

A PHONOLOGICAL STUDY OF ALLITERATION IN WILLIAM BLAKES' SELECTED POEMS

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Abstract

This study highlights on alliteration as a phonological and stylistic device in William Blake's poems, Tyger Tyger, The chimney sweeter and The Garden of Love. The study tries to show the importance of alliteration use in poetry and how it is dominated in the twentieth century. Accordingly, the study seeks to ask the following questions: (1) How does alliteration have an operational role as a phonological device in the twentieth century poetry? (2) What is the most dominant type of Alliteration in the twentieth century poetry? (3) How can alliteration, as a phonological device, be of benefit for the reader? Therefore, this study adopts (Leech's model) to analyze aspects of phonological alliteration in stylistics perspective. Consequently, it attempts to fulfill the following aims: (1) the use of alliteration as a phonological strategy in twentieth-century poetry (2) Determining the most prevalent style of alliteration in twentieth-century poetry. (3) Demonstrating how alliteration might be used as a phonological strategy for the reader.

Key words: A Phonological and Stylistic Device, William Blake's Poems.

 <http://dx.doi.org/10.47832/2757-5403.22.2>

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Introduction

The word "poet" is derived from the word "creator" etymologically. As a result, A carpenter or architect and a poet have a tight relationship since both are creators. In their compositions, they both focus on symmetry. (Crawforth, 2013: 2).

Thus, writers, generally, utilize a wide range of linguistic and paralinguistic devices which include graphological, phonological, semantic, lexical and syntactic, to communicate textual meaning and also enhance the artistic texture and flavor of their works. These devices make the ordinary extraordinary. Alliteration is one of these devices that is used to achieve balance or artistic equilibrium. It is defined as the the appearance of two similar structures in poetry On the level of lexis, grammar, phonology, graphology, semantics, and dialect, it might be identical. (Scheindlin, 1974: 65).

This phonological and stylistic strategy, particularly in twentieth-century poetry, has not been completely studied by the researcher to this point. For this reason, we're doing research on the use of phonological stylistic devices like these in literary writings, particularly poetry. What are some of the questions this study aims to answer? Are there any examples of twentieth-century poets employing alliteration to their advantage? What is the most common sort of alliteration in twentieth-century poetry? How can the reader benefit from alliteration as a phonological and stylistic device? Aiming to investigate alliteration's operationality as a phonological stylistic device in twentieth-century poetry in light of the issues raised above, this research attempts to: Identifying the most dominant type of parallelism in the twentieth century poetry. Showing the way alliteration is useful as a phonological stylistic device for the reader.

1.Theoretical Background

1.1 Phonetics and Phonology

Poutain (2000:13) states that phonology is "the study of the system of sounds means the study of phonemes of language". The phoneme is a main unit of phonology, that is individual speech sound like the letter(p) that is represented by a single letter. However, such the sound /sh/, which is represented by two letters (sh). Beside that, Coxhead (2000:9) indicates that "phonology is more concerned with the underlying representation of sounds".

Phonology is necessary for both processes perception and production of speech and language. Moreover, the relation between phonetics and phonology never seems a simple relation, but is complicated. When a person wants to study a phonological phenomenon, he couldn't do simply without help from phonetics and so on(ibid).

Phonology is the part that consists of the systematic and functional properties of sound in language, It is also concerned with the description of language. By this sense phonology refers to sub discipline of linguistics (Web source 1).

Through out the history of Linguistics, there is a close relation between phonetics and phonology. Generally speaking, phonetics is defined as “it is a branch of linguistics that studies the features of human sound-making, and provides approaches and methods for their description and transcription. Phonetics studies how humans can receive and produce sounds(Crystal,2004:289).

According to Crystal(2008,45), Phonology is a branch of linguistics which concerned with studying sound pattern of the language and how these sounds are organized to produce a meaningful pattern. Phonology deals with distinctive speech sounds of a particular language.

