

My Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last: A Thematic Investigation

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Abstract:

"My Neighbour Friend, Breathing His Last" is an elegy written in response to the death of a friend, guide, and mentor, and it describes the agonies of death. Baba Bulla Shah wrote the poem in Saraiki, and A.R Luther translated it into English. Shah, a Sufi poet and Muslim devotee, believes that this world is only temporary. A.R. Luther sought out Islam after his conversion to Islam and shared its secrets with humanity. His translation of this poem demonstrates his zeal for proselytising. Islamism promotes an existential perspective on life on Earth. Men were created for men to be prepared for the next life. Thematic Analysis was used to identify thematic elements in the poem. The purpose of the study was to find the points in the poem under study where the essence of the poem can be found. The fact that his guide is no longer alive horrifies and devastates him. He is suffering from separation anxiety. What will he do when it comes time to bid his mentor farewell? His Guide will have a meeting with God. He is Allah's servant. He believes that God's love is essential for the success of man in this world and hereafter. He seeks guidance from only one source in this critical situation: Allah. God is everywhere, constantly watching over and supporting those who are in need.

Keywords: Elegy, Pangs of Separation, Thematic Analysis Islamism, Aaith

Introduction

The present stud aims to thematically analyse the poem ‘My Neighbour Friend breathing his Last’ composed by Bulla Shah and translated by A.R. Luther. According to Shona McCombes (2020), the introduction is the first chapter of your thesis or dissertation and appears immediately after the table of contents. It is critical to pique the reader's interest right away. Set the tone for your research by defining your focus, purpose, and direction.

The poet says

کرو مہربانی تم اہل زمیں پر
خدا مہرباں ہوگا عرش بریں پر

If you help and please the needy in this world, Allah will reward you handsomely in the afterlife.

This is Islam's ideology regarding how humans should live on Earth. Allah has given him the title Supreme Being of the Universe. As a result, man must be superior to other animals on the planet. He can also be superior to other human beings, but only in terms of good deeds. To guide the public, this research endeavour will thematically analyse Bulla Shah's poem, His Neighbor Friend Breathing His Last, and uncover the poem's fundamental message, which will be revealed in the process. The message is how a man should live and serve others following the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Historical Background

Sud (2020) asserts that researchers are free to employ a variety of methods for identifying patterned meanings across the data set. Thematic Analysis is one of these philosophies that is increasingly popular for analyzing qualitative data. Its adaptability cannot be overstated; it can be used in a variety of ways for a wide range of datasets. Most importantly, it is a simple method for inexperienced researchers. Drama, poetry, fiction, and essays are the four general categories of literary works. Poetry is the most highly regarded of the four literary genres. It's fascinating to examine because the language used in a poem is artistic. "Poetry is the hymn of praise," writes Knickerboker (1963), and debate over good poetry is rarely on the agenda. We may have read a plethora of poems, but we cannot deny that we have rarely delved deeply into the core of the poem to reveal what the hidden meaning inside it is. Poems are a good medium for poets to express their most suppressed feelings about their surroundings and the people who live

in them. We should try to delve into the poem to find the message hidden in the poet's words, figures of speech, and style. Poems, without a doubt, are a good source of entertainment, inspiration, guidance, and, more importantly, a complete education to shape the lives of the readers. Poems should be evaluated and analyzed to gain a better understanding because the language used in the poems differs from the language used in everyday conversation. Daily conversation is very easy for the common reader, whereas the scholarly, somewhat bombastic, and literary language used in the poems is alien to the common person with low education. The message and meaning of the poems are masked by stylized language that must be assessed and parsed. In general, figurative languages such as antithesis, hyperbola, idiomatic expression, irony, metaphor, metonymy, paradox, personification, simile, and synecdoche can be found in literary work.

