

## Beyond the things: Stylistic Insights into Rafat's 'Kitchens'

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### Abstract

This study has examined the poem “Kitchens” by Taufiq Rafat from his collection “Arrival of the monsoon” in order to analyze the linguistics resources used by poet to explore the theme of nostalgia manifested in his symbolic usage of ‘things’. The Poem had been examined from different theoretical and methodological perspectives; however, it still required an in-depth linguistic examination which this paper aims to provide. For said reasons, study has used stylistics analysis since a through and in-depth analysis helps in uncovering the hidden meanings at the same time bringing about appreciations for the author's creativity and style. Therefore, for such an informed analysis, the poem was analyzed in terms of level model of language i.e. from Phonological, Graphological, Morphological, Semantics and obviously syntactic perspective. The close reading method has been used with things theory given by Bill Brown to carry out an informed stylistics analysis of the poem. The detailed stylistic examination of the poem Kitchens noted that Rafat has utilized linguistics resources and symbolic significance in order state the dominant theme of nostalgia. Such a theme is highlighted via juxtaposition of old and modern life or village and city life with the help of things that are/were present in kitchens. Therefore, the use of things theory further enhanced the claims build around subsisting ideas that Rafat conveys. This research highlights the importance of Rafat as a poet representing indigenous culture thereby longing for it. Apart from it, study adds to available literature and critical scholarship in the field of Pakistani literature. Moreover, it is suggested for future research to carry a corpus-oriented in-depth stylistics analysis of Rafat's collection in order to discover his poetic ingenuity.

**Keywords:** Stylistics, Level model, Things, Kitchen, Nostalgia

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## Introduction

The word stylistics is derived from the word "style" that refers to the way language choices bring about meaning and effect in texts, particularly literary texts. For Bradford (1997) stylistics is "an elusive and slippery topic every contribution to the vast, multifaceted discipline of literary studies will involve an engagement with style" (p. xi). While talking about the origin of stylistics as a discipline in its own Freeman (1971) argues that stylistics is a sub-discipline of linguistics that began in the second half of the 20th century. Since then, many scholars have jotted down definition of stylistics.

Leech (2008) defines stylistics as "the linguistic study of literary texts" (p. 1). These texts - literary and non-literary - are systematically and thoroughly examined in terms of styles they carry and the ways through which they bring about the meaning. This usage of linguistics method for text resulted because of the need of the hour as "[...] a linguist deaf to the poetic function of language and a literary scholar indifferent to linguistic problems and unacquainted with linguistic methods are equally flagrant anachronisms." (Jakobson, 1960, p. 377). Moreover, Short and Candlin (1989) defined stylistics as a linguistic approach that deals with literary texts. Whereas, for Widdowson (1975) stylistics is a link between literary criticism and linguistics. Therefore, it can be established that, in the realm of linguistics, stylistics occupy a crucial spot as it is used as an analytical framework in, both, literary and non-literary text. The former is therefore further categorized and discussed under literary stylistics whereas the later under general stylistics.

The crucial element in any stylistics analysis is the notion of style which Crystal and Davy (1969) define as "saying the right thing in the most effective way" (p. 10). Therefore, stylistics analysis focusing on style may examine the text through different levels as assisted by levels model under linguistics. Moreover, Crystal (1981) is of the view that linguistics, as an academic discipline, scientifically studies language, whereas certain aspects of language variations are explored under stylistics. Another important thing which is focused in analysis is the very fact that styles vary according to context i.e. with respect to individual, era, genre, and so on. Therefore, examination of style is totally up to the requirements of the analysis. While commenting on the analytical part of stylistics, Jaafar (2014) argues that "stylistics makes our interpretation valid and enhances our enjoyment of literature" (p. 239). While keeping that in consideration, this paper indulges in the stylistics appreciation of a poem from Pakistani literature in English in order to explore theme of nostalgia.

