## Exploring Phonological Features in Hamid Khan's Poem 'We Are Dreamers'

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**Abstract**
*This study examines the phonological aspects of Hamid Khan's "We Are Dreamers," exploring how the speaker uses sound devices to create two auditory worlds. Through the stylistic analysis of alliteration, assonance, and sound symbolism, the study highlights the difference between a world of nostalgic sounds and one that is characterized by harsh, unsettling tones. The article represents how the speaker creates a melodic rhythm by frequently using these opposed sounds, highlighting the difference between these two aural domains. Through examining the subtleties of sound, the speaker competently expresses the desire to leave the harsh reality of the dwellers and enter the cozy world of the dreamers. The poet skillfully creates a musical rhythm while emphasizing the differences between the two realms. The poem allows readers to briefly escape reality by submerging them in the fantastical realm of dreams through the collocation of two opposed sounds.*
*Keywords: Phonology, phonological level, stylistics, the Poem*

**Introduction**
Poets often use sounds as an effective tool to express meaning and feelings. In 'We Are Dreamers, Hamid Khan produces a soundscape that sharply contrasts the 'dreamers' and the 'dwellers,'. He highlights a nuanced interaction between the desire to flee and memory. This study explores the phonological devices used in the poem, examining how alliteration, assonance, and sound symbolism create unique aural realms. Phonological features may offer perceptive facts about a speaker's creative decisions and nuanced stylistic use. De Castro et. el, (2024) analyze the phonological components of Billy Collins' poem "Introduction to Poetry" which offers a prospect to examine the poet's aptitude and how sound patterns contribute to

the work's overall impact and meaning. The researchers emphasize the features of meter, rhyme scheme, alliteration, consonance, and assonance. The consonants have to sound the same to produce alliteration and rhyme. The same holds for vowels, which are crucial for syllable formation. Phonological coherence in poetry can be attained by emphasizing the order of sounds using assonance, rhymes, and alliteration (ibid).

In the selected poem, the speaker's desire for an escape is obvious in the severe contrast between the dreamers and the dwellers. This study explores the poem's auditory characteristics, examining how the speaker uses phonology to portray two different worlds i.e. one marked by harshness and startling tones, the other by nostalgia and soft noises.

**Phonology**

The study of phonology observes the organization and use of sounds in a language. It studies a language's phonemes, syllables, intonation, and stress. Focusing on the poem's auditory patterns highlights the nuanced methods in which the poet uses words to offer the reader a deep and significant experience. The field of phonology in Cognitive Linguistics has developed more slowly than other fields like morphology or lexical semantics. Studying the connection between phonology and other academic fields such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics has grown in popularity recently. Currently, scholars are focused on a more comprehensive approach that takes into account the cognitive processes related to sound structure and how they interact with other linguistic elements (Lindner, 1981). Phonology mostly focuses on the relations between the abstract underlying forms that words are kept in memory, and the surface forms that may operate as input to our articulatory device and aural system (Bromberger and Halle, 1989).

Wales (2014) defines phonology as a linguistic level that deals with the expression of language through speech. The careful focus on phonology in a poetic language is often evident through frequent patterns of rhyme, alliteration, assonance, and sound repetition.

**Stylistics**

Stylistics stems from 'style,' which is often assumed to be the configuration of communication and ideas. The notion of style is founded on the idea that language serves two purposes: it may be a tool for communication as well as for shaping thought. The second one is expressive. It is generally assumed to mean having the capability to write perfectly and articulately. It falls under the classification of grammar and forms a set of guidelines and standards for how to write and speak (Tariq, 2018).

Stylistic analysis uses certain technical words and ideas that come from the field of linguistics. Literary criticism is not the same as stylistic analysis. The interpretation-focused nature of literary criticism persists, and linguistics has nothing to offer about literature that goes beyond sentence structure (Aslam, et. el, 2014).

Tariq (2018) argues that certain terminologies, like onomatopoeia, are composed of speech sounds to evoke natural sounds. Alliteration is another phonetic stylistic practice that repeats comparable sounds, particularly consonants, to give the utterances a melodic impact. Short (1996) maintains that stylistic study is not mainly concerned with providing fresh and shocking interpretations of the texts, but in contrast to more conventional types of practical critique. Its

main aim is to describe how we come to understand a text by carefully analyzing the linguistic structure of the text. The study of stylistics involves examining language and its creative applications.