1.2 Types of Sound Devices

Sound devices are patterns of literature and poetry that emphasize sound. Some of the Poets employ sound techniques as a tool or tactic to elicit an emotional reaction from the listener or reader. They are special tools that the poet can use in order to make the poem effects on the reader or the listener and to convey and reinforce the meaning by using sounds. There are many types of devices , for example:

1- Assonance: It is the repetition of vowel sounds in the same line in the poem.

2- Consonance: Consonance is the repetition of consonant sounds in the same line in the poem.

3- Alliteration: Alliteration is the repetition of both vowel or consonant in the same line in the poem, it may occur initially or in the mid of words or at the end of the words.

4- Meter: It is a unit of rhythm in poetry.

5- Onomatopoeia: It refers to the words that suggest the sounds of the things or the sense (Web source2).

2.3 Alliteration

Alliteration is a prosodic literary device used to emphasize or to enforce the emotive effect of words in a phrase, sentence, or a paragraph. Accordingly, the most accurate definitions of alliterations is the repetition of the same consonance sounds . Alliteration also found in the repetition of vowel sounds in neighboring words, Alliteration characterized by two important features; there is a repetition and this repetition either with sounds or with letters are found in the same line(Ivanon,2015:240). Alliteration is a tool which is commonly used by poets to put words together and make elements in their poems. Many of great and famous poets use alliteration in their writing, like Shakespeare, T.S. Eliot, Charles Dickens and William Blake. An example about alliteration in William Shakespeare’s poem Romeo and Juliet:

“**Beauty** o’er- snowed and **bareness** every where:

Then were not summer’s distillation left,

A liquid **prisoner pent** in walls of glass,(ibid).

Alliteration in literature is the use of words that have similar sounds that come in the same place of the word in the same position of the sentence or the line. Alliteration use to achieve many things in each word. It reinforce the intended theme . Poets use alliteration in their works as to emphasize something important that the poet included in the poem so it is used to highlight on certain themes. The use of alliteration is also frequently to make the line or the phrase sound by repetition (Web source2).

2.3.1 Types of alliteration

There are two types of alliteration, consonance and assonance, the two type confused each other. Additionally there are a third specialized type of alliteration which is called Symmetrical Alliteration. This type of alliteration consist of parallelism, or chiasmus. With in this type, the phrase or the utterance must have a pair of outside end words and these parts both starting with the same sounds. Symmetrical alliteration is like the stylistic device palindromes in its use symmetry (Kricka, 2013:7).

2.3.1.1 Consonance:

Consonance is concerned as a wide literary device which identified by the repetition of consonant sounds at any position in the word, for example(hot and battle, loose and lips pitter and patter)(Web source 3).

Consonants in phonetics is a pattern through this pattern, the articulation involves an obstruction to air flow in the vocal tract, while in phonology it is a pattern which presents a syllabic margin. Consonance in literature is used to present the ability and capacity of the poet and to add musicality and memorability, it thickens the language. (Trask,1996:87).

2.3.1.2 Assonance:

Assonance alliteration is as the consonance, but with vowel sounds instead of consonant sounds. Consequently, alliteration refers to the repetition of vowel sounds that found in the sentences. Assonance when there are two or more words place at the same line and have the same vowel sounds repeated, For example using the sounds /oo/ in the following sentence: “The smooth balloon flew up blew up when it hit the roof”(Web source4). However, assonance is used in the poetry to attract the reader’s attention to certain idea or theme. In other words assonance is used in literature to add rhythm, so it gives the poem an interesting mood. For example:

‘Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening’(ibid).

2.4 Sound patterning (prosodic features)

The effect of literary texts can be analyzed in a simple way through depending on various patterns of repetition, and sound repletion is the most famous kind that people associate with. Theses sound patterns (alliteration) give an additional meaning(Web source5). To illustrate the various types of sound patterning, consider the following two lines from Marlow's poem “The Passionate Shepherd. : Line 18 *Come live with me and be my love* 19 *And we will all the pleasures* in: me /mi/ - be /bi/; alliteration in :me /mi/ - my /mai/;

assonance in: come /kəm/ -consonance: will /wil/ -all; /æ:l/; reverse rhyme in: with - /wið/ - /will /wil/; and in: live /liv/” (Thornborrow and Wareing, 1998:31).