In this study, for instance, *Kitchens* poem by Taufiq Rafat is discussed in order to understand the ways poet utilizes language to bring about the overall meaning and thematic organization of the poem. The purpose of selecting the aforementioned poem is to understand the uniqueness through which Rafat creates meaning centered around theme of nostalgia by establishing relationships between things and Human subjects thereby also being one of the objectives of study. Another objective of the current study is to explore the linguistics maneuvers deployed by Rafat to establish a polar opposite relationship between Inanimate and animate beings; i.e. things and humans as manifested in Bill Brown's *Things* theory. The significance of such a study lies in its exploration of the theme of nostalgia by means of linguistic analysis, which is highly important as it discusses an author which belongs to periphery of Pakistani English literature and usually is not paid heed to. Moreover, the study is significant in terms of understanding the utilization of stylistics as analytical framework alongside a theoretical framework from literary realm. The study is, however, limited to the poem *Kitchens* that is selected among 116 other poems from Rafat's (1985) collection *Arrival of the monsoon*. Thus, this study recommends exploration of other poem from different literary and critical lenses.

### **Review of the Literature**

Taufiq Rafat's thirty-one years as a poet is collected in *Arrival of the monsoon* which comprises 116 poems. The common thematic patterns among his works include exploration of indigenous landscape, identity in terms of roots and a gloomy sense of nostalgia. For said reasons, his collection generally and particularly some selective poems have been discussed in terms of literary appreciation. As this research is based on stylistics, it is worth mentioning certain studies that have carried out stylistics analysis in terms of different levels of language (Shaikh et al., 2023; Shawa, 2015). Moreover, when it comes to Pakistani literature in English, Anjum et al. (2021) has carried out stylistics analysis of the poem *A village morning* by Daud Kamal. Similarly, Asad et al. (2023) has explored thematic tendencies by examining text at different levels of the poem *A prayer for the homeland* by Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi. It can be established that there is extensive scholarship on poetry as genre in context of Pakistani literature in English. Similarly, Taufiq Rafat's craft, too, has witnessed such an appreciation.

For instance, Rana and Khan (2022) have explored the collection from a post-colonial perspective while focusing on the notion of roots. Similar is the research of Tabbasum et al. (2021) whose analysis limits the collection to cultural context. A

more focused study regarding our concerned poem Kitchens is done by Raza (2023), who has looked at text from a post-colonial feminist perspective. Apart from these studies, there is dire need of extensive research on the said collection. Though, no stylistic analysis has yet been done on the poem Kitchens; however, Ayaz et al. (2022) has carried out stylistic analysis of the poem Reflections by the same author, which gave ample insight into the style of Rafat. Despite these studies, Kitchens poem lacks an extensive and thorough stylistics analysis, which this study aims to provide. Therefore, the current study proposes to explore the theme which Rehman (2015) puts as a “supportive life pattern of rural communities and who hanker after the warmth and closeness of that way of life” (p. 208). The aforementioned theme of nostalgia is to be discussed in the context of Things theory, for Rafat utilities symbolic meaning assisted by the things around the kitchen.

The theme of nostalgia, manifested in multifaceted yearnings, has long been discussed across genres in Pakistani English literature. In Poetry, particularly, such thematic tendencies are reflected via ideals of love and pain for past. For instance, Gohar et al. (2019) conduct a corpus-based study on the use of metaphors in English poetry by almost sixty Pakistani Poets and posit that Pakistani poets have thematically pondered upon ideas of nostalgic love manifested in their romanticism-oriented tendencies. However, each poet has reflected their version of nostalgia based on their experiences. As Mansoor (2012) states that Ghose in poetry is nostalgic of Indian past as a united country. Such a nostalgia is not merely reflective of historical past but also of the vibrant cultural, people and sense of belonging (Smeekes & Sedikides, 2022; Sedikides & Wildschut, 2022). Similarly, while examining Pakistani English poetry, Mansoor (2012) briefly comments on Rafat’s poem Kitchen, arguing that the poet reflects his “subjective nostalgia for a childhood spent in a rural kitchen” (p. 21). Such were the findings of Tabassum et al. (2020), who examined romantic elements in Rafat’s poetry collection which were manifested in his nostalgic yearnings for “past places and past time” (p. 13). Moreover, they find that in poem kitchen, Rafat’s longing for countryside life “confirms his nostalgia for childhood” which has been replaced by modern lifestyle (p. 19). However, a times such ambivalent emotions surrounding binary of Old versus New result in mixed nostalgic feelings. In such circumstances, poets like Rafat, are challenged by a dichotomy of preserving the tradition or colluding to change (Conner, 2023). To explore and extend more on aforementioned theme, this study carries out a detailed stylistic analysis of form and content. As it is evident that the linguistic manoeuvres used by poet via form and content results in well-crafted poetic expression (Salmose & Sandberg, 2021).

