

Research Article

Sign and Structure Convey the Themes of Dylan Thomas Vision and Prayer

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Abstract

Signs and symbols signify their meanings according to culture, context and passage of time in society as well as mass societal opinion. Signs and symbols earn their unique meanings in poetry with our personal perspectives. “Carmina figurata” is a term used in criticism to mean typography arrangement to create a visual image. According to W.Y. Tindall, “two things detain us first; the shape of the stanzas and the theme”. The shape of “Vision and Prayer” as the iconic image of a basic geometric structure which in itself serves as a sign as well as a symbol pointing to a number of interrelated meanings. The idea of using typography is to enhance the meaning of a poem originated in Greek Alexandria during the third and second centuries BC. They were designed to be a part of religious art-works, including “wing, axe and alter-shaped poems”. The poems by Simias and Theocritus are collected together in the Greek Anthology. The main feature of typographical poetry according to Dylan’s “Vision and Prayer” is the typographical style which is lyrical, personal and spiritual. Semantic use of space, result of relationship between the scale and weight of the letters and words and space they occupy are connected to the spiritual content. The poet has been able to work with a great deal of freedom and individuality in word positioning and construction of letters in handling typographical poetry. The size of the letters and tension created by the space between the words intensifies the tension created in themes with its visual image. Sounds further dramatize the meaning and feeling in the poem. The whole poem has been skilfully modulated. The form of this poem has been formulated very skilfully. It has great force and brilliance. The stanzas of the first part are diamond shaped and those of the second part are shaped like an hour glass and this usual device is not arbitrary but neglect and answers the movement of the thought and emotions at each point. The title of the poem is quite

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meaningful. In the first part of the poem, Dylan presents the divinity of man and reality of divine love. In the second part, he prays for the truth of resurrection.

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Introduction

Visual poetry is a technique used by poets to create the mental image of the themes dealt in the poem with the help of visual effects such as altering the physical shape of the poetry. Such visual poetry is concrete poetry or shape poetry or typographical poetry where the arrangement of words and lines of the poem reflect the themes of poetry. One can see the image formed by the arrangement of words and lines which offers the meaning visually. This allows a poem to ignore standard syntax and logical sequencing. The shape of the poem on the page symbolises content of the poem. The white space of the page i.e the background of the page is the significant part of the poem. A combination of lexical and pictorial elements appends the attractiveness and robustness of the modern concrete poetry. “Roland Mathias in his essay published in *Poetry Wales* asserts that Thomas was out to remake himself in the image of Keats (p.78), and that the shape of the “Vision and Prayer” poems is plainly derived from George Herbert (p.85) – though in Herbert’s entire works I can find only one poem that looks remotely like the “Vision and Prayer diamond-and-hourglass principle” (In Bold, Alan, *Dylan Thomas: Craft or Sullen Art*, p.118).

Vision and Prayer is a religious pattern poem in which the verses of the first part formed the shape of a diamond and the verses of the second part the shape of an hour-glass or prayer-wheel. The device was one that George Herbert had used, a poet whom Dylan particularly loved and admired. Yet the poem had found its original spur in the work of a very different poet. Vernon Watkins had noted that the theme of this poem is due the influence of Rilke’s wonderful statement about “God being born in the next room” and from the poem “Du Nachbar Gott” from the *Stundenbuch* which Babette Deutsch published by New Directions (Watkins, Vernon, *Dylan Thomas and Other Poets: Poetry*, 52,53)

Vision of Diamond

Mystical approach is not new in Dylan Thomas’ poetry. The motives of the mystical approach lead to the religious experience in “Vision and Prayer”. The shape of the diamond is the foundational geometric symbol of creation and considered to be the building blocks of all

matter. In ancient Europe, the tribes deemed this symbol to represent the literal image of the birth canal or vagina. Literally, this symbol means creation of life. In Native American symbolic language, this lozenge means “symbol of wind”. Chief Seattle, leader of the Native American tribe has commented, “The Wind gives our children the spirit of life.” The Native American lozenge represents life force with unity, freedom, eternity and balance. The wind seems to be personified as divine messenger, able to manipulate unseen energy. In alchemical philosophies, the diamond is found. Metaphysically, the foundational image tells of creativity that is expressed by the culmination of the four elements: four sides indicating earth, fire, air and water.

