

## THE MEANING OF FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN "SHE WALKS IN BEAUTY" BY LORD BYRON

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### ABSTRACT

Figures of speech are broadly defined as a way of saying one thing in terms of something else. They are used to beautify literary works, especially poetry. They are not limited to poetry. They can make the poems more interesting and unique, but some readers cannot identify figures of speech used in poetry. They read without considering the use of them and what their meaning. The purpose of this research is to analyze the types of figures of speech used in Byron's poem and their meaning. This is qualitative research with content analysis. The theory used in this research is figures of speech theory. The result shows that the figures of speech used in the poem are diverse. Byron wants to describe a woman who always wants to bring happiness to others. She is not only perfect in appearance, but also in her heart and actions. Her beauty is a brilliant thing.

**Keywords:** Byron's poem; figures of speech; beauty; perfect; pure

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### INTRODUCTION

This paper discusses the figure of speech in "She Walks in Beauty" by Lord Byron (1814). He describes a woman who always walks charmingly. It is not just the meaning of walking physically but in living life. Everyone who sees or meets her will see her beauty. Byron describes it with figures of speech. There are many kinds of figures of speech in this poem. Two subject matters that I will discuss in this paper are (1) what figures of speech Byron uses to describe the beauty of a woman in his poem and (2) what meaning he wants to convey to readers.

Before discussing the two subject matters above in detail, I will first present a paraphrase of the poem. Then, I will describe the method and the theory of figure of

speech in literary works. After describing them, I will discuss the two subject matters above and I will end this paper with a conclusion.

## THE POEM

### **She Walks in Beauty**

by Lord Byron

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meet in her aspect and her eyes;  
Thus mellowed to that tender light ..... (5)  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,  
Had half impaired the nameless grace  
Which waves in every raven tress,  
Or softly lightens o'er her face; ..... (10)  
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,  
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,  
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
The smiles that win, the tints that glow, ..... (15)  
But tell of days in goodness spent,  
A mind at peace with all below,  
A heart whose love is innocent!

## A PARAPHRASE OF THE POEM

"She Walks in Beauty" is a poem about a representation of a woman's beauty, not only her beautiful face but also her extraordinary way of thinking. In the first stanza, Byron describes an unnamed woman. She has black hair like a dark night sky and bright eyes like a shining star. In the second stanza, he tells about the beauty of this woman and how perfectly balanced her beauty is. The balance between the dark and light is visible on her black hair and her expression. Her expression also shows how sweet her thought is. The word "sweet" means her mind is pure. She always thinks positively. In the last stanza, he describes a woman's simplicity through the blush that appears on her cheek, her smile, and everything on her face. She looks quiet and elegant. She has a beautiful face and a clean heart. This is why she looks so calm. The beauty in her shoots every eye.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This section is about theories of figures of speech. According to Wren and Martin (1981, p. 488), "Figure of speech is a departure from the ordinary form of expression or the ordinary course of ideas in order to produce a greater effect." This definition explains that figure of speech is related to what we call connotative meaning. A figure of speech is used to give an aesthetic impression in literary works, especially poetry. There are many kinds of figures of speech, but I will focus on six of them. First, Simile; an expression that compares something to another else by using function words, such as like, seem, or as (Keraf, 2008, p. 138). A simile is a figure of speech that compares two different things, example: "A Red, Red, Rose" (Burn, 1794). Second, metaphor; an indirect expression in the form of an analogical comparison. Almarvius (2003, p. 90) states that "Metaphors are common in language use, and ordinarily it does not seem to require any particular effort to construct and understand them." Example: All the world's a stage (Shakespeare, 1599). Third, personification; a kind of figure of speech that describes things as being alive or having humanity characteristics (Keraf, 2008, p. 140). Personification gives a human trait or quality to something non-human. Example: Tree at My Windows (Frost, 1928). Fourth, alliteration; a kind of figurative language that has repeated consonants (Keraf, 2008, p. 130). It is the repetition of the initial consonant. It should be at least two repetitions in a row. Example: While I nodded, nearly napping ... (Poe, 1845). Fifth, Synecdoche; a figure of speech in which part of something is used to signify the whole: A neighbor is a "wagging tongue" (a gossip); a criminal is placed "behind bars" (in prison) (Meyer, 2020). Example: Halmet (Shakespeare, 1603). Sixth, hyperbole; an exaggeration of utterance (Tjahjono, 2010, p. 65). Exaggeration is used to create a dramatic effect. Example: "as I Walked Out on Evening" (Auden, 1937). Figures of speech are the building blocks in Byron's poem. This is why I only discuss six of them. The theory of figures of speech as the basis for me to analyze the poem of Lord Byron.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this research, I used a qualitative method. I cited the opinion of an expert to explain it in detail. According to Denzin and Lincoln, (2018, p. 3) qualitative research

involves interpretive and naturalistic approaches. It means that I learn something naturally to understand some phenomena. A qualitative approach is used to increase information to be certain thing; it can be a process, a taste, or even a belief.