## **Methodology**

The qualitative study under consideration has incorporated primary data in terms of poem kitchens taken from the collection *Arrival of the Monsoon*. Moreover, other data include, scholarly literature available on the poem, collection and theory itself. In terms of methods, the data collection method is close reading of primary text, whereas the stylistics analysis will be utilized alongside things theory to address the relevant thematic concerns in the poem. In order to carry out such a theoretically informed analysis, the Level model of language will be utilized where the poem will be separately examined from Phonological, Graphological, Morphological, semantics and Syntactic level. Since, the language is organized at different level, the analysis at each level a time has informed more about the style and of course the meaning of overall persisting theme thereby.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Things theory or what Kashikar (2022) calls literary objectification was introduced by Brown (2001) in his work *Critical Inquiry* where he states that “we look through objects (to see what they disclose about history, society, nature, or culture—above all, what they disclose about us), but we only catch a glimpse of things” (p. 4). Before proceeding further, it must be explained that what does Bill Brown mean when he uses words ‘things’ and ‘objects’; ideas borrowed from Heidegger’s comparison between objects and things. For Brown (2001), objects have useful purpose for people and are used based on its functionality and capacity. Their existence has purpose and meaning based on the usage they have. However, “things” are objects without purpose and meaning, therefore their value changes as compared to their previous value and so does the interpretation of things. Thus, when he an individual feel nostalgic about objects that are things now, it is because “We begin to confront the thingness of objects when they stop working for us (Brown, 2001, p. 4). That ‘working’ can be taken as literal or in sense of literature as symbolic. In literature things theory focuses more on human experiences by considering the significance (symbolic) of things. Thus, the theory will inform the analysis by explaining in literary terms the relationship between human subjects and physical objects present in the poem *Kitchens* and that how such relationship reflects nostalgic tendencies. The interesting point about this theory is that it is “rather a means to explore the dynamics between human subjects and inanimate objects” (Kashikar, p. 31); however, the inanimate objects are necessarily not passive in this regard. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by providing stylistic analysis of the poem *Kitchens* by Taufiq Rafat assisted by the theory discussed.

## Analysis

The subsequent sections start from theoretical description of different levels of language as utilised as method of data analysis for this study. In second section, the text of poem *Kitchens* is provided for obvious reasons. The following section carry out detailed stylistic analysis of the poem focusing on language used for the things symbolizing past and present. In fourth section, the discussion is centered around analysed data by linking it to things theory to discuss the theme of nostalgia.

### ❖ Levels of Language

For any stylistics analysis, the crucial task for a researcher is to examine the text precisely in terms of language and choice in order to focus on the ways a writer is making the text stand out. Therefore, the key concept to explore here is of de-familiarization that any write brings about by either deviating or using parallel structures. And since human language is organized at different levels, it is very crucial to examine aforementioned concepts at every level in order to build an organic and holistic criticism and appreciation. Therefore, this section provides theoretical knowledge of all the levels that are explored in the analysis of the poem *Kitchen*.

#### • Phonological level

At this level, the examination of text is based on the way it sounds like, its patterning and how any aberration or deviation foregrounds certain parts. The following elements are looked at this level of analysis.

**Alliteration:** A sound pattern based on the same consonant sounds or most precisely the same phonemes in terms of Manner of articulation. In the latter case, this is also known as Consonance, which particularly deployed in poetry to create rhythm. More creative is the notion of sound symbolism where the repetition of sound conveys symbolic meaning i.e. /s/ hissing sound or other sibilant sounds may be used to symbolise snake, breeze. Similarly, any sound can be repeated to bring about a symbolic meaning

**Assonance:** A sound pattern based on the repetition of the same vowel sounds or most precisely vowel sounds from the same classification i.e. in terms of which part of the tongue is raised? Is it Front, Back, or middle?

