



About Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>



ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Discourse Strategy for the Songs of William Blake

Dr. Vijaylakshmi
Head of the Department,
JECRC University, Jaipur
&
Dr. Parveen Bala
Assistant Professor,
JECRC University, Jaipur

Article History: Submitted-31/01/2019, Revised-27/02/2019, Accepted-01/03/2019, Published-20/03/2019.

Abstract:

Blake's poetry certainly reflects his genius in that it is immediately striking in homely or metaphysical subjects and because of simplicity of style that lingers in the mind. His verses have an elusive nature but subtle poetic merits that guarantee strong fascination and perennial discussion. The songs of both the books, Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience are integrated, not simply as reflecting oppositions, but as a series of shifting perceptions. These poems not only suggest a falling away from Edenic innocence to experience, but also the possibility to progress towards a Christ inspired "higher" innocence and a future regain of paradise.

His poetry is not a simple reflection on the events, hopes, tensions and fears it generates but we see the poet taking hold of the visionary experiences, exploring and negotiating with it, using the full resources of language to make something new out of it. So making of his poetry takes two major forms-lyric and narrative -but it is lyric form that dominates in the songs.

Blake poured forth his effusions in his own grand style, copying no one but breathing spirit and life into his works.

Keywords: Discourse, narrative technique, lyrical, stylistic techniques, experience.

Blake's lyrics that appear in almost every anthology are marked by simple and artless diction but are not without density of meaning and such literary oeuvre, regarded a common discourse, be subjected to the clarity and accuracy of empirical sciences. Obviously in discursive prose only two entities have a meaning: the written word and the reader; in creative writing there are three-the writer, the text and the reader. At one level words are

important for they have a plurality of meaning, at another the creative process, for it tells how they are being used. The words are most likely to be related to certain mental processes. At yet another level, the coming alive of the meaning is important for this relates to the reader. So a literary text like Blake's is like a frog prince waiting to be kissed by the princess in order to come alive. But first the frog has to be the prince who had been transformed. The maiden then has to be pretty, further she has to feel charitable enough to kiss the prince and also to be there in order to do so.

A study of the manner in which Blake uses language in a particular poem is important to the understanding of a poetic text; it implies an evaluative process on part of such writer as Blake himself, it relates to a world outside literature as discourse.

The moment we use the word discourse for Blake's poetic text, expression ceases to be a matter of words. It implies a subject matter, a thought form, and a relationship. Literature works in polarities and Blake's poetry is an attempt to fix the meaning of something which is worth recording through a medium which in itself is dynamic. Paul Ricour, in his essay "Human Sciences and Hermeneutical Method: Meaningful Action considered as Text" aptly defines discourse in the following terms:

'Discourse is the counterpart of what linguists call language system or linguistic codes. Discourse is language event or linguistic usage. This pair of correlative terms-system/event, code/message- has played a basic role in linguistics since it was introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and Louis-Hjelmslev. The first spoke of language-speech (langue-parole), the second of schema-usage. We can also add competence-performance in Chomsky's language'.¹

His poetry is not a simple reflection on the events, hopes, tension and fears it generates but we see the poet taking hold of the visionary experiences, exploring and negotiating with it, using the full resources of language to make something new out of it, constituting the materials that the poet brings to each of his poem. So making of his poetry takes two major forms-lyric and narrative-but it is lyric form that dominates in the songs.

The critical idea of how a text should be arrived at constitutes the most important subject to be considered in the case of Blake's texts and their instability and unique experience offered by each hand-colored and hand-assembled copy of his poems have greatly complicated the reading of his oeuvre. It is now generally realized that it should be

experienced differently in complete imagery with designs and verbal analysis with some stylistic techniques for the study of word-imagery remains to be done, investigations of sources and influences, and most of others readings of these determined by innocent of radical ideological and study of mythical words and structure would make Blake's amazing cohort of major poems an interesting study and fill the whole void. The ultimate aim of this study is to investigate the strictly literary effects of language and to examine the expressive and suggestive devices that have been invented to enhance the impact of Blake's poetic speech. There will be an attempt to reach writer's personality through his language or the aesthetic evaluation of his poetic texts and obsessive images rooted in some personal experience-images as symptoms of poet's likes and dislikes, aspirations, fixations and obsessions.

