

Rhythm and Rhyme in English Poetry

Abstract

The article is concerned with a study of rhythm and rhyme in English poetry. The purpose of this study is to identify the rhythm and rhyme which play very important role in reinforcing musicality and achieving aesthetic effects. Poetry is the art which binds three elements of beauty, style and feeling together along with the tint of figures of speech for the sparkling effect which reaches the level of acceptance by the readers who can truly appreciate this beauty. Poetry itself consist of musical effect it has its own tune with hidden meaning in it. For this beautification poet uses tools of rhythm and rhyme which enhances the beauty of poetry. These are essentially tools that a poet uses to create rhythm, enhance a poems meaning, or intensify a mood or feeling. Different types of both the elements and how they beautify the lines and sewing each and every element to constitute into the beautiful garland of poem by the various authors.

Keywords: Reinforcing, Musicality, Aesthetic, Intention, Rhyme, Rhythm, Essentially, Intensify.

Introduction

Poetry is a prominent genre of literature like that of prose and drama having its specific features. It is generally considered as metrical composition or verse. But some poetry are not often versified. In poetry, imagination plays a pivotal role. The poet by his power of imagination plays upon the experience he comes across and reorders them to make a whole poetry. It is well establish that poetry came first into existence then prose. Poetry primarily appeals to the emotion but is not completely averse to reason. Some modern poets like T.S. Eliot, give more stress to reason than to motion. The primary purpose of poetry is to give pleasure. Rhythm and rhyme are the most important constituents of poetry, which gives rise to musicality of poetry and endears human beings. The other important characteristics of poetry are imagery symbols; figures of speech etc. Poetry has the power of defamiliarisation. It is the main substance of literature. It is the first origin in any literature. It has many sub-genres like lyric, epic, ode elegy, sonnet etc.

Aim of the Study

This paper aims at unwrapping the various ways in which the poetry is beautified by rhythm and rhyme. There are deeper insights of rhythm and rhyme various sub branches are there which constitutes together for the enrichment and brings out aesthetic effect when we study about these we become aware for apprise the beauty of poetry.

Poetry has tremendous appeal for children and it is the best way of exciting their love of the language. It lays the foundation for the appreciation of the beauty of language. It educates their emotions and enhances their power of imagination. The rhythm of poetry helps the students to acquire natural speech rhythm.

Poetry is taught for sheer pleasure and enjoyment. It further lays the foundation for an adequate appreciation of English poetry. Therefore the aims of teaching of poetry should be different for different levels. At primary level it enables students to recite the poem with proper rhythm and intonation, it develops power of imagination and it also develops love for poetry reading and writing. At secondary or higher secondary level it enables the students to appreciate the poem, to understand the thought and imagination contained in the poem, to develop their aesthetic sense.

Rhythm

Rhythm is the arrangement of spoken words alternating stressed and unstressed elements. The rhythm of a poem can be analyzed through the number of lines in a verse, the number of syllables in the line, and the arrangement of syllables based on whether they are long or short, accented or unaccented. Rhythm is also closely associated with meter which identifies units of stressed and unstressed syllables. When an author combines metrical units into a pattern, he or she creates rhythm. The



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definition of the rhythm necessitates the presence of beats, or metrical units. English poetry makes use of five important rhythms. These rhythms are of different patterns of stressed and unstressed syllables. Each unit of these types is called foot.

Iamb

An iamb is a metrical foot in verse consisting of an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable. An iamb is one of several patterns of stress that are used to establish the rhythm or meter of the poem. Iamb can be of different types: trimeter a line with three iambs, tetrameter with four iambs, pentameter with five iambs, hexameter with six iambs and heptameter with seven iambs. For example words with two syllables like "delay" and four syllables like "adorable".

Thě cúr | fêw tolls | thě knell | óf pár | tĩng dáy. |

(An example from Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" in which there is the use of iamb that is an unstressed syllable followed by a stressed syllable)

Trochee

Trochee in poetry is a metrical foot consisting of one long or stressed syllable followed by one short or unstressed syllable. For example words like "garden" and "highway"

"Tell me not, in mournful numbers".

(Plasm of life by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)

Thére thěy | áre, mý | fif tỳ | mén änd | wó mĕn. |

(Robert Browning, "One Word More")

Most trochaic lines lack the final unstressed syllable. In the technical term, such lines, or any verse lines that lack the final syllable (or, less commonly, the first), are catalectic.