**Rhyme:** A sound pattern that results due to repetition of two or more words or ending of words particular at the end of the lines in poetry. Poets in order to be more

creative, tend to opt for alternative ways for the rhyme. For instance, they might opt for reverse rhyme where the initial consonants and vowels of words match. Moreover, they can choose half-rhyme that is caused merely by repetition of final consonant sounds. More interesting is the Internal rhyme that results due to repetition of words within the same line i.e. words like “wood and would”

Speech in poetic style: A unique way where writers/poets try to project spoken language of a speaker or a particular group of speakers belonging to specific area or class. The idea is closely associated with the notion of accent that writers try to replicate using language in an “unexpected irregularity”.

- **Graphological Level**

Graphology or words on page, is another source exploited by writers particularly by poets to convey meaning beyond the linguistic resources. Poets usually play with the structure of the poem in order to graphically represent according to desired ends. For instance, in concrete poetry, poets deploy range of techniques to play with text on page thereby resulting in a visual poetry that not only achieves its meaning through linguistics means but also through the way it is structured and formatted. Moreover, a special attention is paid to elements like spelling, capitalization, punctuation, paragraph structuring, spacing (etc.). Therefore, any deviation in these elements would automatically make a poem or part of the poem, foregrounded.

- **Morphological Level**

This level discusses mainly the notion of Morpheme i.e. free and Bound Morphemes and the way words are produced using both kinds. Though there are two main processes i.e. derivational morphology and inflectional morphology; however, this study includes three-word formation processes namely via Inflection, derivation and compounding. Poets usually exploit this level and try to reach its maximum strength. Therefore, it is a job of a researcher to critically examine the words in terms of their process and rules of word creation and identify how any deviation in that process is foregrounding a word, phrase or even the whole line.

- **Semantic level**

Poetry is, usually, a genre that mostly rely on semantics of the words to manipulate their sense relations or particularly to say things indirectly with the help of literary devices and figures of speech. Therefore, such playful usage of words makes the text unfamiliar, which in itself is caused by deviation or parallelism. The features that

usually are examined at this level, come under the umbrella term of literary devices and figurative language.

- **Syntactic level**

It is another source through which foregrounding is achieved with the help of deviation. In poetry, deviation at Syntactic level is at its maximum since the notion of “poetic license” comes into play. Therefore, poets try to deviate unrestrictedly until they are satisfied with what they may call it as their style. There are certain ways through which poets achieve foregrounding at Syntactic level

**Run-on-lines:** when poets continue the same idea till the second that is when it is referred to as run-on-line. This, usually, is done for a particular effect, or even for symbolic reasons.

**Timelessness:** when a clause is devoid of the main verbal element, others remaining words are placed in a combination that lacks time hence timelessness. Simpson (2004) also calls it Minor sentence, in a sense that it lacks a basic verbal element but still adds meaning. Therefore, the usages of such a structure foreground the text not in terms of grammar, graphology but also semantically.

**Deferring or Iconic structure:** In the English language the structure of the clause includes a noun phrase followed by the verb phrase, (etc). However, when poets deploy extra pre and post modification with the initial noun phrase then the verb phrase is delayed for the time being and that delay usually results in unease for the readers therefore resulting in foregrounding.

**Ambiguity:** when texts include a clause or sentence that has more than one meaning or the meaning. For instance, she hits the boy with a toy. In the given example “with a toy” creates ambiguity since it can either go with the subject or with an object. Therefore, such ambiguous constructions result in foregrounding.

**Vagueness:** A quality of text due to lack of cohesion. Therefore, such a text automatically foregrounds itself as readers start to read.

**Ungrammatically:** when a writer purposefully does not follow the grammatical rules and go beyond standards that results in deviation.