A poet like Blake has his favorite words that frequently recur in his style and inadvertently betray some secret wish. To discover the mind of a poet, or the orientation of his poetic inspiration, or at least his main preoccupation, one can find out in his works which words or images occur frequently. Such words will express his habitual bent of mind, the resonance and therefore a positively creative power for stronger than ordinary usage. Such evaluations can certainly play a significant part in the study. The discovery of key words and other deviations from the norms will be a delicate linguistic operation. For example, the high frequency of terms like "love", "heart", "soul" or "God" denote a person, a feeling, an idea which are alive so far as society recognizes them its ideals. These small numbers of key words epitomize his ideals and aspirations.

The range and nature of a poet's imagery will be conditioned by various personal factors: his experience, his reading, his environment, his circle of friends and acquaintance. Blake's encyclopedic culture and aesthetic sensibility could never have thought of the famous analogies from painting, sculptures and poetry. Blake's aim was to reassert the character of painting and sculpture as a source of aesthetic delight free from the restrictions of narrative. If one seeks to explore the ground for analogy in Blake's works between the arts has been a common drive towards the reproduction of observed reality; the creation of presence the other has been the stimulus of aesthetic emotion by such means as form or pattern. The romantic use of the sublime to produce awe can be seen as a wave in the direction of the second. But in Blake it can be clearly seen in his preoccupation with the creative process itself. Further the scope of literature and Bible, the study will include the referential strength of the underlying biblical myth and its sense of polysemous meaning as creative as ever.

Blake understands the Bible in his own characteristic way, and so he has in his literary output reflected that understanding according to his particular needs and problems in the perennial quest to discover the world.

Anyone studying Blake will soon discover that words and figures which occur in his work usually belong to marriage of hell or heaven or marriage. His way of grouping that is unfamiliar needs some key.

He believes any restrains on energy originating from outside a man are bad. So Blake's villains are associated with law and repression. They include Jehovahs, Moses, Newton, Locke, Priest, law-givers and notably fathers. For him some of these villains guard the prison house of empirical reason. They lock man in the dungeon of five senses. The others that serve commandments keep men perpetually childish and unfulfilled. One of the interesting aspect of the discourse study is to reveal Blake's best known pictures or visuals depicting these villains like Newton as mance with a pair of compass drawing a small circle in which men will be perpetually confined. Priests creating restrictive rules are given strong pejorative word images who restrain the body from its proper delight intellectual systems of dogma enslave the mind. "Chapel on the Green" serves the best example of a powerful discourse against priest craft.

In contrast Blake's heroes are associated with the forces as Israel, Ezekiel, Christ or even Satan whose virtue is energy. Poetic genius, for example, is represented through Isaiah and Ezekiel who dive with Blake. Some of these positive images of his poetic discourse reach a faculty beyond five senses that directly perceive divinity and super sensuous truth.

The fascinating aspect of his poetic vision is how he attempts to bridge the gulf between body and soul and establishes man's integrity of being in his proposed Marriage of Heaven and Hell. The giants of energy must be released from the fetters of law. Thus it needs psycho-linguistic study. Psycho analytic criticism has its origin in Sigmund Freud's psychology. Freud's significant contribution to literature and literary criticism is his concept of the 'unconscious.' He explained that man's psycho has two parts the conscious and the unconscious, the unconscious for ego and super ego. Libido is the primary source of energy and is sexual; id is the unconscious and ego is the conscious personality that mediated between the unconscious and the Super ego, conscience, which is the total sum of the social norms. Any libidinous behavior or desire that goes against the standard social norms arouses a sense of guilt in the doer and she/he becomes neurotic. It is also that the tabooed desire is

censored and repressed by the super ego. This repressed desire or the sense of guilt produced by the tabooed act finds place in the id or the unconscious. The unconscious is active when ego and super ego are asleep. Dreams and reveries are the manifestations of the activities of the unconscious or id; they are the “displacement” of reality and a kind of wish- fulfillment.

The romantic poet, Blake, is susceptible to love and death, in “Sick Rose”, to Freudian Psychology or specifically and lingering rhythm specially the use of iambic and secondary accent along with anapaest. For example in first, second and seventh line, he substitutes the secondary accent or the first syllable of the anapaest.

Seeking|after that swéet|golden climé

The first and third feet are obviously different in fact from the second foot which is a normal anapaest. So “sweet”, “golden” are important terms and sunflower gives a glimpse of natural beauty that sends the poet into an ecstatic mood.