In this paper, the research subject is "She Walks in Beauty", a poem by Lord Byron. The main data of this research are figures of speech contained in Byron's poem and I will find out their meaning. First, I read line by line to find the figures of speech. Then, I classify them into several parts. In analyzing the research data, I used qualitative approach. By using this approach, I can learn contextual factors, symbolic dimensions, and meaning. I can also find flexibility in unexpected ideas during the research and exploration process effectively.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Findings

After carefully reading the whole poem many times, I found six figures of speech in the poem. The six figures of speech are as I mentioned in the theory section above, namely simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, synecdoche and hyperbole. For more details, the six figures of speech can be seen in the following table:

Table 1

The analysis of figurative language in "She Walks in Beauty"

No.	Line	Figurative Language
1.	She walks in beauty, like the night ( <i>Line 1</i> )	Simile
2.	Of cloudless climes and starry skies; ( <i>Line 2</i> )	Simile
3.	... cloudless climes and starry skies; ( <i>Line 2</i> )	Alliteration
4.	Which heaven to gaudy day denies. ( <i>Line 6</i> )	Personification
5.	... day denies ( <i>Line 6</i> )	Alliteration
6.	Which heaven to gaudy day denies. ( <i>Line 6</i> )	Hyperbole
7.	One shade the more, one ray the less, ( <i>Line 7</i> )	Simile
8.	Had half impaired the nameless grace ( <i>Line 8</i> )	Simile

9.	Which waves in every raven tress, ( <i>Line 9</i> )	Simile
10.	Or softly lightens o'er her face; ( <i>Line 10</i> )	Simile
11.	Had half impaired the nameless grace ( <i>Line 8</i> )	Methapor
12.	Had half ... ( <i>Line 8</i> )	Alliteration
13.	Which waves in every raven tress, ( <i>Line 9</i> )	Methapor
14.	Which waves ... ( <i>Line 9</i> )	Alliteration
15.	Or softly lightens o'er her face; ( <i>Line 10</i> )	Methapor
16.	Where thoughts serenely sweet express, ( <i>Line 11</i> )	Methapor
17.	Where thoughts serenely sweet express, ( <i>Line 11</i> )	Personification
18.	... serenely sweet ... ( <i>Line 11</i> )	Alliteration
19.	How pure, how dear their dwelling-place. ( <i>Line 12</i> )	Methapor
20.	How pure, how dear their dwelling-place. ( <i>Line 12</i> )	Personification
21.	So soft, so ... ( <i>Line 14</i> )	Alliteration
22.	The smiles that win, the tints that glow, ( <i>Line 15</i> )	Personification
23.	But tell of days in goodness spent, ( <i>Line 16</i> )	Personification
24.	A mind at peace with all below, ( <i>Line 17</i> )	Personification
25.	A heart whose love is innocent! ( <i>Line 18</i> )	Personification
26.	A heart whose love is innocent! ( <i>Line 18</i> )	Synecdoche

In this part, the result of the data analyzed is presented by me. In Byron's poem, it was found 6 similes, 6 alliterations, 7 personifications, 1 hyperbole, 5 metaphors and 1 synecdoche. The most dominant figure of speech in this poem is personification. The

least figures of speech are synecdoche and hyperbole because they are found only one in Byron's poem.

### **Discussion**

This chapter discusses the figures of speech used by Byron and their meanings. From the data available, the researcher focuses on six kinds of figures of speech which are analyzed. They are simile, metaphor, personification, alliteration, synecdoche, and hyperbole.

### **Simile**

In the first stanza of Byron's poem, it found some similes in lines 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 10.

**Lines 1, 2:** She walks in beauty, like the night

Of cloudless climes and starry skies;

In lines 1 and 2, Byron compares the beauty of a woman with "the night". In the nighttime, the situation is depicted by a cloudless sky that looks shady and starry. This atmosphere gives a deeper meaning to women. "Cloudless climate" is defined as a radiant facial expression wrapped in a cute smile and "starry sky" is a representation of her sparkling eyes. She gives a sign. She always trying to show everyone that she is fine.