Diamond has a symbolic foundation in structure and strength. Symbolic meanings of life experience apply elements like sturdiness, power, resilience and quality which have high integrity. It also represents infinite potential and divine creativity. The centre void design of diamond represents the place of creation which is womb. The shape of diamond as stanzas in the visual poetry of Dylan Thomas has significant and ambiguous rendering multiple meanings. The shape occurs in Hopkin’s “Immortal diamond” stands for light, vision and eternity and Thomas is greatly influenced by Hopkins. Thomas’ diamonds are often considered “as black as coal” and signify light, promise of vision, image, and art and bring things forth. By shape, a diamond represents the womb as the poem portrays the birth of a child often interpreted religiously as the birth of Jesus Christ. It depends on several meanings of diamonds and wings. Diamonds are black and temporal; wings bring the poet to light and eternity. If diamonds are heavenly, black wings are the temporal vehicles to diamond light.

Diamond has a rising from point to climax, ascends to point. Wing descends from climax to point, ascends to climax. The important points of diamond and wing are beginning, middle and end i.e., 1st, 9th and 17th lines respectively. Wings fall and rise like phoenix and seem more triumphant. In diamond forms in part I of the poem, in the first stanza, the question of “who” reaches to the middle point in 8th line with the birth of the child and descends to climax with the mention of “wild child”; in the second stanza, the realisation of the present situation of the visitor or the poet with the introspection of “I” reaches the point where “midwives of miracle” to celebrate the birth of the child or the poem and descends to climax with bright light blessing the child; in the third stanza, the time of the birth of the child reaches to the description of the wild child with “bonfire in his mouth” and the grotesque image of the child descends as it continues to be caldron of kiss referring to the poet’s instability and strong emotions running in terror; in the third stanza, the passing of time is mentioned through “in the spin of the sun” reaches the point where the “lightning of

adoration” for the child as well as the poet for his creation and descends to the “wounds blinds my cry” referring to the poetic enlightenment which the poet enjoys, beyond description.

Hourglass - Time and Cyclic Pattern

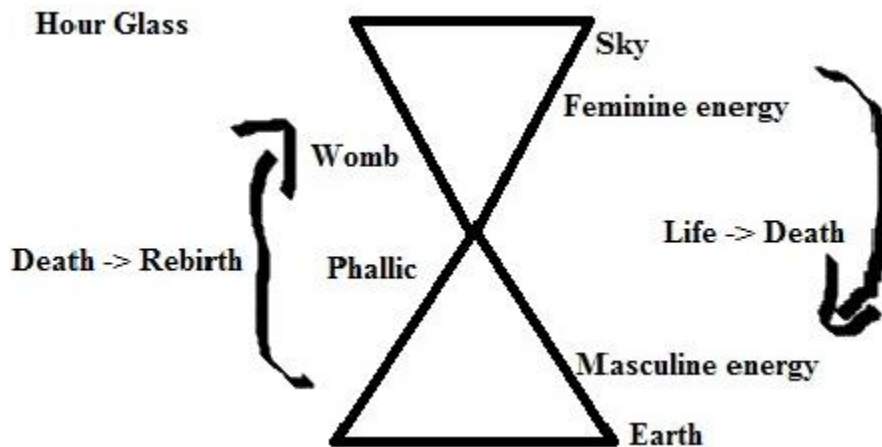
Hourglass, sands of time symbolises the eternity and balance of cycles of life and death. It has upper and lower triangles signifying the sky and earth or the womb and phallic image respectively. The energies of our world are contained in atmosphere and crust. Feminine energy is curvaceousness of the shape and the feminine cycles that a woman has gone through the cycle of maiden to crone. In *Vision and Prayer*, the energies of the world is drawn together in the womb of a woman to borne the child which represents the feminine energy to be complete in the sense which is present in all forms.