2.5 Foregrounding

The word ‘foregrounding’ The structuralisms of the Prague School of Linguistics were the first to define it, it describes as ‘deviation’ Leech(1969:15) applies the concept of foregrounding to poetry, He states the foregrounded figure as ‘a linguistic deviation’ Leech interested with phonological deviation . Halliday (1971:39) refers to foregrounding as ‘prominence’. His description limits the point that there are “patterns of prominence in a poem or literary text, regularities in the sound...such prominence subscribes to the writer’s total meaning”. Further that, the idea of foregrounding enable the reader to pay attention to the meaning of message’ , which means to focus on the message itself and how it is said(Fowler,1987:98).

2.6 The poetic Functions of Sound

There are many various methods to use sound devices in a poem, which helps the poet to make it unique and intriguing.

Thornborrow and Wareing (1998:43-5) list the following poetic roles of sound:

- 1- For purely aesthetic reasons.
- 2- To follow a set of rules.
- 3- To experiment with or invent a shape.
- 4- To demonstrate technical abilities as well as for intellectual enjoyment.
- 5- For the purpose of drawing attention to something or making a statement.
- 6- onomatopoeia.

2.7 Phonology and the Poetry: Overview

Sense and sound have a melodic compatibility. Poets may easily discern phonological devices by listening to their poems being read aloud, since poetry is mostly dependent on auditory criteria. (Savory,1975:5).

Poems are texts in and of themselves. A text can be thought of as a sort of social interaction in this sense, says Halliday(1971:122). In fact, it is becoming more and more evident that a piece of music, such as a poem, is actually a piece of text. Content-oriented, form-oriented, cognitive, and subordinate texts are categorised by House (1981:23). The literary content that was placed beneath the form-represents a particular social strata.

"A rapid rush of intellectual energy accompanied by a feeling of pleasure" is what Bell (1991,204) believes the reader should experience while reading a literary, institutional, or scientific piece of work. In reality, a literary work is considered to be a complicated system of meaning and connections.

Thornborrow and Wareing(1998:20)describe the relation between literature and linguistics and how they go together as “to make sound patterns can be analyzed in poems It allows people to converse about language sounds regardless of the spelling structure.

2.8 Stylistics

As a branch of linguistics, stylistics deals with the systematic investigation of style in language and how this might vary depending on aspects including genre, context, historical time, and author. Stylistics A writer's unique style, genre-specific styles (such as "newspaper language" or the gothic novel"), or elements of what can be considered a "literary" style are just a few examples. Using this definition, style analysis refers to the systematic examination of a text's formal elements in order to determine their functional importance for the interpretation of the text at hand. (Jeffries and McIntyre, 2010: 1).

On his part, Short (1996: 1) defines it as “an approach to the analysis of (literary) texts using linguistic description”.

Leech and Short (1981:74) illustrate the task of stylistic analysis as “an attempt to find the artistic principles underlying a writer choice of language. Similarly, Sampson (2004: 2) maintains that “is a method of textual interpretation in which primacy of place is assigned to language”. The reason why language is so important to stylistics is because the various forms, patterns and levels that constitute linguistic structure are an important index of the function of the text.

2.9 Stylistic Devices

A stylistic device is the method a writer chooses to convey information by manipulating language in various techniques to achieve differing results. They include alliteration, consonance, assonance, repetition, allusion, metaphor, parallelism, metaphor, etc. (Robbins, 2007: 88).

It refers to any linguistic element standing out from its own context in such a way to attract the reader’s attention and provoke a reaction by breaking predictability as it deviates or contrast from the pattern set up previously in the text or the context(i.e. the norm) (Hickey, 1999: 5).

A stylistic device consists in a deviation from the linguistic norm. That is to say, in our ordinary use of language we have all kinds of normal expectation, and the grammar of a language is a codification of such expectations; but stylistic devices are felt to be deviations from what we normally expect (Ellis, 1974: 161).

When used effectively, stylistic devices help us convey our ideas more clearly; clarify our meanings; add colour, humour, and description to our words (Robbins, 2007: 91).