Tý ger! | tiger! | búm ĩng | brĩght |

Ín thě | fó rest | óf thě | night. |

Blake's "The Tyger" is an example of catalectic which lacks the final unstressed syllable.

Spondee

Spondee is a word or metrical foot of two syllables, either both long or both stressed words such as HOW NOW, RAINSTROM, SUNSHINE.

Examples of spondee:

"White founts falling in the courts of the sun".

(Lepanto by G. K. Chesterton)

Góod strong | thĩck stú | pĕ fy | ĩng ĩn | cĕnse smoke. |

(R. Browning's "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" is an example of two successive syllables with approximately equal stress)

Dactyl

Dactyls having three syllables called triple meter. A metrical foot having strong stress at the beginning are called falling meter. It consists of one stressed syllable which is followed by two unstressed syllables. This can be seen in limerick poems (There ONCE was a MAN from NanTUCKET).

For example:

"This is the forest primeval. The mumuring pines and the hemlocks."

(The line from Evangeline of Longfellow the words "primeval" and "mumuring" is an example of dactyl)

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Éve, with hĕr | bás kĕt, wás |

Deep ĩn thĕ | bells änd gráss. |

(Ralph Hodgson, "Eve" is another example of this type of syllable)

Anapest

Anapest are totally opposites of the dactyls. They have three syllables; where the first two syllables are not stressed while the last syllable is stressed.

"Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house".

For example:

Thĕ Ás sýr | ián cǎme down | líke ä wolf | òn thĕ fold. |

(Lord Byron's "The Destructive of Sennacherib" shows the use of two unstressed syllables followed by stressed syllable).

Rhyme

Rhyme is a poetic device which can be used to produce the effect of identicality from the vowel in the stressed syllable to the end. It brings out sameness of sound of part of some words to develop a musical effect which can be sung smoothly and can be easily memorized. This can be seen in nursery rhymes the lines are smooth and young minds can easily recite without and difficulty.

The repetition of syllables, typically at the end of a verse line rhymed words conventionally share all sounds following the words last stressed syllables. Thus "tenacity" and "mendacity" rhyme, but not "jaundice" and "john" does, or "tomboy" and "calmboy". A rhyme scheme is usually the pattern of end rhymes in a stanza, with each rhyme encoded by a letter of the alphabet, from an onward (For example ABBA BCCB). Rhymes are classified by the degree of similarity between sounds within words, and by their placement within the lines or stanzas.

As stress is important in English, lexical stress is one of the factors that affects the similarity of sounds for the perception of rhyme. Perfect rhyme can be defined as the case when two words rhyme if their final stressed vowel and all following sounds are identical.

Rhyme links lines together in various ways. Every line of a poem may rhyme with some other, as in the sonnet or Spenserian stanza, or some lines may be unrhymed as in ballad stanza where only the alternate lines rhyme. The function of rhyme is generally to emphasize the integrity and separateness of the stanza, or of the sections of some complex form such as the sonnet, which it binds together. It also gives a pleasure of its own, falling on the ear with the effect of an echo. Shelley's Ode to the West Wind in which we can see that the second line of every three-lined stanza rhymes with the first and third of the next stanza. It is convenient and as custom goes on pattern of rhyme can be set by using alphabets, the first example may be described s abcb and the second can be as abbaabcbccddedeeff. The rhyme-scheme of a poem plays a very important part to bring out emotional effect, through not generally so great a part as the rhythm.

The numbered lines in the following stanza of Wordsworth's "The Solitary Reaper" (1807) are followed by a column which, in the conventional way,

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marks the rhyme elements by a corresponding sequence and repetition of the letters of the alphabet:

Whate'er her theme, the maiden sang	a
As if her song could have no ending;	b
I saw her singing at her work	c
And o'er the sickle bending -	b
I listened, motionless and still;	d
And as I mounted up the hill,	d
The music in my heart I bore,	e
Long after it was heard no more.	e

Lines first and third do not rhyme with any other line. Both in lines fifth and sixth and in seventh and eighth the rhyme consists of single stressed syllable still - hill, bóre-móre. In lines second and fourth, the rhyme consists of a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed syllable ending – bénding.

Some rhyming schemes have become associated with a specific language, culture or period, while other rhyming schemes have achieved use across languages, cultures or time periods. However, the use of structural rhyme is not universal even within the European tradition. Much modern poetry avoids traditional rhyme schemes.