Hourglass is a symbol of time and death and the flowing sand measuring the duration of the time is fatal and meaning nothing can stop and none can predict the finalities. The sand symbolises the nothingness of the earthly things and the emptying of the one half of the hourglass reminds the heart will stop beating and life will end. The first reference to the time is felt in the poem “burn and turn of the poem” in Part I even though the shape of the first part is a diamond. The swift lines with few words and even one word in a poetic line definitely resounds the passing of time. Part II of *Vision and Prayer*, hourglass symbol starts after the child’s birth symbolic of the reckoning of the life of the child and measuring the duration of life through different stanzas till death. In another perspective, hourglass represents the” high and low, heaven and earth”; the movement of the sand indicating the poles of attraction with lower one which is earthly and the upper one which is heavenly. The sand flows descending and the ascending movement is physically impossible but can be attained through spiritual means through prayer.

The poet says in part II that he prays “in the name of the lost” / “ghost” referring to one of the trinity of Christ (ghost/ soul) which was resurrected in the first stanza; “in the name of wanton lost” referring to the people who are atheists or “unchristened” in the second stanza; “in the name of fatherless and in the name of unborn” in the third stanza; in the name of or “blessing of Sun” which is christened down the sky in the last stanza. He prays that he is not the kind of the folk who laments or mumbles for the loss of joy or loss of hope in life but raises against it by burying the losses in “the inmost marrow of my heart bone”; like a mystic to pray in the centre of the dark part of the mountain where the folks are “unchristened” or atheists to bring in them, the belief of God or the “infant light” who comes as a saviour to redeem from the shackles of earthly attachment and return to Christ before their “lips blaze”

or the doomsday; for those who have lost the star, the guiding force which drives them to the Christ-born(“in the name of fatherless” meaning Christ is born as an infant to Virgin Mary and “fatherless” denoting the absence of father), for those “undesirers” and people who criticises Christ (“interpreted evening” signifying the wrong interpretations of evening when Christ was crucified on the cross), he prays to spring or “stream upon his martyrdom” or the resurrection of life upon his martyrdom; for who criticise him or “scald” him, he would run to his martyrdom and the “lighning” or the Christ answers his cry. The poet turns the spirit of the prayer and he feels that the sun is no blessing but it is scorn thing and the poet wishes to turn back and right himself in safe and cooled place but the sun is so wide and broad that fills the hole sky. No man is free from the blazing heat of the sun. Atlast, the poet wishes that the sun if he finds him out let him burn the poet he wants to live on earth amidst so many difficulty. The poet feels that he is lost in the rising Sun at the present of prayer, he feels that the sun is being too much hot.

Cyclic process creates the need to turn the hourglass symbolises the continual cycle that a soul undergoes between life and death and then rebirth again at the natural works of “heaven and earth” (metaphysically) and “sky and earth” (physically). The reverse of attitudes and actions need to be done to continue the flow of life. It also symbolises the resurrection of Jesus. Hourglass fall and accumulate. Reversing the hourglass leaves time on our hands. Preachers used to pray by the hourglass and it is more suitable for prayer. Thomas prays to the trinity in the poem with the hourglass shape of part II. He played with diamonds, wings and time’s glasses and to play with beginning, middle and end. The vision of child’s birth, vision of making a poem, vision of enlightenment and vision of universality of man and nature of part I are meditated on and in the part II with hourglass shaped stanzas to represent prayer. Cycling process symbolises not only the resurrection of Christ but also the continual process of soul dwelling in different organic matter. The soul’s life is eternal but the physical life decays and the hourglass measures the duration of physical life and the process of reversal of the hourglass or the life is accomplished by nature’s immortality.



The above representation shows the parallels between feminine energy and the masculine energy with the sky and the earth, the process of life and death and the nature's role in the process and the reversal of hourglass representing the reversal of life or rebirth.