In another poem “Echoing Green” he presents a bright spring morning as the setting for the sports of the young on the echoing green. The second stanza presents the healthy and contented old benevolently watching the young girls and boys recalling their childhood when they played on the same spot. In the third stanza evening comes. It is time for the sports to end; the children are sleepy and gather round their mothers.

‘like birds in their nests’.

The unpretending is aptly couched in nature and time of life and a self-fulfilling natural process with a sense of community and warmth in it. The title of the poem, refrain first two stanzas echoing repeated in the last line. The nature poet has an urge for such sports where children enjoy the ecstatic moment. Similarly his Lamb too describes the mind of the child and it is important to study this poem because it is comparable to a poem in the second section entitled “The Tyger”. In the present poem, the child speaks to lamb as if it is another human perhaps especially younger brother or sister. This device supports the presentation of meaning as the most significant thing is not the relation of the lamb and the child to God “as incarnation of Christ, the second person of the Trinity”. In fact, lamb stands for an attitude. So this poem is concerned with creation and lamb and tiger symbolize opposite poles in creation. Thus these two poems symbolize contrast and illuminate each other.

The principle behind these two poems appears to be an artistic creation as well as to God's creation of the world. The most notable features of this poem are the use of abrupt phrase and unfinished sentences especially in stanzas third, fourth and fifth. This relative deviance or disorder can reflect the speaker's agitation. Blake often celebrates certain qualities that his imagination conjures up as a vital part of human self.

An instance of the socio-linguistics is the poem from Blake's Songs of Experience called "The chimney Sweeper". It is a poem that ends powerfully as the child will describe his parents that are gone to praise God and his priest and the king- who make up a heaven of our misery. Their lives are powerfully subversive as they suggest the combined authority of the deity, priesthood and monarchy used to sanction the exploitation of children. Blake's use of the key phrases and words brings this remarkable semantic overruling in the closing stanza. The poem is characteristic of the alliterative emphasis of Gone/God, praise/priest, and make up/misery also because of the brutal paradox of often praised to the originator of misery. Surprisingly the ironical undertone is strangely felt in these closing lines as the parents have smugly departed to their praising and left the child to his own unhappy devices. One can easily discover the ironic play on the words make-up that mean both-construct and tell lies about. Chimney sweeper is thus an example of Blake's manipulation of the lexical features, structural combination, alliteration, assonance and other such poetic devices.

A wonderful use of Blake's lexical and syntactic compactness and economy can be seen in the most striking of Blake's poem "The Clod and The Pebble" describing the feminist linguists. The striking features of the word used and their symmetrical pattern in the first stanza is the point of analysis here. Line 12 and 04 are identical apart from the reversal of "heaven and hell" and shifts from "despair for despise" as if Blake was determined to weight the scales equally, allowing exactly the same number of words, some twenty-five words and more or less the same term to both "clod and pebble" so that the balance is poised.

The sense of opposite extremes tense against each other by way of heaping up of flatly contradictory term is discernible in the pattern of his verse and the lexical choice represent a series of pleasant variation: love, leisure, care, ease, heaven and joys and there are lexical items with negative associations such as despair, clod, trodden, blind, loss, hell and other illustrative items representing idyllically and pervasively unaware of the argument. It's a poem shaped into perfect harmony but the terms such as sheep and battle bending down to drink at the brook and other such trivial details will not directly contribute to the meaning of

the poem. There is an increasingly focused perception on the key terms “clod and pebble” while the pebble’s domineering motive of love based on bending another to his wishes is a common feature of brute masculinity. Clod represents the easy and sweet nature of the feminine itself-trampled on and inverted. Thus this poem typifies the gender relation in the contrasting opposite series of lexical items and Blake has very carefully reconciled the opposites in the form of this poem.

Blake’s “Nurses Song” an illustration of socio-linguistic study that tries especially to come with the modern world and its milieu as it merges through series of his songs sometimes dreamy, sometimes remained familiar-impassionedly idealized, wistful, meandry.

The collection where most reader will inevitably begin the reading of his poetry Songs of Experience and Songs of Innocence, The Nurse’s Song is selected for the modal stylistic analysis.