The earliest surviving evidence of rhyming is the Chinese Shi Jing (10th century BC). Rhyme is also occasionally used in the Bible. Classical Greek and Latin poetry did not usually rhyme, but rhyme was used very occasionally. For instance, Catullus includes partial rhymes in the poem *Cui dono lepidum novum libellum*. The ancient Greeks knew rhyme, and rhymes in *The Wasps* by Aristophanes are noted by a translator.

Since languages change over time, lines that rhymed in the past may no longer rhyme in today's language, and it may not be clear how one would pronounce the words so that they rhyme. Poems written in English employ the following kinds of rhyme:

Perfect Rhyme

Perfect rhyme is a rhyme in which the final accented vowel and all succeeding consonants or syllables are identical, while the preceding consonants are different. It is called Perfect Rhyme, or else "full" or "true rhyme". It is seen that until the twentieth century almost all English writers had used this type of rhyme. For example words like "sky" and "high"; "skylight" and "highlight".

Single

A single rhyme consists of monosyllables having stress on final syllable of the words. When the heavy syllable is present at last in the line then it is said to be a single rhyme. Iambic and anapaestic verses generally have single rhyme. Words such as 'heart-part'; 'day-way'; 'hill-mill' are examples of single rhyme.

Double

Double rhyme involves two syllables in each rhyming line and second syllable is unstressed. When the stressed syllable is followed by one or two light syllables it is said to be a double or triple rhyme. If extra syllable is added to last foot of each line of Iamb and Anapest then it effect to be a double rhyme. Words such as 'marrow-sorrow', 'never-sever', 'airily-warily' are the examples of double rhyme.

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Dactylic

Dactylic rhyme which is made of a stressed syllable followed by two unstressed syllables. In this type of rhyme the stress is on the third syllable of the word counting back from the end. Words such as poetry, basketball, typical and elephant are examples of dactylic rhyme.

General Rhymes

The rhymes in which there is phonetic similarity that is having exact same sound between words. They can further divided into different categories:

Syllabic

Metrical system that is most commonly used in English poetry. Poetry often uses syllables to make its words sing with special kind of rhythm or music. It designates a sound that is or can be the most sonorant segment of a syllable, as a vowel or a resonant. In the word riddle (rɪd'ɪl), the two syllabic sounds are the (ɪ)(l).

Imperfect (or Near)

It is also known as partial rhyme or else as appropriate rhyme, slant rhyme or pararhyme. This type of rhyme does not have identical sounds mostly either the vowel segment are different while consonants are identical or in some cases it's just the opposite.

Weak (or Unaccented)

A rhyme between two sets of one or more unstressed syllables. Weakened or unaccented rhyme occurs when the relevant syllable of the rhyming word is unstressed. Words such as frog and dialog, mat and combat are examples of weak or unaccented rhyme.

Semirhyme

Semi rhyme is also contributes to the group of rhyme. It is the rhyme in which one word has an extra syllable. Words such as "mend" and "ending"; "time" and "climbing" are examples of semi rhyme.

Forced (or Oblique)

The maltreatment of words called forced rhyme, in which the poet gives the effect of seeming to surrender helplessly to the exigencies of a difficult rhyme:

Love then her I did not;
The dizzy day was so hot.

Assonance

The repetition of similar or identical vowel sounds in the stressed syllables of successive words. It has subtler effect than alliteration, and often operates at a subconscious level. It grabs the attention of the reader and he remembers the intriguing thing for a long time.

For example:

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster child of silence and slow time...

The recurrent long i in the opening lines of Keats' "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820)

Consonance

It is the repetition of consonant sounds or consonant patterns but vowel sounds are different. Typically this repetition occurs at the end of the words, but may also be found within a word or at the beginning.

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For example: "O where are you going? Said reader to rider"

W.H Auden's poem of the 1930's makes prominent use of this device, with successive lines ending in "rider to reader," "farer to fearer," and "hearer to horror."

Half Rhyme (or Slant Rhyme)

Half rhyme is a rhyme in which the stressed syllables of ending consonants match but vowel sound is different. Words such as quick and back, bent and rant are examples of this type of rhyme.

Pararhyme

Para rhyme is a rhyme that does not rhyme fully. It is a form of rhyme where sounds are similar but not identical. Words such as hill – hell, lover-liver are examples of para rhyme.