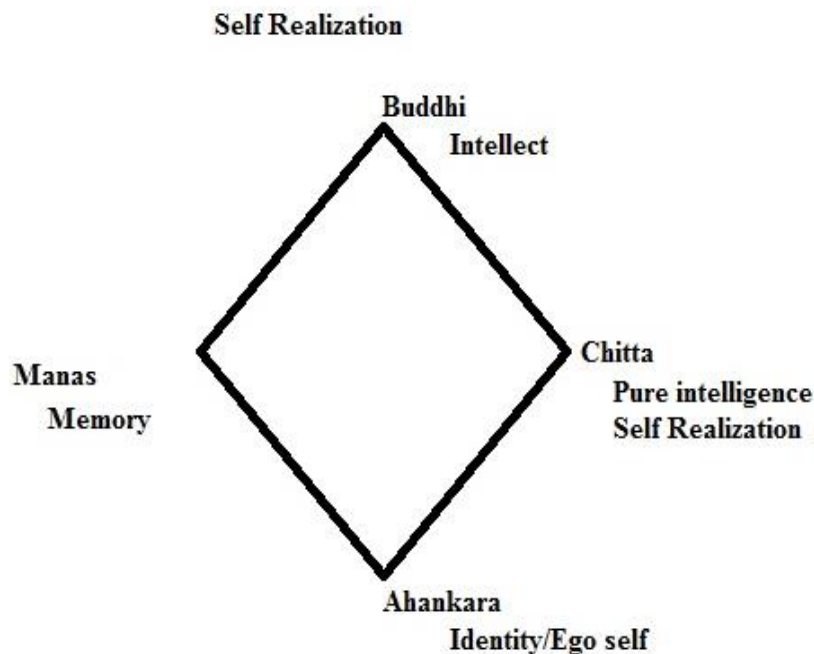
Universality of Man and Poem

The poem is suggestive of creation of man and making of poem as they are parallelised to propagate the universality of all living things in nature. Words like "loud", "hear", "heart print" allures the readers to be aware of the partly audible heart beat and partly like a footprint of sound coming through the thin wall to point in the direction of the birth of the child. The words further make the reference to the presence of characters in the poem. As the birth of the child is recognised by the sounds, the birth of the poem is also realised as sounds contribute a major part to poetry. The quest of understanding the rationale behind creation of the man and the poem is anticipated through the question "who are you / who is born / in the next room". "Heart print of man" suggests the universality of every man and every poem. The physical toil of the mother is depicted biologically through the "burn and turn of time" with the "birth bloody room" which symbolises the creation of man with "ghost" and "dropped son" referring to the new born. Like the "womb opening", the poet's thoughts open out to the creation of poem with "ghost" referring to vague thoughts which are to be refined to make the poem. The thin wall is the screen or obstacle for the poet to express his thoughts in poetic form and it refers to the thin layer of amniotic fluid present on the body of the infant when its born or the thin layer covering inside the womb which prevents the infant to come out of the opening easily. "Heart print" refers to the heart beat of the child and refers to the poetic emotion expressed in the poem. "Dark" blessing represents the child being born with the sin inherited from forefathers, Adam and Eve according to Bible and the child has to be baptised by light (no baptism here can be none i.e. relatives to cuddle the new born) but

rather the darkness of physical room as well as the womb welcomes her to the new world for exploration. The poet or the new poem blessed by the “dark” is subjected to criticism and refusal to accept the making of the poem is realised through the phrase, “no baptism” (no patronage for the poet especially the traditional bards in the Welsh culture). The new child or the new poem is wild without any baptism or any support. Darkness here represents the creative force in a way. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet imagines that he is addressing the unborn Christ who is lying in the womb of his mother Mary. There is very thin separation between the poet and the unborn Christ. The child is in great difficulty before his birth. The child is in birth pains. The child is the true copy of man. The boom is perfectly dark there is no light there is only blessing of the child in darkness. In spite of the “endless falls” the poet as well as the child faces in life as an artist or as a man, the poet wants the human beings to raise against the pitfalls or “interpreted evenings” i.e., the criticism from different people, the poet wants to bury everything that gives him dismay under the lower part of the hourglass and filter only fresh and hopeful experiences to slip through the hourglass. When he finds his own i.e., self-realization, “I am found”, the whole world of artists or critics “scald” him or drown him in “his world’s wound”, the poet wants to rise like “sun roars at the prayer’s end” i.e., attaining the clarity of mind to face hardships in life through prayer or at the end of the prayer as he was answered by God (“lightning answers my cry”).