## ❖ The Text of the Poem

## Selected Excerpts from "Kitchens"

Line No.	Text
1	Kitchens were places
2	we grew up in.
3	High-roofed, spacious,
4	they attracted us
5	with the pungency
6	of smoke and spices.
7	From December beds
8	we hurried to the cheer
9	of wood-fires, above
10	which sang black kettles.
11	Once there, we dawdled
12	over last night's curry
13	and fresh bread dripping
14	from the saucepan, eggs,
15	and everlasting bowls
16	of tea. Discussions
17	centred on primaries:
18	births, deaths, marriages,
19	crops. Mother presided,
20	contributing only
21	her presence, busy
22	ladling, ladling. Noise
23	was warmth. Now in these
24	cramped spaces, there is
25	no time for talk. A
26	stainless homogeneity
27	winks back our sneers.
28	Chairs are insular;
29	they do not encourage
30	intimacy like slats.
31	The table tucks bellies
32	in. We would not dream
33	of coming to this place
34	to savour our triumphs,
35	or unburden our griefs.
36	Chromium and formica
37	have replaced the textured
38	homeliness of plaster, teak.
39	Everything is clean
40	as a hospital.
41	The surrealist clock,
42	where once the eloquent
43	grandfather swung,
44	clicks forward, stiffly.
45	We are deferential

46	to the snap pleasures
47	of electric toast, and take
48	our last gulps standing up.

### ❖ An in-depth Stylistics analysis of text based on Level Model

#### • Phonological level

Research at a phonological level examines the way the author has compared past and present through the kitchen and things around the kitchen. Therefore, with the theoretical knowledge of things theory, the author has utilized deviation and parallelism at a phonological level to build up the major idea.

#### • Alliteration

There are many instances where Rafat has repeated consonant sounds or particularly phonemes from similar categories. For instance,

Line No.	Phrase	Phonemic Feature
6	Smoke and spices	Repetition of /s/ sound (sibilance)
7	December beds	Repetition of /b/ and /d/ sounds
10	Sang black kettles	Velar /k/ and /g/ sounds; plosive cluster effect
11	Once there we	Repetition of /w/ sound
12	Last night's	Repetition of /t/ sound
13	Bread dripping	Repetition of /d/ sound (plosive continuity)
23	Was warmth	Repetition of /w/ sound
25	Time for talk	Repetition of /t/ sound
31	Table tuck	Repetition of /t/ sound
32	We would	Repetition of /w/ sound
46	Snap pleasures	Repetition of /s/ and /p/ sounds
47	Electric toast and take	Repetition of /t/ sound

#### • Assonance

Line No.	Phrase	Phonemic Feature
1	Were / places	Shared central vowel /ɜ:/ quality
2	We ... in	Contrast of long /i:/ and short /ɪ/ vowels
9	wood-fires above	Shared rounded vowel /ʊ/ influence
13	fresh bread	Shared short vowel /ɛ/ sound
20	contributing only	Repetition of /ɪ/ vowel sound
29	encourage intimacy	Repetition of /ɪ/ vowel sound

- **Rhyme**

The poem does not follow any rhyming scheme and is written in free verse in order to give a natural flow thereby making the poem reflective of the dominating discussed idea. The absence of rhyming scheme may also imply and symbolize the natural and organic sounds of things around the kitchen that poet values the most while comparing it with modern kitchen. However, it must be noted that rhythmic cohesion is provided by the use of different sources like Alliteration, assonance, rhyme. There is also use of reverse rhyme for instance, Rafat uses pairs of words like “was warmth” and “we would”.

Another technique employed by poet is sound symbolism where he has tried to convey the distinction between old and new kitchen with the help of the way the words sound like thereby building their significance on those very sounds. For instance, in the older kitchen there was “pungency of smoke and spices” here poet repeats /s/ sibilant sounds to symbolize the sizzling of food. However, in the modern kitchen there are not things that would result in pungency since “electric toast” is utilized. Here the sound /t/ does not give any symbolic significance as did the things in old kitchen. Moreover, in the new kitchen everything is sophisticated, so is the surrealist clock that does not make any sound as compared to the old clock of grandfather that used to sound obviously. Similarly, the “ladling ladling” noise of kettles signifies flow and harmony as compared to electric toast sound.