About the Poets

Buba Bulla Shah

Baba Bulla Shah, also known as Syed Abdullah Shah Qadri, was born in Punjab, Pakistan in 1680. Because Punjabi was his mother tongue, he manipulated the language to express his deep-seated and insightful feelings and expressions in his poetry. In his poems, he made effective and distinctive use of the Kafi Style. Not only did he use Punjabi in his Kafis, but he also used Sindhi and Saraiki. Because of his inspirational insight expressed in his poems, he is known all over the world as Sofi Shair (Spiritual Poet). He was, without a doubt, a humanist and reformer whose poems sought nothing but Allah, Almighty, and preached nothing but the Truth of the World. In 1757, he arrived in eternity to meet Allah.

A.R. Luther

A.R. Luther (Abdul Rauf Luther), a Sikh/Hindu by birth, whose Hindu name was Munshi Ram, translated "My Neighbour Friend Breathed His Last." He was deeply impressed by the Islamic way of life at a young age, and at the age of 16, he joined Isam's fold. It was said about his firm belief in Allah that when he was advised by a gardener who happened to be a saint to walk on the canal's water, he put his foot on the water and successfully crossed it. He practised walking on the water for 40 years. Bulla Shah's spiritual poem could only be translated by a spiritual man with firm belief, such as A.R. Luther.

The objective of the Study

The goal of thoroughly analysing a poem concerning dictions, stylistic devices, metrical pattern, and the theme is to provide the reader with a better understanding of the work of art. The work of art that consoles, entertains, guides, and educates its readers. The goal of literary analysis is to decipher the meaning of a poem and appreciate it on a deeper level. The theme the poem understudy contrasts life and death includes the inevitability of death. Using the theme of an elegiac poem, "His Neighbor Friend Breathing His Last," the current study seeks to delve into the minor details embedded and concealed between the lines of the poem to make the study more interesting and understandable for both readers and researchers.

Research Questions

- i. How does Bulla Shah express the theme of the poem 'His Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last'?
- ii. What effect does the theme of Bulla Shah's poem "His Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last" have on the readers?

Literature Review

A review (Fink, 2014) studies various sources, such as books, scholarly journals, and other resources, to discover relevant works to the research problem under consideration. A literature review is meant to provide a bird's-eye view of your sources, and to show how your research connects to a larger field of study. Every research study requires a thorough literature review to be done carefully and thoroughly. Vigilant work on assigned homework is expected and can be expected in all studies. The researcher is the reader while writing the literature review. The reader is told that his study will act as a bridge to other studies on the same topic which will follow. It surveys not only the existing research on the topic, but also appraises, encapsulates, compares, and correlates the scholarly books, research articles, and other relevant sources that are related to the research. Due to the basic concept of offering one, the current research would not be taken seriously if it was missing one at the beginning. The thematic analysis yields reliable and insightful results, but no one agrees on how rigorously researchers should apply the method. Although themes have been discussed (Aronson, 1994; Attride-Stirling, 2001; Crabtree & Miller, 1999; King, 2004), there have been guides dedicated to

conducting applied research or illustrating inductive and deductive coding (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thematic analysis is behind the times, due to a lack of academic interest in the topic. there is not enough literature outlining practical thematic analysis steps To finish this gap in the literature,

we've written this article.

Researchers can use literature to construct an argument for selecting themes. The storey that is created is important (Aronson, 1994). Additionally, the researcher may expand on the subject's knowledge by proposing new theoretical or practical interpretations (Côté & Turgeon, 2005). the literature confirms the findings, while also challenging and adding to the existing literature (Tuckett, 2005).

Inference should aim to maintain the coherence of the argument. Using the data to support the main points will determine the process's credibility, resulting in a convincing explanation (Starks & Trinidad, 2007). Results must be discussed and all relevant data must be presented for research findings to be taken seriously (Côté & Turgeon, 2005).

The theme needs to be described, as well as the assumptions that support it and the implications of each theme. The conclusion should provide a summary of all of the topics' different themes. Some authors recommend utilising the member checking process for getting feedback on the analyses (Côté & Turgeon, 2005). The final step, member checking, verifies that the respondents' views fit with the researcher's representation of them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

"Domination of Black" was analysed thematically by Radita & Winya (2016). Night turns everyday objects into our greatest fears. An unexpected occurrence can unsettle us because our imagination takes flight. Darkness reigns here, empowering those who fear and allowing them to gain control of us.