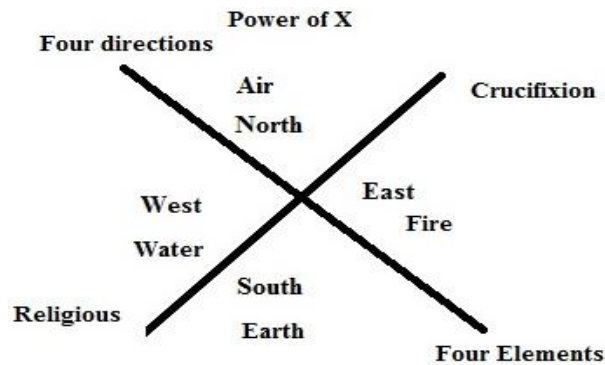
Self –realization

According to Indian philosophy, mind has four parts which refers to the four corners of rhombus here. Buddhi or the intellect is meant for reasoning, Ahankara or Ego self which is the identity part, Manas is the memory storage part or the huge sack of memory and Chitta is the pure intelligence which is attained through self realization. According to the yogis, reaching Chitta is the purpose of life to attain salvation. Self-realization is put forth at the very start of the poem with the introspection of the self through the interrogation “Who/ are you”. It is not just the reference to the child alone but to the whole humanity and self analyzing the purpose of the birth of every human being. The introspection and the visualisation of the birth of the child or the self are further projected through “who is born in the next room”. The secular enlightenment is achieved when the birth of the child is in parallel to the making of the poem. This question or the realisation, in fact made the poet to understand the purpose of mankind as well as the purpose of writing a poem. “Burns me his name” bestows a new realization and recognition that he is father of the child as well as the poem. His realization, the inborn talent of the poet has put his future to question through “Casting tomorrow like a thorn”.



The slipping of sand in the hourglass represent the collection of memory or “Manas” which any man experience in the fixed duration at different stages of his life, accumulation of sand in the one side or the collection of memories or experience leads to his self interpretation as well as the interpretation of the memories and the world. Man at his best intellect or Buddhi embarks on the choicest memories from the collection of “manas” by killing his ego self or “Ahankara” by means of perfect submission through spirituality and prayer. If such an intellectual process is appropriate, such man attains the pure intelligence or “Chitta” which is self realization. The poet infact starts with such a kind of interrogation (“Who are you?”) for self realisation as well as the realisation of God throughout his life and achieved at the end through the vision through diamond shaped stanzas in the first part and prayer through hourglass shaped stanzas in the second part. The ego self “I” appears in the middle of the hourglass as a monosyllabic word to grant the exact shape for the hourglass but the slipping of sand passing through the middle part of the hourglass with “I” is short-lived referring to kill the ego self to attain heavenly blessings through spirituality.

Power of X and Intellectual Reflection



Cross signifies the religious crucifixion. The four corners represent the four cardinal directions, North, South, East and West and the four elements – air, water, fire and earth. In western society, triangle signifies the Christian meaning, Trinity – God, the Father, son and the Holy Spirit united in a single God-head. The infant born in the poem is Christ-like, ghost and the son makes the holy trinity. The reference to the cross in the poem is felt through “bearing the ghost”, “infant light” “name of the fatherless”, “shrine of wound” (representing crucifixion) and “interpreted evening” (representing the evening of Christ crucifixion which is interpreted by people) and “upon his martyrdom” (belief of resurrection).

The space around the cross if considered can denote the sun cross or the solar wheel which is an astrological symbol associated with sun and its four seasons. The three sides of the triangle also represent the present, past and future and body, mind and spirit. The reference to sun and moon and the cyclic pattern of night and day and light and darkness, from despair to hope have their own significance in reference to Christ birth, preaching, crucifixion and martyrdom and resurrection as well as man’s cyclic pattern from life to death and his struggles of “interpreted evening” and in particular to a poet who has chosen art for life’s sake like Dylan.

