

## Language and Style in *Sive* by John B. Keane

### Language and Style

- Understand the **writer's techniques**:
  - Narrative style: Is it first-person, omniscient, or fragmented?
  - Use of **imagery, symbolism**, or figurative language.
  - Tone: How does the language evoke emotions or set the mood?
  - Structural features: Flashbacks, foreshadowing, or parallelism.

Be able to explain **how these techniques enhance the text** or communicate its themes

John B. Keane's *Sive* is a compelling Irish drama that explores themes of greed, manipulation, and love through its rich use of language and distinctive style. The play's techniques effectively communicate its themes and create an emotionally charged narrative.

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### Narrative Style

- **Third-Person Dramatic Style:**

*Sive* is presented as a play, meaning the narrative unfolds through the dialogue and actions of the characters. The audience observes events and learns about the characters' motivations and emotions through their words and interactions rather than through a narrator's commentary.

    - **Effect:** This approach allows the audience to interpret the characters' actions and relationships independently, fostering a sense of immersion.
  - **Omniscient Perspective:**

The audience has a broader understanding of the events than the characters themselves, particularly the scheming and manipulation behind the scenes.
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### Use of Imagery, Symbolism, and Figurative Language

- **Imagery:**

Keane's descriptions and dialogue often evoke the rural Irish setting and its associated hardships. For example, the harshness of the bog and its unforgiving environment mirrors the stark realities faced by the characters.
  - **Symbolism:**
    - *The Match*: The arranged marriage of Sive to an older man symbolises the societal oppression and lack of autonomy experienced by women.
    - *The Bog*: Represents both entrapment and inevitability, reflecting Sive's struggle to escape her fate.
  - **Figurative Language:**

Keane's use of idiomatic expressions and colloquial dialogue captures the rural Irish vernacular, grounding the play in its cultural and geographical context.
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## Tone

- **Emotional and Tense:**  
The tone fluctuates between humour in the lighter moments and tension in the more serious scenes. The humour often arises from the interactions between the secondary characters, while the tone darkens when focusing on Sive's plight.
  - **Evocative Language:**  
The dialogue evokes sympathy for Sive and disdain for the characters manipulating her. Keane's language often exposes the greed and cruelty underlying the façade of societal norms.
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## Structural Features

- **Foreshadowing:**
    - Early conversations about the financial benefits of Sive's arranged marriage foreshadow the tragic events that follow.
    - The ominous tone surrounding Sean Dóta hints at his role as the play's antagonist.
  - **Parallelism:**
    - The parallel between the love story of Sive and Liam Scuab and the transactional nature of her arranged marriage highlights the tension between love and societal expectations.
  - **Dramatic Irony:**
    - The audience is aware of the selfish motivations of Thomasheen Seán Rua and Mena long before Sive realises, heightening the emotional impact of her tragedy.
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## How These Techniques Enhance the Text and Communicate Themes

1. **Cultural Authenticity:**
    - The rural Irish vernacular and imagery root the play firmly in its setting, enhancing its authenticity and relatability.
  2. **Emotional Engagement:**
    - The shifting tone, from humour to tragedy, keeps the audience emotionally invested in the characters' journeys.
  3. **Theme Exploration:**
    - Techniques like symbolism (the match and the bog) and parallelism effectively highlight themes of love, autonomy, and societal oppression.
  4. **Heightened Tension:**
    - Foreshadowing and dramatic irony create a sense of inevitability and suspense, emphasising the play's tragic elements.
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## Conclusion

The language and style of *Sive* are integral to its power as a dramatic work. Through its evocative imagery, authentic dialogue, and masterful use of structural features, Keane crafts a poignant exploration of rural Irish life and its societal constraints, ensuring the play's themes resonate deeply with its audience