Alliteration (Or Head Rhyme)

In this verse is unrhymed; each line is divided into two half-lines of two strong stresses by a decisive pause, or caesura; and at least one, and usually both, of the two stressed syllables in the first half-line alliterate with the first stressed syllable of the second half-line. Matching initial consonants like ship, short.

For example: In a sómer séson, when soft was the sónne...

In the opening line of Piers Plowman all four of the stressed syllables alliterate.

Identical Rhymes

Identical rhymes simply use the same word twice that is repetition of the same word is seen in this type of rhyme. There is a rhyming word itself, but often refers to a different meaning. Words which have such type of repetition are "describe" and "inscribe"; "two" and "too"; "ball" and "bawl" and they are called identical rhymes.

Eye Rhyme

In eye rhyme words whose endings are spelled alike, and in most instances pronounced alike, but in the course of time acquired a different pronunciation words such as prove-love, daughter-laughter are the words where the sounds are identical but pronounced differently. Some early written poetry appears to contain these, but in many cases the words used rhymed at the time of writing, and subsequent changes in pronunciation have meant that the rhyme is now lost.

Mind Rhyme

Mind rhyme is a type of word play which is related to those words which rhyme with mind. It is just like a suggestion of rhyme which is left unsaid and is guessed by the listener. For example words like find, kind, behind, assigned etc.

Classification by Position

Rhymes may be classified according to their position in the verse.

Tail Rhyme

Tail rhyme is also known as end rhyme. A rhyme consists of couplets, triplets or stanzas each with a tag or additional short line. It occurs when the last syllables or words in two or more lines rhyme with each other. Such ending of lines in similar sounds are pleasant to hear and gives musical effect to the poem. For example: "Stopping by woods on a Snowy Evening" by Robert Frost.

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"Whose woods these are I think I know,
His house is in the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow"

First, second and fourth lines of the poem with words "know" "through" and "snow" consists of tail rhyme. These rhyming lines add a pleasant effect and smooth flow to the poem.

Internal Rhyme

This type of rhyme occurs when a word or phrase in the interior of a line rhymes with a word or phrase at the end of a line, or within a different line.

For example: "The rhyme of Ancient Mariner" by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

"The ship was cheer'd, the harbor clear'd,
And every day, for food or play,
In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,...
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
white,

Glimmer'd the white moonshine...

"Why looks't thou so? - With my crossbow

Ah wretch! Said they, the bird to slay...

Then averr'd, I had kill'd the bird...

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew..."

This poem consists of rhyming words which add musical quality and provides intensity or forcefulness of expression.

Off-Centered Rhyme

This type of rhyme is misplaced in the lines of poetry or the rhyming words or syllables are placed at unexpected places in the lines.

Holo-Rhyme

A holo rhyme is a rhyme in which there is a repetition of similar sounds in the final stressed occurs when two entire lines have the same sound or two lines are phonetically identical.

Broken Rhyme

Broken rhyme is also known as split rhyme. The rhyming elements are divided by the break or by a pause between two words. This effect can be brought by dividing a word at the line break of a poem to make a rhyme with the end word of another line.

Cross Rhyme

Cross rhyme have two metrical feet per line where a word at the end of a line rhymes with a word in the middle of the next or previous line.

Rhyming words sound the same at the end. It is a phonemic awareness skill, meaning that it is all about manipulating oral language. Rhyming is just a part of phonemic awareness of working with language, sounds within language, and playing with language. A rhyme serves two distinct functions in the art of poetry:

It gives poetry a typical symmetry that differentiates poetry from prose.

It makes recital of poetry a pleasurable experience for the readers as the repetitive patterns renders musicality and rhythm to it.

Conclusion

Rhythm sets poetry apart from normal speech; it creates a tone for the poem, and it can generate emotions or enhance ideas. It's important to pay attention to rhythm because it's key to understanding the full effect of a poem. Rhyme, alone with meter, helps make a poem musical. In traditional

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poetry, a regular rhyme aids the memory for recitation and gives predictable pleasure.

Many additional elements combine with rhythm and rhyme to produce the overall effect of a poem. Even though a poem's words have dictionary meaning, figures of speech such as metaphor and irony bend that literal meaning and emotion. Sensory images of taste, touch or smell evoke memories and associations from your past. Read a poem a loud to receive the full impact of its many devices, including its sound. A poem is about having an experience, not just decoding the meaning of the lines.

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