Alliteration, being one of the most common and useful devices that can be recognized, identified, interpreted or analyzed, is our concern in the following sections.

2.10 Poetic Language

Through the history of language, it is useful to regard that poetry has a direct relationship with language. Poetic language is sometimes called poetic device, it a tool of sound or meaning by which the poet can make his poem more interesting and more complex. Alliteration is one of these tools that used by the poet in order to make an emotive sense in his writing(Web source6).

As a result, poetry, according to Saporta, is not only a form of expression but also a creative endeavor (1960:882). As for Leech, he explains the difference between poetic and non-poetic language by pointing out that poetry is more than just a matter of meter and rhyme., (1969:5).

2.11 Ways Alliteration is Used in Poetry

There are three reasons behind using alliteration in literature:

1.The main cause for using alliteration in literature is **sounds pleasing**. It's a way to attract the reader's or the listener's attention. Moreover, alliteration helps to signify words which are linked tighter.

2.The second reason for using alliteration in literature is to **build mood**. When a phrase contain a number of words could be used to describe any theme or topic, such sounds have a certain connotation. So the role of repetition is to enhances the effect.

3.The third reason for using alliteration is hinted by its alternate names- initial rhyme or head rhyme. Alliteration gives melody to the verse and rhythm, it is also imparts sense of how it should be read or listened(Web source7).

2.12 Alliteration in Twentieth Century poetry

The use of alliteration is popular in poetry from the ancient to the modern eras. It demonstrates that poets, like other artists, are crafts people. It was employed by many famous writers like William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, John Donne, Alexander Pope, and William Blake (Website Resource 8).

Poets use alliteration to achieve thematic significance. A poet uses this phonological device to draw the readers to certain significant aspect of poetry such as focusing on the dissimilar ideas in similar pattern.

William Blake, being one of the most popular figures of the twentieth century, depends heavily upon alliteration to achieve aesthetic effects in his poetry and to deliver a message with this type of the regularity of form.

2.13 William Blake life and works

William Blake (1757-1827)was born in Soho, London, in this place he lived most of his life. The early ambitions to Blake lay not with poetry but with painting and after that mean at the age of 14 after attending drawing school, he was trained to James Basire, engraver. After his sevenyear term was complete, Blake studies the aesthetic doctrines of its president, Sir Joshua Reynolds, and his stay there was brief. It nonetheless afforded him

friendships with John Flaxman and Henry Fuseli, academics whose work may have influenced him (Web source9).

Songs of Innocence, the most tender and eloquent of his works, was published in 1789, but Songs of Experience, a powerful depiction of adult corruption and repression, was published a few years later. His extensive body of work demonstrates an unwavering commitment to his craft. In his capacity as one of the most sophisticated writers, he was an amalgam of extremes. William Blake writes many famous poems, such as *The ancient day* 1794, *Satan* c1789, *Blak's Cottege* c1819-20, *The Ghost of a Feala*, c1819-20, etc (ibid).

3. Data Analysis

Below, a phonological stylistic analysis is conducted to the poem *The Tyger*, *The Chimney Sweeper* and *The Garden of Love*. These poems focusing on the role of alliteration in William Blake's and the twentieth century poetry, its types and the stylistic effects achieved:

3.1 "The Tyger" (1794)

The Tyger is a poem or it is commonly known as 'Jerusalem' by the English poet **William Blake**, and it is some times modernized as "Tiger, Tiger, burning bright published in 1794 as part of his **Songs of Experience** collection and rising to notoriety in the romantic period. It has been the subject of both literary criticism and many adaptations, including various musical versions. The poem is one of the most anthologized in the English literary canon. The poem explores and questions Christian religious paradigms prevalent in late 18th century and early 19th century England, discussing God's intension and motivation for creating both the tiger and

1- "Tyger....Tyger"
"Tyger..Tyger"
"Tyger Tyger, burning bright,"
"In the forests of the night;"
"What immortal hand or eye,"
"Could frame thy fearful symmetry?"
"In what distant deeps or skies."
"Burnt the fire of thin eyes?"
"On what wings dare he aspire?"
"What the hand, dear seize the fire?"
"And what shoulder, and what art,"
"Could twist the sinews of thy heart?"
"And when thy heart began to beat,"

“What dread hand? And what dread feet?”

