www.grrjournal.com

GRR
Global Regional Review
exploring humanity

GRR
GLOBAL REGIONAL REVIEW

Humanity Publications
sharing research
www.humapub.com
US | UK | Pakistan

Article title

An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight

Abstract

The basic aim of this study is to foreground the ecological elements through, metaphors, deviations, and parallelisms in Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002). The study is qualitative in nature and is based on an interpretive paradigm. The text is used as a primary source of data for the analysis. The data is analyzed through closed reading and textual analysis. The present study uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1985) and Zurru's (2017) approach as a theoretical framework. The analysis highlights that Agha Shahid Ali has used lexical, graphological, semantic, syntactic, and phonological deviations along with lexical, grammatical, and semantic parallelisms in I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002) to emphasize the fragility and beauty of Kashmir's natural environment, the impacts of human conflict on the region's ecology, and the resilience of the natural world amidst political turmoil.

Authors:

Rashid Ali: (Corresponding Author)
MPhil Scholar, Northern University, Nowshera, KP, Pakistan.
(Email: rashidalibsenglish@gmail.com)

Maratab Ali: Head of Department, Department of English, Northern University, Nowshera, KP, Pakistan.

Imran Haider: MPhil, Department of English, University of Lahore, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Citing Article

15	An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight			
	Author	Rashid Ali Maratab Ali Imran Haider	**DOI**	10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).15

Pages		142-148	**Year**	2024	**Volume**	IX	**Issue**	II

Referencing & Citing Styles	APA	Ali, R., Ali, M., & Haider, I. (2024). An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight. *Global Regional Review*, *IX*(II), 142-148. https://doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).15
	CHICAGO	Ali, Rashid, Maratab Ali, and Imran Haider. 2024. "An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight." *Global Regional Review* IX (II):142-148. doi: 10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).15.
	HARVARD	ALI, R., ALI, M. & HAIDER, I. 2024. An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight. *Global Regional Review,* IX**,** 142-148.
	MHRA	Ali, Rashid, Maratab Ali, and Imran Haider. 2024. 'An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight', *Global Regional Review*, IX: 142-48.
	MLA	Ali, Rashid, Maratab Ali, and Imran Haider. "An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight." *Global Regional Review* IX.II (2024): 142-48. Print.
	OXFORD	Ali, Rashid, Ali, Maratab, and Haider, Imran (2024), 'An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight', *Global Regional Review,* IX (II), 142-48.
	TURABIAN	Ali, Rashid, Maratab Ali, and Imran Haider. "An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight." *Global Regional Review* IX, no. II (2024): 142-48. https://dx.doi.org/10.31703/grr.2024(IX-II).15.
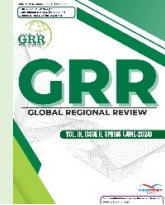
Title

An Eco-Stylistic Analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's "I See Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight

Authors:

Rashid Ali: (Corresponding Author)
MPhil Scholar, Northern University, Nowshera, KP, Pakistan.
(Email: rashidalibsenglish@gmail.com)

Maratab Ali: Head of Department, Department of English, Northern University, Nowshera, KP, Pakistan.

Imran Haider: MPhil, Department of English, University of Lahore, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Contents

Abstract

The basic aim of this study is to foreground the ecological elements through, metaphors, deviations, and parallelisms in Agha Shahid Ali's I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002). The study is qualitative in nature and is based on an interpretive paradigm. The text is used as a primary source of data for the analysis. The data is analyzed through closed reading and textual analysis. The present study uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1985) and Zurru's (2017) approach as a theoretical framework. The analysis highlights that Agha Shahid Ali has used lexical, graphological, semantic, syntactic, and phonological deviations along with lexical, grammatical, and semantic parallelisms in I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002) to emphasize the fragility and beauty of Kashmir's natural environment, the impacts of human conflict on the region's ecology, and the resilience of the natural world amidst political turmoil.

