scents, textures, and visual impressions are allowed to interact in a single perceptual system. This combination of spatial, tactile and auditory elements produces a poetic environment rich and engaging to the senses and reflective of the complexity of human consciousness. The inter-sensory links allow the poem to exceed the boundaries of normal perception, and have the potential to draw in the reader as a more profound imaginative experience.

Another notable finding from the study was how sensory foregrounding is used as the main mechanism in the poem thereby highlighting its major themes. Sensory patterns uncovered in course of the analysis relate directly to the understanding of mortality, imagination, transience, beauty and artistic permanency that the poem is exploring. The final stanza of the poem further emphasizes this connection between sensory and meaning. As the nightingale's song softly grows pale, the sense becomes more and more blurred and the image at the focal point of the speaker's imagination more and more fragile. Overall, this research has shown that the strength, of the poem *Ode to a Nightingale* originates from Keats' great talent in converting what he sees, hears, smells, touches and tastes to the means of philosophical inquiry. For him, language has a power such that physical sensations can be the vehicles to abstract thought, emotional depth and existential questions. The result also proves that semantic stylistics and foregrounding theory is a good instrument in literary analysis. These methods offer a systematic way of exploring the processes of meaning generation in poetic discourse by interpreting based on the perceptual grasp of their linguistic features. This analytic model might be applied to other works from the Romantic period, or one might consider the correlation between the activating foregrounding of the senses and cognitive poetics more thoroughly. Such investigations would also assist in the on-going discussion between linguistic analysis and literary criticism.



Overall, Ode to a Nightingale stems as a really excellent instance of the ability of language to change the perception of sensation to profound artistic and philosophical experience. What makes Keats' work so great, however, is that he is not only a terrific poet of the imagination, but a master of sensoriality and how to shape sensory experience into a cohesive reading of the human experience.

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