Research Methodology

Methods and tools, according to Kallet (2004), act as catalysts in the research process, allowing researchers to investigate the research questions and achieve the study's objectives and goals. The thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) was used as a theoretical framework for sifting and evaluating the themes portrayed by Bulla Shah in his elegy "His Neighbor Friend Breathing His Last" in this qualitative study. The

following is a six-step data analysis method based on themes. Understanding your data, developing initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and creating a report are all steps in the process. To achieve the study's objectives through the lens of thematic analysis, data was collected from Balla's poem 'His Neighbor Friend Breathing His Last,' which was taken from Book-III containing Poems and Plays prescribed by PPTB and included in the Intermediate syllabus.

Data Analysis

Familiarising with the Data

The text of the poem for thematic analysis was adapted from the intermediate English Book-III, which contains Poems and Plays.

“My Neighbour friend breathing his last,
 What should I do? O’ God, Aghast!
He is to leave, now cant the train,
 What should I do? O God, Aghast!
On everyday decamping,
 At every place are shrieks in stock,
 What should I do? O’ God, Aghast!
 Flare up flames in heart to height,
 For, visible is not charming sight,
 What should I do? O’ God, Aghast!
 Without His love, Bullah in loss
 Can hardly dwell here or across
 What should I do? O’ God, Aghast!”

Generating Initial Codes

Explaining all four stanzas is essential here to generate initial ideas for the possible themes of the poem under study.

Stanza 1

Poet is madly in love with his spiritual guide. His guide is nearing the end of his life and will leave him alone and helpless. The poet addresses Allah, Almighty, expresses his anguish and asks for his help and guidance on what to do at this time. He claims to be witnessing the departure of his guide, who will abandon him. He is terrified by the sight and seeks refuge in Allah, the Almighty. He and his companions are so depressed, alone, and helpless

that he wishes to die alongside his guide, as he is ready to accept his guide's death. According to the poet, the only thing worth appreciating is Allah's love, without which a person is lost. As a result, we must remember, love, and fear Allah. Without a doubt, death is a harsh reality and a terrifying experience, but it is a blessing for those who love Allah. As a result, we must always be prepared to meet Him. The poem expresses personal feelings powerfully.

Stanza 2

The poet's guide is breathing his last and will leave this world forever. He begs Allah to help him find comfort and solace because he is depressed and perplexed. People everywhere are talking about leaving this world with their guide, and they, like the poet, are in a precarious situation. The poet wishes to teach humans that Allah is the best protector, who consoles the depressed without discrimination, and that man is destroyed and ruined with Allah's help. Death cannot be avoided, and it is an equaliser that meets everyone, but pious people are proud to know that they will meet Him for eternity.

Stanza 3

The poet's spiritual guide is about to die, and he is saddened by the fact that he will be left alone without any support or guidance. In that schizophrenic state, he prays to Allah for guidance on what to do. He claims that he is running out of energy to deal with the calamity of his guide's departure. This heartbreaking sight has aggravated him to the point where he no longer believes in the present world. He, like a pessimist, wishes to end his own life. When one is in a difficult situation, the poet wants to suggest that one should not be depressed, but rather seek Allah's help. Allah does not abandon anyone who is depressed.

Stanza 4

As the poet's guide approaches the time to meet Allah, Almighty, the situation is critical and heartbreaking. He prays to Allah for help and guidance because he has lost his senses in his love for his spiritual guide, who is about to die. The poet is afraid of being abandoned and ruinous if he does not have the support of his guide. He wishes to teach the lesson that Allah is Almighty, who both grants and takes life. Everything that is born has an end. So, when someone is about to leave this world, whether he is a spiritual guide or not, one should not be depressed or downhearted. When a

person believes in Allah as his Protector and Guide, he does not feel abandoned or helpless.

