

Parallelism and Syntactic Structure: A Stylistic Quest for S. T.

Coleridge's The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner

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Summary:

This study purports to Investigate the parallel linguistic structures as encoded in S. T. Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. It aims at exploring the categories of parallelism in the longer poetic text. The study proceeds on the hypothesis that the aesthetic value of the poem results in the systematic combinations of the phonological, semantic and syntactic patterns of the poem. To verify the hypothesis, a set of lines of verse are selected for stylistic analysis. The linguistic structures, more specifically the syntactic structures, will be analyzed in terms of Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). The study is divided into three main divisions. The first division deals with the fundamentals of the study, the second is preoccupied with the theoretical model, while the third division tackles the stylistic analysis. The study is, then, rounded up with certain conclusions.

1-The fundamentals of the study

Being a stylistic inquiry, the study tackles the notions of stylistics and style. In addition, it explores the concept of parallelism with its categories. The idea of the syntactic structure is highlighted, as encoded in Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG). Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is briefly introduced as a poetic narrative.

1-2 Stylistics and Style

If linguistics is the systematic study of language, as a human phenomenon, stylistics, then, is the investigation of literary language. It is the process in which meaning is created in a literary text by and through the specific use of language. According to Short (1996: 1), "stylistics is an approach to the analysis of literary texts using linguistic description". This means stylistics the fruitful area that comes in-between linguistics and literary criticism.

Akin to literary stylistics is the notion of style. Style "denotes a characteristic use of language. Style has been defined according to its orientation in the writer's personality, the impressions of the reader, an individual text, and the collective features of a genre" (Fowler, 1973:17). This means that there are two types of style: the personal style, i.e. the writer's style and the period style, as revealed in the Romantic period by the English Romantics. From a purely linguistic point of view, style means "a deferential mode of expression manifested on lexico grammatical level" (Hendricks (1980: 49). Therefore, meaning is the cornerstone of the stylistic studies of different genres of literary works of art.

1.3 The notion of parallelism

Parallelism is the most momentous feature of literary style. From a linguistic standpoint, it is the repetition of two or more constituents of combinations in certain linguistic structures. Wales believes that (2001: 281) parallelism is a "repetition of words, phrases, or sentences that have the same grammatical structure or that state a similar idea, or parallel structure." He (ibid) proceeds to say that it "helps make lines rhythmic and memorable and heightens their emotional effect." The parallel structures are of importance to foreground certain concepts in the imaginatively literary artifacts. By using parallelism, writers can add the characteristics of clarity, balance and rhythm to creative writing. By using parallel structures, the writers can emphasize the connection between ideas and make the relationships between them

clear to the reader. Being so, parallelism is of different categories: phonological, syntactic and semantic. They are as follows.

The phonological category

Phonology, in modern linguistic theory, deals with the phonemes of a specific human language. The phonological category is a literary device where sounds are repeated within a phrase or a sentence to create a sense of rhythm and emphasis. This repetition can involve vowel sounds (assonance), consonant sounds (alliteration and consonance), or entire sound patterns (rhythm). Alliteration is the repetition of the same consonant sounds, sound at the beginning of words (Alliteration 2025). For instance, in Shakespeare's line of verse, Full fathom five thy father lies, the voiceless consonant /f/ is repeated as an initial item.

The semantic category

Semantics deals with the meaning of words, phrases and structures. So, semantic parallelism is a literary device where similar or related ideas are expressed using parallel grammatical structures. This technique enhances clarity, rhythm, and emphasis by creating a sense of balance and connection between the ideas presented. It often involves the use of synonyms, antonyms, or related concepts within parallel structures to highlight their relationship. In the famous line from Julius Caesar, I come, I see, I conquer, he uses parallelism to emphasize a sense of accomplishment and swift action (ibid).

The Syntactic category

Syntax, in the general sense, is preoccupied with the systematic arrangement of words and phrases in well - formed sentences in a language. Therefore, the syntactic parallelism, also known as parallel structure or parallel construction, is a literary device that involves using similar grammatical structures to express ideas. This repetition of grammatical patterns, such as words, phrases, or clauses, enhances clarity, rhythm, and balance within a sentence or across multiple sentences (ibid.). It

is a way to make writing more pleasing to the ear and easier to understand (ibid). In the example, I enjoy hiking swimming, and painting, the three phrases are conjoined by the –ing form of the verb.