Lyric poetry, which in modern times is associated with pop’s culture, is Blake’s favorite. Lyric as a form is designed to reach the impact of moment that has inspired the poet to conceive it. It’s the moment of poetic intensity, selection of thought and feeling. It describes in the guise of the slight incidence, a profound visionary experience, an attempt to capture the mood and the insight in it. It is an effort to reach the profundity that stimulated the poet. There is no unfolding of the complex plot because the focus is on the private mood and that’s why Blake preferred the lyric form, an easy way to explore the emotion and ideas that some incident might have provoked. In its structure it is a song form to be recited. So the poet enjoys the freedom to deal with his/her feelings about it. In fact, Blake alludes the original meaning of the lyric. He shifts to lyric to register a directional change in the culture and the poem he deals with the working of the inner self with all the quirky, startling, disturbing, interflecker that blinks for a moment inside the mind and heart of the poet.

So a method of study of Blake’s song must include some instances of lexical recurrence i.e. recognition of some recurring words, e.g. joy, weep in the present poem. It is more than accidental that he was using such key words in his best known lyrics. This implies that Blake is purposely using certain repeated themes associated with these words. So the key words and their recognition can give Blake’s reader a vital clue to the understanding of the poem. For e.g. the present case, if one tries to isolate hope, fear-the hope it expresses or the fear it gives vent to or the tension between “hope and fear”, “joy and sorrow”, “pain and pleasure”, “ideal and reality”, that we might find in it.

When one has identified the key words and the hindered emotion, one can turn to the choice and combination of these words at the syntactical level. It means all the resources of language have been used with optimal freedom in Blake's poetry. He exploits pun, symbol, imagery and innovative linguistic devices for the purpose of a perfect linguistic construct. Each word used is like a precious stone chiseled till it is rounded out and prominent in the context.

Blake has carefully used his words for their lyric effect in every feature of it, in manner and sentiment which is traceable to the romantic attitude. The state of spiritual ecstasy is revealed in the romantic vein in order to get hold of the method. It would obviously be helpful to see how Blake creates the Nurses Song. It is about the young conveyed through the laughter and delight of the children. The whole series of simple, colloquial words with their pleasant associations create an atmosphere of celebration, a group of youngster dancing, playing and it conveys the notion of innocence. In the key words the poet celebrates the rights of children to enjoy the childhood fancies. Out of the selection, the word that strikes the key note, the play, as it is repeated a number of times. The topic highlights the issue and the edifice of the poem is built around it. After introducing the children playing on green turf they are told to leave off play but the second stanza contradicts this in

'No, no, let us play, for it is yet day', at the start of the third given prominence

'Well, well, go and play till the light-fades away'

In fact the group of children has joined their hands with the nurses sitting in the middle. The poem is a unique romantic outcry. It also shows the victory clarity or obscurity and mystification of verbal restraint. The poem builds up indirectly the atmosphere where the children were being headed to textile mills at a tender age and they have no time to play. So their cry is set again. The harsh sounds of discipline and repression issued from those who were interested in making profit at any cost. So the poem stresses through its key words the basic idea and the main idea is understood by rhyming and word play, for e.g. in the lines-

Play and day (line 9)

Play and away (line 7)

The impact of this device can be seen in the form of rhyme that gives each line a punch.

The simple monosyllabic lines and clear syntax creates the world of children, their shared pleasure of the movement which is threatened by adult prohibition. So the muse catches the political overtones and implication of exploitation that here the idyllic simplicity conveys. Blake's sense of pleasure in a sense shadowed by the way children should be singing. The whole structure of the poem reverberates with the joys of the song. The children are not silenced by the jealous insistence; it is the time for play with the nurse conceits "Well". The action endorsed by the adult implies triumph of children, the winning of their rights. The poet has built up a childlike diction with the help of few polysyllabic items. Merely half of the lines, seven out of sixteen begin with simple monosyllabic items and links it to the children's chatter. Youngster to whom Blake addressed this poem would find it easy to follow and the slightly fanciful tongue of the children in the middle of the line becomes more explicit when the poet replaces polysyllabic "meadow" for a monosyllabic "hill" that resounded the glee of the children. And thus, C.M. Bowra significantly points out that:

"The Songs deserve special attention because they constitute one of the most remarkable collections of lyrical poems written in English"².

Works Cited:

1. R.S. Singh, editor, *Stylistic Approaches to Literature* (New Delhi: Arnold Publishers (India) Ltd., 1993
2. C.M. Bowra, *The Romantic Imagination*, Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1949