- **Graphological level**

Taufiq Rafat divides the poem into stanzas consisting of a couplet. Since, the poem has a total of forty-eight lines, the couplets should be twenty-four. However, there are twenty-three couplets and two single lines at the beginning and ending of the poem respectively. The separation of a couplet is perhaps the symbolic representation of separation of past and present life explained via old and modern kitchen and things present within. Moreover, the apparent distance between separated couplet may also signify the distance between old lives and modern lives and poet's nostalgic resentment for the loss of “thingness” that according to Bill Brown occurs once those “things” stop working or no longer held similar value.

Moreover, there is also graphical maneuvering done by Rafat when he discusses “High-roofed” of old kitchen in capital letters as compared to “cramped spaces” old new kitchen in small letters. This distinction symbolically gives prominence to older kitchens as they were open, air free, and liberating, as compared to modern kitchens that are cramped spaces and restricting. Similarly, Rafat uses capital letters when he

talks about “December”, “Discussions” or “Mother” that older kitchens bring alongside. However, he does not use any capital letters while discussing modern kitchens or things in modern present around including clock or toast machine, which gives importance the very idea of life at juxtaposition; Old and new life or village and city life. Apart from it, Rafat has used punctuation correctly and has not utilized as a source to cause defamiliarization by deviation.

- **Morphological Level**

This level, in the light of Bill Brown’s things theory, has explored the ways Rafat has deviated from established word formation rules and therefore has caused foregrounding or is caused by the parallelism at Morphological level. Therefore, while talking of deviation, the following mentioned words may or may not be deviant; however, they are used in an unexpected way and are resulting in foregrounding. For example;

Line No.	Phrase	Lexical / Semantic Feature
3	high-roofed	Morphological expansion of adjective (“high-roof” + past participle -ed), intensifying descriptive quality
9	wood-fires	Nominal variation where “fire” is pluralised to emphasize multiple domestic sources of heat
14-15	saucepan, eggs, and everlasting bowls of tea	Extended listing of heterogeneous items symbolizing material + relational domestic life
17	primaries	Archaic/lexically condensed term referring to fundamental life events (births, deaths, marriages, crops)
37-38	textured homeliness of plaster	Paradoxical lexical pairing blending tactile material (“plaster”) with emotional abstraction (“homeliness”)
46	snap pleasures	Neologistic construction implying brief, instantaneous moments of gratification
47	electric toast	Ambiguous compound noun highlighting modern technological mediation of food preparation

The given examples also aid in strengthening the main idea that Rafat has been building throughout the poem at different levels i.e. the organic and lively nature of past as compared to highly sophisticated yet mundane present. In terms of overall examination at morphological level, it can also be examined that the poet has not deviated extensively when it comes to using inflections, derivations and compounding. The major reason for such conformity emerges out of dire need to be continuous and fluent enough to convey the main idea smoothly yet effectively without deviating Morphologically. However, there is usage of parallelism in order to foregrounding the meaning thereby the main idea. For Instance;

Line No.	Phrase	Syntactic / Structural Feature
3	high-roofed, spacious	Successive adjective pattern creating descriptive parallelism
5-6	with the pungency / of smoke	Two linked prepositional phrases forming a layered descriptive structure
6	smoke and spices	Coordinated noun phrase linked through conjunction, reinforcing semantic field of food/kitchen
14	from the saucepan, eggs, and everlasting bowls of tea	Triple noun listing creating syntactic parallelism and rhythmic accumulation
18	births, deaths, marriages, crops	Four-item noun sequence forming strong morphological and syntactic parallelism

It must be noted that the poem consists of short lines, with an average of three words per line. Therefore, it was very hard for any poet to maintain parallelism while being in the loop of run-on-lines throughout the poem

- **Semantics level**

This level explores the way the poet has conveyed meaning and ideas. The main focus will be on literary devices in order to identify the ways through which subsisting idea is foregrounded with the help of semantic deviation and parallelism. Moreover, in order to establish the claim that the author prefers things present in older kitchens (older times) as compared to those in modern kitchen, the verb phrase and adjective phrases belonging to both the kitchens, have been explored in latter portion.