1.4 The aesthetic function

What makes a poetic text a unique work of art is its artistic arrangement of the linguistic components. The aesthetic function is mainly concerned with the message and how it is composed and communicated so as to make the text deviate from the ordinary codes of normal language. The deviation of the linguistic forms happens on the phonological, semantic and syntactic forms of language.

Being a deviant form of expression, the poetic text deals with the connotative form of meaning. Yule (ibid: 110) is on the belief that conceptual meaning covers the fundamental, denotative, essential constituents of meaning that are transferred by the literal use of a word. On the contrary, the connotative or associative meaning has to do with individual mental understanding of the speaker. It is the rhetoric or the metaphorical sense. In Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Romeo soliloquies.

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks ?

It is the East, and Juliet is the sun (Romeo and Juliet, Act 2, Scene 2, 2025).

Literarily speaking, the sun, a natural phenomenon, is a ball of hot gases in the sky. It the denotative meaning. In the Shakespearean lines of verse, Juliet, a human phenomenon, is compared to the sun in its lightness and softness. Here lies the connotative or the metaphorical sense.

2.The Theoretical model: Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG)

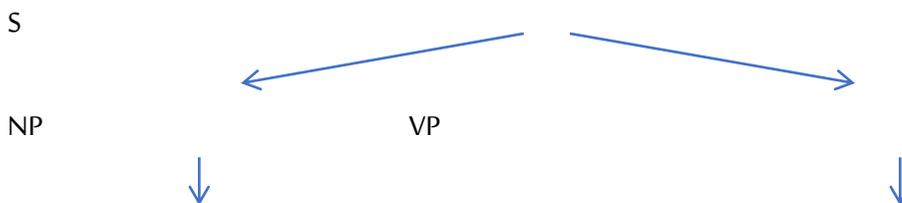
Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG) is a linguistic theory introduced by Chomsky, in his 1957 Syntactic structures. To analyze the well-formed sentence structures, a set of rules and symbols, of which are phrase- structure rules, lexical rules and transformational rules, should be applied. The theory suggests that the syntactic structure has a surface structure, i.e. the actual form of the sentence, while

the deep structure is the abstract or the underlying level where the components of the structure can be represented.

In order to represent the components of the sentence structure, TGG has recourse to a set of symbols like Sentence (S), Noun (N), Verb (v), Article (ART), Adjective (Adj), Pronoun (Pro) Noun Phrase (NP), Verb Phrase (VP), Prepositional Phrase (PP), and so on. In addition, and in order to represent the hierarchical organization and relationship among these comments, the linguistic theory uses the tree diagram. The function of the tree diagram is to be the static representation of the structure of the sentence. Moreover, it represents a way of generating not only that one sentence, but a very large number of other sentences with similar structures (Yule, 2006: 91). Put it simply, they are the representation of the underlying or deep structures of sentences in English (ibid: 95).

While the phrase structure rules generate the structure of the sentence, and the lexical rules specify which words are used when the constituents or components are rewritten, the function of the transformational generative rules is to change or move constituents in the structures from their original places. So, it is possible to move the adverb of time yesterday in the sentence structure, The young lady played the piano yesterday, to the beginning of the structure, as in Yesterday the young lady played the piano. The hierarchical organization can be illustrated in the following tree diagram analysis.

The young lady played the piano



Art Adj N V NP



Art N

Fig (1) the application of the phrase structure rules and The lexical rules

3.The Rime of the Ancient Mariner: A Stylistic analysis

Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is a narrative poem where an old seaman tells his extraordinary voyage to a wedding guest .

3.1Summary of the plot

The strange tale starts with a sunny cheerful day where the sea is quite and bright. Suddenly, things have changed. It becomes gloomy, and a giant storm is blowing. The ship is drifted into a stretch of mist and snow. Luckily, a big sea bird (Albatross) is following the ship, but the old sailor has shot him by his arrow. The wind calms down, and pushes the ship into a sea of ice "As idle as a painted ship / Upon a painted ocean" (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 2025).