**Levels of Stylistics**

**Phonological level:** The examination of a language's sound system and the specific rules governing pronunciation is known as the phonological level.

**Graphological level:** At this level, one must study the writing system of a language, which includes paragraphing, font style, line spacing, graphology, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization.

**Grammatical level:** At this level, the syntactic and morphological elements are examined to dissect the basic sentence structure of a language and the order in which its integral parts function.

**Lexical level:** This stage deals with investigating how certain words and phrases are used in several linguistic contexts.

This research is concerned with the analysis of the poem by analyzing its tone and language style. The study aims to explore the nuances of the poem's rhythm, sound patterns, and pronunciation by examining its phonological features. The researchers will focus mainly on the harmonious quality produced by sound arrangement, and how these aspects add to the poem's effect and meaning. Therefore, this study examines the unique ways in which the poem uses language and music to express its ideas and provoke certain responses or feelings from the reader.

**The Poem**

The poem conveys a feeling of loneliness as the speaker finds consolation in the woman's "indifference" and her detachment from "this nasty world." We also find a need for kinship, as the speaker takes comfort in their commonality as dreamers. The phrase "Eclipsed moons" suggests a retreat into the past and recollection, providing comfort for the lady. The speaker emphasizes how important memories are as a relief and a way to escape from the harsh reality of the present.

The poem constructs a desire for a period when things were more pleasant and easier, as revealed by the colocation of the "colorful evening" and the "happy get-together". The common feature of the phrase "living in the past" emphasizes this urge even more.

The very title of the poem "We are Dreamers" establishes a perfect division between two groups of people: "dreamers" and "dwellers". To explore this difference, this study looks at how the poet constructs phonological effects in the poem. The speaker uses sound to build two distinct auditory worlds that mirror the speaker's urge for escape. This research study explores how the speaker's desire for the dreamy world of the "dreamers" is represented through the striking contrast with the harsh reality of the "dwellers" through an investigation of the poem's use of alliteration, assonance, and sound symbolism.

**Literature Review**

Tariq Rahman (1990) argues that European critics saw third-world writing (literature) from a political perspective. They ignored its aesthetic nature. The main cause why third-world

literature did not get full attention from critics was that colonialism acted as a hurdle between colonizers and the colonized. The present patterns have shifted, with Europeans beginning to read more third-world literature as a result of its significant progress. There are still several unresolved difficulties in this respect, such as the question of whether or not third-world literature differs from English literature (as quoted by Hayder, 2023). Pakistani literature in English differs from other third-world works of literature due to its distinctive grounds. Hayder (2023) argues that colonialism was not only the abuse of power but also the colonizer's cultural dominance. One facet of cultural transition that resulted in confrontation with the colonizer's culture was the fight of the colonized people for their cultural identity and the social construction of the new sovereign countries.

We encounter a diverse environment when examining Pakistani English literature. This is not just because the Pakistani authors reflect diverse cultural backgrounds or because there is no other way to reflect Pakistan's pluralist society, but also because these authors transcend ethnolinguistic, historical, religious, and geographic boundaries in their works (Hajiyeva, 2016). Pakistani English literature provides evidence that contradictions in society cannot be attributed to cultural variety unless those difficulties are exploited for political goals. Violence in a community with varied cultural circumstances may only arise from improper or purposeful political ambitions. While Mohsin Hamid uses allegory to portray a similar theme, Ahmad Ali, Bapsi Sidhwa, Sorayya Khan, and Nadim Aslam use realistic styles to make this point in Twilight in Delhi, Season of the Rainbirds, and Noor (ibid).

**Methodology**

This study examines the poem "We Are Dreamers", analyzing phonological features to explore the connection between sound and meaning. The study examines how certain sounds have certain effects and how often they occur to add to the overall mood of the poem. The study examines certain language devices that use sound to enhance meaning. The data is analyzed using a qualitative method. It used phonological stylistic study to explore the phonological features of the selected poem, containing rhyme alliteration, consonance, and assonance, and their influence on the speaker's poetic style.

The study focuses on the connections between meaning and sound, observing how phonological aspects affect the poem's emotional significance and thematic complexity. It examines how these particular aspects impact the poem's overall impression and its portrayal of "Dreamers" and "Dwellers."