As Rafat equates older things and of course the kitchen with the better version, it shows in his playful usage of semantics. For instances, while talking about the things for older kitchens he has used many personifications thereby implying as if the older things and objects were animate, i.e.

Line No.	Phrase	Stylistic / Figurative Feature
4	they (kitchens) attracted us	Personification: inanimate "kitchens" given animate quality of attraction
8-9	cheer of wood-fires	Personification: "cheer" attributed to wood-fires, suggesting human-like warmth and emotion
10	sang black kettles	Personification: kettles described as "singing," assigning human vocal action to inanimate objects

As compared to new things that have "no time for talk" or that only "winks back our sneers". Moreover, there are also other devices used to convey meaning and the idea established above. These devices include;

- **Metaphor**

Line No.	Phrase
22-23	Noise was warmth
31	table tucks bellies

- **Simile**

Line No.	Phrase
28-30	“Chairs... don’t encourage intimacy like slats”
39-40	“clean as hospital”

- **Hyperbole**

Line No.	Phrase
15	everlasting bowls

- **Imagery**

1: Images used while explaining the activities round old kitchen

- 5-6: Pungency of smoke and spices.
- 8-9: cheer of wood-fires,
- 16-17: Discussions centered around primaries

2: Images used while explaining the activities round new kitchen

- 24: cramped spaces
- 31: Table tuck bellies
- 36: chromium and Formica
- 40: As hospital

It can be argued that Rafat has used lively and vivid images when he is describing the bright memories of the days spent in older kitchen. However, images used for new and well-maintained kitchen are mundane and altogether prosaic.

- **Symbolism**

There are particularly two symbols that shows Rafat’s distinctions between quality of old and modern life. In line forty-three he mentions “Grandfather swung” in order to refer to past i.e. the era when eloquent clock of grandfather used to make obvious yet pleasing sounds. Now in this modern life and with sophisticated kitchen, that

sound is missing and for this particular reason he calls modern clock as “surrealistic” as the real clock is gone.

- **Diction and choice**

In order to identify the obvious difference between both life styles and particularly about the way Rafat highlights such important aspect, this section has examined precisely all the verbs and adjectives present in the poem. Moreover, the selected data is, then, categorized according to particular “Kitchen” in order to explicitly show the difference

**Verbs used (old kitchen)**

- 2: We grew up
- 4: Attracted us
- 8: We hurried
- 10: Sang black kettles
- 11: We dawdled

**Verbs used (New kitchen)**

- 27: Homogeneity winks back
- 29: Do not encourage
- 32: Would not dream
- 37-38: Replaced the textured homeliness
- 41/44: Surrealist clock clicks forward
- 48: Take the last gulp standing up

**Adjective used (old kitchen)**

- 3: High-roofed
- 3: Spacious
- 5: Pungent
- 7: December
- 8: Cheer (implies Cheerful)
- 10: Black (kettles)
- 13: Fresh (bread)
- 15: Everlasting
- 17: Primary
- 21: Busy

### Adjective used (New kitchen)

- 24: Cramped (spaces)
- 26: Stainless (homogeneity)
- 28: Insular
- 37: Textured
- 39: Clean
- 42: Eloquent
- 46: Snap
- Electric toast

From such an obvious difference, it can be stated that the verbs and adjectives used around older kitchen and “Things” are more colorful, lively and reflective of happy life as compared to “Now”, where the kitchen is homogeneous in terms of style, color and “Things” around it. Similarly, Rafat also seems to particularly long for that organic quality of life which was filled by pungency, unlike confining quality of modern “cramped” spaces.