The sea becomes plighted where horrible creatures and spirits have haunted the ship and the crew, while the dead corpse of the albatross has hanged around the ancient mariner's neck. A sail is coming closer to them; the sailors believe it a sign of good omen. To their disappointment, they behold a skeleton of a ship with "Death and the Night-mare Life-in-Death." After seven days, surrounded by the dead sailors, the curse has passed, and things regain their natural beautiful shapes; he can pray now. The dead albatross has fallen in the sea at last. What is characteristic of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, as an imaginatively poetic creation, is Coleridge's poetic style in

narrating the events of the extraordinary horrible sequence of events. It is a descriptive style.

Now, the question is: What is the message that lies behind this long poetic composition with its all horrific extraordinary sequential events. Though read as a poetic narrative for delight, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner carries a set of messages to human, of which are the consequences of actions, the sanctity of nature, and the journey towards redemption. It explores the themes of sin, punishment, and ultimately, forgiveness, highlighting the interconnectedness of all living things (Spark Notes, 2025). There is a moral message behind the poetic description, like the curse after killing the innocent bird and the dropping of the dead bird after blessing and praying.

In the romantic dogma, nature is a living soul that it has its own sacredness. Killing the albatross is the commitment of a sin which needs redemption. This is clearly implied in the following lines of verse:

He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small:

For the dear God who loveth us.

He made and loveth all.

The salvation of the ancient mariner makes him free from the sin and the corpse of the bird has fallen in the sea.

3.2 Text analysis

Stylistically speaking, Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient mariner witnesses a big bulk of parallel structures on the level of phonology, semantics and syntax. So far the phonological level is concerned, rhythm is the most prominent feature. In The Rime

of the Ancient Mariner, the meter is somewhat loose, though in general it approximates a form known as ballad meter. Ballad meter typically consists of four-line stanzas that feature alternating lines of tetrameter and trimeter. The first and third lines usually contain four stressed syllables, and the second and fourth lines contain three stressed syllables (ibid).

Akin to the rhythm is the rime. The rhyme scheme in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is primarily ABCB in its quatrains (four-line stanzas), though Coleridge varies this structure throughout the poem. While many stanzas follow the ABCB pattern, some may feature variations like ABAB, ABAB, or even more complex structures (ibid).

A close reading of the poem's construction indicates that a set of lines of verse comprises instances of alliteration, i.e. the repetition of the initial consonant sounds. This is well illustrated in the following selected lines of verse.

Below the kirk, below the hill,

Red as a rose is she:

The furrow followed free:

From the sails the dew did drip

Let us consider the repetition of the voiced consonant stop/b/, and the fricative/ θ /in the first selected line of verse, the liquid /r/ in the second, the fricative /f/ in the third, while stop/d/ in the fourth. In addition, the poem witnesses a set of assonance, i.e. the repetition of the vowels (pure vowels or diphthongs) at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, and consonance, i.e. the repetition of the consonant sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. The assonance can be exemplified in the following lines of verse.

The bright-eyed Mariner.

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud.

Alone, alone, all, all alone

It is worthy to note the repletion of the diphthong sound /ai/ in bright and eyed in the first line, and /a Ū /in cloud and shroud in the second line, while / ə / and / a Ū / in alone while the long /ɔ:/ in all.

If we shift into the consonant sounds, we will anticipate the following.

The guests are met; the feast is set:

sloping masts and dipping prow.

Both man and bird and beast.

Here, the consonants /g/, /m/, / θ /, /f/, /s/ are repeated in one line of verse, while /s/, /m/, /d/ and /p/ are repeated on the second line, and /b/, /m/, /b/ are in the third. All these sound devices used throughout the poetic text may add euphony, clarity and harmony to the creative poetic fabric.

On the semantic level of the poetic text, it is possible to anticipate certain words or phrases and even complete structures repeated throughout the divisions of the poem. This is wittingly illustrated in the following instances:

Water, water, everywhere.

Below the kirk, below the hill.

The bright-eyed Mariner.

With sloping masts and dipping prow.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down.

And cried, A sail! a sail!