1. Consonance:

As was defined earlier, consonance is concerned as a broader literary device which means the repetition of consonant sounds at any position in the word. This device finds its place in the selected data:

“Tyger Tyger, burning bright,(1)”

“In the forest of the night;(2)”

As shown above, the repetition of **consonant** sounds in the same line such as the sound /t/ and /b/ in “Tyger tiger” burning bright” and /th/ in the second line.

William Blake uses a repetition to convey the speaker’s belief that everything is a possession of the ruling system and that no one is free. He uses repetition to reinforce certain idea.

Assonance alliteration is used in the same line and in the middle position of the words Tyger and Tyger. We have the sound /ai/ and he repeated it to attract the reader's or the listener's attention to the idea or the intended theme of the belief that every thing is possession of rules system.

“ Could frame thy fearful symmetry?” (3)

“In what distance deeps or sikes.” (4)

Again Blake uses an initial **consonant** repetition, he uses the consonant sounds /f/ in frame and fearful in line (3) and the **consonant** sounds /d/ in the words deep and distance in line(4). Blake here wants to refer to the contrast in the term “fearful symmetry” that the tiger has two concepts beautiful because the tiger has bright eyes and frightening , using its beauty balance, and grace to act as a ruthless predator.

An assonance alliteration occurs here in line (3), Blake inserts the sound /i/ in the words thy and symmetry. Assonance type occurs in the final position of the words in the same line. The poet tries to emphasize the intended theme of the poem.

“Did he smile his work to see”?(19)

“Did he who made the lamb make thee”?(20)

In the fourth stanza in the line (19) Blake uses the **consonant** sound /s/ in the words smile and see. Then in line (20) the **consonant** sound/m/ in the words made and make. Blake in these lines use the repetition device to emphasize the theme of the poem which he refers to at the beginning of the poem. In the question lines, he wants to make the reader understanding the idea of how can the human account for good and evil in the world. So that how can human being both good and evil at the same time.

2. “The Chimney Sweeper “(1757-1827)

William Blake (1757-1827) wrote the second poem about the chimney sweeper, which appeared in Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience in 1789 and 1794, respectively. The poem "The Chimney Sweeper" is set against the dark background of child work that was prominent in England in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Youngsters as young as five years old are sold into the chimney cleaning industry. These children are poorly clothed and the majority of them die as a result of a fall or from lung disease or another respiratory condition. In this poetry an adult speaker sees a child chimney sweeper abandoned in the snow when his parents are gone even experienced death.

"When my mother died I was very young
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry "weep; weep; weep; weep"
So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep/"
"There is little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head
That curled like a lamb's was shaved, so I said"
"Hush, Tom! Never mind it, for when your head's bare,
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair".
"And by came an Angle who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffine And set them all free
Then down a green plain, laughing they run,
And wash in a river and shine in the sun"

"When my mother died I was very young, (1)
And my father sold me while yet my tongue, (2)
Could scarcely cry wweep wweep wweep wweep. (3)
So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep." (4)

Consonance: William Blake uses the consonant repetition in the whole stanza as above the sound /m/ in the first and the second lines in my and mother, and /k/ in scarcely and cry, In the third line, /w/ in weep and weep and /s/ sound in the fourth line.

The repetition of consonant sounds enable the poet to intensify artistic language, it can be interesting for reading and to pause the reader on the intended theme implied in the poem. The writer wants to attract the reader's attention about the miserable case of the poor children.

"And so he was quite and that every night", (5)

Again a repetition in the **consonant** sound /t/ above, in this type of repetition Blake reflects the image of those children and he tries to convey the whole society what happens to those children.

“They clothed me in the clothes of death”(30)

A **consonant** repetition with the soft sound /th/ ,and the sound /k/ in the words clothed clothes, in this type of repetition and especially with those words there is a dangerous message sent by the poet. Here he emphasizes the idea that people who let children work in the chimney knows well that they will die.