The poem's main focus is on the phonological difference between the "dreamers" and the "dwellers". The poet skillfully captures the speaker's desire for a place where they may flee the harsh reality of the "dwellers" and find comfort in the surreal world of the "dreamers" by delving into the minute details of sound. The poem's assonance (repetition of vowel sounds) and alliteration (repetition of starting consonant sounds) are identified throughout the paper.

**Data Analysis**
**Structure of the Poem**
The poem has an informal, flowing quality as it deviates from a specific meter or rhyme pattern. The brief, fragmented stanzas of the poem heighten the sensation of reflection and closeness. The poem uses rich imagery to stimulate emotions and produce a powerful pictorial impression, such as the colocation of the works "eclipsed moons," "colorful evening," and "nasty world." The recurrence of the expression "I like her" highlights the speaker's indebtedness and fascination toward the lady. The use of straightforward, simple language carries an air of earnestness and closeness.

The poem addresses the ideas of escape, loneliness, and the necessity for connection. The speaker takes comfort in the woman's shared dreamy quality and her capacity to withdraw into the past to avoid the harsh reality of the present. The poem's melancholy and contemplative tone is influenced by its free verse form and vivid imagery.

**Analysis**
The poem makes use of many phonological strategies to produce a lenient, and dreamlike atmosphere including:

**Alliteration and assonance**
The recurrence of the /l/ sound in the line "Alone she walked" highlights the sense of isolation. The lines "… mind, Eclipsed Moons" suggest mystery and contemplation through the repetition of the /m/ sound.

In the line "Or some happy get-together", the repetition of the short vowel /e/ sound makes the line sound soft and cheerful. In lines "And 'no life" and "To this nasty world" the repetition of the long /i/ sound in the words "life" and "this" produces a sense of distance and contrast between the world and speaker.

Likewise, words like "colorful" and "memories" invoke images in our minds and our senses, adding to the strange, nostalgic atmosphere. The use of words such as "eclipsed," "colorful" and "happy" evokes images of the past and priceless brief memories.

The speaker uses surreal imagery to portray a person lost in introspection, remembering "a colorful evening" or "some happy get-together."

**A Real World of Harshness**
The poem depicts the "nasty world" and its "crazy dwellers" by using harsher sounds and more condensed sentences. The excessive use of staggering noises works as a metaphor for the speaker's harsh reality. A sense of discord and discomfort is created by the recurrent use of harsh consonants like |k| and |g| as well as the startling |b| and |d| sounds, which construct the fears and troubles of the external world. This deliberate difference in tone is a powerful representation of the speaker's need for the comfort that comes from dreams.

The speaker uses phonology as a potent instrument to highlight the stark contrast between the speaker's inner world of dreams and the harsh reality of their waking lives, rather than just as a literary technique. The poem's melodic quality, influenced by two disparate auditory worlds,

allows the reader to feel this division on an intellectual and emotional level, leading to a meaningful contemplation of the human yearning for comfort and escape.

## Consonance

The lines "And 'no life" and "To this nasty world" carry glumness and hopelessness through the use of repeated /n/ sounds. The severe, quick sounds of words such as "nasty" and "crazy" contrast with the dreamy environment of a dreamer. Representing individuals as "dwellers," "nasty," and "crazy" expresses judgment and dispassion. This representation of individuals provides a depiction of a severe, hostile, and occasionally harmful environment.

## The Contrast

Through the use of phonological elements, the speaker represents a contrast between the dreamers and the dwellers: one world is full of tender, smooth sounds, while the other is filled with severe, astonishing tones. The speaker's wish to flee the harsh outside world and find comfort in the woman's dreamy realm is highlighted by this juxtaposition.

## Linkage

The poem suggests a connection between the "dreamers" and the "dwellers" despite their obvious differences. The speaker and the dreamer both seem disconnected from their surroundings and are living in the past, trying to escape the present. The speaker personifies nostalgia, while the dreamers are engrossed in their surreal realms, both demonstrating a strong disengagement from the present moment. This need for an altered reality—an idealized past or a self-made fantasy—relates to a common need to alienate from the present, which may occasionally seem too cruel, or meaningless.

## Conclusion

The main subject of the poem is the phonological difference between the "dreamers" and the "dwellers". The poet effectively captures the speaker's longing for a place to escape from the harsh reality of the "dwellers" and find solace in the dream world of the "dreamers" by focusing on the details of sound. The speaker constructs the impression of being very alienated from the dreadful realities of the present. The choice of language that conveys a feeling of separation and distance serves to further this estrangement.

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