Keywords: Ecostylistics, Kashmir, Deviation, Parallelism, Qualitative, Interpretivist, Systematic Functional Grammar, Zurru's Approch

Introduction

Mick Short in his famous book, Exploring the Language of Poems, Plays and prose (1996) titled the first chapter in a strange way: 'Who is Stylistics?' Short clarifies the title by the fact that he considers 'Stylistics' his friend. Short (1999) called 'Stylistics' his friend because it is such an interesting field and it is constantly emerging with new approaches, ideas and concepts. One such approach is green stylistics, also known as eco-stylistics, that overlaps

with both eco-linguistics and eco-criticism (Mohamed and Jaafar 2023). The term 'eco-stylistics' was first used by Goatly (2010) at the Poetics and Linguistics Association (PALA, 2023) conference. According to Virdis (2022), eco-stylistics is associated with the stylistics analysis of natural space, humanity, and landscape in different texts types, for this reason, it participates in the ongoing scholarly discussion on the landscape, environments, and its effects on humans. Bate (1991) states that "eco-stylistics is, in some ways, a 'new' form of Romantic ideology in which the understanding and appreciation for nature's active energy help people to better exist in the human world by entering into harmony with the environment (p.40)."

According to Zurru (2017), eco-stylistics focuses on two main objectives: Firstly, the relationships between linguistics representation and physical environment and the style of a literary text and secondly, the investigation and evaluation of ecological linguistic patterns in texts, thereby contributing to increase global environmental awareness. Endorsing this claim of Zurru (2017), Douthwaite (2017) states that eco-stylistics has two main goals, the first is related to the environment and is concerned with the depiction of physical or metaphorical landscapes and surroundings in texts whereas the second is ecological. Hence, eco-stylistics can be related to two main areas of investigation: the environmental and the ecological respectively. Eco-stylistics focuses on exploring how a text comes to convey a certain stance, for "stylistic analysis is a method of linking linguistic form, via reader inference, to interpretation in a detailed way and thereby providing as much explicit evidence as possible for and against particular interpretations of texts (Short 1999; 27)."

Poetry, which according to Philip Sidney (2006) is a speaking picture with this aim to teach and delight, is a great source to discuss and present issues related to ecology and its effect on humans. Poets often present contemporary issues related to ecology and its impact on humans by using different stylistic devices. Agha Shahid Ali in his renowned poem, I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002), uses different stylistic devices to convey political and environmental crises in Kashmir. This research article attempts to investigate stylistic devices in I see Kashmir from New Dehli at Midnight (2002) from ecological point of view.

Research Objective

- ▪ To investigate the interconnected political and environmental crises in Kashmir through eco-stylistics devices in Agha Shahid Ali's I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002).

Research Question

1. What eco-stylistics devices does Agha Shahid Ali employ in I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002) to represent the interconnected political and environmental crises in Kashmi?

Literature Review

This section presents the relevant literature and previous research related to eco-stylistics. The researcher, Goatly (2017) carried out a research on eco-stylistics analysis of Thomas's poems (1936) as a case study. He used Halliday's Systematic Functional Linguistic (2014) as a research framework in this study. The main objective of his study was to analyze those noun phrases that indicate nature. The researcher observed that the classifications of seasons, months, weather, water, tree, light, dark, and birds presents important elements and actors of nature, since nature is active. He explained that through the interaction of coordination, personification, and token of non-human and human Thomas has intentionally eliminated the nature of humanity. The researcher concluded that by using imagism and metaphor the poet has showed the distinction between literal comparison and simile. These features show the style of the poet which blurs the line between nature and human and is related to romantic ecology.

Similarly, Zurru (2017) conducted an eco-stylistic analysis of Amitav Ghosh's novel, The Hungry Tide (2005). The researcher attempted to reveal ecological attributes to compare the roles of both human and non-human participants. She combined stylistic analysis with Halliday SFG (1971) and used it as a theoretical framework in her research. The researcher concluded that the Sundarbans as an ecosystem, the ecosystem is a geographic area where the organisms (plants, animals, and others) interact together to make life as a circle.

Finally, Mohammad and Jaafar (2023) conducted an eco-stylistic analysis of selected

extracts from Michael Punke's novels, The Revenant and The Hungry Tide (2002). The researchers aimed to expose the power hierarchy between nature, a non-human participant, and humans created in the selected texts and to reveal the impacts of natural elements on the humans' survival by identifying the eco-stylistic features in the text. In order to achieve these objectives the researchers used Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (2014) and Zurru's (2017) approach as a theoretical framework in their work. Researchers concluded that nature is not solely an inactive non- human participant rather it has a huge effect on humans' lives thus, its resources should be appreciated and it must be protected.

Research Method

The current study is qualitative in nature and is based on interpretivist paradigm. Descriptive research design, as it best suits the purpose of the present study, is used in the present study. The text of Agha Shahid Ali's I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002) is used as a primary source data for the analysis. The data is analyzed through closed reading and textual analysis. As eco-stylistics is a cutting-edge academic method within the context of stylistics as a whole (Jaafar and Ganapathy, 2022 ; Jaafar, 2014, Jaafar 2022) and it can benefit from the eclectic nature of borrowing methods from other fields. Therefore, the present study uses Halliday's Systemic Functional Grammar (1986) and Zurru's (2017) approach as a theoretical framework. Zurru's (2017) approach focuses on the foregrounding of ecological elements in a text through metaphors, deviations and parallelism and then explains the meanings of these stylistic devices from Halliday's SFG (1986) point of view.