**Lines 7-10:** One shade the more, one ray the less,

Had half impaired the nameless grace

Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o'er her face;

Other similes are found in the lines above. Byron compares a perfect balance of the beauty of a woman with the light. They complement each other and a true balance is created. This stanza is still related to the previous stanza. The word "light" means that her beauty is balance and is clearly visible on her beautiful face.

### **Metaphor**

The metaphor found in lines 8-12.

**Line 8:** Had half impaired the nameless grace

"Nameless grace" is a metaphor used by Byron to implying the beauty of the woman. Her beauty is perfect in the right proportion. There is nothing that must be

eliminated and nothing that must be added. In other words, Byron explains her beauty is so perfect. There is no name could represent it.

**Lines 9, 10:** Which waves in every raven tress,

Or softly lightens o'er her face

The lines above still related with the previous stanza. "Raven trees" is a metaphor of dark hair. Dark hair here is linked with a lightened face. The black hair here is associated with a bright face. Her beauty is very proportional because there is a mixture of dark and light.

**Lines 11, 12:** Where thoughts serenely sweet express,

How pure, how dear, their dwelling-place.

Through the eleventh and the twelfth line of third line above, the researcher figures out the metaphor which is implying the thoughts (serenely sweet express) of the woman (dwelling-place). Byron express that her thoughts are serene, pure and sweet. She is beautiful into herself as much as she is outwardly.

### **Personification**

Personification found in lines 6, 11, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18.

**Line 6:** Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

Personification can be seen in this line. The word "heaven" is personified as the appearance of a woman who shines that cannot be compared to the daylight because she walks under starry skies.

**Lines 11, 12:** Where thoughts serenely sweet express,

How pure, how dear, their dwelling-place

"Thoughts serenely sweet express" is the personification. It is about some characteristics of the woman's beauty in this poem. From the above line, Byron expresses one of her hallmarks is having pure thoughts (serene and sweet). It reflects her character.

**Lines 15, 16:** The smiles that win, the tints that glow,

But tell of days in goodness spent,

In this line, "the smiles that win, the tints that glow" means that the glowing smile represent her days are good. Her smile reflects happiness, and it is brilliant, as the tints, and these things tell us about happy days and goodness days. She spends her time doing good to others.

**Lines 17, 18:** A mind at peace with all below,

A heart whose love is innocent!

In this lines, a mind and a heart is personified as the woman's nature. Byron claims her mind is at peace and her heart is plenty of innocent love. In that sense, Byron explains that she is beautiful in herself or inwardly.

### **Alliteration**

Alliteration occurs frequently to enhance the appeal of the poem to the ear.

There are many alliterations in Byron's poem:

**Line 2:** ...cloudless climes; starry skies;

**Line 6:** ...day denies

**Line 8:** ...Had half

**Line 9:** ...Which waves

**Line 11:** ...serenely sweet

**Line 14:** ...So soft, so

Byron uses the repetition of the consonant sound in his poem to enhance each line. He want to make the readers always remember the words on each line.

### **Synecdoche**

Synecdoche found in line 18.

Line 18: A heart whose love is innocent!

In this line, the "heart" is a part of someone used to signify the entire person. It shows the woman's "heart" which loves with innocent rather than the woman herself. It becomes an icon or symbol for those searching for love to model after. It becomes monumental in the reader's eyes.

### **Hyperbole**

Byron uses hyperbole in line 6.

Line 6: Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

This line have hyperbolic meaning. It means the woman has a soft beauty emits from herself, as if the light of her beauty is rejected by heaven. The use of hyperbole as a figure of speech does not ask the readers to believe that a woman's



beauty is completely rejected heaven, but Byron asks them to imagine how her beauty is extraordinary strong.

## CONCLUSION

"She Walks in Beauty" is a poem about the beauty of the woman. This poem was written by Lord Byron. After analyzing Byron's poem, I found several figures of speech that he used to describe a woman. They are simile, personification, metaphor, alliteration, synecdoche and hyperbole. They make his poem more beautiful to read and create an illustration for the reader to imagine how the beauty of the woman.

By using the figures of speech, Byron's poem has a deep meaning about the woman's beauty. It is described in a beautiful way. He conveys how a woman who always walks charmingly in life. She lives life with a definite step. She always shows her sweet smile to others. Even though she is facing the harshness of life. She does not want people to know her problems. She wants to bring happiness to others by giving a meaningful smile. She spends her days doing something useful. Her beauty is also created with balanced proportions. It is perfected with a pure heart.

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