The cross symbolises the basic pattern of creation and influence of Thomas Browne’s “Quincaux” in “Religio Medici” (Part I, Sect. XVI), he has stated the evidence of the fact, “Nature is the Art of God.”. The human perception of the world is itself an example of this geometrical structure i.e., the cross with four sides of rays exemplify the human perception or understanding of the world. The double pyramid represents the inner or intellectual reflection of the cosmos. Browne refers to Egyptian Philosophy, “geniall spirits of the divine and human world do trace their way in ascending and descending pyramids, mystically apprehended in the letter X”. The intellectual reflection of Dylan Thomas as a poet apart from Christian reference is more significant part of any poet who is born in Welsh and ignored in

the mainstream literature. Dylan as a poet has transported the reflection of such Welsh writers and confronts his ideas of creating or conceiving a poem through the struggles where the non-believers who takes pleasure in criticising his poetry for alcoholic addiction and translucent ideas reflected in his poetry and busy with bringing dismay to the poet through their “interpreted evenings”. This reflection turns to be visionary and prayer to stream life upon his death or add more value to his poetry i.e., to recognise and acknowledge his poetry atleast after his death.

Religion

The poem celebrates the religious conversion through baptism. Religion serves as a metaphor. Christianity serves as a secular metaphor yet holy. The infant born in the poem can be Christ. The wing shaped part II of the poem is the wings of the dove which symbolises Christ. The infant or any man is born with sin and “born into sin” according to the Bible as the sin of the forefathers, Adam and Eve is carried onto them. In the poem, “dark alone blessing on the child” like baptism, is the reference to the sin of Adam and Eve. The poem is the glaring example of the change in his approach to life and his philosophy. He emerges in this poem as a believer in the martyrdom of Jesus Christ, resurrection and redemption, but he believes that the humanity has become so irreligious and immoral that Christ’s sacrifices can never redeem the deprived humanity. Dylan rightly asserts in *Vision and Prayer*:

May the Crimson
Sun spin a grave grey
And the colour of clay
Stream upon his martyrdom.

In this poem, Dylan Thomas has in the theme of his identity, common man Christ Dylan images himself addressing in the unborn Christ, who, in his mother’s womb, seems, separated from himself by a “wall thin as a wren bone”. The infant in the next room replies explaining that it is his destiny to storm out across the partition that separates man from God and the poet identifies himself with the glory and suffering of Christ’s redemptive career. The first part of the poem blazes to a conclusion with a vision of the triumph and pain of Christ’s death. The second movement begins in a slow, hushed almost muttering cadence. The poet prays that Christ should remain in the womb, because men are indifferent and wanton and not worth redemption. Let the splendour of Christ’s martyrdom remain unrevealed.

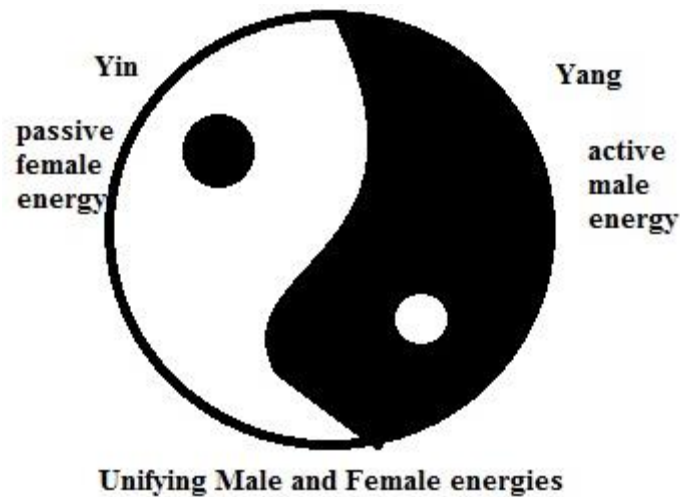
Spirituality through Vision and Prayer

Spirituality in “Vision and Prayer” is seen to be revealed mysteriously. The first part of the poem is the vision Thomas sees and the second part of the poem is his prayer on the vision. The vision that is vouchsafed Thomas is horrific rather than beautiful. The prayer which follows in which Thomas begs that the potent figure within the vision give up or be deprived of his power. The final interpretation of the poem will depend upon whether the figure is construed as having an objective as well as a subjective reality. The three figures dramatize the poem – the poet, the child and the sun. Mother figure appears and serves to produce the child only in the vision and described as a “splashed mothering maiden”. The walk-on role that the sun plays in the vision may not be significant, but in the prayer plays a crucial part. It is referred to as “the finding one” and is described as “spinning, crimson, sudden and loud”. In the first and third part of the poem, the figure of the child is mere personification; in the second he has both subjective and objective reality.