Data Analysis and Discussion:

About the Poet and Poem

Agha Shahid was an Indian American poet. He was born in 1942 and died in 2001. He is basically 'Agha.' Agha belongs to Syed family. He was born in Dehli. The family of Agha Shahid Ali migrated from Kandahar to Dehli and then to Kashmir. Shahid moved to America and there he completed his PHD in English Literature.

This poem, I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002) revolves around 'Kashmir.' Because of the geographical location and natural beauty, everybody is interested in Kashmir. This poem is divided into four stanzas and contains 160 lines. In this poem the poet say that from a distant the environment of Kashmir is looking so cool, calm, peaceful and beautiful but in reality the environment of Kashmir is set on fire by the Indian soldiers. They have imposed a strong curfew there and have set each and every beautiful things of Kashmir on ablaze. The poet present an argument that the beautiful environment of Kashmir is so much disturbed by the Indian soldiers that even respectable people like Brahmins have started migrating from Kashmir.

Foregrounding of Ecological Elements through Metaphor

Agha Shahid Ali uses metaphors throughout the poem to foreground the destruction of ecological elements and its effect on human beings. What follow as the detail discussion of these metaphors:

The very title, I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002), of this poem is metaphorical. In this title the writer uses several stylistic devices to bring forth meanings related to ecology. The writer starts the title with first personal pronoun 'I' that suggests a first personal narrative or a subjective viewpoint. This style invites readers to engage directly with the poet observations and reflections of the environmental degradation in Kashmir. The use of 'I' in the title suggests personal empathy towards environmental issues and its effects on the inhabitants of Kashmir. The next word in the title is 'see.' The verb 'see' evokes a visual perception. It creates visual imagery to engage the readers' senses and set a tone if deep contemplation about the burning of Kashmir. New Delhi, which is five hundred miles away from Kashmir, is used in juxtaposition with the word 'Kashmir' to create meanings related to power dynamic and political symbolism and its impact on the natural beauty of Kashmir. It means that Kashmir can only be viewed from the point of view of New Dehli.

The last words 'at midnight' refer to the specific time of contemplation about political and environmental crises in Kashmir. One can only look to the environmental matters of Kashmir at midnight. Hence, through these words in the title the poet wants to create a metaphorical meaning which echoes environmental and political crises. The title tells us that New Dehli, the capital of India,

has occupied forcefully the region of Sufiasim, known as Kashmir. The Indian soldiers have destroyed the beauty of Kashmir and committing brutalities there. They have imposed a strong curfew there and thus Kashmir is looking like a deserted place. The environmental and ecological issues in Kashmir are so severe that the Indian military has banned every types of news from there so that they show to the world that everything is fine with Kashmir and its environment. New Dehli is so powerful that even the poet says the he contemplates and looks at the environmental and political crises of Kashmir from the point of view of New Dehli.

The poem start with the following quotations of Yeats' poem Easter 1916

"Now and in time to be,

Wherever green is worn…

A terrible beauty is born (p.1)."

In these lines the word 'green' is used as a metaphor for a terrible beauty. Green, which is a symbol of Irish nation, represents their independence. In these lines W.B. Yeats considers an independent Ireland to be something beautiful however; its beauty is terrible to him. Agha Shahid Ali has used these lines in order to set the tone of this poem. Kashmir is full of greenery and is full of beautiful streams, landscapes and mountains but however, these greenery and beauty are so much disturb by the Indian soldiers that it has brought a terrible beauty with it.

The poet uses words like 'ice' (in line 1) and 'snow' (in lines 29, 36 and 59) as a metaphor of isolation and destruction of natural cycles. As autumn destroys the greenery of nature in the same way the Indian soldiers have destroyed the nature cycles of snow falling. In line 36 the poet compares 'snows to ash' and says that the weather is much disturbed by the occupied forces that it cannot extinguish the fire that have destroyed the lives and houses of millions of people.