On the level of a word, the word water is repeated twice, water, water, everywhere in the lines of verse. Not only that, the line of verse is repeated twice in the poem. On the level of the phrase, the whole phrase is repeated like the bright –eyed mariner which is reprinted twice. It is of interest to note the repetition of the same component as the definite article in sequential phrases of the stanza, as in:

Her lips were red, her looks were free

Her locks were yellow as gold

Her skin was as white as leprosy

The constituents of the prepositional phrases might occur frequently, with a slight difference, are repeated, as in below he kirik, below the hill, and With sloping masts and dipping prow. Not only that, whole linguistic structures frequently occur in the poem, as in Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down, or And cried, A sail! a sail! All these illustrations may add the coherence of rhetoric to the poetic texts. They give texture to the whole text.

The syntactic level of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner can be illustrated by drawing the tree diagram as a realization the deep structure of the sentences. In another expression, it is the representation of the hierarchical organization of a certain structure. On the level of a phase the like the bright-eyed mariner, the representation could be the following:

NP

Art Adj N

The bright-eyed mariner

The representation can be illustrated on the level of a complete sentence structure. In the line of verse, The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew (Part II, Stanza 4), the

ancient seaman describes the sweetness of nature while the ship is moving mildly. So, the sentence structure in its two halves shows that equilibrium in the components of the structure.

The fair breeze blew

S

NP

VP

Def.

Adj

N

V

The

fair

breeze

blew

Likewise, the Noun Phrase (NP) the white foam flew can be represented in the following tree diagram.

S

NP

VP

Def

Adj

N

v

The

white

foam

flew

These parallel systematic representations of the sentence structures on the phonological, semantic and syntactic strata are used creatively to build up the proposed vision of the world. The linguistic resources are organized in an imaginative metaphorical way to create the supernatural and horrific events, characters and setting of The Rime of the ancient Mariner; and here lies the aesthetic function of the artistic work of art; it is the violation of the norms of everyday language. BY using the supernatural elements, Coleridge explores the dark and hidden areas of the human ego, too. Though an imaginative work of art, Cordage's poetic text has recourse to material of reality. After killing the albatross and the befall of the curse upon the ship and the crew, anew spiritual tide of remorse and pain

sweeps into the psyche of the ancient Mariner, instead of the cross, the Albatross/
About my neck was hung. His soul cries in silence, seven days, seven nights, I saw
that curse. And this great psychological torture lead to redemption, love and peace:

He prayeth best, who loveth best

All things both great and small:

For the dear God who loveth us.

He made and loveth all (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, 2025)

House (1975: 2016: 2014-239)) thinks that poetic images, are the realizations of the fair spirit of nature. But killing the Albatross, the pious bird of good omen, changes the course of nature. The skeleton of the figure of Death and Life – in Death is linked to the phenomena of the tropical sunset. The sense of guilt eats his spirit as the worm eats the heart of a rose. The salvation comes later on as a fruitful result to that torture, pain and remorse he has undergone (ibid.). In this sense, Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient marines is a unique representation of the romantic movement in its intuition of wilderness, rottenness and exquisiteness.

Concluding remarks

The Rime of the ancient Mariner is not a poem about excavation or sea voyage to unknown areas of the world. Rather, it is the poetic creation of imagination in its romantic sense. The stylistic analysis has shown the parallel linguistic structures, phonological, semantic and syntactic, have built the unnatural world of the poem. These parallel components are used intentionally to violate the norms of the ordinary language, and this aesthetic violation of the norms is the merit of the whole poetic text. The poem, in addition, has its pious message in agony and redemption.

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التوازي والبنية النحوية: بحث اسلوبي في قصيدة "الملاح الهرم" للشاعر كوليج

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الكلمات المفتاحية: أسلوبية القراءة. التوازي. البنية النحوية. السرد الشعري. القيمة الجمالية

الملخص:

(الموازاة والبنية النحوية) دراسة اسلوبية تبغي إدراك ابنية التوازي على المستوى الصوتي والدلالي والنحوي في مطولة كوليج الشعرية (أنشودة الملاح الهرم)، الأمر الذي يخلق القيمة الجمالية للنص الشعري الرومانسي. وللوقوف على البنية العميقة للبنية الشعرية النحوية في (القصيدة. والدراسة تتبنى (النظرية التوليدية التحويلية) للساني الأمريكي (چومسكي) للوقوف على النظام الهرمي للبنية النحوية في القصيدة. والدراسة تبين أيضاً الغايات المقصودة من استخدامات الأبنية المتوازية في (انشودة الملاح الهرم).