Vision and Prayer is an affirmative poem of Dylan Thomas. It was composed by him in 1951, when he had attained poetic maturity and when his facts had become positive. The poem explains the positive role of the sun when it plays its burning role in creation. Its last lines prove the faith of the pact in the life on earth as divine and purposeful, but horrible.

I
Am found
O Let him
Scold me and down
Me in the world's wounds
His lightning answers my
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.
Now I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars of the prayers end

In Chinese philosophy, Yin represents the passive female principle of the universe and Yang represents the active male principle of the universe characterised to be creative which are present in every human being. Male needs to balance his yang self with his inner yin energies and female needs to balance her yin self with her yang aspects of life. The unifying energies between male and female represents the sexual.



In the horizontal position, lozenges represent the female fertility or the creation and in the vertical position, it represents the phallic image. The unifying force of the passive female energy and active male energy is necessary for conception and the process of life. The restoration of feminine energy in a woman after the child's birth is revealed in the phrase "in the spuming cyclone of his wing" and the biological restoration is revealed through the "first fury", "dumbfounding haven" and "back to black silence". Such a kind of unified energy is necessary for the poet to create poetry. This further represents the womb-tomb relationship and continuum of the process of nature involved in creation and destruction of any form of organic matter.

Sound and Themes

In a concrete poem which operates visually, the sound brings attention to both individual words that are drawn together through their sound as well as to the overall feeling or experience. Rhythm along with alliteration, assonance and consonance produces a melodic effect as well as convey the themes of the poetry. According to Daniel Jones, "it is the syllabic nature of the stanza forms of *Vision and Prayer* that makes the achievement quite different from Herbert's *Easter Wings* which hugs to the seafety of the iambic line. In *Vision and Prayer*, Dylan Thomas had adopted the stanza form in vision of syllables 1 to 9 and reverse 9 to 1 in prayer.

The poem opens with the child or the poet himself exploring the sounds of the womb:

Who
Are you
Who is born
In the next room

So loud to my own
That I can hear the womb
Opening and the dark run
Over the ghost and the dropped son
Behind the wall thin as a wren's bone?

Thomas adopts a simple rhyme in the use of “who...you”, “who....room”, “womb”, “own”, “ghost” and “bone” with the use of hollow “O” in a great varieties signifying the hollowness of the womb. Open vowel sounds “O” in the words and warm nasal sounds “m” and “n” signify the warm, moist environment of the womb. Assonance and Alliteration further reinforces the settings and sounds convey the themes in the poem. Assonance in “opening” and “over” link the beginnings of lines in “so loud to my own” to “ghost” and “bone”. Alliteration connects “born” with “behind” and “bone” and it portrays the fragility of the foetus when it is born.

Thomas introduces harder consonants and image of “wren’s bone” reveals the fragility of the foetus. The same idea is expressed in the second half of the stanza with “birth bloody room” where time and man spoil the delicacy of the womb. The soft sounds of the opening lines give way to a harder realism. The sense of sound in the new born is realisation through the line “That I can hear the womb” and sense of light and vision is realised through “dark run over the ghost and the dropped son”.

In the birth blood room unknown
To the burn and turn of time
And the heart print of man
Bows no baptism
But dark alone
Blessing on
The wild
Child.

The hard consonants, assonance and alliteration along with plosive “b” in the above lines emphasize the transition or the progression from birth to death and the process of changes through “birth” to “burn and turn” to time. The words “heart” and “dark” are linked through assonance. The rhyme in “wild” and “child” signifies darkness and hardness of vision. The rhyming of words “unknown” and alone” suggests fear and apprehension created in the mother due to the birth of the child.

The aural perceptions of the foetus are felt in the second stanza even it begins with stillness and sensitivity.

I
Must lie
Still as stone
By the wren bone
Wall hearing the moan
Of the mother hidden
And the shadowed head of pain
Casting to - morrow like a thorn
And the midwives of miracle sing
Until the turbulent new born
Burns me his name and his flame
And the winged wall is torn
By his torrid crown
And the dark thrown
From his loin
To bright
Light.