Foregrounding of Ecological Elements through Deviation

In I see Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002), Agha Shahid Ali uses various types of deviations to foreground ecological elements and emphasis the interconnection of nature, culture and conflict. The following section presents an eco-stylistics analysis of the deviations in the poem:

Lexical Deviation

In the poem the poet has coined rare and strange ecological terms that highlight the intertwined nature of the environment and human nature. In this line, "One must wear jeweled ice in dry plains to will the distant mountains to glass, (line 1and 2)" the term 'jeweled ice' is in unusual phrase that related ice with a sense of beauty and preciousness. Normally, the word 'ice' cannot be used with the word 'jeweled' since these two are different words, representing different entities. Through this deviation the poet tries to highlight the delicate nature of icy landscapes of Kashmir. By contrasting the icy nature of Kashmir's landscapes with the dryness of the plains the poet stresses the uniqueness and fragility of the natural environment of the region. In the same way in this line "In autumn when the wind blows sheer ice, the chinar leaves fall in clusters –one by one, otherwise (Line 23)" the phrase 'sheer ice' deviates from the common description of wind and cold. This lexical choice suggests the cutting quality of the wind. Even the wind is so much disturbed by the Indian soldiers that it has got a cutting quality. The phrase 'chinar leaves' in the same line makes a connection between the poet and local flora of Kashmir. It shows a unique ecological identity and underscoring continuity and resilience of the natural cycles that continues despite human conflict.

Graphological Deviation

In this poem Agha Shahid Ali has used varied spacing and indentation in order to build visual representation of ecological and social fragmentation. In following lines for example,

"Drippings from a suspended burning tire

Are falling on the back of a prisoner,

the naked boy screaming, "I know nothing(lines 13,14 &15)"

the indentation visually breaks the line. This indentation reflects the emotional and physical scars on the beautiful land of Kashmir and on its people. In these lines it is not a boy, who is being torturing in a prison, but Kashmir is basically made a prison and the beautiful environment and nature is in the clutches of that prison and is being destroying by the Indian forces.

Semantic Deviation

In this line "snow begins to fall on us, like ash(line 37)" the poet compares 'snow' with 'ash,' which are two different words, having different meanings. The comparison of these two words blends images of destruction and purity. This unusual comparison of 'snow' with 'ash' shows the impacts of political conflict on environment. Similarly, the comparison of 'blood to rubies on snow' in "Blood sheer rubies on Himalayan snow" reflects the contrast between the natural beauty of the Himalayas and the violence inflicted upon **it.**

Syntactic Deviation

The poet has used fragmented and complex sentences to foreground the ecological elements in the poem. "On the edge of the Cantonment, where Gupkar Road ends, it shrinks almost into nothing, is nothing by Interrogation gates so it can slip, unseen, into the cells (lines 8 to 11)" this fragmented and complex syntax reflects the disintegration and fragmentation of the social and natural order in Kashmir. By using such sentence structure the poet echoes the confusion and chaos in the regions and showing the breakdown of stability and harmony in both the environment and human life.

Phonological Deviation

To create a rhythmic quality that evokes natural cycles and process, the poet uses repetitions and internal rhyme throughout the poem. For instance, "Rizwan, it's you, Rizwan, it's you," I cry out as he steps closer, the sleeves of his **phiren** torn (line 12)" the rhyme and repetition in this line mimic the cyclical nature of ecological process amid conflict.

Foregrounding Ecology through Parallelism

Parallelism is the repetition of similar structures in a successive phrases or paragraphs. In I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002,) Agha Shahid Ali uses several types of parallelism for creating emotional response to ecology in Kashmir. The following types of parallelisms are used in this poem:

Lexical Parallelism

Lexical parallelism involves the repetition of similar words or phrases. Throughout the poem the word 'midnight' is repeated to emphasis the stillness and natural quietness of the natural world at this hour. Midnight symbolizes a time of reflection and longing and the use this word deepens the emotional and ecological resonance of the poem. Similarly the word 'ice' is used time in again in the poem to evoke the cold pristine beauty of Kashmir's Landscapes. It also reflects metaphorically the emotional coldness and numbness resulting from the exile and separation of homelands. In the same way, in this line, "Rizwan, it's you, Rizwan, it's you, (line 12)" lexical parallelism is used to covey the emotional connections and the haunting presence of the lost individual. It shows the impact of conflicts on Kashmir's landscapes.

Semantic Parallelism

Semantic parallelism involves the repetition of ideas or themes. In this poem the writer refers to cold in a number of ways to explain the theme of isolation. At the very start of the poem, the writer uses the word' jeweled ice' which sets the mood and tone of the poem. The mention of the 'five hundred miles' distance from Delhi to Srinagar and the complaint of Rizwan from cold coveys the theme of isolation. 'Snow' and 'ice' stand for the natural beauty of Kashmir but it also act as barriers which separate the people of Kashmir from the rest of the world. The poet paradoxically compares 'snow' to 'ash' (line 36) in order to illustrates that the weather in Kashmir is not so cold to calm and stop the fire that have destroyed the homes and lives of millions of people in Kashmir.