### Syntactic Level

- **Timelessness**

A linguistic construction, particularly a clause, that lacks main verb phrase thereby going beyond the realms of time. Such a technique helps poets to play with the timeless structures and deploy them according to their needs. Following are the examples that are timeless

- 3: High-roofed, spacious
- 7: From December beds
- 23-24: In these cramped spaces
- 31: The table tuck bellies

- **Iconic structure**

In the poem Kitchen is main element, head noun and is introduced as subject

- **Ambiguity**

Line forty-three includes “Grandfather swung” where the key information (clock) is omitted. Therefore, it is resulting in ambiguity

**Ungrammatically:**

Line second ends with non-standard use of proposition therefore it is resulting in deviation. Furthermore, eleventh line includes “once there” as a dummy subject. Line twenty-two and twenty-three that reads “Noise was warmth”, though example of brevity, yet sentence seems incomplete and appears as if it is Ellison and that a word “like” is missing.

- **Enjambment or run on lines**

(For Kitchen in the past)

- **first line continues till second**

- 4,5,6 are run on lines
- 7,8,9,10 are run on lines.
- 11,12,13,14,15,16 are run on lines.
- 16,17,18,19,20,21 are run on lines

(For Kitchen in the present)

- 23 and 24 are run-on-lines
- 25,26,27 are run-on-lines
- 28,29,30 are run-on-lines
- 32,33,34,35 are run-on-lines

It can be noted that run-on-lines while describing past life or older kitchen, are continued for six lines, twice in the poem. However, the maximum continued lines for modern life or kitchen is merely for four lines and that for once in whole the poem. It is obvious that Rafat has used run-on-lines to signify fluency. Moreover, this use of enjambment symbolically depicts the serenity of life and its consistency, which Rafat seems not to find in modern life as shown by examples discussed above.

**Discussion and conclusion**

The analysis section has explored the ways Rafat has conveyed theme of nostalgia via the juxtaposition of life in past and present through the usages of “Things” present in the kitchen. For poet, the past was pleasant since the “things” present around the old kitchen conveyed more of a symbolic meaning: Family bonding and relationship. According to Brown (2001) the unavailability of things triggered more

of the nostalgic memories associated with them, than their practical significance. Thus, that memories as explored at phonological level (sound symbolism), is an instance Bill Brown terms as “Thingness”. For instance, in the older kitchen there was “pungency of smoke and spices” here poet repeats /s/ sibilant sounds to symbolize the sizzling of food. However, in the modern kitchen there are not things that would result in pungency since “electric toast” is utilized. Consequently, such an absence makes poet declare that he does not dream of visiting modern kitchen and do all those activities that they would do when they were children and would “hurried” to kitchen, since the “things” have lost their significance and are replaced by surrealistic objects. For instance, the older kitchen used to be “high-roofed” and filled with smell of “smoke and spices” and that was sole reason they hurried towards kitchen. There they would sit, spend their happy days discussing primaries as “Mother presided”. However, now that old things have been replaced by new things present in kitchen in the modern times, that “Thingness” or essence of things that was reflective of precious past life, is lost. Thus, even the chairs have gone “insular” and everything is clean as hospital and lacks that pungent smell.

Both lives discussed above are so distinctive that its signification can be understood by the graphological and semantic analysis of the poem. For instance, first couplet being separated by forty-six lines, may also signify the distance between old lives and modern lives and poet's nostalgic resentment for the loss of “thingness” that according to Brown (2001) occurs once those “things” stop working or no longer held similar value. Similarly, in order to identify the obvious difference between both life styles and particularly about the way Rafat highlights such important aspect, he has specifically utilized the verbs and adjectives for both versions of life. For him, older kitchen and “Things” are more colorful, lively and reflective of happy life as compared to “Now”, where the kitchen is homogeneous in terms of style, color and “Things” around it. Similarly, Rafat also seems to particularly long for that organic quality of life which was filled by pungency, unlike confining quality of modern “cramped” spaces.

To sum it up, “Kitchens” poem by Taufiq Rafat highlights drastic effect of modern life on the familial relationships and in order to explain such concept, Rafat utilizes “things” around kitchens from respective time periods. Thus, this analysis aided by “Things Theory” has uncovered all the important linguistic maneuvers deployed by poet to establish the idea. Thus, a level model analysis at organic level summed up the entire idea in the discussion section.

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