2. Assonance :

“So your chimneys I sweep and in soot I sleep”.(4)

In this line we notice that William Blake uses assonance sounds /i:/ in repeating the word weep weep and /ai/ when repeating the pronoun(I) in the above line, he uses repetition to remind the reader with those poor children and how they are suffering in their life.

“And so Tom awoke and we rose in the dark” (21)

Assonance repetition in the above words, when the poet uses the vowel sound /o/ in so awoke and rose. Emphasizing the same suffering that children face every morning, so the poet describe the morning by dark since poor children have the same morning and it is dark.

“And taught me to sing the notes of woe”(34)

In this line we have an **assonance** repetition in the words notes woe, so here the poet describes the case of poor children. He wants to link the act of singing with woe, there is a contrast here to reinforce the idea of suffering and misery.

3. “The Garden of Love”

The garden of love is a poem by the romantic poet William Blake. It was published as a part of collection, *Songs of Experience*. This poem reflects William Blake’s detestation of organized religion. Blake was a deeply spiritual artist and poet, but he disliked the institutions associated with religion, and this can be seen clearly in this poem, where the garden of love, formerly associated with play and carefree childhood.

“I went to the Garden of Love

And saw what I never had seen:

A Chapel was built in the midst,

Where I used to play on the green.”

“And the gates of this Chapel were shut,

And Thou shalt not. Writ over the

Door”

“So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore.”

“And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stone where flowers
Should be”

“And Priests in black gowns, were
Walking their rounds”
And binding with briars, my joys and
Desire.

“And saw what I never had seen” (1)

1. Consonance alliteration: Blake uses a consonant alliteration in the words above, he uses the sound /s/ initially alliteration. In this line and with this repetition of consonant sounds, he wants to emphasize the idea of lacking enjoyment and freedom from his early age because of religion in their country.

“And the gates of this chapel were shut”(5)

Again, a consonance alliteration occurs with in this line, Blake uses the sound /th/ in the words the and this. In fact with this alliteration, Blake reinforces the foundation of the church in their which governed him and prevent him to take his role in love.

“And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,”(13)

“And building with briars, my joys and desires”(14)

Another **consonant** alliteration appears in the two above lines. In line 13 the poet uses /w/ sound and in line 14, he uses /b/ sound, he tries to clarify and focused at the same time on the period that he has lived. It is also he considers the garden with graves when he says” priests in black gowns”. Blake uses the vowel alliteration here because he wants to indicates and emphasize what he describes in the first lines.

2. Assonance:

“And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds”(13)

An assonance alliteration found here, the poet uses the vowel sound /au/ in the words gowns and rounds.

Results

Table (1): Types of Alliteration in “ *The Tyger, Sweeper Chimney, The garden Love*”

Type of Alliteration	Frequency	Percentage
Consonant	14	74%
Assonant	5	26%
Total	19	100%

The table above shows that Blake employed two types of alliteration consonance and assonance. Among which makes the highest percentage (74 %) For consonance and (26%) for assonance type. So the dominant type of alliteration in William Blakes' poems is the consonance type. It is highly used in the three poems that are analyzed.

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis conducted in the analysis of the present study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Alliteration is manifestly, of great use in the interpretation of the poem.
2. The twentieth century poets in general and William Blake in particular depend on alliteration in aestheticizing or beautifying their poems as it represents as a set of regularities of form. Moreover, this device is helpful for them in emphasizing and suggesting a deeper connection between specific ideas, musicality and attracting the reader's attention.

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Website Resources

1. [4-typ.....<https://www.englishbix.com](https://www.englishbix.com) types of alliterations English Bix.
2. <http://tnellen.com/cybereng/lit-terms/alliteration.html>.
3. <https://uwaterloo.ca/writing-and-communication-centre/sites/ca.writing-and-communication-centre/files/uploads/files/parallelism.pdf>.
4. http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/95401/9/09_chapter3.pdf
5. <http://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-parallelism.html>.
6. <https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/thomas-stearns-eliot/>.
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