Grammatical Parallelism

Grammatical parallelism is the use of the same grammatical structures in subsequent lines or sentences. For example in this line "Don't tell my father I have died, he says, and I follow him through blood on the road and hundreds of pairs of shoes the mourners left behind, as they ran from the funeral, victims of the firing (lines 31 to35)" the poet uses the parallel grammatical patterns to describe the sequence of events that convey continuity and inevitability and thus emphasizing the continuing nature of the battle and its impact on the natural and human landscapes.

Conclusion

In I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight (2002), Agha Shahid Ali has used a number of eco-

stylistic devices to foreground the interconnectedness of political conflict, environmental degradation, and human suffering in Kashmir. The poet creates a powerful representation of the region ecological system and cultural devastation through various types of deviations, parallelisms and metaphors. The analysis highlights that the poet has used lexical, graphological, semantic, syntactic, and phonological deviations along with lexical, grammatical and semantic parallelisms to emphasize the fragility and beauty of Kashmir's natural environment, the impacts of human conflict on the region's ecology, and the resilience of the natural world amidst political turmoil. The poem functions as a heartbreaking aide-mémoire of the urgency to address the environmental and political challenges in Kashmir, as well as the need of conserving the distinct cultural and biological heritage of the region.

References

Ali, A. S. (2002). *I See Kashmir from New Delhi at Midnight. The Country without a Post Office* (PP. 23-25). W.W. Norton & Company
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Andrews, J., & Short, M. (1999). Exploring the language of poems, plays and prose. *The Modern Language Review*, *94*(1), 284. https://doi.org/10.2307/3736116
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Bate, J. (1991). *Romantic ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. Routledge.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Douthwaite, J., Virdis, D. F., & Zurru, E. (2017). *The stylistics of landscapes, the landscapes of stylistics*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Goatly, A. (2010, July). Edward Thomas, the landscape of Nature, and ecostylistics. In *Poetics and Linguistics Association Conference*.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Goatly, A. (2017). The poems of Edward Thomas. *The Stylistics of Landscapes, the Landscapes of Stylistics, 28*, 95. Retrieved from http://benjamins.com
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Gosh, A. (2005). *The Hungry Tide.* Happercollins.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar.* Hodder Education Publishers.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Jaafar, E. A. (2014). A stylistic analysis of Bisson's bears discover fire. *Journal of College of Education for Women*, *25*(4). https://doi.org/10.36231/coedw.v25i4.888
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Jaafar, E. A. (2022). Book review of Ringrow and Pihlaja's contemporary media Stylistics. *International Journal of Arabic-English Studies*, *22*(2), 341–343. https://doi.org/10.33806/ijaes2000.22.2.19

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Jaafar, E. A., & Ganapathy, M. (2022). Investigating EFL Learners' Ability to Analyse Poetic Language: A Pedagogical corpus Stylistic approach. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *12*(5), 866–875. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1205.06
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Mohamed, Z. A., & Jaafar, E. A. (2023). Foregrounding Nature's Role: A Functionalist Ecostylistic Study of the Hungry Tide. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, *13*(03), 23–34. https://doi.org/10.37648/ijrssh.v13i03.003
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Poetics and Linguistics Association. (2023). Pala 2023: *Green Stylistics: Exploring Connections Between Stylistics and the Environment:* Book of Abstracts: University of Bologna, Italy, Department of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures, University Congress Center in Bertinoro (CEUB), 12-16 July 2023. Università di Bologna, Alma Mater Studiorum.

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Short, M. (1996). *Exploring the language of poems, plays, and prose.* Routledge. https://www.routledge.com/Exploring-the-Language-of-Poems-Plays-and-Prose/Short/p/book/9780582291300

Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Sidney, P. (2006). *A defence of poesie and poems.* http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA60049216
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Virdis, D. F.(2022). *Ecological stylistics: Ecostylistic approaches to discourses of nature, the environment and sustainability.* Springer Publishing.
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext

Zurru, E. (2017). Chapter 10. The agency of The Hungry Tide. In *Linguistic approaches to literature* (pp. 191–231). https://doi.org/10.1075/lal.28.10zur
Google Scholar   Worldcat   Fulltext