Searching Themes

Scholarly analysis and explanation of the poem provide the readers and researchers with a variety of interpretations that assist them in reaching the main core of the poem. A detailed and critical examination of the poems mentioned in the explanation reveals the following themes. Man's Persuasion, the Truth of the World, Temporaryness of the Life, Spirituality, the Need for a Guide, Allah's Love, and Life and Death

Reviewing themes

Using a double-blind review process, the researchers for the current study examined each of the poem's themes one by one and came to the unanimous conclusion that at least these themes address the heart of the poem under study.

Naming and Defining Themes

When the themes of the poem have been reviewed, they are given proper names and definitions so that they can be understood clearly without any ambiguity.

Man's Persuasive Power

Muslims believe that Allah, the Almighty, is the sole creator of the universe and everything in it. Every person on this planet wonders, "What is the point of our existence?" Why were we created? What is the purpose of our presence on this planet? Men must believe in the One Lord and do well because Allah Almighty created them to serve him. This is the ultimate goal of human life. Allah says, "I created men solely to serve me" (Quran, 51:56). This life is a training ground for the afterlife, the "eternal house," which will never end and to which all humans will eventually pass.

Sufism

Sufism is a mystical Islamic belief and practice in which Muslims seek direct personal encounters with God to discover the truth of divine love and knowledge. It consists of several mystical paths designed to reveal the nature of humanity and God, as well as to facilitate the experience of divine love and wisdom in the world. Sufis see this world as a temporary workshop where good deeds can be performed in preparation for the life to come. They

insist that life in this world is merely transitory, whereas Allah's desire for eternal life is eternal.

Spirituality

Spirituality is defined as the recognition of a feeling, sense, or belief that there is something greater than myself, that there is more to being human than sensory experience, and that the greater whole of which we are a part is cosmic or divine. True spirituality requires an opening of the heart, which can only be obtained by approaching a spiritual guide who is a true Sufi in direct communion with Allah.

Friendship

A universal saying goes, "A Friend in Need Is a Friend Indeed." The poet believes that his Guide is his true friend because he does not abandon him and stands by him in hot waters as he leads him to his eternal life-death destination.

Death

The premature death of a neighbour, the poet's true Sufi and Spiritual guide, frightens him and forewarns him about his desertedness, depravity, and helplessness. Because the poet is spiritually in love with Allah, he believes that without his mentor's presence and guidance, the poet will suffer because clemency and benevolence will be denied to him. The guide, on the other hand, was less impressed. The poet intends to convey the harsh reality that this world is merely a fad. After all, everything born will perish. We must seek Allah's help because He is the First and Last.

Producing Report

Allah, the Almighty, is the supreme authority, and man's life aims to live per Allah's precepts, as preached by his Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). It follows that man has two primary sources of inspiration for living a moral life. The Holy Qur'an comes first, followed by the Sunnah of Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). A good man is always on the lookout for a True Guide who will lead him to the source of his inspiration. If man's guide abandons him in the world, he feels abandoned, helpless, and concerned about finding the true who will teach him the right route. A True Guide is a correct road to eternal achievement.

Discussion

The poem under consideration, "My Neighbor Breathing His Last," is an elegy on the death of a close friend, guide, and mentor to the poet. The poet is in a perilous position to describe the agonies of death. The poem was written in Saraiki by Baba Bulla Shah and translated into English by A.R. Luther. Bulla Shah is a Sufi poet who has dedicated his life to Islam and service to humanity, believing that this world is transitory and that the real world awaits. Adul Rauf Luther, also known as A.R. Luther, converted from the Sikh/Hindu religion to Islam. His conversion compelled him to explore the world of Islam and reveal Allah's secrets to man for his betterment and well-being. The translation of the poem under study demonstrates his zeal and contributions to Islamic ideology. The poem's central theme is Islamic ideology, which encourages people to live a spiritual and purposeful life on Earth. Man's purpose on Earth is to prepare himself for the next world, viewing this world as temporary and the other as eternal. Following the death of his Mentor, the poet feels abandoned and powerless. In reality, he wishes to depict the Islamic Ideology of life, which states that everything that has a birth must die. This world is only a workplace. Life is so complicated that man cannot lead it on his own. He requires a guide to living his life by Allah's commands. Life without a guide is full of allures that can lead to betrayal, and as a result, man can lose sight of the purpose of his life, which is to worship Allah.