The aural echo is caused through the rhyming words “stone” - “bone”, “moan” – “thrown” and creates a strong link with the first stanza. This aural echo affirms the foetus’ ability to hear and feel the moans. The rhyming of “thorn”, “born” and “torn” emphasizes the torn birth or life and the thorn of death or old age when the child is born. The greater use of alliteration and hard consonant sounds further emphasize the themes of life, birth and death.

The powerful word “turbulent” suggests the hard labour of the mother and the child due to the birth of the foetus. The “mean” of “mothers”, the “midwives of miracle” and “turbulent...torn...torrid” produces the uneasy darkness of this vision. Darkness is cast outside in the final lines of the stanza. “Bright light” at the end of the stanza is completely unexpected from auditory perspective. The clarity of the “light” image is brought out by clipped vowels and hard stops. The skilful strong rhyme produces the sense of shock.

Death and tone of prayer combine the themes with the heavy emphasis on sound in the second half of “Vision and Prayer”. Thomas employs more direct forms of repetition to convey the themes of prayer.

I turn the corner of prayer and burn

In a blessing of the sudden
Sun. In the name of the damned
I would turn back rod run
To the hidden land
But the loved sun
Christens down
The sky.
I
Am found.
O let him
Scald me and drown
Me in his world's wound.
His lightning answers my
Cry. My voice burns in his hand.
Now I am lost in the blinding
One. The sun roars at the prayer's end.

The above stanza creates an intense focus on “I”. Poetically, “I” stands alone in the hourglass shape covering the middle part of the hourglass to show the ego self being realised through the phrase “I / am found” for which the self had undergone a wide range of experience. “I” is lost by the twist and turns and burns in life as in hourglass. The self-realisation is achieved through the vision and prayer amidst the sound of the womb. The self-realisation for the poet is achieved through the forces of nature. The “lightning” from the sky and the “loved sun” christens down the poet or the child, the answers the purpose of his life through the link of repetition created by “I”, “my”, “me” with the “sky” and “cry”. “Damned”, “land”, “found” and “wound” signifies the new birth of the child and its connection to the world. A shift in verb connection is made in the phrases “sun roars” and the poet’s voice “burns” (“sun” is associated with “burns”) but the poet has raised his voice burning in the roars of sun. The sound in the poem resounds and fills the reader’s mind with echoes of sound and sense. The sounds are worth enough to coax the readers in involving them in the vision and prayers. The meditation of self-realisation is attained through strong use of sounds and excellent synaesthesia in the poem.

Conclusion

The structure of the poem conveys the whole interpretation of the poem as well as the themes which remain undisclosed by the poet. The function of pattern poems with structurally

arranged words and stanzas in appropriate spaces and choice of the count of syllabic words plays a vital role in the pattern poems. In *Vision and Prayer*, such kind of structure is well maintained to convey the themes of the poems. Visual impact, the poem creates is mystical. Diamond shaped stanzas visualises the procreation of the child as well as the poem. Hourglass or wing shaped stanzas visualises the freedom of a mystic meditating on the God's name to relieve him from the earthly bondage and redeem him from the earthly experiences or the manas of the earth to attain the heavenly crown or the spirituality. The universality of the poem is attained through the appeal of any man or every man has to undergo these processes to attain salvation, earth and heaven relationships, man and woman relationships, Christ, crucifixion and resurrection, poet and his artistic lineage, struggles, dismay and hope like the "sun roars". The vision of the poem is universality of themes with elucidation of setbacks of any man. The hourglass can render more meaning and further interpretation of the poem through replacing the lower half of the one stanza of hourglass to the upper half of the next stanza of hourglass which forms the exact shape of the diamond. Two halves (lower and upper) of hourglass in reverse order form the desired diamond shape which cages the man in the womb or the shape of diamond or which cages the man in earthly pleasure. The prayer can only render perfect hourglass i.e., the two wings attached in the upper and the lower part to give freedom and redemption for man to attain spirituality with open mind of upper and lower part of the hourglass and to uplift one by inculcating good and lofty experiences in life and bury the diminutive and dire under the earth.

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