Allah says in the Holy Quran's surah Al-Mulk's first, second, and sixth ayahs, as mentioned below,

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ

Blessed is the One in Whose Hands rests all authority. In addition, He is Most Capable of everything.

The ideology of full faith preaches the word "Kun fa yakun" which emphasizes that Allah, Almighty is the one and only Creator of the universe and everything big and little in it. It signifies that when Allah wishes to perform something, it happens right away.

الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۗ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

He is the One⁷ Who created death and life to test which of you is best in deeds. In addition, He is the Almighty, All-Forgiving.

Allah created everything, including life and death. Allah creates man and sends him out into the world to praise and worship Him. It is man's moral obligation to do good. Allah has determined the reward and punishment for man's good and bad deeds. If a man does good deeds in this world, he will be rewarded with paradise; otherwise, he will be relegated to the burning hell. Allah's will determines whether he forgives or punishes for wrongdoing. Allah has complete freedom and authority to do whatever He wants.

وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا بِرَبِّهِمْ عَذَابُ جَهَنَّمَ وَسَاءَ الْمَصِيرُ

Those who disbelieve in their Lord will suffer the punishment of Hell. What an evil destination!

From this ayah, it is clear that those who betray in the world and do not believe in Allah's power and sovereignty are disrespected in the world, and in the world to come, they will not be treated with consideration, and Burning Hell will be their permanent destination.

All three ayahs mentioned above convey the message that Allah is the supreme power who created the universe and everything in it and that the purpose of man's creation is to do good deeds. The man who obeys Allah's commands is blessed with reward-Paradise, while Allah curses the man who does not follow the preaching of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

For these reasons, it is extremely difficult for a man to live in the world without the assistance of the sages and saints. Because these pious people are true believers and worshippers of Allah, they inspire ordinary people to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUP) to make Allah happy with their good deeds; otherwise, they will be condemned to hell. Following Islamic philosophy, the poet is correct in lamenting the death of his guide.

Conclusion

The objective of the present study was to analyse the poem "My Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last" by Baba Bulla Shah translated by A.R. Luther. The poet expresses his love for the Spiritual Guide and Allah, Almighty. The death of his Guide terrifies him and puts him in a state of aghast. He is suffering from pangs of separation. He is puzzled about how to face his fatal situation and how to bid farewell to his Guide. His Guide is going to meet Allah. He is in deep love with Allah. He believes that without the love of Allah is at the utmost loss. In this precarious state, he seeks guidance from

nowhere but Allah what to do in the time of critical situation when his Guide is going to leave him helpless in the inclement world where there is no other source of inspiration. After all, just one thing consoles him that believing that Allah is Omnipresent to support and guide when the man feels deserted; he will not be at loss. The study's analysis is limited to one poem by BaBa Bulla Shah, My Neighbour Friend Breathing His Last. The poem's themes have been traced back to Islamic Spiritualism. Readers of religions other than Islam can interpret the theme according to their own beliefs. The study revealed the poem's strategies for enhancing the effect of sadness on the eve of death in the Islamic Spiritualist fold. These strategies will be extremely beneficial to avid readers and researchers in improving their ability to apply them in other research projects.

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Conflict of the Interest

The research presented the study's conflict in such a way that this study has been elaborated in Islamic Spiritualism, which may differ from any other religion. The goal is not to establish religious contradiction. Although the scholars are Muslims, they discuss the Islamic theory of Spiritualism, which readers and researchers of other religions can interpret according to their faith.

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